

# Annwn

*"In Annwn the peacefulness, in Annwn the wrath, in Annwn below the earth..." - Anonymous, Welsh poem*

## Introduction

Having fled a nightmarish future dominated by Serpent People ("Shadow Kingdoms") or the dangers of the Nameless Mist ("The Tower"), the investigators wake knowing they must act quickly to stop a catastrophe befalling the world. The problem is, they're not on earth, they're in Annwn (pronounced an'oon), a deceptively familiar dreamland bereft of humanity. The party slowly realizes something is wrong as they rush across the land, encountering evidence of hidden horrors. False hope dawns in the form of a Viking trading party, but they are just as lost as the investigators. Finally, after days of both mundane and supernatural hardships, the investigators find some answers and details of a route home...

"**Shadow Kingdoms**" ends when the investigators die or become insane. The next thing they know is awaking in Annwn. Every player should have an existing investigator from the Pagan Call campaign, not one created specifically for this scenario. If investigators have died, the keeper is free to decide which incarnation awakes in Annwn.

"**The Tower**": if keepers don't want to run a modern scenario, they can move straight into Annwn with all investigators being consumed by the Nameless Mist.

## Keeper Information

"Annwn" begins with the investigators waking somewhere that is at once familiar but unsettling: the last campsite they set up before reaching Caermaen (see "The Tower: The Gray Hills"; use the appropriate descriptions and maps). Investigators who disappeared or died in the Tower appear to be back from the dead (in fact, they are their dead selves in Annwn). Investigators are thus left to wonder if they have dreamt their most recent adventures. In reality, the investigators are plunged into a living nightmare – the underworld Annwn, loosely based on the Dreamlands' Underworld, devoid of humanity and ruled by the God of the Dead Gwynn ap Nudd!

Importantly, the investigators have lost the Book of Thoth. In Annwn, the scroll is still lying at the same place where Quintus fell in the waking world (see "the Tower").

The first stage of the scenario is a journey through a land that is superficially similar enough to the world of the living for the investigators to mistake their true location. As they roam this empty landscape, assailed by unseen horrors every night, the party becomes confused and increasingly desperate. The keeper has to work to stretch this confusion out, dropping hints and avoiding questions. Initial relief comes from meeting with a party of Danes who are just as lost as the investigators. A Worm of the Earth eventually provides the answers wanted – but can they trust the alien creature?

After this apparent success – learning of both a Door out of Annwn and a way to it - the investigators are forced to earn their way to the Door, traveling first to a number of unholy locations and crossing the paths of the Wild Hunt (the Wights) - and that of Tawil at'Umr - see Statistics.

### Find the Door out of Annwn

- Meet the **Danes** and become allies in misfortune. Discuss folklore to answer burning questions: where are we? Where to go?
- Learn to survive the **Wights**: find before nightfall the ruins of the stone **churches** that dot the land, or similar sanctuaries.
- Encounter the **Worms**; learn about the **Door** and the **Book of Thoth**. Strike a bargain: the **Book of Thoth** in exchange of the **Black Stone**.
- Go underground into the **Worm tunnels**, travel to the **Nameless City**; use the Nightmare skill infiltrate the city and steal the **Black Stone**. Capture a **Serpent Man**. Return the stone to the **Worms**. Decipher the **Book of Thoth** with the help of the **Serpent Man**.
- Cross the fens to the **Glass Tower** and the **Door**.
- Outwit the **Avatar** and return to the waking world...

What would earth be like if Seth succeeded in 1021 AD, wiping the land clear of humanity? What would the world look like days or centuries later, the ruins of stone buildings the only sign of our existence, the serpents rising back up and unchecked?

This scenario draws on themes developed in Robert E. Howard's short stories. It also is a modest homage to Jean Ray, some aspects of the plot being loosely adapted from his short stories "Mainz Psalter" and "Shadowy Street".

*Although Annwn is not part of the Dreamlands in the sense that it is not formed solely by the dreams of the living, but rather by the souls of the dead, the keeper may find Chaosium's Dreamlands book a useful reference. Critical Dreamlands mechanics for this scenario are summarized in the "Dreamlands primer" section.*

## Player Information

The investigators awake at their campsite as if nothing had happened! Everything is as they left it with a few notable differences. The entire site of Caermaen seems lifeless; people and animals are gone and the fireplaces are cold. The Gray Hills are still shrouded in mist, but apart from the deadly silence that hangs over the woods, the mist has lost its otherworldly quality. A cold sun shines somewhere above the mist and provides rudimentary navigation. A faint smell of burning wood is carried by the wind from the South.

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## The first day...

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The keeper must foil all initial attempts to accurately navigate the Dreamlands' landscape, especially if the investigators are intent on walking back to the Vale of Wysg (eastward) or to Caerleon (southward). Invoke the mist and the uncertain time of day to justify failed Navigate rolls. Issue contradictory skill roll results for different investigators and let the players argue about directions. After hours of struggling through the undergrowth, they eventually reach a random point on the northern shore of the Severn Sea, in all likelihood to the West of where Caerleon should be, because they never crossed the river Wysg.

As night falls upon the Severn Sea, the smell of burning wood becomes more pervasive and investigators can spot a distant light or fire across the waters, miles to the South. A bonfire maybe? A burning village or burgh?

### Wights

The investigators become aware of the Wights – see Statistics – before being actually harassed by them. Use the following ploys, with moderation:

- ❑ The investigators hear a distant high-pitched ululation. What animal makes such a sound?
- ❑ A Spot Hidden around dusk briefly reveals a strange shadow racing across mud flats miles away.
- ❑ Shortly after settling in to camp for the night the investigators hear distant human-like voices. The investigators soon realize the calls are being carried by the wind. After a period of time, the gibbering voices recede into the distance.

### Food and water

If the investigators need food or water, they have to search the landscape. Familiar plants and animals are easily identified, but investigators do not encounter any large game and have to hunt small mammals (e.g. mice, moles, hedgehogs, squirrels, hares).

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## The second day...

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The investigators travel through an increasingly worrisome landscape. The atmosphere of growing doubt - central to the players' experience in this scenario – places more emphasis on the keeper's discretion than usual. The key is to constantly undermine the players' expectations and at the same time increasingly scare them with otherworldly horrors. Start subtle and grow increasingly overt, refuse to directly answer player queries and time your introduction of events/locations so the world feels empty, but never boring.

Investigators looking South across the yellow waters of the Severn Sea, notice two ominous plumes of smoke rising into the haze just over the horizon, and in the general direction of the lights they spotted the evening before. The smoke might indicate burning villages caused by raiding Vikings or a even siege! In reality, these fires are mirages, passing images of the fall of mankind on the

Last Day. The fires disappear for good over the next few days.

On this second day, the investigators come across the first abandoned hamlet...

### The Abandoned Hamlet

*There are of course many more deserted hamlets and villages like this one in Annwn – reuse the description as needed. The average density is roughly one village every 10 miles. One out of two villages features a stone church, which might still be standing...*

The investigators first notice several mounds on each side of the track. Investigation reveals the overgrown remains of wooden buildings, with scorched roof posts still standing and the rest a mushy mix of rotted wood and weeds on the ground. As in the rest of Annwn, there are no farmsteads or crops or cattle, no villages or cities, no people. Instead, everything is wild and random. Where there would normally be buildings there are only ruins, if anything at all. Only stone constructions such as churches or Roman roads persist to some extent.

A detailed search takes about an hour and reveals nothing of value.

### The Stars aren't right...

As the sun vanishes, a strange sky bends over the empty land; the familiar constellations are gone; unknown stars, arranged in new geometric patterns, shine weakly in the blackness of the night sky.

Any investigator who makes a suitable Navigate or Astronomy roll realizes the sky is utterly alien. After a few minutes of looking at the sky, one investigator startles as he or she catches a glimpse of "something" large gliding across the stars.

At this point, aware investigators may start forwarding various theories. The keeper is to neither confirm nor deny these ideas; a sly smile may be threatening enough.

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## The third day...

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The third day starts like the first or the second, with no hope of improvement of the investigators' situation. After a depressing day, dusk approaches and the first chilling ululations of the Wights can be overheard towards the South. All of a sudden, the investigators hear a series of shouts very close by!

### The Danes

Unlike the calls of the Wights, these shouts are clearly humans calling some name. If the investigators shout back in return, the two groups keep calling until they've closed on each other; if the investigators stay quiet and sneak up, they are able to first hear then see a group of six Danes, pausing at times to call out a name: Svein. See the Statistics at the end of this scenario as well as Adalsteinn's and Torkel's accounts below.

The Danes are on edge and desperate for answers. Adalsteinn, the vessel's captain, does the initial talking. He asks the investigators where they all are and questions them intently about how they got here. He's keen to learn as much about the investigators' story as possible, and patiently answers questions as long as the investigators respond in kind. If the investigators help with finding the vanished Dane (see "Where is Svein?" below), Adalsteinn invites them back to their camp in a ruined church.

**Adalsteinn** - The eight of us sailed out of Lund with a hold full of furs, 6000, not the best, but they would pay for the trip. Good course for the first day but... We were kind of sick, don't know why, and we failed the *night jump*; guess you could say we got lost. Have you seen the stars? By Odin I said! Where on earth are we? We kept sailing onwards, my fathers didn't get anywhere by turning back from new lands. So, then we had a few - er - problems during the nights, but eventually found land before we lost the sail to the *invisibles*, kept it bound up and hidden away at night. We been sailing the coast for a few days now, stopping at every ruin, having a look. You're the first life we've seen.

**Torkel** - Oh, second night out, we was sailin' like we do, but the sky was all wrong, like we sailed into Satan's arse. Then *they* came. I could feel 'em but not see 'em. Poor Leif put up a fight but you can't harm 'em. *They* cut 'im and snatched 'im up and away, God save his soul (yeah, I'm a christen). The sail and the deck was all sprayed with warm blood, Christ! *They* came back the next night, an' we' ready, hidin' and cuddled like sardines under the planking of the foredeck. You could hear 'em walking the deck just above our sweatin' heads like some sailors out of hell; still we could see nothin'!

### Where is Svein?

The investigators are allowed a party spot hidden roll (on the highest spot hidden) for every ten minutes they search. If successful, they notice a portion of disturbed plant life; if unsuccessful a Dane spots it after thirty minutes.

Following the tracks leads to a small clearing. The missing Dane, Old Svein, is huddled up under a tree, his skin cold and gray, and muttering vehemently to himself. Old Svein begins shouting out loud as soon as he is touched: "the one-eyed man, the one-eyed man! Dead, all-seeing eye, cold touch, flaming eye, blue as death, Bölverkr the ill-doer, the wanderer, Gangrad, GANGRAD!" After this final shriek he becomes catatonic. His companions try to grab his clenched arms and make him stand; he resists.

Gangrad ("wanderer") is one of the many names of Odin/Woden, alias Tawil at'Umr. The avatar was drawn by Svein's shaken Sanity and fear. The Odin/Woden connection should be relatively obvious with appropriate skill rolls (e.g. Occult or Other Kingdoms); if the investigators don't make the connection the Danes do. If the investigators discuss Tawil at'Umr within earshot of the Danes, relations become decidedly frosty and they are made to explain their whole back-story. Either way, the investigators are asked to help carry Old Svein back to the

ruined church. Unfortunately, the sun is now setting. The first ululations of the Wights can be overheard from various points of the southern horizon. The Danes freeze. If the investigators ask about the calls, Adalsteinn says: "it is *them*. No time for chatting though, we better reach the church before nightfall!"

### Night in the Church

The church is divided in four spaces. The largest is the nave at eight by five yards, which leads into the chancel. The nave also opens out into the north and south porticus. Angels are painted liberally throughout. The stone has lasted well and still shows sharp corners and tight joins. The Danes have obviously built a makeshift door and barricaded windows and the roof with wooden fittings.

The nave quickly fills with the Danish sailors. Svein is carefully laid on a blanket and given some water. A fire has been lit in the south porticus and Torkel is cooking a stew over it with two hares that Steppo shot in the afternoon. Sitting around the comforting fire, Danes and the investigators start to speculate about their whereabouts. Worried and somber faces dominate.

### Some answers, many questions

**Adalsteinn** - The naïve answer is that we are currently located two miles West of Caerleon. Our knarr is safely anchored in the waters there, and we took the ship's boat to reach the quays. Caerleon is still standing but we found nobody. I mean, not even dead bodies! Looks like everybody fled. Anyway, Torkel here had a really *bad* feeling about the place and we usually don't care much to challenge Torkel's hunches, so we looked for a more, er, pastoral shelter. We found this church... In truth, I have no clue where we *really* are."

**Torkel** - Right! Even the sea was, you know, different! No seabirds to follow the knarr and... You know that I know little but... I do know there is *something* all around us, something worse than... than death itself!

**Farman** - I don' usually argue with you bald man, but me thinks that you're right and wrong at the same time. I think we're fooling ourselves 'cause... (he pauses for effect) we're already dead and this is *Valhalla*, the hall of the slain! Remember what Svein said? I tell you he met Odin in person! This is the END!

**inn Fagri** - Svein's ramblings are worrying indeed and we sure lost poor Leif to... well, *something*. But if you call that escorting *Valkyries*, well they bloody lost their good manners and I have no urge to see this place's version of the halls of *Valhalla*. Don't expect feasting, roasted boar, or mead for sure! Some sorcery transported us from Middle-Earth to another plane of existence, I do agree, but I'd bet for some kind of Underworld, maybe Ægir's hall at the bottom of the sea (we were lost at sea, remember?), or the Land of Mists *Niflheim*. Thinking of it... these beings could be *mara* ("nightmare") or *sjovaettir* ("sea-wights"), spirits of the dead! In that case, we should also watch our backs onshore because of the *landvaettir* ("land-wights"), the Walking Dead. The real question of course is: *can* we leave this place?

The players are free to take part in the discussion, using the knowledge and hints they've gathered so far. Here are some elements of Celtic folklore that the keeper should allow the players to bring into the discussion:

#### Comparative folklore

*Investigators need no skill rolls to access this information:*

- ❑ The Welsh underworld is called Annwn. Gwynn ap Nudd rules this Land of the Dead.
- ❑ Annwn is the Land of the Dead, but may be visited by the living who find the Door, if only in their dreams, for sleep is also known as "the little death".
- ❑ The Door is said to be at the mouth of the Severn or on the Isle of the Dead, also known as the Isle of Glass.
- ❑ The Isle is associated with Gwynn ap Nudd, and some say a "Glass Tower" stands on top.
- ❑ Gwynn ap Nudd heads the Wild Hunt, which captures or kills any humans it encounters. The Wild Hunt is formed by a host of ghostly huntsmen or hounds.
- ❑ The Britons believed that the hunter was Cernunos the Horned God; they called *Avalon* the Isle of the Dead.
- ❑ The Saxons refer to the Wild Hunt as Woden's hunt; Woden is another name for Odin.

*After the unsettling experiences of the last three days, each investigator must now incur a 0/1D4 Sanity loss.*

Later in the evening, Torkel suddenly pales. All conversations subside. From the South, the mysterious ululations echo, this time much closer by. The Wights, attracted like bloodhounds by Svein's zero Sanity, are coming! During a few stressful hours, something large stirs around the church. It occasionally bumps against the door, the shutters, startling the party, and makes the makeshift roof groan under its weight. The creature is clearly testing the crude barricades, forcing STR versus STR Resistance Table matches with the humans to prevent it from bursting through. The humans can only win if at least 3 or 4 work together. The situation suddenly shifts from being stressful to unbearable when one or two more creatures join the first one, each trying to breach the church's defenses in a different place.

At this point, the keeper should allow the investigators to discover that the Wights shun light. If they don't, have inn Fagri shout: "Wights shun light! Try the fire!" With a torch, one person can hold the Wights at bay in one place. As the Wights draw back, the group startles at something banging on the door. A female voice (Tawil at'Umr) calls out for help in Danish, claiming to have been hidden in a refuse pit and begging for being let in. Peering through loose planks, one sees a dark figure of a woman at the door. As her face turns towards the light, her lovely smiling face shows, she has lost one eye! Investigators probably guess this is a trick, but it's new to the Danes and Rø starts for the door, wanting to step outside. Anyone who leaves the church at this point is savagely attacked.

At dawn, everything goes quiet and the exhausted Danes start preparing for the day ahead. Suddenly Farman cries: "Silence! Pray for Old Svein, 'cause he is now God's man!" Indeed, poor Old Svein did not survive the night.

## Dreamlands

Shortly after dawn, the keeper should give a chance to the players to propose a plan of action to the Danes. If they fail, here is the captain Adalsteinn's default proposal, based on the previous day's discussion: to look for the Door, which seems to be located on some island. With a bit of luck it is located in the Severn Sea, close to the mouth of the river. It is a thin lead but the only one they have got so far. One plan is to sail along the coast and explore all islands they come across! The investigators are asked to help inn Fagri with the construction of a proper hiding place under the deck of the knarr, and when the necessity arises, to help with finding shelters, collect waste wood, set up camp, and barricade for the night. Another group led by Steppo must hunt or catch fish, and collect fresh water onshore. Finally, Farman and Rø bury Old Svein and take care of the vessel. Here is the death chant that Rø sings with a broken voice over Svein's grave:

*A warrior,  
The man whom the greatest virtues accompanies  
- Most men knew that -  
Lies buried in this mound;  
A more upright man  
Of the seas  
Will not sail, strife strong,  
Land in Denmark*

#### Without the Danes

If the investigators continue without the Danes, they progress through Annwn on foot, coming across 1D6 ruined hamlets or villages per day. Larger towns or *buhrs* are at least one full day's walk from the last, assuming the investigators know the direction. The players have to make up their own daily survival routine, which depends on finding churches every night. In reality, any closed space will do, including the sewers of Caerleon, caverns, a hole in the ground or even the burrows of the Worms of the Earth, as long as the investigators can secure all entrances. Only larger towns automatically have stone churches; villages have a 50% chance only. Investigators find little of use and few clues. The keeper should read the "Dreamlands" events and adapt them to a party traveling inland. After three nightly encounters with the Wights, continue with the "Worms of the Earth" episode.

Should the investigators be attacked by the Wights in the open, without having been able to find or build a proper shelter for the night, spare them to some extent by sacrificing only the weakest link, for instance the investigator with the least Sanity points.

*The Annwn plot unfolds similarly irrespective of whether the players follow the solo path or the cooperative one. Since Wights are attracted by fear, see Statistics, it may be that the odds of encountering them at night are smaller without the Danes. On the other hand, the investigators may incur greater losses because they miss the Danish helping hands and simply because if somebody dies or is snatched away, it can only be one of theirs!*

The above routine should become the daily routine from now on. The players and the keeper – who plays the Danes – can perfect it as they go along.

It takes an hour to walk to the edge of Caerleon. The investigators are shocked by the contrast between the magnificent and inviting city they knew, and the strange desolate ruins in front of them. Opposite, the investigators startle at the sight of the knarr: it is at the exact same place where they spotted the wrecked knarr from the quays of Caerleon – in some other life! The Danes put the ship's boat to water and row towards the vessel. Steppo, Farman, inn Fagri, and Rø maneuver the knar to deeper waters (it may be gallant for one investigator to take Rø's oar, which elicits a smile from her). The crew then sets sail downwind in the direction of the Severn, looking for the Isle of the Dead.

#### **The Knarr**

A clinker built oval, this large knarr is sixteen yards long and four and a half yards wide, shorter and squatter than the more famous Viking longships. There is one large mast in the center that holds a wide, white sail. The ship is two yards deep from keel to gunwale, with fore and aft decks at either end creating two covered spaces for crew to sleep and shelter in. This leaves a large open hold amidships where cargo can be stored and covered with leather. The knar utilizes four oars for maneuvering.

The knarr's open deck requires someone to be on constant bailing duty. The Danes take a wry joy in explaining to the investigators on duty how children often did this job.

#### **Jellyfish**

The investigators awake one morning to find the sea filled with huge yellow jellyfish for as far as they can see. Ranging in size from a fist to three yards in diameter, these translucent creatures are a thick mass of slapping jelly flesh and probing tentacles. Sucking and popping sounds are common as the knarr forces a slow path forward, the creatures clinging on and getting knocked off. However, the Danes are carrying on as if everything was normal. If asked, they say it's not unusual for jellyfish to spawn large numbers in hot weather, but they privately concede that they're not normally this huge, or in that many numbers. They also warn the investigators to stay clear, as the "fish" are poisonous. The numbers thin out the farther the ship sails, taking a day or two to clear.

#### **Tawil at'Umr**

First encountered by the party in "The Tower", Tawil at'Umr – avatar of Yog-Sothoth – rules this land in his guise of Gwynn ap Nudd, God of the Dead. At any time the keeper wishes, allow the investigators sight of a black human smudge at dusk, watching them from a distance. A successful spot hidden reveals something disturbing: the head doesn't look right, much too big. On second sight, the onlooker exclaims: "antlers? It looks like a damn stag's head, that's what it looks like!"

See Statistics for a description.

## **Escalating hostilities**

When at sea, the party hides from dusk until dawn in the makeshift shelters under the deck, fore and aft. When on land, the party looks for a church or any kind of underground shelter – note that it may take a few hours to properly secure a church or an improvised shelter.

According to the description under Statistics, the chance of evading the Wights each night equals the Sanity roll of the character with the least Sanity points. Succeeding the roll doesn't mean that the Wights are not hunting, but they should not "smell" the investigators' fear and should leave them alone – for that night.

When Wights break through the makeshift barricades, the keeper should try to mitigate losses by exposing the Danes first, e.g. as a result of their self-sacrificing bravery.

Initially, the party does not find the Isle of Dead, because it simply is not located at sea (see "the Glass Tower")! The erring should last long enough for the party to suffer three nightly Wight attacks. The keeper can dutifully roll the required Sanity roll every night, or leapfrog from one event to the next with a narrative shortcut like: "after two fruitless days of travel..."

### **FIRST NIGHT**

The first Wight encounter plays similarly to the previous one. The party should by now be primed to keep the Wights at bay, and prevent the worst from happening.

### **SECOND NIGHT**

The second attack starts like all others, but the odds change dramatically in the middle of the night. At some point, the Wights almost break through the men's provisional defenses, forcing the party to set some wood afire to repel them (at sea this should be considered a desperate act, as it could set the knarr on fire). Follows an uncanny calm in which the players may be left to think the Wights are gone. Suddenly, one of their horrible wails rises in the dark, very close by! As if the night had answered this call, a gale-force South wind swells, progressively blowing out all fires and light sources of the humans. A successful Luck roll is required to protect any light source. In the dark, the Wights strike again and this time only a wonder can prevent the loss of life.

### **THIRD NIGHT**

In this event, the crew is expected to have bedded down at dawn to get some rest after another nightly attack like the previous one. They are awoken by loud cries of man overboard. The knarr goes into controlled panic, people looking overboard, but Spot Hidden rolls fail. After a few minutes of confusion, a headcount shows everyone is present. Somebody asks the caller what happened and elicits the following reply: "we're all here? Can't be! I woke and one of us was standing on deck holding the rudder's tiller, and steering the vessel... No I dunno who, just saw the silhouette against the morning light, then he fell over, well, looked like he stepped off truth be told, but he must've fell. I swear it was one of us who fell!"

If the investigators mention Tawil at'Umr to Adalsteinn or another Dane, he/she looks grim and swears to say nothing to the others, whose sanity is already shaken. The story of the Demon steering the knarr towards who knows where, spreads nonetheless. If the investigators really cause trouble ("oh yes, that's Gwynn ap Nudd and he's hunting us!") Danes ask for them to be abandoned on land. Adalsteinn resists this as first, but particularly insensitive investigators may find themselves walking.

On the day following the third trial, an investigator spots a wooded island slowly emerging from the mist. He or she also sees smoke rising from the far end of the isle.

## The Worms of the Earth

*If the investigators travel inland, adapt the geography of this encounter: turn the sea into a lake with a flat wooded island in the middle. There are no obvious means of crossing, although a Spot Hidden roll reveals that at one point the lake bottom is high enough for investigators to wade across waist deep. Otherwise they have to build or raft or swim across.*

Most of the island is covered in trees, preventing investigators getting a true indication of its size. Wherever the humans land, they find several narrow trails winding through the thick wood (halve all movement) – close inspection of the tracks reveals that they are made, strangely enough, by children's bare feet. The shadowy trail eventually leads to a large clearing with a circle of barrows – man-high mounds of earth partially covered with rotting plants. The stench of rotten flesh is everywhere. Each barrow features a low doorway half sunk into the earth; all entrances are pitch-black except for one that is burning with the red glow of some hidden fire, and from which a heavy gray smoke rises above the trees. Many piles of bones litter the area.

Before the investigators can examine the area, they begin to hear a noise, like many babbling voices, coming from all sides of the woodland. Give the investigators one combat round before the noises become slightly clearer, like a collection of hissing snakes, and one more round before the Worms of the Earth close on them from all sides, forcing the investigators into the clearing. With a successful Listen roll at half skill, an investigator can hear rumors coming from inside the barrows – more Worms wriggling out of their underground tunnels. The keeper should make it clear that the Worms seem afraid to step into the light of the clearing and remain hidden in the shadows. A Spot Hidden reveals a taller, hooded specimen hanging back behind the squirming mass and hissing orders – this is their shaman Th'sss, see the Worms of the Earth statistics.

The investigators may recognize the Children of the Night that they glimpsed in "the Tower".

Once in the clearing, the party has enough time to prepare for the fight and come up with the best possible tactics (standing on top of the barrows or making a move to

capture the shaman). Gradually, the Worms of the Earth silence and only the Worm shaman can be heard croaking some kind of imprecation (the Worms use their collective Nightmare skill to unnaturally advance the time of day). Within a few heartbeats, the sky dramatically darkens to the point that the first stars are seen shining weakly! A far ululation resounds. This is the sign that the Worms waited for: the squirming mass swarms the now dim clearing and attack the humans – count twelve attacking Worms for every investigator or Dane (max. Sanity loss: 6 points)!

*If the Danes are present, one shouts: "Behold the Draugr, the Walking Dead, the Worms of the Earth!" Another: "Forward! Forward, champions of Odin! In the Underworld even the dead can die – make the barrow-wights pay for our lost companions and earn your place in Valhalla!"*

### The Nightmare skill at work

Here is an opportunity for the keeper to introduce the Nightmare skill to the players. As one investigator and one Dane, say Rø, end up back to back on top of a barrow, Rø cries out: "if only I had a sword..." The investigator observes that she does; Rø sighs in amazement: "where is my axe? What is this new sorcery? No matter! I shall cut many heads tonight with this iron..."

Despite the large number of Worms, the investigators are expected to slaughter their weaker opponents with relative ease. Every investigator who kills six or more Worms is left in peace and may help his comrades. If more than half of all attacking Worms are massacred, they flee into the woods or into the barrows and their underground tunnels.

### Th'sss

As the massacre comes to a close, the Worm shaman Th'sss is seen rushing across the clearing towards the doorway of the smoking barrow. The keeper must allow the investigators or the Danes to stop Th'sss in his tracks and overmaster him. Danes want to execute the creature, but the investigators need to spare his life. The Worm's grasp of human language is poor but sufficient:

- "Don't kill me! I... I can help you!"
  - "You lost, yes? Lost in Annwn?"
- (Narrowing his yellow eyes and with a mewling voice)
- "Aah! Where is the Door to Middle-Earth, eh?"
- (He pats his own chest)
- "Th'sss knows the path to the Isle of Glass!
  - "You not kill Th'sss... Then I tell you..."

In reality, there are many Doors out of Annwn, some of which secret Worm tunnels. However, Th'sss is not stupid and won't play his best cards. If the investigators agree:

- "Mmh! Th'sss very grateful!"
- "You see... Th'sss knows where Door is..."
- "And you need scrolls of Thoth magic to pass! You don't know where, you don't have scrolls!"
- "I say: my people give you scrolls, show you the Door... If you give my people the Black Stone!"

## The Nightmare skill

A nearby ululation reminds the investigators that the night is upon them. With a hissing sound, Th'sss directs them to the smoking barrow. The sunken doorway that the investigators can just about squeeze along leans down at a shallow angle to a squalid chamber lit by a large central fire. Several stinking holes inside the chamber lead to the bowels of the earth – the scurrying noise of light footsteps can be overheard from time to time.

Th'sss turns to the investigators and repeats that he has the authority to offer them a pact. The investigators can have the secret to exiting Annwn and the book of Thoth, if they travel to the Nameless City and retrieve the Black Stone. If asked, Th'sss explains that:

- ❑ The Worms of the Earth found the Book of Thoth lying in a tower just before a “Serpent Man” did. It is currently kept in their deepest, most secret chambers.
- ❑ The Black Stone is a small artifact that they worship.
- ❑ The Serpent People awakened long ago, after Yog-Sothoth came through the Door. The Serpent People then drove the Worms out of the Nameless City, and thus appropriated the Black Stone in its Temple.
- ❑ The Worms cannot harm the thieves of the Black Stone. Therefore, somebody else must steal it.
- ❑ The Book of Thoth is in a language that only the Serpent People know (ancient Egyptian). The humans must capture a Serpent Priest and bring him back!

Should the investigators accept the pact, Th'sss says he will teach one or two investigators “nightmare magic” to trick the Serpent People. He gives them a map of the Worm tunnels that honeycomb the land (traveling underground the investigators will be safe from the Wights) and of the Nameless City. When the investigators return with the Black Stone, he will give them the Book of Thoth and bring them to the Isle of Glass.

From dawn to sunset, Th'sss demonstrates and teaches the Nightmare skill to chosen investigators (see the Dreamlands primer; apprentices incur a 0/1D6 Sanity loss). Other worms come in sometimes and provide silent assistance. Food is left on bowls and regularly replenished with disgusting meats dipping in unidentifiable juices. At the end of the day, the investigators are allowed a Nightmare skill check and an experience roll. If successful, add 1D10 percentiles to the POW base chance.

*If the investigators decide to go their own way, allow them to wander Annwn fruitlessly for as long as it takes. Th'sss will pop up when they get desperate, and attempt to bargain again. At whichever point the investigators decide to go along with Th'sss, the Danes refuse to. They are aghast at the sight of what they call “Draugr” and want nothing to do with them. Moreover, they are disgusted by the fact that the investigators – which they consider as friends – strike a bargain with the “Walking Dead”. After an uncomfortable farewell, the Danes sail on alone...*

## The Worm tunnels

The soil of Annwn is riddled with the tunnels that the worms use to move about and it is into these Th'sss takes the Investigators. Obviously, the humans are larger than worms so they will have to take a longer route than a worm would, going only via tunnels that are large enough for humans to move through – see the Worms' map.

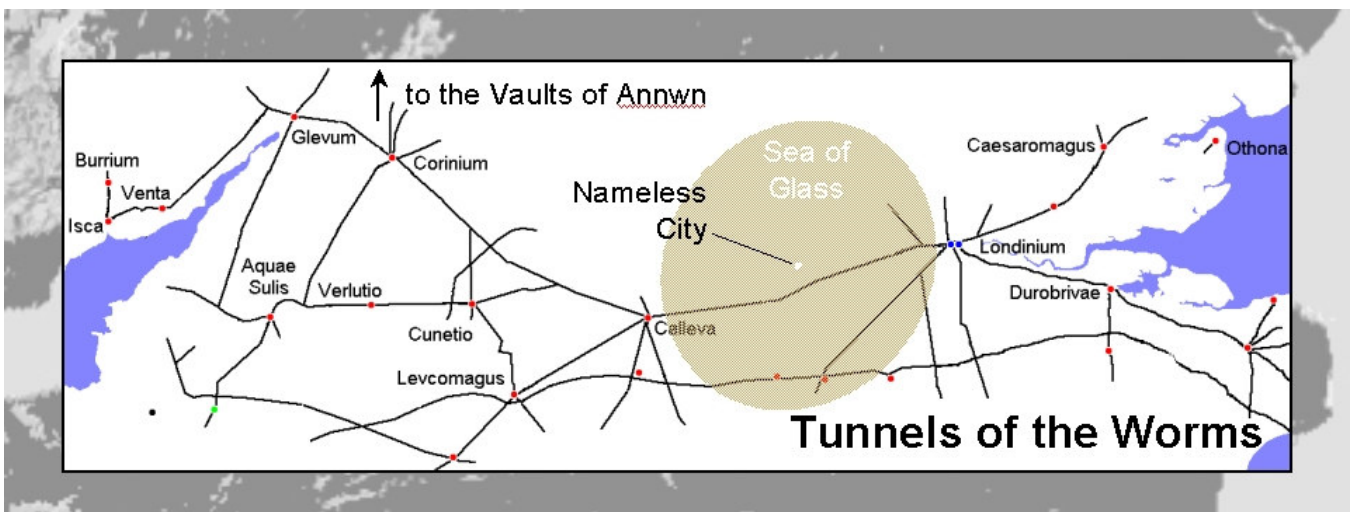
The majority is through soil. These are roughly arch shaped, with a flat ground level pounded solid by footfalls. Walls are generally compacted dirt, but some areas will be damp with muddy soil and more than a few hints of possible collapse. All are dark – there is enough air to breathe but not much – and cramped. Occasionally, the party hears distant footsteps but they are alone. Some tunnels go through the ruins of human settlements: crypts and cemetery soil. Old, half rotted or “mummified” bodies can be found within (by touch).

Here and there, the smell of fresh air coming from a side tunnel indicates a hidden exit. The party can go above ground to get their breath, seek water, etc. The pace is slow and grueling, so count at least twice the normal travel time, e.g. 14 days from the mouth of the Severn to the rim of the Sea of Glass.

## The Sea of Glass

When the party gets to within forty miles of the Nameless City, the air becomes very thin and the tunnel stops abruptly because of a cave-in. A weak current of air indicates that the surface is near; the investigators can dig their way up, or backtrack for many hours to the last exit hole.

In front of the party lies a strange rise of land, like a petrified wave of earth and stone that extends North and



South as far as the horizon. Climbing to the top of this “wall”, the investigators observe a desolate and destroyed landscape in front of them. There are no standing trees in sight, no ruined buildings, nothing of life at all. Instead there is a dully-reflective soil, which seems to have turned into glass from an immense heat, stretching for miles ahead. It doesn’t matter how far the party travel, until they reach Lundenburh they are in a dead mans land.

The party is standing at the edges of what they may realize is the “Wormwood” impact (mentioned in “Shadow Kingdoms”), the place where Seth – in some alternate reality - managed to bring Yog-Sothoth through to scour the earth. The party has to cross the whole 40 miles stretch to the Nameless City in one go. The rules of aboveground Annwn again apply and there is pressure on the investigators to make trip before nightfall. The keeper is advised to maintain an atmosphere of tension and to bring dusk just as the investigators are within sight of the Nameless City. Have them run the last distance and only bring Wights into play if the party does something stupid like stop for a while in the middle of nowhere.

## The Nameless City

The Nameless City resembles a vast pit. As the investigators edge closer, they see that its walls aren’t actually cliffs, they are a huge architectonic structure made of troglodyte dwellings into the cliff face, connected by underground passageways, and a gallery coiled around and around like a massive stone snake.

The Nameless City is now home of Annwn’s Serpent People. Although the gallery is huge, transversal tunnels radiating from it house an even greater part of the city: the gallery is generally for public rooms and access to radial tunnels, while the rooftops are for basking Snakes.

### Observation

As the investigators observe the city (from a hidden position if they’re sensible), they discover the following:

- ❑ The main entrance to the gallery is at ground level, at some distance away from the pit itself.
- ❑ The City dwellings start just below the rim of the hole. Idea rolls if needed suggest investigators could lower themselves into the City via the rooftops.
- ❑ The gallery winds in an unbroken spiral until it reaches the bottom of the city, concealed in shadows. Most of the gallery is covered and hidden from view, but it periodically changes to a roofless ledge or to a half-open colonnaded passage.
- ❑ A few Serpent people (Serpent priests) walking along the gallery wear red hooded robes covering themselves completely, with long trains that drag in the dust behind them. Other Serpent people throw themselves face down to the ground until the hooded Serpents have passed. Serpent clothing hangs loose and covers the entire body except for the snakehead and the hands; the shape of the body does not show.

Each investigator watching the Serpent people suffers a maximum Sanity loss of 6 points. As the investigators are finalizing their plan, the keeper runs the following event:

### The Black Stone

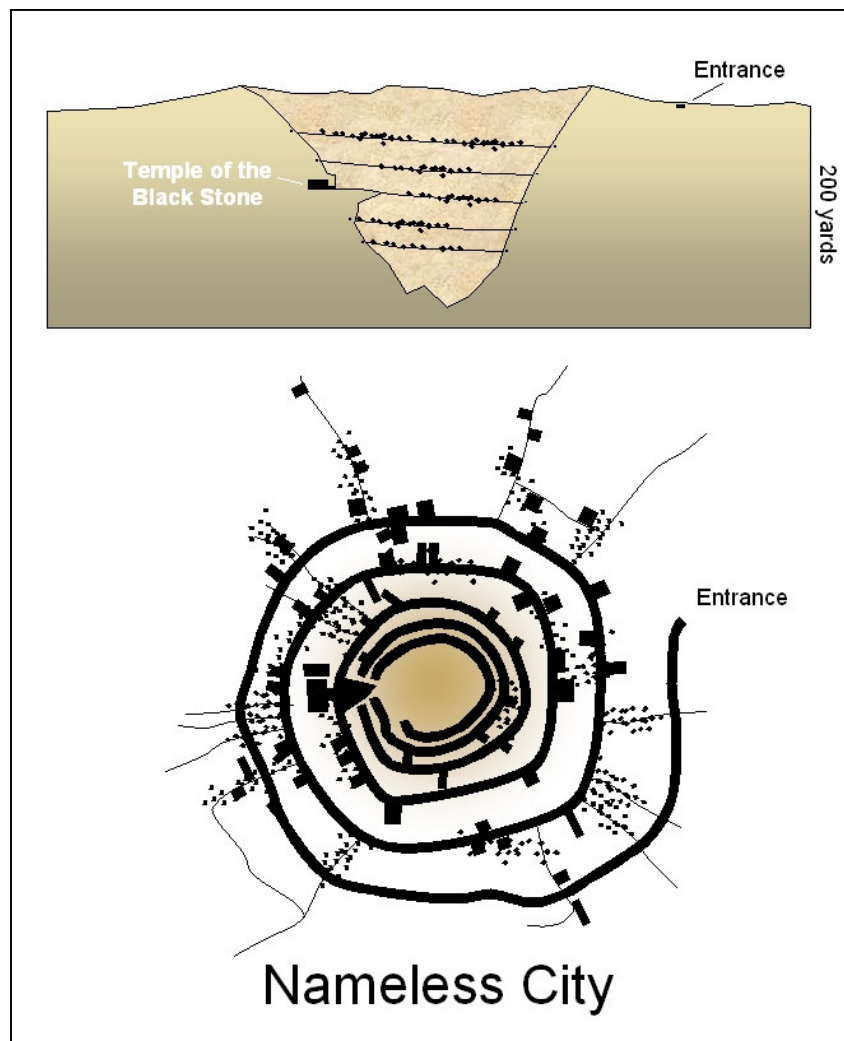
“Drums and reedy horns sound from all parts of the city, at first randomly but then forming into a steady beat. Serpent People pour out of their holes onto the roofs and ledges that overhang the pit. As the music gets louder and faster, a painful parody of chanting can be heard. The hissing reaches a fever pitch when a Snake priest appears on a large platform holding what looks like a small black object. The chanting continues for long minutes and at last the Serpent priest can be seen walking back into a large column-framed doorway behind the stone platform.”

*This is a chance to see the location of the Black Stone.*

As long as the investigators have got a basic disguise (using the Nightmare skill or stealing hooded robes from Serpent priests – whom they have to kill), follow basic social conventions (see below), and don’t dawdle, they can walk freely for a while, it’s a question of nerve.

### Moving Around

Once inside, the central corridor is surprisingly spacious – there is usually enough room for four people to walk abreast – but in a few places along the lower coils of the gallery, the walkway shrinks to a simple ledge not more than one yard wide (these are crucial bottlenecks for the





keeper to consider in the “escape” later on). Doorways and windows open into troglodyte chambers and those on the right, the outside, frequently end up in vertiginous ledges overhanging the central pit. As the investigators move forward, Serpent people emerge out of the pitch-black doorways, bustle past and disappear, all while strange perfumes and fetid odors saturate the air.

Because the passageway spirals down and down around the pit, the investigators feel like constant sinking. Furthermore, sometimes the Serpent People pass close by, so close that the investigators can see sweat glistening on their mottled skin and the moistness of their flickering tongues, and smell their fetid odor!

Without hindrance, it takes about 30 mn to walk from the entrance to the Temple of the Black Stone. It takes another 15 mn to reach the very bottom of the coiled gallery. From there it's a 5 mn climb down to the bottom. The keeper may request at least one Climb roll for each investigator.

The main focus of the Nameless City is the constant tension of being surrounded by enemies. Only the Temple of the Black Stone is explicitly described; the keeper is free to improvise the maze-like city should the investigator stray away from the central gallery – be inspired by historical Arab cities and their covered markets (*Souks*).

## Problems

Keepers are urged to keep the tension high. The investigators shouldn't forget they could be one false move away from a lynching, or worse. The keeper shouldn't be afraid to introduce a range of Serpent encounters into proceeding, from arrogant Serpent priests walking by and Serpents who come over and sniff the air surrounding the disguised investigators with their flicking tongues, to Serpents who attempt to engage the party in some manner of conversation. It doesn't matter what the Serpents are really saying, because it all sounds like a hiss to the investigators.

### Social conventions

*Investigators infiltrating the Nameless City should adhere to the following basic social conventions of the Serpent people. The investigators' cover is blown after 3 slip-ups.*

- Lay flat on the floor while Serpent priests walk by.
- Do not touch a Serpent except with a forked tongue.
- Do not imitate the Serpent's language in vain.

*Note that the Serpent's vision is relatively poor. As long as a human's face is hidden in shadows, he or she is relatively safe. The Serpents' sense of smell is different: if a Serpent can “smell” the air around a human for a full combat round, it identifies the human's “signature”.*

Serpent reactions should occur on an increasing scale, the escalation depending on how the investigators deal with the pressure. Those who fail to respond appropriately should cause a few odd looks or snubs at first, rising to complaints to Serpent priests, and finally calls for guards to seize the intruders (these have to be dealt with).

## The Temple of the Black Stone

The Temple of the Black Stone lies half way down the pit. It is carved into the very rock face, featuring an awe-inspiring 100-foot high façade and a massive column-framed doorway, contrasting with the plain, cool, and dark interior chamber; the Temple is empty except for the Black Stone sat atop a central pedestal. A platform pushes out deeply over the pit in front of the doorway. Bas-reliefs cover some walls, depicting incidents from the stone's history. Investigators may roll to spot figures of a loin-clothed human (Bran Mak Morn) or Worms of the Earth. More pressingly for the investigators, there is a group of particularly tall Serpents priests standing in worship. The party must wait until they have left (D100 minutes or whenever the keeper wishes) or they can decide to kill them; they'd better do it quietly though!

The Black Stone itself is an oval about the size of a fist. It is carved with sixty scratch-like symbols on one face.

However the party decides to deal with the serpent worshippers, as soon as they have grabbed the Black Stone, Sa-Ta the Snake priest enters the room.

## The Serpent Priest

Sa-Ta is one of the leading priests among all of his kind and a permanent dweller of Annwn. Like most Serpent Priests, Sa-Ta is familiar with ancient Egyptian and can thus translate the Book of Thoth. Additionally, this powerful sorcerer sees through non-permanent effects of the Nightmare Skill. If the party has been relying on the latter, Sa-Ta lets out a hiss of alarm and tries to flee; the party needs to stop him before he raises the alarm. If the party has simply covered themselves with snake garments, Sa-Ta will be initially fooled, but only long enough for the players to gain initiative and for instance attack Sa-Ta.

### Sa-Ta

Sa-Ta stands a foot shorter than many of his kin, with much thinner features and a longer tongue. He wears a robe of purple silk and wears a number of bone fetishes. He also wears a small, black replica of the Black Stone.

Where Seth was unhappy with the state of his kin, Sa-Ta is content, acting as he does as the head of the cult of the Serpent God and feeling no need to endanger his position with grand schemes. He is also a coward and can be threatened with physical violence. While he is devious enough to try and outwit the investigators in the Nameless City, he will be a nervous, broken and wholly pliant creature should they get him out and away from his “comfort zone”.

The keeper is urged to keep Sa-Ta alive so the party can take him hostage, but confident keepers can allow his death, leaving the party needing to go in search of another priestly serpent who can read Egyptian. The troglodyte quarters of such creatures are nearby, filled with scrolls, divination bones and other religious utensils.

## Escape

The party needs to use all their wit to get themselves, the Black Stone, and Sa-Ta out of the City. The players also have to consider the time of day: the investigators may have to hide in a disused dwelling or chamber for the night, before attempting the escape. There are two ways out: back through the surface exit, or down through abandoned tunnels beneath the City. The latter will only be revealed if a) the party fails to escape through the top exit and is forced to flee down into the depths, or b) the Worms come to their aid (see “Deus ex machina” below).

- ❑ Use the Nightmare skill to transform into Sa-Ta, cover the real priest up, and walk out.
- ❑ Threaten Sa-Ta with death and march him out. Sa-Ta makes one attempt to attract attention or use magic.
- ❑ Sneak back out of the city, going from empty room to empty room. The keeper should play on the investigators’ fears of being found.

Time will be a factor. A party that moves slowly and leaves a trail of unhidden corpses is in far greater danger of discovery than one that hides their actions and moves quickly.

Should the investigators fail to get out without attracting attention, and should the keeper wish to avoid a total party kill, he or she is urged to drive them further down into the city, perhaps by Serpent People coming for them from higher up. Push them further and further away from the upper exit. Eventually drive them to the bottom of the pit: a gloomy cathedral of gigantic piled-up boulders and rushing waters. One end opens into an underground cavern... with worm tunnels! The party can take a chance and flee into one of these, hoping it remains wide enough for them to find an exit (it does). The keeper might also want to have worms coming to their aid.

### Deus ex machina

If the party have really dug themselves into a hole in the second half of the scenario, the keeper can bring one of several allies into play.

- ❑ The Viking return unexpectedly to join forces with the investigators: they changed their mind and had been following the investigators’ trail...
- ❑ The Worms of the Earth creep out of a hole and take the investigators to a secret/abandoned tunnel away from danger...
- ❑ An interesting role-play variant on the previous encounter: a dead investigator comes back as a Worm, horribly warped but still recognizable and un-dead! Adjust the statistics and the character’s psyche, and play on. Friends or family lose 1/1D6+1 SAN.
- ❑ A renegade Serpent Priest (to be soon executed) proposes to help the investigators in exchange of freedom...
- ❑ Bran Mak Morn makes an apparition. Should the party seem worthy of his aid, he either slaughters a way through the investigators’ enemies, creates a diversion, or silently guides them for a while...

### The “Dark Man” alias Bran Mak Morn

*“Bran Mak Morn fell in battle; the nation fell apart. Like wolves we Picts live now among the scattered islands, among the crags of the highlands and the dim hills of Galloway. We are a fading people. We pass. But the Dark Man remains — the Dark One, the great king, Bran Mak Morn, whose ghost dwells forever in the stone likeness of his living self.” – Pictish chieftain*

Bran Mak Morn is a mythical king of the Picts who lived around 300 AD. The *Picti* or “painted ones” as the Romans called them are a doomed race right out of antiquity, which disappeared from recorded history in the eleventh century. By then, Bran Mak Morn has become something of a godlike figure. For that reason, no statistics are provided: in Annwn, Bran Mak Morn epitomizes mankind; he is immortal and the keeper can direct him as he or she pleases to either haunt or help the investigators.

Bran Mak Morn is as a lean-faced man of average height and dark complexion, almost Mediterranean. He only wears a loincloth and carries an impressive spear and a short sword. His skin appears to be painted or tattooed. It is clear that the man belongs to some unidentified race.

## Returning with the Black Stone and Sa-Ta

Upon arriving back to the Worms of the Earth village, the Worms usher the investigators back into the shaman’s barrow, which this time is packed with Worms: there is precious little standing room. As the investigators ceremoniously present the Worms with the Black Stone, the room hisses in appreciation. The Book of Thoth is then revealed and given to the investigators.

The Serpent man Sa-Ta (or whichever priest the investigators captured) is imprisoned in an underground hole and tortured by the Worms of the Earth.

### The Book of Thoth

The brittle scroll is kept in a golden cylinder.

**BOOK OF THOTH** – in Egyptian, by Stygian sorcerer Thoth-amon, c. 10000 BC. Three scrolls discussing the being Tawil at’Umr, the Great Old Ones, Hyboria, the secret of humanity’s creation, the opening of Gates, etc. The Book of Thoth suggests that the serpent civilization predates mankind. Contains spells of life after death, prayers to the half-serpent half-human god Seth-heh, demon invocations, and astronomical data. It also contains a spell of transformation into a Serpent man and a spell of protection against Wights (“Watchers”) – see Players handouts. Sanity loss 1D4/1D8; Cthulhu Mythos +6%; Occult +10%; 15 weeks to study.

After hours of torture, the broken Serpent captive is very willing to interpret the scrolls as long as the investigators promise not to kill him (a promise that may be difficult to hold given that the Worms are intent on killing Sa-Ta). The Book of Thoth’s revelations are summarized in the Player Handouts.

Once the investigators have learnt about the Book of Thoth, or whenever they decide to ask, Th'sss reveals that there is a way out of Annwn through The Glass Tower. Investigators with a Celtic background can roll to see if they've heard of this before; if they pass they remember their cultural myths, placing the Tower on an island at sea. However, Th'sss goes on to reveal that this isn't the case: the Door is on the Isle of the Dead (also known as the Isle of Glass), which is Glastonburh Tor in the middle of the fenlands of Sumaersaeton (Somerset).

### Returning without the Black Stone or Sa-Ta

If the investigators failed on their mission to retrieve the Black Stone or to capture a Serpent capable of deciphering the Book of Thoth, two problems arise: 1) how to find the Glass Tower without the help of the Worms, and 2) how to survive the challenges of the Glass Tower and exit Annwn without the guidance of the Book of Thoth. Here are some alternatives for helping the players on the way:

- ❑ Clever use of the Nightmare skill, e.g. to create a replica of the Black Stone, might just do the trick and fool the Worms of the Earth – in the short term.
- ❑ An investigator may “recall” myths that say that the Wild Hunt or Odin's Hunt flies out of the Sacred Gate that connect the realm of the dead with the realm of the living. Investigators may thus try to retrace the flight path of the Wights back to the Glass Tower, or get the general location of their calls at nightfall.
- ❑ An investigator may “recall” folklore that locates the Door to the Underworld on the Isle of the Dead, namely Glastonburh Tor in the middle of the fenlands of Sumaersaeton (Somerset). *Keeper's note: this is the information that Th'sss would have provided.*
- ❑ If one investigator assumed the form of a Serpent using the Nightmare skill, a bizarre temporary side effect could be the understanding of the Serpent tongue, as well as some ability to read hieroglyphs!
- ❑ The Worms know of a nearby pocket of Serpent men (including a Priest) and lead the investigators to raid them and capture one for the translation of the book.
- ❑ Th'sss knows of an old worm-witch someplace, who could decipher the scriptures of the Book of Thoth.
- ❑ Provide external guidance in the form of non-player characters, e.g. as suggested in “deus ex machina”.
- ❑ If everything else fails, it should be noted that a few Draugr tunnels (no more than twenty) do lead back to graveyards of Earth in the vicinity of large *burhs*.

A new challenge if the investigators betrayed the trust of the Worms of the Earth, may be that they bring upon themselves *the curse of the Worms*: the Worms will avoid direct confrontation this time and instead try to snatch the investigators one by one from the surface of Annwn at night, and/or undermine the party's temporary shelters – see the Worms' “undermine” attack in the Statistics. To counterbalance this new threat, the keeper is strongly advised to introduce one or more “deus ex machina” such as the investigators' Viking friends, Bran Mak Morn, etc.

## The Glass Tower

After a few days of (underground) travel, the investigators arrive at Shepton, a ruined town less than ten miles East of Glastonburh Tor (the green and black dots in the South-West corner of the map). The Tor is seen rising like an island in the middle of the fenlands. At the top of the Tor, the investigators find the ruins of what must have been a tower. Between the rubble, they spot an opening in the ground they initially overlooked because it is so small. The investigators have to climb down carefully in total darkness; the hole is just big enough for the largest investigator. The hole reaches down into a half-caved in chamber, which provides a seeming refuge against the impending night and its terrors. The investigators find a large bluish tile they close the hole with.

After nightfall, the hiding party starts to hear noises above them, sometimes imitating light footsteps echoing through vast chambers and corridors. One investigator may notice that they do not hear the sound of the wind anymore. The keeper should make the perceptions intriguing enough for the players to gain confidence and send the investigators up. To their surprise, the investigators emerge at the ground level of a long corridor tiled with blue flagstones!

### The Glass Tower

The Glass Tower has been seen in many worlds, yet it only exists *in between*. It owes its name to this very fact, and also because as it shifts in and out of reality on any particular plane of existence, eyewitnesses have described it as being made of glass.

The Glass Tower is best described as the House of the Guardian/Demon (i.e. Tawil at'Umr, who may be known under many different names in different places), or as the Gateway (which Tawil at'Umr guards). Indeed, the Glass Tower features two Doors: the outer Door – the Sacred Gate, of which it has been said “there are few who can tell the manner by which it is locked” - connects the Glass Tower with *all* the worlds that it traverses. The inner Door opens on the *abyss of the unnamable devourers*, which is sometimes called Limbo.

In effect, the Glass Tower is the physical interface between the spheres of existence that compose our universe, and that void *outside of time and space* where Yog-Sothoth resides.

There is no “system” to the transitions of the Glass Tower. In Annwn, it stands on the Glastonburh Tor every night, and vanishes during Annwn's daytime, when it visits other dimensions. Some scriptures mention that there are 540 possible Doors. It would seem that the Glass Tower often materializes in darkness, irrespective of the place. Whatever the exact number of alternate realities that know the Glass Tower, most of them are related to human myths. Here are some:

1. Annwn (Glastonburh Tor)
2. The Dreamlands (City of Gugs, Tower of Koth)
3. Limbo (undefined location)
4. A fiery hell (atop basalt island splitting a river of lava)
5. Plains of Asgardr (desolate, wind-swept, and lifeless)
6. Any other world that the keeper fancies, incl. Earth!

As the party moves forward, they find themselves inside the Glass Tower, built up of many levels on top of Glastonburh Tor, with tens of small contiguous stone rooms connected by twisting stairways. There is no obvious route through the dark maze. On successful Listen rolls, investigators pick up faint melodies, which they can try to follow through.

Like in a nightmare, the tower's internal design defies description and therefore any attempt to understand it, let alone map it. There are only few features of notice that exploring investigators discover within (what feels like) an hour. Once they've discovered these features, the players only need to state where they want to go and the investigators somehow find their way back to it – although they won't be able to explain how.

### THE HOLE IN THE GROUND

This is the caved-in chamber the investigators hid in at the beginning. It is not part of the Glass Tower as such but connects to the blue-tiled corridor when the tower materializes.

### LOOPHOLES

One stairway runs alongside the outer wall of the Glass Tower. High up it features four loopholes, one in each face of the tower. The walls are thick (more than two yards) and the loopholes narrow, so the view angle is limited. Nevertheless, investigators peering outside may see mind-bending vistas of the worlds that the Glass Tower traverses. Count a 0/1D4 Sanity loss for glimpsing any world yet unfamiliar to the investigators.

### THE INNER DOOR

If the investigators home in on the source of the faint melodies that echo through the rooms and corridors of the tower, they eventually reach a large door of worn wood adorned with a brass ring, at the heart of the tower. The door makes the investigators instinctively cringe with fear, but for no apparent reason. The melodies arise from behind this door but have now lost their melodic quality: a vague rumor born at a great distance, like the sound of the sea, and punctuated by fearsome howls. The door simply opens on a steep and short flight of stairs down, which ends in a kind of bottomless well from which the rumor originates, as well as a strong ascendant wind – strong enough to extinguish any unprotected light source. Looking up, the investigators see fading daylight raining down the immense mossy walls. Looking down, the vertiginous well dives into blackness, and vague shadows are glimpsed stirring in the dark.

As long as daylight pours into the well, the investigators are safe. However, at night, the host of Wights will raise into the well and pour out of the top of the tower into the night – investigators who stay longer than one combat round on the stairs or forget to close the Door will be attacked by one Wight – see Statistics.

### THE OUTER DOOR

The Glass Tower's outer Door simply opens into any world that the tower happens to be standing in. Investigators can go in and out freely, at their own risk.

### THE HALL

Occupying almost an entire level high up in the Glass there is a meeting hall, dark and empty except for twelve seats and one high seat at the far end. The entire place reeks of death – sitting on the high seat is a large naked man with a rotting one-eyed stag's head where the man's head should be (see Statistics of Tawil at'Umr). The empty eye socket is filled with maggots and the stench is unbearable. There are flies buzzing all around. After the required Sanity roll, investigators can roll to determine if they recognize this deity as Cernnunos or some avatar of Gwynn ap Nudd, alias Tawil at'Umr. Whatever reaction the investigators have, alien thoughts – more images than words - drone inside their heads: “we meet... again... Land of the Dead... Sacred Gate closed for you... you must give me... something...”

The Horned God will not attack the investigators should they act aggressively; instead he will just passively take damage, be destroyed, and reappear the next day until they tire. The avatar has a begrudging respect for the party; he is a hunter, and they have managed to survive the Land of the Dead so far.

### The “sepulchral offering”

The keeper is invited to study the passages of the Book of Thoth that he or she handed out to the players – see Players Handouts. The occult writings are ambivalent on purpose, especially regarding the role of Tawil at'Umr who appears as the avatar of the All-in-One (Yog-Sothoth), both guide of the dead as well as –paradoxically– the dog-faced devourer of the dead. Give the players enough time to (try to) make sense of it and devise some formulas and rituals of their own to “align” the Glass Tower with Earth and open the outer Door (“first door” or “sacred gate” in the Book). There is no right or wrong way to leave Annwn – the right way is the players' way, and the keeper should reward all player ingenuity, courage, and selflessness.

One important component of the ritual must be some form of “sepulchral offering”, which can be anything from handing the Book of Thoth to Tawil at'Umr, to one investigator sacrificing his or her life (e.g. by jumping into the “well of souls”) in order to save the others.

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## Conclusion

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Eventually, the investigators succeed in aligning the Glass Tower with Earth and opening the outer Door – the Sacred Gate. They find the outside completely enveloped in mist. After a few minutes of exploration, the investigators realize they are standing on the steps of Quintus' Tower in Caermaen, returning to where they started many days ago! This time though, they are back on Earth.

A Sanity award of 2D10 points is in order for all investigators who braved death and physically exited Annwn through the Glass Tower, back into the world of the living. Reduce to 1D10 points if the keeper needed to

bring in substantial external help or if the players had to rely too heavily on Idea rolls to understand Annwn.

Investigators who displayed great bravery against the Worms of the Earth receive an additional 1D6 Sanity points. The same applies to bravery display against the Serpent people in the Nameless City.

The keeper may grant a single additional 1D3 points reward roll for unusually good role-playing, ingenuity, etc.

Remember that Nightmare effects disappear upon return to the waking world. Importantly, investigators who physically died in the Dreamlands disappear forever; all the others – even the ones who died or disappeared in the Nameless Mist of the “Tower” or in the corridors of time of the “Shadow Kingdoms” are back – as if everything that happened from the point where the investigators left the village on the Wysg and climbed into the nameless Mist, had only been a bad dream!

Another consideration for the keeper is what day of the year (“the day of counting souls” in the Book of Thoth) the party return to. Maybe everything happened within a single heartbeat or a single night. The keeper could decide to advance the date closer to the fateful date of November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1021 AD – but not *too* close! The Dreamlands rule allow both, so the keeper must choose what suits the campaign best, and proceed with the next untold chapter.

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## A Dreamlands primer

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*Although Annwn is not part of the Dreamlands in the sense that it is not formed solely by the dreams of the living, but rather by the souls of the dead, the keeper may find Chaosium’s Dreamlands book a useful reference. Critical Dreamlands mechanics for this scenario are summarized here for the keeper’s convenience.*

### Many Doors

In reality there are many Gates allowing passage in and out of Annwn, not just the one Door sought by the investigators. The most numerous of these doorways are certain tunnel-like burrows dug by the Worms of the Earth below the surface of Annwn.

### Time in Annwn

Time flows in strange ways in Annwn. An investigator may spend a week in Annwn to find upon returning that no time at all passed in the world of the living. The keeper should make time within Annwn flow to suit the need of the Pagan Call campaign.

### Sanity

Investigators lose and regain Sanity in Annwn in the usual way. Optionally, if an investigator loses more than 5 Sanity points in a single encounter and also fails an Idea roll, he or she may suffer a Nightmare Effect at the keeper’s discretion. Nightmare Effects replace or extend temporary and indefinite insanity. Examples of Nightmare Effects include:

- ❑ The investigator finds him- or her-self unable to flee effectively, e.g. because of an infinitely stretching corridor or excruciatingly slow motion.
- ❑ The investigator finds him- or her-self locked in a location with the threat that prompted the Sanity loss.
- ❑ An old wound, disease, or malformation reappears and grows to pain or terrify the investigator.
- ❑ The investigator is transformed into the most appropriate horror to the situation, e.g. a Worm.

Nightmare Effects last as long as the investigator stays in Annwn and disappear upon return to the world of the living.

### The Nightmare skill

Each investigator (and non-player character) unknowingly receives this skill the first time he or she enters Annwn. It starts at a percentile amount equal to the investigator’s POW. The skill increases in identical fashion to any other game skill.

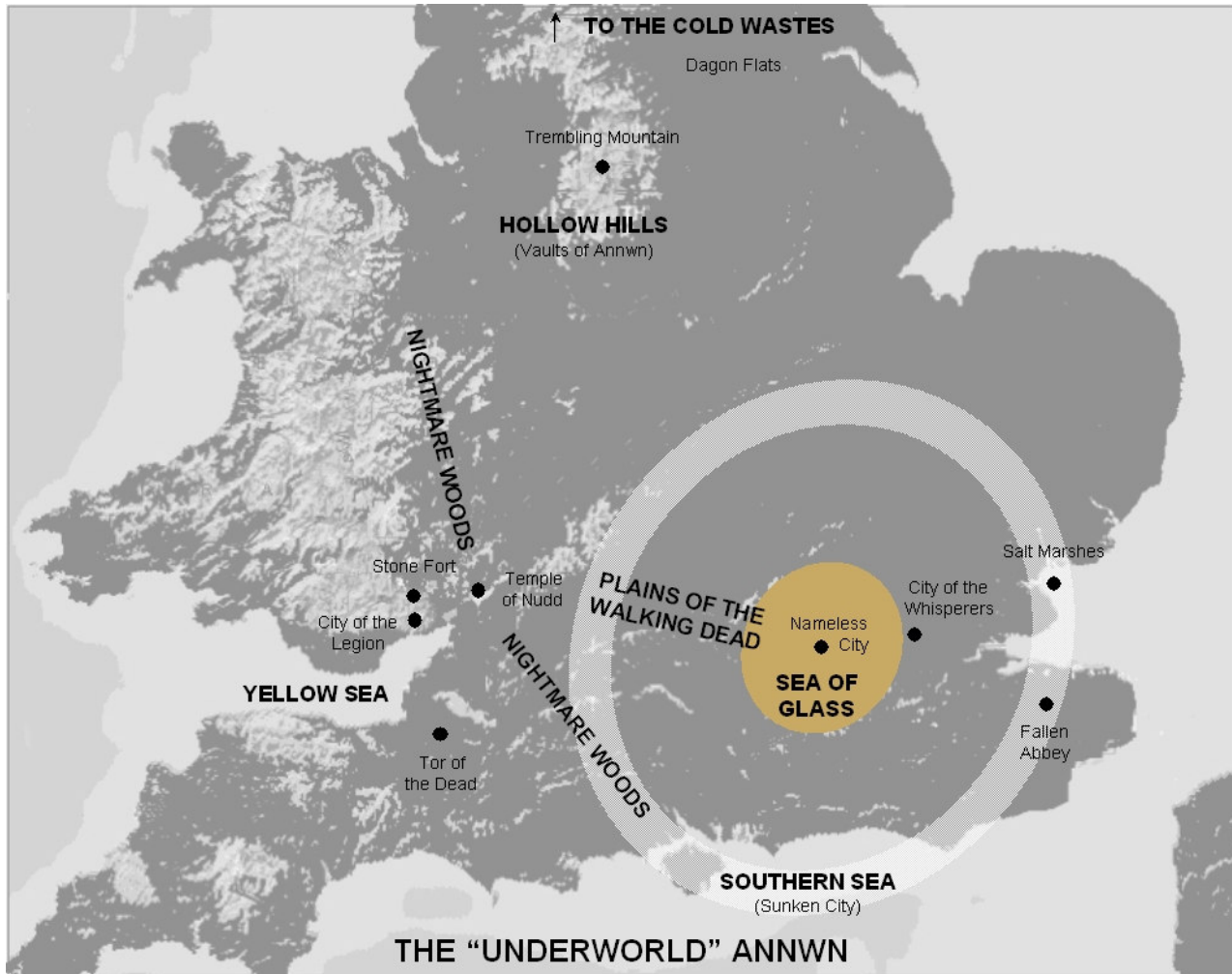
The Nightmare skill is used to alter the Annwn “reality” and can only be performed within Annwn or the Dreamlands. An example of transformation into a Serpent priest is included in at the end of the Book of Thoth handout (see players handout).

The investigator chooses consciously what must be altered or created. If the nightmare’s creative impulse comes from the investigator’s subconscious (especially the first time the skill is applied: “If only... I wished that...”), the keeper may decide what is created in whole or in part.

Magic points are spent in the use of the Nightmare skill. The Nightmare skill attempt is made after all required magic points are assigned. The keeper decides upon the value of the desired alteration of Annwn’s reality. If the required magic points are spent and the Nightmare skill roll is a success, then the Annwn reality is altered as desired. The value of the alteration represents the alteration’s most important attribute. Inanimate objects normally have half the value of their animate equivalents. A sword (“if only I had a sword...”) might have a value of 4 if the maximum damage it can deliver is 8. A Wight with POW 21 (“In the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, I command this demon to be driven out of your church...”) might have a value of 21.

An investigator normally cannot make alterations of more value than his or her Nightmare skill percentile. However, many investigators could be pooling together their magical points as well as their Nightmare skill percentiles.

Permanent residents of Annwn may also possess the Nightmare skill - see for instance the Statistics of the Worms of the Earth and the Wights. The Wights can summon a gale to blow out the investigators’ torches, and the Worms can darken the daylight to hide their approach.



## A Gazetteer of Annwn

While this scenario touches upon some locations of interest in Annwn, it does not cover all possibilities. The keeper interested in expanding the realm of the dead may find the following overview inspiring:

**City of the Legions** (Caerleon/Isca): the ruins of glorious Caerleon. See “the Tower”; adapt descriptions.

**City of the Whisperers** (London/Londinium): the ruins of Lundenburh. No timber buildings remain. Only the ruins of St Paul’s minster survive together with a handful of roofless stone chapels, and of course the Roman walls. The city is haunted at night by unseen, mysterious “whisperers”. The whisperers shun light. Anyone hearing their unintelligible whispers loses 0/1D3 Sanity points.

**Cold Wastes**: one to two mile-high ice sheet that covers the northern regions of Annwn. Plunged in eternal night.

**Dagon Flats**: vast marshy plain. A mysterious gigantic creature dwells in a deep mere there. A worm-witch lives in a hut somewhere in the fens.

**Fallen Abbey**: the ruins of an abbey haunted by dwarfish monk-things (Draugrs) with a deviant taste for flesh. See “the Fall of Guthlac Abbey”; adapt descriptions.

**Hollow Hills/Vaults of Annwn**: the heights of Annwn are riddled with the tunnels of the Worms of the Earth like ant beds. Towards the North and under the cold wastes, the extensive network thins and connects to the Vaults through which the dreaming Serpent people and their creatures (e.g. ghastrs) came to Annwn.

**Nameless City** (Slough): Serpent City and – in forgotten times – a gate through which Yog-Sothoth came.

**Nightmare Woods**: archetypal forest: old, gloomy, and dense (¼ Move rate). So dark that squalid Worm villages can be found. Worms aside, unknown horrors infest its depths and leave trails that are better not followed. Dotted by mysterious phosphorescent stone rings.

**Plains of the Walking Dead** (Thames): great dry windswept vale that stretches from East to West. Scattered with many bones. Contains the Nameless City and the City of Whisperers. Haunted by Worms, Ghouls, and worse.

**Salt Marshes** (Othona): treacherous tidal marshes. See “the Clan”.

**Sea of Glass**: forty-mile depression of glassy stones in the plains of the Walking Dead, mark of Yog-Sothoth when he came through the Gate. Lifeless.

**Southern Sea/Sunken City**: when the moon is high, a lit city can be seen beneath the waves and strange shadows move there – beware, for sea-wights dwell within the city!

**Stone Fort** (Caermaen): See “the Tower”.

**Temple of Nudd** (Lidney Park): one of several shrines of Nudd/Nodens. Buttressed temple of monumental proportions; divided into 3 rooms with 12 niches holding statues of dog-things. Tawil at’Umr can be met here.

**Tor of the Dead** (Glastonbury Tor): Isle rising above the fens, upon which ones finds Tawil at’Umr’s Glass Tower.

**Trembling Mountain**: entrance to the Dhole burrows and perhaps the fabled World Serpent. See “the Blue Stone”.

**Yellow Sea**: jellyfish-infested sea. One island is inhabited by the Worms of the Earth.

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## Statistics

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### Danish sailors, companions in misfortune

	STR	CON	SIZ	INT	DEX	POW	HP	curr San
Ad	11	12	11	10	11	12	12	45
Rø	12	10	10	10	15	8	10	25
St	16	18	17	10	7	15	18	60
Fa	13	14	9	9	14	6	12	<u>15</u>
Vi	10	9	11	16	13	14	10	55
To	8	11	9	8	12	15	10	60

Note: Steppo has a damage bonus of +1D6. All have a badly shaken sanity so their current Sanity points are 15 percentiles lower than normal.

#### Language and skills:

**Weapons:** Axe 40%, 1D6 + db, Knife 60% 1D4 + db (Steppo also has a Bow 55%, 1D8)

**Armor:** Adalsteinn and Farman also carry a small shield 35%, absorbs 20 damage.

The men wear jackets of leather over brightly colored woolen tunics (*kyrtill*) that hang down over their thighs. They have equally bright trousers and some sort of animal skin shoes. All have long, wild hair. All are carrying long handled axes. Rø is a true Viking freewoman, self-reliant and independent, holding equal status with her fellow men. She is well groomed and particular about her (agreeable) appearance, however, the lack of jewelry and her practical dress tells of her modest standing.

This party of eight forms the crew of a large knarr that crossed into Annwn by accident three days ago. The Danes were initially unaware of their changing location, but realized something was wrong as soon as the night sky appeared. Shortly afterwards they were attacked by Wights for the first time. Reeling from the attack, but with no guesses to their location, the crew pressed on the next day. They suffered a repeat attack that night, but saw a coastline the following morning. They anchored their vessel and landed with the ship's boat in search of safety and answers. So far they've found an abandoned town, set up camp in the stone church and lost contact with one of their crew who went to fetch dry wood.

For Saxons some the Danes are invaders, for others they are legitimate rulers. For some Danes the Saxons are mass murderers (Ethelred attempted to exterminate the Danes in England in 1002 AD), for others they are kin. The horror of Annwn initially masks these tensions, the Danes accepting the investigators as fellow men, but awkward comments, bad attitudes or other slights can bring old enmities back.

#### Adalsteinn (noble stone)

Proud captain and owner of the vessel, well-respected and perceptive leader. Man of the seas with a good sense of humor (under normal circumstances). Cast out of Norway because of theft, he indulged in piracy and trafficking for some years – but doesn't boast about his past "exploits". Could potentially become romantically attracted to one investigator.

#### Rø (turnip)

A good girl and a good sailor despite her youth and quick temper. An outcast like Adalsteinn with a weak spot for intoxicating beverages – and Leif. A well-liked storyteller, Rø is not averse to combat and much too emancipated by Christian standards. Could potentially become romantically attracted to one investigator.

#### Steppo (crown in Old Flemish)

A giant of Flemish origin, extraordinarily strong and tough. Steppo almost never speaks but eats like three. Well disciplined if well fed, Steppo is so phlegmatic as to appear indifferent to danger. Keen hunter.

#### Farman (traveler)

Hideous and somewhat unstable man who misses half his nose and one ear, souvenir from Sicilian sailors who were too much in a rush to finish the job.

#### Vilhjalmr inn Fagri (William "the Fair")

Atypical sailor and remarkable craftsman, easily the most intelligent and learned crewmember. It is rumored that "inn Fagri" has royal blood flowing through his veins and that Torkel is his loyal servant from a former life.

#### Torkel (Thor's cauldron)

A bald man with a strange animal-like sense of danger, although he finds it difficult to explain his intuitions. Inseparable from inn Fagri, the two seem complementary. Under stress, Torkel may inadvertently call inn Fagri "my Lord". Torkel is the only Christian in the group. When required, Torkel acts as the vessel's cook.

#### Leif and Old Svein

Respectively vanished and indefinitely insane when the adventure starts.

**WORMS OF THE EARTH, Lesser Servitors.** "... A brief impression of a broad, strangely flattened head, pendulous writhing lips that bared curved, pointed fangs, and a hideously misshapen, dwarfish body that seemed – mottled – all set off by those unwinking reptilian eyes." – "Worms of the Earth", Howard.

"They were short and sticky, with broad heads too large for their scrawny bodies. Their hair was snaky and stringy, their faces broad and square, with flat noses, hideously slanted eyes, a thin gash for a mouth, and pointed ears." – "The Children of the Night", Howard.

The Worms of the Earth average 3½ foot in height with shortened arms and legs. They have stunted and deformed bodies, "a broad, strangely flattened head" and mongoloid face, almond eyes, and yellowish mottled skin that is covered with a kind of sticky slime. The Worms of the Earth wear crude animal hides and stink of decay. This degenerate race is encountered in barrows and subterranean tunnels, the network of which is said to connect the burial grounds of many worlds. They shun light, even that of the moon and stars.

According to Vikings, the Draugr are only destroyed for good by: cutting the head off, burning the remains, and burying the ashes or throwing them out at sea.

The Worms of the Earth communicate with each other in a horrible hissing speech or with crude carvings, and are

capable of primitive magic (Nightmare skill). Humans easily mistake them with vampires or ghouls (Vikings call them “Draugrs”).

The Worms of the Earth worship an artifact of obscure origins, the Black Stone, marked by symbols of terror. It is said that anybody succeeding in stealing the Black Stone may be granted a service in return, although in the end he or she will still incur the wrath of the Worms.

The Worms of the Earth attack in swarms and they eat up the bodies of anything they kill (or any dead flesh for that matter; their hunger is insatiable). Weapons normally injure them.

#### WORMS OF THE EARTH, The Walking Dead

Characteristics	Rolls	Averages
STR	2D6	7
CON	2D6	7
SIZ	2D4	5
INT	3D6	10-11
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	2D6+6	13
Move 7	HP	6

**Damage Bonus:** -1D4

**Other names:** Dragons, Dwarves (*Draugr*), Walking Dead (*Aptrgangr*), barrow-wights.

**Weapons:** flint daggers or mallets 25%, 1D3, stone-tipped spears or small bows 10%, 1D4. With the negative Damage Bonus, count 0 or less damage as a superficial cut or bruise.

**Armor:** none.

**Spells:** Nightmare skill 2% e.g. to shape-shift or to create a temporary darkness or mist in daylight hours to hide its approach.

**Sanity loss:** 0/1D6.

#### UNDERMINE ATTACK

The Worms of the Earth can undermine any building by hollowing out the earth underneath it and digging its foundations away. Residents might hear dim scratching and clawing sounds. The time the Worms need to burrow before a building comes crashing down is determined by the SIZ of the building. Every hour, a single Worm can undermine the equivalent of SIZ 1 of rock and SIZ 30 of unconsolidated material (e.g. clay). To give an example, a stone tower typically weights a few thousand metric tons. Assuming SIZ 300, a hundred Worms of the Earth need 3 hours to sap the tower’s foundations.

The same attack can also target a single human sleeping on the ground: the human will be swallowed by a hole in the ground and carried away by the Worms of the Earth.

#### Th’sss

Th’sss is a large 4-foot Worm of the Earth. He wears a festering wolf-skin mantle, the hood of which can completely cover his face. He carries no weapons, just some kind of ornaments made of animal bones and teeth.

What Th’sss lacks in fighting skills he makes up for in knowledge and occult powers (Nightmare skill 15%). He is the shaman and leader of his tribe, and exerts significant influence on his entire race.

Importantly, he can speak one or two languages known to the human party, at least approximately.

Th’sss always put himself before his temporary allies. He will help the investigators by telling them partial knowledge about the subsurface of Annwn and the location of the Isle of the Dead and the Door, and by teaching them enough Nightmare skill so that they can foil the Serpent People and recover the Black Stone – in exchange of the Book of Thoth that his kin found in the Tower near Caerleon.

**WIGHTS, Lesser Servitors.** “*Sinister creatures fly, malevolent beings howl in the mists, the nocturnal Striges wail.*” - “*Thebaid, III, 510-511*”, Statius.

The Wights are arguably the least well known of all mythical creatures. Their attributes are reminiscent of those of the Old Ones in the Necronomicon. The Wights are hunting spirits associated to the Death God who is known under many names, such as Gwynn ap Nudd, Cernnunos, or Tawil at’Umr. They are usually found in the limbic regions in between worlds. Wights intrude into the world of the living in places of darkness, at night, or even underwater. Darkness effectively acts as a Gate for these beings. The Wights are dispelled by direct light.

In Annwn, the Wights are only half-immaterial, formless beings with ill-defined contours. Their appearance is as indefinite as gray glass, with some oily quality to it. Humans easily mistake Wights with ghosts (Vikings call them “Vaettirs”). Some Wights do bear secret names, with which they can be summoned.

The Wights attack by dragging someone up into the air and away for the kill. They then reap the soul of their dead victims. Needless to say, these victims are never seen again.

#### WIGHTS, The Hunting Horrors

Characteristics	Rolls	Averages
STR	9D6	31-32
CON	3D6	10-11
SIZ	13D6	45-46
INT	5D6	17-18
POW	6D6	21
DEX	4D6	14
Move 7/30 (flying)	HP	28

**Other names:** Striges, Dark Elves (*Dokkalfar*), Nightmare (*Mara*).

**Weapon:** cutting claws 65%, damage 1D6; grapple 90% STR-against-STR Resistance Table roll to break loose.

**Armor:** none, but only cutting weapons (e.g. swords) can harm a Wight’s semi-liquid substance. Impaling weapons or blunt weapons have marginal effect.

**Spells:** Nightmare skill 4% e.g. to control the weather.

**Sanity loss:** 0/1D10 Sanity points to witness a Wight attack.

**TAWIL AT’UMR, Avatar of Yog-Sothoth.** “*An old man of great height, lacking one eye and clad in a hairy mantle.*” - “*Gesta Danorum, II, 65*”.

Tawil at’Umr, one of the forms of Yog-Sothoth, is the Most Ancient One. Tawil at’Umr is the Guide of souls to Limbo and beyond the Ultimate Gate to the last Void, where his dreadful other Self resides. Tawil at’Umr’s form in Annwn is that of a tall one-eyed old man, wearing a threadbare robe of many colors. Tawil at’Umr may also



appear as a 24-ft-tall one-eyed stag- or dog-thing, walking like a man. The symbolism of Tawil at'Umr as a grim nomadic peddler with supernatural sight is very ancient, personified in the Norse pantheon by Odin, and having roots in the "Angel of Death" figure.

Tawil can't follow the investigators inside buildings without being explicitly invited in, but he can look in from outside.

Tawil at'Umr is sometimes confused with the Devil by Christians.

#### **TAWIL AT'UMR, The Horned God**

STR 51 CON 29 SIZ 51 INT 40 POW 100 DEX 19 Move 19 HP 40

**Other names:** The Horned God (*Cernunos*), The Hunter/Seizer (of Souls), The-Stag-That-Walks, The-Dog-That-Walks, Gargan or Gangrad, Odin/Woden, (Gwynn ap) Nudd.

**Weapon:** Antlers or Bite 40%, damage 1D10.

**Armor:** 3-point hide, and only magical weapons can damage the Avatar.

**Spells:** Nightmare skill 20%.

**Sanity loss:** 0/1D10 Sanity points to see the Avatar.

**SERPENT PEOPLE**, Independent Race, *"For as he watched, Tu's face became strangely dim and unreal; the features mingled and merged in a seemingly impossible manner. Then, like a fading mask of fog, the face suddenly vanished and in its stead gaped and leered a monstrous serpent's head!" - "the Shadow kingdom", Robert E. Howard.*

The "Howardian" serpent people are human-sized but tend to be weak (low CON and low STR), they die easily in combat, and therefore are always depicted as being poor warriors. This is clearly different from the Call of Cthulhu serpent people variant.

In their true form, Serpent People feature a monstrous serpent's head on a man's body (often with mottled skin and exuding a fetid smell). The Serpent civilization goes back to the fabled prehistoric lands of *Valusia*. Snake-priests of Yig are crafty sorcerers who can secretly put men to sleep or to death, and take on their appearance and their place in society ("are the people of Valusia men or are they all serpents?"). They can even change the appearance of entire rooms to trick and ambush humans.

One way to recognize serpent men is that they do not wear the symbol of the flying dragon – their ancient foe - and they cannot pronounce the watchwords *ka nama kaa lajerama*.

**SERPENT BITE:** the bite of a serpent is poisonous, and is lethal about 10 percent of the time. The poison is a neurotoxin that is chemically similar to the Egyptian cobra (asp) poison. Symptoms start 10 to 15 minutes after the bite and are characterized by pains and progressive paralysis (all skill rolls halved). Failing the Resistance Table match, the victim dies a painful death caused by respiratory failure in about 2 hour, and otherwise recovers. Only the specific antivenin helps against acute poisoning, and it may not be available in all hospitals.

#### **SERPENT PEOPLE, The Snakes-That-Speak**

STR 2D6 CON 2D6 SIZ 3D6 INT 3D6+6 POW 3D6+6 DEX 3D6 Move 8 HP 8 (average)

**Other names:** snake-men, snakes-that-speak, serpent priests, old serpents, *nagas* (oriental serpent people).

**Damage bonus:** -1D4 irrespective of STR+SIZ.

**Weapon:** Poisonous Bite 30%, damage 1D2 + poison.

**Armor:** none.

**Spells:** serpent priests know at least one spell, e.g. Soul Singing.

**Skills:** Burrow 75%, Hide 80%, Listen 70%, Potions 65%, Aklo 65%, Scent 75%, one Science at the keeper's discretion (e.g. biology, mathematics, physics) 50%, Sneak 80%.

**Sanity loss:** 0/1D6 Sanity points to see a serpent in its true shape.

### **Player Handouts (Book of Thoth)**

*It takes about 6-8 hours to skim through the three Scrolls of Thoth for any person or creature skilled in reading Egyptian hieroglyphs. After skimming, the reader learns what the Book of Thoth is about (the keeper should read the Book's description aloud) and spots the rituals and spells ("chapters") it contains (the keeper hands out a print out of the excerpts below). Skimming the Book of Thoth only costs 1D2/1D4 Sanity points and does not increase the Cthulhu Mythos skill. It does increase the Occult skill by 5% though. If at a later stage the person or creature reads the entire Book (which requires 15 weeks of study), he or she collects the full benefits of the Book, and incurs the full Sanity-point roll, minus those already spent in skimming the Book.*

#### **Hymn to Umr-at-Tawil (from the first scroll)**

"Homage to you, most ancient one, the Prolonged of Life (*Umr-at-Tawil*), whose names are manifold, being of hidden form in the Nameless Mist. You are the guardian of the Silver Key, and also the mighty one in the City of the Dog (*Lycopolis*). You are the Soul of the All-in-One, his own body, and have your place of rest in... (*unreadable*). You are the Lord of the Glass Tower. Your name is established in the mouths of men. You are the substance of Limbo. You are the Spirit among the spirits. The All-in-One draws from you his many mists. You send forth the wind at night, and breath from your nostrils the host of the Watchers, the bird-women of Limbo. The great Doors of the Spheres open themselves before you. The Gods of the Otherworld (*Tuat*) smell the earth in paying homage to you. You are a Spirit-Body, the governor of the twelve Spirit-Bodies; permanent is your rank, established is your rule. Your fear is set in all the lands."

"The Twelve Spirits which were appointed by Umr-at-Tawil are Netcheh-netcheh, Aatqetqet, Nertanef-besef-khenti-hehf, Aq-her-ami- unnut-f, Teshher-ariti-ami-Het-anes, Ubes-her-per-em-khetkhet, Maaem- kerh-annef-em-hru, ... (*unreadable*)."

"The All-in-One has decreed for him the guidance of the dead by your hand as long as times endure."

"You have set darkness over the light, you are the guide of every deceased. You are the favored one of the Ancient

Ones, and the beloved of the Old Ones who are the Watchers.”

“The Speech of Umr-at-Tawil: the dweller in the Glass Tower who lays his hands upon the deceased, whose word is truth, says: Umr-at-Tawil has bound you up. The Prolonged of Life has exalted you. The All-in-One looks upon you, and he leads you along the path between the worlds, in the presence of the Great Company of the Gods who dwell in the House of the Most Ancient One which is in the Country of the Dead. You are the Walking Dead.”

### **The Chapters of living after death (from the third scroll)**

*Here begin the chapters of living after death, and the songs of praising and glorifying which are to be recited for entering and for leaving the Underworld, of living after death, of sitting in the hall of Umr-at-Tawil, and of appearing as a living soul, and the spells which are to be said at the doors for opening up a way through the Glass Tower. They shall be recited after death.*

Behold, the scribe, whose word is truth, says: homage to you, O All-in-One, you who knows good nor evil, and who lives in between the Spheres for the endless and infinite eons of time which make up eternity. I have opened up a way for myself to you. I have become a spirit in my forms, I have gotten the mastery over my words of magical power, and I am adjudged a spirit; therefore let me cross the First Sacred Gate that separates the Country of the Living from the Glass Tower. I know you, and I know your names, and I know also the name of the All-in-One. His name is “Yoq-So-Thoth.” When he opens up The Ultimate Door that is inside the Glass Tower, when he aligns the Glass Tower and its Sacred Gate towards the Country of the Living, may I pass safe and sound. Let not the Fiend (*Sebau*) gain the mastery over me, let not the sacred Gate be aligned with the doors of the Other Worlds, let not your doors be shut in my face, for my SEPULCHRAL OFFERING is in your temple. And there, in the Glass Tower that Umr-at-Tawil has established, grant unto me the power to float down and to sail down the well of souls, and may I reach the Abyss of the Unnamable Devourers. I am the Walking Dead.

*Who is this slaughterer of souls?*

“It is Umr-at-tawil, the headsman of the twelve Ancient Ones. Concerning him some say that he is the All-in-One when he rises up with two heads, whereon one bears the mask of the Nameless Mist, and the other the symbol of man. Others say that he is Ny-har-rut-hotep; others say that he is Seth-Heh; and others say he is Anpu: Anubis the dweller in the chamber of death, Governor of the Underworld. Deliver the Walking Dead, whose word is truth, from the Watchers, who carry murderous knives, who possess cruel fingers, and who would slay those who are in the following of Umr-at-Tawil.”

*Who are these Watchers?*

“They are the Old Ones, the messengers of Umr-at-Tawil the Prolonged of Life, they are the reaper of souls. May I never fall under the knives wherewith they inflict cruel

tortures. For I know their names, and I know the being... (*unreadable*) who is among them in the Glass House of Umr-at-Tawil. He shoots forth rays of light from his eye, being himself invisible, and he goes round about robed in the flames which come from his mouth, commanding the host of Watchers, but remaining invisible himself.”

O All-in-One, you Lord of the Ultimate Abyss, you Sovereign of all the gods, deliver the Walking Dead, whose word is truth, from the god whose face is like that of a dog-that-walks, whose eyes are like those of a man but only one, who feeds upon the dead, who watches in the corridors between the two Gates, who devours the bodies of the dead, and swallows hearts, and who voids filth, but who himself remains unseen.”

*Who is this dog-faced god?*

“His name is ‘Everlasting Devourer,’ and he lives in the Glass Tower on the Isle of the Dead. As concerning the Isle of the Dead, it is in 540 worlds. The man who walks in the Underworld falls down among the knives of the Watchers. Others, however, say that the name of this god is Umr-at-Tawil, and that he keeps watch over the First Door of the Glass Tower, which is the Sacred Door; others say that his name is Tawil-at-Umr, and that he keeps watch over the Second Door of the Glass Tower, which is the Ultimate Gate. Hail, Lord of Terror, Chief of the Lands of the Dead, you Lord of the Watchers, who does keep prepared the block of slaughter, and who does feed on the intestines of men!”

*Who is this Lord of Terror?*

“It is the Keeper of the corridors of the Glass Tower.”

*Who is this Keeper?*

“It is the Body of the All-in-One, which is the devourer of all slaughtered things.”

### **THE DOORS OF THE HOUSE OF UMR-AT-TAWIL**

*The following shall be said when one comes to the First Door.* The Walking Dead, whose word is truth, shall say when he comes to this door: “Terrible one, lord of the host of Watchers, destroyer of the souls of men, devourer of the bodies of men, maker of slaughter is your name.”

### **THE CHAPTER OF NOT LETTING THE SOUL OF MAN BE HELD CAPTIVE IN THE GLASS TOWER**

The Walking Dead says: “hail, Most Ancient One of Souls, you divine Soul who inspires great dread, who does set the fear of yourself in the gods, who are enthroned upon your mighty seat. Make a path for the soul of the Walking Dead. I am equipped with words of power. I have made my way through the corridors of the Glass Tower.”

(If this Chapter be known by the deceased he shall be able to transform himself into a Spirit-soul who shall be equipped with his soul and his shadow in the Underworld, and he shall not be shut up inside any door in the Glass Tower, when he is coming forth in the Underworld, or when he is going back to the Earth.)

**THE CHAPTER OF OPENING THE DOOR TO THE SOUL AND THE SHADOW, OF HAVING MASTERY OVER THE SACRED DOOR**

The Walking Dead, whose word is truth, says: “the place that is closed is opened. That which lies down in the closed place is opened by the soul that is in it. By the Eye of Umr-at-Tawil I am delivered. I have journeyed over a long road. The road of souls is opened. My twin soul sees the Earth, on the day of souls. You shall not hold captive my soul. It sees the Earth on the day of counting souls. It repeats the words of Umr-at-Tawil. The Ancient Ones who are invisible on their seats, and who would do evil to me, shall do no evil to me. I sit down at the head of the Ancient Ones who are chiefs of their temple. The twelve wardens of Umr-at-Tawil shall not hold you captive, though they keep ward over souls, and set a seal on the shadow that is dead. The Glass Tower shall not shut you in.”

(If this Chapter be known by the deceased he opens the Sacred Door onto Earth, and his soul shall not be kept captive.)

**THE CHAPTER OF NOT BEING SEIZED BY THE WATCHERS**

The Walking Dead says: “hail, Prolonged of Life. Things that have been without motion for millions of years have come into life. Now, let me not be carried away, or be seized violently by the host of the Watchers and taken to the well of souls, to have the host of Unnamable Devourers celebrate on me. Let not deadly wounds be inflicted upon me, and let me not be gored by claws.”

**THE CHAPTER OF MAKING THE TRANSFORMATION INTO THE SERPENT SATA**

The Walking Dead, whose word is truth, says: “I am the serpent Sata whose years are infinite. I lie down dead. I am born daily. I am the serpent Sa-en-ta, the dweller in the uttermost parts of the earth. I lie down in death. I am born, I become new, I renew my youth every day.”