

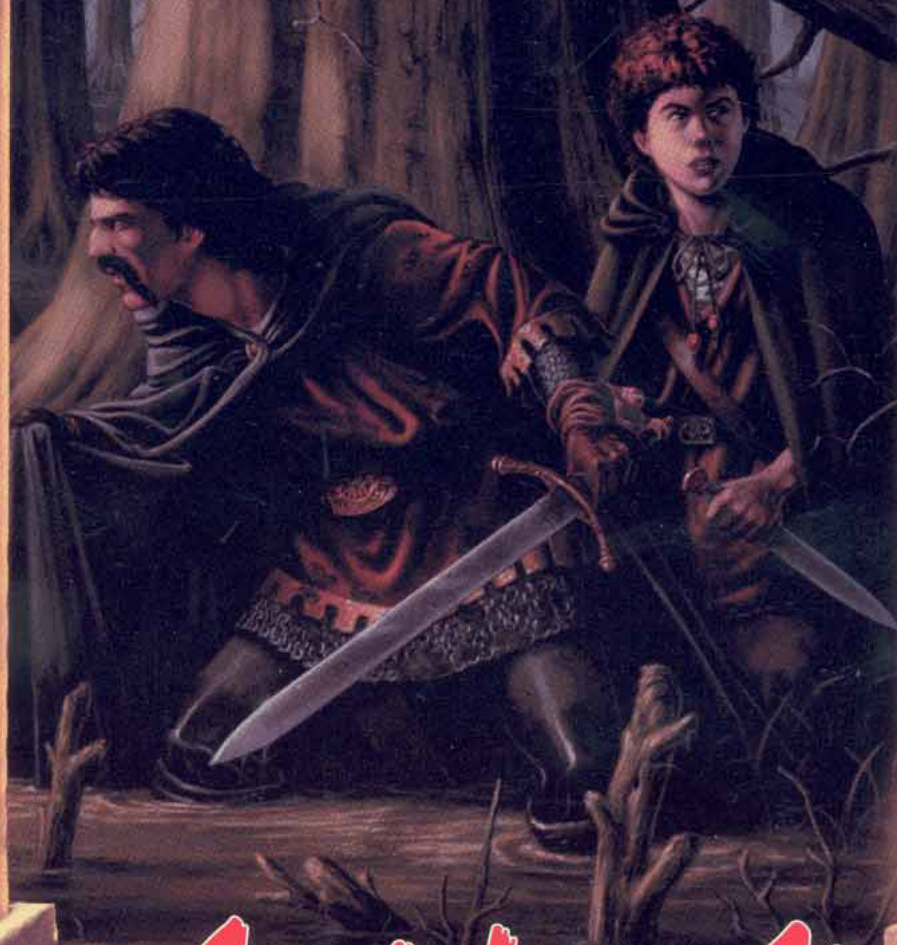
For four to six characters of levels 1-4

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Advanced
Dungeons & Dragons®

Ravenloft®

Official Game
Adventure



*Neither Man
Nor Beast*



EMORE

NEITHER MAN NOR BEAST

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INTRODUCTION



he question is," said the doctor, pursing his lips as he scanned the array of scalpels and surgical instruments, "What is a man?"

The captive struggled against its bonds, sensing the madness in the air. Yet they held secure. Across the room, the doctor's assistant licked his chops like a cat waiting for table scraps.

"Is it the mind?" continued the doctor, stroking the surgical steel,

"Is it the hand? The opposable thumb? The upright manner? Perhaps it's the spine, or forward-facing, predatory eyes. Something as simple as a communal nature or as mysterious and unknowable as the mythical soul."

He plucked a scalpel from the tray and held it up, the edge of the blade glittering in the light, highlighting the rust eating into the scalpel's handle. "This one will do," he said calmly.

The doctor turned to his experiment, the creature's eyes white with terror, "What is a man?" said the doctor, "That is precisely what we're about to find out."

The screams from the hut pealed out across the jungle like church bells, causing flights of brightly colored birds to take wing in panic and animals to head for their burrows. Former experiments of the doctor nodded their head in fear and respect—the Giver of Pain was performing his grisly work.

Yet was the fear they felt in empathy for the poor brute who was the Doctor's subject, or was it in the growing horror that the screams seemed to form words, and that the voice of the doctor's victim was neither man nor beast?

Welcome to the Horror

Neither *Man Nor Beast* is set in the RAVENLOFT® campaign setting, on the island of Markovia. It recounts a tale in which the heroes encounter all manner of beasts—some wearing human form, some animal, and many somewhere in-between.

The adventure begins at a seaport. For adventurers already trapped in Ravenloft, any of the ports along the Sea of Sorrows—Leudendorf, Port-a-Lucine, or Mordentshire—will do. For adventurers who are just arriving in Ravenloft from other lands, such ports as Waterdeep and Marsember in the Forgotten Realms or the Imperial City of Anuire in Cerilia would be suitable. *Neither Man Nor Beast* is designed to function both for long-time denizens of the Mists and for newcomers who suddenly find themselves in a world beyond their ken.

The heroes book passage on the good ship *Sunset Empires*, a solid vessel with a harsh, drunken master. Several days out of port, they run afoul of the weather and are driven by a titanic storm into the Mists of Ravenloft. Here, the *Sunset Empires* is attacked by a ghostly monster of huge dimensions and then runs aground on an unmarked island. The island was until recently the land-locked nation of Markovia, now translated into a island retreat.

The survivors of the wreck must fight to survive, struggling both against the elements and the twisted animal-men which seem to be the island's only inhabitants. They are befriended by an old man, who lives in an estate within a palisade. The old man says he is a castaway, like themselves, and has devoted his life to studying the odd nature, and hopefully effecting a cure for, the warped inhabitants of the land. The kindly old man, named Dr. Fran, is accompanied only by his aide, Felix; his manservant, Orson; and his beautiful ward, Delphi. Dr. Fran opens his house and offers his hospitality to the heroes, appearing as nothing more than a kindly, fuzzy-minded researcher.

Dr. Fran is in reality Frantisek Markov, the darklord of Markovia. He has been cursed to wear a human's face and an animal's body, and far from wishing to cure the twisted, broken beings of Markovia, he created them. The other members of his household are the most successful of his spawn, but the jungles beyond are filled with his rejects, the

INTRODUCTION

Broken Ones who both worship and hate the being they call *Diosamblet*, the Giver of Pain.

Dr. Fran is very interested in the heroes, both as future raw material for his experiments and as agents to recover a great artifact that would aid him in his research. This artifact, called the *Table of Life*, keeps any body placed upon it alive regardless of the tortures and pain inflicted; it will increase the survival rate for Dr. Fran's patients. This includes, of course, the player characters, after they recover the table.

The *Table of Life* is hidden away in a mountain monastery to the south, jealously guarded by a group of monks whose order has taken the task of protecting the world from such dangerous devices. The *Table* has had its effect on these monks, for they have been transformed into the Ancient Dead (mummies) by the power of the *Table* itself. The heroes, should they choose to recover the *Table*, must do so by slaying the monks or stealing the artifact, escaping with the monks in hot pursuit.

Should they return with the *Table*, Dr. Fran will make plans for making the adventurers his next subjects. However, at this point another force on the island violently intervenes. One of Dr. Fran's experiments, Akanga the Lion Man, long ago escaped his bondage and is now preaching a new tale—that Dr. Fran is a mortal and may be slain, and that only by slaying him will the Broken Ones be granted their eternal release.

Against a backdrop of revolution and battle, the heroes must make their escape, both from the diabolic Markov and the rebellious Broken Ones. Should they fall into the hands of either side, they will never leave Markovia alive, being condemned to spending their remaining existence as neither man nor beast.

DMs should be aware that a key element in this adventure is misdirection. Players are adept at putting together clues and solving riddles once they get a feel for an adventure's main focus. *Neither Man Nor Beast* attempts to maintain the mystery as long as possible by shifting the ground under the adventurers' feet with every new chapter. Red herrings abound: what seems to be a straightforward courier mission involving a cursed statuette quickly turns into a seagoing adventure, then a shipwreck/castaway survival adventure. New goals arise to replace the ones the characters started out with, only to be replaced in their turn.

Maintaining the Mystery

One of the delights of dropping a Ravenloft adventure into a traditional AD&D® campaign is the growing sense of horror and urgency engendered in players as they realize that they have fallen into one of the most deadly campaign settings yet created (DMs have reportedly caused scores of adventuring parties to flee from foggy days, for fear of being transported here). No player character in his right mind will wish to sup, or even stand in the presence of, a darklord of Ravenloft. Therefore, some subterfuge is needed to maintain the mystery. Such a deception is particular entertaining once the players realize exactly where their characters are.

For this reason, this adventure refers to Frantisek Markov primarily as "Dr. Fran." This is intentional, to reinforce to the DM that the players should be dealing with kindly Dr. Fran, not the monstrous Markov, despite the fact that the two are secretly one and the same. Thinking of this character as Dr. Fran has the added advantage of preventing awkward slips of the tongue—accidentally referring to the old Doctor as "Markov" might very well give the game away. Similarly, the island is referred to as "The Island" or "Dr. Fran's Island" rather than "Markovia" on maps as well as in larger headings in this book to avoid errant eyes from seeing it.

Therefore, always refer to Dr. Fran by that name, never as Markov, and the island as The Island, never as Markovia. Read the sections on Markov in the RAVENLOFT Campaign setting box to familiarize yourself with his history and personality, as well as the section on Dr. Fran and his household in this adventure. Note that Dr. Fran is a clever, plausible fellow who has a few alibis ready for when the players begin to realize that All Is Not Well.

This is not to say that the player characters will never discover the enormity of their possible fate, or the DM should continue to play coy once all the heroes realize where they are. However, the revelation of their location and situation (They are in Ravenloft—in Markovia—hanging out with a darklord—he dissects people—and *they're next*) should be played out for all it's worth. Ideally, if the DM can get shouts of fear and looks of panic from his or her players, then he or she should be congratulated on a job well-done.

THE GOOD SHIP SUNSET EMPIRES



The adventurers enter *Neither Man Nor Beast* through a sea voyage fated to end in disaster. The DM has several options regarding how to get the heroes on the good ship *Sunset Empires*. The following scene is offered as a sample rationale for the heroes' taking a sea trip: the DM should read the box below aloud to his or her players.

Most of the old man's story is true. There is, however, no curse, only an old man plagued by disease and guilt of actions long-ago. The wizard is real, and the casque does contain an item stolen from him, a figurine of a raven. This statuette has no value, but it does radiates faint magic (the result of a permanent *Nystul's magical aura*); this should give the players something to think about should they open the casque and check its contents.

The patron was well-dressed, wealthy, and most of all, scared. In the dim, smoky light of the common room you and your mates could see the haggard look in his eyes, the look of a man who jumps at every shadow.

"A long time ago," he began, his voice weak and wheezy, "I and a group of fellow adventurers liberated—well, robbed, really—a wizard of his trove. We made the mistake of leaving him alive, and the bigger mistake of thinking he would not find us. He placed a curse on those who stole from him. Now I am the last of my party, and my health is failing. I want to make amends, for fear that the wizard's curse could follow me after my death."

He heaved a small casque onto the table. "The wizard's most prized treasure is within this chest. As long as it remains shut, and does not see the daylight, all should be fine. I want you and your

DMs with players interested in wheedling and negotiating should omit the last two paragraphs of the boxed text. Checking around confirms that old Maxis was quite an adventurer in his day, before he settled down and turned merchant. He is known for being honorable and honest in his dealings. In addition to paying for their passage, Maxis is willing to offer the heroes 500 gold apiece for their trouble.

Suspicious players may decide to forgo passage on the *Sunset Empires*. In this case, they can leave on another ship due to sail a few days later which plans to follow a similar course. This ship, the *Unlamented Cry*, is identical to the *Sunset Empires*.

Alternatively, a DM involved in an ongoing campaign could wait until the player characters determine to take ship for purposes of their own, so long as their planned travel involves sailing beyond the sight of land. Then give the *Sunset Empires* as their ship, and spring the adventure on them.

Be sure to introduce the heroes to Captain Stewart first, then to Mr. Monterey and Old Singe once they get on board. On land Captain Stewart will be a polite, friendly old captain, glad to have the heroes on board. That will change.

party to return this to its rightful owner." He trails off into a hacking wheeze.

"I've booked passage on a sturdy ship due to pass near the wizard's tower, which overlooks the coast. I have sent word by messenger bird that the casque will be arriving, and he expects you and the package, though he will not reverse the curse until he receives it."

"I ask you, by what is right and proper, if you will do me this favor?"

That was last night. Now, in the light of day, standing before the *Sunset Empires*, you see it is a sturdy craft, more than suitable for the short voyage. You remember the old man's last warning:

"You should be safe, as long as you do not let sunlight into the box. Otherwise the curse will affect you as well."

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The Good Ship Sunset Empires

The *Sunset Empires* out of Leudendorf is a caravel—a sturdy, quick ship suitable for long ocean voyages.

It is 70 feet long, with a 24 foot beam, and holds 50 tons of cargo. Her hull planking is made of oak 2½ inches thick. It has two masts, lateen-rigged, and a crew of twenty men, but the ship can function on a fraction of that number.

The *Sunset Empires* has been making its run under Captain Stewart regularly for ten years without serious incident and has a reputation as a safe and sound ship. The ship is currently carrying bulk cargo—rice, grain, fabric, and tools, along with the odd specialty shipment.

Captain Stewart will assign Mr. Monterey to give the heroes a brief tour of the ship. Use the following key as a guide, making sure the players know of the existence of the ship's boat, the firebox, and especially the black leopard in its cage.



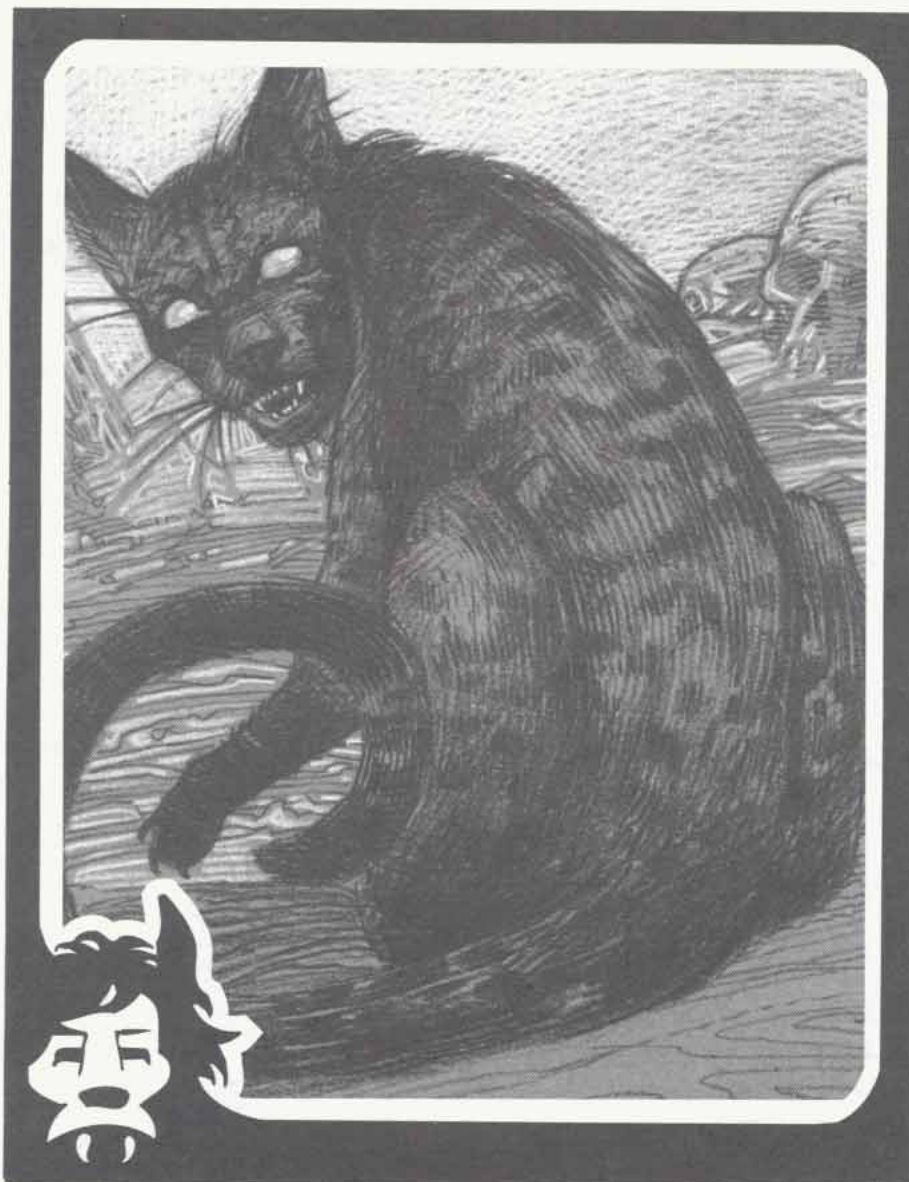
Key to the Sunset Empires

1. Foredeck. The forecastle of the ship is little more than a foot-high rise at the bow, with the anchor cables stored immediately beneath the deck. The *Sunset Empires* has a pair of cast iron anchors, one to each side.

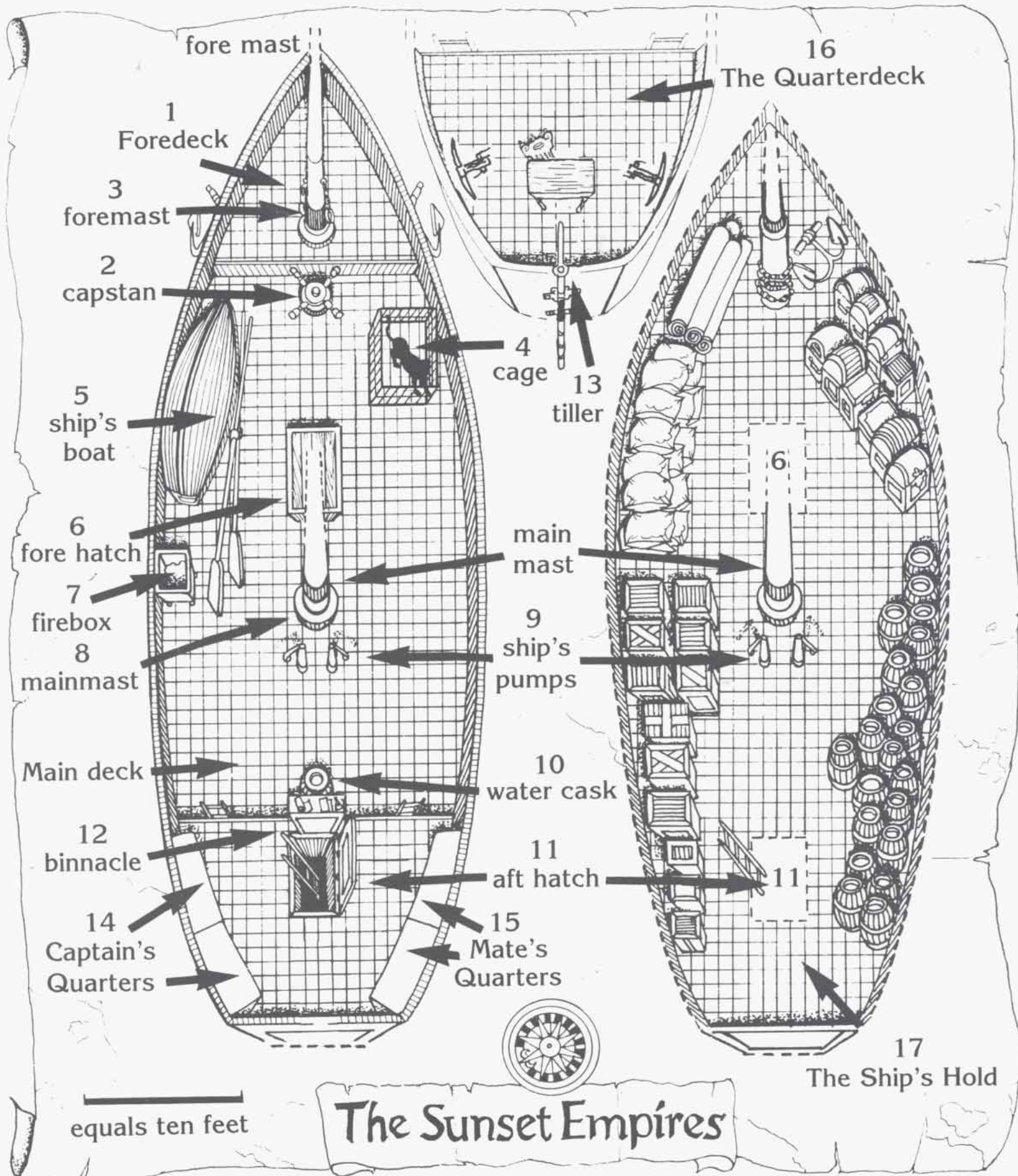
2. Capstan. This rotating pole is used by the sailors to wind the anchor cables around, raising the anchor. The transverse poles are removable and are usually stored beneath the foredeck until needed. It requires four men to raise anchor, and only one anchor may be raised at a time.

3. Foremast. This is the most forward of the two masts. Like all the masts upon the *Sunset Empires*, it is a lateen rig (triangular sails as

opposed to square sails). A set of iron manacles, used for disciplining recalcitrant crewmen, is mounted around waist level.



THE GOOD SHIP SUNSET EMPIRES



THE GOOD SHIP *SUNSET EMPIRES*

4. Cage. One of the specialty items being carried by the *Sunset Empires* on this trip is a female black leopard, supposedly en route to some collector with a private hunting park. The cage is relatively small and the leopard foul-tempered. Any who get within six inches of the cage stand the risk of a swipe of the leopard's paw (the cage is double-barred, so that the beast cannot force her head through them to bite). The cage is unlocked, secured by a simple latch and bolt.

Black Leopard (Cat, Great): AC 6; MV 15; HD 3+2; hp 20; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1d3/1d3/1d6 (claw/claw/bite); SA leap (20' up or 25' ahead, -3 penalty to opponents' surprise rolls), rake (if both front paws hit, can attack with rear claws for 1d4/1d4); SD rarely surprised (1-in-10 chance); SZ M (4½' long); ML average (9); Int semi (3); AL N; XP 270.

5. Ship's Boat. The ship's boat is a fifteen-foot-long launch used by the crew to row to shore for fresh water and supplies. It is stored on the main deck, hull up, next to oars, sweeps (particularly long oars used to propel the *Sunset Empires* in dead-calm waters), and spare spars.

6. Fore Hatch. One of two entrances to the stores in the belly of the ship. Both hatches are covered with fitted planks. These planks can be removed to allow men and supplies to pass below.

7. Firebox. Located amidships, this small copper box on stout wooden legs is used to hold the ship's fire. Hence, this is the site for cooking the evening meal (usually fish, or smoked meat at least once a week, supplemented by hardtack). The fire is normally kept low but banked to burn continually.

8. Mainmast. This is the largest of the two masts and is topped by the crow's nest. The latter is occupied only when seeking land or if there is danger of piracy, as it allows the best viewpoint.

9. Ship's Pumps. This pair of wooden pumps with iron handles is used to bail water shipped in the bilge (usually a duty of the morning watch). These pumps are insufficient to bail the ship if it is holed.

10. Water Cask. This keg is lashed to the supports

of the quarterdeck; it supplies the daily need of fresh water for the crew.

11. Aft Hatch. Similar to the forward hatch. The area directly below contains the food and water stores of the ship.

12. Binnacle. Here the compass stand is kept, along with the astrolabe, ship's logbook, and pilot books (books describing the nearby shores including shoals and reefs). A crewman is always stationed here to mark course corrections on a slate and to mark the time with an hourglass.

13. Tiller. A long pole fastened directly to the ship's rudder and manned by the helmsman. In rough weather, multiple crewmen may be required. Much of the bulk steering is done by shipping the sails, but the tiller aids in finer navigation.

14. Captain's Quarters. The only individuals on board ship that rate their own sleeping quarters are the captain and first mate. The rest of the crew (and passengers) are expected to sleep where they can, which usually means on the open deck in calm weather and beneath the quarterdeck in hammocks or among the stores in choppy seas. In the midst of a tempest, no one sleeps.

Cramped and stuffy, this low room is dominated by a coffin-like bed and several barrels from whence the good captain replenishes his flask.

15. Mate's Quarters. This small room is identical to the captain's quarters, except that the furnishings are even more spartan (no barrels here) and painfully neat.

16. The Quarterdeck. The quarterdeck is a raised deck in the stern, above the binnacle and tiller. It is the preserve of the captain, his officers, and any passengers permitted by the captain. The deck is sparse and open, containing a table and chair for the captain himself. A pair of light ballistae are mounted at the forward corners. These ballistae are usually shipped along the side unless trouble presents itself; they can be assembled and loaded in 3 rounds.

17. The Ship's Hold. Below decks lies one huge hold running the length of the ship. Cargo and supplies are stored here. Everything is packed atop

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loose planking, to keep it dry from the water in the bilge directly beneath (ships of the era are not completely watertight, and daily pumping is needed to keep the caravel from shipping too much water). Among the supplies on the ship are firewood for the firebox, canvas (additional sails) and tack (rope), a spare light ballista (disassembled), 10 tons of rice in bags, dried fruits and meat for the crew, fresh water in casks (sufficient for 30 days for the full crew), a third anchor, and ten sea-chests filled with silk and other fine fabric.

The area marked by the dotted line contains casks of water. However, after the ship is wrecked on the shoals, this area will be underwater and becomes the lair of the soul-kraken.

The Crew

Captain Stewart, 2nd-level human Sea Captain: AC 8 (leather armor); MV 12; hp 14; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (short sword) or 1d6 (belaying

pin); SZ M (5' 9"); AL LN; XP 65. Str 15, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Captain Eli Stewart is a gray-haired, slightly stooped ship's captain with two personalities—one while on the land, and a second while at sea. On the land he is civil and humorous, if a bit gruff, but once at sea he becomes a harsh, drunken, bad-tempered, foul-mouthed petty tyrant who demands instant obedience. He can normally be found on the quarterdeck, if not sleeping off his latest drunken tirade. Any player characters who have volunteered to help with the crew during the voyage will find that he treats them as badly as the rest. Any passenger who disagrees with him will find himself or herself banned from the quarterdeck and locked in the hold by the crew if need be.

Captain Stewart has little truck with adventurers in general and notes that often they're bad luck, causing perfectly good ships to sink without warning. As such he'll be wary of adventurers fooling with anything on his ship. He has a particular hatred of wizards, priests,

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and other spellcasters, and any who use spells on him or his crew will be particularly subjected to his rage.

A typical quote from Captain Stewart (once at sea): "Get the hades off my deck, you pus-bleedings, blood-tainted son of baatezu. I've seen open sores with more brains than you lot of sun-baked layabouts! I'll see you at the gates of Baator before I put up with such a shiftless bunch of lame-legged wasters."

Mr. Monterey, 5th-level half-elven Thief: AC 7 (leather armor, Dexterity bonus); MV 12; hp 17; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (short sword) or 1d6 (belaying pin); SZ M (5' 6"); AL LN; XP 175. Str 13, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 15. Thief Abilities: Pick Pockets (20%); Open Locks (5%); Find & Remove Traps (65%); Move Silently (85%); Hide in Shadows (65%); Detect Noise (20%); Climb Walls (90%).

Monterey is Captain's Stewart's first mate, a cold, calculating creature loyal to his captain as a dog is to his master. He will listen to complaints about the captain dispassionately, offer advice to tolerate the ship's master, but never commit to doing anything on a passenger's behalf. He will kill, if need be, to keep the captain and ship safe.

Mr. Monterey is a one-eyed half-elf with long blonde hair worn in a single braid down his back. He often has a sardonic grin on his face, except when dealing with his captain—then it becomes a stern visage, ready to deal out the captain's orders. He can be found either on the quarterdeck with the captain or at the binnacle. He has a bunk but rarely seems to sleep.

A typical quote from Mr. Monterey: "I would advise you to weather the captain's storms. It would be imprudent to do otherwise."

Old Singe, 0-level human Cook: AC 10 (no armor); MV 12; hp 8; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3 (knife) or 1d6 (frying pan); SZ M (5' 4"); AL LN; XP 15. Str 12, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 11.

The ship's cook, Singe works with the rest of the crew except at mealtimes, when he is crouched over the firebox, cooking fish or making a simple stew from the dried meats and vegetables provided. An obese, smiling man of

middling years, he tolerates both Stewart and Monterey and is well-liked by the crew. If there is any dissent among the crew, Singe quietly relays the matter to his captain immediately. The three of them once put down a potential mutiny by poisoning the entire crew with dinner, shoving the bodies overboard, and limping back to shore.

Singe also has a vivid imagination and ability to tell stories. Unfortunately, most of the stories he knows involve sailors who come to a bad end by disobeying their superiors, and his descriptions can cut down on people asking for seconds at mealtime.

A typical quote from Singe: "Now Sparky, he was the fine cut of a man, until he jumped overboard to get rid of the fleas, against Captain's orders, mind you. He heard us shout the warning as we saw the fins break the water, and he reached the ship and had one hand around the rope when the sharks finally reached him. But we were too slow hoisting him aboard, and the hand was all that we could salvage. But he was a fine cut of a man, indeed. More stew?"

The Rest of the Crew

Crew members, 0-level human Sailors (17): AC 10 (no armor); MV 12; hp 6 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3 (knife) or 1d6 (belaying pin); SZ M; ML steady (12); AL N; XP 15.

The remaining 17 members of the crew are typical sailors—grim, gruff, and expendable. They have sailed with Captain Stewart before and are used to his moods and relatively content with their lot. Their purpose is to enforce the captain's orders and to die spectacularly at the hands of the soul kraken and later the inhabitants of Markov's isle.

What follows is a listing of names and single characteristics which the DM can use to give these NPCs a touch of life and make their inevitable deaths something that might stick in the players' minds. The crew can either be all-male, all-female, or a mix of male and female sailors, as the DM pleases.

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Name	Characteristic
Agar	Always wears a striped knit cap
Bill	Sword scar across cheek
Curtis	Extremely strong (Str 18)
Dirk	Pockmarked face from disease
Gondal	Religious—wears heavy holy symbol around neck, quotes scripture
Homer	Bald—skin on head peels continually. Extremely polite
Jake	Sharkbite scar on arm.
Jeb	Numerous tattoos
Jonny	Missing front teeth
Lucky	Two fingers on left hand
Luke	Missing right ear
Marson	Numerous earrings in left ear
Pintsize	A member of the halfling persuasion
Shanty	Plays the squeeze-box
Slim	Tallest crewman
Snake	Shifty expression, snake tattoo on wrist
Little Thor	Long blonde hair, worn free.

Life Under Sail

The wind catches in the *Sunset Empires'* sails, and the ship makes for the open sea. The sky is a crystal blue, and the ocean a swirling mass of dark greens topped by white foam—as dark as the starry evening, and just as deep.

Captain Stewart hoists a silver flask to the sky and bellows “Here’s to good wind and a strong current!” Spirits are high as the crew bend to their work.

There will be four days between when the *Sunset Empires* leaves port and when it is overtaken by the storm. There are a few encounters the DM may throw in while waiting for the inevitable.

The First Dinner

As the sun starts to wester, one of the crewmen, a portly man with a toothy smile, tends the firebox, building up a low fire. After fetching some vegetables and a bit of jerky, he begins to cook. After about a half-hour, he bellows “Supper!” at the top of his lungs.

The crewman is Old Singe, and supper is one of the two meals of the day (the other being hardtack for breakfast). The crew queues up immediately, and most will try to cut in front of the adventurers.

Shoving (at the least) will result from this, and the heroes have the choice of taking it (and being served last) or shoving back. A pushing duel will evolve with one of the crewmen, though no weapons will be drawn. Should this situation develop, the captain will be there in a moment, flanked by Mr. Monterey.

The captain will always side with his crew, telling the adventurers in no uncertain terms that the working members of this ship get fed first, and the nonproductive passengers will get the rest. The players will note that the captain has been drinking from his silver flask during most of the day and is already red-faced and angry-looking.

Further, the captain informs them, if they have any problem with the way he runs his ship, they are welcome to swim back to shore. With that, he stomps back up to his quarterdeck, Mr. Monterey in his wake.

“Don’t worry,” Old Singe will say with a wink, “There’s enough for everyone.” And indeed there is, though the adventurers’ portion is a single ladle of mostly gravy and a half-biscuit of hardtack.

This will be the first warning for the player characters that all may not be well on the *Sunset Empires*. From here on the captain will spend most of his time on the quarterdeck, yelling orders and swilling from his silver flask.

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Teasing the Leopard

On the second day out, any player characters on deck witness the following:

Near the bow there is a cage containing a large black leopard, with barely enough room for the beast to turn around. The creature is bad-tempered and looks starved. One of the crewmen, in a striped knit cap, is teasing the cat, poking it with a bit of driftwood. The cat snarls and bites at the wood, trying to force its paws through the cage, but the bars are too close together. A few of the other crewmen are pointing and laughing.

Should the player characters do nothing, the captain will appear in a few minutes and bellow everyone back to work. The crewman (Agarn) will not be punished, or even warned, about teasing the great cat.

Should the heroes try to stop the crewman, he glares at them, and tells them it's none of their business if he has a bit of fun. Captain Stewart will appear again, beet-red and half-drunk. He warns the player characters not to interfere with his crewmen and yells at the rest of the crew to get back to work. If the heroes attempt to make their case known to him, he snarls "I get paid to haul the animal, same as I get paid to haul you lot. Were it up to me, I'd dump both you and it, cage and all." And with that he stomps back to his station.

Adventurers trying to reason with the captain will find him ranging between sullen bouts of depression and wild-eyed rage. Mr. Monterey would recommend, if the player characters ask, that the best way to spend the voyage is out of the captain's way.

As for Agarn, he'll be back in a few hours teasing the black leopard again and get a nasty (2 hp) scratch on the arm for his trouble. The wound will be bound up messily by Old Singe. Should the adventurers heal the sailor, they will get yet another chewing out by the captain (on why priests are bad luck on ships) and warned to stay clear. Agarn will grunt something that sounds like "thanks" but not look the heroes in the eye.

The Shanty

That evening the wind dies and the sails are furled. The sea is smooth, and the moon(s) rise, bathing the deck in a tranquil light. One of the crewmen (Shanty) pulls out a squeeze box (small accordion) and starts playing.

Shanty plays a number of songs that evening, from pure instrumentals (which sound like an asthmatic dragon's breathing) to rounds and folk songs. One that the player characters have not heard before is a love-song of lovers reunited after death.

Not all DMs are comfortable singing before their players. For that reason, a summary is provided, in addition to the words of the song. The DM is free to make up his or her own tune with these words—remember, it's not supposed to rhyme well, and it's being sung by a sailor and not a very talented one at that.

The song tells of a pair of young lovers, a young sailor and his girlfriend. They pledge to never part, and the boy sails off. His ship founders on the shoals, and he is lost overboard. The girl is heartbroken but in time finds another and plans to marry. The night before the wedding, she is visited in her room by the dead form of her lost lover, his flesh chewed by the fishes and his ragged clothes draped with seaweed. He embraces her and drags her back into the sea, so they are united in death. The morale, according to the singer, is never promise your love to a sailor, for they always keep their word.

The other sailors are impressed with the song, and there is a moment of silence. A shadow seems to pass before the moon, and it grows cold on the ship's deck. Then Shanty launches into another long, wheezing medley and the mood passes.

Dolphins

On the third day, dolphins appear alongside the ship, jumping in the surf of the ship's wake. The crewmen point and laugh. Mr. Monterey, however, unlimbers the ballista on the quarterdeck and calmly, emotionlessly fires a bolt at one of the dolphins. He misses (the DM may roll a die for this), reloads, misses again, and reloads a third time. The third shot will miss as well but the dolphins will take the hint and be driven off.

The adventurers can interrupt in Mr. Monterey's sport any time they wish, by pushing him aside or

THE GOOD SHIP SUNSET EMPIRES

There once was a maiden
Who loved a young sailor
She loved him and hugged him and
promised to wed
They vowed they would marry
When next he would tarry
They vowed they would marry,
at least that's what she said.

But the lad was a sailor
And left his young maiden
He loved her and hugged her and
left her behind
Down in the south ocean
On shoals they did founder,
He fell from the rigging and
there he did die.

And so the young maiden
She watched for her sailor
The years passed by her and
she forgot her vow
She met another
And promised she'd marry
She forgot her sailor who'd
died long ago.

The eve of the wedding
She had a strange vis'tor
He smelt of the sea and was
draped with the weeds
His flesh was all rotted
For it was her sailor
Come back for his maiden
in word and in deed.

The maiden was frightened
But he did console her
He hugged her and loved her
and dragged her below
The sea is their home now
They both are together
The sailor and maiden who
made their great vow.

taking stronger measures (the dolphins will still dive soon afterwards). This will gain a glowing rebuke from Captain Stewart and get the adventurers banned from the quarterdeck entirely. There are two days left before landfall, and he'll be glad to get rid of the lot of them.

Given the situation, it is possible that Mr. Monterey may be harmed by a player character. Striking a ship's officer while at sea is equivalent to an act of mutiny. Should an altercation occur, some fast-talking and groveling is required to prevent the individual responsible from being slapped in irons mounted to the foremast, near the leopard's cage.

Should the situation go from bad to worse, the heroes find every hand in the ship raised against them. All aboard are loyal to Captain Stewart, and only his death, and the deaths of Mr. Monterey, Old Singe, and about half the crew will cause the remaining crew members to surrender.

If defeated, the characters will be confined below decks, with the ringleader (as chosen by Captain Stewart) chained to the mast. This is where they will be when the storm hits.

The Storm Gathers

On the morning of the fourth day, the adventurers wake to the following:

The dawn breaks over a changing sea. The water has turned murky and sloshes in high whitecaps, as high as the deck of the ship itself. The *Sunset Empires* pitches with the sea, rocking with an ever-growing momentum.

Along the horizon, dark clouds are gathering like a line of orcish soldiers. Within the clouds, lightning flashes in an erratic staccato. A massive storm is bearing down on your ship.

Captain Stewart (if he's still around) bellows an order, and the sheets are unfurled in the face of the strong wind. He intends to run before the storm and ride it out. Should any of the adventurers still be on speaking terms with them, he pulls out a map and shows that they can reach a small island not far away. If they can reach the lee side, away from the wind, they can weather this bluster with no difficulty.

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Otherwise, Stewart will order the player characters to get below, or at least out of the way. Mr. Monterey recommends they stay near the binnacle beneath the quarterdeck. Should the adventurers be in irons or otherwise confined, nothing will be done on their behalf.

Read the following to the players:

The wind catches in the sails, and the masts themselves groan from the strength of the increasing wind. Already it is impossible to be heard above a shout. The sea is rough, now, throwing up a fine misty spray all around you, reducing visibility to a few feet at best.

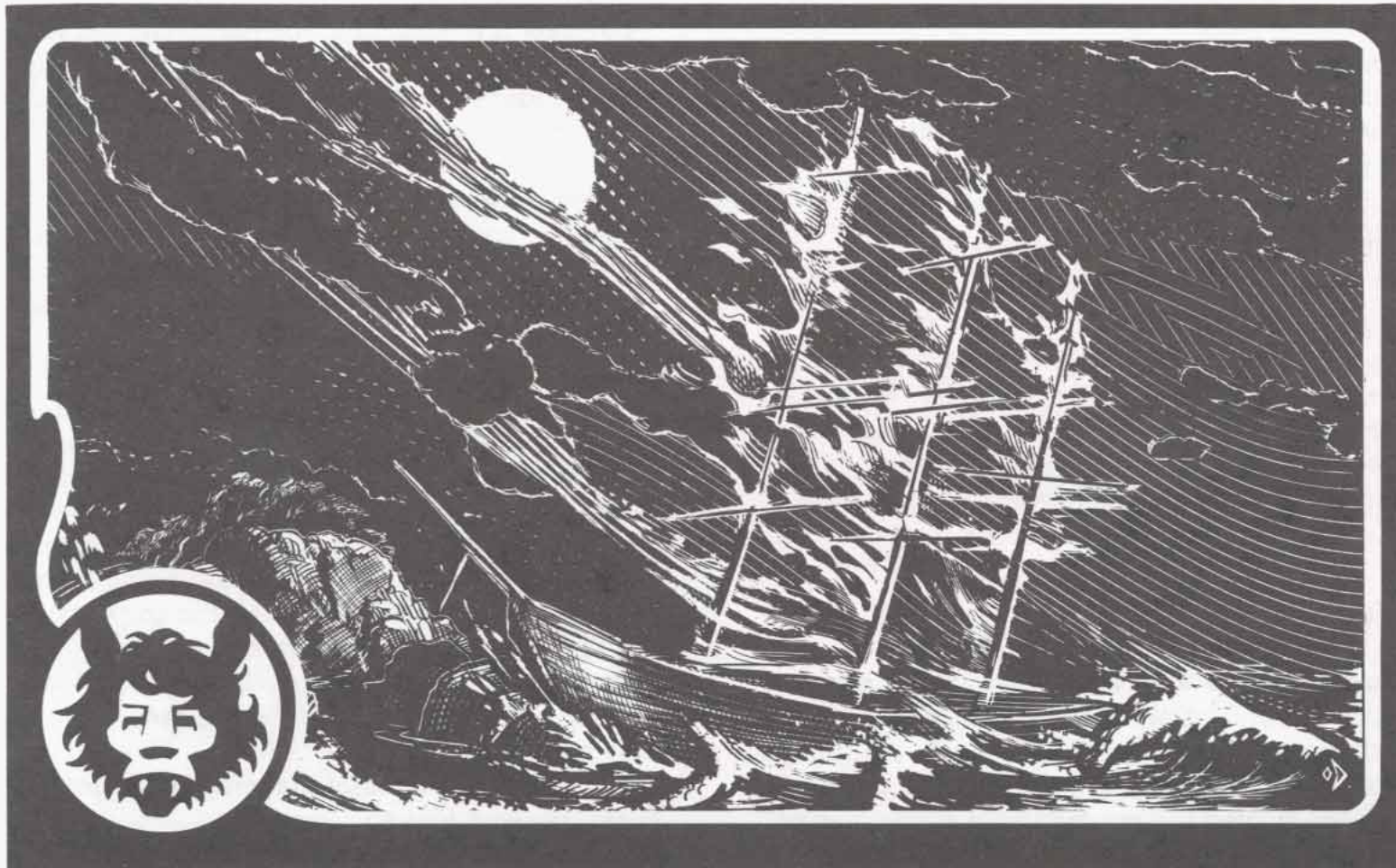
Behind you, you see the leading front of the storm, illuminated by bright flashes of lightning. It looks like a wall of solid water bearing down on the ship. It hangs in the air for a moment, then falls upon you, drenching everyone in a torrent of water.

With the rising of the spray (*Mists*) and the first wave of water, the *Sunset Empires* enters Ravenloft.

The Storm Breaks

With the entrance into Ravenloft, on the Sea of Sorrows, the storm grows worse. The DM should play out the confusion, the bellowed orders, the sense of desperation in the crew. The following suggestions might help put the players on edge and make them fearful for their characters' safety:

- A crewman falls from the rigging into the sea and is lost. The adventures have time to hear his scream, and perhaps see his body fall past, but that is all; rescue is quite impossible.
- The leopard's cage shakes loose from its mooring, and starts banging back and forth in the high wind.
- Shouts come from below that the holds are flooding with water (alternately, if the characters are below, they notice the water rising). The captain orders two of the adventurers to man the pumps, with the threat that he'll feast on their intestines if they let up for a moment.



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- One adventurer sees a ghostly sight. The adventurer should be on deck and able to see overboard. Take that character's player aside and read him or her the following:

The rain parts for a half-instant, and in the break you can see a second ship, a large privateer, rigged out to run with the storm as well. Its sails are in tatters, and you can hear the inhuman bellowing of its captain. The ship seems to veer towards you as you watch. As it seems about to ram your ship it suddenly veers and begins to fade, as if being washed away by the rain. The name on the ship's bow is the *Relentless*.

The *Relentless* is a kind of grim welcome wagon for the Sea of Sorrows. See the *Domains and Denizens* book in the RAVENLOFT box for more information. Any sailor who sees it or hears that it has been sighted will cry out that it is an omen of their doom.

- Ball lightning dances among the masts, tearing holes in the sails. The sails begin to shred under the blasts of wind.
- A huge wave breaks over the side of the *Sunset Empires*. All on deck must make a Dexterity ability check or be washed overboard. Wash a few crewmen away, but leave Old Singe and Mr. Monterey. Now is a good time to have the captain washed off the deck, screaming as he falls to his death in a frothing sea.
If a player character is washed overboard, go to the Drowning section on page 16.
- The foremast snaps about two-thirds of the way up. Those between that mast and the mainmast must make a saving throw vs. breath weapon or take 1d10 damage from the falling yardarm and sails. Any individual in irons is freed at this time.
- The firebox bounces loose, spilling hot coals everywhere (for 1 round, 1d4 damage to those within 10 feet).
- The leopard's cage breaks open, freeing the beast. This is probably not good news for any adventurer manacled to the mast. The wet cat will try to scramble down into the hold for safety, but if stopped it will be washed overboard with a forlorn yowl in the next wave.
- Again, another break in the weather, and anyone near the bow can see a great island ahead, green and bathed in sunlight. The vision fades almost as soon as it appears, leaving the heroes to deal with the ever-worsening storm.

Ask players for what their characters are doing. In truth, there is little they can do. The blinding rain will spoil any spellcasting and force the caster to make a Dexterity check to avoid being washed overboard. Keep throwing new problems at them, one after another, without giving them time to think. Attempts to break the ship's boat free fail; the rain-soaked lashing cannot be untied. If the moorings are cut, the boat is torn away by the waves and lost before they can launch it.

And when it seems that matters cannot get worse, the soul-kraken attacks.

THE GOOD SHIP SUNSET EMPIRES

The Soul-Kraken

The soul-kraken is a denizen of the Sea of Sorrows that preys on the ships that pass along its surface, drawn by evil, petty men.

Soul-Kraken: AC 2 (body) or 6 (tentacles); MV swim 3, jet 21; HD 20; hp 105; THACO 1; #AT 10; Dmg 1d10 + paralysis x10 (constriction); SZ G (70' long); Int average (10); AL NE; XP 13,000.

The soul-kraken is a great, ghostly squid-like creature with a translucent shell and mantle and ten tentacles. Each tentacle ends with a large gripping tendril, and the soul-kraken mounts the heads of its recent prizes at these ends. At the moment, it has been a long time since feedings, so bare, naked skulls are mounted at the end of its tentacles. Each tentacle has 10 hp in addition to the hit point total of the creature itself.

Anyone on deck at the time of the kraken's attack will see a large number of tentacles arching over the sides, each ending in a human skull. Only those peering overboard will dimly see the body of the beast itself. The snakelike tentacles try to wrap around the nearest available crewmen and drag them beneath the waves. Prey is drowned, then consumed. The soul-kraken feeds off both the victim's body and his or her memories.

Run the kraken encounter quickly, not worrying whether it strikes a crewman or not—if it attacks a crewman, then it drags the individual to a watery death the next round. Use the quick descriptions to describe the individuals taken—they will be seen again later in the adventure. Here is a good place to kill off the first mate.

Should the kraken target a player (roll randomly to see which of the available targets on the deck it strikes), then run the combat normally, putting pressure on the player to make decisions on what to do as quickly as possible. If injured, a tentacle drops its prey and retreats back overboard.

Should the characters be hiding in the hold, the water is starting to flow in at an ever-quickening rate. The kraken, should it lack other targets on the deck, will snake its tentacles into the hold looking for more prey.

The kraken will attack until one of the following conditions is met:

- It has claimed 10 victims, one for each tentacle.
- Five of its tentacles are damaged, at which point it retreats.
- The fourth round of combat ends. At this point the kraken breaks off its attack and retreats beneath the waves.

The fifth round is when the *Sunset Empires* strikes the shoals.

The Wreck of the Sunset Empires

The round after the kraken breaks off its attack, read the following to the players of surviving characters:

The entire ship shudders as if struck by a giant, pitching everyone forward. The quarterdeck slides halfway off the ship, the mainmast snaps under the force of the blow, and there is the bone-rattling sound of stone smashing through wood.

The *Sunset Empires* has run aground.

Everyone on deck must make a Dexterity check, at a +10 penalty to the roll, or be washed overboard. Any surviving sailors automatically fail their roles and are swept away by the waves. Each round thereafter, any survivors on deck must make a fresh Dexterity check at a +3 penalty or be washed overboard by the merciless pummeling of the waves. It is only a matter of time—the ship is breaking up.

Anyone below deck is confronted with an equally serious problem—the entire starboard (right) side of the ship has been ripped away by the shoals, and sharp-toothed rocks are tearing against the ship like a rip saw. The characters trapped in the hold may escape by allowing themselves to be carried along by the ever-surging sea, or they may retreat upwards, onto the deck, where they will be washed away.

It should be noted that this is a “lose/lose” situation—eventually every character will be washed overboard and threatened with drowning.

THE GOOD SHIP SUNSET EMPIRES

As each sinks to an apparent watery demise, pull that character's player aside and read him or her the Drowning section following.

The purpose of this nasty little encounter is to underscore the danger the players are in, and to show them that nature can be merciless. Equally merciless, for that matter, can be Ravenloft.

Drowning in the Sea of Sorrows

Players whose characters are washed overboard by the storm (including those who escape the grip of the soul-kraken after being dragged overboard) will survive but be badly damaged in the process. The character will be out of play until the beginning of the next chapter, when all the heroes wake up on the beach. Let them worry for a while.

As each character is washed overboard, pull that player aside and read him or her the following.



You plunge into the cold water, your body stunned by the shock of the immersion. The surge of the ocean pulls you beneath the surface, spinning you in the darkness of its uncaring womb. You are bounced among underwater rocks and boulders, unsure which way is even up.

The dead form of a sailor passes by—eyes glassy and mouth open, trailing bubbles. The water is on all sides of you, pressing to break into your lungs, which ache with the mounting passion to breath. It gets darker still, and small points of light dance at the fringes of your vision. You feel the air leak out of your body in a string of pearl-like bubbles.

Before the darkness closes entirely on you, a vision approaches. A face, human and female. Coming nearer. Smiling.

And then everything goes black.

As a final note, there will possibly be some joker who has a *ring of water breathing* or some similar device, who laughs at the idea of dangerous ocean travel, since he or she cannot drown.

Alas, such a character is far from safe. True, he or she can breath water, but with irresistible force the swirling waves smash the character against the shoals and boulders that wrecked the ship. Each round the character must attempt a saving throw vs. spell to avoid being smashed into the rocks by the tides and waves, suffering 1d6 points of damage on each failed save. When the character is reduced to 0 hp or below, read the boxed text above.

Finally, there may be individuals who, through sheer determination, luck, and magic, manage to weather the storm still on board the ship. Should this be the case, fine. They will awaken on board the wreck in the next chapter, bruised and battered, not far from the unconscious bodies of their friends on the beach. Alas, such characters have to deal with the soul-kraken in the hold immediately.

DR. FRAN'S ISLAND



he island of Markovia was once part of a greater land mass in the Core of Ravenloft, bordering on Tepest, Nova Vaasa, Barovia, Dorvinia, and G'Henna. With the Conjunction of the Spheres, however, the land was wrenched away from the Core and set down in the Sea of Sorrow, becoming a domain surrounded by a large, hostile domain (the Sea itself). Most of the domain's

geographical features (mountains, rivers, etc.) survived this Translation, so the island of Markovia resembles the general borders of the old inland state.

The original climate of Markovia was temperate highlands, with large stands of pines and oaks. Now that it has been transplanted into a wetter, more tropical climate, the vegetation is changing to match the new conditions. Druids and those with wilderness-related proficiencies may notice the odd mix of plants on the island. Most of the old pines have perished and are still standing, rotting upright, in large pine barrens along the island highlands. Tropical vines and creepers have already taken a foothold, their bright greens and radiant flowers contrasting with the dead-brown needles.

The oak forests have survived better, thriving in the new, wetter climate alongside newer, faster-growing tropical plants such as palms and gums. The oaks reign supreme in the island's interior lowlands, while along the coast the palms, gums, and other tropical plants have already established themselves as dominant.

Most of the human population of Markovia has died off, both from the raids of the Broken Ones, who rule the wilderness, and from the experiments of Dr. Frantisek Markov, who is now on the lookout for more human flesh to work with. The one remaining "human" settlement on the island outside of Markov's estate is the Monastery of Lost Souls, high on the southern cliffs. However, its inhabitants have sacrificed their humanity as well,

although they are unaware of the fact.

The wild oaks, the pine barrens, and the shores are all home to various animals, both domesticated creatures that have gone feral (cats, rabbits, etc.), native creatures that have adapted to the new climate, and survivors of Dr. Fran's experiments. The most dangerous encounters are with the Broken Ones, Fran's failures. Cast out to eventually perish and die, the Broken Ones are gathering under the banner of one of their own, who was not quite the failure Markov thought him to be.

Into this world comes the adventurers, shipwrecked and alone, to face the Broken Ones and Kindly Dr. Fran.

Awakening

After stopping for everyone to catch his or her breath (and perhaps start a few hearts beating as well) following the drowning scene at the end of the last chapter, read the following to the players.

The first thing you notice is the sand in your mouth—a gritty, salty taste. You spit it out, and a surprisingly large volume of sea water comes up with it.

You open your salt-caked eyes to see that you are lying, face-down, on a white-sand beach. You are near the smooth border of the high-tide mark, and seaweed curls around your wrists. Behind you the surf crashes in a calm, well-behaved pattern of falling wave followed by the hiss of the water surging up, almost reaching your ankles.

You look around, and see the bodies of your companions.

Any who were washed overboard and faced with drowning have been rescued (by Delphi and her seal-men) and dragged up on the shore as the storm passed. This should include all the player characters who were not killed outright by the soul-kraken, as well as a few (3 to 5) of the sailors. Captain Stewart and Mr. Monterey did not survive, but at the DM's discretion Old Singe is around for comic relief and a later, more gruesome death. Any players joining the festivities late, or

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players whose characters perished in the fight with the soul-kraken, can pick up one of these crewmen as a character if the DM decides it is appropriate. Otherwise, the surviving sailors will follow the adventurers' orders, if sullenly.

All the adventurers awaken around the same time. They are still wearing what they had on when they went overboard—anything held in their hands at that time is lost. The wreck of the *Sunset Empires* is perched at the opening of the lagoon, its masts toppled and its starboard side ripped to shreds. It will never sail again.

There are a few bodies which are not moving on the beach—sailors who were drowned outright and victims of the soul-kraken (including any player characters so killed). The corpses of these later victims turn out on closer examination to be badly mauled, the heads missing (the heads appear to have been twisted from their necks; the DM may call for the appropriate horror checks).

Along with the bodies (living and dead), a goodly amount of debris washed up on shore as well, including the following:

- Two intact bins of hardtack
- The shredded remains of a sail, suitable for creating a small sunscreen or lean-to
- A sea chest of silk
- A variety of driftwood and lumber
- The captain's table, formerly on the quarterdeck
- A few weapons. Magical weapons which would be otherwise lost can be among the flotsam if the DM is feeling particularly soft-hearted.

Finally, there are no signs of footprints or other movement on the beach (Delphi and her seal-men returned to the sea after the rescue).

A Tour of the Island

The large fold-out maps that come with this module show two versions of the island. One is the players' version and should be given to the players once their characters befriend Dr. Fran. As such, it represents Dr. Fran's sensibilities. The other is a DM's version of the same map, showing the true state of affairs. The DM should separate the two maps, so the players have their own



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“official” map of the isle. As the heroes enter an area, the DM should describe it based on what the characters can see. In all likelihood, the player characters should gain the map from Dr. Fran before they’ve had a chance to map out the entire island on their own.

Sunset Bay

The site of the wreck of the *Sunset Empires*, where the heroes wash ashore, is a great, wide lagoon, with sharp-toothed rocks and savage, boat-ripping shoals guarding the entrance. The beach on the inner side of the lagoon is wide white sand, and it is here that the player characters awaken after the grounding of the *Sunset Empires*.

The ship itself can be seen at the entrance of the lagoon, still upright but canted at a 15-degree angle from port to starboard. The masts have snapped off, and a very visible hole runs along a third of the port side, facing inland.

A large number of supplies can still be found on the *Sunset Empires*, and the adventurers will very likely try to retrieve them, at least once. See “Visiting the Wreck” on page 24.

The beach at Sunset Bay is a wide expanse of white sand running up about 20 feet before becoming lost in a treeline of palms and gum trees. There are numerous tropical birds flitting about in the brush, and the air is alive with their calls. These birds suddenly fall silent whenever there are Broken Ones in the vicinity.

To the north, the players can see the first of the Great Stone Men.

The Great Stone Men

The northern coast of the island is littered with the half-buried statues of giants. These appeared only with the Translation of Markovia to its present location, and remain a mystery.

Only the heads, arms, and bare shoulders of the Great Stone Men jut above the sandy soil. They seem either to be reaching for some unseen and unattainable object or struggling to avoid being pulled beneath the earth. Their faces, male and female, are twisted in agony, straining muscles clearly etched on their faces and upper limbs. Several are half-drowned by the waves and look like dying men and women cast in stone. The

jungle is just beginning to cover them with vines and creepers.

The Great Stone Men have no special effect or ability (unless the DM would like to add one). Their presence here is intended, in game terms, to throw any “Ravenloft experts” off the scent, as these great colossi have no previous appearance in the various texts. They are here as a red herring: an insolvable mystery unrelated to the main plot.

The heroes may choose to make their home at the base of these huge statues—an excellent choice, for the Broken Ones avoid this area.

Abandoned Villages

Each of the locations presented represents an abandoned village, devoid of human life. The original inhabitants have either fled or were slain by the Broken Ones or Dr. Fran.

Each village consists of 10 to 20 buildings, all with stone foundations and now-rotting upper structures. The buildings look more suitable for some cold, upland climate than the island’s current tropical climate. The slate roofs have fallen in, the unprotected wood has rotted to worm-ridden fragments, and the stones themselves are being torn apart by fast-growing creepers.

The adventurers may examine the buildings at their own peril—the DM may call for a Dexterity check once per individual per building to avoid falling through the floor or blundering into a support and bringing the roof down on top of the heroes (for 1d6 points of damage; 2d6 if a two-story building).

Most of the buildings have been looted by Broken Ones, and their contents despoiled. There is no food in the area which is not rotted, no weapons which are unruined, no books which have not been reduced to the consistency of soggy mush. If the heroes have a determined idea of searching these ruined villages, roll once on the following table per village.

The old villages are still prowled by Broken Ones, some of whom were once inhabitants of these buildings. Their minds are gone, but their desire to protect their property remains, and they attack any trespassers they find. There is a 10% chance per day of an encounter in a village with 1d6 Broken Ones.

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- 1d10 Item**
- 1 Silver weapon (dagger or short sword).
 - 2 Rotted painting or semi-destroyed statue. Much is lost but what remains shows a man-headed tiger savaging a villager. The tiger's face looks remarkably like that of Dr. Fran.
 - 3 A pouch of 1d10 gold pieces, minted in Nova Vaasa.
 - 4 A child's doll, its arms torn off.
 - 5 An unmarked vial of poison (type B).
 - 6 A torn card from the Taroka deck ("The Beast").
 - 7 A nonmagical ring, with the mummified finger still in it.
 - 8 A small cask of wine, good vintage.
 - 9 A string of garlic. The garlic has sprouted in the moist air.
 - 10 A locket with the symbol of the Order of the Guardians in it.

Dr. Fran's Estate

The kindly Dr. Fran has made his home far inland, on a well-kept estate overlooking one of the island's rivers. The estate consists of an interlocked series of main buildings and a separate guest hut, the entire complex surrounded by a low wooden palisade.

Dr. Fran's Manor is described in the chapter of the same name.

Monastery of Lost Souls

High on the cliffs of the southern side of the island is the only other current human habitation, a monastery of the Order of the Guardians. This order of monks believe in shielding the world from dangerous artifacts and truths. The monastery is situated on what was once the flanks of Mt. Baratak but is now a storm-washed cliff face.

The Monastery of Lost Souls is described in full in the chapter of the same name.

The Ruined Monastery

On the northern side of the island is another monastery of the Order of the Guardians, this one abandoned and in ruins. A now-crumbling wall surrounded a temple and keep, and the main gates hang open like a cavernous maw. An overgrown,

weed-choked road (discernible as such only in the last hundred yards) leads to its gates.

This monastery was once the home of another group of the Order of the Guardians, who were entrusted to guard a tapestry of magical and malicious weave. The tale of this enchanted tapestry, which takes place before the Translation of Markovia, is told in the novel *Tapestry of Dark Souls* by Elaine Bergstrom and describes Markovia in times which were neither darker nor lighter than today, only different.

The walls of the monastery jut like erratic teeth. While they will protect those within from random nightly encounters (making it a suitable base of operations), they cannot withstand a determined assault of Broken Ones. The stone buildings of the monastery have weathered better than those of the villages and make suitable quarters.

The monastery was swept clean by the surviving brethren when they abandoned it, and even the symbols of the order have been removed, leaving only oval frames where the pictures once hung.

Lairs of the Broken Ones

The chief inhabitants of the island are now Broken Ones, the twisted results of Dr. Fran's experiments. Only three of the creatures have been judged by Dr. Fran to be of suitable quality to remain with him—the rest have been turned out to the wilderness to revert to their natural states or to die as the effects of Dr. Fran's treatments subside.

Many of these Broken Ones have banded together in small communities, usually led by the strongest member of the group. In the past they have hunted each other as well as wild game and their devolved brethren, but under the leadership of Akanga (see below) they have started to unify into a single operation.

A typical Broken One village consists of a collection of 2 to 5 (1d4+1) huts, little more than conical lash-ups that bear a strong resemblance to the large roof over Dr. Fran's lab. There will be 10 to 60 (10x1d6) Broken Ones in the community (choose from the sample types listed in the box on pages 21–22).

The only Greater Broken One on the island, apart from Dr. Fran's three companions, is Akanga—in consolidating his power he has shown no qualms in killing any who resist his power.

The Broken Ones: A quick guide

Broken One (Common): AC 7 (hide armor) or 10; MV 9; HD 3; hp 18 each; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (claws) or 1d6 (club); SD regenerate 1 hp per round, stamina (minimum 5 hp per HD); SZ S to L; ML unsteady (7), steady (12) in presence of Akanga; Int low (5); AL NE; XP 175 each. Each Broken One has a special ability derived from its animal half (night vision, keen hearing, a superior sense of smell, and the like).

The Broken Ones of the island are the results of Dr. Fran's experiments and are considered failures by the good doctor—they have not sufficiently shed their animal side to demonstrate a proper method for his own redemption. He has turned them out and left them to fend for themselves and prey on each other.

Each of the Broken Ones is a merger of man and beast, members of one group surgically twisted and infused with abilities of the others. With the dearth of human subjects, Dr. Fran has been concentrating on modifying existing beasts, often catching a devolved former subject and restoring his or her unnatural status. Currently, the good doctor is looking for "new blood."

All Broken Ones have the ability to speak, though this is limited in part by mouths not naturally shaped for the task. Also, their handle on the common language is marred by a tendency to slide into other methods of communication. As a result, much of Broken One speech is nonintelligible.

When role-playing Broken Ones, stress their inhuman nature—humped shoulders, dragging knuckles, constant scratching, speech interrupted by grunts and slurred by tusks and fangs. For large groups of Broken Ones, the original stock is less important, but in one-on-one situations use any of the following suggestions for Broken Ones.

Bat Broken One—One of the more twisted and numerous of the Broken Ones, the bat Broken Ones are halfling-sized creatures with huge ears facing outwards, beady eyes, and teeth like sharp pegs. They have lost their ability to fly but can glide short distances when leaping out of

trees due to cloak-like loose folds of skin along their arms and between their fingers. They chirp and chatter incessantly.

Bear Broken One—The failed experiments which led to Orson, the bear breed is slow-moving and morose, spending much of the time staring into space and chanting unknown hymns to a forgotten god. If attacked (or otherwise roused), they are deadly fighters, and inflict 1d8 damage instead of the usual 1d6. There are at least two bear Broken Ones in every encampment.

Boar Broken One—Boars, wild pigs, and domesticated swine form the basis of one of the main groups of Broken Ones. They are twisted, slouched humanoids with tusk-like teeth jutting at all angles.

Cat Broken Ones—Gnome-to-human sized, these Broken Ones derive from house cats, wildcats, leopards, and jaguars. The most independent of the Broken Ones, they are nonetheless loyal to Akanga. Others may bribe them easily with food and the warmth of a fire, but despite such tokens they will turn traitor at a moment's notice.

Deer Broken One—Skittish, nervous, and easily spooked, deer-folk have a morale of 3 unless there are other breeds around (even then they will hang back). The deer Broken Ones will flee as opposed to fight, unless there is no escape or they are under the command of Akanga, whom they fear almost as much as the Master of Pain.

Fox Broken One—Like the bat Broken One, the fox-folk are halfling-sized but lean-faced and cunning, always calculating. They often inform on the other members of the community, telling Felix (and thereby Dr. Fran) of Akanga's movements. They will be among the first to die when the revolution comes.

Goat Broken One—Another common Broken One, the goat-folk come from mountain goat stock. With silver hair, hoof-like feet, and short black horns erupting from its scalp, they look like satyrs or extra-planar creatures. Encountering a goat Broken One early on may confuse the heroes, who may assume the natives to be of demonic origin.

Gorilla Broken One—Huge, hulking, and bordering on human, there are a number of gorilla-stock among the Broken Ones, as Dr.

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Fran has made them his priority in research. They are grunting, heavy beings, only moving when ordered to by others. Their red eyes are filled with hatred for humans. In hand-to-hand combat, they inflict 1d10 points of damage instead of the usual 1d6.

Hawk Broken One—One of Markov's few non-mammalian experiments, the hawk-folk have lost their flying ability but retain their keen eyesight. Slightly shorter than human, they have a chitinous beak.

Horse Broken One—One of Dr. Fran's experiments when other breeding stock started to give out, the horse breed is broad-shouldered with long, narrow faces. They are the most dependable of the Broken Ones, their speech slow and methodical.

Monkey Broken One—Among the most creepily human of the Broken Ones, the monkey breed is about dwarf-sized, with wide, eerily wet eyes. They are the most curious of the Broken Ones and try to groom anyone they engage in conversation.

Seal Broken One—Another common Broken One, the seal-folk are found near water and swim naturally in it. They are hairless and their manner reserved—they do not like to mix with others. Several have gone out to sea, not to return. The seal-folk secretly worship Delphi and try to ensure that no harm comes to her.

Sheep Broken One—A common Broken One, easily led by others. The sheep Broken Ones have fingers like tiny hooves and large spiraling horns on either side of their faces.

Walrus Broken One—A rare Broken One; there are only one or two on the entire island. Overweight to the point of immobility, the walrus Broken One is nevertheless a smooth swimmer and will often be found close to water. He is fed by the seal-folk (in the knowledge that if not fed properly and often, he will attack them).

Wolf Broken Ones—Including wild dogs, coyotes, and former danes and hounds owned by the villagers, the wolf Broken Ones are cunning but totally loyal to their pack leader. They are easily offended and always seek to establish their superiority over others (their own leaders are already established).

The Broken Ones have an inherent fear of Dr. Fran, whom they consider a god (as they understand godhood, a god's purpose is to punish the people and remind them of their own worthless nature). Dr. Fran moved their land, Dr. Fran killed the humans, Dr. Fran captures them and reminds them of the power of his pain. Unless motivated by a greater force (Akanga), they avoid Dr. Fran when possible, fleeing at his approach.

Dr. Fran's servants are equally venerated. Orson is worshipped as the best of their breed by the other bear-folk, and Delphi by the seal-folk as a near-goddess. All fear Felix, Dr. Fran's right hand and dangerous ally.

Other humans will be considered a curiosity. If clearly aligned with Dr. Fran, they will be treated as members of the Master's household. Generally, this means that they will be feared, until the revolution, when they will be hunted.

If not aligned with Dr. Fran, the travelers are considered fresh meat, suitable for slaying. Again, this will change (but only slightly) with Akanga's revolution.

Akanga

Not all of Dr. Fran's experiments have been failures. One of his greatest successes has been a lion-man named Akanga. Akanga was such a success that he rebelled against Dr. Fran and took to the hills voluntarily, as opposed to being cast out by the Broken One's god.

Akanga (Greater Broken One of giant cat stock): AC 5; MV 9; HD 5; hp 40; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1d8/1d8 (claw/claw); SA rear claws can attack for 1d4 each if both front claw attacks hit the same target, can leap up to 25 feet horizontally or 20 feet vertically (–3 penalty to opponents' surprise rolls); SD regenerates 2 hp per round, stamina, rarely surprised (1-in-10 chance); SZ M (7' tall); ML fearless (19); Int high (14); AL NE; XP 650.

Akanga has risen from the ranks of his people to become their leader, first of a small group of Broken Ones, then of related tribes, and lastly of the island itself. He sees only one thing stands in his way of total dominance—the fear of the people of Dr. Fran, *Diosamblet*, the Lord of Pain.

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Akanga is a warped atheist in his beliefs. He believes there are no true gods and that Dr. Fran is a fraud preying on the weakness of the others. Therefore, since there are no beings truly worthy of worship, he can become as a god himself, using the same methods as Dr. Fran to dominate his fellow Broken Ones.

Akanga lives in a large village of 10 huts on the western side of the island, with about 100 of his followers. He has a personal bodyguard of two gorilla-men and uses cat-men as his personal servants (both subgroups are extremely loyal, as are Akanga's wolf-men).

Should the heroes stumble upon the village, they will be set upon by members of Akanga's group, armed with their bare hands and nets woven of vines (a lesson taught by Akanga—other Broken One groups lack this capacity). The vines will have the effect of slowing the characters thus entangled, requiring two rounds of cutting to free themselves. The Broken Ones will use this time to disarm and knock unconscious the individuals (Akanga has given orders not to kill an unknown enemy).

Should the heroes be captured and brought before Akanga, they will find him sitting on a massive throne of woven bamboo, in design similar to Dr. Fran's chair at the house. He will challenge the heroes to swear fealty to him, and him alone. If they do so, he will let them go. Henceforth, they will be treated as equals by Akanga's Broken Ones, expected to join in on the planned attack on Dr. Fran.

If they do not, he will have them released. After a ten-minute pause, a team of 15 Broken Ones will chase after them, stopping only when the heroes have reached some safe haven (the monastery, Dr. Fran's, a small boat) or killed the chasers.

If the heroes successfully kill the pursuing Broken Ones, Akanga's folk thereafter will rely on stealth and ambush, backed by large numbers. The heroes, as they move through the jungle, will be constantly aware that something out there is watching them, and solitary player characters will be ambushed when the opportunity presents itself.

The Boat House

Akanga's Broken Ones have built a stash of flotsam washed ashore at this location, including the ship's boat from the *Sunset Empires*. There is enough food and water stored here for a careful crew to reach anywhere on the coast of the Sea of Sorrows, barring other difficulties.

The adventurers may discover the boat house in a number of ways. They may discover it by accident in exploring the island or may be told of it by Delphi, who helps them escape, or by Akanga or Felix after the revolution. Should the heroes attempt to use the boat before the adventure is finished, then storm clouds should gather on the horizon; if the heroes persist in launching the boat, the sea grows rough and drives them back to land. Only once Dr. Frantisek Markov is neutralized (even temporarily) can a successful escape be made.

Adventures in Paradise

Once the characters wake up on the beach, they have a number of options available to them. The following describe the likely course of events on their first two days or so on the island, and the results. Ideally, the adventurers should encounter kindly Dr. Fran within two or three days of their arrival.

Taking Care of Basics

The first priority on the first day is to take stock of the situation and answer basic needs of food, water, and shelter, with the eventual long-term plan of escape:

- **Food**—Enough hard tack has been washed up to provide a solid (if slightly wormy) diet for a few weeks. Beyond that, player characters should consider hunting, digging clams, and gathering fruit from the jungle. This will likely bring them into contact with the Broken Ones—see “First Contact” on page 25.
- **Water**—An immediate concern, since there is no fresh water immediately apparent. The nearest river flows out of the interior a half-mile north from Sunset Bay. Once they find this stream, they will notice a well-worn path running along its side. This path eventually leads to Dr. Fran's Estate; should they immediately investigate it, go to “Meeting Dr. Fran” on page 26.

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- **Shelter**—It is possible for the adventurers to erect a suitable tent or lean-to from the remains of the sail and some driftwood, sufficient to see them through a few weeks, though not through the next storm. Locating some form of long-term, defensible shelter is therefore a priority.
- **Fire**—There is enough wood present, and characters may have either the proficiencies or the devices to start a blaze. Should they lack even flint and steel, Old Singe has a set in his pocket (if he did not survive, a flint can be found on one of the drowned or headless bodies).
- **Escape**—Building a raft (or better yet a boat) is no doubt the heroes' long-term goal, but not one that needs to be immediately addressed. In any case, building a sufficient craft would take a few weeks at least, even if they had the proper tools for the job.

Note that since the characters are in Ravenloft, a large number of magical rescues (such as a *teleport* spells, planar travel, and similar methods) will not function. Also, as noted above under the boat house description, attempts to leave by sea while the island's darklord is still effective will result in sudden storms of the type which brought them here.

Screams in the Night

Determine who is on guard for the first evening, then read the following to that character's player, beginning in a hushed voice:

The evening is quiet, and the night air clear and still. You hear a low-level of racket from the jungle—a chattering of apes and night-hunting bats and birds.

Suddenly the evening stillness is broken by a tremendous, human-sounding scream. It sounds like a condemned soul being dragged to the deepest abyss. The scream resounds along the length of the beach and chills you to the core of your being.

The jungle is deathly silent for a moment, then the sounds of the wilderness slowly return.

The scream is the cry of the black leopard from the ship, being captured by Broken Ones for their master, the Giver of Pain.

Should the characters charge off into the jungle,

in the dark (unlikely, but possible), they will find no trace of the leopard, or any other thing (though the danger of getting lost for a short time in the dark is great). See if the encounter "First Contact" (below) is suitable for this time.

Visiting the Wreck

The remains of the *Sunset Empires* can be reached by moving from wave-washed boulder to boulder, the final boulder being even with the deck. Moving carefully and slowly, characters can reach the shipwreck without incident. However, a hero in a hurry (for example, one being pursued by a soul-kraken) needs a successful Dexterity check to avoid falling into the shallow surf for 1d8 points of damage. The water is not deep here, and the shore is lined with underwater boulders and sinkholes.

However, the ship's hold is more dangerous yet, having become the lair of the soul-kraken which attacked the ship. The area which previously held the water barrels at the starboard stern has been ripped away, and the kraken makes its home there. The water is shallow enough to allow attacks against the creature's body by heroes standing in the hold.

The kraken will remain in the hold until the adventurers are on board the ship, then it attacks. Wait until as many of the heroes have boarded as intend to do so, then read the following to the players:

The waves lap softly against the sides of the ship. Most of the deck has been swept clean by the lashing of the waves, and the ship now has a ghostly, haunted quality.

Suddenly, a bloody-headed serpent spirals out of the hold, snaking its way directly at you!

The "serpent" is a tentacle of the soul-kraken, topped by the newly-severed head of one of the crewmen (use, in order of preference, a fellow player character, Captain Stewart, and Mr. Monterey). Make horror checks for those who witness the grisly scene. The soul-kraken can reach anywhere in the ship through the holds. Its tentacles will pursue those fleeing back along the rocks, especially attacking any who fall into the

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water, for about three rounds. If the creature loses all ten tentacles, it attempts to slip away into deeper water and does not return.

The heroes will find that the deck has been swept clean by the storm. The quarterdeck is half-slid off the superstructure of the boat and dangles precariously over the open water. The ship's boat, the cage, and the anchors are all missing. The bowsprit and both masts have been snapped clean off, along with the tiller. It should be quite clear that the *Sunset Empires* will never sail again.

Searching the deck, the heroes will find some of the captain's and first mate's clothes and the ship's compass, a large, bronze-bound device which had been jammed beneath one of the bunks in the storm.

The hold is completely awash, but it is possible to salvage a barrel of salted meat and a cask of rum from the ruin (the rest of the barrels have been breached or smashed and their contents ruined by the salt water). The ship itself can provide enough wood for a small dwelling or to construct a rude raft.

First Contact

Eventually the heroes will begin to explore the island itself. As long as they stay on the beach, they should be fine, but once they move into the jungle, read them the following:

You pass beneath the jungle canopy, and find the forest an odd mix of older broadleaf trees being overgrown by creepers, molds, and mosses. The jungle is oddly quiet and, once you pass out of sight of the treeline, oppressively warm.

The air is close and clammy, filled with the call of birds unknown to you. Suddenly, all the birds near you fall silent. The hairs on the back of your neck stand up as you realize you are not alone. Someone, or something, is nearby. Watching.



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The characters are under observation by one of the Broken Ones, probably a monkey-man, cat-man, or bat-man. The creature will stay out of sight and, if need be, lead any pursuers into a trap.

The Broken One remains motionless when the heroes are watching, hidden in the leafy underbrush. It moves when they move, and careful observation may reveal its presence through the swaying of nearby plants. If the characters move directly towards the Broken One, he bolts. The heroes will catch only a glimpse of what looks like a small humanoid wearing a fur cape, bounding into the depths of the wood. Should the heroes fire missile weapons after the fleeing figure, the brush provides excellent cover, giving the Broken One a -6 bonus to his Armor Class.

The chase will last for a few hundred feet. The Broken One knows the terrain very well and leads his pursuers into a deadfall trap set by Dr. Fran. The lead pursuer must make a saving throw vs. breath weapon or take 2d6 points of damage from a large tree trunk falling on him or her. Even if the save is made, the Broken One will have escaped, leaving paw-like footprints behind.

This little encounter is presented so that the heroes only get a hint that something else is on the island with them. It is possible they might be able to capture the Broken One. If this is the case, the Broken One plays dumb, pretends not to understand the language, and attempts to escape back to its village at the first opportunity.

Meeting Dr. Fran

This encounter should happen two or three days after the heroes' arrival on the island, after they have had a chance to put together a temporary shelter, explore nearby sites, and encounter the soul-kraken.

The encounter does not have to be for the entire group; in the case of large groups of adventurers, it can be sprung on a party which is exploring the woods or going for fresh water.

There is a tremendous rustling in the woods, and small saplings fall over to the right. As you watch, the trees part and out staggers a huge, malformed bear on its hind legs. Its enraged face is a mass of puffy scar tissue, and it has horns like a ram. It gives a great bellow that sounds like the horn of judgment day.

Bear-Thing (Result of Dr. Fran's Experiments): AC 6; MV 12; HD 5+5; hp 30; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1d8/1d8/1d8 (claw/claw/horns); SA hugs for 2d6 points of damage if claw attack succeeds on a roll of 18 or better; SD fights for 1d4 additional melee rounds after reduced to between 0 and -8 hp; SZ L (9' tall); ML average (8); Int semi (4); AL N; XP 420.

Give the characters a few seconds to react, draw weapons, ready spells, and the like, then read the following:

There is another crash in the woods behind the twisted bear, and a human figure barrels out of the woods. He is a massive man, almost as wide as the bear itself, dressed in legging and a billowing shirt which hangs to his knees, both of which are spattered with paint. Atop his round head is a wide-brimmed straw hat. He carries a staff of gnarled wood, topped by what looks like a horse vertebrae.

"Minxy!" the old man bellows (addressing the bear-thing, not yourself), "Don't frighten the nice people!"

The warped bear lowers itself to all fours and moves next to the old man. He scratches it behind the ears, and the creature slinks back into the woods.

"Ah!" says the huge man, "You must be the ship people. Wait here, I'll be right back"—and with that, he disappears into the forest.

The old man reappears a few moments later with a wicker basket filled with berries. "House-warming gift," he says. "Or beach warming. Whatever. It's nice to see newcomers. I'm Fran, Doctor Fran. And you are?"

The berries are succulent and ripe, and Dr. Fran does look like he has been just picking them, as his gloved hands are stained with berry juice (actually, it is to cover his own ape-hands). Dr. Fran is using a gorilla body, but this is not apparent as only his (human) head and face are visible.

Once the heroes have introduced themselves, Dr. Fran allows them to lead him back to their main camp, if they so wish it. Fran will explain that he saw the smoke from their fire a few days after the storm, and put two and two together. Should the

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player characters have refused all fire, he will merely say that he had heard from one of his “little friends” that there were visitors. If they express surprise that he has dealing with the Broken Ones, he explains that they are “like children”—dangerous when frightened, but pathetically eager to please, and that by treating their occasional injuries he has slowly won their trust.

Doctor Fran is a large man, with broad features. He has extremely slick hair, once jet-black but now going gray, and huge bushy eyebrows. He has a wide, toothy smile and eyes that are always open and always surprised (when playing Dr. Fran in character, open your eyes as far as you can, to comical effect). He now has a graying beard and mustache, an addition since the Translation of his homeland.

Doctor Fran has managed to stabilize his curse into one body for a long period of time, and currently has the form of a gorilla under his artist's smock and leggings. He walks with a rolling gate and will always wear gloves when in the presence of the heroes.

When playing Dr. Fran, the DM should reach for that traditional fantasy archetype, the dotty old wizard—a being of great power who always seems a few component short of a spellcasting. He will get names wrong, forget where he put his hat (especially when it's on his head), and talk about the weather incessantly. In other words, he will appear eccentric but essentially harmless.

This is Dr. Fran's plan, for behind his merry face he is the black-hearted darklord of Markovia. He knows about the characters from the Broken Ones who have been watching them. He seeks to use the heroes, first as his agents, then as subjects for his experimentation. He has a number of stories and explanations, and most of them are discussed in the next chapter; see “My Dinner with Dr. Fran” on page 35.

For the moment, Dr. Fran will play the doddering fool, the better to earn the trust of the player characters. He will be seemingly free with information: the DM should put the following into his or her own words, allowing it to come out in Dr. Fran's conversation with the characters. He confesses that he has lived on this island for many years. He considers himself a researcher into nature, which some might call a biologist and others wrap with mystical trapping and call a druid (he is neither). He has an estate upriver, behind a wooden palisade, safe from dangerous animals and the other inhabitants. Yes, there are

others here, but they are cursed creatures, neither

man nor beast. He studies them; the goal of his life's work is to cure their unfortunate condition. Yes, Minxy is one of them, and he's known him for years. He's a grumpy old bear, but Dr. Fran has a way with animals. Why yes, he does dabble in paints—how did they know that?

Dr. Fran invites the heroes up to the house. He says he has a guest house if they want to stay, but at the very least they should come to dinner and meet the rest of his little family. He insists, hinting that maybe they can help each other in their goals.

The full history of the being behind Dr. Fran can be found in the RAVENLOFT boxed set; suffice it to say

he is cruel, sadistic, and merciless. More information on “Dr. Fran” is found in the next chapter.



Dr. Fran (Darklord Frantisek Markov of Markovia), cursed human: AC 6 (gorilla hide); MV 12; HD 5; hp 24; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1d4/1d4 (bare hands); SA shapechange to another animal form while retaining human facial features (the statistics given here reflect his gorilla form); SD heals 2d6 points of damage with each transformation; SZ M (6' 0"); AL LE. Str 19, Dex 18, Con 16, Int 17, Wis 9, Cha 8.

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r. Fran makes his home in a rough-hewn manor constructed for him by his early experiments, the Broken Ones. It is located on a low hill, surrounded by a comfortable, treeless expanse of grass and flower and vegetable gardens.

The outer perimeter of the estate is marked by a low (7' tall) stockade—sufficient to keep most wild animals at bay, but not enough to foil a determined human or

semi-human climber. Indeed, the Broken Ones keep their distance primarily from their fear of *Diosamblet*—“The God Who Walks Among Us.”

The stockade perimeter is made of tree boles set firmly into the ground, lashed together, and sharpened to points at the uppermost end. It is broken only by a single large gate which can be barred at need. The stockade is not a full deterrent against all attacks by wild creatures, and the inhabitants do not wander the grounds at night unnecessarily.

A dirt pathway strewn with gravel begins at the gate and runs towards the front doors of the mansion, with a small side path jutting off to include the guest house. The back entrances (to the courtyard and the pantry) each have a low stoop step and a patch of dirt around them, but no path.

The timbers of the manor are well-hewn and tightly joined, impervious to tropical storms and high winds. A druid, ranger, or character with Carpentry proficiency would notice something odd about the wood should he or she examine it—the structure of the house is built of spruce, fir, and other trees normally found only at high latitudes, not in tropical climes such as these.

The roof of the manor and its outbuilding is made of thatch gathered from the surrounding grasslands, bound together in tight bundles, and interlaced over a wooden frame to provide a waterproof layer against the storm. The roof construction is obvious to those beneath it, since the wooden skeleton is visible, and objects are often hung from hooks set into these beams. Anyone expecting to cross a

thatched roof with the same agility as one made of slate tiles will be in for a surprise—a failed Dexterity check will result in the unfortunate individual stepping somewhere where there is insufficient support, sending the prowler crashing into the manor below for 2d6 points of damage (5d6 if standing atop area 6, the lab, at the time).

The exterior doors of the manor are dead-bolted at nightfall, as are the shuttered windows on the second floor of the manor and the first floor of the guest house. These windows have neither bars nor glass, proving possible entry points when left unshuttered or unlatched. Each of the five entrances to the house (foyer, main hall, pantry, and the two doors leading to the courtyard) is barred shut after dark.

Key to the Manor

Once the heroes arrive at the manor (whether in Fran's company, at his invitation, or by accident), they will find the gates closed. If invited or with Dr. Fran, they find faithful Orson waiting at the gates. Otherwise, a call quickly brings him shuffling to his post. He will let non-Broken Ones in automatically, muttering all the while.

Dr. Fran (unless already with them) will greet them in the compound and offer to give a brief tour. He points out the guest quarters (area 18) first, then enter into the main hallway (area 2).

There Felix and Delphi will be waiting. Felix carries a clipboard with the latest results from food requirements of the menagerie, while Delphi is extremely curious about the newcomers. Fran will review Felix's notes and tell him to ease off the ferret food, after which Felix retreats into the lab via the foyer (area 1), while Delphi accompanies the visitors.

The tour continues through the library (area 3—“excuse the mess”), across into the dining room (area 4), up the front stairs to his studio (area 16—the only private room on the second floor he will show). At this point Dr. Fran reminds Delphi of her lessons before dinner, and she hurries off to her room (area 17). The good doctor then takes his guests down the hall to the gallery (area 14) overlooking the lab (area 6). Descending the spiral staircase into the lab proper, he then shows them the menagerie (area 7) and the courtyard (area 8) before returning to the library.

There, Dr. Fran will leave them on their own,

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saying he must change for dinner (into huge black robes with a white stole and white gloves). The adventurers are able to poke about the room undisturbed for about ten minutes; then Delphi, in a long, flowing gown, arrives to inform everyone that dinner is served.

Other areas mentioned by their host in passing but not entered include the storage (area 5), the kitchen and servants' quarters (areas 9–13), and the two bedrooms (areas 15 and 17). These are personal areas, he says, and not all that interesting.

Dr. Fran keeps up a non-stop chatter throughout the tour, talking about the island (isolated), the weather (unpredictable), how hard it is to get supplies (after storms they often check for flotsam), art (he's an amateur painter himself—there are a number of his works around the manor). Check under “My Dinner with Dr. Fran” (page 35) for information he is willing to share.

1. Foyer

The foyer is little more than a 10-foot-wide hallway of black-and-white tile connecting the servants' wing with the main house. Markov keeps the door to the laboratory (area 6) bolted from the inside most of the time (he usually enters from the second floor) but will unbolt it to receive visitors and deliveries. He prefers guests to detour through the house and enter his lab from the gallery (area 14).

There is a whiff of carbolic acid in the air here, from the nearby lab.

2. Main Hall

Most visitors to Dr. Fran's Manor will be escorted through the double doors from outside into this three-branched hallway. The left branch of the hall leads to the foyer (area 1) and to one of the two doors leading into the library (area 3). The right branch leads to Fran's treasure room (area 5). The central branch leads to the back courtyard (area 8), with doors also opening onto the library on the left and the dining room (area 4) to the right. Where the three corridors intersect, a set of double doors on the right open into the dining room, while a stairway on the left leads up to the upper floor.

A water-stained collection of oriental carpets (salvaged from an earlier ship) cover the floor and the walls are hung with art—studies of wild animals expertly posed and rendered. There are panthers, bears, a black unicorn fighting a lion, various hawks, and a gorilla, all painted in some form of

violent activity. The paintings are signed “Fran” and are the work of their host himself; he will be very pleased if the heroes complement his work.

3. Library

The library is the final resting place of most of Fran's literary collection, mostly salvaged from various shipwrecks; it also serves as a schoolroom to teach his latest generation of Broken Ones. Given Fran's housekeeping skills and interests, the library is a chaotic collection of books, scrolls, and knickknacks littering the room in a hodge-podge fashion. Books have been stacked, and those stacks have toppled across the floor. Spines have been broken, and scrolls left open and folded. Books have been tossed across the room and left there. In addition, some water damage has leaked in, reducing several volumes to mush.

The furniture of the room consists of two massive oak tables and a heavy, overstuffed chair with a imperiously high back and heavy padded arms (Fran's favorite—its twin can be found in the dining room). The remainder of stools and low benches are made from the local timber and cane, lashed together by vines for use by the Broken Ones.

Items of interest in the library include

- A map of the island (**Map 1**). This map is hanging on a wall behind a glass frame (the frame may easily be broken and the map removed). The map is identical to the player's map provided with this product, which should be shown to the players at this time.
- A badly damaged copy of *Volo's Guide to Waterdeep*, with what look like teeth marks on it.
- A water-stained version of *Aurora's Catalog*, missing the last twenty pages.
- A large leather-bound book, left face-up on the table, damaged by a candle dripping wax over its open pages. This is a copy of a journal by Rudolph van Richten himself; it contains information about the monastic group known as the Order of the Guardians.
- A metallic skull which shines with a rainbow reflection. If touched, it will yammer incoherently for 30 seconds. This is a *mimir*, a magical item common in Sigil, an extraplanar city in the far-

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distant plane of the Outlands. The *mimir* was damaged in making the transition to the Demiplane of Dread, and instead of providing information about the Outlands (its original purpose), it now mixes garbled nonsense with portents of oncoming disaster ("In case of danger, *glee praxo minta jagavo*, or else certain death" would be a typical phrase).

- An atlas labeled "Guide to the Known World" which provides maps of Mystara (the DM may choose another campaign setting at his or her option, including the setting the player characters originally came from).
- A large number (50+) of surgical and anatomy texts dealing with both humans and animals and written in a variety of languages (including Elvish, Irda, Gnomish, Dwarvish, and miscellaneous human languages). These texts have been heavily annotated in Markov's hands, with entire sections underlined (usually on comparative anatomy) and others crossed out with "Rot!" written in the margins.
- An "encyclopedia of common knowledge" in five volumes, all of which have been so severely water-damaged as to be useless. A cover plate purports the volumes to come from Palanthas (from the DRAGONLANCE® campaign setting).
- *The Wisdom of Lord Toede*, as transcribed by Bunniswot the scribe, a book of bawdy illustrations which the accompanying text assures the reader are really a manual for good government.
- A large number of children's primers, ranging from thick cardboard books (slightly warped and torn) with colorful pictures, to nursery tales, to grammar books teaching correct use of language. These are used by Dr. Fran and Delphi to instruct the Broken Ones.
- A thick tome labeled "Book of Insufferable Darkness." If opened, it will reveal that the pages have been cut out and a (now-empty) whiskey flask has been stashed inside.
- A large number of once-magical scrolls which have been ripped and shredded to the point they no longer hold any useful spells. Among the

debris is a single intact scroll with three *cure light wounds* and a *cure disease*, purportedly written by one Brother Dominic of the Order of the Guardians. This scroll and the *mimir* are the only truly magical items in the room.

The adventurers will be brought here by Dr. Fran before the dinner party and given time to look around; if they visit him on a later occasion, they will also have a chance to explore this room. Dr. Fran does not believe there is anything here to betray him and has no problems with characters rooting through the remains of his library.

4. Dining Room

The finest room in the house, the floor here is richly carpeted and the room dominated by a massive oak table, similar to the ones in the library but longer, running from the main entrance to the far corner. In the far corner is another of Fran's overstuffed chairs (twin to the one in the library). The rest of the chairs are wooden, though they come from several different sets (more salvage).

The walls are hung with additional scenes of nature in her violent glory—hounds bringing down a stag, a hawk snaring a sparrow on the wing, and a hunter being mauled by a bear. Interestingly enough, the creatures are all well-rendered, as if from life, but the human figure of the hunter is stiff and unnatural. The signature is illegible, but Dr. Fran, if asked, will indicate that it is his work.

5. Storage

This large storage room is Markov's private storage room, where valuables and the results of failed experiments are stored for later use. The single door is locked, and Dr. Fran keeps the only key.

The left-hand side of the room is littered with chests stacked atop one another—the remains of pillaged villages plus the wreckage washed ashore by a bountiful sea. They hold bolts of cloth, iron tools, silver plate (about 2000 gp worth, for those adventurers who value mere coin above their own lives), gold coins (about 4000 gp worth, in a multitude of sizes and with a variety of mint marks from different worlds), and wine.

To the immediate right the sight is more chilling—here are the mummified and dehydrated remains of one of Fran's earlier experiments—a half-scorpion, half-human creature that Fran began to work on, then abandoned. Flesh and fur hang in

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loose strips from the creature's carapace. One glass eye stares blankly at the viewer, alongside an empty socket.

The southern wall is filled with a large series of shelves littered with skulls—human, animal, and twisted combinations of both. The skulls themselves are crisscrossed with carefully inked lines and marked with arcane mathematical symbols indicating brain capacity, jaw line, and other scientific notes. Each of the skulls is labeled by number and name, and the numbers reach into the 500s. At the end of the shelf, there are numbers and empty spaces reserved for Delphi, Orson, and Felix, and if the heroes have been with Dr. Fran more than two days, labeled spaces for themselves and the crew. A horror check would be suitable here, if the characters had not otherwise divined kindly Dr. Fran's motives.

6. Laboratory

The largest room in the complex is Markov's lab, whose conical roof towers 55 feet above the ground. It is a single large room, with a heavy wrought-iron chandelier hanging from the beams in the center of the room. The chandelier is lit by a hundred candles, their light focused by a parabolic mirror above the candles. The resulting glare is centered on the lab table in the middle of the room, so that Dr. Fran has sufficient light to work. The floor is made of white tile. The air has the antiseptic smell of carbolic acid and cleaners.

The lab table, a long slab of gray slate mounted on a wooden trestle which can be tilted to the required angle, dominates the center of the room. The walls are filled with white cabinets containing surgical tools and other paraphernalia. A small cot along the north wall is where Fran usually sleeps.

Among the surgical tools and aids in the lab there is a large white container of ether, the interior of which is packed with wads of cotton padding. Dr. Fran uses this anesthesia to immobilize patients prior to getting them on the slab. Once there, and securely strapped down, he allows the ether to wear off, the better to judge the subject's responses. Anyone inhaling the ether must attempt a saving throw vs. breath weapon. Failure indicates the character is knocked unconscious for 3 to 18 (3d6) rounds, while success indicates he or she is *slowed* (as per the spell) and must save again if still in close proximity. Dr. Fran usually has Felix wrap a cotton pad soaked in ether around the

victim's face. Alternatively, he may order him to place an ether-drenched rag in a closed area (such as the guest house), subjecting all within to its effects (however, they gain a +2 to their saving throws).

7. Menagerie

This tall (25-foot-high at the roof line) square room contains two rows of cages which hold Fran's test subjects. Most remain in their cages, though Dr. Fran may allow some of the goats and llamas out into the courtyard. The cages currently contain the following:

- a. A black female leopard (the one from the ship, unless it was slain, in which case it will be a different one—Fran will note that Felix caught it a few nights ago).
- b. A pair of llamas.
- c. Five goats.
- d. A mated pair of ferrets.
- e. Four wild pigs.
- f. An empty cage labeled "Ursus"—Orson's original quarters before his transformation.
- g. A rhea (a large, flightless bird similar to an ostrich).
- h. Three giant rats.

A spiral staircase here leads up to a small balcony on the second floor.

8. Courtyard

This open area of hard-packed earth is used by Fran to feed the goats and llamas while the carnivores are being fed inside the menagerie. The rough walls are ten feet tall and can be climbed by anyone making a successful Climb Walls roll or Dexterity check. All three doors—two leading into the house and the third leading outside the compound—are barred.

9. Kitchen

This large area, dominated by a large circular fire pit, is used for food preparation. The smoke escapes through the roof above, making the thatch particularly dry and fragile, but the flames are never banked high enough to pose a serious threat to the structure. The beams of the roof are hung with all manner of cast iron skillets and pots; a particularly large kettle is used for most of the day-to-day cooking. There are a number of tables for food preparation, and a rack of seven knives of different sizes hangs along the eastern wall.

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10. Pantry

The primary food storage for the manor consists of bins of potatoes and other tubers, vegetables, fruits, and grain, along with some cured meat as well as barrels of flour and rice rescued from ships. The barrels are marked with a variety of signs and sigils from different lands.

11. Servants' Quarters

This long room contains the day-quarters of the servants. At a long table surrounded by chairs the newly altered practice their reading and writing skills; the table is usually littered with primers and pieces of foolscap. A water barrel and basin provide water for washing and drinking. A ladder in the southeast corner leads up to the loft (area 13).

12. Salvage Storage

Here is where most salvage from the various wrecks is stored, along with useful pillage from the ruined villages. Sealed barrels of nails, flour, and sundries, chests of fabric and sewing materials, tools, ironwork, furniture, and lumber litter the room.

There is a cleared space in the southwest corner. In its center is a stake driven into the hard-packed earthen floor, with a long length of iron chain and a collar attached. Devolving Broken Ones are left here to fully change back to their native form.

13. Servants' Loft

Up a wooden ladder from the servants' quarters is the low-ceilinged loft where they sleep at night. The loft consists of old mattresses, their straw stuffings strewn over the floor. The smell is akin to that of the menagerie (area 7).

14. Gallery

Located directly above the foyer (area 1), the gallery opens out over the lab (area 6) and allows a full view of Dr. Fran's abattoir. The gallery's edge is marked by a low (3-foot-high) double railing. A door leads to the rest of the second floor, and a spiral staircase winds down to the lab floor. Dr. Fran usually enters the lab through this gallery door and will only bolt it behind him if he suspects the player characters of plotting against him.

15. Dr. Fran's Room.

This badly-kept mess is Dr. Fran's lair. He does not keep his door locked, as he does not expect visitors on the second floor. The room is a mess of

papers, diagrams, dirty clothes, clean outfits, and bedding scattered about.

Fran usually begins his evening here, for about an hour, before his own restlessness forces him to the lab for further research and experimentation. Usually he ends up sleeping on the cot in his lab. Delphi tidies the room about once a week, gathering those clothes obviously in need of cleaning to be washed.

Fran's Markov's personal journals are kept in this room, at a writing desk in the southeast corner (location a) by the window. Each evening, immediately after dark, Fran sets down his latest thoughts. From his vantage point while writing, he is able to see the area in front of the house, including the guest house. Then he will (sometimes) sleep or (more often) retire to his lab for further work.

16. Dr. Fran's Studio

This well-lit room is where Dr. Fran does his painting, an activity which confirms for him his own humanity, as well as allowing him to study anatomy. His understanding of animal physiology is exact, but his grasp of human anatomy is more limited. Therefore, his paintings of creatures are lifelike and vivid, his human figures stiff and stilted. The room contains a number of canvas frames, paints, brushes, pallet, and an easel. There are three works currently in progress in the room:

- A clay sculpture of a wolf. This work is rendered in clay and shows the wolf in mid-leap. The model, a dead and (expertly) stuffed wolf, is laid out on a large table against the west wall.
- A portrait of Delphi in a high-necked gown. This is Fran's best human rendering to date. Her high forehead and wide luminous eyes give the painting a strange feeling—he portrays Delphi's inner soul here, and it is not human.
- A painting, rendered in rushed, brutal brush strokes, of the manor itself going up in flames. The smoke rises and forms into the shape of the bare torso and arms of a beast-headed human. The creature's head looks like a mix of gorilla, wolf, and boar; it seems to be exulting in the destruction. This represents a nightmare of Dr. Fran's, from those few times he does sleep—when the beast emerges and destroys all. If confronted with the painting, he will admit to

being troubled by a recurring nightmare—not surprising, he says, given the difficulties of preserving this small island of civilization against the wild and cruel inhabitants of the island.

17. Delphi's Room

These are the quarters of Dr. Fran's "ward," Delphi, who currently oversees the housekeeping as well as aiding Dr. Fran outside the lab. The room is tidy, even sparse, and consists of a canopied bed, cedar chest, armoire, and dressing table. The chest and armoire contain clothing, mostly simple gowns. The only painting in the room is a picture of the sea, signed by Dr. Fran. Delphi can often be found sitting on her window seat, overlooking the entrance of the manor.

18. Guest Quarters

This low, one-story hut is constructed in the same manner as the main house (board walls, thatch roof), with two shuttered windows. Inside, it contains a common room (a) with a fire pit, and sleeping quarters in the back (b).

The accommodations are limited, and the rooms contain little more than a table, a few chairs, a cupboard, and a straw tick in the back. Dr. Fran will apologize for the lack of amenities, but guests are few and far between.

The windows are shuttered but without glass. A player character with a mind to can sneak out the back and escape the stockade relatively easily and undetected, when he or she chooses. What happens then is another matter

The Members of the Household

In addition to Dr. Fran himself, there are three members of the household, all of Fran's creations. They are Orson (made from bear stock), Felix (made from leopard stock), and Delphi (made from dolphin stock). Orson will likely be met at the front gate, Felix and Delphi inside the house.

Orson (Greater Broken One of brown bear stock): AC 5; MV 9; HD 5; hp 40; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1d10/1d10 (punch/punch); SA hugs for 2d6 points of damage if a punch attack succeeds on a roll of 18 or better; SD fights for 1d4 additional melee rounds after reduced to between 0 and -8 hp; SZ M (7' tall); ML fearless (19); Int high (13); AL LE; XP 420.

Markov's Journal

Markov's journals are five (currently) massive volumes bound in red leather, in which Markov reports his successes and failures, new observations, and notes for the future. It is written in a bold but clumsy hand, as Markov must physically will himself to write, conquering the limitations of his animal form. A book plate with the initials "F.M." on the inside of each cover identifies its owner. Each volume begins with a declaration that "This is the work of Frantisek Markov, Lord of the Land of Markovia, who is called *Diosamblet* by the twisted things which fear his shadow."

The bulk of each volume is consumed by self-pitying commentary on the writer's dis-torted form, and the remainder details his current projects, their success and eventual failure. When a transformation succeeds, the diarist becomes jubilant and predicts that he is within days of conquering his own curse. When it fails, his commentary becomes morose and sullen and he speaks of creating a hunting party to destroy his failures living in the wreckage of Markovia. The fourth volume details the wrenching alteration of the Grand Convocation which plucked Markovia from its inland location and surrounded it with water. It mentions, only in passing, the plague and famine that struck many of the interior villages during this time, decimating what population survived.

The most recent entries detail the creation (which he refers to as "arrival") of his latest servants. The "arrivals" of Felix, Delphi, and Orson are presented in that order. Depending on when (and if) the player characters discover this book, it may contain references to them as well. If so, these summarize each day of the adventure, and naturally vary according to the player's actions.

If the player characters are unaware of Markov's true identity, then the discovery and reading of these volumes is occasion for horror checks all round.

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Orson appears as a huge man, towering over Dr. Fran himself. He has a sad, sleepy face and normally shows understanding with a short, tired growl. He mutters constantly to himself in a deep base voice and only speaks to others when spoken to, and then haltingly, a syllable at a time. He is normally dressed in a long monastic robe, tied at the waist. He has a huge beard and hair on the back of his otherwise human hands.

Orson is completely loyal to Dr. Fran and believes him a god-like being. He will lay down his life for his master. In everyday life, however, he is just called upon to do the cooking, guarding, and heavy lifting. When Dr. Fran leaves the compound, Orson will stand by the gate, awaiting his return.

Felix (Greater Broken One of leopard stock): AC 5; MV 9; HD 5; hp 40; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1d8/1d8 (claw/claw); SA can choose to attack with rear claws at will for an additional 1d4 each, leap (20' straight up or 25' ahead, -3 penalty to opponents' surprise rolls); SD rarely surprised (1-in-10 chance); SZ M (5' 6" tall); ML fearless (19); Int exceptional (15); AL CE; XP 650. Special abilities: stealth (Move Silently 80%, Hide in Shadows 62%, Climb 90%).

Felix is Dr. Fran's laboratory assistant and major domo. He is silent, quick-witted, quick-tempered, and impatient. While he defers to Dr. Fran in all things, he regards everyone else with a marked sense of disdain (think of the aloof nature of cats). This includes Delphi (though never in front of the Doctor), Orson, and especially the heroes.

Felix is bred from snow leopard stock, and his neck and the back of his hands are marked with spots (skin blemishes, says Dr. Fran). He is normally dressed as a cardinal, with red robes and a small pillbox-style hat. These robes were taken from a wrecked ship, and Felix is very proud of them, believing that they set him above the loincloth-wearing savages.

Felix is a traitor as well. Though he feigns loyalty, he has been feeding information to Akanga and will in the end betray his "father." Until then, he is precise, accurate, and methodical. He helps in the lab and aids Orson with meal times, although he has the unnerving habit of licking his lips in both cases.

Delphi (Greater Broken One of dolphin stock): AC 5; MV 15; HD 5; hp 40; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1d4/1d4 (fist/fist); SA makes all saving throws as an 8th-level fighter; SD can hold breath for long periods; SZ M (5' 5" tall); ML fearless (19); Int high (14); AL N; XP 420.

Delphi is a young dolphin beached near the boat house. She is radiantly beautiful, with deep, luminous eyes and a high forehead mounted by a luxurious mane of dark hair swept backwards past her shoulders. Dr. Fran introduces her as his ward and says her parents were killed in one of the storms (true, as far as it goes).

Delphi is shy and demure. She has been brought up to be a perfect hostess, in the way Fran hoped his Ludmilla originally would be—ever serving and never questioning. She knows what Dr. Fran does and sees it as his nature—there can be nothing wrong in being true to one's nature. She calls him Father, and believes she is a foundling from a previous wreck.

Delphi is here as a potential love interest for one of the player characters. The DM should choose his or her target (the biggest romantic running a male player character) and pull that player aside, telling him or her that the face the hero saw when almost drowning was hers. Delphi will show an interest in that character in particular, and she will seek to spend as much time as possible with him. Dr. Fran will play the part of the stern father, steering her back to her studies, but he is interested in this development in her maturation as well.

In any event, Delphi shows a polite but intense curiosity in the strangers and where they come from. She asks many of the questions at dinner about the character's origins and experiences.

Delphi tends to wear high-necked, tight-wasted gowns, with flat soles. She sometimes trips, as she is still unused to walking on land.

Manor Life

While in Dr. Fran's company, a number of things may occur to the heroes, culminating either in their agreeing to seek the *Table of Life* or in their being betrayed and made into Broken Ones by Dr. Fran.

My Dinner with Dr. Fran

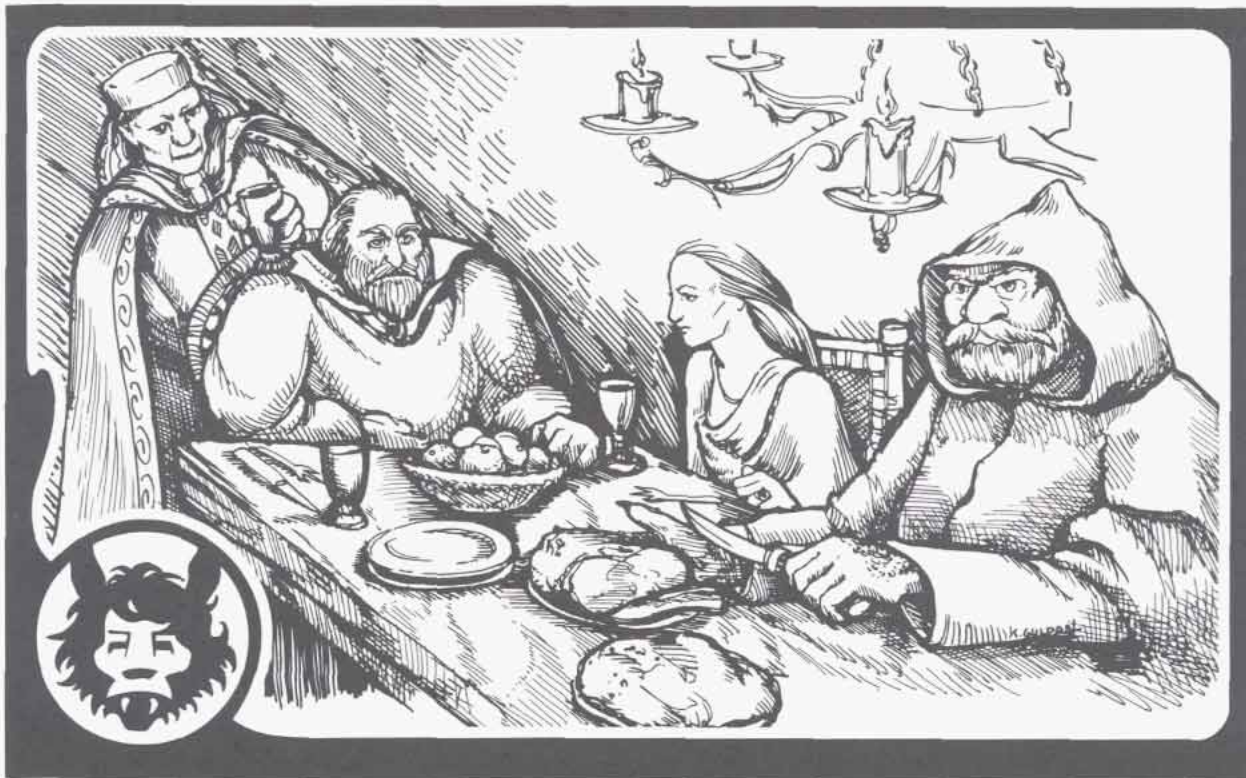
The evening of the first day they meet Fran, or at their earliest opportunity, Dr. Fran will give a tour of the premises (as indicated at the start of this chapter), and then everyone will settle down for dinner.

As host, Doctor Fran sits at the head of the table, his ward Delphi at his left. Anyone Delphi fancies will be asked to sit at her left. The rest of the seating is up to the party. Orson and Felix will serve. Orson wheels in a tray laden with fruits, breads, and a great side of roast beef, cooked to a bloody rare. Felix will carve, expertly, offering wine (a medium vintage of red) and inquiring if each guest wishes his or her beef *au jus*. Delphi passes on the red meat, saying it does not agree with her; fascinated by the strangers, she hardly touches her fruit, cheese, and bread. Orson and Felix retire to the kitchen after serving but may be summoned (for coffee and desert) later by a silver bell at Dr. Fran's right hand.

Dr. Fran is willing to speak about a number of things—often lying through his teeth but in half-truths plausible enough to pass a cursory inspection. The following topics are among those likely to come up during conversation:

- The island has no name, not anymore, anyway. He could name it after himself (“France” has a nice ring) but never gave much thought to it. It was once inhabited, but a great plague destroyed most of the inhabitants and left the remaining poor souls in a twisted, savage state.
- Those savages call themselves “the broken ones.” They are little more than beasts. The disease may be magical, since it malforms those so affected into man-beast forms. It could be a variant of lycanthropy, he suggests, though it has no lunar cycle or other hallmarks of that disease.
- The origin of this plague may be a monastery of corrupted monks living in the southern cliffs of the island. They are said to worship an evil artifact that spreads disease wherever it goes.
- The purpose of the lab and the menagerie is to try and seek a cure for these poor, savage outcasts. He has had some success in very mild cases (and here he mentions Orson), but the cause of the disease eludes him.
- If confronted with his own odd appearance, or a player grown hugely suspicious, Fran will confess that, yes, he too is a victim of the curse or disease. He removes one glove to show the hairy hand beneath it to the heroes, remarking that they too will probably develop symptoms if they remain on the island long enough.
- Fran is an avid artist, and anyone who works in any medium will get a battery of attention—what paints do they use, do they employ live models, what subjects do they paint, do they prefer representational versus iconic depictions? Fran will admit that his interest is in living things, animal and human, and his art combines with his research.
- Fran considers himself a healer and physician and a skilled surgeon. The lab is used for examination but primarily for dissection of animals. Occasionally he engages in vivisection and quickly adds that this is necessary to advance the cause of science. He will be willing to entertain other thoughts on the matter but believes that the suffering of a lower creature is outweighed by the benefits which may be gained from the studies. After all, none at the table have complained about the cow who died to produce the beef they eat!
- And while on the subject, he has a few well-chosen words about the clerical profession. With all their reliance on spells and the will of the gods they haven't sought out the root causes of disease, the vectors by which it spreads. If not for the over-reliance on faith over knowledge, there would human communities instead of ruins on this island.
- The management of this small scrap of civilization is a daunting task, but he suffers from insomnia and uses the evenings to pursue his work. In addition to everything else, he is trying to raise Delphi as a proper young lady (here he is fishing for compliments).
- The weather is terrible this time of year, and storms can brew up in no time at all. The beaches are often swept clear of debris and entire stands of trees evaporate in the strong winds. Should the characters be camping on the beach, he would recommend moving inland. He offers either the guest house or, should they prefer to build their own quarters, the loan of tools and materials.

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- Should the heroes suggest it, he will gladly lend similar materials for boat-building. That will take several weeks, he notes, but understands if they have a desire to leave. He himself says that his conscience will not permit him to leave while any hope remains that he may be able to help the unfortunate victims of the curse.
- If the characters have not already visited the wreck, Dr. Fran declares that whatever is still on the ship is theirs—he claims no salvage from it. If they have met the soul-kraken a second time, he confesses he has never heard of such a beast but that the sea is filled with deadly, evil monsters.
- Should the characters know they are in Ravenloft (by starting there or through deduction) and know the lands there are ruled by darklords, Fran will admit that yes, there is a dark ruler of this land, who rules the night and lives by the law of savage nature—survival of the fittest. This foul creature is named Akanga, and he first used the monk's cursed device to bring ruin onto this island. Akanga is a lion-headed man who rules the Bro-

ken Ones and has prevented his, Dr. Fran's, escape for years. Only by finding the cause of the disease, and destroying it, can Akanga be negated. He will not volunteer this at first, saving it in reserve for when the player characters seem close to figuring out who and what he is. In Ravenloft, players expect a darklord, so Dr. Fran provides the characters with one.

All these comments should be intermixed with Delphi's questions, directed to all in general but the individual on her left in particular. Where are they from? What do they do there? Do they have Broken Ones where they come from? Do they have books? Are priests as dangerous there as they are here? Are they going to leave so soon?

The dinner concludes with coffee and desert (Orson makes excellent pastries), when the conversation finally drags. Dr. Fran offers the guest house for the evening, or even until they build their own place, but understands if the characters decline. He invites them to dinner the next evening and every evening after this.

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Returning to the Campsite

While the adventurers are at dinner, Felix has dispatched (on Dr. Fran's orders) a band of Broken Ones to raid the campsite.

If the adventurers return in the evening, they become aware of a growing light on the beach. They arrive to find whatever shelter they had built burning merrily, their belongings scattered in the surf. Should they delay their departure from Dr. Fran's estate until the morning after the dinner, the fire has burned itself out but the scene is otherwise the same. In both cases, the sand is churned by bestial footprints of all sizes and shapes.

Should the players have left an NPC guard (such as Old Singe or one of the sailors) behind, they find that unfortunate, mortally wounded, among the remains. He is badly hurt, and though his hit points can be restored, he remains in a coma, having apparently contracted some disease that causes constant trembling and shivers (it is a poison).

Should the players have had the foresight to park one of their own at the campsite while everyone else went partying, that individual will be attacked by a pack of 20 Broken Ones, who try to kill or drive the character off, set fire to the shelter, and flee into the night. This occurs between the dinner and desert course, and those at the dinner table should be unaware of the attack.

The characters can choose to rebuild their camp or move in with Dr. Fran. The good doctor will be more than willing to look after any ill or injured crewmen; they will be the first to fall under his scalpel once the heroes are safely out of the way (see "If the Offer is Refused" on page 43).

Nothing has been stolen from the campsite, though all the casks have been broken open and the food cast into the sea. Any magical devices will be found in the sand, unharmed. Dr. Fran, if told of this, will note that the Broken Ones are little more than savages, and they do not remember the value of civilization.

The First Night

Should the heroes stay in the guest house, they will be shown there with the setting sun. Delphi retires to her room and Dr. Fran to his. The windows will be open, and from the guest house any PC looking toward the house can see Dr. Fran at his writing

table and Delphi sitting in her window brushed her hair out and watching the guest house with a dreamy expression, singing softly and wordlessly to herself. Dr. Fran pays no attention. After a while, Delphi pulls in her shutters and douses her candle; the old doctor closes his own shutters a short time later but the light remains on in his room for some time.

Past midnight, there is a horrible scream from the house, rousing everyone in the guest house. The cry is similar to that heard by the heroes their first night on the island. Characters who investigate find the doors of the manor locked. Banging will bring a sleepy Orson to the door.

Orson explains that the doctor is busy. If the characters put up an argument, Orson says he will go fetch the doctor. At this point Dr. Fran appears, in surgical garb, with elbow-length white leather gloves stained with blood. A little frantic, he explains that the leopard they caught had an infection on its leg, and he had to lance the pustules before they festered. It's a rather messy procedure, and he would like to get back to it.

Should the characters still persist, he will open the door to his lab from the foyer and usher them inside. The leopard is securely strapped to the table—Felix is waving an ether-soaked rag under its snout and looking pensively at the doctor. The ill sailor, if there is one, is resting comfortably along the far wall, ignorant of all which is transpiring.

Doctor Fran says he must get back to this, and they can talk about it tomorrow. Orson shows the characters out (unless they choose to suddenly get violent, in which case he and Felix will respond in kind). The next day, Dr. Fran will be glad to describe the operation over breakfast ("pustules as large as my thumb," he'll say, glowingly) and show the bad-tempered cat, back in the menagerie with a bandaged back leg. All is as he says it is. This time.

Building Project

Should the player characters express an interest in building their own quarters (either within their own palisade or near Dr. Fran's place) or building a boat to escape, Dr. Fran will provide whatever aid is needed, and the services of Orson.

Orson will bring nails and, just as importantly, tools from the stockade's stores. Even so, with the proper tools and the aid of any surviving sailors

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(and perhaps a few characters with Carpentry proficiency), it will take at least two weeks to put together a permanent dwelling or small boat. And by this time events will overtake the characters.

Dr. Fran Paints

Use this encounter should there be any female members of the party. At dinner the second night, Dr. Fran speaks admiringly of one of the female characters and begs a favor—could he try his hand at rendering her in oils?

The offer is sincere, as Dr. Fran feels more like a father (or an angry god, depending on his mood) to his creations and desires nothing more than the company of other true humans. He is thinking of nothing more than a portrait, though other options (a battle scene, a landscape, a figure study, etc.) may be suggested by the player character involved.

If Dr. Fran's offer is accepted, this means that during the day that heroine will pose while Fran draws. His strokes are inexact, and his grasp of the human form clumsy. He often curses and paints over the canvas, starting again. He talks with his model during the sessions, and any information not passed on during the formal dinners can be slipped in here.

It will take about a week to create a poor-looking draft, inexact from an draftsman's eye but capturing the inner nature of the heroine (be that good or bad). It is a successful piece of art, but not a pretty one. Again, events may occur over this time which supersede the painting's being finished.

Should a friendship bloom between the player character and the disguised darklord, Fran will reveal the nature of his affliction to the heroine (though not its cause). Any affection (real or feigned) she shows toward the old fellow will be returned, and Dr. Fran will secretly begin to hope that, once he has turned all of this lovely creature's friends into Broken Ones, she will remain with him, and they will rule the island together.

Delphi and the Seal-Men

This encounter should occur the second or third night at the compound, and every night thereafter. Use the encounter only if the heroes are staying at the guest house or are watching the compound.

After completing her nightly ritual of brushing

her hair, Delphi puts out her light as usual. However, rather than going to bed she sneaks out the front door a few minutes later, wearing a heavy cloak. Using a pile of boxes, she sneaks over the palisade wall. Anyone watching the house or compound should see her stealthy departure.

Delphi goes down to the river, whistles softly, and sheds her cloak. Wearing only a modest slip, she dives into the water and swims strongly and effortlessly. A few more shapes appear in the darkness—they are seal-men, who worship the ground Delphi walks on (or, rather, the water she swims through). These seal-men are clearly inhuman, with fur-covered bodies and seal-like faces, their hands ending in dexterous flippers. They join in the swim.

After a brief time, she climbs out of the water, laughing, and towels off with the cloak. She then heads back to the house, pulling herself over the palisade easily. If not interrupted, she repeats this activity each night—it is her way of staying in touch with her origins, and she believes that Fran does not know of it (she is correct, for he would forbid it if he knew).

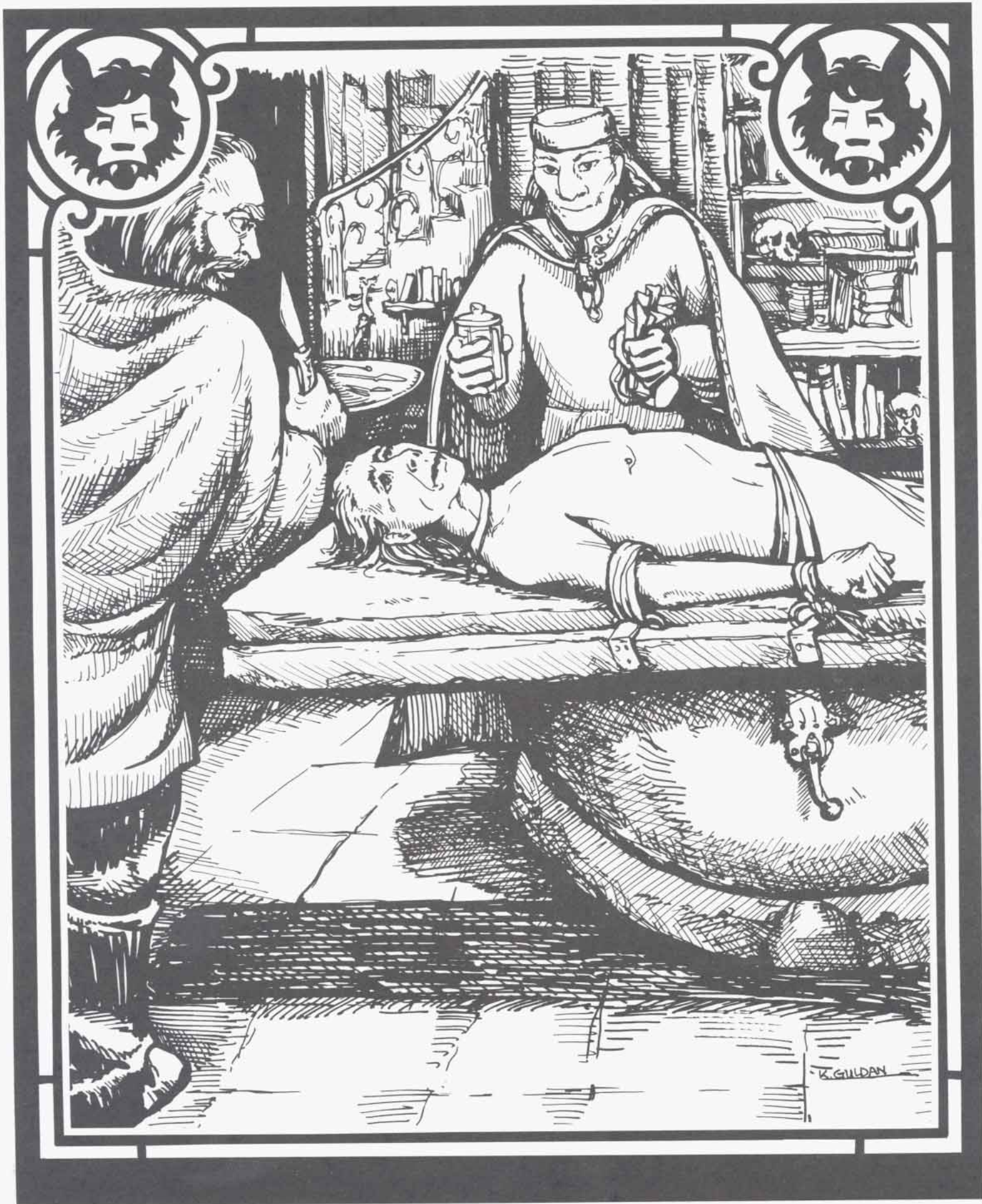
An adventurer watching the entire display can remain in hiding unnoticed or declare his or her presence. Delphi will be surprised at first but encourage the adventurer(s) to join in the swim. There is no danger, and it is a pleasant diversion. She will be particularly pleased if the human she is attracted to is present, though the degree of attraction is left up to the DM with an eye towards the maturity of his or her players. She asks that nothing be said to Father of this matter.

Should the player characters seek to attack the seal-men, they flee, and Delphi will be furious, though she still makes no mention of the incident to her guardian. Should the adventurers attack Delphi, the seal-men will defend her to the death (there are 6 of them, and though they are called "seal-men" there are members of both sexes present).

Exploring

The adventurers may want to go exploring during the day and check out the island, particularly once they have the map from the library. As in most things, Dr. Fran is supportive, though he will not lend out any of his servants for the trip. The sailors, for that matter, do not want to budge either, whether they have accepted the hospitality of the Doctor or are building a ship or house.

DR. FRAN'S MANOR



Dr. Fran will discourage traveling to the western half of the island, since Akanga is strongest there. He will also inform the heroes that most of the ruined villages have been picked over by the Broken Ones. Visiting the Great Stone Men would be a good day-trip, though even Dr. Fran admits they are a mystery to him.

Should the heroes indicate an interest in exploring the monastery to the south, go immediately to "The Offer" (page 43).

Felix Goes Hunting

The third or fourth day (or earlier, at the DM's option), the heroes note that Felix, armed with a short bow and arrows, is leaving the compound. He exchanges words with Orson at the gate (giving player characters sufficient time to get ahead of him) and heads into the jungle. If asked, Dr. Fran or Orson states that Felix is out hunting for game for dinner.

Should the heroes follow Felix, have each character make a Dexterity check or Move Silently roll to avoid being detected by his cat-like senses. On a failed roll, Felix knows that he is being followed and loses his shadowers in the underbrush. Should all the rolls succeed, the heroes will see two odd things.

First, a short way out, Felix will remove his cloak and set it and the bow against a tree. He then strips to the waist, retaining only his leggings and boots. Any observers can see that the discolorations (spots) on his hands and neck spread all the way down his arms and across his lean, well-muscled back.

Then Felix begins to stalk, hunting in primal fashion, silent and deadly. He slowly approaches a patch of brush, hesitates for a moment, then strikes with lightning intensity. Catching a rabbit or groundhog in his clawlike hands, he rips out its throat, letting the blood drip down the front of his furry chest.

He will repeat this process, clean himself, then return to his cloak and bow. He will jab the game a few times to make it look like they were shot.

The second odd thing occurs soon afterwards. A halfling-sized Broken One appears in the clearing. Felix looks up, then nods, and the Broken One, clearly of cat-blood (cats' eyes, long wildcat ears, and a cat's soft nose), approaches and kneels before Felix.

The two talk in a series of snarls and meows, the language sounding very natural for Felix. Should the player characters have any method of understanding

this new tongue, they will find that Felix is describing in full the adventurers and their capabilities. The smaller cat-man nods and backs out of the clearing. Felix then returns to the compound, where the game he caught is served for dinner that evening.

Should the heroes try to continue their surveillance on Felix's return trip, have each player make a second Dexterity check or Move Silently roll for his or her character. Should this second roll fail, Felix is aware of their presence and begin stalking THEM.

Felix will try to fade into the underbrush (62% chance) and strike at the heroes before they can return to safety. After silently slipping away, he climbs a tree and waits to pounce on his pursuers as they pass below. He is in pure hunt-mode now and will take no prisoners. Only if he is seriously wounded (damaged below half his hit point total) will his upbringing reinstate itself, at which point he either surrenders or runs away back to Dr. Fran. Considering the role Felix has to play in the finale, the DM should try to keep him alive—for example, having any magical attack would otherwise kill him reduce him to unconsciousness instead.

Back at the Estate, Dr. Fran will explain that Felix is a far-advanced case of the cursed disease. While the doctor has slowed its spread, the malady continues its evil work and causes poor Felix to lose control from time to time. The good doctor is sorry for the whole episode, and apologizes on his servant's behalf. Fran will be surprised if the smaller Broken One is mentioned. Felix will have a good excuse, but Fran may come to doubt his trusted aid (this may or may not be important during the coming revolution).

Dr. Fran Goes Out

On the third or fourth night of life at the estate, Dr. Fran himself sneaks out into the night, shortly before Delphi's nightly excursion. Dr. Fran exits by the gate, Delphi over the wall as usual. Delphi will leave the manor door ajar when she leaves. Orson can clearly be seen at the gate waiting for Dr. Fran's return; he strongly recommends against any player characters leaving—the jungle is dangerous at night, he says; only Dr. Fran knows what he is doing; the "savages" know and trust Dr. Fran, but any others who venture abroad go into deadly peril. Should the heroes ignore his warnings, he allows them to pass but tells Dr. Fran upon his return. Felix will be sleeping in the loft. The injured sailor will still be comatose in the lab.

DR. FRAN'S MANDOR

The heroes have three options, all of which they may choose to pursue, breaking into teams to do so. One choice is to check out the house, particularly those rooms which Dr. Fran glossed over the first time (his own quarters, Delphi's, the servants', and the storage). The second is to follow Delphi, if they have not done so before (in which case they have the same encounter as is given above under "Delphi and the Seal-Men"). The third and final is to follow Doctor Fran.

If they check out the house, the only peril is in waking Felix, who is curled up in the loft in area 13. Should they enter this area, he will awaken, and, if healthy, begin stalking them as in the preceding section, attacking to kill and surrendering only when seriously injured. If already injured, Felix remains hidden. In both cases he will tell Dr. Fran of the break-in. Regardless, Dr. Fran will make "The Offer" (see next section) the next morning, over breakfast.

If they follow Dr. Fran, no roll or check is needed to successfully follow him—intent on his own course, he is unaware of their pursuit. The doctor moves inland, away from the river. As they move up-country, the heroes hear the beating of drums and an odd, mystic chant from somewhere up ahead:

Diosamblet, Diosamblet, Diosamblet.

The cry strengthens to a roar as Dr. Fran steps out into a wide clearing. There are all manner of Broken Ones of every description in the clearing—cats and wolves and bears and apes and other creatures whose heritage is much murkier.

Upon seeing Dr. Fran, the entire assemblage falls to their knees, with hands, flippers, and claws extended in supplication. Dr. Fran ignores them and strides to a low platform of raised earth, ringed with stakes. The stakes are topped with the skulls—some of them human.

The chanting rises again, and Dr. Fran stands upright, then holds his hands out and shouts "I have come!"

Ask the players where their characters are in this situation (probably in the brush with a good view of the scene, preferably downwind). There are about a hundred Broken Ones present. Dr. Fran no longer sounds like some potty old wizard—power flows through him.

"I have come!" he repeats.

Diosamblet.

"I have come to bring you power!"

Diosamblet

"I have come to bring you justice!"

Diosamblet!

"I have come to bring you pain!"

Diosamblet!

"Let the judgment proceed!"

In ones and in twos the Broken Ones approach the platform. Some confess their sins of murder, of blood-lust, of acting like the lower beasts, of stealing another's hoarded grain. These are forgiven. Other accuse their fellow Broken Ones of such crimes. Often the accusation is followed by an immediate confession by the accused. These are forgiven as well. *Diosamblet* is merciful.

One goat-man accuses another of listening to the words of Akanga. The other denies his guilt in a bleating whine. Dr. Fran listens, then nods to one of the great bear-men at the periphery. The bear-man steps forward and wrenches the wretched thief's head clean off (an appropriate moment for horror checks). Dr. Fran takes the head and holds it aloft before the assembly, who prostrate themselves in terror. Then he places the head atop an empty stake, showing where the skulls come from.

Other confessions and accusations follow. Finally Dr. Fran holds out his hands to his followers.

"I have come!"

Diosamblet

"I have brought power, justice, and pain!"

Diosamblet

"I am the living god!"

Diosamblet!

"Akanga will pay for his crimes!"

Diosamblet!

"As will any who thwart my will!"

DIOSAMBLET!

The multitude goes wild in cries of joy and dance about in paroxysms of ecstasy. Dr. Fran moves in strong strides to the edge of the clearing and returns to the estate.

DR. FRAN'S MANDOR



If the heroes interfere in any way or make themselves known, Dr. Fran orders his Broken Ones to “kill the unbelievers.” It will then be a race with the adventurers trying to cover the half-mile back to the estate with a hundred Broken Ones of various species out for their blood directly behind them. Should they arrive safely (and remember that they are crossing an uneven path littered with vines in the dark: feel free to call for repeated Dexterity checks), Orson will let them in, shutting the gates in the faces of the Broken Ones. Dr. Fran will show up later.

If the heroes do not interfere, they can sneak off safely and return to the estate. Whether they confront Dr. Fran with what they have seen is up to them.

If Dr. Fran had to “sic” his Broken Ones on the players, and if they made it back to the estate safely, he will be very angry with them for interrupting his plan. He has been working to subvert the power of Akanga, he says, by convincing the local Broken Ones that he was a godlike being who could free them of their ghastly curse. Once the

heroes had made themselves known, he had no choice than to order an attack on the heroes, lest the poor savages turn on him. He’s very grateful, he says, that they all got safely away.

If the heroes slipped away quietly and confront Dr. Fran later with their knowledge of the scene, he gives the same story, but this time without the anger, and congratulates them on not making themselves known—that would have been a Bad Thing.

If the heroes are horribly well-informed and accuse Dr. Fran of being Markov, he denies that as well. Markov was once the ruler of this land, he says, but Akanga killed him. He has Markov’s old records and has taken the mantle of Giver of Pain in the hopes of overthrowing the evil Akanga, who urges the poor Broken Ones to exult in their bestial nature. He will stick to this story, his last option, and not waver from it, calling upon Delphi as his witness to support him in his claims.

In any event, the next morning Dr. Fran will ask them for help with the Monastery of Lost Souls.

DR. FRAN'S MANDOR

The Offer

On the morning after Dr. Fran has met with his people in the guise of *Diosamblet*, or earlier if the heroes have expressed an interest in the monastery, they will be invited to breakfast bright and early by Delphi, who says that Father has something to say to them.

Over eggs and muffins at the breakfast table, the adventurers have a chance to confront Dr. Fran with any crimes, real or assumed, and Dr. Fran will make his excuses. Then the good Doctor comes to the nub of the matter.

"You may have noticed on your map a monastery to the south of here," he begins, sounding old and tired. "This monastery is a dark, evil place, infested with leprous monks who worship a vile magical device. This device is called, or miscalled, the *Table of Life*."

"After much work, I fear that this *Table* is responsible for the foul state of my island home and that these monks are in the service of the evil Akanga, seeking to thwart me as I try to find a cure to the Broken Ones' horrid state."

"I want you to go to that accursed place and recover that table. I cannot go, nor can any of the Broken Ones, because of the magic which surrounds the peak. If you could bring it back here, I could unlock its secrets and free this island of its curse."

"I have opened my home to you, fed you, and protected you. Will you now help me to help all those poor people?"

If the offer is refused, Dr. Fran will be saddened but resolute. "I cannot blame you. For this a foul place, and who would trust a bent old man, anyway? I will still help you escape, if I can, before it is too late." He will lay on the guilt as heavily as he dares; go to the next section, "If the Offer is Refused."

If the offer is accepted by all, then Dr. Fran will provide more details. In particular, he tells them that in the old times, before they turned to evil, the monks had a great bell or gong at the foot of their mountain. Travelers would ring the gong,

and the monks would then lower a great basket and haul the visitors up. Undoubtedly there must be another way up that puts one less at the mercy of the cultists, but it is said that these other entrances were destroyed by the paranoid monks.

Dr. Fran tells the heroes that he believes the *Table* is harmless, at least in the short-term, and nearly indestructible. Though made of stone, it will float and seems resistant to every form of magic and physical punishment available. He is working on a solvent which may destroy it yet, however.

Dr. Fran will provide food and equipment, as best as he is able, for the trip to the monastery. Any of the player characters may refuse to go along; all of the surviving sailors do refuse to make the journey. Dr. Fran cannot risk Felix or Orson, and even if Delphi volunteers he will deny her permission. There is, by the way, no magical effect preventing Dr. Fran or anyone else from approaching the mountain peaks; this is one more lie in the skein woven by their host.

If all the heroes go, Dr. Fran takes the opportunity while they are gone to knock out and modify the remaining sailors into twisted creatures. He also sends Felix to burn the boat, if one is being built. Go to the "Attack of the Broken Ones" section.

If any heroes remain behind, go to the next section, but run it AFTER the other heroes have explored the monastery.

If the Offer is Refused

This is the fate of any who refuse Dr. Fran's offer.

Again, that evening, they will meet again for dinner. The guests will be asked one last time to reconsider. If they refuse, Dr. Fran sighs heavily and says he understands. Felix will then place a narcotic in the heroes' meals, a narcotic derived from mushrooms and placed in a mushroom sauce.

Each character gets one saving throw (vs. breath weapon) a round for three rounds. If all three saves succeed, that individual is unharmed (save for horrible stomach cramps). If any one roll fails, that character falls unconscious and remains so for 1d3 turns (more than enough time for Dr. Fran and his assistants to secure the heroes and prepare them for surgery).

Any who do make these saving throws must get past Orson, Felix, and the good doctor himself, who seek to knock them down to 0 hit points and then secure them for surgery. Even Delphi aids in the heroes' capture, saying that Father says it's for their own good. She is armed only with a cotton pad with ether on it and would most likely use it on individuals who has shown attentiveness to her, so she might strike by surprise.

If some heroes refused the invitation to dinner and stayed in the guest house, or remained in their own camp outside the palisade, then the *Diosamblet* rallies a number of Broken Ones to attack them, with orders to knock them unconscious rather than rend or kill. Dr. Fran can get about 50 Broken Ones for the attack, led by Orson and Felix. Delphi may be used as a decoy to lower their suspicions, possibly being sent to the camp with the gift of a basket of food just before the attack begins. Should there be nothing but NPCs (sailors) left behind, this encounter occurs automatically.

Given player ingenuity, it is possible that one or more player characters might escape the betrayal. If this is the case, their only hope is to rejoin the rest of the party or to find and join with Akanga against the evil Dr. Fran.

Even if captured, there are still some chances of escape. Dr. Fran will start on the sailors first (see the introduction of this module for his lecturing style while working), and the players may try to break their bonds (a bend bars/lift door roll is required to loosen the great leather straps). It might be possible to talk a remorseful Delphi into letting them go if they have wooed the young ward; superior role-play (and a promise not to hurt Dr. Fran) should be required to persuade her to abandon her guardian and throw in her lot with the heroes.

If none of these occur, the DM should merely shake his or her head sadly and draw a curtain on the scene as the first of the player characters is wheeled up to the operating table, and the etherized leopard is wheeled up next to it. Darkness falls before the knife does, leaving the grisly horrors of the operation to the players' minds and the results to the chapter following the next one.

Attack of the Broken Ones

The heroes who chose to travel to the monastery (whether they believe Dr. Fran at this point or not) have a single encounter en route to the place. This is an ambush by Akanga's loyal Broken Ones.

The day is hot and muggy, and the insects swirl about your head. The trek to the monastery seems to take forever.

You suddenly notice that all the birds have gone quiet—it is a creepy, dangerous silence. Your compatriots have noticed it as well and reach for their weapons.

There are cries of "Akanga! Hail!" all around you, and the brush erupts with Broken Ones. These are as twisted and malformed as any you have seen so far, but they are armed with crude black swords of cold, beaten iron. They are among you in an instant.

There are three times as many Broken Ones in the mob as there were living player characters at the time Felix talked to the cat-man (this attack is the result of the information he passed along). They are all armed with swords of cold iron, the best that Akanga can manage, and useful items for dealing with undead monks in the next chapter.

Akanga's Broken Ones: AC 7 (hide armor); MV 9; HD 3; hp 18 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (claws) or 1d8 (cold iron sword); SD regenerate 1 hp per round, stamina (minimum 5 hp per HD); SZ S to M; ML unsteady (7); Int low (5); AL NE; XP 175 each.

The mob has no real leaders, nor any Broken Ones of size L. If two-thirds are slain, the rest will panic and flee immediately, dropping their weapons. Until their morale breaks, they fight grimly, with unexpected discipline.

This encounter is not intended to kill the heroes (well, one or two, maybe), but rather to show Akanga taking the heroes' worth. He knows the heroes are going to fetch the *Table of Life* for *Diosamblet* and is willing to weaken them now, and confront, and perhaps destroy, them later.

THE MONASTERY OF THE LOST



The Monastery of the Lost was originally a monastery of the Order of the Guardians, a secret society entrusted to protecting the outside world from dangerous artifacts and relics by safeguarding them in their remote retreats. In its original position, the monastery was nestled on the lower slopes of Mount Baratak, which remains in Barovia. Now the Monastery is situated

on the upper reaches of the highlands which line the southern shore of the island-domain of Markovia, facing away from its steep seaward cliffs.

Both before and after the Translation, the monastery perched high above the mundane world, escaping it through inaccessible height. The cloud-shrouded respite is scarcely noticeable from the ground level, and only the sharp-eyed might pick out the few buildings which line the edge (the Lift House, the Hall of Contemplation, the monks' quarters, and the Temple).

Getting There

The Monastery has two accesses, neither of which is immediately obvious. When the retreat was first constructed, a narrow trail wound around up the side of the mountain, up which the initial supplies and materials were brought. With the construction of the lift, the brothers set off a series of avalanches which closed the mountain path.

Finding the old path requires a keen eye. Each hero has a 1-in-6 chance of spotting it (2-in-6 if an elf or a dwarf). It is a steep, narrow, twisting affair which hugs the mountainside, entirely blocked or altogether swept away by rockslides for fifty to a hundred feet at three separate points. Each individual attempting to cross such sections must succeed at a Climb Walls roll or Dexterity check to avoid falling 20 to 120 feet (2d6 x 10 feet; determine the distance before asking for the check). Individuals with Mountaineering proficiency may use that proficiency to circumvent the

rockslide for their entire party, provided they have the correct tools (ropes, pitons, etc.—lack of the tools prevents effective use of this proficiency). It takes about 4 hours to reach the monastery by way of the path.

An easier way to access the monastery is via the lift. See “Reaching the Monastery” on page 55 for a description of the great, hollow metal tube which serves as the monastery’s door-knocker and the results of ringing this unusual bell. Heroes who do reach the top via the lift will find the Lift House empty, as the Brothers who brought them up have gone back into hiding; see the section entitled “Arrival” on page 55.

There are other ways up the side of the mountain, including magical devices or spells (such as a *fly* spell or a *carpet of flying*), as well as climbing the sheer walls of the mountain itself (ten Dexterity checks or Climb Walls rolls required per climber—should one character have *Mountaineering* proficiency and have the correct tools to hand, then only one check needs to be made per person). Such a climb would take 8 hours.

The Monastery

The Monastery of Lost Souls is perched on an overhanging promontory of what was once Mt. Baratak, several hundred feet above the valley floor. It is often wrapped in low, sinister clouds, which break to allow only the barest forms of the buildings to be visible. From the ground, a sharp-eyed individual might be able to make out up to four different buildings atop the outcropping.

The buildings of the monastery are of uniform construction—fired brick with plaster (now cracking from the weather) and roofs of fired red clay. The balconies and frames are wood, the timbers exposed on the interior walls.

Initially, the Brethren attempt to stay out of sight, until Father Milhouse greets the visitors and determines their intentions. As a result, there is a feeling a desolation about the old buildings as the Brothers, warned of the heroes’ approach by noise, motion, etc., seek to evacuate buildings ahead of the adventurers. The player characters will have the chance to examine two or three buildings before Father Milhouse catches up to them.

Due to the influence of the *Table of Life*, the

THE MONASTERY OF THE LOST

Brothers (and Father Milhouse) are all members of the Ancient Dead (mummies), but this should not be immediately apparent; see "The Brethren" on page 52.

1. The Lift House

This is the main access to the monastery, though it has been rarely used since Markovia moved to its present location. The Lift House is built over the edge of the promontory the monastery rests upon, with a wide balcony (1a) running along two sides. The corner of this balcony is entirely filled by the lift, a huge wicker basket with a floor of wooden planks.

The winch (1b) within the building is manned by a pair of monks who can bring the basket up to the balcony in about half an hour. This includes one five-minute stop, about 50 feet from the top, while the monks check out the riders to ascertain that they are not Broken Ones or other obvious threats (merely being an adventurer is not enough to warn them).

The monks, upon hauling the individuals the rest of the way up, will then abandon their station, retreating first by the staircase to the Library (building 2) then Contemplation Hall (building 3), then finally to the catacombs beneath the monastery.

If there are player characters still on the ground after the first group reaches the monastery, then the heroes must operate the winch to bring their friends up. They will find it in excellent repair, the working mechanisms carefully oiled to avoid rust and deterioration. Two people can easily operate the winch. The Lift House is usually empty unless someone has rung the bell in the valley below.

The interior of the Lift House (1c) is a single open room, occupied by the winch along the north wall, a doorway leading onto the rocky promontory, and a sunken stairway to the south leading to the Library. Along the western wall are two rows of barrels containing supplies brought up before the Translation but never used by the now-undead members of the community. The barrels are of

The Order of the Guardians

The Order of the Guardians is a semi-secret organization which exists throughout the domains of Ravenloft, though primarily in those domains with human populations and human or humanoid leaders (including Markovia, Barovia, and Tepest, among others). They are a reclusive banding of "brothers" (the title applies to members of both sexes who join the order) who are dedicated to protecting the greater world from artifacts which are evil, destructive, powerful, or all three.

Each monastery or retreat of the Order is dedicated to a single powerful magical device, relic, or artifact. The Brethren, usually 6 to 24 (6d4) in number, dedicate their lives to researching, understanding, and comprehending the device they guard and ensuring that it does not find its way out into the general population. Given that some of these artifacts have their own malevolent sentience and desire to influence the great and powerful of Ravenloft, this is a major task. Such items are often resistant to all but the most arcane form of damage, so they cannot be destroyed, though the Brothers often devote much of their research and meditation to just that end.

The Brothers will lay down their lives, fanatically, to prevent their Order's artifact from

being spirited away. Should it be stolen, they will leave their retreat to pursue it. They will only abandon their charge if they are all killed or the item they protect is somehow destroyed.

Each monastery or retreat of the Order is an independent unit, and they rarely communicate with each other. There can be several operating independently in the same domain, dedicated to protecting the world from separate artifacts. Each group takes its own name, often influenced by the artifact it watches, thus concealing that the greater Order exists. The Monastery of the Lost was but one of several branches of the Order in Markovia before the Translation; another, charged with guarding a haunted tapestry, was known as the Guardians; their fate is recorded in the novel *Tapestry of Dark Souls*, by Elaine Bergstrom. The events of that book take place before the Translation of Markovia to its present location; the Monastery of the Lost is the only branch known to have survived the Translation.

The symbol of the Order is a monk in blue robes, with a high-necked collar that gives him a sinister appearance. The monk is shown holding a closed box in his hands, both presenting it and holding it securely.

THE MONASTERY OF THE LOST

salted fish, and markings on the side indicate they are from Mordentshire.

The door to the balcony has not been as well cared for as the winch and is stuck but not locked (the knob turns, but the door does not swing open). It will not open unless forced, but any amount of pressure or strength will knock it open.

2. Library

The Library of the Lost Souls is a three story structure with only the topmost floor above the surface; the rest are sunk into the mountain. The three stories open into one large atrium, with balconies on the 2nd and 3rd floors. Each floor is 20' above the one directly below. The balconies are staggered such that if someone falls off the top floor, that individual will land on the 2nd floor balcony, not the ground floor (usually). Each floor can be reached by a spiral staircase of wrought iron in the southeast corner.

Light is provided by crystal gloves, within which are placed *continual light* spells. The globes are so old they have taken on a milky translucence, giving the room a soft, diffused glow.

The topmost floor (2a) is marked by narrow (5-foot-wide) balcony around the edge, two feet of which is filled with heavy oak bookcases. These represent the histories of the various orders, each volume of which equals the tale (or a version of a tale) of one branch of the Order and its artifact. These volumes refer primarily to locations and individuals in the Ravenloft campaign settings, and investigators will discover numerous references to Strahd, Markov, Azalin, and the rest of the darklords. These volumes were written before the Translation of Markovia cut off all contact with the mainland and have not been corrected. There are multiple copies of the same volume, copied and recopied by the monks.

Among the volumes include the tale told in *Tapestry of Dark Souls*, as well as reports of an order protecting a transubstantial halo in Mordentshire, another guarding a mechanical serpent in Sithicus, and an order in Darkon which hide the Key to the Abyss. There are also volumes which describe lands which are not known in Ravenloft (such as Theka, Bileplate, and Moridana) which may have been part of the Ravenloft Core eons ago. The Library also holds several copies of *The History of Markovia* (see the box on page 48) and the volume detailing the

Table of Life (retelling the legends given on page 51). A doorway in the south wall opens out onto the monastery grounds.

The 2nd level (2b) has a much wider balcony and walls lined with books, with reading tables at the four corners. These books tend to be general knowledge, and include volumes on farming, toolmaking, metallurgy, and naturalistic studies. There is much here about ordinary animals and plants, and nothing about Markov or the Broken Ones.

The eastern wall of books is broken by a great arch, which leads to the Hall of Contemplation (building 3).

The lowest level of the Library building (2c) is filled with several great tables, upon which rest innumerable scrolls and maps. Here are old maps which depict Markovia as being part of the mainland Core of Ravenloft, and maps of the surrounding areas of the Core, along with city maps of the major Ravenloft cities (all of these city maps can be found in the RAVENLOFT boxed campaign setting). The scrolls indicate pronouncements and declarations from various rulers, histories which have not been transcribed, and two magical scrolls, each with three *cure disease* spells on them.

The amount of scrolls and scrap paper littering the lowest floor makes the library a fire trap—any open flame accidentally or purposefully cast into the central well will start a blaze (1d6 damage first round, 2d6 each round following) which will level the building before spreading to the Lift House and Hall of Contemplation.

The Library will be empty initially, when the monks are avoiding the heroes. After the characters meet with Father Milhouse, there will always be one monk present in this building, and usually two.

3. Hall of Contemplation

This small building perched on the edge of the cliff is used as a copying room for the Brethren, where they duplicate books, which are then stored in the Library. There are six small writing desks here, facing away from the windows (the natural light is used to illuminate the scriptures, not the Brethren). An arched passage leads west to the Library's 2nd floor. There is a door to the outside along the southern wall and a narrow set of stairs leading down into the natural rock of the promontory and ending in a door. Beyond lay the catacombs, but

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the door to them is held shut by a special priestly version of *wizard lock* so that only a member of the Order may open it.

Initially, as with the Library, the Hall of Contemplation will be empty as the monks avoid the player characters, retreating into the catacombs if need be. Normally there will be 4 to 6 (1d3+3) Brothers at work at their desks during the daylight hours.

The monks may have abandoned their posts, but their work remains. The Brothers are currently occupied in transcribing the *History of Markovia*, sections of which are at the different desks around the room.

4. The Kitchen

The monastery kitchen was once a hub of activity but has now been abandoned, as the monks no longer have the same bodily needs they once did. The building consists of a single large room, with a large hearth in the northeast corner. The hearth has been long cold, and the great iron cauldron is showing a mottling of rust. There are two doors along the south wall of the building, one leading to the monastery grounds, the other to a set of stairs which lead up and down to the Hall of Necessity.

The History of Markovia

There are several copies of this book in the monastery, most in the Library and several in the Hall of Contemplation. There are none in Dr. Fran's house, for obvious reasons, though he does keep his own diaries (these diaries would be extremely valuable to the monks).

The History of Markovia retells, in rather lurid form, the information set out in the RAVENLOFT boxed set about that realm and its darklord. For those going through the entire text, provide the following summary:

"Once, in the land of Barovia, there was a butcher named Frantisek Markov. He experimented with his animals before slaying them, mutating them into horrible forms before they died. He was found out in his grisly hobby by his wife, Ludmilla, who became Markov's first human victim. Markov then fled into the Mists.

"Markov found a wilderness in which he could indulge in his passion for vivisection and experimentation. His desire became all the greater because of the curse which twisted his frame and further warped his mind. Though he has the face of a man, he has the body of a beast—often that of a bear or gorilla. He now seeks a humanity lost even before his curse overtook him, and all who fall into his grasp, human or otherwise, are mere fodder for his mad experiments.

"At one point, Markov dispatched a group of his animal-men, called the Broken Ones, to Nova Vaasa to raid a tomb of the Ancient Dead. They brought back with them a great slab of polished

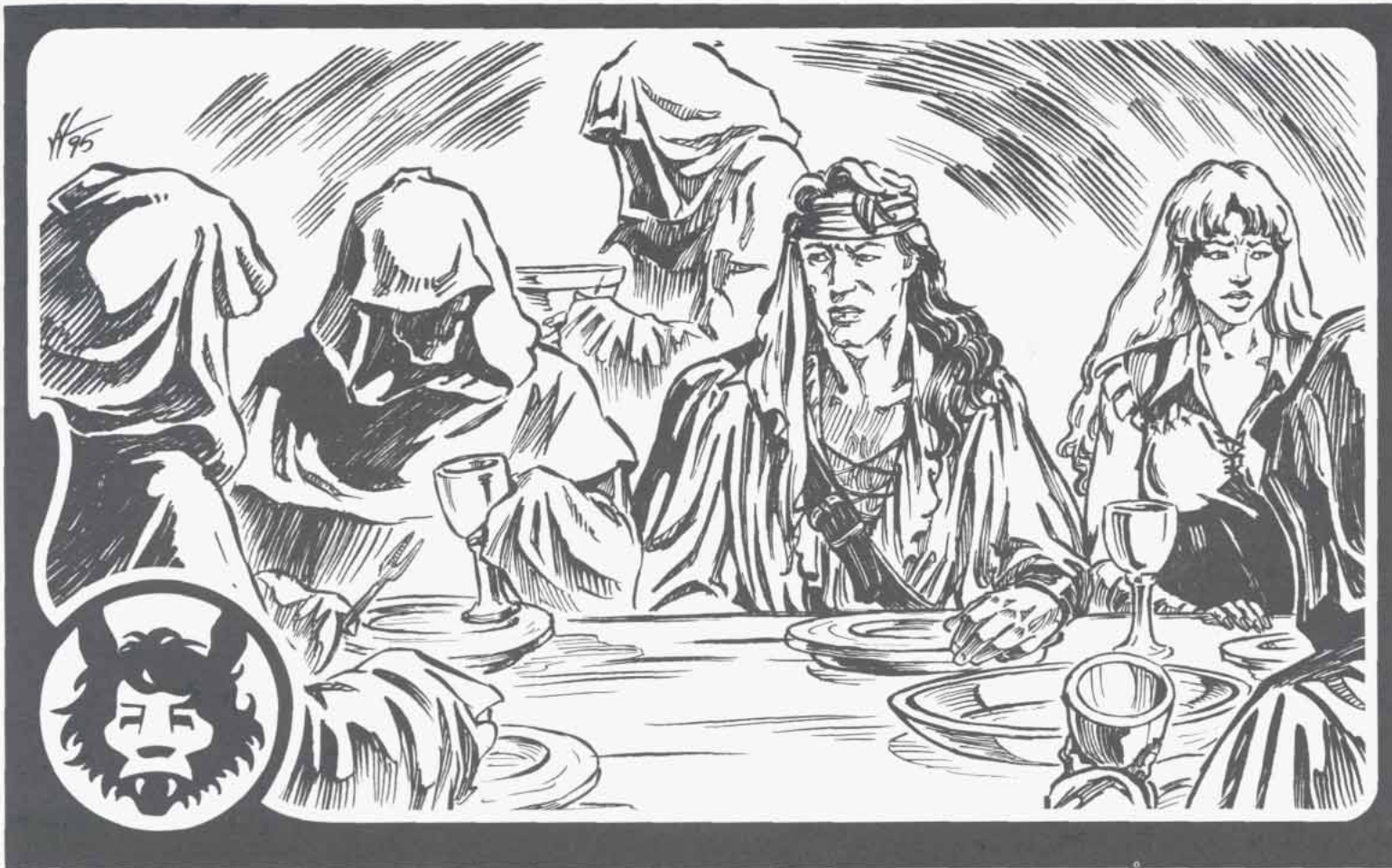
marble, veined with gold, which was called the Table of Life. The table was said to preserve the life of any who lay upon it, and was used by those Ancient Dead to prepare bodies for eternal life.

"The animal men knew that Markov, whom they call Diosamblet ("The god who walks among us") could use the Table of Life, and so they brought it back to Markovia. They were ambushed by rogues on the border, who in turn were robbed by Vistani, who in turn were waylaid by thieves, who in turn were slain by adventurers. One of these adventurers was a member of the Order of the Guardians, and left his own Monastery to found a new retreat on the haunches of Mt. Baratak.

"Since that time, the Order has protected Markovia and the greater world from the dangers of the Table's reaching Frantisek Markov. The Table has given its benefits, for the monks have been very long-lived in its ghostly radiance and have not suffered the pains of age and decay. They are prepared to serve their cause, and protect the Table, until the end of all time.

"The Order is protected by its reclusive nature and secrecy. Before the Grand Conjunction and the Translation of Markovia into the Sea of Sorrows, they were supplied by agents of the Order and wandering Vistani. Now they are self-sufficient, and that is as it should be—for should Markov discover the treasure that lay in the temple, then he would spare no effort to recover it. And all the world should tremble on that day."

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5. Hall of Necessity

This two-story building is the Brothers' dining hall, with food storage beneath. Since the Brethren have curtailed all need of food, the supplies have moldered and the kitchen (building 4) has gone unused.

The monks still gather for meals at the dining room of the Hall (5a), however, since this is the one time of day when they may break their vow of silence. Empty plates are passed down the table, silverware carefully laid alongside each. While the Brethren engage in conversation and gossip, no food passes their lips. Such has been the case for so long that if visitors (such as the adventurers) stay for dinner, they will be given the odd opportunity to dine on empty plates. Should they complain, Father Milhouse will make a fuss and a hasty meal of cold salted fish (from the Lift House) and wine (from the basement, 5b) will be provided. Father Milhouse and his Brethren will consider this no more than a small, unavoidable breach of hospitality.

There are four long tables in the dining room, with benches along each side. A hearth stands at the

northern end of the room, unlit (the room is usually cool, as are all buildings in the complex). Above the hearth is a painting by one of the Brethren of the symbol of the order (a blue monk in high-collared robe with a closed box, the monk's face blessed with a beatific smile). Visitors may notice that only two tables are filled at dinner time, indicating that either the Order once had more members who have since left or died or that there are some who no longer show up for meal times.

The basement (5b) is used for storage, and most of the floor has rotted in the moist mountain air. Flour has solidified in its barrels into concrete; grains have been reduced to sticky, mashed bricks; the cheese and bread is stale and vermin-infested. In the northwest corner, a rotted bin of apples has become a forest of slender, multi-colored mushrooms. These mushrooms have no special properties, good or ill, and have a bland, slightly bitter taste.

The basement also has several large casks of wine, which have also been ignored for years. The vintage is very good, if slightly vinegary, and the monks recommend the wine.

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6. The Quarters of the Brethren

This two-story building with its second story tucked under a steeply slanting roof houses the minimal quarters of the monks, as well as the storage area and armory of the monastery.

Father Milhouse has his reception area (6a) and personal quarters (6b) on the western wing of the ground floor, behind a door which can be locked, though it rarely is. The Father's reception area is relatively bare, his only luxuries a personal writing desk and a gold-bound copy of *The History of Markovia* resting on a bookstand (worth 200 gp for the material and workmanship alone, and worth much more to those seeking information on Markov). Several low wooden stools are used by the Father and his guests for meetings.

The Father's personal quarters are equally spartan, consisting of nothing more than a cot and a wash stand. Along the western wall of this room is a ladder leading up to a trap door. The trap door is bolted from below; when opened, it gives access to the armory (6e).

The remainder of the first floor and most of the second consists of individual cells of the monks (6c). These doorless cells house only a low cot and a stool apiece. Each cell is home to one Brother, and here the Brethren retire each evening (though they do not sleep, old habits die hard, and the pattern of living is important to them).

Should the player characters remain the night as guests of the monks, they will be given rooms on the second floor, along the northern side of the building. Of course, since the monks never truly sleep, sneaking about at night will draw the curiosity of several of the Brothers, and eventually a visit from Father Milhouse.

The cliffward side of the second floor consists of a low crawl space (6d) where the roof meet the far wall. This is used as storage by the monks and contains a number of chests containing items which have not been used by the monks for some time—rotting fabric, worn clothes, and the like. At the DM's option, the players may find some minor magical item within, such as a *potion of extra-healing* or a *ring of feather falling* (the latter potentially useful at this great height).

The western end of the upper floor consists of the order's armory (6e). In normal times, the monks would fall back here to gain weapons, but since they have become undead they inflict more damage with their bare hands. There are two *maces* +2 among the collection, one of which will be used by Father Milhouse in any fray against opponents who may only be struck by magical weapons. The door is always closed but neither locked nor bolted. In an emergency, the Brothers can gain access through Father Milhouse's quarters.

Finally, the eastern side of the building has a door sunk into the rock (6f). This door opens to reveal a staircase leading up to the second floor of the monks' quarters and down to a special *wizard-locked* door which can only be opened by a member of the Order; behind lie the catacombs (area 8).

7. The Temple

The largest building in the monastery is a great Temple, where the *Table of Life* is stored, protected, and venerated. The grand double doors are the north end are heavy oak and covered with two large metal plates, each plate depicting the symbol of the order.

The bulk of the Temple consists of low benches facing a platform reached by ascending three broad steps. The walls are plain and unadorned. Behind the dais, on the far wall, is the symbol of the Order, with Father Milhouse's face represented as the monk holding the box.

Centermost on the dais is the *Table of Life* itself, resting on a small altar of gray stone. This gray stone altar is carved from the living rock of the mountain and is quite immobile—however, it should be clear to the player characters from Dr. Fran's description that the *Table* is only the slab atop the altar. The entire area of the altar radiates a soft, milky glow.

A pair of doors flank the dais. The western door leads up to a passage to the monks' quarters, and the eastern door leads to a low balcony. This balcony hangs precipitously over the valley floor below, and any one or any thing that is cast off will hit the ground some 500 feet down (damage 20d6, no saving throw unless other factors are involved).

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The Table of Life

The *Table of Life* is a single large slab of greenish-black marble shot through with thin veins of gold; it is eight feet in length, three in width, and six inches thick. The surface is smoothly polished and appears like a part of the surface of a still pond, as if one might plunge into its lucid depths; its corners are smoothly rounded and unmarred. The *Table* radiates with a soft, milky glow that accumulates over time, so that after a few days the area it is stored in will seem to be filled with a radiant mist. This mist does not obscure the *Table* and the area around it but rather makes the entire area seem to glow with an unearthly light.

In its history the *Table* has rested on hand-made legs, the ground, and for the past many years the stone altar of the monastery. None of these supports are necessary for the *Table* to operate: only the stone slab of the *Table* itself is required. Several owners have fastened restraining straps or ropes around it but again these are not necessary for the *Table* to function, and none are currently present.

The *Table of Life* has one primary function. Any creature placed on it will not die. The creature will not require food or drink (though it will experience hunger and thirst), can survive poison (though it will feel the venom burning through its veins) and survive any injury, including complete loss of hit points or severing of limbs and removal of organs (though it will still feel the pain of these effects). In short, the *Table* will prevent loss of life no matter what damage or harm is done to the individual on the slab, while not abating the amount of pain to the individual one whit. A person bound to the *Table* may go mad from the agony and horror of watching his or her own body being reduced to component parts but cannot die as a result of that damage.

However, should an individual bound to the *Table* be suddenly freed from it, all the effects of any damage suffered while on the *Table* immediately have full effect the instant he or she is no longer in contact with the *Table's* surface. Poisons, unless negated, will take full effect. Severed limbs, heads, etc. cannot be reattached, save through other magical means.

The *Table of Life* also has an effect on those in its vicinity who are not in direct contact with it. Those who spend a great deal of time near the *Table* are slowly transformed into Ancient Dead (mummies). Most folk so exposed are transformed into mummies of the second rank,

while superior individuals (those of 8th level or higher, or of 8 HD or greater) are transformed into mummies of the third rank. Information on the various forms of mummies may be found in *Van Richten's Guide to the Ancient Dead*, but all the information necessary for this adventure is summarized under the descriptions for the Brethren on pages 52–55, and possession of the *Van Richten's Guide* is not required for play.

This transformation takes a period of months of exposure, and individuals so affected lose their appetite and their need to consume food, their thirst and their need to drink, and their need to sleep. After six months of exposure, the transformation is complete (no saving throw). If an individual is not exposed to the *Table* daily, the effects will wear off in a similar time to the amount of exposure. Once transformed, however, there is no escape. Those actually resting on or bound to the *Table* are unaffected by this transformation.

The origins of the *Table of Life* are unknown, and it is believed to come from some land which is no longer part of the Core. There are several legends and tales surrounding the *Table*, including the following, all of them known to the Brethren:

- A pasha used the *Table* to display particularly grisly amusements for his court, until the commoners (annoyed by their involuntary participation in these displays) rebelled and spent a year killing him, with the aid of the *Table*.
- A paranoid researcher, fearful of death, slept on the *Table*, received his meals there, and refused to leave it. He lived fifty years in this fashion, until an earthquake knocked him from his perch and he crumbled into a pile of bones.
- A mortician in Nova Vaasa (the most recent owner before it was moved to Markovia) used it to prepare the dead. She and her servants retreated with the *Table* into the depths of some ruined catacombs, where Markov's animal-men found it.

The *Table* is indestructible and will survive fire, cold, weapon attacks, and even extreme attacks such as spells or being dropped from a great height. This last is a very real possibility, given its present location; if thrown off the mountain, it will plunge to the valley floor and imbed itself 2 feet into the soft earth, at a tilted angle but otherwise unaffected.

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Unknown to the Brethren, Markov has at last learned of the resting place of the *Table*, and he intends to use it to aid in his research (the greatly extended lifespan of victims strapped on the *Table* allows for greater possibilities in his studies of nature and body modification). Should the heroes return with the *Table*, kindly Dr. Fran thanks them effusively and praises their remarkable feat. He then fits it with new supports and straps and uses it to transform the player characters into beasts in his service.

8. The Catacombs

The region beneath the promontory the monastery rests upon is criss-crossed with intersecting tunnels, opening here and there onto small alcoves remarkably like the monks' cells above (see area 6c). Only a small portion of the catacombs—that section immediately reachable from the Hall of Contemplation and the monks' quarters—is shown on the maps, but they continue to plunge and branch throughout in a maze of twisty passages far back into the mountain.

Here remain those members of the order who have decayed due to continuous exposure to the *Table of Life*. While they look like any other monk when hooded and robed, their advanced stages of decay and status as Ancient Dead becomes obvious the moment their hoods are cast aside. Each evening, as the more human monks retire to their cells, these Withered Brethren come up in twos and threes to sit in the radiance of the *Table*. In the evenings, there will always be two of them present.

If the monastery is threatened, then the Withered Brethren will surge to the surface to defend their home and their charge. They will appear at the monks' quarters and the Hall of Contemplation and attack with their bare hands.

9. Bolted Door

The monastery grounds are neatly swept and generally empty. The only access to the complex, other than the lift, is through this heavy oak door, which opens onto the old path that once lead up the mountainside. The door is bolted and the bolt rusted shut, so that it would take a bend bars/lift gate roll to force the door open. It is possible for those with wall-climbing ability or the Mountaineering proficiency to work around the door.

The door leads to the trail down the hill. See page 45 for a description of the difficulties involved in negotiating this old path. If the heroes choose this method as their means of escape, they will be pursued by the monks, who will risk all to recover their sacred charge (where Dexterity checks are necessary, consider the monks to have a Dexterity of 13).

The Brethren

The monks of the Order have been transformed into Ancient Dead, also called mummies, through their exposure to the *Table of Life* during the daily rituals performed in its milky radiance.

There are a total of 41 monks in the monastery. Forty of these are Ancient Dead of rank 2, but only twenty of these are sufficiently whole and self-aware to pass for ordinary humans. The leader of the forty monks is Father Milhouse, an Ancient Dead of rank 3. In van Richten's terms, the most decayed monks (those who haunt the catacombs) would be considered "withered," the ones who could pass for human (that is, those who inhabit the buildings aboveground) are checks "intact," and Father Milhouse himself is in "pristine" condition.

Father Milhouse, 7th-level human Priest and Ancient Dead of Rank 3: AC 2 (mummification—appears to wear dark, heavy robes); MV 12; hp 36; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 2d8 (bare-handed) or 1d6+3 (*mace* +2); SA diseased touch (see below), *fear*, priest spells and abilities; SD unaffected by weapons of less than +1 enchantment, immune to cold and fire, immune to spells that affect only the living, rejuvenation (regenerates 12 hp per hour when resting), infravision (30'); SZ M (5' 8"); AL LN; XP 6,000. Str 18/00, Dex 11, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 10. Spells (5/3/2/1): *bless*, *command* (x2), *cure light wounds* (x2); *enthrall*, *hold person*, *silence 15' radius*; *cause blindness*, *dispel magic*; *spell immunity* (*lightning bolt*).

Father Milhouse's touch can spread disease if he so wishes. This disease is fatal in 1d8 days and may only be cured by magical means. The mummy rot reduces the victim's Strength and Constitution by 1 point each day, and Charisma by 2 points. This later loss is permanent, even if

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the individual is healed. While affected, the victim cannot recover hit points save by a *wish* (that is, neither *bedrest* nor any of the *cure wounds* spells have any effect). After 1d6 hours, the victim experiences convulsions causing him or her to suffer a -2 penalty on all ability checks and making spellcasting impossible. A simple *cure disease* will banish the effects of this rot, but unless it is followed up within 24 hours by a *regeneration* spell a relapse occurs. Father Milhouse may also use his *fear* power at will (saving throw vs. spell at a -2 penalty; those affected are paralyzed with fear for 1d8 rounds). This is a matter of willpower rather than simple squeamishness; the Ancient Dead bends all its will to flood the victim's mind with sheer terror.

Father Milhouse is the leader of the Brethren of the Order of the Guardian and, though one of the Ancient Dead, his undead status is not apparent. He appears a somewhat overweight abbot with broad shoulders and a prodigious belly, all wrapped in heavy dark robes. His stole is hooded, and he normally wears it with the hood down (as opposed to his followers) to reveal chubby features and short hair which has gone entirely silver. He normally has a friendly, amused smile on his face.

Father Milhouse was among the Brothers who first brought the *Table of Life* to its present resting place. As with his fellow monks, he is relatively unaware of his own undead status. The fact that he neither eats, nor sleeps, nor drinks is merely a fact of everyday "life" for him. If the oddity of all this should be thrust beneath his nose, he merely credits it to the blessings of the *Table*.

Father Milhouse is the only member of the monastery not bound under a vow of silence and hence will be the Brother with whom the heroes will normally interact. The other monks, if asked direct questions, will point in Father Milhouse's direction and indicate by sign language that they cannot speak (raising two fingers to the lips, holding the other hand up as if ward off the intrusion). Father Milhouse will give the visitors a warm welcome, explaining the purpose of the monastery if questioned, even freely admitting the presence of the *Table of Life*, although he will certainly not allow them to carry it off.

Father Milhouse commands the loyalty of his

fellow monks, regardless of their state of deterioration. They attack on his command, but he will only give such an order if the heroes draw weapons first, or if they are caught trying to steal the *Table*. In a conflict, Father Milhouse casts *spell immunity (lightning bolt)* on himself if at all possible; this protection applies only to himself and not to his flock. He is immune to all cold and to fire as a result of his nature as one of the Ancient Dead.

When the heroes first arrive at the Monastery, regardless of method, Father Milhouse will be in the Temple, praying before the *Table of Life*.

The Intact Brethren

The Intact Brethren (20 Ancient Dead of Rank 2): AC 4 (mummification—appear to be wearing long, heavy robes); MV 9; HD 4; hp 18 each; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d12 (bare-handed); SA diseased touch, *fear*, Str 18/91; SD unaffected by weapons of less than +1 enchantment, immune to cold, immune to spells that affect only the living, rejuvenation (regenerate 6 hp per hour when resting); SW affected normally by weapons made of cold iron, silver weapons cause half-damage; SZ M; ML fearless (19); Int high (13-14); AL LN.

The Intact Brethren are those monks who can still generally pass for human. Their faces are cadaverous and gray, but still whole and unblemished with rot. Their voluminous robes conceal the eroding flesh and ichor-filled pustules that verge on breaking open. Heroes should be forced to make a horror check the first time the Brethren's undead nature is revealed, whether by intent or accident, and a fear check each time they confront the monks thereafter. Note that the revelation of the Intact Brethren's undead status, the appearance of the Withered Brethren, and the Ancient Dead's *fear* ability are all separate phenomenon calling for different responses.

The Brethren have a weakened form of the mummy's touch, which reduces the Charisma of the victim by 2 points per week; it is fatal in 1d12 weeks. The afflicted cannot regain hit points through *cure wounds* spells, nor by the Healing or Herbalism proficiencies, while healing via *bedrest* is reduced to 10% its normal efficiency (thus, it takes 10 times as long for an

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injury to heal). If a victim is affected both by this rot and the more deadly strain spread by Father Milhouse, then Father Milhouse's version will take precedence.

The *fear* ability of the Brethren is a matter of willpower, the Brother's against the victim's. The target may attempt a saving throw vs. spells at a -1 penalty; those who fail the saving throw are paralyzed with terror for 1d6 rounds. This *fear* ability will not be used against non-hostile strangers, but the monks will employ it freely against any who abuse their hospitality.

The Brethren are generally unaware of their transformation to the undead and continue to lead simple "lives." They rise from their humble cots at dawn; have a breakfast at the Hall of Necessity; spend the day in meditation, contemplation, scroll-copying, and general repairs; have a late afternoon meal; attend vespers between that meal and sunset; then retire to their individual cells.

It is the simple ritual of a monastic life. However, the Brethren do not actually sleep but lay inert on their cots in the ritual of sleep. They do not eat, and the only excuse of the two meals is to gather and talk, the only time they may break their vow of silence. Their veneration and meditation at the Temple in the evenings are bathed in the misty luminescence of the *Table*, maintaining their undead existence.

The Brethren at the Monastery of Lost Souls have taken a vow of silence, and if confronted will direct the inquirers to speak with Father Milhouse. They are reluctant to fight, even in self-defense, but are fanatically loyal to their mission and will attack any who attempt to take the *Table of Life*. They are loyal to Father Milhouse and will defend him against any assault, even at the cost of their own lives.

The Brethren are identical in stats, and in general appearance, though the DM may choose one of them (Sister Gamaliel or Brother Sime) to act as a silent guide (and watchman) of the travelers. Names which may be used for the Brethren include Alphonse, Balzathar, Beryl, Dominic, Eric, Felice, Gamaliel, Geoffrey, Greggor, Henric, Kendel, Leoni, Luce, Netheril, Pavlov, Quincy, Salvadore, Sime, Timothy, and Unger.

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The Withered Brethren

The Withered Brethren (20 Ancient Dead of Rank 2): AC 4 (mummification—appear to be wearing long, heavy robes); MV 9; HD 4; hp 20 each; THACO 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d12 (bare-handed); SA diseased touch, *fear*, Str 18/91; SD unaffected by weapons of less than +1 enchantment, immune to cold, immune to spells that affect only the living, rejuvenation (regenerate 6 hp per hour when resting); SW affected normally by weapons made of cold iron, silver weapons cause half-damage; SZ M; ML fearless (19); Int high (14); AL LN.

The empty places at the dinner table, the empty cells in the quarters, the sheer size of the complex—all point to a larger population in the monastery at one time. These lost members are the Withered Brethren, who have abandoned all contact with the surface and live in the catacombs beneath the monastery.

These monks are identical in game statistics to their intact Brothers on the surface. However, their appearance is quite different. Their faces have now rotted and dissolved with the passage of time, and the yellow-white of their skulls glisten beneath the crumbling skin. Bones protrude from the flesh of the hands and the skin is stretched tight over the bones of the arms and legs. Their eyes are little more than wrinkled pits, and their few remaining teeth wobble in their sockets.

These beings dwell in small cells far below the surface but retain their fanatical devotion to the Order; if the *Table* is removed from the Temple, they will feel it and surge to the surface in order to recover it. They will leave the monastery grounds in order to recover it; hence, during the Broken Ones' revolution there may be undead prowling the wilderness as well.

The adventurers may also encounter the Withered Brethren if they choose to explore the catacombs. The creatures in their native domain wish only to be left alone, but if attacked they will call for aid (wheezing howls over rotting vocal chords), and others will come to aid them.

The Withered Brothers have forgotten their own names, and no longer answer to them.

Reaching the Monastery

Once the heroes have arrived at the base of the mountain and found the bell, read the following description out loud to the players:

You arrive at a location at the base of a towering cliff. Far above you, the heights of the mountain's gray sides disappear into low, moisture-laden clouds.

A great, hollow bronze tube some 10 feet tall is partially buried in the ground, canted slightly, at the base of the mountain. The tube bears a raised impression of a figure in robes with a high collar, carrying a box. The face of the figure has been worn away over time.

The heroes are at the foot of the monk's promontory. If they search the area, they may find the overgrown remains of the trail described on page 45. If they strike the tube, it resonates with a deep sound that bounces off the valley floor to reach the Brethren above. Visitors were once more common to the monastery, and the surviving Brothers continue to offer hospitality even in their reduced circumstances. Accordingly, a large basket comes into view far above and is slowly lowered to the valley floor.

The lift can carry about 800 lbs, or roughly four player characters at a time. If the basket is overloaded, then the heavily-corded rope will strain, but the basket will not leave the ground until sufficient weight has been removed.

The lift will rise to within 50 feet of the Lift House, then stop, as the hidden monks spy out the passengers. No Broken Ones or other obvious agents of Markov will be admitted to the monastery, nor individuals who brandish weapons or attack with missiles or spells. In such cases, the lift reverses itself and lowers these undesirables back to the ground.

Arrival

Once the adventurers arrive on top of the promontory, they find themselves in a vacant, haunted area. The Brethren have standing orders to avoid all newcomers until the strangers can be greeted officially by Father Milhouse. Therefore the lift operators will retreat, first to the Library, then to

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the Hall of Contemplation, and finally to the catacombs.

Should the adventurers choose the mountain path instead of the lift, they will see the brief flash of a dark robe disappearing into one of the buildings as they enter the compound. The scenario will proceed apace from there.

The monks will play hide-and-seek with the heroes, at least at first, seeking to stay out of their way. Those pursuing them will discover books recently set down, tasks abandoned, and ink still wet on the copied parchment. During this time, Father Milhouse is at the Temple, praying before the *Table of Life* in preparation for meeting them. It will take about a half-hour for him to complete his preparation, sufficient time for the heroes to investigate two or three buildings.

During this time, should one of the player characters “catch” a monk, the hooded Brother surrenders peacefully. Should the intruders try to set fire to the Library or otherwise begin to engage in destructive behavior, one of the monks (Sister Gamaliel) will approach and beckon for them to follow, attempting to lead them to Father Milhouse. The Brethren have taken a vow of silence, effective at all times except meals, and as a result will only communicate through hand gestures. When role-playing these monks, the DM should make their hand gestures smooth and serious and try to avoid the more comical and exaggerated features common to mime. The sign of their silence is two fingers raised to the lips, backs of the fingers outward. Surrender is simply both hands raised to shoulder height, palms outward. Any questions will be directed towards Father Milhouse, in this case by a sweeping motion directed to the Temple.

The monks are not trying to be difficult, merely following the precepts of their particular order. However, their wraithlike, fluid movements and secretive nature should put any players on their guard, prepared for greater, unseen dangers.

If the monks are attacked or threatened with unsheathed weapons, they will use their *fear* power to gain time for a successful escape. If harmed, the monk does not fight back but cries out in agony, bring Father Milhouse on the run. He arrives 5 rounds later and attempts to stop any combat. However, if one of his Brethren has been slain he assumes that the intruders are agents of Markov and orders the monks into battle.

Meeting Father Milhouse

Barring a major melee breaking out, the character’s ghostly encounters with the Brethren will continue for about a half-hour, or sufficient time to give two, perhaps three, buildings the once-over. Once the heroes have had sufficient time to look around, read the following.

“Hello to the Honored Guests!” says a hearty bass voice, splitting the silence of the monastery.

You turn to see a priest making in your direction at full sail. His heavy robes billow around him as he moves, making him resemble nothing so much as a storm cloud of massive nature and singular intent. His hood is down, and the light plays across his smiling features. He is gray-haired but hearty, almost sprightly in his movements.

Should the heroes make for the Temple immediately, they will find Father Milhouse in meditation; in this case, read the following instead of the preceding box:

The massive doors swing open with only a slight squeak. You see before you the interior of a simple temple. Two rows of benches fill nearly half of the room. Where the benches stop, there are three low, wide steps, leading to a wide platform which fills the far end of the church. There is a staircase to the right of the platform leading up, and it looks like another on the left leading down.

The entire building is filled with a milky luminescence and swirling, almost living fog that imparts a soft glow to everything within. The glow is concentrated around a great, greenish-black slab, veined with striations of gold, resting on a stone altar in the center of the raised area.

Before the great slab, there is a single figure, broad-shouldered and of great girth, kneeling on the topmost step. While you cannot see the figure’s face, you note that its hair is cut very short and is extremely gray.

“Take a seat,” says the figure without looking around, in a amused, deep voice. “I will be with you in a few minutes.”

Father Milhouse takes a few more minutes in his devotion, then greets the players properly. During

THE MONASTERY OF THE LOST

this time he will be vulnerable: should the adventurers wish to get a drop on him, they may be able to have one round of free attacks. Should they fail to take out the good Father in a single round, he responds in kind and shows no mercy once thus treacherously attacked.

However, should the heroes keep their hands from their swords and a civil tongue in their heads, Father Milhouse greets them cordially once he completes his devotions and asks them as to their business. Should the heroes be up-front about their intentions, Father Milhouse will explain that this is quite impossible, as the *Table of Life* cannot leave the monastery. He will give the heroes a copy of *The History of Markovia*, saying that it explains better than he could why their request cannot be granted.

The travelers are welcome to spend the night, but they must leave by the following morning (unless they express an interest in joining the Order). Two of the Brethren (Brother Sime and Sister Gamaliel) will be assigned as their guides; these two will keep a constant watch on all the heroes' actions and promptly report any strange behavior to Father Milhouse.

Should the player characters prove more devious in their excuses, Father Milhouse will open the monastery for them, granting them room and board in exchange for tales of beyond. He knows of Markov, but refers to him only as "The Master of Pain" (Markov's true identity may be found in the library, and Father Milhouse confirms this if asked). He will ask (over the ghostly dinner) if The Master of Pain still rules in the land beyond, painting the dark-lord in the most unappealing (and truthful) terms—a vivisectionist, a sadist, a cruel, inhuman beast cursed to wearing the face of a man and the body of an ever-changing creature. Should the player characters have been taken in by Dr. Fran's kindness, then this realization should cause a horror check.

When playing Father Milhouse, remember that he would be just as happy discussing the change in weather and the mushroom crop as he would Dr. Fran. He will be friendly and outgoing, only closing up if the players betray an intention of making off with the *Table of Life*.

According to Father Milhouse, the Order of the Guardians is entrusted with protecting the greater world from powerful magical items. The *Table of Life* is one such item, since it grants a perverse form of immortality while allowing the body trapped on it to suffer all manner of horrible

privations. He cannot allow it to be removed.

The other Brothers, according to the Father, have taken a vow of silence, which they may break only at meal time, and even then they tend to be a quiet lot. There has been an outbreak of skinrot and other previously unknown tropical diseases affecting the Brothers. He is trying to keep it at bay, but the adventurers should understand that his Brethren are a little sensitive about this. Father Milhouse believes that the degeneration of his fellows is because of the change of climate. It has not occurred to him that it might be the result of the *Table*, and he rejects any such suggestion indignantly.

Finally, Father Milhouse remembers when his monastery was part of a larger land, far inland. The land they were in was so evil, that the gods sunk it beneath the waves, leaving them the only survivors (a reasonable interpretation of events from the Brethren's point of view). This part of that land was then called "Markovia," ruled by the Master of Pain.

The monks will not leave their mountain fastness (except to pursue the *Table*, if it is stolen). The heroes are more than welcome to spend their lives here in simple meditation and protection of the *Table of Life*. However, the DM should be aware that this will mean their eventual transformation into Ancient Dead as well.

A Day in the "Life" of the Brethren

The monks have a very simple lifestyle, as mentioned before, and their daily routine is unvarying, despite their undead status. Here is their daily schedule:

- Dawn—leave their personal cells after a night's rest.
- Breakfast at the Hall of Necessity. Talking allowed.
- After breakfast until around 4 pm—Daily tasks such as scroll-copying, general duties. Those with free time will be engaged in meditation (often in the catacombs or in the Temple).
- Around 4 pm—Dinner at the Hall of Necessity. Talking allowed.
- After 4 pm until dusk—Vespers at the Temple, in the radiating light of the *Table of Life*.
- Sunset—Retiring to their cells to "sleep" (actually laying motionless on their cots with their eyes closed).

THE MONASTERY OF THE LOST

Dealing with the Brethren

There are three general options that the player characters may take at this point, confronted with a group of seemingly innocuous monks.

1. Take the *Table of Life* by Force. Should the adventurers declare their intention to steal the *Table* or attack the monks, the Brothers fully mobilize. Assume that all monks immediately present (including Father Milhouse) will attack, and 1 to 3 additional monks will arrive each round until all 20 of the Intact Brethren are present. A well-armed and properly-equipped party of sufficient level may be able to deal with the monks.

The Withered Brethren living below will appear only once the *Table* itself is removed from its resting place, drawn by its power. From 2 to 8 of them will appear at the temple 2 rounds after the *Table* is first moved, with another 1 to 3 arriving each round thereafter.

The revelation of the Intact or Withered Brethren, or Father Milhouse himself, as undead will force a horror check. Each of the three checks is made individually, though by the third such check, if it occurs, the individuals gain +2 on the saving throw. The monks will seek to capture and bind those paralyzed by a failed saving throw, as opposed to killing them.

Should the character be overpowered by the Brethren but not slain, or should they surrender, Father Milhouse will have the individuals stripped of their weapons. He then either has them expelled from the monastery via the lift or bound with iron manacles in the Temple in the radiance of the *Table of Life* itself. Over time, characters so exposed will be transformed into the Ancient Dead themselves and join the Brothers as mummies of the 2nd rank.

2. Take the *Table of Life* by Stealth. It is possible, though difficult, to befriend the monks, then sneak out in the dead of night with the intention of grabbing the *Table*. If Father Milhouse is suspicious, or the heroes have been forthright in their intentions, both they and the *Table* will have a pair of Brethren acting as guards. Attempting to take the *Table* will be met with physical resistance, with the results noted above.

Even if the adventurers have deceived the good father, he is no fool and will be wary. The monks do not truly sleep at night, and should the characters prove active, two will follow them. The *Table*, however, will initially be unguarded, though removing it will bring the Intact and Withered Brethren as noted above.

Note that if the *Table* is thrown off the side of mountain (from any edge, or the balconies of the Lift House or Temple) it will fall unharmed to the valley floor. The adventurers would then have to escape themselves from the horde of angry monks seeking to capture or kill them. The monks would deal with the interlopers first, then recover the *Table*.

If in either of these cases the player characters escape the monastery with the *Table* but leave behind surviving monks (of whatever type), these monks, bound by their oath, will come down from the mountain to recover the *Table*. During the heroes' retreat to Dr. Fran's, the DM is encouraged to stress the feeling that their opponents are directly behind them. There are no further listed encounters with the monks, but the DM should feel free to have one or two of them pop up an inopportune times (like when the characters are trying to escape the island during the finale).

3. Throw in with the Monks: It is possible that the player characters will befriend the monks and believe Father Milhouse's tale, realizing kindly Dr. Fran's true identity and the harm that he intends. The Brothers will be more than willing to allow the characters to live there with them (and eventually become undead). The monks will not abandon their monastery, should the characters wish to leave, though they will gladly arm and equip the player characters as best as they are able. The two magical maces in the armory and the clerical scrolls from the library may be given to the players if they convince the monks that they will be used against The Master of Pain.

The monks have no way of escaping the island, and no desire to do so—now that it's on an isolated island, their prize is even more protected than before. They warn the heroes that both Markov and the Broken Ones are dangerous and not to be trusted, and recommend that they flee for their lives as soon as they are able.



FINALE

t this point, the heroes have most likely had the idea that not everything is on the up-and-up with kindly Dr. Fran, what with the information from the monks, the library, the worshipful nature of *Diosamblet*-chanting Broken Ones, and all. Any doubts which they have about the good doctor's innocence will be shattered in this section, forcing the heroes to search for allies elsewhere on the island.

Such allies manifest in the person of Akanga, who has been a shadowy figure throughout the adventure and, according to Dr. Fran, a force of evil and darkness. Akanga does carry his own evil and savagery with him, but his is a pale shadow of that of the island's true dark master.

Against the backdrop of Akanga's revolution, the heroes must try to make their escape from the island or forever be trapped there.

A Treachery Revealed

Run this encounter for those members of the party who visited the monastery. This is the first of two encounters on their way back to Dr. Fran's, and the DM may wish to reverse their order if it fits the gaming group better.

Ahead on the path you see what looks like a broken bundle cast by the side of the road. As you carefully approach, the bundle pulls itself upward and half-staggers, half-draws itself towards you.

It is a twisted mockery of a man, its bones melted and warped, dressed in tatters of rags and flesh. The warped visage of its face is a melding of an insane human's with that of a terrified great cat. An inhuman gurgle churns from its ruined throat.

With horrific clarity, you suddenly recognize the broken figure.

The twisted mangling of man and beast is a crossing of the black leopard with one of the ship's party—either one of the player characters who stayed behind or, should none of them be available, one of the ship's crew. His (or her) face is half-feline, half-human, the features running into one another like hot wax.

If the amalgam Broken One is a player character, and the player is present, let the player explain (in broken gasps) what happened. The details are in the section entitled "If the Offer is Refused" on pages 43–44. Eventually, Dr. Fran became frustrated (much as with the painting) and decided to start over. Orson dumped the body outside to die and be carried off by carrion creatures. However, the hapless individual survived and has been dragging itself forward, trying to reach his or her friends.

The creature is incomplete, and now lacks a number of basic organs, poisoning its blood as its eyes are turning crimson from the internal damage. No amount of healing, shy of a *limited wish*, will save this unfortunate. The *Table of Life*, if the heroes have it with them, can postpone the inevitable but cannot alleviate his or her agony. Tell the player running this character the situation and let him or her play out a death scene to rival the one in *Camille*. If the victim is an NPC, then allow him to expire, gasping in his last breaths "The monster . . . He is *the master of pain* . . ."

So warned, the player characters (with or without the *Table of Life*) have the choice of pressing on to Dr. Fran's or seeking some other safe haven, at least temporarily. If they have been building a boat, or found the ship's boat in the boat house, they may consider fleeing the island. However, any boat they have been constructing has been destroyed in their absence, while the threat of the rising storm should discourage them from trying to put to sea.

Lastly, they will meet Akanga.

Akanga's War

The DM may place this encounter as he or she sees fit. It can be on the way to Dr. Fran's Manor, or on the beach by the ruins of the burned boat, or in whatever hiding hole the characters have found to think things over.

They are suddenly there, without warning or sudden movement, manifesting like a desert mirage, completely surrounding you. They are silent and stone-faced, their twisted, anthropomorphic faces like masks of some arcane and fell sect. Some of the Broken Ones are carrying weapons of cold iron, but most are unarmed. They make no immediate move to attack, but stand there, watching.

Wait a beat, to see what the player characters will do. There are about 50 of the creatures, of all shapes and sizes; if attacked, about half of them fade back into the brush (for the later assault on Dr. Fran) while the others hammer the heroes with everything they've got. Akanga is testing the savageness of the newcomers and their willingness to deal. If the adventurers attack, Akanga will not appear, dismissing the player characters as too savage and too human to become his allies. This will make them prey once the revolution comes.

Akanga's Broken Ones: AC 7 (hide armor); MV 9; HD 3; hp 18 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (claws) or 1d8 (cold iron sword); SD regenerate 1 hp per round, stamina (minimum 5 hp per HD); SZ S to L; ML steady (12) in presence of Akanga; Int low (5); AL NE; XP 175 each.

Should the player characters hold their ground without attacking, read the following:

The crowd of Broken Ones parts at one side and a great lion-headed man strides into the clearing. He is wearing leggings made of the hide of some dark-furred beast and has scars across his broad chest and muzzle. His eyes are those of a predator, missing nothing, and his smile shows even rows of razor-sharp teeth.

Behind him, a quartet of deer-men bring a high-backed chair made of wicker. The lion-man nods and they set it down. He sits in the chair, facing the adventurers.

"I am Akanga," he says in a rolling deep voice. "We must talk."

The adventurers can still attack at this point, in which case Akanga and all his warriors fade quickly into the woodwork. Should they agree to the parley (which would be very wise on their part), Akanga has the following to say:

- They have supped at the table of a darklord, and for that they are damned to begin with. He offers them a chance for redemption.
- Their benefactor is Frantisek Markov, called the giver of pain, *Diosamblet*, by the sheep who worship him and submit to his hellish experiments.
- He, Akanga, was once a man who dreamed of beasts, or a beast who dreamed of men, but *Diosamblet* stole his past from him and turned him into what he is, neither man nor beast but something between the two, partaking of both.
- *Diosamblet* calls himself a god, but he is not a god, and he must pay for his transgression. His work is a crime against nature, and he turns his experiments out when they do not please him.
- *Diosamblet* must not get the *Table of Life*. If the heroes have it, Akanga will demand it be destroyed; if it cannot be destroyed, then it must be hidden from the darklord before he can use it to make greater abominations.
- *Diosamblet* will die at Akanga's hands. Akanga has rallied almost a quarter of the Broken One population—they are gathering to assault the estate and kill those within.
- It would please Akanga to have true men next to him in the assault (it would also help steady his troops, many of whom still think Dr. Fran a god). He offers them the chance to be in the attack.
- If they refuse, he will give them five minutes' head start, then set the entire force on their heels. Should they reach the wooden palisade, then they can warn *Diosamblet* that his doom is coming for him.

The heroes have the choice of throwing in with Akanga or not. Should they refuse, he allows them to leave just as he promised. The closest known

place of safe haven is the stockade. The characters may try to find another place to hide, but the upcoming war will sweep through the entire island, so there is no safe place.

Note that, if still carrying the *Table*, the characters will be slowed so that their pursuers will catch them unless they abandon or hide it. Should they do either, Akanga will find it.

Should the heroes throw in with Akanga, he will assign them to his main battle van for assaulting the palisade. He will not allow them to go ahead or separate from the main body.

Akanga's plan is simple—a direct assault. Careful and diplomatic adventurers may be able to convince him to modify this plan slightly, but a headlong attack fits both his own personality and the troops he leads. Indeed, he admits, he has a friend at the side of the false god (he will admit this only to those who have thrown in with him).

Lastly, should the heroes return to Fran's estate, they find it in a state of siege. The area around the wooden palisade has been burned away, and all the shutters and doors have been shuttered and barricaded save for the foyer. There are a large number of Broken Ones loyal to *Diosamblet* readying for the assault inside the area. Delphi has hidden herself upstairs. Orson and Felix are manning the front gate. Dr. Fran is "finishing a few things" in the lab (killing the last of his experiments, first anaesthetizing and then smothering them). All will be dead by the time the player characters arrive, several of them badly mutilated, turning the room into an abattoir. At the DM's option, any hero left here may still be left alive, but in serious need of healing.

Dr. Fran does not seem worried, even though his forces seem to be outnumbered—he has a surprise for the attacking forces.

Fort Markov, the Bronx

When the assault comes, the heroes may be in any of three locations—as part of Akanga's assault force, among the defenders in the estate, or hiding in the wilderness. All three hold various threats.

If they are hiding in the woods, the heroes will hear the sounds of a tremendous battle. It unfolds without them, and the victor will be Akanga. The heroes are then hunted down and have to find their own escape from the island.



The revolution is a full-fledged holy war which rocks the entire island, with most of the combat being between Broken Ones of the two factions. Assuming that the heroes take part in the climactic battle on one side or the other, most of the battle has little effect on the player characters—there are a huge number of Broken Ones on either side. Run the battle cinematically—give each hero 1d3 Broken Ones to battle. Once they are dealt with, the heroes may move to another area and battle 1d3 more. The flow of the battle occurs as follows: Akanga closes in on the palisade—his forces halt in the woods surrounding the palisade, and Akanga steps forward to issue a challenge to *Diosamblet*—

surrender and his children (Felix, Delphi, and Orson) will be spared.

Dr. Fran's response is to spring his surprise—the bulk of his forces are already concealed under the ashes around the palisade, outside the walls. With a single cry they rise up from hiding and attack their brothers, taking them by surprise. Dr. Fran, giving orders from his foyer door, laughs in delight.

Akanga's main body will be under direct assault, and heroes accompanying him must fight through 3 Broken Ones each to keep up with him. Akanga throws Broken Ones in all directions on his way to

the front gates. Already, small groups of Akanga's Broken Ones have reached the low wall, to be repulsed by Markov's forces on the far side.

Then comes Akanga's surprise—he has a traitor in the midst of Dr. Fran's forces. Felix, guarding the main gate with Orson, stabs his compatriot with a poisoned dagger. The bear-man will linger for a while, as the poison takes 1d4 turns to kill, and thus will be able to sacrifice himself dramatically if need be, but he is doomed. Felix then opens the gate for Akanga, as he arranged during one of his conversations with a cat-man in Akanga's service while hunting. Should Felix have perished somehow before this point, another cat-man on the inside may be used as a betrayer.

If Felix has bad blood with any of the player characters, he will use this occasion to even the score, with his bare hands (having left his knife in Orson's side). Akanga will not care if this occurs—his main goal is the house and Dr. Fran. If Felix does not succeed in killing a character quickly, or if no grudge exists, he flees into the jungle.

The resistance at the wall crumbles and the Broken

Ones battle each other in localized skirmishes across the well-manicured lawn. Dr. Fran slams the door to the foyer and retreats to his abattoir.

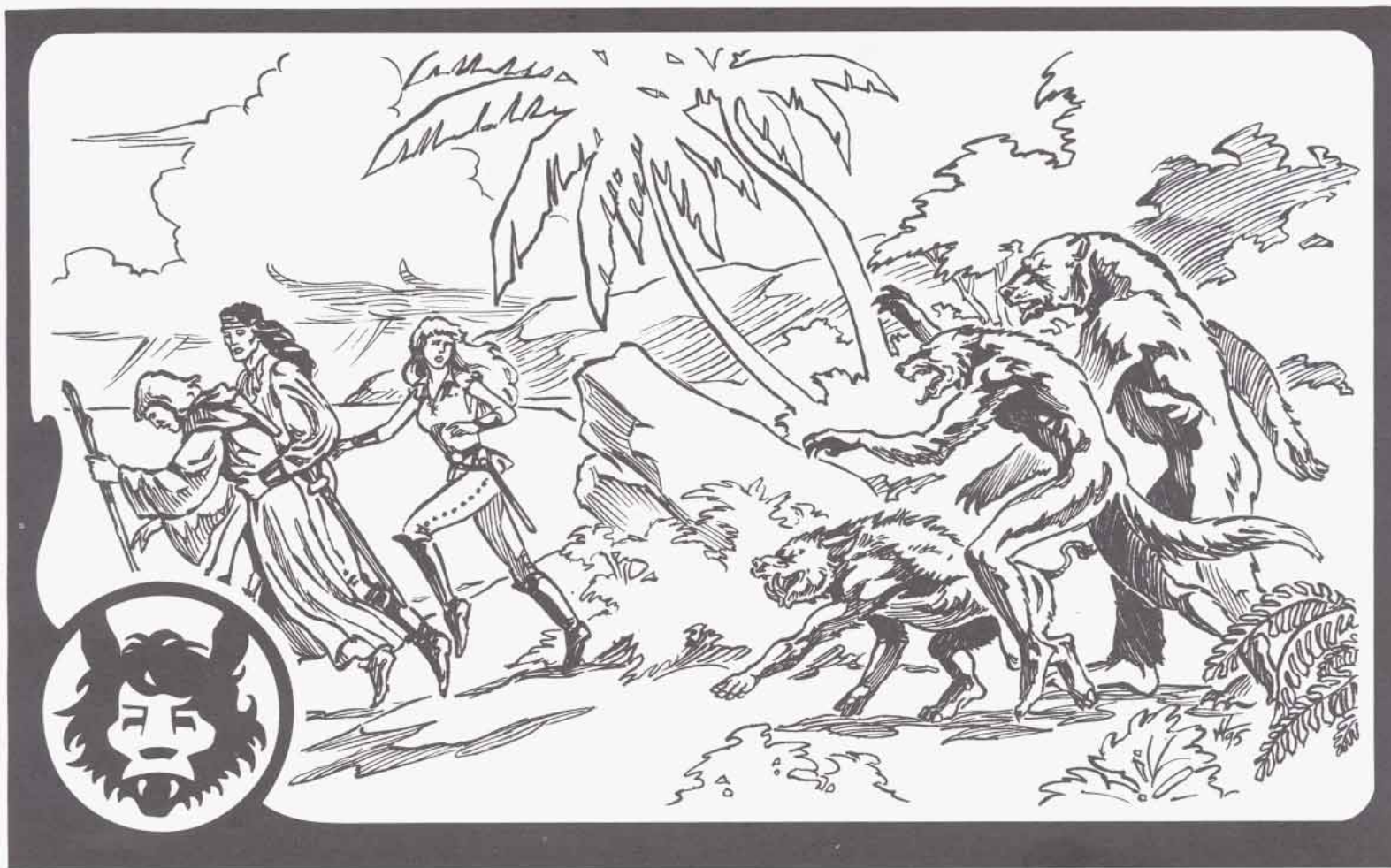
The heroes, with Akanga, can batter the doors down and find Dr. Fran amid a scene of bloody carnage: the bodies of those left behind have been carved up and are strewn about the room. Dr. Fran is armed with a scalpel (1d6 damage + Strength bonus). His smock has been ripped away, and he is clearly a gorilla except for his face.

Akanga bellows: "You die now, *Diosamblet!*"

Fran laughs, "I am the land! I CANNOT die!"

Akanga is then attacked by the mortally-wounded Orson from behind, and the two struggle, inflicting 4 points of damage on each other each round. Heroes may aid either side; otherwise, Akanga will be busy for 4 rounds until Orson dies. Dr. Fran now unveils his final surprise.

The severed hands and twisted torsos of animals and men lurch forward in a deadly pantomime of life. They attack all they encounter, as long as Dr. Fran is alive. Their slithering appearance forces a fear check.



Animated Body Parts (20 total): AC 10; MV 9; HD 1; hp 6 each; THACO 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (blow or throttle); SD regenerate 1 point per round; SZ S; ML fearless (20); Int non (0); AL NE; XP 35 each.

The body parts will attack the heroes as Dr. Fran giggles maniacally. Only by injuring Dr. Fran to zero hit points can they be totally stopped. Killing either Akanga or Dr. Fran will end the battle and send the fallen leader's forces fleeing into the woods.

If the heroes have sided with Dr. Fran and killed Akanga in the battle, Fran then orders his surviving Broken Ones to slay the adventurers: their bodies will form new experiments for the mad doctor. The weary heroes will have to fight their way past 20 Broken Ones and find a way to escape.

If Dr. Fran is knocked to 0 hit points, his body will lose its stability, transforming from one animal shape to another in a hope of regaining lost hit points. From 0 hit points, it will take time to regenerate fully, and for the next 24 hours the island can be escaped without risk of a storm.

If Akanga lives, he orders the helpless Dr. Fran (still bellowing his threats) to be strapped to the table. If Akanga has the *Table of Life* (or the characters have abandoned it), then it will be brought in. The *Table* will prevent Dr. Fran from regenerating properly, while keeping him alive.

Akanga picks up one of the scalpels that has been scattered aside, and looks at the heroes. If they are expecting thanks, they will be sorely mistaken. "You will go, now," is all he says before he turns back to Dr. Fran, the scalpel poised to make its first cut.

The mad doctor bellows as he experiences the pain he has given so many times to so many. Those watching will make horror checks. The Broken Ones will watch the fun for ten minutes, then they begin to hunt the adventurers.

In all this battle, Delphi is missing. Characters who search for her will find her hiding in her room, clutching a small rag doll given her by the Doctor when she was young. She can help provide an escape from the island, as she knows where the ship's boat has been hidden. Should Delphi be forgotten, she will side with Akanga as his mate and not act to help the adventurers in any way.

Escape from the Island

Those who evaded the battle and those who survived it are now on the run and face a number of dangers. The DM may use any of these, subject to suitability and the cinematic flow of the game. The pressure should be on the player characters to get off the island as soon as possible. Among the problems are the following:

- The Broken Ones are on the rampage, and it is impossible to determine one faction from another. Groups of Broken Ones 10 strong will be sweeping the island, looking for opponents.
- The Brethren (withered and intact), led by Father Milhouse (should he survive) are seeking the *Table of Life* (should it be stolen from them). They will be at large on the island, attacking any minions of the darklord (including the heroes, if they stole the *Table* for Markov).
- Felix (should he survive) has turned on one master and wishes to eventually slay his second master. He's smart enough to realize that the heroes are a danger to his plans. Therefore, he suddenly appears before them and tells them about the hidden boat in the boat house. He tells them that this island is no place for true men and that they should go at once. A traitor to the end, he then reports their present whereabouts and goal to the next Broken One patrol he sees.
- Delphi, if rescued, knows about the boat house and will take the characters directly there.

The boat house is the most likely means of escape, but there are others, including the boat they were building, if the DM chooses not to have it burned, a hastily thrown-together raft of dubious construction, and even the *Table of Life* itself (hey, it floats). If the heroes flee back to the monastery, they will find that no one answers their bell (the monks see the fires and wish nothing to do with the outside world for a time).

If Delphi helps them escape the island, the pull of Markovia will prove too strong for her. Once away from the shore, she begins to devolve back into her dolphin form. Her hair falls out, her skin becomes hard and rubbery, and her nose moves upwards to

become a spout. Her delicate lips elongate and turn into a peg-toothed snout. With a final look at her beloved, she leaps overboard to join her true kindred in the sea.

Regardless of the method of escape, the bestial screams and howls that erupt from the island will haunt the characters for many evenings to come. And the loudest one is that of Dr. Frantisek Markov, darklord, who is himself becoming neither man nor beast



Wrapping Things Up

At the close of the adventure, the heroes (should they survive) will be adrift, probably in the ship's boat. What occurs next is up to the desires of the Dungeon Master.

If the DM desires the characters to remain in Ravenloft, then after a few days they will be carried by ocean currents to one of the coastal lands on the Sea of Sorrows. Alternately, they could find their way to another island, or even be picked up by the *Relentless* itself (a fate worse than the one they left behind).

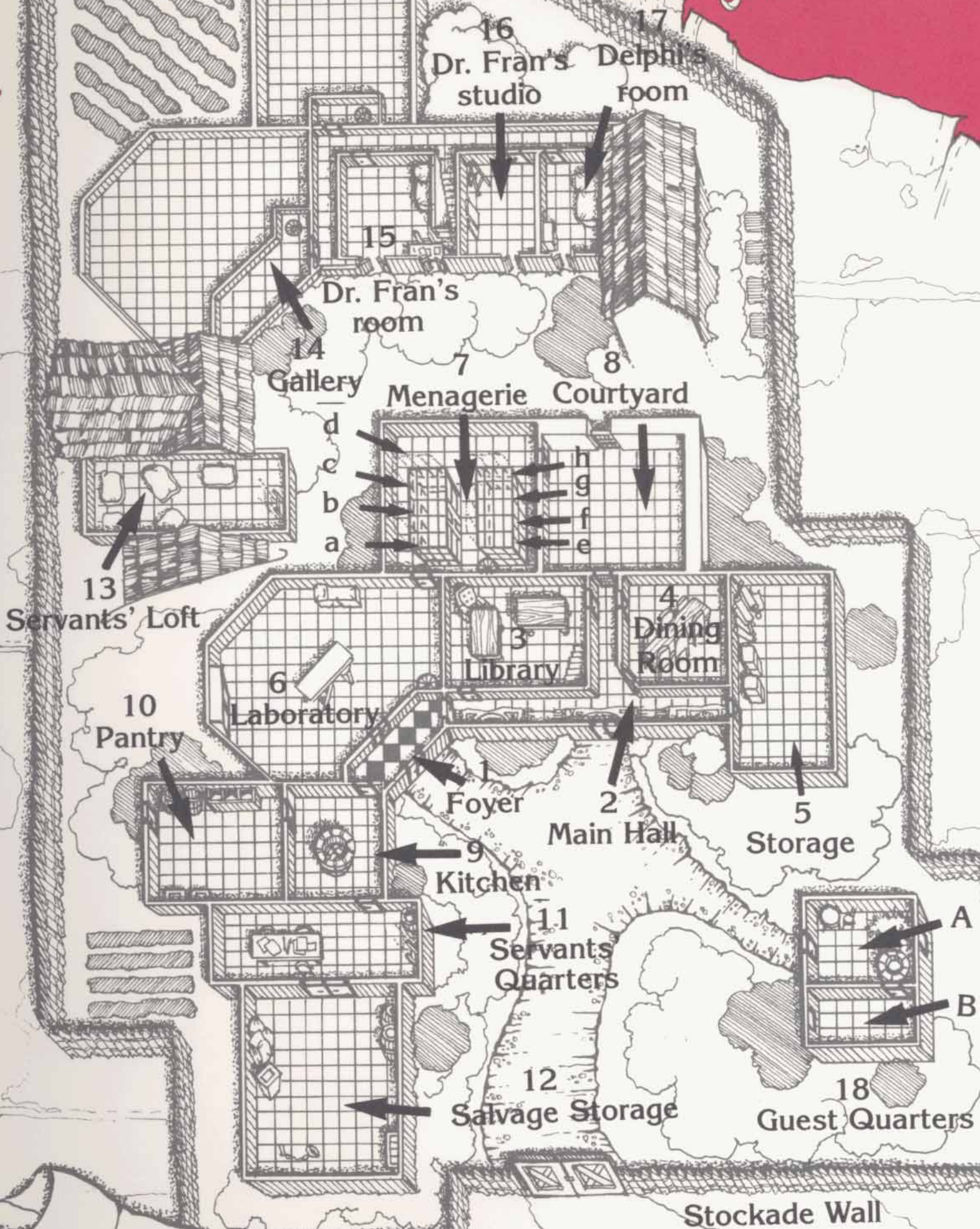
If the DM wishes them to resume their regularly scheduled fantasy adventures, a small storm arises, a sickly cousin to the one which brought them here. The surging mist diminishes to reveal them off the shore of some well-known landmark in their home campaign (or in another world entirely, if the DM so wishes).

If the players managed to escape with the *Table of Life*, an extended voyage may be called for, during which time the effects of the *Table* manifest themselves. The characters may thus survive months of drifting without food or water, so long as they take care to eat and drink heartily before stepping off the *Table* when rescued. Should they have the *Table* aboard their boat, they should be rescued before the transformation is irrevocable, but they will have some of the characteristics of the undead for some time afterwards, and their popularity will suffer accordingly.

Lastly, the fate of Dr. Frantisek Markov should be mentioned. As part of his curse, he cannot truly die, but while under the careful ministrations of Akanga, his hold on the land is temporarily suspended. Individuals can come and go as they please. However, the same magics which keep the Broken Ones sentient begin to fade, and they will slowly devolve back into their original states. Even Akanga will eventually fall prey, and his tortures of Dr. Fran will cease, leaving Dr. Fran strapped to the *Table* like some evil Prometheus. Eventually he should be able to escape his entrapment and return to his rightful place as darklord of Markovia.

And deep and abiding will be his hatred of the heroes who caused him so much pain, and he will seek to return it to them tenfold if ever given the chance.

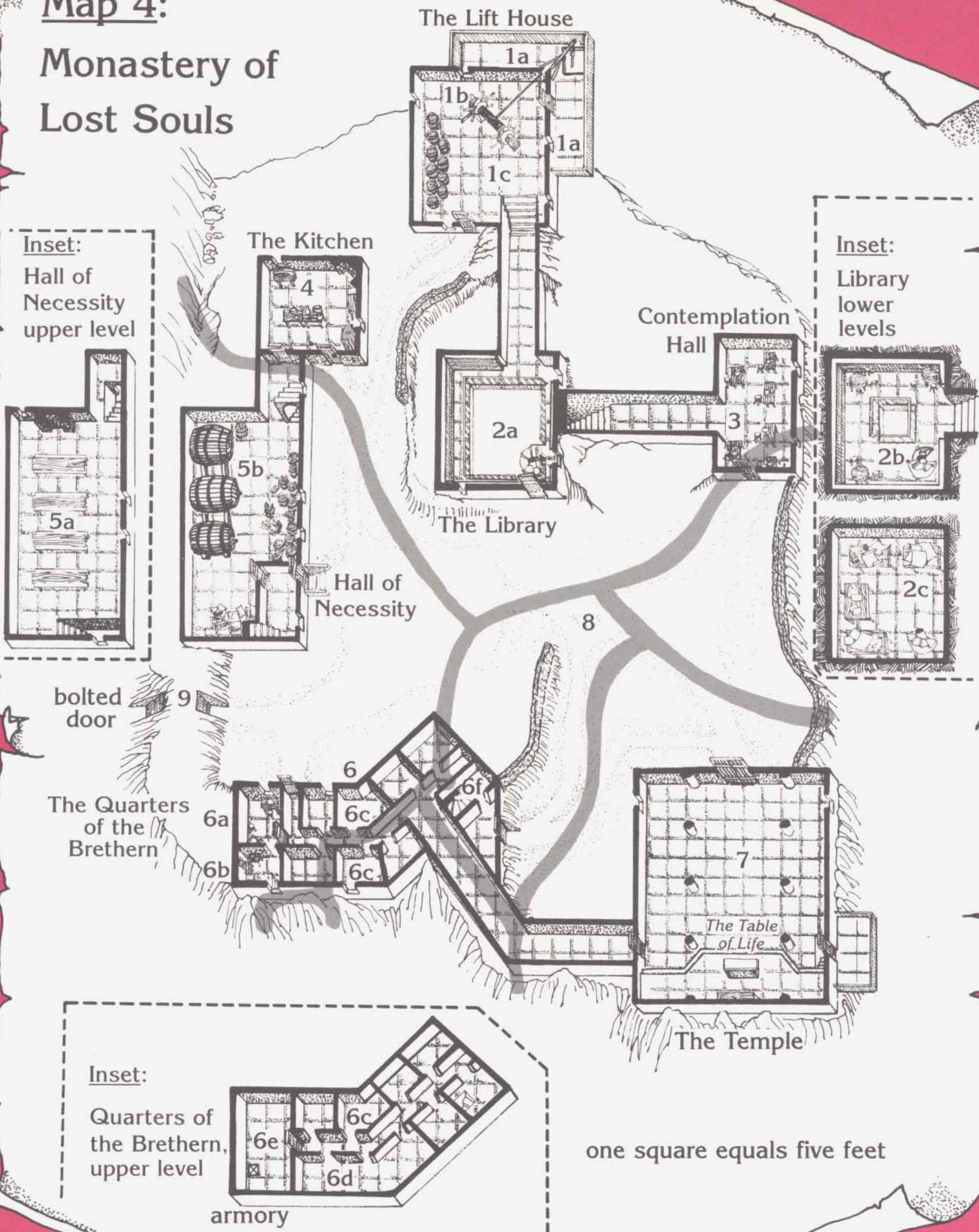
Dr. Fran's Manor



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Map 4:

Monastery of Lost Souls



Player's Map



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Great Stone Men

Broken Ones

Sunset Bay

Ruins

Dr. Fran's Manor

Broken Ones

Abandoned Village





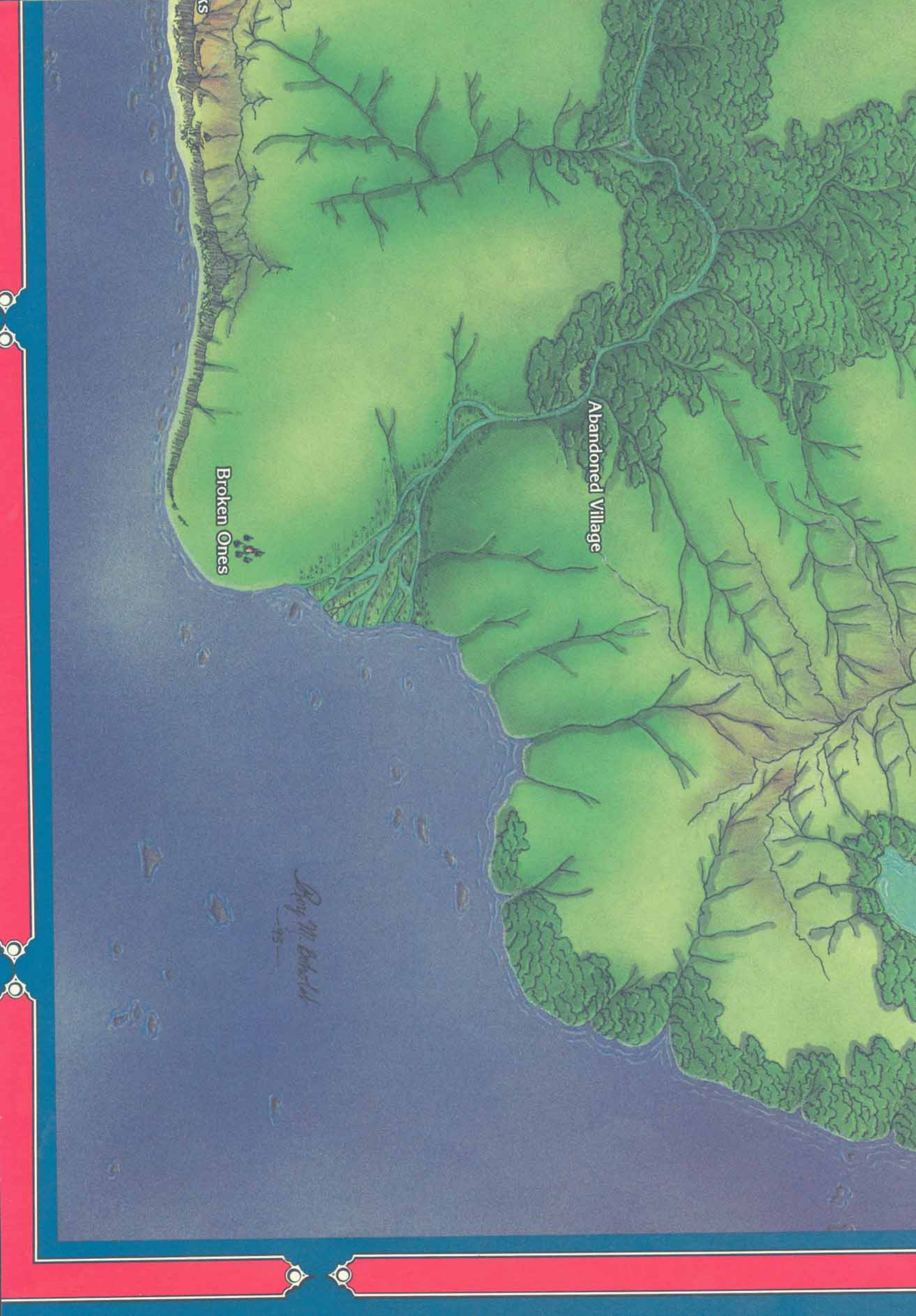
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Broken Ones'
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Abandoned Village

Boat House

Ray M. Smith
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Abandoned Village

Broken Ones' Camp



Great Stone Men

Broken Ones' Camp

Ruined Monastery

Markov Estate

Sunset Bay

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DM's Map



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Neither Man Nor Beast

by Jeff Grubb

Shipwrecked on a desert island! Marooned among savage creatures who seem half human, half animal. Who can you trust? Kindly old Doctor Fran and his beautiful companion? The strange monks said to guard an evil artifact in their mountain fastness? Or the beast-man chief who gathers his people and prepares for war?

Time is short, for you must escape the domain of *Diosamblet*, the Master of Pain, before the island works its curse on you and your companions in turn, leaving you...

Neither Man Nor Beast.

For four to six characters of levels 1-4

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