

# Nixiade

Yes, unfortunately, it's made from nixies. Living nixies, too -- and, rest assured, the nixies did not volunteer to be converted into a tasty, calorie-free, carbonated 'health' drink that promises 'all of the sweetness, none of the guilt!' Blind taste testing suggests that the second half of that slogan is inaccurate; consumers who were then told that their zero-calorie taste sensation was actually the homogenized corpse of a sapient being who had had been fed into the hopper *while still alive and screaming* universally tended to feel rather guilty indeed for enjoying Nixiade. It was remarkable, really, how universal the revulsion was. Humanity: every now and then, they pleasantly surprise you.

Unfortunately, of course, humans also **make** Nixiade. The company (Arruns Bottling) clearly knows what they're doing; they've made it a point over the last five years to purchase every available spring and wetland in North America that harbors a water spirit. Surreptitious examination of their water collection facilities has also revealed that Arruns Bottling routinely lays out its workspaces and offices in geomantic-significant ways. Simply put: once any kind of nature spirit ends up inside

an Arruns facility, she's not getting out on her own. Plus, the company makes sure that all of its personal drinking water comes from the lake of what was one of the most powerful limnades on the East Coast. It's almost contemptuously obvious.

Unfortunately, it's also not conventionally *actionable*. Exoteric US law does not recognize the existence of sapient non-humans generally, and the esoteric sections of the legal code only grant protections on an individual basis (a policy that's a relic from the 1880s, and one that is not entirely relevant here). Arruns Bottling clearly knows which nymphs are vulnerable, and which ones are not. And it's not like anybody wants to let the Masses know that all the old mythologies are there, and wandering around -- that's including the members of those mythologies, mind you. If they don't know you exist, they won't go around and importune you at inconvenient times to **ask** for things.

Of course, this deliberate obscurity also means that you become hideously vulnerable to attacks by somebody who wants to suck up your life essence with a straw, which is why the Greek pantheon is asking the Illuminati for help. Which the Illuminati would enjoy giving -- drinking the corpses of murdered sapient creatures is **gross**, and nobody told the Secret Masters that they were doing it (a bad call, that) -- but they aren't sure what's really going on, here, and sending a full MiB Squad to investigate is an excellent way of turning small conflicts into full-bore Secret Wars.

Well, that's why the Good Lord invented independent adventuring groups.

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