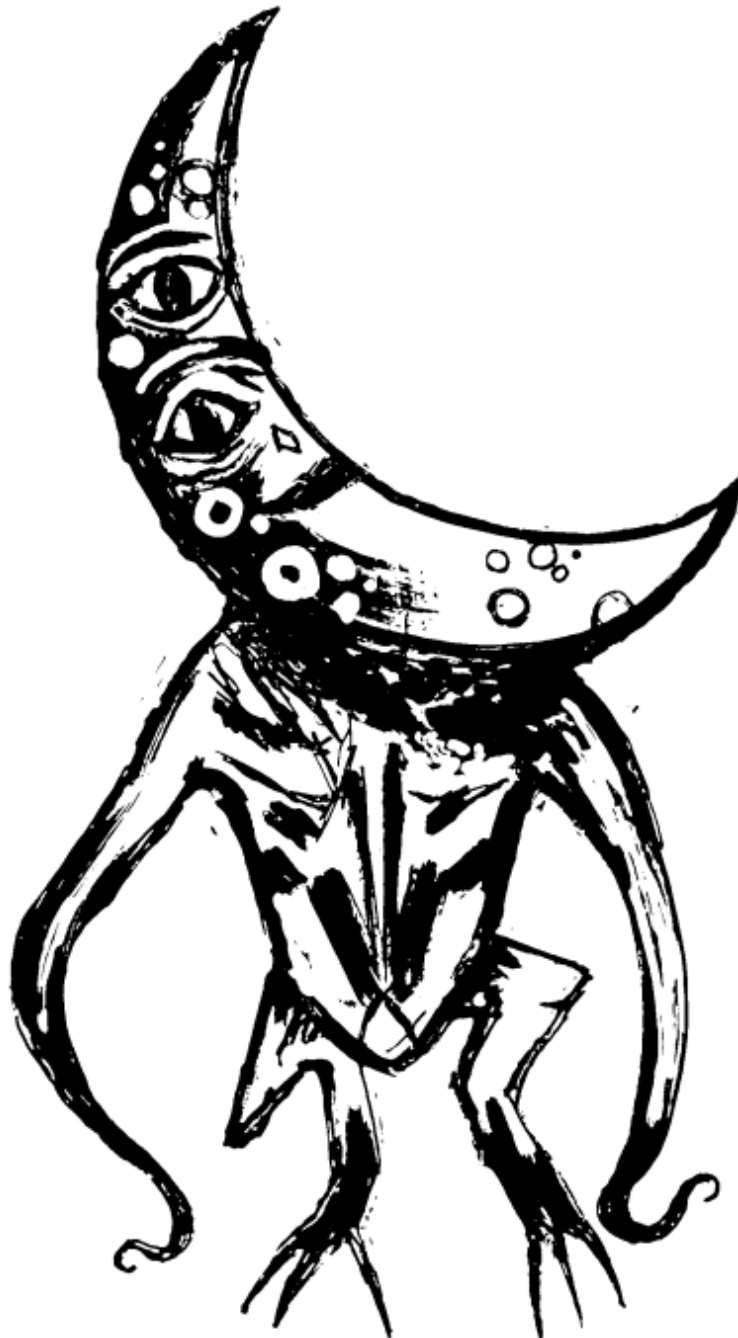


# The Arcane Ugly

*Vol. 1*

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## Foreword.

Dear curious reader, the book in your hands is no fairytale. You will find no Spriggan forest princes nor fair Aelven maidens. Not a single sea captain and not one lovely siren. Unless, of course, our young prince saved our fair princess from gangrene with a tonic of Appalaso Berry and Adamant Algae. Or perhaps we will hear of our lonely sea captain resisting his siren by stuffing Wittlewort in his ears!

I will share many such stories with you, because these are not fairytales. These are daily occurrences for many on Croft, and it is our job as Alchemists to provide the necessary remedies for those unable (or unsure of how!) to care for themselves.

The Arcane is ugly, dear reader. It is messy, it is bubbly, it is smelly, and it makes noise. You will feel a pinch, maybe hear a squeal. Steam will erupt from your ears and your eyes will turn green. The Arcane is ugly.

But it is kind as well, and makes for a great story. I would like for you to come along with me as we hear of such stories together, and learn how to solve each problem with a tonic or a tincture, a filter or a cream, or that great big potion with the edge that bubbles over.

For what's a little  
Alchemy without a little

*\*pop\**



## The Lantern.

Once upon a time in a little hut on a wayward rock in an ocean of angry waves sat an old man and his lady. The old man was gray on his head and gray on skin, for the storms he faced perched upon his rock were fueled by salt and brine which bleached his olive skin white.

The gray man had his lover; a lady of the sea. Her hair as white as his and her flesh as strong as bone. Together they sat and loved each other old.

But when the light appeared past the fog which beset the rock his lady grew weary. She grew longing of the sea, for she had been landlocked with her lover on borrowed time.

The gray man wept as his lover swam to the burning lantern. Left alone on a lonely rock, crying did him no good, he thought, wiping water from his eyes.

And so he dove in after her. The black current fought his strokes. His eyes stung from burning salt, and strained against the orange glow. Bilgewater and brine were his angel and devil; his reminders of black and white. Yet they drowned alongside

him. Swallowed up by a vengeful sea.

The gray man never made it to the light in the fog.  
How shall he be saved?

*With lungs that love the  
sea.*

### **Surane**

*A tall, hardy reed capable of growing up to 10' tall, found mostly along salt and brackish water in colder climates. When mixed with oil and left to sit for a period of three days, the resulting mixture can be applied to the neck and will allow the person to breathe underwater (and only underwater) for up to 2d4 hours.*



## Oh My Child.

Once upon a time, a lonely farmer heard a wild rapping at his door. Roused from the sweet nothings of restful oblivion went the farmer to open the door. Injured and tumbling into his home came a small child with golden hair and green eyes.

The farmer, a gruff man of work and toil, had no child of his own and had lost his wife years ago. Upon seeing the young lad's wounds, leaking pus and dripping in blood, the farmer lifted him up, dropped him on his bed, and began to think on how best to help.

His wife was once the village healer; the ways of herbs and alchemy were her ways, and how to grow them were his. She spoke to plants like the children she never had. Now, with her gone, the farmer desperately tried to recall her methods.

A root in her garden; red like beet but tangled and entwined. The farmer plucked the root from its home in the earth, chopped it up, and fed it to the boy. As soon as the root touched his tongue, the child began to swell and

vomit; upending the rest of his frail body.

The poor boy never knew health again. How shall he be saved?

*With red water to  
strengthen our blood.*

### Redroot

*The plant is a tangled mass of leafy shoots that grow close to the ground. While it does grow wild in a large swath of Croft, it is also sometimes intentionally planted on farms. Pulling a ripened root from the ground reveals a large crimson colored tuber. The tuber can be turned into a Minor Healing Potion after being boiled in water with crystallized honey for 3 days. Ingesting the root often causes nausea and vomiting (DC 16 Constitution Save to avoid vomiting and nausea for the next 1d4 hours).*

## The Boreal Wood.

Once upon a time, a Northman sat on his stump with a wood-axe and whetstone in hand while the winds of the Yule month bit at his skin.

Both he and his wife could feel it coming, an ice storm of gross proportions no more than a day away. They had since barricaded their windows with oaken timbers and nails of iron, in preparation for the winter tempest.

On the squall's fifth day, there came a hurried succession of knocks at their door. Standing up from his nest of hide and linen to head over toward the noise, he peered through a small crack in the wood, but saw nothing other than the blizzard. Abruptly, the door shuddered with another four heavy thuds.

With numbed fingers, the Northman unlatched the wrought-iron fastener and swung the door wide. Before him, wrapped in a sanguine cloak, was the silhouette of an old woman with a broom and a rake strapped to her back. Crooked was her spine, gnarled were her legs, and twisted were her arms. She

begged the Northman to let her in so that she may live another day.

The Northman swore on his honor that he'd never let a person so old and so weary succumb to the elements he was safe from, so he let the woman in. She called herself Pesta, and she went to work.

In the following days, the winter storm only grew stronger, and Pesta took to helping around the home. Sweeping was her chore. All day, Pesta wielded her fine-bristled stick and swept up all the dust and dirt and dross in the Northman's hall. The Northman's wife was a heedful woman, and suspicious of those she did not know, and Pesta was a stranger in their home.

At first the source of the choking sickness in the household was blamed on the ceaseless sweeping--the ailment loose and circulating in the musty cottage air. Yet, in the coming days, the Northman's wife became bedridden. Boils and sores sprouted on her flesh that oozed and bled and tore.

The Northman pleaded to Pesta to stop sweeping and help him tend to his wife, but

the old woman paid no heed to his voice, and continued her sweeping.

It was not until the Northman himself lay beside his wife with identical blackened boils and a fever akin to the flames of Torment that Pesta ceased her sweeping.

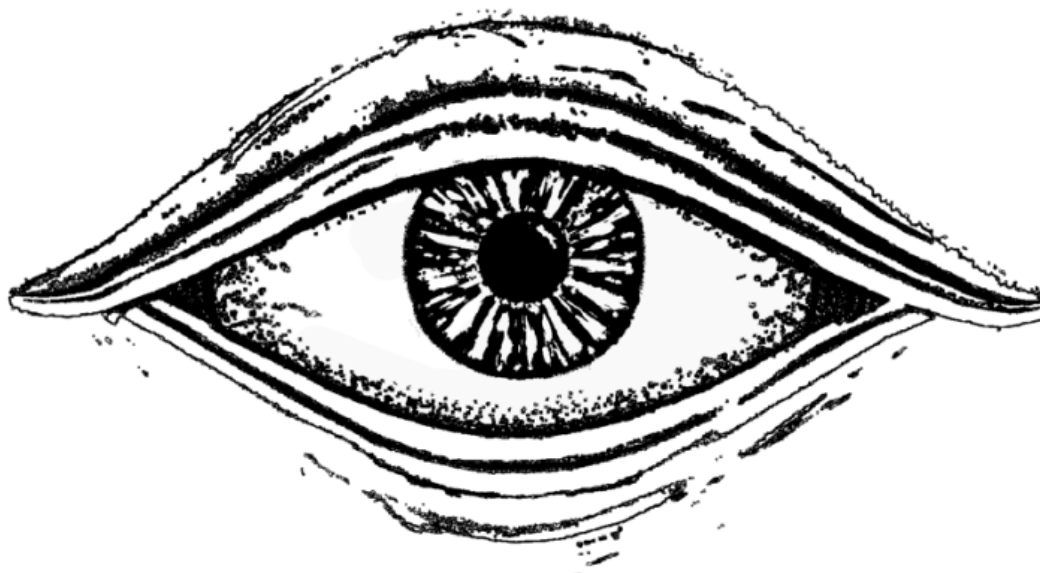
Wordlessly, she packed her things and ventured back into the violent wintry haze from which she had emerged. But the Northman lay beside his loving wife in a clean home shielded from the storm out-of-doors. A pleasant fire kept him warm, and fur blankets kept him comfortable.

Good folk can ask for little more. How shall they be saved?

*With a brew stronger  
than wine.*

### **Bishop's Weed**

*Bishop's weed is a small plant with pale blue flowers, and small pale green leaves found in northern climates. This herb will protect people from plague (+5 to Constitution Saves against disease). It is drunk in wine, and is effective for one week. In plague years, its price increases rapidly.*



## The Perfumer.

Once upon a time in a house in a clearing in a forest by a brook lived a spritely young Satyr and her nose.

This young Satyr was gifted in the art of aroma. She could approach any plant or any animal or anything in between and pick apart that which made them stink.

This made her unbearably fascinated whenever she came across a scent she did not know. So, when that citrusy scent caught her attention—that citrusy scent that felt like shards of broken glass in her nose—she followed its trail.

She followed its trail past the brook. She followed the scent through the woods. She followed the fragrance to a little hole beside a hill.

The hole was dark and deep and she could not see the bottom. Little worms crawled in and out of the walls, and she watched as toads plopped down the pit before her.

The scent was overpowering now. She needed to find its source. So, the young Satyr dove in after the smell.

She landed in a puddle in the dark. Alone in the

pocket, she began to grow still. Her skin turned cold and her muscles locked. But her nose was still sharp, so her world was lemon and glass.

There is little worse than to be so close but so far. How shall she be saved?

*With a spirit of leisure.*

### Ashline

*Ashline is a small red flower, with very pale green leaves found in dense temperate forests. The entire plant must be mashed and boiled in fine red wine for one week with the resultant mixture being mixed with basilisk phlegm. When this liquid is poured over a petrified person it will, on a successful roll, restore them to their normal state.*

## The Stargazer.

Once upon a time, the daughter of a noble family was caught looking up to the night sky. The young girl was fascinated by stars. They winked at her, told her stories, and traveled further than she ever thought she would.

Her parents thought her amusement was a waste of time. The sky was a distraction, not an aspiration. Yet despite her parents' qualms, the little girl would escape to the rooftops of her family home and fall asleep under the great expanse of the Cosmos.

One night, she saw a blue star soar across the sky. It burned with cerulean flame, and crashed into the woods near her home.

A star had finally come to visit her. She had been lonely for so long, and now the sky had gifted her a friend.

And so she ventured deep into the forest to find her companion. She crossed logs and bogs, climbed atop hills, and tumbled down mounds until she found herself beside a small, glowing stone.

As her fingers caressed the rock, it cracked open. And so did her mind, so young and fragile.

To call to the stars is to learn their secrets. How shall she be saved?

*With a mind wide enough for answers.*

### Somalot

Found deep within caves and ravines, Somalot is an alien looking, bulbous fungus that grows into silver balls the size of small melons. These bulbs are full of a silvery, almost metallic liquid that when brewed with Eir Grain produces a Lesser Potion of Arcane Recovery.

