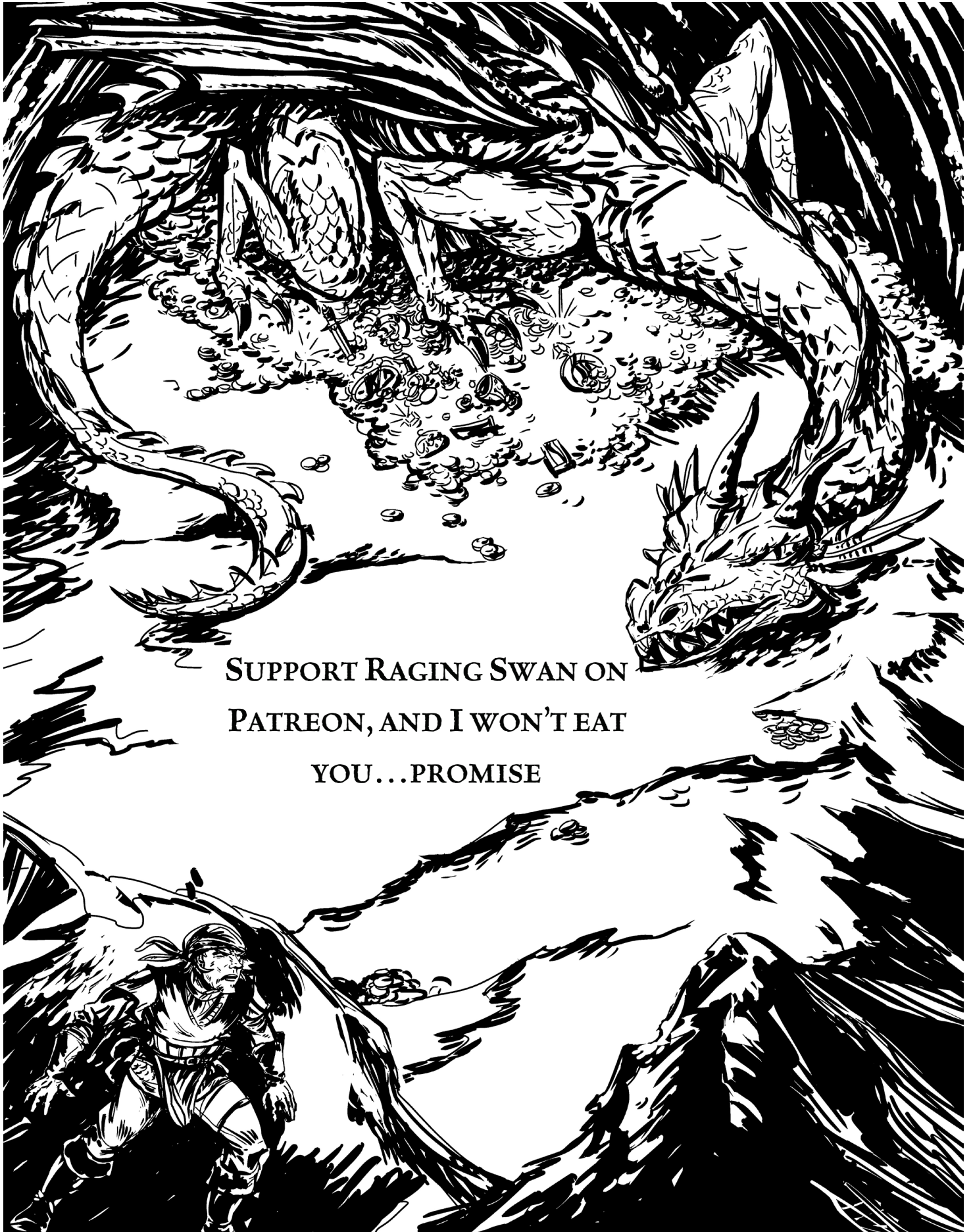


RAGING SWAN PRESS

GM'S MONTHLY MISCELLANY:

SEPTEMBER 2015





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GM'S MONTHLY MISCELLANY: SEPTEMBER 2015

Featuring material from some of Raging Swan Press's newest products as well as classic releases of yesteryear, advice articles and material from Creighton's own *Borderland of Adventure* campaign, the *GM's Monthly Miscellany* series is a terrific free resource for the busy, time-crunched GM.

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SOURCES

As well as new, never seen before material from my own *Borderland of Adventure* campaign, this instalment of *GM's Monthly Miscellany* presents information from several Raging Swan Press products and advice articles including:

- **Alternate Dungeons: Alchemist's Laboratory** Nicholas Wasko.
- **Caves & Caverns** Creighton Broadhurst and David Posener.
- **Village Backdrop: Kennutcat** John Bennett.

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FOREWORD



Can it really be September already? By now, summer is but an ephemeral dream and autumn's storm clouds will soon be here. That's good news here at Raging Swan Press as it means less time outside and more time slaving away over cool gaming products! (Also, running in the mud and the rain is fun!)

In any event, herein you'll find excerpts from some of Raging Swan's newest products including *Village Backdrop: Kennutcat*, *Alternate Dungeons: Alchemist's Laboratory* and an old favourite of mine—*Caves & Caverns*. I've also included a couple of "20 Things" articles I post up twice a week over at ragingswan.com.

In other rather marvellous news, by the time you've read this I will be deep in design of a module! Sadly, at the time of writing this I'm not sure which one! I've been pondering a *Sinister Secrets of Coldwater* module—set in the village of the same name—that utilises *Fane of the Undying Sleeper* as well as another previous unseen adventure locale. On the other hand, for several weeks now, I've been pondering upgrading *Shadowed Keep on the Borderlands*. Decisions, decisions!

You might also be aware that Raging Swan Press is now on Patreon. We signed up at the start of April, and it's going rather marvellously. The thrust of our Patreon campaign is to be able to afford better rates of pay for our freelance game designers. As I'm sure you know, the economics of 3PP are notoriously tight, but Patreon gives us at Raging Swan Press a way to increase our freelancer rates. At time of writing, we've already increased our word rate to 5 cents a word, which gives me a warm, fuzzy feeling inside. We want to pay more, but to do that we need your help! If you sign up, you get our supplements earlier than normal and cheaper than normal. Even better, you can pledge what you want and cancel when you want. If you are interested in taking a look at the campaign, check out patreon.com/ragingswanpress or head over to patreon.com and search for Raging Swan!

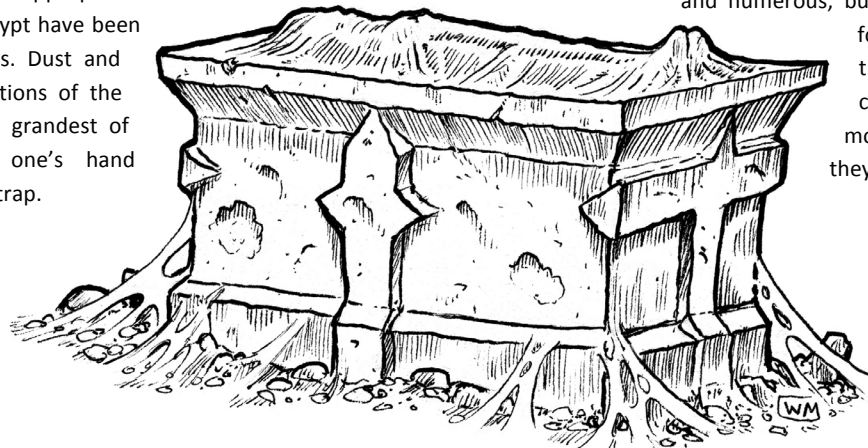
In any event, I hope you enjoy the material in this GM's Monthly Miscellany, but more importantly I hope you find it useful and that it enhances your campaign. If you've got any comments or questions about Raging Swan Press, I'd love to hear from you. You can contact me at creighton@ragingswan.com.

20 THINGS TO FIND IN A DUSTY CRYPT

It seems adventurers are always poking about in dusty, seemingly abandoned crypts. Often the lairs of the blasphemous undead or the repository of forgotten treasures such places draw adventurers like moths to a candle.

But not all areas of a crypt are stuffed full of undead and treasure. Use the table below, to add points of minor interest into the dusty crypts in your campaign:

1. Here, water oozes down the walls from above leaving tracks on the ancient brickwork. On the ground, the water has turned the dust into thick paste-like grey ooze.
2. Dusty cobwebs fill the corners of the ceiling.
3. A small portion of brickwork from one wall has fallen away revealing the bare rock behind. A low pile of rubble lies on the floor nearby.
4. Dust sifts down from the archway over a door. The stones of the arch have shifted and consequently the door is harder than normal to force open. If the door is opened, the stones above groan ominously and dust sift down into the doorway...
5. Incongruously, a single bone—a thighbone—lies on the floor in front of a shadowy archway.
6. The walls here were once decorated with brightly painted images painted directly onto the smooth stone. The colours have long since faded, and now only a suggestion of what once was remains.
7. A section of floor is bumpy and uneven, making rapid movement difficult. The paving slabs can be easily pried up, but nothing of interest lies beneath.
8. A pillar once held up the roof here, but at some point in the distant past it collapsed. Dust shrouds the resultant pile of rubble; the ceiling over the rubble sags dangerously.
9. Several niches that once contained offerings to those buried here pierce the walls. All have succumbed to time's remorseless advance and are now nothing more than small piles of rotting, rusting or desiccated remains.
10. Huge religious symbols appropriate to the faith who built the crypt have been carved into the walls. Dust and cobwebs shroud portions of the carvings. Tracing the grandest of the carvings with one's hand deactivates a nearby trap.
11. Statues of the faithful garbed for war stand guard over this area. Half have serene looks upon their faces while the others' faces are twisted with hate. The statues are arrayed so they all look towards the entrance.
12. Niches cut into the wall each hold the shrouded skeletons of long-dead worshippers. Dust, cobwebs and other detritus cover the remains. The densely packed niches run from floor to ceiling. An ornate shroud edged with silver and gold thread covers the corpse in one of the particularly inaccessible niche near the ceiling.
13. Several small holes pierce the wall at ground level. Small dried faeces—typical of that left by rats, mice or other rodents—covers the floor.
14. Small holes in the ceiling emit a faint cold breeze into the chamber. The constant draught stirs the dust covering the floor. Paranoid explorers may think some form of invisible guardian lurks within the dust cloud.
15. Carved holy symbols decorate the walls of this area. Several have been deliberately defaced, but there seems to be no obvious reason for this deliberate vandalism.
16. A faded mosaic covers the floor. It depicts a stylised representation of the afterlife, but exact details are hard to pick out as some of the tiles are cracked and others are missing.
17. Several burial niches in this area are empty. In all cases, discarded burial shrouds lie in the niche or nearby. Have the remains been removed or are they lurking animate guardians of the complex?
18. A narrow ventilation shaft cut into the ceiling allows a thin ray of pale light into the crypt.
19. Burial niches pierce the walls of the area (see #12 above). The remains of one of the interred have fallen from its niche and lies draped on the floor nearby.
20. Cockroaches and other insects once infested this crypt. Feasting on the remains of those interred here they grew fat and numerous, but when they ran out of food they died off. Now their desiccated remains coat the floor and make moving quietly difficult (as they crunch underfoot).



KENNUTCAT AT A GLANCE

Three generations ago, a consortium of merchants and titled nobles purchased the small island of Kennutcat. Graced with a natural harbour and bountiful fishing, the sandy island promised further wealth for its investors. After brutally subjugating the native inhabitants, the Kittiwaki, the colonizers worked diligently to build a prosperous settlement. Kennutcat's ideal location quickly proved to be a boon as the villagers resupplied and repaired passing ships as well as developing their own fishing fleet.

However, despite its apparent idyllic appearance, a deep fog rolls in at night, staining the paved stone streets and shingled houses with a clinging dew. Within the mists, strange sounds echo—voices of past villagers, their footsteps treading the streets and ancestral homes—making traveling at night dangerous for the unwary. Meanwhile, family members relentlessly pace the porches perched on rooftops, known as widow walks, their eyes straining for loved ones reported lost at sea. For something lurks out in the waters, a titanic monster that lures Kennutcat's sons and daughters out onto the water with hopes of glory. Those who hunt the strange beast never return alive, but their spirits are inexplicably bound to the strange island.

Deep within a forest cave, the few surviving Kittiwaki eke out a living as they have for hundreds of years in worship of unfathomable nature spirits. At night by huge bonfires, they pray to the spirits to cleanse Kennutcat of the taint of the colonisers exploiting their holy island.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Ruler Kayda Balton, Timius Holland, Patrok Talbot, Ramus Tennett, Gretchen Vankmeer

Government Council

Population 191 (163 humans [colonisers], 23 humans [natives], 3 halflings, 1 dwarf)

Alignments LG, N, LN, LE

Languages Common

Corruption 0; **Crime** 0; **Economy** 2; **Law** -2 **Lore** -2; **Society** 4

Qualities Prosperous, strategic location

Danger 10; **Disadvantages** Cursed (haunted, +10 danger)

NOTABLE FOLK

Most of the population are nothing more than hardworking peasants. A few, however, are of interest to adventurers:

Apika Spiritseer (location 7; N female old human druid 7) Ancient Apika leads the last of the native islanders in their ancient rites and practises.

Captain Jayn Kell (location 1; LE female human ranger 6) Kennutcat's most esteemed captain plans to avenge her family's death by Lobata.

Debbin Hoggle (location 6; LG male halfling expert 3) Debbin keeps Kennutcat's lighthouse operational 24 hours a day.

Gretchen Vankmeer (location 2; LN female old human aristocrat 2) Gretchen Vankmeer keeps her remaining children imprisoned in their manor for fear they'll succumb to the insane desire to hunt Lobata.

Hargan Saltbeard (location 5; N male dwarf druid 4) Hargan communes with nature in a small shrine.

Kayda Balton (location 4; LN female human aristocrat 3) Aging Kayda Balton runs the Shrouded Mistress.

Patroc Ralbot (location 7; LE male human aristocrat 2) Patroc Ralbot works tirelessly to undermine the other council leaders and install himself as lord of the island.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Most of the village comprises peasant homes. A few locations, however, are of interest to adventurers:

1. **Kennutcat Harbour:** A natural harbour, supported by a well-built wharf, is the centre of the island's trade and fishing industries.
2. **Vankmeer Manor:** Home to one of the original founding families, its current owner locks herself inside, slowly rotting away into insanity.
3. **Kennutcat Council Hall:** This stout building and adjoining tower serves the island as its centre of government.
4. **The Shrouded Mistress:** Kennutcat's main inn and tavern also serves as a general store, owned by the Baltons.
5. **Beach Shrine:** Old Hargan Saltbeard maintains a small shrine built of driftwood dedicated to the spirits of the sea.
6. **Coln Point Lighthouse:** This sturdy lighthouse, its beacon guiding ships to safety, rests at the end of a long stretch of sandy beach.
7. **Forest Cave:** A large cave burrows deep underground, its walls painted with the ancient history of the Kittiwaki and the island.

MARKETPLACE

Resources & Industry Fishing, shipbuilding, trading

Base Value 700 gp; **Purchase Limit** 3,750 gp; **Spellcasting** 3rd; **Minor Items** 2d4; **Medium Items** 1d4; **Major Items** -

When the PCs arrive in Kennutcat, the following items are for sale:

- **Potions & Oils** *comprehend languages* (50 gp), *eagle's splendour* (300 gp)
- **Scrolls (Arcane)** *obscuring mist* (25 gp), *water breathing* (375 gp), *whispering wind* (150 gp)
- **Scroll (Divine)** *detect undead* (25 gp), *helping hand* (375 gp), *protection from evil* (25 gp), *undetected alignment* (150 gp)

VILLAGE LORE

A PC making a Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local) may know some information about Kennutcat. A successful check gains all the information revealed by a lesser check.

DC 10: Kennutcat boasts a wide, natural harbour and excellent fishing waters for such a small island.

DC 15: Many claim to hear voices or see spirits in the deep fogs shrouding the island at night.

DC 20: Despite the prosperity of its citizens, many seem to go mad, possessed by a desire to slay a legendary sea beast.

VILLAGERS

Appearance The colonisers have pale skin and dark hair and eyes. Men wear their beards long while women prefer their hair wrapped in buns with ornate jewelled pins. The Kittiwaki are dark-skinned with reddish to black hair and green or blue eyes.

Dress Coloniser women wear long, heavy drab dresses while men prefer loose pants ornamented with a colourful sash and open chested shirts. Kittiwaki wear animal furs, mostly rabbit, and leather. They wear little in the way of ornamentation.

Nomenclature *male* Argis, Fellen, Korl, Potrus, Tarl, Ulwich; *female* Cassiway, Enda, Hendi, Renna, Sorah; *family* Balton, Holland, Ralbot, Tennett, Vankmeer

WHISPERS & RUMOURS

A PC can use Diplomacy to gather information about Kennutcat and its surroundings. This takes 1d4 hours and requires a DC 10 check. A character exceeding this check gains one additional rumour for each 5 points by which he exceeded DC 10. Use the table below to determine which rumour(s) the PC learns.

D6	RUMOUR
1	Lady Vankmeer keeps her youngest children locked inside their manor house.
2	Captain Jayn Kell is paying well for a crew to help her avenge her family's death by Lobata.
3*	The Kittiwaki practice human sacrifice, evil magic and cannibalism.
4	Families often leave out food and drink for their ancestors who do not seem to rest in peace.
5*	The reason the island seems haunted is that the Council members are actually vampires practicing vile sorcery.
6	Hargan Saltbeard jealously guards his shrine. He won't let anyone inside.

*False rumour



ALCHEMIST'S LABORATORY: AN ALTERNATE DUNGEON

The art of alchemy arose among archaic scholars pursuing cures for disease, pain and mortality. Some continued to hunt for medicines, while others turned from the healing arts to seek riches, trying to transform ordinary metals into pure gold. While the alchemists of our world evolved into modern scientists, those within the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game found their original methods more successful. In a world brimming with arcane power, a true alchemist may achieve wonders to rival even great feats of magic. A blend of science and sorcery, alchemy remains a mainstay of roleplaying games, embodying the intersection between reality and fantasy.

Exploring an alchemical laboratory provides adventurers with a glimpse into the minds and arsenals of the great crafters. The alchemist masters the world by learning its fundamental workings through experimentation, concoction and dissection. Over smoking fires in rooms lined with cluttered shelves, they hone their art. Although alchemical laboratories share many features with typical dungeons, designing a realistic yet mystical laboratory presents a unique challenge for the modern GM. The following section uses a combination of mysterious atmosphere and real world chemistry to provide the GM with guidelines for transforming a simple alchemist's workroom into an unforgettable gaming experience.

DEFINING THE DUNGEON

An alchemist's laboratory serves as a workshop where scholars can refine mundane ingredients into tools or supernatural power. Alchemist laboratories can be found anywhere intelligent creatures call home, whether as part of a larger complex or built as an independent structure. At its heart, a laboratory is a high-risk workspace, designed to maximize efficiency, function and, above all else, safety. Laboratories tend to be sequestered from living spaces in order to reduce the risk of alchemical waste or botched experiments harming people or property. The nature of a laboratory dungeon depends on its state of repair; abandoned laboratories accumulate numerous hazards as unstable concoctions and apparatuses break down, while occupied laboratories are better maintained and more likely to contain recent research notes, newly crafted alchemical products and functional traps.

DESIGNING THE DUNGEON

When designing an alchemical laboratory as a dungeon, the GM must consider how each room's features contribute to the laboratory's overall function. Laboratories are dynamic structures that require certain components in order to conduct safe and reliable experiments. Dilapidated or inadequate provisions create an unstable environment, increasing the risk of

hazards and changing the nature of encounters within the laboratory. Below are some features the GM should consider when designing an alchemist's laboratories as dungeons.

Disposal: All experiments create waste, which must be removed. Ideally a researcher can dump experimental waste into a river, chasm, portal or other reservoir where they can disperse with little risk. Laboratories that lack immediate disposal methods must set aside containers to hold alchemical detritus until it can be safely removed. Laboratories without adequate disposal mechanisms risk mixing unstable waste products, which interfere with normal biology. Creatures interacting with alchemical waste must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + the party's APL). Failure means the creature cannot heal hit points or ability damage naturally. This condition can be removed with a DC 20 Heal check or a *remove disease* spell.

Heat Source: Heat is easily manipulated, making it an appealing and often vital catalyst for alchemical reactions. A fire that burns too hot can easily lead to an explosion, while a fire that is allowed to burn too low may not yield the desired results. Ideally, alchemists have apparatuses capable of limiting temperature fluctuations; almost any heat source can be jury-rigged to function in a laboratory. Broken or poorly regulated heating mechanisms can create severe or extreme heat conditions, or explode when mishandled, functioning like *fire trap*, *fireball* or *incendiary cloud*.

Maintenance: Alchemical reactions are sensitive, and even small flaws or trace amounts of contamination can ruin materials. Alchemists must routinely scour their workspace, glassware and other tools, and replace damaged equipment to ensure high quality products. Improperly maintained laboratories increase the risk that alchemical items found or produced in the laboratory fails to function (up to 50% chance of an item having no effect when used), and debris can function as difficult terrain or caltrops.

Ventilation: Poisonous fumes are an insidious killer. Gaseous products can quickly fill the surrounding air if a laboratory is not properly ventilated. A chimney is often sufficient, but noxious or volatile substances require artificial airflow to draw fumes away, such as heated air rising to carry away vapours, or vacuums created by pump mechanisms or magical portals. Poor ventilation results in the accumulation of toxic fumes, which deal 1 point of Constitution damage per hour, minute or round spent in the laboratory, depending on the extent of contamination. A DC 10 Fortitude save resists the damage, but longer exposures become more dangerous, increasing the DC by 1 per previous save.

RUNNING THE DUNGEON

Running an alchemist's laboratory as an adventure site is similar to running a traditional dungeon. Below are some features GMs should bear in mind when using an alchemical laboratory as a dungeon.

Airflow: Bellows, shutters, fume hoods and other apparatuses installed in a laboratory allow alchemists to direct gases into or away from certain areas. A DC 15 Disable Device or Knowledge (engineering) check allows creatures to manipulate these mechanisms to relocate or remove airborne hazards. Powerful ventilation devices may create strong or severe wind effects.

Contaminants: Poorly cleaned laboratories accumulate all manner of poisonous compounds that can weaken the body and befuddle the mind. Creatures within contaminated areas take a -2 alchemical penalty on Fortitude and Will saves unless they wash away the toxins by making a DC 20 Heal check.

Corrosive Compounds: Alchemists often work with materials that rapidly dissolve wood, stone and metal, requiring special containers that remain unharmed by the powerful solvents. Objects exposed to these reagents take 2d6 acid damage every turn, ignoring hardness, until the item is destroyed or the corrosive substance is scraped or washed away. Attended or magical objects can attempt a DC 15 Reflex save to negate the damage. Objects that are immune to acid damage remain unharmed by these reactions.

Explosives: Some concoctions are extremely unstable when exposed to an open flame. When ignited or dealt fire damage, these mixtures explode, dealing 1d6 bludgeoning damage and 2d6 fire damage in a 10-ft. radius burst (DC 15 Reflex halves). Clusters of these compounds can create catastrophic chain reactions capable of destroying entire buildings.

Irritants: Alchemical reagents can be notoriously pungent, causing itching, nosebleeds, watery eyes and other distractions to confound the senses. Creatures exposed to irritants must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or take a -2 penalty on Perception checks until they return to fresh air. Alchemical irritants also obscure other odours, so creatures with the scent ability can only detect creatures within 5 feet, and the base DC to track by smell becomes 20 rather than 10.

Mutagens: Some alchemical materials possess properties that enhance or inhibit effects that alter a creature's physical properties. When a creature exposed to mutagens is targeted by a transmutation spell effect, there is a chance its duration will be decreased by half (1-40), doubled (41-80) or remain unaffected (81-100). The magic consumes the mutagens, which only modifies the first transmutation spell affecting the creature following its exposure. Mutagens have no effect on spells with a duration of instantaneous or permanent, though these spells still remove the mutagens from the creature.

SACKING THE DUNGEON

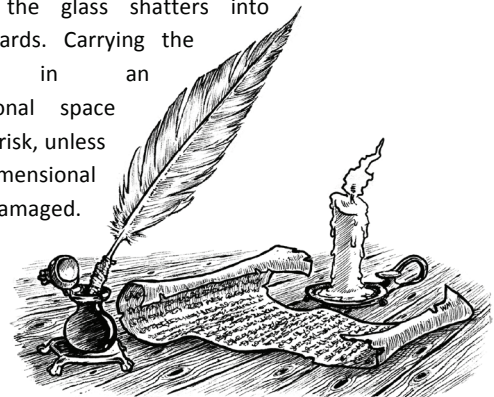
Like any adventuring site, an alchemical laboratory has its share of valuable treasures and magical artefacts. Listed below are inspirational ideas for unique, thematic treasures to award PCs adventuring within an alchemical laboratory.

Alchemical Ingredients: The most obvious resources found in laboratories are reagents used in alchemy. Using these rare ingredients provides a +2 circumstance bonus on Craft (alchemy) checks, and reduces the time needed to craft any nonmagical alchemical item by one day. Particularly potent reagents can enhance the magical properties of solutions. Potions created with these ingredients increase the duration of their effects by 50%. An alchemical laboratory typically has enough materials to create 1d4 of these extended potions.

Documents: Most alchemists keep fastidious records of background research and experimental results in order to reproduce their findings. Valuable to researchers in their own right, these tomes may also provide bonuses on Craft or Knowledge checks, function as magical scrolls or spellbooks or describe ways to augment spells using alchemical items. These formulae allow spellcasters to use items created with Craft (alchemy), such as alchemist's fire or thunderstones, as optional material spell components for related spells, providing bonuses on caster level, save DCs or other benefits based on the GM's discretion.

Precious Metals: Many alchemists study metallurgy, probing the mystical properties of rare metals and discovering valuable alloys. Ores, powders and ingots of any metal or gemstone may be found in a laboratory. These precious commodities can be sold or used as raw materials for relevant Craft skills. Experimental metals may also possess new properties, such as increased hardness, more hit points or resistance to certain types of energy damage.

Research Equipment: Delicate experiments require masterfully crafted tools, so intact sets of alembics, crucibles, retorts and other apparatuses can fetch a high price among alchemists. Glassware is fragile, so looting it requires extra care. When a PC carrying research equipment takes damage, there is a 5% chance the glass shatters into worthless shards. Carrying the equipment in an extradimensional space removes this risk, unless the extradimensional container is damaged.



CAVES & CAVERNS: STRANDS OF TERROR (EL 13; XP 25,600)

In this encounter, the PCs stumble into the lair of Deravnix a gigantic, elder roper. This old and canny hunter has established himself in a cavern featuring a wide, deep chasm and waits for prey to come to him. Although evil and depraved, he enjoys speaking with those that have fallen into his grip. Read:

The floor of this large cavern is rent by a wide chasm – roughly 40 ft. across. Rubble litters the floor and several stands of stalagmites grow up from the floor. Across the chasm, a single passageway leads away into darkness.

Few creatures reach this cavern and leave again.

TACTICS

Deravnix lurks in the darkness on his side of the chasm pretending to be a stalagmite and waits for explorers to cross. When an explorer starts to do so Deravnix attacks with his strands, focusing on a single target. Every time he strikes a foe, he uses his pull ability to drag them closer to (or into) the chasm. He ignores a target falling into the chasm, focusing on active threats. He plans to trap a few explorers in the chasm (where he can dine on them later at his leisure) and force the others to flee.

Deravnix does not pursue fleeing explorers contenting himself to dine on those falling into the chasm.

AREA FEATURES

The area has several features of note:

Illumination: Darkness.

Ceiling: The ceiling is 30 ft. high.

Chasm: The floor suddenly drops away into darkness.

The chasm is 80 ft. deep and 40 ft. wide. Characters can scale the chasm's walls with a DC 15 Climb check.

A character falling into the chasm can make a DC 20 Reflex save to grab onto something to stop their fall before they plummet into the chasm proper. A character failing the save suffers 1d6 damage per 10 ft. fallen (to a maximum of 8d6 damage) and lands prone. See "Falling into the Chasm" for more information.

Rubble (Light): Small rocks are strewn across the ground.

Light rubble increases the DC of Acrobatics checks by 2.

Rubble (Dense): Rocks of all sizes cover the ground.

It costs 2 squares of movement, to enter a square containing dense rubble. The DC of Acrobatics checks increases by 5 in such areas and the DC of Stealth checks increases by 2.

Slender Stalagmites: Thin stalagmites, slick with water dripping down from above, grow from the floor.

A character standing in the same square as a slender stalagmite (hardness 8, hp 150, DC 20 Break) gains partial cover (+2 to AC, +1 on Reflex saves).

Skeletal Remains: The chasm floor is littered with the remains of Deravnix's previous victims. These count as dense rubble (it costs 2 square of movement to enter a square containing skeletal remains). Hidden and scattered among the skeletons are a few objects of interest. Searching PCs can find each with the listed Perception check.

- Many rusted and pitted weapons, scraps of backpacks, clothing and so on.
- **Masterwork Full Plate (DC 5):** This finely-crafted suit of full plate armour is battered and scratched but functions normally. A DC 10 Craft (armour) or Profession (armourer) identifies the armour as duergar-craft.

DERAVNIX, ELDER ROPER

CR 13 (XP 25,600)

A huge eye and toothy maw dominate the "front" of this conical-shaped creature. Long strands of fibrous material writhe about the creature's body.

Giant roper

CE Huge aberration

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +24, Sense Motive +3

Speed 10 ft.

AC 0; **Acrobatics** +0 (-8 jumping), **Climb** +29, **Stealth** +13 (+21 in stony or icy areas)

AC 28, **touch** 8, **flat-footed** 28; **CMD** 35 (can't be tripped) (-2 size, +20 natural)

Immune electricity; **Resist** cold 10; **Weakness** vulnerability to fire

Fort +15, **Ref** +4, **Will** +13; **SR** 27

hp 186 (12 HD)

Space 15 ft.; **Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +25

Melee bite (reach 15 ft.) +21 (4d10+21/19-20)

Ranged Touch 6 strands (range 50 ft.) +8 (1d8 Strength [DC 27 Fortitude negates])

Atk Options strands (pull; 5 ft.)

Strands (Ex) A roper can extend up to six thin, sticky strands from its body at a time, launching them to a maximum range of 50 ft. These strands (AC 20) are quite strong, but can be severed by any amount of slashing damage. With a successful attack, the roper can make a free combat manoeuvre check to pull a Large or smaller target closer. Creatures pulled in this way do not provoke attacks of opportunity and stop if the pull would move them into a solid object or creature.

Abilities Str 38, Dex 11, Con 33, Int 13, Wis 16, Cha 12

Feats Improved critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Perception, Stealth), Weapon Focus (strand)

Skills as above plus Knowledge (dungeoneering) +16, Knowledge (religion) +13

Languages Aklo, Undercommon

- **Lesser Metamagic Rod of Empower Spell (DC 20):** strong; no school; DC 32 Spellcraft identifies; this long, tapered iron rod is decorated with many arcane symbols. A DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) check identifies these as dealing with strength and power.
- **Ring of Counterspells (DC 25):** moderate [DC 19 Knowledge {arcana} evocation]; DC 26 Spellcraft identifies; this golden band is plain, and worn. It is obviously old and has been badly scratched.
- **Silver Raven Figurine of Wondrous Power (DC 30):** moderate [DC 21 Knowledge {arcana} evocation]; DC 21 Spellcraft identifies; this small, incredibly detailed figurine is only an inch high.
- **Mixed Coinage:** 34 pp, 137 gp, 489 sp.

Cavern Map: Using the blood and gore of those he has slain as his paint, Deravnix has daubed a highly detailed map of the surrounding area on the lower portion of the chasm walls. Whenever possible, Deravnix avoids climbing through the area and flies into a fury if anyone else climbs through the area.

Depending on the GM's machinations, PCs studying the map may be able to gain some insights into the surrounding terrain or even locate various locales.

FALLING INTO THE CHASM

A character falling into the chasm suffers 8d6 falling damage and lands prone. If the character has suffered Strength damage it is possible that he will be unable to climb out. Such characters are trapped and at Deravnix's mercy unless their comrades come to their aid. Remember, however that Deravnix has a high Climb skill (+29) that he can easily reach the chasm floor. His slow, remorseless advance has driven many trapped explorers mad with fear.

Deravnix doesn't normally immediately eat caught prey; he enjoys conversing with those he has captured – in this way he keeps up to date with events of import in the surrounding area.

To roleplay these discussions, refer to the notes under "Deravnix" for details of his personality and interests. Initially, Deravnix begins as indifferent toward his captives.

Every day a PC remains trapped, Deravnix may become bored of their conversation and eat them. A PC can attempt to keep Deravnix interested by making a Diplomacy, Knowledge (religion) or Knowledge (dungeoneering) check:

- **DC 20 (+1 per previous check):** The PC's conversation pleases Deravnix and he does not attack.
- **DC 15 (+1 per previous check):** The PC's conversation angers Deravnix and he attacks (but not to kill) and damages the PC's Strength. Once he has rendered his captive practically unable to move, he retreats.

- **DC 10 (+1 per previous check):** The PC's conversation becomes boring and Deravnix grows hungry. The PCs must immediately make another check. If the PC fails, Deravnix attacks intending to consume his prey.

DERAVNIX

A cunning ambush-hunter and elder evil of the depths, Deravnix has lived in this chamber for decades. Now, he rarely leaves his cavern-lair, preferring to wait for prey to stumble into his clutches.

Background: Deravnix is an elder roper. In his youth, he wandered extensively feeding on whatever he encountered. During one of his rambles he discovered access tunnels leading to a deep dwarven mine and enjoyed for the first time their tasty flesh. However, after a disastrous encounter with a powerful dwarven cleric during which he almost died he retreated into the deep tunnels of the Ebon Realm and sought out a defensible lair.

Personality: Evil and wholly self-centred, Deravnix is intelligent and certain of his own superiority over any entering his realm. He is brave to a fault – having never been defeated – and confident in his own success.

He is interested in many things but has a particular fascination with evil cults and their practices and the layout of the caverns and passageways radiating outwards from his own lair. This interests him so much that he has daubed a hugely convoluted and detailed map on the walls of the chasm depicting caves in the surrounding areas for many miles. See "Cavern Map" for more details.

Mannerism: Deravnix delights in his prey's suffering and often chuckles as they squirm and particularly enjoys them begging for their freedom and life.

Distinguishing Features: Deravnix has fought many battles and has many scars. The most notable of these is a black mass of scar tissue on the rear part of his body caused by a *flame strike* that almost slew him. Large jagged teeth fill his huge maw; several are broken.

Hooks: Deravnix enjoys speaking with interesting and engaging prey, but is careful not to allow them to regain their strength enough to flee. He also doesn't feed his captives. Eventually they would starve to death, but Deravnix typically enjoys consuming them while they yet live so they can experience the terror of their impending death.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

To modify this encounter, apply the following changes:

EL 12 (XP 19,200): Apply the young creature template to Deravnix (+2 on all Dex-based rolls, -2 on all other rolls; hp 162).

EL 14 (XP 38,400): Apply the advanced creature template to Deravnix (+2 on all dice rolls [including damage]; strands DC 29; AC 32, touch 12, flat-footed 32; CMD 39; hp 210).

20 THINGS TO FIND IN A NECROMANCER'S SANCTUM

In their forbidden corpse-filled laboratories necromancers pursue their unspeakable, blasphemous experiments. Such horrible labours require terrible components and depraved research materials of the very worst kinds.

Often, though, such details are overlooked as the party merely loots the chamber for items of obvious value. Use this table to generate such items of interest. It is up to the GM to determine the value of any particular piece on the table below, however most good-aligned PCs will be uncomfortable (at best) owning such items.

1. A wooden box contains a dozen thin, long black candles. When burnt, they give off an indescribable smell akin to burning flesh.
2. Seven skulls fill a shelf above the desk. A strange rune decorates each skull's forehead.
3. A coffer near one wall holds a jumble of horribly misshapen bones. Most are of humanoid origin, but surely no creature could have survived long with such deformities.
4. An ornate display of bones decorates the ceiling. Leg and arm bones form the perimeter of the "sculpture" while a circle of skulls fills the centre. The bones are yellowing and old and have been stuck in place with strong glue. One of the skulls contains a bead from a necklace of fireballs. If the skull is disturbed, the bead falls out and explodes when it hits the floor.
5. A fireplace pierces one wall. Deep soot and ash lie within. Even a cursory examination of the pile turns up fragments of bone.
6. A small red velvet pouch contains a single braid of long impossibly red hair. The braid is carefully curled up and has been dusted with some kind of fine black dust.
7. A skull—with its top removed—serves as a mixing bowl of sorts. A nearby worn leg bone hints at its use as a pestle.
8. A small sack of salt lies on one corner. It is half empty and the remaining discoloured salt looks contaminated.
9. A large earthen jar of honey contains the preserved head of an old man. His face is contorted as if in indescribable agony.
10. Three small glass jars hold an array of different coloured dust. Each is the ash of a different cremated creature, used for some ineffable purpose. A different esoteric sigil has been carefully written on each jar.
11. A chandelier crafted of bones hangs down from the ceiling in the centre of the room. The bones are blackened with soot and covered in dried wax.
12. A small cauldron blackened with use and pitted with age stands near the necromancer's worktable. Dark, unnaturally cold water fills the cauldron almost to the lip. Within lies the sludge and detritus of many experiments—shattered bones, decaying flesh and the like.
13. A sagging bookshelf holds the remains of ancient tomes long since succumbed to the ravages of extreme age.
14. A small box contains four long quills carved from bone. Their tips are exquisitely sharp and blackened with red "ink".
15. A partially dissected body lies on the table. The body is that of a long dead human. The unfortunate's chest cavity has been opened and the organs removed.
16. An ornate pentagram carving on the floor provides a zone of protection around the necromancer's workbench. The carvings have been picked out with blood.
17. Several beakers stand on a shelf above the table. Each is full of a different kind of dark, sticky and noxious fluid.
18. An oversized leather wallet holds a dissection kit. Incongruously, the leather wallet is of the finest quality and is even monogrammed with the necromancer's initials.
19. A small cage hanging from the ceiling holds the skeletal remains of several songbirds amid a small heap of discoloured feathers. Hideously, the birds' remains yet stir and judder. A close examination reveals they appear to still be trying to sing.
20. The room seems unnaturally cold and the party's nonmagical lights do not dispel the darkness lingering in the room's nooks and crannies. Anyone spending much time here gets the feeling that unseen presences lurk in the chamber.



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