

Tales from Bruckstadt

Call of the Toad

- Malicious highwaymen
- Deadly traps
- Eternal damnation

Glitter and Gold
for those who survive!

Dungeon Crawl in the Thirty Years' War

Written by Markus Schauta
Illustrations and Cover by Mariela Schöffmann

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Call of the Toad

A Weird Fantasy Role-Playing adventure for character levels 1–2

Sample file



Gazer Press - We do Dungeon right

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The Adventure

The Call of the Toad is a short dungeon crawl for 2-4 players with low level characters. If the players have already played the OSR-adventure *The Saint of Bruckstadt*, this module could be used as a sequel, as well as an introduction to the main adventure.

The booklet was written with the Lamentations of the Flame Princess rules in mind but is playable with a variety of OSR-rulebooks such as Labyrinth Lord, Swords & Wizardry or Old School Essentials.

Background

The Call of the Toad is set in the year 1633 in Bruckstadt, a town somewhere in Germany during the Thirty Years' War.

Maybe the player-characters (PC) came to Bruckstadt because they fled from plague and misery to this (still) peaceful region. Maybe they were attracted by rumors about the old Roman catacombs. Or they may be passing through to join a regiment recruiting mercenaries for the upcoming battle of Regensburg.

At a junk market in Bruckstadt, a tattered diary fell into their hands. A small booklet bound in scuffed leather, in which someone had written down in neat handwriting his life as a merchant's employee.

The Diary

The book describes the last five years in the life of Daniel Schwarz, who served the cloth merchant Konrad Keudel. The entries are irregular, sometimes in daily, then again in weekly intervals. On 200 pages a boring life spreads out, which has not much more to offer than the daily routine of the job.

Then, in the last year of the records, a turn in the author's life takes place. As his employer is increasingly occupied by private research, he entrusts Schwarz with the management of the business.

But Schwarz cannot be happy about this. The studies of his employer worry him. To the pages of his diary he reports of strange shadows haunting the house at night and that old Keudel and his clan worship a bizarre golden toad idol in the vaults below the family crypt.

The last entries are brief and vague, as if Schwarz was afraid to confide in his diary the horrible things he saw and heard during those nights. For January 1608, he records the death of Keudel's sister. A week later, her 16-year-old son Adalbert died of fever.

According to Schwarz, their corpses had decomposed in a perverse way into an infernally stinking slime - a sight that almost took his mind away. In the following weeks, old Keudel hardly left his study. With the help

of an abominable book called *The Call of the Toad*, written by a certain Raz'Kafaun, he is said to have tried to bring his sister and nephew back from the dead and to procure eternal life for himself.

Schwarz is deeply troubled. More and more often he asks for God's blessing. For November 1613, Schwarz notes that he has locked Keudel's body in the deepest part of the crypt behind a stone door.

The horrible memories of what he saw down in the tomb would haunt him with horrible nightmares. Even if his eyes had perceived otherwise, he writes in the last sentence of the diary, his mind tells him that Konrad Keudel died on November 28, 1613, at the age of 67.

What really happened

The Old Toad Joz'Quatl was worshipped in Bruckstadt and its surroundings since the Middle Ages. Keudel's nephew Adalbert should have continued the cult, but he died unexpectedly shortly after the death of his mother. Thereupon, old Keudel decided to raise his sister and nephew from the dead with the help of the book *The Call of the Toad*. Once death was overcome, the three of them could continue the cult of the Old Toad forever, according to the fanatical Keudel's thoughts. However the experiment went wrong: Not their bodies, but only the slimy remains of Keudel's relatives

awoke to undead life. And Keudel's spirit also remained trapped in his body, which had decomposed into slime. Gripped by horror, Schwarz imprisoned the creatures in the tomb before he died a year later, taking the dark secret with him into his grave.

Why it matters

Magic-User and clerics should take notice at the name Raz'Kafaun. The former, because this medieval author is said to have written occult works that give the initiate unimagined power. The latter, because Raz'Kafaun's books represent sacrilege, writings against the laws of nature ordained by God, which must be destroyed at all costs.

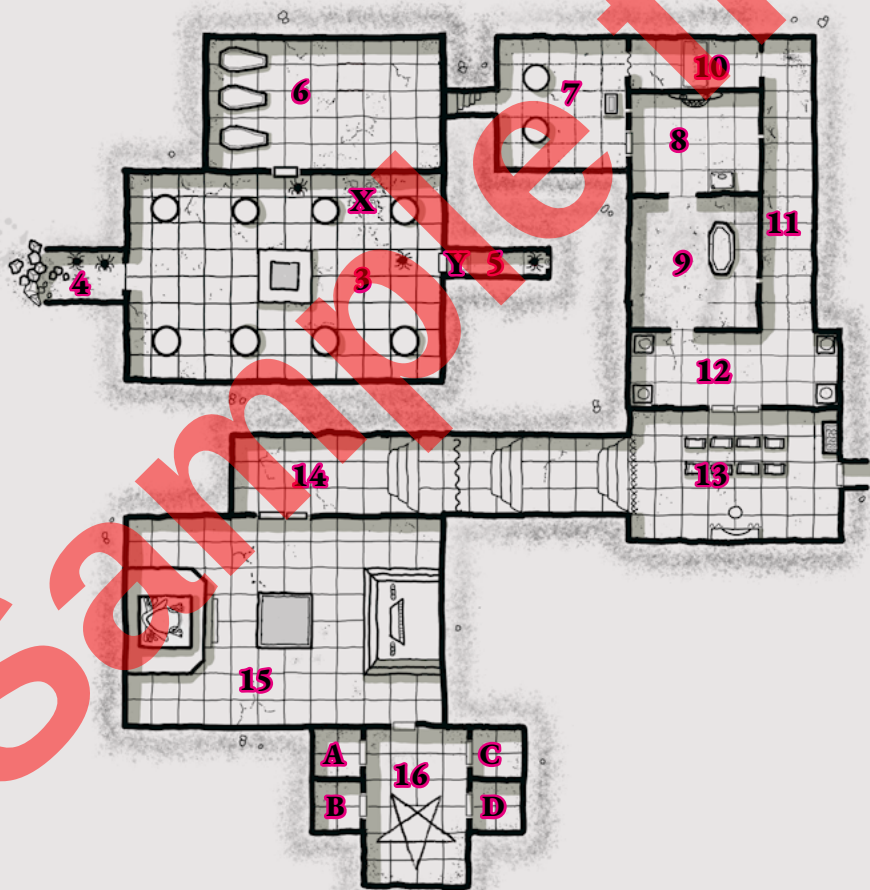
A thief or fighter might assume that this ancient tome could be sold for a good sum of gold. But also the mentioned golden idol could tempt them to descend into the catacombs.

Mausoleum of the Kendlers



Tomb

Temple of the Toad



The cemetery of Bruckstadt

A lonely place with well-trodden paths between weathered tombstones and blind stone angels. A few old mausolea rise above the man-high cemetery wall. The stone gargoyles that once watched over the gables of the burial houses were smashed last winter by gravedigger Randolph Strott. They were up to evil and killed his cats, he claimed.

The iron cemetery gate is locked at night. There is a 2 in 6 chance that Strott is present during the day, digging a new grave. The fact that Stine and her gang have nested in Keudels' mausoleum is ignored by old Strott because they helped him smash the Gargoyles.

1: Mausoleum of the Keudels

- Burial house with a bronze dome, discolored green by the centuries and knee-high nettles growing on the walls.
- Entrance portal with gable inscription: *Familiae Keudel Sepulcrum*.
- High bronze gate, decorated with biblical scene of the resurrection of Lazarus.
- Window slots with rusty cross bars (at a height of 2 meters).

Gate: The padlock was broken, but the door is stuck. There is a 2 in 6 chance to push it open quickly and surprise Stine and her gang (Strength modifiers apply).

Listen at the door: Voices of women and men, 3-4 people.

2: Inside the mausoleum

- Degenerate **figures** (4) have erected a poor blanket camp between two **sarcophagi**.
- Cool air, dim light falling through the window slots, rotating leaves in the corners.
- Stone **hatch** in the floor, locked with chain and padlock.

Hatch: When the hatch is opened, the PC is met with cool musty air. 5 meters below is the floor of a crypt. The staircase that once led down has collapsed (or was it torn down?).

Sarkophagi: The one on the left bears the inscription: *Inga Keudel, 1588-1611* (wife of Keudel, her skeleton lies inside). The right one reads: *Konrad Keudel, 1546-1613* (empty).

Figures (Stine and her gang):

Stine: Blue eyes pierce out of a dirty face, croaking voice. Brave, defiant. Can't stand being ordered around. If she is humiliated, she takes merciless revenge.

Speck: Torn soldier's skirt, much too tight for his fat body.

Arno: Barefoot with snotty nose, disfigured face (bitten by a dog when he was a child).

Eule: Bulging eyes, cape decorated with bird feathers.

Stine: Armor 13, Move 120', 2nd level Thief, 10hp, sling d4 and bayonet d6, Moral 8.

Speck, Arno, Eule: Armor 12, Move 120', 1st level Thief, 6hp, cudgel d6, knife d4, broken bottle d4, Morale 7

Talk to Stine:

As soon as it is clear that the PCs want to crawl down into the Keudels' crypt, she smells a deal and asks what the PCs are willing to pay to prevent her from cutting the rope.

Stine wants at least 80sp for a lavish meal at the Bruckstadt Inn for herself and her companions.

- If she gets the money, she promises not to stand in the way of the PCs.

Roll on table "What does Stine do?" d6-2.

- If the PCs threaten Stine she will leave.

Roll on table "What does Stine do?" d6+2.

- If a fight breaks out, Stine surrenders or flees as soon as it is clear that they are outnumbered.

Roll on table "What does Stine do?" d6+3.

Table: What does Stine do

1 or less: Stine is willing to help the PCs (could show up in the dungeon if the group is in danger).

2: Leaves the mausoleum and never comes back.

3: Cuts the rope or locks the hatch and leaves.

4: Climbs into the tomb about 20 minutes after the PCs and awakens all the still petrified spiders. While Stine's gang flees, the spiders will follow the PCs and attack them.

5 or higher: Stine calls for reinforcements and pursues the PCs to ambush them and take their loot.

3: Hall of the Spiders

- Under the hatchet lies the rubble of a collapsed staircase (marked with X on the map). The Crypt is supported by bulbous stone columns. Musty sepulchral silence.
- Two black, dog-sized outlines in front of the north and east walls (**petrified spiders**)
- **Basin** set in marble in the middle of the crypt.

Door to the North: Stuck wooden door tarnished with rusty iron sheets. There is a chance of 2 in 6 that it can be pushed open (Strength modifiers apply).

Door to the East: Iron door, without lock and bolt. "Do not open!" is carved into the metal.

Next to the door hangs an iron handle on a chain from the ceiling. When pulled, the door moves up 1 meter and opens the entrance to room 5.

Petrified spiders: Immobile, made of solid stone. If light of torches or lamps is brought to within 2 meters of them, d4.

1: Spider legs move and take a step forward before collapsing under the weight of the still petrified spider body (spider dies).

2: Spider slowly wakes up from stone sleep and is not fully able to move until next turn.

3: Spider puts down petrification and attacks immediately.

4: Spider awakens and gives birth to d4 young spiders.

Basin: A low wall of greenish marble encloses a hole black as hell. The smell of rotten vegetation rises from the darkness.

The damp shaft first goes down vertically into the depth, then branches off to the south and leads into room 15 above the sacrificial hole.

Spider: Armor 14, Move 240', 8hp, bite d6, Morale 12, 25xp.

Young Spider: Armor 12, Move 240', 4hp, bite d4, Morale 12, 25xp.

Spider venom: If the spider deals 5 or more damage from a single bite, save vs Paralyse. If failed, the PC petrifies within 2 hours: Limbs become stiff, reflexes weaken, skin becomes less sensitive.

The antidote is hidden in the frog demon's mouth in room 8.

4: Collapsed tunnel

- A **Tunnel** made of musty brickwork, damp and crumbling.
- As soon as someone shines a light into the tunnel, 3 petrified spiders awaken.

Tunnel: Led long ago to lower catacombs from Roman times, from where the spiders crawled up a century ago before fossilizing here for lack of food.

5: Spider's Prison

- As soon as the PC steps on the first stone tile in the chamber (Y), the iron door closes behind her and blocks the exit.
- Petrified, wet shiny body of a spider in front of the east wall.
- Dusty cobwebs cover walls like shrouds.

Cobwebs: Hide a niche in the east wall with a dusty clay jar.

Stone tile: There is a pressure plate

(Y) under the tile. As long as someone stands on the plate, the door remains locked. Only when the PC takes a step forward and relieves the plate, the door can be opened again from the outside. However, if the PC steps forward with a torch in her hand, she thereby awakens the spider from its petrification, which attacks immediately.

Spider: Armor 15, Move 240', 10hp, bite d6 (venom), Morale 12, 25xp.

Clay jar: Stuck in the jar is a scroll (written in Latin): Short treatise on the so-called death slime, into which cultists of the toad transform themselves a few hours after their death. Experiments by the unknown author indicate that the slime, swallowed in small quantities, causes amazing transformations of the body. However, the text warns of possible side effects.

Effects of tasting the slime, d6.

- 1: The PC can read other people's minds once a day while talking to them.
- 2: Becomes immune to the acid secreting of slime creatures.
- 3: A lost limb grows back within d4 days (effect only once).
- 4: Skin secretes an odorless poison, which protects against any kind of parasites and fleas.
- 5: Takes knowledge and experience of the slime creature: Gains d20*100xp.
- 6: No effect.