

THE CRUSADER™

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The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer

NOTES
FROM THE
MANAGING
EDITOR

BY JAMES M. WARD

A PEEK INSIDE
PART II

BY STEPHEN CHENAULT,
CASEY CHRISTOFFERSON

THE CAMPAIGN
SETTING:

RULES, PART II

BY CASEY CANFIELD

CREATING
MAGIC ITEMS

BY DAVIS CHENAULT

GAME REVIEW:
AIRSHIP

BY JAMES M. WARD

THE ANGRY
GAMER

BY A TROLL

TALES OF THE
RINGS OF
BRASS

BY STEPHEN CHENAULT

MONSTERS
OF AIHRDE

BY STEPHEN CHENAULT



*LOTS O'
TROLLS
INSIDE!*

**NOW
MONTHLY!**

Egg Sucking Dawg

by Stephen Chenault Art by Jason Walton



END.

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notes from the managing editor



James M. Ward

was born in 1951. Living a pleasantly long time, he has been happily married 38 years thanks to the patience of his wife, Janean. He has three equally charming sons, Breck, James, and Theon. They in turn have given him five startlingly charming grandchildren: Keely, Miriam, Sophia, Preston, and Teagan. Working here and there, he's managed to write the first science fiction RPG, METAMORPHOSIS ALPHA, several best selling CCGs including SPELLFIRE and DRAGON BALL Z, and a few novels including HALCYON BLITHE MIDSHIPWIZARD and HALCYON BLITHE DRAGONFRIGATE WIZARD. He likes to fence, the 'sword' type, not the 'put up' type. He spends a great deal of time looking for work. He reads science fiction and fantasy novels and occasionally something else when the cover looks interesting. Recently, he designed and tricked a company into producing his DRAGON LAIRDS board game and he's very happy with the results. If possible, he'd like to end up as the Captain of the starship Enterprise, but that job keeps getting taken before he can get his resume into the proper time stream.

I've been in the hobby gaming industry for a long, long time; perhaps too long, but that will be a different story. I've very excited about the future of CRUSADER magazine and CASTLES & CRUSADES as a thriving magazine and product line. In the past months, we've taken the magazine and made it a monthly product (or almost). Steve Chenault, the Publisher of the magazine has been very gracious and allowed me to add in new features even when he questioned if anyone wanted to read them. I've started giving you game reviews of games I've played recently and I believe all of them are well worth adding into your personal game collections. In this issue, we are doing book reviews and again these will be publications we think everyone who enjoys the hobby should add to their bookshelves.

As I said before, I've been in the gaming business a long time and I've had a great deal of success in the products I've designed, and in helping companies grow themselves. One of the secrets to my success is listening to gamers and their comments on what I've done and what they would like to see in future products. The Troll Lords Company has an excellent web site that has a forum for CRUSADER magazine. I'm there every week looking at what people are saying. I would really like to see more of the fans of this magazine online giving their input. Here are three recent comments:

1. ... Seriously, I think someone who really understands the SIEGE engine should write up a big article on it. Give a basic, easy-to-understand explanation of the mechanic, and then some big tables with lots of examples. I personally still have problems with this, as the explanation in the rulebook is so badly written that it confuses me, even though I know the basic idea is simple...
2. ...I wonder how a sage advice style column would do?...
3. ...I have a question about these series of articles. I own copies of the Crusader issues #2-7, but I notice that issue #2 and #3 seem to "jump" with regard to the "How

It All Happened" series. Is there a missing article that connects "Way Back When" and "Live Action Role Playing in 1947", which feature in issues #2 and #3 respectively?...

On the first request, I'm going to ask Steve what he thinks and see if we can't get something like that written up. I know Steve is working on a product that will do this as well, so the article might wait until the product comes out.

On the second request, certainly some type of regular column answering game questions could be a lot of fun. However, I remember in the Skip William days when he wrote that column, there were hundreds of letters to draw from with questions about the game, coming into TSR every single month. You C&C people do not write a lot of letters begging for answers to C&C issues. I think that's partially because the C&C system is well written. I can just see the first two columns of our magazine's version: "There weren't any questions this month, I'm reminded of a great Castle Keeper session I had a few years ago"—"Or, no questions this month, I'm working on an adventure idea what do you readers think?" I might be teasing you all a little, however if the company begins to get a number of letters with valid questions I will definitely set up column in the magazine.

On the third question, at the time of this writing, I don't know the answer, but I'll get it to Steve and he'll take up the task of getting you an answer. I know articles about the history of the company are popular. CRUSADER magazine is definitely the place where news about Troll Lords should be posted. The web site does a great job, but the magazine is where the detailed information should fill in the bits and pieces you C&C fans desire.

On another note, Troll Lords and I are working on a new hardbound book, OF GODS AND MONSTERS. The idea is to present a series of interesting Pantheons from history as well as the C&C pantheon of deities, deity artifacts, new clerical spells, and new abilities for clerics in every C&C campaign. I will get a few sections of the product into this magazine to get feedback from all of you.

ALEA IACTA EST



"The Die is Cast" – An Editorial by Stephen Chenault

A Peek Inside: Part Two

by Stephen Chenault and
Casey Christofferson

It's been a tumultuous 3rd and 4th Quarter here in the TLG offices, with a great deal of loss and not a little bit of realignment. But, as always, we soldier on. Our focus, though a bit distracted lately, is still on the Castle Keeper's Guide. I have to say my increased enthusiasm for this project has not waned. In the light of the sell out of the Players Handbook, 3rd Printing and the Monsters & Treasure, 2nd printing, and with the addition of James M. Ward's Of Gods & Monsters I find the need for the CKG even greater than before. In fact, its absence is beginning to look something like an open wound in the C&C family. So, if anything, it's with renewed excitement that we continue to slave away on this most venerable of unpublished tomes.

With that in mind, I've been plying through the various chapters and subjects looking for some material that is largely complete and that will simultaneously peak a little interest. After much deliberation, I found the section on Player Adjuncts to be the perfect little set piece. This is, in the present format Chapter 10. That of course can change as Peter lays the book out so if it appears in a slightly different form then please forgive us. Also, this is Casey Christofferson's raw text, meaning that Davis has not gone over it in its final form. It will probably appear much as it does with a little more focus on the role-playing aspect of these adjunct skills.

A note on the material itself is certainly in order. When we designed the C&C game some few years ago we intended it to be a contained game that did not have new editions or additions to it. It remains that. Material like that presented to you is additional material that is not part of the core game. Material presented in the CKG is flavor text if you will and brings us back to the whole purpose of the CKG. That purpose being to supply a book of optional rules for players and Castle Keepers alike. When first presented to me I was adamant that they would not appear in the book, but Davis kept pressing me that the CKG is a book of options. It's taken my tired old brain some time to grasp the full impact of this concept.

These Player Adjuncts do that perfectly. On the surface, they are simply extra skills that players can use under certain circumstances. In fact they are a

little more, they are tools that you can use to enhance the role-playing at the table. What's missing, the three tiered approach to many rules concepts in C&C. For those of you who might not be following various blog, message board, and articles I've written. The CKG presents the reader with a three tiered approach to rules concepts. Where appropriate each subject is dealt with by supplying the reader with different optional approaches to problems. Skills are the perfect example. Section 1 of Book 3, Chapter 5 (this is subject to change) presents the reader with simple role-playing tips, completely free of mechanics, pointing out some creative ways to make (in this case) skills for you favorite character/NPC. Section 2 gives a slightly more rules oriented approach for (again in this case) skills, giving loose guidelines or the like. Section 3 creates a rules oriented approach to the problem, allowing only a little wiggle room for the CKG to manipulate.

So remember as you are reading the following material that it does not include sections 1 and 2 for the added skills and abilities chapter for the Castle Keeper's Guide.

Without further ado, presented below are the Adjuncts: Additional Skills for Players...well one last ado, remember these will need some fine tuning before its all published.

Steve

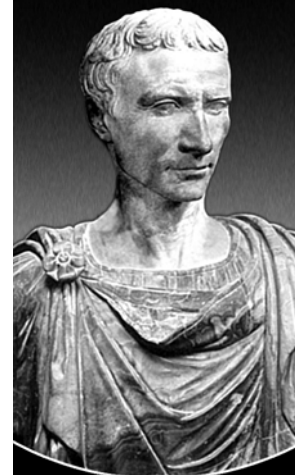
October 2008

Chapter (X): Adjuncts: Additional Skills for Players.

Adjuncts are a rules option for the Castles & Crusades game, offering characters the ability to go beyond the standard abilities offered by their character class. Adjuncts allow the character to add variety to their arch type and diversity in picking their own unique character traits. These Adjuncts go a bit deeper than pure numbers, prime attributes and by-the-level class abilities, reflecting the role playing needs of the individual player.

Similar to experience point progression, the progression of Adjuncts differs from class to class. The reason for this is that different classes have sweet spots where they gain a Class Ability merely

WHEN CAESAR
STOOD UPON THE
BANKS OF THE
RUBICON LOOKING
SOUTH TO ROME,
HE HESITATED.
BEFORE HIM STOOD
THE VAST, COMPLEX
MECHANISM OF THE
PAST, GLOWING
WITH A HOST OF
INTRICATELY WOVEN
STRATAGEMS.
WITH HIM, HE HAD
BUT ONE LEGION,
WEARY FROM EIGHT
YEARS OF BRUTAL WAR
WITH THE GAULS.
BUT WHEN CALLED
TO SURRENDER
HIMSELF TO THE
SENATE AND CERTAIN
EXILE, HE DID NOT
HESITATE.
HE CALLED HIS
LEGIONARIES TO
CROSS INTO ITALY,
TO CROSS
THE RUBICON.
AND AS HE DID SO,
HE SAID ONLY THIS:
ALEA IACTA EST!



JULIUS CAESAR

by virtue of leveling up. At other levels they receive “nothing” or merely gain some small improvement in an existing ability. When playing Castles & Crusades with the Adjunct optional rules, the following differentiated Adjunct gains are suggested to facilitate balance and give PCs something more than hit points or another point of BtH bonus for leveling up.

When is an Adjunct an Adjunct?

Adjuncts exist as an option that may be substituted for an equal class ability, or taken if the Adjunct options are used as additions to existing class abilities.

As mentioned, in general terms an Adjunct is a special ability that is chosen by the Player to best represent unique actions that their character can do. Adjuncts are designed to give the Player the most versatility in achieving their character concept within the confines of the Siege Engine’s resolution mechanic.

Learning or earning the ability to be more accurate with a specific weapon type is an Adjunct. Learning a special move or unique kick that is not covered by the abilities addressed in the character arch-type is an Adjunct. Equally, focusing on a signature spell, school of magic, or style of armor are all Adjuncts that may be earned through the course of play.

When is an Adjunct an Attribute Check?

When designing Adjuncts for your campaign, the simple rule of thumb is that anything that can be more easily handled with an Attribute check should be handled as such. The ability to swim or ride a horse does not necessarily require a specially designed Adjunct to resolve. Simply making an attribute check fills this need with no real difficulty. To do so “better” than average however, or gain some bonus to the die roll not ordinarily opened to a character due to not being “Prime” in the ability would necessitate creation of an Adjunct to fill that niche for that character.

For example of Yukesh the sneaky wished to be a championship style swimmer, but was not Prime in Strength, and therefore has a difficult time swimming. In this instance Yukesh would greatly benefit from an Adjunct to fulfill their character concept. Yukesh’s player and the Castle Keeper would then work together to generate an Adjunct for Yukesh that would result in a fair and equitable solution that satisfies the players, but maintains the play balance required by the Keeper’s campaign setting.

Note: Abilities that replicate the class abilities of other arch-types are NOT Adjuncts and should never be given as such unless in the form of a substitution for existing class abilities. See chapter x for further details.

Adjuncts at Level Rewards vs. Awarded Adjuncts

A Castle Keeper should be discouraged from awarding Adjuncts to Player Characters for role play, or through the use of a similar power or ability through consistent and frequent use of prime check to achieve the same or similar result. Although this may seem like a good use of Adjuncts it has the potential for abuse. Care must be taken in awarding Adjuncts in such a manner as the Castle Keeper must remember to award Adjuncts uniformly to all members of the gaming group. If a Castle Keeper chooses to award Adjuncts as some form of game award they should avoid granting more rewards than are determined at the onset of game play as the “maximum” for their campaign.

Adjuncts as Indicators of Campaign Strength

Presented in this chapter is a rough baseline for awarding Adjuncts as characters progress in levels. The Adjunct system as designed in this manner allows for “slow points” along a typical arch-type’s career path. In other words, where possible Adjuncts, and when they are earned are awarded on levels when a character class does not receive a “Level Up” bonus. It is felt that offering some form of “class award” in this manner makes gaining a level feel more worthwhile than simply gaining a handful of Hit Points and perhaps a Base to Hit increase.

Despite the suggested Adjunct awards being based on character class gains and levels, some Castle Keepers are certain to have their own ideas on what is best for their campaign. This is fine and well within their right as the adventure guide.

Castle Keepers who prefer granting Adjuncts to every character class at the same level may wish to grant Adjuncts every four levels.

Castle Keepers wanting a more aggressive and “super-heroic” style campaign, may wish to offer Adjuncts every two levels. Others may not wish to use Adjuncts in their game at all, having a preference for gaming that is stripped down to its barest core.

Examples given here in the Castle Keeper’s Guide limit the number of Adjuncts given to a character class to six. Again, this may not suit the taste of every Castle Keeper, nor every campaign. What matters most is that a method for granting Adjuncts, and the number of Adjuncts offered is left to the Castle Keeper, the players, and the campaign at large rather than any rule as written!

Adjuncts as Class Ability Substitutions

Quite possibly, an Adjunct, or series of Adjuncts are more to the taste of a player or Castle Keeper than the class ability offered by a specific character class. For example, a series of horsemanship Adjuncts may suit a campaign set in a Mongol Horde style campaign better than having everyone play a Knight class. In this case fighter or barbarian abilities gained at levels could be substituted with the variety of riding and mount related Adjuncts and could be gained as class abilities for fighters or barbarians in such a campaign at the suggested level provided in the Adjunct description.

For more information on class deconstruction and alternative class abilities see Chapter (X).

Adjunct Progression

Fighters gain Adjuncts at:

1st, 3rd, 6th, 11th, 15th and 20th level

Barbarians, Bards, Paladins, Knights, Monks gain Adjuncts at:

1st, 2nd, 6th, 12th, 16th, and 21st Level

Clerics, Druids, Illusionists, Wizards gain Adjuncts at:

1st, 4th, 8th, 12th, 16th and 20th level

Assassins, Rogues, Rangers gain Adjuncts at:

1st, 2nd, 6th, 11th, 16th, 21st level

Types of Adjuncts

Adjuncts are broken up into categories based on racial, combat, magical, and general. For example, Heritage Adjuncts are offered for the various playable character races offering unique ways to capitalize on their innate racial abilities. Combat Adjuncts are open to any character class who meets the BtH requirement for taking

them. Magical Adjuncts are open to any spell casting class that meets the requirement to take them. General Adjuncts are open to any class, offering non-characters further ways to customize their character.

Goblin Slayer

Prerequisite: Dwarf, +1 BtH

Years of skirmishing against goblins have yielded effective tactics to best kill them.

Benefit: Dwarves who take this Adjunct gain +1d4 points of damage with each successful attack when fighting goblinoids (goblins, hobgoblins, bugbears). However, they cannot hide their eagerness to kill goblinoids, and suffer a -2 on all reactions with goblinoids.

Special: This Adjunct can be taken multiple times. Each time it is taken, the bonus damage die improves by 1, i.e +1d6 the second time it is taken, +1d8 the third time etc., and each time it is taken, there is an additional -2 penalty to reactions.

Cat's Eye

Prerequisite: Halfling

Some halflings are better at seeing in the dark than others.

Benefit: Halflings who select this advantage can see twice the normal range in starlight and moonlight, and can see up to 30 feet away underground or in areas with poor illumination.

Rock-gut

Prerequisite: Half-Orc

Because many half-orcs have to scrounge and forage to survive while growing up, they are able to stomach fare that would leave others sick and heaving, and can endure toxins in their system.

Benefit: Half-orcs who select this advantage gain a +1 bonus to all Constitution saving throws against poison and to avoid illness caused by spoiled foods or tainted liquids.

Myrmidon's Shield

Prerequisite: Armor Proficiency (Shields)

Professional warriors know the quality of a good sturdy shield to actively fend off foes.

Benefit: The Myrmidon's Shield Advantage allows a shield bearing warrior to fend off one additional blow per round. Thus a fighter using this Advantage with a buckler, gains the use of the buckler against two attackers instead of one.

Holy Aura

Pre-Requisites: Cleric, ability to Turn Undead, BtH +2

You are a visual conduit of your deity.

Benefit: Through deep prayer and communion with your god, you permanently trade your ability to turn undead for the ability to invoke a holy aura. When you hold forth your holy symbol and chant a loud prayer for one full round your god cloaks you in a faintly glowing aura that demonstrates their power and grace. Enemies within 30 feet of you must succeed at a Wisdom save or suffer a -1 penalty to their attack rolls. Maintaining the aura requires constant prayer which prevents spellcasting but has no effect on your ability to fight.

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A Series of Unfortunate Events

Reviewed by Davis Chenault

The Trouble Begins: A Box of Unfortunate Events, Books 1-3

(*The Bad Beginning*; *The Reptile Room*; *The Wide Window*)

[BOX SET] (Hardcover)

- Reading level: Ages 9–12
- Hardcover
- Publisher: HarperCollins (October 2, 2001)
- Language: English
- ISBN-10: 006029809X
- ISBN-13: 978-0060298098
- Product Dimensions: 7.4 × 5.4 × 2.7 inches

The Situation Worsens: A Box of Unfortunate Events, Books 4-6

(*The Miserable Mill*; *The Austere Academy*; *The Ersatz Elevator*)

[BOX SET] (Hardcover)

- Reading level: Ages 9–12
- Hardcover: 848 pages
- Publisher: HarperCollins (October 1, 2002)
- Language: English
- ISBN-10: 0060095563
- ISBN-13: 978-0060095567

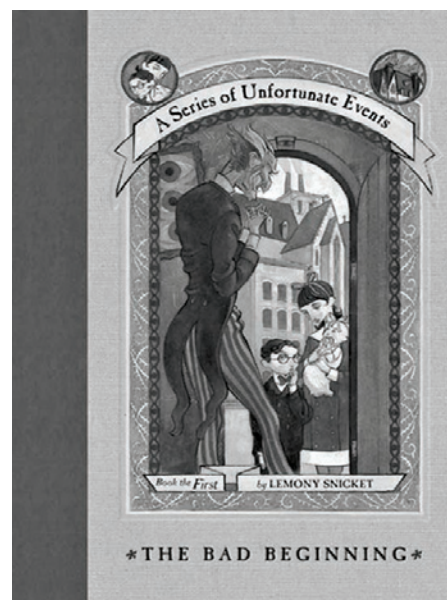
OK, so I read the first six books in this series. I read them in six days. For six days, I was in that joyful state that only the sufferings of others could engender. Tragedies are like that. At least I think they are like that. Actually, I don't think about it much. All I know is that tragedies make me feel good and comedies usually anger me. I think it is supposed to be the other way around, but I'm not sure. For me, tragedies are cathartic. Someone else is suffering more than you or me. I generally have to read a book to find someone worse off than me.

(I advise anyone out there who believes I am suffering from a mental problem or have misunderstood the nature of tragedies to write me a letter and let me know, as I have nothing to wad and throw away right now.)

Ethan Frome, which one might consider a tragedy, on the other hand, does not make me so happy. That particular book should have been entitled a "Serious Unfortunate Event which Occurred at the Moment of Salvation that Dashes all Hope and Casts One into an Eternal Hell on Earth." I, however, did not write the book so have no say so in the matter of its titling. If, though, circumstances prove such that I am enthroned one sunny afternoon and come to rule the world and all its inhabitants I shall, as my first act, re-title that book. My second act (for those concerned) would be to abolish government and go camping in the wilds of Montana.

A Series of Unfortunate Events concerns the lives and adventures of three young orphans. Their parents die in the first few pages and from that point, forward the children must fend for themselves against the depredations of an evil uncle named Count Olaf.

Tragedies (and comedies I suppose) are important for another reason. They provide points of reference for understanding who we



are, who we might be, who we may want to become, or who we don't want to be. With whom do you identify the most? (By the by, if you identify with Mr. Frome, relax and read a good book; perhaps one about orphans)

In one of Euripides plays, Alcestis dies for Admentos. Admentos' life is the better for it. For the Greeks, and generally I do believe, the tragedy is that for Admentos to become a better person and live a life worth living someone must die to make it so. (The real tragedy though, is that, no matter how many people die for whoever or whatever, there are still and will always be someone needing to be "died for." Euripides failed to take his theme to its final resting point and that is, dying for someone else is pointless because some other human reject will step up to take the place of the person died for. Even worse, the person for whom one dies is a complete waste. That would be the real tragedy.)

I only bring this play up because it was, for some reason, the first play to pop in my head and I am laboring to make a point. So the point is, with whom do you identify, the one who dies or the one who needs someone to die for them? It's fairly simple in that regard. Much more so than say, King Lear, which, since watching Ran ages ago, I have been unable to view or understand the play except through the prism of Kurosawa's vision (and it was murky in the first place).

The point is, *A Series of Unfortunate Events* provides the reader with many interesting characters to identify with. Are you pasty pale? Then perhaps the powdered white-faced girls are for you. Do you have hooks for hands? Then perhaps the Hook handed person is just your match. Do you lack physiologically distinct features? Then the person with an undetermined sex is your reference. Are you a child that likes to bite things, a snake handler, a grammarian, the sixth most successful financial advisor in your city? It's all there.

Of course, *A Series of Unfortunate Events* is a tragedy. Some may disagree, claiming that the orphans did not bring about the unfortunate events which are visited upon them, nor do the efforts of the heroes to bring about their own downfall and so, the story lacks that traditional tragic theme. Alternatively, so it may seem, the reality is, the orphans do bring about the unfortunate events by simply being alive and doggedly avoiding death or worse and constantly setting themselves up for future punishment.

The Campaign Setting: Rules, Part II

In the last issue, I started the process of creating custom classes for the campaign. I didn't have room to present the modified Wizard spell list, however. So, as promised, this column will deal exclusively with necromantic spells of all types for use with that modified class.

Before I begin, here's an important reminder: the design of these spells relies heavily on the assumptions I've already made for the campaign. These particular spells are scaled, in power or effect, to help offset the more limited utility of the selections. As a specialty list, the variety of options that a wizard may draw upon is greatly reduced. By contrast, the focus of the necromancer has benefits. The spells that are available should be very effective. In cases where a spell presented here also has a basic counterpart in the core C&C rules, you may notice a greater intended effect due to this reasoning. If using these spells in your own campaign, think about how the overall power of these spells translates to your setting.

The spell list will be presented in the same format as the spells in the C&C Players Handbook. You will also notice two new designations for each spell. These are new characteristics applicable to this campaign setting.

The first new characteristic is Wizardry. The possible values for Wizardry are "High" or "Low." The distinction between the types is not just a matter of nomenclature or prevailing opinion. There are specific differences in how the spells are cast, what components are used, and the overall effects of the spell depending on the type of necromancy that is implemented. PCs of the wizard class can learn and cast both types - but they will have to face the societal and possibly physical consequences of doing so.

High Wizardry is necromancy that is considered "clean." It accomplishes benevolent or neutral effects. Using High Wizardry, mages can apply healing magic, speak with the dead, consecrate ground, harm undead, or any number of other

positive functions. High Wizardry is considered more difficult to cast. It requires stricter componentry and often has longer casting times. These requirements allow the mage to craft the spells to avoid the corruption of dark magic.

Low Wizardry is considered "dark." Low Wizardry is often associated with the malevolent side of necromancy, including animating and controlling undead, harming souls, harnessing negative energy to do damage to foes, and other negative effects. Low Wizardry is easier to cast. It takes less time and has less strict component requirements. Because of its greater power potential at a lesser cost, Low Wizardry is seductive. Practitioners of the dark art usually find themselves paying a steep price for that power.

This leads me to the second new characteristic, Taint. Taint is an indicator of decay of the body and soul, and is earned every time a spell of Low Wizardry is cast. The accumulation of Taint can be resisted occasionally, and it can sometimes be reversed if addressed early enough. The process of doing so is extremely difficult and expensive.

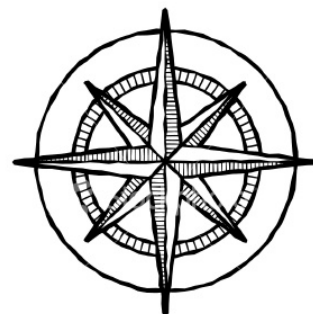
There is a point-of-no-return, however; a stage where the Taint in a particular person is so high that they cannot be fully cleansed.

Obviously, powerful Low Wizardry causes the most Taint, and certain spells can Taint both the caster and the recipient. Taint points are rated on a scale from 0 to 50, and are cumulative. As Taint gathers in a body, its negative influence causes physical difficulties, eventually becoming deformity and decay. Taint also warps the soul, changing alignments and even causing pathological psychiatric conditions.

The following table outlines the various stages of Taint, and the overall effect of each stage on the Tainted. CKs should not reveal the contents of this table to the players! Most PCs would have no idea of the overall impact of Taint. If a player knew what level of Taint caused each stage, the feeling of risk disappears



Casey Canfield has been playing and game-mastering RPGs since 1983. Casey currently plots the deeds of nefarious characters and creatures from his lair just outside of Endicott, New York.



when a Low Wizardry spell is cast. Players should always feel like the next stage of Taint could lead to disaster, and that one more Low Wizardry spell could put them over the edge.

When designing this table, I focused on a gradual decline, but not all effects are negative. Some, like the bonus spells and undead immunities, actually make the Tainted individual more powerful. The intention here is to show the seductive but corrupting influence of Low Wizardry. If an individual succumbs to the Taint completely, a true monster is created, and one of considerable power.

Effects of Taint

All attribute damage is permanent unless Taint is reversed, and all effects are cumulative.

Bonus spells apply only if Tainted is a member of the Wizard class.

Taint Score	Effect
1-5	Mild nausea, disorientation, occasional pallid skin (-1 to initiative rolls)
6-10	Moderate nausea and vomiting on occasion, loss of appetite, sunken eyes, occasional nightmares. (-1 Cha).
11-15	Chronic nausea and loss of appetite, weight loss, pallid, clammy skin, more frequent nightmares. (-1 Con, -1 Cha)
16-20	Significant weight loss, wounds resist healing (1/2 normal rate for natural and spell healing), very gaunt appearance, ashen skin. (-1 Con, -1 Cha, +1 1st level spell per day.)
21-25	Hunger for raw meat, cooked food causes vomiting. Raw meat removes pale appearance and stops weight loss. Enraged outbursts, personality changes. Alignment shifts one position toward Chaos on the Law/Chaos axis (Law-Neutral-Chaos).(-1 Cha, +1 2nd level spell per day.)
26-30	Point of No Return: Taint may not be removed once this level is reached. Alignment shifts one position towards evil on the Good/Evil axis (Good -Neutral- Evil). Increased unpredictability. Gaunt appearance returns despite raw meat diet, becomes increasingly disturbing. Skin cold, pale, and clammy.(-1 Con, -1 Cha, +1 3rd level spell per day.)
31-35	Callousness and utter disregard for life starts to manifest. Desire for raw meat no longer hidden. Sunken eyes and bony frame start to resemble walking corpse. Alignment becomes Chaotic.(-2 Con, -2 Cha, +1 4th level spell per day.)
36-40	Alignment becomes Chaotic Evil. Psychosis sets in, individual becomes pathologically murderous. (Cha set to 3, +1 5th level spell per day.) Note: PCs should become NPCs at this point.
41-45	Flesh starts to decay, mobility affected (1/2 normal movement rate). Gains undead immunities to mind-affecting spells, disease, and poison. Healing spells now inflict damage, spells that cause wounds restore HP. (Con set to 3, +1 6th level spell per day.)
46-50	Individual becomes unique intelligent cadaverous undead creature of equal HD and HD type to the character. All undead characteristics apply. (+2 Str, +2 Int, Primes: Physical and Mental, Darkvision, Energy Drain as wraith).

Now that we've covered the new spell characteristics, it is time to move on to the spells themselves. I will present several sample spells for each spell level. These spells will serve as a baseline that CKs can use to develop their own additional spells.

A note on components: many of these spells list a material component. This component is usually blood, either from a willing or unwilling donor. Obviously, tastes vary on the use of material components, and a component as graphic as this may be problematic. Feel free to drop components from your campaign, but be mindful of the fact that Low Wizardry becomes even easier without them.

For the purposes of this campaign, a small glass vial is roughly the size of a tube of lip balm. Each vial can contain 30 drops of blood.

Zero Level Spells

Cure Minor Wounds

Type: High

Casting Time: 1 round

Range: Touch

Target: one creature

Duration: Instant



Taint: None

Saving Throw: N/A

Components: V, S, M

(1 drop of freely donated blood)

This spell allows the wizard to cure 1 HP of damage by touch.

Detect Magic

Type: High

Casting Time: 1 round

Range: as C&C PHB

Target: caster

Duration: as C&C PHB

Taint: None

Saving Throw: N/A

Components: V, S

This spell is identical in all respects to detect magic as detailed in the Castles & Crusades Players Handbook.

Prepare Vial

Type: High

Casting Time: 1 round

Range: touch

Target: one glass vial

Duration: instant

Taint: None

Saving Throw: N/A

Components: V, S

This spell ritually prepares one small glass vial to contain blood to be used as a material component for necromancy spells. Blood used as a component for High Wizardry must be stored in a glass container prepared in this fashion. All wizards begin their careers with this spell in their repertoire.

First Level Spells

Phlebotomy, Lesser

Type: High or Low

Casting Time: 1 round

Range: touch

Target: one creature

Duration: instant

Taint: 1 point

Saving Throw: Dexterity

Components: V, S, M

(prepared glass vial)

This spell magically extracts enough blood from a single subject to fill a small glass vial. The subject suffers no ill effect from this spell. The wizard must possess a glass vial that was enchanted using the prepare vial spell prior to casting lesser phlebotomy. If the subject is a willing donor, the spell automatically succeeds, and the donated blood can be used in the practice of High Wizardry. If unwilling, the donor is entitled to a Dexterity saving throw to avoid

the touch of the vial. Blood obtained from an unwilling donor may only be used for Low Wizardry. If this spell is used to obtain blood from an unwilling donor, the caster receives 1 Taint point.

More powerful phlebotomy spells can be obtained at higher levels.

Resist Paralysis

Type: High

Casting Time: 1 round

Range: touch

Target: one creature

Duration: 1 hour per caster level

Taint: none

Saving Throw: N/A

Components: V, S, M (ten drops of freely donated blood)

This spell envelops the recipient with a protective nimbus that thwarts paralysis. For the duration of the spell, anyone so protected receives +10 to all Strength saving throws against paralyzing attacks.

Disrupt Undead

Type: High

Casting Time: 1 round

Range: 50 feet

Target: 1 undead creature

Duration: instant

Taint: none

Saving Throw: none

Components: V, S, M

(1 drop of freely donated blood)

This spell unbinds the negative magic that animates undead creatures. When cast, a shimmering ray of positive energy strikes a single undead creature and loosens these magical bonds, causing 1d6 HP + 1 HP/caster level of damage.

Query The Dead

Type: High

Casting Time: 3 rounds

Range: 5 feet

Target: 1 deceased creature

Duration: 3 questions or 1 turn

Taint: none

Saving Throw: none

Components: V, S, M

(5 drops of freely donated blood)

By using this spell, a wizard can compel a spirit to return briefly to a recently-deceased corpse in order to answer three questions. These questions must be answerable by “yes” or “no” only. The CK should exercise judgment regarding the answers to the questions. It is possible that a corpse may not know the answer or may refuse to provide a truthful answer to any given question. The corpse must be less than one week old for the spell to be effective. The questions must be asked and answered within one turn or the spell expires.

Second Level Spells

Cure Light Wounds

Type: High or Low (reversible)

Casting Time: 1 round

Range: touch

Target: 1 creature

Duration: instant

Taint: none (for cure), 1 (for cause)

Saving Throw: none

Components: V, S, M

(10 drops of any blood)

Cure light wounds operates nearly identically to the 1st level cleric spell of the same name. This version of the spell is second level and requires a material component of blood. The base spell causes small wounds to knit and bleeding to stop, healing 1d8 HP of damage to individual creatures. This application of the spell requires 10 drops of freely donated blood, and causes no Taint. The reverse of the spell, cause light wounds, creates small wounds (1d8 HP of damage) on a single touched creature. This application of the spell requires 10 drops of any blood, and causes 1 point of Taint per casting.

More powerful cure and cause spells can be obtained at higher levels.

Touch of Death

Type: Low

Casting Time: 1 round

Range: touch

Target: 1 creature

Duration: 5 rounds for shroud, 1 turn for paralysis

Taint: 1

Saving Throw: Strength negates paralysis

Components: V, S, M

(10 drops of any blood)

Upon casting this spell, the wizard creates a nebulous shroud of darkness around one of his or her hands. If the wizard chooses, he or she may maintain this shroud for up to 5 rounds after casting. As soon as the wizard touches a single creature with the shrouded hand, the shroud disappears into the victim, and the victim suffers as if brushed by death itself. Any creature touched is wounded for 1d8 HP of damage and must make a Strength saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 turn.

Preserve Corpse

Type: High

Casting Time: 5 rounds

Range: 10 feet

Target: 1 corpse

Duration: 1 day/level

Taint: none

Saving Throw: none

Components: V, S, M

(10 drops of freely donated blood)

A wizard may cast this spell upon a single deceased creature that is not currently animated as undead. This spell causes a protective shell of magic to surround a corpse, protecting it against decay and from necromantic energies that would animate it. Once cast, the protection may not be removed unless magically dispelled or the duration expires. This spell will also help extend the length of time after death that an individual may be still be raised from the dead. This spell may be cast in succession, preserving a corpse indefinitely, but this is usually better accomplished by priests of the Siblings that perform a special ritual.

Sting

Type: Low

Casting Time: 1 round

Range: 30 feet

Target: 1 creature

Duration: instant

Taint: 1

Saving Throw: Constitution negates

Components: V, S, M

(10 drops of any blood)

This spell targets the nerve endings in a single victim, instantly inflaming them to inflict the sensation of a million simultaneous insect bites or stings. This causes an intense sensation of agony, forcing the victim to act only in his or her defense for 2d6 rounds. The victim may not attack, cast spells, use class abilities, or otherwise take any action except movement and defense.

Third Level Spells

Animate Lesser Undead

Type: Low

Casting Time: 3 rounds

Range: 30 feet

Target: 1d4 corpses

Duration: permanent

Taint: 3

Saving Throw: none

Components: V, S, M

(1 vial of any blood)

This spell causes 1d4 unprotected corpses to be raised as minor cadaverous (corporeal) undead. Depending on the level of decay of the corpses raised, this spell may create skeletons, zombies, or some combination of the two. The undead so created are under the complete control of the casting wizard, and will obey simple commands.

Blackshine

Type: Low

Casting Time: 1 round

Range: 150 feet

Target: 15 foot radius circle

Duration: 5 rounds

Taint: 2

Saving Throw: none

Components: V, S, M
(10 drops of any blood)

A wizard casting this spell causes a swirling cloud of bands of darkness to spring into existence around a specific area. All creatures caught within the swirling darkness find themselves disoriented and unable to focus their senses. All special racial visions are negated in the area of effect. In addition, all creatures caught within suffer a -4 on all attack rolls and saving throws due to the dizzying effect of the cloud on all of the senses. The cloud also makes targeting of those within it more difficult. Any attack rolls made by an external creature against a creature within the cloud suffer a -4 penalty. Spells that target individuals may not be cast against a creature within the cloud.

Feign Death

Type: High
Casting Time: 1 round
Range: self
Target: caster
Duration: 1 turn/level
Taint: none
Saving Throw: N.A.
Components: V, S, M
(10 drops of freely donated blood)

This spell causes the caster to lapse into a state of suspended animation that is so profound as to resemble death itself. The caster's breathing and heartbeat slow so much that they become virtually undetectable without magical aid. The caster's skin becomes pallid and cold to the touch, and the caster's eyes appear lifeless and will not dilate when exposed to bright light. The caster remains in this state until the spell is magically dispelled or the duration expires.



Fourth Level Spells

Undead Friend

Type: High
Casting Time: 2 rounds
Range: 15 foot radius circle
Target: up to 6 individuals
Duration: 1d4 rounds +1 round per level
Taint: none
Saving Throw: none
Components: V, S, M
(10 drops of freely donated blood)

The spell causes the perceptive abilities of undead creatures to be altered. While this spell is in effect, all recipients appear as undead creatures to all actual undead creatures within line of sight. This spell is effective even against intelligent greater undead creatures such as vampires, though very intelligent undead may realize something is amiss if a number of unrecognized undead creatures suddenly appear.

Sustenance

Type: High
Casting Time: 2 rounds
Range: touch
Target: 1 creature
Duration: 1 day per caster level
Taint: none
Saving Throw: none
Components: V, S, M
(1 vial of freely donated blood)

This spell allows the affected individual to survive without food or water for the duration of the spell. The recipient of the spell finds his or her body magically sustained, and suffers no ill effect or discomfort from hunger or thirst. Further, the magical halting of the recipient's metabolism renders that individual immune to poison for the duration of the spell. It is important to note that some poisons may retain potency while held in the body and may become harmful after the duration of the spell expires.

Fifth Level Spells

Cloak of Shadow

Type: Low
Casting Time: 1 round
Range: 30 feet
Target: 1 creature
Duration: 1 round per caster level
Taint: 2
Saving Throw: none
Components: V, S, M
(1 vial of any blood)

This spell creates a blanket of darkness that falls across the recipient's shoulders like a mantle or cloak. This magical shroud is constructed of a fine weave of magical negative energy, and acts as a protective barrier. The affected creature is immune to paralysis and energy drains for the duration of the spell. Any foe striking at the affected creature suffers a -1 penalty to the attack roll, and also suffers 1d4 HP of damage as the magic strikes back at the attacker. Note that the attacker need not strike the cloaked individual in order to suffer the retributive damage; the attacker simply needs to make a melee attack at the cloaked individual. In exchange for this protection, the magical barrier prevents the recipient from receiving any form of magical healing for the duration of the spell.

Cleanse Body

Type: High

Casting Time: 1 round

Range: touch

Target: 1 creature

Duration: instant

Taint: none

Saving Throw: none

Components: V, S, M

(1 vial of freely donated blood, 1 crushed diamond of 500 gp value)

Upon casting, this spell instantly neutralizes all poisons, cures all disease, and removes 1d6 points of necromantic Taint from the recipient's body. This spell may be cast multiple times to remove Taint, but will not succeed in doing so if the individual has 26 or more points of Taint.

Sixth Level Spells

Purge Taint

Type: High

Casting Time: 1 turn

Range: touch

Target: 1 creature

Duration: instant

Taint: none

Saving Throw: Constitution

Components: V, S, M

(2 vials of freely donated blood, 1 crushed diamond of 1000 gp value)

This spell ritualistically removes necromantic Taint from a victim. The process is lengthy and painful for both the caster and the recipient. When the spell is cast, both the caster and the recipient make Constitution saving throws. If both are successful, the spell removes all Taint from the recipient. If only one of the saving

throws is successful, the spell removes 1d10 points of Taint and inflicts 1d10 HP of damage to the caster and the recipient. If both of the saving throws fail, the spell removes 1d6 points of Taint and inflicts 3d6 HP of damage to both the caster and the recipient. If this spell is cast on an individual with 26 or more Taint points, it is ineffective, but causes no damage to the caster or the recipient.

Disconnection

Type: Low

Casting Time: 1 round

Range: 30 feet

Target: 1 creature

Duration: instant

Taint: 5

Saving Throw: Strength

Components: V, S, M

(1 vial of any blood)

This horrific spell inflicts horrible agony and torture by tearing or snapping the connective tissues throughout the victim's body. When cast, the target is entitled to a Strength saving throw. If successful, the spell causes 2d10 HP damage. If the saving throw is failed, the spell causes 4d10 HP of damage and causes the victim to fall prone. Victims so affected are immobilized until they can be magically healed for the precise amount of damage caused by this spell. For example, if a victim suffers 15 HP of damage from this spell, and fails his Strength save, then he is immobilized until he receives 15 HP of magical healing. Until that time, the victim may not move, cast spells, speak, or otherwise act in his defense.

Seventh Level Spells

Synergy

Type: High

Casting Time: 3 rounds

Range: 15 foot radius

Target: all creatures within radius

Duration: 1 turn

Taint: none

Saving Throw: Constitution to avoid inclusion in spell

Components: V, S, M

(3 vials of freely donated blood)

When this spell is cast, all creatures within a 15 foot radius of the caster are imbued with a collective strength and health. All current HP totals for every creature in the radius, including those of the caster, are added together. For the duration of the spell, any successful attack on an affected individual removes HP from

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the collective HP total instead of the individual's HP total. If the collective HP total reaches zero or negative numbers, every affected individual falls unconscious. When the spell expires, the remaining HP in the collective total are divided equally among the recipients of the spell.

Castaway

Type: Low

Casting Time: 2 rounds

Range: 120 feet

Target: 1 creature

Duration: special

Taint: 6

Saving Throw: Charisma negates

Components: V, S, M

(3 vials of any blood)

This brutal spell forcibly separates a living creature's spirit or soul from its body and strands it. This instantly incapacitates the body of the victim while the spirit or soul is flung to a distant point in the Ethereal Plane and disoriented. The spirit or soul will then attempt to find its way back to the body. This process takes an amount of rounds equal to $20 - ((INT + WIS + CHA)/3)$ (20 minus the average of Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma). Creatures without attribute scores are handled according to this standard: those with Physical saves require $12 + 1d6$ rounds to return, while creatures with Mental saves require $8 + 1d6$ rounds to return.

Eighth Level Spells

Resurrection

Type: High

Casting Time: 1 turn

Range: touch

Target: 1 deceased creature

Duration: instant

Taint: none

Saving Throw: none

Components: V, S, M

(4 vials of freely donated blood)

With the exception of the required material components, this spell is identical in all respects to the clerical spell of the same name. It should be noted that although this is considered High Wizardry, resurrection of the dead is often considered taboo in this campaign setting unless intended to correct a significant injustice.

Ninth Level Spells

Drain Body

Type: Low

Casting Time: 2 rounds

Range: touch

Target: 1 creature

Duration: instant

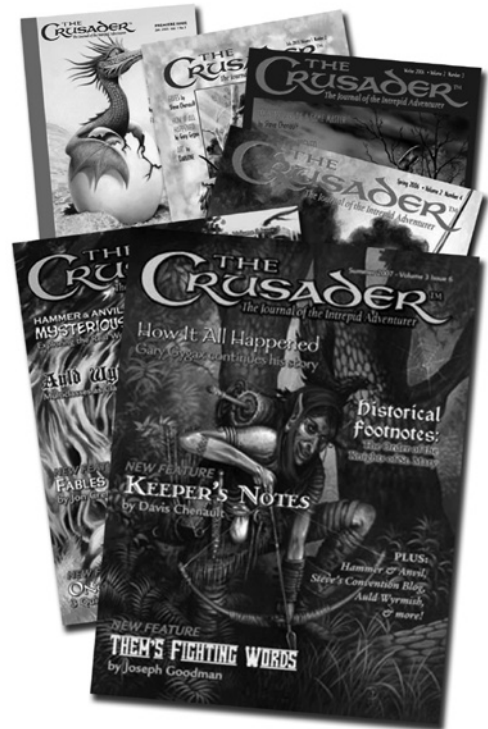
Taint: 8

Saving Throw: none

Components: V, S, M

(prepared glass vials)

This spell forcibly removes all blood from a single creature and deposits it in specially prepared vials. This nightmarish and gruesome spectacle destroys the creature targeted, providing a number of vials of blood according to the size of the victim. Very small creatures provide 10 vials, small creatures provide 25 vials, medium creatures provide 35 vials, and large creatures provide 50 vials. While creatures definitely contain more blood than this, much of it is messily wasted as it is physically extracted from the victim. There is no saving throw, but the spell is ineffective against creatures or individuals with greater than 60 HP.



Towers of Adventure

By
James M. Ward

Towers of Adventure

TLG 8313

MSRP \$24.99

We covered what the TOWERS OF ADVENTURE boxed set was in the last issue. In this one, I wanted to show you how you could put together an adventure in 5 minutes.

30 seconds to pick a tower from Volume 1.

30 seconds to pick an adventure hook from Volume 2.

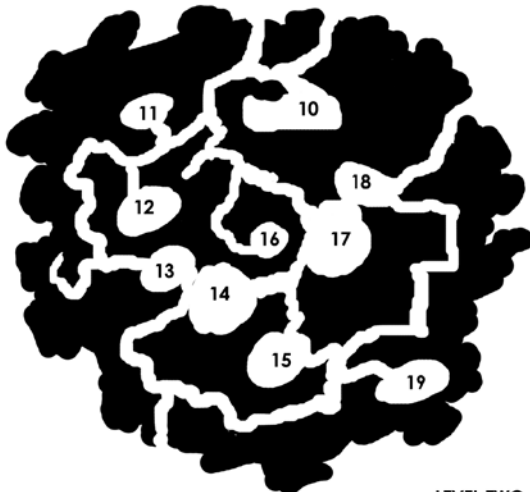
The town guard is not pleased. High on a cliff above the town, goblins have built a tower in just one night. The guard isn't prepared to attack that type of fortification. The commander puts out a call for a band of brave adventures to scale the cliff and try to take out the goblins. He'll pay 100 gold and found for anyone who will agree to take on the task.



GOBLIN TOWER



LEVEL ONE



LEVEL TWO

Room Occupants

1. #128 goblin sergeants 4 - stairs up to 2
2. Treasure #259
3. #130 goblin strikers
4. #140 guard, dogs 4 - stairs up to 2 (editorial sigh as stairs up didn't get drawn on map)
5. #129 20 goblins
6. #129 20 goblins
7. #165 goblin chief, #257 backpack treasure
8. #128 goblin sergeants 4
9. #255 tall barrel
10. #294 clay warrior trap
11. #130 goblin strikers 10
12. Treasure #263
13. #299 clay flying balls
14. #129 20 goblins
15. #325 magic trap
16. #153 Ogre Chief, #258 treasure
17. #129 20 goblins
18. #166 goblin Shaman

KEEPER'S NOTES

CREATING MAGIC ITEMS

BY DAVIS CHENAULT

I am playing a character in Steve's campaign. The character, Braelick the Hermit, is an illiterate cleric. He just attained 4th level and sewed his mouth shut. I think everyone playing was somewhat stunned at my decision. My cleric can not cast any spells. All the spells available to the character require verbal components. I actually had not researched that prior to my decision to have Braelick sew his mouth shut. OOOPS. In any respect, it makes the sacrifice all that more valuable. Braelick, you see, is in the process of creating a magic item.

When designing Castles & Crusades, Mac, Steve and I had many discussions on the process of creating magic items. The results are to be found in the Monsters & Treasure rulebook. They are somewhat vague and to be honest, I am only partially happy with them. The reason being is that I have always felt magic items should be rare and unique and personalized and I do not believe we created a system whereby truly unique magic items can be created. I may be wrong. Running a low level, low magic campaign the issue has not arisen often – or at all as I recall. However, playing in Steve's fantasy campaign, the issue has arisen as a result of my game play.

Let me explain just a little. Braelick, the cleric I am playing, was a hermit and is a flagellant. His 'magic' comes as a result of self inflicted pain. It was a character creation decision. How I have played this out is, at low levels, the self-punishment consisted of physical deprivation (for 0 level spells), minor mutilating behavior such as cutting oneself (for 1st level spells), etc. One sacrifices oneself to the ancient deities and one gains powers. That's the skinny.

Another aspect to Braelick is that he does not plunder. He takes nothing from the dead or from treasure troves or anything. In fact, he made his own weapons up until his current level when he actually picked something up for the first time — a massive warhammer. His mantra is, "The gods supply."

By 4th level, the lack of treasure, armor and magical items started to leave Braelick as the

weak member of the party and was making things technically fairly difficult especially vis-à-vis the other characters in the game. Every member of the party had at least one magic item except Braelick. All had treasure to buy material such as new armor, better weapons and other supplies. Mac's character (a ranger) always ensured that Braelick had food to eat.

Braelick had little to offer the party (even more so if one considers Braelick NEVER casts cure spells). This was pretty much all by design, though some development occurred as a product of in-game role-playing. It's all very interesting and very much unlike any other cleric played in our gaming group. At 4th level however (and this is by design), things needed changing and Braelick is ready for some growth.

One aspect of that growth is the creation of a magic item. I had no idea, when I set down to play the character, what type of magic Braelick would create or even how it could be created but, I knew I would be doing it at 4th level. (Did I mention that Braelick is illiterate and therefore can't create scrolls)? The biggest conundrum I had were the rules. The rules simply do not allow me to do what I want to do. So I improvised and role played it out to see where things would end up.

The latter is what I would like to emphasize as a designer of Castles & Crusades, a Castle Keeper, and player. I had a goal but had no idea how to get there so I improvised and role played it out. I wanted to create a very personalized magic item at 4th level. There are no rules (or the rule disallow) what I decided to undertake.

In short, this is what has happened. Braelick carried a staff from the games beginning. Luckily it has survived the campaign thus far. The staff was nothing more than a staff to which Braelick attached holy symbols of the various deities he interacted with in his adventures. It has acquired a 'value' because of role-playing. I decided I wanted the staff to project Braelick's power. It was to become a conduit of the power of the various deities' whose symbols were dangling from it.



Davis Chenault was born way back during the 1960s, when free love and happiness reigned in a world seemingly without consequence. A product of a military upbringing, he managed to jettison all the cultural baggage that bogged down the whole host of anyone who lived in that era. He wandered the trackless wastes of life spending precious hours trying to decide what to do with his precious hours, until he at last found a home amongst the dead, digging up the debris of other long-dead people's lives and examining and comparing their relative value to his own world. "Archaeology," Davis is known to have claimed, "is the wellspring of all my knowledge of social-drinking houses!"

After a decade of cultural anthropology, Davis gave up the good life for gardening, in between which he designs and writes games for Troll Lord Games. His most notable achievements: Castles & Crusades and a cast-iron outdoor stove, acquired from his neighbor.

Braelick, the flagellant, had to sacrifice something to make this so. Because of role-playing, Braelick had become somewhat of a verbal irritant in the meta-game atmosphere of the table. I played the hermit and 'mouth of the gods' gambit to full hilt and most everyone was becoming irritated by it. So, I decided to have Braelick shut up for a while on the very same night I attained 4th level. I literally shut Braelick up by having him sew his mouth closed.

The two came together in a seamless fashion. By sewing Braelick's mouth shut, a major act of self-sacrifice and self-mutilation occurred at the moment I was to begin the process of magic item creation. I discussed the matter with Steve and the following magic item would be created.

The staff could be used to cast one spell, at will per level from 4th and beyond per day. So, at 4th level, Braelick can cast one spell per day at will from the staff, at 5th level, Braelick can cast 2 spells per day at will, at 6th level, Braelick can cast 3 spells, etc. The spells can only be those at least nominally associated with those deities whose holy symbol's dangle from it (that's pretty broad). In return, Braelick had to sew his mouth up for one whole level and thereby sacrifice spell casting for one level.

I created a magic item which made up for several of Braelick's deficiencies (no magic items, inability to create scrolls, etc.), resolves a meta-gaming issue, and falls into line with my characters overall scheme of development. I managed to do it all within the rubrick of role-playing. Steve was happy with the process as well because it relieves him of the issue of 'placing' a usable magic item somewhere in the adventure for me (which often seems disingenuous) and stayed within his desire to have role-playing drive the game's development. The magic item is not too powerful (especially considering the sacrifice and the impact it's having on the current game as we roll along and Braelick is unable to cast many spells to aid the party).

So, here's the rub. The rules we designed for magic item creation are standard and should, if possible, be followed, adhered to, or minimally used as guidelines. However, role-playing games allow for so much more than rules can ever convey. They allow one's imagination to run rampant. Rules can hinder imaginative processes and should always be viewed from within that rubric. On the other hand, role-playing games must have rules to be playable. Role-playing can make a game completely unplayable if not managed with a rubric of rules. My summation here, look outside the box to see what can fit in the box.

With regards to magic item creation, many things can be accomplished. The Castle Keeper often supplies magic items as a reward for adventuring and are often used to augment a character's abilities. Plundering the dead or treasure troves and the like have become the normal method of attaining magic items

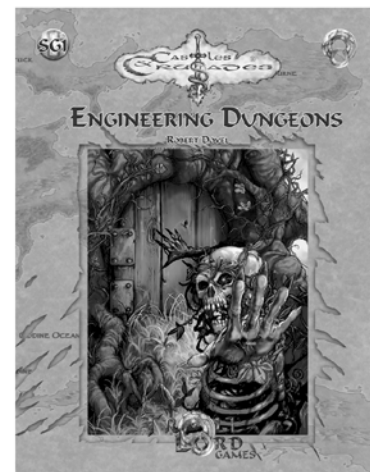
Consider this, a lawful good paladin belonging to a holy order of great renown plunders the blood soaked body of a dead orc chief to get a +1 dagger. Imagine that moment for the Paladin. Reconsider this moment. When the paladin slays that vile orc chieftain with a dagger symbolic of the Order, the dagger becomes enchanted for a +1 bonus. Consider that image for a moment. In both circumstance the Paladin gets the +1 dagger.

One circumstance provides memorable role-play another not so much. Both methods engender a certain type of role play. Which would you as a Castle Keeper or player prefer? The options for magic item creation and 'supply' are unlimited within the rubric of role-playing and the games. The magic really comes in how the two are brought together.

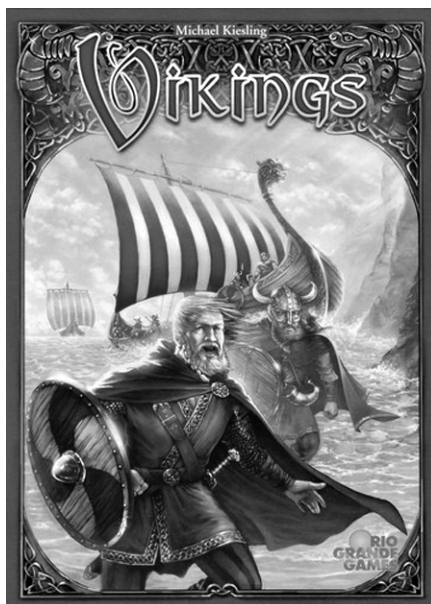
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VIKINGS

GAME REVIEW BY JAMES M. WARD

GAME RATING: BUY THIS GAME!

GAME DESIGNER: MICHAEL KIESLING

PUBLISHER: RIO GRANDE GAMES

PLAYERS: 2-4

AGES: 10+

PLAY TIME: 60 MINUTES

ISBN: 978-1-892081-77-3

The information on the back of the box tells it all about the theme of the game.

Each player is the leader of a band of Vikings. His task is to scout and then settle the islands off the coast of his homeland. As the Vikings uncover the size and shape of the islands, each band seeks to control as much of these new lands as possible. The bands build buildings and invite scouts, goldsmiths, fishermen, and nobles to settle on their islands to establish the most profitable settlements. But Warriors are also necessary! The islands will soon attract ships whose intent is to attack them to pillage the new settlements.

Each player has a t-square sort of game piece that helps set up a grid, 3 counters wide by 6 deep. In a round, each player can purchase a counter that is either an island part or a boat. The boats represent several things and normally you don't want them unless you have a black warrior counter to block the boat's ill effects.

The excellently written rules present a great overview of game play.

The game is played over 6 rounds... At the beginning of each round, the players lay out an offering of 12 tiles with 12 Viking (colored tokens) pieces. The colored Viking counters are always placed in the same order around the 12 positions on the dial: first, all of the blue fishermen, then all of the yellow goldsmiths, then all of the green scouts, then all of the red nobles, then all of the black warriors, and finally all of the gray boatsmen.

In clockwise order, players take turns acquiring tiles and Vikings... After taking a set, the player immediately adds both the Viking and the tile to his homeland. When all 12 tiles and Vikings have been taken, the round ends with a scoring.

There is a final scoring round and the player with the most points wins the game.

I've played the game many times now and like how the game works itself out. The only fear I have is that I'm worried there is a little bit too much luck in the drawing of the counters and Viking pieces, but you will have to decide that yourself. In the course of playing the game, I really admired the way the special counters



worked. These counters provide each player with lots of different game choices and that's a feature I always like in any game product. These unique counters are taken when a player spends the most on the cost wheel for a matched pair of pieces (Viking token and island or ship counter). However, during the course of turning the wheel that largest price can even be one gold or 0 gold.

There aren't a lot of catch up features and there is no way to interact with other players, but these facts didn't stop me from enjoying every game I played. There are good rules for when a player runs out of money. One can use victory points instead of gold to buy things, but I don't think it's generally a good "game play" idea to do that. I have been amazed at what over feeding your Vikings does to the game score. This tells me that collecting blue fisherman on their islands is a "way useful" idea.

In the process of reviewing games, I'm only going to review products I think should be in everyone's collection. Vikings is one of these and a very good game.



The Angry Gamer

by Some Angry Troll Dude



Another game night. Goodie. I am so happy everyone is coming over for a visit and a good night of gaming. I was up at five this morning. I was at the gym pounding weights before most people began to rouse their sleepy little heads from their fluffy little pillows, all cuddled in their downy comforters. In fact, I burned more calories in that hour than most people will burn all week. I was at work at seven in the A.M. (yes, some people do go to work before 9 am) and at my second job by five in the P.M. You read that right, my second job at five in the P.M. I got home around 8:30 P.M.

Steve will have shown up with Mark around seven. They'll sit on the couch like lounge lizards flipping through channels on the TV I have paid for, but never have time to watch, drinking Dr. Peppers and Pepsis and wandering around my kitchen like mindless cattle looking for something to graze on. Mac will show up some time later with Davis in there somewhere (depending upon his current 'legal' status, familial relations, financial crisis or any of the other various afflictions that seem to follow that dude like flies on... Well, you know), with a final show by Chris, (generally with a bottle in hand and often half empty).

They will, during this season, begin the inevitable slide toward political discussions, that's a fun one. Politically, our group is essentially divided between those who are right and those who are wrong. I side with those who are right. The others being wrong, have opinions I really honestly just do not care to hear about. I don't listen to cattle pontificate about physics or math so why listen to someone who is wrong pontificate about politics? Actually, I wouldn't listen to anyone speaking about math or physics, but you get the picture.

These conversations are long, dull, and pointless since everyone made up their mind how they were going to vote by the age of 18 and not one of them has changed party affiliation or voting practices since then. So, uh, why don't you just shut the political pie-holes and move on to an entertaining/interesting conversation that maybe, just maybe, once in a blue moon involves a little known rhetorical device called—A JOKE!

I wish those brain dead, mealy mouthed, worthless whiners would just tell a joke every once in a while (other than Mac's bum jokes).

Anyway, I get home tired and want to play a game before going to sleep or just go to sleep. Usually I have to wade through a pile of cigarette butts on my front stoops, a thick fog of political discussion, and a haze of inebriated Chris before beginning to game—if I'm lucky.

All this aside though, when I sat down to write this, I just wanted some Doritos and a Dr. Pepper. I don't often indulge myself with these items, but on occasion I like to spoil myself. Where are my Doritos? They are not in the cabinet. They are not on the shelf where I keep them. They are not on the counter. They are not anywhere to be

found. Oh, wait. Ahoy, that's them thar! At least their last vestige as a wadded up bag stuck in my trash can. Ok. So where are my saltines? Oh, same story. My Cheetos? My Funyuns? My—ANYTHING!

ONE DR. PEPPER!

I'm guessing all my friends are starving, except Mark that is. Mark always brings his own food; cookies, chips, sodas, bologna, bread, cheese whiz, candy, popcorn, a roast beef, some potato salad and on and on and on. Mark might as well bring a store with him. He should, he has to feed Davis who, I am assuming, has not eaten in eleven years, so quickly does he consume Mark's snacks. All night long Mark is throwing some item of food into Davis' mouth. Sorta like feeding a dog. Mark's rewarding bad behavior because Davis never brings anything to eat or drink. He is like a vulture, hovering around everyone else's leftovers or waiting to pounce on some unprotected consumable (like Mac's coffee).

Speaking of coffee. Mac has now moved his coffee maker over to my house. I don't drink coffee but I get up every morning and look at that coffee maker cluttering my visual space. I open the cabinet and see the coffee can, the sweet n low, the sugar, the coffee cups, the filters, a new coaster? Mac has been slowly moving things into my house for years. As is often the case with Mac, he moves with stealth in everything he does, and one never sees him coming. Only now that I am thinking of it, can I see it. There is a pile of his books, some comics, a few extra glasses, a suitcase (with clothes in it), his football, a bed...A bed? When did that get over here? At least Mac does not eat anything, so if I must have a roommate, that's the best type to have. But really, why is all his stuff over here?

Chris does not drink coffee. I wish he would. Chris shows up with a bottle of wine, a six-pack of beer, a forty-yodee-yo or something else to imbibe. Boy howdy, after about an hour the fun begins. Chris is a lawyer and, as with many lawyers, there is a frustration level built-up in their very core. Perhaps it's the law, perhaps it's the cases, perhaps it's the workload, I am not really sure and don't really care which it is, but this frustration comes out in the game. Chris takes revenge on all of us for the dire wrongs enacted in his profession. I imagine it's because the "law" (or at least the manner in which it is carried out) does not offer him satisfactory solutions to the ills and misgivings of such a litigious society. No matter how you cut it, Chris's sharp wit and razor like verbal assaults shred the gaming table. This is all carried out through and in the name of 'role-playing.' I am about to role-play my boot upside his head one of these days.

So, whom does this leave me with? Mark brings enough food to the table to feed a third world country. Davis is that third world country. Mac is moving in and adding to the junk in my house. Once underway, Chris couldn't find a crumb on the corner of his lip.

Steve. Steve. Steve.

Steve is always going on and on and on about taxes. He hates taxes, decries taxes, wants taxes lowered and done away with. His daughter's first sentence was, "The IRS is bad." Seriously, if it were up to Steve the government would not be allowed to tax and the entire federal edifice upon which our 'public servants' feast would be run on donations. Steve, of course, would not donate. We know this because all one has to do is mention taxes at the table (or revenue) and Steve launches into one of his long winded, obnoxious diatribes on the evils of government, taxes, public service, private service, infrastructure construction etc, etc, etc.

Look at Steve who brings nothing to the table but a pencil and punishment for our characters. What is it you are always hiding behind that screen? Let me guess. MY SNACKS! This guy is like a bottomless pit of snack consumption and an empty well filling up with my Dr. Peppers. I suppose it's a game tax. A tax from Steve. A tax from the gaming government. A tax that leaves me hungry at night.

As everyone knows, or should know, when I get hungry, I get surly. I have a plan for next week's game. It involves a tea party and Steve.



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TALES OF THE RINGS of ORASS

THE AIHRDIAN CHRONICLES BEING THE 12TH NARRATIVE OF THE LAY OF THE LOTHIAN PRINCES

The Elven Warlord, Meltowg-Aet-Ohd, Prince of Lothian, has wandered the world in the Shadow of the Long Centuries. Bitter and filled with rage, his life is one of unceasing war against the tower of Aufstrag and its great horned god. In his travels he learned of the Castle of Spires, its guardian Melius the Wise and its location in the Twilight Wood. He learned too that it held the gates to other worlds, where his kin had fled to and now dwelt. Returning from his travels he gathered with his small band on the Avishean Ridge, that is the Blacktooth in the Vulgate, where stood the Ineng Tree, from whose roots flowed a small creek of healing water. In drinking the waters, roads were opened for him, paths that led to the world's past. He has learned from whence came the Sentients and the Trolls. He has learned too that the Ineng Tree itself was a Troll of old who had grown roots into the stone and rock of the earth. He followed the Troll's tale, from its beginning at the feet of the All Father to the high roads of its life upon the feet of Gardrim Mountain and beyond to its defeat at the hands of an ancient and evil dragon.

A gathering wind blew from the north, carrying with it hints of the cold deeps of Aufstrag and its grim horned god. Roused by the cool air Meltowg lifted his head. Gazing into the north, the breeze uplifted him and his mind began to wander. He thought about the long war with the Empire of Aenochia and its young lord. He remembered how, after many years, the wars came to his homeland in the Shelves of the Mist. After the fall of the kingdoms of man the war continued; those who remained in Aihrde after the coming of Unklar would not yield any ground without blood. That brought his mind to the separation of his people and he brooded on his kin folk who fled in the face of the wrath of the horned god. They would not stand. They fled the realm entirely, leaving this plane for another, hiding themselves in Shindolay, which lay in one of the deep pockets of the Void. There they waited, hoping for a victory without sacrifice. Of course there is no such thing and after many years and great suffering upon Aihrde some grew discontent. Shame guided their reasoning and they broke from their kin and tried to return, but the horned god would not have it and he made it so that the gates were closed. In the end, the voluntary flight of the elves turned into an exile.

Meltowg spat, lifting his helm, he gazed upon the dents and rent metal. Costly battles left his troop with fewer elves than before, but more men had joined. The sons of sons of ancient houses rode with him, foot to stirrup with grim faced mercenaries. They stood by him as his people, his sacred tribe, born of the blood of long war and much suffering. He cast his eyes to the west to see if he could see them, but it was too dark and the trees were thick on the slopes of the Avishean Ridge.

He looked up at the tree under which he stood. The Ineng Tree, the locals called it. Ineng. Once a Sentient, a Troll, a Lord of his own people until a dragon cast him out. The tree was short, 20 feet high at best, its leafless branches gnarled and broken off at the ends. His trunk too was gnarled, twisted with a life time's worth of scars.

"Where to now, old Ineng, where shall I go now? I am here, standing at your feet...or your roots as it may be. The Fair Lady of Gilgum sent me hither. Why did she send me here? 'You have encountered the secret of sentient things' she said. It must be you she referred to, but what secret did she think you held? You are old and bitter, tired from a lifetime's worth of suffering and loss. I found your family in the roots of your memory, but little more, little to aid me in my quest to find the Castle of Spires and open the gates to other worlds where my people dwell in hiding. What curse or beneficence do you offer old trollish tree? Shall I make sacrifice? Or call it a day and yield you to your solitude. I do not know."

The elf bowed his head, his long chin brushing the cold metal of his ornately carved breast plate. He looked at his shield and sword, both as ornate as his armor. They were all powerful magics but of no aid to him in his quest for knowledge. "Where is my Queen? She would know what riddle I wander through. She would give me direction and send me on the path of the horned god's undoing. But my Queen is dead..."

The wind howled about him, lifting his tattered cloak so that it whipped in the wind, snapping to and fro behind him. He looked askance at it and even as he did so a honking came to him from above. A flight of geese flew overhead, sounding out their calls to one another to guide them on their pre-determined path. He gazed up, his hair snapping in the wind. In the distance he could see the black specs of them, flying on high, a wedge of them, moving south for the winter. "Even though the world is held in a lock step winter you fly south. Fools of beasts."

His eyes flashed for a moment and he turned to the Ineng Tree and gazed upon it. Its roots snaked into the ground, but they were shallow for the ground here was too rocky but more than that, this tree was a troll and had no roots. He walked a path of his choosing... leaving behind that set out for by the world's creation.

"I have you now, Fair Lady. I see what you would have me see." Turning he picked up his helm and placed it upon his head. He slung the great sword Noxmorus upon his back and called to his steed. Scooping up his shield he secured it upon the barding and leapt into the saddle. The horse could feel his nervous energy, and itself refreshed from the healing waters that tumbled from the troll's feet, the tree's roots, it stamped and snorted a great cloud of steam. He turned then to ride after the others, but Meltowg slowed its ardor. Grasping the reigns he turned the steed about, fully swinging around to face the tree once again.

"Well old troll. What a life you have led, from a seedling at time's beginning to lord of your people to beaten and outcast. What other stories you might have are beyond my reckoning today, but I shall return someday and learn the ending of your tale for I guess that it is as well as the beginning. But for now, watch over this land for me and remember that you were once great amongst all the creatures of the world, even if you are now diminished. But damned if your path has not opened my own before me...hold your charge steed before I rap you in the head..." The horse turned again, a full circle about, stamping and snorting its lust for the journey. "How now, old Troll? Wish me luck and damn you if you don't!"

The steed bolted at the shout and Meltowg leant forward giving the beast its full reign. Together they thundered down the path, the snow swirling around them as the darkness fell like a wall in their wake. In a moment the elf lord was gone from the ridge line, vanishing into the dark.

Upon the hill the Ineng Tree creaked in the wind, its great trunk bending only a little, but its old bark groaning at the effort. Faintly, in the dim recesses of its mind the elf's voice echoed. The sound of it awakened something in the old tree that brought memories to the fore.

Much of what happened to Ineng was lost to him, buried in the thick recesses of time that wrapped him like the bark of the old tree that he was. The dragon, that stood out so prominently to the elf was little to the old troll. One of many such events for his life overflowed with as many tragedies as triumphs, with as much suffering as comfort. Memories of the sun upon his skin came to him first, when he realized such things and thought upon them. He was young then, without a shape of his own, before the All Father established the order of things. The memories of the warmth of the sun hung with him, dispelling the gathering snow on his gnarled branches.

He remembered then a great sea of grass. Empty of all things but the sky and the waving green of the deep grasses, the plain seemed to roll on for leagues without count. Filled with the promise of silence the country was open, inviting him to dwell there without molestation. He drank of the earth deep in those days and feasted upon the silence of the grasses. Why he left he could not remember, thoughts of the land being befouled came to him, and he wondered what deeds of his may have brought this about.

His mind turned dark then and images of wars and battles came to him. This was in the later years, for there were many of the little all fathers armored and armed with axes and hammers. They waged war over all the lands, wherever the troll went he could not stay for long for the armies of these creatures would soon be around him. Though they did not always fight him, more often themselves, they did attack him when they could. So he waged a war upon them whenever he could. He destroyed their houses and emptied their barns of livestock, tore down walls and plundered their lands when he could. Many died beneath his grinding trunk like feet, and even

more did he crush and slay with his sword. This war did not end when the goblins came, but they bound Ineng in spells and used him as a weapon against the little all fathers. These years were long and filled with deeds of blood and iron. The memories were only shades of red, black and an overriding darkness from which he could not escape. Of all the tumult his mind settled on a set of great doors, bound and sealed in bronze workings. His masters compelled him to bash the doors in and he set to the task with a relish for he took great joy in the destruction of things. But the doors would not yield the rage of frustration that overtook him allowed him to break the bonds of sorcery that held him and he slaughtered the goblins in droves and ground their bones to pulp and dust. He pulled the roof of the cave down and buried himself and the ancient doors beneath mountains of rocks. There he pondered the doors and sought to shape the earth and he did so but the doors would not open nor yield. Eventually he tired of the pointless endeavor and left for the light of the sun again.

He came forth from the mountains into a deep forest, the Ethvold, or so it was called by the tall fathers. He dwelt there for awhile until he wandered east again.

A kingdom was his for awhile, where he lorded it over lesser trolls and orcs and other untidy creatures that had crawled from the morass of time. He enslaved men and dwarves and others besides and built cities and temples in worship of the sun god. This kingdom ended in fire and ash and Ineng left it in ruins to wander into the south and west where he hunted for many years.

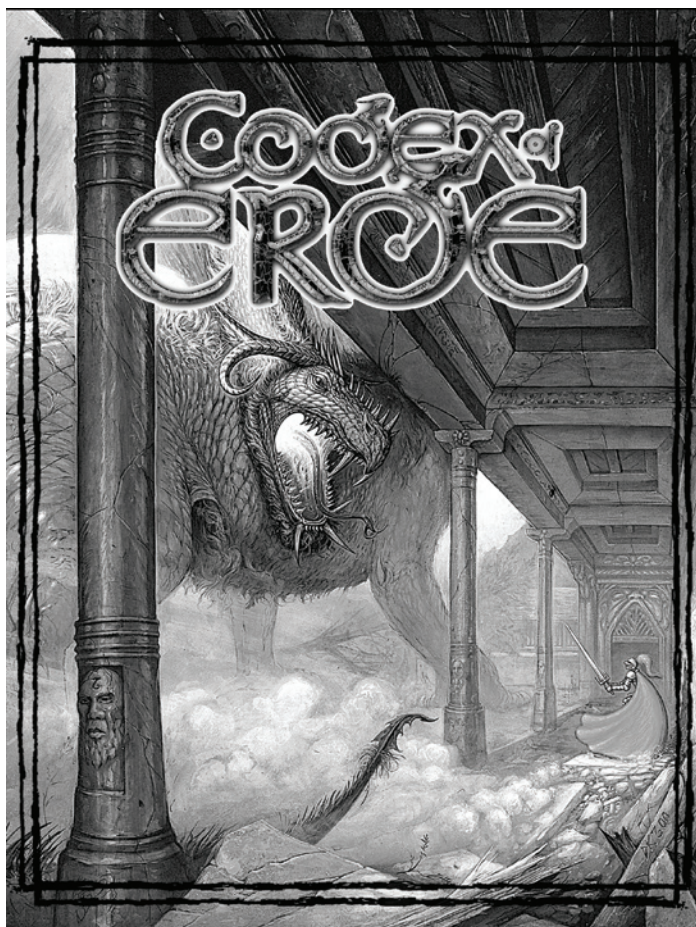
At last, his limbs grew tired and he crawled atop a high ridge to look over the land and ponder his next course of action and to discover where his next journeys take him. Cool water greeted him, bubbling up from the earth, spilling around his toes. He remembered this first sensation and thought upon how nice it was, how good the water felt. He drank of it and settled in for a spell to see the world unfold. He had grown accustomed to sitting for long spells on his travels, rousing himself when the need or desire struck him.

Ineng groaned, for no memories came after that. Deep thoughts of the forest to the south and what vitality it promised, but these faded into silence. He tried to move, but only a little, giving the effort scant attention. His feet were so rooted to the ground that he could not move any longer, his torso was as stiff as any trunk and his arms had long since ceased moving. He could not remember what came after the cool waters and his slated thirst.

After a moment the thoughts escaped the old troll. He settled back into the wind and his mind drifted out to wide plains of grass and warm sunlight upon his back. But those memories were little but forgotten moments. Ineng was a troll no longer, but a tree now, rooted to the ground upon a small patch of cold, rocky earth. His lonely perch looked over a bleak landscape of frozen, dead trees. In the distance a torpid river crowded with floating ice meandered through an otherwise empty world. The snows of winter's dark fell about him, piling slowly upon his branches, covering his roots and catching in little pockets where the bark of his skin was jagged enough to allow the icy purchase. Gray clouds hung overhead, a crown to his lonely forgotten misery.

In the east Meltowg overtook his companions in a mad rush and joy of adventure...





Title: CODEX OF ERDE - Fantasy Campaign Setting and Rulebook

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Suggested Retail Price: ~~\$34.95~~ \$10.00

Author: Stephen Chenault



“This being an account of the Days before Days and the creation of the world...”

Those are the opening words for the **Codex of Erde**, the longest running and one of the best selling books in the TLG library. The Codex, as it is known around here, has sold literally thousands of copies and until very recently it has been a staple of the TLG stock at every convention and book fair we’ve attended. It’s sold more copies in the book trade than the **C&C Players Handbook**, has been carried for almost a decade in the game

market and is one of the constant sellers in our mail room. Only recently, since the release of the **Aihrde Folio**, which replaced the Codex in a slightly more user friendly format, has the Codex begun to shy off its top selling rank. It’s just as well of course as there are only a few hundred left of the original run. It’s a book that deserves a little more than a tip of the hat from TLG so with that in mind I’d like to reveal its history, how it was written, the problems that were associated with it and its eventual triumph. The Codex is a book that was massive in the undertaking for a tiny staffed company and consumed huge amounts of resources. In it are the early signs of the C&C game as the Codex encapsulated our entire approach to gaming and game publishing. It contains the first published work we had from Gary Gygax, an adventure written for the Codex by Gary and one that appears no where else in print, and likely will not. It has the first published racial class for the whole d20 market, predating others by years. So sit back for a bit and enjoy the tale of the making of the Codex of Erde.

In the beginning, the Void existed without shape or form, and the All Father moved across the face of the Void, pondering the great emptiness. He saw the great Dragon Inzae, and realized there was life apart from himself. The All Father wondered at this and sought to master meaning in existence. To this end, he set about creating all manner of things. ~ The Codex, Book 1, Chapter 1, Section 1, 9

The Codex’s origins are buried in TLG’s past and so enmeshed with it that it is impossible to separate the two. The earliest conversations about TLG came about as two roads intersected. I had been sending material to TSR for publication for some time, none of it accepted, and Mac had been talking about creating a zine. As I scribbled my notes he and Chris Harris created the first copy of the Seeker and together we all went to Dragon Con (this would be in in the mid-90s) and distributed the heck out of the thing. We handed out hundreds of copies, standing in hallways, wandering around the show floor and the like. After the show the zine died away despite Mac’s repeated calls to all of us for another go at it. I hadn’t a lot of interest in it still a little curious to publish stuff officially. This was before the internet consumed humanity’s every waking moment so the traditional route was really the only route. That is but for one. Starting our own company. Mac and I discussed working on the zine together, fleshing it out with some of my setting and adventure material. It seemed plausible and not a bad direction. But I never took it very seriously. Chris had fallen out and noone else seemed very interested. So we began to poke around at the possibility of doing this and attending Gencon. This rolled around our weekly game table for several years.

In the late 90s Davis joined our group in an on and off again fashion as he would wander in from anthropological digs from out west. He had mountains of game notes, monsters, system notes, maps of castles, dungeons and all manner of stuff he had produced over the years. The talk turned to a greater endeavor. If we were going to go to Gencon why not go for broke and bring up an adventure. **The Mortality of Green** was perfect. It was written and edited and wouldn’t take much to put together. We could marry that with the zine and go for broke.

Our first discussions with the printers revealed that if we did things in multiples of two then we could get a break on cost. If we did four such books we could get a real nice break. Well heck and however, what to do. Davis had the makings of an adventure called Into the Unknown. Mac wanted to pen one he had run in our weekly session some months back, but that left a hole in the square. I suggested (or

someone did) that we put a little setting together. I had two giant notebooks of pure setting material, very little mechanics. The Red Book and the Gray Book. These could be parsed and sorted and I was sure I could put something together in short order. I had been running adventures in the world since the late 70s so the amount of material was monstrous.

The lands of Aenoch grew in strength and number, greater than those of Ethrum. Their people were far more industrious, adopting the new world and the new races far more readily than their neighbors to the west. The Codex of Erde, Book 1, Chapter 1, Section 4, 20

So the **After Winter's Dark: The World of Erde** was born. This first rendition of the world was published in the year 2000 and released at Gencon of that year. It joined **The Mortality of Green, Into the Unknown and The Fantastic Adventure** on our table. Also there was a hand drawn map that Davis had done of the world and we had printed up. So the world of Erde was first presented to the buying public in a small 24 page blue book with a 19 × 22 inch map set next to it. The first map actually came in tubes to keep it from getting damaged.

The setting was met with some success and was nominated that year for the first or one of the first EN World awards for best setting. It was received quite well. In fact the whole line was and we were picked up by a number of distributors and sold quite a few copies. We had showed a profit barely out the gate, and we weren't part of the d20 crowd.

Of course d20 took the industry by storm and we were caught up in that and began producing material for that game, setting aside our own small Swords and Sorcery game that we had put out in the back of the aforementioned modules. The company began to pick up steam and we suddenly had to worry about what comes next. There were many things that we discussed and ideas we tossed around, some came to light, many did not. But one of those that stayed on the table was the world of Erde. The AWD was received well enough to encourage us to expand it into a full blown d20 3e system setting and put it out on the market. This I began to do very soon, in late 2000.

I worked tirelessly on this project. As the company began to take greater shape and gain direction and as we all struggled with coming to understand the whole nature of the business Erde began to grow. Material began piling up, drawn from the Red and Gray books, expanded, fleshed out or revised.

But it had ever been the All Father's joy to fashion things, great and small. So he turned once more to the labors of creation. Into the great forests and plains, rivers and seas, mountains and hills and swamps, the All Father placed other living things, beasts, fish and birds. These were simple tasks, made with only slivers of his self. Few of them knew his mind, or even their own. These animals wandered the world, propagating, and evolving, heedless of their creators desires or intentions. The Sentients seemed to enjoy the company, for few of these animals caused them harm, and those few who did, never did so intentionally.

For his part the All Father watched in amazement when, after many years, certain of these creatures changed, seemingly of their own accord, becoming creatures altogether different from his original intent. But he did not worry. Rather, he watched and enjoyed their continued evolution. ~The Codex of Erde, Book 1, Chapter 1, Section 2, 12

The structure of the setting began to change of course; not much, but in presentation, from what had originally been played at our table. The company's earliest philosophic approach to publishing became a pillar of the world of Erde. We had pitched our early works as Generic adventures, built for any game system. We made generic stat blocks and created generic skills so that even the most disinterested gamer could interpret them for his weekly game. The general approach seemed the best to take in a market dominated by a consumer who loved to create his own adventures and worlds.

This became the cornerstone for the presentation of the **Codex of Erde**. The book and setting had to present a world that was highly detailed and useful but at the same time one that was usable by any gamer. That means he had to be able to tailor it to his own style. The germ of this was already established of course, and had been in the AWD book. The setting could not have too many point specific items that would turn gamers away or force them to recast massive amounts of material. This is easy for designers to do, by adding wild new races or too many unusual world-specific classes you can easily create distrust in the average game. If he has to work much upon a setting, why buy it? Chances are he has one or two in his own archives anyway. Erde of course had no 'new' races and classes. It was played under the old AD&D game, a great game that needed little in the way of additional material to make it fun. Add in that and my own natural distaste for making weird quirky races that have no point or purpose and we were already graced with a setting's occupants that were very recognizable to any long-term gamer.

But placing the setting in time became a task a little more difficult, though as before its genesis is easily found in the AWD book. In fact the very name says it all: After Winter's Dark. When we began publishing this material the setting itself, a work in progress of 20-odd years, was in a huge state of flux. When I joined the army in 1991 we had called our long running hybrid-Greyhawk campaign to a halt. I had changed the setting over the years so that it was hardly recognizable and had still greater changes I wanted to make. A long-running story arc ended just before I entered the army and it ended with the characters scattered or dead (much to everyone's annoyance) and the arrival of the Winter Dark.

As the last breath of the Days before Days blew across the land the Emperor Sebastian Olivier I sat upon his throne with the Cradle of the World upon his brow. Behind him stood his councilor, the High Priestess, Nectanebo, servant of the goddess Imbrisuis. Before them both stood Nulak-Kiz-Din. Folds of sorcery wrapped the Arch-Magi, clothing him in power. He called upon this fountain of magic and lay the Incantations of the Paths of Umbra to summon the horror from the Void. Sebastian Oliver, last of the House of Aenoch, used vile sorcery learned from the Wizard Aristobulus, to aid him and Nectanebo lent her considerable weight to the spell's undertaking. The Paths of Umbra, a spell of Ondluche the Goblin's of old, split the Wall of the World, opening a gate to the beyond. And Unklar, wrapped in shrouds of the substance of creation, stepped into the world of Erde.

None could have foretold the true horror which Paths of Umbra would bring. Indeed, had Nulak known he would not have cast the spell, and had the Emperor known the fate which Unklar would deal him, he certainly would not have consented to the atrocity.

But as is told in the year 7480y the devil came to Erde and the long days of the Feast of Death began. The High Priest Nectanebo he slew upon sight, even before the spell fully completed its cycle. Sebastian, alarmed, drew forth his great sword, Discipero and com-

manded the beast to yield. It was the first and last time any mortal commanded Unklar in any tone. He slew the Emperor Sebastian and cast his broken body upon the daos. He cast aside Sebastian's sword and crown, and took his seat upon the throne of the God Emperors. ~ The Codex of Erde, Chapter 1, Section 6, 28

While in the army I began retooling the whole game, changing the setting completely, reworking the history and more importantly the geography. The Winter Dark was the perfect opportunity. Using the horned god as my tool I remade the world, all of it. In telling his story of course the creation mythos had to be drawn up as did the long histories of the dwarves, where the elves and orcs came from and all the other nuances of a world's structure. Erde was born on the sunny beaches of Hawaii, where I was stationed. I did much of the recreation through the characters themselves, writing extensive and very long letters to Mac, Todd and Charlie about what happened in the intervening thousand years since their fall.

I wanted to strike a theme in the work and to touch upon that thing that all of us marvel at: the Epic. I felt that the world should be one in which players passing through it knew and felt that they were part of an ongoing story, an epic that cast new players in lead roles but one that connected with its beginning themes. The story had to be large and fantastic to both fit the genre. Too it had to have more than one pinnacle. There had to be something that came before, the ancient civilizations where magic lore had risen and fallen from the pale of man. In its very essence rode an overriding story line of birth, death and rebirth. First came the rule of the gods, this was followed by the trees and dragons, then the dwarves, the goblins, the ancient men, the Heroes, the Winter Dark and at last the Long Days of the World, the here and now of any GM's campaign. This epic story was one that would have a depth of history unrivaled. I think, in many ways it achieved this. The Codex portrayed a world of epic adventure it was up to someone else to take up the sword where past heroes left off and wage the tireless war of eternity.

When I returned, the game—the “big game” as it came to be called—was launched anew in the Lands of Darkness. What followed were a series of adventures, long, exhausting adventures

in which the characters were pitted against the Dark Lord. This continued until 1999 when the setting was tooled for publication and leads us into one of the most unique aspects of the setting. Its placement in its own history. The Winter Wars were too point specific and would guide to many games, setting a tone that some GMs might not want to strike. The Winter Dark itself could easily turn off any aspiring or veteran GM as it required so much to run a world covered in snow. So, much to the annoyance of my game group, I moved the time frame to 60-odd years after the ending of the Winter Dark Wars (wars that had in no way ended in the actual game). I used the NPCs from the big game as the foundation for the NPCs of the published game. And with that foundation a whole world setting was placed in its present time frame.

Erde is a world that has been ruled for a thousand years by the horned god and his minions. It was broken free of that long embrace and the ice has left and snow retreated. Two whole generations of men have been born in a world free of his rule. The world is fresh, with little in the way of long standing customs to force a GM into one particular milieu, in fact the opposite is true. The GM is given only enough material to serve as a guidepost for creation and gaming. Though he does not have to create whole new regions, countries and states, as that is all there, but he can easily change what he wants to his own direction, to fit his own needs or to establish his own mood.

This is one of the great strengths of this setting and has played into its continued support from consumers. The setting is easy to tailor to almost any style, genre, or type of game. The setting is in and of itself generic.

But what separates it from all the rest of the generic settings out there? What gives it more pull than other settings? That answer is easy enough and comes from my own professional historical background (I was once a PhD candidate for European History). Any setting, any world has to have background. Culture is buried in our history, language and geography. These things give us reference points for how we see the world. In a fantasy setting its even more critical. Where creatures live for thousands of years and have magical knowledge it is hard to separate a setting from its past or origins.



Knowing those origins allows GMs to ground the story of adventure in a bedrock of information that can be both referenced and used.

Its history sets Erde apart. Its depth and its coherent interaction with its mythos gives Erde the advantage over many other settings. A GM can run a dragon that is a thousand years old and easily reference where that dragon was in time when it was born. This makes story telling so much easier, believable and fun. It allows for a greater suspension of disbelief. Knowing the past in role playing games is every bit as valuable as it is in the real world. Many settings have a history, or a mythos. But few ground their setting in the depths that the Codex does. In Erde there are reasons for almost everything.

In the small County of Karilia the lords of that land rule from the Dragon Throne. What settings don't have a Dragon Throne? But this throne mingles with the history, NPCs and cultures of the area like no other. Here is the section in full as given in the Codex. What one finds is that the Dragon Throne is tangled with ruined fortresses, ancient vampires, raging dragons, hero elves (Meltowg from the Aihrdian Chronicles in these pages is even briefly mentioned).

Karilia, County of

Count Josef Olbrich retains control of Karilia from the great fortress of Khemi, where he sits upon the Dragon Throne. His coat of arms is respected far and wide. Upon an azure blue background, two towers represent the fortitude of his people. The connecting rampart symbolizes unity of mind and the stylized dragon between them harkens back to Josef's grandfather's heroic battle with a dragon (see below). The wreath pays homage to the god Demeter.

Of Her Lord and People: Karilia is a land of gently rolling hills, where deep grass gives way to cropland. There are streams a-plenty and copses of trees here and there. Small villages dot the landscape, often looked over by the watchful knights in their castles of stone. The castles are generally small affairs and the villages too, with mud and wattle walls and thatched roofs. There are plenty of small taverns however, whose proprietors offer travelers space on the dirty floors.

Joseph Olbrich rules in Karilia. A young man filled with the legends of his forefathers, Josef fiercely defends even the slightest insult to his honor. He pays homage to Utumno and has dedicated several temples to this lord of dreams.

There, as elsewhere, the knightly tradition is upheld through tournament and war. Castles and fortified townships dominate the County. The fierce spirit of independence in Karilia is supported by close relations with the County of Sienna. Intermittent warfare with the Kingdoms of Angouleme and Maine offer employment to the local knights, as well as to all manner of adventurers. Much of the wealth of the lords of Karilia comes from ransoms and plunder. As with their Lord, many of the nobles pay homage to Utumno.

The peasantry are generally contented and the Lord's rule there is lax. It is not unheard of for peasants to rise above their station in service to a noble and earn the title to a piece of land. There is some movement to reverse this trend, to make the rule of the nobles more in tune with those of Angouleme, but the peasants resist it as

much as the Count. In general, Karilian peasants take advantage of the rich flat lands, producing crops of wheat, barley and oats. A great deal of timber is logged and exported to Avignon. The local folk are known far and wide for the taste of their brew.

Bordering the Twilight Wood in the west and the Gelderland in the south, Karilia is victim to many strange occurrences. Travel at night can be dangerous and it often behooves those who find themselves on the road too late to fall upon the kindness of castle wardens.

As the worship of Demeter spreads, many churches great and small are springing up across the land. They are generally poor, relying on locals to aid them in the creation and maintenance of the churches.

Upon the Tide of History: Karilia rose from obscurity. As with the other provinces in this region, Karilia gained her independence when the Imperial garrisons withdrew to the fortified cities. Even as the provinces of Angouleme moved slowly but certainly to a bloodless revolution, Karilia moved violently into the maelstrom of war and rebellion.

The Imperial Governor of the province, Actaneb, a priest of Unklar, settled in that land as an acolyte. No mean intellect, Actaneb mistakenly thought he understood the rule of law. He applied his with a harsh, unforgiving attitude. Whereas many folk living under the yoke of Unklar knew at least the vestiges of prosperity, the people of Karilia did not. Actaneb taxed them heavily and spent the money on lavish residences and temples to the horned god. When war came to the west and the power of Aufstrag waned, Actaneb fell back on his own resources. He employed an army of mercenaries and hired assassins of the Crna Ruk (reference Guilds and Orders, p. 196) to kill those who opposed him.

He also dabbled in sorcery. Actaneb became obsessed with death and sought to waylay the day that he would breathe his last. To this affect he sought ways of transmuting his soul into another host. The dread experiments which he performed on people pulled from the local environs fed the hatred of the people he ruled.

Events came to a head in 1025md. Actaneb's servants kidnapped the son of a powerful knight, a one time legionnaire, who went by the name Mattahius of Olbrich. Mattahius was not a man to be trifled with, but too late did Actaneb discover that he had tortured and slain the man's first born son. Mattahius gathered an army of men about him, ex-legionnaires, mercenaries, bandits and others who would join him and openly rebelled against Actaneb. They sought but failed to attain the aid of the Council of Light, for in those days the Council struggled with their own folk fighting a secret war against the dark.

Mattahius campaigned throughout the fall and winter until he forced Actaneb's army into battle. Upon the beaches of the Amber Sea the two small armies met in combat. The mercenaries fought for a short time but could not long stand against Mattahius. Many were done to death and thrown into the sea. The rest fled to the north and south, seeking refuge in distant parts. Mattahius turned his attention to Actaneb himself.



By early summer he caught up with the Governor, besieging him in the halls of fortress Iliador upon the edge of the sea. Several weeks passed before Mattahius mined the walls and broke into the castle. A great slaughter followed and none were spared. Mattahius did not restrain his men, but rather let them plunder and serve the evil its just do. Actaneb, in terror of being tortured, threw himself from the high towers of that place. Mattahius abandoned that terrible castle of death and suffering. It is said that even those who sought to plunder its wealth could not do so for fear of the undead. It is also said that Actaneb did not die when he fell from the tower, but lived on to haunt the castle as a dread spirit of terrible evil.

The war ended as soon as it had begun. No support came from the legions in the north or east and Mattahius found himself in control of the whole province. The men who served him proclaimed him their Lord and sought for him to take a crown. The folk of Karilia welcomed the rule of the man who had slain Actaneb.

In 1027md, when the Lords of the north crowned William King of Angouleme, Mattahius sought to join his lands to those of the northern monarch. In return for the security offered by Angouleme, Mattahius swore an oath of fealty to King William. In turn, William invested him with the County of Karilia and placed him high in the councils of the land.

This arrangement worked for awhile. Count Mattahius enjoyed the comfort of security offered by his King. His lands sat astride the east-west trade routes, for in those days Avignon stood as a ruined fortress only. Troops fleeing the east crossed his land continually, pillaging all the while. Many small battles were fought in which Mattahius proved himself a competent general and hardy soldier. Augsburg's victory in the east (reference Augsburg, Olensk, p. 74) shattered the ability of the Empire to maintain any control in the west and left many loyal to Aufstrag without recourse but to fight their way into the Young Kingdoms. Battle followed battle, particularly in Karilia.

Many men of great renown earned their spurs in service to the Count. Lord Charles Galveston, an errant knight of unknown origins, first gained the recognition of the Council by slaying a great Ungern battle lord here (for further reference to Lord Galveston, see the module "A Lion in the Ropes"). The Elven Prince Meltowg, half brother to Daladon Lothian, respected the Count so much that they campaigned together frequently.

Mattahius lived to see the end of the Winter Dark, and fought in the final battles of the Toten Fields, but he died when a vengeful member of the Crna Ruk, still remembering the death of Actaneb, shot him with a poisoned arrow.

Francis, Mattahius' younger brother, took the reigns of power. This did not sit well with William II of Angouleme, however, who sought to give the County to his own nephew. The King sent the Dukes of Mousine and Orange south to represent his case. They claimed that William had not promised to invest any but Mattahius with the County of Karilia and therefore Francis should yield to the King's nephew. To this, Francis replied with these stern words: "My Lords, I thank thee for your kind representations of the monarch of Angouleme. But I would have you bring him word of my displeasure at his claims so that he may know I reject them utterly. And, my Lords, you have but two days to clear my lands or I will have you drawn and quartered and your entrails fed to the fish." They fled north to bring news of the disaster to the King.

Francis' act of rebellion benefitted from two simultaneous events. The first occasioned a religious rebellion in Angouleme. In that Kingdom, as in no other, the worship of Demeter had taken a firm hold. There were many doctrinal disputes between the early priests, not the least of which was who controlled the Church, the King of Angouleme or the Bishop in Avignon, a city that had grown rapidly after the fall of Aufstrag. Rebellion and war spread throughout Angouleme, keeping the King from responding to Francis' insult (reference Angouleme, p. 68).

The second occasion marked Francis as one of the greatest heroes of his day. An ancient blue worm descended upon the County. It terrorized the whole region from the Twilight Wood to the sea. Francis armored himself with plate and shield, took up the lance of his father and rode to give battle to the creature. Upon the way he met an elf who befriended him, saying that he was an old friend of Meltowg and wished to return the kindness which Mattahius always showed the Elves. He gave over a sword that he claimed St. Luther bore in combat against the dragons of another era. With the dragon slayer at his side, Francis rode to war.

He met the dragon beneath the eaves of the Twilight Wood and there they fought a horrible dual. The air thundered such that the calamity of the battle could be heard for miles around. They felled trees and shook the earth in that contest of arms, but in the end the dragon slayer took the life of the beast leaving Francis the victor. The Count payed homage to Utumno, the dark god of dreams, and left that place where, it is said, the bones of the dragon lay still.

Francis placed the dragon's hide upon the floor before his throne and mounted the beasts four great paws upon the throne itself. Ever after has that throne been called the Dragon Throne. Francis added the dragon to his families' coat of arms.

Francis ruled for a short while after the battle, but eventually died of his wounds. His son, Francis Mattahius, took the Dragon Throne and the sword, ruling as his father had for many long years. Under his rule, the County became the feudal realm it is to this day and the worship of Demeter spread to many of the common folk, though Francis Mattahius worshiped Utumno, a practice that grew common amongst the nobles of Karilia. When he died in 1091md, his son Josef, a thick strapping youth, took the Dragon Throne.

OF HER LORDS AND COUNTS

Mattahius of Olbrich (1027md-1046md)

Francis of Olbrich (1046md-1062md)

Francis Mattahius Olbrich (1062md-1091md)

Josef Olbrich (1091md-present)

~Codex of Erde, Book 1, Chapter 3, Section 19, 102-103

Here the GM is given a huge amount of material to work with, all wrapped up in a few pages. He is given only enough to map a backdrop for any number of adventures from vampires to assassin, from dragons to magical swords. Ancient battle fields abound as do the promise of hordes of old dungeons. This material is presented in the **Ahrde Folio** but certainly not to the depth that it is in the **Codex of Erde**. There are over 30 countries detailed like this. The detail continues on and over into the terrain areas in the Lands of Ursal. Much of this detail was left out of the Ahrde Folio for space reasons and it didn't serve the immediate purpose of bringing the setting to light for a whole new generation of TLG fans and most notably the C&C fans. But the Codex

is packed with this material. The details without the devil, adventure hooks buried in background for almost everyone.

I labored over the Codex for many months. It in fact is one of the reasons TLG had so few releases in its early days. As the main writer for the company I became consumed with this one project. Mac wrote a huge bit of the second part of the book, the *Players Guide* book, but by and large the whole first 200 odd pages belongs to me. I wrote and in many cases edited it. This of course proved a horrible mistake as it highlights the book's greatest failing, its editing. It has many textual mistakes and a couple of large glaring cosmological contradictions. But for its size and scope the book is something I am very proud of authoring. The material is solid if its presentation was a bit less so.

The book brought together two other outside forces that remained with TLG for many years: Gary Gyax and Necromancer Games. I was about 2/3rds done with the Codex when we began our conversations with Gary about signing on. He was more than willing to send us some material if we would consider publishing **Gaxmoor**, written by Luke and Ernie, his sons. We worked this in if he would write us a short introductory adventure for Gaxmoor that we could include in the Codex, sort of as an introductory piece. We were near publication and thought it would be a perfect cross promotional piece. Gary heartily agreed and quickly penned the short adventure "Search for a Lost City" that appears on page 169 of the fabled book. It was and remains a great little adventure. Classic Gary Gyax.

About this time Mac, Davis and I got to know the boys from Necromancer Games as well. A small company out of Nevada/Washington that had shot to the top of the 3rd edition crowd with a gusto. Bill Well, co-owner of Necromancer, Davis and I had struck up an immediate "at the bottom of the mug" friendship and Mac and Clark Peterson, the other owner, shared a common love of law and game. We began working together even in these early days as pieces of Relics and Rituals were used in the *Players Guide* section by Mac.

This last section does deserve some credit as it created the first real mechanics TLG created and published commercially and it includes the fabulous little character class, the Elf. Modeled after Basic D&D, Mac's favorite version of the D&D games, it brought the first published racial class to the 3rd edition universe, dating as it does back to the year 2001. This along with hosts of spells, new magic items, more classes and abilities made the Codex not only a setting but a *Players Handbook* for the Codexian gamer. Here he is in full for those who haven't had the opportunity to view it. This little job, though here presented as a 3rd edition variant, is the cornerstone of the racial classes for the C&C Basic set.

HIGH ELF

The High Elves of Erde are a melancholy race whose past is clouded by guilt for abandoning the world in its darkest hour (reference Fontenouq, pages 88-89). Unlike their ancient ancestors and kin, the High Elves have turned from carefree spirits into brooding philosophers, content to indulge themselves in the pursuit of music, poetry, and other art. Their independent lives have led to a slowly declining population, with little concern among the young for propagation.

Even so, the High Elves retain the fierce nature that developed in their return to the world, and the skill in armory, weapons, and magic that they have always possessed. Occasionally, some of the younger High Elves leave their family's castles to explore the

world. Most are driven by guilt to redeem their family's name, if not their entire race. They are easily recognized by the make of their weapons and armor, their warlike attitude, and the sorceries they employ in combat.

Adventures: High Elves wander Erde seeking redemption for their families and their race. How pronounced their guilt is depends upon each individual High Elf, but it remains at the core of their adventuring motivation. Like paladins, they seek to do good in the world and to battle evil.

Background: High Elves will either trace their ancestry to those High Elves that remained in Erde and did not pass on to Fay, to Shindolay, or to Fontenouq.

High Elves that remained in Erde, and their descendants, wander the world as Ronin, righting wrongs, making war upon evil, and upholding good. They are noble and honorable. Having discarded the trappings of their ancestry during the long, hard Winter Dark, each individual chooses different armor and weapons and manner of dress as befits their own mind. They are quite humble.

High Elves descending from Shindolay tend to be more colorful in dress. They prefer to employ spell over sword, but when arming themselves, they utilize light to medium armors, bows, and swords. They most closely resemble their ancient forefathers, and some see them as arrogant. Still, good remains in their heart, and they will stand back-to-back with any that would eradicate evil.

High Elves of Fontenouq ancestry leave the safety of their family's towers, and their books, art and music. Instead of talking philosophy and debating the sins of history, they seek to live in the present and honor the memory of their ancient forefathers, those proud elven warriors that combated evil before their descendants fled the world. They typically arm themselves in conical helms and long shields, and wield light but sturdy swords and spears from the backs of their long-legged horses.

Other Classes: High Elves are the silent, dependable warriors that an adventuring party needs for a stable foundation. Their combination of martial skill and wizardry can be invaluable, especially in parties with few members. They relate well to clerics, rangers, monks, paladins, and wizards. They sometimes clash with bards and rogues, but realize that the skills they possess are often necessary in the battle between good and evil. They see sorcerers as undisciplined.

Racial Characteristics: The racial characteristics for High Elves is as follows.

Physical Description: High Elves average 4 1/2 to 5 1/2 feet in height, but some stand 6 feet. They weigh between 100 to 135 lbs. Their skin is fair; their hair is light, and their eyes bright. They have no facial hair or body hair. They move with grace and purpose, no motion being wasted.

Relations: High Elves are often strangers in a strange land. They can relate to most any race, but it typically takes time to develop trust and respect.

Religion: Many deities populate the pantheon of the High Elves. Two of these are Aenouth and Burasil. All high-elven deities seem quite alien to most every other race for the High Elves seem to revere qualities that are not easily definable in human terms. High Elves also pay homage to Wenafar, and the heroes Setiva and Mithlon.

Languages: High Elves speak Elven (Shindolay or Fontenouq), Aenochian, Dwarven, Ethrum, and Goblin. Their bonus languages are: Draconic, Gnomish, Halfling, Runic Tongue, Sylvan, Ungern, and Vulgate.

Names: Naming is as described for Elves in the Player's Handbook. Family names for Fontenouq high elves will tend to carry connotations of war.

Traits: The racial traits of High Elves differ from those described in the Player's Handbook as follows.

Abilities: +1 Dex, +1 Int, -2 Con, -1 Cha. High elves weakened constitutions are a result of the curse laid upon them by Daladon Lothian. The lowered charisma flows from the general mistrust all races secret against them for abandoning Erde at the coming of Unklar.

Weapon proficiencies: Proficient with either longsword or short-sword.

Literacy: High Elves begin play with 2 ranks in Elven (Fontenouq or Shindolay), and 1 rank in Aenochian, Dwarven, and Ethrum.

GAME RULE INFORMATION

High elves have the following game statistics.

Abilities: Intelligence determines how powerful a spell-caster a High Elf becomes, how many spells the High Elf can cast per day, and how hard those spells are to resist. High scores in Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution are helpful to a High Elf's adventuring career.

Alignment: Any good.

Hit Die: d8.

Starting Gold: $5d4 \times 10$.

Class Skills

The High Elf's class skills (and key ability for each skill) are Alchemy (Int), Concentration (Con), Hide (Dex), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Ride (Dex), Speak Language (Int), Spellcraft (Int), and Spot (Wis).

Skill Points at 1st level: $(2 + \text{Int modifier}) \times 4$.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: $2 + \text{Int modifier}$.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the High Elf.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A High Elf is proficient in the use of all simple and martial weapons, all armor, and shields. Normal armor penalties for skill checks apply.

Spells: A High Elf casts arcane spells without needing to memorize them from a spellbook. Table 2-1: The High Elf shows the number of spells per day that a High Elf may cast, which is improved by the bonus spells granted by the Intelligence modifier, if any. A High Elf cannot use a higher-level spell slot to cast a lower-level spell.

A High Elf begins play knowing three 0-level spells and one 1st-level spell of your choice. You choose the spells from the sorcerer and wizard spell list in the Player's Handbook. At each level, a High Elf gains one or more new spells according to Table 2-2: High Elf Spells Known. As with sorcerers, these spells can be chosen from the sorcerer and wizard spell list, or, if a spell is not on that list, learned from another source such as a spellbook.

To learn or cast a spell, a High Elf must possess an Intelligence score of at least $10 + \text{the spell's level}$. In addition, a high elf receives bonus spells based on Intelligence. The Difficulty Class for saving throws against a High Elf's spell is $10 + \text{the spell's level} + \text{the high elf's Intelligence modifier}$.

Arcane Spell Failure Reduction: High Elves know how to wear armor effectively and how to minimize the interference it might cause to their spells. Thus, a High Elf has a less difficult time casting arcane spells while wearing armor. The Arcane Spell Failure percentage of any armor is reduced by 15% when worn by a High Elf.

High Elf Starting Package

Armor: Studded Leather +3 AC, speed 30 ft., 20 lb., armor check penalty -1, arcane spell failure 0%.

Weapons: Longsword (1d8, crit 19-20/x2, 4 lb., Med. slashing); Longspear (1d8, crit $\times 3$, 9 lb., Large piercing).

Skill Selection: Pick a number of skills equal to $2 + \text{Int modifier}$.

Skill	Ranks	Ability	Armor
Hide	4	Dex	
Concentration	4	Con	
Ride	4	Dex	
Listen	4	Wis	
Move Silently	4	Dex	
Spot	4	Wis	
Spellcraft	4	Int	
Knowledge (arcana)	4	Int	
Alchemy	4	Int	

Feat: Dodge if Dex is 13+. Improved Initiative otherwise.

Spells Known: 0-level: Resistance, Dancing Lights, Detect Magic; 1st level: Ray of Enfeeblement.

Gear: Backpack with waterskin, one day's trail rations, bedroll, sack, three torches, and flint and steel. Spell component pouch.

Gold: 2d4 gp.

~Codex of Erde, Book 2, Chapter 2, Section I, 189

I should say that the cover of the book was painted by Doug Kovacs. When Mac saw it on display at Origins 2001 he called me immediately. I had to see it he said. When I saw that cover I was stunned. It captured the very mood and feel of the Codex and the world it encapsulated. This world's epic struggle was translated into the visual in this painting. The massive dragon that defied all reason and the knight who stood his ground against him unafraid captured that epic feel I tried to cast into the setting. Of course the art worked into the mythology of the whole book as the Knight became Thorax and the dragon Frafnog and the cloak the tattered cloak of red.

That Dragon, first born, stood before Thorax like a mountain. He cornered the god upon the porch and gave him such battle that never again did Thorax dare to stand before the Drake. In the end Frafnog threw Thorax from the mountain, his very breath scorching The Cloak of Red, and melting away the god's armor. ~ Codex, Book 1, Chapter Section 4, 21

The Codex stands for so much around here. Its something of a legendary book. It comes up in the offices frequently. It was and

remains a huge part of the TLG line. Everyone in those days worked on it, myself, Todd Gray, Mac Golden, Davis Chenault, Mark Sandy, Chris Harris. We all remember bits and pieces. It was our first hardback, brought under its roof a bunch of relationships we fostered for years. It displayed all the creative energies that defined the way we game and the feel that eventually would shape the C&C RPG if not the company itself. It sold like madness when it was released and continued to sell for years after. When other titles came and went the Codex kept selling.. Eventually the advent of 3.5 made the rules in it obsolete and we had to discount it. It continued to sell in its discounted state. It is and remains the Codex, and with all its editing flaws, defines a philosophy of gaming and publishing that TLG has fostered for years.

What is its future? Its not certain. There are only a few hundred copies of this book left for sale, a few hundreds out of a multiple thousand print run. But the book will undergo a renaissance. It will be cleared of all its d20 material and it will be replaced with C&C mechanics. The editing will be cleaned and the formatting set to Peter's own style, that style that defines Castles & Crusades. The Codex will remain, as it always has been, a major part of the TLG line up.

I remember this book fondly. I remember being bent over the computer with mountains of notes all about my desk and on the floor. I remember running over mythological concepts with Davis and Todd, Mac. I remember the book well and in some ways think it was the best we have ever offered.



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MONSTERS OF AIHRDE

BY STEPHEN CHENAULT

The world of Aihrde spins upon an earth-like axis of ancient civilizations where good and evil have struggled for countless years. It is a world bearing the markings of its past; where ancient evils slumber, stained with the power of eldritch wizardry; where gods dwell in bejeweled halls of wonderment, worshiped by men and women of all creeds; where dragons live in great dens of heaped treasure; where the new stands upon the ruins of the old in beds of ancient glory. Here, kingdoms have risen and fallen, ground to dust by war, famine, plague or time. Aihrde is a world reborn, and in the After Winter Dark heroes tread in iron, shod boots and wizards lean on crooked staffs to plunder the buried wealth and power of the ages. Here, the eternal struggle goes on, age after age, for Aihrde is a world of adventure, of undaunted heroes, untainted by the decadent philosophies of those meek who suffer in the shadows of lesser men. For here, the stone columns of history are wiped clean, awaiting the bold to carve their mark and gain entry to the halls of immortality.

IKLE DEMON

NO. APPEARING: 1

SIZE: Small

HD:1(d6)

MOVE: 20 ft

AC: 14

ATTACKS: Choke for 1d4 points of damage

SPECIAL: Engulf, Incorporeal

SAVES: M

INT: Low

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Evil

TYPE: Planar

TREASURE: Nil

XP: 25

Ikle demons have no particular shape or form. Upon first glance they look like a wisp of dark smoke cast, though a more careful observation reveals the vague shape of a man or woman's face, captured with a look of extreme fear. This terror is so written into the parchment of their expression that it leaves the viewer cold. The smell is over whelming powerful. The burnt tar is so strong that anyone within a few feet is left with an acidic taste in their mouths and its difficult to breath naturally around the demon.

These small creatures come from the negative planes. They are the evil spirits of petty criminals cursed to spend eternity in the shadows. They are numerous and found almost anywhere. Ikle demons are terrified of everything around them and seek only to hide from any light. However, if suddenly unearthed or exposed in some ways they do attack.

Though they are not technically undead, a cleric can turn them. Holy water does 1d8 points of damage on the creature.

COMBAT: When pressed the ikle demons attack the nearest person to them by launching attacks at their enemies faces. They



attempt to engulf them. If they succeed, they enter the victim's mouth and nose, attempting to choke them to death. If left alone it flees to the nearest darkest corner it can find.

Engulf: If an opponent is struck by an ikle demon, the creature engulfs the victim's head. The opponent must make a successful dexterity save in order to avoid damage. If they succeed they take no damage, if they fail the demon enters their throat and nose and begins choking them for 1d4 points of damage a round. Each round their after, the victim can make a dexterity check to see if they manage to break free from the creature's grasp. The victim cannot attempt to break free and take another action in any given round.

The Ikle Demon In Aihrde

Though most commonly encountered in the Shadow Realm, the Ikle Demons dwell everywhere. Cursed by their life's actions their souls wander without direction, forever denied access to the Dreaming or the Stone Fields. Ushered from the light by their own fears, they hide in dark places far from the roving minds of men. They are often captured by wizards, sorcerers, priests, dwarven smiths, goblins, shamans, and the like and used as guardians.

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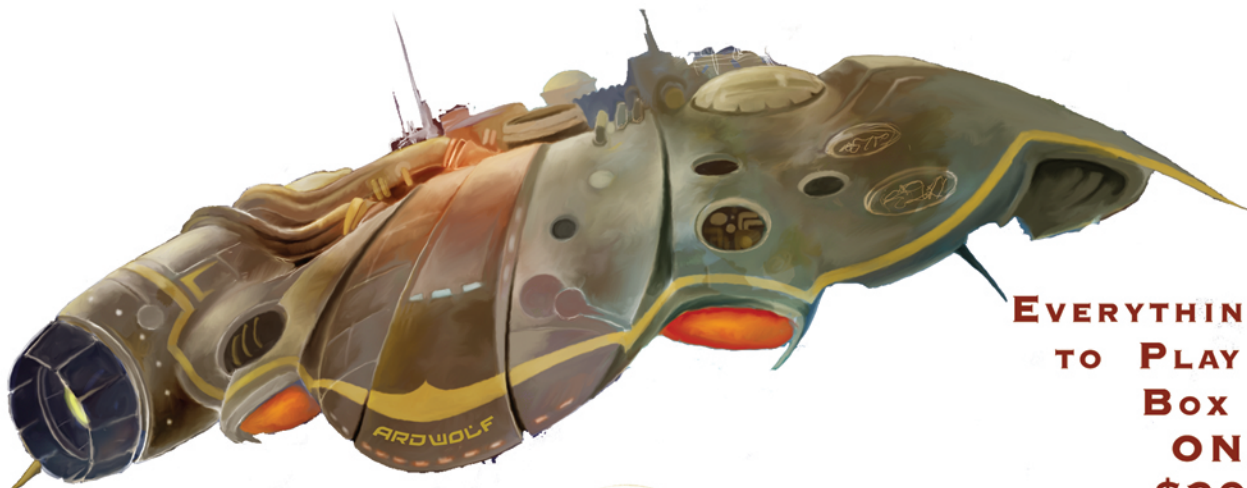


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