

ISSUE 1 THE KEEPER SPRING 2007

Welcome

Welcome to the relaunch of *The Keeper*. This has been a long time coming and an event I am most proud of. For our initial issue we have contributions from around the C&C community that shows the variety that makes the *Castles and Crusades* game possibly the best RPG in print. I hope that this is the beginning of something that will further the crusade and make each gaming experience more and more unique.

Our mission is for C&C players and CK's to submit anything that will enrich our experience and share the many facets that our campaigns may take. We also want to use this newsletter for those of us who want to polish our own work to move into new venues of gaming related work. How nice would it be to see that a new module has the name of a regular Keeper contributor as the author?

So enjoy this work and remember it is as much a product of the community as the individuals that help make it possible.

The Black Trade

by Joshua Sherrer (Julian Grimm)

While many would think the name 'Black Trade' would refer to illicit goods the term actually covers trade in teas, coffees and tobaccos. In the lands these three things are held in high esteem. Even commoners appreciate the flavors and brews of the above and in some villages the fame or infamy can come from a cup of steaming brew or the flavor of a smoke.

Some say the entire cultures of the regions are based around these three things. In part this is true since all daily routines be it that of the high class noble to the lowly farmer have traditions based around the use of these items. Conversations, negotiations and even treaties have centered around the use of the supplies of the black trade and many notations of meetings between lords include the types of coffees or teas drank or tobacco smoked. Secret blends

have fueled guild wars and theft attempts in many cities the most notorious being a war between brewers guilds in Hidlestadt.

Traders in the merchandise and accessories needed to make the drinking or smoking experience pleasant can find stable income. In some urban areas entire cafes have come up dedicated to the trade products with menus containing exotic and far off items for consumption and commanding top prices. It is not uncommon on city streets to see businessmen and nobles meeting in such places and sampling the wares while they discuss important business. The most high class have private tasting rooms for those with the gold to spend. These houses have in some circles have almost supplanted taverns as places for clandestine and underhanded deals to be made.

Understanding what is what

To begin understanding the cultures behind the black trade one must first understand what defines a coffee, tea or tobacco. In the lands these definitions can vary region by region and are topics of hot debates among expert connoisseurs of the trade items. What follows is the most accepted definitions of each.

Coffee: A coffee is usually a drink brewed hot from grind beans of certain plants. However in some southern areas coffees are brewed from certain roots such as the chicory root or the halflings foot. Tastes are usually a bit bitter but some have a semi-sweet taste.

Tea: A tea is usually brewed hot and contains blends of certain barks, leaves, roots and pieces of fruit or berries. They can range from bitter to sweet in flavor. In the same southern regions that chicory and halflings foot are found some brew tea hot and drink it cold to alleviate the summers heat*.

Tobacco: A tobacco is taken from dried leaves of a certain variety of plants. Though in some regions they are made from some barks, and

dried matter from vegetables. It ranges in harshness and taste and blends vary from region to region. It is most always smoked in pipes or rolled in leaves of some plants. A new technique has come down from soldiers who have used small squares of paper to roll the blend. This has proved popular and now many traders sell these papers in books along with pouches of their finest blends.

Blending and blenders

The blending of tobaccos, coffees and teas are relatively the same. Select beans and leaves are harvested and dried. Then many are processes for immediately sale. However some items are taken and aged then processed and mixed with other similar processed materials. These items are sold and some aged further or have certain oils or fruit pieces mixed in.

Dwarven blenders usually age most of their stock for a century or more and are mixed with spices that only that race knows. Dwarven blends of coffees and teas fetch a good price and many dwarven clans have founded new empires with this work.

Elves tend to blend only teas and tobacco. These are well regarded and a closely kept secret. Some elves have been known to blend using magical means producing teas with enhanced flavors or steam that dances or liquid that changes colors. Magically blended tobaccos can range in flavors and smell and the smoke has been known to change colors or form shapes that dance, spin or even reenact historical periods. Elven blends are usually purchased by the wealthy and powerful as the price is more than common folk could enjoy.

Halfling and Gnomish blends vary in strength and taste. Halflings are known tobacconists and rival elves in their work. However Halfling blends are cheaper and are made for the common folk as well as the rich. Gnomish work is usually considered vile in tastes and smells and is only usually purchased by Dwarves. There are others that savor the pungent odor and bitter flavor of the gnomes but they are rare.

Humans have only been working in the fields for a few centuries but have many blends exclusively their own. They also have been known to hire adventurers to steal from other blenders and brewers and many trade wars have

broken out between human black trade houses. Human traders have also cornered the market on bulk tobacco trade. They have been known to sell large bags of tobacco for many to experiment blending with. These bags are usually fresh cuts and have to be aged by the buyer. Among many of middle to higher class this has become a popular hobby and entire manor wings have been converted to the culture of the home blenders.

The Black Culture

As stated before there is an entire culture among those in the trade. In many cities houses have sprung up that sell special blends of teas and coffees while serving exotic tobaccos. The prices here are rather inflated but this does not stop those of taste entering these houses and doing business over their favorite brew and smoke while sampling various pastries and foods.

Tobacconists have also split off into their own domains. These houses offer select tobaccos for smoking, pipes and papers, incenses and other items and accessories. They have also opened up to using simple machines to roll tobacco into papers and selling them per fifteen to twenty in metallic or wooden boxed engraved with the house seal. Those returning with the boxes may be refilled at less cost on later visits. Also some have offered a self blending and rolling service. For a price a customer may select up to three tobaccos to blend and enough papers and a roll machine to roll a pre-selected number of smokes. This has proved popular and many hoping to break into the mysteries of blending have used this service to hone their skills.

Coffee and Tea houses are quiet affairs. Some of the houses that claim higher class customers have also incorporated live music from well respected composers, poetry recitals and even small theater. A visit to any tea or coffee house is relatively the same. The patron is escorted to a table and given a list of the house blends. They will receive either a cup or pot of the chosen brew and offered various forms of biscuits, cookies or pastries to go with their drink. The person may stay at their table or roam while enjoying quiet chatter or appreciating art or entertainment. At most tables is a complimentary tin of tobacco and papers or in some cases pipes to enjoy after or during their drink.

At the end of the visit a discreet check is given to be paid. In lower houses it is expected immediately. In those patroned by nobles or other higher classes it is to be paid later by a servant. With the check is a form that will allow the sale and delivery of the houses blends to the home of the patron so they may enjoy their favorite blends at their leisure.

The influence of this culture has now even been felt in the inns and taverns of the lower classes, even those in frontier lands. Many of these gathering places now serve and sell black trade items. Though they are of considerable less quality. Though some taverns have perfected blending techniques and blended new coffees and teas with certain liquors. There have even been those that have taken to aging their tobacco in harder liquors for a unique flavor**. Surprisingly gnomish blends have held up to this and the flavor is bettered by the aging.

The Black Trade in a Campaign

The black trade can be introduced in one of two ways. The first is that it is a relatively new business and the public takes to the new flavors and so-called vices with a fervor. This can lead to tensions between traders and approaches by the established orders to control and even abolish the new businesses. The second is that the trade exists but has been in the background until recent developments have thrust it into popularity. The two most common groups that will want control are local nobles and clergy who have differing views on the trade but both do not see the benefit of the common masses enjoying such a princely or 'sinful' item.

In a game where the trade is established brew and blending houses may be after a secret recipe to foil an upstart house. Lower houses may be the target of a trade baron wanting control of the entire market. In this case hired muscle is out on the streets enforcing the law of the tradesmen. Assassins can be hired to kill off heads of houses and their lieutenant.

If an open involvement in the trade is not desired then it can be used for a backdrop. Characters can meet in a tea or coffee house. A new shop opening may be a source of news or a treasure given may be a tin of the best coffee, tea or tobacco, or a recipe for a brew may be a valuable treasure. The Black Trade in any instance can give the players a sense of being

part of the world. In play a CK may brew up a select coffee or tea to drink while gaming as an example of a special brew. I have just provided the framework it is up to the players and CK to flesh it out.

* Ice houses are an active industry in the southern kingdoms. Though usually the realm of nobles the trade is pushing beyond that. The Icehouses and trade will be detailed in a later work.

** The most famous is Johann Hiram Black, a deep dwarven tobacco mixed with whiskey from the south. The most Infamous is Goblin Gut, a tobacco called Gnome Stinkplant mixed with goblin rye ale. A test of strength is smoking a whole bowl or roll of this . None have even done so without becoming violently ill.

New magical Item Listing

Two new items from Maliki.

Ring of the Rat: The Ring of the Rat is a magical ring of unusual powers. It is thought to be a unique item, although more than one may exist. It appears as a simple silver band, unadorned with runes or markings. The only clue to its magical nature is that it never tarnishes nor does it show any scratches or signs of wear. It will radiate as magical, if a detect magic (or similar magics) are used.

When placed upon any finger the wearer may at will (3 times per day) assume form of a normal rat. Anything worn or carried by the wearer is transformed as well. In rat form the owner retains his normal intelligence and hit points. His AC and rate of movement is that of a normal rat. AC is modified by any magical protections the wearer had at the time of the transformation. Normal armor has no effect on AC while in rat form, but any magical plusses are added to AC in rat form.

The wearer can communicate with both normal and giant rats. (What information a rat has to impart is entirely up to the CK). Also while worn the wearer can detect any wererats within a 30' radius no matter the lycanthropes form.

Watercloak: The water cloak bestows upon it wearer both boons and hindrances. This cloak appears as a hooded cloak made of shimmering silk of various hues of blue and green. For the cloak to retain its magical nature, it must retain some degree of moisture. At least once per week the cloak must be immersed in water for a minimum of four hours. If this is not done, the cloak will lose all magical properties until it is immersed in water. (This time for four hours, plus one hour per week of neglect, up to a max of twenty-four hours)

When worn the water cloak grants the wearer a +2 bonus to any saves versus either magical or mundane fire. If worn in water, the cloak wraps tightly around the wearers mouth and nose, allowing him to breath water as if it were air. This power functions automatically and has an unlimited duration. Also the wearer of the cloak may go up to a week without the need of drink of any type, with no ill effects.

Unfortunately, due to the cloaks nature, the wearer suffers a -2 penalty to any cold based attacks. In addition any failed saves versus magical cold (including breath weapons) results in the wearer being affected as if he were under the effects of a slow spell for 2-5 rounds.

The Keeper Bestiary

From Paul Tremiti A.K.A. Beyondthebreach:

Revenant

NO. ENCOUNTERED: 1

SIZE: Medium

HD: 8 (d12)

MOVE: 30 ft.

AC: 19

ATTACKS: 2 Claws (2d4)

SPECIAL: Fear, Debilitating Touch, Throttle, Create Spawn

SAVES: P

INT: Average

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Evil

TYPE: Undead (Extraordinary)

TREASURE: 7

XP: 825 + 8

Filled with an unyielding hatred and desire for vengeance on all life, the revenant is a horrifying

creature. They appear similar to animated corpse in varied states of decay. At first glance, they might be mistaken for zombies, but they have an unnatural intelligence gleaming in their eyes and their movements are quick and agile.

Revenants are driven by their rage and vengeance and they will mercilessly stalk those in life who wronged them or they perceived to be enemies. However, this rage translates to all creatures and revenants who have destroyed their enemies or who can not locate them, bestow their fury on any living creature.

Combat: They are intelligent and cunning and enjoy stalking, hunting and instilling terror in weak victims before moving in for a slow slaughter. They are fond of weakening foes with their debilitating touch and retreating, periodically moving in to torment and attack again, delighting in the pain, anguish and growing weakness of their hopeless victim. Powerful opponents are attacked with much more fury and finality and, if possible, enemies will be separated (often through the use of traps in the revenant's lair). In this manner, the revenant will hope to lock its deadly claws around a victim's throat and throttle the life from them.

Fear: A revenants gaze strikes fear into any who meet it requiring a Wisdom Save. Those who fail will either cringe in fear or flee for 3d4 rounds (50% chance of either). Any attacked by the Revenants (or other opponents) can fight back, but do so at a -4 penalty to hit.

Debilitating Touch: Anyone struck by a Revenant's clawed hands must make a Strength check or loose d6 Strength points and a -1 to initiative rolls. These effects are cumulative and if a victim reaches 0 strength, they fall unconscious. They will remain in this state until their strength is restored by magical means. Lost strength and initiative can only be restored by magical mean, such as *restoration*. After the first day, any unconscious victim must succeed at a Constitution Save or die – each successive day adds a cumulative -2 penalty to the check.

Throttle: If a revenants successfully strikes a victim with both claws, they can choose to "throttle" their opponent. This locks both of the revenant's claw about the person's throat which dig in, inflicting maximum damage (for each claw) every round and requiring two checks for loss of strength & initiative. It also requires the

victim to make an immediate fear check (even if they have already succeeded in saving versus the revenant's fear – those who fail this check will be unable to fight back, those who succeed can attempt to attack the revenants at a –4 penalty.

Create Spawn: If the revenants so chooses, those who are killed by strength loss can be brought back to unlife as a zombie under control of the revenants. Victims of 4 HD or greater, have a 25% chance of returning as a wight. This wight will be full strength, but lack the ability to Create Spawn.

Special Information: Only an individual who was particularly evil and vengeful in life can be made into a revenant through the use of *Create Greater Undead* by a cleric of level 15 or higher.

Draug

NO. ENCOUNTERED: 1
Size: Medium
HD: 3 (d12)
MOVE: 30 ft.
AC: 17
ATTACKS: Incorporeal touch (1d6) r
SPECIAL: Drowning, Create Spawn
SAVES: P
INT: Low
ALIGNMENT: Lawful Evil
TYPE: Undead (Common)
TREASURE: 1
XP: 45 + 3

Draug are the horrid undead creatures of those who have drowned at sea. They have hideous bodies of putrid, bloated flesh covered in slugs, shellfish, algae and other scavenging sea life. They often swim along coastal waters, preying upon fishermen and any who stray too close to the shore. Other Draug are found deeper at sea and will search out ships, climbing on deck during the night to slay and drown unsuspecting sea travelers.

It is rumored that some Draug inhabit ships that sail only during night – these "Ghost Ships" will chase and board other weaker vessels, capsizing the boats and drowning everyone aboard.

Combat: Draug are slow, cumbersome creatures suffering a –3 penalty to all initiative checks when out of water. If they are out of water and it is possible, they will attempt to

overbear opponents and hurl them into the overboard, often ganging up and clinging to their victim as they plummet to the depths. Opponents grappled by a draug in the water should not be allowed to add their dexterity or strength bonuses to their defensive Armor Class unless they have some special abilities to swim/act in water.

Drown: When in water, draug will usually attempt to grapple an opponent who needs air to survive. If an opponent is grappled and they fail to break free, the draug will use its natural ability to increase its weight - effectively doubling it and surrendering all of the draug's natural buoyancy. Any victim of roughly ogre size or smaller will be pulled down under the water, plunging downwards at the rate of 15 ft per round. The victim can attempt to break free each round, but after 3 rounds of downward descent, they will have to make a constitution save or drown. Each successive round will require another save at a cumulative -2 penalty.

Create Spawn: Victim's drowned to death by a draug have a 25% chance of returning to unlife as a Draug in 3 days time. Removal of the victim's body from the water will prevent this from happening.

Special Information: A cleric of 10th level or high can cast *Create Undead* upon to body of anyone who has drowned to create a draug.

Mummy, Greater

NO. ENCOUNTERED: 1
Size: Medium
HD: 14 (d12)
MOVE: 30 ft.
AC: 22
ATTACKS: Slam (3d6) or By Weapon
SPECIAL: Despair, Deepvision 120 ft. , Advanced Mummy Rot, Teleport, Mental Awareness, Spells, Minions.
SAVES: P, M
INT: Superior
ALIGNMENT: Lawful Evil
TYPE: Undead (Unique)
TREASURE: 18 (x2)
XP: 9700 + 14

Sometimes referred to as Mummy Lords or Mummy Kings, the Greater Mummy is a very powerful undead creature. The majority of Greater Mummies were High Level Clerics in life,

but sometimes Kings, Archmages or mighty warriors can be turned into a Mummy Lord. The process for creating a Greater Mummy involves a complex series of rituals and clerical magic. This dark necromantic rite can be performed on either a still living being or on one who has died - assuming the body was specially treated, prepared and maintained immediately following their death. Obviously, clerics who perform the ritual on themselves must still be living!

Greater Mummies are strongly tied to their burial tomb which is always a massive, elaborate structure. Typically it might consist of an entire series of catacombs, a large temple, a pyramid or other significantly impressive structure. The Mummy Lord will rest deep within this structure, often staying in apparent "slumber" throughout the centuries within the confine of their Sarcophagus. Despite this state of inactivity, a Greater Mummy is aware of all that goes on within the confines of their tomb. The exact location and actions of those who enter their domain is always known as is the location of all items, relics, treasure and valuables – all of which are tied to the Mummy Lord.

A Mummy Lord will have a host of traps and minions to guard and protect their domain, many of which are normal Mummies and other undead as well as other dark and terrible creatures.

Combat: Greater Mummies are very strong and do significant damage with their powerful arms. Some Mummy Lords prefer the use of a powerful magic weapon, especially those who were once Warriors in life. (Weapon attacks should apply a +3 to hit and bonus due to strength). Despite their impressive physical might, a Greater Mummy seldom enters combat, preferring to let their many minions attend to any intruders. Those who are sufficiently mighty to defeat these minions and any who present a significant danger of stealing the any of the Mummy Lord's wealth will find themselves in confrontation with the burial king himself. Greater Mummies will always use their intelligence, spells and intimate knowledge of their tomb (which is a powerful foe in its own right) to maximum advantage. When all else fails, they will retreat to their hidden inner sanctum which is often sealed off and inaccessible except through magical means.

Mental Awareness: A greater Mummy is aware of all that transpires within their domain. Though

the Mummy Lord can not "see" individuals, he is aware of where they are, what they are doing, what they find or disturb and the progress of all combat. This awareness can be foiled by *non-detection* or similar means of masking someone's presence. The awareness does not extend to Ethereal or Astral beings. A Mummy Lord is also aware of any and all treasure it possesses – if anything it taken from its domain, he always knows the exact location so long as it is on the same plane.

Minions: A Greater Mummy will have dozens of undead minions at his command. At the time of his creation, it is common for slaves, servants, advisors, family and companions to be slain and given undead status. The least of these servants will be reanimated as zombies or skeletons while many more will have been turned into mummies. The most powerful and loyal of servants will have comparably greater undead status bestowed upon them. At all times, the Mummy Lord has complete awareness of his minions and can exercise total domination over them if he so chooses.

Advanced Mummy Rot: Anyone struck by a greater Mummy or by a weapon that the Mummy Lord uses must make a constitution check or be inflicted with a severe form of Mummy Rot. This manifests itself in an immediate debilitating sickness that saps 1 point of constitution and strength. Every round, another constitution and strength point are drained, until one of them reaches 0. When this happens, the victim dies and is instantly transformed into a mummy under the Mummy Lord's command. At this point, only a Wish will turn the victim to human (demi-human) again, though they will still be dead and need to be raised. A victim inflicted with Mummy Rot will need a Heal, Greater Restoration or similar magic to remove the disease. A cure disease spell will allow another constitution check, and, if this is passed the disease is removed, though all currently lost strength. And constitution points must be recovered at the rate of one per day (or through use of restoration). *Restoration* or similar magic can restore lost strength & constitution points in a victim, thus prolonging their fate. As with normal mummies, those afflicted can not recover hit points through magical means and regeneration and normal healing are 10 times slower. (NOTE: A single *restoration* spell will restore either strength OR constitution loss – two castings would be required to restore both).

Hopeless Despair: Any living individual who views or is within 50 ft. of a Greater Mummy is immediately struck by unnatural terror that is so potent it causes all living creature to be frozen in paralyzing fear for 1d4 rounds. Only those who are immune to fear, have *protection from evil* or similar warding are able to resist this. Furthermore, all in the Mummy Lords presence are subject to the effects of a *fear* spell.

Class Abilities: Greater Mummies have 14 HD, though they possess the class abilities they had in life, at the level they had previously attained. Those with clerical powers are the most common, though fighters, wizards, thieves and others are all possible. Though a person may not have been evil in life, the decision to become a Mummy Lord irrevocably changes the recipients alignment.

Bound: A Mummy Lord is bound to his domain and the area immediately surrounding it. Though it is possible for them to leave this area, they will almost never willingly do so. A Greater Mummy that does leave his domain suffers a loss of one HD per day – if this decreases to 0 then it turns immediately to dust and is forever destroyed. Within its domain, a Greater Mummy can not be turned – on a successful Turn check a cleric can only keep the Mummy Lord from advancing on the cleric himself.

Limited Teleport: A Greater Mummy can dimension door to any place within his domain. Similarly, it can teleport from 1d6 +4 of it's minions to it's aid once per day.

Special Information: Only a cleric of level 20 or higher can create a Mummy Lord and even then, only through the casting of *Create Greater Undead* and *True Resurrection*. In addition, many special components are needed in the casting of this ritual, not the least of which is an entire tomb made to house the Mummy Lord as well as a hoard of treasure, gems, jewelry, art, magic and victims/willing recipients to serve the Mummy Lord in undeath.

Phantom
NO. ENCOUNTERED: 1
SIZE: Medium
HD: 8 (d8)
MOVE: 30 ft.
AC: 18
ATTACKS: Incorporeal Touch (1d6)
SPECIAL: Drain Essence, Grief
SAVES: M
INT: Superior
ALIGNMENT: Neutral Evil
TYPE: Undead (Extraordinary)
TREASURE: 8
XP: 775 + 8

Phantoms are the undead spirits of those who still long for the pleasures of mortal life. As such, they will often be found haunting a specific place of importance to them like a mansion, temple, palace, school or theater. By dwelling within, they seek to deceive or hide from others and regain their perceived mortality by draining the life essence of the living and gaining a semblance of humanity in return. Phantoms were most often scholars, wealthy individuals, nobles or artists in life – individuals possessed of an intense desire for material items, the pleasures of high society or a deep passion for their art.

When a phantom drains the essence of a victim, they are able to assume a corporeal and strikingly “normal” appearance for a short period of time. Many phantoms will deceive others for years, only showing themselves on special occasions or events or to periodically entertain their sycophants and admirers.

Combat: In their normal form, phantoms are incorporeal and can only be hit by magic weapons. They prefer to attack by stepping out of the floor, walls or similar structures and retreating through solid barriers to escape their foes. Phantoms who have assumed a corporeal form can still strike and their hands will deliver the chilling numbness that their normal incorporeal touch bestows. Alternately, corporeal phantoms will sometimes employ a weapon, especially if it was part of their previous life and something of importance to them.

Grief: Anyone touched by a phantom in combat must make a charisma save or be overcome with deep and hopeless grief. Images of their worst fears, dark despair and unfulfilled longing will cause them to fall to their knees, unable to

act for 3d4 rounds. A victim who is attacked in this state is allowed an additional charisma save at +2 to break the effects. If this save fails, they will remain unable to take action, but each future attack entitles them to another save.

Drain Essence: A phantom gains its corporeal form by draining the essence, beauty and strength of personality from a living victim. Most often their victims are sleeping or overcome by hopelessness and phantom's cannot employ this power against someone who is aware of them (unless for some reason that person willingly submitted). A phantom needs to come into contact with a victim for three consecutive rounds, after which two points of charisma will be permanently drained. At this point, the phantom can choose to relinquish contact and assume a corporeal form or continue to feed, draining another 2 points after three more rounds, etc. Once the essence drain is complete, a phantom must either assume corporeal form within 1 turn or lose the essence that was drained. Phantoms can only drain charisma from those who possess a score of greater than 11 and, conversely, they cannot drain a victim lower than 11 as only the most potent of individuals can fuel their hunger. A normally sleeping victim is allowed one intelligence save at -2 to awake at the phantom's first touch. If this is failed, they will sleep as normal while the phantom feeds.

Special Information: Phantoms can be made with the *Create Greater Undead* spell by a cleric of level 17 or higher provided they meet the personality traits as described above. Of course, some phantoms (like all undead) are created through unfathomable means, simply through their lust for continued life.

From Zudrak:

Blisterpixy

NO. ENCOUNTERED: 2-12, 40-400

SIZE: Small or Medium (see below)

HD: 1 (d4) or 2 (d8) (see below)

MOVE: 20 ft. or 30 ft. (see below)

AC: 15 or 20 (see below)

ATTACKS: Weapon or 2 Slams (see below)

SPECIAL: Blistering Rage

SAVES: P

INT: Average

ALIGNMENT: Lawful Neutral (good tendencies)

TYPE: Humanoid

TREASURE: 1

XP: 5+1 or 20+2

These small (1½' tall) pudgy blue humanoids live in moderate forests. They exist in relative peace amongst the low-lying shrubs on the forest floor, burrowing much like moles do. They love to collect the flowers of the shrubbery that grows above their homes and feed on these as a delicacy. While they are small and look fairly harmless, their initial appearance belies their ability to defend themselves well. Whenever a blisterpixy is harmed or becomes angry, it will erupt into a rage and undergo a physical metamorphosis. The blue skin of the blisterpixy changes to a deep red and its body more than doubles in size to about 6'. This transformation takes a mere round to complete. Any weapons (usually daggers) are discarded and the creature begins to attack with its fists, causing 1d8 points of damage per fist. They may attack with both fists each round. The blistering rage lasts for 5 rounds after combat has finished and generally any surviving blisterpixies will pat each other gently in order to calm themselves down. It is believed that these creatures are responsible for the euphemism "seeing red" in anger as scores of them transform at one as a tribe.

Editor's note: Due to formatting issues the following article will appear in a differing format from the standard that this newsletter uses.

Banes and Balms – A Guide to Herbal Lore
for the **Castles and Crusades Roleplaying Game** by Troll Lord Games
written and compiled by Robert Doyel

Natural cures vary greatly in their costs, availability, and effects. There are some that grant magical abilities, some that restore damage, and some that simply treat minor afflictions, like toothache. The Castle Keeper should remember, that in a world of swords and sorcery, a place where many alternate planes of existence exist, and creatures from those places freely roam, there is virtually no possible effect some herb, somewhere, cannot achieve. These special concoctions, however, are not the province of this work; instead, the Castle Keeper is encouraged to develop whatever is needed for the individual campaign. What is here are the guidelines for the mundane, and the magical, drawn from popular and folkloric roots.

Whenever a character eats, imbibes, or uses an ointment, poultice or other herbal remedy, a saving throw is normally not required. However, if the affliction is magical in nature, a save may be allowed at the Castle Keeper's discretion; such a save should use the level of the treatment's creator as the modifier, modified against a difficulty of the cause of the infliction. Some herbal remedies might have their own modifiers, or other effects, replacing the above, as specified. In the case of a character partaking an herbal treatment which is in fact a poison, the rules as detailed in "Appendix A" of *Monsters and Treasure* should be followed.

COST OF HERBS

Most herbs are relatively inexpensive, or even free, if they can be located. Some, however, are very expensive, or are regulated by the local legal authorities, due to their ability to be utilized as poisons. To determine the cost of an herbal remedy, simply determine all of its effects, and then add the numbers rolled to get those effects, and divide by two; this is the price in silver pieces for a single, effective, dose. Unlike a poison, range variation is always considered the lowest value for determination of cost. For example, an herbal treatment that provided a thirty second symptom relief of a physical condition (a roll of 1, 1, and 1) would cost 1.5 silver pieces. If the remedy is a poison, treat it as such and follow the rules for cost as detailed in *Monsters and Treasure*. However, a character capable of making herbal remedies, as detailed following, can mitigate or eliminate, the costs, both of herbal remedies and of herbal poisons. It is recommended that an herb, whether poison or not, that is purchased or obtained outside its natural climate have its cost in gold pieces, and multiplied by a minimum of 10. Especially difficult herbs, such as the few found in alpine climates, should have their cost in gold, and multiplied by 100. Finally, any herb which renders a permanent effect, either a cure, a bestowment, or certain unguents that heal damage, have its cost treated as a magic item of a level and price commensurate with its ability; this applies equally to those herbs which grant permanent negative side effects, as well.

MAKING AN HERBAL REMEDY

The knowledge to make herbal treatments is normally widespread, with several people, from all classes and cultures, possessing a fundamental and rudimentary ability to create a functioning remedy. Few, however, are truly gifted and know the complete secrets held within the herbs. In fact, basic treatments, for symptoms, and for minor or major afflictions, are normally quite easy to make, and can be found in nearly any environment where people dwell. Anything else is much more difficult, and the knowledge to create such items is carefully guarded, often by druids, assassins, and powerful spellcasters who keep books and other media devoted to the subject. These classes, especially (along with the ranger, and in some cases, the barbarian,) are well-suited for the purpose.

The actual making of the herbal remedy is not unlike that of brewing a potion crossed with cooking. Each remedy is a recipe, with exacting details for its completion, and no variation can be made or unintended consequences may be found; this is, rarely, how a new recipe is discovered, especially when dealing with poisons. It should be noted that many herbs have multiple properties, and that it is possible for a character to know one aspect, but not another; each requires a different recipe to make.

Any character with knowledge of plant-life, such as those listed above, can use such knowledge to make an herbal remedy. Doing so requires an Intelligence check, with a modifier equal to the highest required roll to achieve the desired effect. Should a character actually possess a recipe, then a +10 bonus is gained on the check, but, only when making an herbal remedy of that type. Assassins are more limited, and can only make herbal remedies with negative effects, poisons, and those with narcotics involved.

TABLE 1: HERBAL REMEDIES

d20	Effect	Creation Modifier	Addiction Difficulty
1-4	Physical Condition (Table 2)	(-1)	1d2
5-9	Hit Point Damage (Table 3)	(-1)	1d3
10-12	Hit Point Damage and Physical Condition	(-2)	1d4
13-14	Attribute Damage (Table 4)	(-3)	1d6
15-16	Attribute Damage and Hit Point Damage	(-4)	1d8
17-18	Attribute Damage and Physical Condition	(-4)	2d4
19	Attribute, Hit Point and Physical Condition	(-5)	2d6
20	Poison (Appendix A, Monsters and Treasure)	(-1 to -5)	--

Creation modifier applies to the check made to successfully create a dose of the herbal remedy. All such modifiers are cumulative.

Addiction difficulty is the base difficulty for the save made to avoid gaining an addiction, as detailed later, to the effects of the herbal remedy. Unless an herbal remedy is, or contains, a narcotic, there is only a 5% chance of addiction being possible.

TABLE 2: PHYSICAL CONDITION TREATMENTS

d20	Effect	Creation Modifier	Addiction Modifier
1-6	Symptom Treatment (Table 2A)	(--)	(--)
7-12	Minor Relief (Table 2A)	(-1)	(+1)
13-15	Major Relief (Table 2A)	(-3)	(+3)
16-17	Cure	(-5)	(--)
18-19	Bestowment (See Table 2A and 2B)	(-5)	(+5)
20	Bestowment and Cure (See Table 2A and 2B)	(-7)	(+5)

Symptom Treatment means that the character ceases, for a limited time, suffering the basic symptoms of whatever afflicts them. This does not remove, negate, or hinder any suffering of the ailment, but it does help in other, always minor, ways. An example of this sort of treatment effect would be the temporary suppression of a headache.

Minor Relief treats the ailment, reducing penalties and otherwise giving the character some sort of minor assistance. It does not, however, treat or restore damage suffered. It is suggested that it reduces penalties by ¼. If the ailment does not provide penalties, the Castle Keeper is encouraged to develop and roleplay the situation. An example of this sort of treatment effect would be the cessation of muscle ache, allowing a character to more easily move about despite exhaustion.

Major Relief treats the condition in such a way as to completely remove all symptoms, and severely limit any penalties brought on by the condition. Any penalties taken are reduced by three-quarters, and the condition is undetectable by anything short of magical means.

Cures render the condition permanently treated, removing all associated drawbacks and penalties, as well as the complete cessation of symptoms. The character does not become immune to the affliction, and may contract or be affected by it again.

Bestowments grant the character some side effect, which may, or may not be, beneficial. These types of treatments always function as a major relief at minimum, and may even cure the condition. For these, a roll on Table 2a indicates the length of the bestowment as well as that of the treatment itself; cures, however, are still permanent.

Addiction modifier applies to the base difficulty to resist becoming addicted to the effects of the herbal remedy, assuming such a save is needed. All such modifiers are cumulative.

TABLE 2A: TREATMENT LENGTH

d20	Duration	Creation Modifier	Addiction Modifier
1	1d6 (x10) seconds	(--)	(--)
2-3	1d6 minutes	(--)	(--)
4-5	1d6 (x10) minutes	(--)	(--)
6-7	1d6 hours	(--)	(+1)
8-9	6d4 hours	(-1)	(+1)
10-13	2d4-1 days	(-1)	(+2)
14	1d4 weeks	(-1)	(+2)
15	1d4 months	(-2)	(+3)
16	1d4+3 months	(-2)	(+3)
17	1d6+6 months	(-3)	(+4)
18	1d4 years	(-4)	(+5)
19	1d4+3 years	(-5)	(+5)
20	Permanent	(-6)	--

TABLE 2B: BESTOWMENTS

d20	Bestowment Category	Creation Modifier	Addiction Modifier
1-3	Negative Effect (See Table 2B-1)	(-3)	(-8)
4-12	Metabolic Effect (See Table 2B-2)	(-1)	(+1)
13-16	Aptitude Effect (See Table 2B-3)	(-2)	(+2)
17-18	Interpersonal Effect (See Table 2B-4)	(-1)	(--)
19-20	Magical Effect (See Table 2B-5)	(-3)	(+3)

Any bestowment, whether negative or otherwise, tends to manifest as a physically visible way. For example, a character that gained the Enhanced Senses ability might start to exhibit a change in their eyes, or ears, in such a manner as any careful observation by another will notice the change. Any herbal remedy effect is not detectable as a magical aura.

TABLE 2B-1: NEGATIVE EFFECTS

d20	Effect
1-7	Mild Affliction
8-13	Major Affliction
14-15	Narcotic Reaction
16-17	Physical Injury (Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution Only; See Table 4, “Appendix A” of <i>Monsters and Treasure</i>)
18-19	Mental Injury (Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma Only; See Table 4, “Appendix A” of <i>Monsters and Treasure</i>)
20	Mental and Physical Injury

A mild affliction is any non-damaging, non-penalizing negative effect, such as bad breath, acne, or other issue. Such occurrences should be roleplayed, and should not hinder or harm the character in any significant way.

Major afflictions affect the character in some way, such as double vision, or anemia. The exact nature of the effects is left to the Castle Keeper’s discretion.

A narcotic reaction results in some sort of change in physical condition, always on a severe level, such as catatonia, blindness, or hallucinations. Any herbal remedy generating this effect also requires a save to avoid addiction, despite its negative qualities.

TABLE 2B-2: METABOLIC EFFECTS

d20	Granted Ability
1	Extra Attack
2	Primal Force
3	Primal Fury
4	Primal Might
5	Primal Will
6	Still Body
7	Resist Elements
8	Woodland Stride
9	Deepvision
10	Resistance to Arcane Magic
11	Enhanced Senses
12	Twilight Vision
13	Fast Movement
14	Dusk Vision
15	Enhanced Hearing
16	Resistance to Divine Magic
17	Prime Bonus +1 (Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution Only)
18	Prime Bonus +2 (Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution Only)

19	Prime Bonus +1 (Two of Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution Only)
20	Prime Bonus +2 (Two of Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution Only)

All metabolic bestowments are considered to be magic items for purposes of costs and availability. In addition, all granted abilities are exactly like the racial and class abilities of the same name as listed in the Player's Handbook; these abilities do not add together. For purposes of level, and for resolving abilities which require a check, the character's Primes are considered as normal (the herbal remedy does not provide the character with an additional Prime), and the character is assumed to be 1st level for purposes of the check (if the character already possesses the ability, the treatment does not hinder it.)

Resistance to Divine Magic is identical to Resistance to Arcane Magic except it applies to spells cast by clerics and druids.

A Prime Bonus adds the listed amount to any check made which has the attribute in question as the saving throw category.

TABLE 2B-3: APTITUDE EFFECTS

d20	Granted Ability
1	Conceal/Hide
2	Move Silently
3	Scale/Climb
4	Traps
5	Decipher Script
6	Case Target
7	Listen
8	Open Lock
9	Pick Pocket
10	Disguise
11	Combat Sense
12	Sharp Senses
13	Spot Hidden Doors
14	Legend Lore
15	Survival/Nature Lore
16	Weapon Training (+1 Attack Bonus)
17	Prime Bonus +1 (Wisdom or Intelligence Only)
18	Prime Bonus +2 (Wisdom or Intelligence Only)
19	Prime Bonus +1 (Wisdom and Intelligence)
20	Prime Bonus +2 (Wisdom and Intelligence)

An aptitude bestowment is considered to be a magic item for purposes of cost and availability. They are considered to be identical to the ability of the same name as detailed in the Player's Handbook; however, unlike a metabolic effect, if a character already possesses the ability by race or class, then a +2 bonus is gained instead.

TABLE 2B-4: INTERPERSONAL EFFECTS

d20	Granted Ability
1-2	Inspire
3-4	Embolden
5-6	Demoralize
7-8	Divine Aura
9-10	Exalt
11-12	Fascinate
13-14	Call-to-Arms
15-16	Love
17-18	Prime Bonus +1 (Charisma Only)
19-20	Prime Bonus +2 (Charisma Only)

Interpersonal effects are granted abilities that function exactly like the class abilities of the same name as detailed in the Player's Handbook. If the character already possesses the gained ability, no further benefit is obtained. These effects are always considered to be magical items for cost and availability. For purposes of level, and checks, the character is considered to be 1st level and has Primes as normal (the herbal reagent does not grant an additional Prime); nor, does the herbal treatment reduce a character's natural ability.

The love effect causes the imbiber to make a save, modified by the difficulty of the level of its maker, with a failure resulting in an unnatural and extreme sensation of affection for, and to, the first person encountered after its partaking. The exact effects are left to the Castle Keeper to determine, but in general, it should not be more powerful than a charm person spell.

TABLE 2B-5: MAGICAL EFFECTS

d20	Granted Ability
1-11	Potion (See Table 4.1, "Treasure" of <i>Monsters and Treasure</i>)
12	Turn Undead
13	Ki Strike
14	Detect Evil
15	See Spirits
16	Animal Empathy
17	Telepathy
18	Spell Resistance +3
19	Totem Shape
20	Spell Effect (See Table 2B-51)

Magical effects are magical, by their nature, and therefore are detectable as such, and should be considered magical items for cost and availability. Each functions identically to the named ability as listed in the Player's Handbook, and detailed below; if the character already has the ability, the herbal remedy does not improve it, or hinder it. Otherwise, the character is considered to be 1st level and to have their normal Primes for all relevant checks associated with the gained ability.

See spirits allows the character to perceive, and view into, other planes of existence. In specific terms, the character can see incorporeal and ethereal creatures as normal, but must still have other means to affect

them as desired. Having this ability subjects the character to the possible attacks of such creatures. It does not allow the character to detect invisible creatures.

Telepathy grants the character the ability to mentally communicate with any creature capable of speaking a language within three hundred feet.

Spell resistance +3 is a bonus to the character's natural spell resistance (which for most characters is zero.) Magic items which grant a flat bonus do not have their total increased; however, a magic item that grants a bonus to natural spell resistance does.

A spell effect either functions as a spell as listed in the Player's Handbook, or allows the character to cast the spell, depending on what the Castle Keeper wishes to allow. Caster level, and spell type is determined by the following table; note, a second roll on the table is needed to determine the spell level.

TABLE 2B-51: MAGICAL EFFECTS

d20	Caster Level	Spell Type	Spell Level
1-2	1	Cleric	1
3-4	1	Druid	1
5-6	1	Wizard	1
7-8	1	Illusionist	1
9-10	2	Cleric	2
11-12	2	Druid	2
13-14	2	Wizard	2
15-16	2	Illusionist	2
17	3	Cleric	3
18	3	Druid	3
19	3	Wizard	3
20	3	Illusionist	3

TABLE 3: DAMAGE HEALED

D20	Hit Points Restored
1-2	1
3	1d2
4-5	1d3
6-8	1d4
9-12	1d6
13-14	1d8
15-16	2d4
17-18	3d4 (Treat as Magic Item for Cost)
19	3d6 (Treat as Magic Item for Cost)
20	3d8 (Treat as Magic Item for Cost)

TABLE 4: ATTRIBUTE RESTORATION

d20	Attributes Affected
1-4	One Physical (See Table 4A and Table 4 “Appendix A” of <i>Monsters and Treasure</i>)
5-8	One Mental (See Table 4A and Table 4 “Appendix A” of <i>Monsters and Treasure</i>)
9-11	One Physical and One Mental
12-14	Two Physical
15-17	Two Mental
18-19	Two Physical and Two Mental
20	All

TABLE 4A: ATTRIBUTE HEALING

d20	Attribute Damage Healed
1-5	1
6-10	1d2
11-14	1d3
15-16	1d4
17	1d6
18	2d3 (Treat as Magic Item for Cost)
19	2d4 (Treat as Magic Item for Cost)
20	3d3 (Treat as Magic Item for Cost)

CLIMATE

Wild plants do not grow just anywhere. Some require excessive amounts of moisture, and some grow best in arid conditions. Others are reinforced by destruction, combusting in the dry heat of desert winds, and some are hardy and durable to survive in the frigid existence of the arctic. These reasons, among others, are why herbs are sometimes very difficult, if not impossible, to obtain. Once found, it may be possible to cultivate, but that is left to the Castle Keeper's discretion.

Following is a basic breakdown of climates, with general descriptions of weather patterns. Each herb noted herein has an associated climate, to facilitation and ease of use for the weary Castle Keeper.

Rainforest (Rf): One hundred or more inches of rain falls each year, maintaining a steady temperature of about eighty degrees Fahrenheit. Populated with an abundant supply of plant and animal life, a rainforest climate typically blankets the equator.

Savanna (Sv): Savanna climates alternate between wet and dry seasons, with temperature and wind conditions changing as the seasons. When it is dry, the wind picks up, and phenomena such as tornados are possible; temperature falls, but not excessively. Wet seasons are normally much hotter.

Desert (Ds): Characterized by lack of rainfall, a desert climate receives very little, if any, moisture. Temperature during the day is often much hotter than at night, when temperature often drops; this drop in temperature is often very high, but is much more noticeable during the winter seasons. Wind, when blowing, is usually mild and arid.

Steppe (St): Semiarid, with spotted, limited rain, a steppe climate tends to have very cold winters, and hot summers. Wind is generally mild, though gusts are not uncommon.

Chaparral (Cp): Summers are marked by increased wind and temperature, rising significantly from the cold wetness of the winter months. Fires, induced by wind, are normal during the summer.

Grasslands (Gl): Rainfall is consistent, generally coming in summer, forcing away heat. During the winter, the moisture keeps the temperature cold, allowing for a fairly average yearly temperature.

Deciduous Forest (Df): Thick trees grow in the ever-changing temperature of the deciduous forest climate, enjoying the steady yearly rainfall. Summers tend to be wet, and winters tend to be cold.

Taiga (Tg): Long, cold winters are normal for a taiga climate, as is dramatic, and extreme temperature change. Rainfall is slim, and summers are short.

Tundra (Tu): Often found near arctic coasts, a tundra climate is often laced and spotted with permafrost, having very long and extremely cold winters, lacking any sign of summer.

Alpine (Ap): Covered with permafrost and ice caps, an alpine climate is often located at high elevation, having a yearly temperature of extreme coldness, and a lack of any rainfall.

TABLE 5: CLIMATE

d%	Climate
01-44	Rainforest
45-49	Savanna
50-51	Desert
52-54	Steppe
55-59	Chaparral
60-77	Grasslands
68-96	Deciduous Forest
97-98	Taiga
99	Tundra
100	Alpine

SAMPLE HERBS

The following is a sampling of herbs, their properties, and their effects. Castle Keepers are encouraged to research herbs and discover the plethora of variant abilities they possess, or, create them per the needs of the campaign.

Alder Buckthorn Bark: 1st level caster level; *fireball*

Wormwood Juice (Absinthe / Artemesia): Addictive (Narcotic); +2 Strength Prime

Vervain: Divine Aura granted

Tea: Reduction in nausea

Two years of C&C and an open call.

As this issue winds down I would like to make two open calls for items from the C&C community. As you know C&C is in it's second year. I feel it would be appropriate for anyone to submit thoughts and feelings for how the game has affected their hobby and also the hobby of roleplaying in general.

Also with such a varied community I would like to hear a brief overview of the worlds or campaign areas that you are creating or have created. We hope to include one or two of these overviews each issue.

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