

INTRODUCTION

You are about to be introduced to the wildest tavern in the multiverse: The Looking Glass. Here you will meet its unforgettable denizens and learn of the cosmological mysteries that lie in the endless Shifting Halls. This issue is broken into three sections: a description of the setting, a new adventure for 4-6 fourth level characters, and an appendix of unique items, monsters, NPCs and tables to help you run your Fifth Edition game in The Looking Glass and the fantastic worlds beyond. Subsequent issues in this series will expand on the setting while introducing new assets to your game, all referring back to information in the issue you are now reading.

THE LOOKING GLASS

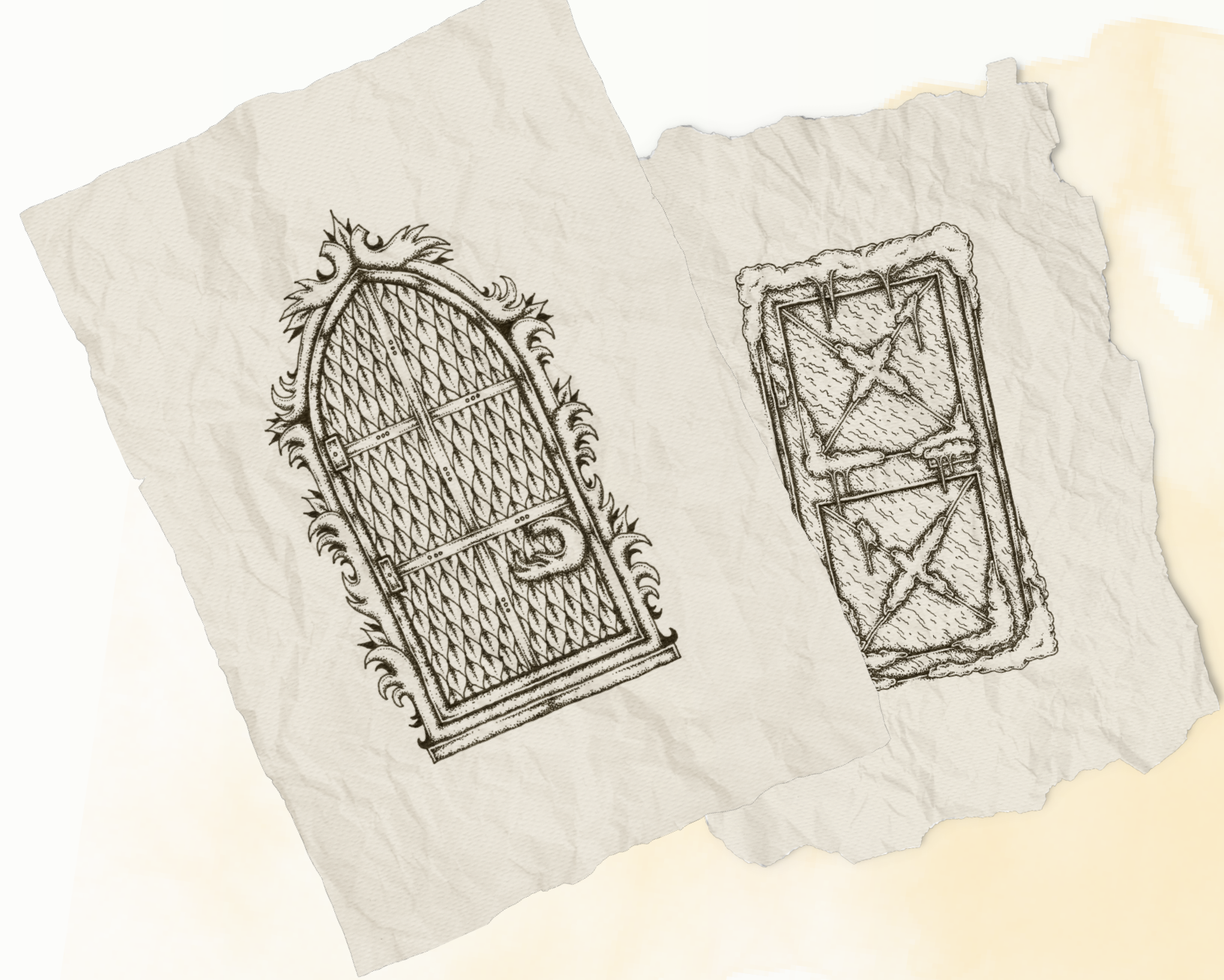
The Looking Glass itself is a bar of high spirits and ornate décor, taking its name from the various windows that peer into the distant reaches of the multiverse. Due to its enigmatic accessibility from many realms and many planes within those realms its patrons represent the full spectrum of life in the cosmos. It would not be uncommon to see two creatures of drastically different alignments, from seemingly incongruous worlds, sharing a steaming libation from the skull of an extinct beast. The inexplicable wards bestowed upon the bar and the watchful eye of the bartender Azisa, keep even the most tenuous combination of individuals cordial throughout their stay.

Though the regular visitors of The Looking Glass and the bar itself are oddities on a grand scale, the real mysteries lie in wait in the Shifting Halls. Behind the bar an expansive ever-changing network of pathways and rooms connect doorways to the farthest reaches of the multiverse, held in place only by the attention of those who may be watching. In this issue we will only scratch the surface of the worlds beyond and within the Shifting Halls but subsequent issues will bring to light new discoveries.

There are many arcane theories as to this place's true relationship to the rest of the cosmos. It has been studied in depth by sages who have encountered its wonders. What IS known is that it was created by a mortal. And not just any mortal. It was created, almost in jest, by a fuzzy little bard...

SOUND FAMILIAR?

In several settings throughout the history of the world's oldest roleplaying game there are similar nexuses of multiversal travel, including a bar of a very similar sort. These locations are a wellspring of inspiration for any player or dungeon master that may stumble upon them, and though we dare not invoke them by name, we encourage you to seek them out. The Looking Glass is both an homage to and a compatible sibling of these settings, and was born from the desire for further adventures in such fantastic locales.



FUZZY BEGINNINGS

Many years ago in a place that may or may not be known to you there was a bard of great power and renown by the name of Raj. He was born in a wild, forested country known as Alta, famously populated by individuals of the feline sort. His tail was tufted and puffy at the end and his ears ended in little wisps of fur like those of a lynx. In his later years he took to wearing a variety of colored and feathered hats, cocked atop his striped little head, but his whimsical appearance belied his powerful nature.

As time went on he got very close to a group of adventurers with whom he had been traveling. He sang their praises from seedy bars to dazzling palaces in every corner of the cosmos. They defeated demented dragons, made deals with devious devils, and even fractured a phylactery or two. Every experience came with a trinket, a song, and a furtherance of Raj's arcane prowess.

In need of a place to put all of his fantastic finds on display, Raj created a magnificent museum in a demiplane of his own making hoping to open it to the public and share with the masses the wonders he had found.

Items were displayed with riotous whimsy: large ornately framed windows peering out onto the planes, showing views of fantastic places he had been, skulls of creatures he and his friends had slain, magnificent magic items adorning the walls in impenetrable cases. He created rooms in a winding maze of hallways near the back for his friends when they chose to visit. The entire place was created in his mind, as the receptacle for his memorabilia and his treasures – "People will pour in!" he thought, "There will be a line across the cosmos of people waiting to visit Raj's Magnificent Museum!"

He cut the ribbon and waited. And waited. And waited some more. To put it mildly the turnout was dismal.

Museums just don't have the pop that they used to. I mean, in the great expanses of time and space with all of the wonders available to a person, would they want to spend their precious copper on looking at things in cases?

It seemed the answer was a resounding "no".

Raj then had a fantastic idea. Slap some tables and a bar in the middle of it all. Serve fabulous drinks. Play music, and offer a wondrous setting for adventurers like himself to come and rest and share stories of their close calls and giant successes! It was a huge hit. Word spread across the planes like wildfire, packing the booths and tables with creatures of all sorts: a revolving door of chaos and storytelling.

In the end, the perfect reflection of Raj himself. A place bathed in the constant variety of life.

That is how The Looking Glass was born. And even two centuries after Raj's disappearance the ale keeps flowing.

WELCOME TO THE LOOKING GLASS

The Looking Glass is a place like none other, and its arcane workings are a mystery to many visitors even after years of patronage. The simple truth is that The Looking Glass is a demiplane of a singular sort. The following rules of its structure are known to nearly all of its visitors.

GENERAL FEATURES

The following features are common throughout the tavern. Some areas of the tavern have additional features that are described at the beginning of their respective sections.

ENTERING

Just as the Astral Plane is accessible from any location on another plane, The Looking Glass is accessible from various locations around the multiverse. The Looking Glass often creates connections to its entrance on various worlds and planes at random. At the DM's discretion, a door might appear in their campaign setting, bringing the party inside The Looking Glass. It is known that stable doorways to The Looking Glass exist in a few worlds, though the secret of their location is closely guarded. Whether led to an entrance through a veiled hint from an NPC, or merely by walking through an unassuming doorway, the tavern will bring new patrons in through the front door.

Places where your party might encounter a stable entrance to The Looking Glass include:

- An abandoned gothic mansion sits among a glen of leafless trees. Though this estate is crawling with ghosts, banshees and zombies, the most sinister inhabitant lies in its partially flooded basement. After wading through its untold horrors a group of adventurers may find the skeleton of an otherworldly creature splayed out across a forgotten hall, its lifeless hand pointing towards a locked cellar door: a secret entrance to The Looking Glass.
- A roughly carved wooden sign with a set of goat horns hangs over a cozy mountain cabin. It seems that this cabin hasn't been inhabited for quite some time. If the party sticks around long enough, they may catch a glimpse of a satyr approaching the front door. With a flick of his wrist he sticks the stem of a rose into the keyhole just as the first rays of morning sun strike the door. The horns on the sign briefly morph into an image of a hand mirror, the door springs open and a faint mist drifts out. With the clack of hooves he disappears into The Looking Glass, the door slamming behind him.
- A barren tundra swirls with a biting wind. A faint green

light can be seen emanating through an ice fishing hole in the middle of a frozen lake. Closer inspection reveals a sunken canoe on the lake floor, partially covering a shimmering portal to The Looking Glass.

- A bustling city sprouts up from a seemingly endless scorched desert. An escaped slave dashes through the streets. Barely staying ahead of his pursuers he bursts into a shaded alley only to be greeted by a dead end. Quickly attempting a ritual he fills his pockets with sand and rhythmically knocks on the far wall. With an arcane spark the sandstone shifts and twists into an opening. By the time his captors arrive in the alley he is already safe within The Looking Glass.

EXITING

Those who have entered The Looking Glass often find it difficult to make their way back home. The main entrance to the tavern is not accessible to those within it therefore patrons wishing to find their way back to the place from which they entered the bar must do so through the Shifting Halls. Because the endless doorways of the Shifting Halls are constantly appearing, disappearing and moving from one location to another even experienced visitors have a difficult time locating portals.

The tavern staff have the unique ability to determine where a door may lead. Each carries a set of keys that works within the Shifting Halls. Like a tuning fork these keys are attuned to various locations and allow the staff to access certain places. Once inserted, the key turns any door into a portal to the place attuned to that key. For example a tired staff might wander back into the hallway to return home, inserting the key to his house in a door that leads to the Astral Plane, temporarily converting it into a door to his home. This effect ends once the door is shut.

It is known by a few that if you can provide proof of where you came from, as well as a hefty bribe, the tavern staff may use a key to help you return home. Their inventory is limited, however, and they may not always be able to help.

HOLDING A DOOR

If no one is there to see a door disappear, can you even be sure it was ever really there? As long as a door in the Shifting Halls is being witnessed it cannot alter its location or disappear from its current place, as if the grasp of someone's attention is all that binds it to reality. There are three ways that denizens of the Shifting Halls will use this trick to keep a door active while they pop through into a

new location, take care of business, and return through the same door they left without risking being closed off and having to find a way back through the primary entrance in The Looking Glass. These methods are the following:

Hire a Watcher. The Watchers Cabal is a group of men and women who wander the halls, generally armed to the teeth, offering their services to adventurers who would like to return to the Shifting Halls after completing some sort of business on the other side of a door. A watcher merely takes coin to protect and watch a door until the adventurers return. They generally charge hourly taking pay up front, though sometimes a daily rate can be negotiated, leaving immediately when the time is up whether you have returned or not. Traveller take heed, time may pass in unpredictable ways on other planes.

Buy a Portabrace. Portabraces (see **Appendix C: Magic Items**) are constructed through a secret method in the back of The Looking Glass and can be purchased from various members of the staff or ordered directly from a delivery bird. Portabraces are found in three sizes: Lesser, Standard, and Greater. These will hold a door's location for one hour, eight hours, or one day respectively before being crushed by the hall's desire to shift. Each Portabrace is a single use item, that once activated, expires after the allotted time regardless of if they are taken from a door early.

Learn Raj's Doorjam. Some people are aware of a rare spell that allows them to, when cast at certain levels, hold the position of a door. When cast at too low a level concentration must be maintained throughout travels outside the Halls which sometimes poses a great risk.

TIMELESSNESS

The flow of time within The Looking Glass obeys a different set of laws. Creatures inside do not age.

UNREAL MATERIALS

Nothing that originates in The Looking Glass can be taken from it. Tables, chairs, drinks and other furnishings dissipate into a glittering mist if removed from The Looking Glass.

SPELL RESTRICTIONS

Many spells have altered effects when cast within The Looking Glass, including spells cast from magic items or artifacts, and class abilities that duplicate the effects of spells. Spells that attempt to transport a creature into or out of the tavern, pass through walls, transmute materials, or communicate over long distances (including those that commune with divinity) are all ineffective here.

DISTANT GODS

Clerics, paladins, and other divine casters may use their abilities within the entirety of The Looking Glass though there is much discussion as to how this is possible. If a world apart from that of their god is travelled to, a new god must be sought for access to their similar powers, as god's powers may stretch between planes in their world but not in others. Some followers have found methods within the bar itself to bypass this rule, also leading the theorizing among many sages and theologians.

PLANAR WINDOWS

A cluster of circular windows are inset along the back wall of the tavern. These ornately framed portals are the tavern's

namesake referred to by savvy patrons as "looking glasses". They display scenes from all across the multiverse creating a colorful collage in every shade of existence.

One may wonder why simple planar viewports would garner the attention that these looking glasses do, often crowding the back of the bar with dozens of experienced adventuring parties. Their popularity is due to the fact that these looking glasses seem to only peer into moments of high emotional stress. Attuned to latent lay lines of emotion that permeate the expanses of the multiverse, these looking glasses are more akin to natural phenomena than a magical item, and cannot be dispelled or removed by any means. Every time a sufficiently rich emotion is felt, regardless of where it may be happening in the multiverse, it has likely drawn the attention of a looking glass.

Each creature focused upon by a looking glass is in need of something. Perhaps they need to find a lost item, locate a beloved person, exact revenge upon a foe, or send important news to a loved one. It is almost always the case that a creature with this degree of desire is willing to pay, trade, or barter, to get something done.

Should your players wish to look through the looking glasses, consult **Appendix A: Planar Locales and Creatures** to determine which creatures and locations are being displayed.

THE LOOKING GLASS

We hope you have enjoyed this sneak peek into our upcoming release: *Nothing Ever Happens At The Looking Glass*. You can find the full release on our website March 12th which will include:

- **Plot hook tables** that allow you to create more than 440,000 adventures stemming from The Looking Glass.
- 9 new **NPC stat blocks and art** (including four entirely new monsters).
- 5 new **spells and items**.
- A playable **map** of the extraplanar tavern, created by **Venatus Maps**.
- A new **adventure** for 4-6 fourth level characters.
- And more!

Follow us on Instagram: **@StormGiantGames** for more information about this upcoming release on March 12th.

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