ABIDE

We Live. We Fight. We Die. But we shall not be taken!

All of the Rules

You are an Elder. Your Harvester is coming. You can't do this alone. ABIDE is a tabletop RPG for 2-5 players. You'll need at least one 20-sided die and ABIDE character sheets.

Character Sheets can be downloaded from **TechnicalGrimoire.com/abide**

Create Your Elder

1. In your first Slot, write down an Achievement. Achievements are notable accomplishments and events from your past. Write a short phrase to describe the Achievement.
2. In your second Slot, write down a Spell you invented. A spell can be cast to do anything related to its name. Spells are named in an "Adjective Noun" format.
3. In your third Slot, write down a Burden you can't stop thinking about. Burdens take up a Slot and cannot be used with Rolls. Over time your Elder can work on a Burden to transform it into something useful.
4. Add a few other items your Elder considers important: tools, weapons, provisions, and knickknacks.

Slots are not an exhaustive list of everything your Elder knows and carries. They are just a list of what your Elder is thinking about right now.

5. For every empty Slot you gain 2 Energy. You can spend Energy to improve your Rolls.
6. Augment a Number by marking its box. Augments represent your growth as an Elder.

How To Play ABIDE

Players create Tasks for Elders to work on. Tasks keep the game focused and moving forward.

1. Review the current situation. Mention any threats, opportunities, and weird details.
2. Discuss your goals as a group. Decide what you want to do next.
3. Create a Task from everyone's ideas.
4. Elders work on the Task in any order, as long as it makes sense for them to do so.
5. The group succeeds or fails together. If the Elders make enough Progress before they exceed the Roll Limit, the Task is completed! If they don't make enough Progress before they run out of rolls then the Task is failed, and the group suffers the consequences together.

Work on a Task

1. Describe your action. How are you working on this Task?
2. Your Slots either allow you to work on this Task (roll once), or they assist you (roll twice, pick one).
3. You may spend any amount of Energy to increase your Roll, 1 Energy for +1 to your Roll.
4. Consult the Number chart to see how much progress you made, if any. If the Number is Augmented with a checked box, then it could modify the outcome.

Abide to recover Energy

Abide with your fellow Elders to recover Energy and work on Burdens. While Abiding, each Elder follows these steps in order:
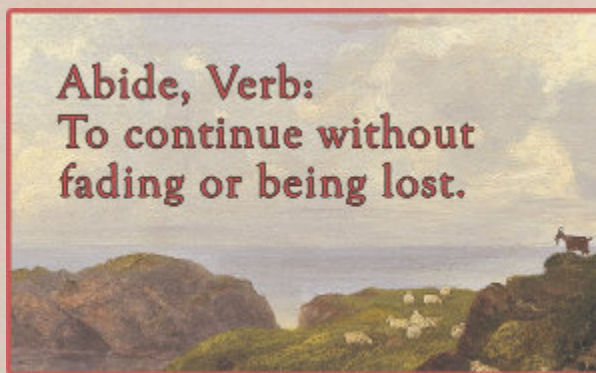
1. Make a single roll on any Burden (even another Elder's), then spend all your remaining Energy on that roll.
2. Pack and Prep. Clear Slots you don't need any more, and you may gain one item, Achievement, or Spell.
3. Rest. Gain 2 Energy for each empty Slot.

Task Tips

Tasks are scenes, not moments.

- "Dodge the arrow coming at your face!" is not a Task.
- "Disarm the traps before torches run low" is good.
- "Get past the traps before our torches dim" is better.

Tasks can be accomplished in many ways.

- "Pick the lock on the door" is not a Task.
- "Get past the door" is good.
- "Get past the door before the guard returns" is great!

Tasks hint at consequences.

- "Explore the room" is not a Task.
- "Explore the room before it floods with oil" is good.
- "Find any valuables before the room floods" is great!

Tasks focus on the true goal.

- "Fight the bandits" is not a Task.
- "Protect the gold from the Bandits" is better.
- "Protect the gold until reinforcements arrive" is great.

Abide, Verb: To continue without fading or being lost.

Tasks Are Everything

ABIDE relies on well-phrased Tasks to move the game forward and keep everyone on the same page.

What do we really want? How will we get it? Who will help us? What will we risk? What might happen?

These questions are the core gameplay of ABIDE. Use these conversations to create the Tasks that your Elders will work on together. Tasks have 4 parts:

- The Goal: What are we trying to accomplish?
- Consequences: What happens if we fail?
- Progress required to complete this task.
- How many rolls before we fail this Task.

Task Pacing

When setting the Progress cost and roll limit of a Task, think of it in terms of pacing rather than difficulty. How much time does the group want to spend on this Task? Is it important? Or minor?

- Minor Task: 5 Progress, 2 Roll Limit
- Average Task: 10 Progress, 3 Roll Limit
- Important Task: 20 Progress, 5 Roll Limit

Task Consequences

Consequences are narrative events that affect the entire group. They don't just punish a single Elder, and they rarely have mechanical consequences.

Harvesters are the only thing that can immediately end an Elder. That's what makes them such a scary threat.

Instead of throwing dangers at the players, ask them what they want to do. Elders will cause enough problems on their own; they don't need any more.

Consequences should be tailored to each situation, but roll a d20 for some inspiration:

1. We ran out of time. The situation changes. Things are so different now that Elders are basically starting over. "We spent too long arguing with the merchant and now her shop is closed."
2. Our goal is now impossible. We need a new goal, a new strategy, a new direction. "The magic shard was broken during our escape, it's useless."
3. Wasted effort. Our goal remains just as far as it was. We went in the wrong direction. We had bad information. "Turns out the tomb was empty...even after all the work we did to get here."
4. Opposition arrives. They must be dealt with before we can continue. "Just as we escaped the forest, a group of extremists intercepted us on the road."
5. Environmental hazards appear. "The approaching storm would force us to seek shelter before we reached the city."
6. An unexpected threat approaches. Wild animals, terrible monsters, or corrupt leaders force us to split our attention. "When the howling started we had to put down the stretcher and defend our friend."
7. Things get worse for you. Future Tasks will be more difficult. "...and then the thunderstorm began to flood the river!"
8. Things get better for the opposition. An enemy reveals new power, new information, new strengths. "With a curled lip he began to chant a spell I knew would kill us..."
9. Sacrifice is required. We can still accomplish our goal, but must lose something. "The King demanded treasure, and we only had one thing to give them..."
10. Everyone gains a Burden. Don't use this too often, but a Burden that everyone works on can be a powerful consequence. "We would all bare the scars for the rest of our lives."
11. The past haunts you. Pick one Elder to describe what they recognize but the other's don't. "My old rival, Captain Bloodstone, is here to get revenge."
12. Something precious is endangered. An NPC is in trouble, innocents are caught in the middle, a treasure is in peril. "When we crossed the bridge I looked back and saw the pearl spear dangling on the precipice."
13. Setup a future threat. An enemy is made, reputation forged, and distant doom assured. "We won the competition, but we won't be welcome in this city any time soon."
14. Lose an asset. A friend leaves, transportation breaks, valuable items are gone. "As alarms went up all over the prison grounds, our getaway driver was nowhere to be found."
15. Group weakness. This should be used sparingly, but the occasional argument or weakness can force the group to come back together. "Just then, a heavy gas descends upon the Elders, draining their Energy."
16. Magic? Something weird happens. "So many fish fell from the sky that we could only see a few feet ahead."
17. The group is split. Not necessarily physically. They can't work together as well as they want to.
18. The next consequence will be even worse. Nothing happens this time...but the next time you fail will be devastating.
19. Figure it out later. Keep the game moving and introduce this consequence later when it makes sense.
20. Someone's Harvester arrives. The ultimate consequence. It could be an NPCs Harvester, or a willing player's Harvester.

- **Can't think of anything?** This was probably a bad Task to begin with. That's okay! Pause the game and talk with your group about how to handle things. Do we move forward? Rewind a bit and try again?

Name:

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│   │
│   │
│   Portrait   │
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Mental Load Slots

Slots **allow** you to work on a Task (roll one d20)
or they **assist** you with your action (roll twice, pick one).

Slots contain items, Achievements, Spells, or Burdens.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

Energy Reserves

┌──────────┐
│   │
│   │   Spend any amount of Energy to improve
│   │   your roll, 1 Energy to add +1.
└──────────┘

When you Abide

1. **Roll on any Burden** (even another Elder's), then spend all of
   your remaining Energy on that roll.
2. **Pack and Prep.** Clear Slots you don't need any more, and
   you may gain one item, Achievement, or Spell.
3. **Sleep.** Gain 2 Energy for each empty Slot.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Work Together on Tasks

Describe then roll. Ignore unmarked boxes.

20 Make 10 Progress on this Task.
☐...and you may augment another Number.

19 Make 9 Progress on this Task.
☐...and make 5 Progress on any Burden.

18 Make 8 Progress on this Task.
☐...and you may gain an Achievement.

17 Make 7 Progress on this Task.
☐...and you may gain a Spell.

16 Make 6 Progress on this Task.
☐...and you may gain a Burden.

15 Make 5 Progress on this Task.
☐...and you may gain an item.

14 Make 4 Progress on this Task.
☐...and grant 2 Energy to each ally.

13 Make 3 Progress on this Task.
☐...and grant 1 Energy to each ally.

12 Make 2 Progress on this Task.
☐...and Recover all Energy spent on this Roll.

11 Make 1 Progress on this Task.
☐...and make another 2 Progress on this Task.

10 Make no Progress.
☐...and increase this Task's Roll Limit by 1.

9 Gain a Burden related to your past.
☐...and make 5 Progress on it.

8 Gain a Burden related to an injury.
☐...and make 5 Progress on it.

7 Gain a Burden related to stress.
☐...and make 5 Progress on it.

6 You must clear an item if possible.
☐...and gain 2 Energy after clearing them.

5 You must clear an Achievement if possible.
☐...and gain 2 Energy after clearing them.

4 You must clear a Spell if possible.
☐...and gain 2 Energy after clearing them.

3 Incapacitated: 15 Progress required to revive.
☐...and you may also roll to revive yourself.

2 Lose an augmented Number, unmark its box.
☐...and you may Augment a different Number.

1 Your Harvester arrives! Use online generator.

Achievements

Sailed the 5 oceans
Navigation, predict weather, ship repair,

Head Bartender at RFG
Alcohol alchemy, bouncer, counselor

Married to Six Kings
Social cunning, clever insults, alliances,

Bestselling Poet
Build up fame, forge papers, lie beautifully

Achievements are notable accomplishments and events from your past. Write a short phrase to describe each Achievement. Achievements must be specific, but their applications may be broad.

Create an achievement inspired by...

1. A failed career. Why is it an Achievement?
2. A taboo activity. Who else knows?
3. Your fame. What part of your reputation is a lie?
4. An old lover. What do you miss most about them?
5. An old wound. How did you learn to overcome it?
6. A time of desperation. Who helped you?
7. A hated rival. What was the secret that allowed you to surpass them?
8. Something you learned from an old book.
9. A close friend. What did they help you overcome?
10. A terrible defeat. What did you learn from it?
11. A mundane career. What did you do to standout?
12. Something your parents failed to teach you.
13. A family tradition. Will you adopt it as your own?
14. A belief you hold dear. Is it a religion? Moral code?
15. A personal goal. Is anyone else impressed?
16. Another Elder. How did they help?
17. A private moment. Who else knows about it?
18. An accident. Why did everyone praise you?
19. A single moment in time. Why does everyone remember it?
20. Let another player pitch an idea to you.

Spells

Angry Growth
Tangle foes, infest an area with deadly ivy

Burnt Questions
Ignite materials, confuse an enemy

Howling Moon
Turn into a wolf, a piercing howl

Freezing Gale
Knock foes around, Freeze a lake

Spells are named in an "Adjective Noun" format. A spell can be cast to do anything related to its name. Spells are not necessarily book-magic; they're anything your Elder can do that's unexplainable or mysterious.

2d20 Spell Adjectives

2. Arcane	12. False	22. Haunted	32. Shining
3. Blazing	13. Flying	23. Infected	33. Silent
4. Bleeding	14. Foamy	24. Jagged	34. Soggy
5. Chaotic	15. Fractal	25. Metal	35. Stinging
6. Crying	16. Frozen	26. Mystical	36. Stylish
7. Cute	17. Furious	27. Pale	37. Twisted
8. Devious	18. Galactic	28. Prismatic	38. Wandering
9. Dying	19. Glaring	29. Sad	39. Withered
10. Elder	20. Gloomy	30. Scarlet	40. Youthful
11. Empty	21. Growing	31. Screaming	

2d20 Spell Nouns

2. Ally	12. Edge	22. Moon	32. Sleep
3. Bane	13. Elder	23. Mountain	33. Sound
4. Beast	14. Embers	24. Noise	34. Spike
5. Blossom	15. Eye	25. Ocean	35. Storm
6. Champion	16. Fate	26. Oil	36. Terror
7. Claw	17. Frost	27. Pain	37. Time
8. Cloud	18. Grave	28. Reverie	38. Tooth
9. Creature	19. Hunter	29. River	39. Trick
10. Dream	20. Ink	30. Santuary	40. Wind
11. Dunes	21. Justice	31. Seed	

Burdens

Half-empty Vial

Challenging Hobby

Familiar Fear

A Lie You Believe

Twisted Ankle

Homesick

Halting Stutter

Confusing Relationship

Burdens take up a Slot and cannot be used with Rolls. Burdens can be positive or negative; anything your Elder can't stop thinking about.

Burdens require 20 Progress and have a 6 Roll Limit. If completed successfully, clear the Burden and Augment a Number by checking its box. If the Burden is failed, simply clear the Burden with no benefit.

Burdens are Projects
Burdens can represent a lot of things, but in practice they're a project that an Elder is working on.

When a Burden is completed it is not necessarily "fixed". It just means your Elder doesn't think about it as much. But it may be important again someday!

Burdens are Heavy
Burdens can be an upsetting reminder of real-life struggles that we all carry with us. If anyone expresses concerns over your Burden, try a something else. When in doubt, just have positive Burdens like learning a new instrument, juggling, or perfecting a standup routine.

Sharing Burdens
Often another Elder will want to help with your Burden while resting. Sharing Burdens with the group can be a powerful way to bond Elders together.

Consent is key, as is how things tie into the narrative details. Would my Elder accept help with their Burden? Or are they protective of it? Would it even make sense for someone to help with this Burden?

- Another Elder offers to help massage Aliz's muscles and assist her with stretches or exercises.
- Lauen asks for someone to quiz her vocabulary words in the language she is learning.
- Yamot is determined to discover what works for them. They complete their Burden alone.

Snare

This is a starting adventure for ABIDE. It should take one or two sessions to complete and will introduce players to many of the concepts of ABIDE; especially the Harvester threat.

The Tasks in this adventure are suggestions; adapt them to whatever your players decide to do.

The Letter

The players receive a letter from their old friend, Greydon:

"I'm sorry for my sudden disappearance all those years ago. Despite our checkered past I have not forgotten what you taught me; both about alchemy and about the Harvesters. In fact you'd be proud of what I've accomplished.

I have found a solution to the Harvester problem! Come to my lab on the Tempered Coast. I've taken up residence in an old observatory. Don't tell the Silver Keep Council; they're not ready to handle my discovery.   - Greydon"

Travel to the Observatory

Task: Catch the next boat to the Tempered Coast before it leaves. (10 Progress, 3 Rolls)

If they succeed, they board the ship and learn of their corrupt captain. Task: Aid the crew in their justified mutiny before the storm gets worse. (10 Progress, 3 Rolls)

If they succeed, The crew drops the Elders off near the windmill. They will wait here for their return to take the Elders home.

If they fail, the ship is wrecked in the storm and the Elders lose any items they were carrying. They wash up on shore and must scale the cliffs to the observatory. (15 Progress, 4 Rolls)

If they fail, then use this follow up Task: Convince a shifty-looking caravan to let you ride along as guards. (15 Progress, 4 Rolls)

If they succeed, the caravan welcomes them with hesitant smiles. At some point the caravan is attacked. Task: Defend the caravan from Firholt Stalkers before they drain the light. (10 Progress, 3 Rolls).

If they succeed, the Caravan warms up to them and even rewards them with a few trade valuables (cloth, jewlry, etc). They arrive safely at the Observatory.

If they fail, the Caravan accepts them but tries to drug their food and take the Elders hostage. Task: Escape from the Caravan before the drugs take effect. (20 Progress, 5 Rolls). Either way, the Elders will have to make their own way to the Observatory.

Side View

3rd Floor

2nd Floor

1st Floor

Laboratory

The Battle
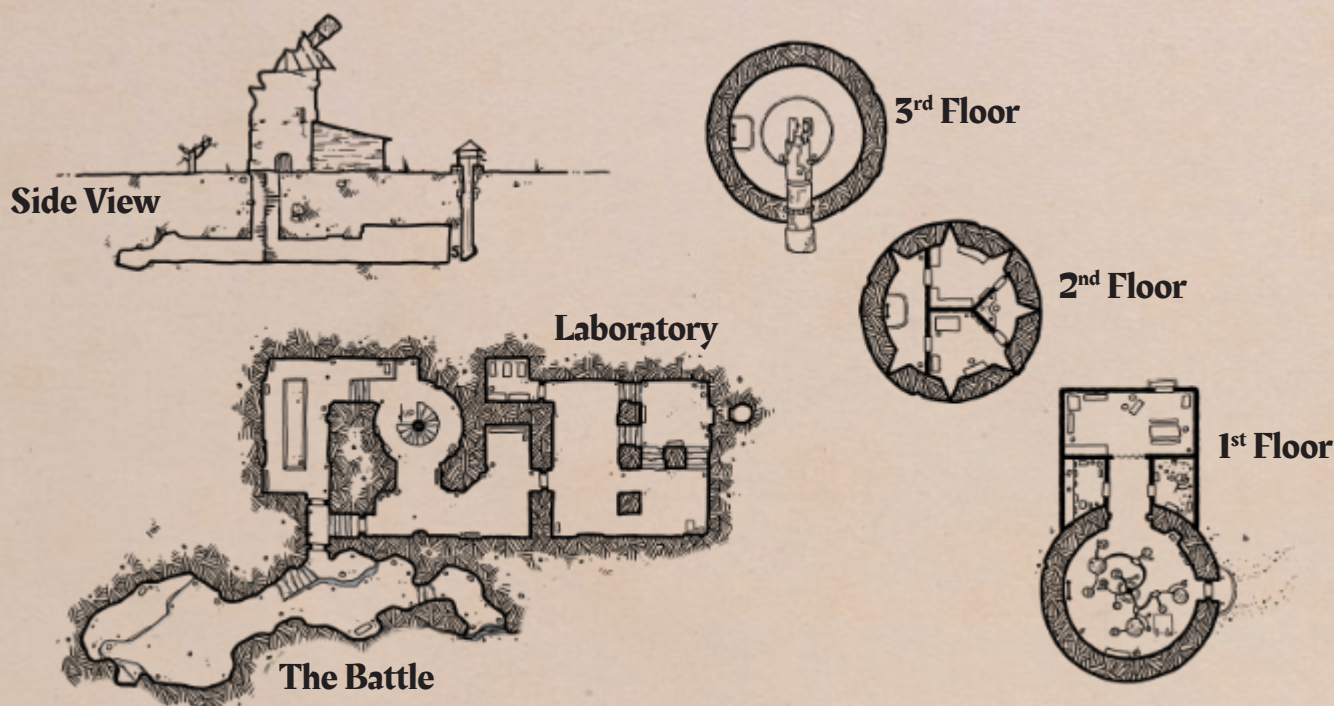
Entrances

The Observatory looks like it was hit with a meteor...because it was. Something clipped the roof as it flew over the cliffs and into the sea. Luckily, most of Greydon's work happened in the underground lab anyway.

There are 2 obvious entrances to the observatory, and a secret entrance to the laboratory:

- **The Front Door.** Task: Get past the front door (10 Progress, 3 Rolls). It is sealed behind a time-lock as evidenced by the utterly still butterfly on the handle. If they fail, the closest Elder is frozen in time; they cannot take any action and will not age while frozen. It requires 20 Progress, 5 Rolls to unfreeze them and the butterfly safely. A well-made counter spell, the right alchemical formula, or careful application of force can unfreeze a target.
- **Broken Roof.** Task: Scale the walls and enter through the broken roof on the 3rd floor without causing a collapse. (15 Progress, 4 Rolls)
  If they fail, the top two floors are destroyed, but the first floor remains sturdy.
- **The Well.** Task: Investigate the well before the approaching storm hits. (5 Progress, 2 Rolls)
  Next Task: Descend the well and reach the laboratory before the well floods with stormwater. (20 Progress, 5 Rolls)

Observatory First Floor

A large, complex model of the solar system takes up most of the first floor. Several lines of multi-colored thread trace complex paths between the planets. A few storage closets. A ladder leads up to the second floor, and a hatch in the floor leads to the laboratory.

- **Task:** Repair the model without breaking it. (5 Progress, 2 Rolls)
  If they succeed, they can tell that the Harvesters are coming from multiple points outside the solar system. It's like they're swarming from all directions...
  If they fail, the clatter of model parts draws the attention of an invested creature from the laboratory.
- **The storage closets** contain a few notebooks written in cypher, outdated or broken alchemical equipment, and a few empty cages. See "Decoded Notes 2" for more info.

Observatory Second Floor

A comfortable bed, tea set, and romance novels fill this cozy space. A few photos of Greydon and their Elder friends are pinned to the bedframe.

- The tea set is old and well-cared for. A few cracks have been repaired with gold inlay.
- The romance novels all have a few common themes: tragic loneliness, old flames, and bare chests.

- A few pictures stand out (prompt the Elders to tell the stories behind each photo):
  - ◇ Greydon and another Elder working at a table of alchemical equipment.
  - ◇ Greydon on a date; both of them look upward towards the sky with a hint of fear in their eyes.
  - ◇ Greydon packed up and ready to go.
  - ◇ Greydon and another Elder studying the corpse of a dead Harvester.
- Greydon's journal is encoded, but written in a sloppier, sleepier hand. See "Decoded Notes 1" for more info.

Observatory Third Floor

The Zoomiscope peers into the night sky. Complex notes and logs have tracked hundreds of Harvester landings, see Decoded Notes 3.

Any Elder who looks through the Zoomiscope will be able to see their Harvester en route. It's impossible to tell how far away it is, but the Elder will get a vague idea of what their Harvester looks like.

Laboratory

The laboratory is usually kept clean and organized. Signs of a violent struggle have overturned the tables, knocked over cabinets, and broken some of the cages releasing magical animals to wander around.

- **Cages.** Scattered cages, all but one of the creatures has escaped its cage. The caged creature is still causing trouble, roll a d6 to see which creature is caged.
- **Well Entrance.** If Elders attempt to open this from inside the laboratory, use this Task: Open the well door without flooding the lab (20 Progress, 5 Rolls).
- **Observatory Entrance.** When the door is opened, an invested creature tries to escape past the Elders.
- **Lab Tables.** Beakers, equipment, and the instructions for the Harvester Snare (Decoded Notes 4). An invested creature is lying on the table, completely frozen in time. Unexpectedly, the instructions for the Snare are also frozen alongside the creature; you cannot unfreeze one without unfreezing the other.
- **Dimensional Map.** A detailed map of the area covered in notes and runes. Greydon's notes are in his cypher, Decoded Notes 5.

The Battle

Near the back of the lab Greydon is locked in fierce combat with a Harvester that tunneled into the lab. Both are frozen in time; shards of rock and half-cast spells float in place. You can't unfreeze one without unfreezing the other. Use the online Harvester Generator to determine what Greydon's Harvester is capable of.

If unfrozen, Greydon will aid in the battle (making 5 Progress with his Roll). Greydon does not remember one of the Elders (let a player volunteer) or his research on the Snare. He sacrificed those memories while making his own Snare. His notes are the only guides to his breakthroughs and discoveries.

Invested Creatures

These creatures have been imbued with Spells. They are not necessarily violent, but they are unpredictable. Roll a d6 whenever a creature is mentioned to see which one:

1. **Parrot** which contains the spell "Shattering Echo". Any noise generated near the parrot is reflected back at glass-shattering volumes. Task: Get past the parrot without making any noise (10 Progress, 3 Rolls).
2. **Goat** with small trees for horns which contains the spell "Blooming Horns". The tree-horns burst into colorful bloom, filling the area with a thick flurry of flower petals. Task: Clear the petals before they flood the room (15 Progress, 4 Rolls).
3. **Weasel** with that teleports around the room which contains the spell "Spacial Swap". The weasel switches places with various items held by the Elders. Task: Recover your swapped items before the weasel leaves the area (20 Progress, 5 Rolls).
4. **Gerbil** that quickly splits into two new gerbils; all of them contain the spell "Rapid Replica". Unlike the other Creatures, these gerbils pose no threat...for now. Given enough time they will consume the entire solar system.
5. **Lemur** with eyes that shine a blinding hot beam of light; which contains the spell "Sunny Sight". Task: Get the Lemur's eyes closed before it sets the lab on fire (10 Progress, 3 Rolls).
6. **Blue Crab** that releases bubbles of toxic gas; contains the spell "Caustic Bubbles". Task: Get past the crab without popping any of the gas-filled bubbles (10 Progress, 3 Rolls).

Decoded Notes

An Elder who wants to decode these notes may gain the Burden "Decode Greydon's Cypher". Once the Burden is completed they gain the "Decoded Greydon's Cypher" Achievement that can be used to read all of his notes (or write their own encoded notes).

1. Greydon's Journal contains a wealth of alchemical knowledge, some clues to what he's been up to since you last saw him, and a copy of the Snare instructions.
2. Musings about Harvester cores, how he struggles to find a safe way to carry them without draining memories.
3. Zoomiscope Logs prove that Harvesters are everywhere...from a galactic perspective. They have visited countless worlds; we're just the latest victim.
4. Snare instructions.
5. Greydon has been using the Dimensional Map to track dimensional portals that keep intermittently appearing. These portals lead to a distant world that was already decimated by Harvesters. Greydon used these portals to gather otherworldly item for his Snare. This map would be valuable to anyone who wants to learn more about Harvesters.

Snare instructions

Building a Harvester Snare could be the next phase of this adventure. Elders must gather the appropriate materials, make sacrifices, and get a little lucky to make a true Harvester Snare.

"The Snare is a device that traps you and your Harvester in a cage of time. Later, when the time is right, you and your Harvester can be unfrozen safely. I recommend unfreezing after you're surrounded by an overwhelming show of force...".

Each Snare must be customized to a specific Elder; in fact, it's probably best that each Elder builds their own Snare...just to avoid cross-contamination. Here are the materials required:

- The core of a defeated Harvester.
- An Achievement that most strongly defines who they are.
- A Spell that they invented and never taught anyone else.
- A Burden they will never work on.
- An item from beyond this world. (outer space, another dimension, different time, etc)
- A living creature that will be sacrificed.

Assemble the Snare

1. Gain the required Achievement, Spell, and Burden. Meditate on them and know them well.
2. Once you know all three, go to sleep while holding a Harvester core. These cores are parasitic, and will drain the Achievement, Spell, and Burden from your memory. You will lose them and all associated memories forever.
3. Take the otherworldly item, the Harvester core, and the creature outside on a clear, moonless night.
4. Slay the creature and embed the otherworldly item and the core in its body. The core will "absorb its death" and resonate with the otherworldly item. What you pull from the animal's corpse is the Snare: a white marble sphere about the size of your fist. It takes up a Slot and can never be removed.
5. When your Harvester arrives (whenever that may be), the Snare will activate automatically, freezing you and your Harvester in time until someone else releases you.