

DUNGEON CRAWL CLASSICS

LAIRS OF LOST AERHART



#91.2: CREATURES AND LAIRS AT THE CENTER OF AERETH
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LAIRS OF LOST AGHARTA

CREATURES AND LAIRS IN THE CENTER OF AERETH

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ages will aver that the denizens of the underworld are, by necessity, alien to surface dwellers such as ourselves. Few will ever stand on the ink-black shores of the Lost Agharta, and even fewer will return to tell the tale. Those that do report creatures transmuted by their deadly environs and the weird gloom. These creatures of legend owe no allegiance or kinship to the beasts of our lit-realms, and woe to the adventurer who mistakes them for familiar foes.

Collected herein are thirteen of the stranger beings explorers may encounter upon their arrival at the very center of our hollow globe. This is certainly not an exhaustive list, if such a thing could even exist – for the underworld is vast, and our knowledge is slight.

FOR JUDGES



his collection is intended to serve as a stand alone product, or as a supplement to a Center of Áereth campaign. If the former, no adjustment is necessary.

If the latter, and the judge is referencing the random encounter and exploration tables from *Journey to the Center of Áereth*, use the following tables any time a random encounter roll in DCC 91 results in “no encounter.”

And of course, the judge should always regard the tables as mere suggestions. Entries can be altered, marked out, or built upon as it serves your setting. You are the first and final arbiter of your game.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS



oll for random encounters once each day and night, modified by the sum of the PCs’ single best and worst Luck modifiers. (So a party comprised of a warrior with a +3 Luck modifier, and a thief with a -2 Luck modifier, would add +1 to their encounter rolls.)

In general, higher rolls result in distant encounters, allowing the PCs to determine the rules of engagement (or avoid the encounter altogether). Lower rolls tend to offer less opportunity for a safe withdraw or can even result in a surprise attack by a monster – possibly resulting in more burned Luck, and worse modifiers on future encounter rolls, as the denizens of the underworld sense the weakness of the PCs and circle in for the kill.

Encounters are listed alphabetically below, followed by the collected monster entries and lairs.

Four of the results are the unique “marooned mortals,” characters like the PCs who have found themselves trapped in Lost Agharta. After an encounter with a marooned mortal, the judge is encouraged to roll up another character to take the NPC’s place on the random encounter tables. See Appendix A for tables and a information on creating more stranded NPCs.

THE CENTER OF AERETH IN BRIEF



he lands at the center of Áereth are home to scores of shining city-states scattered along the bleak shores of a great sea. Bands of slave giants roam the blood-soaked heaths, doing battle for the pleasure of their obscene, ageless masters, while sentient, sooty clouds swirl about the smoky sun that hangs above the black sea.

The Aghartan underworld cycles between 8-hour periods of shadowed gloom and absolute darkness. During the “day,” the smoky orb hovering above the central sea flares in intensity, mimicking the long shadows cast in the surface realms at sunset. The air is sweltering and thick with the smell of the sea.

After eight hours, the sun dims and dies, leaving the underworld in absolute darkness. Temperatures drop precipitously, and the frothing sea rolls inland, swamping the Bleak Shores. Come dawn, the waters recede, leaving the bloodied shores and battlefields scoured clean.

The majority of the lands are made up of three principle environs:

Bleak Shores: The “beaches” of the Aghartan underworld are naught but stone slabs rising from the water. Scoured by eons of rolling waves, the slabs are slick with slime and the weird pale algae that inhabits the sea. The waves roll in to the shores with curious – almost sinister – irregularity, and the more powerful waves threaten to swamp unlucky souls and suck them into the deeps.

At night, the black waters rise precipitously, swamping the shores with powerful, icy waves. Strange creatures are washed ashore, riding the waves inland in hunt of prey, then slithering back into the depths.

Spine Ridges: Towering ridges of broken stone run to the shores from the arching cliffs, bisecting the shores like long, ragged cairns, or fallen, cyclopean walls. While offering shelter and a place for PCs to hide, the ridges are also home to underworld monsters that emerge in the night to stalk the heaths.

Blood Heaths: Saturated with the remains of the dead, churned underfoot by the sandals of a thousand armies, the loamy heaths have served as the Aghartan’s battlefields since time immemorial. The “soil” of the heaths is composed of sand worn down from the ridges, bone fragments, and shards of metal and wood shorn from the harness and weapons of fallen Aghartans.

Sages, over-curious wizards and foolish explorers can find more detail on the environs of Lost Agharta in *DCC 91: Journey to the Center of Áereth* and *DCC 91.1: Lost City of Barako*.



JOURNEY-TO-THE-CENTER-OF
AERETH