KILLIAN'S KRAWLS

Adventure Module MX-02
The Treasure of Melifex the Mad
An adventure for level 3 characters

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COMPATIBLE WITH
DCC RPG

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This product is compatible with the Dungeon Crawl Classics Role Playing Game.

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DCC RPG

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INTRODUCTION

The Treasure of Melifex the Mad is an adventure for 5-7 characters of third level. Smaller and lower level parties can be accommodated by using the scaling suggestions in the Encounter Table.

BACKGROUND

The party has solved the mystery of what happened to Melifex the Mad and the experiments he was performing. The corrupted wizard is now dead, a victim to his own work. His dragon companion, out of fear of the wizard's work, has completely destroyed the laboratory complex, leaving nothing left.

Except…

The magical texts and notes the party recovered while exploring the laboratory. These magical texts hold the key to Melifex's great power and would be worth a fortune if the party could find the right buyer.

Melifex, however, planned for such a contingency and had his most valuable research coded and ciphered so no one could understand the written works without the proper cipher. Without the cipher, the works can never be used. The party needs to find the cipher if they intend to use the magic, become fabulously wealthy, or even save their lives.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Possessing the works of Melifex has many implications that could be used for adventure hooks. The GM should consider the following:

 - The wizard's guild in Pinecliffe desperately wants the magical research and would pay a king's ransom to possess them.

 - A wizard or elf in the party may want to unlock the power of Melifex's work for their own gain.

 - A wizard or elf of far greater power than the party may threaten the lives of the party unless the works are given to him/her. At this point, the only thing keeping the party alive is the cipher; if they can find it.

 - The Thieves' Guild has stolen the works from the party and quickly realized they are coded. They have placed a contract on the players' lives that can only be cancelled if the party delivers the cipher to the Guild Capo in 3 days.

 - The party could be tempted by what else Melifex may have hidden away.

GM's NOTES

Descriptions in *italics* should be read to the party. Any additional information not covered in the description is left up to the GM. Occasionally, background information will be found in highlighted gray boxes. This information can be shared directly with the party or given out through role play. Additional GM notes for specific areas are in boxed text.

The GM should spend time reading and learning about the City of Pinecliffe before running the adventure. A great amount of role playing, information gathering, and buying and selling will take place there, so knowing the background of the city is important. Refer to the GM Tools section of this adventure module.

ENCOUNTER TABLE

AREA	DESCRIPTION	TYPE
W-1	Osotaurs	C
W-2	Vault Entrance	T
V-1	Image Spectre	C
V-2	Wand Trap	T
V-3	Mist Warriors	C
V-4	Water Puzzle	P
V-5	Rot Hounds	C
V-6	Lever Room A-B-C	P,T
V-7	Lever Room 1-2-3	P,T
V-8	Treasure Trove	P
V-9	The Hidden Vault	P,T
G-1	Garnet Stone	R
G-2	Rot Master	C

C= Combat, T= Trap, R= Role play, P= Puzzle

The encounters can be scaled to accommodate a smaller or lower level party. Make the following changes:

- W-1: Reduce the number of osotaurs by 2

- V-2: Make the wand trap fire every three rounds instead of two

- V-3: Start with only one mist warrior.

- V-5: Do not allow the rot hounds to regenerate.

- G-2: Remove the following spells from the Rot Master: Chill Touch, Sleep, Ray of Enfeeblement, Scorching Ray

ADVENTURE START

GM NOTE #1: If the party has already completed Adventure Module MX-01 "The Laboratory of Melifex the Mad" the following intro should be well understood. If not, it might be a good idea to give the party the background information on Melifex's Laboratory found in the GM Tools section of this adventure module.

You managed to survive the oddities and horrors of Melifex the Mad's laboratory to discover what befell the wizard who was corrupted by his magical studies. Melifex is now dead and his dragon companion gathered assistance and destroyed the complex entirely. Now, only charred ruins remain.

The City of Pinecliffe welcomes your news with joy. No longer haunted by the fear of an experiment going horribly wrong or an accidental invasion by demonic forces, the city begins to return to life as normal, putting aside all memories of the gifted young mage who once practiced in the city but fell to corruption and madness.

Not everyone in the city has forgotten though. Melifex's work was like no other magic practiced, and many mages, thieves, and treasure hunters are eager to know what may have been unearthed by your party. You possess all the texts and notes regarding Melifex's magical studies, including the unfinished work on combining healing magic with necromancy in order to achieve near immortality.

The incredible power potential you now possess could be both a boon and a curse. This work could be used by yourselves, sold to the highest bidder for a fortune or make you the recipient of a dagger between the ribs. You must plan your next steps very cautiously.

Any wizard, elf, or cleric in the party will understand the descriptive notes regarding the scope of the projects Melifex undertook but will not be able to understand the magical texts. They will look like meaningless scribbling. Because Melifex coded his magical texts with a cipher, even calling upon a patron would be useless since the patron would

have to read the mind of Melifex to understand the logic behind the cipher and Melifex is dead.

The party may attempt to enlist the help of the Thieves' or Mage Guilds to appraise the works. The guild will agree only on the condition that the works be sold to them exclusively. The guilds promise a handsome price. However, the party's contact will have to be paid 300gp for their silence.

If the party is put under duress to hand over the texts (see adventure hooks), a senior Mage Guild officer will study the texts himself and find out they are cipher coded. Regardless of the scenario, read the following:

You are led into a brightly lit room dominated by a large table. At the table sits an aged wizard who looks disheveled and frustrated. At the sight of your party he folds his arms, sneers and points at the books disgustedly: "Absolute rubbish!" he yells. "Completely undiscernible, Look here" he says as he lifts up one of the tomes and points to a page. "You can clearly see the intent and design of an incantation, but after that, it's just gibberish!" He lets out a long sigh, takes his glasses off and begins to rub his temples. "I've looked at these works for days now. They are definitely authentic works of Melifex, and I am certain there is relevant spell research and spell products, but it appears he has written them in his own invented language. I have attempted to use context clues to try and unlock the secret format, but it just isn't enough." He closes the book he was studying and looks up at you. "I've seen this before. Some wizards cipher code their work so it can not be stolen or copied, others code it to keep magic out of the hands of those who may not be able to control it. Whatever Melifex's reason, these works are unusable unless you can find a way to break the code."

Your hearts sink. What seemed to be the key to riches and freedom looks like a lifetime of frustration. If one of the senior members of the Mage Guild can't figure the books out, how could you? In frustration, one of you launches one of the books off the table into a wall, breaking the binding. Pages spill out onto the floor as the wizard gasps in horror. He springs to his feet to collect the scattered pages, cursing profoundly. Suddenly, his

rant stops and he goes deathly quiet. He picks up the book by a corner, as if it were the gossamer wing of a rare butterfly. Eyes wide, he pokes his finger into the broken binding of the book and delicately fishes out a tiny piece of parchment rolled up like a miniature scroll. "What is this?" he whispers to himself. His trembling hands unroll the tiny parchment and his mouth moves as he reads the contents. Looking at your party, he declares: "It seems your careless act may have given us a clue as to where Melifex's mysterious cipher may be." He hands the tiny paper over to you. In small, smooth script are the words "A gem of a small town is the way to an island watched over by a man made out of stones."

GM NOTE #2: Give the party handout #1a

The aged wizard scoffs. "If he hid his cipher on an island, then I wish you luck in finding it. If you haven't noticed, Pinecliffe is in a valley between two mountain ranges and the nearest coastline is a few hundred miles away." He stomps out of his study muttering to himself: "I've had it with riddles. I'm a wizard, not a cartographer."

The party will need to find someone in the city who would know where islands may be located or what the "gem of a village" is. There are several avenues the party may take. It is up to the GM to decide how fruitful they are. Speaking with the locals about islands will be mostly pointless, since, as the wizard stated, the nearest shore is hundreds of miles away. Most of the locals know of a village called Garnet located North of Pinecliffe and up the front range to a plateau. A few rare individuals (Luck check at DC 13) may tell the party to check with the merchant guilds, since the caravan masters know the geography outside the town. The party may think of this idea on their own as well. The caravan masters will have a recollection of the village of Garnet and can give crude directions to the village.

There are a few options in Pinecliffe for securing travel. The caravan masters will accept passengers in a wagon, especially if they know the passengers are experienced with weapons. They will charge a fee of 5gp per day per party member, but the price

includes food and water, plus fairly comfortable sleeping arrangements in a wagon. Horses and saddles can be purchased at the livery for 75gp for a horse, 8gp for a donkey, and 32gp for a saddle, bit, and bridle. If the party decides to go on foot, they will need to prepare for a three day trip in the wilderness.

The trip will be uneventful, as the route between Pinecliffe and Garnet is well travelled. If there are any new members to the party, this would be a good opportunity for the new members to introduce themselves and share background information.

THE TOWN OF GARNET – PART I

The air is chilly and crisp as you climb the last switchback to reveal the plateau shown on your map. The plateau stretches out several square miles and is mostly an emerald green plain with an occasional wooded area of pine, fir, cedar, and birch. The sky is a dark blue-grey and a foggy mist fills the air. Your eyes trace the hard-packed trail that follows a clear, icy river to what looks like a small hamlet on the banks of the river and an expansive, placid lake. At the far East end of the lake, the massive Kinibik Glacier stands; A wall of ice and hard pack snow nearly 150 feet high. As you stare at it, you see sheets of ice fall and crash into the lake leaving a huge wake and water spraying nearly twenty feet high.

As you near the town, you are greeted with the welcome sounds of conversation, the sight of people busy at their tasks and the enticing smell of cooking fires. You notice a mixture of dwarves and humans mingling about. Occasionally, you spot someone staring at you; curious to see newcomers with armor and weapons on.

Within the town boundaries are three smooth, gigantic boulders which must have been deposited there many decades ago by the glacier. The stones are different colored, with a Red granite stone to the North, a coppery green boulder on the East, near the shore, and a grey stone with veins of turquoise on the West. Small communities have been built around the center of the stones making the town look like a small collection of districts. In the center *of the districts lies the main thoroughfare with small businesses, a tavern and a small inn.*

GM NOTE #3: Allow the party members to see the map of Garnet during role playing in the town.

Garnet is a small town on the banks of the Kinibik Glacier Lake. The town has a population of about 200 people and covers only a few hundred acres. Established about 50 years ago as a mining town, it got its name for the rare garnets found there that are darker than any other red garnet stone. Over the years, the gems became fewer and the town almost died until dwarven miners found rich copper deposits. The main industry of the town is still mining, but some fishermen have settled here to harvest the lake of its trout and walleye. Several small vendors supply the common goods needed by the town and three members of a merchant guild manage trade into the town.

Garnet has a Mayor and a constable, but very little government control. Crime is usually handled by forming a posse when needed. Party members will be able to find basic goods and services, but will not find weapons other than large knives, and hunting arrows. A farrier manages a tiny smithy and has little expertise beyond horseshoes, nails, mining tools, and kitchen utensils. Adventuring gear beyond what normal hunters and fishermen need is non-existent.

The town's population is a mix of dwarves and humans and Common is the preferred language. There are no temples in the town as the people tend to keep their religious beliefs to themselves. Sufficient lodging for the party can be found at the inn for 3gp per person, per night, which includes three meals.

If approached in a friendly manner, the villagers will tell of three islands within rowing distance of the shore. No one has ever heard of the "man of stone". The miners know very little of the lake and will tell the party to ask the fishermen. The fisherman will state they have ventured close to the islands but have never docked on them for fear of predators. Some fishermen believe the spirits of those who have drowned in the lake haunt the islands. Some

will say they have seen strange creatures roaming about the islands.

The fishermen are willing to loan the party two rowboats for 20gp each, 10gp will be refunded if the boats will be retuned undamaged. One fisherman will allow you to rent his spyglass for 10gp. If the party tries to negotiate these prices, they can make an opposing Personality or Luck check with the fishermen having a +3 bonus to their check

If Melifex is mentioned, the villagers will tend to be wary of the party. Some have seen the mad mage and thought him a demon. No one will reveal they have ever seen Melifex in the town and it will be harder to obtain supplies for the trip. The GM may decide to increase prices or have the party make opposed personality checks to obtain assistance.

WILDERNESS

You stow your gear into the two small rowboats and make your way to the nearest islands you can see. The lake is placid and calm making rowing and steering easy. The water is extremely clear, allowing you to see the bottom of the lake a few feet below. You see an occasional fish dart away from your boat as you row onwards. After nearly two hours of rowing, you take a break. Directly East lies three islands arranged as if they were in a straight line. The islands consist of huge boulders piled up as if a mighty broom swept them together and piled a thin layer of soil on them. Trees of cedar, birch, and fir wind their roots around the stones and leave a thick carpet of brown needles on the ground. Each island appears to be about 700 feet long and 450 feet wide.

The correct island is #2. The party can discover this by two ways: either by using a spyglass to scout the islands, or by docking at each island and searching it. If the party uses the second method, they will surely alert the osotaurs on the second island and they will gain a surprise round on the party when discovered.

As you search the second island, you notice the island slopes upward from the East from water level to approximately 35 feet at its westernmost

part. While scanning this area you notice an unusual rock formation.

GM NOTE #4: Give the party Handout #2

Area W-1:   OSOTAURS

Carefully docking and securing your boats on the East side of the second island, you begin to climb uphill towards the rock formation you discovered. It appears a worn path leads straight to the formation. On each side of you, the trees are dense and the ground is choked with dead branches and fallen trees. As you get within sight of the stone formation, you notice the area has been somewhat cleared. The massive man of stone is about 15 feet high and 20 feet wide. You realize no human could move the stones and place them without some type of tools. Cut into one of the stones is a string of what looks to be dwarven symbols. Suddenly, you see six massive creatures emerge from the trees and brush, surrounding you. They have the legs and torso of a large, muscular, hairy human and the arms and head of a ferocious brown bear. Their arms end in massive paws with claws large enough to slash a man in half and menacing teeth like daggers.

The creatures are osotaurs, a result of Melifex's research in combining species (much like the blattodes in his former laboratory). Melifex promised them freedom in exchange for guarding the island. Since the fishermen have stayed clear of the islands, the osotaurs have never made their presence known. If the osotaurs have surprise on the party, they will immediately attack. Otherwise, read the following:

One of the beasts points his massive paw at your party and yells: "Stop! Dis OUR land! Great wizard Melifex give it to us! You leave NOW! And leave fish when you go!"

The party must find the cliff with the blue stone in order to discover the entrance to melifex's vault. A careful search of the island will need to be made.

> The GM may choose how to manage this scenario. Either inform the players that after a long and careful search, they find it, or the GM may have the party make Intelligence or Luck checks at DC13 until three party members succeed on their checks. It all depends on how much detail the GM wants and if time allows.

You painstakingly search nearly every inch of the island until you finally spot a clearing. Looming in front of you is a cliff face approximately 25 feet high and 20 feet wide. The cliff is made of large stones that look as if they were fit together like huge puzzle pieces. Centered near the bottom is a stone about the size of a man's head made of turquoise.

Any dwarven character or character who had any experience with stonecutting or succeeds on a DC14 Intelligence check will notice the rocks are held together by their own weight, and the large turquoise rock is the keystone. The keystone can be removed safely by attaching some kind of hook to the stone and pulling with a rope some distance away. The rocks are too large and too connected to be pried apart individually. Attempting to dig into the top of the cliff will result in finding more stone that is impossible to move.

If the party is foolish enough to simply yank the keystone out while close to the cliff, the pile will make a large grating sound and collapse violently. Any character within 5' of the wall will be crushed to a pulp and buried (no save). Any character within 10' must make a DC14 Reflex Save or take 2d10 damage from the falling rock.

A cloud of dust rises into the air and small rocks and pebbles rain down onto the massive pile of stones on the ground before you. You look up the face of the cliff and see a cave-like opening nearly 10 feet off the ground. Fortunately, it is an easy climb up the pile of rubble to enter.

The osotarus have no interest in conversing with the party and will continue to order them to leave and will attack if the party refuses to do so. They attack with two claw swipes. If both hit, the osotaur will grapple the player and squeeze them in a bear hug for 1d4 damage per round until the grapple is broken (Strength check DC15) or if the osotaur takes 5 damage on a single hit. They may also choose to bite.

Osotaurs (6) Init +3; Atk 2 Claws +4 melee (1d8+ grapple), Bite +3 melee (1d7); AC 16; HD 3d10; hp 16 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20+1d20; SP "Bear Hug"; SV Fort +5 Ref +3 Will +4

The dwarven symbols on the tree read: "A sheer cliff is puzzled together and the blue stone is its key, but don't become close friends with calamity!"

GM NOTE #5: Give the party Handout #1b