

HELLOWEEN FEW PAGE RPG

Well- Gourded Village

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A PLACE OF RENEWAL

Iskēl Beryar

*“Green Sun is —setting
to sleep and Winter —white greet.
Eaves creak and —groan,
leaves yellow and —roan.
Lift, lift the —veil.
All-harvester pre-vail,
come oh come now,
judge, yes, re—new.”*

—Renewal Song, Traditional.

*“Iskēl Beryar, Grain Gourde in the
Metriq tongue, is famed among the
hedge scholars of the little
traditions for its folk magics of
pumpkin whispering. As recently
as in the seventies most
developmentalist wizards were
convinced that pumpkin
whispering would disappear like
the infamous (and likely
apocryphal) dodo spell of the last
century. However, none calculated
with the rise of the re-renaissance
tourism movement in the eighties.
Since then the Grain Gourde Gala
has become something of a must-
see event among the back-rooters.
While the village now devotes a
whole week to the visitors who
wish to make offerings to the Grain
Pompon (the spirit of the biggest
pumpkin of the year), the 1st day of
Hellsmonth remains off-limits to
outsiders. Appointed gouradians
(an atrocious pun) begin making
their rounds at mid-night on the
31st of Noddermonth, chasing out
the tourists with thrown pies and
mind-numbing nettle whips.”*

—Punkin Fête Customs,
Fendor Unchak, esq. (2392, p. 17).

1st of Hellsmonth

*“All the sehenkis come again today,
to say hello this strange brew.”*
—Necromantic Customs of the
North-East, Visitors’ Guide.

Who is Visiting This Year? Why?

1. **Honest back-rooter** • White-collar middle manager hoping to commune with the spirit of their legume-tilling ancestor and find guidance after a hard year.
2. **Runaway bank robber** • Planning to use the masked gala to stash the stolen jewels with a farmlander accomplice.
3. **Undercover thief-catcher** • Hired by the ladies Berrychurn to keep their jewels safe as they plan a sparkling victory at the gala pageant.
4. **Hardluck string-plucker** • Booked by the All-singing Werebeasts Orchestra to perform at the gala. A horrible gig, but the hexads are after the plucker who witnessed a hexland hit.
5. **Wealthy student sibling** • Visiting the gala with their fellow university-siblings for a week of hijinks and intense pumpkin wine drinking.
6. **Gonzo reporter** • Reassigned to covering the punkin fête because of a clerical error.

Why Didn’t the Gouradians Expel Them?

1. Passed out in a basket of chestnuts.
2. Crept back in the wee hours.
3. Indisposed in the powder room.
4. Hid in a loft with a friendly companion.
5. Missed due to garbled message.
6. Forged a prodigal visitor pass.
7. Lost in a wicker maze.
8. Given a pass by an attractive older landlady or landlord.

A Gong. Where is Everybody?

1. Unmade rooms in the hotel.
2. Cooling meals in the inn attract a couple of raccoons.
3. Wind whips a sheet off a clothesline. It flies.
4. Mayor’s manor is locked up.
5. Footprints around the pool.
6. Vagabond thief stealing pies.
7. Autonomous gouradian golem wanders about, making sure everything is in order.
8. Lights move in the Great Hall Pumpkin.
9. Wolves howl at the moon.
10. Shaggy figures move through Sail Leaf Park.
11. A wagon stacked with giant pumpkin seeds.
12. The mayor, looking thunderous.

Is This a Clew? A Rumor?

1. A life-like portrait of a hero carved in a pumpkin.
2. A private letter from a neighboring village, sealed.
3. A militia inspector’s badge, under a bag of pumpkin seeds.
4. Five fresh funeral garlands on the wickerman.
5. Brown whorls and geometries on a standing stone look like ... blood?
6. A bundle for the state necrolegal institute full of ... fresh human parchment?

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Many pumpkins to the heroes who make this adventure possible.

Village Notables

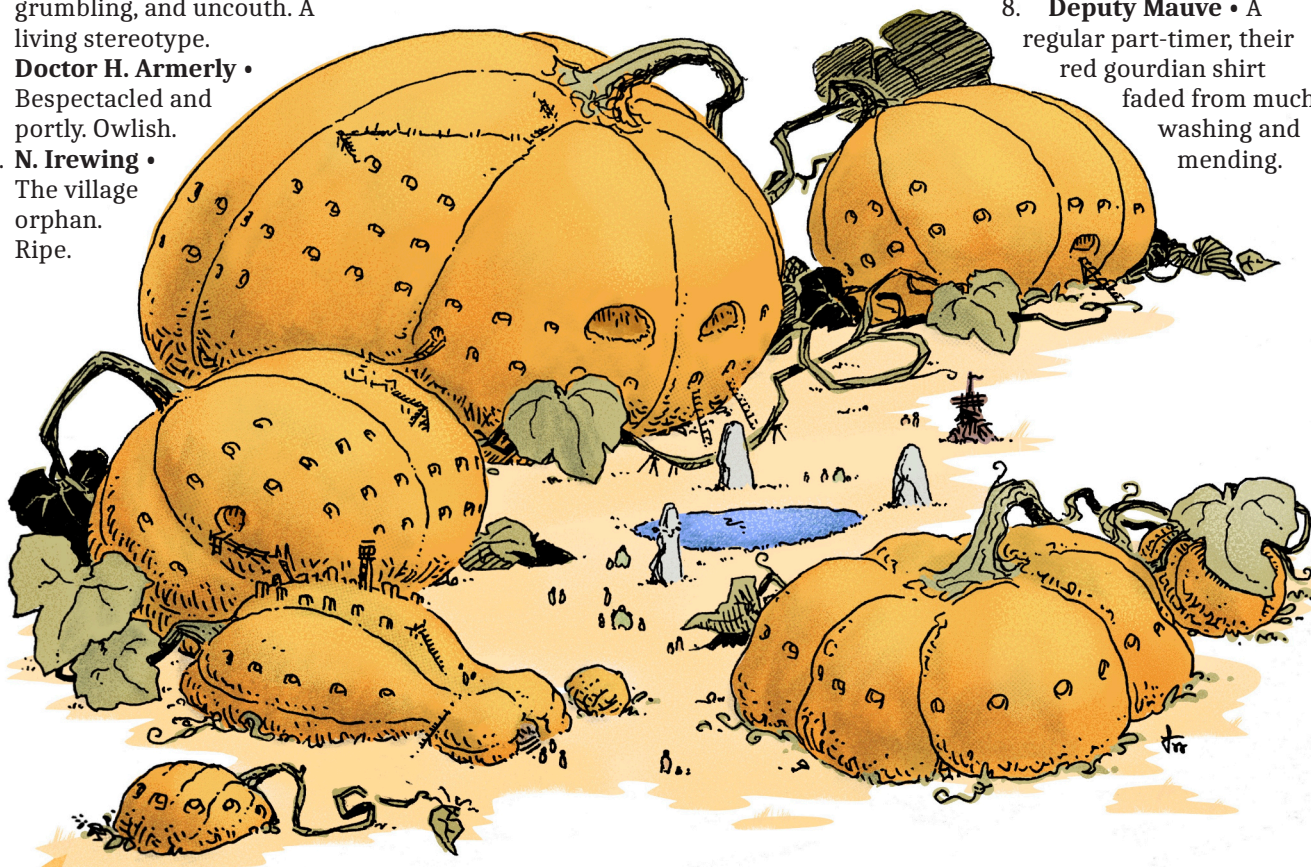
1. **Mayor Autumnisle** • Erudite. A little distant. Lives in First Gourd.
2. **Gentile Marigold** • Proprietor of the Grand Residential Hotel.
3. **Innkeep Springschild** • Red-handed, bluff and old.
4. **Shire Reeve Sourvan** • Gruff but good-natured. Proud of village.
5. **E-Wizard Goodword** • Eager but tactless electric magician. Runs the Gourd light show.
6. **Therapist P. Redfruit** • Very upper crust. Fond gardener.
7. **Phytomancer J. Greenpin** • Esteemed master of vines.
8. **Yon Homsterly** • Loud, grumbling, and uncouth. A living stereotype.
9. **Doctor H. Armerly** • Bespectacled and portly. Owl-ish.
10. **N. Irewing** • The village orphan. Ripe.

Local Sights

1. Three stones of the Three Avatars.
2. Pool of sacrifice and golden carp.
3. Solstice wickerman—due to burn in two months.
4. Great Hall Pumpkin—a surprisingly small, elongated gourd house.
5. Grand Residential Hotel—Largest gourd house. Quite new.
6. Autumnisle Patch—mayoral family's gourd manor complex.
7. Gourdian Gourd—small golem shop & vintage weapon museum.
8. Sail Leaf Park—vines and giant leaves behind the village. Good for self-portraits and romantics.

Gourdians

1. **Ayvan** • More golem than human. Tall, classically gorgeous, stunning uniform.
2. **Humble Pie** • More kobold than human. Quite whiny.
3. **U. Lickfinger** • Very round. Very cunning. Rather lackadaisical.
4. **Begleave** • Automatic guard unit with faulty personality stone.
5. **R. Hillbreak** • Recent immigrant. Arrived 13 years ago. Suspect.
6. **Wood** • Wooden dog. Centuries-old shell for *ka-ba* of someone's pet. Sadly, Wood can't talk.
7. **Deputy Red** • Red-shirted eager part-timer from a nearby hamlet.
8. **Deputy Mauve** • A regular part-timer; their red gourdian shirt faded from much washing and mending.



Sight & Sound

1. A tumbleweed tumbles through.
2. The inn door bangs fitfully.
3. A crow caws on the wickerman.
4. A bear pokes at pumpkins.
5. An owl swoops and hoots.
6. Laughter echoes in the park.
7. Bottle knocked over. Breaks.
8. A dog wolfs down a forgotten pumpkin pie.
9. The moon hides behind clouds.
10. Lightning flashes in the distance.
11. A weathervane spins madly.
12. Heavy drops of rain strike with an ominous beat.

Tools

1. A dried-gourd rattle.
2. A pair of stout shears.
3. A sharpened shovel.
4. The tusk of a great narwhal.
5. An ancient bronze spear.
6. A sturdy wheelbarrow.
7. A pitchfork.
8. A pile of torches.
9. A museum-piece rifle.
10. A two-shot derringer.
11. A pair of crystal spectacles.
12. A flask of medicinal "get-up-and-go, Doc Pearbottom's patent revivificative fizzy ingestable."

Treats

1. A pair of good shoes.
2. A lonely dog.
3. A delicious pie. Fresh-baked.
4. A box full of event t-shirts.
5. A visitor's wallet with 400 cash.
6. A black silk cape lined with red.
7. A set of sharp dentures.
8. A stuffed wolf.
9. A horned helmet.
10. Cheese.
11. A flagon of pumpkin wine.
12. A stolen pocket watch.

Suitable for players of all persuasions. Even those who are not the top cat.

I HEARD IT ON THE PUMPKIN VINE

"Players, head nae here! This is the court of masters and cats aloon!"

—Loremistress Gris
"Grandam" Lutnaya.

The Truth

All the 'ancient' customs and pumpkin 'traditions' were invented by the founder of Grain Gourde, L. Autumnisle, to create a sense of community and belonging among the villagers. Even the old name, *Iskēl Beryar*, was invented by fiddling with an old continental phrase "From-death Bringer," roughly "Renewer."

Autumnisle, a phytosplicer of some renown, discovered and adapted a fantascientific technology from three creations before: the renewer. Changing the created source code of the great house pumpkin of the West Peponés, they created a biological plant machine capable of creating a rejuvenated duplicate of a human, body and personality both.

For the last three generations, Autumnisle and the inner circle of Grain Gourde have been slowly traveling through time, abmortal thanks to their pumpkin renewer. Over the years many have become convinced that Autumnisle is more than just a scientist, that they are a sorcerer and perhaps a prophet, and that the renewer is a manifestation of the divine.

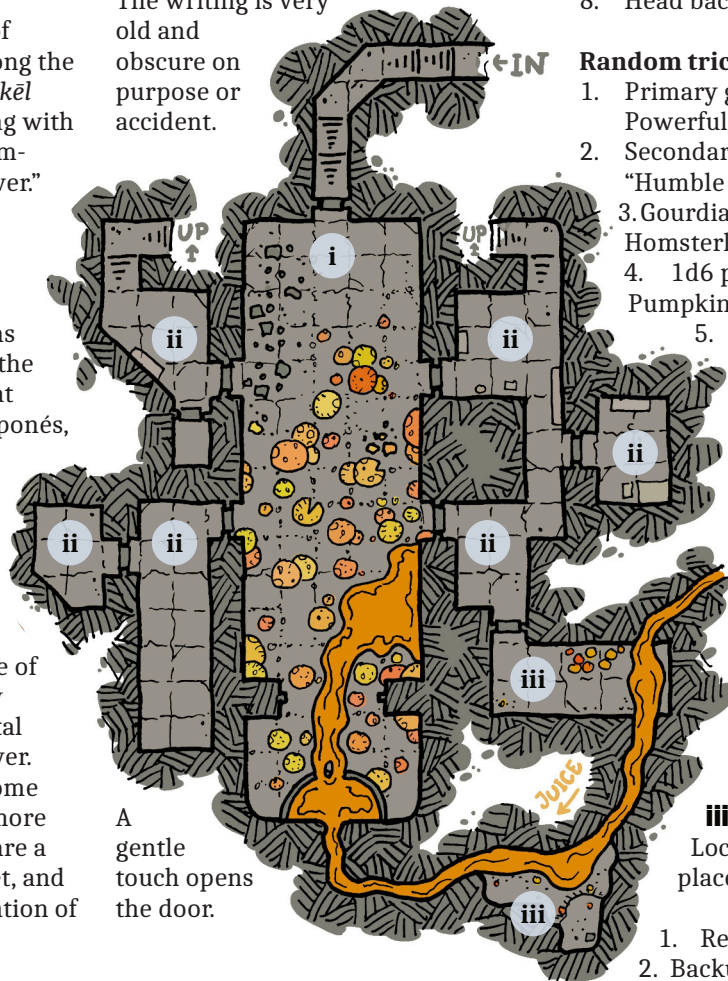
So it is that every 1st Hellmonth, when other local communities visit their burial mounds and make offerings of pine honey, mead, and pumpkin pies, the chosen of Grain Gourde submit to the renewing pumpkin. In the root system of the Great Hall Pumpkin (GHP) they let the renewer weave its pod about them, breaking them apart and rebuilding them in a new body, old memories intact.

The Deep Roots

A convoluted living tunnel of wood curls and twists a hundred feet deep into the soil beneath the Great Hall Pumpkin. Finally, a door like a grinning orange face.

It's toothy grin declares, "*Wy! Hieris autumn's insla, baring Lief from Khel.*"

The writing is very old and obscure on purpose or accident.



A gentle touch opens the door.

i. Hall of Seed and Juice

1. Great seeds suspended in curtains of orange pulpy flesh. A second story above. No stairs to see.
2. A river of thick, gourdly re-juice collects in a great pool.
3. Tendrils of strong roots like piping convey the re-juice.
4. Webs of filaments lace the hall.
5. Smells of spice linger and cloy.
6. Gardening tools and fertilizers for the GHP.

ii. GHP Operation System Rooms

Machines and pumpkin sourced flesh combine into an unholy agglomeration of systems.

1. Seed control system.
2. Bio-link typing organ.
3. Renewal reader unit.
4. Tissue sample archives.
5. Cleaning supplies closet.
6. Waste flesh reabsorber.
7. Carving and rebuilding blocks.
8. Head backup refrigerator.

Random tricks in the rooms.

1. Primary gourdian golem "Ayvan." Powerful, very dangerous.
2. Secondary gourdian golem "Humble Pie." Whiny, dangerous.
3. Gourdian podling person "Yon Homsterly." Janitor, slow, loud.
4. 1d6 pod halflings. Slow, weak. Pumpkin emanation.
5. Awakened faulty pod clone. Laughable.
6. Autumnisle's dog. Harmless. Barks.
7. Rotten seed bursts.
8. Wall of pulp sags.
9. Sound of laughter.
10. Goopy, tearing sound.
11. Root pops, spraying re-juice. Cures skin conditions.
12. Bundle of clothes and a few candy bars.

iii. Control Halls

Locked. Alarm systems in place. 1d6 pod halflings each.

1. Re-juice pump.
2. Backup energy turbines.
3. Stored seeds for analysis.
4. Main re-juice artery.
5. *Concealed* research notes describing improvements to the renewal protocol.
6. *Hidden* pumpkin carving cutlass. Very deadly against podlings.

The Pod Cavities

From the deep roots, two curling staircases cut through the living pulp of the GHP.

iv. Decommissioned Seed Foyer

The pulp is swallowing this chamber. Sheets of orange flesh hang and flap. The mezzanine outside has been chewed away.

Concealed, an abandoned (?) pod. Inside a half-formed human.

v. Seed Foyer

Diaphanous curtains of silky fibers divide up the room. Elegant woody lockers line the pulp walls. *Inside*, clothes and shoes neatly folded.

Well hidden, a door inside a locker. Leads to the chamber of the Gourdian Maggot (viii).

vi. Pulpulent Mezzanine

The mezzanine runs all the way around the hall of seed and juice. Great roots rise like columns to the high ceiling above. Runners of pulp and seed hang like vegetal chandeliers. The banisters have been gnawed in places.

Six woody doors open off the mezzanine.

vii. Seeding Chamber Encounters

1. The **Gourdian Maggot** arrives (from viii) to check on the seeds. Very powerful, very resilient, very dangerous. Makes the pulp move to its commands. Expectorates sticky filaments. Keen hearing. The terrifying amalgamation of pumpkin on human source looks for all the world like seven oversized human torsos joined one after another. At each end, instead of a human head or hind-quarters, is a great spherical head that resembles an uncanny hybrid of giant caterpillar and squash. The Gourdian Maggot is relatively gentle. It seeks to restrain unannounced visitors until Autumnisle decides what to do. It only attacks if provoked.

2. A goopy, sucking sound. A rush of sweet, spicy air. A secret passage to the chamber of the Gourdian Maggot (viii) opens. Next encounter roll: automatic 1.
3. Two redshirted gourdians doing the rounds, humming to themselves. Vaguely competent.
4. Neatly-dressed villager. Quite confused about all the hubbub.
5. 1d4 pod halflings. Slow. Weak. Checking the seeds.
6. Soothing music. Empty wooden slab and wicker basket.

viii. Gourdian Maggot's Lair

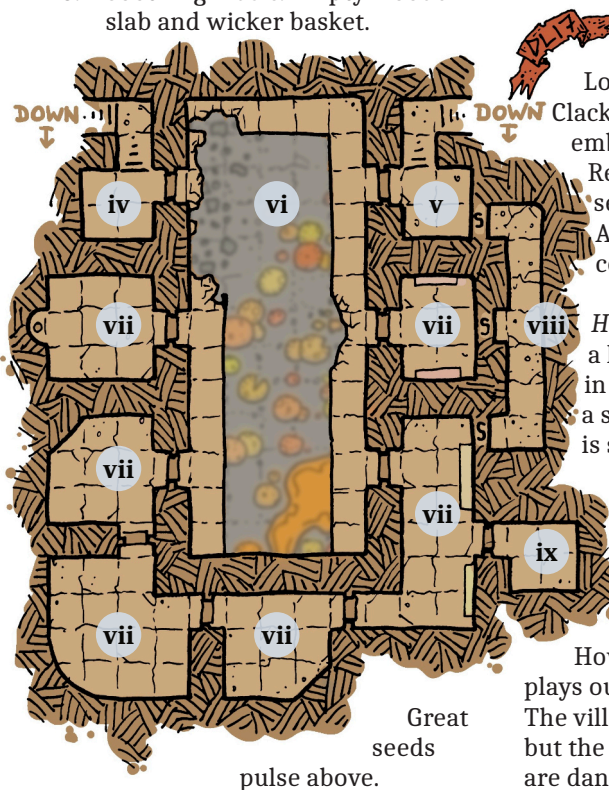
The smell of spice is strong. A milky substance covers the floor. Sticky and pheromone-rich, the gourdian maggot can smell it from a great distance. It also predisposes anyone who smells it to be positively disposed towards the gruesome Gourdian Maggot.

Concealed plush toys, giant gnawing seeds, and a great ball of fibrous yarn.

ix. Autumnisle's Seed Vault

Locked and alarum'd door. Clacking ceramic machines embedded in the pulp. Refrigeration units stacked with seeds. Five seeds with copies of Autumnisle in various stages of completion.

Hidden beneath a wooden table, a lever that opens a pulpy door in a random other room, where a sixth seed copy of Autumnisle is stored.



End Game

How the Well-Gourded Village plays out is mostly up to the players. The villagers are not outright hostile, but the heroes may well decide they are dangerous pod people, and things will degenerate from there.

7. Villager in a simple smock, combing their hair. Nearby, their wicker hamper. de a dry human skin sack full of crumbly bones.
8. Villager waking up from a seed, pulling off strands of pulp. Nearby a dry human skin sack with some crumbly bones inside.
9. Shrivelled husk of a villager swathed in thick ropes of pulp. Nearby a split seed, inside the same villager sleeping. *If disturbed*, the new villager rises up and screams.
10. A villager swathed in silky fibres. Nearby a great seed, big as the villager, pulses. Villager will not awaken.
11. A villager entirely ensconced in fairy-light filaments. A great seed pulses rhythmically in the pulp above. Hard to awaken.
12. A villager on a woody slab, tendrils entangling them in a gentle embrace. *If disturbed*, rises up and screams.

1. **Join Us** • Autumnisle may ask heroes with useful skills to join the community.
2. **Murderers** • If Autumnisle is killed, the villagers will be furious and send cloned hunters to pursue the heroes.
3. **Destruction** • If the heroes destroy the GPH then the village will slowly wither and die. Another victory for cruel Entropy.
4. **Run** • If the heroes flee, the villagers will make sure they don't try to come back by reporting them as criminals to the surrounding communities.
5. **Tell the World** • Nobody will believe them without incontrovertible proof.
6. **The Renewer Changes the World** • Heroes bring proof of the renewer to the world. The richest and most powerful win. An abmortal caste.

Only for the keeper of the pumpkins, the lord of broomsticks, the top cat, the wearer of the witchy hat.

“Visit Grain Gourde,
get back to your source.”



“‘A renew you,’ is our motto.”

—*J. Humanbolt Autumnisle, mayor.*

fin.

