

# The Vaults of Hunger

by J.T. Sensoff

A crevasse in the cliff face wends into darkness. Ancient sconces dot its walls. It twists a few times before opening up into a small cavern. Opposite the crevasse, a pair of fat braziers rest on the floor, flanking a set of heavy iron double doors that hang ajar, carved with images of people engaging in various perversions. The thick crossbars across the middle of the doors are carved with runes in an ancient tongue. Translated, they would read, "All who surrender may find salvation through pleasure within". Over them is scratched, "Only pain and damnation await the sane".

Beyond the doors is a wrecked stone hall with marble floors. Claw marks and bloodstains mar the floor and bones line the walls. The remnants of faded and crumbling, disgusting frescoes and mosaics cover the walls. A few silk scraps hang in doorways and now and then seem to flutter. As you progress down the broad hall, the sound of heavy breathing and snoring grows louder. Finally, the hall opens up to show a massive statue of a horned man, arms raised in triumph and supporting the ceiling, standing in a dry, blood-stained pool. A giant, warped bear slumbers at the statue's feet, its even more monstrous cubs sleeping around it, save one who is playing with a kicking, struggling fox leg. Behind it there is waist-high rubble barricading another set of double doors, similar to the first, but made of bones. As soon as excavation is heard, degenerated cultists will be standing guard on the other side.

Once the doors are opened, degenerated cultists come spewing out along with a wave of hot, humid air, the scent of blood and rancid meat heavy on it. They are pallid and corpulent, wild-eyed and gibbering, clad in fine, skimpy garments which are threadbare and ragged, with fat bulging out around them. They wield whatever bits of scrap they can - fabric wrapped around shards of shattered glass, broken bottles, or improvised clubs and throw themselves into battle with reckless abandon.

On the other side of the door is a spiral staircase that winds down. A dim, pulsing reddish glow spills from the floor, just enough to see by. The air becomes more and more warm and you begin to feel a faint sensation of drunkenness creeping over you as you descend into the Vaults of Hunger.

The structure is marble-floored with smooth stone walls which depict the perversions of the builders and more primitive carvings and paintings in bodily fluids complementing them wherever there is room. Practically every foot of floor is littered with shattered lounges, cushions, bottles, broken glass, goblets, hookahs, and all sorts of other detritus related to indulging in vices. It is difficult to move quickly or silently here. Footing is uncertain.

As you descend, Golgoroth's corruption strengthens:

**1.** Everything organic; everything that was once alive, still is, as long as it's bigger than a few inches. This includes crawling wooden lounges, velvet garments that slither along like serpents (which is why only silk is worn by the cultists, as it was never living), and would include corpses of the dead - if they hadn't been eaten. After a day, you can feel your own applicable items start to twitch and slither. Take a penalty when using affected items.

**2.** The further down you travel, the more moist and sticky the air becomes from the increasing heat and humidity. At this depth, armor is stifling and it is impossible to keep it on while resting without penalties.

**3.** Pulsing red things something between vines and veins start to grow over the walls like ivy, getting thicker the deeper you descend. Every now and then, a white, misshapen, growth of tumorous meat can be seen from them. These tumor-fruits are the main source of food here. When eaten for only a short period of time they have no real adverse affects, but the more you eat, the better they taste, and you crave them for months afterward.

**4.** At this depth, your sweat turns reddish and you taste sour and salty flavors on your tongue, as if the aftertaste from a mixture of blood and sour wine.

**5.** This deep, the walls and floor are slick and greasy, and liquid fat and grease drips from the ceiling onto you. It's all oppressively hot and smells of rancid meat.

**There are collapsed passages and small side chambers besides, but this is what truly awaits within:**

**A.** Round, high-ceilinged chamber. Hallways stretch off to the left and right, gently sloping downward.

**B.** Leashed in front of the stairs down is a degenerate so massive it can barely move, foaming at its blood-covered mouth and shrieking as it tries to get to you.

**C.** Rigged with a web of tripwires hidden among the rubbish that will open containers on the ceiling and walls, sending hordes of long, animated cloth serpents streaming out, though their tails remain trapped to prevent them from escaping.

**D.** Largely ruined, and the rubble can be shifted easily to barricade the doorway.

**E.** The succubus Eshair ruling a miniature realm of degenerates, many demons, and a few half-demons, small baths and orgiastic sleeping rooms off the main chamber. She is friendly and welcoming but her true form shows through in patches due to Golgoroth's corruption, marring her beauty with one wing, a hooved foot, a muscled, furry arm, and a mouth filled with needle-like fangs - her personality is likewise affected and she is given to bursts of rage. She wants Golgoroth's worshippers and Golgoroth itself dealt with, and will offer much for either service - and it's the only way she'll let you descend without violence. She is

fanatically devoted to the lost demon god and seeks to destroy Golgoroth and hopefully restore the demon god to power.

**F.** Degenerates clash in violent competition around Yrael, a massive, intelligent half-demon, eerily beautiful and perfect, clad in stitched-together skins. Always calm and composed, he rules firmly and efficiently over degenerates, many half-demons, and few demons. His forces are larger than Eshair's, but he is an aberration; the other half-demons are bestial, vicious, and stupid. Though he serves Golgoroth, his true desire is freedom.

**G.** A crack in the ceiling drips clean, scalding water down that smells of rotten eggs. While the tumor-fruits' blood manages to hydrate, this is still infinitely better.

**H.** Cafeteria and kitchen - many degenerates consuming a brutish-demon with bowls of tumor-fruits on the side. Stealth is an option - but they eat fast.

**I.** Barricades and traps similar to in room C, as well as a fleshstick-made pit that drops to room M.

**J.** Sauna filled with thick, roiling steam and a soft, sibilant hissing sound. Anything could be lurking in here.

**K.** A forest of bone sculptures fills the room and hides foes.

**L.** Crude traps - wires that drop rubble and rubbish.

**M.** The most bestial, mindless, and monstrous half-demons make this their den and sleep in piles. If not cleared, they will hear Golgoroth's bellows if he is fought and rush to join the fray.

**N.** Revolting cesspit of waste; once a dining room.

**O.** The fleshstick rests in this overwhelmingly pungent room, supported by an altar of bones. It is being worshipped by a mass of degenerates prostrate before it on a floor of rotting meat.

**P.** Cleaned of detritus. No encounters. Only art on the walls and in sculpture. All of it is crude and primitive, as if by a four-year-old caveman and depicts Golgoroth.

**Q.** Empty; not even detritus. No encounters.

**R.** Cellar filled to the ceiling with opened casks, barrels, and bottles. The room is flooded with sour alcohol to stomach height. Enemies here can lie under the surface or hide behind casks and push them down.

**S.** Every surface is covered in pungent, living meat. Your feet squelch and sink in with each step. Here dwells Golgoroth, a massive, corpulent demon of gluttony. He is six times the size of a human and impossibly obese. Rather than legs, he has seven headless bodies growing from under rolls of fat that drag on the floor as they carry him along like a crab in slow motion. He offers a choice; lure people back to this place and rule this den of debauchery or die. If defied, the floor roils and he attacks using the environment, with trip attacks and pustules growing from the ceiling that rain down massive maggots. He moves very slowly and clumsily flails with massive, powerful arms.

## Encounters (2d8, use both results)

1. None
2. Cache of shiny valuables
3. Booby trap
4. Velvet golem (blunt weapons ineffective)
5. 1d4 cloth serpents (lie in wait; grapple, choke)
6. 1d12 degenerates (reckless, all-out attacks)
7. 1d4 half-demons (drain health; toy with prey)
8. Succubus/incubus (stun/charm; retreat and harry)

## The Fleshstick

A rod made of bloody meat, sickeningly warm and slimy to the touch. Flies are attracted to it so it crawls with maggots. The meat regrows fast enough to see and needs to be regularly played off or it rots. Under the meat is a long, very straight bone. Once per day it can be used to turn a 3-foot sphere of any nonliving substance into meat. The meat is technically alive, at least at first, but it's almost always just a lump of mutated meat and bone, with tumorous growths sticking off and bits of a malformed ribcage or something showing. When you use the fleshstick to transmute a substance to meat, roll d100. On a result of 1-25 it goes out of control. On a 26-85 choose one property. On a 86-100 choose three properties.

- It's edible.
- It's truly alive, with a brain and working organs, and choose one: it's sentient, it can speak, it can move, or it isn't in agony
- It will remain "alive" for some time - a lifetime, if fed.
- It merges and adapts to an existing meat sphere.

