

# SKYCrag MOUNTAINS

A sandbox-style adventure module for Tavern Tales.

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This adventure centers around Bottleneck, a bustling trade city located within the Skycrag Mountains. These tall, craggy mountains are nigh impassable with the singular exception of Burnsley Pass. Bottleneck is situated along the pass, ensuring that anybody crossing the mountains will also have to pass through Bottleneck.

## HOW TO RUN THIS ADVENTURE

This is a sandbox style adventure, which means that there is no set objective or goal for the players to complete. Rather, this adventure presents a complicated web of factions, locations, and objectives. It's entirely up to the players to decide what quests they want to pursue, and how. As the GM, try to follow these general guidelines:

- Familiarize yourself with the material.
- Don't direct the players; let them decide what's important.
- Complicate matters by involving multiple factions in the players' lives.
- Add elements of danger by reminding players of "The Rush."

## NOTES ON LYCANTHROPY

Lycanthropes (weregoats and werEBats) feature heavily in this adventure. So, there's a good chance that your players may gain the curse of lycanthropy. It's generally up to you to decide how to handle lycanthropy. The trait *The Curse* from the Transformation theme is a good starting point:

### **The Curse • Passive**

When you gain this trait, work with the GM to determine how your curse spreads to make others more like you (your blood parasites turn people into zombies, your infectious bite turns people into werewolves at the next full moon, you can inscribe a tattoo that turns someone's flesh to stone, etc). When you spread your curse to a suitable target, it replaces one of its traits with *The Curse* and begins to transform. Afterward, the target's disposition towards you greatly improves.

Here are a few suggestions:

- The infected player transforms at the next full moon.

- The infected player transforms instantaneously and operates on animalistic instinct for a day or two.
- The infected player will transform randomly during the next emotionally intense situation.
- The curse can be treated like a disease. Medicine (especially wolfsbane) can end the curse.
- The only way to end the curse is to slay your maker.
- The lycanthropy subsides if the cursed player isn't exposed to the light of the next full moon.

# THE FACTIONS

## THE WEREGOATS

Wealthy and detached, the weregoats control the government of Bottleneck and seek to tighten their oppressive grip.

Years ago, a mysterious strain of lycanthropy swept through Bottleneck, transforming some of the citizens into twisted were-kin that resembled local wildlife. The city erupted in bloody chaos as terrified humans and desperate were-kin killed each other on the streets.

The weregoats were one of the two bloodlines that survived the chaos. Mountain goats have an incredible sense of balance and powerful legs built for jumping, so the weregoats thrived in the mountain environment. They took control of Bottleneck and quickly created a strict government to quell the fighting.

But controlling a city costs money. They used their position of power to heavily tax goods that traveled through Bottleneck. It wasn't long before the weregoat clan became one of the wealthiest organizations in the land. They are now the picture of extravagance, spending absurd amounts of gold on lavish parties and luxury goods.

The weregoats largely lost interest in ruling Bottleneck and have turned their backs on the citizens. They throw extravagant balls while the people on the streets slowly starve. Growing unrest has led to a crime wave, which borders on revolution. The weregoats blame their rivals, the werebats, for threatening the status quo and want nothing more than the werebats' complete destruction. The weregoats now seek to preserve their way of life by crushing dissent in the city.

**The Goal:** Stabilize Bottleneck with the weregoats where they rightfully belong: at the top.

**The Catch:** Just about everybody hates them.

**The Rush:** Revolution stirs in the hearts of citizens.

## Important Characters

- **Tasar the Wise** is the weregoat governor of Bottleneck. He is vain, greedy, and heartless — anything but wise.
- **Magistrate Sydney** serves as the chief lawmaker of Bottleneck. She prosecutes criminals with an enthusiasm that borders on sadistic glee.
- **Lord Greywald** is a traveling merchant-lord moving fine spirits and prisoners (soon to be slaves) through Bottleneck.
- **Weregoats** compose the ruling class of Bottleneck.

- **The Guards** watch over the weregoats and are never far from their wards.

### Quests

**Werebat Bounty:** Every werebat head will net the adventuring party 100 gold.

**Army of Darkness:** A well-paid diviner informed the weregoats that the Astronomers could provide the weregoats with a dark army capable of annihilating the werebats.

**The King is Dead:** Keith, Burne, and Jasmin of the Thorne family (currently working with the Racker Gang) are the only remaining descendants of the former ruling class. Assassinate them to end this silly rebellion.

**Sacred Texts:** The Paladins of Bodvarr have been questioning their loyalty. Retrieve the paladins' sacred texts hidden somewhere within the Bookatorium vault to remind them where their loyalties lie.

### Resources

**Unimaginable Wealth:** Their coffers are overflowing. They are prepared to spend hand over fist if it means solving their problems.

**Political Control:** The weregoats control the laws and the guards of the city.

**Peerless Climbing Skills:** If the need arises, they can effortlessly reach any above-ground location in the mountains.

**VIP Connections:** The weregoats can leverage their relationships with nobles, merchants, and royalty in neighboring regions.

**The Paladins' Service:** The Paladins of Bodvarr are oath-bound to serve the weregoats.

### Rewards

**Money:** Piles of coins and glittering gemstones worth 5,000 gold at least.

**Connections:** Write on your character sheet that you have connections to important figures with 3 tally marks. At any point, cross off a tally mark to call in a favor from an important member of nobility in the area.

## THE WEREBATs

Hidden in the dark undercaves, the werebats deal in crime and fuel the flames of revolution. When the lycanthropy disease spread through the city, the werebats got the worst of it. Citizens recoiled in fear at the werebats' hideous appearances and forced the werebats out. Ironically, this was also the werebats' salvation, for they were spared from the bloodshed that followed as rival bloodlines battled for control.

The exiled werebats fled to the Undercaves beneath Bottleneck, where they formed a new home for themselves. They now deal in crime, smuggling goods through the mountains in a dark mirror of the weregoats' trade empire.

Despite their sinister line of business and their hideous appearance, the werebats are actually quite kind-hearted. Their exile has made them sensitive to the plights of the poor and downtrodden. Occasionally, Bottleneckers who lost everything to the oppressive government turn to the werebats, who take them under their wing with the gift of lycanthropy.

In fact, one of their main smuggled goods is former slaves. Slavery is legal on one side of the Skycrag Mountains and illegal on the other side. The werebats frequently smuggle slaves across the mountain to reach free territory.

The werebats are virtually invincible in the Undercaves. They've mastered a dark form of magic that allows them to snuff out light sources. As a result, the werebats can blind and slaughter anyone who would dare to invade their shadowy realm.

**The Goal:** End oppression in Bottleneck.

**The Catch:** Overthrowing the government will spill the blood of the people they want to protect.

**The Rush:** The weregoats are on the verge of declaring martial law.

### Important Characters

- **Cecilia** is the empathetic leader of the werebats. She longs to live beneath the sun again.
- **Alissa** leads the Alley Cats, an all-female thieves' guild. These former slaves were freed by the werebats and work alongside them in gratitude, despite not having the werebat curse.
- **Winston** leads the Gloom Speakers, the group of werebat mage-assassins who magically suppress light sources that enter the Undercaves.
- **Werebats** dwell deep within the Undercaves, where they hide from the hateful weregoats.

## Quests

**Assassinate Tasar:** Throw Tasar's bloody head upon the city streets, sparking a revolution that will end the government!

**Free the Slaves:** A caravan of prisoners is passing into Bottleneck. If it crosses to the other side of the mountain, the prisoners will be sold into slavery. Nobody deserves that – even criminals. Free them! (Treat slavers as Guards, found in the weregoat section)

**Cleansing Fire:** The Alley Cats were former pleasure-slaves and carry firebrands burned into their backs with red-hot irons. The brands are cursed, forcing the women to endure burning pain until they return to their masters. A fire spirit at Chelianth's Furnace may teach them how to remove their firebrands.

**Rob from the Rich:** Steal precious valuables from well-guarded weregoat compounds to fund the rebellion efforts.

## Resources

**Illicit Connections:** The werebats can easily contact any criminal organization in the region.

**Knowledge of the Undercaves:** The werebats have scouted and mapped the Undercaves.

**Werebat Physiology:** The werebats are skilled climbers, have exceptional hearing, and can glide. They are adept cave travelers.

**Dark Magic:** The werebat Gloom Speakers have control over dark magic.

## Rewards

**Gear:** Weak or powerful Beast or Transformation magic items.

**Illicit Goods:** Where are the players traveling next? Wherever it is, the werebats could give them a crate of illicit goods that will sell for thousands of gold. They even have a buyer lined up.

## PALADINS OF BODVARR

Torn between duty and integrity, this religious sect is unsure of how to proceed.

When the weregoats took control of Bottleneck, they sponsored the construction of a temple to Bodvarr, God of Progress. They reasoned that encouraging the locals to worship Bodvarr would make it easier for the weregoats to pursue profit, expansionism, and heavy spending.

The paladins of the new temple swore an oath to serve the government and now act as the police of the city, constantly fighting against the crime brought in by the werebats. However, the paladins are now conflicted in their cause. They see the strife caused by the weregoats' apathy and despise that they are being forced to contribute to the oppression. When the weregoats create a new law, it's the paladins who have to go out and strike down their neighbors. These paladins could be the tipping point in the weregoat-werebat conflict.

### Important Characters

- Arch-Paladin **Argassa Silverheart** is caring and almost motherly in how much she loves others; she is deeply hurt whenever she's forced to oppress the citizens. However, she takes her oath seriously as the leader of her sacred paladin order.
- **Brady** was recently (and secretly) given lycanthropy by the weregoats to spy on the paladins and ensure that they are following their oaths.
- The Blackguard, **Jackson Fiske**, was excommunicated as an oathbreaker — he refused an order from a weregoat to arrest a dissenter. He is no longer with the church but retains his divine power as a servant of Bodvarr.

### Quests

**Dark Visions:** The temple's prophet has been having nightmares of a dark, malevolent star that hovers above the observatory. What is the source of this evil?

**Oathbreaker:** In exchange for the paladins' service, the weregoats swore to let Bodvarr reign as the one true god throughout Bottleneck. Blackguard Jackson Fiske seeks proof that the weregoats secretly worship another god, thereby freeing the paladins from their oath. There is a hidden shrine to Tiffora, Goddess of Gold and Beauty, in the weregoat clan hall. Acquiring proof of the shrine would free the paladins from their vow.

**Keep the Peace:** The streets are overrun with riotous criminals, and the paladins are spread thin. The paladins will deputize adventurers who will arrest (but not kill!) Racker Gang thugs.

### Resources

**Divine Authority:** The paladins are sanctioned by the weregoats and have the authority to enforce laws.

**The Temple:** Not even the weregoats would dare harm someone who claims sanctuary within the temple, for it would invoke the wrath of Bodvarr and his followers.

**Devout Followers:** The paladins have a sizable flock that will readily obey any request that comes from the Argassa.

**Divine Guidance:** Members of the church have access to virtually any trait in the Faith theme.

**Shrine to Bodvarr:** Advance society, make an oath, or educate others before the shrine to gain +1 mind for up to 1 week.

### Rewards

**Gear:** Weak or powerful Faith magic items.

**Blessing:** Write on your character sheet that you have the favor of Bodvarr, God of Progress. At any point, cross it off to invoke his power.



## THE LAUGHING SCRIBES

A group of scholars and bards seek knowledge above all else.

Thousands of years ago, a humble scholar named Quincy Deighton traveled the world in search of obscure lore. His travels came to an end when he stumbled upon Bottleneck. He knew that travelers from distant lands would have to travel through the city. Rather than seeking out information, why not let information come to him? So, he started a humble library and began collecting lore from travelers.

Years later, an artificer found a critical piece of information in the scholars library. As a gesture of thanks, the artificer created a powerful magic item known as the Furious Quill. The quill had the power to write books on its own. All someone had to do was touch the quill and it would immediately spring to life, writing down that person's amassed life experience into the nearest tome. This gift increased Quincy's output from a few books a year to more than a thousand.

The library attracted all manner of scholars who continued Quincy's noble goal of amassing knowledge. For years, the library prospered under Quincy's leadership.

And then the bards came. Playwrights, composers, poets, and all manner of bards flocked to the library, eager to learn the stories contained within. The library (which the bards gave the mocking nickname "the Bookatorium") descended into chaos as bards checked out books without following proper protocols, and then carelessly returned books to the nearest empty slot.

The scholars would have banished the disorganized bards if not for the fact that the bards brought in a hefty amount of coin. The constant influx of money allowed the scholars to expand the library to make room for the endless stream of books.

The Bookatorium reflects this inner conflict. The labyrinthine library can only be described as organized chaos. The bards paid for expansions to the library at whim, building bookshelves when and where they pleased. Meanwhile, the scholars scrambled to maintain organized records of where everything went. Now known as the Laughing Scribes, this group of scholars and bards work together in their pursuit of amassing knowledge.

**The Goal:** Remain neutral in a city boiling with conflict.

**The Catch:** None; the scholars are almost universally respected for their wisdom and entertaining performances. The Bookatorium is widely regarded as neutral territory.

## Important Characters

- **Shane Deighton** is the direct descendant of Quincy. He leads the scholarly half of the Laughing Scribes.
- **Tianna Paddley** is most popular, charming, and outspoken member of the bards, which makes her their de facto leader.
- **Dragarom**, a minotaur, is the esteemed librarian. He and he alone knows where to locate every book in the Bookatorium.
- **Ssarmak** is a naga who lairs within the Bookatorium. He reads voraciously and is infatuated with Jiaying.
- **Jiaying** is a sphinx who lives in the Bookatorium. She delights in games of wit and lively debate.

## Quests

**Investigate the Observatory:** The Laughing Scribes sponsored the astronomers, so it's strange that the scribes haven't heard from the astronomers in a while. Has something gone wrong?

**The Heart of Fire:** According to their research, a fire spirit dwells within Chelianth's Furnace. If they had the spirit's ruby heart, they would be able to create a powerful flame ward that would forever protect the library's precious books.

**Banned Literature:** A scholar by the name of Danny (secretly a member of the Racker Gang) wants to read A Ballad of Frost and Flame, which is a book about a warring kingdoms with heavy revolutionary undertones. The weregoats banned the book, so checking out the book is illegal. He wants somebody who can sneak it past Dragarom.

**Spontaneous Stories:** The Laughing Scribes like to play a game called Spontaneous Stories (outlined below). Entertain the scribes by playing a round.

**Unrequited Love:** Ssarmak is secretly in love with the inscrutable Jiaying. He suspects that he can win her favor by solving The Tesseract, a puzzle box that is supposedly impossible to solve. Jiaying has been tinkering with the puzzle box for the past 80 years to no avail, and Jiaying is an unparalleled genius. Ssarmak's odds of solving the cube are effectively zero. Unbeknownst to all of them, It That Dwells Behind the Darkness (refer to the Skycrag Observatory) knows how to open it. Bon (refer to the Endless Nomads) might also be helpful.

## Resources

**Vast Knowledge:** The Bookatorium contains books on every subject imaginable. The only hard part is finding the right book.

**Neutral Ground:** The other factions generally see the Bookatorium as neutral ground. People who meet at the Bookatorium unofficially adopt a truce, of sorts.

**Entertainment:** The bard half of the Laughing Scribes are excellent entertainers. Other factions (especially members of nobility) will offer a hefty fee for an elaborate performance.

## Rewards

**Gear:** They can offer weak magic items from the Arcane, Artifice, and Bardic Lore themes.

**Knowledge:** Write on your character sheet that you have studied in the vast Bookatorium. At any point, cross that off to ask the GM a question about something you could have researched at the Bookatorium and the GM must answer your question honestly.

## The Tesseract

### Legendary • Transformation • Puzzle Box

This puzzle box has an infinite number of configurations, and only the exact sequence will open it. Opening this box is approximately as difficult as correctly guessing a number between 1 and infinity, a thousand times in a row.

It's up to the GM to decide what the box contains.

**History:** Keeping track of all of the numbers of infinity is a taxing chore. It's so difficult, in fact, that the cosmic god of numbers lost track of the number 4 for a brief second. He hoped nobody noticed, but it just so happens that at that exact moment a blacksmith was drawing a square. The square came out with 5 sides, which surprised the blacksmith (to say the least). The blacksmith then used the schematics to create a five-sided cube. Shortly thereafter, the god of numbers subtracted the blacksmith from the universe to cover up his mistake. The solution to solving the puzzle box seemingly vanished with the blacksmith.

## Spontaneous Stories

Spontaneous Stories is a storytelling game where participants make up a story from randomly selected elements. A player rolls 1d20 four times:

- The first roll represents the hero.
- The second roll represents the villain.
- The third roll represents the setting.
- The fourth roll represents the plot twist.

The sides of the dice correspond to the Tavern Tales themes:

1. Alchemy
2. Arcane
3. Artifice
4. Bardic Lore

5. Beast
6. Command
7. Dragon
8. Elements
9. Faith
10. Heritage
11. Nature
12. Martial Arts
13. Occultism
14. Psionics
15. Savagery
16. Thievery
17. Tracking
18. Transformation
19. Undeath
20. Warfare

For example, suppose that a player rolls 1, 2, 3, and 4. That player would then have to tell a story that incorporates those elements. Perhaps the protagonist is a young wizard's apprentice (Arcane hero), the villain is a massive robotic golem (Artifice villain), the conflict takes place during a live opera performance (Bardic Lore setting), and the opera singers are secretly working for the golem (Command plot twist).

Scoring is completely subjective — the winner is whoever tells the most entertaining story. The bards who often play this game prefer bawdy, humorous stories.

## THE RACKER GANG

These criminals are equal parts criminals and rebels.

The growing wealth gap between the ultra rich and the ultra poor in Bottleneck has left many people upset with the weregoat-controlled government. A group of thieves and revolutionaries formed the Racker Gang (so named for their desire to reduce the ruling class to a steaming plate of rack of lamb).

Gang members don't always agree philosophically: some just want to make a living, while others dream of fiery revolution. But every member can agree on a common goal: steal from the weregoats.

### Important Characters

- **Carver** is the shrewd and conniving leader of the Racker Gang. He's motivated by boiling rage against the weregoats (his right hand was cut off for petty theft). He also holds no love for the Paladins for chopping off his hand.
- **Keith Thorne** is the oldest brother and head of the Thorne Family. The Thornes were overthrown when the weregoats took control of Bottleneck. Keith, Garrett, and Jasmin Thorne are the remaining members of the king's bloodline.
- **Garrett** is Keith's the younger brother. He joined the Rackers more as a matter of survival; he doesn't think the Thorne line will ever be restored.
- **Jasmin Thorne** is the middle sister and serves as the main intermediary between the Gang and the werebats. Ever idealistic, she doesn't want a revolution and would rather have the gang join the werebats in an underground society.
- **Racker Gang Thugs** rule the streets, especially in the slums where the Racker Gang is most prominent.

### Quests

**Long Live the King:** The Crest of Thorne is a magic shield stolen by Chelanth, a dragon. Keith Thorne hopes that it is still in Chelanth's Furnace. If found, the Crest would rally the citizens of Bottleneck to bloody revolution.

**Hands Clapped in Prayer:** Carver wants the bloody hand of Argassa Silverheart. An eye for an eye, a hand for a hand.

**Smash and Grab:** Grab some valuables from weregoat private manors for a hefty reward.

**Negotiate a Truce:** Jasmin believes (perhaps naively) that there's a chance for peaceful resolution. She wants someone to negotiate a truce between the weregoats and the werebats on neutral ground — the Bookatorium would do nicely.

### Resources

**The Ear of the People:** Most citizens are still secretly loyal to the old regime. The old government wasn't perfect, but at least it wasn't oppressive. The Thorne family can easily sway the mob.

**Expert Knowledge of the City:** They have been collecting dirt on the upper-class citizens of Bottleneck for years. They know who's having an affair, who's addicted to drugs, who stole Countess Adelia's golden hairpin, and so forth.

**Thug Muscle:** The gang is filled with thieves, thugs, and ne'er-do-wells. If needed, the gang can supply muscle.

### **Rewards**

**Gear:** Weak or powerful Thievery magic items.

**Connections:** Write on your character sheet that you have connections to criminal organizations with 3 tally marks. At any point, cross off a tally mark to call in a favor from a local criminal organization.

## THE ENDLESS NOMADS

Nomads from another realm seek a way to continue their extraplanar journey.

True to their name, the Endless Nomads are on a never-ending journey across the planes of the multiverse. A race of blue-skinned aliens, the vaserians, compose more than half of the nomad group. They were ejected from their home realm under mysterious circumstances and seek to return home. They've picked up a few stragglers over the years: exiles, refugees, and wanderers who travel with the vaserians for personal reasons.

When the nomads enter a new realm, their Arithmagician uses interplanar trigonometry to calculate when and where the next weak spot will occur in the border between planes. Then, it's simply a matter of applying enough force to the spatial weak point (a swift punch usually does the trick) to rip open a portal between realms.

But there's a problem: according to their calculations, the next portal site is deep underground and will appear in just three days. If they miss it, they'll be stranded on this plane for a month or more until the next planar anomaly. Their interplanar travel has attracted the ire of Astral Watchers, who currently pursue the nomads across the planes. They must flee the realm — and swiftly! — before Astral Watchers appear and turn Bottleneck into a black hole.

**The Goal:** The nomads want to leave the plane.

**The Catch:** The next portal location is hidden somewhere under the mountains.

**The Rush:** Astral Watchers are hot on their trail.

### Important Characters

- **Jin** is the vaserian leader of the nomads. He will do anything to protect his people.
- **Bon** is an arithmagician and portal-mistress. She is brilliant beyond measure.
- **Iguluk** is a lizard-like merchant who travels with the nomads and sells weak magic items.
- **Laut** is an angel with platinum skin who claims to seek her goddess-mother. Listen to her tale of divine parentage to gain 1 religion advantage.
- **Astral Watchers** are extraplanar void-hounds that relentlessly hunt the nomads.

### Quests

**Find the Portal:** Jin wants the players to find the portal, which is hidden in an underground mushroom forest. The werebats know how to reach the mushroom forest.

**Plan B:** Bon's equations indicate that there is irregular planar activity high in the mountains near the Skycrag Observatory, which might mean another way off of this plane.

**Divine Sacrifice:** Laut wants the players to destroy any of the shrines in the area (Bodvarr or Tiffora) so that she may absorb the divine essence that spills forth and commune with her

goddess-mother. This will earn the wrath of the offended deity, but Laut promises that her goddess-mother will make the reward well worth it. It's up to you if she's right. She also knows that there is a hidden shrine in the city and can locate it if asked (the hidden shrine to Tiffora, Goddess of Beauty and Coin. Refer to the Paladins of Bodvarr quest "Oathbreaker").

### Resources

**Expert Planar Knowledge:** If anyone has a question about the planes, odds are good that the nomads have an answer.

**Bizarre Exotic Goods:** They have stockpiles of strange herbs, magic items, gemstones, and everything else imaginable. They're bound to have something useful.

**Divine Knowledge:** This angel-like entity is an expert on all things related to religion.

**Math Wiz:** Bon is a math wizard capable of making incredibly advanced calculations.

### Rewards

**Money:** Ten exotic goods, each worth 1d100 gold (roll separately for each).

**Gear:** A weak Arcane or Tracking magic item; a weak divine item (from Laut only).

**Knowledge:** Write on your character sheet that you know how to calculate portal coordinates. At any point, cross it off to have the GM tell you of a portal site in the region. If you can reach it within the next 3 days, you can open a temporary portal to another plane.

**Vial of Astral Watcher Blood:** Use it to cast something into the void, as per the Astral Watcher effect.



## THE ASTRONOMERS

They looked to the stars and found more than they bargained for.

Long ago, the Laughing Scribes founded an observatory atop one of the tallest mountains. The astronomers looked to the stars to better understand the celestial heavens and recently discovered a dark entity cloaked in shadows floating through space. They believe (correctly) that gazing upon it would unlock hidden secrets of the universe and have been trying to figure out how to behold its shadowy form.

But when you gaze into the void, the void gazes also into you. The entity, which the astronomers call It That Dwells Behind the Darkness, is slowly becoming aware that mortals are looking in its direction... and it's not happy. If the Astronomers succeed, its sacred darkness would be pierced and the astronomers would learn its secrets, thus robbing it of a fragment of its power. The entity would forever be bound to the astronomers. It cannot risk open confrontation: the more the astronomers learn of It, the more power they gain over It. It has sent Dark Ones to the observatory to quietly and secretly drive the astronomers insane.

The astronomers don't want to disclose their discovery to outsiders and will claim that they are trying to witness "a spatial anomaly" for research purposes. They are very cautious and will only disclose their true motivation if they feel that it is absolutely necessary.

**The Goal:** Look upon It That Dwells Behind the Darkness.

**The Catch:** An entity of pure darkness cannot be seen... nor does it want to be seen.

**The Rush (they claim):** A planet will soon obstruct their viewing.

**The Rush (in actuality):** The only way to avoid the impending wrath of It That Dwells Behind the Darkness is to steal its power, thus becoming immune to its corrupting magic.

### Important Characters

- **Anders** is ambitious and partially unhinged. He leads the other astronomers in their quest to look up the entity's true form.
- **Master Stargazer Orion** opposed gazing upon the dark entity and is now locked away in the cellar, waiting to be sacrificed.
- **It That Dwells Behind the Darkness** seeks to foil the astronomers. Anyone who looks upon it will learn its True Name, Ythgluth, and thereby gain the ability to draw upon Its power. Ythgluth would be forever bound to serve as a patron (as per the Occultism theme).
- **Dark Ones** are the otherworldly spawn of It That Dwells Behind the Darkness. Their only purpose is to protect their master's secrets.

## Quests

**Blackglass Lens:** Anders wants the players to gather obsidian shards from Chelianth's Furnace so he can craft a Blackglass Lens, which views darkness rather than light.

**Eradicate the Dark Ones:** Hideous creatures have come up from the mountain depths (so Anders claims) and hide among the shadows in the observatory. Slay them so the astronomers may continue their work.

**A Worthy Sacrifice:** An angel lives among the nomads in Bottleneck! Truly, this worthy sacrifice would temporarily appease It That Dwells Behind the Darkness. Bring the angel to the observatory alive. If not, its still-beating heart would do just fine.

**Extraplanar Guidance:** The nomads may know how to create a portal to the dark entity's shadowy realm, thus allowing the astronomers to gaze upon It That Dwells Behind the Darkness.

**Hijacked Portal:** The nomads seek a portal hidden deep underground. If the astronomers open it before the nomads do, they can create a permanent gateway to the shadowy realm of It That Dwells Behind the Darkness and finally gaze upon It.

**Werebat Translator:** Ever since they discovered It That Dwells Behind the Darkness, the astronomers have been able to just barely hear the entity's mad ramblings. If only they could make out what It was saying! Werebats have incredible hearing — bring a werebat to the Observatory to act as a translator. The whispers would probably drive the werebat insane, but it's a necessary sacrifice in the name of science.

## Resources

**Power of Darkness:** The astronomers have a fragment of Its power and can twist darkness to suit their needs.

**Dark One Army:** It That Dwells Behind the Darkness controls an infinite supply of Dark Ones and can send them forth to do Its bidding. The astronomers don't control the Dark Ones... yet. It That Dwells Behind the Darkness may offer Dark One servants to anyone who will destroy the astronomers.

**The Black Hole:** The dark entity created some sort of shadowy void in the cellar beneath the observatory. What does it do?

**Untold Secrets:** It That Dwells Behind the Darkness knows every secret, but it does not share them lightly.

## Rewards

**Gear:** Weak or powerful Occultism magic items.

**A Favor:** Write on your character sheet that you have Ythgluth's favor. At any point, cross it off to invoke the shadowy power of It That Dwells Behind the Darkness.

**Dark Knowledge:** Write on your character sheet that you know a secret of It That Dwells Behind the Darkness. At any point, cross it off and ask the GM a question. The GM must answer, revealing a sinister truth.

**Servants:** Anders or It That Dwells Behind the Darkness sends you 1d6 Dark One servants;

# LOCATIONS

## THE BOOKATORIUM

Located within Bottleneck, the Bookatorium is a massive maze-like library containing millions upon millions of books.

### 1. The Entrance

The entrance to the Bookatorium is lined with floor to ceiling shelves. The air is thick and musty. A table with a few chairs sits in the center of the room. Two prominent signs hang in the back. The first explains the rules of the Bookatorium:

- NO OPEN FLAMES.
- Tell Dragarom when you check out a book.
- Return all books to Dragarom.
- Quiet, please.

The scholars take the first rule very seriously. A single candle could destroy the library and potentially set the whole city ablaze. For that reason, the scholars have the authority to arrest anybody who brings an open flame into the Bookatorium.

The scribes have also laced the library with powerful water spells, which spring to life and spew a torrent of water at any source of open flame in the library. The water ruins the books, but not nearly as much as a fire could.

The Laughing Scribes have made countless attempts to organize the Bookatorium, and each time they have failed miserably. They eventually settled on a color coded system with lines painted onto the floor. To find a certain section, you must follow the lines in the designated order to reach the heart of that section. It's confusing, but that's what happens when bards are in charge of organization.

- Ancient History: Red
- Ballads and Sonnets: Blue
- Legends and Fables: Blue, light green
- Study: Blue, yellow

- Science: Blue, yellow, dark green
- Fiction: Blue, yellow, dark green, purple
- Biographies: Blue, yellow, dark green, purple, orange
- The Quill: Blue, yellow, grey
- Romance: Red, teal
- Religion: Red, teal, pink

## **2. Ancient History**

When the players first enter the this area, Dragarom will be here restocking books. He is massive bull-man hybrid dressed in a fine leather tunic. Oversized glasses hang from his horns. He carries a stack of books under his arm and mutter titles and shelf numbers to himself. For more information, check his entry in the Characters section.

## **3. Ballads and Sonnets**

Here, a group of bards are quietly going over the lines of a play.

## **4. Legends and Fables**

There aren't any people in this section.

## **5. Study**

The study is a relatively isolated section of the Bookatorium where people can read in peace. Tables are scattered around the room with tomes stacked on them. Low burning arcane lamps cast a warm orange glow. The air here feels still and heavy somehow. The place is deadly quiet.

In fact, the scribes placed powerful enchantments on this room that block all sounds. Any noise a person makes is deadened to a whisper, and the study blocks all sound from beyond its walls. It's one of the few places in Bottleneck where people can be assured of having a truly private conversation.

## **6. Science**

Here, an artificer is thumbing through a manual as he attempts to build a bizarre contraption.

## **7. Fiction / Ssarmak's Lair**

Ssarmak, a naga, currently keeps a lair in this section. Nagas are snakelike monsters that hoard knowledge the same way a dragon hoards treasure. Naturally, Ssarmak was attracted to the Bookatorium and took up permanent residence within its book-lined halls. Ssarmak has reptilian eyes, a forked tongue, and gorgeous red and black scales.

His lair is a nest-like circle of rugs and pillows. A clump of arcane lamps hang from the ceiling directly above the nest. In front of it, an open book sits on a lectern: 'The Merchant's Wife, a Tale of Passion.' A small collection of well-tended potted plants sit on a table nearby. This seems cozy.

Ssarmak is rarely here, however; he spends most of his time in area eight where he attempts to flirt (unsuccessfully) with Jiaying.

## 8. Biographies / Jiaying's Lair

Jiaying, the sphinx, favors this room, which is large enough to accommodate her considerable size. She has transformed the room into a comfortable lair. A latch in the ceiling opens up to the surface, enabling her to fly out and hunt at whim.

A large rug spread across the floor. The side of one bookshelf has been shredded by claws. Rats squeak in an iron cage in the corner of the room. Jars of open spices and perfumes give the room a heady aroma. A porcelain tea set sits on a small table, next to a marble chess set. Someone's in the middle of a game. The board is surrounded by various trinkets and gadgets.

Jiaying and Ssarmak can often be found here debating, reading books to each other, or continuing their 30-year-long chess game. Jiaying is a genius, but she is utterly clueless when it comes to the subtleties of emotions; she has no idea that Ssarmak is infatuated with her. The bards often tease her with hints and clues, but she never has any idea what they're talking about. Ssarmak hasn't yet made a move because he's still performing research on the mating rituals of sphinxes. That being said, Jiaying genuinely enjoys Ssarmak's company.

## 9. The Writing Room

This writing room contains the Furious Quill, which true to its name is busily jotting down words into a tome. Its pace is incredible, probably close to four pages per minute. A lone attendant sits next to the quill, patiently reading a book as he waits for the quill to finish this particular volume.

A pile of tomes sit nearby under a label reading 'Blank books.' Beside them, there's a separate pile of 20 or so books with the label 'To Be Shelved.'

### **The Furious Quill | Weak • Bardic Lore • Quill**

**Lore:** When touched, the quill springs to life and immediately attempts to write the amassed knowledge of whoever touched it into the nearest blank tome. The quill does not write down sensitive information that the user would rather keep private.

**History:** Impressed by a scholar's attempt to amass knowledge, a skilled craftsman created this quill to aid in the scholar's journey. To date, the quill has penned well over a million books.

## **10. Romance**

Ssarmak can occasionally be found here, perusing the section for a steamy romance novel.

## **11. Religion**

This section contains the holy book of the Paladins of Bodvarr (refer to the weregoat quest "A Sacred Text").

## **CHELIANTH'S FURNACE**

If the legends are true, this active volcano holds the lost hoard of a dead dragon.

Chelianth's furnace is located in the heart of a mountain that is close to Bottleneck. Many locals know the location of the cave entrance, but few are brave enough to go near it.

### **1. The Entrance**

The unbearable heat and choking smoke are omnipresent. Players eyes sting. Their throats ache. Sweat rolls down their faces. Everything is cast in a red-orange glow.

Ahead, the cave entrance opens up into a large open chamber that contains pools of boiling lava.

The lava in Chelianth's Furnace is incredibly dangerous. Anyone who touches the lava without protection (magical or otherwise) will be instantly Maimed or killed, depending on which body parts touch the lava.

### **2. Obsidian Shards**

The large central pool contains obsidian shards. The shards are fairly brittle, so breaking off fragments is easy — the tricky part is reaching them.

### **3. Lavafall**

A continuous stream of lava spills from the ledge above, forming a lavafall. The hidden cave to Chelianth's lair (area 5) is behind the lavafall.

### **4. Skelda's Pool**

Skelda, a fire elemental, dwells in the upper lava pool. She feeds on the boiling magic energy that surrounds Chelianth's bones and is fiercely protective of the hidden lair (area 5). Skelda has no use for Chelianth's treasure (precious metals and glittering gemstones are common sights for creatures of the deep earth).

Skelda has the power to temporarily halt the flow of lava protecting Chelianth's lair, but she won't reveal the dragon's bones to mortals unless she has a good reason. She also knows how to remove the firebrands from the Alley Cats (refer to Alissa in the Werebats section) and is in fact eager to absorb the flame magic within the firebrands. It's up to you to decide the method (Skelda gives a magic item that absorbs the fire energy, the Alley Cats have to come to the volcano to remove the firebrand in person, they must cleanse the firebrands with a source of magical water, etc).

## **5. Chelianth's Hidden Lair**

In the center of the hidden lair is a boiling pool of lava, which contains Chelianth's ever-burning bones.

The air is so hot here that people without any sort of special protection take 1 unpreventable damage every turn they spend inside. As if that wasn't already dangerous enough, a cast of 3 lava crabs dwell in the pool (they don't all emerge at once). Skelda led the lavacrabs up to the pool from the depths of the earth so that they could protect Chelianth's bones in her absence. They are not under her control.

Chelianth's treasure contains 4,167 in gold and precious gemstones. It also contains 1d6 weak magic items along with the magic item Crest of Thorne.



## **SKYCRAG OBSERVATORY**

An academic retreat that harbors a dark secret. The Skycrag Observatory is nestled high atop one of the tallest mountains.

### **1. The First Floor**

The observatory's first floor contains the common room. A cold, howling wind blows outside. The furniture here is mismatched and ugly, but functional. There's a wooden table with a few chairs. Stale bread is set out for a meal. A small wood-burning stove is against the north wall, providing the room with meager warmth.

There's a hidden passage under a chair in the northwest corner (area 4). If a player moves by it, mention that it's difficult to get warm because it's so breezy here. A cold draft blows up from the floor.

### **2. The Second Floor**

The second floor doubles as the living quarters and the study. The air is musty. The beds are unmade, and messily arranged around a central desk, which contains dozens of books and scrolls.

A large chalkboard on the south wall shows complicated equations and graphs. If your players are curious about the equations, make up an overly complicated formula and show it to them. If they show it to Bon (see the Extraplanar Nomads), she will immediately realize that the astronomers are tracking a dark entity born of the Void.

Be sure to mention that there are 5 beds. There are only 4 astronomers, so a player who is paying close attention will probably wonder where the fifth astronomer is.

### **3. The Observation Deck**

A spiral staircase opens up into the observation deck, where a 15-foot-long telescope points at the clear sky. Anyone who looks through the telescope at night will see a distant spiral galaxy.

Nearby, notes on star paths are scribbled in an open notebook.

If the players move the telescope to the correct coordinates (+40.2, -79.98; see area 6), they can gaze upon It That Dwells Behind the Darkness, an otherworldly horror that is the living embodiment of secrets. In fact, its very power comes from secrecy; any person who learns of the entity's existence permanently steals a fragment of its power.

It That Dwells Behind the Darkness utterly hates that the astronomers have looked upon its shadow, and it is fearful that they are on the verge of permanently stealing a fragment of its essence. Once a creature looks upon its shadow, there are only two possible outcomes:

- It That Dwells Behind the Darkness will send forth Dark Ones to slaughter the mortal, thus restoring the lost power. The dark entity will pursue this goal until the end of time.
- The mortal looks upon the true form of It That Dwells Behind the Darkness, thus permanently stealing a fragment of the entity's power. The entity will forever more be bound to serve the mortal, thus becoming the mortal's patron (as per the Occultism theme).

If a player also looks at this dark entity, that player will share the astronomers' fate.

### **Gaze upon the obscured form of It That Dwells Behind the Darkness**

*Describe an impossibly dark void in space* → The player rolls to maintain their sanity. Ask the player questions based on the roll. On a Very Good/Bad roll, ask 2 questions. You permanently gain the ire of It That Dwells Behind the Darkness, who will stop at nothing to erase your knowledge of it from the face of the universe.

Mixed or better

- What secret is revealed to you?
- How do you temporarily gain a fragment of the dark entity's power?
- What mortal threat are you now temporarily immune to?

Mixed or worse

- How do you become temporarily insane?
- What knowledge does the entity steal from you?
- How long will you be plagued by nightmares that leave you sleepless?

### **Learn the True Form of It That Dwells Behind the Darkness**

*Describe a Lovecraftian horror* → The player rolls to maintain their sanity. They learn the entity's True Name, Ythgluth, and can now use it as an Occultism patron. Ythgluth can no longer attempt to harm that player. Ask the player questions based on the roll. On a Very Good/Bad roll, ask 2 questions.

Mixed or better

- What in all the universe do you wish to know?
- In the future, what dark fate can you force Ythgluth to protect you from, once?
- How many Dark One servants do you wrench from its control?

Mixed or worse

- In what way do you become permanently insane?
- When you fall to 0 life and your dark contract ends, what will Ythgluth do to your miserable soul?
- What part of your personality does it permanently corrupt?

If the players fulfill the dark entity's wish by slaying the astronomers and destroying the telescope, It That Dwells Behind the Darkness will reward them. They each mark on their character sheet that they have the dark blessing of It That Dwells Behind the Darkness. At any point, cross it off to gain creative license to invoke its power.

#### **4. Hidden Cellar**

A trap door hidden beneath a chair descends into an underground cellar. The cellar is surprisingly pleasant and warm because it's insulated from the cold mountain air.

When Anders took over, he and the other astronomers threw Orion below and barricaded the door. They quickly realized that this was a foolish decision because Orion had access to all of the food in their pantry. So, they purchased shackles from slave traders passing through Bottleneck and installed them deeper into the cave.

The astronomers don't want the players to go into the cellar. If the players find the trap door, they will warn that the cellar isn't safe because there are monsters below. If that doesn't work, they will "come clean" and say that one of their members went insane and tried to kill them, so they had to lock him up (this is a lie). As proof, they say that his mad notes are stored in the lecture hall (area 6). This could be damning because the notes are in Anders' handwriting, not Orion's.

#### **5. The Pantry**

The pantry holds astronomers' food. It looks as though they are running low on supplies. There are a few empty barrels and some of the shelves are bare.

There's a smell of stale and rotted food. Most of what's here is edible, but past its prime.

#### **6. Lecture Hall**

The astronomers like to hold lectures and debates in this lecture hall because the underground chamber provided respite from the howling, bitter wind of the upper levels. After discovering It That Dwells Behind the Darkness, the astronomers wisely moved their notes to this location so that visitors couldn't stumble upon their dark mission. The book on the lectern holds the coordinates to view It That Dwells Behind the Darkness: +40.2, -79.98.

The room is brightly lit with candles and glowing arcane runes. These runes keep the Dark Ones from area 8 away. Hidden behind the books at the bottom of the lectern is the magic item Stargazer Telescope.

### **Stargaze Telescope | Weak • Nature • Telescope**

This functions as a normal telescope in that it allows the user to view distant objects. Also, the user can look upon the night sky to immediately gain a single use of Astrology (Nature). Recharge by roleplaying spending a week's worth of nights studying the stars. The telescope uses the following constellations:

1. The Cobra of Treachery (bad)
2. The Mask of Deception (bad)
3. The Hare in Endless Flight (neutral)
4. The Wolf in Endless Hunt (neutral)
5. The Maiden of Hope (good)
6. The Soldier of Conquest (good)

**History:** The scholars of the revered Bookatorium gave Master Stargazer Orion this telescope when he set out to oversee the Skycrag Observatory. Unfortunately, the magic powers of the telescope didn't allow him to foresee his dark fate. His fellow astronomers found a dark entity floating between the stars and began worshipping it. When Orion found out, they locked him into a cellar with the intent of sacrificing him to their dark master.

## **7. Holding Cells**

The astronomers keep Master Stargazer Orion shackled in the south-most holding cells. He's alive and not terribly hurt— the astronomers want a worthy sacrifice when the time is right. His beard is unshaven—maybe a month of growth. The shackles have rubbed his skin raw. A plate sits in front of him. No silverware. The place stinks of human filth.

The astronomers installed extra shackles hoping that they could capture and study a Dark One. Their initial attempts to capture one of the beasts nearly proved fatal, so they quickly abandoned that idea.

Orion is desperate to escape the cellar. He can hear the Dark Ones in area 8 and fears that they will tear him apart if they ever reach him (they won't; they regard Orion as an ally and want to free him). He will readily tell the players the truth about It That Dwells Behind the Darkness.

## **8. The Black Hole**

After being discovered by the astronomers, It That Dwells Behind the Darkness immediately took action to keep its secrets. It began corrupting the darkest corner of the observatory, transforming it into a portal that could spill forth Dark Ones. The astronomers discovered the black hole when they locked away Orion and built barriers to keep the Dark Ones at bay. The backs of the barricades glow with bright arcane runes; the light is poisonous to Dark Ones.

Five Dark Ones lurk in the back tunnels, waiting for an opportunity to strike against the astronomers. They have been scratching at the wall near the south-most holding cell in an

attempt to reach Orion. They regard Orion as an potential ally. It That Dwells Behind the Darkness can spew five new Dark Ones out of the black hole every 5 minutes or so. It is currently biding its time while it waits for its Dark Ones to find a way past the light wards.

## Underground Mushroom Forest

This mushroom forest lies deep within the Undercaves in werebat-controlled territory. A planar anomaly is contained therein.

### 1. Entrance to the Cave

A winding cave opens into a massive cavern that contains a mushroom forest. Small ponds of tranquil water cover the ground, making the cavern feel like an underground swamp.

Here and elsewhere throughout the cave are mushbooms, a highly toxic mushroom. They explode in a cloud of deadly spores on contact.

#### Someone Touches a Mushboom

*Describe an explosion of spores* → Affected players roll to resist toxic spores. Ask the player questions based on the roll. On a Very Good/Bad roll, ask 2 questions.

Mixed or better:

- What useful fact do you learn about the mushbooms?
- What's the trick to harvesting these to make alchemical bombs?
- You develop a resistance; what does that mean?

Mixed or worse:

- How do the spores make you sick?
- How badly do the spores damage you?
- How long are you blinded by the stinging spores?

### 2. Home of Nevin the Hermit

Nevin the Hermit lives here. He carved a humble mushroom home out of one of the largest mushrooms. He's a little smelly. His skin is pale, his hair is white and scraggly, and mushrooms grow from his cloak. Still, he's perfectly sane and polite – he just really likes the taste of mushrooms.

If the players cross paths with him, he will be quite hospitable and invite them into his home where he offers mushroom stew, pickled mushrooms, and fried mushrooms. The house is lit by a glowing mushroom in the corner. Discuss the mysteries of the swamp over a cup of steaming mushroom tea (sweetened with swamp-wasp honey) to gain 1 mushroom forest advantage.

### **Sporebloom | Weak • Nature • Mushroom**

This bioluminescent mushroom has a rope strung through it, allowing it to act as a lantern. Additionally, the user can hold the mushroom above their head to release a cloud of spores, which naturally repels wildlife. Unless provoked, beasts will subconsciously avoid the user for several hours. Recharge the item by leaving it in a cool, damp, dark spot for 12 hours or so.

**History:** Nevin the Hermit was a simple man who loved the taste of mushrooms more than he loved people. So, it seemed perfectly logical to leave society and spend the rest of his days in a peaceful underground mushroom forest. The only problem was the local wildlife (namely crokigators) didn't appreciate the new neighbor. Luckily, many of the mushrooms in the forest had natural defense mechanisms. Nevin found this peculiar specimen, which had evolved to ward off hungry beasts.

### **3. The Dead Earthworm**

The corpse of a giant earthworm stretches across the ground, half-submerged in the earth. Mushrooms stalks grow out of its decaying body. The stench of rot is overpowering. There's movement under its skin.

The worm died from an infestation of parasites, which are currently feasting on the worm's entrails. If players come near the worm, four bloodgrub parasites will sense the vibrations and burst free.

### **4. Silkworm Curtain**

Here, silkworm nests hang from the ceiling. They glow with a pale green light. The color reminds you of snot. The way forward is barred by thousands of strands of ooze. It has an acrid, chemical smell. The ceiling writhes with movement.

The silkworms themselves are about as long as a finger and produce acidic, snot-like drippings that hang from the ceiling in strands. The strands are sticky, trapping bats and insects as they fly past. The silkworms then slide down the strands and feast on the digested juices. The silkworms are much too small to hurt people, but the acidic strands can be quite dangerous to anyone who attempts to push through.

#### **Cut through the silkworm curtain**

*Describe how the acidic strands stick to things* → Players near the strands roll to twist free. Ask them questions based on the roll. On a Very Good/Bad roll, ask 2 questions.

##### **Mixed or better**

- What useful fact do you learn about the silkworms?
- How many strands do you clear away?
- Why are you immune to the acidic strands?

##### **Mixed or worse**

- What falls on you?

- What happens when the acidic strands stick to you?
- What gets stuck to a strand, and then pulled up to the ceiling?

### **5. Crokogator Spawning Pool**

These large ponds are the krokogator spawning pools. Coincidentally, this is the middle of mating season and the krokogators are highly protective of their nests. If the players try to traverse the pools, 4 krokogators will attack.

### **6. Mindbreaker Shrooms**

Tucked away in one corner of the forest is a cluster of mindbreaker shrooms. These mushrooms are powerful psychedelic drugs that cause extreme hallucinations and giddiness to anyone who touches them.

Touch the mindbreaker shrooms

### **7. Portal Location**

The portal location is in the center of a small clearing. To reach it, the players must successfully cross the krokogators spawning pool or the silkworm curtain. If the Endless Nomads reach this site within 3 days, they will open a portal and step through. If the players are present, they can step through to worlds unknown. It's up to you where the portal leads.



# CHARACTERS, MONSTERS, AND ITEMS

## THE WEREGOATS

**Tasar the Wise | 2d6+1 Damage, 90 HP, 1 Block**

**Drives:** Expand your wealth, enjoy the pleasures of your high station, ignore the problems of lesser people, schmooze with the wealthy elite.

**Look:** A disdainful sneer and substantial gut. He wears a fine silk tunic inlaid with gold, and gold rings on his spiral horns. Fond of saying things like “why don’t the poor just work harder?”

**Weaknesses:** Take +5 damage from silver weapons.

### **Headbutt • Action**

Deal melee damage and choose one:

- Push the target a close distance. If it collides with a breakable object, destroy the object and deal +5 damage.
- Inflict lycanthropy.

### **Transform • Slow Action**

Over the course of two turns, bolster and enter weregoat form. Become significantly more animalistic and aggressive. Gain the ability to Leap and Bound. Increase your damage and silver vulnerability by +5.

### **Call for Aid • Action**

Once, call 5 guards. They rush to your aid next turn.

### **Leap and Bound • Passive**

Only usable in weregoat form. Jump as far as you can move, and wall jump. Auto-succeed attempts to jump, balance, and move along ledges. Safe fall 5.

**Magistrate Sydney | 1d8+1 Damage, 35 HP, 0 Block**

**Drives:** Uphold the law, prove how important you are, look down your nose at others, do things properly, don’t ruin your freshly pressed outfit.

**Look:** A neatly pressed tunic and a perpetual frown. Her posture is impeccable.

**Weaknesses:** Take +5 damage from silver weapons.

**Transform • Slow Action**

Over the course of two turns, bolster and enter weregoat form. Become significantly more animalistic and aggressive. Gain the ability to Leap and Bound. Increase your damage and silver vulnerability by +5.

**Boss Others Around • Action**

Spend your action to let an ally in earshot deal damage for free (no roll required), with a +10 damage bonus.

**Leap and Bound • Passive**

Only usable in weregoat form. Jump as far as you can move, and wall jump. Auto-succeed attempts to jump, balance, and move along ledges. Safe fall 5.

**Lord Greywald | 1d8+1 Damage, 40 HP, 1 Block**

**Drives:** Make a profit, enjoy the weregoats' generous hospitality, drink far more than you should, be sleazy.

**Look:** More rings than fingers. His beard is perfect. The pockets of his fine silk jacket jingle with coin when he walks. He burps frequently.

**Weaknesses:** Completely drunk whenever the players see him.

**Thrust Rapier • Action**

Deal melee damage and:

- On a twelve or greater, deal +5 damage.
- On a twelve or lower, drop your weapon. Woops.

**Appraise Goods • Passive**

You're an expert on valuables and trade routes.

**Stumble Drunkenly • Passive**

If you run more than a few steps, fall on your face, ending your movement.

**Call Upon Host • Passive**

Exploit connections with nobility for protection and lodging.

### **Weregoat | 2d6 Damage, 40 HP, 1 Block**

**Drives:** Enjoy your wealth with other weregoats, stick to your own, avoid dirty peasants, don't fight unless you have to.

**Look:** Thick grey fur and coiled horns. Eerie goat eyes. Perfect balance.

**Weaknesses:** Take +5 damage from silver weapons.

#### **Headbutt • Action**

Deal melee damage and choose one:

- Push the target a close distance. If it collides with a breakable object, destroy the object and deal +5 damage.
- Inflict lycanthropy.

#### **Transform • Slow Action**

Over the course of two turns, bolster and enter weregoat form. Become significantly more animalistic and aggressive. Gain the ability to Leap and Bound. Increase your damage and silver vulnerability by +5.

#### **Leap and Bound • Passive**

Only usable in weregoat form. Jump as far as you can move, and wall jump. Auto-succeed attempts to jump, balance, and move along ledges. Safe fall 5.

### **Guards | 1d6 Damage, 25 HP, 1 Block**

**Drives:** Protect your ward, lay down your life in the service of the weregoats, patrol weregoat compounds.

**Look:** Gleaming, polished scale armor and sturdy shield bearing the weregoat insignia.

#### **Slash Sword • Action**

Deal melee damage and:

- Deal +3 damage on a 15 or better.
- Once, disarm your target.

#### **Guardian • Interrupt | Warfare**

You can intercept attacks to become the new target if you are in a position where you could logically do so. When you do this, the creature you protect bolsters.

## THE WEREBATs

### Cecilia | 2d6+3 Damage, 55 HP, 2 Block

**Lore:** Cecilia is the empathetic leader of the werebats. She longs to live beneath the sun again. Her clothes are black and simple. Her ears are a little too big. She's frequently lost in thought.

**Drives:** Lead and protect the werebats, oppose tyranny, empathize with exiles, show kindness in a world filled with darkness.

**Weaknesses:** Take +5 damage from silver weapons. Effectively blind while exposed to extremely loud noises.

#### Bite • Action

Deal melee damage and either

- Make the target bleed.
- Inflict lycanthropy.

#### Transform • Slow Action

Over the course of two turns, bolster and enter werebat form. Become significantly more animalistic and aggressive. Gain the ability to Travel the Caves. Increase your damage and silver vulnerability by +5.

#### Screech • Action

Stun creatures in a cone for 1d6 turns. Resisting.

#### Network with Criminals • Passive

You have access to extended criminal networks.

#### Travel the Caves • Passive

Use only as a werebat. Glide. "See" with echolocation.

### Alissa | 1d8+2 Damage, 40 HP, 1 Block

**Lore:** Alissa leads the Alley Cats, an all-female thieves' guild. These former slaves were freed by the werebats and work alongside them in gratitude, despite not having the werebat curse. Her long blonde hair is tied back tightly. Her jaw is perpetually clenched.

**Drives:** Lead your sisters, remove your painful firebrands, make a living for yourself, oppose the slave trade without risking being recaptured

#### Ambush • Action

When you strike from the shadows, roll +2 damage die.

**Stalk Through the Shadows • Passive**

Others decrease rolls to spot you. Defy slow and halt.

**Escape • Action**

Once, escape any situation.

**Winston | 2d6/2d8 Damage, 40 HP, 1 Block**

**Lore:** Winston leads the Gloom Speakers, the group of werebat mage-assassins who magically suppress light sources that enter the Undercaves. A wand hangs at his belt. He's a patient, thoughtful man, perpetually shrouded in shadow.

**Drives:** Think before you act, protect the werebats, provide counsel to Cecilia, prepare and plan, manipulate the shadows.

**Weaknesses:** Take +5 damage from silver weapons. Effectively blind while exposed to extremely loud noises.

**Bite • Action**

Deal melee damage (2d6) and either

- Make the target bleed.
- Inflict lycanthropy.

**Transform • Slow Action**

Over the course of two turns, bolster and enter werebat form. Become significantly more animalistic and aggressive. Gain the ability to Travel the Caves. Increase your damage and silver vulnerability by +5.

**Travel the Caves • Passive**

Use only as a werebat. Glide. "See" with echolocation.

**Throw Shadowbolts • Action**

Deal ranged damage (2d8) and blind the target for 1d6 turns. Resisting.

**Warp Shadows • Action**

Snuff a visible light source for an hour or so.

## **Werebats | 2d6 Damage, 30 HP, 1 Block**

**Lore:** Werebats dwell deep within the Undercaves, where they hide from the hateful weregoats. They have needle-like fangs, snub noses, black eyes, and enormous ears. They skitter around the caves on hooked claws.

**Drives:** Lurk in the shadows, build a cooperative community with other werebats, welcome society's outcasts, avoid exposing yourself above ground.

**Weaknesses:** Take +5 damage from silver weapons. Effectively blind while exposed to extremely loud noises.

### **Bite • Action**

Deal melee damage (2d6) and either

- Make the target bleed.
- Inflict lycanthropy.

### **Transform • Slow Action**

Over the course of two turns, bolster and enter werebat form. Become significantly more animalistic and aggressive. Gain the ability to Travel the Caves. Increase your damage and silver vulnerability by +5.

### **Travel the Caves • Passive**

Use only as a werebat. Glide. "See" with echolocation.

### **Throw Shadowbolts • Action**

Deal ranged damage (2d8) and blind the target for 1d6 turns. Resisting.

### **Warp Shadows • Action**

Snuff a visible light source for an hour or so.

## PALADINS OF BODVARR

### Argassa Silverheart | 2d8+4 Damage, 70 HP, 3 Block

**Lore:** Arch-Paladin Argassa Silverheart is caring and almost motherly in how much she loves others; she is deeply hurt whenever she's forced to oppress the citizens. However, she takes her oath seriously as the leader of her sacred paladin order. She has a warm smile and thoughtful eyes.

**Drives:** Serve Bodvarr, lead Bottleneck towards progress, obey your vow of service to the weregoats, help your fellow citizen escape poverty, show concern for the plights of others.

#### Wield a Glowing Sword • Action

Deal melee damage. Maim the target if they are a heretic of Bodvarr (GM decides who qualifies).

#### Pray to Bodvarr • Action

Bolster and:

- Heal a person you touch for their toughness. Resisting.
- Once, give yourself and present allies +5 block for 1d6 turns.

### Brady | 2d6 Damage, 50 HP, 2 Block

**Lore:** Brady was recently (and secretly) given lycanthropy by the weregoats to spy on the paladins and ensure that they are following their oaths. He tries to subtly provoke dissent.

**Drives:** Spy on the paladins, earn your place among the weregoats, tread cautiously, avoid touching the shrine to Bodvarr.

**Weaknesses:** Take +5 damage from silver weapons.

#### Stab • Action

Deal melee damage and slow the target for 1d6 turns. Resisting.

#### Transform • Slow Action

Over the course of two turns, bolster and enter weregoat form. Become significantly more animalistic and aggressive. Gain the ability to Leap and Bound. Increase your damage and silver vulnerability by +5.

#### Leap and Bound • Passive

Only usable in weregoat form. Jump as far as you can move, and wall jump. Auto-succeed attempts to jump, balance, and move along ledges. Safe fall 5.

**Jackson Fiske | 3d6+1 Damage, 45 HP, 1 Block**

**Drives:** Secretly serve the Church of Bodvarr, work against the oppressive weregoats, free your fellow paladins from their oaths, redeem yourself.

**Weaknesses:** Counts as a heretic of Bodvarr.

**Crush • Action**

Attack your enemy with a spiked mace. Deal melee damage and choose one:

- Deal +4 damage.
- Reduce your target's block to 0.
- Deal +10 damage,, once.
- Damage all other adjacent enemies.

**Wield Bodvarr's Power • Action**

Usable only if redeemed. Heal a person you touch for your toughness. Instantly gain +3 block.



## THE LAUGHING SCRIBES

### Shane Deighton | 2d6 Damage, 40 HP, 1 Block

**Lore:** Shane Deighton is the direct descendant of Quincy. He leads the scholarly half of the Laughing Scribes. He is tall and lanky. His clothing is simple. Gold spectacles hang from a chain around his neck.

**Drives:** Collect obscure lore, preserve the Bookatorium, share your wealth of knowledge with others, work together with others democratically.

Shane is a scholar first and foremost. He has no combat actions.

### Tianna Paddley | 2d6 Damage, 35 HP, 0 Block

**Lore:** Tianna Paddley is most popular, charming, and outspoken member of the bards, which makes her their de facto leader. She has fiery red hair and eyes like emeralds.

**Drives:** Entertain yourself and others, practice your harp skills, enjoy attention from others, flirt aggressively.

#### Play Enchanting Melodies • Action

Bolster an ally and choose one until you leave the fight:

- Your ally deals +5 damage
- Your ally gains +2 block

#### Seduce • Slow Action

Once, select someone. They become infatuated with you.

### Dragarom | 3d6 Damage, 65 HP, 3 Block

**Lore:** Dragarom, a minotaur, is the esteemed librarian. He and he alone knows where to locate every book in the Bookatorium. He huffs like a bull. Gold-rimmed glasses hang from his horns.

**Drives:** Patrol the Bookatorium, keep the books in their rightful place, protect your maze, enforce the library's rules, read lots of books.

#### Charge • Action

Deal melee damage and choose one:

- Deal +6 damage.
- Once, push the target back until it hits a bookshelf, stunning it for 1 turn.

**Never Get Lost • Passive**

You know the exact location of every book in the Bookatorium, and how to reach it.

**Ssarmak | 2d6 Melee Damage, 13 Ranged Damage, 80 HP, 2 Block**

**Lore:** Ssarmak is a naga who lairs within the Bookatorium. He reads voraciously and is infatuated with Jiaying. He has beautiful black scales with red stripes.

**Drives:** Read steamy romance novels, daydream about a romance with Jiaying, protect the Bookatorium's treasured lore, try to match Jiaying's wit.

**Bite • Action**

Attack with poison fangs. Deal melee damage and choose one:

- The target bleeds.
- Wrap around the target in a grapple.

**Sserpent Spellss • Action**

Deal ranged damage. The GM asks the target, "In what way does the naga confuse you for a round?" They have to roleplay it.

**Jiaying | 3d6 Damage, 60 HP, 2 Block**

**Lore:** Jiaying is a sphinx who lives in the Bookatorium. She delights in games of wit and lively debate. She has golden fur, brown wings, and deep black claws. Her human face is stony and expressionless.

**Drives:** Study riddles and books, try to solve the Tesseract, engage in lively debate with mental equals, play chess and games of wit, maintain a cold demeanor.

**Slash • Action**

Deal melee damage and choose one:

- Deal +4 damage.
- Hamstring the target, slowing it for about 1 minute.

**Fly on Eagle Wings • Passive**

You can fly for about 5 minutes before needing to rest.

**Piercing Wit • Passive**

You are a genius.

## THE PACKER GANG

**Carver | 2d8 Damage, 45 HP, 1 Block**

**Lore:** Carver is the shrewd and conniving leader of the Racker Gang. He's motivated by boiling rage against the weregoats (his right hand was cut off for petty theft). He also holds no love for the Paladins for chopping off his hand.

**Drives:** Lead the Racker Gang, destroy the weregoats, steal to survive (preferably from the weregoats), get bloody revenge, teach the paladins of Bodvarr a lesson.

**Weaknesses:** Missing his right hand.

### **Stab • Action**

Deal melee damage and choose one:

- Deal +3 damage (14).
- Leave a bleeding wound.
- Chop off a hand (maim) if the target has 10 or less life.

### **Lurk • Passive**

You know the streets like the back of your one good hand. Use the citizens' support of you to hide from authorities.

**Keith Thorne | 2d6 Damage, 40 HP, 1 Block**

**Lore:** Keith Thorne is the oldest brother and head of the Thorne Family. The Thornes were overthrown when the weregoats took control of Bottleneck. Keith, Garrett, and Jasmin Thorne are the remaining members of the king's bloodline. He speaks a little too loudly. His tunic bears his family crest.

**Drives:** Express your outrage, reclaim your birthright, act like a king, rally the citizens, use the Racker Gang for your own bloody goals.

### **Give Orders • Action**

Choose one:

- An ally in earshot deals damage (no roll required).
- All allies deal +2 damage until you leave the fight.

### **Inspire • Action**

Bolster 2 people you can see.

### **Garrett Thorne | 2d6 Damage, 40 HP, 0 Block**

**Lore:** Garrett is Keith's the younger brother. He joined the Rackers more as a matter of survival; he doesn't think the Thorne line will ever be restored. He's quiet and reserved. He dresses like a normal peasant.

**Drives:** Protect your hide, don't stick your neck out, find an outcome where you can live peacefully, ignore your brother's suicidal schemes.

[No combat stats. Garret is a coward at heart.]

### **Jasmin Thorne | 2d6 Damage, 40 HP, 0 Block**

**Lore:** Jasmin Thorne is the middle sister and serves as the main intermediary between the Gang and the werabats. Ever idealistic, she doesn't want a revolution and would rather have the gang join the werabats in an underground society. She has bright blue eyes and a far-away stare.

**Drives:** Use the Gang to form connections with the werabats, push your siblings towards life in the Undercaves, keep spirits up, avoid conflict.

[No combat stats. Jasmin is a lover, not a fighter.]

### **Thug | 2d8 Damage, 20 HP, 1 Block**

**Lore:** Racker Gang Thugs rule the streets, especially in the slums where the Racker Gang is most prominent.

**Drives:** Steal to survive or oppose the government, hate the weregoats, mug people wealthier than you, intimidate others.

#### **Stab • Action**

Deal damage and choose one:

- Steal something from the target.
- Slow the target for 1d6 turns. Resisting.

#### **Burgle • Passive**

Others decrease rolls to spot you. You can pickpocket a single small item from anyone you have contact with.

## THE ENDLESS NOMADS

**Jin | 2d8 Damage, 50 HP, 1 Block**

**Lore:** Jin is the vaserian leader of the nomads. He will do anything to protect his people. He is calm and confident. His skin is smooth and blue. His clothes are made from an unrecognizable material.

**Drives:** Shield the nomads from local threats, gracefully accept exiles into the fold, find the next portal location, keep your people safe.

### **Wield Otherworldly Crystal Sword • Action**

Deal melee damage and choose one:

- Deal +5 damage.
- Inflict bleed.
- Bind the target to this plane for the next week or so.

### **Lead Your People • Action**

Bolster an ally. The target can deal damage (no roll required).

**Bon | 2d6 Damage, 40 HP, 5 Block**

**Lore:** Bon is an arithmagician and portal-mistress. She is brilliant beyond measure. Her magic armor occasionally flickers as it shifts to become visible in this plane. Her large glasses slip down her nose.

**Drives:** Calculate probabilities, use your head, research planar routes, prefer cold logic over emotion.

**Weaknesses:** Loses all block if exposed to some sort of disruptive or dispelling magic.

### **Alien Magic • Action**

Deal melee damage and sispel a magical effect on the target.

### **Barrier • Action (Arcane/Combat)**

*Describe how you use defensive magic* → Bolster. Within a far distance, create a wall that is up to a close distance across.

### **Open Portals • Quick Action**

Teleport a midrange distance every 5 minutes or so. You may also open a portal at a planar weak spot.

### **Iguluk | 1d6+2 Damage, 30 HP, 1 Block**

**Lore:** Iguluk is a lizard-like merchant who travels with the nomads and sells weak magic items.

**Drives:** Collect exotic wares, sell goods to locals for a hefty profit, buy oddities (especially pretty trinkets).

#### **Bite • Action**

Deal melee damage and inflict a disease that decreases the target's spirit by 1 every two hours or so. A creature that reaches -5 spirit falls into a coma for a week or so.

#### **Appraise Valuables • Passive**

You instantly know the magical properties of any object you see.

### **Laut | 2d8+3 Damage, 75 HP, 3 Block**

**Lore:** Laut is an angel with platinum skin who claims to seek her goddess-mother. Listen to her tale of divine parentage to gain 1 religion advantage. She has liquid metal eyes and an echoing, otherworldly voice. There's a hint of doubt in her words.

**Drives:** Seek your goddess-mother, absorb divine energy from other religions to fuel your prayers, keep the true nature of your faith a mystery.

#### **Wield Silver Greatsword • Action**

Deal melee damage and choose one:

- Deal +5 damage (17).
- Fill the target with repentant guilt; it can't attack for 1 turn.

#### **Fly on Platinum Wings • Passive**

Fly, but only in the presence of divine icons.

#### **Blind with Divine Light • Passive**

If you like, close enemies are blind.

### **Astral Watcher | 3d8 Damage, 60 HP, 3 Block**

**Lore:** Astral Watchers are extraplanar void-hounds that relentlessly hunt the nomads. They're enormous—nearly the size of a house. An empty nothingness, like the night sky shaped into a wolf's body.

**Drives:** Hunt planar travelers, emerge from thin air, drag planar travelers into the void.

**Resistances:** Immune to ranged attacks (they vanish into its void body).

**Weaknesses:** After absorbing too much matter (especially liquids), die by collapsing in on itself.

### **Bite and Claw • Action**

Deal melee damage and choose one:

- Deal +6 damage.
- Suck the target half-way into your Void body. It has 1 round to escape or it's cast into the Void!
- Ask once, "What is cast into its void body?"

### **Absorb Matter • Passive**

Suck in air and liquids constantly. Swallow something to cast it into the void.

### **Distort Space • Action**

Bolster and choose one:

- Teleport as far as you can move.
- Turn invisible for 1d6 rounds.
- Swap the locations of 2 visible creatures/things.
- Collapse in on itself
- Leave a temporary portal to the Void.
- Suck something nearby into the Void.

## **Cast into the Void**

Astral Watchers may cast creatures into the Void, the space between planes. Creatures can survive in the void, so a player thrown into the Void may still be saved. It's up to the GM to decide what happens in the void. Here are a few suggestions:

- The player is approached by a native of the Void.
- The player is tried before an interplanar council for crimes against the multiverse.
- The surviving players see glimpses of the lost player whenever they look into pitch-black surfaces.
- The Void despises matter and will violently eject the player through the closest portal.

## THE ASTRONOMERS

**Anders | 2d8 Damage, 65 HP, 2 Block**

**Lore:** Anders is ambitious and partially unhinged. He leads the other astronomers in their quest to look up the entity's true form. His shirt is on backwards. His hair is messy. He mumbles to himself.

**Drives:** Find a way to look upon It That Dwells Behind the Darkness, study the stars, unlock the secrets of the universe, find protection from the dark entity's wrath.

### **Corrupting Magic • Action**

Deal ranged damage and choose one:

- Terrify the target for 1d6 turns. Resisting.
- Create a cloud of darkness in a blast for about 1 minute. It blinds creatures in it.
- Inflict insanity on the target for several hours. The GM can now occasionally lie to that player about what they see.

### **Create Binding Circles • Action**

Spend several minutes creating a magical barrier that creatures of a certain type (you decide who) can't pass. You can only have 1 at a time.

**Master Stargazer Orion | 2d6 Damage, 40 HP, 1 Block**

**Lore:** Master Stargazer Orion opposed gazing upon the dark entity and is now locked away in the cellar, waiting to be sacrificed. He has sunken cheeks and a long, thinning beard.

**Drives:** Save your fellow astronomers from certain doom, escape the wrath of It That Dwells Behind the Darkness, destroy all written knowledge of the dark entity.

### **Wield Staff • Action**

Deal melee damage and dispel a magical effect.

### **Study the Stars • Passive**

You are an expert on all things related to astronomy.

**It That Dwells Behind The Darkness | 8d8 Damage, Cannot be Damaged**

**Lore:** It That Dwells Behind the Darkness seeks to foil the astronomers. Anyone who looks upon it will learn its True Name, Ythgluth, and thereby gain the ability to draw upon Its power. Ythgluth would be forever bound to serve as a patron (as per the Occultism theme). Unseeable. Unknowable. A black void of whispers that causes some part of you to panic.



In its true form, a writhing mass of tentacles with one enormous eye.

**Weaknesses:** The only way to harm It That Dwells Behind The Darkness is to uncover the secret of its existence. The secret is so well hidden that not even the creator of this adventure module knows what it is.

**Lash • Action**

Attack with teeth-lined tentacles. Deal melee damage and choose one:

- Drive the target permanently insane.
- Maim the target horrifically.
- Pull the target into its dark realm.

**Hide in Darkness • Passive**

You are shrouded in darkness and cannot be seen by normal means.

**Spawn Dark Ones • Action**

Once every five minutes or so, spawn 5 dark ones in an area of pure darkness.

**Know Secrets • Passive**

You know every secret.

**Dark One | 2d6 Damage, 30 HP, 0 Block**

**Lore:** Dark Ones are the otherworldly spawn of It That Dwells Behind the Darkness. Their only purpose is to protect their master's secrets. A twitching mass of teeth and tentacles wreathed in shadow.

**Drives:** Serve It That Dwells Behind the Darkness, protect secrets to strengthen your master, destroy evidence of your master's existence, stay hidden to preserve secrets, leave disturbing traces of your presence (claw marks, disgusting black goo, flashes of movement out of the corner of peoples' eyes).

**Weaknesses:** While in the presence of very bright light, you bleed and lose your Hide in Darkness trait.

**Lash • Action**

Attack with barbed tentacles. Deal 6 melee damage and choose one:

- Ignore the target's block.
- Start a grapple.
- Permanently remove a fact from the target's mind.

**Drive others insane • Passive**

Mortals within a far distance of you slowly go insane.

**Hide in darkness • Passive**

You are invisible and make no sound while you are in deep shadows. You can see in pure darkness. You are shrouded in darkness, so others decrease their rolls to attack you.