



the dressmaker of gothga

This is an urban scenario for four or five *Rêve: the Dream Ouroboros* characters of experienced levels. The party should have one or two High Dreamers, but at least two members should have *City Survival* beyond level zero. Most characters should have a few skills at +4 or +5, and each character should have one or two skills in the +5 to +6 range. The Dream Keeper should adjust encounters accordingly if the party is larger or smaller; weaker or stronger.

This adventure is designed to incorporate as many aspects of the rules as possible, in order to extend the players' and Dream Keeper's knowledge of the mechanics and spirit of *Rêve*. Gothga, a unique urban environment, is sketched out, with maps, a general overview of the city, a description of its Songmaker's Quarter, and non-player character descriptions. After the scenario has been played out, players and DK alike may wish to linger awhile in the baroque streets of Gothga.

This is a tale of mistaken identities, intrigue, and gruesome events in the fabled city of Gothga, an ancient metropolis largely cut off from the outside world. Its varied and eccentric inhabitants are given to peculiarities, some harmless; others less so. Several seemingly disparate plot threads are woven against the backdrop of this sprawling and exotic city.

overture: the gnawing perils of the blue forest

Each of the player characters has recently arrived in the reality encompassing Gothga. Perhaps they are itinerant travelers who have happened upon the place in their journeys on the Black Road, or maybe they have entered Gothga from the edges of the Ocean Abysses. One possibility is that they have arrived here after a peculiar dream. In this case, each recollects having gone to bed

hungry, regardless of their separate circumstances. Perhaps one was a pauper with an empty larder, the other an inhabitant of a famine-stricken land, and yet another a drunken reveler who was too much in his cups to remember to eat.

In any event, each remembers sleeping fitfully, hounded by gnawing pangs of hunger and a growing sense of unease, but not fully awakening either. As the night proceeds, it is punctuated by the grumbings of an empty stomach, which grow louder and more insistent, and seem to take on an almost palpable presence. Eventually the fitful and hungered sleeper's vague dreams become a fever nightmare of barks, howls and snapping jaws, as if the dreamer's hunger itself had become personified in sleep as voracious hounds.

As the players wake, groggy, disoriented (and hungry), each finds himself at the edge of a forest. The trees have a decidedly blue-green cast to their foliage, as certain spruce trees do. Scattered scores of meters apart, each player character can see the others, also waking from their slumber and also disoriented. Each is equipped not as they were the night before, but as adventurers and Journeymen. Indeed, the life each led before going to sleep is quickly receding in his or her memory, as if it too was a dream, vivid upon first awakening, but quickly evanescent.

Only their hunger remains — their hunger, and the baying, barking and snapping of their dreams. For emerging from the forest is a monstrous creature of nightmare: a turntooth.

<i>turntooth</i>			
Size	28	Life	26
Constitution	23	Endurance	49
Strength	23	Speed	14/30
Perception	14	Damage	+7
Will	12	Enc	25.5
Dream	12	Protection	8
		Level	Init Dmg
Maw	18	6	15 +9
Parry	18	6	15 +9
Dodging	12	3	
Running	12	3	
Vigilance	14	3	

The turntooth may cast a variant of *Non-aggressiveness* via one of its yellow eyes once per round. Victims must make a successful resistance roll at -8 or be forced to make a **Will** roll at -3 to attempt any aggressive action (check each round). Once a character has successfully resisted the

turntooth's magical attack, she is no longer susceptible to that particular creature's *Non-aggressiveness*.



The characters will obviously have to cooperate in order to deal with this nightmarish creature. The creature has a peculiar blue-green cast to it; a **Sight/Botany** roll at -1 will indicate that this is due to a thick mossy coat of

a chance invitation

Since their initial encounter and meeting, the player characters are assumed to have taken up residence in Gothga for a short while. They may be intending to stay for a longer time, or may be seeking passage out of the city. In any event, play resumes with the assumption that the player characters know each other casually.

On the night when our story begins, one of the player characters has just won a fairly large sum of money (large by adventurers' standards) in a game of chance and is buying rounds for his or her new friends — that is, the other members of the party. Have each character roll **Luck** at -4; the first who makes a particular success is the lucky winner. In case of more than one player's rolling a particular, have those roll again until a single player is determined to have won. The amount is irrelevant, but it should be enough to afford the group a fairly lavish evening of carousing.

Late in the hour of the Reed, it becomes obvious that old Merriman Fot, the owner of the *Urgent Need*, is ready to close and go home. The group are his only patrons, and

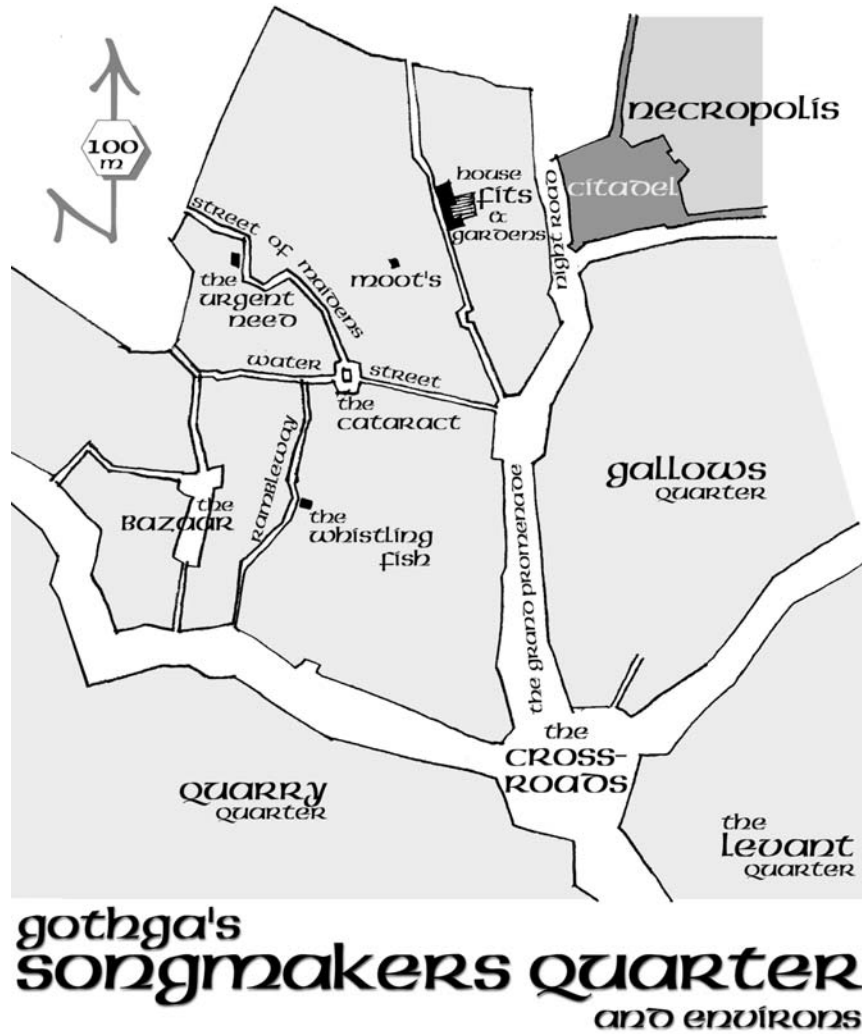
verdigleam growing on the creature. This moss is typically found in dark, moist places (such as root hollows and in rotted out logs) of certain coniferous forests. Verdigleam is a specialized healing herb, with a bonus of +4, but only useable in the healing of wounds, not the recovery of Life points. Enough of the moss can be gathered from the beast's pelt for six applications, with a **Dexterity/Leatherworking** or **Dexterity/Alchemy** at 0. If enchanted, a potion made from the herb functions per the normal rules for enchanted healing potions.

Sight/Forest Survival at 0 will spot another, smaller growth of verdigleam on the bark of nearby trees. Investigating, the Journeymen will locate a large hollow dug in between the roots of two particularly large spruces — the turntooth's nest. There, in a matted pile of old gnawed bones and rent bits of cloth and leather, is a silver ring set with a gleaming ice-blue astarite: Size 5, Purity 6, worth 30 sols (a small fortune)! Of course, unless the Journeymen are specifically searching through the turntooth's wretched pile, they will only spot the ring with a **Luck/Vigilance** roll at -3; otherwise they will automatically detect it.

Once the turntooth has been dealt with, the sprawling city of Gothga, visible in the distance even from the eaves of the Blue Forest, is an obvious destination.

he'd rather find his bed. Someone in the party (presumably after making a *City Survival* roll) suggests that all migrate to the *Whistling Fish*, just a few streets away. Assume that at this point the players have been enjoying their cups, and each has had to make three Life rolls at -2 (they have been drinking from Fot's wine cellar); each failed roll indicates a greater degree of inebriation (see Book One, *Journeymen*, Chapter 9: Morale). Characters may therefore be as far gone as second degree inebriation ('lit') and may have suffered Endurance loss appropriately.

As the group bids a grumbling Fot good night and makes its way down the Street of Maidens (so called for its ancient reputation as a red light district) through the Songmakers' Quarter over to the Rambleway and towards the promised *Whistling Fish*, they cross Water Street and pass the ancient, dry fountain known locally as Cataract Square. The streets this night are quiet, and the group only crosses a few passersby.



A slight chill is in the early autumn air, and the old cobbles gleam with the damp of the low, clinging fog which has risen as if expressly to caress them. The group's attention is drawn to the clear sounds of horse-hooves striking cobbles and the creak of carriage wheels (**Hearing** at 0). As they stand next to the fountain, discussing amongst themselves how best to proceed to the *Fish* (remember that they are newcomers to Gothga), the carriage itself comes into view.

It is a black hansom, drawn by two magnificent black steeds. Its coachman wears a plain black livery with no visible crests or insignias; neither is the coach itself marked in any way. A halberdier is visible, standing on the rear of the carriage. **Sight** rolls at -3 will be necessary to distinguish any details about the passenger within as the carriage slows slightly in passing the group. She appears to be wearing a deep red, long-sleeved gown, and a mask as if for a ball. She will extend a long, black-gloved hand holding out what appears to be a white card.

The passenger will drop the card if none are quick enough to retrieve it; **Dexterity** check at -3 (using any positive levels in *Juggling* as a modifier) for any group member to catch it (low roll wins any ties). As the carriage speeds away, the decisive thack! of the window being shut can be heard. Caught as it were almost flat-footed, there will be little for the group to do except to examine the card. The carriage simply moves too quickly to be caught on foot. For reasons which will become clearer later, neither the coachmen nor the passenger expect any sort of confrontation whatsoever, so if the group do attempt to physically restrain their escape in some way, they may well surprise the interlopers. Almost certainly, however, the carriage will escape.

By the light of their torches the player characters will be able to discern that the object left behind so quickly and mysteriously is not, in fact, a card, but a heavy linen

envelope. It is blank (although perhaps a bit damp and dirty if it has been dropped on the ground) on the front and marked with a large, elaborate, black wax seal on the back.

Sight/City Survival or *Legends* at -8 would indicate that the seal is that of the House Fits (the seal of House Fits is actually fairly well known to a native of Gothga; the difficulty of the above roll represents the characters' status as relative strangers). Should the group open the envelope, they will find that it contains a single very large sheet, also of prohibitively expensive linen, folded in quarto, and penned in a beautiful hand, elaborate almost to the point of being illegible except with great care and in good light. So peculiar is the script that it will require a **Sight/Writing** roll at -2; the dim flickering light of the torches will add a further penalty of -3. The missive is, in fact, an invitation (and is necessary to allow entry) to the Duke of Fits' dress ball, to be held in three days, on the 15th of the Lyre.

coachmen					
Size	11	Will	10	Life	12
Appearance	10	Intellect	11	Endurance	23
Constitution	12	Empathy	11	CT	4
Strength	13	Dream	10	Damage	+ 1
Agility	11	Luck	10	Sust	3
Dexterity	10	Mêlée	12	Enc	12.0
Sight	12	Missile	11	Speed	12
Hearing	11	Throw	12	Protection	2
Smell-Taste	9	Stealth	10		
		Level	Init	Dmg	
Hand-to-hand		+ 1	7		
Dagger		+ 3	9	+ 2	
Polearm		+ 4	10	+ 5	
Crossbow		+ 1	6	+ 3	
Dodging		+ 3			
Climbing	0	Running	0	Riding	+ 3
Discretion	+ 2	Tinkering	+ 1	City Surv	+ 5
Jumping	- 2	Vigilance	+ 3	Legends	- 2

Receiving such an invitation (to a ball obviously beyond their station as strangers in this strange city) in such a unusual way ought to pique the curiosity of any player worthy of the name.

lady eriaða of house blant					
Born in the Hour of the Sleeping Castle					
28 years old. 1m53, 60 kilos.					
Right-handed. Black hair, brown eyes.					
Size	9	Will	15	Life	10
Appearance	15	Intellect	14	Endurance	25
Constitution	11	Empathy	13	CT	3
Strength	10	Dream	11	Damage	+ 0
Agility	14	Luck	12	Sust	2
Dexterity	15	Mêlée	12	Enc	9.0
Sight	12	Missile	13	Speed	12
Hearing	14	Throw	11	Protection	1
Smell-Taste	11	Stealth	13		
		Level	Init	Dmg	
Hand-to-hand		+ 0	6		
Dagger		+ 5	11	+ 1	
Dodging		+ 4			
Climbing	+ 2	Acting	+ 7	Locksmith	+ 4
Dance	+ 6	Commerce	+ 2	Surgery	+ 2
Discretion	+ 5	Disguise	+ 4	Swimming	+ 0
Drawing	+ 2	Music	+ 6	Alchemy	+ 4
Jumping	+ 1	Pickpocket	+ 3	Astrology	+ 1
Running	+ 0	Riding	+ 4	Botany	+ 3
Seduction	+ 5	City Surv	+ 6	Legends	+ 4
Singing	+ 7	Outdoor	+ 0	Medicine	+ 3
Tinkering	- 1	Undergrnd	+ 1	Writing	+ 2
Vigilance	+ 4	Gaming	+ 2	Zoology	+ 2
		Jewelry	+ 4		

RUMORS AND HABERDASHERS

Should the group begin asking around about the Duke of Fits or making inquiries about the ball itself, they should make **Luck/City Survival** rolls at -4 and consult the following rumors table (the roll should be made secretly by the Dream Keeper, so that the player may not use the result of the die roll to interpret the rumor's veracity):

Particular The Duke's eldest daughter has a reputation for mingling below her station. Just last week she was seen with a young escort at a party at the *Garrulous Rat*, and he was certainly **not** her chaperone, nor a member of the nobility, judging by his behavior and manners.

Significant The Duke once quickly fell into political disfavor nearly twenty years ago. But, as these things go, he was just as quickly reinstated to his position at court within a year or two. Some say he got back into the Padishah's good graces by seeing to the assassination of a political rival.

Normal The Duke has always been well-known for his patronage of the great fencing masters of the city. Even in his advancing middle years he is said to be an excellent swordsman. That coupled with his famous temper has led to more than a few duels. Needless to say, the Duke has always been victorious.

Failure Time out of mind House Fits has always thrown lavish parties. It's a tradition of theirs. Every once in a while I hear they even have a feast for the commoners.

Part. Fail. People from the Duke's household are always patronizing the apothecary in my neighborhood, which is far from the Duke's palace on the edge of the Gallows Quarter. My nephew's friend is an apprentice at that particular herbalist's, and he says that the Duke is very ill, but his servants come so far to his master's shop so no one at court will find out.

Fumble The talk is that the Padishah is looking for a replacement for the head of House Fits. New blood, and all that. Maybe the Duke's going back into exile.

Obviously arriving at these rumors will entail much more than just asking the local fruit vendor in the market what she knows about House Fits. It is assumed that players will attempt to ingratiate themselves with members of the population likely to have dealings with the Duke's House,

and that they will attempt to not be obvious in their investigations. Such things take time. In the interest of game play, allow each character one rumors roll per day (and events will conspire to give them little more than a day of investigation). This assumes that the character in question pursues an avenue of investigation which seems reasonable to the DK; the judge may feel free to fiat that the player's approach is fruitless. Do not repeat rumors; make up new ones if necessary. Alternately, failed rolls may result in simply no rumor at all.

In any event, the player characters will need to acquire suitable clothing if they plan on attending the ball. Most of the large Houses of Gothga have their own servants who make the various elaborate costumes frequently worn at these sorts of affairs. Indeed, Gothgans wear incredibly elaborate costumes; recently the fashion has been the incorporation of mechanical devices of no particular usefulness (clocks, music-boxes, kinetic sculptures, marionettes) into jackets, coats, headdresses, and masks.

Tailors capable of satisfying the Gothgan fashion are rare; those not exclusively in the jealous employ of one House or another are rarer still. Pharrish Moot is one such rare tailor, a dressmaker by preference, although not exclusively so. His shop is fairly well-known (owing to his reputation and free agency); **Empathy/City Survival** at -4 will allow a player character to find it in the Songmakers' Quarter, a few streets short of the Grande Promenade which divides that Quarter from the Gallows, the very center of Gothga. His shop is, in fact, very near the palace of House Fits.

Moot is a middle-aged man who leads a quiet life and keeps largely to himself. He is well-known in his neighborhood, but seems to have few friends, if any. Of course, his work is so completely consuming, his costumes and dresses so elaborate, his services in such demand by the petty nobility and wealthy merchants who seek to impress their social betters, that it is a wonder that he ever sees the light of day at all.

But there is another side to Pharrish Moot, one not so obvious to the players but which will sooner or later catch up to them. Moot is a secret practitioner of Thanatos, and an accomplished one at that. He has other talents as well, but his necromancy is his obsession. He has just recently, in fact, fallen victim to a Necromantic Shadow, and is about to embark on a series of grisly murders.

When Moot feels the need to kill a victim, he will seemingly carelessly prick a likely customer with a pin. He will then use the drop of blood so gathered to possess the person, whom he will send to bring him his next victim. He currently has a fascination with mannequins, and hopes to collect several (headless) zombies made from the bodies of young women, to be displayed in his private quarters wearing some of his couture creations. Any heads left behind at the scene of the crime, naturally, will implicate (via *Speak with Skull*, a not-unknown ritual in Gothga) the person controlled, not Moot himself. So innocuous will Moot's pinprick be (hopefully of a player character, to add spice and interest to the game), that the DK should only mention it after the fact, not as it is happening. If Moot feels that a potential agent is suspicious, he might even surreptitiously daub her with a bit of black camphor, to render the skin in the area of the needle-prick numb, before actually drawing blood.

pharrish moot					
Born in the Hour of the Lyre. 45 years old. 1m59, 68 kilos. Right-handed. Thin greying hair, brown eyes.					
Size	10	Will	14	Life	12
Appearance	9	Intellect	15	Endurance	26
Constitution	13	Empathy	12	CT	4
Strength	12	Dream	17	Damage	+ 0
Agility	12	Luck	11	Sust	3
Dexterity	16	Mêlée	12	Enc	11.0
Sight	13	Missile	14	Speed	12
Hearing	10	Throw	13	Protection	1
Smell-Taste	9	Stealth	11		
		Level	Init	Dmg	
Hand-to-hand		+ 0	6		
Dagger		+ 3	9	+ 1	
Dodging		+ 4			
Climbing	-1	Riding	-4	Alchemy	+ 5
Discretion	+ 5	City Surv	+ 5	Astrology	+ 2
Drawing	+ 4	Outdoor	+ 0	Botany	+ 0
Running	-3	Forest	+ 3	Legends	+ 2
Tinkering	+ 5	Undergrnd	-2	Medicine	+ 1
Vigilance	+ 5	Jewelry	+ 6	Writing	+ 1
Acting	+ 3	Leather	+ 8	Zoology	+ 1
Carpentry	+ 3	Locksmith	+ 2		
Commerce	+ 3	Metalwork	+ 3	Hypnos	+ 5
Disguise	+ 7	Surgery	+ 0	Narcos	+ 6
Pickpocket	+ 3	Swimming	-4	Thanatos	+ 11
reserved spells					
<i>Amnesia—Lethe</i>		<i>Dreamlessness—A3</i>		<i>Suggestion—A2</i>	
<i>Confusion—G1</i>		<i>Sleep—C2</i>			
known spells					
All Hypnos spells and rituals up to and including -8					
All Narcos rituals up to and including -9					
All Thanatos spells and rituals					

By the time the players discover the truth about Moot and are in a position to confront him, he may well have collected quite a few zombies in his back room.

<i>mannequin zombies</i>			
Size	10	Endurance	20
Dream	10	Speed	12/24
Level	1	Damage	+ 1
		Level	Init Dmg
Claw	12	+ 1	7 + 2
Dodging	10	+ 1	

thieves in the night

In a thread — if the pun can be excused — almost completely unrelated to the murderous Pharrish Moot, members of House Blunt are involved in some political intrigue of great interest to them and their political and social rivals, but of little import to the player characters — for now. Blunt have (the singular is used, but is plural in constraint) in the past few months engaged the services of a notorious rogue, assassin, and spy, one Thurnius Tohl. Tohl is quite a colorful character: duelist, seducer, thief and a bit of a pirate. It is in this last capacity that he has been working for Blunt, gathering (and where it is lacking, manufacturing) evidence that their rival House Drum has been engaging in piracy against Ducal interests. Blunt hopes thereby to sway the Duke towards favoring their dubious claims to some ancestral lands of Drum's currently in question owing to some rather entangled and incomprehensible inheritance laws.

By the morning, House Blunt will have realized their regrettable error. Tohl is a master of disguises, and it is understandable how Eriada Blunt could have mistaken the group for the adventurer in the company of a few of his bravos, especially as they were coincidentally at the appointed place more or less at the appointed hour, if slightly early. And as the characters will have presumably made inquiries throughout the entire subsequent day regarding the Duke's ball, House Blunt will have been alerted to their presence and possible connection to the misplaced invitation.

So the night following their receipt of the letter, the group will have their inn room burglarized by agents of Blunt, bent on recovering it. Naturally it would be desirable for the player characters to thwart the efforts of the thieves. Other than possibly revealing (under duress, presumably) the object of their mission, and that they come from House Blunt, the thieves will give up little other intelligence.

<i>thieves of house Blunt</i>					
Size	10	Will	10	Life	11
Appearance	10	Intellect	11	Endurance	22
Constitution	12	Empathy	11	CT	4
Strength	14	Dream	10	Damage	+ 1
Agility	14	Luck	10	Sust	3
Dexterity	13	Mêlée	14	Enc	12.0
Sight	13	Missile	13	Speed	12
Hearing	11	Throw	13	Protection	2
Smell-Taste	9	Stealth	12		
		Level	Init	Dmg	
Hand-to-hand	+ 0	7			
Dagger	+ 3	10		+ 1	
One-handed sword	+ 5	12		+ 4	
Dodging	+ 4				
Climbing	+ 3	Commerce	+ 0	Juggling	+ 2
Discretion	+ 4	Disguise	+ 0	Locksmith	+ 4
Jumping	+ 2	Pickpocket	+ 3	Surgery	- 2
Running	+ 1	City Surv	+ 5	Swimming	- 4
Tinkering	+ 2	Outdoor	+ 0	Legends	+ 0
Vigilance	+ 3	Undergrnd	- 2	Writing	- 4
Acting	+ 1	Acrobatics	+ 0		

Naturally even lowly burglars know better than to barge into someone's room while they are there. Around the hour of the Lyre, therefore, the group will encounter as if by happenstance a few young ladies of obviously corruptible morals: Phisbe, Outhia, Magris, Enna and Anthiope (there should be one young lady for each party member). These will express interest in the male members of the party (and tactfully even female members should it seem appropriate), marveling at their exoticism and 'obvious' charm. The Dream Keeper may wish to feign making 'secret' **Luck** rolls for the players, in order to give the impression that this is indeed a favorable random encounter. The exchange could well lead to an evening of carousing, beginning with drinks and dinner at a local eatery (but not the *Outside Inn* where the party is staying: "The food there is unacceptable, the service boorish!")

Their new friends will lead the group to the *Fountain Court*, a rather mediocre place that they consider upscale. They will be perfectly happy to be fêted by the players; even if they are being paid by House Blunt for their services. After all, a few extra coins and drinks won't hurt. Their instructions are to keep the party occupied through the night, and they will have no compunction about using all their wiles and charms to do so.

Should the group have the presence of mind to avoid dallying with these young ladies and return to the inn, they will in all likelihood encounter the burglars in the hour of the Reed. On the other hand, if they stay with their

companions through the night and have the invitation on one of their persons, they may well get it stolen by one or more of “the girls”. After all, these young ladies are not above rolling their escorts. The Dream Keeper should make liberal use of **Appearance/Seduction** and **Appearance/Discretion** rolls for the young ladies, while the player characters will need to exercise **Empathy/Vigilance** (and maybe even **Will** rolls to stay awake at a critical moment).

filles de joie				
Beauty	14			
Size	10	Will	11	Life
Appearance	13	Intellect	10	Endurance
Constitution	11	Empathy	11	CT
Strength	10	Dream	10	Damage
Agility	12	Luck	9	Sust
Dexterity	13	Mêlée	11	Enc
Sight	11	Missile	12	Speed
Hearing	11	Throw	11	Protection
Smell-Taste	10	Stealth	11	
		Level	Init	Dmg
Hand-to-hand		+ 0	5	
Dagger		+ 1	6	+ 1
Dodging		+ 1		
Climbing	- 3	Vigilance	+ 0	Gaming
Cooking	- 2	Acting	+ 4	Jewelry
Dance	+ 1	Commerce	+ 0	Locksmith
Discretion	+ 3	Disguise	- 2	Surgery
Jumping	- 3	Music	+ 0	Astrology
Running	- 1	Pickpocket	+ 3	Botany
Seduction	+ 5	City Surv	+ 5	Legends
Singing	+ 0	Outdoor	+ 0	

Blood in the street

On the second day after their accidental receipt of the invitation, events will take yet another dramatic turn. The entire Songmaker’s Quarter will be roused by the news that a young society girl has gone missing. Maïella Pale, youngest daughter of Joragendt Pale, scion of House Pale, is missing. Her bodyguards were found drunk and asleep in an alley off of High Street. By noon her warders will have been publicly hanged, still claiming their innocence, their heads taken to the Necropolis for dark purposes. It is only then that the girl’s own severed head will be found, carelessly tossed over the wall of the city’s great cemetery near one of its main gates. (Subsequent magical interrogation of the bodyguards will yield no useful information, other than the regrettable fact of their innocence). Interrogation of the girl’s skull will only yield vague information indicating that she was killed by a stranger of uncertain description. In the macabre game of

telephone that will ensue from her posthumous testimony, a description will be circulated which could possibly fit at least one of the characters — as well as Thurnius Tohl. Of the rest of her body no trace will be found.

For the rest of the second day after receiving the invitation the entire district will be abuzz with the shocking murder, and tensions will be high. Unbeknownst to the general population, this is in fact the third murder in as many days; the other two victims were servant girls and have either gone unnoticed or undiscovered.

By now the Dream Keeper should already have steered the party towards Pharrish Moot. The tailor will at first be unwilling to outfit the group given the deadline, but will suddenly change his mind. The Dream Keeper might act as if it was the Journeymen’s persuasion which led the tailor to change in mind; in fact he will have done so with the purpose of using one of the player characters to further his killing spree. While it would be impossible for him to create something specific for the group on such short notice, he may have something which a client never picked up which could fit the bill (it’s a good thing that the old necromancer also knows the ritual of *Gremlin*). He will ask the group (or individual) to return the next morning for a fitting. Moot has found his next agent.

Needless to say, one of the prostitutes sent by House Blunt to distract the party away from the invitation may well turn out to be one of the party member’s victim. Moot will first *Spirit Possess* his pinpricked victim, then *Task* him to communicate to no one about any subsequent magical contact with the necromancer. Moot will follow this *Task* with two others: to murder a beautiful girl, then one to bring the headless body to Moot in secret. Once in his shop, the agent will be subject to an *Amnesia* spell. It could well be that by the time of the ball, the authorities might be investigating one of the player characters for one or all the murders (doubtless the assumption will be that the same *modus operandus* for all the crimes necessarily points to the same perpetrator). It almost need not be mentioned that anyone reasonably suspected of killing a noble cannot possibly hope for a fair trial.

the Dress Ball

The House Fits ball will officially last from the hour of the Lyre until the Spider, but in fact will go on until dawn. The night of the ball the entire area in the vicinity of House Fits will be abuzz. Some will be there out of macabre interest due to the recent murder among the

nobility, but the populace at large traditionally gathers near a great House when a ball is held, in order to see the magnificent costumes and carriages of the invitees as they proceed into the great courtyard of the House, beyond the prying eyes of the great unwashed (a similar scene in Paul Féval's *Le Bossu (The Hunchback)* comes to mind).

Beyond the carriage-gates of the perimeter wall of the house lies the outer courtyard of the Fits compound. There the magnificent carriages and hansoms of the more illustrious and wealthier guests turn about after depositing their passengers at the head of the walk into the gardens. Meanwhile, those whose carriages have deposited them outside enter through a gate adjacent to the carriage gate, no less ornamental and grandiose. Liveried footmen (halberdiers; use the same characteristics as for Eriada's coachmen) man the gates. As the party enters the grounds, they might spot the same black hansom (or a suspiciously similar one) which delivered the invitation with a **Sight** roll at -3. A **Sight/Legends** or *City Survival* roll at -8 (again owing to the players' relative newness to Gothga) might identify the crest now visible on the carriage as belonging to House Blunt. If that opportunity is missed, the bestaffed chamberlain announcing arrivals will call out Eriada of Blunt's name as she exits her carriage; players might hear him above the din of arriving and departing carriages, horse hooves on cobbles, and the general hubbub of excitement with a **Hearing/City Survival** roll at -3. Failing that, they might simply recognize her as the woman from the carriage with a **Sight/Disguise** roll at -6.

Timetable. It is important for the Dream Keeper to keep track of time throughout the evening, even loosely. Eriada will arrive at about the same time as the Journeymen, presumably in the hour of the Lyre. Thurnius Tohl (see below) will arrive in the hour of the Spider, and will plant his evidence at the end of that hour. The House Drum assassin will lie in wait for Eriada until the hour of the Reed, at which time it will seek her out (see the hedge-maze description below). At about that time, Tohl will also seek her out in order to confirm that his mission has been accomplished. There is potential here therefore for Eriada, Tohl, the Journeymen, the House Drum entity, and even NPC bravos and duelists to collide sometime in that hour, probably in or around the hedge-maze.

Dances. At the dress ball the players will be involved in a series of dances. Naturally, one is not obligated to dance, but to do so will leave one open to conversations with the Gothgans attending. That might lead to the exposure of whatever identities the players might have fabricated to justify their presence at the ball.

If the players want to approach Eriada Blunt they may do so most easily by dancing. Naturally, one might need to dance with several partners before reaching her. Check **Luck/Dancing** at -3, period 30 minutes, 8 task points. If at any time a character has a negative task-point total, then assume that the player character has committed some unforgivable social *faux pas* in Eriada's presence (such as attempting a poor rendition of a Sarabande instead of the Pas de Deux required); speaking with her hereafter will be virtually impossible

Naturally a player character could simply stride across the room, jostling dancers and disturbing the festivities, and confront Eriada. Boorish behavior, however, will absolutely not be tolerated and one engaged in such activities might well find himself called out to a duel in the gardens with one of the many bravos in attendance.

BRAVOS OF THE BALL					
Size	12	Will	11	Life	13
Appearance	12	Intellect	10	Endurance	25
Constitution	13	Empathy	9	CT	4
Strength	13	Dream	10	Damage	+ 1
Agility	15	Luck	11	Sust	3
Dexterity	12	Mêlée	14	Enc	12.5
Sight	10	Missile	11	Speed	12
Hearing	10	Throw	12	Protection	2
Smell-Taste	11	Stealth	12		
		Level	Init	Dmg	
Hand-to-hand	+ 0		7	(+ 1)	
Dagger	+ 5		12	+ 2	
Dodging	+ 5				
One-handed sword	+ 6		13	+ 4	
Climbing	+ 1	Acting	+ 1	Gaming	+ 3
Dance	+ 3	Commerce	+ 0	Locksmith	+ 1
Discretion	+ 2	Pickpocket	+ 0	Surgery	- 3
Jumping	+ 1	Riding	+ 3	Legends	- 2
Running	+ 1	City Surv	+ 6	Writing	+ 0
Seduction	+ 2	Outdoor	+ 0		
Vigilance	+ 2	Acrobatics	+ 0		

Draconic Sign. **Sight/Drawing** at 0 will allow a High Dreamer to notice that there is a scene woven in a portion of one of the House Fits tapestries (hanging in a secondary passage near one of the ballrooms) which is indeed a draconic sign. The image depicts a school of fish being tossed by the waves at the foot of a precipice, and a ship being dashed against the rocks in an attempt to net them.

Dreamland Lake
Difficulty -8
Duration Indefinite
Value 30 spell development points

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eriada

Once Eriada is reached, she will be elusive and vague, until eventually realizing that her interlocutor must be the person accidentally given the invitation. Her reaction will partly depend on the players' handling of her.

If threatened or if the players are antagonistic, she will attempt to evade them, but will lead them outside the ballroom and to the adjacent gardens and hedge-maze. There she will signal a group of her bodyguards to assist her in dealing with the player characters. On the other hand, even if the players admit to simply following up on the invitation out of a sense of innocent curiosity, a lifetime of Gothgan intrigues will have taught Eriada suspicion. Unless they are very convincing (in the DK's estimation), she will feign sympathy and will suggest they talk in private, again leading them to her bodyguards. At best, the player characters can expect that she will realize that they have nothing to do with her affair, and will ask (or bribe) them to leave. In all likelihood, however, Eriada will assume that they are lying and wish her harm.

thurnius tohl

Unbeknownst to Eriada or the party, Tohl has already gotten into the ball — he is, after all, a master spy, and is not about to allow the lack of an invitation to prevent his getting into the ball. He will have forged an invitation, or fabricated a story, to get himself in, and will be attempting to work his way to Eriada. He has with him a stolen ship's log book filled with evidence damning to House Drum, and after showing it to his client plans on leaving it at the ball for the Duke of Fits to find. Tohl will get to Eriada late in the hour of the Serpent. In the meantime, the pirate will spy the party, and may assume they are agents of House Drum bent on harming or thwarting him or Eriada. He will also attempt to lure the players outside, where they can be ambushed by his assassins (use the same stats as for the bravos of the ball).

in the hedge-maze

To the east of the grand ballroom is a wide garden of lawns and *parterres*, low geometrical garden beds and paths. Beyond lies the Duke of Fits' hedge-maze, a complex and grand affair. The gardens between the hedge-maze and house are the gathering place for various bodyguards and bravos, and care should be given to avoid giving offense and starting a duel. Most duels can be settled on a first-blood basis (first light wound) but if one or both of the antagonists are drunk or greatly offended such social niceties may be tossed to the four winds.

If Eriada feels threatened by the PCs, she will flee into the maze. She knows it fairly well, having been to many Fits parties, and will hope to lose any pursuers there.

thurnius tohl					
Born in the Hour of the Crown. 35 years old. 1m78, 72 kilos.					
Left-handed. Long thinning brown hair, hazel eyes.					
Size	11	Will	12	Life	13
Appearance	13	Intellect	11	Endurance	25
Constitution	14	Empathy	12	CT	4
Strength	13	Dream	11	Damage	+ 1
Agility	17	Luck	13	Sust	3
Dexterity	13	Mêlée	15	Enc	12.0
Sight	13	Missile	13	Speed	12
Hearing	9	Throw	13	Protection	2
Smell-Taste	12	Stealth	13		
		Level	Init	Dmg	
Hand-to-hand	+ 4	11	(+ 1)		
Dagger	+ 6	13	+ 2		
Dodging	+ 6				
One-handed sword	+ 9	16	+ 4		
Climbing	+ 3	Disguise	+ 5	Leatherwork	+ 3
Cooking	- 3	Pickpocket	+ 0	Locksmith	+ 9
Dance	+ 4	Riding	+ 2	Navigation	- 2
Discretion	+ 6	City Surv	+ 8	Surgery	-11
Drawing	- 2	Outdoor	+ 3	Swimming	+ 3
Jumping	+ 3	Desert	- 1	Alchemy	+ 4
Running	+ 2	Forest	+ 3	Astrology	+ 0
Seduction	+ 7	Swamp	+ 2	Botany	+ 1
Tinkering	+ 1	Mountain	+ 0	Legends	- 2
Vigilance	+ 4	Undergrnd	- 3	Medicine	+ 0
Acting	+ 6	Gaming	+ 7	Writing	- 4
Carpentry	+ 0	Jewelry	+ 1	Zoology	
Commerce	+ 3	Juggling	-11		

Note on dueling. In Gothga duels between gentlemen are frowned upon but generally have no serious legal ramifications. The winner has much more to worry about if the duel starts a blood feud between two Houses, as these feuds can have far more dire consequences than a mere prison sentence (or even straightforward execution). Of course, if a death results then matters are more serious. A weregild will almost certainly be paid to the deceased's family (in essence a fine extracted from the killer), but here again the worst consequence is inter-House warfare.

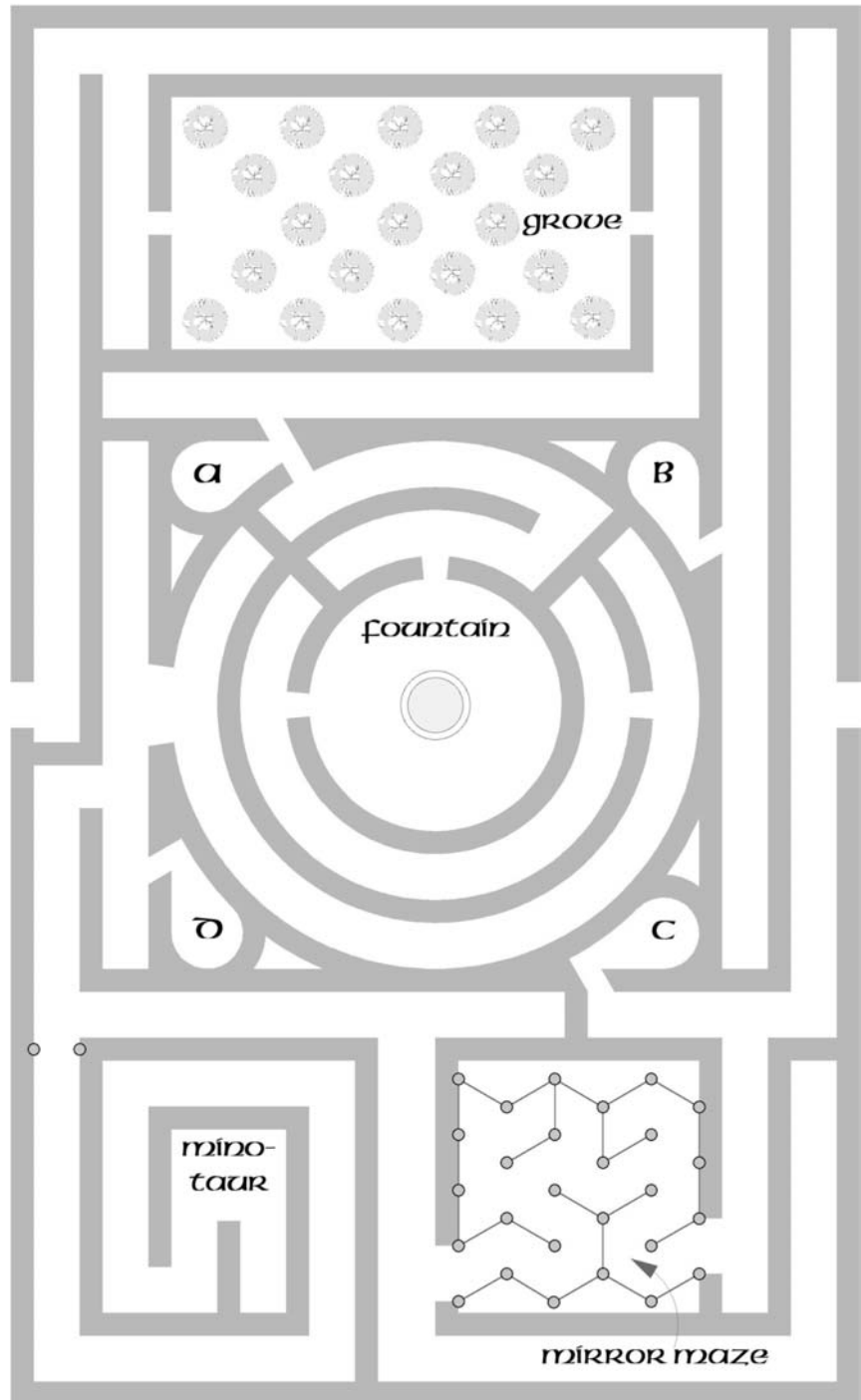
Naturally this is all predicated on the assumption that the duelists are gentle-born — which the Journeymen will presumably be assumed to be at first. But if it is revealed that they are common adventurers and vagabonds, one can assume that they would receive a much harsher and less civilized punishment in the dungeons of the city.

The cedar hedges of the maze are thick and well-trimmed, some two and a half meters tall, and about a meter thick. Thorny vines grow throughout as well as various flowering vines — jasmine, passionflowers and honeysuckle, predominantly. Going through the hedge is virtually impossible, so thick and robust is the cedar hedge itself — would it surprise the Dream Keeper to learn that the hedge was encouraged by many castings of *Plant Growth*?

Of course, the hedge can be hacked through with a sword or axe, but doing so is bound to attract unwanted attention, and in any event requires **Strength** rolls at -4, 10 task points, with a three minute period. Don't forget to count Fatigue (about 3 points ought to do) and give the despoilers a **Luck** roll to avoid detection. Even if they take the precaution of magically silencing their vandalism, they might be seen.

The paths of the maze are two meters wide and well-tended grass turf, leading to various areas meant to amuse and delight the guests of House Fits. During the party there will be so many paper lanterns hung everywhere that ambient light levels will suffice to provide adequate visibility, and the ball is held on the night of a full moon as well. The following areas may serve to delay or potentially endanger the Journeyers.

Mirror Maze. This small area within the maze has partitions made of polished mirrors, set at 60° from each other and supported at their juncture by columns. The visual effect is of a hall of columns, each reflected and re-reflected such that the space seems about six times bigger than it really is. Each column supports the corner of a shallow domed pergola or arbor, which are overgrown with a vigorous wisteria vine whose heady violet blooms drip from overhead.



Characters will find the mirror maze quite confusing and disorienting. Getting through it will take **Empathy** rolls at -4; those with a positive ranking in *Underground Survival* may use that skill as well. Each **Empathy** roll has a period of 5 minutes, and each character must roll a total of 6 task points to get through the maze. If through particular failures or fumbled rolls a character loses all accumulated task points, then she finds herself back at the starting point of the mirror maze.

The Minotaur. This portion of the maze is entered through a pair of columns similar to the ones in the mirror maze. Those in the know avoid this area unless, as the Duke sometimes does when overcome by insomnia, they wish to take a little restful nap.

In the central chamber of the maze is a thick, soft bed of grass under a bower overgrown with a flowering vine; **Sight/Botany** at -5 will identify it as somnifora, a natural (and powerful) narcoleptic plant. Over the bower is a plaque which bears this inscription:

**Bull-headed that thou art
Rest here the knot of th ne thought**

Anyone breathing in the heady scents of the somnifora plant or laying down or sitting in the bower will be exposed to its effects, which are a bit milder than the distilled sleep potion made from it.

somnifora	
Malignity	2
Period	15 minutes
Damage	Irresistible sleep
Remedy	-7/Sandpowder +12, Turngrease +10.

Those succumbing to the plant will sleep for a full draconic hour (instead of the eight hours or so of sleep a potion of the stuff would produce).

The Grove. This large open area has been planted in a quincunx so as to resemble an orchard. Almost all the trees here are velvines, and one of them is about to bear a bouncer (for a full description see Appendix II). The central tree is a treasurine which has been carefully cultivated, pruned, and grafted to have a more treelike appearance rather than its natural thorny bramble-like form. The treasurine trees are in fruit, and from 2-5 (d4+1) fruits are ripe and ready to be picked.

Bouncer			
Size	1	Life	8
Constitution	14	Endurance	22
Strength	2	Speed	30/50
Perception	15	Damage	-5
Will	3	Enc	—
Dream	16	Protection	4
		Level	
Cuteness	16	+ 5	
Dodging	14	+ 3	
Jumping	13	+ 6	
Vigilance	15	+ 4	

The Fountain. At the center of the maze is a bubbling fountain, carved stone basin filled with fresh and pure water. The mechanism of the fountain is magical, of course, a pair of small transmutation zones, *Air to Water* and *Water to Air*. The former is 20 cm in diameter and centered on the surface of the basin; the later is on an identical diameter and serves as a “drain”, set at the bottom of the basin. As water is turned into air it bubbles up and produces enough motion to create an irregular bubbling in the former zone.

Within the fountain itself are a few coins which luck-seekers have tossed in, 4d8 bronze pieces (each worth 10d). A **Sight** roll at 0 will spy them.

Miko, a felorn, has recently taken up residence near the fountain in the hopes of finding fish there. If the Journeymen splash around to retrieve the coins, the sound will awaken the hungry creature, who will naturally be hoping for a meal.

miko, felorn			
Size	2	Life	5
Constitution	8	Endurance	13
Strength	3	Speed	10/30
Perception	13	Damage	-4
Will	10	Enc	2.5
Dream	11	Protection	-6
		Level	
Flying	11	+ 3	
Vigilance	13	+ 0	

“Secret” Chambers. Arrayed about the circular central portion of the maze are four small hedge-chambers, whose entrances are small angled openings in the maze. Normally these are empty or occasionally used as guard-posts. Tonight, however ...

A. House Drum has suspected that Eriada was involved in the theft of politically damaging evidence, and believe that she has in her possession the very log book which Thurnius Tohl is planting in the Duke’s palace this very night. Unfortunately, an enterprising Thanatos High Dreamer of House Drum has summoned and planted a nightmare entity to assassinate Eriada, and it will remain here until either it is distrubed or until the hour of the Reed. Remember that in the first round of encountering them, all characters must roll **Sight/Vigilance** at a negative value of the shadow’s level. In case of failure, the character is subject to an attack by the shadow with *complete surprise*.

shadow			
Size	12	Endurance	28
Dream	16	Speed	12/24
Level	3	Damage	+ 2
		Level	Init
Claws	14	3	10
Dodging	12	3	+ 2

- B. One of Thurnius Tohl’s men is on the lookout for Eriada. If the group is chasing her for whatever reason and passes by, he will leap to her defense (probably with surprise, as he is discreetly concealed at -5). Use the same stats as for the bravos of the ball.
- C. Empty, but could be populated by a surprise of the Dream Keeper’s own devising.

conclusion

The design of *The Dressmaker of Gothga* is intentionally somewhat open-ended. Naturally the Journeyers may not take the bait of the intriguing invitation, and they might simply go to the ball, enjoy themselves, and not get involved in the machinations of Eriada, Thurnius Tohl, and House Drum. Or they may crash the party, behave badly, start fights (roleplaying gamers are known to do that) and get themselves killed. It is up to the Dream Keeper to walk the delicate line between allowing players freedom of choice (and therefore having their characters suffer the consequences, good or tragic, of their actions) on the one hand, and advancing the story on the other.

Ideally, the Journeyers should have to deal with Pharrish Moot, the murders, and go to the ball, where they should have to socialize, dance, and get drawn into the maze. There are several ways to achieve the last: Eriada could flee there, Thurnius Tohl could entice them there, or a partygoer could take a fancy to one of the Journeyers and propose a tryst in the maze.

Finally, don’t forget that this is *Rêve*: there are ample opportunities for the Dream Keeper to allow the characters to have portentous dreams leading up to the ball. In fact such dreams could provide clues about Pharrish Moot. Remember that Thanatos is the stuff of nightmare, antithetical to the Dreaming, and represents an imbalance. The Great Dreamers are quite likely to react to that

- D. An amorous couple have retreated to this alcove off a dead-end passage in the hopes of consummating their desire uninterrupted. Needles to say if that expectation is dashed, they might not be very friendly. A quick excuse and retreat is the appropriate response; anything more might result in a passionate duel.

Of course, should the party stray into the maze they will not necessarily be alone. If they have come here, it is in all likelihood that they are following Eriada, and of course other partygoers will be enjoying the Duke’s maze. It is, after all, the perfect place for secret trysts and dark dealings. The Dream Keeper should populate the maze as necessary.

imbalance by using the Journeyers (unconsciously of course, it must be stressed) as their “agents” to right this “wrong”. The Dragons are not moral nor do they particularly care for concepts like “good” or “evil”. Thanatos is not anathema because it is “evil” per se, but because it is the Way of Awakening, a denial of the Dreaming. In that sense, it cannot be a coincidence that the Journeyers meet Moot and (hopefully) put a stop to him.

As for the politics of Houses Drum, Blunt, and Fits, these may not be to every party’s liking. Here the Dream Keeper must know her players and follow her own tendencies. The behind the scenes machinations outlined above can be just that: a pretext for tension and conflict, and an excuse to explore the maze. Or, if the players want to take a short break from flitting from Dream to Dream, the Dream Keeper can allow them to become entangled in Gothgan society. Does Eriada grow to trust them (if for example they protect her from House Drum’s supernatural assailant)? Do they make an enemy of her? Does Tohl recognize them as kindred adventurer’s and invite them to work for him for a while? What will be the reaction of the Duke if he finds out that outlanders are meddling in his affairs and aiding in his being manipulated? Will House Drum discover the Journeyers and attempt to punish them for helping thwart them?

All of these questions can be answered or neglected, the later especially if the Journeyers manage to leave the ball and continue on their Road...

appendix i: further adventures in gothga

It is quite possible, given the urban nature of this scenario, that the Journeyers elect to stay longer in Gothga, or they may stray from the plot of the scenario, or the Dream Keeper may wish to run further scenarios in the City of Crossroads. With that in mind, a brief outline of the city, its districts and quarters are presented.

society

Gothgans tend to knuckle under to authorities above them, and in turn exercise their authority over those beneath them. They are a clever and innovative people, but they tend to use their wits to devise cruel things, or invent convoluted schemes. They have a love of mechanical things, but the machines they create tend to be singular apparatus which serve no real useful purposes, rather than truly beneficial machines designed to improve life. As a result, technology here is paradoxically both clever and stagnant, brilliant and futile.

Mores in the city are corrupt, as is often the case when living under an absolute regime, which the Gothgans have for centuries. Cut off as they are from the rest of the Dreaming, they have little contact with foreigners except for slight sea commerce with the Pythians. There is therefore little incentive or opportunity for new ideas and fresh perspectives. Your typical Gothgan is selfish, sometimes melodramatically sentimental, somewhat cruel, intelligent and fatalistic.

the padishah

Gothga is an oligarchy ruled in principle by an elected Padishah drawn from the ranks of the nobility. In practice, the Padishah is a nearly absolute prince who rules the city-state through the coercion and manipulation of his fellow nobles.

The current Padishah, Supervius Mal the Twelfth, is a gargantuan fellow with a penchant for wrestling and grappling. His prodigious gluttony is exceeded only by his notorious cruelty. As is customary it seems, his court is rife with intrigue and byzantine machinations, poisonings, seductions, torture and necromancy.

his emminence the padishah, supervius mal the twelfth

Born in the Hour of the Spider. 49 years old. 2m10, 130 k
Right-handed. Black hair, dark brown eyes.

Size	17	Will	13	Life	16
Appearance	12	Intellect	12	Endurance	32
Constitution	15	Empathy	11	CT	5
Strength	18	Dream	15	Damage	+3
Agility	14	Luck	10	Sust	5
Dexterity	11	Mêlée	16	Enc	17.0
Sight	12	Missile	11	Speed	12
Hearing	11	Throw	14	Protection	2 (5)
Smell-Taste	12	Stealth	9		

	Level	Init	Dmg
Hand-to-hand	+ 12	20	(+ 3)
Dagger	+ 5	13	+ 4
One-handed mace	+ 5	13	+ 6
Two-handed mace	+ 7	15	+ 7
Shield	+ 8		
Dodging	+ 8		

Climbing	-1	Commerce	+ 3	Botany	+ 3
Cooking	+ 7	Riding	+ 5	Legends	+ 3
Running	+ 1	City Surviv	+ 7	Medicine	+ 2
Jumping	+ 3	Gaming	+ 3	Writing	+ 0
Tinkering	+ 7	Locksmith	+ 8	Zoology	+ 8
Vigilance	+ 4	Alchemy	+ 5		
Acting	+ 5	Astrology	+ 5	Thanatos	+ 16

reserved spells

<i>Beastform Self—C14</i>	<i>Fist of Thanatos (14d)—G15</i>
<i>Beastform Self—E15</i>	<i>Fist of Thanatos (12d)—H14</i>
<i>Beastform Self—F13</i>	<i>Putrescence (8d)—C10</i>
<i>Fist of Thanatos (12d)—C15</i>	<i>Putrescence (8d)—C12</i>
<i>Fist of Thanatos (22d)—E13</i>	<i>Putrescence (8d)—F10</i>
<i>Fist of Thanatos (13d)—F14</i>	<i>Thanateye (10d)—B14</i>
<i>Fist of Thanatos (12d)—G12</i>	<i>Thanateye (12d)—F12</i>
<i>Fist of Thanatos (13d)—G13</i>	<i>Thanateye (11d)—K14</i>

known spells

All Thanatos spells and rituals

quarters & districts

Blue Forest. The Blue Forest extends, it is said, forever; no one in recent history in Gothga has ever found its far border. The place is reputed to be inhabited by strange and fantastic creatures, and tales abound of fauns, sylvans, centaurs, sprites and malicious atomies. Some claim that in the Blue Forest can be found a multitude of entrances to blurdream, others that Limbo itself lies beyond. Along its outskirts from time to time small communities of Gothgan exiles will establish themselves, surviving by hunting or harvesting verdigleam or the unique blue spruces that give the forest its name. But inevitably within a few generations these communities die out, victims of a harsh winter or

wolf infestations or simply vanishing. Base *Forest Survival* rolls here are at -6, although deep within the woods such rolls might well get far more difficult.

The Outer Gloom. This poverty-stricken district is so called because it is closest to the setting sun, and is the last place that the rising sun touches in Gothga. Base *City Survival* rolls here are at -7, and the place is home to the dispossessed of the city, unskilled laborers, paupers, beggars, prostitutes, criminals, the desperate and the maimed. Filth and disease run rampant here, and anyone not from here who drinks the water or eats the food (or stays long enough to be bitten by the vicious gloom fly, a painful horsefly) is quite likely to catch some dire disease. Fevers, agues and plagues are certainly not unknown to the Outer Gloom's natives, for that matter. It is difficult to estimate the population here, but it must be well over twenty thousand.

Gloomwall. This narrow district is considered part of Gothga proper, and is thus technically a Quarter, unlike the Outer Gloom which is really not much more than a shantytown. Gloomwall was established before the end of the Second Age as a bulwark against encroachment by the shack city of the Outer Gloom, and hence its name. Base *City Survival* rolls in Gloomwall are at -4. While it is not a wealthy area by any means, Gloomwall is home to many of the city's artisans and skilled workers and their families. Smiths, carpenters, potters, tanners, coopers, weavers, glazers and wainwrights can be found here. A private militia keeps a semblance of law and order, but mostly serves to keep out Duskers, as inhabitants of the Outer Gloom are known.

Songmakers. This area is far more prosperous, close as it is to the administrative center of the city, the Gallows. Highly skilled artisans, merchants, and noble families equally live here, as well as their servants and workers. *City Survival* rolls start at -2, and the area is very well patrolled. Lawlessness and violence, especially against the upper castes, are dealt with swiftly and harshly.

Gallows. The heart of the day to day administration and government of Gothga is the Gallows district, so named for the public executions which are an almost daily occurrence even to this day. The various ministries — the Exchequer, Carnifax, civil and criminal Courts — all are located here, as are the homes and offices of various ministers, magistrates, administrators and ministerial factors. *City Survival* rolls are at 0, and needless to say the quarter is very well patrolled.

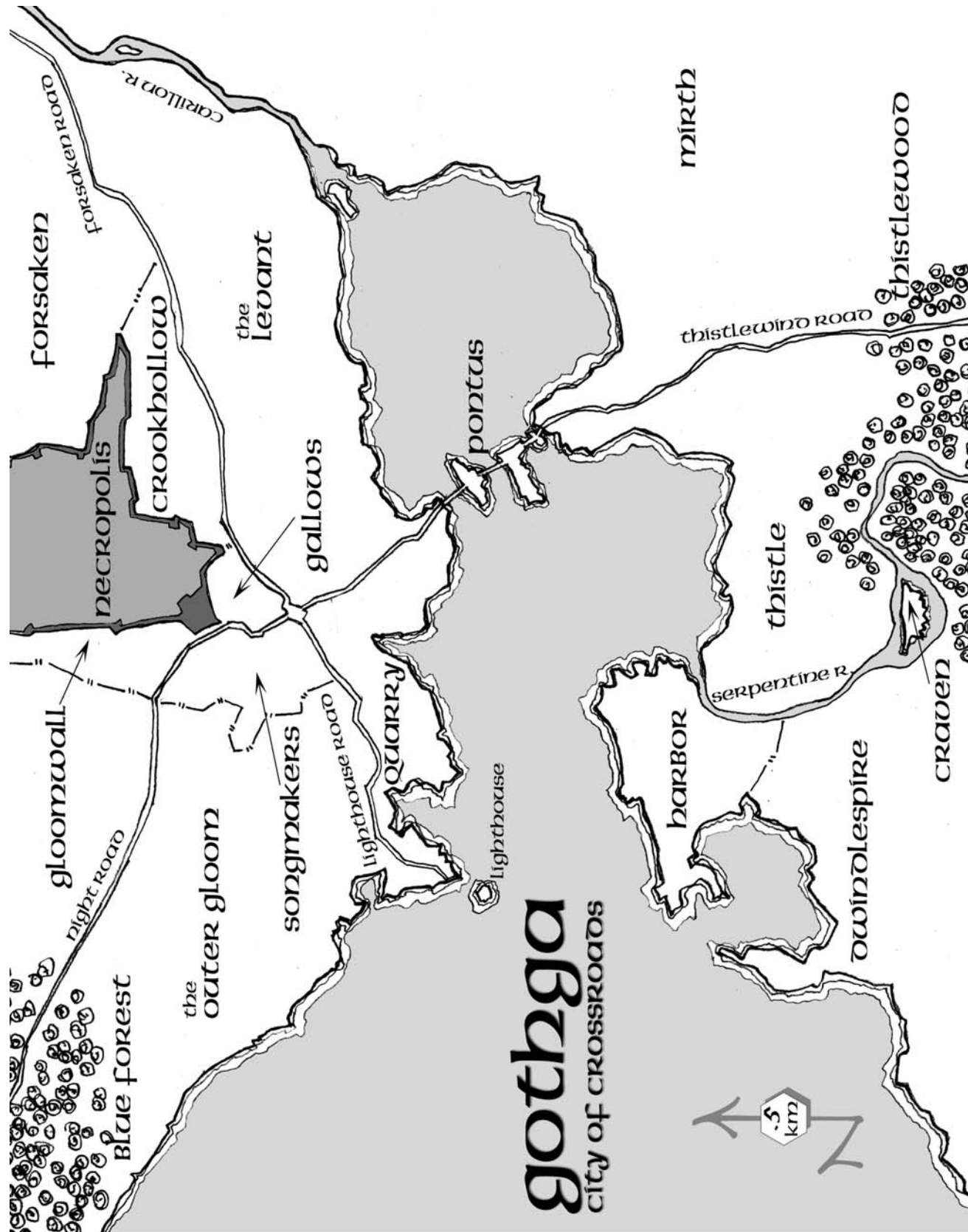
Necropolis. The origins of Gothga are lost in the mists of the dawn of the Second Age. Some scholars claim that the city was one of the first, if not the first, founded by humans — a claim which the ruling classes assert to legitimize their power. Propaganda and legends aside, there is no doubt that the city is very ancient indeed, and few dispute that the oldest part of the city is the area now known as the Necropolis.

This quarter is immense, and extends in a widening swath beyond the northern reaches of the map. While many of the middle and upper classes of Gothga are even today buried there, the Necropolis has been abandoned except at its edges. The district is walled, and Gothgans joke (rather ruefully) that its ramparts are designed to keep the dead in. In the wilder parts of the quarter, which long ago reverted to a natural state of overgrown decay, dangerous creatures (and worse) abound. Harpies are not unknown, drakkules are common, and many a tomb and ancient tomb complex is haunted by lugubrious nightmare entities: coqmares, omen birds, shadows, skeletons and even vampires. Of all of these, the most notorious and powerful is the Hangman.

Legends say that the Hangman, often called the Hanged Man, was an early prince of the city who met the gallows head-on and has haunted Gothga ever since. Others claim that he is the embodiment of all that is morose and corrupt in the city. Mention of him goes all the way back to the earliest Second Age texts and legends about Gothga. To the nobility, he is a patron saint, the Lord of the Crossroads, the titular head of the city. To the common citizen, he is a symbol of terror.

Tales abound of heroes of old going forth into the Necropolis and slaying the Hangman, but he always comes back. One night a year, on the winter solstice (the 15th of the month of the Spider), the Hanged Man is said to wander the streets of Gothga looking for someone to take back to the depths of the Necropolis. On that night all Gothgans stay indoors. Of course, on any given night there is always someone in the city being murdered or disappearing, so who can say whether the Hangman really does claim his annual due?

<i>the hanged man</i>			
Size	13	Endurance	38
Dream	25	Speed	12/24
Level	8	Damage	+ 4
		Level	Init Dmg
Claws	19	8	17 + 4
Rope	19	8	17 + 5
Dodging	16	8	



In the southwest corner of the Necropolis, built into its very walls, is the gloomy and convoluted Palace. While the families of those who have served as Padishah are buried nearby, it is also rumored that a warren of tunnels originates from underneath the Palace and extends into the Necropolis, some leading to ancient subterranean royal mausoleums, others to haunted areas where those who provoke the Court's severest displeasure are left to die.

Forsaken. Forsaken suffers from its proximity to some of the most notorious and feared areas of the Necropolis. This district is home to poorer subsistence farmers and laborers; by no means as destitute as the inhabitants of the Outer Gloom, but hardly comfortable. It is also on the northern regions of this district that much of the city's waste is dumped, and so Forsaken is also known as the home of Gothga's nightsoilmen. *City Survival* at -4.

Crookhollow. This relatively small quarter is fairly prosperous, more from its proximity to the government nerve center of the Gallows than anything else. It is the home to many of the city's professionals and minor bureaucrats. *City Survival* at 0.

The Levant. So called for its eastern location, this quarter is largely residential and home to the backbone of Gothgan society: shopkeepers and workers. Most *City Survival* rolls are at -2.

Quarry. The Quarry Quarter is home to the vast majority of Gothga's stone masons and is the source of most of its stone. The limestone cliffs which constitute this area overlooking the harbor have been mined and quarried for centuries. As accessible surface limestone diminished, the masons of Quarry delved deep in the earth. Today the subterranean quarries are extensive and many are still productive. Base *City Survival* rolls in this well-ordered district are at -1; the masons are a tight-knit community and look out for each other.

The quarries themselves are active and generally only the quarrymen go in them. Many have been abandoned over the years as they have been exhausted or become dangerous, however. A few centuries ago many Gothgans began burying their dead in the abandoned limestone mines as an alternative to the dangers of braving the Necropolis. Unfortunately, those same currents of nightmare which haunted the Necropolis (and their human devotees) also began to haunt the catacombs. Since then the practice of burying the dead in the catacombs has been largely stopped, and most of them sealed. But a few unpleasant things still haunt them, and nightmares

occasionally surface. *Underground Survival* rolls are at -5 in the active quarries, and -7 in the abandoned catacombs.

The Light House Road defines the northern boundary of Quarry, and is one of the four major thoroughfares of the City of Crossroads. The Lighthouse itself is a monumental affair, built in the days when more trade took place with the Pythians and other long-gone peoples. By night a permanent *Air to Fire* illuminates the harbor and serves as a beacon for those few ships that still come to Gothga. By day the Lighthouse emits a towering pillar of black and orange smoke which is visible for leagues at sea.

Pontus. the great bridge which connects the older northern portion of Gothga with its southern districts is almost a town in and of itself. Pontus spans across two islands and the bridge in most parts is built on three levels, carrying a significant length of the Thistlewind Road as well as a major aqueduct and foot and cart traffic. On the bridge itself are houses and shops. The poor of Pontus ply a small trade in trinkets and small household items from a moveable bazaar of skiffs and other small boats, hile the children of the lower castes attempt to fish from the dubious waters of the Carillon River.

Harbor. When Gothga was a major trade center in the Second Age Harbor was its economic heart. From here ship captains sailed across vast seas to trade with distant lands. Since the end of the Second Age, however, all attempts to reopen trade routes with Gothga's old partners have failed: all that the captains find today are open seas for as far as they dare to sail. Only the Pythians, a race of peoples who seem to lead entirely nomadic lives aboard their ships, now trade with Gothga.

As a result, Harbor is a mere shadow of its former self. What once was a center of commerce is little better than a fishing village inhabiting the ruins of former greatness. In places even entire ships have been pulled from the water and inhabited as buildings. There are a few sea captains and sailors left, but they seem to subsist only on the meanest piracy they can exercise on the small coastal communities and Pythian ships they find. This quarter is poor, yet there is enough swagger left in the denizens of Harbor to make them particularly lean and dangerous; base *City Survival* rolls are at -5 here.

There is in Harbor a small enclave of gnomes. These diminutive folk came to Gothga in the beginning of the current Age and established a colony in an abandoned portion of the quarter, with the permission of the Padishah. They have turned this small neighborhood into a hive of

productivity, trading with the rest of the city in all things mechanical. The Clockworks, as their neighborhood is known, is stable and safe. Humans are welcome there, but the gnomes seem to have a calming effect on their larger, more violent neighbors. As proof, the street gangs of sailors' descendants leave the gnomes alone for the most part. While the gnomes still do not fathom the Gothgan penchant for baroque machinery — gnomish artifacts tend to me more useful devices like clocks, pumps, and locks — they will build Gothgan items if necessary, and certainly do a lively business repairing them. *City Survival* rolls in the Clockworks are at +1.

Dwindlespire. Once a separate and autonomous city unto itself, Dwindlespire is so called somewhat derisively. Dwindlelights, as they call themselves, are fairly independent and still tend to think of themselves as separate from the rest of Gothga, although naturally still recognizing the authority of the Padishah and his ministers. The quarter is reasonably prosperous, and contains a mix of tradesmen, merchants, laborers, shopkeepers and private homes — a sort of city in miniature. There is an independent guard which patrols here, paid for by local taxes above and beyond the extensive burden that the Padishah places on all his subjects. *City Survival* at -1.

Craven. Situated on a hilltop island in the Serpentine River, Craven (a corruption of *Raven Crag*) is a sparsely populated enclave built up among the ruins of an ancient castle. Craven once served as the military center of Gothga, but as the city became literally cut off from the rest of the world and more and more introverted, it was gradually abandoned. An odd mix of folk live in Craven, but all share one thing in common: they shun contact with other Gothgans almost completely. many are wanted criminals who have managed to escape and eke out a subsistence living among the ruins here. Others are Duskers who found life in the Outer Gloom so unbearable that they chose the relative solitude of windy Craven over the teeming filth of western Gothga. Life here is no easier, but it is quieter. Then there are the hermits and recluses who come here either to fulfill some Dragon Breath, or simply to pursue their own oneiric activities undisturbed. *City Survival* rolls here are at -3 when they apply, but characters are just as likely to check *Outdoor Survival* at -2 or even *Underground Survival* at -4 should they delve into Craven's many underground passages, some of which have already been claimed by those wishing absolute privacy...

Thistle and the Thistlewood. If the Blue Forest reeks of the supernatural, the community of Thistle and the northern reaches of the Thistlewood against which it is built reek of something else: soot.

Once this area was stone houses and broad streets, and ancient maps of Gothga show it as a thriving urban area, complete with bath houses and arenas. Nowadays, the stones of old Thistle are likely to be used to shore up a faltering garden wall, and old men digging in their gardens and children playing in the broad grassy streets are likely to turn up an old fragment of the past in the form of a piece of statuary or a broken column capital. Many of the great buildings are partially standing, but they have fallen into grave disrepair and partial collapse, and repurposed for other uses. The great Arena, or what's left of it, is now an open-air stock market, and goats graze and are bought and sold where the great actors of the Second Age once spoke their lines.

Nowadays a community of woodcutters continuously harvest from the forest and burn the wood to make coal for the cooking fires of Gothga. This is a hard life, made harder of late by increasing Snork raids that have originated from deep within the Thistlewood, something unheard of even three generations ago. *City Survival* rolls in the sprawling and sparsely built community of Thistle are at -1; *Forest Survival* rolls in the Thistlewood are at -3 (and lower).

Mirth. The vast dour landscape to the northeast of the Thistlewood has been given the ironic name of Mirth by its inhabitants. It is said that once the very trees and brambles of the Thistlewood extended as far north as the gaping banks of the Carillon river, skirting the noble houses and broad avenues of Thistle. Now the only trees here are those that are bought from the coal sellers of Thistle and lit in the heating pans. The soil here is poor, thin and rocky. What little crop that farmers here don't keep for themselves they sell for a pittance to their fellow Gothgans. So maligned is the produce of the farms of Mirth that anything ugly in Gothga is said to have the face of a mirthapple (as the wretched potatoes that are grown here are called).

—Text, cartography and layout by François Lévy
Turntooth illustration by Rolland Barthélémy

appendix ii: BOUNCER

BOUNCER			
Size	1	Life	8
Constitution	14	Endurance	22
Strength	2	Speed	30/50
Perception	15	Damage	-5
Will	3	Enc	—
Dream	16	Protection	4
Level			
Cuteness	16	+ 5	
Dodging	14	+ 3	
Jumping	13	+ 6	
Vigilance	15	+ 4	

Description. Nothing is cuter than a bouncer. Naturally compared to a velvine (see Book Three: *Worlds*, p. 30), this little furball merrily bounces around, leaving behind a trail of smiles.

Habits. According to ancient lore, when a High Dreamer sleeping under a velvetine tree feels the wrath of a dragon (tail or breath), next time that the tree bears fruit, one of them will be a bouncer. The little chlorophyll-based “animal” will then die within two weeks, unless a humanoid comes within range (10 meters x **Dream** of the humanoid), whom the bouncer then adopts as its “owner.”

In many ways, the bouncer is more a boon than a burden. It is quite endearing, so cute that its mere presence grants an improvement of one place on the table: Bad morale checks become Indifferent, Indifferent becomes Good. If conditions are already Good, then there is no benefit.

This improvement is applicable to everyone waking up in its vicinity. *Cuteness* is similar to *Seduction*, except that instead of working on members of the same species, this skill works on anyone who can see the bouncer as a pet (humans, notably).

The bouncer enjoys making people happy, a fact that often boosts the popularity of its owner, who also enjoys a +1 to **Luck** (this virtual point cannot be spent). It is very sensitive to emotions, and the color of its “fur” will reflect the feelings of nearby creatures: crimson for anger, cyan for bliss, etc. Being able to sense hostility also makes it a convenient watchdog, above all since it never sleeps. When hostility draws near enough to mean danger, the bouncer becomes restless: it jumps and rebounds all around, faster and faster, which is usually enough to wake up anyone close by.

So what’s the catch? Is the bouncer secretly a devouring monster? Yes and no. Being basically a chlorophyll furball, the bouncer has no mouth and would not harm anyone... physically. It only feeds on dreams. No one within 10 meters times its **Dream** score of it can dream, which means that no experience can be gained through dreams, nor any **Dream** point be regained. There is no discomfort involved, and even when someone begins to find odd the absence of dreams, it may not be so easy to guess

the cause. Magic items work normally, as do previously-cast spells, but Dream entities lose 1 **Dream** point per minute, which they can regain only beyond feeding range of the bouncer, at the rate of 1/hour. Likewise, High Dreamers may not enter the Dreamlands, which is a form of dreaming, and so may not cast spells within the bouncer’s feeding range.

Now, how to get rid of the critter? That, at least, is simple. If the humanoid the bouncer has adopted starts to feel genuine hostility towards it, it will leave. It will not attach itself to anyone else but will die within two weeks. During the same two weeks, its former owner suffers from a mere -1 to both **Luck** and morning morale rolls. If someone else than its owner tries to get rid of the bouncer, it will turn to its owner for protection; but to protect its owner, it will never fight.

Bouncers are rare, nearly unknown. To have heard of them requires a very difficult (-7) *Botany* or *Zoology* roll. A significant success means that the character knows about the bouncer bringing luck, as well as the meanings of its color variations. A particular success means that the character also knows that the bouncer feeds on dreams.

— *Pierre-Alexandre Sicart*
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