

Incursion: The Gallery of Castien DeRont

Castien DeRont. Architect, painter, sculptor, genius. Many an artist has gone mad trying to equal his creations. They say he grew up in this once-beautiful forest, creating works of unparalleled genius. Awed patrons built a studio for him first, then a gallery to house his works. Visitors would flock from the corners of the earth to gaze upon his masterpieces.

One day Castien stopped accepting visitors. Soon the forest around his gallery grew dark and foreboding. The gallery would never open again. With each passing decade collectors have grown more desperate, placing higher and higher offers for genuine works by Castien DeRont. Few have managed to return safely, with a masterpiece intact. Will you be one of them?

Ask each of the treasure hunters to share a disturbing rumor they've heard about why the gallery closed. One of them is at least partially true. Decide which theory holds this truth and note it for later.

Theme

Art

Moments

- Smiling bodies preserved in wax
- Bones and teeth arranged into mosaics.
- Statues with human eyes set in their stone sockets that seem to follow your movements.
- Tattered tapestries dangle from bleached, gnarled branches. Like skeletal hands.
- Clay that takes the form of a tragic memory from. one of the onlookers.
- Origami cranes perch in a tree, devouring a crow.
- Monstrous marionettes dangle from the branches. They seem to dance in the breeze.
- Living mural drawn in chalk. Smudging it makes the inhabitants panic and riot.
- Corpses hold parchment rolls in their mouths. The parchments depict their deaths.
- Shrubs in beautiful, abstract shapes. They cast monstrous shadows.
- Paintings of alien landscapes. They can be entered. Returning requires a ruin roll.
- A wooden mannequin with human teeth. If the party destroys it, they will find it again.
- A white canvas. Paintbrush and palette set beside it. Anything painted upon it becomes real and dangerous. Creatures it creates are killers. Objects it creates are cursed.
- A hunter finds one of their childhood drawings. Ask them what it is, and how it has been gruesomely altered.
- A hunter sees a life-sized version of one of their childhood sculptures. Ask them what it is, and why it's now hunting them.

Conditions

- To you, the sky looks like an impressionist painting of your deepest fear.
- Your right hand turns to heavy marble.
- A tattoo depicting your darkest secret appears somewhere on your body.

- Your teeth turn to stained glass.
- Your eyes become ceramic. You can still see with them, even if they're not in your skull.
- Your blood becomes paint. Any work created with it will be a masterpiece.
- You weep ink.
- You believe yourself to be beautiful. Any disfigurement causes you extreme distress.
- Your face becomes moldable, like clay. It can be shaped by a sculptor.
- You must carve a sculpture of a loved one before the night ends. It will hunt you.

Ring 1

TERRORS: Headless marble statues slowly roam the area, groping blindly as they move. Their movements block the narrow path. The statues put rocks and similarly shaped objects on their neck stumps, but nothing fits well. The hunters' heads would fit perfectly. The statues are bereft of any sense beyond touch. Hunters can easily bypass them by manipulating their movements with thrown objects or similar actions.

TEMPTATIONS: At the center of the clearing, surrounded by the groping statues, is a wide marble plinth. Engraved are the words, *The Seekers*. Ask each of the treasure hunters what personal meaning their character finds in the piece.

Ring 2

TERRORS: The forest path becomes a sluggish river of wet clay. What appear to be pieces of clay statues slowly bob along it. They're actually clay-covered corpse parts. Clay-covered hands occasionally seek to drag a hunter under. During this ring a hunter should become entirely covered by clay. It should severely hamper their movement and breathing until painfully scraped off. The river eventually widens to create a wet clay swamp among the trees. The party will have to wade through.

TEMPTATIONS: Clay-covered mouths whisper welcomes to the Gallery of Castien DeRont. Each tells of one of the glorious exhibits it saw there. Ask the hunters what incredible work they hear the clay mouths describe.

Ring 3

The path rises into a long marble stairway that switchbacks up a hillside. The sides of the path are thick with obscuring trees. The temptations must come first in this ring. The terrors will come after.

TEMPTATIONS: Hung between the trees are gigantic paintings set within frames of bone. Each portrays one of the treasure hunters claiming their deepest desire. Ask each treasure hunter what the painting they see depicts. Probe for details. Get as clear a description as possible of each scene. This coaxes the treasure hunters to literally visualize their desires.

TERRORS: Further down the path, each treasure hunter sees another painting set within frames of thorny wood. Each portrays a scene of one of the other treasure hunters, depicted as

an ugly caricature of themselves, stealing or destroying the deepest desire from the previous painting. Ask the traitorous hunter to describe the scene in detail, precisely how they are depicted ruining their companion's happiness.

Ring 4

TERRORS: The party reaches the gallery. Architecture is an art and Castien's gallery was once his greatest achievement. Time has eaten its beauty. Roots grow up through the cracked marble floors. Faint light filters through broken stained glass windows, painting the floor with color. However, the art itself seems untouched by time. As they enter one of the early rooms, ask the hunters to "paint the scene" by describing paintings of beautiful creatures they see upon the walls. Do not let them name the creatures, they must describe their appearances in detail. Later have them notice that at least one of these creatures has left its frame. The gallery's subjects crawl from their paintings and statues roam from their plinths, hunting intruders.

TEMPTATIONS: Priceless masterworks are everywhere. The unguarded ones are large, heavy, or noisy. The treasure hunters can carry them... Barely. Carrying even one slows them enormously, draws attention from the terrors, or comes with some other price that makes taking them impractical. Smaller treasures fill the gallery as well, but each is well guarded by one or more of the terrors. The small treasures themselves may raise an alarm if taken. A statuette of a beautiful maiden may scream uncontrollably if taken from her place. Despite these challenges, at least half the hunters should claim something immensely valuable during this ring.

Ring 5

TERRORS: The hunters discover the disturbing truth as to why the gallery was closed. When they do, the gallery changes. Once-beautiful art becomes hideous. Looking at these nightmares too long can make onlookers claw at their eyes. Ask the treasure hunters what about the exhibits has changed to make them think the gallery hates their presence and resents their gaze. Any treasure hunters that have been left behind, dead or not, are found in the form of hideous caricatures of their worst flaws, consigned to sculpture or canvas.

TEMPTATIONS: Inform the treasure hunters that the gallery's statues are softly whispering in unison. They hiss that a terrible curse shall be visited on any that remove an artwork from the gallery without offering something priceless in exchange. Only one of the treasure hunters will suffice. For each artwork taken, one treasure hunter must be subdued and placed on a statue's plinth or against a painting's canvas. When this happens, the subdued hunter will become part of that artwork forever. Show that many of the statues have treasure hunting equipment. Some may even be recognized by the treasure hunters.