

# FLUXINGTON'S FOLLY



*A DUNGEON WORLD adventure by Joe Banner*

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## WRITING, DESIGN & LAYOUT

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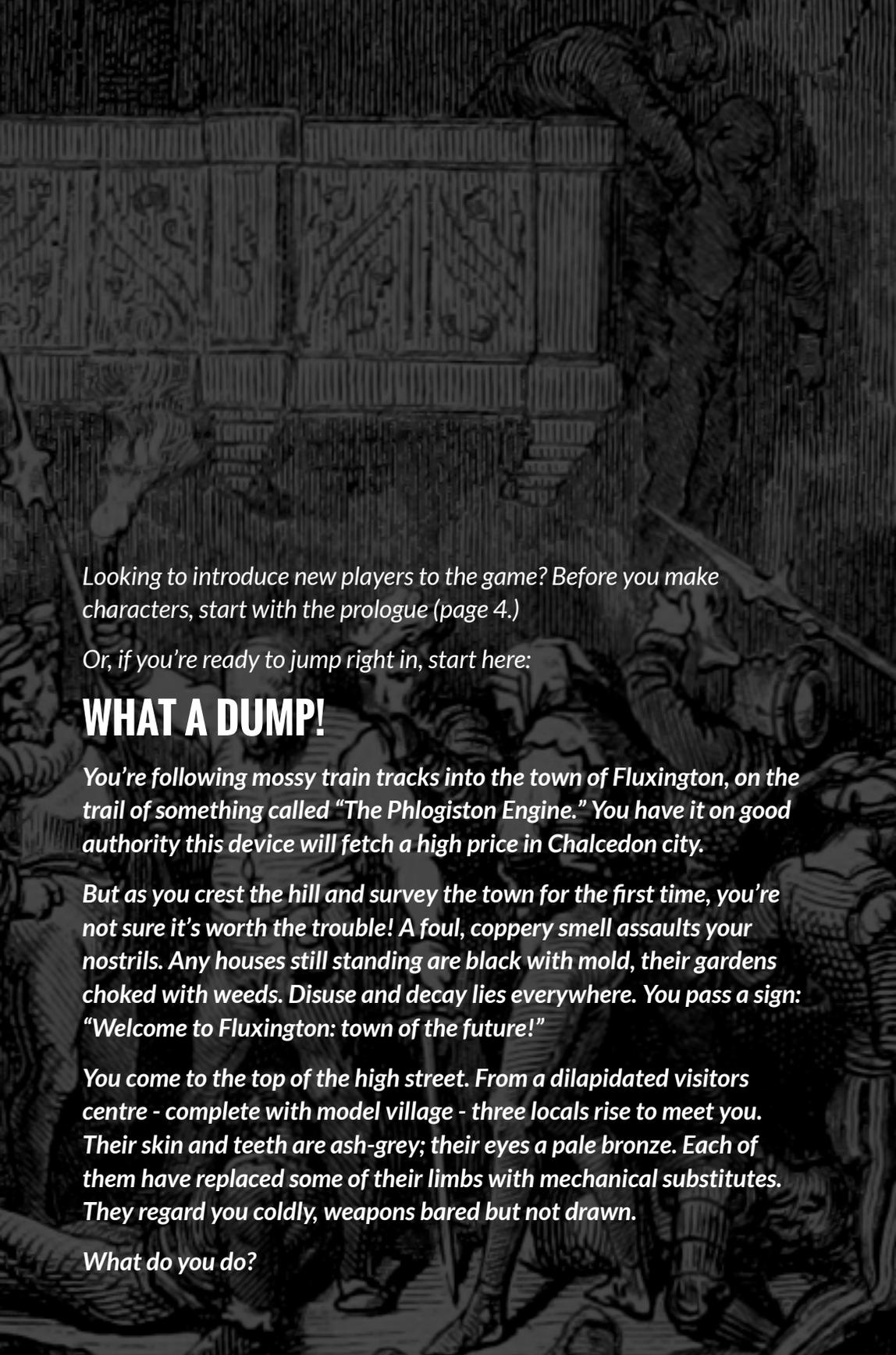
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*Looking to introduce new players to the game? Before you make characters, start with the prologue (page 4.)*

*Or, if you're ready to jump right in, start here:*

## **WHAT A DUMP!**

*You're following mossy train tracks into the town of Fluxington, on the trail of something called "The Phlogiston Engine." You have it on good authority this device will fetch a high price in Chalcedon city.*

*But as you crest the hill and survey the town for the first time, you're not sure it's worth the trouble! A foul, coppery smell assaults your nostrils. Any houses still standing are black with mold, their gardens choked with weeds. Disuse and decay lies everywhere. You pass a sign: "Welcome to Fluxington: town of the future!"*

*You come to the top of the high street. From a dilapidated visitors centre - complete with model village - three locals rise to meet you. Their skin and teeth are ash-grey; their eyes a pale bronze. Each of them have replaced some of their limbs with mechanical substitutes. They regard you coldly, weapons bared but not drawn.*

*What do you do?*

# PROLOGUE

This prologue is a chance to show new players how Dungeon World works, and give an idea what destroyed the town of Fluxington. It doesn't include any of the player characters (PCs), so can be done before character creation if you're starting from scratch.

If someone hasn't played Dungeon World before, encourage them to take one of the roles below. Up to two players can join in; there's no risk to their "main" character - in fact, they'll get a small reward if they take part! If you have more than two people who want to join in, whoever has played Dungeon World the least has priority.

If a character isn't being played, ignore the questions in italics and treat any rolls as though the player rolled a 6.

**Cheapfield junior:** an eight-year old boy with white hair. Your father has brought you to the unveiling ceremony for some kind of mechanical device, in the middle of nowhere. *When the GM tells you to roll, take two six-sided dice (2d6,) roll them, and add 1.*

**Reward:** When you make your own character later, they are carrying a *phlogiston meter* (1 weight) in addition to their usual kit. The meter beeps in the presence of high levels of phlogiston.

**Dorik, the technician:** Foreman for the phlogiston engine, Cheapfield's new flagship creation. You're very nervous about today's grand reveal, and frankly, in over your head. *Tell the other players your age, sex and race: they can be whatever you like. When the GM tells you to roll, take two six-sided dice (2d6,) roll them, and subtract 1.*

**Reward:** When you make your character later, in addition to anything else they planned this job. They've got an advance of *d6x15 coin* from a fencer named Lux in Chalcedon city.

## **FLUXINGTON: 45 YEARS AGO**

The air in the engine room is thick with copper dust and grey smoke as Dorik oversees the phlogiston engine's official launch. A fresh-faced worker runs by too quickly, knocking the papers and equations out of their hand. As they stoop to collect them, another nervous young techie asks frantically "sir, was it supposed to read 8.72 or 8.27 on the capacitor? Because it's reading 9.71..."

*Dorik, what do you do?*

*When Dorik attends to the problem, roll. On a 7+, the readings show a catastrophic failure - everybody out, now! On a 10+, you also spot the cause: a simple miscalculation in the etheric mill regulator. On a 6-, everything is well within tolerance, you're sure it'll be fine...*

On a podium at the Fluxington etheric mill, Clovis Cheapfield is giving a speech on his family's newest invention: the Phlogiston engine. A safe, secure power generator to propel the noble nation of Chalcedon into the modern age! His son stands nearby as do a crowd of bronze-armoured guards and retainers.

*Son, it's your eighth birthday today! How are you feeling right now? Bored, fascinated, anxious?*

Without warning, the mill explodes in a cloud of green and purple smoke. People are screaming, timbers and scaffolds rain down from above. Most are vaporized by the explosion or pinned by rubble.

*Junior: over the chaos, you hear your father cry: "Obadiah! Run for your life, son!" A guardian looms nearby, armour dented but still whole. What do you do?*

*When Obadiah tries to escape, roll. On a 10+, he's out. On a 7-9, he must leave something behind - a treasured toy or keepsake, perhaps. On a miss, he escapes but not without suffering an injury that will plague him for the rest of his life.*

# IMPRESSIONS

- \* The overgrown train tracks leading out of town
- \* Rivers of grease and detritus
- \* Tattered pennants laid out for a recent festival
- \* A conspicuous, oily bloodstain on the cobblestone road
- \* Scrawled graffiti: “The model is broken”, “they lied” and similar
- \* The ancient handleways, leading to every part of the village
- \* A bronze chestplate, rusted and overgrown with black grass
- \* The constant coppery smell on the air
- \* Clouds of glittering, chittering geardust
- \* Men, women and children with grey skin and dull bronze eyes



# MOVES

**When you force your way through a crowd of piston-heads,** roll+STR. On a 10+, you force a space through the mob for yourself (and anyone behind) for a moment or two. On a 7-9, you're through if you can unhook whatever it is of yours that's just gotten snagged on a wayward gear. On a miss, the piston-heads close ranks - and the pistons start firing...

**When you are in possession of a wayhandle and attempt to ride the handleways,** roll+DEX. On a 10+, you're on your way - name your destination, you'll be there first. On a 7-9, you're on the handleways, but there's a break in the line before your destination - you'll only get part of the way. On a miss, you're latched on, but choose two: your grip is tenuous; you're not moving yet; or someone/something is right behind you.

**When you attempt to move through a cloud of geardust,** roll+CON. On a hit, you're through, but: on a 10+, some of the dust has latched to your clothes and gear. On a 7-9, the dust is on your hands and face. On a miss, you're not through the cloud yet.

**When you pray at the shrine of Pneumaticism,** roll+INT. On a hit, you may choose to gain great knowledge from the anointed series of tubes if you sacrifice a secret only you know in turn. (You must speak it out loud, into the mouthpiece, within earshot of the priests and anyone else nearby.) On a 10+, it does not have to be an absolute secret - describe something new about a creature or place you've encountered before. On a miss, you hear a whispered truth you didn't want to hear.

**When you are exposed to the Phlogiston engine's core,** roll+WIS. On a 10+, your mental fortitude defies this psuedomagic - you take +1 forward to the engine's effects. On a 7-9, you feel your mind lapse, but only for a moment. On a miss, the latent phlogiston in your mortal mind starts to burn away!



# CREATURES

**PISTONHEADS:** These mechanised humanoids are an ironic testament to the dangers of etheromancy. Constant exposure to etheric energy has withered their limbs, but the mechanical substitutes are powered by the same energy that's killing them.

**Instinct:** to gather more energy

**6 HP 1 Armour d6 damage, forceful (powered limbs)**

Horde, construct, intelligent, organised

- \* Stand in mute defiance
- \* Display hive intelligence
- \* Act in a surprisingly human manner

**PNEUMATIST CLERICS:** A few valued pistonheads have learned (or think they've learned) how to 'appease' the engine. These few have set themselves as deacons of a new priesthood. **Instinct:** to revere the engine

**7 HP 1 Armour d8 damage, 3-piercing, far (crude etheromancy)**

Group, arcane, intelligent, cautious, organised

- \* Cast a techno-magical spell
- \* Analyse their surroundings
- \* Act with ruthless efficiency

**GEARDUST CLOUD:** these microscopic workers are impossible to maintain outside of a phlogiston-generated field. However, without proper maintenance these devices now run rampant. Locals know that to linger in the coppery clouds, even for a moment, is to invite death. **Instinct:** to disassemble

**3 HP 1 Armour d4 damage, 3-piercing**

Horde, tiny, construct

- \* Take something apart
- \* Sanitise a surface
- \* Block a way out

**PROFESSOR ELEMENTAL:** A well-known travelling bard, Elemental is the latest in a long line of agents to observe the town. Unlike the others, he isn't interested in the money as much as the opportunity to help these poor people. **Instinct:** to help the people help themselves

**12 HP 1 Armour Etheric Accordion (d10 damage, far, 2-piercing)**

Solitary, Arcane, Intelligent

- \* Harness the elements in a song
- \* See through deception
- \* Reveal an immunity to the fallout
- \* Engage in a battle of sick rhymes



# LOCATIONS

**The train line and the farmlands:** The closest active station is half a days' walk away across rolling hills. The vegetation gets increasingly bleak the closer the party get to Fluxington. *The static figures on the horizon aren't scarecrows. Beware their gaze when the sun goes down.*

**The model village:** A miniature replica of what the village was once meant to be. Presided over by 'mayor' Chavspike. The mayor and his goons know of the engine, but is paranoid - he believes anyone asking questions about it are Cheapfields agents looking to finish the job they started. Furthermore, they believe the engine's energy is the one thing keeping them alive, and will react violently to anyone who lets on they intend to deactivate it.

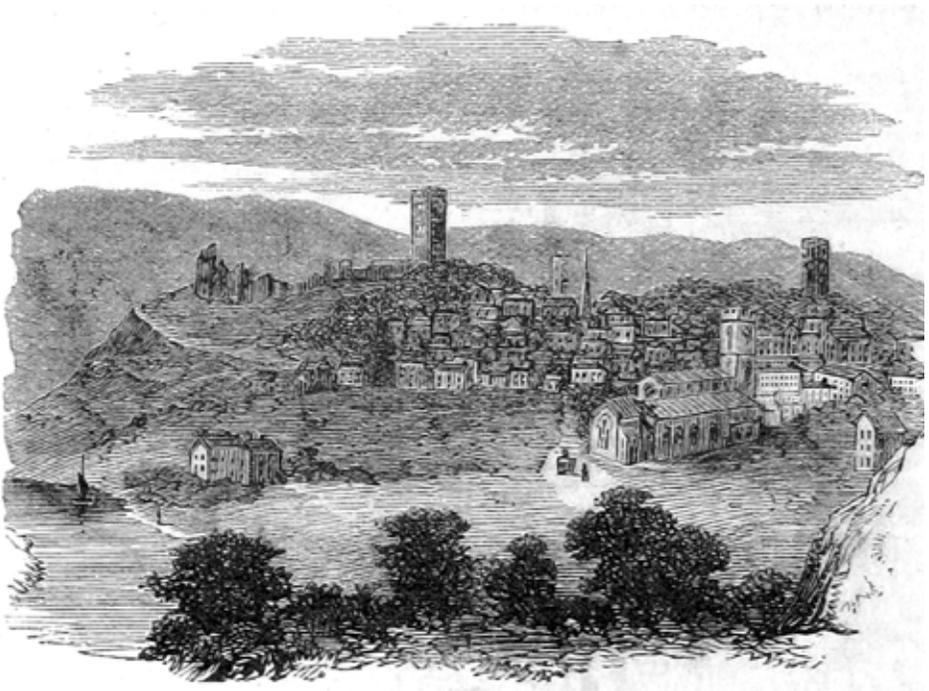
**The handlewaystation:** A sky-rise tower that's a hub for every other location in the town, via handleway. Most pistonheads have grafted wayhandles to themselves to make travel easier, although hand-held devices are commonly found.

**The shops:** There are a few odd shops providing meat, bread and common supplies to the occasional travellers and each other. A bit of greyish meat and bread can be bought by way of rations, as well as adventuring gear and other common supplies. The townsfolk are grey-skinned and not prone to conversation.

**The Rogues' Scythe:** Once a chapel to Mareth, now a (usually very quiet) tavern. Like the merchants, the innkeeper is grey-skinned and not very talkative. However, Professor Elemental can often be found here - the players will almost certainly get his attention. *If you spout lore, you may recall Mareth is an old god once popular in Chalcedon. If you make an appropriate offering at the old shrine of Mareth, you are granted some useful knowledge or boon related to your deity's domain. The GM will tell you what, and what might be an appropriate offering.*

**The chapel of Pneumatancy:** The main power plant, as the population got increasingly paranoid the engine began to be guarded and even revered. Now, the plant looks more like a church, converted with crude religious trappings. The door is locked, and the mysterious clerics don't let just anyone in.

**The ruins of the etheric mill:** Not even the townsfolk dare venture near this area, which decades later is still little more than a dusty crater. An open conduit is present just below the surface, which leads directly to the location of the engine. The area is heavily irradiated and home to the worst mutants and thickest gear dust clouds. (If you played the prologue and the son left something behind, whatever it was should be stumbled upon in the ruins - left pristine by the etheric fallout.)



# THE PHLOGISTON ENGINE

During the early development of etheromancy, the Phlogiston engine was one of several attempts at a device that could independently contain and regulate etheric energy. Initial tests were promising: the engine was able to generate tremendous amounts of energy with only a modicum of maintenance. Touted as the solution to the nation's economic and industrial problems, the engine's test-site was converted, at great expense, into a model town representative of this brave new era.

But on the day of the opening ceremony, disaster struck. One of the mechanics made a minor miscalculation, leading to a breakdown of the regulator at the etheric mill. As a result, the mill - and nearly everyone in it - were destroyed. The chain reaction left a pall of fallout across the entire town. In the following months, more side-effects were discovered in the survivors: discolouration of the skin, eyes, and bones, physical deterioration, and bouts of severe anxiety and paranoia. Even worse, these changes were hereditary. The engine still worked, but was incredibly temperamental: some days it ran as intended, others it would fail to start at all.

Lacking the means to safely dismantle it, the Cheapfields family quarantined the town and spread rumours of sabotage by a third party. The truth was, the family was both unwilling to clean up its own mess and keen to study the long-term effects of exposure.

In the decades since, they have sent their own agents in secret monitor the engine and its effects on the population. These agents are misled into believing the engine is responsible for *containing* the mutative energies, rather than prolonging them.

To the select few even aware of its existence, it's believed removing the engine safely would go a long way to making Fluxington truly habitable again. But to do so would mean braving the irradiated town and its mutant population, not to mention Cheapfield's deluded agents. Who would be foolish enough to try that?

## **ETHEROMANCY**

Etheromancy is the conversion of latent energy from the etheric plane into a physical, kinetic force. Essentially, the technology is vampiric: it converts latent psychic power into physical energy.

Etheromancy is most commonly used to store energy on a mass scale and empower mechanical devices: pistons, gears, lightbulbs, radiators and so on.

The Cheapfields family were the first to bring etheromancy to the public eye and regard it as a science. In the decades since, it has united the nation and propelled it into an industrial revolution. Other nations have similar methods of power generation (such as the “electrickery” of the gnomes of Mirkasa) but few are as stable or simple to maintain.

To overcome the early problems from the phlogiston engine and similar devices, the etheromancers have started tapping other planes as sources of ‘fuel’ instead. The long-term consequences of this are yet to be discovered.

Many individuals practice etheromancy as an alternative school of magic. Technically this is illegal, but unfortunately there’s often a fine line between legitimate etheric enterprise and power-mad wizardry.