

THE FORBIDDEN LANDS



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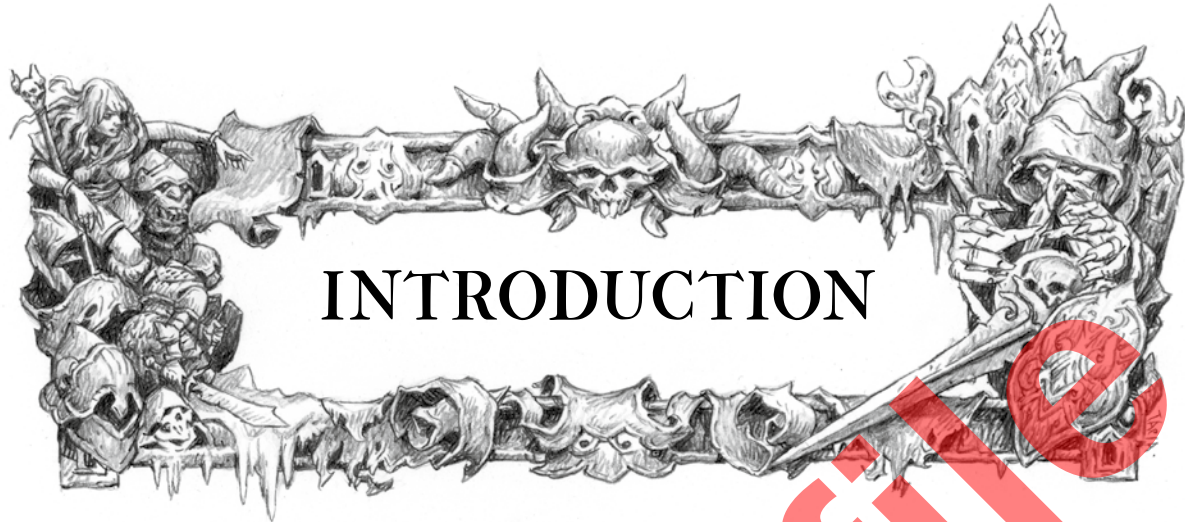
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INTRODUCTION

As the mural crumbles beneath your determined blows, a blackened iron door is revealed, decorated with the image of a bee. The air beyond is stale, yet tinged with the putrid smell of spoiled meat and something oddly floral....

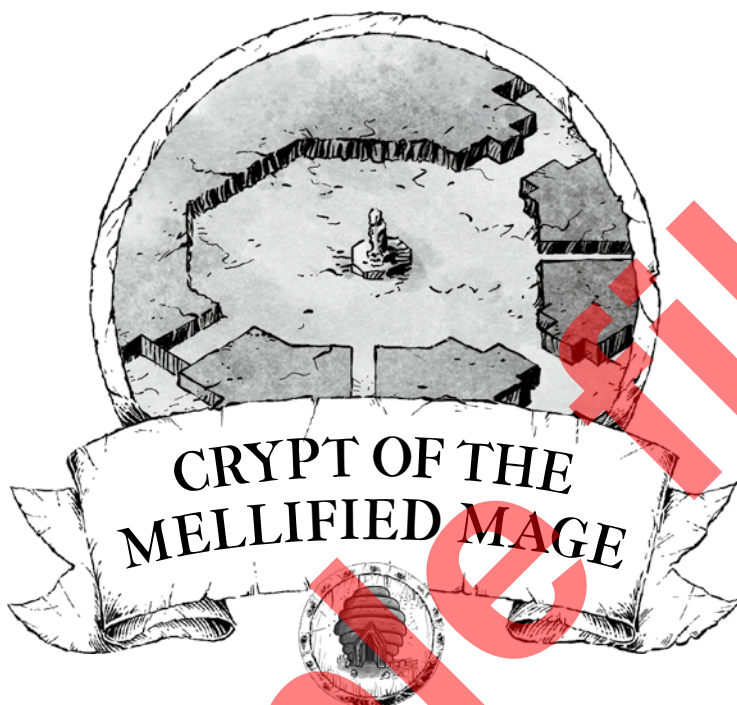
Forbidden Lands is a toolbox for your imagination. A canvas upon which thousands of players and Gamemasters have told exciting adventures as diverse as the people telling them. These tales of imagination are what the game is about. It is about creating your own stories and making your mark on the world itself. But like the frenzied blinking of fireflies, most of these adventures only exist for a brief time before turning into memories and legends of past adventures.

In this book, we have collected four adventure sites written by some of the most intriguing writers in the hobby today. While *Forbidden Lands* is built on a foundation of Sword & Sorcery, old school aesthetics and sandbox gaming, the tales told with the game can go in very different directions.

❖ *In Crypt of the Mellified Mage*, Fiona Maeve Geist (writer for the space horror game *Mothership*) invites you to a dungeon of dripping honey, weird insectoids and the foul abomination that was once the sorcerer Pagoag.

- ❖ David McGrogan (author of the fabulous *Toon-Suinn*) summons you to the magical warmth of *The Firing Pit of Llao-Yutuy*, where a master of his craft creates the most beautiful pottery in the world – for the right price.
- ❖ *In Temple of the Six-Limbed Lord*, Zedeck Siew (creator of the brilliant *A Thousand Thousand Islands*) leads you to the temple of the Monkey King and drops you in the midst of a struggle for control over the titular six-limbed lord.
- ❖ Lastly, Adam Koebel (co-writer of *Dungeon World*) takes you on a dizzying tour through a mad mage's mind. It is a dungeon filled with memories, regrets and aching pain, where the monsters are nightmares and your own worst fears becomes real.

Four visions from the *Forbidden Lands*, told by four masters of their craft. So strap on your backpack, light your torch head into these magical places and make them your own.



TYPE OF ADVENTURE SITE: Dungeon

Lit by guttering candles, the timeworn saint's shrine still reeks of burnt offerings. Plaster dust floats in the still air as you smash away a mosaic depicting a wondrous healer tending wounds with a honeyed touch – eyes become bright and clear, limbs vital rather than withered, the dead rise from their graves and dance about him. As the mural crumbles beneath your determined blows, a blackened iron door is revealed, decorated with the image of a bee. The air beyond is stale, yet tinged with the putrid smell of spoiled meat and something oddly floral...

BACKGROUND

The Honied Catacomb gestates beneath the earth like a pustule waiting to burst. While

the catacomb itself was buried long ago, the fragrant, windswept heath attracted those looking to take advantage of the many subterranean beehives in the area. The only sign of prior habitation is a small temple to a forgotten Saint (the entry to location #34 – no one thought to shatter the mural seeking a hidden catacomb). Some roughly hewn buildings have sprung up, though the settlers (thirty odd individuals in total) have a reputation for insularity and weirdness.

Beneath their feet slumbers a mellified man – one who willingly forgoes all sustenance save honey in a fast to the death before being entombed for at least forty years within a bath of milk and honey – an invaluable panacea. The ancient sorcerer Pagoag, vain in his pursuit



of mastering the healing arts, attempted to transform himself into a lich concurrently. The result of this crude fusion of vile necromancy and the noble sacrifices of the healing arts is the Abomination sealed in location #22. Pagoag is nearly dormant, though aware of the hive of Insectoids burrowing nearby. However, he is powerful enough to provide the inhabitants of the town with haunting dreams of honey-dripping wealth hidden inside the catacomb.



GETTING HERE

It is suggested that the PCs pass through the small village at some point. The Insectoids will eventually ravage the settlement providing a macabre abattoir for their young (see Events), but this should not happen until after the PCs' arrival. Happenstance (or research) uncovers the existence of Pagoag's fabled healing powers and alleged final transformation into a mellified man – a treasure sought by any afflicted with an incurable illness.

We leave the composition of the village and the lives of its inhabitants to the GM (if you like, use the tables in Chapter 12 of the *Gamemaster's Guide*). The three important details are that the Insectoid cave (location #30) be located close by, the one entrance be an offering place to the mysterious saint of honey and the healing arts (location #34), and a second entrance (#1) be hidden nearby (perhaps overgrown with brush, waiting to be uncovered). Also, the town should be on an elevated position as the catacombs were built and then buried.

The PCs can visit the village for a variety of mundane concerns, or perhaps because they have heard the place has exemplary effects on the health of those who visit. For any number of reasons, the party may uncover one of the three entrances (see Background). The interior of the honied crypt is composed of roughly hewn stonework where the mortar is riddled with tiny tunnels carved by industrious subterranean bees seeking pollen – the occasional fall of a piece of ceiling is the only sound that disturbs their omnipresent humming. The air is always thick, loamy, faintly spiced and tinged with sweetness. The PCs can enter the Crypt in one of three ways:

- ❖ Breaking the mural in the rear of the town altar (location #34).
- ❖ Venturing into the Insectoid cave and exploring their tunnels (location #30).
- ❖ Uncovering the obscured entrance and moving the stone door (location #1).

The act of entering the catacomb doesn't trigger anything major, but once the PCs start looting treasure the dead awaken and Pagoag sets certain plans in motion unless stopped (see Aftermath).



LEGEND

The sorcerer Pagoag is a minor note in most histories, as his vanity, excesses and medical prowess brought plenty of commentary, but darker insinuations become more and more explicit – that his cult was insular, greedy, and lasciviously hedonistic. The darkest allegation is that Pagoag began experimenting with the creation of a mellified

