A Taste of Madness

Some recipes were never meant
to leave the kitchen..

A Taste of Madness
A Rordon Gamsay Preview adventure
organized and designed by

KELFECIL'S TALES

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A lesson interrupted

Along the supply roads leading toward Rordon Gamsay's arcane kitchen tower, daily traffic moves as expected. Wagons carry ingredients, sealed crates change hands, and apprentices oversee deliveries with practiced routine. The tower's influence reaches far beyond its walls, supported by a steady flow of goods and carefully managed logistics. On most days, nothing about this operation appears unusual.

The first sign that something is wrong is a missing cart.

At first, the delay is written off as poor conditions on the road. When another shipment is redirected without notice, the explanation becomes less convincing. Before anyone at the tower intervenes, word begins to spread among travelers and locals nearby. Hunters speak of scorched earth along forest paths. Merchants complain of spoiled goods that seem warm to the touch. In a small town not far from the road, people stay indoors after dark, keeping lights burning longer than usual.

The common thread is not sabotage or attack, but carelessness.

Somewhere between the tower and its destinations, Rordon's methods have been copied and used without proper oversight. Containment sigils are incomplete. Recipes are followed without adjustment or restraint. Spells designed to be dangerous under controlled conditions are allowed to operate freely, with predictable results.

By the time the adventurers become involved, the situation has already escalated beyond a simple delivery problem. Failed experiments have begun to affect the surrounding roads and settlements. Unless the source is found and shut down, the consequences will continue to spread, regardless of who was meant to be responsible.

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Introduction

Kelfecil's Tales is all about strong and deep narratives. I create stories and adventures inspired by art. I believe that well-designed narratives in TTRPGs can be extremely important if we want to create memorable and meaningful stories. For that reason, I put a lot of effort into my designs, so that you and your players can later leave the table with something that you will find difficult to forget.

Adventure Summary

A Taste of Madness is a contained escalation adventure centered on the consequences of unsanctioned culinary magic tied to Rordon Gamsay's teachings. What begins as a disrupted supply route quickly expands into a town-wide emergency and culminates in a failed laboratory buried beneath the docks.

Act 1 introduces the problem at a forest crossroads, where a ruined shipment reveals that containment failed during transport. The party faces unstable food constructs and uncovers evidence that Rordon's techniques were copied and applied without proper safeguards.

Act 2 shifts the focus to a nearby town under active threat. Slice Horrors spread through streets, docks, and markets, forcing the party to balance combat with civilian rescue. How effectively the characters manage panic and limit casualties directly affects what remains intact below.

Act 3 descends into the cellar laboratory where the experiments originated. The space is unstable, hazardous, and already failing. Environmental pressure replaces open panic as the party confronts the final results of the apprentices' work, culminating in a chaotic confrontation with their largest creations.

Throughout the adventure, player decisions shape escalation rather than stopping it outright. The situation can be contained, mitigated, or allowed to scar the region. By the end, the party is left with evidence that the incident was not an isolated failure, but a symptom of dangerous knowledge escaping controlled spaces.

Quick Adventure Info

Some quick information about the adventure:

- **Recommended APL:** 4-5
- **Themes:** Containment, Environmental Hazard, Combat
- **Setting:** any, Starlight Chronicles (anywhere near Rordon Gamsay's arcane kitchen tower)
- **Expected Sessions/Playtime:** 1 to 2 sessions (3 to 5 hours)

Background

Rordon Gamsay's tower has a reputation for producing powerful and unconventional culinary magic. Its kitchens operate under strict internal rules that govern who may experiment, what techniques may be used, and how dangerous results are contained. When those rules are followed, even volatile creations are kept under control.

That oversight has recently been bypassed.

A small group of apprentices began conducting unsanctioned work using fragments of Rordon's teachings. Rather than operating within the tower's primary facilities, they diverted ingredients and equipment to secondary locations along the supply routes. Their intent was to refine and accelerate the techniques they had studied, without waiting for approval or supervision.

To avoid scrutiny, the apprentices set up a concealed laboratory beneath a dockside warehouse in a nearby town. The space was small and poorly suited for sustained experimentation. Containment procedures were reproduced from memory or incomplete notes. Cooling and disposal protocols were ignored in favor of speed.

Early failures were treated as acceptable losses. Ingredients spoiled. Residue retained heat longer than expected. Minor food constructs formed and collapsed without intervention. Each problem was followed by further adjustments rather than a halt to the work.

As the experiments escalated, larger creations were attempted. Some escaped during transport when containment failed. Others were released intentionally to observe their behavior outside controlled conditions. When these incidents began to draw attention from townsfolk and travelers, the apprentices abandoned the site and fled, leaving their work behind.

What remains is a series of connected incidents tied to the same source. Damaged shipments along the road. A town struggling to contain living food. A hidden laboratory filled with unfinished notes and unstable magic. The methods involved are clearly derived from Rordon's teachings, even if the tower has not acknowledged responsibility. How the situation is resolved now depends on who intervenes and how much of the damage is allowed to surface.

Need more Setting Lore?

The Starlight Chronicles is a living world of ancient ruins, starfaring ships, and vast legacies shaped by Fate. Each adventure offers a glimpse into its history, whether through the ruins of Latakar or the endless Sea of Stars. To learn more, you can access the free Adapting to the Setting guide, which introduces the core lore and explains how to bring these stories into any campaign. For deeper exploration, the Starlight Chronicles Lorebook provides the full and ever-expanding collection of regions, ancestries, factions, and timelines that define the setting.

This adventure is designed to fit easily into any campaign world. Within the Starlight Chronicles, its events unfold in the shadow of Rordon Gamsay's arcane kitchen tower, during **the years following the Astral Conflict (AC)**. Outside the setting, the tower can be placed anywhere culinary magic is practiced without restraint.

Want to connect this awesome content to something bigger, tastier, crazier?! Then…

Check out **Rordon Gamsay's Extraordinary Cookbook!**

Running the Adventure

A Taste of Madness is structured as a response scenario. Events are already in motion when the party becomes involved, and their actions determine how much damage can be limited rather than whether the situation can be fully undone.

The adventure progresses through three escalating environments: a disrupted supply route, a town under immediate threat, and a failing laboratory. Each stage increases pressure by expanding the area affected and reducing the amount of control available.

Situation Awareness. The party should always be aware that conditions are changing around them. Heat lingers where it should not. Residue spreads when left unattended. Damage accumulates instead of resetting between scenes. Communicate this through visible shifts in the environment such as spreading fires, louder disturbances, blocked routes, or missing evidence. These changes signal escalation without requiring timers or explicit warnings.

Time and Consequences. Time pressure is handled through outcomes rather than tracked minutes. Lingering in one location allows problems elsewhere to worsen. Failed checks, repeated delays, or disengaged threats directly increase civilian losses or environmental instability. Progression is uneven by design. Stabilizing one area often means leaving another unresolved, and the consequences of those choices carry forward.

Civilian Pressure. Civilians represent the cost of delay. They appear as crowds, trapped groups, or panicked movement rather than individual NPCs to manage. Once a rescue is resolved, those civilians are no longer part of the situation. Losses during Act 2 directly affect Act 3. Higher civilian casualties result in more fire damage, missing records, and weakened structural integrity in the cellar laboratory. Lower losses preserve information and reduce environmental hazards.

Combat Structure. Combat encounters are reactive and unstable. Food constructs move toward activity, heat, and noise. They do not coordinate or retreat. Encounters are shaped by space. Narrow streets, slick residue, collapsing interiors, and blocked exits matter as much as enemy placement. Encourage movement by letting the environment change during the fight. If encounters resolve too quickly, escalate through hazards, additional movement, or environmental effects rather than increasing enemy durability. If the party struggles, successful skill use should reduce pressure temporarily rather than removing threats outright.

Information and Evidence. Information is fragmented and often damaged. Notes are incomplete. Equipment is cracked or unstable. Clarity comes from assembling partial details rather than receiving full explanations. Players who interact with the environment gain better understanding of what went wrong and why. This information supports later scenes but is never required to complete the adventure.

Act 3 Resolution. The cellar laboratory is already failing when the party arrives. Heat, residue, and structural instability are constant factors throughout the final act. The Burgersteins are uncontrolled results of sustained experimentation.

Their presence increases environmental instability through movement, size, and heat output. Use collapsing terrain, spreading residue, and blocked paths to prevent static positioning. The difficulty of the final encounter reflects earlier choices. Preserved infrastructure and intact notes provide safer footing and clearer options. Heavy losses result in faster escalation and fewer opportunities to mitigate hazards.

The adventure ends when the immediate threat is contained. The broader issue of leaked knowledge and responsibility remains unresolved by design.

Adventure Hooks

Adventurers may become involved in the events surrounding Rordon Gamsay's tower through chance, obligation, or reputation. Each hook provides a practical reason for the party to encounter the situation early, before the damage spreads further.

- **A Missed Delivery.** A merchant, courier, or tower-affiliated contact approaches the party regarding a shipment that failed to arrive. The job is straightforward on its surface: locate a lost cart along a nearby supply road and report back. Payment is modest, but urgency is stressed. This hook draws the party directly into the first signs of corruption at the forest crossroads.
- **Roadside Trouble.** While traveling near the tower, the party encounters evidence of recent disturbance along the road: abandoned goods, scorched ground, or frightened travelers turning back. Locals warn that something dangerous has been moving along the route since morning. Following the road leads the characters into the unfolding events without any formal contract.
- **Town in Panic.** The party arrives in, or is already staying near, a coastal town that has sealed its streets after nightfall. Bells ring, lanterns burn, and guards struggle to keep order as reports spread of food attacking people in the streets. The authorities are overwhelmed and accept help from anyone capable of restoring control.
- **Quiet Damage Control.** An agent connected to Rordon Gamsay's tower seeks the party out discreetly. They do not admit fault, but they acknowledge that unsanctioned activity may have occurred beyond the tower's walls. The adventurers are asked to investigate, contain the situation, and recover any evidence before it draws wider attention. This hook frames the party as a deniable solution to a growing problem.
- **Personal Stakes.** One or more characters learn that someone they know, a trader, dockworker, former apprentice, or relative, was present in the affected town when the trouble began. Contact has been lost, and rumors suggest the streets are no longer safe. Acting out of concern rather than duty, the party becomes involved before official responses are fully organized.

Prologue

> *You travel along one of the supply roads that feed Rordon Gamsay's tower, where carts and wagons usually pass with steady regularity. Today, the road feels quieter than it should. Wheel ruts cut deep into the dirt, but few are fresh. The air carries the smell of smoke and hot stone, faint but persistent, as if something nearby has burned and never fully cooled.*

Use this opening to establish unease without immediate danger. The disruption is subtle but noticeable to anyone paying attention. Goods are late. Travelers move cautiously or turn back altogether. Whatever is wrong has not announced itself loudly, but it has left marks along the road.

⊙ **Reading the Signs. Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation), DC 12.** On a success, the party notices scorched patches of earth, warped wood fragments, and food residue that still radiates heat. These signs suggest recent magical activity tied to cooking or alchemical preparation. On a failure, the road simply feels abandoned and uncomfortable, without a clear reason.

> *Further along the road, you spot disturbed ground leading off the path. Broken crate slats lie half-buried in the dirt, and a dark, greasy smear cuts across the grass before vanishing into the trees. The smell grows stronger here, heavy and unpleasant, clinging to the back of your throat.*

At this point, the party can pause to assess their surroundings, discuss how to proceed, or investigate further. No immediate threat presents itself yet, but the evidence points toward a recent incident involving a supply cart and unstable magic.

⊙ **Identifying the Residue. Intelligence (Arcana) or Wisdom (Survival), DC 13.** On a success, the characters recognize signs of failed containment rather than a natural spill. The magic involved resembles culinary enchantments associated with Rordon Gamsay's tower. On a failure, the residue is clearly unnatural, but its origin remains uncertain.

> *The road continues ahead, curving toward a forest crossroads where multiple paths meet. Whatever happened here did not stay contained for long. Whatever caused it moved on, or was carried away, leaving the road behind in uneasy silence.*

Once the party decides to follow the trail, the prologue ends. The next stage of the adventure begins at the forest crossroads, where the first clear signs of the disaster come fully into view.

Act 1: Spoiled Goods

The forest crossroads marks a point where several supply paths converge before continuing toward settlements and ports. Under normal circumstances, carts pass through regularly, slowing to reorient before taking the next leg of the journey. Now, the clearing sits half-silent, marked by scorched earth, broken cargo, and the lingering heat of failed magic.

This area shows the first clear signs that something went wrong during transport rather than at a destination. Whatever escaped here was not meant to do so, and the damage reflects panic, haste, and a lack of control.

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1. ON THE MAP – The Fallen Cart

> *An overturned cart dominates the center of the clearing, its axle bent and one wheel torn free. Crates lie split open around it, their contents sagging and partially melted into the dirt. The smell is thick and unpleasant, burned cheese, wet ash, and something sour that clings to the air.*

The cart was carrying sealed ingredient crates intended for use in higher-end culinary spellwork. Several containers have ruptured completely, while others show signs of forced opening or internal pressure.

➤ **Encounter!** x2 **Ooze Fondue** have coalesced from the spilled contents. They lurk close to the cart, reacting aggressively to movement and heat. As the encounter continues, residue near the wreckage shifts and bubbles, making the ground slick and unstable.

⊙ **Assess the Crates. Intelligence (Arcana) or Wisdom (Medicine), DC 13.** Careful examination reveals containment sigils copied from established tower methods but applied inconsistently. On a success, the party learns the magic was never meant to be used outside reinforced kitchen spaces. On a failure, the sigils are clearly flawed, but their purpose remains unclear.

⊙ **Stabilize the Spill. Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) or Intelligence (Alchemist's Supplies), DC 14.** A character can attempt to neutralize part of the residue during the fight. On a success, one Ooze Fondue has its speed reduced until the end of its next turn. On a failure, the residue flares with heat, dealing minor fire damage to the character.

## 2. ON THE MAP – THE CLIFFSIDE DROP

The clearing's eastern edge ends in a sharp drop. Below, jagged stone bears dark scorch marks and long streaks of hardened residue where something hot struck and slid downward. Broken crate fragments are wedged between rocks partway down the slope.

Several crates were dragged or knocked toward the cliff during the initial incident. The marks suggest a sudden loss of balance rather than careful unloading.

⊙ **Trace the Incident. Wisdom (Survival) or Intelligence (Investigation), DC 12.** On a success, the party determines that the cart stopped abruptly, causing its load to shift violently toward the cliff. This supports the idea that something attacked or escaped before the cargo could be secured. On a failure, the destruction appears chaotic and difficult to reconstruct.

⊙ **Dangerous Edge. Dexterity (Acrobatics), DC 12.** Characters moving too close to the cliff during combat risk losing footing. On a failure, the character slides several feet toward the edge and must spend movement to regain balance.

ACT 1 MAP

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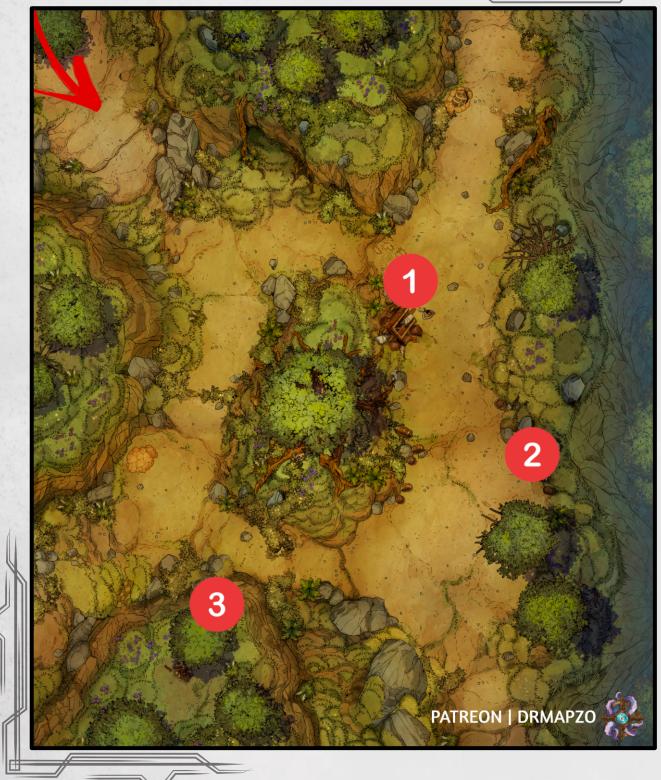
3. ON THE MAP – THE SOUTHERN HILL

Loose stones tumble down the slope as movement stirs among the trees. Pale shapes drop from branches and roll through undergrowth, leaving streaks of grease and torn foliage in their wake.

Waste from earlier experimental batches was dumped along the hillside instead of being properly neutralized. Residual magic soaked into the ground and vegetation, causing the refuse to animate.

➤ **Encounter!** x8 **Cheese Spawn** emerge from the hill over the course of the fight, sliding or dropping into the clearing as noise and heat draw them out.

⊙ **Cut Off the Descent. Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics), DC 13.** A character can climb or maneuver partway up the slope to disrupt the spawn's path. On a success, two Cheese Spawn are delayed from entering the encounter until the following round. On a failure, the character slips, falling prone at the base of the hill.

⊙ **Burn the Refuse. Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Survival), DC 14.** A character can identify the most volatile waste deposits. On a success, destroying or igniting these spots prevents additional Cheese Spawn from appearing after the current wave. On a failure, the attempt releases a burst of heat, dealing minor fire damage.

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When the creatures are destroyed, the clearing finally falls quiet. The residue continues to radiate warmth, but no further movement stirs among the wreckage.

Searching the area uncovers crate fragments, partial shipping notes, and markings consistent with techniques taught in Rordon Gamsay's tower. None of the records show authorization or oversight. Drag marks and disturbed ground lead away from the crossroads toward a nearby town, suggesting that the incident here was only the beginning.

This concludes Act I. Following the trail leads directly into Act 2: A Town in Panic.

Act 2: Panic Town

Situation Overview

By the time the party reaches the town, night has fully settled. Lanterns burn in windows and along the streets, but their light does little to steady the situation. Shouts echo between buildings, doors are barred from the inside, and guards struggle to direct frightened civilians toward anything resembling safety.

This act is about pressure. The threat is no longer contained to a single site, and the adventurers must balance combat, movement, and rescue. Left unchecked, the chaos will worsen.

Civilian Pressure Mechanic

Throughout Act II, track **Civilians at Risk**.

At the start of the act, there are x8 **Civilians at Risk** spread across the town. These civilians are assumed to be scattered between streets, buildings, and escape routes.

Escalation Rule. At the end of each round, **for every active Slice Horror that is not engaged by at least one player character**, x1 Civilian at Risk is lost. A Slice Horror is considered engaged if at least one character is within 5 feet of it or has attacked it during the round.

This rule reflects the fact that the party cannot be everywhere at once. Leaving areas unattended allows the creatures to continue harming civilians out of sight.

Rescue Opportunities. Skill checks, smart positioning, and specific actions listed in each location can reduce the number of Civilians at Risk. These represent clearing escape routes, shielding townsfolk, or creating moments of order in the chaos.

Consequences. Each Civilian at Risk lost represents serious injury or death. The total number lost during this act influences how much evidence, documentation, and equipment remains intact in the cellar lab during Act III. The more civilians lost, the more fires spread, the more records are destroyed, and the more hastily the apprentices fled.

This mechanic represents people being injured, trapped, or killed as panic spreads.

1. ON THE MAP – Central Plaza

➤ **Encounter!** x3 **Slice Horror** drop into the plaza from rooftops and alleyways, immediately attacking civilians and guards. They move quickly through the crowd, forcing the party to choose between direct combat and crowd control.

⊙ **Direct the Crowd. Charisma (Persuasion) or Wisdom (Insight), DC 13.** A character takes a visible leadership role, shouting instructions, guiding movement, or physically pulling people out of danger. On a success, two Civilians at Risk are rescued as a clear escape path forms. Guards regain footing and help hold the line. On a failure, panic surges. One Civilian at Risk is lost as the crowd collapses inward, and the next Slice Horror to act gains advantage on its next attack roll.

⊙ **Secure the Well. Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics), DC 12.** A character can prevent civilians from being pushed into the well. On a success, no civilians are lost from this area during the next round. On a failure, one Civilian at Risk is lost.

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2. ON THE MAP – The Docks

> *Wooden planks creak under hurried footsteps as townsfolk attempt to flee along the docks. Crates lie broken open near the water's edge, their contents smeared across the boards. The tide laps against the pilings, carrying bits of refuse out to sea.*

Evidence here shows recent deliveries arriving by boat, bypassing town inspection.

➤ **Encounter!** x2 **Slice Horror** tear free from smashed crates and barrels, skittering across the docks toward fleeing townsfolk. Their movement is erratic, using ropes, pilings, and overturned cargo as cover.

⊙ **Cut the Lines. Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) or Strength (Athletics), DC 13.** A character severs mooring lines or pushes a vessel clear as civilians scramble aboard. On a success, two Civilians at Risk escape by water. The freed vessel drifts out of reach of the Slice Horror. On a failure, a Slice Horror leaps onto the docked ship, immediately threatening those attempting to flee.

3. ON THE MAP – MARKET ALLEY

Stalls line the narrow alley, their awnings torn and goods scattered across the stones. Lantern light flickers over overturned carts and abandoned baskets as something moves low and fast between the shadows.

The concentration of food here has worsened the outbreak.

➤ **Encounter!** x4 **Slice Horror** swarm through the narrow alley, climbing stalls and darting beneath awnings. Their numbers and the confined space make focused movement difficult.

⊙ **Barricade the Alley. Strength (Athletics) or Intelligence (Carpenter's Tools), DC 14.** A character overturns carts, collapses stalls, or wedges debris into doorways. On a success, the alley is sealed, preventing further civilian losses here and blocking one Slice Horror from moving freely. On a failure, the barricade collapses under pressure, and one Civilian at Risk is lost as panic surges.

4. ON THE MAP – THE WAREHOUSE

The warehouse stands darker than the surrounding buildings, its windows shuttered and its doors reinforced. The noise outside fades slightly here, replaced by the low hum of magic seeping up from below.

This structure serves as a front for the cellar laboratory beneath.

⊙ **Force Entry. Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Thieves' Tools), DC 13.** The party attempts to breach the reinforced doors before the situation worsens outside. On a success, they enter swiftly, preventing the loss of one additional Civilian at Risk this round. On a failure, the delay allows fires to spread and chaos to escalate, costing one Civilian at Risk before entry is gained.

Once the party enters the building, the immediate spread of the threat slows. The source of the outbreak lies below.

This act ends when the party descends into the cellar. Act 3 begins beneath the warehouse, where the experiments originated.

ACT 2 MAP

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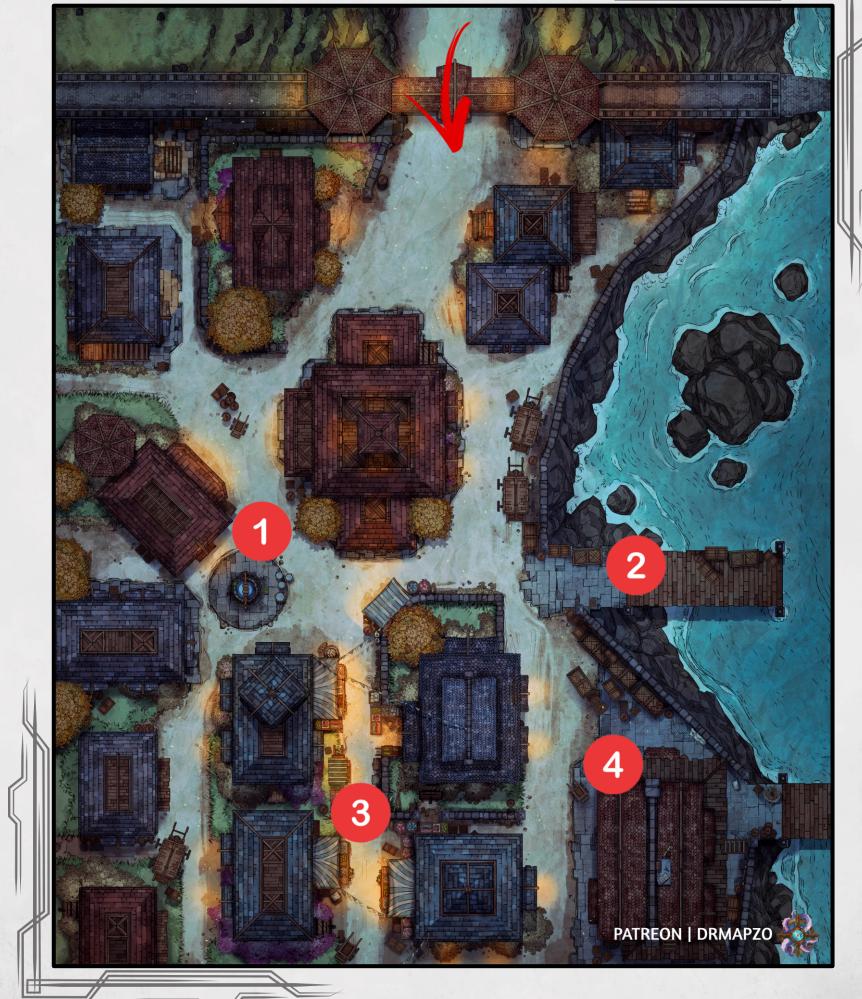
Act 3: The Cellar Laboratory

Situation Overview

The cellar beneath the warehouse was never meant to hold sustained experimentation. Its rooms are cramped, poorly ventilated, and scarred by repeated magical failures. Heat clings to the stone, and the air feels heavy with grease, herbs, and spoiled enchantment. The apprentices fled in haste, leaving behind active wards, unstable concoctions, and creatures they no longer controlled.

The consequences of Act 2 are felt here immediately. If many Civilians at Risk were lost, fires and panic above have damaged parts of the cellar. Notes are burned, containers cracked, and some rooms partially collapsed or flooded with residue. If the party managed to keep casualties low, more records and equipment remain intact, offering clearer insight into what occurred.

The apprentices have already escaped through a concealed tunnel. What remains is their work, and the inevitable result of letting it continue unattended.

Act 3 Setup: Escalation and Space Pressure

Before running any encounters in Act 3, review the following elements. These define how dangerous the cellar feels from the moment the party enters and help you frame the tone of the descent.

Using the Space

The main hallway and adjoining rooms should feel cramped and unstable from the outset. Encourage movement, forced repositioning, and interaction with the environment rather than static combat. The cellar is already failing when the party arrives.

During combat in Act 3, characters can attempt the following actions:

◉ **Collapse a Section. Strength (Athletics), DC 15.** A character brings down unstable shelving or damaged masonry. On a success, one Burgerstein's movement is reduced until the end of its next turn. On a failure, debris falls unpredictably, forcing the character to make a Dexterity saving throw or take bludgeoning damage.

◉ **Vent the Heat. Intelligence (Arcana) or Dexterity (Sleight of Hand), DC 16.** A character manipulates broken wards or ruptured pipes to redirect heat. On a success, the next Dripping Residue trigger affects one fewer space. On a failure, the attempt worsens conditions, increasing residue spread for the following round.

Consequences from Earlier Acts

The state of the cellar reflects what happened in Act 2:

- **High Civilian Losses.** Fires above weakened the structure. Structural Collapse triggers more frequently, and residue spreads faster.
- **Moderate Losses.** Conditions proceed as written.
- **Low Civilian Losses.** Some supports and wards remain intact. Skip the first Dripping Residue trigger in the final encounter.

Lab-Wide Hazard: Dripping Residue

Throughout Act 3, the cellar is affected by unstable culinary runoff.

Warm, semi-liquid residue drips from ceilings, pipes, and cracked containers. At the start of each round, choose one 5-foot square in a room where residue thickens.

- The space becomes slick and dangerously hot until the start of the next round.
- A creature entering or starting its turn in the space must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw or take minor fire damage and have its speed reduced until the end of its turn.

Successful actions that stabilize equipment, disrupt rituals, or shut down machinery can reduce how often this effect occurs. If multiple failures accumulate, residue spreads faster, affecting two spaces per round during the final encounter.

Act 3 Map

PATREON | DRMAPZO

1. ON THE MAP – MAIN HALLWAY

Stone steps descend into a long, low corridor slick with residue. Thick drops fall from above, hissing softly as they strike the floor. Pale shapes drift along the walls and ceiling, leaving smeared trails that glow faintly in the heat.

The main hallway connects all chambers of the cellar. Broken sigils pulse unevenly beneath layers of grease and ash.

➤ **Encounter!** x6 **Cheese Spawn** roam the corridor in loose clusters, reacting to sound and movement. They are not coordinated, but their numbers and the narrow space make avoidance difficult.

⊙ **Navigate the Wards. Intelligence (Arcana) or Dexterity (Acrobatics), DC 15.** A character moves carefully, reading damaged sigils or timing their steps between flares. On a success, the character avoids triggering the lab-wide residue effect this round. On a failure, a ward discharges violently, dealing fire damage and leaving a slick patch behind.

⊙ **Control the Space. Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics), DC 14.** A character can shove, block, or herd Cheese Spawn away from chokepoints. On a success, one spawn is prevented from reaching the next room this round. On a failure, the character is knocked prone by a surge of heat and movement.

2. ON THE MAP – RITUAL CHAMBER

Crude symbols cover the floor, carved directly into stone. Melted candles pool along the walls, and residue drips steadily from the ceiling, feeding faintly glowing runes. The heat here is constant and oppressive.

This room was used to test direct invocations tied to Camembroxis, without proper containment or preparation.

➤ **Encounter!** x4 **Cheese Spawn** cluster around the ritual markings, drawn to lingering power. They grow more agitated as the markings remain intact.

⊙ **Disrupt the Ritual Marks. Strength (Athletics) or Intelligence (Arcana), DC 16.** A character damages or scrapes away the carvings under pressure. On a success, the markings collapse, preventing further surges in this room and reducing residue buildup elsewhere in the lab. On a failure, the ritual discharges, empowering one Cheese Spawn and triggering the residue effect immediately.

3. ON THE MAP – RESEARCH ROOM

Shelves bow under the weight of jars and flasks, many cracked or leaking. A dented boiler dominates the center of the room, its surface radiating heat. Notes are scattered across the floor, some burned, others stuck together by grease.

This room was used for refinement, testing, and modification of spells and ingredients.

⊙ **Recover the Notes. Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception), DC 15.** A careful search yields partial experiment logs describing altered versions of Rordon Gamsay's techniques. On a success, the party gains clear evidence of unsanctioned experimentation. On a failure, key information is lost to fire and residue.

⊙ **Shut Down the Boiler. Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) or Intelligence (Tinker's Tools), DC 16.** A character attempts to vent or disable the boiler. On a success, the lab-wide residue effect occurs less frequently. On a failure, the boiler releases a blast of heat, dealing fire damage and worsening conditions during the final encounter.

4. ON THE MAP – APPRENTICES' OFFICE

This cramped office is in disarray. Ledgers lie half-burned, drawers smashed open, and sealed containers cracked as if grabbed in haste. The smell of scorched parchment lingers in the air.

This room holds the clearest record of responsibility, though much has been destroyed.

⊙ **Examine the Ledgers. Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Insight), DC 16.** On a success, the party pieces together delivery routes, falsified records, and references to accelerated trials. On a failure, names and dates are too damaged to fully reconstruct, leaving gaps in accountability.

5. ON THE MAP – SAUCE CHAMBER

This cramped office is in disarray. Ledgers lie half-burned, drawers smashed open, and sealed containers cracked as if grabbed in haste. The smell of scorched parchment lingers in the air.

This chamber stored the unstable sauce used to amplify forbidden spells.

⊙ **Secure the Canisters. Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Sleight of Hand), DC 16.** A character braces or seals the containers. On a success, further leaks are prevented, limiting hazards during the final fight. On a failure, a canister ruptures fully, increasing the number of residue zones during the confrontation.

Final Confrontation

The temperature in the corridor spikes without warning. Cracks race along the stone floor as something heavy shifts beneath it. Containers rattle, residue boils, and a deep, guttural grinding sound echoes through the cellar. Then the floor gives way in places as massive shapes force themselves into the hallway, dragging heat and debris with them.

The apprentices' final experiments can no longer be contained. The remaining magical pressure, combined with heat, noise, and lingering residue, triggers the release of their largest creations.

➤ **Encounter!** x2 **Burgerstein** erupt into the main hallway, tearing through weakened walls and flooring. They attack anything nearby, driven by unstable instincts rather than intent or command.

These creatures should feel overwhelming in presence, not just damage output. Their size, movement, and interaction with the environment are as important as their attacks.

Environmental Breakdown (Mechanical Effects)

While at least one Burgerstein is active, the cellar continues to destabilize. Apply the following effects during the encounter:

Dripping Residue Escalation. At initiative count 20 (losing ties), the lab-wide Dripping Residue hazard triggers automatically. If earlier containment actions failed, two separate 5-foot squares are affected instead of one.

Structural Collapse. When a Burgerstein moves more than 10 feet on its turn or uses a slam-style attack, loose stone and shelving collapse nearby. One random adjacent square becomes difficult terrain until cleared.

Heat Saturation. Creatures that end their turn adjacent to a Burgerstein must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or take minor fire damage as heat radiates from the creature's body.

GM Notes: Running the Burgersteins

- The Burgersteins should apply constant area pressure rather than focusing on a single target.
- Use forced movement, blocked paths, and terrain changes to keep the fight dynamic.
- Avoid long stand-up exchanges. The environment should always demand attention.
- Let the creatures damage the space freely. Collapsing walls and blocked corridors reinforce the cost of the apprentices' actions.

This act ends when the Burgersteins are destroyed and the cellar is finally brought under control.

Epilogue

The heat slowly bleeds out of the cellar. Residue hardens, then cracks. Whatever pressure held the space together finally loosens, leaving behind silence broken only by cooling stone and the distant sounds of a town beginning to breathe again.

The immediate danger has passed, but the aftermath spreads outward from the cellar. Guards and townsfolk move cautiously through the streets above, extinguishing fires, tending to the injured, and sealing off the warehouse. Word travels quickly that the source of the chaos has been found, though the details remain fragmented.

If Few Civilians Were Lost

Order returns faster than expected. Fires are contained, and most buildings remain structurally sound. Enough records survived in the cellar for local authorities or outside agents to piece together what occurred.

Rumors circulate about reckless apprentices and stolen techniques, and some speak openly of Rordon Gamsay's tower with renewed suspicion. Survivors quietly credit the party with preventing the situation from becoming far worse.

"Whatever you stopped down there," a dockworker mutters, watching the warehouse doors seal shut, "it would've taken the whole town with it."

The party gains goodwill among merchants, guards, and travelers along the supply roads. Future dealings in the region begin with trust rather than fear.

If Several Civilians Were Lost

The town stabilizes, but the damage is visible. Several structures are badly burned, and portions of the docks remain closed. Survivors speak in hushed tones about living food and streets that could not be held.

Much of the evidence recovered from the cellar is incomplete. Names are missing, records burned, and responsibility remains blurred. Investigations stall as blame shifts between apprentices, suppliers, and distant oversight.

The party's actions are acknowledged, but the mood remains grim. Gratitude is present, though it is tempered by loss.

If Many Civilians Were Lost

The incident leaves a lasting scar. Entire blocks are damaged or abandoned, and funerals follow in the days after. Fear lingers long after the streets are cleared.

Most of the cellar's records were destroyed by fire and collapse. What remains is enough to confirm that forbidden techniques were used, but not enough to trace the full chain of responsibility.

> *"They came from the road," someone says quietly. "And whatever taught them is still out there."*

The party's involvement becomes part of a larger, uncomfortable story. They are remembered as witnesses as much as heroes.

The Wider Consequences

Regardless of outcome, word reaches those connected to Rordon Gamsay's tower. Shipments slow. Oversight tightens. Quiet efforts are made to recover or suppress what knowledge escaped.

The apprentices responsible are not found. Their escape tunnel leads into the wider world, carrying fragments of dangerous techniques with them. Whether they are pursued, silenced, or continue their work elsewhere remains unresolved.

> *As you leave the town behind, the road stretches on, scarred but passable. Lanterns still burn at night, and carts move more carefully than before. Somewhere ahead, the tower still stands, and its influence continues to travel far beyond its walls.*

Connecting to the Tower Crawl

The events of this adventure can serve as a direct lead-in to the tower crawl presented in Rordon Gamsay's Extraordinary Cookbook. The cellar laboratory represents only a fragment of the wider problem. Notes recovered here reference incomplete recipes, failed containment diagrams, and ingredient ratios marked as "unstable outside tower kitchens." Marginal comments suggest these methods were copied hastily from restricted sections of the tower.

If the party investigates further, they may learn that similar experiments were halted inside the tower itself, locked away rather than destroyed. The chaos along the supply roads becomes the reason outside intervention is no longer avoidable. What happened in the town is proof that these techniques cannot remain partially contained.

This connection can be framed as:

- A request to enter the tower and audit its kitchens before more knowledge leaks.
- A retrieval mission to secure or destroy the original sources the apprentices copied.
- A confrontation with Rordon Gamsay over responsibility, oversight, or deliberate risk.

The tower crawl then becomes the escalation point. The party moves from cleaning up the consequences of forbidden cooking to confronting the system that produced it.

> *What spilled into the streets was never meant to leave the tower. If it happened once, it can happen again. This time, the source still stands.*

Monsters Used

Act 1: Spoiled Goods

- x2 **Ooze Fondue** (Fallen Cart, spilled cargo)
- x8 **Cheese Spawn** (Southern Hill, contaminated refuse)

Optional escalations:

- Additional x1 **Ooze Fondue** if the party delays containment or fails to stabilize the spill

Act 2: A Town in Panic

- x3 **Slice Horror** (Central Plaza)
- x2 **Slice Horror** (Docks)
- x4 **Slice Horror** (Market Alley)

Optional escalations:

- Wandering x1 **Slice Horror** may appear if multiple rounds pass without engaging active threats

Act 3: The Cellar Laboratory

- x6 **Cheese Spawn** (Main Hallway)
- x4 **Cheese Spawn** (Ritual Chamber)
- x2 **Burgerstein** (Final Confrontation)

Optional escalations:

- Additional x2 **Cheese Spawn** may emerge during the final encounter if residue hazards escalate

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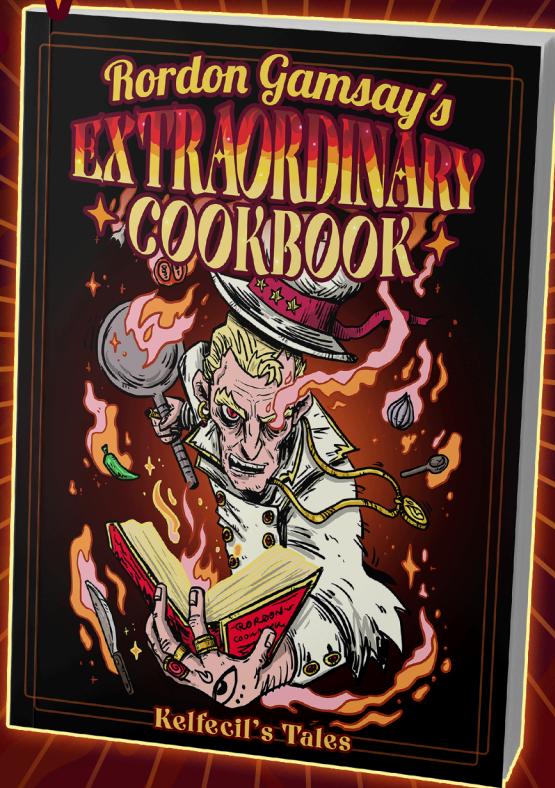## Then make sure you check out my video content over on [YouTube](#)!

Designer's Notes

These notes explain the intent behind A Taste of Madness and highlight the design goals that shaped its structure and mechanics.

1. Containment Before Confrontation

This adventure is built around escalation rather than exploration. Each act shows a failure of containment at a different scale, first a roadside incident, then a town-wide crisis, and finally a collapsed laboratory. The goal was to make players feel like they are responding to a situation already in motion, not uncovering a mystery at their own pace.

2. Food as an Environmental Threat

The monsters here are not just enemies but hazards. Ooze Fondue, Slice Horrors, and Cheese Spawn are meant to affect space, movement, and priorities. Encounters are designed so that ignoring terrain, heat, or residue makes fights harder, reinforcing that the danger comes from careless application of culinary magic rather than malice alone.

3. Pressure Through Consequences, Not Timers

Instead of a strict countdown, Acts 2 and 3 use pressure mechanics tied to player choices. Civilians at Risk and lab instability reward decisive action and punish hesitation without forcing a single correct path. The aim was to keep tension high while letting the party choose what they sacrifice.

4. Apprentices, Not Masterminds

The antagonists behind the scenes are intentionally absent. The apprentices fled, leaving only their work behind. This keeps the focus on outcomes rather than villains and allows the tower crawl to serve as a natural escalation rather than a required sequel.

5. A Bridge to the Tower Crawl

This adventure is meant to stand on its own while also functioning as a lead-in to the tower crawl. The lab, notes, and escaped techniques show what happens when Rordon Gamsay's methods are removed from their controlled environment. By the end, the question is no longer what went wrong here, but whether the system that allowed it can be trusted at all.

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Appendix: Stat Blocks

Here you will find all of the stat blocks for all the NPCs and monsters involved in the adventure.

Ooze Fondue
Medium ooze (any), neutral evil

Armor Class 13 (melting rind)
Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)
Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	8 (-1)	14 (+2)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

Damage Resistances fire
Condition Immunities prone
Senses blindsight 30 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 10
Languages Common
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Culinary Summon. This creature was conjured through forbidden culinary magic and is sustained by unstable arcane energy. If the creature is reduced to 0 hit points, its body collapses into inert ingredients. Any magical effects that were created by this creature end immediately. Spells and abilities that specifically affect summoned creatures treat this creature as a summoned creature for their effects.

Seeping Melt. The ground in a 10-foot radius around the Ooze Fondue is slick and sticky. This area is difficult terrain for creatures other than oozes.

Scalding Drip. A creature that starts its turn grappled by the Ooze Fondue takes 4 (1d8) fire damage.

Amorphous. The Ooze Fondue can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Actions

Pseudopod. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 3 (1d6) fire damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 12).

Engulf. The Ooze Fondue moves up to its speed. While doing so, it can enter the space of Medium or smaller creatures. A creature whose space the ooze enters must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or be grappled. Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained and takes 7 (2d6) fire damage at the start of each of its turns.

Fondue Spill. The Ooze Fondue releases a wave of molten cheese in a 10-foot radius centered on itself. Each creature in the area must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or have its speed reduced to 0 until the start of its next turn.

Cheese Spawn

Small elemental (any), chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (semi-hardened curds)
Hit Points 33 (6d6 + 12)
Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	4 (-3)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning; piercing; slashing; poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Primordial
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Culinary Summon. This creature was conjured through forbidden culinary magic and is sustained by unstable arcane energy. If the Cheese Spawn is reduced to 0 hit points, its body collapses into inert, sour-smelling cheese. Any magical effects it created immediately end. Spells and abilities that specifically affect summoned creatures treat this creature as a summoned creature for their effects.

Cheese Form. The Cheese Spawn can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing. It can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there.

Spread the Cheese. The Cheese Spawn leaves sticky cheese behind as it moves. Spaces it moves through are difficult terrain for creatures that are not food elementals until the start of the Cheese Spawn's next turn.

Cold Curdle. If the Cheese Spawn takes cold damage, its speed is reduced by 10 feet until the end of its next turn.

Curd Burst. When the Cheese Spawn is reduced to 0 hit points, each creature within 5 feet of it must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or take 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage from exploding curds.

Actions

Slam. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Hot Cheese Spit (1/Day). The Cheese Spawn spits molten cheese in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or take 4 (1d8) fire damage. The affected area is difficult terrain until the start of the Cheese Spawn's next turn.

Slice Horror
Small monstrosity (any), neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (greasy crust)
Hit Points 39 (6d6 + 18)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	5 (-3)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Skills Acrobatics +5, Stealth +5
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Common
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Culinary Summon. This creature was conjured through forbidden culinary magic and is sustained by unstable arcane energy. If the creature is reduced to 0 hit points, its body collapses into inert ingredients. Any magical effects that were created by this creature end immediately. Spells and abilities that specifically affect summoned creatures treat this creature as a summoned creature for their effects.

Stretchy Cheese. When the Slice Horror hits a creature with a melee attack, the target's speed is reduced by 10 ft. until the end of its next turn as molten cheese stretches and clings.

Grease Slide. The Slice Horror ignores difficult terrain caused by grease, oil, or food waste. In addition, it can move through the space of a creature one size larger than it without provoking opportunity attacks.

Scalding Toppings. When a creature misses the Slice Horror with a melee attack, it takes 3 (1d6) fire damage from splattering sauce and burning toppings.

Actions

Cheese Slash. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage.

Pepperoni Fling. Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage.

Sizzling Skid. The Slice Horror moves up to its speed in a straight line. The first creature it passes within 5 feet of during this movement must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone.
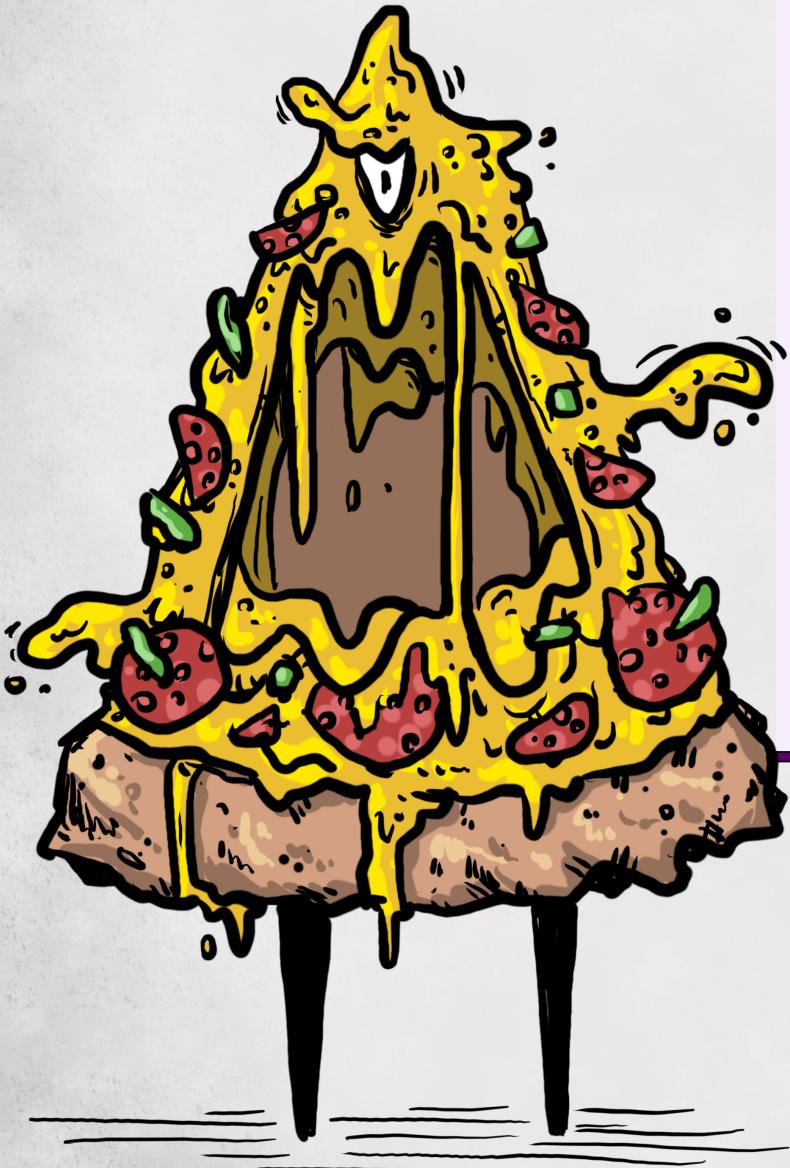
Burgerstein

Large monstrosity (any), neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (grease-hardened flesh)
Hit Points 110 (13d10 + 39)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Str +8, Con +6
Skills Athletics +8
Damage Resistances fire
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Common
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Culinary Summon. This creature was conjured through forbidden culinary magic and is sustained by unstable arcane energy. If the creature is reduced to 0 hit points, its body collapses into inert ingredients. Any magical effects that were created by this creature end immediately. Spells and abilities that specifically affect summoned creatures treat this creature as a summoned creature for their effects.

Grease-Fed Bulk. Burgerstein has advantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws. In addition, difficult terrain caused by grease, food waste, or similar substances does not cost it extra movement.

Sizzling Impact. When Burgerstein hits a creature with a melee attack, the target takes an extra 4 (1d8) fire damage.

Unstable Assembly. When Burgerstein is reduced to 0 hit points, its body collapses into a burning heap of meat and grease. Each creature within 10 feet of it must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or take 10 (3d6) fire damage, or half as much damage on a successful save.

Actions

Multiattack. Burgerstein makes two Slam attacks.

Slam. Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 15 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage plus 4 (1d8) fire damage.

Grease Spray (Recharge 5–6). Burgerstein expels scalding grease in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 21 (6d6) fire damage and is knocked prone. On a successful save, a creature takes half as much damage and is not knocked prone. The area becomes slick with grease until the end of Burgerstein's next turn. While in the area, the ground is difficult terrain.

License Information

Maps Used

You can find the maps used in this adventure without the GM notes at the following links:

- Forest Crossroads
- Coastal Town
- Alchemy Laboratory

Art Credits

Resources

Here's a whole bunch of links of where you can find more of the stuff I create:

- All my Releases
- DriveThruRPG Store
- Setting Lorebook
- "How to adapt to the Starlight Chronicles setting"
- YouTube: Narrative Design Videos
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