

SLUG WIZARD

N° 2

PRESENT THEIR ANNUAL GAMES MAGAZINE



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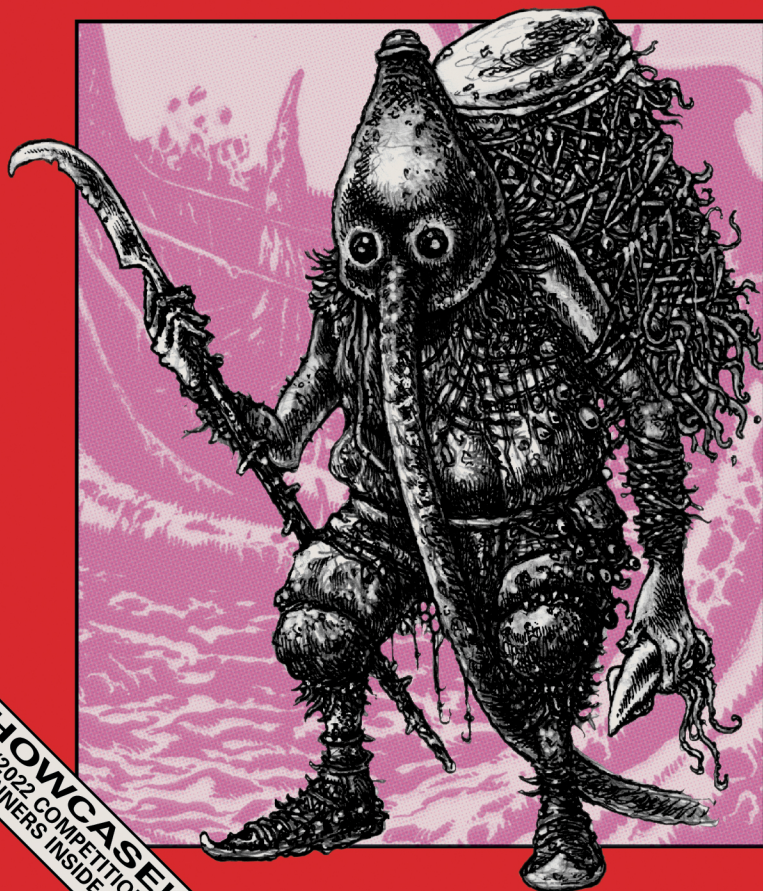
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NEW!

NEW!

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This seems as good a place as any to express my sincere thanks. First and foremost: thanks to all of you that have supported all things Slug Wizard by making miniatures and illustrations, sending in photos, buying this zine, or spreading the word. Thanks, Nick - without you there would be no Squid Gnomes. Thanks to Eric Radey for the gorgeous cover image; to Ana for the painting featured on the back cover; to Christoph for the spectacular ink & watercolor pieces! Huge thanks, Arjan, not only for sculpting and casting custom trophies, but also for your beautiful illustration. Tanner - you know. Thanks to Ill-Gotten Games (Arian!) and Bestiarum Games for prize support. Thanks, Django, for printing your badass minis for lots of us to enjoy. Dillon, I'm so stoked about that Bloodsport Gambler card. You all rule. -b♥

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SQUID GNOME

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This publication, just like the last, represents the work of many generous, talented people (just look to the left!). It's jam-packed with new background for both Slug Wizards and Squid Gnomes, a look at the winning entries in both 2021 & 2022, new rules for indie games, and lots of fantastic art and painting by some of the most talented artists in the hobby community. I hope you enjoy it!

-  BRYAN

Managing Director/Editor

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The Slug Wizard universe is always growing, so why not write to us with your ideas or send us images of your creations? We'd love to see them! Send electronic mail to slugwizards@gmail.com. Cheers!

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SLUG WIZARD

THE TALE OF ATHEB'QYTET

by Bryan Ruhe & Tanner Simpson

The origins of the Slug Wizards were covered in issue 1. We continue the story with the events that occurred in the centuries to follow, primarily the rise and fall of the great city of Atheb'qytet. The reconvening of the Conclave described herein represents the conclusion of last year's Slug Wizard event.

Immediately following the seismic event of CY 500 and the subsequent establishment of the Slug Wizard Conclave, Thubja Atheb, glorious father of the Slug Wizards, realized a dire truth of his new form. The blessed mollusk mutations now shared by Thubja and his kind (a result of the spellquake) meant that salt could now render their flesh to slime. Despite the close proximity of Thubja's cliffside abode to the Western Abyssal Sea, eternal westward winds ensured that the region saw little to no rain. Furthermore, the only nearby and easily-located sources of drinking water contained trace amounts of ocean salts.

Thubja explained to the young Slug Wizards that he had been unable to conjure any spell to create freshwater or remove the salt from the seawater; the secret eluded him. None of the others knew, either, as their raw magical abilities were to be shaped by the teachings of Thubja in the days to come. He told them that although distillation had been a sufficient solution for himself, a more reliable and plentiful source of safe water was necessary if they were all to thrive. So, Thubja sent out search parties to comb the surrounding lands for sources of freshwater. Tragically, most of them vanished and were presumed dead.

The prevailing assumptions were that they became lost, perished of thirst, or literally dissolved when testing a potential wellspring for potability. Eventually a single party returned, proclaiming success, and aqueducts were constructed to supply safe water to the region. Agriculture flourished.





Equipped with the resources necessary for life, the Slug Wizards traveled to all reaches of the continent, full of eagerness to learn about the world and grow in culture. For any society to endure, it must know and understand its neighbors.

ATHEB'QYTET IS BUILT

Some of the explorers settled in new territories. Most returned to the Conclave with valuable treasures: rich, dense tomes to scrutinize and study; exotic goods, both magical and practical; secrets of strange, distant lands. Many travelers brought back fantastic beasts and gargantuan creatures. These giant mollusks and lumbering herbivorous behemoths were used as foundations upon which elaborate, ambulatory castle-cities were built. The regions surrounding Thubja's abode thus became a towering empire, made up of several increasingly-distinct Houses, and it became known as Atheb'qytet.

THUBJA'S GRIEF

For half a millennium the Slug Wizards lived in peace, until Thubja Atheb perished in CY 1021. His death was shrouded in ambiguity and intrigue. How had he died? Had one of the Houses been responsible? Had there been silent conflicts between them, and if so, for how long? Atheb'qytet turned against itself in mourning and confusion. Thus began a civil war that was to last for centuries - a period now known as Thubja's Grief.

Study of the arcane arts became secondary to fighting. Magical practice focused almost entirely on death and killing, and much knowledge was lost. The Slug Wizard race degenerated into a violent people, most of whom had forgotten their magical origin and no longer practiced the mystic ways of their forefathers.

Wizards dwindled in number; some refused to use magic to harm, and others fell as casualties. Only the most powerful Slug Wizards survived - a small number of mages whose morality had become deeply warped by trauma and desperation.



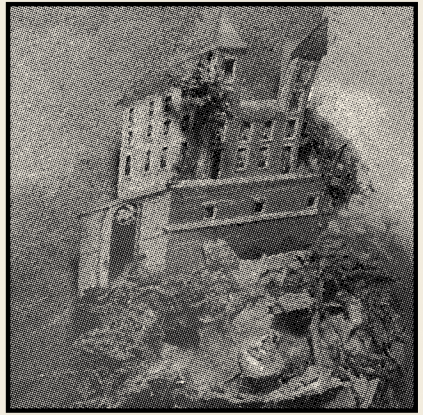
The cessation of the war was not marked by surrender, nor treaty, nor victory bought with attrition. Instead, the massive, sentient beasts upon which the castle-cities sat wanted nothing to do with fighting, and made the slowest retreat in recorded history, putting distance between the Houses. As the gargantuan creatures made their way across the lands, they ate up the forests and vegetation, creating a vast, barren wasteland.

Over hundreds of years, the castle-cities grew so far apart that fighting became impractical and very costly; none wished to risk traveling across the dangerous wastes, only to face deadly combat. Inconvenience and ambivalence caused the war to slowly fade away, eventually giving way to forgetfulness, ignorance, and the tenuous peace imposed by great distance.

Each castle-city was now isolated. Some ended up in areas with very little in the way of natural resources, and the inhabitants suffered. The separation of the few remaining Slug Wizards prevented collaborative study, and had a deteriorating effect on what little knowledge of magic remained. Eventually, the massive retreating beasts upon which the decaying cities stood came to a halt - they were exhausted from traveling,

starving due to the scarcity of forests, and dying without the restorative, life-giving magic they used to receive from the old magic of the late Slug Wizards. The cold, crumbling castle-cities now slumped atop empty shells and disintegrating bone - only dark, haunted shadows of their former glory.

The number of Slug Wizard-kind continued to decrease as the cities collapsed into utter ruin. The few cities that remained structurally sound enough to inhabit were usually “ruled” by a Slug Wizard insane with lust for power - a flawed reflection of their past goodness. Most of the Slug beings, however, departed from the ruins and made homes wherever they could eke out a living - damp caves, the few remaining copses of trees further beyond, or small towns within which they were treated as freaks and outcasts. This was the tragic fallout of Thubja’s Grief.



NEW ATHEB’QYTET

In CY 2020, nearly one thousand years after Thubja’s death, three Slug Wizards from three distant cities established contact with one another. They had no previous knowledge of each other, and their connection could only be explained as the result of forces beyond perception or rational explanation.

Their names - hail these wise ones! - were:
- T’bom Sattsrom of House Innigpack
- Magus Limaxus of House Udtalg’torben
- Wormulon of House Iconfaliar

Together, the trio focused their combined power and cast it through the air to send a magical summons to any remaining Slug Wizards in the land who wished to be united once more. Many who received the message were shocked to learn that any other Slug Wizards still even existed.

Thus, twenty-one generations after Atheb’qytet had been fractured by war, sixty Slug Wizards journeyed to reunite on the ocean cliffs of the Great Rift, in the very place where Atheb’qytet once stood. This occurred in the spring of CY 2021.





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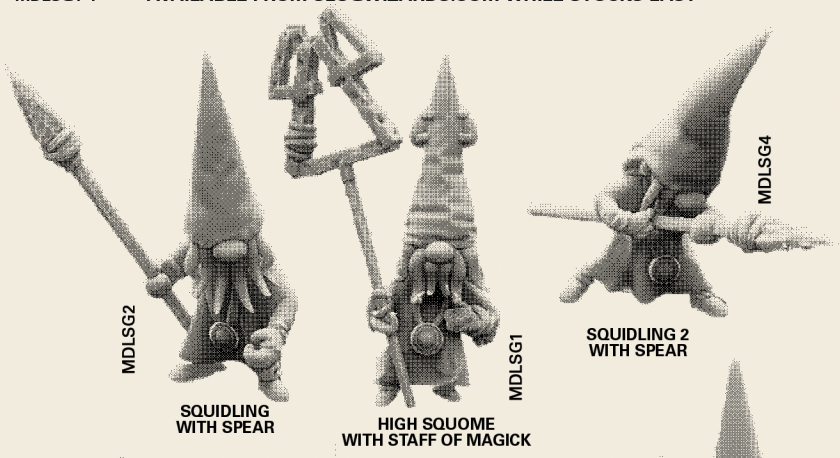
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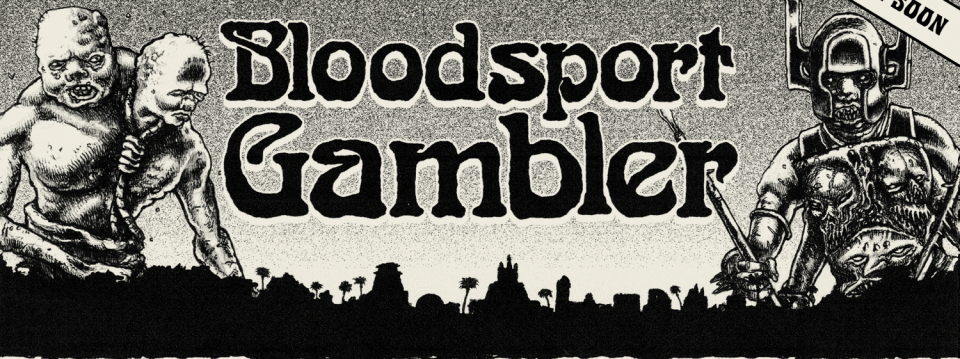


MORE ABOUT THE SURFACE WORLD...

The Surface World is an expansive fictional setting based on the single, sole remaining habitable planet named Adaetus. Adaetus sits under the watchful gaze of the Red Sun, an everlasting celestial entity that has cultivated a menagerie of robust and diverse species that inhabit the Surface of the planet. The prominent humanoid lifeforms of Adaetus are known as Natureborn, due to their birth being determined entirely by their surroundings and which elements exist nearby. Born of Sand, Sky, Steel and Stone, these life forms are stuck in an age of endless conflict.

MDLSG3
SQUIDLING 3
WITH SPEAR
HELD OVERHEAD

COMING SOON



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Thrust into desperation by swelling debts, you must gamble on the foul pit fights of Ghoulmorrah in a last-ditch struggle to pay off a merciless syndicate of moneylenders. With looming payments fast approaching, the only way to beat the odds is to sleuth, scheme, and sabotage. While a sure bet is favorable to warding off debt collectors, the risk of getting caught cheating could rid you of your earnings, your reputation, or worse - your life! Only those who are clever and cunning enough to pay off their debts will survive the vile underbelly of the slithering city.

Follow your curiosity for updates and the latest news from Mirage Merchant on the release of Bloodsport Gambler

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Behold! A stranger approaches the fighting pits of Ghoulmorrah!

This limited, promotional card expands the gameplay & experience of **Bloodsport Gambler**, an upcoming tabletop game. Include this card amongst the original 18 Fighter cards when playing to bring the **Squidding Gnome** to Ghoulmorrah!

Squidding Gnome



STR	DEX	LIFE
2	2	2

Learn more at www.BloodsportGambler.com



SLUG WIZARD SPRING, 2021

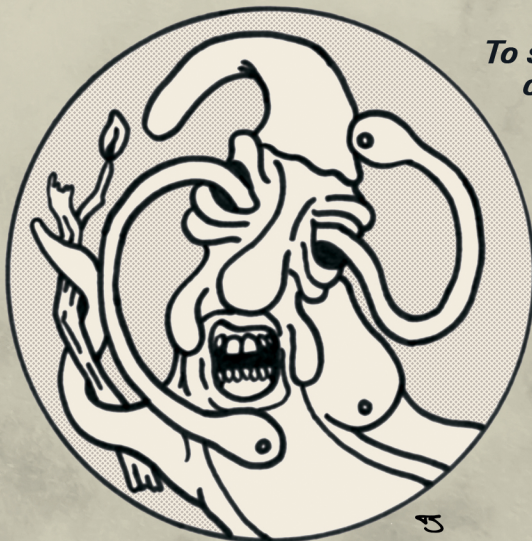
SLUG WIZARD: it began as a simple creative prompt but transformed into a competition and an initiative to raise money for charity. Sixty talented individuals from around the world created spectacular miniatures* and collectively donated nearly \$1200 USD to The Bail Project. Here, we recognize the top three entries.



SIMON SCHNITZLER

This entry by Simon “4ydra” Schnitzler took *third place* for its incredible composition and rich, earthy feel. The Slug Wizard levitates menacingly while a raven warns of coming doom. It’s almost as though Simon predicted 2022’s theme when he modeled the trio of eerily-squidlike creatures crawling along the branches!

Second place was awarded to Giuseppe del Bono for this strange, unsettling character: a bony Slug (Snail?) Wizard with scraggly hair, rolling on wooden wheels that seem to signal he is long done with the exhausting indignity of squirming along the ground. A threatening staff, a rictus grin, and long tentacles ending in eyes that have clearly seen horrible things work to give visual intensity to this unique and thrilling miniature. A suitably grim and muted palette acts as a quiet exclamation point, elevating this singular piece to the next level.



*To see the model
created by the
first place
winner...*

**TURN
THE
PAGE**

*...wonder
and slime
awaits you!*

**All sixty entries can be seen in zine number one, or online at slugwizards.com!*

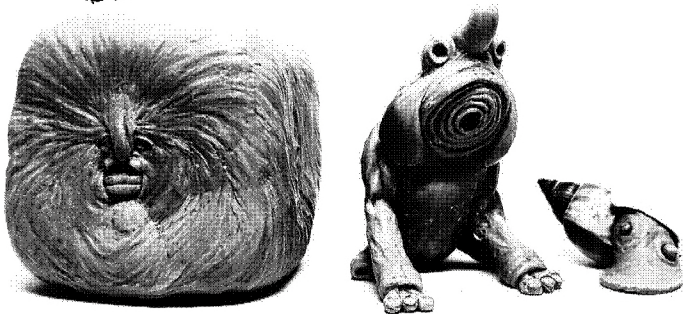


Tanner Simpson won *first place* for his elaborate diorama. Details abound: piles of tiny books, glass containers filled with lichen and shells, expressive framed paintings, hand-sculpted slug creatures, purple mushrooms... So much to see, all colorfully-painted and extremely fun to study. Tanner is also a talented illustrator, and contributed loads of the artwork in zine number one (and some to this one, too!). He also acted as one of the judges for this year's Squid Gnome event!

TANNER SIMPSON

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'The Vermin Volume' is available for free, and can be obtained in digital format via download from the world wide web. You will find it in the profile link on @simsominiatures Instagram profile.

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RISE OF THE SQUID GNOMES

by Bryan Ruhe & Tanner Simpson



avpl

Since the reuniting of the Slug Wizards in CY 2021, the existence of the once-mythical creature known as a “Squid Gnome” has become an undeniable reality. Once dismissed as nothing more than paranoid delusion or the visions of waking nightmares, these strange beings from the deep have begun appearing in such large numbers that their very presence has caused an upset in the daily lives of the people that occupy the Great Rift.

My understanding of the Squid Gnomes' origins is shocking and tragic, and at its root lies a deep and dire controversy. Very few in the lands of the Great Rift know what I am about to reveal in these pages. I, Magus Limaxus, will tell you what I know; when I am finished, you can decide for yourself if you believe this to be truth.

Seek understanding; it will set you free.



THE LOST SEARCH PARTY

Prior to the establishment of Atheb'qytet, Thubja, Father of the Slug Wizards, sent groups to search the surrounding areas for sources of fresh water. The fates of the parties that never returned are, for the most part, unknown. It is certain that at least one unfortunate group wandered into the gaping caverns of G'tha'lubzos. This put into motion events that led to the genesis of the Squid Gnomes.

The Slug Wizards, young and untutored in the ways of magic, became lost in the pitch-black caverns. They stumbled upon the major subterranean river that runs through the caves, called the G'tha Ghelem. Along the river's length, the tunnels periodically open into massive

rooms, in which the innumerable stalactites far above are made barely visible by a strange, soft glow that emanates from the river itself. Once bare, the walls of the caverns are now covered in runes and glyphys. The most repeated glyph is that of a streaky, dripping triangle.

The Slug Wizards were indeed doomed to perish here. The sticky truth, however, is more complicated: the Slug Wizards did not die; they simply did not continue to exist in their typical form. They *changed*.

ADAPT, SURVIVE

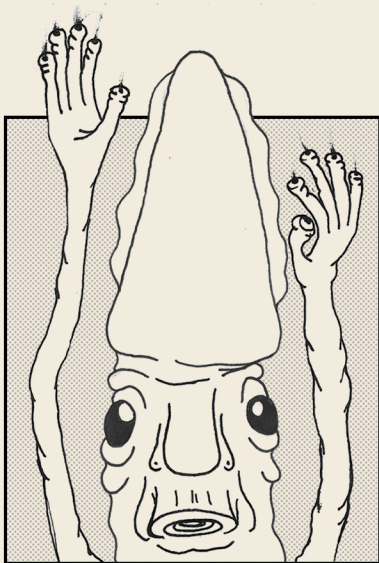
The Slug Wizards followed the river, its eerie luminance allowing their eyes to grow accustomed to the inky gloom. The party grew thirsty and hungry. They risked drinking from the river and found it to be free of salts; they scavenged for sustenance and discovered intermittent patches of Asteraceae that grew along the river. This subterranean species has coarse roots that wrap like small ropes around stalagmites and rocks. The leaves exhibit an unusual purplish color with bright pink veins that, like the river from which the plants drink, radiate a gentle glow. Little did the Slug Wizards know that ingesting these things was slowly causing their bodies to transform.

It is thought that the Slug Wizards eventually made their way to G'tha'lubzos, the hidden city of the deep gnomes through which the G'tha Ghelem flows. Whether or not the mages were welcomed has been debated. Precise details of the city have never been recorded. I hypothesize that the Slug Wizards were accepted by the deep gnomes, and that a strong instinct for survival led to an eventual mixing of genetic makeup. Why they remained in the city I can only guess.

1500 YEARS OF POLLUTION

Miles above G'tha'lubzos, Atheb'qytet flourished. The magickal byproducts of the growing city's unrestrained arcane experimentation created a sort of runoff that slowly trickled into the earth below. It spread throughout the ground with the same pervasive and thorough nature as mycelium. It eventually reached the caverns, and for more than a century, the pollution trickled into the G'tha Ghelem. The inhabitants of G'tha'lubzos were unaware of the river's taint, and remained so, even as it began to corrupt their minds and bodies.

Whether due to the tainted river, the mixing of deep gnome and Slug Wizard genes, or something else, the cave-dwellers began to exhibit squid-like properties. As their superstitious minds became clouded with ink, they presumed these changes to be the acts of a divine being.



As the city grew and sorcerous studies continued, the river became increasingly contaminated. The mutated inhabitants of G'tha'lubzos spiralled further into obsessive cephalopod worship and cultural transformation. The Squid Gnomes were born.

They morphed and changed; shared resemblances were lost. The mutations inhibited their ability to communicate, thus causing their culture to backslide into a more primitive state and ultimately leading to the development of a pictographic language consisting of inken glyphs. The objects of the beings' worship eventually distilled into the shape of a triangle and the number three. The triangle glyph appears to broadly represent the concepts of "squid," "gnome," and "community." I refer to this glyph and its meaning as "Squome."

SCIENTIFIC OBSERVATIONS

The increasing frequency with which Squid Gnomes have been appearing in New Atheb'qytet has permitted scientists and wizards - such as myself - to observe these bizarre creatures. I will tell you my findings, and will conclude with some controversial hypotheses.

The Squid Gnomes I have witnessed appear to understand one another through non-verbal communication or by ejecting ink from their bodies to draw glyphs. Outsiders are generally unable to interpret the squomes' inky glyphs; I am only just beginning to decipher them myself. Despite the fact of their ascension from the cave systems, the city of G'tha'lubzos has remained secret. My attempts at communication with the Squid Gnomes have thus far been unsuccessful.



Outside of New Atheb'qytet, elsewhere in the Great Rift, Squid Gnome sightings are less common. Usually the evidence that Squomes (people have begun combining the words "squid" and "gnome" into a sort of portmanteau) have been present is the inky writing they scrawl on the ground, on walls and in village squares. In these places, there continues to be denial in regards to the true identity of the vandals responsible. Shortly after the appearance of the graffiti, it is not uncommon for fear to take hold, ultimately causing a town's inhabitants to ostracize one or more of their own people - usually the most disliked persons in their community.

So far, the Squomes I have witnessed are small beings, reaching heights no greater than that of an average adult human's waist, although I have heard reports of far larger, even gargantuan, specimens. I am admittedly relieved to have not yet seen such monstrous Squid Gnomes.

Differences in appearance, behavior, intelligence, and propensity to aggression vary widely between specimens. Observed Squome behavior is highly erratic. Their character and morality is ambiguous, but generally seems to be dictated by their apparently-poor survival instincts.

Squomes may remain unresponsive in the presence of a threatening adversary, and often appear oblivious to even the most imminent dangers. When attacked, Squomes sometimes fail to react at all; their unpredictable responses to aggression appear to defy explanation. Squid Gnome aggression - which I have witnessed only twice - has consisted of offensive behavior by means of tentacle constriction, or laceration of the enemy by hidden beaks.

SG18



Without exception, Squid Gnomes have only been sighted in threes. Generally, individuals within a group exhibit similar physical traits, but each group has traits distinct from every other. This would support the theory that each trio is the Squid Gnome equivalent of a nuclear family unit, however this has yet to be confirmed; details of Squid Gnome reproduction are completely unknown.

Finally, I have witnessed on multiple occasions a very puzzling behavior: Squid Gnomes frequently stand still for several hours, their wall-eyed gazes half-fixed on unclear and irrelevant points of focus. Then, without warning, they snap into action, and begin to race around, the goal of their panicked activity unclear.

Until communication can be established, diplomacy is not an option. Many communities have "declared war" on the Squid Gnomes, but it is obvious that the creatures fail to comprehend. I hesitate to approve hunting them, as I have yet to witness them act as anything more than a minor nuisance. No single leader has emerged or been identified. Their motives are unclear. Further research is required.

THEORY, NOT CONSPIRACY

Now I will share some of my theories responding to the most vexing questions: why? How? I hesitate to tell you, as I fear my words may be twisted and give rise to rumor, or worse, they may incriminate me as some sort of paranoid quack or traitor - I assure you I am neither. For the sake of completeness, I am compelled to put these things down in writing.

What sparked Thubja's Grief? Why did the Great Houses turn on one another? I expect you are not certain how this query is relevant to the Squid Gnomes. I will do my best to connect the ideas.

Many have wondered at Thubja Atheb's inability to conjure potable water. Was he truly incapable? While there are none in our land who openly profess to know spells to purify or create freshwater on a large scale, many persons suspect that Thubja withheld such arcane knowledge from the Slug Wizards, and that perhaps he knew the secret. It is this doubt that first caused discord and enmity between the Houses, even before Thubja's death. Many believed Thubja to be honorable; just as many believed him to be a scheming tyrant.

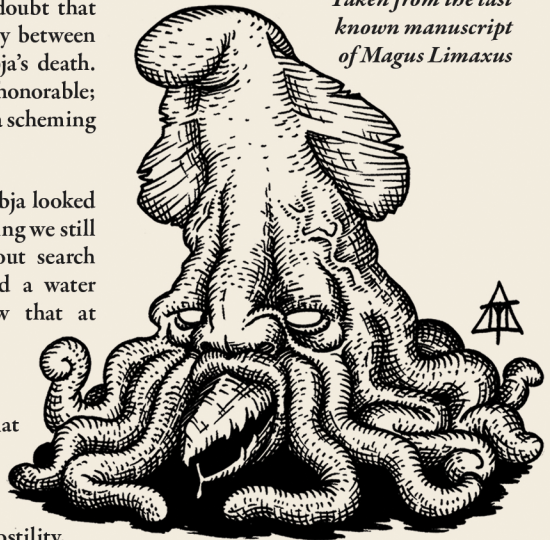
I believe it is possible that Thubja looked into the future and saw something we still cannot see. Perhaps he sent out search parties not because he needed a water source, but because he knew that at least one group would stumble upon G'tha'lubzos, eventually giving rise to the Squid Gnome race. But why? The answer to that question still eludes me, but I firmly believe that these strange creatures should be approached not with anger or hostility,

but with curiosity and a desire to understand. The increasing presence of Squid Gnomes in New Atheb'qytet forces each of us to choose a response. I will not destroy a creature simply out of ignorance or a failure to understand it. Such response is abhorrent and primal; unsophisticated and base. As a Slug Wizard dedicated to the advancement of knowledge through science and magic, I will not stand for such an approach.

As a final note, there have been recent reports of hunting parties in the area. While some hunt Squid Gnomes, the disturbing truth is that just as many seem to be hunting us. I do not know why, nor from where they come. Witnesses state that Slug Wizard hunting parties materialize out of thin air. Wizards of some kind?

As I seek to understand, I will not fight the unknown. I will fight my fear.

Taken from the last known manuscript of Magus Limaxus





ICKY ALLOY

SQUIDGNOMES & SLUGWIZARDS

Feast your eyes on these highly-customized miniatures, converted and painted by skilled artists across the USA. The Slug Wizard below, created by Matt Ross, was the initial inspiration that led to all things Slug Wizard!

Nick Borelli's creepy, pale Squid Gnomes were the catalyst for this year's modeling event.



MATT ROSS



NICK BORELLI



CHRIS BECKHUSEN

BRYAN RUHE



NICK BORELLI

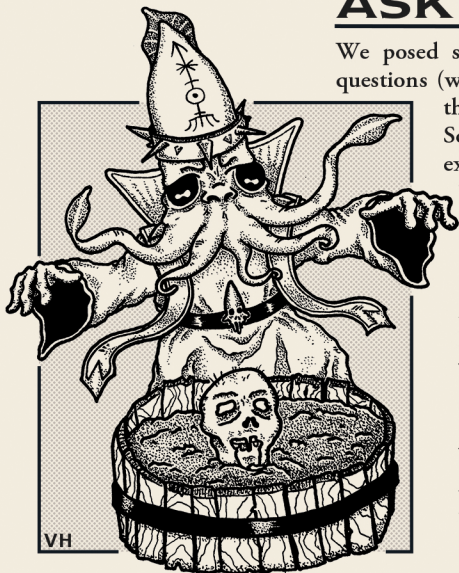


CHRIS BECKHUSEN



ASK SLOMFINDAL

We posed some of our readers' most important questions (we didn't make these up - promise!) to the wise and all-knowing Slomfindal, Squid Gnome Wizard (yes, such a being exists!). Here, we reveal his insights. Take heed, my friends!



Slomfindal, my friends say that the Squid Gnomes are an evil race, intent on causing chaos and havoc. Is this true? Would you tell me if it wasn't? I want to believe that there is good in your kind, but it seems difficult to know for sure based on your current relations with the people of New Atheb'qytet. You must tell me!

- Carl Francis, Oldorf, UK

Carl, ymg'ah nafl ph'nglui ah'hri vulgtmnaah gn'bthknknyth ot ya uh'e?... Oh? Pardon me, I lapsed into the Lubzolian tongue. Do you not believe there is good in the heart of my people? It brings me sorrow to hear this truth. Change your mind in order to change your heart, or you will die an inner death before it is your time. If you cannot trust, you will find yourself alone.



Greetings, wise Slomfindal. My query is short: can Squid Gnomes access the fourth dimension?

- Hough Rick, Italy

Yes indeed, Hough. By means of a ritual blending of Slug Wizard and Squid Gnome mucopolysaccharide and an arcane Lubzolian recitation, a portal is formed that enables us to travel beyond the mortal plane. Before you ask, no, I will not tell you the words. I doubt you could pronounce them anyway.

SG22

What does that purple lettuce with pink veins taste like? Is it bitter? I hate bitter food.

- Afferij Jo, USA

Ah, yes, "epgoka." I'm not sure to what I would compare the flavor, as I'm uncertain what our diets have in common. It isn't bitter. It's very fragrant. If you happen to be familiar with *pandanus amaryllifolius*, which I believe grows on your planet of Yurth, it is very similar.



pencilsanddungeons

SLUG WIZARDS CLASH WITH A GROUP OF SQUID GNOMES

Brawl Arcane 28

The rules in this article tell you everything you need to know to use a Slug Wizard and three Squid Gnome Minions in Brawl Arcane 28, a game of wizard duels created by Brett Evans. The core rules and the latest releases for the game can be found at brettfp.itcb.io. If you've got minis, use 'em! Otherwise, we've provided standees for you to photocopy and cut out, so you can use these rules right away! Now let's get slimy and magical!

DUELS OF PAST DAYS

When the city of Atheb'qytet was at its zenith, and the study of magical knowledge at its peak, wizard duels were a popular sport. The events provided a practical testing ground for new arcane research and recently-developed spells (and a thrill for the crowds of spectators, too). At the onset of Thubja's Grief, the games were outlawed, and in the hundreds of years that followed they were nearly forgotten. In recent days, a small group of wizards and loyal fans have dived into historical texts in order to learn the rules of the sport. These enthusiasts are convinced that Brawl Arcane is poised to become the next big thing in New Atheb'qytet.



SG24

THE DUELISTS

Some Slug Wizards have discovered that Squid Gnomes, although feared by many, will obey basic commands if motivated by the promise of stinky dried shrimp!

THE SLUG WIZARD

Move	Skill	Defense	Health
4	4	4	15

Ability: Slime Trail

Any enemy model within 1 Space becomes **Stuck**. **Stuck** models cannot Move until they spend an Action to free themselves.

Spell: Slippery Mucus

Range Damage Special

8 - Target gets +4 to their move this turn.

SQUID GNOMES

Move	Skill	Defense	Health
4	3	2	4

Action: Power of Three

Range Damage Special

3 3 +1 Damage if Target is **Stuck**.

New rules authored by Brett Evans

Photocopy this page and paste it to a sheet of thick card. Cut out the figures. Make a single mountain fold along the centerline of each figure where indicated so that the image is still visible and the cut edges of the two sides line up. Fold back the half-circles where indicated to create "bases" for the figures so that they can stand upright. Finally, apply glue inside the figure to keep it together (a gluestick works quite well).

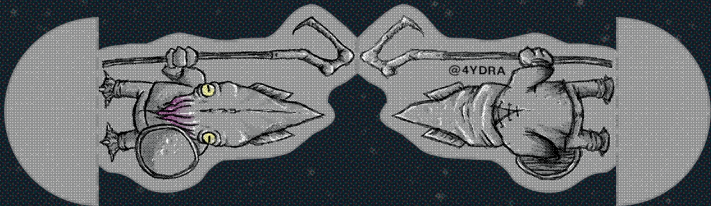
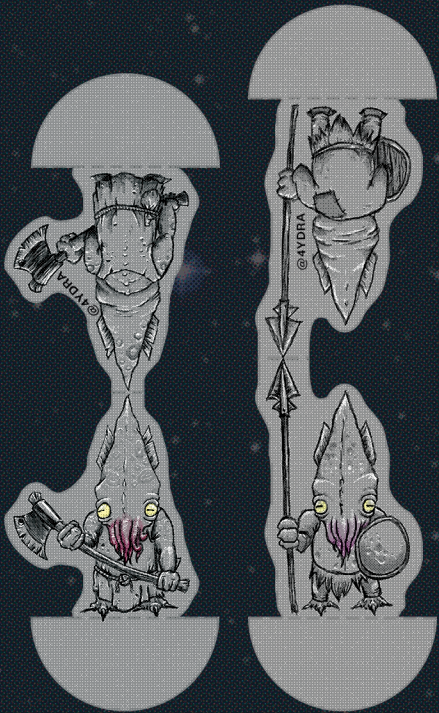
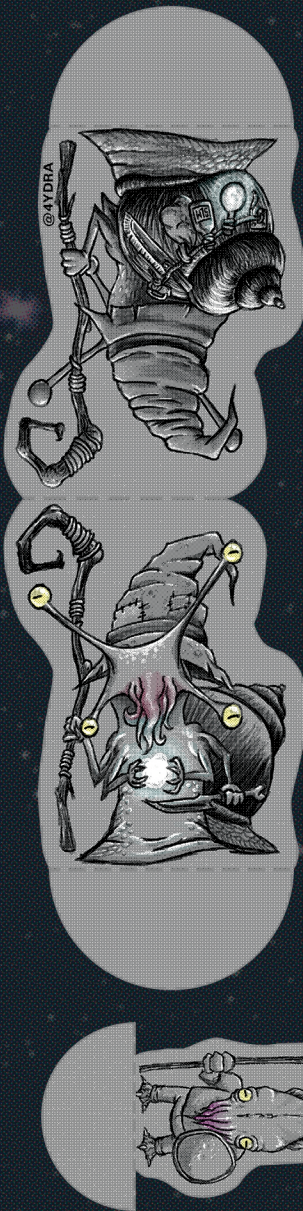


Figure artwork by Simon "4ydra" Schnitzler



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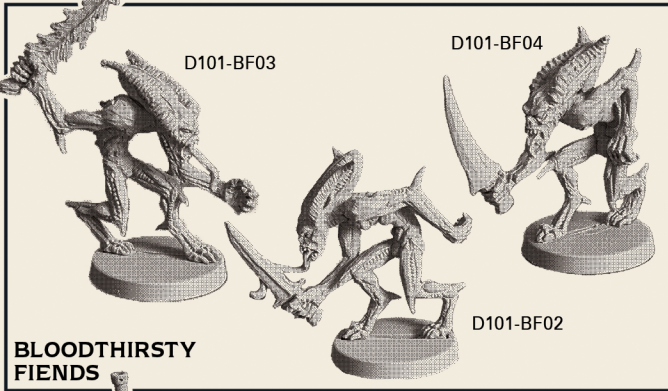
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A NECESSARY EXCHANGE

by Bryan Ruhe, developed from original concepts by Evan Hough

He stood before the gently-lowing bovicomp, carefully hidden behind one of many rotting trees in the damp, dark woods. His container wasn't as full as he had hoped - the hunt hadn't gone according to plan - but he hoped the volume of its contents would be deemed sufficient. He hadn't appeared before this Lord before. With the vessel in hand, he punched a set of tempordinates into the bovicomp, pulled a lever, and zapped out of existence.

"Hunter!" He heard the voice first. Soon, he could make out the shape of a figure - humanoid, seated. As he phased into the room, the surroundings of the omasumal chamber - an architectural design favored by the Lords - grew solid, and the figure before him became more distinct every second - a hunched form, decrepit in the way it held itself upright upon a weathered throne... Forms settled further into detail: a deeply wrinkled face, a body over which hung a brown-spotted, dark yellow, moldering gown - clearly a pattern designed after the Ariolimax.

"Approach now!" the elderly being commanded. "What do you offer?"

"One point three seven litres of mucopolysaccharide, my Lord."

The old man glared. He leaned hard on the left side of his throne, his left fist supporting his chin. "Hardly an offering. But, fine." An exaggerated exhalation, followed by a flippant and unimpressed waving of his right hand.



Immediately, an orderly appeared beside the old man - perhaps one of the fabled Aestivators. Best to not divulge that knowledge, however. Very few knew of the Aestivators and their abilities with MucoPoly.

"Are you alone? Where are your Hounds? Who was your Strigilon?" demanded the elder.

The visitor replied, "A loyal Jadgturkier acts as Hound during the hunt. I performed the extraction myself, my Lord."

"Is that so?" A curious look overtook the man's face. "It isn't customary for a Hunter to travel without a Strigilon, much less to perform the extraction personally. What is your name?"

“Hoffrich, son of Brucello, my Lord. I hail from Apophysus. My hunting efforts are focused on the arboreal outskirts of New Atheb’qytet in dimension IV-B.”

“Ahh, a particularly dangerous and rewarding region,” the old man rasped. He seemed impressed, his tone softer but no less shrewd than before. “You may refer to me henceforth as Lord Rhachis, Hoffrich, son of Brucello.” He paused. “Brucello... I know that name...”

“Yes, Lord Rhachis - none other than the legendary Hyaline Hunter, a man with such speed and stealth as to be nearly invisible to his quarry. Destroyer of over seventy Slug Wizards.”

“He served us well. An honorable Hunter.” Rhachis’s tone told a different story than his words, but he shifted the conversation too quickly to allow for any deep consideration. “Let’s get down to business, Hoffrich. You bring me just over a litre of MucoPoly...” Rhachis’s gaze fell upon the cylindrical glass container within Hoffrich’s hands, and his eyes glowed with a crazed hunger. “...for what do you ask in return? Be quick now, and do not test my generosity.”

Hoffrich preemptively braced himself for Rhachis’s reply. “In order to continue my eradication efforts, I require a new bovicomp.”

Rhachis’s eyes widened. Generally, numerous hunting parties coordinated their excursions in order to make use of a single bovicomp, which was usually owned by a Lord and operated by a rancher-engineer, a specialist skilled in cattle-rearing & multi-dimensional tech.



*Hunter Hoffrich upon his loyal Jadturkier.
Model by Evan Hough.*

“As you are a son of Brucello, I am not surprised that you have found the means to acquire a bovicomp, but I am indeed surprised that you have the knowledge to operate it. Is it malfunctioning? Why do you require a new bovicomp? They are terribly expensive. I’m not certain I can provide you with one in exchange for the paltry one point three seven litres of MucoPoly you brought me.”

Hoffrich was no fool and would not fall for Rhachis’s tactic of downplaying the MucoPoly’s value; although 1.37L was too little for what he was asking, its trade value was at least equivalent to that of a cottage on a few acres of land. Further, the mechanical parts of his bovicomp were in perfect working order - it was the cow itself that was dying. No need to divulge that much detail, though. Hoffrich pressed further.

“Lord Rhachis, I am not ignorant of the fact that I am asking for much. If it pleases you, consider this cylinder a first-installment. I do not require a new bovicomp immediatly, but the use of mine is limited, and soon it will be inoperable. At this moment, all I ask of you is a dose of high-TDN coolant to extend the lifespan of my bovicomp. If I am to continue with the hunt, I have little choice but to ask for this boon.” He had laid it all out. Nothing left to say. He set the canister of MucoPoly on the floor.

“Hoffrich,” Lord Rhachis began, his tone stern, “if you were any other Hunter than the son of Brucello, I would flog you, command you to cease your vigilante behavior, demand that you organize a proper hunting party, and warp together with the Hunters in Apophysus. But you impress me. To some, your insistence on hunting alone would appear foolish, but I sense that you are no fool. A fool would not have been capable of extracting this much MucoPoly by himself. Surely you slayed, what - three, four Slug Wizards to obtain this?”

“Beg pardon, my Lord, ’t’was five I have slain for it,” Hoffrich took a risk in interjecting. Lord Rhachis did not respond.

“Orderly! Examine!” squawked Rhachis. The robed man moved quickly toward the container of MucoPoly, his hood bouncing as he stepped, but never falling back or revealing his face. He picked up the canister, returned to Rhachis’s side, and poured the slime into a tall, narrow, goblet-shaped altar bowl that stood upright beside the throne. A long ribbon of paper printed from a slit beneath the

receptacle. The orderly inspected the print-out, then presented it to Lord Rhachis.

“Remarkable. This is the purest and most potent MucoPoly I’ve received from a Hunter in many years. I have heard your request and will supply you with a new bovicomp once you have brought me another one point six three litres.” He addressed the orderly now - “Supply Hoffrich with three syringes of high-TDN coolant.” The orderly walked toward Hoffrich. A hand emerged from beneath the flowing robes, presenting the requested goods to Hoffrich. Hoffrich took them. “I hope that will suffice,” Rhachis intoned. “Good hunting to you. I look forward to our next exchange.”

Lord Rhachis pressed a button on the arm of his throne, and Hoffrich vanished as he was transported back to his ailing bovicomp in the woods of New Atheb’qytet.



Hoffrich turned to his Jadgtukier as it stood obediently beside the bovicomp and checked his gear as a means to distract himself from the disorientation of the dimensional shift. Copper blades, salt grenades, rocksalt scattershot, bait, rations, tracking devices, empty MucoPoly canister, combi-strigil, tent. Good. Everything present and well-secured. He'd need it all - he had work to do. - BR



A SLUG WIZARD HUNTER ENCOUNTERS HIS QUARRY IN A DARK COPSE.

SLUG GUARD OF GAARD VERSUS THE HOUSE OF THE STAR-SQUID

POCKET TACTICS



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Pocket-Tactics is a 3D print-and-play strategy board game in which fantasy forces battle for control of a hex tile-based map. The game is fast-paced (most games lasting between 10-30 minutes), designed for ease of printing, and the entire game is small enough to fit in your pocket. The system is dynamic, though resolution is quick. There aren't a ton of rules to track or memorize, making it ideal for advanced and casual gamers alike.



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COMPETITION WINNERS!

We had to choose from 46 absolutely brilliant entries. It was not an easy decision! When the ink cloud finally cleared, these three champions remained...

THIRD PLACE: GREG SMALLING (KAVERNOFCURIOSITIES)



"The main inspiration for my entry came from the realization that a squid has the same shape as an old rocket from classic mid-century science fiction. From there the ideas came very quickly and easily, and the whole concept kind of fell into place. I had one big setback where my first batch of polymer clay tentacles fell apart in baking and I had to start over again. I did finish just in time though! This was the biggest project I've attempted in 10 years, and I'm really pleased with the result and feel like I learned a lot." - Greg S.



SECOND PLACE: DÍDAC CALVENTUS (DDPAINTS)



“When I saw the early cryptic announcements for the Squid Gnome event, I was hyped. After reading the Squid Gnome lore, I started thinking about what to model. I missed the chance to participate in the first Slug Wizard event in 2021, so I felt bound to add a Slug Wizard to the entry, as well. A duel was afoot!

After much trial and error (and lots of pinning and greenstuff), I fit all of the action on the base, with each duelist to one side and the clash of powers between them. I went for a colorful but desaturated palette, with the exception of the bright pink magic slime shield - spells should be colorful! I made the magic shield by wrapping a small lightbulb in cling film, then dropping UV resin over it.” - Dídac C.

FIRST PLACE: JOHAN PETERSON (LUKEWARM_RECEPTION)



"I racked my brain for months trying to come up with the perfect tribute for our Slug Wizard overlords. Exhausted and filled with despair, I sat down in my workshop. Only a package of Milliput, three fantasy goblins and a 2mm hole punch lay in front of me. Suddenly, two weeks had passed, and my hands were covered in super glue and sawdust flocking. My body barely held together, having survived on nothing but dirty paint water. But there before me it stood, my perfect creation, my magnum opus. I could only hope that it would be enough to please the council." - Johan P.

And please us it did, Johan - congratulations on your first place win!

THE TROPHIES FOR SLUG WIZARD II: RISE OF THE SQUID GNOMES



Each winner received one of these beautiful hand-cast trophies, designed & created by the talented Arjan van den Brink (atelier.ag)!

A thimble goes missing. Then a stool. Then a candlestick. All over the course of weeks, until enough is enough. You have a good long rummage, and find no trace of your disappeared decor, only the absence of more things not immediately apparent in everyday life. Someone must have taken them. Someone must be responsible.

NIGHT of the SQUID Gnomes

A solo/co-op scenario for Samuel Allan's *Lobsterpot*

Find the free game rules at 28-mag.com/lobsterpot

-Conceived and written by Ben Doane-

While interrogating your peers, a traveling peddler introduces herself and shares stories of folk affected by similar plights. She warns that they had incurred the ire of wee folk, and failed to make amends before the next bile tide, leaving those little strangers no choice but to torment them for the rest of their natural lives! Good thing she told you how much they like Poison Pie!



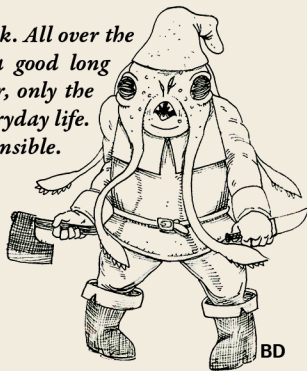
BD

SETUP

Place your patrol in the center of the board, $\geq 4''$ from any edge. Place terrain to taste.

RULES

At the beginning of the first Fox phase, randomly nominate a model controlled by a player. That model becomes GnomecurSED, and gains a Pie token.



BD

A Pie token may be thrown as an action, and goes $d6''$ in the direction of the player's choosing. All Squid Gnomes immediately move $3''$ towards the spot where the pie landed.

At the beginning of each Hound phase, a Squid Gnome appears $2''$ from the GnomecurSED. If it's an odd numbered turn, a second Squid Gnome appears $2''$ from a random haunt.

Squid Gnomes are monsters who activate at the beginning of the Hunter phase, attack as though armed with a Knife, and have the *Gripping* keyword. They will always move towards and attack the GnomecurSED.

At the end of the sixth turn, if the GnomecurSED is still alive, the player who killed the most Squid Gnomes wins. Otherwise, the Gnomes have won, and have eaten the GnomecurSED. The player whose patrol lost a GnomecurSED rolls up a new member (of the same class as the deceased,) and gains the following boon:

PIE OF DOOM: Reveal this card when an enemy model passes a Defense roll while within $2''$ of a model you control. Place a Squid Gnome within $1''$ of that enemy, and move your model up to $2''$ in any direction.

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