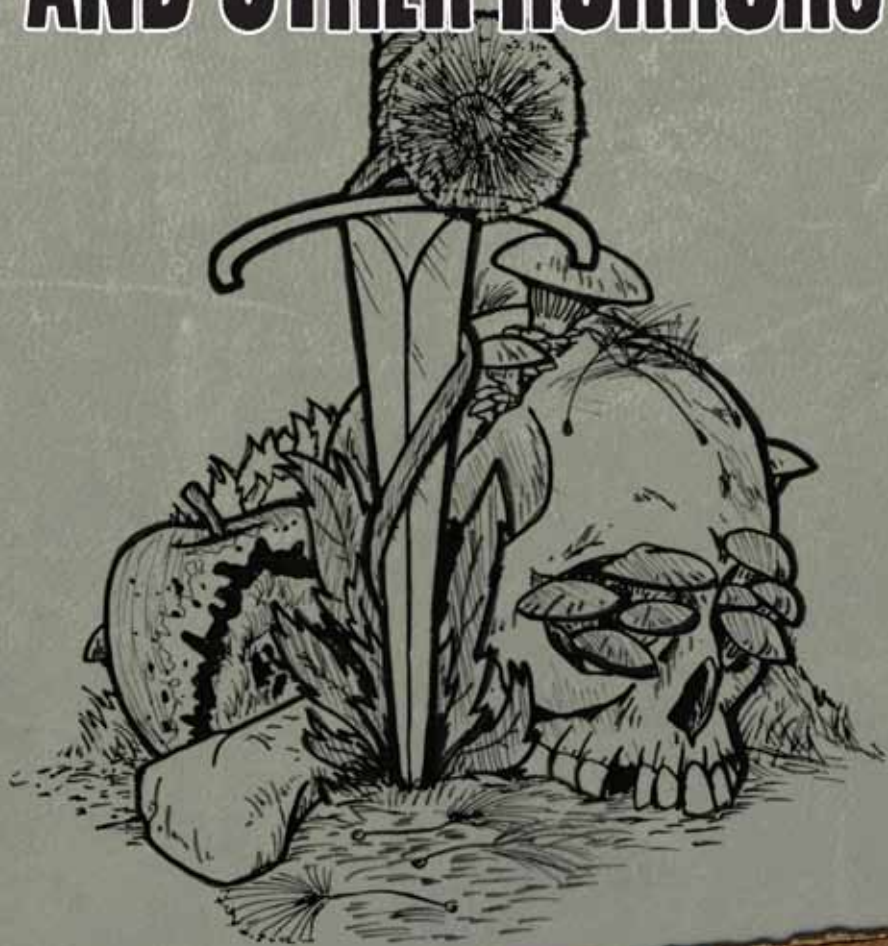


MYCELIUM AND OTHER HORRORS



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TROPHY

🍄 DARK + GOLD 🌀

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THE ABBEY OF OUR MOTHER OF THE INESCAPABLE FATE OF ALL THINGS

~or~

“O quam cito transit gloria mundi!”

*No one is sacred, no one pure
Blessings denied before the gods
Your crimes are unforgivable
You are banished; be forgotten*

*Yet you deny your cruel exile
You know of a place that forgives
Find this place, pray for salvation
Gods will make your sins their trophy*

It is said there is an Abbey where any sin can be forgiven, where no crime can be denied absolution. The souls of tyrants can become as blessed virgins. Kinslayers can return to their ancestral home, welcomed. Oathbreakers can reveal themselves, and all will know they are righteous. They need only drink a single vial of the Abbey's holy waters. Locate the monks of this blessed place, and salvation is yours.

THEME

Decay and Mistakes

MOMENTS

- The ruins of an abbey collapsed and rotted to its stones. The reliefs praising the gods crumble with mold. Surely this is not the place.
- A sigil of praise to the dark gods made from spoiled rations arranged in the soft mud. The long-decayed corpses of mercenaries and adventurers are placed just out of sight, a silent audience of private worshipers. Blasphemy! But to which gods?
- Decaying trees abound, some only saplings.
- A rusted sword impales a freshly slain squire to a dead tree. His unopened pack is full of putrid fruit.

- Another rotted church, this one with a mural still in place. It portrays a group of withered and ancient nobles feasting on spoiled, mouldering food. Chained to the wall behind them, sackcloth-clad children hold fresh fruits and hearty meats. They weep with sorrow.
- Voices can be heard chanting praises and wailing hymns. Closer investigation reveals they are children, marching in a lighthearted but slightly-too-detailed imitation of a religious procession.
- Young flagellants strike themselves with bloody sticks, tiny priests wave censers filled with burning sticks and leaves, a bucket with a crude symbol painted on it is used as a mitre, etc.
- A long-dead adult male tied to a fallen log, his facial hair neatly done. He has been beaten to death. Sticks and decaying, wooden carved toys lay around in the mud.

CONDITIONS

- Light-headedness and nausea.
- Exhaustion without tiredness; tiredness without exhaustion.
- Disgust: Your rations, even if consisting of your favorite food, taste strangely foul.
- Wet, phlegmy coughs.
- Bile erupts in your throat.
- Grim recollections of your proudest childhood memories; proud recollections of your sins.
- When you lay down to rest everything feels too soft, too wet.
- Your joints creak and ache deeply. You can barely move or hold a blade.
- Wounds become infected far too swiftly.
- You begin to physically putrefy, as if dead for months.
- You are restless and unable to muster energy or strength. Only the sleep of death can rest your body.

RING 1: CONFIDENCE/EPHEMERA

TERRORS

- Religious zealots, bound for the Abbey, tell the party they must join their procession — as flagellants.
- The flagellants and mourners are young and healthy.
 - » The officials (who will not fight) are aged beyond their prime. Are you the same age as either extreme, or closer to the middle?
- If they agree to become flagellants, their whips cut deep. Take a Ruin roll and pray your unskilled hand does not bleed you.
- Flagellants are easily dispatched, more experienced in self harm than externalized violence.
- When half or more are defeated, an official is so horrified that he swears the gods have abandoned them and collapses in convulsions. He dies of a lethal heart attack moments later.
- The fighters cease, rushing to their leaders' sides.

TEMPTATIONS

- Despite their humiliating defeat, the officials apologize and bow their heads humbly.
- They tell the party that they are bound for the Abbey; adding that now they must atone for the sacrifice of the young warriors.
- They offer the Party gifts of fresh food and water.
- They will not accompany the party and wander away in a different direction.
 - » If taken captive, they attempt an escape.
- One of the party members recognizes one of them as an exile from their homestead — accused of vile crimes.
- Emphasize their quiet dignity and graceful vulnerability, even that of the disgusting criminal.
 - » Truly this place can resolve any internal conflict. What do you want forgiven? Why do you want to claim the Abbey's waters?

RING 2: ENVIRONMENT/EVIDENCE

TERRORS

- The muddy ground becomes less and less tenable the deeper you enter the forest. Grime runs up past your ankles.
- Someone collapses and struggles to get up, becoming infected with a swamp-bound, decaying disease.
- They potentially find their way into impassable bogs and mud holes.
- Draw connections between their physical state and the all-consuming weight of their sin
- Why did you do it? Why do you regret it? Do you really?

TEMPTATIONS

- Atop the mud, a thin scroll of holy prayers is wrapped around a vial.
 - » Small traces of silvery fluid remain within.
- Fine, recently-shed priest's robes lay in the mud as if removed in an act of wild exultation.
 - » What things have you seen in your life that drove men to such wild joy?
- Distantly, a group of hooded monks walk away from the party, holding lanterns, thuribles, and censers. The divine smell wafts toward the party.

RING 3: SUSPICIONS/DRIVES

TERRORS

- The sound of fresh-water flows nearby, and although the direction is clear, the water does not draw any closer.
- A wanted poster, soaked through and partially destroyed, is crumpled and stuffed into a hollow log. It portrays one of the PCs, and states their crime exactly.
- One of the PCs' satchels of vials has been shattered, seemingly on accident from being set down too roughly.
- Every vial has been smashed, there are no survivors. What's more, all the corks are missing, as if stolen. Sabotage is likely.

- A group of penitents of all ages emerges from the woods. They are blind through mysterious means, eyes milky and white. They single out a PC or a handful of PCs and exult them, swarming and claiming they will reach the Kingdom of Heaven.
 - » They shun and spit on the others, refusing to speak with them.
 - » The Path to the Kingdom of Heaven involves drinking the Abbey's waters, yet they say the Abbey's waters reside on the Gates of Hell.
- If ignored, the penitents will follow at a distance, giving cheers and exultations about the PC or PCs' actions. They will boo and jeer at the others.
- If the singled-out PCs admonish them loudly or bless them, they will disperse, weeping in religious ecstasy.

TEMPTATIONS

- In the distance, fires of travellers both moving and camping bring comfort. You are not alone — not in your sins, nor in your quest for redemption.
 - » What was life like before you did what you did? Why do you wish to go back to that?



- Everyone will forgive you when you drink, from the gods to the very people who shunned you. The open air and the promises in the distance reminds you of this.
 - » Who do you most want forgiveness from? How long have you known them?
- You feel that you can escape the past if you keep moving. Even this pause to reflect is time wasted, even if you need it.
 - » What is the first thing you'll do after leaving the Abbey? Who will you visit?

RING 4: MONSTROUS/DESPERATION

TERRORS

- Things hide in the mud. No, worse than things. People. Ancient men and women move with unnerving nimbleness, while children who rise from the filth withstand even the cruellest blows.
- Their weapons are filthy, delivering rot and disease with unnatural swiftness. Anyone struck begins to decay.
 - » These who emerge from the mud are familiar. Why? Who are they?
- A group of monks from the Abbey are nearby, scavenging for food. When the party approaches, they brandish axes and knives. Are they acting on their own, debauched after years in the forest, or are they driven mad by its influence?
 - » Regardless, the monks seek what the players have — the last of their supplies to stave off their desperate hunger, a bounty on a PC's head, even vengeance for past transgressions. They think these selfish desires will sate the terrible hunger inside themselves.
 - » If slain, the monks collapse into complete putrescence, barely held together.
- By this point, anyone infected previously decays rapidly. The decay starts to age the victim turning necrotic and then rotten.

TEMPTATIONS

- The sound of revelry, cheers, and prayer become too loud to be ignored. Voices of all ages join together, howling in revelry. Only true penitents may join them.
 - » Will you pray and sing to join the chorus? What song do you sing, where does your prayer originate?
- Swords and axes, armor and shields, poisons and implements of torture, all laid aside along a trail. Items given up in pursuit of a new life.
 - » Will you shed your arms when forgiveness is granted?
- The monks are here, the Abbey and its waters must be too. Why do the monks attack? Is it to ward something away, or is it a test of faith and diligence?

RING 5: PSYCHOLOGICAL/COMPANIONS

TERRORS

- The Abbey lies ahead, but not as promised. The exterior is rotted, art and architecture crumble from the horrible march of time. A grey-black mold coats the Abbey in thick sheets. The air inside is acrid and thick, barely breathable.
- Lepers and rotting penitents swarm, weeping and begging the PCs for forgiveness for their failures. They spread disease with every touch, the stench of their bodies unbearable.
 - » They have fallen astray of the enchanted waters and come apart. Yet, somehow, they survived. They think the PCs, especially ones who have yet to begin decaying, can purify them.
 - » Some may even ask the PCs for a second chance at the waters, and will ask to be smuggled in.
- The monks remain silent. They guide the PCs to the waters, reluctantly. Their eyes filled with regret and woe.
 - » Most of them are covered in thick linen, and all carry items to hide the scent of their putrefying bodies.

- At last, the waters. They flow in through the Abbey's heart, glowing silver... but filth mingles. At either end of the waters, travellers sob and drink full.
 - » Half seem overtaken by joy and revelry, practically glowing with purification. Then a terrible death overtakes them and they swiftly decay, their corpse blackening to infest the waters.
 - » The other half exult as the first, but soon begin to shrink. They become children with blinded eyes, and wander into the forest for purposes unknown.

TEMPTATIONS

- Surely this is a mistake. To flee into the woods, tainted as you are, would surely be suicide. But to drink and become a child again, or else... ? That, too, spells death. Surely a cleric, untainted by the forest's decay, must be nearby.
 - » There must be a section where the waters are untainted, and one of your companions has found it.
 - » Look at them, how they glow and smile wryly, as if hearing a joke told silently. Force them to tell you where they found the purified stream.
- Perhaps, in its own way, the rot IS purification. It is what all things will go to, so to die here at the end of your quest is to die without the sin of having given up.
 - » If you are tainted and rotting, seek to lord it over others. If you are pure and in good health, seek to infect yourself through your allies.
- Purified or rotten, blinded child or rotted corpse, death comes for you all. You may choose how to embrace it.

MYCELIUM

~or~

“Fortuna multis dat nimis, satis nulli.”

*Death the great unknown, so too life
There are more ways to kill a man
Than to make love or fresh-baked bread
Procreation and destruction*

*Since you seek conquest, ambition,
Souls to control and reign over,
You'll find the Great Mycelium.
Make a trophy of life and death.*

The fairies of the woods promise a gift to anyone who can find them: The Great Mycelium holds an army of slaves who will do whatever you like. They can act as soldiers, scribes, or servants — anything their master desires. They never tire, never need to eat or drink, and are powered by shadow and a drop of water. You set out into the forest to find the Great Mycelium and take its army for yourself.

THEME

Fungus and Survivalism

MOMENTS

- A fairy circle in the middle of the forest with a large mushroom at its center. Any attempt to touch it causes it to burst into spores, and the mushrooms surrounding it swiftly wilt and die.
- An endless field of mushrooms, all dull grey and littered with brittle, dust-like corpses. No sun shines through here, only endless clouds.
- A field of freshly-slain men, the scene of a great and terrible battle. Footsteps in the mud are thick and rounded. Large mushrooms grow from corpses.

- A book on a fungal desk, with a mushroom seat before it. A skeletal corpse grips a long-dried ink pen, laying dead on the desk. The book is a collection of fond memories and great triumphs, but also traumatic anecdotes and terrible tragedies.
- A copse completely caked in fungus, more decay than tree. They remain upright. Removing any of the growths causes the tree to decay and collapse.
- A forested area where stifling spores float in the air. They choke the breath from your lungs until you fall dead... only to awaken comfortably in a large fairy circle.
- A large group of humans are buried to their necks in the earth. They seem content.

CONDITIONS

- Tiredness; not exhaustion. Just a desire to rest.
- Overbearing warmth or cold, no in-between.
- Moisture and humidity, sticking to your skin like honey.
- Fond memories of birth and family tempered with dour memories of death and sorrow.
- Sensitivity to light, stinging your eyes.
- Suicidal thoughts, fleeting and woeful.
- Flesh becomes sore and tender, almost spongy.
- A lumpy growth forms on the surface of your skin. It flakes off easily.
- Visions of being eaten alive. They are somehow comforting.
- Overwhelming desire to lay somewhere dark and cold and fade away.
- Mushrooms grow through your body, wracking you with pain.

RING 1: CONFIDENCE/EPHEMERA

TERRORS

- A group of bulb-eyed myconids lurk here, carrying a prisoner back to their secret lair.
- If the myconids are dispatched with violence, the prisoner thanks the PCs and offers them a handful of lowly treasures for their trouble — as well as a map that supposedly leads to the Mycelium.
 - » The map is somewhat abstract and vague. Following it leads to the occasional Ruin rolls. But it may also lead to reward — if not the Mycelium, then perhaps something later on.
- If the myconids are bartered with for the man's freedom, they ask for suitable items that can be used as mulch or fertilizer. They'll accept freshly chopped wood from a rotten tree, a worn cloth overcoat, or any other suitable (biodegradable) object.
 - » If the PCs go above and beyond granting them fresh supplies, they chip rd6 'pieces' off of their hive-brains. These pieces provide clear visions that can lead to the Mycelium, but cause Ruin rolls due to their mind-altering effects.
- Neither reward leads clearly to the Mycelium, providing only tantalizing glimpses into the area's secrets.

TEMPTATIONS

- Besides the map and the hallucinatory hive-brain chunks, there are many more clues towards the Mycelium.
- Rounded myconid footsteps in the mud seem to trail on forever, then return the opposite way. Perhaps they can be followed.
- An old man along the way, living in a charming mushroom hut, controls tiny myconid "sprites" to prepare his tea and meals.
 - » When asked about the Mycelium, he is impressed by its power and claims it possibly exists, but he prefers his simple magic and smaller, more controllable friends.
- Mushrooms are plentifully here — and if the trail is followed, the mushrooms grow increasingly bigger. Deeper in, some seem alive, and may even come to life and speak in normal words, or burst open as freed but non-hostile myconids.

RING 2: ENVIRONMENT/EVIDENCE

TERRORS

- The great trees of the forest turn more dead with each step. Something rises to blot the sun, but it is merely dead wood. And on these moist, decaying trees, great mushrooms grow.
 - » What of your efforts went to waste beyond your control? If you could control the Mycelium, could you correct that?
- Crude, subterranean insects dwell in every hollow log and every mud-bound rock. They gnaw at unsecured rations and pollute waterskins.
 - » The smell of decay surrounds you at all angles. Nowhere is safe from the thick dust of mold. Ruin comes as you snuffle and choke on the air.
- Prayers and strange murmurs haunt the night, along with chittering and grotesque snorts. Great beasts patrol the night — only a danger if they notice you.

TEMPTATIONS

- Beasts roam here, herbivorous and eager to keep their distance from the PCs. Immense squirrels leap through sickly trees, and sweep down to eat growing mushrooms from the floor.
- While searching through the woods, the PCs find trails of round, footstep-like imprints for miles around. The indentations are like the stalk of a mushroom, and although the trails lead out in a thousand directions, they only lead back in one.
- A great tree, almost still green, houses the partially-fungoid home of an old and powerful sorcerer. The house is full of evidence, revealing his contact with intelligent myconids, the gifting of a great crown, and the bond he formed with the forest myconids. The sorcerer is not present — or perhaps he is, and has yet to be found...
- The road vanishes, but the mushrooms grow larger. Follow their growth.

RING 3: SUSPICION/DRIVES

TERRORS

- Rations moulder at an advanced rate. Apples seem fresh on one side, but grow turgid on the other, feeding their own new growth of mushrooms.
 - » Who was responsible for their purchase? What did they do with the gold they saved buying cheap, rotten food?
 - » The only thing that stays fresh are mushrooms, which look healthier somehow.
- The myconids stalk the PCs through the woods, one step ahead of their journey. Some nights they take PCs, who cannot recall where they've been. When they return, they are granted a great bounty of fresh, edible mushrooms.
- Many wild mushrooms look edible, but induce frightening dreams — dreams of betrayal and psychic communion with the Mycelium.
- Has someone claimed it? Are they leading us into a trap?

TEMPTATIONS

- Memories of the fallen shape the PCs' idle thoughts. Mementoes, long forgotten in their pack, fall loose while searching through for supplies.
- An army would surely have saved the ones you love. Servants to do your drastic labor would have spared your absence from their death. Their story was too important to let die. You have to tell it, and the Great Mycelium has to write it down.
- A curious myconid war-camp seems to have left here recently. A great rubbish pit is dug to the side, filled with valuable food, drink, and trinks — all fresh.
 - » The things they can take but have no need for could feed you a thousand times over.
 - » The treasures they discard this far along the journey are of incredible value. Imagine what “unnecessary” things await you at the foot of the Great Mycelium.
- Some of the fungi have a pleasing odor that takes you back to times of beauty. Some of them almost feel like memories.

RING 4: MONSTROUS/DESPERATION

TERRORS

- Finally they come across what surely must be it: The Great Mycelium.
 - » An enormous mushroom sits in the middle of a radiant copse of green trees and mushrooms taller than oaks.
 - » It glows strange colors that illuminate the forest around it.
- As the PCs approach, the air goes thick with spores.
 - » A Ruin roll dizzies the PCs, but grants insight into the truth. Otherwise, they remain sharp.
- The Wild Hunt has begun.
 - » The Great Mycelium wishes to expand its territory, and it requires new myconids.
 - » It sets the Mycelium Army on the PCs, which stalks them with spears and bows through the mostly-fungal woods.
 - » The army numbers in the hundreds, but will not swarm or attack recklessly.
 - » They hunt the PCs through the forest, and need to be certain the PCs will be worthy hosts for the Great Mycelium's spores.



TEMPTATIONS

- Some of the myconids grant hiding places or mercy to PCs who grovel sufficiently, seemingly taking pity on them.
 - » These may be traps, or they may be genuine. Either way, they are suspicious.
- The only place the Myconids defend aggressively is the Great Mycelium cap itself. Any who approach it foolishly find themselves ruined with spears. Swiftly.
- Smashed mushrooms, myconids, etc. release a strange green ichor.
 - » Those who completely soak themselves in this ichor are virtually invisible to the myconids.
 - » However, they take on strange moods and uncomfortable bodily sensations.

RING 5: PSYCHOLOGICAL/COMPANIONS

TERRORS

- The more the PCs fight the myconids, the more they feel as one with them. The Army's instincts become theirs, and their focus narrows. Kill or be killed, that is the way.
 - » The PCs' thoughts grow more alien the longer they breathe in the Mycelium Army's presence. Their thoughts cease being their own, and meld into a strange harmony with one another. There is only one goal: Kill the Great Mycelium.
 - » What single-minded purpose brought you here? What does the Great Mycelium offer to fulfill it? How will killing help?
- If the PCs breach and strike a deadly blow against the Great Mycelium, they are totally soaked in toxic green slime.
 - » Within a few coughing moments, their skin softens and their bones dissolve as they die in agony.
 - » After years, the affected PCs return from the dead. They feel every agonizing moment of their human senses stitch together, their minds expanding into thousands of simple mushroom bodies... but centralized here. Soon they tower over the forest, the myconids, and even their original selves. Now they may take command of the Mycelium Army.

- If the PCs are killed, the Mycelium spores in their lungs burst from their corpse with terrible vigor. Within seconds they begin to nourish from both the corpse and the soil below.
 - » Each of the dozens of mycelium grows to a young myconid within a handful of years, sharing the senses of all other myconids (including other PCs so transformed).

TEMPTATIONS

- Only by working together can the Wild Hunt be overcome.
 - » Cleverness and tricks suffice. However, with nobody to watch your back, you'll find yourself prey to the Mycelium Army in short order.
- The Great Mycelium's voice cracks through the hallucinogenic haze. If they have done anything heroic or kind, it knows about it. If countered with sins, it acknowledges them too. It does not judge the PCs for their cruelty, however, because all in the Forest are cruel. Any who try may speak to the Great Mycelium.
 - » It is tired of eternities of suffering and cycles of adventurers to myconids. It longs to find a way out. It cannot communicate any other way.
 - » Would you abandon your goals to help this thing? Who did you hurt to get here, and how can you atone?
- If the PCs consume the Great Mycelium completely, they may retain their human bodies but completely control the Mycelium Army. However, they will always sense the Mycelium Army's resentment. The myconid legions will obey them grudgingly until one day...

TO LIVE AND DIE IN THE DARK

~or~

Alitur vitium, vivitque tegendo.

*Who you are in the dark is true
Who you are in the sun as well
Which is the greater you to show?
Man shows man the truth of itself*

*The Book of Mouldering shows truth
Truth of all men, truth of all souls
If your truth desires secrets
Then your trophy dies in the sun*

It has many names. The Book of Molded Souls. The Book of Mouldering. The Secret Rot. The Mycelium Tome. It contains the truth of every man alive — and their terrible secrets. For blackmail, for justice, or just for curiosity, the book is a tempting target. It's said to be traveling through the forest now, among a band of curious revelers bound for the underground.



THEME

Mold and Secrets

MOMENTS

- The sound of a collapsing building is punctuated by laughter. When you find the ruined building, mold and the smell of rot permeate the air. Masks, ribbon, and other signs of a party remain at the site.
- The rain begins and the forest and refuses to cease.
- While in the safety of an abandoned village, mold visibly rises up a wall and spreads across the ceiling.
- The mold overtakes the forest and begins illuminating a gentle, untrodden path away from muck and decay. Down into a cave in the earth.
- The mold whispers, giving dread commands and offering fell gifts.
- A foul creature with the body of a pig taunts the PCs from a distance.
- More hideous mutants come to bear — some address the PCs, some hiding deeper in the trees.

CONDITIONS

- Runny nose and sneezing.
- Tearful, bulbous feeling behind the eyes.
- Shortness of breath and a clawing throat irritation
- Decaying arms and armor, turning to black mold.
- Joints loosening terribly.
- Wheezing.
- Coughing and vomiting blood.
- Clothes, slick with foul-smelling mold, fuse to your body.
- Aural hallucinations of treachery and betrayal.
- Your body slowly shutting down as mold overtakes the unused parts of your body — like your eyes, your heart, your mind.

RING 1: CONFIDENCE/EPHEMERA

TERRORS

- A drunken oaf half-wearing a party mask cheers to himself and circles a clearing.
 - » He can easily be persuaded to steer the PCs further to the west, where the party trailed off without him.
 - He seems oddly unbothered at having been abandoned.
 - He suggests he's seen the book and can name each PC.
 - What are your favorite things to drink? That's all that interests the drunk, and he can verify the truth from having read the book.
- Cruel mercenaries have chained a group of revelers and hung them from a tree, threatening to douse them in oil and burn them if they do not reveal where the other revelers have gone.
 - » If the PCs assist the revelers, the mercenaries are shockingly ineffectual. More interested in bullying their way to the top, they may flee if overly threatened.
 - The rescued revellers give the PCs delicious cakes from the parade. When eaten, each cake reveals a surprising fact about the two characters closest to you.
 - The cakes seem slightly moldy.
 - » The revellers allow the PCs to follow them back to the parade, but they never reach it — the party goers are too drunk to proceed logically.
 - » If the PCs assist the mercenaries, the mercenaries cheer on the PCs' cruelty. They grant them permission to copy a "map" they have — a sketch of the strange entrance to a cave said to be the revellers' destination.
 - The mercenaries may try to stab the PCs in the back — either now or later, mutated by the mold.
 - » The mercenaries have no interest in accompanying the PCs, and may make veiled references to the PCs still being "competition."

TEMPTATIONS

- Besides the clues proffered from the drunk, the captured revellers, or the mercenary band, the PCs find much in their environment.
- Clues leading to the partiers destination are found in the form of discarded drinking vessels, sashes, and other trinkets.
- Slips of torn scroll-paper can be found along the trail with saucy rumors, awkward truths, and humorous fun facts written on them, next to names the PCs are unlikely to recognize.
 - » If a PC recognizes a name, how so? Do they recognize the story or fact on the paper? How do they know it was a secret?
- A lost journal lays in the dirt, near-soaked with wine. The ink inside bleeds. The journal tells the story of a beautiful object of affection, and secrets that could be used to win their heart.
 - » The desired person could potentially be a PC, and the contents of the journal embarrassing. What romantic desire is written in the journal? How could the writer know?

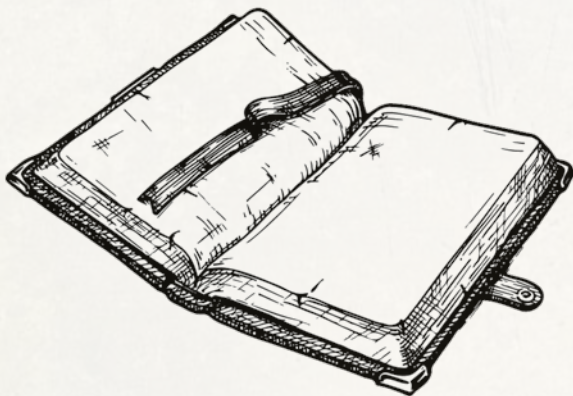
RING 2: ENVIRONMENT/EVIDENCE

TERRORS

- The PCs follow the revelers' obvious trail into a dark cave, the mouth walls illuminated with strange phosphorescent growths.
- The cave is a foul-smelling, grotesque place. Every surface is slick with mildew and slime.
 - » Injuries by slipping and hitting hard surfaces are common.
 - » PCs may also find themselves plunged into stagnant pools of foul-smelling water.
- Deeper in, the lights become less frequent, the cave growing darker with each step.
 - » PCs who light a match may briefly be disoriented as the dormant molds on the wall suddenly spring to light.
- Pits, trenches, and other deep impressions litter the area.
 - » Not all falls are lethal, but it is easy to permanently lose objects in the pits.

TEMPTATIONS

- Further proof of the revelers is here, littering the floor in a seemingly never-ending trail.
 - » Their trail seems to always lead deeper, confusing at times but largely legible.
- Here and there, leftovers from party games — secrets written on scraps of paper and hidden inside of a pauper's hat, for example.
- Somewhere amidst their refuse are torn out pages from the Book of Moulded Souls.
 - » The pages are from people the PCs know. Who do you hate and why? What is their darkest secret? Who do you love and why? What secret would most help your relationship with this person? If you wanted to know one secret about anyone, who in the land would it be?
 - » Frustratingly, the page is never the one for the person they want.



RING 3: SUSPICION/DRIVES

TERRORS

- Deeper in, it becomes harder to track supplies and provisions.
 - » Some PCs seem to have more than others — and you swear that rope the other PC is using is the one you had!
- The path becomes dizzying, and any attempts to map it prove fruitless.
 - » They'd be much more fruitful if someone knew how to draw a proper map.
 - » Or maybe they know where they're going and are trying to lose you.
- Full bottles of liqueur leftover from the party are suddenly empty.
 - » Can't you have just one nice gods-damned thing?
 - » That other PC smells like liquor. The good stuff too.
 - » Bastard stole it from me, drank it, and put it back!!

TEMPTATIONS

- The cave finally comes to an end, the trail of revelers leading back to the forest.
 - » The fresh air and clearer light feels good, as does taking in a breath of clean air.
- Villages come into view, and the PCs are welcomed for fast relief.
 - » PCs who want to prevent their secrets getting out are identified by people in the village... but reassured they don't mind anyway.
 - » PCs seeking other people's secrets hear villagers speaking about their target, wishing someone would deliver justice to them.

RING 4: MONSTROUS/DESPERATION

TERRORS

- Night falls, and terrible howls echo from the deepest places of the forest.
- The terrible smell of mold from the cave fills the air, and hideous things begin to stalk through the woods.
 - » Those affected by the mold feel hostile forces press at their minds. They're urged to butcher and kill, and those especially affected by the mold feel their limbs turn against them.
- Creatures twice the size of any man lumber from the underground to feed on blood and return meat to the deep caves.
 - » The creatures hunt by sound and scent. They are warped and twisted, and clear light still does not reveal if they are men or monsters.

TEMPTATIONS

- While hunting through the night, the monsters keep deposits of useful objects and unspoiled meat in the hollows of trees.
 - » One so discovered could be useful — the blind creatures intend to sort what is meat and what is inanimate matter later. They have brought as much trash as they have supplies.
- The creatures can be driven off with flashes of light and loud noises. Explosives, fire, clattering rocks, and more can be used to distract or drive away the light-sensitive creatures.
- Sometimes villagers will come to the PCs rescue, especially if they were particularly brave or kind.
 - » They have grown accustomed to these nightly attacks, but something must have truly aggravated these monstrosities...

RING 5: PSYCHOLOGICAL/COMPANIONS

TERRORS

- Eventually the PCs come to the outside of another cave mouth, where the party seems to have finally ended.
 - » Dozens of revelers lay dead, overcome with mold and fuzz.
 - » The smell of rot is thick here, as if they've all been dead for a VERY long time.
- The Book of Moulded Souls sits on a rotten stump in the center. It is open to a page regarding the fates of all who died here.
 - » A party was held by a duke from underground to celebrate a recent conquest.
 - » The secrets of the book and the temptation it presented sowed discord and resentment among the partygoers.
 - » The conflict ended in horrible violence just outside the entrance to the duke's domain.
- Any who were previously corrupted or tempted by the mold are now tempted by it at deafening volume.
 - » If they give themselves over, they become vile cave-beasts, blind until the sun sets.
- If no mutation or manipulation is required to begin the slaughter, the Book of Moulded Souls willingly gives itself to the survivor of the final massacre.
 - » Their fate is sealed now. They will get their revenge, their love, their protection, but at the cost of everything they came here for. Their life will come apart and down into a death so horrid, even the catharsis of your goals will bring no comfort.

TEMPTATIONS

- After all that you've been through, could you truly slay your allies?
 - » The book is clearly a deceiver — look what it did to these poor folk.
 - » Other entries in the book record terrible secrets, true, but all its stories end in death — for the holder of the book and anyone within their range, friend and foe alike.
- Talking to one another can break the book's compulsions.
 - » Even monstrous creatures transformed by the mold can be reasoned with if spoken to by someone they know or trust.
- If all survivors abandon the Book of Moulded Souls, it finally succumbs to its own rot. A fresh, undecayed page blows in the breeze. If the PCs ever find it again, they find it is a desperate plea to write a secret onto it.
 - » The page can be burned with no effort.



THE WRATHFUL FLOWER

~or~

Caelesti sumus omnes semine oriundi.

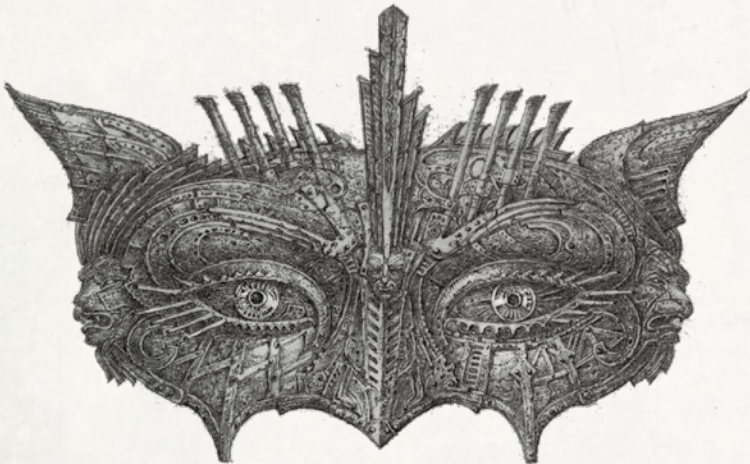
*Mankind leaves itself everywhere
You leave pieces of yourself to all
Large gestures and subtle movements
All leave a footprint in the earth*

*There is a great field of flowers
It lies out beyond the forest
And gives the divine right of kings
A trophy that reigns over men's hearts*

Every king in your kingdom has borne the Wrathful Flower. Once believed to merely be a symbol, only you know the truth — a king must brave through the whole forest to find the Red Field. Taking even a single flower from it and returning to your homeland shows all that you are worthy of kingliness. You braved the forest — child's play, empty and dull — and plucked from the beautiful endless red. Now you must return through the forest and take your throne.

THEME

Pollen and Hubris



MOMENTS

- A mulch pile of Wrathful Flowers abandoned in a heap in a grown-over garden.
- A throne on a large stump, looking over hundreds of corpses which white and yellow dandelions grow through.
- Gold, coins, treasure, etc. turn to raw pollen powder and blow away in the breeze.
- A castle on a hill is covered in bees and pollen, dripping so thick with sap and honey that any entrances are sealed.
- Children pass through with flower crowns, arguing over possession of a stick with a red yarn bobble on it. They claim that it's their turn to have it and "be in charge".
- A massive puffball dandelion in a grove of trees explodes dangerously, launching artillery-sized seeds with terrifying trajectory.
- After a time, the PCs fall into a crowd of others with a Wrathful Flower of their own. While they walk with them, they rapidly but subtly disappear until the PCs are walking alone again.

CONDITIONS

- Light-headedness
- Violent sneezes
- Skin itches incessantly
- Skin puffs up, pink and irritated
- Dark circles form around the eyes
- Skin pales and turns yellow-ish
- Swollen and itchy eyes
- Coughing violently
- Mobility slows and exhaustion sets in
- Collapse, flesh too soft and sensitive to move on
- The Wrathful Flower takes root, growing through your body

RING 1: CONFIDENCE/EPHEMERA

TERRORS

- Outside of the grove waits an ambush — thieves intent on stealing the Wrathful Flower.
 - » They can easily be driven away with force, or convinced to cease attacking when shown the flower and assured of its power.
 - » If attacked, some bargain for their lives. Mercy wins their loyalty better than any display of force.
- A seemingly endless wall of cruel, barren thorns block the path, forcing the party to find an alternate route. Dozens of dead bodies are stuck inside, their remains embracing the barbs that once pierced their flesh.
 - » Deep within the bramble, a dried out corpse is dressed like a king; his skeletal hands raised to the sky, holding a single, large beautiful rose.
 - » Large tendrils stretch out along the floor, catching the unaware by the feet.
 - » Getting cut by the thorns fills you with an otherworldly confidence that quickly vanishes, leaving you wanting more.
- A woman in a large armoured suit, her face hidden behind a layer of sticky, rusted chainmail; lumbers through the woods with casks of honey. As soon as she sees your Wrathful Flowers, she pulls out her sword and threatens the party to stay back.
 - » If approached calmly, she relaxes and trades casks of honey for any other kind of food.
 - » The honey is far more enticing than any of your rations — the smell is inebriating.
 - » However, consuming the honey does not satisfy you, it feeds only the Wrathful Flower growing inside you.
 - » The woman is ever watchful, her hand always close to her hilt, as if expecting you to pounce at any second.

TEMPTATIONS

- A curious merchant has set up a stand in the forest. He bows to the PCs and offers rations and valuables in exchange for a little blood from anyone wielding a Wrathful Flower.
 - » The merchant wears thick leather gloves and is careful about not touching the flower itself; he places their blood in little vials mixed with other strange liquids.
 - » The valuables are trinkets: necklaces and rings with many different origins.
- Two men are fighting over a Wrathful Flower. They demand the party kill the other, and promise great wealth if they do.
 - » If the party kills either one of them, the other grabs the Wrathful Flower and flees into the woods.
 - » Following him reveals a path through the forest.
- There is evidence of recently dug holes in the forest; bits of shedded insect skin mixed in with the soil. Some have been dug up and are empty.
 - » Digging up any of these holes reveals a single belonging, a symbol of an old ambition. A gold coin for wealth, a lover's pendant for lust, a blade for vengeance. What do you carry that symbolises your ambition?



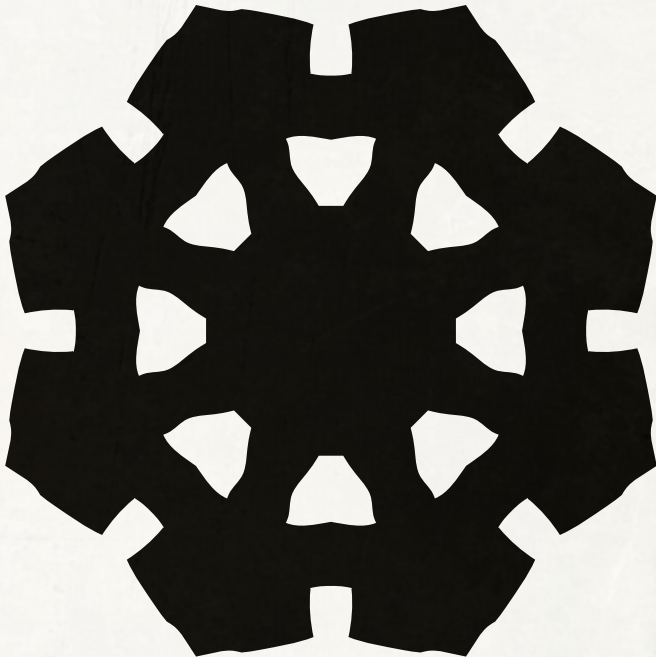
RING 2: ENVIRONMENT/EVIDENCE

TERRORS

- Human-sized cocoons hang from the trees. Most are empty, seemingly burst from the inside-out. Some still occasionally shift and shake with life.
 - » Popping a cocoon results in an outpour of a sweet sludge mixed with decayed human flesh and bones that smells of honey.
 - » The sludge is strangely alluring and any who drink it will feel a kingly ambition fill them up, but nothing else, as the Wrathful Flower inside them consumes it all.
- Swarms of bees drift through the forest; they overwhelm any who openly display their Wrathful Flower.
 - » Those that are paralyzed by their poison are taken away and turned into a cocoon.
 - » They can be saved if freed quickly, but their minds become slightly muddled and consumed by a desire to taste the flesh of those touched by the Wrathful Flower.
- As the party makes their way through the forest, the vegetation gets denser as more and more flowers sprout up.
 - » The air is covered in a hazy cloud of pollen that erupts in puffs from the surrounding flowers.
 - » Breathing the pollen brings about coughing fits and convulsions that draw forth bees.

TEMPTATIONS

- The flowers are beautiful and colorful. When pulled out they immediately wilt out and die, bringing about memories of past desires.
 - » What unfulfilled ambition drives you to be king?
What could you achieve with this newfound power?
- Two lovers are trapped in an eternal embrace, their feet rooted in the floor. The flowers around them release pollen each time they kiss.
 - » If the lovers are killed, the hazy pollen cloud stops lingering and the flowers wilt and die. Thoughts of failure and absolute loneliness plague the PCs.
 - » If approached calmly, the lovers willingly place their hands on the PC's chest and make them immune to the effects of the pollen.
 - However, this comes at a cost; causing the Wrathful Flower to grow ever faster inside them. They are wracked with ebbing waves of pain.



RING 3: SUSPICION/DRIVES

TERRORS

- As the Wrathful Flowers take hold inside of them, the PCs will begin to feel as entitled as kings; making demands and expecting them to be fulfilled immediately.
 - » The other PCs mock and disrespect you, they should be bowing to your every whim. You're the one that got them this far.
 - » Only you can be king, no one else has what it takes.
 - » They will grovel at your feet for mercy when the time comes.
- Human, insect-like shapes stalk from the shadows, observing the party with an unsettling gaze.
 - » These half-human, half-anthropod creatures flee when approached, buzzing away between the trees. They leave behind petals of Wrathful Flowers.
 - » Touching a petal grants a vision of someone's past ambitions. Who were they, and what did they want?
 - » Eventually, they return; following the party at a distance.
- The party feels weak during the night, only having the energy to move during the day. They are also overcome with a desire to lie down and dig their hands into the cool, soft soil; debilitating spasms of pleasure gush over those who do.
 - » Anyone that spends the night with their hands in the dirt does not awaken in the morning. The others find them dead, tendrils growing out of every orifice.
- Food begins to lose its appeal. Anything but the sweetest of things tastes sour in your mouth. You are also overcome with an unquenchable thirst.

TEMPTATIONS

- The party comes across several skeletons through the forest, each wearing a crown of perfectly-kept flowers.
 - » Their backpacks are intact, full of untouched rations and other supplies.
 - » The crowns call to the PCs, asking to be worn. Picking up the crown and placing it on your head causes it to wilt and fall to pieces.
 - This crown is not yours to take.
 - What plebeian thoughts still plague you, preventing you from achieving kingship?
- The forest slowly clears and the outline of a castle can be seen not too far in the distance through the tops of the trees.
 - » As the trees spread out and more sunlight breaks through the foliage, you brim with a renewed vigor.
 - » As you continue to march, you realize the outline is ever so slowly growing. The castle is further away than expected and much larger than you thought.
 - » It truly is a colossal fortress, fit for a king.
- One of the insect abominations is seen burying something with its remaining human hand.
 - » It asks the party to leave it alone, sobbing with regrets of a life long lost.
 - » Is this what failure looks like? It's too late to give up now.

RING 4: MONSTROUS/DESPERATION

TERRORS

- A legion of half human, half insect-people pours out from between the trees. These arthropods hunt down the party, screaming their desire to taste their sweet insides in ghastly buzzing voices.
 - » Any PC who drank from the sludge is especially targeted.
 - » There are too many to defeat, but cutting any arthropods causes them to bleed a sugary brown syrup, drawing the others to cannibalize them.
 - Injuring several of them may cause a distraction large enough to escape.
- The floor and trees are sticky with large webs that make movement difficult. Mummified bodies hang from loose strands.
 - » Backpacks, shoes, weapons hanging from belts, and other belongings can easily get stuck on the webs.
- The castle grows ever larger. It's shadow covering the forest, blocking out vital sunlight; draining the party of willpower.
 - » The closer you get to the castle, the more arthropods appear.
 - » Some outright attack you, while others praise you and bow at your feet. Only to attack you moments later in screams of anguish and fury. Several ask to be put out of their misery.
- A powerful smell permeates the area, each whiff forming words in your mind.
 - » The voice says it has waited a long time for one so worthy.
 - » It warns you of a betrayal your friends are plotting.

TEMPTATIONS

- The arthropods are easily be lured by the smell of any sweet substance. They are also strongly attracted to fire and lights, catching on fire just to be near light.
 - » If any PC is cut, they see their blood slowly resemble honey.
- The party comes across a small community living in a hidden cave. They usher the party in. A strong smell hides them from the insects.
 - » They offer the party a place to rest and recover in return for their stories. What stories do you tell them?
 - » The people look and treat you with the slightest tinge of pity. What do they know?
 - » They say nothing of themselves and treat you with the utmost kindness.
 - » None of them have any Wrathful Flowers. They are not worthy; cowards hiding in caves, too scared to claim their destiny.
- If players explore the cave they find a room where the arthropods are hung from hooks and drained of their fluids.
 - » The community harvests these creatures for everything they can.
 - » They share the knowledge they have of the weaknesses of these creatures.

RING 5: PSYCHOLOGICAL/COMPANIONS

TERRORS

- In a clearing in the woods, an immense flower stands at the archway of a castle of thorns.
 - » The arthropods remain at the edge of the clearing, observing with great interest, as their mandibles twitch with anticipation.
 - » The flower sends puffs of pollen that speak deep into your mind with every whiff: approach me, and become king. But there can only be one, the rest must perish.
 - » The surrounding creates buzz and cheer, hoping to soon see bloodshed. Their droning quickly becomes unbearable.
 - Become king and you can command them to stop, the flower whispers in your head.
- If any PC manages to come in contact with the giant flower, the Wrathful Flower inside them grows at an incredible rate. Tendrils sprout from every orifice in their body and a bramble of roses extend around them.
 - » The roses instantly blossom and spray seeds, which fly in every direction, further extending the kingdom of the Wrathful Flower.
 - » The PC's minds drift and they see through the eyes of the arthropods. They share in their hunger and gaze upon their contenders for the crown.
 - » The arthropods, in a mad frenzy, devour the remaining PCs.

TEMPTATIONS

- This is no true castle. This is not what you want. These are your friends, not contenders for a crown of thorns.
 - » You can still survive this if you each pull out your Wrathful Flower, painfully removing its roots from your body.
 - » The arthropods screech in pain and the giant flower gives a giant puff of poisonous air before dying out.
 - » Escape is difficult, but possible.
- As the flower wilts, so too does the whole forest begin to slowly die out. Trees crumble to pieces, dropping large branches on the unaware.
 - » The party must flee or be buried with the dead trees.
- Upon exiting the woods, the PCs begin to violently cough blood until all the essence of the Wrathful Flower has left their body.
 - » Any who pay close attention notice a tiny patch of red flowers growing around the puddles of blood on the floor.
 - » A small bee comes buzzing out of the woods and lands on the flowers.

