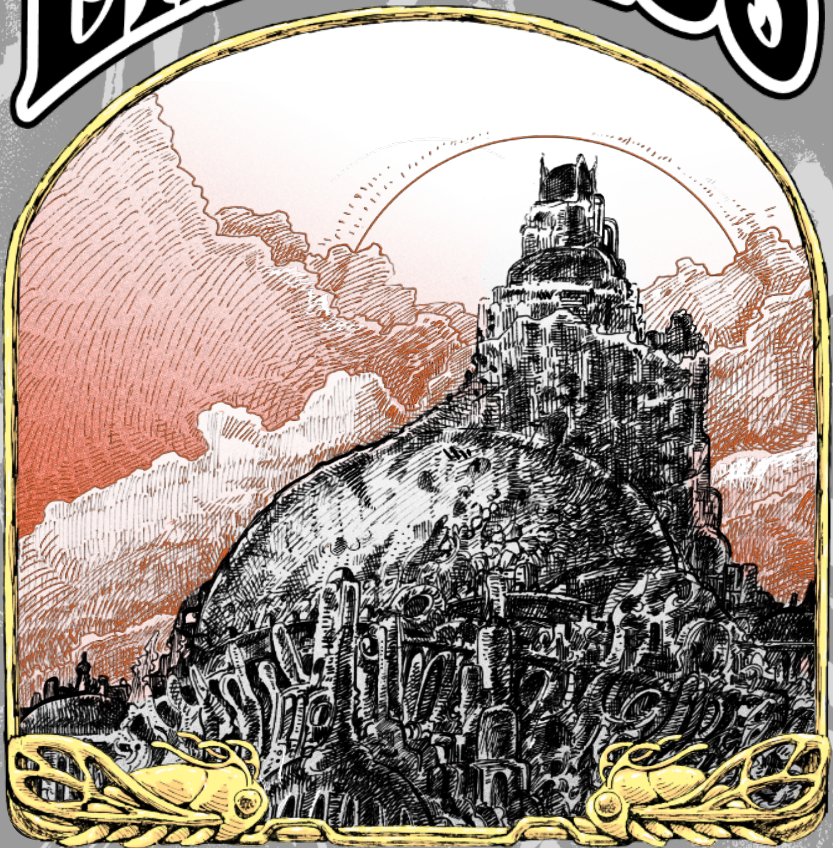


ECOLOGICAL SCIENCE FANTASY RPG

CLOUD EMPRESS



LABYRINTH OF THE BRIDE



FOR USE WITH THE
MOTHERSHIP
SCI-FI HORROR RPG

1E

KIENNA SHAW



LABYRINTH OF THE BRIDE

LOCATION: [BC25] Cloud Empress: Land of the Dead

CONTENT WARNING: Labyrinth of the Bride contains implied sexual violence, forced marriage, body horror, self-injury, implied cannibalism, intrusive thoughts/mind control, and lacerated skin.

The Emperor's collapsed monument has called for a new bride, and the surrounding temple of broken glass has opened its doors for the first time in 10 years. Guests flock to the celebratory banquet to grasp for archaic favor and ancient treasure as the bride awaits her fate in the twisting hallways below.

TIMELINE IF THE PCs DO NOTHING

1. The Emperor's collapsed monument rumbles to life and calls for a bride.
2. Within two days, Eudemius and the servants emerge and begin preparing the banquet.
3. Three days later, Perennia is given over by their master as the chosen bride and forcibly brought into the labyrinth.
4. A week later, guests arrive at the banquet and offer presents to the tithing altar.
5. During this, the PCs receive their impromptu invitations.
6. After an hour of pleasantries, each guest is given a ball of string. The Emperor's monument calls for the guests to escort the bride to the surface, in exchange for whatever treasure they find below.
7. Over the next hour, Perennia crafts a decoy bride out of chalk and poisonous flowers.
8. By sunset, Gilded-Hand Hearse escorts the decoy bride to the surface.
9. Once brought to the surface, the decoy bride destroys the Emperor's monument, the temple, and all of the people within.



EUDEMIUS

Befouled Ceremonial Planner (he/him)

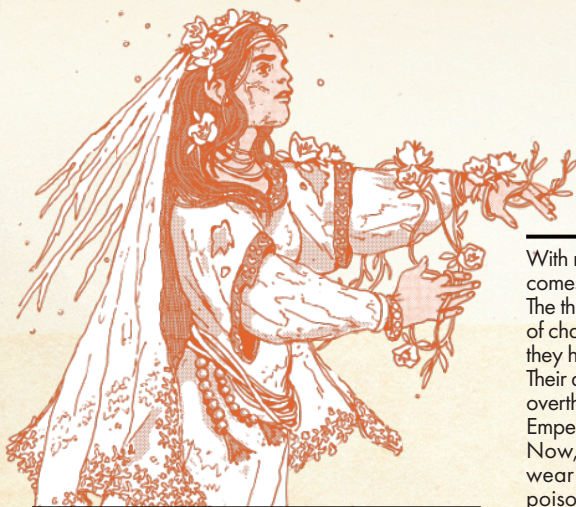
INSTINCT: 27 AP: 0 WOUNDS: 2

Belongings: A planner bound in the hide of a long-extinct animal, a plastisteel-tipped wooden rod, an outdated but extravagant uniform, an ivory pendant carved with the Emperor's face.

He is capable of levitation, telekinesis, telepathy, and matter manipulation. Like a drowning man to slowly sinking driftwood, Eudemius clings to the fading memories of life in Bravo City. He binds himself to the grace of the Emperor in body and mind, tying himself in the comforts of the known to stay afloat.

Every rite and ritual has its specific purpose and its specific steps, mired in the wisdom of tradition. When the Emperor's monument beckons for something to be done, it is Eudemius that lays out the plans and enacts them. When the bodies of the servants continue to decay, it is Eudemius who ensures they never appear or act unpleasant to the Emperor. When action or speech is interrupted, it is Eudemius who begins over again to execute perfection.

Despite years of servitude, Eudemius has never seen the Emperor's face, and he longs for the day that the brides are no longer the sole and ungrateful receivers of that divine gift. For now, he carries out the bridal rituals until reality inevitably—and belatedly—comes crashing down, like Bravo City once did.



PERENNIA

Ambitious Magician Bride (they/them)

INSTINCT: 55 AP: 3 WOUNDS: 3

Belongings: A spell scroll with an incantation to create a decoy, a smuggled chalk stick, poisonous flowers, a pair of bent silver earrings with the posts sharpened to needle-like points.

With magic comes power, with power comes freedom, with freedom comes life. The theories of spells and the manipulation of chalk comes easy to Perennia, and yet they have only ever tasted freedom once. Their dying master, scared of being overthrown, gave them over to the Emperor's servants as the chosen bride. Now, instead of Magician robes, they wear the cursed bridal gown, weaving poisonous flowers into their hair, a fragment of their chalk stick smuggled into their new prison under their tongue.

Perennia burns bright, and with their anger, they burn brighter. Like a trapped animal, Perennia is willing to chew off their own leg to escape and will bite anyone in their way.



GILDED HAND HEARSE

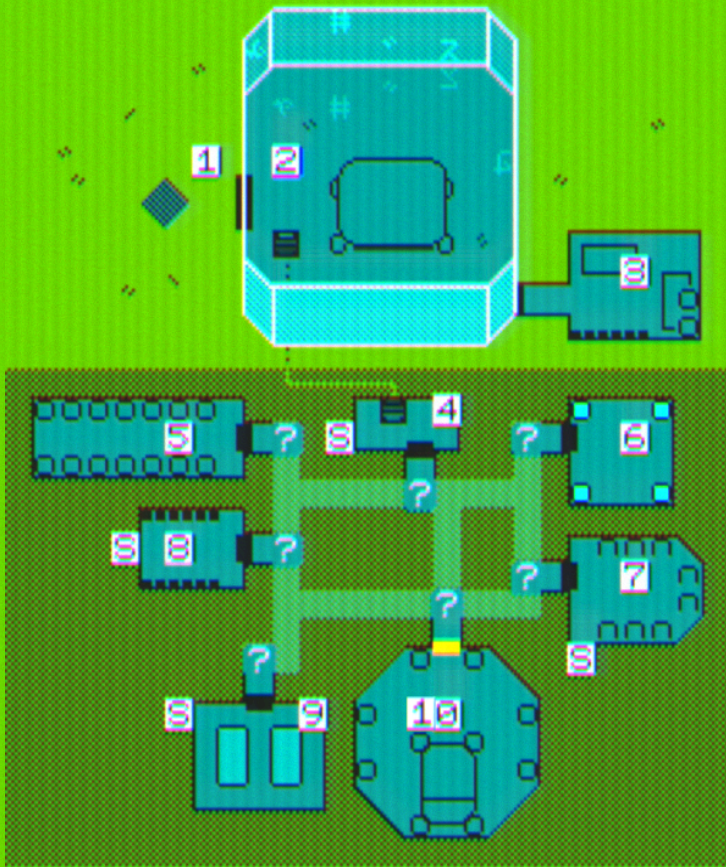
Rapacious Treasure Hunter (she/her)

INSTINCT: 63 AP: 7 WOUNDS: 4

Belongings: A curved, ruby-edged sword (2d10 Damage), a three-needle compass made of copper that points to nearby hidden objects, a worn leather pack, a pair of silver spoons.

Gilded-Hand Hearse earned the nickname before the curse, but the burden has only made her more quick and clever and cruel. Though she once sought treasure for glory and prosperity, it is now a necessity as the beast gnaws within her gut. Her eyes are pearls, her teeth opals, her fingers gold. Food no longer sustains her, and she feeds only on the spoils of theft. With each piece of treasure she swallows, more of her transforms.

One day, she will be nothing but an insatiable beast of hoarded greed, her mind trapped in a Midas-vessel of her own doing. Until then she will enjoy the trivial thrill of the hunt.



1 TITHING ALTAR

2 BANQUET HALL

3 KITCHEN

4 LABYRINTHINE HALLWAYS

5 SERVANTS' QUARTERS

6 DRESSING ROOM

7 BATHS

8 BRIDAL CHAMBER

9 OSSUARY

10 PORTRAIT GALLERY

8 SERVICE TUNNELS

OUTSIDE

1. TITHING ALTAR

A stone statue of a man with his hands extended to the sky guards the door. Its lolling tongue extends to swallow the bounty of fealty brought by the Emperor's loyal subjects. It whispers an empty blessing with each offering.

GROUND FLOOR

2. BANQUET HALL

Light barely filters through glass walls muddied with time and humidity. The collapsed monument of the Emperor stands in the middle of the room, a circular stone table built around the plastisteel rubble. Table settings of tarnished gold and broken crystal goblets await guests. Black-blue crows with Farmerling teeth flit from perch to perch, mixing songs with screams as untuned orchestral instruments play themselves.

Eudemius directs scurrying servants with clipped words and a stiff smile, though his longing gaze is never far from the monument.

3. KITCHEN

The stone floor is overgrown with red moss, oozing out ochre with each step. The cupboards are filled with luxurious, bug-infested spices and rotten grains. Roaring fires slow-cook bubbling pots of stew, each meal stirred with a silver spoon.

At the butcher block, servants carve off their earthly flesh with runic knives. Crude plastisteel parts crafted from the broken monument are quickly attached to their stumps, and their meat is added to the stews. Vegetables with dying roots grow from the corpses of servants that didn't survive.

UNDERGROUND LABYRINTH

4. LABYRINTHINE HALLWAYS

Winding passageways twist and curl like the ventricles of a heart. The gilded walls have been stripped of their gold, leaving only the stone behind. Reliefs of the Emperor in Bravo City are carved into the stone, his face etched many times in search of perfect replication. Decades of precious metals, glittering gems, forgotten tomes, and ancient jewelry collect in corners beneath fist-sized holes in the ceiling.

The hallways contort themselves into new shapes and structures every seven minutes, connecting different rooms in the labyrinth together, confounding anyone attempting to traverse it by their earthly senses alone. If the PCs are in the hallways when the shifts happen, walls will emerge and disappear, taking them to rooms that they've already been in, or trapping them within dangerous spaces.

1d6	HALLWAY ENCOUNTERS
1	A fellow wedding guest, stumbling drunk and lost as desperation drips from his smiling mouth.
2	1d8 silver-shelled beetles fall from the ceiling, twitching in their dying throes.
3	A ball of string rolling across the floor. It unravels, guided by forces unseen.
4	A skeleton clad in scraps of bridal satin nests itself in a dark corner. Though there is no longer any flesh, blood still trickles thick and sweet from her throat.
5	1d10 disembodied hands made of quartz. Fingers adorned with garish rings crawl and skitter in search of new glinting accessories.
6	A royal servant, more plastisteel than flesh, scurries past with a mewling, squirming basket in their hands.

5. SERVANTS' QUARTERS

Thirty marble plinths line the wall. A handful of them hold lifelike statues of the servants, posed as if to please a refined gaze. Cables run from the base of the plinths and discreetly plug into the statue's napes. A rickety wooden chest holds several sets of moth-eaten servant uniforms and a pristine icon of an Imago.

If any of the servants are awakened from their slumber, they see that the PCs are unfit to be seen by the Emperor. The servants will attempt to dress the PCs in more appropriate attire, and even plug them into an empty plinth.

6. DRESSING ROOM

Dust clings to the air in a sparkling miasma. A rug of tanned skin and multi-colored hair softens every sound to a whisper. Luxurious clothes, several decades out of date by Cloudling fashion sensibilities, hang in a wardrobe, satin and silk reaching out to be touched and worn. On the mirrored vanity sits an amethyst jewelry box, holding a tiara of Imago carapace that threatens to crumble at even the softest breath.

Any PC who wears the clothes or jewelry will have their thoughts intruded upon by the image-obsessed former wearer of these garments. If kept on for too long, the clothing will begin to puppet the PC's body into the stiff etiquette of Cloudling mannerisms.

7. BATHS

Blue and white tiles adorn the walls, each painted with naked dancers that contort and stretch from floor-to-ceiling, mouths agape in eternal laughter. Some of the tiles are cracked and broken, slicing into any skin that brushes up against them. The large rectangular pool swirls with heated water and thick black oil. The steam is scented with honey and oleander.

8. BRIDAL CHAMBER

Pearlescent pillars bear the weight of the marble room, forming the gilded cage Perennia is kept in. The golden door only opens from the outside, though no key is required. Scratch marks mar the interior side, gouged over the years by panicked hands. The marital bed had its gossamer curtains torn down and posts splintered, and the floor is scattered with petals of wolfsbane, nightshade, and jasmine.

When Perennia is done with the ritual of creating the decoy bride, they will dress the decoy in the bridal gown and veil before hiding under the bed. With them is the spell scroll containing an incantation they developed—a spell that uses chalk and poisonous flowers to create a golem. The caster can make the golem look like them (and more powerful) by infusing it with memories, and the golem will carry out a single directive until completion or until it's destroyed.

9. OSSUARY

Spines delicately entwine into sweeping arches while ribs and femurs form intricate mosaics on the walls. Skulls outfitted with sapphire and ruby eyes delicately balance in the formation of long-forgotten coats of arms. One set of bones gleams brighter than the rest, knife marks still fresh.

A spotlessly clean altar holds a plait of ebony shining hair, a hand with perfectly manicured nails, and a heart that quivers like a newborn animal as it begins to sprout four legs.

10. PORTRAIT GALLERY

Warm blue light emanates from soul-light lanterns, dancing across plush velvet curtains that frame larger-than-life portraits. Each portrait features a different bride, all from different walks of life, some aged by the toils of chalk and war, some fresh and barely out of the bloom of adolescence. All of them have wooden smiles and empty eyes, all of them wear the same cream-white bridal gown, all of them have the ageless presence of Eudemius in the background.

One of the portraits had her face smeared away before the paint was dried, but her voice and hand emerge from the streaks of oil, reaching out in the search of a companion to join her in her canvas prison.

Credits

Written by Kienna Shaw, Edited by Roz Leahy,
Sensitivity Editing by Monroe Soto, Maps by Daniel
Hallinan, Illustrations: Garin (cover, pg. 1,3), pbbeta
(pg. 1), and pbbeta (pg. 3).

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