

**GARGONOX'S**  
**REDEMPTION ARMY**

Version 1

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Text: Shane Preece

Layout: Shane Preece, who is using Affinity Publisher for the first time. The style has been vaguely copied from another book, Maze of the Blue Medusa, but this is a vastly lower quality imitation. Please don't judge its beauty by this.

Cool cover art: "Smokey Background Generator"

<http://dragdropsite.github.io/waterpipe.js/>

Illustration: fukamihb

<https://www.fiverr.com/fukamihb>

*This is my first time using fiverr. I'm sure I'll go back to fukamihb again.*

Map: Dyson Logos, "The Beholder Isometric Map"

<https://dysonlogos.blog/2020/08/31/the-beholder-pit-isometric-map/>

*Funny story, I thought this was one of their generous commercial maps, but it isn't. Hopefully, you found this PDF free and as such feel free to share it. Thanks, Dyson!*

*Between this and the layout, it really looks like I'm playing fast and loose with copyright. Awfully sorry about that.*

Dear Reader,

This is an adventure I wrote to replace one of the rooms in *The Maze of the Blue Medusa* which I've found a mixture of delight and frustration running. Some rooms evoke that little Dungeon Master scoff of delight that players have learned to tread carefully around. Another category of rooms may well be interesting, and played as part of a dungeon crawl might fit wonderfully, but when played as part of a narrative driven adventure they only serve to confuse the players. "How," they wonder, aloud or to themselves, "does this room help me figure out how to save The Happy Couple's special day?" The answer, Reader, is that it does not.

This isn't a complaint about the book - not per say. It is a comment that sometimes a DM (especially a novice one, like me) can pick up a book with the wrong intentions. The Maze, lets remember, is first and foremost a crawl.

I thought it was worth adding in this foreword because it's probably worth you knowing who the Medusa in this adventure is referring to, even if you aren't featuring that specific Blue Medusa. Just ignore all the Maze stuff, if you're not into that.

It is a liberty of the DM to throw away published content they do not like, and so this entire dungeon replaces Almerly 205. This is an important looking room that I couldn't see how to run, nor how to have it enhance the story I was telling. So, a zombie beholder took its place.

I figured you might like to meet them too.

– Shane

# AN INCONSEQUENTIAL, LONG SINCE FORGOTTEN, MEMORY OF THE MEDUSA

## *ABOUT SIX THOUSAND YEARS AGO*

The Medusa is, for better or worse, settled in the Maze now. The plan with her father has worked better than expected, so far.

After a millennia of adventure, now might be the time to reflect on her catalogue of collected prizes.

## *JUST UNDER SIX THOUSAND YEARS AGO*

As help, and possibly a touch of familiar company, she breaths life into The Curator.

The Galleries begin to form.

Boredom settles. In her dreams her mind recalls adventures past.

## *FIVE THOUSAND YEARS AGO*

Dreams deplete quickly when there is little else to do. Her mind wanders as she sleeps, conjuring unseen adventures.

Ancient thoughts have a habit of breeding themselves into reality. Gargonox is born from her dreams, and immediately turns on his creator as Beholders are want to do.

A deadly blow sends Gargonox fleeing. The Medusa is unaffected.

## *FOUR THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED YEARS AGO*

Gargonox refuses to die, even after death comes.

Weaker now, in pride and strength, he finds a new appreciation in the Medusa and wishes to return to her good graces.

Within the Maze, so few people are left. He learns of a way to replenish them,

indefinitely. Gloriously. This he'll do to win back her heart.

## *THREE THOUSAND YEARS AGO*

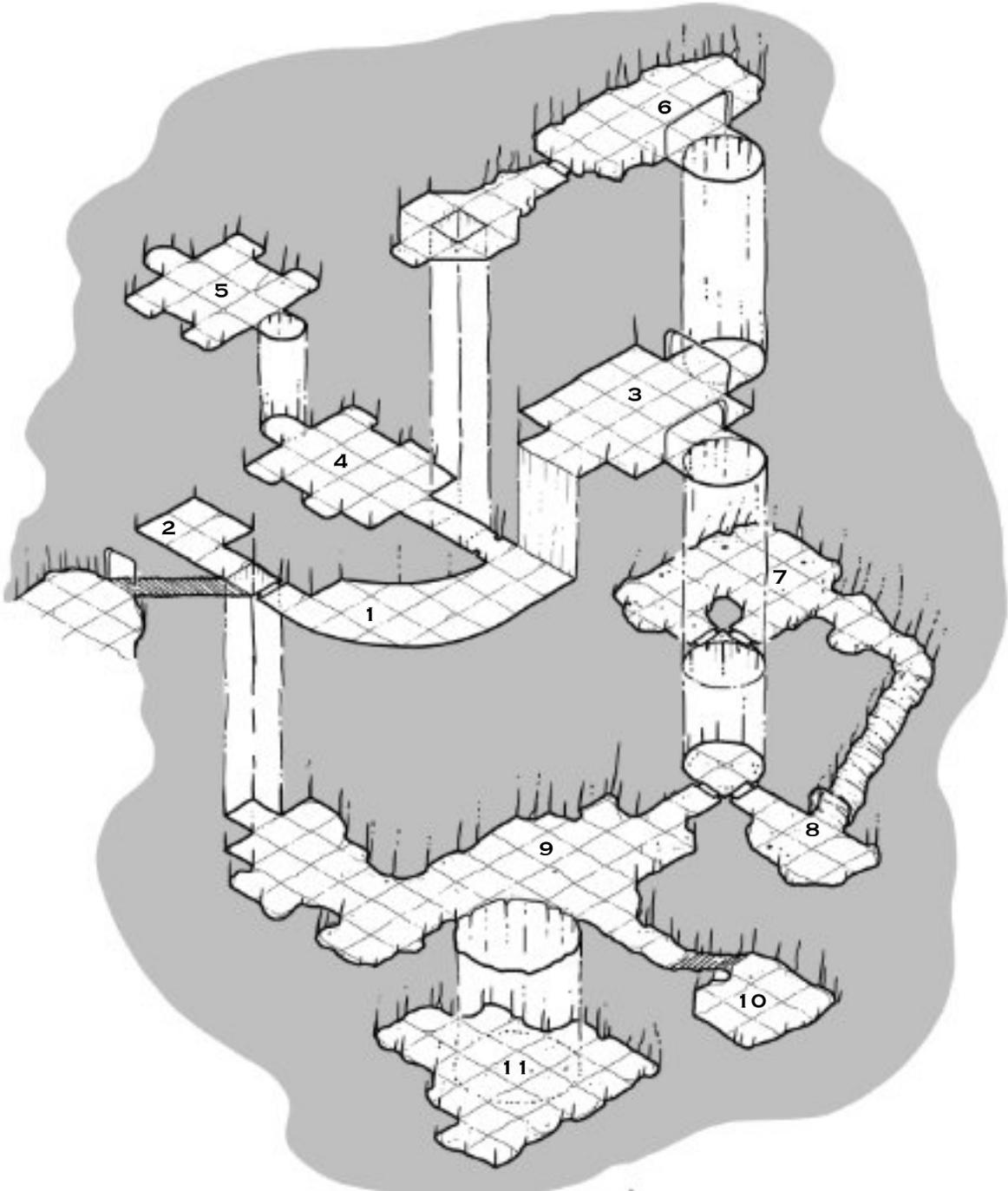
Gargonox toils away.

The Medusa has no recollection of him.

## *Now*

Your adventurers set foot on fertile compost, the round lair of Gargonox lies in the distance.

THROUGHOUT THIS ZONE there is no light. Caretakers who might otherwise take care of lanterns and other such maintenance duties are unaccounted for here. The walls of the lair are made from repurposed petrified flesh which the beholder collected and prepared themselves. The smell of decomposing flesh lingers and sticks to clothes. The entire area is desecrated land where holy men struggle to find comfort.



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# WORLD OUTSIDE

The sky above is steeped in an overbearing darkness. The ground is made up of wet soil, which sticks to the feet and builds up in cumbersome clumps. Walking kicks up the scent of organic fertiliser.

There is a large, round shadow that looms ahead. Getting closer, this sphere of dark materials has round tunnels bored out of it. A ground level entrance is visible by purple runes glowing around it.

**DC 13 Nature.** This particular smell comes from composting meat.

**DC 10 Perception.** Body parts can be spotted around in a state of decomposition.

## 1. ENTRANCE HALL

Grand doors open inwards and immediately lead downwards.

The slab at the foot of the stairs is trapped. Any weight will trip it; this is more to stop ambling zombies getting out until the time is right. Though, adventurers foolish enough to trip the trap will fall the 50' drop straight into Gargonox's quarters. Fall damage is typically 1d6 per 10'.

**DC 10 Investigation.** The floor wobbles a little, disturbed even by the wind. It is easy to jump over this slab now it's been spotted.

**DC 15 Investigation.** There is likely a way to disable the trap very close by.

**DC 15 Dexterity Save.** This will allow the character to grab onto the edge of the collapsing floor.

The room is decorated with a mural of the beholder's ultimate aim: a beautiful, motherly figure stands on her royal pedestal, with thousands of adoring subjects around her. Those observant enough might note that they subjects do not appear to be alive.

Text written in Undercommon reads, "So few pass through these lands. We must keep those who do."

## 2. TRAP CONTROLS

This is a simple room which houses a lever to lock the trapped floor in place. The lever stays held in place for thirty seconds before clunking back into its default position. A perceptive person might hear this happen.

## 3. HOPEFUL MURAL

Climbing appears to be the only way to and from this platform.

There's a mural in the same style as the one below. This time there's an odd trick of perspective though. The viewer appears to be high in the sky, looking down on hundreds of (Undead) creatures as they look up at you, saluting.

**DC 10 Investigation.** The tunnels leading upwards and downwards have been magically carved out, but then smoothed naturally over many years of frequent passage.

## 4. ENDLESS UNDEAD

This room is filled with heavy urns and four oversized sarcophaguses. One of them has their lid slightly askew.

These are filled with a constant stream of **Gargonox's Zombie Bursters** if the room is disturbed, or if the characters make too much noise in other rooms.

At the top of each round a zombie will pull itself out of its tomb, if the tomb is open. If it is closed, the zombie inside makes a *DC 12 Athletics* check to see if they can open it up.

To start with, a single zombie lies in a mound on the centre of the floor. From afar, they might look like someone who needs help.

Lifting an urn and dropping it on top of a tomb requires a *DC 12 Athletics* check. This is stop the sarcophagus spawning new zombies for five minutes, when they manage to push it off.

## 5. ONE OF THREE

There are wards on the floor here which will alert Gargonox to the intruders'. They can be stepped over easily, if spotted.

In this room there are three, briefcase sized chests; one has a symbol of vial, one has a figure of shooting stars, and one has a sleeping deer on it.

Opening one will cause the others to lower into the ground quite quickly. A quick handed trio might be able to open all three at once, but it is unlikely.

**Vial.** Trapped to cause 2d8 poison damage. Inside are three vials of acid. Can be applied to a weapon to add 2d8 acid damage to a hit. Lasts for thirty minutes. At the end of thirty minutes, there's a 5% chance the weapon becomes unusable.

**Stars.** Trapped to cause 2d4 + 1 force damage. Inside is a Wand of Magic Missiles.

**Deer.** Trapped to cause paralysis until the next long or short rest. Inside is a Cape of Trace-like Sleep, granting an elve's trace ability.

## 6. RESURRECTION LAB

The stench of death is strong as they climb up towards this room. The room is a storage place for bodies which are good candidates for zombification as well as the enchanting room in which to do it.

There are three tables in this room. Lying on each is a dead body. There are runes around these bodies, and reagents in a pentagram surrounding them. If the characters watch for a short while, they'll see that the runes are slowly vanishing, one by one. This is a timer. Once all the runes have vanished, the enchantment is complete and the Zombie will amble around.

Gargonox is not likely to check on this room until the zombies are baked.

**DC 15 Arcana.** Simply rubbing out the carefully drawn runs will disrupt the spell and halt the countdown.

There is also another room on this level; it is closed off by a door, to keep the zombies in. In this room are a pile of slightly more damaged bodies who did not survive the process.

## 7. CELLS

There are three cells in this room. The cells are guarded by three particularly unperceptive

zombies. Likely, they won't notice the characters passing, if they climb straight down.

The cells are occupied by a female who likely has only days left to live in her current condition; she looks starved. A male **lizardfolk**, called *Silence Through The Night*, doesn't look quite so bad. Finally, a very dead dwarvern creature.

If combat breaks out in here, the lizardfolk will cast *Shrink* in himself to escape the jail. He was waiting for backup to come and free him, and he assumes the characters are them. He joins the fight. He is slightly crazed, believing himself to be part bird; he'll show his liberators his glued-on feathers. He's a member of a group known as the Oku.

**DC 10 Insight check.** The male creature certainly appears to be worse for wear, but he's putting on a bit of a show about it. There's something about him that betrays his vitality.

**DC 10 Strength check.** The gates of these cells aren't very strong - it appears that the people inside them are typically fatigued when they're thrown in here.

## 8. ILLUSORY TRAP

The stairs in this room are only real until about halfway down. At this point, they are only illusory, causing the creature to slide down to the floor below.

The floor below is full of transparent, incredibly tender balloons. These balloons are filled with poison causing 3d6 damage for each that is popped.

**DC 15 Dexterity saving throw before falling.** The character is able to steady themselves from sliding all the way down. Unless their passive Perception is very low, they will be able to spot the floating balloons.

**DC 15 Acrobatics.** The balloons can be avoided by being rather delicate once you're on the lower level.

**DC 10 Constitution saving throw.** If hit by a balloon's poison, it will apply the Poisoned condition for 1 hours, unless saved against.

## 9. GARGONOX'S GALLERY

The group might be caught off guard here when they see many groups of people hanging around this room. However, a closer look will show that these are all manakins, rather than zombies or living creatures. Gargonox has captured many species over his years, and presents these eternally preserved trophies here. Lizardfolk circle each other, Tritons hold their tridents high, werewolves snarl at each other.

The characters may be worried about these statues coming to life, but they are only taxidermy ornaments. No need to let them know that though. Maybe the *did* just see one moving. Who knows! (They did not.)

Around the walls other mementos are kept. Heads tied to each other, like bunting. Distinctive weapons from various cultures.

The ceiling here is forty feet high.

If Gargonox has already been alerted, he'll be waiting for them, flying near the ceiling and attempting to hide. Otherwise, he'll be down in his nest (11).

**DC 15 Investigation / Detect Magic.** Only one of the weapons show as magic; a snake, coiled around itself which acts as a striking dagger when used. It is a magical, +1 weapon, which deals 1d4+2 damage, plus 4d6 poison damage (or half as much on a DC 14 Con save). If the weapon crits (failure or success), it applies its damage and then turns to stone.

## 10. ENDLESS UNDEAD PT. 2

A second store of endless zombies is within this room, but this time there's no urn to keep it closed.

To halt its endless flow, the archway between this room and 9. must be collapsed. It has an AC of 14 and 25 hit points. Once it falls, the zombies will no longer spawn.

## 11. A GRIM NEST

A pit 30 feet deep, filled with wasted zombies used as bedding.

**DC 13 Investigation / Detect Magic.** There is a Maul of Marauding here. It's a +1 maul. If attuned, +2 whilst raging. However, if an

attack fails to hit the intended target, but the AC is high enough to hit a nearby creature, that creature gets hit instead. Whilst attuned, the owner must make a DC 10 Wisdom save during their long rests, or be woken in the midst of one of their rages.

**DC 16 Nature.** It's odd that the nest lies at the bottom of the dungeon. Beholders typically sleep as high up as they can, out of reach. Either Gargonox is particularly confident, or his ailing body struggles to continue making the journey upwards.

# AFTERMATH

Once a creature has been alive for thousands of years its very being becomes a part of the fabric of the universe. Their past isn't just stories for folk to sing about, but the actual strands of time which keep the world together. Gargonox is certainly old enough for this phenomena to become problematic after his death.

Upon his death a shockwave is triggered as the universe attempts to heal the rip the ancient's death has caused. All those within 300 feet must make a Wisdom saving throw, DC 15, or take 4d10 + 10 psychic damage. Incidentally, this wipes out all of the remaining zombies left in Gargonox's army.

Those within the blast range absorb some of Gargonox's memory as the universe attempts to resecure stray threads in its fabric

## Fall of Gargonox

You're born, complete and powerful. You find yourself in a dark room, where the only movement is a sleeping woman. Sleeping too are her crown of serpents.

Now is your only chance. Your instincts drive you, baring forwards, teeth exposed. But her snakes sleep lightly and half a dozen tiny bites nick at your flesh as you come within reach.

Their venom is strong and working quickly. You shall use range then, as you fly backwards into the room blindly knocking over a suit of armour.

A ray hits the Medusa as she stirs. Pain crosses her face for a moment, then a shiver, and she sees you with her own eyes. You see disappointment in her face. One of your eye stalks, two now, solidify to stone.

"Not another," she sighs.

A blade is conjured from no where, then flung across the room. The tiny sliver of metal collides with barely any pain as you barrel forwards with another ray. It has little affect again.

The poison seeps its way further into you. Drowsy now. You feel the knife move within you. You won't last.

"Go!" Her scream is full of fury, breaking your

resolve.

It's best, you decide, to flee.

Your death comes slowly.

Then, you awake again.

It's not clear how much time passes as you wallow alone. With each day respect grows for the strange woman, powerful enough to dream you into existence. Powerful enough to subdue you.

With her as an ally, maybe you can regain your strength. You resolve to find her a wonderful gift. An unstoppable army.

# GARGONOX

**Undead Zombie.**

**Fly speed: 20 feet.**

**Health: 93. Armour class: 14. Immunity: Poison, Prone.**

**STR: 0. DEX: +2. CON: +3. INT: +1. WIS: -1. CHA: -3.**

Remaining HP.  
Max: 93.

**Wants:** To make more soldiers for his army. To please a mistress he's not seen in centuries.

**Does not want:** To show weakness, especially now he's technically dead and much weaker than he used to be.

**Retreat:** Never. He's been killed before and didn't die. He must be invincible.

**Undead Fortitude.** If damage reduces the zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

## Actions.

**Summon allies.** Bonus. A low growl summons aid from the nearby tombs. 1d4 of his Zombie Bursters begin to make their way out of the darkness.

**Bite.** +5 to hit. 3d6 piercing damage. The target must make a Dex save (DC: 10) to be held in his jaws, grappled. If someone is grappled, he'll fly into the air to drop them (free action). 1d6 per 10ft fall damage.

**Eye ray.** He will use this if it is available; it's available on a 5 or 6 on a d6.

## Checks.

**DC 10 Nature check.** You've heard of beholders, but this one looks different. It's skin of already sloughing off. It's colouring is pale. It's large, middle eye is greyed over, potentially even blind. (DC 15.) This is a zombie beholder. This is what happens when a particularly determined beholder refused to die. It's not as strong as ordinary beholders.

## THE DEADLY EYES

**Paralysing Ray.** DC 14 Con save, else be paralysed for 1 minute. Save ends at the end of their turn. Paralysed creatures automatically fail grappling checks.

**Fear Ray.** DC 14 Wis save, or else become frightened of the Beholder for 1 minute. Save ends at the end of their turn.

**Enervation Ray.** DC 14 Con save. Take 7d8 necrotic damage. Half on save.

**Concussive Ray.** DC 14 Int save. Take 5d6 physic damage. For 1 minute, you must take a Melee attack action at the start of your turn, targeting the nearest creature. Save ends at end of turn.

# GARGONOX'S ZOMBIE BURSTERS

**Undead Zombie.**

**Speed: 35ft.**

**Health: 27. Armour class: 10. Immunity: Poison.**

**STR: 3. DEX: 0. CON: 3. INT: -2. WIS: -2. CHA: -3.**

Archway HP.

**Wants:** To make more bodies for Gargaonox.

**Does not want:** To live in this condition any longer than it has to.

**Retreat:** Never. "Just kill me already."

**Undead Fortitude.** If damage reduces the zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

## Actions.

**Multiattack.** This zombie can make two attacks per turn.

**Claw.** +5 to hit. 1d6 + 3 slashing.

**Burst.** If damaged, the zombie will attempt to explode, taking down as many foes as it can with it. Those around must make a DC 12 Con save. 4d6 poison damage, or half on a save.

**Dash.** Using their bonus action, the zombie can sprint towards their prey.



**Descriptors:** Atrophying, Bloated, Clumsy, Droning, Erratic, Feminine, Gaunt, Hideous, Itchy, Jerky, Kobold, Lopsided, Maudlin, Neanderthal, Occultish, Paladin, Queer, Roasted, Sly, Towering, Upset, Vicious, Werewolf, Yawning, Zen

## Gargonox.

**DC 15 Survival check.** You manage to cut out some organs that you've kept intact. You might be able to sell them to the right person for a high amount of gold. (DC 18.) You managed to delicately cut off an eyestalk. You think you can get at least one good squeeze out of it.

**DC 15 Investigation check.** With advantage, if they mention looking for the Medusa's dagger. You find *The Writhing Blade*. It is a magical +1 weapon. It feels like fairly soft metal. You can bend the blade in your hand without causing it any distress. On a successful attack with this blade it will deal damage as blade. However, the blade will refuse to relinquish itself from the target. Instead, at the start of your round, the blade will continue working its way into the target dealing 1d4 + 1 piercing damage, until the creature is dead. It refuses to harm the Medusa and will turn on anyone asking it to do so.

## Anyone else.

### 2D20 YOU FIND 6D6 SILVER PIECES AND...

- 1 Instantly jump to level 20. You're a god now. Huh.
- 2 A pearl, worth at least 100GP
- 3 A packet of salted meat of unknown age. (Still edible, just about.)
- 4 A book detailing local fauna that someone has compiled. There are many pressed plants in here.
- 5 A cursed ring. +1 to attack rolls, but it makes you feel incredibly miserable on a miss. "Even with a magic ring you can't hit someone right in front of you, eh?"
- 6 A waterskin full of a liquid which smells exactly like a potion of healing. It does not have the colour of a potion of healing though. It's just flavoured water.
- 7 A fancy dagger or bow, worth at least three times the cost of a normal one.
- 8 A novice's spellbook, containing Find Familiar and Unseen Servant.
- 9 A bag of powered silver, iron, and gold.
- 10 A scroll with runes which look like Teleportation Circle runes. Leads to a Circle inside a mad, long dead, wizard's pocket realm.
- 11 An apple with a bite taken from it. Taking another bite will summon the ghostly gnome who haunts it. They'd like you to finish the apple so they can move on. Whilst their patience holds, they'll help you out.
- 13 Endless flagon of Elvish wine.
- 14 Mithril gloves. +1 AC but cannot use Finesse weapons or bows.
- 15 Flask of lamp oil, ordinary, except it burns with magical fire damage.
- 16 A dog collar. Animal Handling checks are made with advantage against targets wearing it.
- 17 String of garlic. Whilst wearing this, all Charisma based checks are done with disadvantage. Melee attacks against you Critically Fail (PHB 194) on an attack roll of 1 or 2.
- 18 A list of names. *Celric the Longhorn. Kavendish the Lighthearted. Dizzy the Thirstiest. Tindle the Bleeder.*
- 19 A notebook with scribbles describing the mechanism of a treasure chest trap. With the right tools you could make this.
- 20 A postcard. On the face is a picture of the moon; it always shows the current phase of the moon or moons in the holder's home dimension. On the other side is an ordinary "wish you were here!" message.
- 21 *Bag of Boomerang Pitons.* Can be recalled as an action.
- 22 Six poisoned arrow heads. (No shafts.)
- 23 Slippers, size 9. Waterproof, constantly warm.
- 24 Snowglobe, cracked. If fixed, can turn nearby rain into snow when shaken.
- 25 2 patches of *Better Mending*. Fixes an item, as per the spell, but can also restore its magical properties.
- 26 *Prosthetic limb.* It's happy to change into an arm or leg. Worth a lot to the right person. Acts as if normal. Chaffs without oils.
- 27 *Sending Cricket.* A whispering cricket willing to deliver messages for kind people. It will do its best to hunt down the recipient no matter where they are.
- 28 *Jar of Eyeballs.* Lizard, ant, sheep, elf. Just all crammed in there.
- 29 Magic chess board. Can play against themselves, against one person, or just to give advice during a normal game.
- 30 Splintered *Wand of Fireballs*. It has no charges left.
- 31 Coconut, filled with coconut milk. Any librarian, chef, or person that makes a DC 17 Nature check will know that this is a kilmoulis egg. It will hatch in 3 days.
- 32 *Warm Bag of Sand.* Looks like sand. Can be placed into an hourglass. The sand vanishes as it passes through, but whilst that's happening, time stops for anyone not touching the hourglass. Six seconds of sand remains.
- 33 *Wand Dogle.* Fire two wands with one action.
- 34 *Cone of Silence.* An actual cone, like injured dogs wear. The wearer is silenced.
- 35 *Cold Flame Vial.* Can be lobbed. If hit, the target is set alight and they lose their magic resistances whilst burning.
- 36 *Greater Restoration Potion.* Two if they ask "is there anything else?" They are all poison if they ask three times.
- 37 *Someone's Bag of Holding.* Contains a dead unicorn, two vials of Healing Potion, four days of rations, and a Helmed Horror.
- 38 Zag's Nectar. This is always a good, and highly commended, gift.
- 39 *Tracking Coin.* Can be called as an action, so long as it is on the same plane. The attuned creature always knows where this coin is. (A nice DM warns about attunement rules.)
- 40 *Gyver's Playing Cards.* Look like normal cards. Can be thrown at a target within sight, and will automatically hit, dealing 1 slashing damage. The cards return to the pack each dawn.

# "I loot the body."