

DAVAE BREON JAXON'S

CINEMATIC ENVIRONS

MOUNTAINS

CALL OF CTHULHU EDITION



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INTRODUCTION

An interesting backdrop can set a story above and beyond the rest, turning a mundane investigation into an epic fight for survival. Just imagine Key Largo without the hurricane or *The Thing* without the Antarctic setting.

The purpose of this book is to explore and expand the concept of survival in *Call of Cthulhu*. Besides providing additional challenges and pressures for the investigators to face, the environment also helps to set the mood, which is critical to any horror story.

This book includes some additional definitions, rules, and arctic hazards that the Keeper can use at their discretion throughout the scenario to enhance the cinematic feel of the story.

THE RULE OF THREE

One of the most important aspects of cinematic role playing is the **Rule of Three**. When adjudicating the dangers presented in this book, be aware of what level of realism you, as a Keeper, are looking to provide.

In a realistic, brutal setting, allowing only **one** skill or ability check or to overcome the obstacle is acceptable.

If you're interested in less lethal, but still gritty setting, allow **two** skill or ability checks before lethal effects befall the investigators. This will give the players a real sense of danger, yet still encourage some heroic stunts.

And for a truly pulp action, over-the-top cinematic feel, allow **three** skill or ability checks before the proverbial hammer falls on the characters.

For example, let's say that the investigators are attempting to climb a sheer cliff face to enter a cave unseen. A deadly setting would see only **one** roll to avoid falling to one's death. In this case it might be that one poor climb check would seal their fate.

A setting that mixes gritty action and heroic deeds would allow **two** rolls before dropping the characters on the rocks hundreds of feet below. In this case, perhaps the climbing roll fails, so an additional strength roll is needed to hold on with their fingertips.

In a pulp setting that reflects a more Indiana Jones sensibility, there would be at least **three** potential chances before tumbling

down the rocky mountain wall. In this case, it might be that the climbing skill fails and the strength check fails, but perhaps a Dexterity roll could save the falling investigator as she grabs a root dangling nearby.

The **Rule of Three** also applies in the opposite direction when a character attempts to perform a stunt. The more skill or ability checks required to achieve the stunt, the more realistic and dangerous the action will be. In other words, asking for more rolls to succeed will lead to barriers when you want your player group to engage in cinematic action.

For example, suppose a player wants their character to grab a coat from a hook, throw it over a security guard and then push them down a flight of stairs. In a realistic setting, that player may have to roll to snatch down the coat, another roll to hit the guard, and yet another roll to knock them over.

In a gritty game, the Keeper may ask for a roll to cover the guard and another to knock them prone.

In a cinematic world, a single roll is enough to give the hapless guard a blanket party and send him on his way to oblivion.

It's important that you communicate with your group to decide collectively what sort of game you intend to run concerning the **Rule of Three**. Make sure all are in complete agreement to prevent conflicting expectations in the game.

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

The following hazards are not truly characters or monsters, but it may be necessary to place their effects into the Initiative order. Pick an initiative system and remain consistent from one combat round to the next. Players may have to be tactical, expending an action to remain balanced or hold on, so be aware if a character does not have a movement or action available to maintain safety.

Flavor. At the beginning of each entry, there is a small narrative section that can help inspire the scene. After reading the flavor text, the Keeper should describe the scene in their own words as appropriate to the encounter and the mood of your game.

Each entry may also include additional options other than those listed below, or it may omit ones that do not apply. Details on their use will be included with each specific description.

Pressure. Sometimes your players will suffer from analysis-paralysis. If they are intent on remaining locked up, refusing to move either forward into danger or around the obstacle, these ideas can help to get the story moving.

If / Then. Many scenes are dangerous to traverse. The notes here describe which specific actions could cause certain consequences. This can and should give your players pause as they weigh various actions and what that means for them moving forward. Do they run across a frozen lake or walk carefully? Both options will have merit based on the group and their mission.

Even the Odds. This is a simple way to randomly pick targets in a crowd. Each target rolls a die. An **even** number means that subject is not targeted, but an **odd** number means suffering the effects of the environment, be it falling through ice, tripping over roots or being smashed against rocks while being swept away by a raging river.

Changes. Even a blizzard can get boring after a while. This section is a prompt to wake up lethargic players. Use one or more of these events to jump start the encounter as things change... for better or worse.

Fumblecrit. During any extreme activity, whether it's combat or dealing with a natural hazard, some will fumble while others will enjoy a critical success. This table will list a few events that you can either roll for, or choose from, to add to the drama and energy of the scene.

AVOIDING REPETITIVE CHECKS

In a survival game, the number of checks can become tedious and interrupt the flow of the story. If this happens, the Keeper can have players make bulk rolls. For example, if a character needs to make a check every hour over the course of twelve hours, simply roll them all at once and narrate the results.

DEFINITIONS

BONUS DICE

Having a *Bonus Die* means that you roll a second 10s die when you make your percentile roll. You then use the more favorable of the two rolls. For example, if you have a *Bonus Die* and roll a 10 and a 30, you use the 10. A character can have up to 2 *Bonus Dice* at a time. *Bonus Dice* and *Penalty Dice* cancel each other out.

BLINDED

A *Blinded* character can't see and automatically fails any skill check that requires sight. Attack rolls against them have a *Bonus Die*, and the character's attack rolls have 2 *Penalty Dice*.

DEAFENED

A *Deafened* character can't hear and automatically fails any ability or skill check that requires hearing.

DESPAIR

Enough time under extreme conditions can wear anyone down. After enduring extreme conditions (cold, heat, isolation, etc.) for 3 days, you must make a successful *Sanity* check (0/1). The character gains 1 *Penalty Die* after 6 days, and 2 after 9 days.

DIFFICULTY LEVEL

For every skill or ability check, the Keeper decides which of the characters skills or abilities is relevant and the difficulty of the task, represented by a *Difficulty Level*. There are three levels of difficulty: *Normal*, *Hard* and *Extreme*.

A *Normal* difficulty means that the player must simply roll under their character's skill point or characteristic. A *Hard* difficulty means that they must roll under half of their skill point or characteristic. An *Extreme* difficulty means that they must roll under one-fifth of their skill point or characteristic.

For example, if a character has a Spot Hidden skill of 50, a roll of 38 would be a success, a roll of 24 would be a hard success, and a roll of 8 would be an extreme success.

PENALTY DIE

Having a *Penalty Die* means that you roll a second 10s die when you make your percentile roll. You then use the less favorable of the two rolls. For example, if you have a *Penalty Die* and roll a 10 and a 30, you use the 30. A character can have up to 2 *Penalty Dice* at a time. *Penalty Dice* and *Bonus Dice* cancel each other out.

EXHAUSTION

Some environmental hazards, such as starvation and the long-term effects of freezing or scorching temperatures, can lead to a special condition called *Exhaustion*.

Exhaustion is measured in six levels. An effect can give a character one or more levels of *Exhaustion*, as specified in the effect's description.

Level	Effect
1	Penalty Die on skill checks
2	Speed halved
3	Penalty Die on attack rolls and characteristic checks
4	All Strength checks require an Extreme success
5	Character is unable to walk and Strength checks automatically fail
6	Unconsciousness that only rest can rectify

A character suffers the effect of their current level of exhaustion as well as all lower levels. For example, an investigator suffering 2 levels of *Exhaustion* has their speed halved and has a *Penalty Die* on skill checks.

Finishing a good night's sleep reduces a character's *Exhaustion* level by 1, provided that they have also ingested some food and drink.

HYPOTHERMIA

This is a state of deep cold where the body begins to shut down, and the creature's core body temperature begins to drop.

When a character is exposed to extreme cold without protection, they must make a Constitution check every 30 minutes or become hypothermic. The *Difficulty Level* starts at *Normal*, increasing to *Hard* after an hour, and *Extreme* after 90 minutes. The character with hypothermia has 2 *Penalty Dice* on all Dexterity and Intelligence checks and suffer 2 levels of *Exhaustion*.

Every 30 minutes thereafter, they must make a Constitution check at an *Extreme Difficulty Level* or suffer another level of *Exhaustion*. This process continues until they either warm up or die.

INCAPACITATED

An *Incapacitated* character can't take actions.

INVISIBLE

The characters are effectively *Blind* when it comes to the invisible object or creature. This condition applies mainly to supernatural creatures or events, but could be used if something is just incredible hard to see (Keeper's discretion).

PAIN

There are four levels of pain that are considered beyond the normal pain that is regularly encountered by the characters. These include Major, Severe, Extreme, and Crippling.

Major Pain. This level of pain is experienced when a character endures serious injuries such as sprains, minor burns, a broken nose, and so on. A character suffering major pain gains a level of *Exhaustion* until the pain is relieved; either through some sort of pain relieving medicine or healing.

Severe Pain. Characters experience severe pain when they suffer a broken leg, a 1st degree burn, a deep cut, and so on. The victim suffers a level of *Exhaustion* and is stunned while the pain remains.

Extreme Pain. This level of pain is experienced with 2nd degree burns, severed limbs, deliberately exacerbating existing wounds (such as sticking a finger into a stab wound), and so on. The victim gains two levels of *Exhaustion*, screams uncontrollably and is incapacitated.

Crippling Pain. This amount of pain is almost unbearable.

Some causes include 3rd degree burns, being dissolved by acid, frostbite, and so on. Anyone unfortunate enough to experience this level of pain suffers three levels of *Exhaustion*, is incapacitated, and must make a *Hard* Constitution check or fall unconscious for 3d6 hours.

PRONE

A *Prone* character's only movement option is to crawl, unless they stand up and thereby end the condition.

The character has a *Penalty Die* on attack rolls. An attack roll against the character has a *Bonus Die* if the attacker is within 5 feet of the character. Otherwise, the attack roll has a *Penalty Die*.

RESTRAINED

A *Restrained* character's speed becomes 0, and they can't benefit from any bonus to their speed. Attack rolls against the character have a *Bonus Die*, and the character's attack rolls have a *Penalty Die*. The character has a *Penalty Die* on Dexterity checks.

SANITY

Sanity is a measurement of the character's mental health and stability. Most characters start off reasonably sane, but as their Sanity points diminish, they become more and more insane, and can develop all sorts of mental problems as a result.

The average character's Sanity would be around 45 or 50 for an every day person, while a Sanity of 20 or less is approaching madness. If a character's Sanity reaches 0, they are completely insane, and are no longer under the control of the player. See Keeper's Handbook (p. 154) for more information.

STUNNED

A *Stunned* character is *Incapacitated* (see above), can't move, and can speak only falteringly. The character automatically fails Strength and Dexterity checks. Attack rolls against the character have a *Bonus Die*.

UNCONSCIOUS

An unconscious creature is *Incapacitated* (see above), can't move or speak, and is unaware of its surroundings. The character drops whatever they are holding and falls prone. The character automatically fails Strength and Dexterity checks.

Attack rolls against the character have a *Bonus Die*. Any attack that hits the character is an *Extreme* success if the attacker is within 5 feet of the character.



MOUNTAIN HORROR

Mountains have always been places of mystery and power. Armies have been stopped by them, and prophets have climbed them to hear the word of their gods. People have build strongholds, monasteries, and even entire civilizations hidden within long forgotten cliffs and valleys. Even well-traveled mountains have dark secrets that have never been discovered, often concealed within ancient passes or deep cave systems.

The most famous mountains to those familiar with the writings of H. P. Lovecraft are the Mountain of Madness on the Antarctic continent. It was there that the expedition from Miskatonic University discovered the ancient and terrifying civilization of the Elder Things.

Especially in the modern era, when so much of the Earth has been explored, it can be difficult to create a mysterious location for the investigators to explore. Mountains can provide are ideal settings for an isolated cult, lost tomb, ancient city, or some horrifying cryptid.

Getting the characters there might seem difficult at a glance, but there are plenty of reasons why they might go there. Maybe they are mountain climbers out to test their mettle or soldiers sent to find a band of enemy guerrillas. Perhaps they just had the misfortune of having their plane crash, and now they are simply trying to get to safety.

WHAT IS AN MOUNTAIN ENVIRON?

Mountains are unique in that there is not one single set of conditions to consider. On a mountain, the ecosystem can change greatly depending on the altitude, weather patterns,

and even time of day. For example, during the day the warm air rises up the mountain slope from the valleys below, and in the evenings, the cooling air falls, changing the temperature in a matter of minutes. While it may be sunny and warm near a mountain's base, it may be arctic conditions near the summit, depending on the height of the mountain. Even the air that we take for granted becomes thinner the higher one climbs, making even the most basic physical activity difficult.

MOUNTAIN TRAVEL

Due to the severity of the terrain and unpredictable weather conditions, the methods of traveling in this environ is very limited. Most ground vehicles quickly become useless beyond the foothills. Aircraft have few places they can land and takeoff again, even if they can navigate the violent up and down drafts.

Aircraft. Unless there is some sort of plateau on the mountain, the only aircraft that have any use are rotary-wing aircraft (helicopters) or a harrier jump jet, though these latter aircraft are limited to military use and can't carry any passengers as such. If aircraft are used, the pilot will have their hands full maintaining control of their vehicle. Crashing is a very real option, so it's well worth hiring the very best pilot available.

Aircraft are limited by altitude and temperature, and so the investigators will have to choose the right kind for the job.

Animals. During the early 20th century, and even later in some regions, domesticated animals are still commonly used as transportation to remote areas.

In mountain environs, the most common pack animals are donkeys, mules, alpacas, llamas, goats, horses and dogs. Each animal has its pluses and minuses. For example, the alpacas

and llamas are best suited for high altitudes, while dogs can move through much smaller gaps and have the added advantage of providing warning against potential threats.

The important thing to remember with animals is that they are living creatures that require food, water, and other forms of care. They also have unique moods and personalities which can make things interesting, and of course they can be injured or adversely affected by the elements, just like people.

Investigators will need see to the animals' needs as well as their own, which means more supplies and time. Maintaining animals can take as much as two hours each day, depending on the number. In a cold environ this work is compounded since water may have to be collected or thawed and some sort of shelter provided.

Horses are large creatures, requiring much more food per day than an average human. Ponies require a minimum of 6 pounds of food and 6 gallons of water per day, while larger horses requires a minimum of 12 pounds of food and 12 gallons of water per day.

Pack dogs can eat 5 pounds of meat per day, though this amount can double if they are being pushed hard. They can only carry around 10 pounds (depending on the size of the dog), but that less that the investigator has to carry.

Depending on the region, it may be possible to hunt for food along the way, but this will of course add to the overall duration of the trip.

Hot Air Balloon. While this would seem to be a natural choice for a mountain, the unpredictable winds can make navigating such a vehicle nearly impossible. In rare circumstances it might be possible to use a hot air balloon if one has a pilot that is extremely familiar with a specific mountain's wind patterns, much like an experienced seaman knows the ocean currents.

Zeppelin. If the campaign is set in the right time period, traveling by zeppelin can be very cinematic, especially if the Keeper is looking for a more pulp adventure feel for their game.

Zeppelins were used several times to explore the Arctic, the most famous being the Graf Zeppelin. It is therefore not unrealistic to think that they could be used to explore mountains, though they would run into some of the same issues as other aircraft. Winds could easily slam the zeppelin into the side of the mountain, and finding a suitable landing site could prove challenging.

Using a zeppelin in a mountain environ can mean having a movable base of operations that can carry more supplies and equipment, isn't at risk of becoming trapped by snow, and is capable of reaching extremely high altitudes.

Naturally there are risks to the use of a zeppelin. Airships like these depend on volatile hydrogen gas that can ignite and explode under the right conditions. The Keeper could use this vulnerability to either strand the investigators or provide another potential threat.



GRIPPING SCENARIO IDEAS

Much like arctic settings, mountains are usually very isolated and unpopulated. This means that it's easy enough for the Keeper to place a mysterious statue, lost village, or previously undiscovered ruin within the greater landscape.

The following story seeds are meant to inspire Keepers to take full advantage of this particular environ, so they should feel free to use them as presented or modify them to suit their setting and style of campaign.

Artifact Down! A valuable artifact was being transported by aircraft when a freak storm caused to crash on a mountainside. While the official story is that the characters are going to rescue the crew, the truth is that the artifact has unnatural properties and so it must not fall into the wrong hands. Now they must race against time to reach the crash site before the Cult of the Dark Queen gets there first.

Keeper's Note: The pressure of the ticking clock in this scenario can make it extremely tense. The Keeper may want to use some sort of physical timer to emphasize this point. This pressure is likely to push the player characters into taking chances, and so the Keeper may want to lean towards a more pulpy game when adjudicating the rules.

Brotherhood of the Dawn. High on an isolated mountain plateau, a stone church dating back to the 3rd century houses a very old religious order called The Brotherhood of the Dawn. Some believe them to be an early Christian sect, while others claim that they are an obscure Jewish cult.

The High Prior of the order has reached out to the characters, knowing something of their reputation in dealing with the occult. All he would say in his letter is that the situation is dire and that they should come immediately. If the characters are hesitant, he will offer a small fortune as enticement.

When they arrive, they are brought to see a complex machine of copper, stone, and glass vessels filled with strange, swirling fluids. The Prior says that it is a prison for an entity known as Yahweh, who some worshiped as a god. He says that

the monks have been experiencing disturbing dreams, and that the machine seems to be running down. The investigators must help them repair this complex occult device before the entity is able to escape.

Keeper's Note: The entity Yahweh is an aspect of Yog-sothoth that was released from his prison on Mount Sinai by Moses thousands of years ago. He was later imprisoned by a group of Kabbalistic sorcerers around the 2nd century BCE.

Lost Temple of Azathoth. Legends have told of a dark temple hidden somewhere in the highest peaks of a particular mountain range. The stories describe it as an obelisk-like column of steel-gray stone with a single door of black metal at its base. The door has no handles or latches, but only a single, oddly-shaped keyhole sits at its center.

Recently, the characters have come into possession of a book that not only describes the location of the temple, but contains a key concealed within the spine of the tome.

The legends also warn that opening the temple will release a great evil trapped within, but those are only foolish superstitions, aren't they?

Keeper's Note: If the characters are ignorant of the mythos, they may be seeking to open the temple, but if they are aware of the danger, then they may be trying to stop those who would unleash the dark god within. Either way, this scenario will provide ample opportunity for traveling some extremely hazardous mountain terrain. The temple could be hidden deep within a crevasse or beneath a massive overhang of rock.

Monastery Murders. The characters must travel to an isolated monastery to investigate a series of unexplained deaths. According to the authorities, the victims were found eviscerated in their sleeping cells with the doors locked from the inside, and no other way to enter.

The local authorities have concluded that there must be some sort of serial killer stalking the monks, but the head of the order believes something supernatural is behind it. The investigators must find out who or what is killing the monks and stop them.

Keeper's Note: The monks have been tasked with translating a very old scroll, and as they continue their work, they are inadvertently unleashing the attacks. The scroll is sacred to their order, and so they are required by their vows to keep its existence a secret. The investigators could notice that the ones getting killed happens to coincide with them working in the transcription room.

Paleontological Discovery. A group of mountain climbers discover what appears to be some sort of fossil near the entrance of an unexplored cave. Their photo of the site comes to the attention of the investigators because the fossil is reminiscent of a creature described in an obscure occult book.

They put together an expedition to the site, and upon arrival they discover that the bones are not fossilized. This means that the remains are much more recent than they believed.

Exploring the cave for more artifacts, they end up discovering a labyrinth of carved tunnels that are hundreds of thousands of years old. That night, a storm moves into the mountains, compelling them to move into the tunnels in order to survive.

Keeper's Note: This would be a great opportunity to introduce one of the classic Lovecraftian races or create a new one. This could be an Elder Thing outpost, a Yithian laboratory, or something entirely unique and unknown. To ramp up the tension, the Keeper could have a member of the expedition disappear on the first night or maybe they find something odd left at their campsite in the morning.

Raiders of Iughaza. Throughout the centuries, rumors have persisted that a hidden city exists somewhere within this mountain range, but it has always been dismissed as a legend... until now. The characters recently acquired an ancient tablet that seems to refer to this city, and more importantly, provides a location. Through the funding of a wealthy patron, the investigators put together an expedition to seek out this city and the unimaginable treasure that it is supposed to contain.

Keeper's Note: The Keeper can have this start with a slow burn as the characters search for this lost city, and upon finding it, begin exploring its utterly alien streets and buildings. The Keeper can take this in many directions. What is hidden within this city? Is it still inhabited? What threats will they encounter on the way? Does the characters' patron have a secret agenda?

Rescue Mission. A party of mountain climbers are lost in the mountains, and the characters have been asked to help rescue them. All they have to go by is the expedition's intended route, and one signal that marked their last position. Comparing the two, they learn that the expedition was way off course for some reason, and that reaching them is going to be extremely difficult.

When the rescue team enters the region where the lost expedition disappeared, they find magnetic anomalies that cause their compasses and equipment to give them false readings, which suggests that this is why the original expedition became lost. The odd thing is that this anomaly has never been recorded before, despite the fact that other expeditions have climbed this mountain.

A day of searching finds one of the expedition raving like a lunatic about strange lights, sound, and something he calls the "broken mirror".

Keeper's Note: The signal that marked the climbers' last position could be anything from a flare to a radio signal to

a GPS ping, depending on the time period of the campaign.

The broken mirror is some sort of dimensional anomaly that opens on another time, place or both, and it's this phenomenon that's causing the equipment failures. The Keeper can have something unnatural comes through and attack the characters or maybe they have to go through into an alien world to rescue the climbers.

The Keeper should consider making the other side of the portal an entirely different climate and terrain, like a desert (see Cinematic Environs: Desert Wastes).

Serial Cultist. The characters have been closing in on a ritualistic serial killer for months now. They recently identified the most likely suspect, but when they went to arrest him, he managed to evade capture. The next day, a tip from a gas station attendant suggests that their quarry is headed into the mountains.

As the characters track the killer, they begin finding strange symbols carved into trees, as if marking a trail. When they finally catch up with him, they find themselves surrounded by a group of primitive-looking men and women, all bearing the same occult tattoos as their suspect.

Keeper's Note: This group is an inbred cult who worship Shub-Niggurath: The Black Goat of the Woods with a Thousand Young. The serial killer wasn't just murdering people at random, but rather performing a complex ritual. In fact, there are many members of this cult out there performing these sacrifices. Unfortunately for the characters, they didn't just get lucky to stumble upon this one. He actually wanted them to follow him into the mountains to participate in a very special sacrifice.

Soldiers of Misfortune. The characters are soldiers who have been sent into the mountains to hunt down a band of guerrilla fighters that have been causing significant problems with the supply convoys moving through the area.

They find the guerrillas massacred in a narrow pass, looking as if they were put through a meat grinder. Now the characters find themselves being hunted by a vicious enemy that seems to be able to move with uncanny stealth and speed.

Keeper's Note: A forgotten stone vault has been breached by a stray bomb, releasing a number of ghosts that had been trapped there for thousands of years. They will watch the characters caves during the day, and come out at night to attack. The Keeper can choose the number of ghosts based on how easy or difficult they want the scenario to be.

Terror from the Stars. Witnesses report a meteor hitting somewhere in the mountains. Whether the characters are scientists, amateur astronomers, or curious teens, they set out to find the impact site and recover the meteor.

After more than two days of searching, they finally come across a crater. Instead of finding a typical chunk of iron and nickel, they

find and almost perfect sphere about two feet in diameter. It has split down the center, revealing an empty hollow core.

They find a strange set of scratches in the dirt leading away from the impact site. Following it for a half mile, they find the corpse of a deer hanging in a tree, wrapped in sticky gray rope-like strands. Its body is completely desiccated.

Keeper's Note: The thing from the meteor can be anything the Keeper likes, changing the specifics of the deer kill to reflect that option. One recommendation would be to re-skin an existing mythos creature, such as a Formless Spawn or Shuggoth, or use the Star Spider below.

STAR SPIDER

STR 120 CON 90 SIZ 80 INT 20 POW 70 DEX 80

HP 17

Damage Bonus +1d6

Move 10

Attacks

Attacks per round: 1

Bite: 40%; Damage 1d3 + db

Armor: 3 (chitin)

Skills: Hide 50%, Sneak 80%

Sanity Loss: 1/1d10+2 Sanity points to see the Star Spider.

Web: The Star Spider will usually lay down a ten foot area of web to momentarily cause its victim to pause, allowing it to strike from behind. Anyone stepping on the web must make a Dexterity check or become stuck for 1 round.

Camouflage: The Star Spider can manipulate its outer layer to mimic almost any color or texture, making them impossible to see when blending in. Spot Hidden checks require an Extreme Spot Hidden check to succeed.

About the Star Spider

This alien arachnid is about three feet across and looks similar to an wolf spider with a few exceptions. It has a soft, yellowish outer layer that seems to ripple as it moves, ten legs, and dozens of eyes, seemingly scattered randomly about its head.

It hunts from ambush, laying down a near invisible layer of web and then using its camouflage to wait in ambush. Once their prey steps on the web and becomes momentarily stuck, the Star Spider will strike.





MOUNTAIN CONDITIONS

The summit was some distance above us, shrouded in clouds, and the sun had just settled behind the peak to the west. Night would be here all too soon.

We had so far trusted our guide, but as he glanced up slope and down, it became increasingly clear that he was worried.

After a short rest he said, "I'm afraid that we're not going to reach the temple today," and with a serious look added, "It's going to be a long night."

No matter where one travels within a particular environ, there will be aspects that are common throughout the entire region. The following section outlines conditions that are likely to effect the characters no matter where they go.

REGIONAL PRESSURES

The mountains are harsh and unforgiving, with a wide variety of conditions spread over very short distances. One can go from near arctic conditions at the summit to temperate forests after descending only a few miles.

More than any other natural barrier, mountains often delineate very different bio-regions on a continent, with cool rain forests on one side and burning deserts on the other.

If the investigators travel long enough, they will eventually have little choice but to cross a mountain range at some point, and even navigating a well-traveled pass can be treacherous.

REGIONAL CONDITIONS

Remember to be consistent and adjudicate your gaming table when situations arrive that hinder the party. Listed below are some possible hazards and minor setbacks that a mountainous region can offer.

Alpine Climate. Once the characters reach the higher altitudes, the temperature begins to drop sharply. They are

going to encounter conditions similar to those found in arctic lands, but even more extreme due to the reduced air pressure, low oxygen and rapidity with which the weather can change.

Freezing Liquids – Most common liquids will freeze solid in higher altitudes, even in the summer. These can include drinking water, medicines and other liquids that might be of value. The Keeper must decide if the liquid can still be used once melted or if it has any reduced effects. Note that most glass containers will break if the liquid inside freezes.

Frostbite – Prolonged exposure to the extreme cold found at high altitudes without sufficient protection can lead to frostbite in the extremities. Each hour spent exposed to the elements requires the character to make a successful Constitution check or lose 5 points of Dexterity due to numbness and pain.

If the setting is particularly brutal, the Keeper could have the frostbitten character lose 1d4 fingers or toes to frostbite after failing their Constitution check 5 times in a row, and 1 more for each failure thereafter.

Recovering from frostbite takes a long time, with the character recovering 5 Dexterity point per day of bed rest.

Severe Weather – The mountains are prone to extreme weather changes that can happen in a very short time. It could be possible to go from a sunny day to complete whiteout conditions in less than an hour. When this happens, the characters will have to seek shelter as soon as possible or risk getting lost or freezing to death.

The simplest way to handle this is for the characters make a successful Constitution check every 30 minutes or gain 1 level of *Exhaustion*. This continues until they find shelter or die. If they're traveling in a specific direction, then they may also need to make skill checks to not lose their way, with the difficulty based on the situation (Keeper's discretion).

For more options concerning arctic climates, see *Cinematic Environs: Arctic Lands*, also by Critical Hit Publishing.

Altitude. As the investigators climb to higher and higher altitudes, the air becomes increasingly thin, and this makes it extremely difficult for those that are not acclimated to it. These altitude regions are broken down into 4 zones:

High Altitude (5000 to 11,500 feet) – As the characters move into high altitudes, they begin to feel the early stages of altitude sickness, which include fatigue, shortness of breath and a mild headache.

They immediately gain 1 level of *Exhaustion*, and cannot have less than 1 level as long as they remain at high altitude.

Very High Altitude (11,500 to 18,000 feet) – At very high altitudes, the characters will begin to feel ill, as if they have a really bad hangover. The character gains 1 additional level of *Exhaustion*, and cannot have less than 2 levels as long as they remain at very high altitude.

Extreme Altitude (18,000 to 26,000 feet) – At extreme altitudes, the characters begin suffering acute altitude sickness as their brains and lungs begin to collect fluid.

The symptoms include lung congestion, weakness, tremors, rapid heart beat and disorientation. This means the characters gain 1 more level of *Exhaustion* and cannot have less than 3 levels as long as they remain at extreme altitude.

Death Zone (Above 26,000 feet) – Above this altitude, the air is too thin to support most living creatures, including humans. If the characters find themselves in this unfortunate position, they will begin to suffocate without special breathing equipment.

As an option, the Keeper can allow the characters to resist the effects of altitude by making *Hard* Constitution checks until they fail, after which they are effected normally.

Cold. When a character is exposed to extreme cold without protection, they must make a Constitution check every 30 minutes or become hypothermic. The *Difficulty Level* starts at *Normal*, increasing to *Hard* after an hour, and *Extreme* after 90 minutes. The character with hypothermia has 2 *Penalty Dice* on all Dexterity and Intelligence checks and suffer 2 levels of *Exhaustion*.

Every 30 minutes thereafter, they must make a Constitution check at an *Extreme Difficulty Level* or suffer another level of *Exhaustion*. This process continues until they either warm up or die.

Despair. Between the brutal physical exertion, vast distances and thin air, the mountainous terrain is enough to run anyone into the ground. If your game has a strong element of realism, you may ask for Sanity checks once per day to determine how the characters are dealing with the stress. Failure means losing 1 point of Sanity. If a character loses 20% of their Sanity in this way, this despair could cause them to simply give up, sit down, and do nothing to save themselves from the elements or predators.

Difficult Terrain. While in the mountains, all characters move at half of their normal movement rate, unless otherwise stated.

Natural Barriers. When traveling through the mountains, there are any number of natural obstacles that can force the characters to risk their lives overcoming it. Otherwise they will have to backtrack, losing precious time.

Unrelenting Discomfort. Sleeping and resting is incredibly uncomfortable at best and near impossible at worst. As such, the benefits of any rest may need to be modified depending on the specific conditions.

Unstable. Mountainous terrain often has areas of instability where loose stone can shift under foot, causing characters to fall or even trigger rock slides. The Keeper may wish to include areas of broken rocks for the characters to traverse. These will tend to be steep slopes littered with shattered gray slate or similarly brittle stone.

When attempting to cross these fields of crumbling stone, the characters should make a Dexterity check every 10 minutes to avoid losing their footing. The Keeper should base the difficulty on how hazardous he wants to make the travel. A failed roll means that the character falls prone and begins sliding down the slope towards whatever the Keeper has placed below. It may be a piles of crushed stone, a dense line of trees, a mountain river, or even a cliff.

When one or more characters loses their footing, there is a 10% chance per character that the disturbance will cause a significant rock slide (see *Rock Slide* in the section on hazards).

Wind Chill. The Keeper may want to intensify the situation by considering the wind chill when adjudicating the cold. The following chart can be used to give an idea of how cold it really feels to the investigators.

Temperature (°F)

	40	30	20	10	0	-10	-20	-30	-40
10	34	21	9	-4	-16	-28	-41	-53	-66
20	30	17	4	-9	-22	-35	-48	-61	-74
30	28	15	1	-12	-26	-39	-53	-67	-80
40	27	13	-1	-15	-29	-43	-57	-71	-84
50	26	12	-3	-17	-31	-45	-60	-74	-88
60	25	10	-4	-19	-33	-48	-62	-76	-91

Frostbite Times: 30 minutes, 10 minutes, 5 minutes

Even before frostbite sets in, the bitter wind will make it difficult to perform even the most mundane tasks. Manipulating tools, holding objects, and even seeing clearly could become difficult or impossible. The Keeper will have to decide on a case-by-case basis what the effects will be on the investigators.

ABILITY SCORE LOSS

Unless otherwise stated, any ability score points that are lost as a result of environmental conditions are restored at a rate of

1 point per hour once those conditions have been rectified. For example, if one is suffering from the cold, then time spend in a warm, dry place will allow the character to recover.

FALLING

Although Call of Cthulhu has rules in place to deal with falling, they are fairly basic, and may not take into account situations that are unique to a mountainous environ.

For this reason, we are offering an alternative to the standard falling damage. Some may feel that this is unnecessary or too brutal, and so the Keeper should feel free to disregard these falling rules if they wish. It will not affect any other features of this environ either way.

Free Fall. When an investigator falls through the air without anything to get in their way or slow them down, this is free fall. A falling creature or object will reach terminal velocity (the fastest rate at which they can fall) in about 15-20 seconds.

The following chart should be used to determine injuries to the character. As always, the Keeper should take any extenuating circumstances into account.

Seconds	Distance	Damage
1	0-30 feet	1d6 HP and Stunned for 10 minutes.
3	30-60 feet	3d4 HP and a Broken Bone
6	60-90 feet	5d4 HP and 1d4 Broken Bones
12	90-120 feet	6d4 HP and 2d4 Broken Bones
18+	120+ feet	Death is Almost Certain (see below)

The Keeper should roll randomly to determine which bones are broken, and determine if they want to limit breaks to limbs and ribs, or if there is a chance of head or spinal injury. These latter breaks can result in conditions like paralysis or brain damage, and so should be considered carefully before going that route.

Anyone that falls over 120 feet has a very slight chance of survival. They can make a Luck roll, and if they succeed, they miraculously survive, though they are critically injured.

This means that they are left with countless broken bones and will be in a coma for 3d4 days. Additionally, there may be long term lingering effects, such as a permanent limp, reduced dexterity, memory loss and so on.

The Keeper can discuss any lasting damage with the player, and any lingering effects should be reflected in their ability scores. For example, it might be that they have a permanent loss of Dexterity points or their movement rate might be reduced by half.

If a character has any means of mitigating the damage from a fall, the Keeper can decide to apply other modifiers as they see fit. For example, falling into a pine tree might be able to reduce their damage level by 1 distance category

Inclined Fall. Not all falls will be as simple as falling straight down. In some ways, falling down a steep, or even gradual slope

can be almost as deadly. For the purposes of this section, a gradual slope will be defined as being between 35 and 45 degrees, while a steep slope will be 45 to 80 degrees.

When a character begins to fall, they must make a Dexterity check every 10 feet. If it's a steep slope, the check requires a *Hard* success. A failed check means that they continue to fall and suffer 1 Hit Point of damage. A successful check means that they manage to slow and stop their fall at the beginning of the next round.

The distance they tumble down the incline each round is erratic, ranging from 10-40 feet (1d4 x 10) on a gradual slope and 20-80 feet (2d4 x 10) on a steep slope.

In addition to Hit Point damage, they can suffer more serious injuries the longer they fall. After losing half of their Hit Points, they break a bone. If they get below 4 Hit Points, they are unconscious and tumble like a rag doll until something stops them.

If the character has any sort of acrobatic training, then they can have a *Bonus Die* on their rolls.

Unintended Consequences. With any sort of falling, a lot can happen that the characters do not expect. For example, a character might reach out in desperation to grab a companion to stop their fall off a cliff, but in doing so they risk dragging the other character with them.

If there are other characters below them when they fall, they could collide with them and end up taking the whole group down.

If the cliff is crumbling or littered with loose stone, the character's unfortunate fall could trigger falling rocks or even a full blown rock slide. The Keeper should consider all these possibilities, and go with whatever would be logical, interesting, and above all, cinematic.

An excerpt from the Journal of Dr. Hale

Alan Maxwell is gone. He was within arm's reach when the rope broke. No one noticed that it had frayed against the rock as each of us in turn ascended the cliff.

Our eyes met for the briefest of moments as we both realized that there was nothing that could be done. I stared in utter horror as poor Alan dropped helplessly into the mist below. He never screamed, but I'll never forget the sound as he struck the ground far below.

We debated the wisdom of going down to retrieve his body, but with only half of our rope, it would be suicide. We settled for offering a prayer to whomever was listening. Alan never spoke of his faith... if any.

Although I'm ashamed to admit it, I'm grateful that the growing dark has hidden his remains from sight. We can travel no further today, and must make camp for the night. Even as we now sit around the campfire pretending not to hear the coyotes below, our eyes keep wandering to the empty space that's been left in our circle.



MOUNTAIN HAZARDS

The expedition entered the foothills of the Dhaulagiri Mountains on August 23rd. It was a bit late in the year for any expedition to attempt the climb, but I was willing to pay twice the going rate to reach the abandoned monastery before Kelly's team. While this probably wasn't the best decision I've ever made, I simply can't let Dr. Kelly find it first.

The mountaineer for our expedition was a woman named Kate Sheffield. She came highly recommended, and had in fact been the only one willing to take on the contract. Ms. Sheffield had been through those mountains at their worst, and if she couldn't get us through, no one could.

The first few days of the climb had been better than we could have expected. By the end of the week however, the weather began to turn against us. It was the evening of the 8th day when I found Ms. Sheffield staring off to the south as we were setting up camp for the night. She looked grim, and without looking at me said, "The storms are coming early this year."



MOUNTAIN HAZARDS

CAVES

The thunderstorm that had threatened us for days has finally struck with incredible ferocity. We managed to reach the cave that Alan discovered just off the trail, and it turned out to be much larger than it first appeared from the exterior.

Since we're low on water, several of our number have gone deeper into the cave, following the sound of what could be an underground spring. That was an hour ago however, and I am becoming rather concerned. My research into these mountains suggested that they are riddled with caves and labyrinthine tunnels, many of which are unexplored.

Even as I write this, I hear foot steps coming this way. The footfalls sound rather heavy, so perhaps they found water after all.

PRESSURE

The characters can be compelled to seek out the shelter of a cave for many reasons, including severe weather, a secure overnight campsite, or to avoid unfriendly eyes.

Once inside the cave, they may discover new threats which can put them in the position of choosing the lesser evil.

IF/THEN

If your players decide to explore the cave, the Keeper will have to decide the nature of the place. Is it a shallow cave that provides minor protection, a larger cave, or the beginning of a cave system that stretches throughout the mountain.

Bat Cave. As the name implies, these caves extend quite far into the rock, and often have high ceilings housing huge colonies of bats. Such creatures are not necessarily harmful in and of themselves, but the deep guano that covers the floor is often rife with parasites, diseases and noxious fumes.

The nasty smell is usually enough to dissuade most parties from spending too much time in a bat cave, but should they decide to endure the discomfort for longer than 1 hour, the characters will have to make a successful Constitution check each hour or become nauseous, dizzy and have trouble breathing. This will give them the poisoned condition until they are able to breath fresh air for at least 30 minutes.

If attempting to rest within the cave, there is a very good chance of infection from parasites and/or disease. After spending more than 4 consecutive hours in a bat cave, the characters must make a *Hard* Constitution check. Failure means that the character contracts a disease or is infected by a parasite.

1. Histoplasmosis. Within 2 days after becoming infected, the victim will develop a fever, chills, sore muscles and massive swelling around the neck and groin. They will develop purplish-black sores all over their body, but mainly in the extremities. The infected character suffers 1 level of *Exhaustion* and loses 5 points of Constitution.

At the beginning of each day, an infected character must make a Constitution check or gain another level of *Exhaustion*. On a successful check, the character's *Exhaustion* level is decreased by 1 level. If a successful check reduces the infected character's level of *Exhaustion* below 1, the character recovers from the disease.

The disease can be carried with the characters on their gear or clothing, so the Keeper will have to decide if there is a chance of becoming infected, even after leaving the cave.

2. Death Grubs. These mythos parasites can be found in any pile of rotting organic waste matter or dead flesh where there has been prolonged mythos activity. They will viciously burrow into any living flesh that they come into contact, inflicting 1d4 hit points of piercing damage. If fire or electricity is applied to the wound within the first 2 rounds, the Death Grubs can be driven out, though the victim will take damage from whatever method is used. For example, if a torch is applied to the wound, the victim will suffer 1d4 hit points of fire damage. Another option is to apply an Elder Sign to the infected site within 5 minutes after first contact.

If these parasites are not purged somehow, they will burrow painfully through the victim's flesh and into their heart, killing them within 15 minutes. After the first 2 rounds, the intense pain will incapacitate the victim, preventing them from taking any actions apart from screaming.

3. Rabies. One of the most serious diseases found in caves, it inevitably leads to convulsions, coma and death if not treated quickly. The disease takes weeks to progress and is found in nearly every corner of the world. The humidity of a cave can be a perfect place for rabies to persist since there are hundreds of thousands of bats urinating and defecating in a very warm moist environment.

The rabies virus can last for a period of time after it's left their body. The most common infection route is a bite or a scrape, though there is the possibility of contracting the virus by breathing in contaminated dust.

Anyone in the cave should make a Luck roll. Failure means that they came into contact with the virus and must make a Constitution check. Failure means that they are infected. If the infected wound is washed immediately with soap and water, they have a *Bonus Die* on their check. The victim will have no symptoms for 3d4 weeks. At the end of that time it reaches the brain, and the virus multiplies rapidly, spreading to the salivary glands. The victim then begins to show obvious signs of the disease, including excessive salivating, fever, hallucinations, and violence, attempting to bite their victims. They will die within 2d4 days later.

4. Gut Worms. Although not lethal, these parasites are subtle enough to go unnoticed and can wear a character down over time. The first symptoms manifest about a day after infection, and include cramps and diarrhea. Whenever the infected victim attempts to rest, they must make a Constitution check. Failure means that they are awake most of the night with cramps and get no rest.

This parasite can be purged with medicine (available at most pharmacies) or with certain herbal tinctures, usually known to local indigenous people. The right medicine will clear out the parasite in a couple days, while the tinctures will clear them out in a couple weeks.

Labyrinth. Whether these cave systems were formed by countless centuries of erosion or ancient volcanic vents, they stretch throughout this part of the mountain in all directions. The tunnels themselves can be anywhere in size from 2 foot crawl spaces to massive vaulted halls.

The passages can extend in any direction including up, down and at varying angles. With the nearly unlimited possible directions, it is very easy to become lost, unless the investigators take precautions, such as marking with chalk or

using a string to find their way back. Both of these options have their limitations. Chalk doesn't work well on damp stone and may be nearly invisible on lighter rock. A string can only go so far, and can be cut if dragged across a sharp piece of stone.

When entering a labyrinth, the Keeper can roll a d12 on the following table or come up with their own prepared map:

1. Narrow Tunnel. The tunnel is low and narrow, averaging around 2 feet wide and 5 feet high. There are countless spurs of sharp stone that must be squeezed past, and anyone taller than 5 feet will have to duck their head. When passing through, the characters must make a Dexterity check to avoid getting stuck. Getting unstuck requires a Strength check to get loose. A roll of 01 means that they remain stuck, and gives them a *Penalty Die* on their next attempt. It is not possible to get through here with a Size of 80 or greater or while wearing a backpack. Characters with a Size of 70 to 80 will have a *Penalty Die* on their check to avoid becoming stuck.

2. Wet Cave. This cave is just large enough for a person of average height to stand up, and is roughly 8 to 10 feet in diameter. The walls and floor are slick with algae from constantly trickling water. The water is drinkable, though it has a rather slimy texture. There are 1d2 additional exits, with one descending rather sharply. If the characters take the descending passage, they will have to make a *Hard* Dexterity check to avoid slipping on the heavy coating of slime that is running down the tunnel. Failure means sliding down tunnel. Their options at this point depends on the size and nature of the passage.

3. Crawl Tunnel. This passage is little more than a crawl space, only about 2 to 3 feet in diameter. It is lined with crumbling rock, and due to its twisting turns, it is impossible to see more than 10 feet at a time. Crawling through here is very difficult, and for those prone to claustrophobia, rather alarming. When crawling in this tunnel, there is a 1 in 20 chance that some of the tunnel will collapse, trapping the character. Freeing themselves requires a *Hard* Strength check. They have a *Bonus Die* on the check if they are aided by another. The Keeper may also want to consider a Sanity check to avoid panicking when the roof collapses, particularly if it makes sense for the character. It is impossible to crawl through the passage if the character's Size is 80 or greater or if they are wearing a pack, though they could push it ahead of them or pull it along behind them.

4. Crystal Cave. This cave is somewhat spacious, but very irregular. It has a high ceiling around 18 to 20 feet above, and many nooks and alcoves that make estimating its actual size difficult, though it is likely somewhere between 15 and 30 feet across. The area is clogged with calcium deposits, stalagmites, stalactites, and clusters of quartz crystals that amplify any light within the cave. There are between 1 and 6 additional exits, with most of them moving deeper into the mountain. There are many pools of stagnant water throughout, each with dozens of pale, blind fish. The fish and water are safe to consume, though the fish are quite sour. While not poisonous, eating them requires a Constitution check to avoid vomiting them out within an hour.

5. Tall and Narrow Tunnel. This tunnel is narrow but tall. It twists and turns through the mountain, making it impossible to see anything

more than 15 feet away. It is somewhat dry and crumbling, with loose limestone littering the floor. Traveling through here is easy enough, though wearing a backpack is impossible. The constant sound of falling dust and debris can be alarming, since it feels as if the ceiling could collapse at any moment, though this is not the case.

6. Deep Chasm. This cave is somewhat larger at nearly 40 feet across. Taking up most of the floor is a deep chasm that descends into pitch darkness. Dropping a stone or some light source will reveal that it goes farther than 200 feet before a faint splash can be heard. There is a passage on the far side which is possible to reach by climbing around the chasm to the left or right. This is a dangerous prospect since the rock is very loose. Climbing along the edge of the chasm requires a Strength check to avoid slipping. If a character slips, and is not secured by other means, they can make a Dexterity check to grab hold of a more secure rock. Should they plunge into the chasm, there could be other opportunities to grab hold of something at the Keeper's discretion. The water is only a few feet deep, and so falling into the water far below will have them taking 2d6 Hit Points of damage. Note that the Keeper may want to consider having the remains of other hapless explorers in the water with some of their gear intact. Some climbing gear would certainly be appropriate.

7. Vertical Chimney. This tunnel climbs steeply up through the rock. It twists and turns, even leveling off for brief periods. It emerges in an almost vertical shaft with an opening to the sky about 100 feet above. This shaft can be climbed, but it is very narrow. Characters with a Size of 80 or greater, or anyone wearing a backpack cannot quite fit. Packs and other gear can be pulled up behind if they have any rope. Climbing to top requires 3 consecutive Strength checks to succeed. Any failures result in slipping a short distance and suffering 1 Hit Point of damage. If a character has 3 consecutive failures, they gain 1 level of *Exhaustion*.

8. Wide Tunnel. This isn't so much a cave as it is a widening of the tunnel, forming a long, winding gallery of stalagmites, stalactites and pillars of various minerals. The width varies between 20 and 30 feet, with the ceiling nearly 60 feet overhead. Despite the space, moving is difficult as there isn't anything like a flat surface to walk upon. The only exit is roughly 100 to 150 feet somewhere ahead, though the nature of the cave makes it difficult to tell for sure. Crossing this chamber is a challenge requiring a Dexterity check to avoid falling prone. Normally such a fall would only be annoying, but with this broken and jagged floor, the unhappy character will suffer hard bruises amounting to 1 Hit Point of damage. The Keeper should note that if there is going to be some sort of predator awaiting the party, this would be a perfect ambush point. Due to the difficult terrain, any attacks by the characters would have a *Penalty Die*.

9. Dead End. At first glance, this appears to be a dead end, but closer examination might reveal a small, difficult-to-find exit. There is a 1 in 10 chance that there is such an exit, which can be located with an *Extreme Spot Hidden* check.

10. Fork in the Tunnel. There is a fork in the passage that goes left and right. Both tunnels of sufficient size to allow the average person to pass without difficulty.

11. Deep Pool. The entrance to this cave is between 10 and 40 feet above the floor which is filled with water of unknown depth. There are 3d4 additional exits to this chamber scattered throughout, all above the water line. The water is very deep in the middle, but much shallower at the edges. Should a character be foolish enough to leap into the water, there is a 1 in 20 chance that they will hit a shallow rock, suffering 1d6 Hit Points of damage. The water is clean enough to drink, and even has a number of white, eyeless eels that are edible, if a bit sour.

12. Wildcard! The Keeper should come up with something unusual, whether it's the remains of a previous group of explorers, a long forgotten shrine, cave art, strange mineral formations, or a vein of precious metal. If the Keeper has planned some sort of encounter for these caves, this would be the place to put it. On the other hand, if the Keeper is feeling uninspired, then simply roll again.

Naturally not all potential cave configurations can be listed here, and so it is important that the Keeper embellish each of these options, changing them up as the characters move along.

The important thing is to impart to the players a sense of confusion and claustrophobia while within these cave systems. For example, when describing the twisting tunnels, stress the fact that, even as they turn a corner, they are not turning a perfect right angle, and that the passage might even turn back upon itself. Occasionally mentioning that a tunnel or cave "looks very familiar," even if they haven't been there before, will help to heighten the sense of being lost.

Let's say that the characters have entered a cave with six exits. If there is no indication of which one they entered, they would be hard pressed to pick the right one to go back unless they have taken precautions to note it, since all of them look more or less the same. Some clever players may have their characters use chalk or rocks to mark the way, but of course using chalk on calcium deposits or sandstone is nearly invisible. String or other cordage can be used to leave a trail, but these can get snagged or even cut on sharp rocks.

The confusion is compounded by the fact that any light they have will only reach so far, and in most caves, there will be overlapping and confusing shadows.

Imparting the sense of claustrophobia is also critical to the success of this hazard. Describe how their shoulders rub against the passage walls, how they are hunched over because of the low ceiling, and the sense of feeling the weight of an entire mountain above them pressing down.

Mineshaft. Burrowed into the side of the mountain is an abandoned mineshaft. This is fairly obvious at a distance due to the obviously carved opening and debris scattered around the entrance. The tunnel goes in for some distance, and is shored up every 10 feet by stout wooden beams. Near the entrance are several boxes of old mining gear, including lanterns, half empty oil flasks, decayed rope, a few rusted pickaxes, and perhaps even a mining hat or two.

The Keeper will have to decide the extent of the mine. For example, it could be collapsed a short distance inside, or it

could consist of literally miles of tunnels. In this latter case, just keep in mind that the tunnels will likely be fairly well organized and perhaps even labeled with crude signs. The mine could potentially connect with a natural cave system (see *Labyrinth*).

The entrance to the mine should make a suitable location for a campsite, though going further in could be less stable. This will be quite obvious due to the fallen beams and sections of collapsed wall.

Many creatures could have made their lairs within the mine, including dangerous predators. It's also possible that those who operated the mine delved too deep and uncovered something... unspeakable.

On the bright side, there is a 1 in 20 chance that, if the party takes some time to search around, they can find an amount of valuable ore (like gold or silver) near the entrance that was not taken by the miners. The ore weighs roughly 50 pounds, and contains precious metals or gemstones, depending on the location of the mine. The Keeper can determine the value.

Overhang. This is only a cave in the loosest sense of the word. It consists of a massive sheet of stone that extends out of the side of the mountain, creating a sheltered area anywhere between 100 to 1000 square feet. These are rarely inhabited since they provide little protection from wind and cold.

The drawback to taking refuge under the overhang is that it is usually quite visible at a distance, and if a fire is built inside, it will act like a lantern, making the investigators visible for many miles.

Enemies will have a *Bonus Die* to notice the investigators' camp at a distance.

Predator! The cave itself is quite mundane, and seems like a good location for setting up camp for the night. Sure, there are a few old bones laying about, but nothing fresh.

Unfortunately, near the back of the cave is an opening to another chamber that is very difficult to see. If the investigators takes 15 minutes to search the cave, the opening can be found with a successful Spot Hidden check.

Within the rear chamber is a large predator appropriate to the region. It could be a large mountain lion, a grizzly bear, or some eldritch horror if it seems appropriate. Whatever it is, it will not appreciate being disturbed. If their lair is discovered, they will attack immediately. Otherwise they will awake sometime in the night and surprise the investigators by attempting to savage the one closest to the back of the cave.

If the Keeper wants to make it more interesting, it can be turned into a full blown encounter by including a creature related to the current scenario.

CHANGES

There are many areas within a cave system or mine that can collapse with little or no warning. If a character makes any significant disruption to a tunnel or cave (such as discharging a firearm or violently striking the stone), there is a 1 in 20 chance that there will be a cave in. This chance increases by 1 for each consecutive disruption in the same area.

If there is a collapse, everyone in the area must make a *Hard* Dexterity check to avoid being caught in the rubble. A success means that they have avoided the collapse, but are still knocked prone. The Keeper should Even the Odds to determine which side of the collapse a particular characters finds themselves.

A failed check means suffering 2d6 hit points of damage and becoming pinned by the rocks. Getting free will require a successful Strength check. If aided by someone who is not trapped, they have a *Bonus Die* to get free. Each attempt to dig free takes 10 minutes.

Clearing a collapsed passage will take a minimum of 1 hour of hard labor. The Keeper can decide if things such as limited air will be a factor for anyone trapped.

EVEN THE ODDS

An odd roll means that the investigators discovers the remains of a previous explorer. The corpse is little more than bones and rags, but they may have a few bits of useful gear (Keeper's discretion). The Keeper can use this opportunity to insert a plot hook, clue, or bit of local lore to enrich the story.

FUMBLECRIT

- 1 Victim inadvertently triggers a local collapse, trapping them beneath a pile of rocks and rubble. One of their legs is crushed (roll randomly) and they are unconscious. The leg is broken and useless until set and healed. Once set with a successful First Aid or Medicine check, the bone will mend on its own in a month or so.
- 2 The victim managed to brutally strike their head on a low hanging rock, stunning themselves for 1d4 rounds. They gain 1 level of *Exhaustion* until they get a good night's sleep to recover from the blow.
- 3 Victim is struck by a falling rock and is knocked unconscious for 1d4 hours.
- 4 The victim experiences an extreme reaction to being inside the cave, causing them to feel extremely claustrophobic. They suffer a severe panic attack. This is a bout of madness that persists as long as they are in the cave, and for an additional 1d10 minutes once they are out. The panic attack will start with an increasing sense of dread, followed by mental paralysis that will make them unable to move from the spot, resisting all attempts to move them. Finally, they will attempt to flee the cave at all costs. Anything that would give them some resistance to fear will give them a Sanity check to resist the panic attack.



CHASMS

On our twenty-third day we came upon a great fissure in the stone as if a mighty blow from a crazed god and split the very mountain in twain.

At first glance it seems nearly bottomless, but Thomas assures me that it's not. It's a small matter, since death would surely be the result for any poor soul unfortunate enough to plunge into that abyss.

PRESSURE

The chasm is perhaps one of the more frustrating natural barriers in that it can utterly stop a group's progress, while at the same time allowing them to see the path on the far side. Like a cliff, this hazard can force the characters to backtrack, losing precious time and resources.

IF/THEN

A chasm can be anywhere from a few feet to hundreds of yards across, but one challenge is common to all of them; finding a way across without falling to their death.

If the characters contrive a way to attempt to get across, the Keeper will need to consider many factors.

Unstable Edge. A chasm can have loose and broken rocks near its edge, and so even getting close enough to take a good look can be dangerous. Other edges appear stable, but actually hang out over the abyss, just waiting for the opportunity to crumble when some hapless character gets too close.

Any character than gets within 10 feet of an unstable edge must make a *Hard Spot Hidden* check to notice the dangerous places to step. Failure means that they step on a loose rock, sending them careening off the edge. They will get at least one *Hard Dexterity* check to stop themselves. It is recommended that they get an additional *Extreme Dexterity* check to give them one last chance to grab the edge. If their companions intervene, the Keeper will have to gauge the chances of success based on the situation.

Updrafts. Mountain winds can be very unpredictable, especially when channeled into narrow spaces. These winds can cause violent updrafts from the depths of the chasm, causing great problems for anyone hanging suspended over the chasm. The Keeper should consider giving the characters a *Penalty Die* on their checks when an updraft occurs.

CHANGES

The terrain can change quite rapidly in the mountains, particularly in the early spring when melting ice breaks rock loose from cliffs, overhangs and slopes. Occasionally, a larger section of mountain can reach a point where a massive section of rock breaks open, leaving a deep chasm.

The Keeper could consider having one of these chasms open up when the characters are present. Are they separated from their goal? Are they now unable to backtrack? Are the characters split by this new obstacle? Were they unlucky enough to be on top of a chasm as it opens?

Rope Bridge. One of the more permanent means of crossing a chasm is the classic rope bridge. These can be very primitive (like the ones fashioned from vines and bones) or more sophisticated (like the ones made with chains and ironwood).

These bridges can offer great cinematic opportunities for Keepers to spice up the game. Is it in disrepair and ready to collapse? Is it trapped to break at the wrong time? Are their enemies watching, and just waiting for the party to reach the middle of the bridge before loosing a cloud of arrows.

The fight on the rope bridge is a trope for a reason. Keepers should make the most of this exciting opportunity for their player characters to be awesome.

EVEN THE ODDS

If a new chasm opens up in the midst of the party, *Even the Odds* to determine which characters are on which side. The odd rolls will end up on the least advantageous side based on the current situation.

FUMBLECRIT

- 1 Victim tumbles into the chasm, falling 10 to 40 feet before getting horribly wedged between two massive rocks and taking any appropriate falling damage. They are unable to extract themselves, but may be extracted with the help of others. Doing so requires an *Extreme Strength* check. Unfortunately, the act of forcibly dragging a character from such a position will inflict 1d6 Hit Points worth of damage.
- 2 The victim just manages to grab a hold of someone or something before plummeting into the chasm, but ends up losing a personal or valuable item in the process. The Keeper can give the player the option to save the item and allow themselves to fall.

- 3 The victim gets tangled in a rope, root, or bit of clothing and ends up tripping into the chasm. Whatever tripped them stops their fall, but it wrenches their leg and leaves them hanging over the edge upside down. Assuming they are rescued, they will have a limp, reducing their movement by half until they get eight hours of solid sleep.
- 4 The hapless victim plunges into the unseen depths below. The rest of the party might well assume that the character is dead, but in fact they are still alive. There is a massive web suspended between the walls of the chasm, and they are in fact unharmed but trapped. The Keeper can decide whether this web is abandoned or inhabited, and if it is still in use, by whom.

An excerpt from the Journal of Gregory Powell

I was horribly disoriented by the fall and my unexpected stop left me with my heart racing and my head, which was pointing awkwardly towards the ground, throbbing painfully.

It took me several moments to piece together what had just happened. I had been standing on the edge of the chasm attempting to judge the distance across, when a gust of wind caught me off guard. I lost my balance and pitched head first into the darkness below.

I only vaguely remember hearing the gasps from my companions, who must have surely thought me dead. The edge from which I had fallen was nothing but a bright gash of light above me. A shower of grit and small stones continued to rain down upon me.

Taking a breath to collect myself, I started to relax. Then I felt one of the sticky threads tremble, like the string of an instrument. Then it did it again. Twisting my head around I saw a large opening in the chasm wall, and in the darkness was the faint reflection of eight, shiny black eyes. A three foot long stick-like leg had reached out and was gently plucking at the threads of the web.





CLIFFS

As we rounded one last bend in the trail, we were confronted by a sheer plain of stone that seemed to stretch to the very sky itself. The land fell away to both sides, leaving us only two choices: retrace our steps for a week and take the southern pass, or find a way to ascend the vast wall of stone before us.

Alan went to examine the cliff, and reported that there are sufficient hand-holds for one of us to make an unassisted climb to the top. Once there, anchors and ropes could be established to bring up the remainder of the expedition, including gear and beasts.

Since this will mean at least a full day of backbreaking work, we have decided to set up camp for the night and start fresh in the morning. Measuring out the rope, it seems as if we will have enough, if nothing goes wrong.

PRESSURE

These unexpected obstacles can come up at any time in a mountain setting. Encountering one of these imposing barriers – even a small one – can mean hours or even days of lost time if the characters decide to backtrack and find a new route. Traversing the cliff can save time, but will add a significant amount of risk to the journey, especially for those without the proper equipment or training. If the party has pack animals, this can compound the challenge even more.

The pressure can be heightened if they are being pursued by an enemy or if they themselves are chasing down quarry. They could also be pressed for time. For example, they might need to acquire an item before darkness is released upon the land.

IF/THEN

There are a number of ways that the characters can climb the cliff, depending on whether they are going up or down and the nature of the cliff. For example, some cliffs are smooth granite with few hand-holds while others can be rough and crumbling.

Other factors that can effect the ease or difficulty of climbing include the character's level or training, the presence of proper equipment, the characters' endurance, and no small amount of luck.

Crumbling Face. The major difference between this type of cliff and the others is that the surface is very unstable, though it may not appear so at first glance. A *Hard Spot* Hidden check will alert the characters to the dangers of climbing such a cliff.

Those who are aware of the danger will make climb rolls as if they are on a stable cliff face. The difference comes when the character just barely succeeds or miserably fails.

When the character succeeds by 5 or less than their Climb skill, they climb as normal, but they knock several rocks loose which plummet to the ground below. For example, if a character's Climb skill is 50 and they roll a 45, they knock some rocks loose. Anyone within 10 feet directly beneath them must make a Dexterity check or suffer 1d4 Hit Points of damage from the falling debris.

If a climber rolls a critical failure, then, in addition to falling, they bring a rock slide down with them (see *Rock Slide* on page 25).

If the climbing character is unaware of the unstable nature of the cliff, they will trigger falling rocks when rolling within

10 of what they need to succeed. For example, if they require a 50 to ascend the cliff, a roll of 40 will trigger the falling rocks. The unaware character will trigger a full rock slide on a natural roll of 01 or 02.

Overhanging Face. The overhanging cliff, as the name implies, is a face of rock that is greater than 90 degrees. In other words, the top extends out farther than the bottom. This makes ascending and descending a lot more challenging in that there is little to no contact with the actual cliff.

Climbing down means anchoring a stout rope and the characters lowering themselves slowly by either sheer strength or by using some tool for slowing their descent. This requires climbers to make Strength checks every 20 feet to maintain their grip on the rope. Climbers have a *Bonus Die* if they are using proper climbing gear, and two *Bonus Dice* if they have been trained how to use it.

Climbing up (assuming the use of a rope) is much more physically demanding, requiring the climber to make an *Hard* Strength check every 10 feet. Proper equipment and training does not provide any *Bonus Dice*, but it can save their life if they fail a Climb check.

A failed check while climbing a bare rope means falling to the ground. If they are properly using climbing gear, then they will fall only 10 feet before jerking to a stop and suffering 1 Hit Point of damage.

Regardless of the equipment, a climber must also make a Constitution check every 30 feet or gain 1 level of *Exhaustion* from the extreme physical exertion. Of course this means that future checks will become increasingly more difficult, making the prospect of reaching the top far less likely.

Rough Face. These cliffs tend to have more outcroppings and holds to make climbing easier. They also tend to have intermittent plant growth that takes hold in the various nooks and crannies, depending on the climate.

Climbing is similar to the smooth faced cliff, except that Strength checks only need to be made every 20 feet.

Rough faced cliffs can provide shelter for many creatures, from nesting eagles to climbing primates. The Keeper can decide if any such creatures inhabit the cliff, and what might happen if the characters stumble across one. Are they startled? Is the beast dangerous? Is it something more dangerous than a normal beast?

Smooth Face. These cliffs are usually comprised of a hard stone like granite, and are usually quite tall. Climbing up is close to impossible without training, unless the party can somehow get a rope anchored at the top. A character can climb without equipment, making a Strength check every 10 feet until they reach the top or fall (see page 13 for falling rules). The character has a *Bonus Die* on their Strength check if they have anything in their background related to climbing.

If a character manages to reach the top and anchor a strong rope, the rest of the characters can ascend with successful Strength checks every 20 feet, with a *Bonus Die* if they have climbing experience.

Descending is easier, though certainly not without risk. The characters can secure a rope and rappel down, making Strength checks every 30 feet (1 check minimum).

The last character will either have to abandon the rope, or if they have twice the length required, they can loop the rope around a secure object (like a sturdy tree, piton, or smooth rock) and use both ropes to climb down. This allows them to pull one end and recover the rope when they reach the bottom.

Waterfall. Many cliffs in the mountains are created by waterfalls fed by icy runoff coming down from the summit.

Between the constantly thundering water, mist and slime making every surface slick, and the risk of hypothermia, these cliffs are particularly dangerous and best avoided if at all possible.

If it's unavoidable, then climbing is an option. Climbing down is easier since a rope can be anchored at the top, allowing for a controlled descent. On the other hand, if the water seems deep enough, the more bold investigator might decide to dive into the water below and hope for the best.

The rules for climbing up or down can be used from any of the previous cliff types, but all checks are made with a *Penalty Die*.

Diving into the water requires the character to make a Spot Hidden or Natural World check to determine if the water below is deep enough, and a *Hard* Strength check to make the dive safely. If the water is not deep enough or they fail of their dive check, then treat the dive as a fall, except that the damage halved (round up).

If anyone becomes immersed in the water, they must make a Constitution check to avoid hypothermia. They must re-roll the check every minute until they are warm and dry. This check has a *Penalty Die* if the air temperature is below 50° F (10° C).

CHANGES

Due to the nature of cliffs, there are always rocks falling, even from the most stable cliff face. These can happen randomly, but are more common in the later evening or morning when the temperature changes cause the stone to expand or contract. If the characters decide to camp near a cliff, there is a chance that rocks can simply fall, and potentially causing serious injuries.

During the 2 or 3 hours after sunset, there is a 5% chance that some rocks will fall. If the party camps close to the cliff, they will hear the crack as the rock comes loose and have 1 round to react. Each character should make a Dexterity check to avoid being struck by debris.

Anyone struck by the rocks will suffer 1d6 Hit Points of damage. If anyone is asleep, have them make a Luck roll. If they fail, they get hit by debris.

If it is a crumbling or rough cliff, then there is an additional 5% chance that the falling rocks will cause a huge section of the cliff to give way (see Rock Slide on page 25 for details).

The initial falling rocks will alert the characters to the coming rock slide, and so they will have 1d4 rounds to react before the cliff comes down upon them.


FUMBLECRIT

- 1 An unknown flaw causes the victim's gear to fail, whether it's an inherent weakness in the rope, a fracture in the piton, or the seam of a glove tearing. They plummet to the ground, suffering critical injuries. They will die in 1 minute without a *Hard First Aid* check.
- 2 Victim slips and gets snagged in the rope or wedged in a rock. The good news is that they haven't fallen. The bad news is that they suffer 1d6 Hit Points of damage as their leg is badly broken. Someone will have to rescue them.

3 Victim suffers a massive head injury in addition to any other damage. The brain damage is irreversible, causing a permanent loss of 2d6 points of Intelligence. Nothing short of brain surgery will help, restoring half of their Intelligence loss.

4 Victim is gripped by a new fear of heights and has a panic attack at the thought of being on the cliff. This has the effect of leaving the character frightened when thinking about the cliff. They may be able to climb if they can make a successful Sanity check, but their repressed terror will make the climb take twice as long.





LEDGES

I don't believe in a god, but it sure felt like someone was on our side today. After three hard days of climbing over broken rocks and cliffs, we've finally come to a ledge that seems to run along the mountainside, and as luck would have it, the path is going in the direction we want to go.

Whether the result of natural erosion or by the hands of some long forgotten hands, we won't look a gift horse in the mouth.

Greg is concerned that the ledge may be narrowing ahead, and that the outer edge seems unstable, but I refuse to give in to the despair that seems to have gripped our group recently.

I have to go. We just heard a cracking sound just ahead.

PRESSURE

Although ledges can allow travelers to move more quickly and easily in the mountains, they are not without their downsides. The characters will essentially be limited to moving forward or back, unless they are prepared to do some rather dangerous climbing. A ledge can be used by the Keeper to provide a clear path for the investigators, or it can make an excellent place for an enemy ambush.

IF/THEN

The nature of ledges allow for few options if things go badly, since they are often narrow with a wall to one side and a cliff to the other. If there's a rock slide, there will be nowhere to run. If the ledge comes to a dead end, there will be no option but

to go back. If the ledge is unstable and begins to crumble, the characters will have to think quickly if they are to survive.

Walking along a ledge requires the characters to pay particular attention to where they put their feet. Certain areas may seem stable, but will break loose with a single wrong step.

If the players state that their characters are paying attention, then they should make a Spot Hidden check every 30 minutes. Failure means that they either get a little too close to the edge or step on a bit of rock that seemed safe, but was not.

The character must then make a Dexterity check to save themselves, or those nearby can make a grab for them with a successful Dexterity check. If they fall, the results will depend on the ledge and what is below it (see *Falling* on page 13).

Pack animals are more likely to misstep, and so it will be up to their handlers to keep them on the ledge. This will require an Animal Handling check every 30 minutes in areas that are extremely narrow and/or unstable.

CHANGES

Depending on the nature of the surrounding stone, rock slides are a serious risk when walking on a ledge. These can happen randomly, but are more likely caused by significant disturbances such as discharging a firearm.

Any checks to avoid a rock slide have a *Penalty Die*. If a character is pushed off the ledge, they will likely take significant falling damage. Since this means almost certain death, the Keeper may want to allow an extra Dexterity check to allow them to catch the edge.



ROCKSLIDE

We learned an expensive lesson today about becoming too complacent in the mountains. Shortly after breaking camp, we were feeling ambitious and decided to push on directly up the slope through to the tree line.

After an hour of hard climbing however, our optimism began to wane. A short time later we found a trail that took a more gradual path up the mountain, and we were more than happy to take advantage of it.

Grateful for easier climb we foolishly relaxed our guard, and we paid the price for it. As we rounded a bend in the trail, we heard a deep cracking sound that caused us all to stop in our tracks.

My gaze followed the sound to a massive boulder over our heads, and even as my eyes fell upon it, the rock gave way. The entire cliff was coming down on us.

PRESSURE

The characters must decide to go back or forward when the slide begins. Otherwise the party will be slammed by falling rocks, boulders and other debris. Depending on the size of the slide, this event can dramatically hinder travel by blocking trails and filling narrow ravines.

IF/THEN

If your players do not chose an action quickly, then all checks related to the rockslide have a *Penalty Die*. If a Keeper wants to ramp up the tension, they should consider using some sort of timer. The instant the rockslide is announced, give the players 30 seconds to describe what their characters do.

CHANGES

A rockslide can affect an area between 10 square feet to 100 square feet. The Keeper can determine the size of the slide or they can roll 1d10 x 10 feet to determine the area of effect.

The characters will have 1 round to react before any checks are necessary. If the area is greater than 50 square feet, they will have to make a Dodge check to avoid it.

Rocks and dirt will slam into every person in the area, requiring them to make a *Hard* Dexterity check to avoid the worst of the slide. A failed check means that the character is pushed in the direction of the slide by a number of feet equal to the amount they failed their check. For example, if the player ends up with a check roll of 40, and their Dexterity is 60, they will be moved 20 feet. Additionally, the victims of the rockslide will suffer 2d6 Hit Points of damage and become *Stunned* for 2d4 rounds.

A successful Dexterity check means that they take only half damage and are not *Stunned*.

Due to the sudden violence of the event, everyone in the slide area loses whatever they were holding. It will take at least 30 minutes to recover any lost objects. The Keeper may also want to note any fragile items carried by the characters which may have been broken in the event.

EVEN THE ODDS

An odd roll means that they are trapped by the slide. It might be a pile of smaller rocks or they might be pinned by a large boulder. In either case, it will require a combined Strength of 130 to free the trapped character. If the rescuer(s) create some sort of mechanical advantage, like with a lever and fulcrum, moving the stone only requires a total Strength score of 70.

FUMBLECRIT

- 1 Victim has one of their limbs crushed by a boulder (roll randomly). It is broken and useless until set and healed. Once set with a successful First Aid or Medicine check, the bone will mend on its own in a month or so.
- 2 Victim loses 1 to 4 items in the slide. It will require an *Extreme Spot Hidden* check to find any one item.
- 3 Victim is knocked unconscious for 1d4 hours.
- 4 Victim has sustained an internal injury that is not immediately apparent. Over the course of the next few hours, the character will begin to feel weaker, losing 5 points of Constitution per hour as they bleed internally. A Medicine check will reveal the problem. Repairing the damage will require something like a hospital and a qualified surgeon.
- 5 Victim suffers a massive head injury, causing them to lose consciousness for an hour. Upon waking, they are unable to remember anything about their life, including their own name. Their memory will return gradually over the course of the next day or so. During that time, they will lose the ability to perform any complex or knowledge-based skills, so the Keeper will have to use their discretion when deciding which skills will suffer as a result of the amnesia.
- 6 Victim twists their leg badly, reducing their movement by half until they have had a good night's rest.

An excerpt from the Journal of Dr. Hale

I'm not sure that I would say we were lucky today, but it certainly could have been much worse. It's been an hour since the mountainside came crashing down on us for no apparent reason, leaving the mules with all of our supplies are on the far side of the rockslide. For the moment, we are helpless to reach them.

Benjamin suffered a nasty blow to the head, and although the Dr. Leeds claims that his injury isn't all that bad, he has still not awakened. The rest of us have suffered a plethora of cuts and bruises, but no other significant injuries.

A few minutes ago we heard distressed cries from the mules, and we're worried that there's a predator nearby. Alan is trying to uncover a wide enough path to reach them, but it could take hours to clear enough stone to allow for safe passage.

In the meantime, we can only wait as night begins to set in, and Alan continues to move stone. As I sit here and think about the rockslide, the timing does seem rather suspicious, as if it had been deliberately triggered to separate us from our supplies.

I suppose that I could just be getting paranoid as the darkness closes in around us.

Alan has just informed us that he hears rocks moving above, and if he keeps digging, the rest of the rock could come down. That's the most reasonable explanation, but I can't help but feel as if we're now being watched by someone on the cliffs above us.





WIND & WEATHER

Another close call today when we were nearly blown off the mountain by a sudden gale. We suspected nothing since the sky was perfectly clear, and the only warning was a kind of howl that seemed to be moving along the valley far below us like a banshee.

Then the wind hit us with such force that we were all knocked off our feet. I barely managed to hold on to Amanda, as the violent gust threatened to toss her into the air.

Then, just as suddenly, the wind ceased. We were left with a few bruises and a lot of gear to collect, but otherwise none the worse for wear.

If this had happened when we were scaling the cliff however, we might not have been so lucky.

PRESSURE

A sudden change in the weather can force a party to seek shelter, move more quickly, or turn a previously safe terrain into a nightmare. Depending on the altitude, the party could encounter sudden gale force winds, thunderstorms, whiteouts, or dense fog.

IF/THEN

There are quite a few options for weather of varying intensities. Here are only a few. The Keeper should feel free to adjust them to suit the location and tone of the scenario.

Fog. Of all the extreme weather conditions in the mountains, fog is probably the most common (though specific regions can vary). When the mountain is wreathed in clouds, visibility ranges from 10 and 40 feet. This can make navigation very difficult and cause one to lose direction very quickly.

Every 30 minutes in the fog, the characters should make Spot Hidden checks to maintain their heading. Failure means drifting to one side or another by many degrees. The Keeper should roll randomly to determine how far off course.

Anything beyond 40 feet is essentially invisible.

Freezing Rain and Fog. Freezing rain is simply rain that falls through a shallow layer of cold temperatures (at or below freezing) near the surface. Ice will collect quickly on all surfaces from rocks to trees to outer clothing.

Freezing fog is not as common, and happens when a bank of fog moves into an area of freezing temperatures.

The ice can be up to an inch thick, and so anything left outside unattended is likely to be encased.

The icy surfaces cause everyone in the area to suffer a *Penalty Die* on all movement related checks.

If moving faster than half of their normal movement, a character must make a successful Dexterity check every 10 minutes, or slip and fall prone, sliding 5 feet in a random direction.

Gust of Wind. These sudden bursts of wind can occur on the most pleasant of days. They are caused by many things, from wind being funneled through a mountain pass to strong updrafts. Whatever the cause, the characters will have very little time to react.

The characters can make a Listen check to notice the sound of the approaching wind, and if they are not familiar with such things, a *Hard Survival* check to understand what's coming.

When the wind hits, the characters will need to make Dexterity check or get knocked prone. Those who knew it was coming have a *Bonus Die* of this check. Obviously if a character is climbing or near a cliff, this could mean serious trouble.

Heavy Rain. Normally a heavy rain is nothing but a simple inconvenience, but in the mountains, it can make many other dangers even worse.

Within moments after the rain starts, all stone surfaces become slick and more difficult to hold onto. Rope becomes a lot more difficult to grip. Any checks related to keeping one's feet, climbing, using rope, and so on, have a *Penalty Die*.

The rain also reduces visibility significantly, especially at night. During the day, normal vision is reduced to 60 feet, and at night it is reduced to 0 feet without a water and wind-resistant light source. The effectiveness of the light source is reduced to half of what it would normally be.

Thunderstorm. Few things are quite as spectacular or dangerous as a thunderstorm in the mountains.

During a thunderstorm, the characters will not only experience heavy rain and wind (see above), but also deadly lightning.

There is only a 1% chance of a direct lightning strike, but even a nearby strike can cause injury or death. Every minute that the characters remain exposed during a thunderstorm, the Keeper should roll a percentile. If they roll a 95-99, then there is a nearby strike. Each character within 60 feet must make a successful Constitution check or suffer 1d6 points of damage. They are also knocked prone and deafened for 1 minute.

If the roll is 100, then the lightning strikes the character with the lowest Luck score. They must make a *Hard* Constitution or suffer 3d6 points of damage. If they are still alive, they are unconscious for 1d4 hours. If the Constitution check is successful they take only half damage and are unconscious for 10 minutes. Everyone within 30 feet of the character is effected as a nearby strike.

Any electronic equipment has a chance to be damaged by the strike, particularly if it is being held by a character when they are struck.

The Keeper may opt to have this damage return more quickly, restoring 1d6 Hit Points following a good night's sleep.

Whiteout. Normally, one would only encounter a snowstorm in the winter, but in the mountains they can come much later in the season, particularly at higher altitudes.

When a snowstorm moves through the mountains, it can turn a previously clear day into blinding whiteout. When this happens, the driving snow and accompanying wind reduces all visibility and hearing to 5 feet, making everyone effectively blind and deaf. Ranged and thrown weapons are rendered useless.

CHANGES

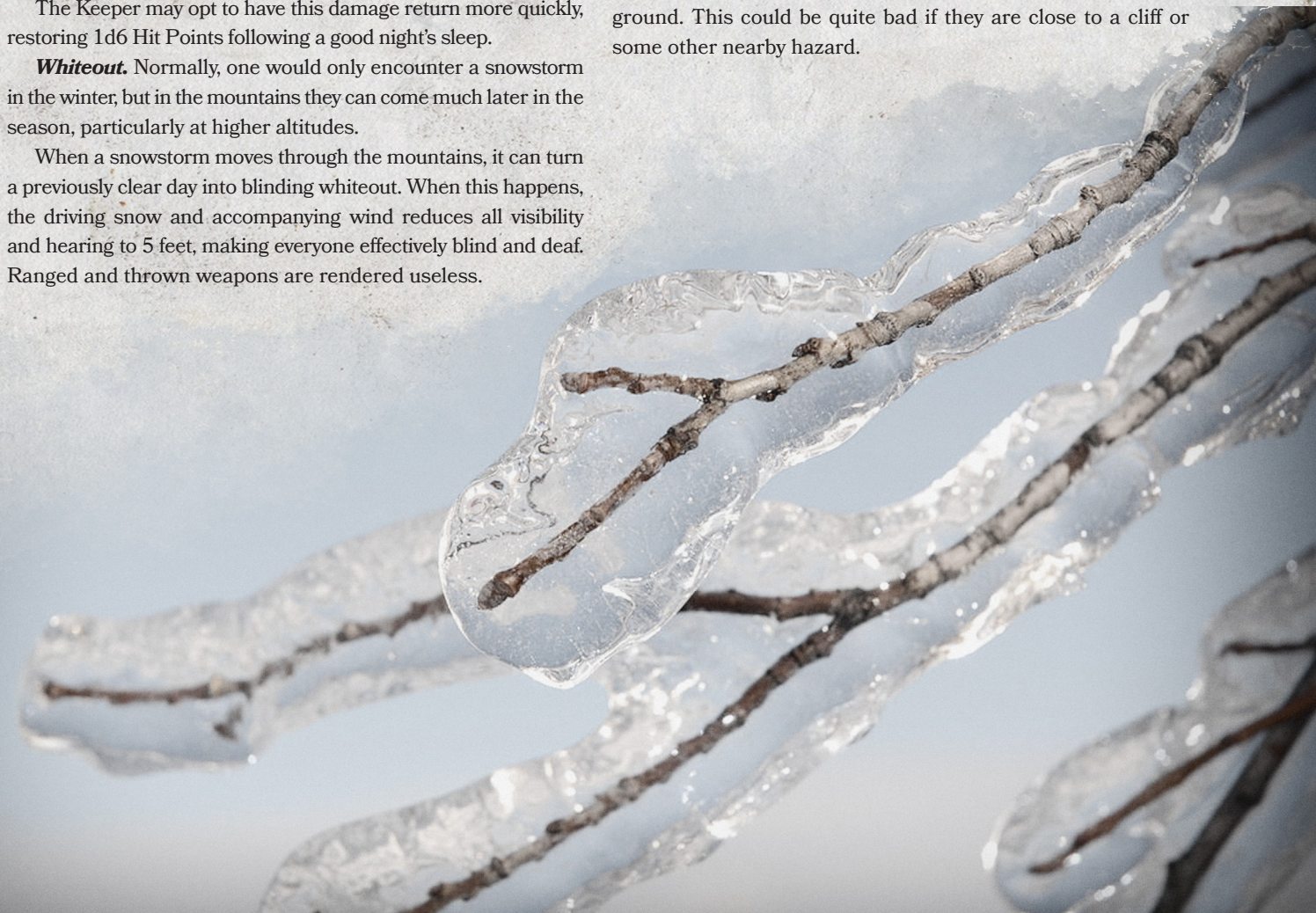
Regardless of the specific conditions, extreme weather can trigger all sorts of events, from falling to compelling investigators to seek shelter in a cave. If the players are taking their time or are suffering from analysis paralysis, pointing out that bad weather is closing in can give them the kick they need to get things moving.

Alternately, weather can be used to interrupt an undesirable situation. For example, maybe the investigators is being set upon by dozens of cultists, and they are losing. Having a thunderstorm move in can provide them the cover and distraction necessary to make their escape or strategically reposition themselves.

Keep in mind that one weather condition can lead into another. So the investigators might begin experiencing more wind gusts as a precursor to a major thunderstorm. Allow those who are familiar with weather or mountain climates to make a Survival check to realize what's coming.

EVEN THE ODDS

In the mountains, it only takes a moment to make a deadly mistake. If the characters become sufficiently distracted (Keeper's discretion), then have them roll a die. An odd roll means that the character makes a misstep that sends them falling 5 feet in a random direction, leaving them prone on the ground. This could be quite bad if they are close to a cliff or some other nearby hazard.



Appendix

NEW OCCUPATION

MOUNTAIN GUIDE

Whether they are native to the mountains or whether they were trained to navigate them, the mountain guide is at home in this brutal environ. In those high, rocky places, the climate can change by the hour and a wrong step can send the careless traveler careening into a chasm. The mountain guide is as hard and indomitable as the land that forged them.

Occupation Skill Points: $\text{EDU} \times 2 + (\text{DEX} \times 2 \text{ or } \text{STR} \times 2)$

Credit Rating: 30-60

Suggested Contacts: Other climbers, patrons, sponsors, local rescue or law enforcement, environmentalists, park rangers, sports clubs.

Skills: Climb, First Aid, Jump, Listen, Navigate, Other Language, Survival (Alpine or as appropriate), Track.

FEATURE: BORN CLIMBER

The mountain guide has the ability to ascend and descend vertical surfaces that would be impossible for the average person. Their training has taught them to take advantage of smallest hand holds and maximize the efficient use of their muscles when climbing.

This gives them a *Bonus Die* to any skill checks related to climbing. If they already have a *Bonus Die* for some other reason, then they have two, and of course it can cancel out a *Penalty Die*.

The mountain guide is able to climb without any gear as if they were using it, except under the most extreme cases. If they are using climbing gear, then no climb check is necessary, unless there are extenuating circumstances.

If they are assisting others while using climbing gear, their companions gain a *Bonus Die* on their climb-related checks.

Finally, if they or someone within 5 feet of them falls, the mountain guide can make a last ditch effort arrest their fall by succeeding on a *Hard* Dexterity check. Success means that they have grabbed a nearby hand hold or just managed to snatch their companion from the jaws of death. Unfortunately, this desperate act inflicts 1 level of *Exhaustion* upon them, but at least they're still alive.

NEW EQUIPMENT

Altimeter. This small, brass device is about 4 inches in diameter, and has a glass face, much like a compass. Inside is a series of gears and cylinders of fluid that cause the needle on the face to point to the current altitude above sea level.

It is accurate to within 100 feet unless there is a storm approaching, at which point, the air pressure drops, giving a false reading. The obvious benefit to this "flaw" is that the perceptive user can possibly predict an approaching storm.

When such a storm is approaching, the character using the altimeter can make a Spot Hidden check to notice the drop. If they are familiar with the device, they will know what it means, but anyone else might have to make an Intelligence check to understand the implications.

There is a dial on the side to adjust for the inaccuracy if the user wishes.

In a more modern setting, this device is probably electronic, and may include other features. In this case the thing to worry about is the battery life. Keepers should keep track of how long the batteries in the altimeter will last, especially if the investigators are going to be traveling for a while. Note that these devices may be vulnerable to strong magnetic fields, and this too should be kept in mind. [**Cost** \$30 (1920s)/\$60 (Modern); **Weight** 10/6 oz.]

Climbing Gear. Often carried in its own pack, this gear consists of climbing rope, pitons, spring cams, body harness, locking carabiners, belay mechanism, rock hammer, grappling hook, chalk pouch, climbing shoes and reinforced leather gloves.

Each pack contains enough gear to equip one person, though it can be shared if taking turns. The rope is sufficient to climb distances of up to 200 feet, though this can be extended if addition rope is available.

When properly trained, this gear allows the character to climb a normal surface under normal conditions without the need for a skill check. These could include a cliff face, stone wall, or almost any vertical surface.

Under adverse conditions, they will need to make a Climb check, but will do so with a *Bonus Die*.

An untrained character will gain a *Bonus Die* using this equipment climbing normal conditions, and under adverse conditions, the gear will allow them to do so with a *Penalty Die*.

If there is a trained climber assisting them, the untrained climbers will gain the full benefits of the equipment, but it will take twice as long to climb the same distance. [**Cost** \$150 (1920s)/\$2000 (Modern); **Weight** 50/20 lbs.]

Mountain Sleeping Bag. This is a sleeping bag that allows one to sleep on the side of a mountain. It is a quilted rectangular sleeping bag with grommets or loops that allow it to be anchored to a solid surface with pitons. This is so the climber to secure the sleeping bag in place, and eliminate the possibility of rolling of a cliff during the night.

The mountain sleeping bag can even be anchored to a vertical surface, though only the most experienced climbers will use this technique.

The fabric is heavily weatherproofed on the outside, making it resistant to rain and wind, and the hood at the top can be pulled up to cover the head. This provides protection from the elements, and can allow comfortable sleep in temperatures as low as -40° F (-40° C).

The drawback to the mountain sleeping bag is the weight, which can add 15 pounds or more to the climber's gear if it's a 1920s era sleeping bag, or 5 pounds for a modern version. This is a not insignificant burden when scaling a mountain. [**Cost** \$55 (1920s)/\$750 (Modern); **Weight** 15/5 lbs.]

Mountain Staff. This 8-foot long staff is used by seasoned mountaineers to aid them in their travels. The shaft is most often made from high plains ironwood. It has a sturdy steel claw on the bottom and a six to eight-inch hooked spiked

hammer at the top. Since one of the primary goals of this staff is to assist with walking, the bottom claw is designed to dig into a surface to avoid slipping. The spike on top is used to give a climber extra reach when needed.

Additionally, the mountain staff can be used as a weapon to deal with any wild beasts the climber might encounter, such as a mountain lion or bear. [*Use the statistics for the Spear on page 401 of the Keeper's Rulebook.*]

This staff provides reach and stability for the climber, and could provide a *Bonus Die* where appropriate (Keeper's discretion). For example, if a Dexterity check were required to walk across a wet stone surface, then it would likely provide a *Bonus Die* on that check. Another example would be a climber traversing a cliff face whose path is blocked by a crack in the rock that is wider than his reach. The staff could be then used to get a hold on the far side to facilitate crossing the gap. [**Cost** \$8 (1920s)/\$85 (Modern); **Weight** 8 lbs.]

Mountain Sleeping Bag

Mountain Staff

Altimeter

Climbing Gear



MOUNTAIN ENCOUNTERS

1 An outcropping of rock is carved into the life-sized likeness of a very sorrowful-looking man. His hands are out in front of him forming a small bowl. Water pours from small openings cunningly concealed at the base of his eyes, creating the illusion of tears. The water spills down into the man's cupped hands before overflowing onto the ground. The water then follows down a channel and disappears down into the rocks below. The water seems clear and cool.

[The water is perfectly safe to drink, but if the characters get close enough to take some, they will hear what sounds like a faint sobbing coming from the sculpture. There is nothing supernatural at work, but rather the sound the water makes moving through the stone.]

2 An almost perfectly spherical stone is sitting in a small indentation. It is about four feet in diameter, and has been expertly carved from a bluish-gray stone. Cast in a heap nearby are some heavily weathered logs and coils of rope. It looks as if someone was moving the stone sphere when it got stuck in the depression and they simply gave up for some reason. The wood and rope are rotten and useless.

[Due to the depth of the indentation and the weight of the stone, it would take the combined strength of five or six strong men to have any chance of moving it. Once moved, they would then have a tough time preventing it from rolling down hill. Anyone in its path would have to make a Dexterity check to avoid it. Failure would mean suffering 1d4 points of damage, while a critical failure would inflict 1d12. If they have enough space to move and/or time to react, their Dexterity check is made with a Bonus Die.]

3 A series of twenty-one narrow Scandinavian-style runes are carved into a smooth face of rock. Each rune is about two inches tall, and at least an eighth of an inch deep. At a glance they appear to be rather old.

[If anyone reads old Norse, the runes will translate to say "HALFDAN CARVED THESE RUNES". An Archaeology

or Science/Geology check will reveal that these carvings are thousands of years old.]

4 A recent rock slide has revealed a cave entrance. The opening is narrow (about two feet wide), but an average person can get inside.

[Anyone with a Size above 80 cannot fit into the cave. Packs and other gear may have to be removed before entering (Keeper's discretion). The cave goes straight into the stone for about thirty feet before ending in a ten-foot-diameter chamber with a carved dome ceiling about fifteen feet above the floor.

On the far wall is a carved niche with a human skull resting within. Old piles of wax on either side of the skull indicate that this might have been some sort of shrine. If anyone examines the skull, they will find thirty silver coins inside. The coins are worn, so it's not possible to identify their place of origin. An Archaeology or Science/Geology check will suggest that this shrine has been buried for more than 50 years.]

5 A reflection catches the eye of the character with the highest Luck score. If they investigate, they find a small metal tin that has been mostly buried by loose dirt and gravel.

[Inside the tin are thirteen photos of young women. In each case, the subject is in a room with the walls painted a blood red color. Their hands and feet are securely tied with rope, and they are all gagged with a heavy black cloth. They're all very different in appearance, but they all have the same look of absolute terror in their eyes. A later and more detailed investigation will reveal that there are no fingerprints on either the tin or photos. Unfortunately the photo paper is too common to track and none of the women match any missing persons on record.]

6 The remnants of a canvas tent flutters in the wind. A pile of debris nearby includes a wooden folding chair (broken), a brass kerosene lantern (corroded but functional), and a small footlocker.

[Inside the footlocker are moldering clothes that date back to the mid 1800s, a pair of spectacles (strong), a bottle of ink,

a fountain pen, and a leather journal containing hundreds of poems that highlight the futility of existence. There is no name or date on the journal.]

7 The glint of metal catches the eye of one of the characters. If they investigate, they find wreckage of some sort of aircraft in a deep ravine. The only recognizable piece is the tip of a wing and the tail. The rest is just shredded aluminum fuselage and charred, unidentifiable bits. Several small trees and bushes are growing in the wreckage, implying that it wasn't a very recent event.

[An successful Intelligence check will reveal that this was likely a small aircraft. A Hard success will reveal that it was likely a 1940s era fighter plane, though it will take an Extreme success to identify it as a P-40 Tomahawk. If the characters descend the 150 feet to reach the wreckage, they will find the bones of a single pilot and an unexploded bomb. The Keeper should feel free to change the type of aircraft based on the era, or if it is intended to be an anomaly, describe the plane in terms of how the characters of the time might perceive it.]

8 The characters hear a deep rumbling growl from above. They look up just in time to see a mountain lion (or similar predatory big cat) preparing to pounce.

[The Keeper can have the characters make a Power check just prior to this to see if they can sense that they are being stalked. It will target whichever character is towards the outside of the group, appears the most vulnerable, or the Keeper can choose the one with the lowest Luck score. The lion will be frightened off by a gunshot, though it will continue to follow the characters, waiting for an opportunity to get its prey.]

9 A piton is secured to the edge of a cliff, a 150 ft. length of rope still tied to it. The equipment appears to be more or less contemporary, and is still in reasonably good shape.

10 What appears to be some sort of hunting lodge stands atop four stout beams, a wide stair climbs to the door six feet off the ground. There are two shuttered windows on the front, and one on each of the other sides. A black stovepipe rises from the peak of the steeply pitched roof.

[The door is unlocked. If the characters enter, they see an old iron potbelly stove in the center of this one room cabin. A loft at the rear is accessed by a sturdy-looking ladder. The room is apportioned with a heavy wooden table, four rustic chairs, a cabinet on the far wall, and two musty old sofas with a coffee table in between. The loft has four mattresses with a heavy woolen blanket covering each. The place has the smell of disuse and decay, though there is surprisingly little in the way of rodent activity. The cabinet contains several dozen cans of canned food including potted meat (8), baked beans (8), mixed vegetables (8), beef stew (6), and peaches in syrup (6). The cans are all old, but there is no sign that they have gone bad.

If anyone sleeps here overnight, they will have terrifying nightmares about seeing something outside the cabin. Read this to the dreamers: "The thing is nearly half the size of the cabin, with oily black flesh and ropy arms that squirm as they reaching out towards you. Suddenly, it lurches forward, pulling itself up onto three legs the size of tree trunks. It begins moving up the hillside with alarming speed, its hoofs tearing great furrows in the dirt. You are paralyzed with fear as it gets nearer, its mouths gnashing greedily with wet, gibbering sounds. You stagger back from the window and the cabin shudders from the impact. You awake to the first light of day. Looking around, you all realize that you had the same dream." A Spot Hidden check outside will reveal mysterious two-foot-wide hoof prints from some gigantic creature. The dream triggers a Sanity check (0/1d4), and the tracks outside trigger a second (1/2d4).]

11 A canvas duffel bag has been cast into the bushes just off the trail. It contains eight cans of food, though the labels crumbled to nothing.

[The can seem intact and unspoiled. If opened, the characters will discover three cans of baked beans and five cans of pears in syrup.]

12 A small stream of water emerges from a vertical rock face and spills into a small pool directly below it. The water overflows the pool to the left and flows down the mountain in a small stream bed.

[The water is clean and drinkable.]

13 A large cave has a lantern sitting on the ground outside the entrance. Inside the walls are covered with paleolithic art depicting a terrifying scenes of amphibious sea creatures slaughtering people.

[A successful Mythos check will reveal that the images depict Deep Ones. An Archaeology check will reveal that the art is at least 6,000 years old.]

14 There is a metallic cylinder in the undergrowth. It is an oxygen tank that seems more or less intact.

[It is still half filled (20 liters). The valve works, but there is no breathing gear with it.]

15 The characters spot a worn canvas backpack with a torn shoulder strap.

[In one of the side pockets is a pack of beef jerky that is still edible, and is enough to provide four meals. The backpack can be repaired with the right materials and 30 minutes of effort.]

16 The characters come upon an abandoned campsite under an overhang of rock. The campfire remains are more than a year old. A bundle of dry firewood and kindling is tucked into a niche in the stone.

[The wood is sufficient for a single fire to burn all night.]

17 An arrow is drawn in charcoal on an exposed rock. It seems to point to a clump of bushes against a rock wall.

[A cursory investigation will reveal that there is a three-foot-high cave opening behind the bushes. Inside is a cache of supplies, including five gallons of water, two sleeping bags, a tent, and two hundred feet of rope. It looks as if there was once food in here as well, but some sort of small mammals have eaten it all. A blank journal contains hand-written atmospheric data that is dated to six years ago. The stub of a pencil is held to the journal by a rubber band.]

18 A stone on the ground is marked with a symbol that looks like a star with an eye or flame in the middle. The stone is about six inches in diameter, and does not seem indigenous to the region.

[Anyone with mythos experience will recognize the Elder Sign, though others could make an Occult check to recognize it. If the stone is moved, the characters will find a three-inch diameter hole beneath it. In the bottom is a ring of some sort of black material that reflects absolutely no light, making it appear more like a hole in space. It's rather heavy and would fit the ring finger of a man of average build. Do to its unique light absorption properties, it is impossible to use any sort of spectral analysis to determine that object's material composition. The Keeper can decide if this ring has any abilities or significance.]

20 A low stone hut sits a few yards off the characters' path. Closed shutters cover a single window, and the stout wooden door is adorned with an iron knocker in the shape of a bear's head. The slate roof has a shallow pitch, broken only by a chimney of natural stone in the center. A stream of white smoke drifts up from the chimney.

[Anyone who knocks on the door will be met by a heavily weatherbeaten old woman. The characters' first impression is that she must be old due to the shock of gray hair that flies wildly about her head and her lined skin that has the texture of leather. In fact, she could be anywhere between forty and ninety. She smiles with a perfect set of teeth and invites the characters into her cramped dwelling. It is a one room cabin with a loft that presumably contains her bed. The fireplace is glowing with coals. She offers them pine needle tea and directs them to sit on a wild collection of rustic, hand-made wicker chairs and stools.]

If asked about why she lives here, she tells them a story of how she used to come to the mountain with her father as a young girl, but when her family died in a fire, she moved here to live alone. After a few minutes of talking, the characters will realize that she has probably been here for more than 50 years. She has forgotten her name and knows little about anything beyond a mile from her hut.]

21 Out of nowhere a deep roar shakes the characters. Spinning around they see a rearing grizzly bear! There is thick

foam around its muzzle that flies everywhere as it shakes its head violently from side-to-side.

[The bear is suffering from advanced mercury poisoning and will violently attack the characters. Neither bear spray nor firearms will dissuade it. It will attack until either the characters or itself is dead. Note that characters cannot be affected by the mercury if bitten.]

22 An overhang of rock turns out to be the entrance to a cave that goes several hundred feet into the mountain.

[If investigated, the characters will find a pile of human bones in the back of the cave. There look to be about three dozen or so, and each shows signs of predation. A Natural World check will reveal that it was likely some large predator. A Hard success will indicate that it was some sort of big cat. The Keeper can decide on the specific species based on the location and setting. If it's an environ that doesn't have any native big cats, it could have escaped from a zoo, menagerie, or some wealthy eccentric. Anyone with the medicine or Archaeology skill will know that these bones are many decades old.]

23 A square opening into the mountainside indicates the entrance to an old mine shaft. Heavy wooden beams shore up the entrance. Several boards have been nailed across the opening, though they seem more like an afterthought than any real attempt to keep anyone out.

[If the characters explore the mine shaft, they will learn that it was abandoned sometime in the early 1900s. They will find a kerosene lantern (half full), a pickax, a shovel, and a wooden cart. An Extreme Spot Hidden check will allow a character to find nugget of extremely pure silver weighing about three pounds. The Keeper can base the worth on the current era of the campaign. The mine only goes in for about eighty feet, but seems solid throughout.]

24 At the base of a cliff the characters stumble across a dead body. Based on his clothing and gear, he must have been a trained climber.

[Closer examination seems to indicate that part of his harness broke, which is probably why he fell. He looks to have been here for a number of months, and so will be difficult to identify due to decomposition and scavengers. The rest of his gear is intact, and he has food and water for a single person for two days. He has no wallet or any identification.]

25 Rockslide! A loud crack signals the beginning of a rockslide right above the characters.

[See the Rockslide hazard on page 25.]

26 The characters find their way blocked by a deep ravine. Fortunately, someone has constructed a sturdy looking rope bridge that crosses it. It is weathered, but appears heavily oiled to repel moisture. It looks to be at least fifty years old, though

it could be much older. It is about five feet wide and thirty-five feet from one side to the other.

[While it is indeed sturdy, it will fail if more than 800 pounds is put on it at a time. If anyone tests the bridge, they will get the feeling that three people with gear would be safe, but four or more might be pushing it. If any of the characters have a fear of heights, they will have a difficult time getting across. The Keeper should note that if the characters have enemies, this would be a great place for an ambush.]

27 The path is blocked by the remains of an old landslide. The slope is covered with loose, broken stone, making any crossing of the area extremely treacherous.

[Anyone trying to walk across the area must make a successful Dexterity check every 10 feet or begin sliding down the slope (see Inclined Fall on page 13). At the bottom of the slope is a drop-off. Whatever is below should be decided by the Keeper.]

28 The characters have seen nothing but stunted trees for a while now, but up ahead they spot a peculiar tree that towers above the rest. It looks vaguely like a birch tree, but the bark has more of a reddish color and the leaves have a longer, more slender shape. The trunk is just over three feet in diameter, and the top is thirty or forty feet from the ground. There are no other trees like it nearby. Closer examination reveals small, perfectly spherical nuts in groups of three. Each is about the size of a penny and has a deep purple color.

[When cracked open, each nut has a dark red that is edible and sweet, tasting more like a berry than a nut. One hour after eating one, the character will begin to see the world around them differently, with solid objects becoming ethereal. They will see another landscape beyond the normal one with strange creatures and plants. If they look up, they will see two suns. The visions last for about thirty minutes, with no lingering effects. If the nuts are planted, they only grow if the air pressure is close to the same where the tree was found. It is a slow-growing tree, reaching a height of only three inches after five years. It will not produce nuts for 200 years.]

29 A pile of ashes sits on a flat patch of barren ground that forms almost a perfect six foot circle around the ashes.

[Sifting through ashes reveals human bone fragments and bits of metal from what appears to be hiking gear. It is impossible to identify the body or even whether they were male or female.]

30 A section of rock has recently broken away from a cliff face revealing a large fossil.

[The Keeper can choose whether it is a Deep One or an Elder Thing. It will take several days to carefully extract the fossil, assuming that one has the right tools and expertise. It will weigh hundreds if not thousands of pounds, so getting it down the mountain will be extremely difficult.]

31 A scorched stone about the size of a small car is split in half. It looks as if it may have been struck by lightning right at the point where it split.

[If they examine it closely, they see that revealed in the center of the stone is a small sphere of copper about an inch across. There are fine markings like writing across its surface. Anyone with a basic knowledge of geology will know that stone in which the sphere is contained must be millions of years old. The sphere can be extracted from the stone in an hour with a small hammer and chisel.]

32 The characters come upon what appears to be a small Buddhist shrine. The structure is crude, but there is a two-foot statue of Buddha sitting atop a low flat stone. There are offerings scattered around the base. These consist mostly of coins of various denominations and nationalities.

[If a character drops a coin there, they will gain 1d10 Luck points. This happens only once per person. Conversely, if they steal any coins, they will lose 1d10 Luck points.]

33 Standing in a carved niche on the side of a fifteen foot boulder is a statue depicting a robed figure, the face a mask of what look like worms or tentacles. The idol is carved from a single piece of yellowed bone, ivory, or some similar material. It stands about eight inches tall.

[If examined, the character will discover a symbol on the bottom. A Mythos check will reveal that it is the Yellow Sign, and that this is a statue of Hastur. Hidden behind the idol is a small vial of what appears to be blood.]

34 A crow or raven begins following the characters. Occasionally it will speak the words: "Your fate is sealed."

[If shoed, it will not leave. If killed, the character who deals the mortal blow will lose 1d10 Luck points.]

35 An earth tremor shakes the ground causing a number of larger rocks to come tumbling down the slope.

[The characters should make Luck rolls. Anyone who fails should make a Dodge roll to avoid one of the tumbling rocks. Failure means suffering 1d4 points of damage.]

36 An isolated lake is situated between two ridges. It is roughly half a mile long and a quarter of a mile wide. The water is crystal clear and still. There is no sign of life.

[The water is safe to drink. The reason that there is no life is because the water lacks oxygen due to the extreme altitude.]

37 A character trips on a steel box that is half buried in the ground. It's eight inches by four inches by three inches, with a built-in lock.

[If they dig it up, they learn that it's quite heavy. The cover is damaged, and so it opens with little effort. The walls of the box are about a quarter inch thick, and inside is a cloth bag with thirty precious stones. A label on the inside of the box suggests

that it may have originated in India. The stones are worth a small fortune. The label inside would allow the characters to trace them back to the original owner if they choose to do so. The Keeper can decide the actual value of the stones and what the repercussions will be if they decide to keep them.]

38 The characters find several abandoned and badly damaged tents in a snowy mountain pass. The tents are half torn down and covered with snow with no human remains inside. They do however appear to contain the belongings and shoes of at least a half dozen people.

[A closer investigation suggests that the tents have been cut open from inside. Searching the area finds that there are six or seven sets of footprints left by people who were barefoot, wearing only socks, or in one case, a single shoe.]

The tracks lead down towards the edge of a nearby woods on the opposite side of the pass just under a mile (1.5 km) away. However, after 1,600 ft. (500 m) the tracks are covered with snow. At the forest's edge, under a large pine tree they find the visible remains of a small fire. There are two frozen bodies huddled together. They are shoeless and dressed only in their underwear. The branches on the tree are broken up to five meters high, suggesting that one of the men had climbed up to look for something.

A Hard Spot Hidden check allows the characters to find three more corpses buried in the snow between the pine and the camp. They died in poses suggesting that they were attempting to return to the tent. They are found separately in different directions, 300-400 ft. (90-120 m) from the tree.]

39 While exploring or foraging for food, one of the characters finds what looks like a clay jar half-buried in the silt of a narrow stream.

[If extricated from the sediment, they find it to be a reddish clay jar about a foot tall and seven inches in diameter. The lid is sealed in place with a black substance very much like tar. Two, half-inch diameter copper posts protrude from the lid an inch and a half. If both posts are touched simultaneously, the person will receive a strong shock of electricity. If measured, they will find that it produces a constant 14.375 volts, or slightly more than a car battery. Using x-rays to look inside doesn't seem to work. Opening it violently releases a dark purple gas that quickly dissipates. The rest of the interior contains multiple coils of copper, gold, and two other metals that do not match anything on the periodic table. Once opened, this strange battery stops working and cannot be made to work again.]

40 A perfect three and a half foot round hole is cut into a vertical rock face. The inside surface is as smooth as glass, and there is no sign of stone debris outside the tunnel.

[If explored, the characters find that it goes more than 100 feet straight into the rock before angling down at an almost

perfect 45° angle. If anyone dares to descend, they will not be able to gain any purchase to slow their descent. After about 200 feet they reach a blockage where the tunnel has collapsed. Getting back up will be next to impossible without someone pulling them out with a rope. The Keeper is free to have this tunnel lead to someplace interesting if they wish.]

41 The characters suddenly become dizzy and disoriented. After blacking out for a moment, they realize that more than three hours has passed.

[Within the next day or so, each character will discover a small scar on the back of their neck near the base of the skull.]

42 A strange gravitational anomaly covers an irregular area roughly 100 feet across. Everything in this area feels 50% heavier.

[If the characters have the means or report the phenomenon to authorities, research will reveal that this anomaly is due to a source of mass, about 300 feet below the surface in solid rock. Anyone with any Astrophysics knowledge might speculate that it is a fragment of neutron star (or similar massive object) that collided with the Earth during its formation. If this is the case, the fragment would only be about the size of a grain of sand.]

43 A rough-looking old man lurches towards the characters. His manner does not seem threatening, though they can smell him at several yards. He is wearing denim overalls, a gray work shirt, and heavy black boots. On his back is a too-large leather backpack with a lantern and small pickax hanging from the side.

[Most of his words are intelligible, though it sounds like some bastardized version of English. It's fairly obvious after a minute of this that he's stark raving mad, but in the midst of his ramblings, he mentions a relative of one of the characters and something about them that he could not possibly know. They also pick up that this person is in danger from an unusual accident. The Keeper should choose the most appropriate character and relative for this prophecy, and then give the character the opportunity to save their loved one based on this information. The man has no identity, and simply refers to himself as Old Man Joe. He talks about himself in the third person, saying things like "Ol' Man Joe knows what he's talkin' 'bout."]

44 The characters find a raised concrete circle on the ground, about ten feet in diameter and four feet tall. In the center of the top is a steel hatch with a heavily rusted padlock. Stenciled on the hatch are the words "US AIR FORCE – AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY".

[If opened, the characters find a four foot diameter shaft descending 500 feet into the ground. The metal ladder bolted to the wall seems solid enough, and if anyone climbs to the bottom, they find a twenty-foot square room with a large vault-like door opposite the ladder. It has no handles or mechanism on the outside, and stands partially open. The door itself is

at least three feet thick and appears solid. Anyone attempt to move it must use a combined Strength of at least 200.

Beyond the doors is an abandoned military complex which includes labyrinthine corridors, living spaces, kitchens, and dozens of laboratories that seem to indicate that this was once a research facility. The elevators are not working, but the eight levels can be accessed via emergency ladders and access tunnels. It's clear that at one time the facility could have housed as many as 150 people.

Any evidence that might have indicated the nature of the research being done here has been completely removed, though the general layout implies that it was likely biological in nature.]

45 A herd of fifteen goats is grazing on a grassy slope nearby. They do not seem alarmed by the presence of the characters.

[If goats are not native to the region, this could be a foreign species that was accidentally introduced by humans. They will let the characters approach.]

46 Atop a small outcropping of rock, a small wooden hut is covered with meteorological instruments. The hut itself is about six foot square and seven feet tall. The door on the front is latched, but not locked. It is held in place with steel cables that are anchored to pitons hammered into the stone.

[Inside the hut are shelves with more than thirty notebooks with recorded weather data that goes back several decades. There are no entries more recent than ten years ago.]

47 A freak storm moves into the area.

[The Keeper can decide if it is a thunderstorm or blizzard based on the location and time of year (see Wind & Weather on page 27).]

48 Tucked in between two ridges is a small cabin made from a pair of shipping containers bound together. A large water cistern sits on the roof, while a simple windmill slowly turns in the breeze. There are two windows on the side and a single door in between them.

[If the door is open, there is a noticeable escape of air, as if opening a sealed jar. The smell inside is stale, but not rotten or mildewed. The interior has been divided into several rooms, including a kitchen, living area, and two bedrooms. In one bedroom are the mummified remains of a man and woman who are in positions as if they were sleeping. In the other room are two young children – a boy and a girl – who are also mummified in their beds. The supplies and equipment make it clear that this was some sort of survival retreat.

If the characters spend time investigating the situation, they will learn that the family believed in a religious prophecy that foretold the end of the world, and they they took sleeping pills to end their lives. They were preserved when the air filtration system malfunctioned and hermetically sealed the home more than ten years ago. There is enough food and water

here to sustain four people for up to five years. Hidden in a concealed panel in the floor is a stash of weapons including 2 hunting rifles, 2 assault rifles, 4 pistols, and hundreds or rounds for each.]

49 Hidden in a small mountain forest is an old abandoned log cabin. The roof's wooden shingles are covered with a heavy layer of moss and the stone chimney is similarly green with lichens. Every external surface is carved with strange, unidentifiable symbols. The windows and door are all secured against the elements.

[Inside is a single open room some sort of humanoid effigy at the far end. Its hands are raised to the ceiling and its head is covered with many different bits of antler and horn. Closer examination reveals that the effigy is fashioned from sticks, animal bones, leaves, and straw. The larger abdomen area appears to be a kind of woven basket with a hollow center. Inside can be seen a human fetus carved from a single piece of wood.]

50 The characters reach a high vantage point that overlooks the land below. They suddenly realize that they can see a symbol of some sort carved into the landscape that would never have been visible from the ground.

[If they attempt to see it from directly above in some kind of aircraft, it will not be seen. In fact, it is so cunningly made that it can only be seen from the vantage point where they first spotted it. The Keeper can decide on the specific symbol that would best fit their setting. Otherwise it could simply be an animal or a mythological creature.]

51 A large footprint is pressed into a patch of clay-rich ground. It is similar to a bare human print, but it is far too large and has one too many toes on each foot.

[A Hard Natural World or Track check will reveal that whatever made the print, the depth and pressure releases suggest that it must have weighed over 1000 pounds.]

52 The characters find a radio or mobile phone (depending on the era). It's a model from a decade ago or more.

[The battery is long dead, and the case is cracked. An Extreme Electronics check would be able to repair it, if they can also find a battery to power it.]

53 A woman's shoe lays discarded on the path, its style is clearly not suitable for this terrain. The weathering suggests that it's been there for more than a week.

[Closer examination reveals that there is a dark stain on it that could be blood.]

54 A manila envelope in a clear plastic bag is tacked to a tree in plain sight. The full name of one of the characters is on it (Keeper's choice).

[Inside are large black and white photos of them and their loved ones that look as if they were taken from a distance.]

55 Near a recent rockslide the characters find a video camera (VHS or digital depending on the era). The battery is dead, but it appears to be in good condition otherwise.

[If they manage to get power to it, they will find that the video is heavily corrupted, but the last bit of footage is intact. It shows that the hiker was filming just before the rockslide. The images is blurred and jumpy, but there is a dark shape that apparently lifts the hiker fifty feet into the air, at which point the camera falls to the ground. It continues to record a sideways view of the landscape for another thirty minutes before the battery goes dead.]

56 A pair of binoculars sits discarded on the ground. The right lens is broken, but the left seems to work fine. The strap is missing.

57 The characters find a stuffed teddy bear on the ground. It's weathered, but doesn't look to have been here for too long.

58 A stainless steel flask is perched atop a low boulder. It looks old, like something from the 1940s. There is still liquid inside.

[If opened, the contents smell like gasoline.]

59 An old car lays on its side, wedged against a tree that has partially grown around it. There are no roads nearby, and no apparent way that it could have come to be here. The interior is heavily rusted and all the soft fixtures have crumbled to dust.

[A thorough examination of the car reveals that it was registered to a private investigator who lived in a city on another continent. The specifics of the make and locations are up to the Keeper.]

60 In a soft bit of ground or snow, the characters see a few footprints that are not their own. They appear to be basically human in shape, and spaced to indicate that their maker was bipedal. Upon closer examination, the characters notice three things that are unsettling about these tracks: 1. whoever made them was barefoot, 2. they apparently have only three toes on each foot, and 3. they were made within the past few hours.

[A Natural World check will reveal that the three toes look as if they are natural to the foot size, and not the result of amputation of toes from a normal human foot. An Extreme success will reveal that the individual who made them likely stood between seven and eight feet in height and weighed nearly 1000 lbs.]

61 While passing an outcropping of rock, the characters hear a faint voice calling out for help. As they approach, they find a hidden cave with a pool of clear water inside. Looking around they notice a raven in it's nest. A moment later it says (in a young woman's voice): "Help me, please." This is followed by an eerie imitation of someone choking. There is no sign of anyone here; alive or dead.

[The water is clean and drinkable, fed by an underground spring. If they search the pool, a Spot Hidden check will allow them to find a silver heart pendant with the words "For my beloved Lenore" engraved on the back.]

62 A stack of eight white quartz rocks stand on a spur of granite jutting from the ground. The stones are all roughly the same size, and the entire stack is about four feet tall. It seems a little unusual that the wind hasn't knocked it over considering how precariously balanced they appear to be.

[The type of stone is not particularly unusual for the area, so they could be local. It is easy enough to dismantle the stack if someone wishes to do so. If they pass by this place after twenty-four hours have passed, the stack will be restored to its original condition. If the characters become interested enough to wait and observe the area from hiding or leave a recording device, they will see a group of three racoons (or whatever mammal would be appropriate to the area) carefully restacking the stones. If they are interrupted, they will run away and will never rebuild the stack again.]

63 A pile of liquor bottles is scattered around the base of a boulder. There are the remains of a campfire that is many months old.

[Most of the bottles are intact and could be used to hold water in a survival situation. A search of the area and a successful Spot Hidden check will reveal a full bottle of Jack Daniels (750 ml) hidden in a niche behind a flat stone.]

64 Crossing a small stream, one of the characters (determine by Luck score) notices a reflection in the silt. If they dig it out, they find a bowie-style knife. It is about fourteen inches long with a nine inch blade. The handle is made from some kind of horn and the pommel is a brass wolf head. It is in surprisingly good shape, and is even reasonably sharp.

[Closer examination will find a maker's mark. If anyone researches the mark, they will find that this knife was made in 1854 by a knife maker by the name of Hannibal Davis.]

65 The characters come across a rustic wooden bench fashioned from rough hewn logs and bent saplings. It looks to have been sealed with a thick coating of boiled pine pitch, giving it a dark, shiny appearance. Carved onto the back are the words: "A gift for all travelers who have yet to find their way." Below that is carved: "July 1822".

66 A rustic old cabin comes into view. The heavy storm shutters are closed and no smoke issues from the black stovepipe.

[If anyone enters the unlocked cabin, they'll find a single room with a pair of stout chairs in front of the fireplace and a bed in the far corner. A trunk at the foot of the bed contains spare blankets and an unnaturally large sheepskin. A week's worth of firewood is stacked to the right of the fireplace, and a kindling bucket stands to the left. A Hard Spot Hidden check will reveal

a cunningly hidden trap door that leads to a stone-lined cellar. It is bare except for a dark circle carved into the flagstone floor. Incomprehensible symbols line the ring and a book sits at its center. The Keeper can decide on the nature of the book depending on which direction they want this encounter to go. Whether they find the cellar or not, if they sleep in this place, they will have exceedingly disturbing nightmares involving imagery that is constant with Shub-Niggurath. The nightmares will trigger a Sanity check (1/1d6). They have now come to the attention of the Black Goat of the Woods, and her young will soon pay them a visit if they remain.]

67 A thin line of steam emanates from a fissure in the rock. If the characters explore the area, they will find a low, narrow cave that leads to a thirty foot chamber with a hot spring taking up most of the floor.

[While the water is not suitable for drinking, it is not harmful to touch, and so characters could bathe in it, or at the very least used the warm cave as a comfortable rest stop. If they are foolish enough to drink the water, the arsenic in the water could poison them (see Keeper's Rulebook p.129).]

68 A ruined stone building sits at the base of an eighty foot sheer cliff. Most of the structure has crumbled into dust and debris, but the basic shape can be inferred from the existing remains. It was a square building, approximately sixty-three feet across. The single doorway had lead into a kind of entry hall with four adjoining chambers to either side. At the far side an archway opens onto the base of a shattered staircase, implying that there was once more than a single level.

[The architectural style is extremely simple, making it difficult to categorize. Even a casual eye will understand that the ruin is extremely old. An Archaeology check will reveal that it is more than five hundred years old, and it was built from local stone. It is mortarless construction, with each block cut perfectly to fit with the adjoining stone. A Hard Spot Hidden check will reveal the remains of a fireplace buried in the rubble. Bits of charcoal have been preserved, and if the characters have the means, they can be carbon dated to around 1250 BCE. Enough of the ground floor remains intact so that the characters could find some shelter from the elements here.]

69 The characters find themselves a small glen between two ridges. At its center is a circle of eight standing stones, roughly forty feet in diameter. Each vaguely cylindrical stone is about a foot and a half wide by seven feet tall, tapering slightly at the top. The heavily weathered stone is covered with yellowish-green lichens, and the interior of the circle paved with flat, interlocking stones. Dark moss fills every crack and seam.

[A Science/Geology check will reveal that the stone is not local, and was probably transported more than a hundred miles to get

here. An Archaeology check reveals that the stones are buried at least five feet into the ground, making their overall length around twelve feet. The style is reminiscent to the stone circles found throughout the British isles, though it seems unlikely to have been the same builders. An Extreme Spot Hidden check will allow the characters to find a faint symbol carved on the north stone. Anyone who can read Norse runes will recognize it as a symbol which means danger and suffering.]

70 A sudden fog descends on the area, and visibility drops to zero (see Fog on page 27).

[The sound carries very differently in the cool humidity, and the characters start to hear all sorts of noises as if they are coming from nearby. Perhaps they start to see shapes moving in the fog and hear unnatural noises, or perhaps it's their imagination playing tricks on them. The Keeper can decide which is the case.]

71 A howl that is neither animal nor human echoes across the mountainside. The distance is difficult to tell, but it sounded disturbingly close.

72 Wedged in between two rocks is a fragment of yellowed paper. It looks as if it was just blown there by the wind.

[If the characters investigate, it turns out to be a map. The paper is heavy and waxed to make it water resistant. It shows part of what appears to be a cave system drawn in black ink, but there is no indication of where the entrance might be found. A small side cave near the middle is circled in blue ink.]

73 Starting in the morning, the characters are followed by a "murder" of crows. They caw and circle all day as they walk, landing nearby if they stop to rest. At nightfall, the crows fly off and do not return.

74 A stray dog comes close to camp. It looks like a medium-sized mutt with black fur, a long tail, and floppy ears. It looks slightly emaciated as it cautiously walks around the edge of the firelight.

[He can be enticed to come over with a bit of food and patience. Once befriended, he will bond with the character who fed him. He will alert the characters in case of danger, and will defend them against predators – or die in the attempt. He has no collar or any other identification.]

75 The carcass of some kind of goat is found in a small clearing. It looks as if some sort of predator has been feeding on it recently.

[A mountain lion (or similar big cat) will return in about 30 minutes. The characters can harvest about three individual meals worth of meat from it if they want to take 10 minutes to do so.]

76 Hanging from a piton just inside a cave entrance is a brass Ruhmkorff lamp. It consists of a translucent glass tube

held within a brass housing about a foot long and three inches in diameter. Inside the tube they can see the shadow of a heavy coiled wire. A straight wooden handle at its base allows the lamp to be carried like a torch. A fabric-covered cord trails from the bottom of the handle to a rigid leather satchel with a wide shoulder strap. There is a sturdy hand crank on the side of the satchel with an embossed arrow indicating the direction that it should be turned.

[Turning the crank spins an induction coil that charges a large chemical battery in the satchel. Ten minutes of charging will power the lamp for about an hour. A switch on the side of the lamp turns it on and off. The lamp casts a bright white light that will illuminate a roughly forty foot area. The whole kit is heavy, weighing a little over ten pounds (eight for the satchel and two for the lamp itself).]

77 The ground in this area is covered with thousands of 7.62 mm spent shell casings.

[Anyone with military experience will know that these are standard rounds commonly used by the military. An Intelligence check by anyone with military experience will also reveal that the spread of the casings indicates the use of a weapon with an extremely high rate of fire, such as a minigun. There is no indication of what the target might have been. If this option is used in a pre-1963 setting, the Keeper can substitute some other weapon, such as Thompson submachine gun, which would make the casings .45 caliber.]

78 A small path leads off the main trail. It's well defined but the characters cannot tell whether it was made by humans or animals.

[If they follow the trail, it leads into a narrow slot canyon that ranges between eight and ten feet wide. The thirty-foot walls are sheer and smooth, and look as if they were carved by millennia of running water, though there is currently no water to be found here. At the far end, it opens up into a deep natural well that must have once been the base of a waterfall. In the center of this area is a three foot pillar of stone with a flattened top. Resting atop this crude plinth is a bleached white skull.]

79 Walking along a kind of path, one of the characters (the one with the lowest Luck score) hears a creak of metal beneath their foot.

[A trapper concealed a bear trap here a long time ago and never recovered it. The character who stepped on it should make a Luck roll to see if the old and rusted mechanism still works. A failed check means the trap snaps shut, inflicting 2d4 points of damage and a broken leg. It's a clean break, so it should be simple enough to set, though it will slow down the group.]

80 A sudden rumbling alerts the characters to a gigantic boulder (about the size of a house) rolling down the slope towards them.

[The characters should all make Dexterity checks. A success means that they easily got out of the way. A failure means that they suffer 1d4 points of damage as it knocks them aside. A critical failure means that they were hit head on and suffer 3d4 points of damage, and suffer 1d4 broken bones.]

81 A old steamer trunk is leaning against a large pine tree. It's heavily weathered, but more or less intact.

[If opened, the characters will discover that it is from 1908, and is filled with clothes, toiletries, and other items that one might pack for a long journey. While everything is in surprisingly good condition considering the age and location, most of the contents are unusable. A brass plate on the outside has the initials GHM.]

82 The characters notice a crude animal snare made from natural local materials.

[A Natural World check will reveal that it has probably been here for a week or more.]

83 One of the characters (the one with the highest Spot Hidden score) notices a rectangular shape in the underbrush. Closer examination reveals an old and heavily weathered wooden box. It looks like it may have been quickly stashed there and covered with loose organic debris. The box is heavy, with a hinged top. If there were any markings, they have long since worn away.

[Inside are fourteen sticks of dynamite, individually wrapped in waxed cloth. A separate cotton bag contains a three-foot roll of fuse. The fuse can be cut to any length and is easily inserted into a dynamite stick. It burns at about a half-inch per second. (Dynamite Stick – Skill: Throw, Damage: 4D10/3 yards, Base Range: STR/5 yards, Malfunction: 99)]

84 As the clouds gather overhead, the characters feel the first drops of rain. In a matter of minutes they are in a complete downpour.

[Use the Heavy Rain rules on page 27. The rain will last for 30 minutes or so, and then the sky will clear as if it never happened.]

85 A roaring sound appears to be moving up the slope. A moment later the character are hit by a sudden blast of wind.

[Use the Dust of Wind rules on page 27.]

86 In the evening, the characters hear what sound like drums in the distance. It isn't possible to tell from which direction the steady, rhythmic booming is coming. It lasts well into the night, ending shortly before first light.

[If anyone tries to follow the sound, they will lose track of it once they get more than fifty yards from camp, but will hear it again when they return. In fact, they learn that the place where they are camping is the only place where the drums can be heard.]

87 The characters come across a bobcat crouched right in the middle of their path. This isn't so strange in and of itself,

but instead of running off as they approach, it just stands there staring at them ominously. The bobcat will stay there locking gazes with the characters until they move. At that point the animal suddenly lets out an ear-piercing scream and lunges at the closest character, attempting to bite them.

[The bobcat has rabies. Any character bitten must make a Hard Constitution check or become sick 2d4 weeks later. The first symptom they will develop will be a fever and flu-like symptoms. Over the next few days they will become hydrophobic and confused, suffering numbness, drooling, insanity, asphyxia, and finally death 1d4+5 days later. The victim can be cured if they receive treatment prior to the onset of neurological symptoms, 1d4 days after the fever starts.]

88 The characters hear the sound of a river running nearby. If they follow the sound, they reach a point where they feel as if they should be able to see it, but there's nothing. After a few minutes, the sound stops and there is only the faint whisper of wind.

[As soon as the sound disappears, the characters should make Power checks. Anyone who succeeds will feel a dark, malignant presence watching them. They will also get the sense that it's moving closer, and they will have the irresistible urge to get out of the area as fast as possible.]

89 On a twenty degree slope stands a large dolmen. Three flat stones are set to form three walls that support a massive, rectangular plate of granite on top. The open side of the dolmen faces the down hill slope. The entire structure is about five feet on a side and six feet tall. A closer look reveals that just inside the open end, there is a set of stone steps that descend into the mountain.

[If the characters explore the stairs, they will discover that they lead to a narrow corridor fifty feet below the surface. The three-foot-wide by six-foot-tall is about thirty feet long and ends in a small, circular burial chamber lined with interlocking stones. A four-foot-tall clay jar sits in the center of the room. It is shaped like an egg, with the lid making up about a quarter of the top. Inside is thick black liquid like tar. If anyone fishes around within, they find a preserved male human bound in a fetal position. There are no markings to indicate the origin of this strange burial rite.]

90 The characters notice a figure following them some distance behind. When they stop, the figure stops. Little detail can be made out except that it's obviously a person of average build, and that they are wearing a coat with the hood up.

[If the characters make any attempt to move towards the person, they turn and move away, disappearing in the distance. If they search the area where they saw the person, a Hard Spot Hidden check will reveal a scrap of paper with the name of one of the characters on it (Keeper's choice).]

91 The ground beneath the characters' feet begins to tremble. Rocks and debris begin rolling down the slope, though it does not become a full rockslide. The tremor lasts for about a minute and a half.

[The Keeper could have this trigger a rockslide if they wish to ramp up the danger. See the Rockslide rules on page 25.]

92 Passing near a tall tree, one of the characters spots a bizarre sight. What looks like an octopus is lodged in the uppermost branches.

[There are a few ways that it could have come to be here. The most likely option being that a bird of prey snatched it from a nearby sea or ocean and was forced to drop it for some reason.]

93 In a hollowed out tree, the characters find what appears to be a shelter built by or for a child. A small nest of blankets and leaves sits in the back, while another blanket serves as a door. There are a number of toys and children's clothes neatly placed around the space. There is no sign of a child.

[It's fairly easy to guess that the child who made this shelter is probably a girl between the ages of six and eight. Collections of local nuts and berries fill plastic tea cups, and a metal coffee pot has been turned into a makeshift wood stove, with the hollowed out tree acting as a chimney for the smoke. A Natural World check will reveal that this place has been abandoned for at least a week.]

94 A stone with paleolithic carvings depicts a local tribe fighting against what appears to be a huge flying serpent.

[A Mythos check will suggest that creature might be a Hunting Horror.]

95 A fissure in the rocks crosses the characters' path. It's only about two feet across and is easy enough to hop over. If anyone glances in, they will see a point of white light more than a hundred feet down. Calls will not be answered, and it's too far for any normal light to reach.

[If anyone descends into the fissure, it gets progressively wider the lower they get. When they reach the bottom, they discover that the light is coming from a quartz crystal sphere about the size of a grapefruit. There does not appear to be any external power source or technology generating the light. If it is carried out, it gets dimmer as it's raised from the fissure, so that by the time it reaches the surface, it appears as nothing more than a quartz sphere. If it is returned to the bottom of the fissure, the glowing resumes.]

96 A skunk suddenly emerges out of the bushes right in front of the characters.

[The characters should make Luck rolls to avoid startling the skunk. If anyone fails, the skunk turns and sprays the group. The smell is overwhelming, and requires that everyone make Constitution checks to avoid vomiting. The smell will remain strong until they can get a thorough cleaning.]

97 A man dressed as a Roman centurion comes out of nowhere and starts shouting at the characters. Anyone with a classical education will recognize that he's speaking Latin. Anyone who speaks Latin will be able to translate his words as: "WHERE IS THIS PLACE?! WHO ARE YOU?!"

[Anyone trained in Archaeology will be able to tell that his clothes, armor, and gladius all appear to be authentic. If someone speaks to him in Latin, he will calm down enough to relay his story.]

He says that his name is Regulus Maximus Verrucosus. His legion was sent to root out a band of rebels from the caves where they were believed to be hiding. He became separated from the others and wandered the tunnels for many hours before emerging in this place three days ago.

Of course the authorities will dismiss his rantings as lunacy, despite the authenticity of his paraphernalia and their inability to find any records to identify him. If the characters take charge of him, they will eventually learn that he claims to be from the year 45 CE (based on the information he is able to provide about his time). He is quite smart and will begin picking up English fairly quickly as he adapts to his new world. Keepers should note that Regulus could make an interesting recurring NPC or even a PC if necessary. Finding the cave where he emerged could even make for a compelling scenario.]

98 A severed deer head lays in the middle of the path. A large raven sits atop it, croaking at the characters. The cut that severed the head looks very clean, and it shows no sign of predation or scavengers, except for the eyes which the raven is currently devouring.

99 A flash in the sky is followed by a concussive blast less than a mile from the characters. Approaching the area, they can see the impact crater of a meteor.

[Use Terror from the Stars on page 10.]

100 A ledge moves along the side of a steep cliff. It has obviously been carved by intelligent hands using some sort of tools. It is about six feet wide, and set into the rock wall at least two feet, creating a slight overhang above it. The entire walkway is about two hundred yards long. About half way along it, there are ten burial niches cut into the stone wall. Each is piled with bones and primitive jewelry made from shell, clay beads, semi-precious stones, and ivory.

[An Archaeology check reveals that this burial practice does not match any known culture. This would seem like a good place to spend the night, but if they do, they will get little sleep. The shape of this ledge causes the wind to howl along it, sounding like the cries and laments of the dead interred here.]



Davae Breon Jaxon

Davae Breon Jaxon is an archaeologist and collector of rare antiquities. [REDACTED] to the infamous [REDACTED] in Asia and the middle east.

Shortly after, Jaxon set out into the world in search of [REDACTED] spending more than three decades traveling [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. During his wanderings, he managed to amass [REDACTED] and has an extraordinary number of rare books. In the past few years, Professor Jaxon established a private research library dedicated to the [REDACTED] ever seen.

Professor Jaxon has recently turned all his attention to the [REDACTED] in extreme environments, and this book has benefited greatly from his experience.