



POSTCARD FROM THE DARK PEAK · #1

# SOMETHING IN THE HOLE

A SOLO RPG SCENARIO · THE DARK PEAK · HELLSBOROUGH, S6

DEMONSPAWN BOOKS AND GAMES

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## A NOTE FROM PIP

I want to be clear that I did not believe Pal's story. I still don't, entirely.

Pal has been propping up the bar at the Mason's Arms since before anyone can remember. He is small and weathered and smells of the river, and he drinks with the focused commitment of a professional. He is also, by general agreement, the best liar in three valleys.

The story goes: something lives in the Hellsborough Hole. The dark pool beneath the road bridge where the Loxley runs slow and black under Walkley Lane. Cats go in. Rats go in. Things don't come out.

Van Hallam, apparently, dealt with the matter some years ago. Van Hallam deals with most things, according to Pal. I've learned to treat Van's reported exploits with the same scepticism I apply to everything else in this world — which is to say, considerable scepticism, poorly maintained.

The job is simple. Three nights ago, a courier dropped something into the Hole. A small package. Wrapped in oilcloth. The person who wants it back has paid you enough çhits to make the question *what exactly is in the water* feel almost academic.

The murk is down tonight. The rats are quiet.

You have until dawn.

— Pip Rippon, *field notes, The Mason's Arms, Walkley Lane*

## YOUR CHARACTER

You are a crosslander, recently arrived in Hellsborough from the off-world. You know very little. This is both dangerous and, occasionally, useful.

Distribute the numbers **3, 2, 1** between your three stats. Choose according to who you are.

STAT	WHAT IT COVERS
<b>GRIT</b>	Strength, endurance, physical force. Pushing things. Not dying.
<b>WIT</b>	Perception, intelligence, quickness. Spotting things. Not being surprised.

STAT	WHAT IT COVERS
<b>MURK</b>	Sensitivity to dark matter. Luck. Resistance to things that feed on minds.

**HP: 6.** At 0 HP you are taken by the Hole. The oilcloth package is never recovered. Nobody will admit to having hired you.

## TESTS

When you attempt something uncertain and the outcome matters, roll **2d6 + the relevant stat**.

ROLL	RESULT
<b>10+</b>	Success. You do the thing.
<b>7-9</b>	Success with cost. You do the thing, but something goes wrong, you take 1 damage, or the situation worsens.
<b>6-</b>	Failure. The GM — your own bad luck — decides what happens instead.

When a creature attacks, roll **2d6 + Grit** to resist physical damage, or **2d6 + Murk** to resist mental damage. On a failure, take the creature's listed damage.

# THE HOLE

The Hellsborough Hole sits in three distinct zones. Move between them freely, but each time you enter a new zone, roll on the **Encounter Table**. Also roll when you make noise or fail a test.

## THE LANE

Walkley Lane. Gas lamps. Fog at shin height. The Mason's Arms is behind you. You start here.



## THE BRIDGE

Old stone bridge. The Loxley runs beneath. Slick road. Something large moves slowly in the murk.



## THE HOLE

Steps down from the bridge to the water's edge. Dark. Cold. A smell like iron and old fish. The package is here, two feet from the waterline.

**To complete the scenario:** Move to The Hole, retrieve the package (Wit test), and return to The Lane — all before making **6 total Encounter rolls**. On roll 6, if you are not back in The Lane, the Syncarid has had long enough to notice you.

## ENCOUNTER TABLE

Roll 2d6. The middle numbers are more likely. This is intentional.

ROLL	ENCOUNTER
2	<b>It knows you're there.</b> Skip directly to The Syncarid encounter, regardless of your zone.
3-4	<b>Morivarids.</b> A pair of them, looping low. Roll Wit 7+ to freeze and let them pass. On a failure, they attack.
5-6	<b>Hexikid on the bridge.</b> You walk into it before you see it. Roll Grit 7+ to stay upright. On 7-9, you stay up but knock into the bridge rail — roll again immediately. On a failure, you go down. Take 2 damage.
7-8	<b>The murk shifts.</b> Nothing happens. The water sounds closer than it should. Add +1 to your next Encounter roll.
9-10	<b>Clear passage.</b> You move without incident. Note it. It won't last.

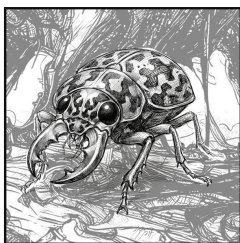
## ROLL

## ENCOUNTER

- 11** **You find something.** On the steps: a boot, still laced. Inside, 3 çhits and a folded note you can't read in this light. Take the çhits if you want.
- 12** **A Hexikid is between you and the bridge, facing you.** Neither of you moves. You can pass it without a roll — you just need to do it carefully and quietly.

# THE CREATURES

## THE HEXIKID



Water beetle. Road-sleeper sized. The colour of wet slate.

You hear it before you see it — a low scraping, sandpaper on stone. It moves with the absolute confidence of something that has never been in a hurry and never needed to be. Its shell is thick enough to deflect most blows. Its legs, if you go down in front of them, will not stop.

### STAT BLOCK

**HP** 6   **Damage** 2 (crushing, physical)   **Type** Warden

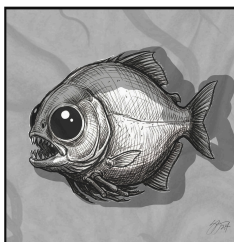
**Hard to see:** In The Lane or on The Bridge, roll Wit 7+ when entering the zone. On a failure, you walk into it before you spot it — roll Grit 7+ or take 2 damage and fall.

**Thick shell:** Grit attacks deal 1 less damage (minimum 1). Wit-based manoeuvres — ducking, sidestepping, climbing over — deal normal damage and don't trigger Trample.

## THE MORIVARID

Flying fish. The size of a large hand. Teeth like a pike's.

They travel in threes. You will only ever see two of them. The third is already behind you, orienting on the soft tissue of your right eye with the focused attention of something that has never done anything else. They are not malicious. They are just hungry, and eyes are soft, and soft things are easier.



### STAT BLOCK

**HP** 2 each   **Damage** 2 (targeted, physical — always to the face)   **Type** Hungry

**They come in threes:** When Morivarids appear, there are always three. Roll Grit 7+ once for the swarm. On 7–9, one connects. On 6 or less, two connect. Take damage for each.

**Light and movement:** Drawn to both. If you use a lamp or lantern near the water, they appear automatically — no Encounter roll required.

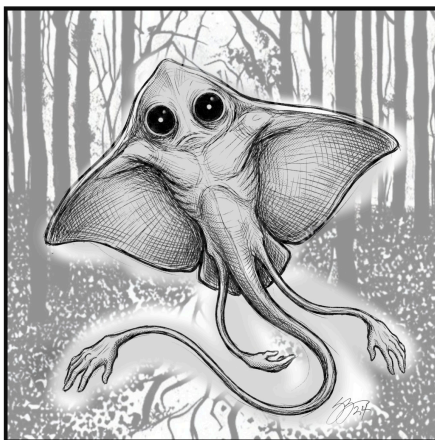
## THE SYNCARID

*Ray. Wide as a cartwheel. The colour of deep water.*

You will feel it before you see it. A warmth behind your eyes, a slowing of thought, a brief and persuasive sense that retrieving the package was never really that important, that the water is quite pleasant actually, that you could simply stay.

This is the feeding.

The Syncarid does not surface unless it believes the meal is already secured. By the time you see it — grey-white in the black water, vast and slow, trailing tendrils of something that might be silk — the question is not whether it is feeding on you. The question is how much it has already taken.



### STAT BLOCK

**HP** 8   **Damage** 2 to **Murk** (not HP)   **Type** Listener

**Mind feed:** The Syncarid attacks Murk, not HP. Resist with Murk tests (not Grit). At **Murk 0**, you are absorbed: you walk into the water of your own accord, and nothing about it feels wrong.

**Cannot be fought with Grit:** Physical attacks pass through it. To damage it, resist it (Murk 10+ on your attack) and force it back beneath the surface. On a success, it retreats and will not surface again this encounter. On 7–9, it retreats but will surface again on your next Encounter roll of 5 or less.

**Can be avoided entirely.** The Syncarid only surfaces if you spend more than 3 total rounds in The Hole zone, or roll a 2 on the Encounter Table. Get in, get the package, get out. It does not chase you onto the bridge.

## OBJECTIVE

The package is on the steps of The Hole, two feet from the waterline. It is wrapped in oilcloth. It is heavier than you expected. Roll **Wit 7+**.

ROLL	RESULT
<b>10+</b>	You have it. It is dry. Something in the water stirs but does not surface. Move immediately.
<b>7-9</b>	You have it, but your foot slips. You make a noise. Roll on the Encounter Table immediately.
<b>6-</b>	Your hand goes into the water up to the wrist. Roll on the Encounter Table immediately with +2. You still don't have the package.

# HOW TO PLAY

A complete example game. Follow this once and you'll have it.

## STEP 1 – MAKE YOUR CHARACTER

Assign **3, 2, 1** to your stats (see page 2). For this example: **Grit 1 · Wit 3 · Murk 2 · HP 6**. Write it down.

## STEP 2 – THE GOAL

Lane → Bridge → Hole → pick up the package → Lane. Do it in **6 Encounter rolls or fewer**. Every zone move triggers a roll.

## STEP 3 – MOVE TO THE BRIDGE

Roll 2d6. You roll **4+3 = 7**. Look up 7-8 on the Encounter Table.

*"The murk shifts. Nothing happens. Add +1 to your next Encounter roll."*

Safe. But note the +1.

ENCOUNTER ROLLS USED: 1 OF 6

## STEP 4 – MOVE TO THE HOLE

Roll 2d6, add the +1. You roll **2+2 = 4, plus 1 = 5**. Look up 5-6.

*"Hexikid on the bridge. Roll Grit 7+ to stay upright."*

Roll 2d6 + Grit (1). You roll **3+4 = 7, +1 = 8**.

**8**

7-9: Success with cost – you stay up but hit the bridge rail. Roll again immediately.

Roll again. You roll **5+4 = 9**. Look up 9-10.

*"Clear passage."*

You're at The Hole. Package is two feet from the water.

ENCOUNTER ROLLS USED: 3 OF 6 (2 ROLLS THIS STEP)

## HOW TO PLAY CONTINUED

### STEP 5 — PICK UP THE PACKAGE

Roll **Wit** 7+ (2d6 + Wit 3). You roll  $2+3 = 5$ ,  $+3 = 8$ .

8

7-9: You have it — but your foot slips. You make a noise. Roll the Encounter Table immediately.

Roll again. You roll  $1+1 = 2$ .

2

"It knows you're there." Skip directly to The Syncarid.

The Syncarid attacks your **Murk**. Roll **Murk** 7+ (2d6 + Murk 2). You roll  $4+5 = 9$ ,  $+2 = 11$ .

11

10+: You force it back beneath the surface. It retreats. Run.

ENCOUNTER ROLLS USED: 5 OF 6 (2 ROLLS THIS STEP)

### STEP 6 — GET BACK TO THE LANE

One roll left. Move to The Bridge. Roll 2d6. You roll  $6+5 = 11$ .

*"You find a boot. Inside, 3 çhits."*

Grab the coins. Keep moving. You step into The Lane. The scenario ends — you made it back on roll 6.

ENCOUNTER ROLLS USED: 6 OF 6 · YOU'RE OUT

### RESULT

*You deliver the package at dawn. Pal nods slowly from the bar. You are 3 çhits richer. The rats are still quiet.*

### FIVE THINGS TO REMEMBER

1 **Move between zones** = roll the Encounter Table.

2 **Encounter Table tells you what happens** — sometimes nothing, sometimes a

creature.

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**3** **Creature appears** = roll 2d6 + Grit (physical) or + Murk (mental) to resist.

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**4** **Hexikid and Morivarid damage HP.** At 0 HP you're dead.

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**5** **Syncarid damages Murk.** At 0 Murk you walk into the water and it feels warm.

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## OUTCOME

**If you return to The Lane with the package before 6 Encounter rolls:**

You deliver it at dawn. They count out your çhits without meeting your eye. You walk back to the Mason's Arms. Pal is still at the bar. He looks at you the way he looks at people who have been to the Hole and come back — not surprised, and slightly disappointed that there isn't a better story. The rats are still quiet.

**If you reach 0 HP:**

The last thing you are aware of is the cold of the steps and the sound of water. Your name will be added to the list of things that went into the Hole without coming back, alongside several cats and a much-loved mongrel called Bonny.

**If you reach 0 Murk:**

You walk into the water. It is not cold, which is the strangest thing. It is almost warm. The package bobs gently at the surface behind you. Someone else will have to retrieve it.

The full legend of the Loxley Kraken, the world of Hellsborough, the Bestiary of The Dark Peak, and more Postcard Adventures:

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