

Winter 2008-09 Issue 8

NEW SPELLS AND MONSTERS

KOBOLD

Quarterly

A Magazine of Kobolds & Dragons

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MEDICINE

Interview with

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Deadly

GLYPHS

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Legends of the

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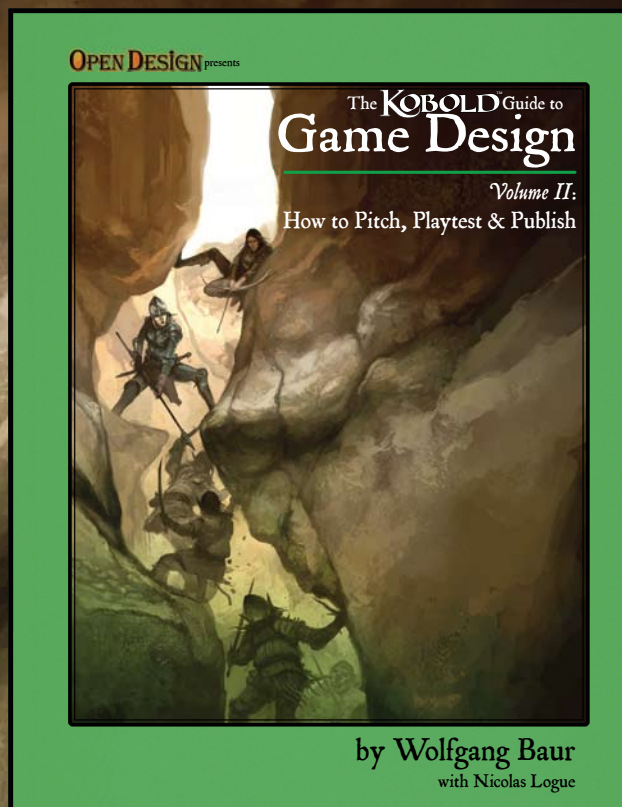


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New Voices

For the second time, I'm judging the RPG SUPERSTAR contest with the Paizo folks. It's a wonderful gig, but it reminds me as well that there's always room for new talent and for new voices. The RPG SUPERSTAR contest is open to anyone who isn't a previous winner or a published game designer, so all sorts show up, from the wildly creative to the number-crunching madmen. The field is open to all comers, and it shows, with the full range of experience, talent, and drive on display.

And yet, the material submitted does follow Sturgeon's Law, which says that 90% of any given field is junk (and that's why editors have jobs). The Superstar slush pile in Round 1 is so brutal (it inspired me to write "How Not to Design a Magic Item" for the *KOBOLD Guide to Game Design, Volume 2*). There's so many ways to go wrong...

But that's why it's so much fun to watch a new or unknown designer succeed. The judges have no names or information about the contestants when we're going through the entries, and yet I see that the most talented contestants pack a lot of personality into of 200 words of Wondrous Items.

The key word, to me, is Wondrous. Magic weapons and armor are functional, scrolls and potions (and wands and staves) are just containers for existing effects, but the wondrous item category is a great one for showing off both imagination and mechanical skill. The designers with imagination seem to rise above the rest of the pack. Their items nail something so well that you want to see what else they might do in future rounds. I want a spotlight on those folks.

Frankly, I want them to submit queries and articles to KQ, because much as I love printing articles by big-name designers, it's also exciting to hear from new names.



Designers come and go from the RPG hobby over time, and I'm happy to see both variety and stability in who we hear from. Not sure I want to list all my favorite game designers here (though it is no secret that kobold diplomats have interviewed several of them). But I'm curious to hear what names on an adventure make you say "Yeah, it must be mine!" And if you don't mind sharing your loathing with fellow readers, I'd be happy to hear which designers have made you groan.

In any case, in the interests of keeping things lively, this time out we have a few of those new names on the old table of contents. I promise we'll have a few more next time. Mario Podeschi and Steven Robert are new to these pages, and so is John Ling, though you'll certainly be familiar with his excellent work on the Monday Monsters series on the koboldquarterly.com site. Give their work a read and see how you like it. Better still, give us your feedback with a letter or a forum post.

And I'll also note something that isn't in this issue: the Ecology article is back as a 3rd Edition piece, and may stay that way for a little while. As of this writing, the current number of 4th Edition article submissions is pretty close to zero.

As always, direct your protests, goons, goblins, treasure fleets, couriers, courtesans, *message* spells, sealed letters, *explosive runes*, songbirds, and email to letters@koboldquarterly.com or to Kobold Letters, PO Box 2811, Kirkland, WA 98083.

Wolfgang Baur
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From the Mines

Dispatches and Complaints

Editor's Note: We definitely whacked the beehive with a stick with our editorial from Issue 7. Here's a sampling of the response.

Gain One Level of Enjoyment

Just got done reading your editorial in the latest edition. You pose an interesting question at the end when you ask "would sword & sorcery without the world's most popular set of mechanics still be great?"

Until May of this year, I would have answered "rules be damned." As in the spirit of your editorial, I believe that story and character development are much more important and interesting than the rules core. As a player, it's the story that I get the majority of enjoyment from (although I find some enjoyment in optimizing feats, skills, etc. as well). And as a DM, I've always viewed the rules more as guidelines.

However, with the introduction of 4th Edition, I'm finding for the first time in 20 years of gaming that a rules system holds some sway over me. I've read the 4.0 rules, played some games, and made an informed decision: I'm just not keen on 4E. The games I've played in the system have largely been spoiled by the rules for various reasons. So the rules are important to the play experience. This was a real epiphany to me.

Will I play 4E if the rest of my group decides to use those rules? Sure. The social interaction with my friends and story that is being told is more important than a rules set. But what I think the situation boils down to isn't so much enjoyment vs. non-enjoyment, but *level* of enjoyment. I could be

enjoying myself more or less depending on the rules set.

~Adam Bennington

Gotta Improvise

I just picked up volume 7 of KQ, and I think you are on to something in your opening editorial. Fun has to be priority one, and that revolves around the mix of people sitting around the table and the ability of the GM to keep things entertaining and engaging. I do not believe that the GM's knowledge of the rules needs to be the best at the table, but their ability to craft the story around the goals of the players will determine their success. What is critical is the GM's ability to improvise, and realize when there needs to be a change of plan.

On game mechanics, my personal belief is that the mechanics should be as streamlined as possible, and be flexible enough to handle the off-the-wall ideas that players come up with. Common scenarios should be described in the rules to give the GM an idea of how the mechanics work, and offer ideas for how to handle the more complex situations. I fully agree that bad mechanics can destroy an otherwise good setting and adventure. It is easy for a game designer to fall in love with the rules and miss the point of playing the game.

Cheers!

~Bret Smith

Roles First, Please

Are rules the most important element of a game session? I would have to say no. While rules play an important part of a roleplaying game, they are not the most important part.

Roleplaying games are first and



foremost about roles. If the mechanics were the most important then we would all switch over to an online gaming model. It would be a lot easier to just log on and play. Playing a character like a collection of stats meant to 'win' a game is missing the point. Role-playing isn't about amassing treasure or magic, it is about developing a shared imaginary world. There are no winners, just participants. You can overcome challenges, but there is no real finish line to the game, unless you want to consider a character's retirement to NPC status a victory.

I approach my games as combinations of improvisational theater and storytelling. As a DM I am constantly taking the input of my players and incorporating it into the shared story arc. Mechanics are important, and the element of random chance plays a big role in how the game progresses, but it shouldn't stand in the way of a good story.

The story shouldn't stand in the way of the player's enjoyment either. Dice rolls help structure the narrative, and you need to respect that. However, as a good storyteller you need to know when to adjust the dice to avoid destroying the entire game.

Hewing to the rules too closely will create a sterile experience where players feel as if they are playing a slow-motion video game. A good DM knows when to improvise and bend the rules.

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People won't play if they feel railroaded, cheated, or restricted by the rules. A game where you continually hear 'the rules say you can't do that' gets old very quickly.

The DM's role is to enable his players to have fun and tell an interesting story. A good DM can do this with a D20 system, a D6 system, a dice pool or flipping quarters. The game's the thing, not the rules.

-Patrick Curtin

Our Dastardly Agenda

Reading the editorial to issue 7 got me thinking – this is a sneaky way for you to convince us that KQ should post few if any game mechanics in its fine pages so as to satisfy the demanding and faithful 3.5, PATHFINDER, and 4.0 crowds alike. I think that would be a shame. While the mechanic-less articles are very fine reads, I enjoy some numbers along with my story.

To answer your last question, "would sword & sorcery without the world's most popular set of mechanics still be great?" my personal opinion is no. In 30+ years I have played in and run dozens of game systems, and more than half a dozen for sword & sorcery alone, but I always come back to you-know-what. Every time. To the point that nowadays I play 3.5 (heavily PATHFINDER influenced) today as my only fantasy RPG.

On the other hand, I know where you are coming from. I just put the finishing touches on a game book seeing print soon that's 400 pages of fantasy gaming material and there isn't a rule on any page. It's best when numbers and story work together to show the players and GM a good time, and there's already so many enjoyable rule systems out there.

And, while initially annoyed to learn the centaur Ecology article would be 4E, I liked it just the same (I don't buy into 4E's feel or play style). The stats didn't bother me either. Don't tell my players, but I've run 4e monsters from their collectable miniature cards in my PATHFINDER campaign to fine effect.

Keep up the amazing work.

-Jeff Ibach

Well, Jeff, you caught us. We do think that sometimes (especially lately) people get so caught up in the mechanics that they lose sight of the sheer entertainment of sword-and-sorcery RPGs. We love the wahoo mayhem of the game, and we love the rules, too. But if I had to choose (and thank goodness, I don't have to!), I'd rather have the wahoo than the rules.

With respect to the Centaur article, we're trying to bring a less tactical feel and play style to 4E content. Hell, we did the same thing with Wrath of the River King, just by offering more social and skill encounters.

Community Theatre Needs You

Before I dive into the meat of my email regarding the editorial in KQ7 I would like to tell you how much I am enjoying the magazine. This will be my second issue (having signed up for a sub at GENCON). I normally loathe reading PDFs and have been eagerly awaiting my print copy, but after reading the cover and the editorial I find I must dive into the rest of my PDF copy without delay!

So onto the meat.

A good friend of mine and I have had a series of ongoing discussions regarding RPG rules and role-playing. My friend could run games without rules altogether and turn it into a story telling event, but I feel if there are no dice rolls involved (and a good rules system to back it) I might as well be reading a book or participating in community improv theatre. Sure it can be fun, but playing without dice is not really playing a game anymore, it becomes co-operative storytelling or play acting. This in itself is not bad, but if I want to sit down to play an RPG I want to see some dice rolling!

Introducing dice and rules adds an element of chance and a sense of danger into the make-believe world. Without that sense of danger I would rather be playing a video game where my avatar can respawn if he dies.

I almost never fudge die rolls as a DM unless I realize that I have made a poor choice in my encounter selection,

but if the players themselves are making bad choices (especially the min-maxers) forget it, let the pips reveal their fates!

If as a player I am getting so attached to my character that I am afraid for him to die, well the DM is probably doing a pretty good job of running the game, but if the character dies he dies. There are always 100 other character ideas waiting to be born onto paper.

So I like to have a good set of rules, but I also need a good story, and a good background. As a DM I try to be part storyteller, part game designer, and part opponent. If I have done my job correctly before the players arrive at the table, then the dice and the rules flow seamlessly with the story and if a PC goes down in battle the player (hopefully) knows it was his bad choices or bad luck that put him there, not the killer DM.

-Ray Franklin

Thanks to everyone who shared their take on it – I especially like the improv comparison.

And now we return once more to the topic that pretty much rules the letters column every issue. This time, I blame the centaurs.

This Endless War: 4E vs 3E

I decided to subscribe to KQ once the announcement was made that it was sticking with 3E. I was very disappointed to see the 4E content on the centaurs creep in.

I am of the group who believes KQ should remain loyal to 3E content only – let WotC do the 4E stuff. However, if you must bring in some 4E – at least try to have equivalent 3E content as well. For example for the centaurs article, both 3E and 4E stats for the example centaurs would have been nice if possible.

If KQ does start going 4E - I will cancel my subscription.

-Paul Sacker
Little Neck, NY

Yep, we expected to lose some subscribers just for talking about 4E topics and run-

ning a page of 4E stats in issue #7. It's a shame, but it seems foolish to pretend that PATHFINDER and 4E don't exist. The game is always changing, and KQ will support those changes, both 3E-friendly ones like PATHFINDER and (to the degree possible) 4E as well.

Thank You 4 the Content

Just wanted to say thanks for putting 4E content in the latest issue of KQ!

While I'm still playing 3E, this is because we're in the process of finishing up a couple of long-running campaigns and will soon be playing 4E almost exclusively. While 3rd Edition articles will still be useful for their fluff content (like the excellent and surprising "Ecology of the Phantom Fungus" in issue #6!), I'll have little use for rules crunch going forward. I'm glad KQ is able to support both editions.

-Richard Green

Hey, so are we! By relying on fair use and the copyright laws regarding game rules, we can offer some things for 4E fans, but not as much as we might if a proper license were available. We'll take what we can get, and will strive to make every article inspiring to players of both editions.

Sneaking In

First of all, thanks for a great print mag. I've enjoyed my issues so far, and it looks like you've done a really nice job with the most recent, and I'm actually quite surprised by the amount of material.

I was quite surprised to find some 4E formatted information this time, and think it would be great if you could use both in the future. I'm one of the rare ones that likely will play a little of both versions in the future. I was extremely skeptical during the run up to 4E, and was really disappointed with the way Wizards handled "their" magazines, and considered myself a very loyal Paizo subscriber, although I do think Wizards is starting to do the mags justice in the last couple issues.

I've been playing the new edition now for about 4 months and I have to say – it's a lot of fun. I know quite a

few people who were iffy at first, but are now enjoying the game play. Although the mechanics seem really funky just reading through the books, the play is actually quite engaging. But, I'm sure you've heard this before.

The moral of my email is that I really do hope you can continue to sneak in little bits of 4E, while focusing on generic and 3E material. I'm still supporting Paizo, but due to limited time I'm likely to play mostly 4E most of the time, so don't have much need for new 3E material.

Thanks for listening, and thanks for putting out a great magazine.

-Aaron Derrick

We seem to have snuck another bit of 4E material into this issue, though I think 3E paladins and fighters might enjoy it as well. See "Warlord Battle Cries" on page 52.

Ring Our Bell

You have asked readers to chime in if they support 4E so here is my bell. I stopped running 3.X years ago and have little interest in it anymore nor do I have much interest in the new spin-offs such as PATHFINDER, FANTASY CRAFT, etc. I may purchase one or two because they have some interesting ideas but have little interest in running them.

For me and most of my players, 4E is bringing more fun to the table than 3E ever did. The action is dynamic and interesting and much easier for me to run with an enhanced sense of teamwork. Sure there are things we miss (like druids, monks, bards...) but most of these will come in time.

The thing that saddens me most is the restrictive license which I hope they fix so the community can become more involved – I'd love to see a superhero system made using 4E as the base as MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS did with 3E.

To each his own, though.

-Robert Stehwien

You started running 4E years ago? Ok... Damn time travelers ruining gaming for

the rest of us.

Seriously, we're glad to provide material for all fans of the worlds most popular roleplaying game. But we are still seeing a lot more 3e queries and articles than 4e at the moment.

Dance Dance Yeah!

What a great issue! I love your centaur ecology.

Thanks for the great reads/escape; especially when my wife is watching *Dancing with the Stars* (ugh)!

-Pete von Bleichert

Kobolds cut a mean rug when they put their minds to it.

Class and Character

I first wish to thank you for the Adopt-a-Soldier program. Many of our fellow gamers might be surprised to learn how many military members enjoy pen-and-paper RPGs. Every issue that we can get out here is gratefully passed around several times. Everyone who donates a subscription deserves a major thank-you.

Second, I wish to applaud the art in your magazine. The combination of old woodcuts and romantic paintings add a level of class and character to the publication that sets it above the competition. Please include more illustrations like the ones from the Paladin Code and Angel of Redemption articles! They work even better in the black-and-white print edition!

-SGT William Smith

Hooked After Just One Dose

I've only read one issue of your magazine that I chanced upon at our BX, and I'm hooked. You have a great mag going, and the fact that you encourage the sponsorship program is awesome. Us gamers overseas appreciate all the support. I intend to tell all my GI gaming buddies about you!

-Christopher Adams,
Capt, USAF

Hey, tell everyone! And thanks for writing.

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Glyph Magic

The Ecstasy of Ink

by Joshua Stevens
Art by Pat Loboyko



Laboriously copying page after monotonous page of decaying tomes, alchemical notes, and treatises on various esoteric topics often causes a scribe's mind to wander. In these inattentive moments, it is all too human to take shortcuts, to attempt to improve on the original, and to reinterpret the text. Glyph magic's roots lie in an obsession with the written word and an infatuation with the errors and alterations that invariably sneak into a written work. And in the Magocracy of Allain, the five personal scribes of Magus Hakren found this out first hand nearly 80 years ago.

Heretical Verses

Magus Hakren was renowned for summoning devils and demons—both to interrogate them for his own ends and to supply information to interested parties. Tasked by their master, Hakren's scribes copied various protective wards onto scrolls from several celestial manuscripts. While summoning a particularly powerful

devil, Hakren's impermeable wards failed and the enraged fiend devoured him. Hakren's wards failed because of minor inaccuracies on the vellum upon which they were copied. In truth, Titivillus, the Arch-Duke of Scribes (see *Kobold Quarterly* #1), had been retained by Hakren's demonic assassin to subtly influence his scribes in their efforts to faithfully copy the ancient celestial tomes, thus laying a trap for the despised Magus.

Those same scribes could hear their master's screams as he was devoured within his summoning chamber—the summoned fiend crunching each bone in its jaws and hungrily slurping at flesh. Flinging the chamber door open to reveal the horror within, the scribes saw protective wards had warped into writhing black tentacles that held Hakren fast while the fiend deftly picked him apart. The fiend vanished with a howl, leaving the scribes forever stained by what they had seen. With little evidence left in the chamber, Allain's Council of Mages dismissed it as an unfortunate accident.

The scribes could never forget what they saw—the power of the written word lay low the mighty Archmagus Hakren with something as simple as a minor transcription error in protective scroll. Intrigued by the applications of magic hidden within seemingly innocuous ink, the scribes secretly focused their studies toward twisting common spells and harnessing the full power of their glyphs.

The names of these scribes have been lost to time. Of course, this was intentional as the scribes methodically sought out all written evidence of their existence and destroyed it. The five formed a powerful cabal of wizards and came to refer to themselves as the Verses. Their services were eventually traded to other magi in Allain to serve as scribes, but the Verses' obsession with mastering the power of writing only grew stronger.

The Verses remained secretly allied with one another and began instilling potent inaccuracies and hidden spells within various scrolls and tomes, and disseminating them among key mem-

bers of the Council of Mages. Over several bloody and terrifying months, half the council members were assassinated in grisly fashion as the Verses eliminated potential resistance.

Fortunately, the Magocracy's diviners uncovered the Verses' schemes and identities before they could mount a successful coup. Branded as heretics, each was immolated in a pyre of magical flame. All records of their unconventional magics were ordered to burn with them, but several apprentices fled with fragments that survived the pyres.

The Nature of Glyph Magic

Glyph magic, derogatively referred to as ink magic, is well hidden outside of Allain. Even within Allain, it is discussed only in hushed tones and is not a topic of polite conversation, especially after the turmoil the Verses previously wrought in the country. Practitioners of glyph magic, who call themselves scribes (but are commonly called ink mages), practice their art with an almost paranoid secrecy, especially when their travels take them close to Allain's borders.

The mages of Allain fear that a single scribe could destroy the magocracy's great libraries or scrollhouses, so the practice of glyph magic has been outlawed in Allain for decades and is a crime punishable by death. Outside the magocracy, scribes are itinerant loners, often covered head to toe in arcane symbols. Members are loosely connected through a network consisting of secret symbols, encoded messages, and clandestine meeting points. While each individual practitioner is unique to a point, most scribes are bibliophiles who hunt rare tomes and grimoires with a fervency that shocks even the greediest of treasure hunters, "liberating" rare texts from owners who fail to appreciate them. Some evil scribes pay homage to Titivillus, and some even take ink devils as familiars (see *Kobold Quarterly* #1). This requires CL 9 and the Improved Familiar feat.

Traditional wizards scorn glyph magic, dismissing it as a hodgepodge of variant spells and an exaltation of the

written form of magic over magic itself. Glyph magic remains largely unrecognized as a separate school of magic in most learned circles of wizardry. The scribes do not mind this disdain from their peers, for it allows them to develop their art in secrecy and take their prideful enemies by surprise.

The school combines conjuration, creation, divination, illusion, and transmutation magics, but it stands apart from each of these individual schools. Glyph magic spells often complement each other or "stack," just as varied inks blend seamlessly together.

Scribes require writing implements, ink, and language to power their spells. Tattoos, paintings, inked scrolls and books, even runes etched in rock function as the spell components for their magic. The Eschew Materials feat does not relieve a scribe from the need to use inks as spell components, but the feat becomes effective if the scribe covers his body in tattoos and uses their ink to power his spells.

Further, because the scribes who developed ink magic often worked in complete silence, verbal components are foreign to glyph spells. Scribes take great delight in the somatic components of their spells, sketching each required glyph with painstaking care. An ink mage is a formidable foe with many weapons at his disposal: she can use his foe's scrolls and spellbooks against him; bring his tattoos or drawings to life; befuddle him with written symbols; encode script that obscures the truth and allows secret communication; and she can use the power of writing to generate dozens of other effects.

Glyph Spells

Aegis

Glyph (Abjuration)

Level: Sor/Wiz 6

Components: S, M

Casting Time: 10 minutes/spell level countered

Range: Personal

Target: Creature or object

Duration: See text

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

School of Glyph Magic Spells

The spells listed in the school's spell list all belong to the glyph school. New spells are marked with an asterisk; all others are found in the SRD.

Cantrips—*acid splash, arcane mark, ink cloud*, mage hand, read magic*

1st Level—*color spray, comprehend languages (written only), erase, grease, harrying glyph*, magic aura, protection from chaos/evil/good/law, silent image, skinbook*, summon monster I*

2nd Level—*acid arrow, darkness, hypnotic pattern, glitterdust, glyph aura*, locate object, mind's eye map*, minor image, mirror image, misdirection, obscure object, rope trick, summon monster II, summon swarm, web*

3rd Level—*babel*, explosive runes, dispel magic, glyph of warding, marauding glyph*, illusory script, magic circle against chaos/evil/good/law, major image, scrawl bones*, sea of ink*, secret page, sepia snake sigil, summon monster III*

4th Level—*black tentacles, confusion, fire trap, fugue script*, hallucinatory terrain, illusory wall, inkblot*, lesser geas, minor creation, mnemonic enhancer, phantasmal killer, rainbow pattern, summon monster IV*

5th Level—*major creation, memory echo*, mirage arcane, passwall, persistent image, summon monster V, symbol of pain, symbol of sleep*

6th Level—*acid fog, aegis*, circle of death, geas, greater glyph of warding, guards and wards, legend lore, programmed image, summon monster VI, symbol of fear, symbol of persuasion, true seeing*

7th Level—*prismatic spray, summon monster VII, symbol of stunning, symbol of weakness*

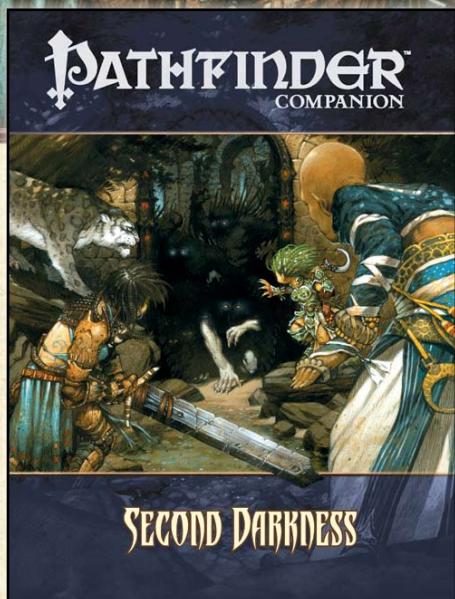
8th Level—*prismatic wall, scintillating pattern, summon monster VIII, symbol of death, symbol of insanity*

9th Level—*prismatic sphere, summon monster IX, teleportation circle, weird*

By casting this spell, the caster inscribes a sigil on any portable surface that symbolizes any one arcane spell the caster knows, up to 6th level. Anyone or anything with such an *aegis* is protected and if the selected spell or spell effect is cast on the recipient of the *aegis*, that spell is instantly countered (as per a *ring of counterspells*).

The spell requires infusing diamond

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dust into the ink while inscribing the sigil, costing 100 gp per level of the spell countered. Only spells up to 6th level may be countered. After the spell is countered, the *aegis* is destroyed.

The *aegis* may be physically destroyed, and the effect persists only as long as the possessor retains the *aegis* and the *aegis* remains undamaged.

Babel

Glyph (illusion) [glamer, mind-affecting]

Level: Sor/Wiz 4

Components: S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: 1 document or 1 creature

Duration: Permanent

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

Casting this spell on the text of a scroll, tome, or any single section of written work makes it unintelligible, as the ink runs together, the text disappears, words become nonsensical, and so on. Only a single such written work may be affected per casting (although a 9th level caster, for instance, could affect 9 pages of text, all 9 pages must be contained in the same written work to be affected).

Alternatively, the spell may be cast on a single creature with a successful touch attack as the caster paints a glyph on them. The painted creature, failing a Will save, can speak only gibberish; *tongues* and *comprehend languages* cannot unravel the garbled speech of the target. All modes of communication—including spoken, written, and telepathic—are nonsensical to others. Anyone who reads the affected creature's mind finds only nonsense and scattered, broken thoughts. Spellcasting requiring verbal or somatic components is impossible.

Additionally, the painted creature becomes effectively illiterate for the duration of the spell, as all text becomes completely undecipherable to them. In the case of spellcasters, scrolls cannot be read and daily spells that require reading cannot be prepared. The glyph cannot be removed through mundane means, but it may be dispelled or re-

moved with *break enchantment*, *limited wish*, *miracle*, *remove curse*, or *wish*.

If *arcane mark* is used to paint the glyph, the DC for dispelling is increased by +2.

Fugue Script

Glyph (Divination)

Level: Sor/Wiz 4

Components: S, M

Casting Time: 10 minutes

Range: Personal

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

The caster's eyes roll back in his head and he enters a deep trance, becoming fully rigid save for his writing hand, which must be dipped in ink. The caster communes with unknown forces and spirits, gleaning a useful piece of advice in reply to a question concerning a specific goal, event, or activity that is to occur within one week and recording it with ink-stained finger.

The advice takes the form of a mysterious phrase, single word, picture, rhyme, etc. recorded in ink. If the cryptic information is not acted upon, conditions may change that render the information useless.

The base chance for correct information is 60% +1% per caster level, to a maximum of 80%. If the dice roll fails, the caster does not know whether the information given was false. Multiple trances regarding the same topic produce the same result.

Material Component: Exotic inks costing 25 gp, and either the eye of a blind man or wheat infected with ergot, which must be ingested.

Glyph Aura

Glyph (Transmutation)

Level: Sor/Wiz 2

Components: S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: 10 sq. ft./level

Target: Personal

Duration: 30 minutes/level

Saving Throw: See text

Spell Resistance: Yes

One of the signature spells in a scrivener's repertoire, *glyph aura* erects a cir-

cular field that moves with the caster, allowing him to take full advantage of any ink, script, writing, or hieroglyph in that field. Once cast, the caster may use written materials within the field to fulfill the ink material component of glyph magic spells.

Further, the caster may center any glyph spell on the written materials within the field. A caster using *glyph aura* may even use an enemy's scrolls, spellbook pages, or even tattoos against him. The caster must be aware of the intended scroll, spellbook, or tattoo (or other appropriate document adorned with ink) and must have line of effect.

Unattended objects gain no save.

Attended objects have a chance to resist by making a Will save. If the target fails the save, the caster may use a single page, scroll, or tattoo to power a glyph spell. The caster must satisfy all other requirements of the glyph spell, and non-ink material components are still required by the glyph spell. Using writing to power a glyph spell in this way utterly destroys the scroll, page, or tattoo.

A glyph aura may be countered by a *protection from chaos/evil/good/law* or *magic circle against chaos/evil/good/law* spell keyed to the glyph aura caster's alignment.

Material Component: Sepia toned ink that the caster uses to trace a 3-ft. circle around himself.

Harrying Glyph

Glyph (conjunction) [force]

Level: Sor/Wiz 1

Components: S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Effect: One 5 ft./5 ft. glyph

Duration: 10 minutes/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes, vs. jolt attack

The caster sketches a 5 ft. by 5 ft. string of translucent arcane symbols on any surface and brings a tiny construct to life to act as a guard, scout, or trap. The glyph can straighten out and move like a snake, squeezing through openings that only tiny sized creatures may

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fit. A *harrying glyph* has the following statistics:

N Tiny construct
Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +0, Spot +0
Defense
AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 12 (+3 Dex, +2 size)
hp 6 (1d10 + 1hp per caster level)
Fort +0, **Ref** +3, **Will** +0
Immune construct traits
Offense
Spd 20 ft.
Melee jolt +3 (1d4+1 nonlethal damage)
Space 2 ½ ft.; **Reach** 2 ½ ft.
Special Attacks jolt, trip
Statistics
Str 12, **Dex** 16, **Con** 0, **Int** 0, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 1
Base Atk +0; **Grp** -7
Feats —
Skills Hide +11, Move Silently +3

A *harrying glyph* attacks by delivering a jolt of force during melee that causes nonlethal damage. It may trip a Medium or smaller sized creature by wrapping itself around their legs; succeeding with a jolt attack, it can attempt to trip the opponent as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot attempt to trip the *harrying glyph*.

The caster cannot see or hear what the glyph sees, but the glyph can report back to the caster and answer very simple questions (regarding number, distance, etc.) by rearranging its wording and allowing the caster to read the answer, if the caster instructed the glyph to seek out this information. A *harrying glyph* perform only one simple task or answer one simple question at a time. (If scouting for enemies, for example, a glyph could report back how many beings it saw, but it could not report their distance from the doorway unless sent to scout a second time.)

A *harrying glyph* moves to the limit of the spell's range and then waits for its master. Glyphs forced beyond this range wink out of existence.

Use of *illusory script* in conjunction produces an invisible glyph construct.

Material Component: Ink to sketch the glyph mixed with the caster's own fresh blood, which deals 3 hp damage

Ink Creature Slam Damage

Size	Damage
Fine	1
Diminutive	1d2
Tiny	1d3
Small	1d4
Medium	1d6
Large	1d8
Huge	2d6
Gargantuan	2d8
Colossal	4d6

to the caster (This damage cannot be healed as long as the glyph exists.)

Inkblot

Glyph (Transmutation)

Level Sor/Wiz 3

Components S, M

Casting Time 1 standard action

Range Touch

Target Corporeal creature

Duration 2 min./level

Saving Throw None

Spell Resistance No

The subject becomes a malleable being of pure ink and takes on the ink subtype. An ink creature's gear, weapons, and armor turn to ink and are absorbed into the creature; however, its size, Dexterity, deflection, and armor bonuses still apply.

An ink creature has damage reduction 5/magic, is immune to poison and critical hits, and does not need to eat, sleep, or breathe. An ink creature gains a slam attack at their base attack according to the table. An ink creature may cast spells and use supernatural abilities as normal (except those that require material components other than ink or liquid), but it may not physically attack using any means other than its slam attack.

Ink creatures moves at their regular base speed, and can pass through small cracks or openings. It may enter water and retain its shape while moving at its regular base speed with the same degree of ease it had on land; however, it must make Swim checks to avoid drowning as if still in natural form (though it does not suffocate, the effects from drowning are the same).

Ink creatures may not manipulate ob-

jects with fine detail, though they may cling to them and move them along their wave of ink if the subject could have carried the object in its regular form. Ink creatures gain a +10 racial bonus to Hide checks.

Finally, ink creatures that assume the form of puddles act as a *grease* spell exactly as if cast by a caster of the same level (or Hit Dice) to all beings that enter it.

Material Component a vial of indigo ink, consumed during casting

Ink Cloud

Glyph (Conjuration) [Creation]

Level: Sor/Wiz 0

Components: S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: 20 ft.

Target: One large or smaller humanoid creature with sight organs

Duration: 1d4 rounds

Saving Throw: Reflex negates

Spell Resistance: No

A ray of viscous black ink sprays forth from outstretched fingertips, blinding your opponent. The targeted creature is allowed a Reflex save to dodge the stream of ink and remain unaffected. This spell may be cast underwater with no penalties.

Material Component: Squid's ink or a tattoo on either of caster's hands.

Marauding Glyph

Glyph (Conjuration) [Force]

Level: Sor/Wizard 3

Components: S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)

Effect: One 5 ft./5 ft. glyph

Duration: 10 minutes/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes, vs. jolt attack

This spell functions as *harrying glyph*, but with the following statistics:

N Small construct

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +3, Spot +3

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 15, flat-footed 13 (+4 Dex, +2 natural, +1 size)

hp 3d10 + 1 hp per caster level

Fort +1, **Ref** +5, **Will** +1

Defensive Abilities camouflage;

Immune construct traits

OFFENSE

Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee jolt +6 (2d4+3 force damage)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Special Attacks jolt, trip

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 18, **Con** 0, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +2; **Grp** +1

Feats Alertness, Track

Skills Hide +8(+28), Listen +3, Move Silently +7, Spot +3, Survival +4

A *marauding glyph* attacks by delivering a jolt of force energy in melee combat that deals lethal damage. A *marauding glyph* may also blend in with its surroundings and camouflage itself by remaining still against a surface for 1 round without moving, after which it gains a +20 circumstance bonus to its Hide check. This bonus is lost if the glyph moves onto different looking terrain, requiring another full round to camouflage itself upon the new terrain. A *marauding glyph* may be given up to 3 simple commands at once and can report all that it has seen and heard to the caster (using rudimentary words and phrases).

Casting *summon monster* in conjunction with a *marauding glyph* produces a construct that resembles and acts in all ways as the summoned creature, gaining the ink subtype (see the *inkblot* spell above). Combining this glyph with *illusory script* makes a *marauding glyph* construct invisible.

Material Component: Ink mixed with the caster's own fresh blood, which deals 6 hp damage to the caster (This damage cannot be healed as long as the glyph exists.)

Memory Echo

Glyph (Evocation)

Level: Sor/Wiz 5

Components: S, M

Casting Time: As scribing a scroll

Range: Special

Target: Creature that reads or touches the memory echo

Duration: See text

Saving Throw: See text

Spell Resistance: Yes

This signature scrivener spell allows the caster to remove memories from

their own mind and capture them in written form. Doing so removes the memory from the caster's mind until the memory is triggered. This allows the caster to pass on information secretly to someone else, for good or ill. Chosen memories can be contained within a symbol, rune, or keyword. When someone reads the symbol, the information is instantly conferred to them and also returns to the caster.

Spells may be conferred in secret in this way as well. Enclosing a spell in a *memory echo* removes that spell from the caster's spell list until the spell is triggered. Reading a *memory echo* enclosing a spell triggers that spell unless the reader succeeds on a Will save. A basic memory enclosing only information does not allow for a saving throw. Learning information this way confers familiarity equal to the caster's.

The Verses used *memory echo* in conjunction with other spells to wage their failed coup against Allain's Mage Council. Concealed with *illusory scripts* and *secret pages* or placed within forged documents, harmful spells were hidden within secret missives, official papers, and scrolls. For each such spell used to conceal the *memory echo*, the DC for the Will save is increased by that spell's level. Scriveners facing persecution will often use *memory echo* to remove incriminating information from their minds or to convey important information to fellow scriveners.

Material Component: Ink and the same gp required to scribe an equivalent scroll; or 100 gp spent on rare inks if only a memory is scribed, and not a spell (Unlike preparing a scroll, XP is not expended when a *memory echo* is written.)

Mind's Eye Map

Glyph (Divination) [Mind-affecting]

Level: Sor/Wiz 2

Components: S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: 60 ft.

Target: 1 creature

Duration: Concentration, 1 minute/level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

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A *mind's eye map* allows a caster to magically craft a map taken directly from the target's mind, using the caster as a conduit. The caster spills a steady stream of ink upon the chosen surface for the map, which slowly undulates and forms shapes perfectly copying the target's mental image: 100 sq. ft. of space may be mapped per minute. The map is only as complete as the target knows or can recall, and it includes any illusions, visual tricks, or inaccuracies the target witnessed.

If the target is unwilling, the caster may attempt to forcefully extract the mental image, but the caster must succeed on a touch attack and paint a glyph on the creature. An unwilling target is allowed a Will save; success completely negates the spell. Another *mind's eye map* reflecting the same mapped area cannot be created from the same unwilling target until the caster advances in level (or until the target becomes willing).

If the caster paints the glyph on an unwilling target with *arcane mark*, the DC for the Will save increases by +2.

Material Component: Ink and material to record the map.

Scrawl Bones

Glyph (transmutation) [language-dependent]

Level: Sor/Wiz 3

Components: S, M

Casting Time: 2 standard actions

Range: 1 mile/level

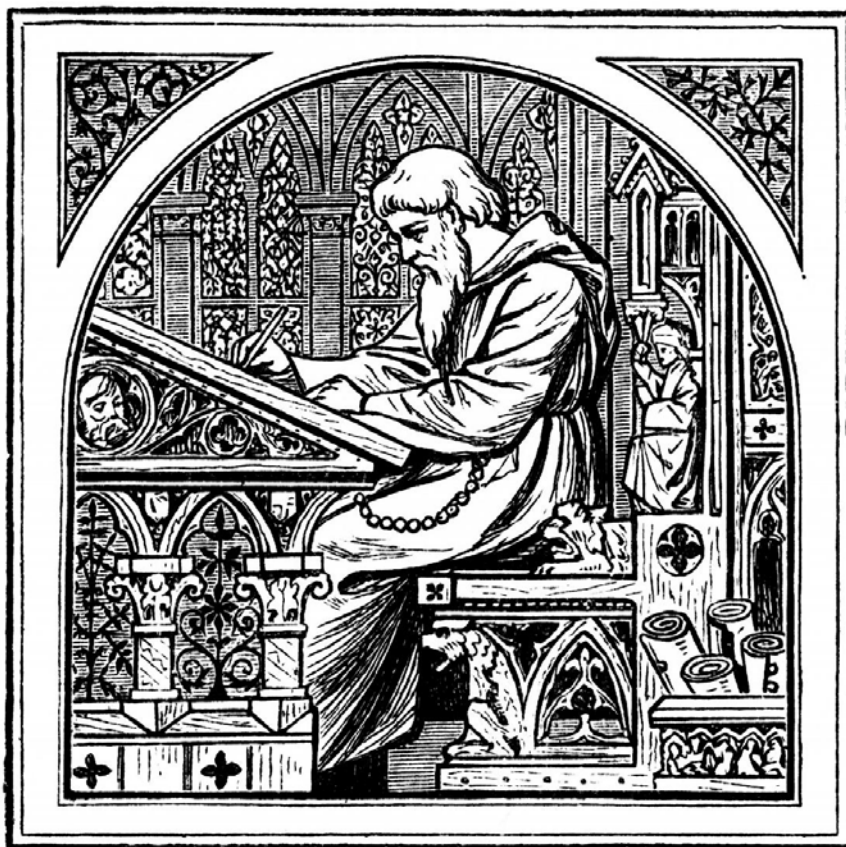
Target: One creature/level

Duration: 1 hour/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

The caster temporarily enchants bleached bones or scrimshaw to communicate with other creatures. The caster may trace up to 10 words per round on the piece, and all the other recipients of the spell can read the message on their matching pieces. The recipients can communicate with the caster and each other in the same fashion. Destruction of a creature's piece ends the spell for that creature, while destroying the caster's piece ends the



spell in its entirety.

Material Component: Ink and enough pieces of scrimshaw or bone for each target.

Sea of Ink

Glyph (Conjuration) [Creation]

Level: Sor/Wiz 3

Components: S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Area: 5 sq. ft.+ 5 sq. ft./3 levels

Duration: 1 minute/level

Saving Throw: See text

Spell Resistance: Yes

By spilling a *sea of ink* on the ground and stirring concentric circles into it, the caster creates an inky morass similar to quicksand.

The caster may choose to make the sinkhole move of its own accord, at a maximum speed of 20 ft. per round, up to the spell's range. The sinkhole is 20 ft. deep, and when the spell ends, the sinkhole disappears. Anything within it appears on the ground's surface (no longer beneath it) and covered in ink.

Creatures that enter the sinkhole's area must make a DC 15 Reflex save or begin to sink (treat as pinned). On the second round, a sinking creature may take a move-equivalent action to try to free itself, but it must succeed on a DC 17 Reflex save to do so. Failure indicates the creature is pinned.

On the third round, the creature may take another move-equivalent action to escape, but it must succeed on a DC 19 Reflex save. Failure indicates the creature begins to drown.

A drowning creature may try to free itself each round on its turn by taking a move-equivalent action and attempting a DC 20 Reflex saving throw. A failed save indicates the creature sinks 5 feet deeper. (For every 5 feet sunk, the creature must make a DC 20 Reflex save to move 5 feet up. Success on a DC 20 Reflex save at the top of the sinkhole frees the creature.)

Helping the creature by throwing it a rope grant a +2 bonus to its save attempt, plus the total Strength modifier of the creature(s) pulling it free. A *fly* spell automatically frees a trapped creature.

A *grease* spell used in conjunction increases all DCs by +2. Use of *illusory script* with *sea of ink* creates an invisible sinkhole that resembles regular ground (Spot DC 24 to detect).

Skinbook

Glyph (Transmutation)

Level: Sor/Wiz 1

Components: S, M

Casting Time: 10 minutes per spell level

Range: Personal

Duration: Permanent, but see text

Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

Using a process known only to the scribes, the caster may inscribe a glyph school spell on his skin, to serve as a scroll or as a recorded spell in a spellbook. A Medium-sized caster may record up to 24 spell levels on his bodies (by shaving all bodily hair), while Small casters may record up to 12 spell levels on their bodies. (For example, recording a 9th level spell requires 9 spell levels, leaving the caster with 15 spell levels for recording on their body.) If used together with *illusory script*, the spell or scroll is invisible to all but the caster.

If recorded as a spell, the script must be tattooed or scratched into the flesh and made permanent. The caster treats any such recorded spell as if they had the Spell Mastery feat for that spell, and daily preparation of that spell is instantaneous. Further, any such recorded spell may be instantly swapped for another memorized spell of equivalent level.

If recorded as a scroll, black henna is typically used and the cost for scribing the scroll is calculated as normal. Casting a scroll recorded on one's skin in such a manner can be done as a swift action.

Damage to one's skin through cutting, slashing, or fire prevents use of the skin-recorded spell until that flesh is healed, while skin-recorded scrolls may be destroyed this way. Skin-recorded spells are permanent but may be changed by using *erase* to remove

them. Skin-recorded scrolls dissipate upon use. *Dispel magic* destroys a skin-recorded scroll but has no effect on a skin-recorded spell.

Material Component: Black henna or exotic inks to inscribe the spells, same gp cost as writing a scroll or recording a spell in a spell book.

Variants in Ink

The scribes throughout the years have developed many variants to spells commonly studied by their more mainstream peers and have wholeheartedly adopted these variant spells into the school of glyph magic. The variant spells described below all require some form of writing or ink as material components in lieu of their regular spell components. Glyph magic spells not listed below remain the same as listed in the SRD.

Acid arrow, acid fog, acid splash—These spells are composed of black ink, which bubbles, boils, and hisses, betraying its acidic nature.

Black tentacles, web—Thick strands of sticky ink form tendrils, springing from a deep puddle of black ink.

Color spray, glitterdust—Instead of powders or mica, the spell uses brilliant, vibrant colored inks that explode to produce the same result.

Comprehend languages—A scribe may only use this spell as it relates to written languages.

Darkness—A cloying cloud of darkness takes the consistency of blackest ink, dripping everywhere and staining everything within it.

Geas—These spells function as normal, except the scribe and target sign a contract outlining the terms of the *geas*. The scribe keeps the contract, destruction of which ends the spell. If the target is unwilling, the caster must somehow obtain the target's signature through force or subterfuge. (If the caster elects that the contract be signed in blood, the target's blood will suffice.)

Grease—A conjured pool of ink (the color depends on the ink that powers the spell) performs the same function.

Hypnotic pattern, rainbow pattern,

scintillating pattern—As with *color spray* and *glitterdust*, a multitude of brilliant, vibrant hued inks produce these effects.

Illusion and creation spells—The caster draws or paints the desired forms, which become semi-real as illusions or real as creations. When the spell ends, the forms slowly drip and run into puddles.

Locate object, magic aura, misdirection, obscure object—The caster must place his arcane mark on the object to be obscured, and thereafter can manipulate its aura. *Locate object* may only be performed if the object has some form of writing upon it, or if the caster previously placed his arcane mark upon the object.

Prismatic sphere, prismatic spray, and prismatic wall—As with *color spray* and *glitterdust*, a multitude of brilliant, vibrant hued inks produce these effects.

Rope trick—The caster creates a pocket dimension within books, text, scrolls, paintings, and such, and he can hide within even a single letter of text. No rope is involved.

Summon monster I-IX—As with illusions, the caster draws the intended summoned creature. Thereafter, the caster may only summon that creature with that specific spell (or creatures, if a particular spell is used to summon several lesser level creatures).

Casters often develop complex relationships with these summoned forms, naming the forms when they take on distinct personalities. These creatures take on the ink subtype (see the ink-blot spell above) and can make normal attacks. Once summoned, the chosen creature can be changed only by using *erase* on it, which shifts its form to a new type chosen by the caster.

Summon swarm—By flinging hundreds of droplets of ink, the caster causes each droplet to become vermin. The caster is also able to summon a swarm of silverfish, which does damage as a swarm of spiders (without poison), but only to paper, papyrus, bookbindings, or similar materials.



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Extra dimensional

Horrors from the Fifth Dimension

By Tim Connors

Art by Pat Loboyko

Gypsies found the following letter on the boneless body of a rider. It bore the seal of Sariel of Morgau, retired Master Summoner of the Arcane Collegium:

Learned sirs of the Collegium, take heed! Creatures vast and alien look upon us. They watch you read this missive. Their breath and tentacles curl around your neck.

Yet you cannot turn to see them any more than a letter on this parchment can peel itself up and look at you. Heed my words well—these creatures, these watchers, their claws are at your face!”

The Watchers

If such unseen creatures were but invisible, our magic could detect them. If

they were but traveling the Ethereal Plane, our champions could confront them. Alas, the Watchers lurk beyond both our vision and our reach. They see us, but by the very nature of the world we share, we cannot see them. Indeed, they may be staring into your eyes at this very moment.

How can this be? How can I know of them if they so elude our senses?

Sirs, I have been on an incredible journey. By extraordinary circumstances, which I shall reveal in due course, I have visited the Watchers’ realm, and from the memories of that vantage point, I now recount to you my unsettling experiences.

To understand the Watchers, you must first understand where they live. The Watchers are extradimensional beings. To be precise, Watchers live in the fifth dimension. Make no mistake! The fifth dimension is not another

reality, wholly separate from our own. It is not another plane of existence like the Ethereal or Astral. The fifth dimension is an integral extension of the four dimensions we experience directly—three of space and one of time. It is neither front nor back, left nor right, up nor down, but a direction altogether perpendicular to these. How can I make you understand? I fear that I must rely on analogy to describe this fantastic realm.

Five-dimensional creatures are to us what we are to two-dimensional creatures. Consider a space of just two dimensions—a sheet of parchment like the one you are reading. Suppose the sheet is home to two-dimensional creatures like a square and a triangle. For these creatures, the paper is the entire universe. They can rotate and slide upon the sheet, but they cannot lift themselves up off the sheet. Indeed,

they have no concept of “off the sheet.” In their world, “up” and “down” are utterly alien concepts. “Above” and “below” are meaningless terms.

We, of course, know there is more. We look down upon their paper world, and they have no idea that we are watching them from “above.” Indeed, we can drop our faces incredibly close to theirs, and they remain oblivious to our presence. This, learned colleagues, is how five-dimensional creatures see us. Watchers look down upon us from “above” our four-dimensional world, and we remain oblivious to both their gaze and their proximity.

Further, consider what two-dimensional creatures see when they look at each other across the paper. A square looking at a triangle sees only a line—the triangle’s skin, its side that faces the square. However, from our three-dimensional viewpoint above the paper, we can see both the triangle’s skin *and* its innards. Now you begin to see how Watchers see us! With a single glance, Watchers dissect us, gazing upon our skin, our organs, and every point within our bodies—even seeing us at different points in time simultaneously.

Watchers can see inside every closed space in our three-dimensional world and along some stretch of our fourth dimension of time. Just as we can see inside every closet within every room of a castle layout drawn on a parchment, Watchers can see inside every strongbox, inside every chest, inside every chamber of the Arcane Collegium; they can simultaneously observe the collegium of yesterday, today, and tomorrow. To the Watchers, our entire universe is akin to that sheet of parchment sitting on the desk.

A Watchers’ Eye

Spellcraft and happenstance brought the Watchers to my attention. Magic allowed me to bind my vision to theirs. My spells could not choose or control an individual Watcher, but gods as my witnesses, I have spent weeks exploring our world through their eyes!

I have plumbed the depths of ocean trenches, chased gold veins through

the Crimson Mountains, peered into the treasure chambers of dragons and kings, and explored the branching paths of the human nervous system. What powers of discovery I held! What levels of understanding I gained! Unlike the cataract vision of the Ethereal Plane, I saw all with perfect clarity.

Only areas shielded by magic escaped my Watcher’s penetrating gaze. Moreover, these areas drew its attention. On one occasion, my Watcher peered into the curious black blot created by someone’s *private sanctum* spell. I watched through its eyes as it jabbed a sharp tentacle into that shrouded area of our world. The *private sanctum* cleared, and I saw a man lying dead. From my extradimensional vantage point, it was clear how he died. As easily as I might take up a needle and poke out the heart of a square drawn on parchment, my Watcher had reached inside the man’s chest and speared his heart without so much as touching his skin!

In that instant my mind opened to the terrible potential of these beings.

Summoning Watchers

I confess that the idea of controlling a Watcher fascinated me. Through its eyes, I learned. Through its hands, think of what I could do!

Heaven forgive me, but I resolved to summon and control one. I succeeded only in the former. Forgive me, but for you to appreciate what I saw when the creature appeared, I must again proceed with analogy.

Imagine that you touch the very tip of your finger to a two-dimensional parchment world. A square living on the parchment sees a dot suddenly appear. Now imagine that you pass your finger through the sheet up to the first knuckle. A cross section of your finger—a circle with skin on the outside and bone on the inside—is now coplanar with the sheet. The square sees the side of a skin-covered circle. To the square, a dot creature teleported in and morphed into a circle creature. Imagine how strange the morph would appear to the square if you slowly passed your whole hand through the sheet. The

Extradimensional Subtype

Creatures with the extradimensional subtype share the following traits.

Type: When an extradimensional creature intersects the traditionally four-dimensional Material Plane, it gains the extraplanar subtype.

Dimension Shift (Ex) As a free action, an extradimensional creature (and anything it can drag or carry) can intersect part of its body with the traditional four-dimensional Material Plane. The creature may not intersect an area already occupied by a solid body or force effect. Doing so is an extradimensional strike (see below). As a move action, the creature can withdraw one intersecting body part, provoking an attack of opportunity if in a threatened square.

Dimension Walk (Ex) An extradimensional creature can move in any direction relative to our four-dimensional world (even up and down) at its normal movement speed. If wholly in the fifth dimension, such movement occurs “above” rather than through the intervening four-dimensional space and is invisible to any without extradimensional sight.

Extradimensional Sight (Ex) Treat the creature’s vision as continuous *clairvoyance* except that the sensor is nonmagical, moves with the creature, and can penetrate solid objects. The creature can never be surprised and is immune to flanking.

Extradimensional Strike (Ex) While wholly in the fifth dimension, an extradimensional creature can directly attack a four-dimensional target’s internal organs. Treat this as an incorporeal touch attack with a wounding weapon. Targets surrounded by fields of force such as those granted by *mage armor* and *bracers of armor* are immune to this attack. If the attack misses, a part of the extradimensional creature momentarily enters then withdraws from a square adjacent to the defender, which provokes an attack of opportunity.

Unassailable (Ex) A normal creature cannot target an extradimensional creature that is not penetrating our four-dimensional realm.

Hyper-Angler **CR 5**
N Large plant (extradimensional)
Init +0; **Senses** extradimensional sight*

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 9, flat-footed 15 (-1 size, +6 natural)
hp 30 (4d8+12 HD)
Fort +7, **Ref** +1, **Will** +2
Special Defenses unassailable*

OFFENSE

Speed 5 ft.
Melee slam +7 (1d6+7)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Special Attacks extradimensional strike*

TACTICS

Once this semi-mobile, extradimensional plant has attracted a victim within 10 ft. of its lure, it uses its extradimensional strike to spear the victim's internal organs with a separate, specialized tentacle. It does not withdraw the lure unless the lure is attacked.

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 10, **Con** 16, **Int** —, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 9
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +12
SQ dimension shift*, dimension walk*, lure, plant traits

Special Abilities

Lure (Ex) By adjusting its entry angle into our world, a hyper-angler can make a four-dimensional cross-section of its body resemble any Tiny to Small inanimate object like a fruit, a gem, or a simple weapon.

Anyone within 20 ft. notices something amiss in the object's texture or coloration with a DC 20 Spot check. Touching the object offers a second check at +5. The lure wobbles slightly whenever the hyper-angler attacks.

(* See sidebar for details.)

square would see an incredibly alien, shape-shifting creature before him.

Likewise, when the extradimensional beast that I summoned actually touched our world, a four-dimensional cross section of the creature—a ball of flesh—appeared and hovered before me. When the Watcher began to pass

further through our world, each new four-dimensional cross-section of the beast replaced the previous. The ball of flesh boiled, grew, and collapsed. Bone, hair, claws, and eyes alternately erupted to the surface and sank into the mass.

The summoned Watcher quickly disappeared, for my brash and feeble magic could not contain it for long. I made many attempts, and one changed my life forever.

Parasites

At first, I thought I had inadvertently summoned two creatures. Along with the Watcher came a spider-like form that rushed me with a maw of needles.

Later, I realized that my summons had not gone awry. This spider creature was a parasite feeding on the summoned Watcher. It simply jumped off its host to attack me.

How long had this four-dimensional spider-alien been riding the Watcher through the fifth dimension before it leapt off into our world? And how many times have other deadly aberrations thus popped into our countryside? These questions, dear sirs, gave me my next idea. Could I grapple a Watcher and take such a ride?

Yes. I could. And I did!

Into the Fifth-Dimension

Ioun stones and magic spells sustained me as I gripped the Watcher and journeyed through the hyperdimensional worlds stacked above our own. A dead world of bone dust sandblasted me. An ocean of vein-connected organs lashed me to my host. All the while, I turned my head and looked about as I never could when looking through a Watcher's eyes. Wonders dazzled me in every direction! Life both alien and familiar suffused it all!

For the first time, I surveyed the Watchers' world and understood their frightening place in it. Those Watchers I had summoned, those simple inert flesh balls that hung in the air before me, were all mere plants in the vast menagerie of extradimensional predators that stalk the worlds.

Hyper-Predators

Are you familiar with the anglerfish? This deep ocean horror skates through the blackest depths with a phosphorescent lure that sways from a thin head stalk. When curious prey swim close, the anglerfish's splayed needle teeth snap at them from the darkness.

I have seen extradimensional plant creatures use the same tactics. By adjusting the entry angle of their bodies relative to the three-dimensional world they wish to "fish" in, a hyper-angler can alter its appearance.

Consider a two-dimensional analogy. Suppose you know that ovals attract paper-world squares. By dipping your finger into the paper at a sharp angle, you can change the shape of the coplanar cross-section of your finger from a circle to an oval. Hyper-anglers do the same thing, only in four dimensions. I have seen them mimic fruit, simple weapons, and precious metals. When prey comes near, they thrust spear-like appendages directly into its internal organs. Some hyper-anglers consume only bone, leaving unframed skin behind.

The Brothers

"The Brothers" is a sophisticated extradimensional creature with tactics similar to the hyper-angler. Similar to a hand, this creature dips each of its five "fingers" into our world. To us, the five appear to be separate creatures, but they are simply parts of the same extradimensional creature. The fingers can individually withdraw themselves from the world, but their connection to the hand prevents them from traveling very far from each other. All five seem to share the same mind—the hand manipulating them like a puppeteer above a stage.

The Brothers' incredibly complex extradimensional surface allows each finger to assume nearly any form. I have only witnessed one hunt in our world, and it masqueraded as three human slave girls, an injured orc, and a ship's chest. The Brothers' would-be victims managed to slay the orc. The hand, unable to withdraw the muscle-damaged

CE Gargantuan outsider (extradimensional, native) Treat each of the five "fingers" of The Brothers as a chaos beast with the extradimensional subtype and without the corporeal instability attack.

Grant each the change shape special ability, allowing each to change into any creature or object within one size category of its current form and limited to Tiny, Small, or Medium size. Changing shape is a full-round action and involves cycling through intermediate, nonsensical forms. A shape may include an exotic-looking simple or martial melee weapon, which deals 1d8 damage in any form.

No two of the five can ever be more than 100 ft. apart.

All five share a common pool of 220 hp, allowing each to move and attack even though individually mangled with damage. Each "finger" can take 1/5 total damage (or 44 hp) before becoming mangled and useless.

finger from the world, dragged it around before severing it permanently. The horrified victims watched as the dead orc's body morphed, twisted, and dragged across the ground apparently unassisted. Later, one of the victims cut the corpse open and found a hodgepodge of muscle, wood, eyes, shell, and hair.

Homecoming

I no longer summon Watchers. Ever since I returned from my journey, they come to me unbidden and unwelcome. What extradimensional glitter highlights my form I cannot say, but something draws them to me. Watchers watch me write this missive. I can feel it in my soul. Twice I have paused when hyper-predators appeared, their claws inches from my face.

I write you, dear colleagues, not to seek aid but to warn you that an extradimensional storm is coming. I sit at its heart as a beacon that calls horrors from beyond our own dimension. Deadly creatures we know almost nothing about spill into the countryside around me. Sinister hyper-predators morph into innocent children and lie in wait. Hyper-spiders rush victims who accidentally set a strand of their worlds-spanning web quivering.

Friends, my dabbling has focused a vast hunger on our world, and I do not know how to turn these predators away from such rich hunting grounds. I have presented them a feast. Gods forgive me.

Extradimensional Space

The world we live in exists in four dimensions of which we are perceptually aware—three of space and one of time. Many assume that additional dimensions are needed to fully describe our universe, dimensions generally considered beyond human perception. Though often used interchangeably, the terms "plane" and "dimension" should be further disentangled for clarity.

Planes are realms of existence, supporting different creatures and landscapes and even different physical constants, such as gravity—each is separate within the whole of the multiverse. Dimensions, however, are inherent to all planes, and all planes exhibit dimension. For necessity, planes are described for our own four-dimensional frame of reference. The Elemental Plane of Fire, for instance, enjoys the same dimensions that we on the Material Plane do—three spatial and one temporal. The fifth dimension—and whatever potentially lies beyond!—is as much a mystery to the average salamander (or hound archon or glabrezu) as it is to the average human.

The terms "extradimensional" and "extraplanar" do not mean the same thing. The spaces created by *rope trick*, *mage's magnificent mansion*, and similar spells can be seen and entered by extradimensional beings and affected by extradimensional powers. Likewise, the interior of a *bag of holding*, *handy haversack*, and *portable hole* are considered extradimensional spaces.

The spell *dimensional anchor* can block extradimensional travel. Knowledge of the fifth dimension and whatever lies beyond is best folded into the Knowledge (arcane) skill with DCs of 20 or more, depending on the rarity of extradimensional creatures in your world.

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Legends of the GOLEM

A Breath of Life in Clay

By Ross Byers

"They are not men. They are better than men! They are untiring workers, obedient servants, and eternal guardians. They are my legacy."

—Aris the Golemwright

"You want to go traipsing around in some forsaken crypt, fighting goblins, seeking treasure, that sort of thing? Lemme give you a piece of advice, kid: never trust statues."

—Drogar, a retired adventurer

A golem is a magical wonder, known by its creators as a marvel of elemental magics and by its foes as an unstoppable juggernaut. Now golems are legend, and countless mages and holy men have dedicated their lives to the study and creation of these constructs. But the first of them was something special.

Origins: the First Golem

Golems are a wholly artificial race, so their origins involve the work of men, not gods.

It is said that at the dawn of creation, the gods molded the first mortal races from the base materials of the world. Dwarves were sculpted from the solidity of stone, their hearts full of forge-sparks. Elves were carved from living wood, their souls filled with

the wind and the sky. Lizardfolk were elevated from the simple creatures that already crawled across the surface of the world. The races of men, however, had no single benefactor and—made of humble, shapeless clay—were given spirits consisting of all the elements, allowing both their lives and destiny to be of their own making.

This legend inspired Father Marcello Joirus to create the first golem. A master of healing and other life-giving magic, he sought an understanding of the gods and, perhaps, the attainment of a bit of divinity for himself. Joirus believed that creation is the fundamental act of divinity. He worked tirelessly for years, researching the nature of life itself and the function of the soul. He conferred with the most righteous priests, the most brilliant sages, and the

wisest druids and hermits. He concluded that every living creature was composed of all elements and that the soul was a reflection of this mixed composition. Therefore, he could construct a soul out of elemental essences. Since the purpose of a soul is to bring vitality to its vessel, Joirus reasoned that he need not craft a full body of flesh if he could keep the soul from departing a vessel.

In imitation of the making of humankind, Joirus brought together a great mass of virgin clay and spoke over it words of great power. He shaped the clay into the form of a man, and as his words infused it with the semblance of life and a soul, he anointed it with sacramental oils and wines to seal the ersatz soul-essence within the vessel.

Before long, the clay effigy rose from



where it lay, and Joirus named it after himself, as he would any natural-born son. Joirus was overjoyed. His 'son' was stronger than any man, and would perform any task he asked without error or hesitation. While the creature was mute and lacked any intelligence or initiative, so was a newborn baby, so Joirus assumed that in time it would learn and grow in time, like any living being.

As time passed, though, Joirus became more and more disappointed in his creation. It never seemed to learn, not even through coaching and repetition of simple tasks. The priest realized that he had created a mindless hulk, little better than zombies that are forced into a semblance of life with the trapping of their once-living souls.

It would be necessary to start over.

But when Joirus tried to destroy the clay man, he discovered it was immune to both his blows and all the heavenly power he could summon. Eventually, in desperate anger, he ordered the hulk to leave and never return. Obedient as ever, the thing walked off into the distance, never to be seen again.

Joirus made no secret of his work: the creation of a soul was a great theological puzzle and his primary goal. However, those he consulted were far less picky, and it was not long before many others built upon his works to produce their own golems as servants, temple guards, and status symbols. Some of these creations broke free of their masters' control and rampaged with berserk fury until they destroyed themselves, proving the imperfection of Joirus' creation.

Joirus could only shake his head.

Arcane Imitators

Once it became known that the golems of clay were not truly divine creations, countless young mages turned their will toward improving on Joirus' designs. They were soon disappointed to discover that their eldritch magics could not bind a soul-essence within an artificial body.

One particularly gifted, if amoral, wizard decided that if an artificial

body would not suffice, then perhaps a natural one would. Flesh, after all, is naturally meant to contain a soul. After a few failed experiments, he and his cohorts brought to life an artificial being composed of once-living human remains.

Hailed as a marvel, the stitched man became an object of intense study. And while this golem eventually ran amok during a trial, information gleaned from its creation (and destruction) allowed mages to instill soul-essences in more perfect, more durable forms of stone and steel.

Physiology

Golems have wildly varying physiology, since their basic physical makeup is dependent on their maker's whim. Golems share the same basic design, consisting of a roughly humanoid shape made of a base material and, usually, with no actual moving parts beyond simple joints. But the physical build of golems is not their defining trait. Golems are unified by the nature of their magical construction.

The motivating spirit of a golem is a synthetic soul forged from elemental essences. While it is commonly believed to simply be an earth spirit, this is merely an oldwives' tale brought on by the solid and earthy nature of a golem's body. Like most living creatures, a golem's soul-essence is made of equal parts of all elements. Unlike a true soul forged by a divine source, however, the different elements are not fully merged with one another as they are in a true soul. It is this incompleteness that deprives a golem of free will and leaves it completely suggestible to the will of its master.

Generally speaking, a soul requires a living (or at least undying) vessel to reside in. The natural action of a soul placed in dead matter is to depart, in a similar manner to how a man's soul deserts the body upon death. Powerful magic is required to bind a golem's essence within its body as it forms a semi-permeable membrane and creates extradimensional space within the body of the golem.

These containing magics grant golems their nigh-invulnerability to both physical attacks and magical effects of all kinds. The binding magic that holds a golem's soul together also binds its body, strengthening the material such that ordinary weapons cannot reliably damage it, and the same magics that safeguard the soul-essence within also keep other magical forces out.

In practical terms, golems have a skintight antimagic field. Only spells that directly affect its elemental essence can penetrate that field. Of course, certain types of magical energy can also pass through the field and be directly absorbed by the elemental essence. Mundane versions of the same energies are not transmuted in this manner. That is, an iron golem may gain energy from being struck by a *fireball* but will melt in a blacksmith's forge as easily as any heap of steel.

The Wakening

Golems have a reputation for breaking free of external control, becoming uncontrollable berserk monsters. While this reputation is well-deserved, it is not entirely true. A golem is a blank slate and bears no inherent malice toward anything.

The elemental forces that make up a golem's soul-essence can spontaneously fuse, transforming the soul-essence into a proper soul. Usually, this effect is temporary: the golem continues to follow its programmed functions and the soul breaks up again. If this 'awakening' occurs in a threatening or strenuous situation, however, the newborn soul can snap to awareness, reacting on a primitive level to destroy the threat. Even once the immediate threat is destroyed, the only thing the waking golem has known in its exceedingly short life is fear and violence, and it will continue to attack anything and everything nearby. In exercising its newfound free will, the golem cements the existence of its soul.

Left unmolested, the rampage will eventually run its course. After a few days, a berserk golem will give pause as its primitive mind realizes it has



choices other than destruction and violence. Over the course of several weeks, the golem gains a mind equal to that of a man, although an ignorant one. An intelligence emerges, and its inherent wisdom and charisma are further developed: each of its Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores becomes equal to 3d6, and it gains feats and skills according to its hit dice. This can result in a reduction of an awakened golem's wisdom score. The golem's memories and personality vary wildly from case to case. Some recall nothing before their berserk rampage. Some remember even less. For others, their previous life as an automaton is remembered only in glimmers of previous waking. Some flesh golems even inherit some of the memories and personality traits of their 'donors'.

An awakened golem understands the language of its creator, plus additional languages its creator knew as determined by its new intelligence score. A recently awakened golem may still have trouble learning to speak or articulate itself, and golems crafted without a mouth may never be able to speak at all. A character with the Craft Construct feat can grant a mute golem a mouth with which to speak by spending one day and 50 gp/HD of the golem.

Psychology and Society

Golems have no minds to speak of. They merely carry out their most recent order until given a new one. Even an inactive golem is following the order, "Go, and wait over there." Likewise, they have no society and merely serve whatever purpose their master designates for them.

Awakened golems have minds, but each is tempered by a unique creation and history. Two men from opposite sides of the world will think more similarly than two awakened golems. However, since almost all awakened golems are born from violence, they do tend to share a distrust of men. Golems recall them only as enemies intent on destroying them and men in turn view golems as dangerous monsters.

Awakened golems are exceedingly rare, and as a result, they do not form societies. Usually, they either hide from civilization or integrate themselves within another society in a similar manner to a gray render by bonding with and protecting another creature. Occasionally an awakened golem will seek to wake more of his "brethren" to build a colony of free-willed constructs. Thus far however, these occurrences have all inevitably failed when one of the golems turns to violence against humanity, resulting in the group's dissolution or even extermination.

Creating Golems

Creating golems is an ancient practice, and by now, countless formulas for creating golems exist as practitioners tinker by improving older recipes or attempt to fill in the missing pieces. The resulting golems differ in the nature of the binding magic needed for the golem's soul-essence.

In all cases, the body must be crafted from the best materials available, lest the enchantments simply fail for the same reasons a common sword cannot be enchanted.

Variant Golems

While the commonly known golems are certainly the most tried and true formulas, these are not the only paths to making a golem. Presented below are variants on the most common golem varieties. Except as described, they are the same as their more ordinary counterparts.

Barrier Golem

Stone golems are frequently designated as the guardians of arcane complexes and other important sites. Barrier golems are built almost exclusively for this task, especially when it is necessary to keep something in, rather than keeping others out. Where ordinary stone golems can slow their foes down, a barrier golem can stop them entirely.

Barrier golems lack a stone golem's *slow* ability.

Wall of Force (Sp) Every 1d4+1 rounds, a barrier golem may use *wall of force* as a spell-like ability at CL 5th.

CL 16th; Craft Construct, *antimagic field*, *geas/quest*, *wall of force*, *symbol of stunning*, caster must be at least 16th level; Price 100,000 gp; Cost 55,000 gp + 3,800 XP.

A barrier golem is CR 13.

Forge Golems

These iron golems are created by dwarf magesmiths and major artificers' guilds. Designed to help forge massive metal objects, their hands resemble massive hammers. Instead of breathing poisonous gas, the forge golem can spout fire for heating the metal it is working or



Golem Lore

Characters with ranks in Knowledge (religion) or Knowledge (arcana) can learn more about golems. When a character makes a successful skill check, reveal the following lore, including the information from lower DCs.

DC Result

- 10 Golems are powerful constructs animated by elemental forces with bodies constructed of various materials.
- 15 A golem's unique construction shields it from the effects of most magic, and they can sometimes absorb the energies of a magical attack.
- 20 A golem's body is also strengthened by its magical bindings. Only weapons forged of adamantite can reliably pierce their hides.
- 25 The elemental spirit that animates a golem is imperfect and incomplete. Golems have been known to break their controlling bindings and go on a berserk rampage of destruction.
- 30 Golems that go berserk are actually developing free will. Given time, they can gain a real personality.

incinerating its foes. Forge golems are particularly dangerous in groups as their fiery breath can heal each other.

Forge golems lack an iron golem's breath weapon.

Breath Weapon (Su) A forge golem may breathe a 10-ft. cube gout of fire as a free action once every 1d4+1 rounds. It deals 10d6 fire damage. Reflex DC 19 negates. The save DC is Constitution-based.

CL 16; Craft Construct, *wall of fire*, *geas/quest*, *limited wish*; Price 150,000 gp; Cost 80,000 gp + 5,600 XP.

Warden Golems

Clerics of oppressed religions occasionally create golems to protect their people from harassment and mob violence. Since a clay golem's unsubtle ways are not ideal for this situation, warden golems were created that can walk through the marketplace unseen.

Warden golems lack a clay golem's *haste* ability.

Invisibility (Su) As a full-round action, a warden golem can cloak itself from view as if by *invisibility*. This lasts as long as the golem maintains concentration and ends when the golem stops concentrating. The warden golem may only affect itself in this manner.

Berserk (Ex) A warden golem has an increased chance of going berserk. It has a cumulative 2% chance of going berserk each round of combat.

CL 11; Craft Construct, *animate objects*, *invisibility*, *commune*, *resurrection*; Price 40,000 gp; Cost 21,500 gp + 1,540 XP.

Death Golems

A favored creation of necromantic golemwrights, a death golem is a flesh golem made from the parts of zombies and other undead, rather than normal corpses. Death golems lack the muscular vitality of fresher golems, but more than make up for it with a life-sapping touch.

A death golem's Strength score is 16. (This replaces the flesh golem's Strength of 21.) Other stats are not affected.

Energy Drain (Su) Living creatures hit by a death golem's slam attack gain one negative level. The DC is 9 for the Fortitude save to remove a negative level. The save DC is Charisma-based. For each such negative level bestowed, the golem gains 5 temporary hit points.

CL 8; Craft Construct, *animate dead*, *enervation*, *geas/quest*, *limited wish*; Price 20,000 gp; Cost 10,500 gp + 780 XP.

Other Constructs

Spellcasters of all stripes practice golem crafting, and a wide variety of golems exist. Druids have even been known to create golems of wood or soil. Additionally, spellcasters have developed other constructs as well. Unlike golems, these constructs lack anything resembling a soul although some of them have minds of their own, such as homunculi. Even the fire-hearted brass men lack souls of their own, being powered instead by enslaved efreet.

Only the mysterious inevitables seem to possess souls and minds of

their own (though some might argue that they are so purpose-driven as to lack free will), but they are not created by mortal hands. Many an aspiring golemwright has sought to dismantle an inevitable to learn its secrets. Some have even captured one, but thus far, the details of their power remain hidden to mortals.

History of the Golem

The term *golem* comes from a Hebrew word meaning “unfinished.” In this use, Adam was the first golem, created by God from the dust of the Earth. (Adam ceased to be a golem when God gave him a soul.) In Jewish folklore, holy men gained a portion of God’s power, and the wisest and most powerful rabbis could bring life to the lifeless, using knowledge from the *Sefer Yetzira* (or the Book of Formation). Some even used this ability to create calves, which they slaughtered and ate. However, unlike God, they could not create a being with a soul: only animals or soulless golems. Animating a golem this way required the use of holy words, frequently the names of God, both as part of the ritual and as part of the golem itself.

Creating anything in this way required utmost purity: clean white vestments (discarded afterward); virgin, untilled earth; and clear, fresh rainwater. Any impurity and the creation would fail.

Owning a golem servant was seen as a great honor, because it proved closeness with God. Golems, however, were still viewed as dangerous since they lacked souls, and their intelligence was quite limited and literal.

Golems were usually visually indistinct from real humans, only being discerned by their lack of intelligence and inability to speak.

The Golem of Prague

The best known of the golem legends is that of the golem of Prague. As the story goes, in 1580, the Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II issued an edict expelling the Jews from Prague. Rabbi Judah Loew the Maharal received a

vision, telling him how to create a golem to protect his people. He carved the golem’s body from the clay bank of the Vltava River. Loew called on his fellow rabbis Isaac Ha-Cohen and Jacob Ha-Levi to assist him: Cohen was born under the sign of fire, while Levi was born under the sign of water. As Loew himself was born under the sign of air, together with the earth of the body, they represented all four necessary elements. Loew and his assistants performed the ritual, carving the word ‘*Emet*’, meaning ‘truth’, into the golem’s forehead as the final step.

The golem, named Yosele, was tasked with protecting the Jews of the Prague ghetto. This it did, but over time, Yosele became more powerful, and more violent. Its magical powers included invisibility, a burning touch, and the ability to summon the spirits of the dead. Eventually, the Golem began attacking Christians indiscriminately (and in some versions, it attacked the Jews or even the Maharal as well).

In light of the terror and destruction wrought by the golem, the Emperor begged Rabbi Loew to destroy Yosele Golem, promising that the violence and harassment of the Jews would stop. The Golem having served its purpose, Loew accepted the offer. He went to Yosele and wiped the first letter from its clay forehead, transforming ‘*Emet*’ into ‘*Met*’, meaning ‘death’. The golem fell still, and the rabbi hid its body in a coffin in the attic of the Old New Synagogue in Prague and banned anyone else from entering the room.

According to legend, the body lies there to this day, ready to rise if it is ever again needed. Indeed, some credit the golem with protecting the synagogue during the Nazi occupation of Prague.

Other Golems

Rabbi Elijah of Chelm, a contemporary of Rabbi Loew, is also said to have created a golem. Elijah’s golem was activated with the name of God and grew larger and more powerful each day. Eventually, the golem grew so



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large that Elijah feared it would be too large for his house and deactivated it. The golem was nearly too tall for Elijah to reach the name on its forehead. The deactivated golem then fell onto Elijah, scarring his face.

In other versions of the story, Elijah is killed by the falling golem. Since one of this golem's duties was to defend Jews from beatings in the marketplace, the Golem of Chelm may have inspired the legend of the Golem of Prague.

Legends of the golem inspired many, and variations appear in Goethe's *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Meyrink's *The Golem*, Capek's *Rossum's Universal Robots*, Pratchett's Discworld series, and Steven's "Ecology of the Homunculus" (*Kobold Quarterly* #5).

Marcello the Mendicant

An awakened clay golem lives as a hermit on the outskirts of a small village. Hiding his form under a great hooded cloak, most of the townsfolk assume he is an outcast ogre or hill giant. They also know he can fix anything and answer impossible questions.

Marcello spends his time meditating on creation and on the mysteries of life. Known as a scholar, he receives visitors seeking knowledge or specially crafted items. While he speaks readily about theology and arcana in a booming voice, he guards his privacy carefully, not wanting to become a curiosity himself. Instead, he lets people believe that he is some kind of giant, ogre, or ogre magi. When a visitor earns his trust, he casts off his cloak, revealing his earthy complexion and great expressive face. To these people, he claims to be the first golem of them all.



Marcello Joirus, CR 15

Male-identified awakened clay golem cleric 9
NG Large construct

Init -1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +3, Spot +3

Aura aura of good

DEFENSE

AC 25 [27], touch 11, flat-footed 25 [27]
[+2 armor], +3 deflection, -1 Dex, +14 natural, -1 size)

hp 130 (11d10+9d8+30); [9 Temporary Hit Points]

Fort +9, **Ref** +5, **Will** +12

Defensive Abilities immunity to magic; **DR** 10/adamantine and bludgeoning; **Immune** construct traits

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee 2 slams +21 [+26] (4d8+7 [4d8 + 10] and cursed wound)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks cursed wound, turn undead 4/day

Spells Prepared (CL 9th):

5th—*fabricate*^D, *slay living* (DC 18)

4th—*divination*, *divine power*, *minor creation*^D

3rd—*bestow curse* (DC 16), *create food and water*^D, *magic vestment*, *meld into stone*, *stone shape*

2nd—*enthrall* (DC 15), *hold person* (DC 15), *make whole*, *shatter* (DC 15), *wood shape*^D, *zone of truth* (DC 15)

1st—*animate rope*^D, *command* (DC 14), *comprehend languages*, *doom* (DC 14), *magic stone* (x2)

0—*create water*, *detect magic*, *light*, *mending* (x3)

D Domain Spell; **Domains** Artifice, Creation; conjuration (creation) spells cast +3 CL

TACTICS

Before Combat If Marcello expects a fight, he uses *magic vestment* on his cloak or breeches, and uses *divine power* to enhance his already formidable physical prowess. These effects are reflected in the bracketed statistics.

During Combat Marcello relies on his natural resilience to protect himself while using disabling spells like *bestow curse* and *hold person* to end fights with a minimum of mortality. If dropped below half hit points, he "takes the gloves off" and lashes out using *slay living* and his fists.

Morale If Marcello believes he may be destroyed (below quarter hit points), he will flee or surrender.

STATISTICS

Str 25 [31], **Dex** 9, **Con** —, **Int** 11, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +15 [+17]; **Grp** +26 [+28]

Feats Craft Construct, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Forge Ring, Improved Natural Attack (slam), Scribe Scroll

Skills Craft (sculpture) +8, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (religion) +10

Languages Common

SQ aura of good, *haste*, spontaneous casting (cure spells)

Combat Gear *ring of protection* +3, *ring of free movement*, *scroll of raise dead*; **Other Gear** 50 ft. of hemp rope, common cloak and breeches, masterwork smith's tools

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Aura of Good (Ex) Marcello radiates a strong aura of good.

Cursed Wound (Ex) The wounds left by Marcello's slam attacks do not heal naturally and resist healing spells. A character attempting to cast a conjuration (healing) spell on a creature damaged the way must succeed on a DC 26 caster level check, or the spell has no effect on the injured character.

Domains (Ex) The Artifice and Creation domains grant Marcello a +4 bonus on all Craft checks and allow him to cast all conjuration (creation) spells at +3 caster level.

Haste (Su) After 1 round of combat, Marcello can *haste* himself once per day as a free action for 3 rounds.

Immunity to Magic (Ex) Marcello is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against him.

A *move earth* spell drives him back 120 feet and deals 3d12 points of damage.

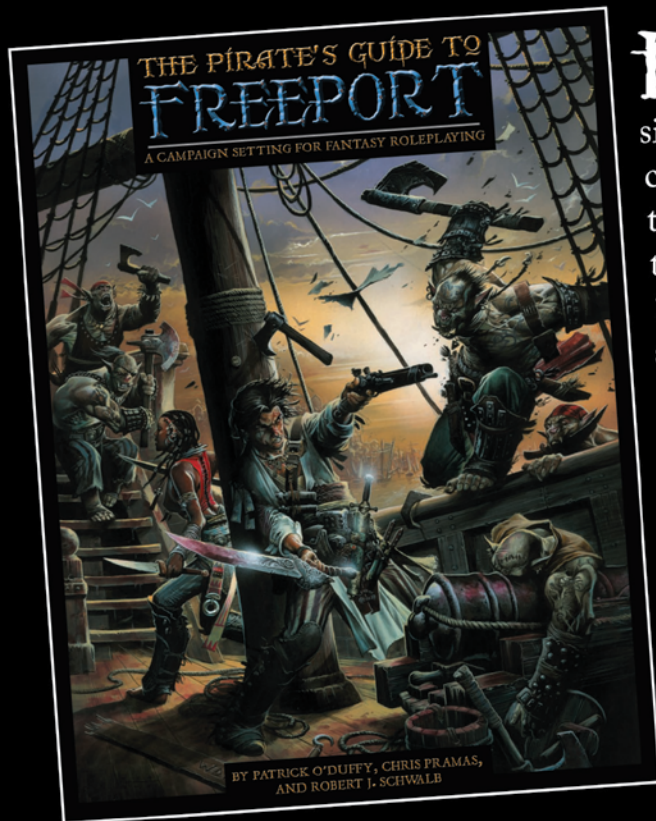
A *disintegrate* spell slows him (as the *slow* spell) for 1d6 rounds and deals 1d12 points of damage.

An *earthquake* spell cast directly at Marcello stops it from moving on its next turn and deals 5d10 points of damage. He gets no saving throw against any of these effects.

Any magical acid damage heals 1 point of damage for every 3 hp damage it would otherwise deal. If this healing would lead Marcello to exceed his full normal hit points, he gains any excess as temporary hit points. He gets no saving throw against magical attacks that deal acid damage.

Turn or Rebuke Undead (Su) Marcello may attempt to turn undead 4 times per day. He gains a +2 bonus on turning checks because of his ranks in Knowledge (religion).

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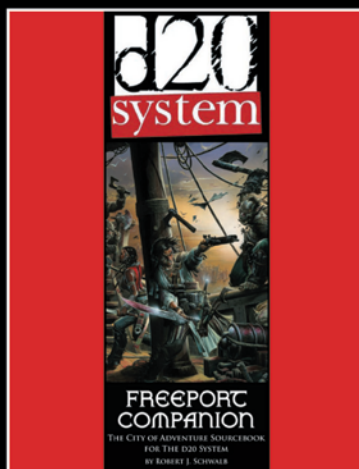
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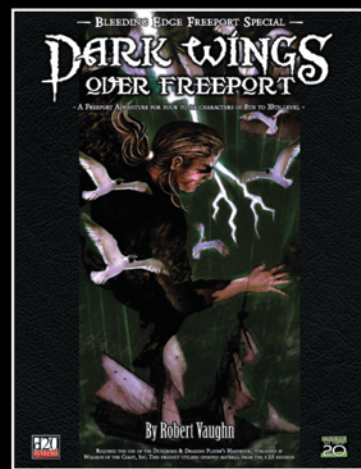
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The Brutal Honor of R.A. Salvatore

*We get the word from
the master of dark elves
and the Corona saga*

Interview by Jeremy L. C. Jones
Book Cover Art © TOR Publishing



R. A. Salvatore is best known for Drizzt Do'Urden, the iconic dark elf who leaves the Underdark city of Menzoberranzan, forsakes his evil drow heritage, and lives a life of brutal honor among people who despise him.

Drizzt is certainly a major part of Salvatore's canon, appearing in more than 20 novels and a handful of short stories, all set in the FORGOTTEN REALMS.

Salvatore is also known for his action scenes. Drawing on his experiences as a hockey player and as a bouncer—"it's all in your feet; it's all in your balance"—Salvatore slashes his way through fights scenes with a vivid freshness and breakneck rhythm unmatched by anybody (except maybe fellow former-bouncer, David Gemmell).

But what makes Salvatore's action scenes memorable as well as exciting is that the violence in his books reveals something about the characters (and often the setting) involved. Each character endures consequences for taking up the sword, and has to live with those consequences long after the sword is sheathed.

Lastly, Salvatore is infamous as the guy who was brought in by George Lucas to kill Han Solo's faithful cohort, Chewbacca, in the first book of The New Jedi Order series, *Vector Prime*. For that, Salvatore received hostile fan mail and death threats.

"They made me do it!" Salvatore said at a recent GenCon event. "They didn't even tell me I had to do it until after I'd signed

the contract and put the advance check in the bank."

But Lucas knew Salvatore was the man for the job, and the result was that a single character's death changed the Star Wars Expanded Universe, heightening the sense of danger throughout the universe and offering the core cast of characters a chance to develop further through their grief.

As the creator of Drizzt and the killer of Chewbacca, Salvatore is not always given full credit for another key element of his writing—world-building.

"Bob Salvatore has worked the magic that all writers dream of," said Ed Greenwood, the creator of The Forgotten Realms, "creating characters and a subterranean setting that caught on with readers, becoming wildly popular, beloved, and attracting a devoted ongoing following waiting to see what happens next."

"This is the essence of worldbuilding: not just painting in lots of details in a setting, but telling a great story in that setting. Bob has mastered that, making readers *care* what happens to Drizzt and his companions and the drow city he was born and raised in. I re-read *Homeland* for sheer personal enjoyment at least once a year, and devour each new Salvatore book, inside the Realms or outside of it, as it appears."

On a brief hiatus from writing FORGOTTEN REALMS novels for TSR in the mid-1990s, Salvatore began building his masterwork, Corona, the setting for nine novels (with two more scheduled to be re-

leased), an RPG campaign setting, comics, and graphic novels.

GenCon 2008 was an exciting time to speak with Salvatore. He was finishing up *The Dame* (the tenth book set in Corona), awaiting the release of *The Pirate King* (featuring Drizzt Do'Urden), and helping his son, Geno, promote their co-authored young adult novel, *The Stowaway*.

Even though *The Stowaway* focuses on twelve-year-old Maimun, it is, as Salvatore said, "a worthy addition to Drizzt lore," as the famous dark elf makes "more than a cameo" appearance.

And, of course, Salvatore was also busy building the world for "a computer game that I can't talk about." That game, officially codenamed "Copernicus," is a MMORPG for Curt Schilling's 38 Studios.

"I'm a hardcore gamer," Salvatore said, "and I think this [game] is going to be big!"

Salvatore and I spoke in Indianapolis in between events celebrating the 20th anniversary of the creation of Drizzt. I tried to keep the conversation focused on world-building, but as often happens with Salvatore, the conversation often came back to characters and to honor.

What follows is a combination of interview and public Q and A.

It's been a little over 25 years since your first novel, *The Crystal Shard*. How have things changed in the genre?

Salvatore: When I started in fantasy, it was a very black and white genre. You were

either good or you were bad. You were Saoron or you were Gandalf. You were Aragorn or Boromir. You made the right choice or you made the wrong choice. Period.

And the women in the books! They were either chicks in chainmail or damsels in distress.

But now the genre has grown up. Writers are really exploring the grey areas. If you put a woman in your book, she better be a kick-ass character. I think that makes for much more interesting reading.

When I started, science fiction had one bay in the bookstore. They had Asimov, Heinlein, Clarke, and Bova, and they had Tolkien down at the bottom. Then Terry Brooks came on the scene. And Stephen Donaldson and Michael Moorcock. But there was still only one bay, and maybe five or six fantasy books.

It exploded in the mid-80s with Dragonlance and David Eddings and The Forgotten Realms and Robert Jordan. Now there is so much more room out there and there are so many different things you can explore within the genre.

You've worked in shared worlds and created your own settings. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each?

Salvatore: With a shared world, the advantage is that you get to stand on the shoulders of giants like Gary Gygax and Ed Greenwood and Dave Arneson. There's so much already there, so much richness.

The FORGOTTEN REALMS is the way a shared world ought to be. They let you have your characters and you find your own little corners of the world and do your own thing. It's led to one of the most successful book lines for over twenty years.

The disadvantage is that things happen in the world that you have no control over. You're limited in what you can do. I can't blow up Waterdeep in the FORGOTTEN REALMS. They're just not going to let me do that.

So, overall, the biggest limitation is that you can't reshape the world. But that lets you tell more private stories, stories of personal triumph. You are forced to really make your characters sing.

What can you say about *The Pirate King*?

Salvatore: The Realms are changing. That's why the series is called Transitions. Some pretty big things happen. I don't want to give too much away, but suffice it to say that I hope it's going to hurt. And I'll leave it at that.

Drizzt is pretty angry these days.

Salvatore: Isn't that great? He's been

called "emo" one too many times. One of the things I am gathering about the new FORGOTTEN REALMS is that it's pockets of civilization surrounded by leagues of chaos and craziness and badness. And if Drizzt is going there, Drizzt is not going to be a nice guy. He's going to go about his business ruthlessly. You get to a point where you've just seen too much. He's still an honorable hero, but he's going to be an honorable hero who will take people out in a hurry... He's going to live another 700 years if I don't kill him. And I'm not.

Will Drizzt ever get sick of being Drizzt and just snap?

Salvatore: From the beginning, my philosophy has been, "The hero isn't the guy with the biggest gun. He's the guy with the biggest heart." That's not going to change. Drizzt may get an edge to him, he may have a bitterness to him, he may at times forget who he is but it will be very brief. He's never *not* going to be Drizzt.

I've got Jarlaxle for that.

How did an honorable guy like Drizzt come out of the drow culture?

Salvatore: He had a pretty honorable father. And I think there is a subculture of the drow that's honorable. I don't think Jarlaxle is dishonorable all the time.

I don't think the drow are purely evil. Do you know where Menzoberranzan came from?

We had just finished *The Halfling's Gem* and TSR said, "We're reading the mail and people want to know where this guy came from. We want you to create the Dark Elves in the FORGOTTEN REALMS." I had the *Fiend Folio* and the old modules. About five different products mentioned them but really didn't give much. So I said to TSR, "What else do you have?" They said, "Nothing. It's carte blanche. You're *creating* them in the Realms."

So I went and read Mario Puzzo's *The Godfather*. I'm not kidding. That's where Menzoberranzan came from. I got the family structure from *The Godfather*. Gary Gygax, of course, had already turned it into the godmother.

So I don't think it works to say they're purely evil. There are too many shades of grey in there.

There is an old saying that there is no one more fanatical than a convert. Drizzt understands the need to adhere to a code more than someone who is raised in a society that already had codes of honor.

Of your creator-owned worlds, Corona is the most extensive.

Salvatore: My plan with DemonWars Saga was to create the world of Corona through a gigantic seven book series and then tell the more personal stories, like I did in *The Highwayman* [the eighth book].

The other thing I wanted to do with Corona was give it a sense of *distance*. One of the things people in our world don't always get about fantasy worlds is that if something happens in one part of the world it can be months before the other part of the world knows about it.

I started the story of *Demon Awakens* on the frontier in the town of Dundalis. I wanted that feeling that people can grow up, live their entire lives, and never leave that one small area where they live.

What was the first step in the world-building process?

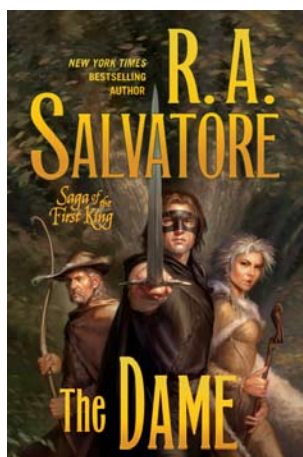
Salvatore: Corona was germinating for a long time before I actually started writing it. In fact, my old Crimson Shadow books, I think, are the forerunner of Corona.

[When I started the DemonWars Saga.] I had left TSR over some creative differences back in the mid-90s and the editor at Del Rey called me up. He said, "I'll give you as long as you need to write the best book you can write." That's what I'd been waiting to hear. I'd been on the treadmill for several years, pumping out two or three books a year, every year, and I needed to sit back and develop this world that had been germinating for a long time. I needed to create *my* world, *my* Forgotten Realms, *my* Middle Earth, *my* Shannara. And that world was Corona.

The first thing I did was figure out the climate and geography. I grabbed my old *National Geographic*s and started finding land that would fit the story I wanted to tell. If you look carefully, the land of Corona looks like Eastern Canada. I'd promised some people I'd met at a convention that I would put Labrador in the book and I think Labrador is one of the coolest places in the world.

The premise of the world was going to be the gemstone magic. That was going to be the *difference* in my world. And then came the question: where do you get the gemstones? Am I going to have mines set up in various places, mining all the gemstones that have magical properties? What I settled on was a corona around the planet, a ring like Saturn's.

Every few generations the gemstones would shower down along the equatorial ring. The gemstones had magical properties that weren't permanent, at least not until monks from the church got them. The church was founded by the guy who



figured out how to make the gemstones' magical properties permanent. This gave great power to the church, and from there the entire Abelian Church was born in the middle regions. Building Co-

rona kind of spiraled outward from there. It took about six months.

What is at the heart of Corona?

Salvatore: The major struggle of Corona, as I think it is in most fantasy and certainly in our world, is: why are we here? What is the whole point of it all? It manifests itself in Corona within the Abelian Church, which goes through a schism similar to the one the Catholic Church went through in the 11th century.

In the Abelian Church, it's over the gemstones. One group says these are gifts from god, we're the people of god, so we should keep the gemstones. The other sect says, no, no, if we spread this out—and this is where *The Demon Awakens* starts—if we give these gemstones to people they're going to have better lives. We should be sharing this magical wealth.

But it all comes back to questions like, what's the point of the religion and what's the point of the church?

That struggle is the most apparent in the fourth book, *Mortalis*, where you have this monk who questions whether there is life after death. This monk is a poet and the other monks think he's a great philosopher who's helping them come to terms with their faith. Is there really meaning? Is there really more to life? But when the poet-monk starts sharing these same poems with the people, the monks are afraid it will shake the people's faith. And the monks need that faith to control the people, so they kill the poet as a heretic.

Mortalis seems to be the point in your career at which all your writing deepens. In all your books written after *Mortalis*, for instance, your characters seem to experience loss more profoundly.

Salvatore: I don't know that I'll ever write another book like *Mortalis*, and I hope I never do. I wrote that book while I was losing my brother to cancer and it was my catharsis. That was where I was letting my emotions, my fears, my hopes—all of it—play out on the page. I've never gone back

and re-read the book. I can't. That book was as important to me as anything I've ever done.

How has it been to return recently to the early days of Corona with the Saga of the First King series for Tor?

Salvatore: It's been a mixed blessing. When I went back, I started going down the wrong road with the character. I was kind of going with what I know best and that would be the Dark Elf model: put this group of amazing heroes together and they go walking through adventures.

That's not what Bransen is all about. There were supposed to be more trials in his life than that. But I put the brakes on and reminded myself of why I'm writing Bransen and what I want to do. And now I'm finishing the third book, *The Dame*, and I am right back where I want to be with him and his voice is loud and strong again.

How did you get involved with making a computer game for 38 Studios?

Salvatore: I was sitting at home a couple of years ago and the phone rings. I pick it up and the guy says, "Can I talk to Bob Salvatore?" I say, "speaking." And he says, "Oh man, this is so cool! You're my favorite author. I've read all your books *twice*. This is Curt Schilling." I'm a big Red Sox fan, obviously. I'm like, "Yeah, right." And he says, "No, this is really Curt Schilling."

He was starting a video game company and he wanted me to come in and design the world.

Curt flew me out to Kansas City with my wife. It was Curt and a few of his friends. Couple of them from Sony. Guys he'd played *EverQuest* with for years. They told me this idea they had for a video game. I saw what they were doing and there was one thing missing. I knew right away what had to be done, but I wouldn't tell them right away. I made them wait overnight.

We've put together this team that is just unreal. I got together with my group and we created a history of the world, the cultures of the world, and the story of the game. And that's all I can tell you.

When will the game come out?

Salvatore: We won't release it till it's ready. If you put a video game out there that's not ready, not polished, people won't give you a second chance.

Any dark elves in the game?

Salvatore: Drizzt won't be in it. It's completely new. The world has a bigger history than you can even imagine. My whole phi-

losophy going into this was "deep threads." We're going to have 150 people working on this. We need deep threads. You need a 10,000 year history so that everything makes sense. When everyone sits down to paint on the canvas that we're creating, they have all this history to draw on for consistency's sake and for logic's sake. That's why the players are able to go around the world and, even if they're not paying attention, everything's going to make sense. Why this race interacts with these people like this and why this is going on over here—it's going to all make sense.

We spent six to eight months just building those deep threads before we even started on the game.

You've mentioned elsewhere that working with your son Geno on *The Stowaway* has reminded you of why you write. Why do you write?

Salvatore: There are a lot of reasons why I write. But primarily it's to get those letters from teenagers that begin, "I never read a book until..." or "I couldn't get my son or daughter to read until I gave him your book..."

I was at a reading once on South Broad Street in Philadelphia many, many years ago and there was this young man who looked like a gang-banger. He had the baggy pants and the hat on backwards. And he kept going to the back of the line whenever more people would come. I'm thinking he's going to rob me or something. Showing my suburban stupidity, right?

So this kid finally gets up to me and he says, "You know, in high school I never read a book but I did play D&D. I wanted to play a dark elf and my DM threw *Homeland* at me and said, 'I'll let you play a dark elf but you've got to read that book.' So I threw it right back at him and said, 'If it's any good they'd have made a movie out of it.' And he says, 'You have to read this book or I'm not letting you play a dark elf.' So I went home, started reading the book and I had to stop when it was time to go to school.

He read right through the night and wanted to tell me that now he was a literature major at Tulane University.

You hear stories like that and you realize that words affect people. That people are actually paying attention to what you're writing and it scares the hell out of me, but it's a pretty magical thing as well.

What are you working on next?

Salvatore: *The Ghost King*. It's going to be a very brutal book... I hope. After that, we'll have to see what happens.

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Medieval Medicine

The Four Humors

By Phillip Larwood

"Ah, yes, I see now. Note the dark orange color of your bile? No wonder your rage grows out of control. I'm afraid your condition will only worsen without the proper treatment."

"Can anything be done for me, doctor?"

"Well, certainly my dear man. Just let me get my stomach pump and purging bucket, and we can get right to work."

*—Doctor Winton Callow
to a concerned patient*

From the classical age through to the latter stages of the 19th century, medicine was dominated by the study of the four humors—those essential elemental liquids governing all health and well-being. In recent years, medical science has consigned the four humors to the trash heap, vilifying their use in the prognosis and treatment of disease and replacing them with modern methods of diagnosis and intervention. Yet while these humors are maligned and forgotten in modern life, they might play a vital role in any fantasy world where humorism (the study and use of the four humors) can be a legitimate and commonplace medical practice.

The Four Humors in History

The four humors—that is, blood, black bile, yellow bile, and phlegm—were first proposed in the writings of classical Greek writers around 400 B.C. While Hippocrates was the first to apply them to medicine, Galen popularized the four humors. Widely practiced, the study of the humors dominated medicine and was virtually unchallenged for more than 1,000 years.

Historically, the four humors were

linked to the seasons and the elements: *blood* (or sanguine humor) was associated with cheerfulness, air, and spring; *yellow bile* (or choleric humor) was associated with anger and irritability, fire, and summer; *black bile* (or melancholic humor) was associated with depression and sadness, earth, and fall; and *phlegm* (or phlegmatic humor) was associated with calmness and apathy, water, and winter.

All disease was attributed to a disturbance or imbalance of the humors (also known as *dyscrasia*) while good health was the result of equilibrium or balance between the humors (also known as *crasis*). Emotional and mental well-being was also associated with the four humors, and any disturbance in one's behavior or temperament was often linked to an imbalance.

In medieval medical practice, the diagnosis of disease consisted of checking the fluids of the body, such as blood or phlegm, for irregularities. Treatments included bloodletting using a lancet or leeches, induced vomiting, enemas, and simply changing one's diet to "even up" the humors.

Eventually, belief in the four humors faded due to the scientific discoveries of Rudolf Virchow and others in the 1800s, and it survives these days only in the discussion of certain blood diseases and various medical parlances and sayings.

The Four Humors in Fantasy

Even though the humors and their connection to the elements and seasons are categorically discounted by modern medical science, in a typical fantasy world where magic is a tangible force and the four elements influence the

very planes, study of the four humors can change the way sickness is examined and how various symptoms are treated.

The easiest way to incorporate the four humors into a campaign is with healers and clergy, whose study of the humors forms the foundation for how all ailments are identified and treated. In this type of campaign, all clerics with ranks in Heal understand the four humors and their effects on the universe around them. This expands how the Heal skill can be described and lends weight to the strange remedies or practices of medieval healers. Deities may also embody the four humors, especially a deity of healing or disease, and the rituals or histories of the gods may relate to the four humors.

In a campaign where humorism exists, the elements and the seasons can have a far greater impact on health and add color or flavor to the world. An imbalance of the humors may be the result of an imbalance in the elemental planes or the presence of a greater concentration of one element. A person may feel melancholy near a large group of xorn or more cantankerous or belligerent near a portal to the Elemental Plane of Fire. The elemental planes reflect the nature of the humors in small but appreciable ways. For instance, the Elemental Plane of Air might be a plane of warm and moist vapors, because these are among the governing qualities of blood.

In a fantasy world the seasons might create an imbalance of the humors in creatures or even set their general behavior. Dwarves might be tied to



winter and, therefore phlegmatic in nature; elves might be tied to spring and therefore sanguine. The dwarves would be generally unemotional while the elves would be excessively cheerful, reflecting both the season of their race and the humor that governs their overall personalities.

Similarly, an elf in the fall might become overly withdrawn or depressed and a dwarf in summer warlike and generally foul tempered, as their opposing seasons and therefore humors take hold. Their humors affect each race's society and culture; that is, trade negotiations with dwarves should ideally occur in winter when they are calmer and more rational, and elven festivals might shift temperaments with the seasons.

New Uses for the Heal Skill

The four humors can be presented within a campaign primarily through the Heal skill. In a fantasy world, an imbalance of the humors might produce very real conditions. The DCs given below allow creatures to treat various conditions or injuries more effectively by applying the study of the humors in appreciable ways.

All of these uses of the Heal skill require a standard action to perform.

In a campaign featuring the four humors, healer's kits typically contain a lancet or jar of leeches, several glass cups, various powders for mixing emetics or enemas, and a small bowl for collecting and examining bodily discharges. Such kits are also known as *chirurgeon's kits* or *leecher's kits* (by those who suffered at the hands of bogus healers).

New Domain

When the four humors are linked to the gods, some clerics gain access to the Medicine domain (also known as the Humorism domain). Unlike the Healing domain, the Medicine domain has a more spells that cure or remove negative conditions rather than simply hit points.

Healing Humors Table

Task	DC
Check bodily fluids to identify an imbalance in humors	15 ¹
Remove dazed, fatigued, or sickened condition	20 ²
Heal a gangrenous or bleeding wound.	25 ²
Remove exhausted, nauseated, or stunned condition	25 ²

¹ If the healer successfully identifies an imbalance in the patient's humors, he gains a +5 bonus on all future Heal checks to treat diseases related to the specific imbalance or to perform one of the tasks presented above.

² This requires using a method such as bleeding, purging, or cupping (using a burning hot glass or ceramic cup pressed against the skin to draw out bad humors). If the healer fails this check by 5 or more the condition worsens by one step (such as going from dazed to stunned). If this is not possible, he deals 2 points of Con damage to the victim.

Medicine Domain

Deities gods of healing, medicine, the elements, or seasons (and their relationship to the humors), or disease.

Granted Power +2 bonus on Heal checks and a +2 bonus on saving throws against disease.

Medicine Domain Spells

- 1 *remove paralysis*
 - 2 *remove disease*
 - 3 *chirurgeon's touch**
 - 4 *black weep**
 - 5 *greater restoration*
 - 6 *heal*
 - 7 *regenerate*
 - 8 *mask of humors**
 - 9 *mass heal*
- * New spell.

New Spells

A variety of new spells are called for in a campaign featuring the four humors.

Black Weep

Necromancy

Level: Clr 5, Medicine 4

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Creature touched

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Fort negates (harmless)

Spell Resistance: Yes

After finishing the incantation, the creature you touch begins weeping glittering black tears that vanish as quickly as they appear.

This spell removes the dazed, exhausted, fatigued, nauseated, sickened,

and stunned conditions from the creature touched, as well as the following conditions or spells related to the humor affected:

Black Bile—Negates the effects of *crushing despair* and of the frightened, panicked, and shaken conditions.

Blood—Negates wounding and bleeding effects (such as from *stirges* and weapons of wounding).

Phlegm—Negates the effects of *calm emotions* and *slow* and of the fascinated condition.

Yellow Bile—Negates the effects of rage and any anger-based effect.

One humor must be selected when this spell is cast, and the spell varies depending on the one chosen. The description above is for black bile; an imbalance of phlegm means the creature weeps clear, slimy tears while those with excess of blood weep blood and yellow bile weeps yellow, oily tears.

Chirurgeon's Touch

Transmutation

Level: Clr 4, Medicine 3

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: 1 creature

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: No

Spell Resistance: None

You complete the spell and the target feels new knowledge flood through her body.

This spell grants a +10 competence bonus on Heal checks and the ability to take 10 on Heal checks even while rushed or threatened. As a swift action,

the recipient can expend the spell to cast *cure moderate wounds* or *lesser restoration* with a CL equal to the cleric who cast *chirurgeon's touch*.

Mask of Humors

Conjuration

Level: Clr 9, Medicine 8

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Personal

Duration: 1 minute/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

An invisible mask composed of all four humors swirls around your face, protecting you from a range of negative and harmful effects.

This spell creates an invisible mask composed of black bile, blood, phlegm, and yellow bile. The mask prevents you from becoming dazed, exhausted, fatigued, nauseated, sickened, or stunned. It also gives you complete immunity to all mind-affecting abilities and spells which affect your emotions (*antipathy*, *crushing despair*, *fear*, etc.) and to all natural diseases and poisons.

Material Component: A vial filled with a solution composed of each of the four humors.

Touch of Dyscrasia

Necromancy

Level: Clr 4, Sor/Wiz 4

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Creature touched

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

You touch the victim and afflict him with a condition of your choosing.

You channel the energy of the four humors through your touch, causing a powerful chemical imbalance in your target. You must succeed on a touch attack to strike a target. The subject is immediately dazed, exhausted, fatigued, nauseated, or sickened for the spell's duration. The condition ends as soon as the spell's duration ends.

Material Component: A drop of black bile, blood, phlegm or yellow bile.

New Magic Items

A campaign featuring the humors needs a few useful magic items.

Leech Sphere

Aura faint necromancy; **CL** 5th

Slot —; **Price** 750 gp

Extremely valuable as both a healing tool and weapon, this object appears as a black cold slimy sphere composed of hundreds of living, intertwined leeches.

The *leech sphere* extracts bad humors from the blood. When a command word is spoken, a swarm of leeches leaves the sphere and attaches itself to the nearest willing, helpless, or bound target. As soon as the leeches grab hold, they begin sucking the blood from the creature. This is a standard action and grants the wielder a +5 competence bonus on Heal checks to cure diseases or conditions related to infected blood (including diseases like filth fever). This never drains enough blood to cause Con damage or other negative side-effects. A second command word causes the leeches to rejoin the sphere.

In emergencies, the wielder of a *leech sphere* can use it as a weapon, hurling it at a target while speaking a third command word. When used in this way the sphere has a range of 30 ft. and the wielder makes ranged touch attacks. If he hits, the sphere unravels and the swarm of leeches sticks to its victim and drains blood. This attack deals 1d6 points of Con damage to the victim and sickens them for 1 minute.

A successful DC 14 Fort save stops the creature from becoming sickened but does not prevent the Con damage. This use destroys the *leech sphere*, and its leeches become non-magical vermin.

The sphere has no effect on undead or creatures without blood (such as constructs and elementals).

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *vampiric touch*, crafter must have 5 ranks in Heal; **Cost** 375 gp, 30 XP

Sawbones Scalpel

Aura faint necromancy; **CL** 9th

Slot weapon; **Price** 18,000 gp

This long thin blade has a bone or ivory

handle and is kept razor sharp by those who use it. While healers use this magical tool to perform surgery on patients without anesthetic, the scalpel can also be used as a very effective weapon.

A *sawbones scalpel* is treated as a +1 keen dagger in combat; however, its true power lies in the ability to anaesthetize wounds. Any creature struck by the scalpel must make a DC 13 Will save or be numbed for 1d4 rounds. This numbing effect prevents the victim from feeling pain and imposes a –2 penalty on all attack rolls, damage rolls, and skill checks involving fine manipulation (*Disable Device*, *Open Locks*, *Sleight of Hand*, etc.).

A creature that fails its saving throw against the anaesthetizing ability of the scalpel may not be aware it has been wounded if it was surprised or caught flat-footed. This makes it a valuable tool for those with the sneak attack ability such as assassins and rogues.

Requirements Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *hold person*; **Cost** 9,000 gp, 720 XP

Staff of Humors

Aura moderate enchantment; **CL** 8th

Slot —; **Price** 13,875 gp

This staff is composed of stout wood and topped by a sphere of bilious liquid that constantly changes color from dull black to rich crimson to glistening blue to faintly glowing yellow before starting the whole process over again.

Because of the nature of the spells placed in this staff, they are typically constructed by bards. When casting a spell associated with a particular humor the sphere changes color to match the humor in question.

This staff has the following spells:

calm emotions (1 charge; the sphere turns blue when casting this spell)

crushing despair (2 charges; the sphere turns black when casting this spell)

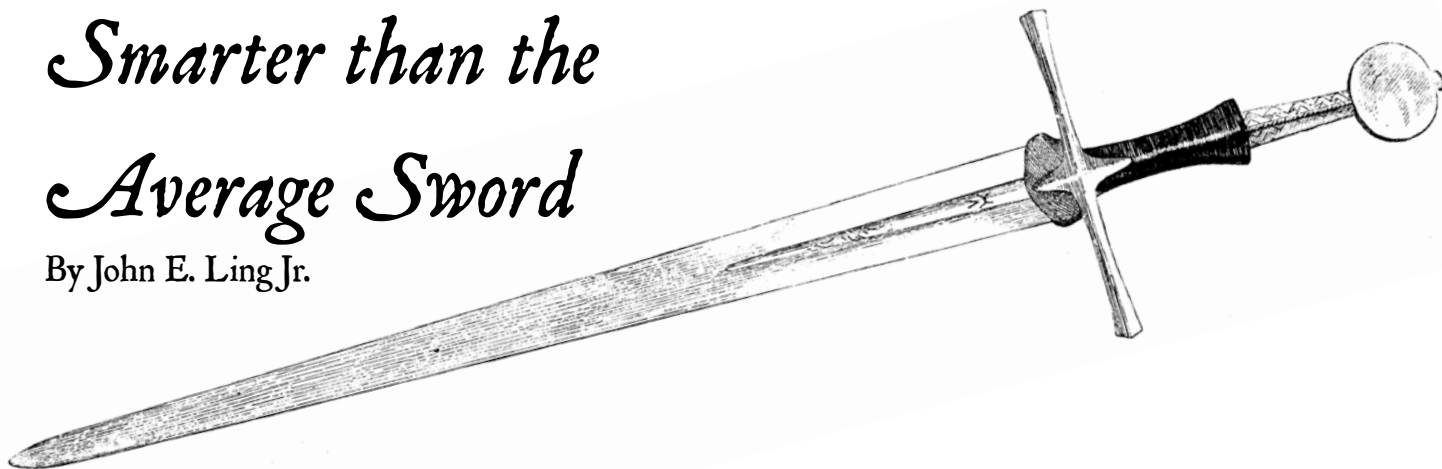
good hope (2 charges; the sphere turns red when casting this spell)

rage (1 charge; the spell turns yellow when casting this spell)

Requirements Craft Staff, *calm emotions*, *crushing despair*, *good hope*, *rage*; **Cost** 6,937 gp, 555 XP

Smarter than the Average Sword

By John E. Ling Jr.



Intelligent items present wondrous opportunities, yet in most games, these items are rare. Presented here are four swords of varying levels of magical intelligence. Each item has its own story with plenty of room for a GM to customize the item to fit within her campaign.

In addition, each sword presents a hook for the GM to use to introduce the weapon. While these swords have a value listed, they should not be available at Ye Olde Magic Shoppe. Instead, this value is provided so GMs can keep the relative value of items among all the players even.

Thane's Honor, The Sword of State

By dwarven tradition, the eldest son of the clan's thane assumes the mantle on his father's death. So it has gone for millennia, and clan Stonebreaker was no exception. However, they faced a difficult proposition 300 years ago. Their long-lived leader, Thane Ragnar, was near death and desperately wanted a son. Though his beard was thinning, his wife was able to conceive a boy and they named him Amund. Ragnar's spirit still strong, and he set about teaching his young son rulership and statecraft, for Ragnar knew he had little time left under the mountain.

The thane's high priest worried Amund would ascend to lead the clan while ill prepared for the difficult politics of the dwarven world. Secretly he began work with the greatest of

weaponsmiths in the clan to build a gift for Amund. The high priest spent years forging the perfect sword and, in due time, presented the young dwarf with the greatsword *Thane's Honor*. The high priest trusted the young lad would grow into the greatsword in due time.

It was designed to defend the Thane during times of trouble and, most importantly, imbued with the spark of intelligence and the abilities of debate and reason. Young Amund would not fall prey to the brutal world of dwarven politics so easily with it at his side. Seeing the blade in his son's hands, Thane Ragnar died.

Though Amund was young by dwarven standards, he had learned much in his time with his father, and aided by *thane's honor*, the young leader quickly developed a reputation as a fair ruler. Alas, others were jealous of the young thane. Civil war erupted among the clans, and Amund, while a capable warrior, fell in battle. His sword disappeared that day for 30 long years.

A Change of State

Eventually, an elven paladin by the name of Annasei Featherbow sought to slay a dragon, ending a long and bloody reign of terror. She fought gallantly, but the dragon sundered her sword and battered her body during the long and brutal fight. Weaponless and near death, Annasei fell to the ground as the dragon readied its final attack on the paladin. In that instant, Annasei saw *thane's honor*, lying on

the ground. Renewed, she took up the weapon and thrust it into the belly of the surprised dragon, slaying the beast.

Annasei became a hero that day, beloved by those who lived in terror of the dragon. She was quickly thrown into the position of leader of a small kingdom; though against her wishes, she relented for the common good. Much like Amund, she ruled with a reputation of fairness. Also like Amund, her time as a ruler didn't last long. An assassin, sent by agents of the God of Vengeance, murdered Annasei in her sleep, and made off with her sword and armor.

In the Present

Thane's honor has not been seen since. Some speculate the weapon is cursed. Others believe the weapon is not content providing aid to only one person. Still others hypothesize that *thane's honor* had nothing to do with the deaths of its previous owners and that it would make a fine sword for a good and fair ruler.

Thane's Honor

NG intelligent item; +1 *defending* greatsword of rulership

Properties defending, rulership
Int 13, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 13; **Ego** 6

Communication empathy; **Languages** Common, Dwarven; understands but is limited in response due to limitations of empathy

Senses hearing, vision 60 ft.

Skills Diplomacy +16, Listen +0, Sense

Rulership Weapon

Weapons imbued with this ability aid the owner in diplomatic matters. The weapon grants the owner a +5 circumstance bonus to Diplomacy and Sense Motive. The weapon only bestows these bonuses while sheathed.

Aura faint transmutation; **CL** 5th;

Price +4,375 gp

Requirements Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, creator must have 5 ranks in Diplomacy and Sense Motive

Motive +15, Spot +0

Value 24,725 gp

Personality *Thane's honor* is conservative in action. It prefers to take a defense posture, often encouraging its owner to negotiate rather than fight. Even if combat breaks out, the blade continues to encourage its owner to proceed carefully through the battle, seeking an opportune moment to negotiate a truce.

GM Tip *Thane's honor* currently has no owner. Or rather, the current owner does not really know what it has. The assassin who killed Annasei suffered an "accident" of his own after leaving the paladin's home. He failed to detect a pit in the floor of the forest and fell 50 ft., where he was beset upon by a ten-headed hydra. Injured from the fall, the assassin proved no match for the hydra. The sword lays unclaimed in the hydra's lair, waiting for a worthy hero to rescue it from the pit where it lies.

Judge's Blade, the Sword of Temporal Justice

The exact history of this finely crafted blade is lost to time, but markings along the blade and the style used to build the quillons and hilt suggest the blade is quite old. Regardless of when it was forged, *Judge's Blade* was certainly known to exist around 500 years ago. Some scholars believe that is the point at which the sword became sentient; others suspect the blade was always capable of such thought but simply never felt the need to demon-

strate it prior to those events.

On that fateful day, a trial was held. The vile necromancer Adallus the Black was brought to trial by the Legion of Light—a militant sect—for his crimes against decency. It is unclear why the subsequent events happened, but scholars agree that demons beset the court that day. The demons freed Adallus the Black from his bindings and slew Menicus Everbright, the leader of the sect and the wielder of the sword that today is known as *Judge's Blade*.

A young paladin named Herbert Bonnivar, distraught at seeing his leader slain, took up Everbright's sword. It was at that moment the sword spoke for the first time. The blade directed young Herbert through the treacherous combat. Though the demons were slain, Adallus the Black escaped his judgment and was never seen again. Many paladins perished that day, though Bonnivar himself survived the fierce battle and his injuries and became a hero to his church.

In the Present

Judge's Blade has passed through the hands of several individuals, always ending up with those who decide the guilt or innocence of those accused of crimes. Bonnivar passed the sword to another paladin deemed worthy of possessing such a fine blade; that paladin bequeathed the blade to a king. It switched hands several other times before seeming to fade from history.

Judge's Blade

LN intelligent item; +2 *axiomatic* longsword

Properties *axiomatic*

Int 15, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 10; **Ego** 11

Communication speech; **Languages**

Common, Draconic, Terran

Senses darkvision 60 ft., hearing.

Skills Listen +2, Spot +2

Spell-Like Abilities At Will—*detect magic*; 3/day—*hold person* (DC 15), *zone of truth* (DC 14)

Value 53,915 gp

Personality *Judge's Blade* has a quick wit and impressive powers of observation. If it determines somebody within

its immediate area is guilty, it quickly speaks up, seeking to impart justice against the wrongdoer. Even if a crime seems justified to the perpetrator, to *Judge's Blade*, the ends never justify the means.

GM Tip Adallus the Black sold his soul long ago to ensure demonic protection should he ever fall captive. Adallus barely escaped with his life that day and went into seclusion for many long years. During that time, he underwent the transformation to become a lich and took a new name—Machnar the Foul. Intent on revenge, Machnar plotted the destruction of the Legion of Light, tempting a weak-willed paladin into turning and becoming a blackguard. The blackguard's machinations destroyed the Legion of Light before Machnar snuffed out his life to keep him quiet.

Still not content in his revenge, Machnar sought the blade that saved the young paladin on the day of his trial. The lich destroyed the then owner—a half-orc warrior intent upon ending the orc raids threatening to tear his region apart—and brought the blade back to his sanctum. There the blade now sits, locked away in a chest.

Pious Hunter, the Sword of Spiritual Justice

This weapon resembles *Judge's Blade*.

It is unclear whether the two swords were created by the same weaponsmith or if *Pious Hunter's* style was copied from *Judge's Blade* later. Regardless, they share a common point in their background—both were the blades of a paladin from the Legion of Light.

Pious Hunter's known history indicates that the sword was first created as a simple masterwork weapon to be used by a young paladin named Jenna Lightbrow. Like all adepts entering the sect, Lightbrow was provided with a longsword, a shield, and a suit of chainmail armor.

Lightbrow dedicated her life to the Legion of Light, specifically to the task of hunting and destroying undead. Through a combination of her well-honed skills and sheer luck (though

some would say it was actually divine intervention), Lightbrow traveled the world, seeking any sign of undead.

As her skill advanced, Lightbrow paid handsomely to have the wizards of the sect imbue her sword and armor with magical abilities.

Late in her career, Lightbrow sought once again to have her blade improved upon by the casters of the Legion of Light. She spoke to a wizened elven wizard by the name of Sephilai Moonflower; he explained to Lightbrow that he could imbue the sword with intellect—making it a reasoning, thinking being to aid her in her struggles against undead. Sephilai explained the process, and they agreed upon the abilities to bestow upon the sword.

Lightbrow lived a long life, fighting undead long into the years in which most enjoy retirement. When she was finally too old to continue the fight with her weapons, she passed her sword on to another member of the Legion of Light, knowing *pious hunter* would aid her companion as he took up Lightbrow's cause.

The Pious Hunter

LG intelligent item; +2 *holy longsword*

Properties holy

Int 15, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 10; **Ego** 11

Communication speech; **Languages**

Celestial, Common, Elven

Senses darkvision 60 ft., hearing

Skills Knowledge (religion) +12, Listen +2, Spot +2

Spell-Like Abilities 1/day—*consecrate*, *remove paralysis*

Value: 49,915 gp

Personality *Pious hunter*, much like *judge's blade*, possesses a strong intellect, but it also possesses a strong sense of humor, and it often makes jokes—even during the darkest moments of combat. The sword also loves to prattle on about religion, demonstrating its deep understanding of the topic to all those who will listen—and to those who won't.

GM Tips Lightbrow was on the trail of Machnar the Foul, though she was unaware of whom he really was. She never caught up to the lich, however. Sadly, for both Lightbrow and her understudy, Machnar destroyed the order from within. *Pious hunter* fell into the hands of one of the demons trafficking with Machnar and his blackguard lackey. Despite the terrible pain the sword inflicted, the demon took it with him back to the Abyss. There it sat for a generation, before the demon grew bored of it and gave it to a minion to sell on the material plane.

The minion had orders to sell the weapon only to a collector who would not actually use the blade. Finally, after years of searching, the minion located a buyer—a rakshasa sorcerer by the name of Evvellwinj. The rakshasa, to this day, keeps the sword hidden away within its hoard.



Curtana, The Sword of Mercy

Curtana was not always a sword but used to be a man—specifically Saint Curtana. Jimmof Curtana was an ascetic, his only possession a short sword. Through the grace of the gods, he traveled the lands, seeking to aid those who needed it most. Curtana's work often pitted him against tyrants, despots, and slave traders. Dangerous work, to be sure, but work Curtana felt was necessary. "After all," he would say to friends, "if not me, who?"

Throughout his career, Curtana and his friends brought about the demise of countless overlords and destroyed dozens of slave smuggling operations. It was during the latter that Saint Curtana ceased being a man.

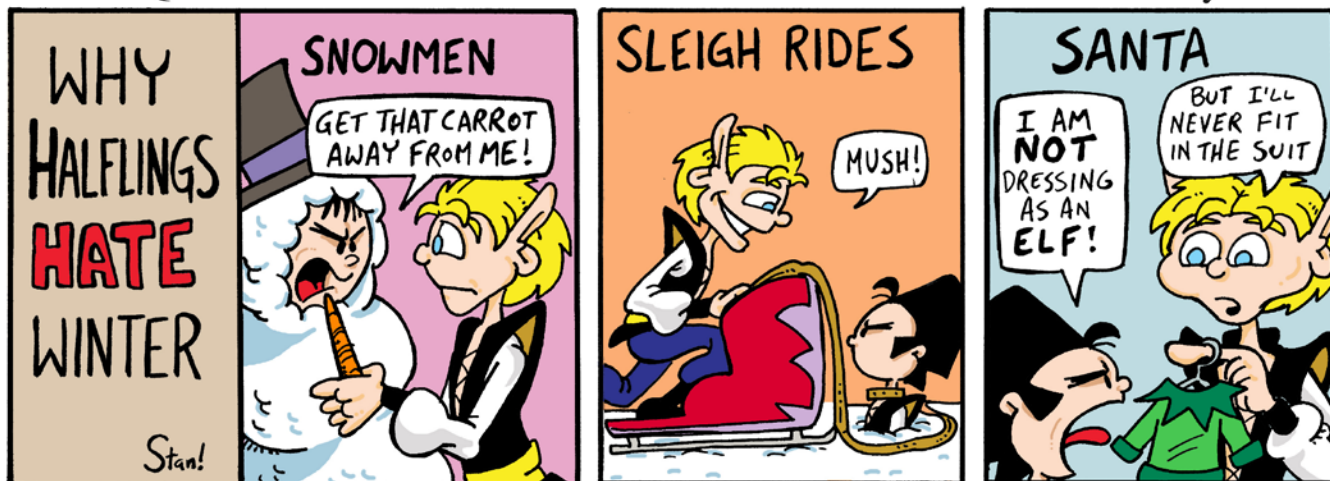
Curtana had gone out on his own, as he often did. This time, he sought a band of pirates known for trafficking in humans and demi-humans.

Curtana trailed the miscreants to their hideout, where he slowly incapacitated them one by one. His luck ran out, however, as a particularly stealthy pirate snuck up behind him while he was freeing prisoners. The pirate knocked Curtana out, and when he came to several days later, he was bound, his head placed on a chopping block.

The leader of the pirates wielded Curtana's short sword. He thought it devilishly ironic to use the saint's own weapon to behead him. The pirate put on quite a show, verbally abusing Curtana

by Stan!

Bolt & Quiver



for some time before offering him the chance to join forces with the pirates. When Curtana refused, as expected, the pirate swung the short sword in a high arc, bringing it down on Curtana's exposed neck.

The blade shattered with a thunderous boom. The pirate leader fell, slain by the thunderstroke. According to witnesses, Curtana smiled knowingly, then simply vanished in a flash of light, and the shattered blade reformed into a newly sanctified holy weapon.

Since that time, Curtana's spirit has occupied the blade he made famous. He guides the weapon's wielder, always seeking those who would oppress and do harm.

Curtana

NG intelligent item; +4 *merciful short sword*

Properties merciful

Int 18, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 10; **Ego** 25

Communication speech; **Languages** Celestial, Common, Infernal, Orc

Senses blindsense, darkvision 60 ft., hearing

Skills: Listen +4, Search +14, Spot +4

Spell-Like Abilities At will—*read magic*; 3/day—*daze monster* (DC 16), *hold person* (DC 17), *locate creature*

Special Purpose capture those who harm innocents.

Special Power wielder gains a +2 luck bonus on attacks, saves, and checks (while fulfilling special purpose)

Value 190,310 gp

Personality Much as in life, *Curtana* revels in all that the world offers. Ever cheerful, he beseeches upon those who possess him to protect the innocent, often imploring, "If not you, then who?"

GM Tips *Curtana* has a spectacular history, often accomplishing tasks that should be impossible. Currently, a swordsman named Merle Barnard owns the sword. Barnard and *Curtana* share a love of song and a joy for life—and a loathing for those who would harm the innocent. Barnard especially

detests the abuse of children, and he has made it his life's work to roam the city seeking those who would bring harm to the youngest of innocents.

Barnard, however, is in the twilight of his life. He desperately seeks a like-minded individual to carry on the traditions of *Curtana* and fight for those unable to fight for themselves. Recently, Barnard has researched a likely successor and has arranged to meet the person. Should the selected individual meet with Barnard and *Curtana's* approval, the old rogue simply hands over the blade; a single tear streaks down his cheek before he slumps into a chair and passes away from old age.

In this scenario, you are arranging to give your player quite a piece of equipment. Be sure to put her through the paces—Barnard would ask all sorts of questions and, likely, even expect the character to show her chops by resolving a mission.



Coming Next Issue

New toys and fertile beginnings... KOBOLD QUARTERLY brings you a springtime revel of lusty elves, cruel fey lords, and all the things a fertile imagination can dream up when the sap quickens. Join us for a wild bacchanalean ride into the Greenwood!

Bow to the Inevitable

by Tim and Eileen Connors

The Law is the truth, and the truth brings inevitable Justice.

Fey Lords and Ladies

by Kobold Secret Author #1

Who are the lords and ladies of the Summer Kingdoms, the masters of the Fey lands, and the ladies who rule the deep woods? An introduction to the Fey ruling class, underclass, and their pawns and powers.

Ecology of the Maedar

by Ross Byers

Wild and full of power, the maedar are not who you think they are. Drink up, and learn their secrets.

Plus, a set of new 4th Edition rituals, some dinosaurs, a bat god you don't want to miss, and all the rich, meaty, and shockingly inspiring gaming goodness we can find.

Not to mention a possible interview with **Dave Arneson**, the co-inventor of our hobby, plus some surprises for green and woodsy characters.



Tossing Kegs and Smashing Chairs

How to Stage a Great Barroom Brawl

by Steven Robert

Imagine the party wizard careening across the beer-slicked floor with angry peasants launching mugs at her as she slides by, the fighter wildly waving a broken chair while perched precariously on top of a rickety table about to be smashed by the town brute, or the rogue swinging to their rescue dangling from the chandelier.

These images are iconic, and having a brawl in a pub is a great way to spice up an evening's play. You can even set a finale there, where the number of innocent bystanders makes it tougher for good-aligned PCs to break out the area-effect spells.

A barroom brawl can fill many roles. It can be the pseudo-friendly, machismo-filled challenge where everyone awakes hours after with a headache but no serious wounds. It can be the perfectly choreographed diversion needed to cover up other deeds. It can be a deadly earnest fight for the safety of the town. It can start as an innocent misunderstanding only to turn sour in a single palpable drunken moment, going too far and escalating an aggression that can end only in regret. These fights are different things to different people, and with a little practice, it is easy to start looking at your local drinking hole with tactical eye.

Spice Up Combat

The chaotic whirlwind of a brawl can be a new arena for PCs raised on more straightforward challenges. Unarmed combat is usually extremely inefficient, which at first glance seems to make it uninteresting, but it opens up tactical opportunities that encourage cinematic and unorthodox play precisely because standard strategies are less useful.

Improvised weapons: Most fantasy cities are civilized enough that drawing blades will have serious repercussions with the law but not so civilized that clubbing an opponent with a chair leg is out of bounds. For some general advice on using improvised weapons most effectively, see "Eight Ways to Up the Action!" (*Kobold Quarterly* #3).

Chairs are obvious choices (treat them as clubs), but they are also fragile and may break on a successful hit (with hardness 0 and 5 hp; they suffer the same amount of damage they inflict). Storage containers, such as smaller ceramic amphorae and casks, are somewhat sturdier; they deal damage like clubs but have hardness 5 and 1-5 hp. Larger amphorae or kegs could also be available, but only the strongest brawlers can even lift them (requiring a DC 15-25 Strength check), but they deal significantly more damage (2d8 hp).

Mugs of ale make memorable thrown weapons, shattering upon impact and inflicting damage comparable to a sling. A bowl of piping hot soup or a pan fresh off the fire is even better and add 1d3 fire damage.

Finally, sprinkle squares with broken glass or ceramic as windows and trays of mugs are smashed during the combat. Treat these as caltrops for those without shoes, and even well-shod characters suffer 1d6 points of damage from a fall (or trip) into such a square and another 1d3 points when exiting or standing up (unless they expend a full-round action).

Bull rushes: Few players will forget being bull rushed into a wall, window, or fireplace. Each 5-ft. square that a character would be pushed beyond

what is sufficient to place him next to a wall inflicts 1d6 points of nonlethal damage (plus Strength or other bonuses). Also, allow the attacker to make a free Strength check against the wall's break DC (20 for normal wooden walls) to send the victim crashing through to the other side. With glass windows, the impact is less forceful (causing 1d6 less nonlethal damage), but the glass shards deal 1d6 points of lethal damage. Ending in a large fireplace inflicts 2d6 points of fire damage and requires a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid catching fire.

Crank Up the Chaos

One of the most difficult aspects of a traditional brawl for the DM is the sheer number of participants: the more the merrier but, also, the more difficult to adjudicate. The following system accounts for the many nameless combatants in a chaotic brawl.

1) First, assign a rough area to the mob and assume that every square is either occupied or threatened by a combatant. Moving through these spaces inflicts 1d3 points of non-lethal damage per 10 ft. of movement; a DC 15 Reflex save halves this damage. Alternatively, a character can avoid any damage by tumbling (as if to avoid attacks of opportunity) or by moving their speed as a full-round action.

2) At the end of each character's turn, determine the number of adjacent squares occupied by these nameless brawlers. Roll 1d4 for each such square; the character suffers one attack, which is considered to be flanking, for each 1 rolled. If the mob has reason to dislike a particular character (e.g. the party rogue whose cheating triggered

Table 1: Improvised Weapons

Item	Damage	Hardness	hp	Str DC to lift
Amphorae, Small	1d6	1	5	10
Amphorae, Large	2d8	3	10	20
Bench	1d12	2	8	10
Cask, Small	1d6	2	6	10
Cask, Large; or keg	2d8	5	15	20
Chair	1d6	0	5	—
Mug	1d6	— shatter on impact —		—
Soup, boiling hot	1d6+1d3 fire			—
Broken glass or mugs	1d3 or 1d6 if falling or tripping			—

the fracas), increase the odds of targeting that character by also including each 2 rolled.

3) Assign a total hp to the mob (rather than track individual members). To resolve area spells, estimate the number of affected brawlers and apply the results proportionately. As the mob's hit points fall, reduce its size; most mobs will disperse when reduced to half their hit points.

Of course, never use these rules to describe the PC's principal opponents.

Emphasize the Terrain

PCs may not immediately recognize it, but taverns offer countless opportunities for innovative use of terrain during combat. The classic examples are tables, slippery floors, and chandeliers.

Tables: Tables may be meant for eating and card-playing, but they also offer numerous options to enterprising combatants. Standing on one grants higher ground (+1 to attack rolls) but also leaves a character vulnerable to being thrown off (inflicting 1d3 points of nonlethal damage and leaving the character prone unless they succeed on a DC 20 Tumble check) either because of a bull rush or because the table collapses following a well-placed strike. Typical tables have AC 2, hardness 5, and 10-15 hp (or break DC 18-23).

Old or poorly made tables have weak spots to be exploited. A creature next to such a table may notice that it is rickety; as a move action, it can make a Craft (carpentry), Knowledge

(Architecture and Engineering), or Disable Device check (at DC 15) to identify the weak point, or a DC 20 Spot check. That character then ignores hardness, automatically scores a critical hit on any successful strike, and receives a +5 circumstance bonus on break attempts.

Characters can flip tables over—always a dramatic way to start a fight. This requires two free hands and a DC 5-8 Strength check (depending on sturdiness) if the table is empty. Raise the DC by 10 for each Medium size creature standing on it (or 5/15 per small/large creature).

Slippery surfaces: Areas covered in spilled ale or greasy food pose special challenges. Treat them as difficult terrain, requiring a DC 10 Balance check to run or charge or after suffering damage, adding 2 to the DC of any other Balance or Tumble check, and rendering creatures without five ranks in Balance flat-footed. More importantly, such terrain can easily be used for cinematic effect in combat. If a creature is bull rushed along such a surface, the pushed distance is doubled and the character must make a Balance check or fall prone (DC = 10 + the difference in the bull rush checks).

Creating these conditions is not difficult: small kegs or casks cover a single 5-ft. square while larger ones substantially more. Slicks can be produced during melee, by characters intentionally smashing stacked kegs, or even by ranged attacks that miss their targets

but instead puncture a barrel (imagine the burly fighter's surprise when his own improvised weapon trips him!).

For a high fantasy setting, a waxed bar also provides a slippery surface: the bar's narrowness increases the Balance DCs to 15 for running or charging or for taking damage. A fall to the floor inflicts 1d3 points of nonlethal damage (plus another 1d6 if the character falls in a shower of mugs). Climbing onto a bar also grants the higher ground bonus.

The key to using the bart effectively is luring the PCs onto it to set up a bull rush, either by tempting them with an opponent already atop it or taking cover behind it (and harrying them with thrown casks of beer).

Chandeliers: Prosperous establishments may have a hanging light fixture, which can be tempting during combat. Swashbuckling rogues may leap to the chandelier and swing to someone's rescue.

Reaching a chandelier requires a standard jump and grabbing it a DC 10 Str or Dex check (player's choice). The chandelier doubles the horizontal distance of the jump, and the PC may also drop to a lower floor (decrease the effective distance fallen by 10 ft. with a DC 15 Jump check). A PC who misses the chandelier can make a DC 15 Reflex save to dangle awkwardly before falling (reducing falling damage by 10 ft.).

And few events will energize a combat more than a well-placed arrow dropping the entire chandelier (see Table 2 for chandelier hp, hardness, and AC). Smaller chandeliers may be held up with a single rope or chain secured to one side, making them vulnerable. Large chandeliers have multiple supports; give them a chance to fall equal to the fraction of support missing at the beginning of each round.

A large iron chandelier (200 lbs. or more) deals 1d6 points of damage per 10 ft. of falling distance to all those below it. A smaller one (100-200 lbs.) deals half that. Characters under the chandelier must make a DC 15 Reflex save or be pinned; escaping a pin

Table 2: Chandeliers

Swinging On	Check Type	DC
To grab	Str or Dex	10
On a failed grab	Reflex save	15 to avoid fall

Falling	Damage per 10 ft.	Escape Artist DC	Str DC
Chandelier, Small	1d3	10	10
Chandelier, Large	1d6	15	15

Removing Supports	AC	Hardness	hp	Break DC
Rope	11	0	2	23
Chain support	11	10	5	26

A character may untie a secured rope with a DC 15 Use Rope check.

* Chandeliers and their supports are immune to bludgeoning damage, and ranged weapons do half damage to objects.

requires a DC 10 Strength check as a standard action (and leaves the PC prone).

Use the Entire Menu

Taverns serve food and drink, and it pays to remind your players of that, even during combat. Characters drenched in alcohol make take a -2 circumstance penalty on Hide checks, and bull-rushed PCs may sprawl into a table full of greasy food.

Tapping Kegs: Kegs of ale can be shaken and tapped (usually with a hammer and a spigot, but a dagger will do in a pinch) as a full-round action. With a ranged touch attack, a keg can then be pointed toward a character within 10 ft., who must succeed on a DC 10 Concentration check to cast spells and suffers a -2 penalty on attacks and skill checks. Small kegs can spray an opponent for five rounds.

(Heavily carbonated beer—and, thus, pressurized kegs—are a modern invention and are not appropriate for worlds hewing closely to historical realism. Anything is possible in fantasy worlds: if an explanation is required, blame it on the gnomes!)

Brewing vats: Many taverns brew their own beer in large fermenting vats, in a side room or cellar. Such vats occupy a 5-ft. square and are 5-8 ft. tall. Small pubs have freestanding vats with makeshift stairs to their tops;

larger taverns might have platforms built around a set of them (effectively putting their tops at floor level). The earthenware or wooden vessels are sealed or loosely covered at the top.

Brewing vats are sturdy, with Break DC 23 (20 at the tops), AC 2 (-1 size, -5 Dex, -2 inanimate), hardness 5, and 150 hp: 15 hp damage suffices to cut a hole from which beer will flow into the room, coating two 4-ft. squares per round (and eventually even filling the room with a shallow sea of yeasty ale).

Characters can push each other into the vats (or, alternatively, throw grappled characters into them); again, allow a free break check with the bull rush. Characters inside full vats must make a DC 10 Swim check to reach the lip and breathe, plus a DC 10 Climb check to pull themselves out—especially difficult for those in armor.

Final Thoughts

A chaotic tavern fight offers many tactical options. Consider the battlefield and select one or two special features to use each round; your players will quickly follow your example and no doubt develop ideas of their own. Use these guidelines to encourage them—especially in a non-lethal brawl, most players will be happy to follow your judgment. Then, sit back and watch the mugs fly, the chandeliers crash, and the tables flip.

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Roachlings

An indestructible new PC race

by Andrew Hind

Art by Michael Jaacks

Also known as scuttlers, roachlings are an unpleasant humanoid race of insectoid stock that closely resemble cockroaches. Inquisitive and covetous, unclean and ill-mannered, most other races shun them.

The reclusive roachlings reveal little about their true origins, though scholars agree that they have long existed as a ubiquitous but unwanted part of most large urban areas. Supposedly, roachlings were once an agrarian people—with no resemblance to insects at all—who were uprooted by war and, as refugees with only whatever meager belongings they could carry on their persons, forced to relocate to a large city.

There, without means and hope, they crowded into vermin-infested tenements and huddled in abandoned warehouses. Illness and despair began to sweep through their ranks, culling the weakest at an alarming rate. They prayed to the gods for salvation, but none heard their desperate pleas. Only the intervention of Akyishigal, the demon known as the Skittish One, Lord of Cockroaches, saved them from being consumed by the dark underbelly of the city. His gift was to transform the few remaining refugees into a new race, remaking them in his image and allowing them to survive and even thrive in the sewers and slums of even the most vile of districts.

Since that time, the number of roachlings has swelled, and populations have emerged in countless cities, thanks their adaptability and rapid breeding.

Appearance

Roachlings are roughly humanoid in shape, but they blend insectile features that include whip-like antennae protruding from their foreheads just below the hairline, a carapace that covers much of the back, and small spines on their legs and arms. They have no visible nose, and some have small mandibles on either side of their mouths. Females are slightly smaller and thinner and almost never have mandibles. Most stand 4-5 ft. tall.

Hair is unusual among roachlings, but when present it's always oily and dark, pressed flat against the skull. Roachlings have dark skin, ranging from tan to yellow or dark brown or black. Regardless of the color, skin tends to have a shiny, oily appearance though it is in fact dry.

Demeanor

Roachlings are skittish and easily frightened, but they are not cowards. Rather, they are practical. They understand survival often depends on their ability to remain unseen and out of reach of those who would kill them. As a result, most roachlings prefer to attack only when the chance for victory sits squarely on their side. That said, they also have a well-deserved reputation for deviousness and are adept at creating the conditions for victory through skulking, underhanded tactics, and hit-and-run fighting.

Because they have a long history of being neglected, abused, and persecuted throughout their history, roachlings are naturally suspicious and extend their trust only slowly. A deep-rooted



paranoia infect their race, leading them to believe everyone wishes them ill until proven otherwise.

Despite this, however, roachlings are highly communal and driven by a swarming instinct. When a roachling is made to feel truly welcome and respected, he will adopt that individual or group as part of his swarm. This bond is never broken, and the roachling will even sacrifice his own existence, which he has been conditioned by society to view as worthless, to ensure the survival of his friends.

Roachlings have a darker side, though. If a roachling is abused, betrayed, or abandoned, it becomes extremely vengeful and goes to great lengths to even the score. Evil roachlings will kill or torture offending individuals, though most take a more subtle approach by destroying reputations, undermining business opportunities, and stealing objects of immense sentimental or monetary value. Such a campaign of revenge can consume a roachling's entire life.

Most roachlings are neutral, but they tend toward chaotic with a lack of respect for laws they had no role in drafting. Good roachlings are usually those who have been sheltered from the prejudices of the world and given a nurturing place to develop, most often in a hospice or as a ward of a benevolent individual. Evil roachlings

are typically followers of Akyishigal, seeking to placate their demon god with grotesquely elaborate sacrifices.

Background

Roachlings face suspicion and prejudice at best and frequently encounter abuse and outright hatred. Urban dwellers who suffer infestations from hungry giant cockroaches often see little distinction between insects and roachlings, attempting to exterminate both with equal fervor. As a result, most roachlings live in tortured confusion, fascinated with civilization but unable to play an active part in it. They watch from the shadows, tempted but fearful.

Roachlings mature quickly, reaching physical and emotional maturity by the age of ten. Unfortunately, this accelerated aging continues throughout their lives and only a few live past the age of forty. Even reaching that milestone is considered a monumental achievement since most roachlings die much earlier by the twisted knife of a cutthroat, the slaving maw of some subterranean horror, or strung up by fearful humans.

Adventurers

The constant struggle to survive in dank sewers and violent slums defines every roachling as an adventurer, even if most never venture more than a few miles from the hovel or cellar they call home. Always searching for food, avoiding predation, stealing necessities, and running from angry mobs or watch patrols, the life of a roachling is never dull.

It is little wonder then that many decide to turn their backs on their families and seek out greater opportunities as an adventurer; the risks are the same but the rewards invariably higher. Many roachlings take up careers as thieves, subterranean scouts, outlaws, and bounty hunters.

Humans and elves consider them little better than vermin. Dwarves, on the other hand, respect their adaptability and tolerate them far more than most races. In fact, many dwarf clans employ roachlings to keep sewers

and little-used tunnels free of vermin though most roachlings feel these tasks below their proud race.

Roachlings of any class appreciate the talents of rogues and are alternately fascinated and frightened by displays of arcane spellcasting. They have little time for clerics, save those of Akyishigal (see sidebar), since they believe the gods shunned them; only the Skittish One answers their prayers.

Fighters, rangers, and most especially barbarians intimidate roachlings, but if the opportunity presents itself, they will often ally themselves with someone of physical prowess to even the playing field against those who bully them. They are stubborn survivors with little interest in luxuries like pride or honor.

Roachling Racial Traits

Str -2, Con +4, Cha -2 (Roachlings are small and slight of frame, but despite their stature are surprising resilient to disease and illness. They are unattractive on the whole, lacking in manners, and are widely considered little better than vermin.)

Small: As Small creatures, roachlings gain +1 size bonus to AC and attacks and a +4 bonus on Hide checks, as well as other normal effects of being Small creatures such as using smaller weapons and having carrying limits 3/4 of those of Medium-sized creatures.

Base speed is 20 feet.

+1 natural armor bonus to AC

+2 racial bonus on Climb and Hide checks

+2 racial bonus on Fortitude saving throws against poison and disease

Darkvision 30 feet.

Tremorsense 30 feet.

Light Sensitivity: Roachlings are dazzled in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell

Favored Class: rogue

ECL +1



Akyishigal, the Skittish One

Of all the dreadful demons lurking within the Abyss, perhaps none is as vile and disgusting as Akyishigal, the Cockroach Demon, whose filth-slick mandibles clack hungrily and ceaselessly for the flesh and souls of humans. Despite this, he has a surprising number of followers among the urban dispossessed, the slum-dwelling downtrodden, and those who lurk within the lightless depths below cities.

Though Akyishigal has sired an entire race in his image, he craves followers among humans and other races as a means of corrupting civilization from within, rotting it at its core like an aging fruit. Shrines are most likely to be located in abandoned buildings, garbage dumps, sewers, ruins, graveyards, and other filthy places.

Kidnapped victims find themselves submerged in filth with only their heads showing. Bound, disoriented by darkness and hissed chanting, and paralyzed by fear, the innocent are helpless to act as ravenous roaches feast on their eyes and tongue.

A sacrifice who survives is later released back into the populace. There, blind and speechless, his body wracked by disease contracted from the filth in which he was submerged, he despairs as he becomes a drain on family and society. In most cases, the cripple soon finds himself begging in the slums, adding to the seething mass of disenchantment that exists in the shadows of most large cities. These tragic figures become potential new supplicants for Akyishigal, who promises to heal them of their ills but leaves them hollow shells of bitterness and cruelty.

Unfortunately, these cults are almost as difficult to stamp out as are real cockroach infestations. Even if driven off repeatedly, followers inevitably resurface among the teeming mobs of beggars, thugs, streetwalkers, and refugees.

Alignment: Chaotic Evil

Domains: Chaos, Destruction, Evil, Trickery

Preferred Weapon: Sap

Typical Worshipers: evil humanoids (kobolds and goblins in particular), roachlings, disenfranchised slum dwellers



Traps of the Mind

By Maurice de Mare

An unsung but deadly war of wits has raged across the ages. A war between those who create traps and those who overcome them, or die trying. But the trap-crafters of traps have a dirty secret—they cheat. Some of their mightiest efforts exist only in the minds of burglars, tomb robbers, and adventurers. These are but figments of the imagination.

Mind Traps

Most traps target the body, but a few target the mind: planting seeds of doubt and the suggestion of a certain yet unseen doom. A mind trap pits the intruder against his worst enemy—his own mind. For a mind trap to work, a “proof” must be provided, something that starts the process of inductive reasoning. For example, an empty hallway is just an empty hallway. But a hallway with a corpse on the floor, whose head has been cleanly severed, is something else.

Faced with proof of danger, a search reveals nothing. This may serve as even more proof for the existence of an extremely well hidden and deadly trap. The goal of a mind trap is to delay and discourage further intrusion; even if such a trap is defeated, it incurs a cost in spent time and resources.

XP: Mind traps are by definition not real and pose no threat to the PCs, but in certain situations, a roleplaying award may be warranted.

Elements of a Mind Trap

A mind trap consists of two elements: the proposition and the refutation.

Proposition: The proposition is the scene that serves as the premise for the faulty conclusion that a trap exists.

Refutation: The refutation is the careful examination of the proposition,

and it gives the PC a chance to dismiss the mind trap. The DC for that check should start at 15.

Sample Mind Traps

Insert the following mind traps into the campaign to confound the players.

Beheaded Corpse

Proposition: There is a corpse, head cleanly severed, lying in an empty corridor.

Refutation: A DC 20 Heal check reveals that the body has been planted.

Mysterious Markings

Proposition: A door lined with minute arcane symbols.

Refutation: A DC 15 Knowledge (arcana) check reveals that the markings amount to gibberish.

False Lever

Proposition: A lever mounted on the wall.

Refutation: A DC 20 Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check exposes that the lever serves no purpose.

A Handful of Needles

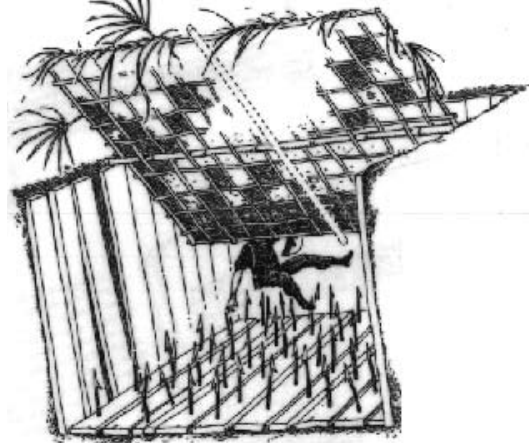
Proposition: Many needles dot the floor, and some are stained with blood.

Refutation: A DC 25 Craft (trap-making) check determines that the needles are of inferior quality and are unusable for building traps.

A Robe, a Ring, and some Dust

Proposition: An old tattered robe hides a conical shaped pile of dust with a flaming red copper ring sticking partially out of it.

Refutation: A DC 25 Spellcraft check determines that the pile of dust is not the result of a *disintegrate* spell.



Ogre Bones

Proposition: The massive and yellowed bones of an ogre lie slumped against a wall. Sticking out of the ogre's slightly ajar mouth is a black, seemingly burned-out piece of glasslike material.

Refutation: A DC 15 Appraise check reveals that the glasslike material is indeed glass and not the remains of a black onyx gem, the key component of the *animate dead* spell.

Blade Marks

Proposition: The wall of a passageway is marked by several hits from a large blade at the height of man's neck.

Refutation: A DC 20 Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check indicates that the markings all slightly vary, as if applied manually.

Mixing Mind Traps with Traditional Traps

Mind traps are not generally intended for the efficient dispatch of intruders but for triggering worry, delay, anguish and sheer paranoia, for separating parties, and for breaking minds. With the creative application of these principles, traditional traps can be made to incorporate the ideals of mind traps, and have an enhanced effectiveness.

Screaming Poison Trap

The screaming poison trap serves a dual purpose: it alerts nearby forces and dispatches trespassers. If triggered, the trap targets the intruder with four screaming bolts. Even if the screaming bolts miss, they affect anyone in their continued paths. At the same time, 30 ft. behind the intruder, caltrops coated with blue whinnis poison drop from the ceiling. The caltrops cover four 5 ft. squares. The trap intends to induce

a panicked state in the intruder(s), forcing a run through the poisoned caltrops.

Screaming Poison Trap: CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; hidden switch bypass (Search DC 25); Atk +5 ranged (1d10+2/19-20, four screaming bolts); Atk +0 (1 plus poison, caltrop); poison (blue whinnis poison, DC 14 Fortitude save resists, 1 Con/unconsciousness); Search DC 24; Disable Device 24. *Market price:* 3,652 gp.

Catch and Burn Trap

Used to ward passageways, this trap features two attacks. If triggered, two launching tubes on opposite sides of the target open on the ceiling and target the trespasser with their contents. The first tube hurls a tanglefoot bag and the second tube launches a flask of alchemist's fire. The trap entangles the target to increase the effectiveness of the alchemist's fire.

Catch and Burn Trap: CR 3; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Atk +5 ranged touch (tanglefoot bag); Atk +5 ranged touch (alchemist's fire); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20. *Market price:* 3,070 gp.

A more effective version of the trap increases the number of launching tubes and calibrates the various launch paths of the missiles.

Catch and Burn Trap (multiple): CR 8; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; Atk +15 ranged touch (two tanglefoot bags); Atk +10 ranged touch (two flasks of alchemist's fire); Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 20. *Market price:* 49,400 gp.

Roasting Trap

Using many different spells and alchemical substances, the roasting trap aims to make an intruder disappear in the blink of an eye. Once triggered, small vents fill the space behind the intruder with smoke, similar to a smokestick; then the intruder is targeted with a *hold monster* spell (a DC 17 Will save negates this effect); and last, a *forceful hand* tries to bull rush the target through an *illusory wall*. The

illusory wall obscures a 10 ft. by 10 ft. room. A permanent *wall of fire*, facing the far wall, stands just inches behind the *illusory wall*. Anyone passing through the *wall of fire* takes 2d6+12 hp fire damage. The *forceful hand* will bull rush the target until it ends or is destroyed.

Roasting Trap: CR 7; magic device and mechanical; visual trigger (*true seeing*); automatic reset; smokestick; spell effect (*hold monster*, CL 9, DC 17 Will save avoids paralysis); spell effect (*forceful hand*, CL 12, the hand has 48 hp); spell effect (permanent *wall of fire*, 12th-level wizard); spell effect (*illusory wall*, CL 7); Search DC 31; Disable Device 31. Cost: 58,500 gp, 6,680 XP. *Market price:* 117,000 gp.

Drag and Drop Trap

A complex fusion of magic and mechanical engineering, this trap is executed in two rounds.

On round one, everyone in the area of effect is paralyzed unless they succeed with a DC 23 Will save. Immediately after this magical effect occurs, the walls launch two-inch thick ropes at the intruders; everyone is targeted by two animated ropes that wrap themselves around their victims.

Those paralyzed are automatically tied up. Those who are not paralyzed can save themselves from being tied up by making a DC 14 Reflex save. The trap's final action in the first round is a mechanical release of the stone anchor points for the ropes: the ropes drop from the wall down a 10 ft. by 10 ft. shaft. This action jerks those tied to the weight 30 feet closer to the newly opened shaft and causes 3d6 subdual damage.

Round two gives the paralyzed victims another chance to shake off the effects. Everyone not paralyzed may attempt to sever their own ropes or those of a companion (4 hp each, AC 12), may burst their bonds with a successful DC 25 Strength check, or may escape the ropes with a DC 25 Escape Artist check. The bumpy and accelerating ride toward the shaft causes another 7d6 subdual damage.

Those lucky enough to break free of the ropes may attempt a DC 25 Reflex save to avoid falling into the shaft. Anyone who fails the save or is still tied to the weight takes another 10d6 damage from falling down the shaft at the end of round two.

Truly cruel DMs might consider placing a monster at the bottom of a drag-and-drop trap. Or in mind trap style, at least the illusion of one!

Drag and Drop Trap: CR 10; magic device and mechanical; visual trigger (*true seeing*); repair reset; spell effect (*mass hold monster*, 20th-level wizard, DC 23 Will save avoids paralysis); Atk +15 ranged touch attack (rope); multiple targets (two ropes per target in an area covering twelve 5 ft. squares); spell effect (*heightened animate rope*, 5th-level wizard, DC 14 Reflex save avoids entanglement); pulled towards shaft (3d6 subdual first round, 7d6 subdual second round); DC 25 Reflex save avoids; 100 ft. deep shaft (10d6, fall); Search DC 34; Disable Device 34. *Market price:* 156,500 gp.



D&D's Five Most Deadly Weapons

#3: Bag of Holding & Portable Hole

It's an ancient rule that extradimensional spaces don't play nicely with each other, and 22,500 gold pieces buys you one of each. Placing the hole into the bag has the specific effect of destroying both and pulling any creatures within ten foot radius into the Astral Plane. For safe and instant victory, the payload can be delivered by summoned monster. If you're more of a do-it-yourself adventurer and want to bring your allies along, you'll find that on the Astral Plane your spells are quickened. Oh, and everyone in your party can fly.

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Inspiring Words:

A Warlord's Field Guide To Battle Cries

By Mario Podeschi

A rallying cry rose above the din of the battle, inspiring the halfling to fight on long enough for Captain Titus to get to his side: "Try harder!" Titus cried.

"Huh?" thought the halfling. "That's it, try harder?"

Battle cries have long been a staple of fantasy gaming. A good battle cry brings an exciting touch of character into a combat encounter, whether it's the barbarian's savage yell or the elven fighter's solemn oath to slay his foe. With the advent of 4E, inspirational one-liners are even stronger—after all, the warlord class restores hit points and grants saves based on heartening words.

Most of us don't have the improvisational skills to invent an inspirational shout every combat round, though, so a list of one-liners, ready for use and stapled to a character sheet, can be invaluable. Bards and marshals from 3.5E use very similar powers, and a cutting line can add personality to bold heroes of any class.

The battle cries below are organized by types. Several are inspired by literary or historical battle cries.

Call to Arms

These aggressive battle cries signal either the beginning of a battle or a major shift in a battle's rhythm. Use them when your warlord PC grants your allies speed and bonuses or to unleash that daily powers that make the difference between victory and defeat.

- Awake the irons!
- At them, my brothers-in-arms!
- Onward, mongrels; do you want to live forever?
- Into the fray, you dog-hearted cowards.
- After me! Forward!
- If we should die, let us die with sword in hand and courage in heart.
- Clear the way!
- No step backwards!
- No retreat, no failure. Only move forward!

- Faster! Faster! Fasterer! [*a goblin stand-by*]
- Ka-kaw! [*Native American warriors once used animal sounds as battle cries, which the European colonists found quite terrifying*]
- They are nothing to us. They are leaves to our wind!
- Let valor not fail!
- When we meet in hell, let us dine together as friends.
- We will win this fight, and with it, our place in history.
- Let us fly to glory on wings of steel.

We Happy Few

Since many powers target individual characters, you may find it useful to develop personalized encouragements for your allies. Revise these battle cries to match your own party members.

- Stand up, Shorty. Otherwise, I'm going to trip over you on my way to the others.
- Ha! You're already falling behind.
- We can't do this without you.
- You're not going to let me have all the fun, are you?
- Get up. I didn't give you permission to die.
- Get up. Either we all go home, or no one goes home.
- On your feet—I'm not carrying you out.
- On your feet, or it's not them you'll have to worry about.
- Arise, and let your steel sing.
- Kai keryth-karlanis. [*Elven for "long life to the war-souls"*]
- Labbaik. [*a grim dwarven call for defense that means "we are here"*]
- Be strong, comrade. The day is not lost so long as we stand together!
- These fools have not yet learned to fear your dance of death. Make them fear you!
- Worse the weather, longer the march.
- Don't give up now! This will be the greatest part of your legend!
- Their swords will shatter on your shield.
- Giving up so soon?

Warlord's Challenge

Sometimes, the best way to encourage your allies is to demoralize your foes. These battle cries taunt the enemy and



blend well with powerful attacks that bring other benefits to your party.

- Do you so fear my blade that you bother us with these peasants?
- I have sworn to be slain by better than you.
- My name is Titus, and this is Death!
- Which limb shall I rend first?
- This is the last time I humble you.
- Stand down, or be put down.
- Might I have the pleasure of your name before I run you through?
- Challenging us? You're about as bright as a dying firefly.
- Two strokes and ten seconds is all you've left in this world.
- Never have you been so doomed as when you provoked my wrath.
- Hell hungers, and my sword shall feed it.
- Let your eyes look their last—soon they will be food for the crows.
- Repent, villain, for this is your final hour.
- Fight your last, look your last, breathe your last.
- We will speak more while you twitch upon my blade.
- I must warn you, knave: only cowards have faced me and lived.
- There's nowhere left to run.

Salute

These battle cries, many inspired by real-world history, are used to invoke patriotism, religious zeal, or moral conviction. When your party fights for a shared goal, these salutes can add an epic flourish to an encounter. They also work well for clerics and paladins, and

for inspiring allies in larger battles.

- Long live the Queen!
- Land and freedom!
- The Empire forever!
- For honor!
- Forever Zobeck! [*or any city are defending*]
- And when get to Heaven / to Saint Charon will we tell / four more men reporting, sir / we've served our time in Hell.
- Fight well, for the fallen will receive a chosen place at Khor's side!
- After this day, the Red Goddess will know our names.
- Svarog aid us!
- Mithras guide our sword-arms; Isis guide our souls.
- Remember the dead, fight for the living!

Making Your Own

You may need to expand this list depending on how often your characters fight. Though it requires some work, it is incredibly rewarding when you develop a line that is completely your own. Just start with a simple phrase like “kill that guy” and expand it into something epic.

The terms introduced here are taken from the study of rhetoric—the art of using language to inspire, educate, or persuade. Even if you are not familiar with these terms, they describe concepts that we instinctively understand.

Using cool-sounding synonyms is the most common tool. Rather than killing that “guy,” have your comrades kill villains, knaves, corpses-in-training, and fly-bitten boar-pigs. Similarly, you can slay rather than kill, swear instead of promise, and persevere instead of win.

Metaphor is another sharp blade for rhetoric. By expressing simple ideas abstractly, you can turn dozens of epic phrases. Powerful animals provide great imagery for this, as your party can “catch this prey in their iron talons” or “strike with a lion's fury.”

Synecdoche is a metaphor that substitutes a part for the whole. For an adventuring party, this means referring to your allies as their blades, hands, hearts, staves, and so on. Rather than saying “we will end you,” a hero might say “our blades will end you.”

You can add more life to a cliché by using *metalepsis*, where you renew an

old phrase by referring to it without repeating it. As your allies get used to battle cries like “let fly to glory on wings of steel,” you can reinvent it with similar cries like “our wings of steel will carry us through!”

Chiasmus is one of my favorite ways to turn a phrase. It contrasts points with very similar structures. Politicians love chiasmus, using it in phrases like “ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country” and “what counts is not necessarily the size of the dog in the fight—it's the size of the fight in the dog.” In your own battle cries, reverse sentences to provide a ringing tone.

Alliteration makes your battle cries more poetic and memorable by repeating similar sounds. The warlord's cry “their swords will shatter on your stalwart shield” sounds more impressive than “their weapons will break on your hard shield.”

Winston Churchill used *anaphora* to inspire British soldiers when he proclaimed that “we shall fight them on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets.” By repeating a phrase with different endings, this technique can turn a simple phrase into a memorable speech: “together shall we slay their skeletons, together shall we slay their trolls and their basilisks, together shall we slay their mighty dragons!”

Conversely, *epistrophe* repeats sentence endings with similar effect. It was used in Lincoln's Gettysburg address, when he called upon a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. With epistrophe, you can insist that your friends live as heroes, speak as heroes, dream as heroes, and, if they must, die as heroes.

The halflings' foe dealt a vicious smack of his morning star, catching the halfling under the chin. Fading fast, he knew his enemies would have the advantage soon.

A rallying cry rose above the din of battle: “Don't give up!” yelled the warlord. “This will be the greatest part of your legend!” The halfling smiled at the thought—and fought on.



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BOOK REVIEWS

ALL TOMES READ BY CANDLELIGHT

by Cynthia Ward and Pierce Watters



Lamentation

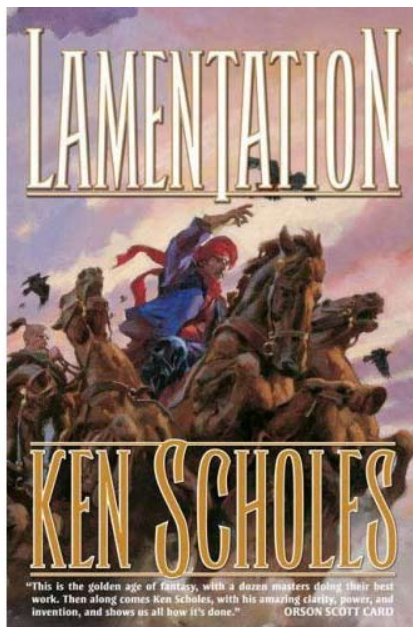
by Ken Scholes
Tor Books, February 2009
Hardcover, \$24.96
368 pages

"...I wish my first novel had been as good. I wish all five volumes of this series were already published so I could read them now."
Orson Scott Card

The greatest and most glorious city has been destroyed in a horrible and unimaginable way. Gone is the library, the grandest place of learning in the Named Lands. Gone is the seat of the Androfrancine Order. The city of Windwir provided stability and law and order to a world that had already suffered a terrible cataclysm long ago. And now Windwir is truly gone. In *Lamentation*, a host of characters struggle to restructure their world. Some seek to make reclaim part of what was lost, some seek to seize complete control. First-time novelist Ken Scholes has hit the mother lode. *Lamentation* is a breath of fresh air blowing through the world of fantasy. Make that a gale. Scholes creates a world with steam-powered robots built to cry when they are sad. There is an entire religion devoted to reclaiming the treasures of knowledge lost when Xhum Y'Zir destroyed the world with the seven spells of Cacophonous Death, creating the Churning Wastes and felling most of the remaining population during the Age of Laughing Madness. Invisible warriors speed through this world as blurs and small sounds, magicked into invisibility by a taste of powder kept in a neck pouch. Birds of different colors fly with many-layered messages. And then there is the fearsome Marsh King and his fetid, stinking army. This book is rich and inventive in so many ways, it constantly astounds. *Lamentation* is also multi-layered. Read it, experience it, enjoy it. Do not wait for it to hit the shelves in February, reserve your copy at your favorite bookseller now. And be glad there are at least four more books to come.

"Patience is the heart of art and science alike." The Whymer Bible

-P.W.



Most Of What I Needed to Know About Writing I Learned from RPGs

By Ken Scholes

I remember it well. It was Christmas 1979 and my best pal Bobby Fairbanks had gotten a new game that you played with paper and dice and...your brain. No board. No dial to spin. Lots of thinking and talking, though. It was like nothing I'd ever seen before.

Yep. Dungeons and dragons and me, we became really good friends. And then *Top Secret*. Then *Gamma World* and *Boot Hill*.

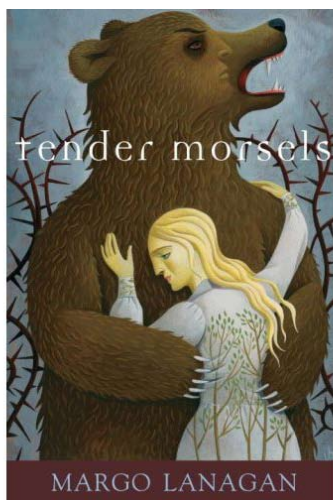
Story had always been my truest home -- I'd learned that from *Speed Racer*, *Time Tunnel*, *UFO*, *Land of the Giants* and *Batman*. Then, I'd learned it again when I discovered reading. And when these RPGs showed up on the scene, I found myself utterly immersed in an interactive Story that taught me a good deal of what I use today as a writer.

As the player, I learned point of view and how to think around corners and exactly why iron spikes could come in handy as a dungeon crawling tool. As the DM, I learned plot and backstory, world-building and rising stakes.

Most importantly, I learned that for the game to be fun, the DM and players had to move together in a kind of Storytelling Waltz. You had to dish out just enough mystery to keep the player intrigued, you had to misdirect just enough to keep the player surprised, you had to shake up the player just enough to keep them on their toes and you had to make it all seem so real that the stakes no longer seemed like...paper.

It's been years now since I've cast a twenty-sided die, yet here I am plugging away on volume three of a five book series for Tor. I'm still the Dungeon Master, laying out my campaign and my cast of characters for the players to fall into.

I hope you'll pick up *Lamentation* when it comes out and join the game!



Tender Morsels

by Margo Lanagan
Random House, October 2008
Hardcover, \$16.99
436 pages

Liga tries not to upset her father. But he gets angry so easily! And he behaves so strangely at night, and — she finally realizes — has impregnated her. When her situation worsens, she tries to kill her baby and herself, but a mysterious supernatural being intervenes, transporting them to another world. It is Liga's ideal world, her personal heaven, containing all that is good from her former world, and excluding the bad people and things. Here she raises her children, Branza and Urdda — two daughters, the second born in her private paradise.

But the three are not the only ones to enter Liga's heaven. A dwarfish con artist, Dought, regularly comes in search of gold. And animals also visit. In Liga's old village, they are young men who dress in bear skins to perform an ancient ritual. In Liga's heaven, they are truely bears, and dangerous.

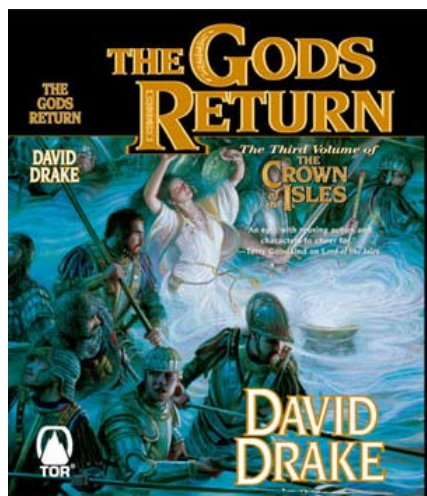
All this travel between the worlds damages the connection between them. And, if that isn't bad enough, it attracts the attention of a powerful witch....

Award-winning author Margo Lanagan made her debut in an unusual way: by releasing three collections of young-

adult short stories. Now she follows these critically acclaimed compilations with her first full-length work, the YA fantasy novel *Tender Morsels*. Like her stories, it is idiosyncratic and unpredictable, with sympathetic, three-dimensional characters and a distinctive prose style that will provoke a "love-or-hate" reaction in many readers.

It is not a perfect novel. Some readers will be annoyed when a couple of late developments come out of left field. Moreover, not all mysteries are revealed—the identity of the mysterious supernatural being remains a mystery. But, in its wisdom and strengths, *Tender Morsels* is, like Lanagan's stories, a powerful work that will gratify both adult and young-adult readers.

-C.W.



The Gods Return

by David Drake
Tor Hardcover, November 2008
\$25.95
400 pages

The back cover copy on the Advanced Uncorrected Proof of this book proclaims it as book three in the "... Crown of the Isles trilogy, and the final chapter in the Lord of the Isles." That makes *The Gods Return* book three of three and book nine of nine. It seems this reviewer hopped on the train at the last station. It's a short ride to the

terminal, but is it sweet?

The Gods Return is rich in characters. These characters have been changing and growing over a span of eight books, and now they are at their height in this final chapter. We have Cashel, a shepherd who is also a stout fighter, adept with the long staff; Rasile, a wizard who belongs to a race of cat people called the Coerli; Prince Garric, ruler of the recently changed "Land"; Sharina Garric's sister and Cashel's par-amour; Tenoctris, old woman-wizard, now restored to youth again after absorbing a demon; Liane, wed to Prince Garric; and Ilna, Cashel's dour sister.

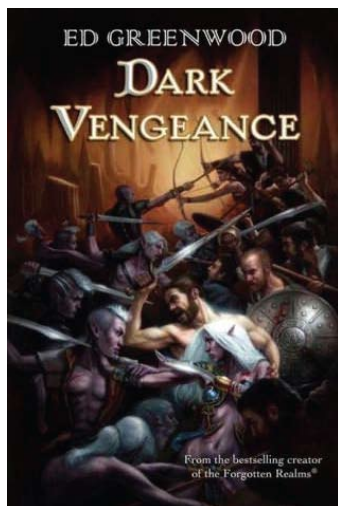
These characters have all had time to become quite developed and real. Of them, Ilna, with her odd wizard's talent of producing spells by weaving yarn between her hands, is the most fascinating.

In this final book, our characters are in their rightful places, having risen from the farmyard and the country inn to the throne room. Great turmoil swept through the world over the course of the series, and nothing is as it was before. Now, even the old gods have departed, and our heroes must face one last challenge, namely meeting and defeating even older, darker gods who seek to fill the newly created gap in the pantheon of heaven.

A lover of heroic fantasy will take delight in this series—especially if they do this the right way and start with the first book of the series, *Lord of the Isles*. The chapters are short and the shifting point of view creates almost endless action and cliff-hangers.

Start with *The Fortress of Glass*, book one in the final trilogy, and read your way through, watching the evolution of the characters, and the Land. An exciting climax!

-P.W.



Dark Vengeance

A Novel of Niflheim
by Ed Greenwood
Tor Books, August 2008
Hardcover, \$24.95
320 pages

Once, Orivon was a slave of the dark elves, the Niflghar. Kidnapped as a small child, he was raised in captivity beneath the earth and trained as a blacksmith. But he escaped Niflheim, the Niflghar underworld, and regained his freedom. Now, Orivon Firefist forges steel for his fellow humans. But when the dark elves abduct four children, he returns—alone—to the underworld on a nearly impossible rescue mission.

When other members of his family vanish, the high-born elf Jalandral becomes Lord of Evendoom, one of the Houses of the Niflghar city of Talonnorn. But that's not enough for Jalandral. He declares himself High Lord of all Talonnorn.

His move is not popular. The other Houses rise against him. One priestess of Olone leads an army against his city, while the other priestesses turn their magic against him. The spellrobe Klarandarr of Ouvahlor, the most powerful sorcerer ever to live, bends his magic to the utter destruction of Talonnorn. And some of Jalandral's missing kin still live, and bear him little love.

These powerful figures, and many more—among them the immensely strong and determined ex-slave, Orivon

Firefist—are converging on Talonnorn. Rather than saving his battered city, High Lord Jalandral's usurpation may well have doomed it.

As these many characters and subplots may suggest, a great deal happens in FORGOTTEN REALMS creator Ed Greenwood's *Dark Vengeance*, the second book of the Niflheim saga and the sequel to *Dark Warrior Rising*. *Dark Vengeance* will appeal to readers seeking action-packed sword-and-sorcery adventure. Unlike a lot of fiction described as having “never a dull moment,” this novel genuinely doesn't flag. Magic flares and steel rings as attacks, schemes, and treacheries follow one another at a fierce pace.

Perhaps ironically, this frenzy of activity will leave some readers confused, especially when combined with the sheer number of characters, some not strictly necessary. There really is a lot going on here.

But if you like your sword-and-sorcery fast, furious, pulpy, and violent (the body count is exceptionally high), *Dark Vengeance* delivers the goods.

—C.W.

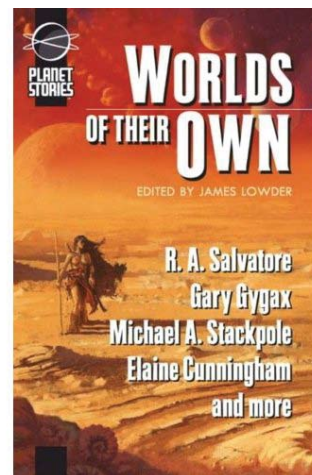
Worlds of their Own

edited and with an introduction
by Jim Lowder

Paizo Publishing, August 2008
Trade Paperback, \$16.99
364 pages

With *Worlds of Their Own*, editor James Lowder presents a different sort of theme anthology. Instead of organizing the book around a high concept (eco-catastrophe, say, or zombies in space), he assembled 18 fantasy and SF stories written by gaming-fiction authors, but set in universes of the authors' own creation. Each writer had full creative control of their work, with no need to follow the rules of a shared world or the mandates of a publisher. So the anthology's theme is: “Do as thou wilt!”

And the contributors do, taking their stories in unexpected directions. In “Mother's Blood,” R.A. Salvatore twice steers his action-filled sword-and-sorcery fantasy away from the obvious



turns. Paul S. Kemp's controversial S&S tale, “Confession,” also offers a couple of sharp twists. Michael A. Stackpole's SF war story, “Keeping Score,” offers a surprising revelation on the nature of its alien foe. Another (quite different) war story, J. Robert King's hard-SF “The Admiral's Reckoning,” surprises both reader and protagonist with the true requirements of leadership.

Nancy Virginia Varian's artfully written high fantasy, “The Oaths of Gods,” embodies the doom-laden grimness of German/Scandinavian mythology, so you know it's going to be dark; yet the author still pulls off the unexpected.

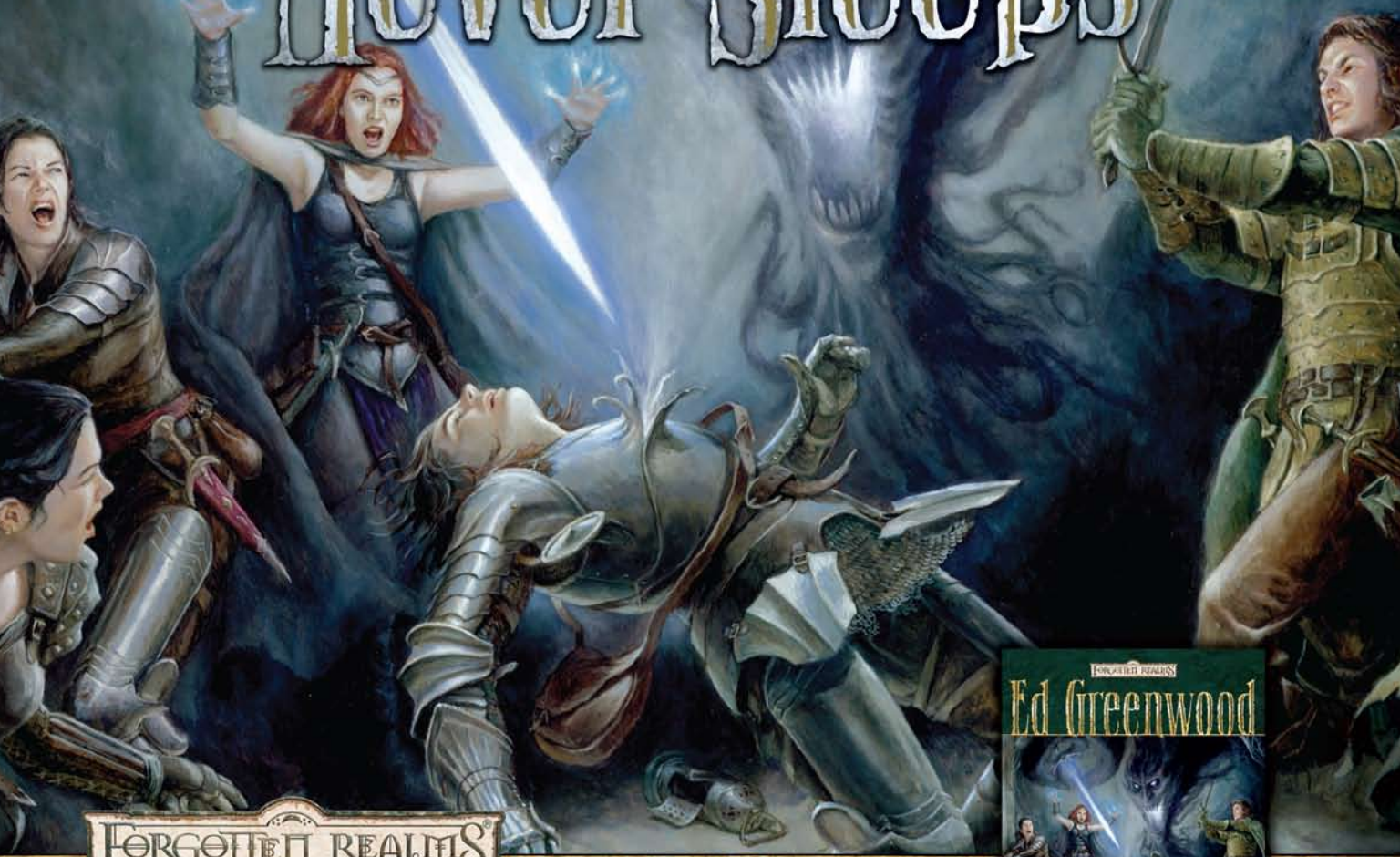
As the anthology's weirdest story (that's praise), Greg Stafford's macabre fantasy “Near the End of the World” offers several startlements. And, in the book's cleverest tale—Lisa Smedman's excellent “Three Impossible Things”—the protagonist fulfills a goblin's impossible tasks, even as the author nimbly pulls the rug out from under readers.

Some stories in *Worlds of Their Own* are set in freestanding literary universes that exist only in prose, while others are set in gaming-worlds of their authors' creation. All the stories are reprints, but they're drawn from such a diversity of sources (ranging from Big Name Publishers to micro-presses and podcasts) that it's unlikely any reader besides the book's industrious editor will have seen them all before.

For most fans, *Worlds of Their Own* will function as an all-new anthology—and one they will enjoy at that.

—C.W.

The Sword The Knights of Myth Drannor Book III Never Sleeps



FORGOTTEN REALMS

As Florin Falconhand and his companions struggle against enemies from outside Cormyr, they discover even deadlier threats from within. Faerûn's first adventurers finally become true heroes in this climactic conclusion to Ed Greenwood's Knights of Myth Drannor trilogy.



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THE FLAGELLANT

by Derek Kagemann

"Forgive me, for I have sinned. My god has turned his face from me, and it is a hell far worse than one of barbed chains and blazing fire. My warhorse has abandoned me, my prayers go unanswered, and the temple has barred its doors against me. I stand as a pariah at the doorstep of the abyss, and here, I make my stand. Here, with blood and tears, I beg atonement."

These were the words spoken by Nacae, once called Khor's White Light, when he lay down his sword and took up the scourge of the flagellant. We baptized him in blood, and he walked at the head of the procession of the Apocalypse for thirty-three and a half days as we traveled our wayward pilgrimage. As one, we suffered the stroke of the lash and fell down upon the earth to roll in filth and broken glass. It was as we crossed a desolate battlefield, where long ago Nacae had fought, that he had a vision of the coming Apocalypse and had his faith restored to him.

Description

Flagellants travel on a ceaseless holy pilgrimage, barefoot and in ragged robes, calling on the faithful to redeem themselves in preparation for the coming Apocalypse. They cleanse their

minds and souls of sin by mortifying their bodies and flogging their flesh with wickedly barbed scourges. To some, they are mere madmen and doomsayers. Others view the flagellant as an embodiment of true faith and repentance.

It is not uncommon for a failed cleric or paladin to take up the scourge of the flagellant as a means of redemption. Other classes may join a procession of the Apocalypse to cleanse their hearts of evil (or goodness) and thereby change their alignment. Though most flagellants are human, the order rarely discriminates, turning a blind eye to all but the need for spiritual redemption, and other races often are caught up in the zeal and devotion. In any case, a flagellant's life is an agonizing journey of extreme physical suffering and equally potent spiritual fulfillment.



Requirements

To become a flagellant, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Feats: Endurance, Toughness

Special: To take up the scourge, the character must leave behind all worldly possessions (though he may acquire new ones) and be baptized in the blood of a procession of the Apocalypse. Some processions will require that the character accompany them for a period of thirty-three and a half days.

Class Features

Hit Die: d12

Class Skills: Concentration (Con), Heal (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Survival (Wis)

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A flagellant gains no proficiency with any weapon or armor.

Skill Points: 2 + Int bonus per level

Special Abilities

Act of Penance (Ex): To use his class abilities, the flagellant must perform acts of penance. Typically, this requires an act of self-flagellation or comparable mortification: a full-round action that deals 1d4 to 3d4 damage to the flagellant (the player may choose how many dice to roll). Strength bonuses do not apply to this self-inflicted injury, which automatically succeeds and bypasses any damage resistance and magical forms of protection. For every four points of damage suffered from a single act of self-mortification, the flagellant receives one penance.

Flagellant Prestige Class

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+2	Penance, Passion, Zeal
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+3	Augury, Aura of Doom, Ecstatic
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+3	Atonement, Diehard
4th	+4	+4	+1	+4	Damage reduction 2/—
5th	+5	+4	+1	+4	Fulmination
6th	+6	+5	+2	+5	Atonement
7th	+7	+5	+2	+5	Damage reduction 4/—
8th	+8	+6	+2	+6	Immolation
9th	+9	+6	+3	+6	Atonement
10th	+10	+7	+3	+7	Damage reduction 6/—

Attempts that deal less than four points of damage do not apply toward penance, and multiple attempts at self-flagellation do not combine. No other sort of damage applies toward penance. (For example, a flagellant who rolls 3d4 and suffers 11 points of damage would receive two penances. A flagellant who rolls 1d4 and suffers 3 points of damage would not receive a penance.)

A flagellant with at least one penance is considered repentant. Expendng a penance is a free action. A flagellant who rests or is healed even a single hit point loses all of his penance.

A failed paladin with at least one flagellant level may expend penance to activate a paladin class ability for one use or one hour with a few exceptions: the paladin may only use his lay on hands and remove disease abilities on others, never on himself, nor may he call upon his special mount under any circumstances. Lastly, activation of divine health will not cure any pre-existing conditions from which the paladin suffers.

Atonement (Su): At 3rd and 6th level, the flagellant may shift his alignment one step toward either good or evil. At 9th level, the flagellant may opt to become lawful, potentially making two shifts if starting from chaotic. (For example, a chaotic evil character would become chaotic neutral at 3rd level, chaotic good at 6th, and lawful good at 9th.) This progress must be toward a consistent goal. The character may not shift toward good and then back toward evil, for example.

In addition, a failed cleric or paladin who becomes a flagellant may find absolution for any past misdeeds. If the character has shown sufficient repentance in the course of their advancement as a flagellant then he may resume his career as a cleric or paladin, at the DM's option. The character's levels as a flagellant (either all or none) may be traded for levels appropriate to the class to which the character has just been restored.

Augury (Su): At 2nd level, the flagellant may expend a penance to perform an augury (as the *augury* spell). The

flagellant may use this ability once each week, and his chance of success equals 50% +4% per flagellant level, to a maximum of 90%. The result will always include additional portents of gloom and doom, hints of major disaster, or insights into the end of all existence. The flagellant may perform an additional *augury* each week at 5th and 8th level.

Aura of Doom (Su): Starting at 2nd level, a repentant flagellant exudes an aura of doom. Any creature within 30 feet, including allies but excluding other flagellants, becomes distraught (-1 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks). The flagellant may exempt one creature from this effect for every three flagellant levels.

A flagellant with an active aura of doom receives a +2 bonus to Intimidation checks, but a -2 penalty to Diplomacy, Disguise, Gather Information, Handle Animal, and Ride checks. The range, Intimidation bonus, and penalties are doubled (and any creature with the condition distraught becomes instead shaken) for a procession of 10 or more flagellants, all of at least 2nd level.

Damage Reduction (Ex): At 4th level, the flagellant gains damage reduction 2/-. Increase this amount to 4/- at 7th level and 6/- at 10th level. This does not affect damage from self-flagellation.

Diehard (Ex): A flagellant gains Diehard as a bonus feat at 3rd level.

Ecstatic (Ex): At 2nd level, the flagellant may expend a penance to enter an ecstatic state. The flagellant gains the benefits of an *endure elements* spell, though the effects do not extend to the flagellant's equipment. In addition, the flagellant may ignore up to one point of ability damage for every three flagellant levels while in this state. These benefits remain in effect until the flagellant rests or is healed.

Fulmination (Su): At 5th level, a repentant flagellant begins to smolder with the intensity of his sacrament. The flagellant suffers an additional 1d6 damage from his first act of penance



each day and gains fire resistance 10 (this damage does not count toward additional penance). This benefit remains in effect until the flagellant rests or is healed. In addition, by expending a penance, the flagellant may ignite flammable materials with a touch or generate a brimstone cloud, which functions as the *obscuring mist* spell.

Immolation (Su): At 8th level, once each day, a repentant flagellant may choose to literally combust with holy (or unholy) fire. This does not cost any penance to initiate, but the flagellant suffers 1d6 points of damage each round that the ability is active and must perform a penance to end the effect. Anyone within 10 ft. of the flagellant must succeed on a DC 14 Fortitude save or take 1d6 points of fire damage per round from the intense heat; the flagellant and his equipment are immune to this effect. The flagellant's touch will ignite flammable materials, and anyone struck by the flagellant must succeed on a DC 15 Reflex save or catch on fire. Burning creatures take 1d6 points of fire damage immediately and must make another Reflex saving throw in subsequent rounds or suffer another 1d6 points of damage that round. Success means that the fire has gone out. The flagellant gains im-



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Simple Weapons	Cost	Dmg (S)	Dmg (M)	Critical	Weight	Type
Scourge	3 gp	1d3	1d4	20 x4	1 lb.	Piercing

munity to fire and sheds light equivalent to a *light* spell.

Passion (Ex): At 1st level, a repentant flagellant gains a +1 bonus to Strength and Constitution. This increases to +2 at 5th level and +3 at 10th level.

Zeal (Ex): At 1st level, the flagellant may expend a penance to gain immunity to confusion, fear (magical or otherwise), and mind-affecting effects. In addition, the flagellant gains a +2 morale bonus to Will saves. These benefits remain in effect until the flagellant rests or is healed.

The Flagellant's Gear

The flagellant is usually a character of simple tastes, even spartan ones. Most of their goods are plain and unadorned, often plain woolens and simple belted robes. Their garments and scourges for self-mortification are a richly-decorated exception to that rule.

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Cilice The cilice is a holy symbol carried by failed paladins and clerics who have taken up the scourge. It is a length of spiked chain, linked together in a rough approximation of a deity's symbol and strapped to the flagellant's body. The metal spikes dig into the flagellant's flesh and inflict excruciating pain.

The wearer of the cilice suffers a -1 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks. A flagellant who is a failed paladin (of at least 8th level) or cleric and wears a cilice for a full 12 hours, may pray for a single 1st level spell available to their class.

Cost: 25 gp

Weight: 1 lb.

Hair-shirt Hair-shirts are rough-cut garments made of animal hair designed to distract the wearer from worldly temptation. They itch and scratch the wearer.

The wearer of such uncomfortable clothing suffers a -2 penalty to all saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks, as well as a 40% chance of arcane spell failure. The garment may be worn under armor. A flagellant who wears a hair-shirt receives a single penance each day, though this does not qualify him as repentant.

Cost: 4 sp

Weight: 2 lb.

Scourge The flagellant's scourge is a hideous whip with three thongs, each knotted with metal spikes and hooks. It is designed to torture criminals and tear exposed flesh into bloody shreds.

When used as a melee weapon, a scourge deals no damage to any creature with an armor bonus of +1 or higher or a natural armor bonus of +3 or higher.



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The Frostrift Oracle

by Paul Leach

Art by Elmer Boyd Smith

Map by Sean Macdonald



A deadly maze of glacial caverns serves as the domain for the frightful Hrolffa, a long-deceased frost giant shaman who still shares her prophetic visions in exchange for precious and durable works of gold, silver, and magic. Rumors abound that, while she herself peers into the minds of gods, her incalculable hoard of enchanted offerings shimmers from within the icy grips of a frozen waterfall.

This snowbound location is a challenge and reward for all enterprising heroes. As the DM, you can replace Hrolffa with a preferred creature or special effect, and fill the inhospitable icescape with extraordinary monsters and treasure to complement the frozen hazards presented here.

Background

The Frostrift Oracle is a mystical place, where a fantastically old glacier smothered a hot mineral spring located on an ever-frigid mountainside. Hrolffa the Seer, the infamously cruel prophet of the frost giants, holds court in this natural junction of earth, air, water, and fire.

According to legend, as her body lay dying so long ago, she bid her followers grant her an eternity by severing her head and devouring her body; tethering her soul in this way, her followers made her an eternal oracle.

Despite the tales of this imperious and fickle seer who deals so harshly with all petitioners who fail to appease

her, foolhardy supplicants arrive at her frozen rift almost every year. Hrolffa's reputation for astounding divinations has outlived all her rivals, and she is growing into a legend among the frost giants (who also come as supplicants, and are treated better than small folk).

The Frostrift offers a perfect setting for monsters that inhabit arctic climates as well as those that might guard ancient sources of magic. Frost giants, white dragons, and brown mold make obvious choices, but none should underestimate elementals, fey, and fiends (especially ice devils). Hrolffa might control a remorhaz or a couple of frost worms. Lesser giants and ruthless, white-furred gnolls might serve as her cult or slaves. Somebody or something must clean the tunnels for Hrolffa every now and then.

Environmental Conditions

Ice dominates this glacial locale. Except where noted, the walls and floors are made of ice. Characters must spend 10 ft. of movement to enter an icy square, and they must make a successful DC 10 Balance check to run or charge. The slippery conditions increase the DC for Balance, Climb, and Tumble checks by 5.

The DM determines the weather's brutality: freezing cold, severe cold, or extreme cold. Freezing cold and severe cold require PCs to make Fortitude checks (DC 15, +1 per previous check) every hour or 10 minutes, respectively. Failure results in 1d6 points of nonle-

thal damage. Extreme cold causes lethal damage (1d6) per minute in addition to nonlethal damage. Protective clothing, magical protection against cold, and the Survival skill may negate the adverse weather or at least improve a character's chances for survival.

A spell that emits extreme heat (such as *fireball* or *wall of fire*) vaporizes ice, turning it into a thick fog cloud with an area equal to twice the spell's area of effect. The mist dissipates in one minute, and it provides concealment (20% miss chance) to characters over 5 ft. away.

Unless noted otherwise, ceiling height is 30 ft. in the Frostrift.

On The Glacier

From a distance:

Steam billows from a massive hole in the glacier's surface, shimmering with blue ice and white snow. Just beyond, there stands a cavern mouth flanked by life-sized sculptures of grim frost giant warriors.

1. The Pit

The pit measures over 20 feet across, and its floor rests some 40 feet below. Clouds of warm air billow from a stone opening on the southern side of the pit, obscuring the pit's depths. But even at the very top, its walls look quite slippery and dangerous despite its cracked stone and many handholds.

The steamy pit limits vision to 5 ft. and provides concealment to anyone 5 ft. away or more (20% miss chance). De-

scending the hole without aid (ropes, magic, etc.) requires a DC 25 Climb check (includes +5 DC due to slippery conditions). A small tunnel (5 ft. high, 5 ft. wide) burrows through the glacier to arrive at the steam pools 20 ft. in the steam pools (room 11).

Monsters Consider placing a steam mephitis or two in the pit. They can offer only limited information about the Frostrift, for they are hesitant to explore much beyond their warm sub-glacial comfort zones, but they can make up fanciful stories for the gullible.

The mephitis charge a toll as “protection money” for characters wishing to pass through the dangerous vents and geysers at the pools.

2. The Two Sentinels

Bluntly shaped from the ancient glacier itself, a greatly bearded sentinel stands on either side of a 20-foot wide cavernous maw. They grasp mighty swords, burying the points in the snow banks gathered around their boots. Their sightless eyes of carved ice look into the depths of all worlds.

A cavern mouth fully 20 ft. wide and 30 ft. tall waits between the frost giant sculptures. Permanent *magic mouth* spells cause them to speak (in the giantish) whenever anyone approaches within 30 ft.

The left giant greets the heroes, saying, “Welcome to Hrolffa’s Hall! The Seer peers into the mists and knows all dooms.” The right giant quickly adds, “Bring thy honorable gifts and be wary, lest you hasten your doom.”

3. Hall of the Doomed

The wind crisscrosses this wide and winding hall of unyielding blue-tinged whiteness. Thick rectangular blocks of ice form a horrific path through the chamber, each containing a mortal frozen with a scream on its lips.

The two rows of 8-ft. tall blocks leave 10 ft. between them, and they snake through this winding chamber. The

DM could reward characters willing to take the time to loot the icebound, but punishment seems a better match for a room that presents such a dire warning.

4. Icicle Cavern

Icy stalagmites and stalactites fill this rugged cavern. The crystalline columns and shards tinkle and creak as the frigid wind whispers past.

Icicle Hazard (CR 4)

A character safely navigates this deadly maze with a successful DC 20 Survival check or a DC 25 Balance check (already includes +5 DC due to slippery conditions). A failed check results in a +15 melee attack, dealing 6d6 hp damage. Characters make a check each time they enter this room.

5. Forever Chasm

The chasm, 10 feet wide and 30 feet long, plunges toward the black depths. The wind shrieks within the darkness, and its chill breath buffets the gnarled, narrow ledge that clings to the eastern wall of ice.

Walking the ledge requires a DC 17 Balance or Climb check (already includes +5 DC due to slippery conditions and +2 DC for rough winds). Failing the check by 5 or more results in falling 100 ft. (10d6 damage) to the bottom of the chasm.

6. The Great Stairs

Massive stairs, carved from the glacier’s heart by a frigid titan of legend, offer a hazardous path down a long, sloping shaft. Cold air blankets the ledges.

Crossing the five ledges without ropes or magic requires DC 25 Climb checks. The ledges are 20 ft. apart. Anyone in the shaft suffers from extreme cold (see Environmental Conditions).

7. Hrolffa’s Hall

Rune-etched ice pillars, twice the height of a man and glowing with white luminescence, encircle the terrible and beautiful head of Hrolffa the Seer in this airy

chamber. The frost giant’s head rests on a square dais, also made of ice. Eyes closed, Hrolffa faces the cavern’s eastern portal.

To the south, the smooth ice warps and twists as it turns into a stilled waterfall beginning its grand plunge. Gold and silver objects, encased in its frigid grip, imperceptibly move towards an unknown fate under the translucent surface.

The DM determines how Hrolffa reacts to intruders and her level of awareness of the mortal world. Under the best circumstances, DC 25 Diplomacy checks are required for parley attempts, with bonuses for awe-inspiring gifts of magic and precious metals.

If Hrolffa accepts an offering, she levitates her head to expose a hole in the ice so the supplicant may deposit a gift there. Once appeased, she may cast a powerful divination spell on behalf of the character (her caster level is 10+), or she may confer a blessing that makes a PC’s divination attempts more likely to succeed.

Monsters: Instead of creating Hrolffa from scratch, consider slightly modifying the standard frost giant. Give her a fly speed and a bite attack that uses a greataxe attack and damage. Assign spellcaster levels and add the lich template. Or give her white dragon’s breath and the undead type.

Of course, Hrolffa’s legends could simply be a hoax. Other creatures might use the frozen head as a lure to trick desperate souls into bringing wondrous treasures and fresh meat to the Frostrift Oracle.

8. The Frozen Flow

An ancient waterfall of ice shimmers with an unknown quantity of gems and precious treasures. The Frozen Flow clings to the rocky face even as its waters ebb below the veneer of swirled crystal, eventually depositing the hoard into the lake below; a frozen and jealous crust shelters the lake’s still waters. The glacier’s moan resonates strongly within the surrounding enormous stone passage.

FROSTRIFT ORACLE



1. The Pit
2. The Two Sentinels
3. Hall of the Doomed
4. Icicle Cavern
5. Forever Chasm
6. The Great Stairs
7. Hrolffa's Hall
8. The Frozen Flow
9. Little Waterfall
10. Warm Rapids
11. Steam Pools

1 Square = 5 ft.

The icefall drops 100 ft. to the frozen surface of the lake. Except for the 20-ft. diameter shaft, the great glacier entirely covers the rest of the lake below. The sheer ice requires a DC 30 Climb check (includes +5 DC due to slippery conditions).

Falling Ice Hazard (CR 5)

Chiseling through the icy sheets to reach bits of treasure requires a DC 25 Survival check. If the check fails, a poorly-chosen blow sends great swathes of ice crumbling and falling all around the character with the chisel. This falling ice makes a +15 melee attack and causes 6d6 hp damage to the character. A character hit by falling ice must make an immediate DC 30 Climb check or fall the remaining distance to the floor of the cavern. The noise of the ice collapse may bring attention from any monsters the DM has placed on at top of the icy sheet.

Chipping a treasure out requires making a DC 20 Balance check to hold onto the treasure. Failure means that the treasure drops to the floor below.

9. Little Waterfall

The hushed waterfall quietly empties into a pool of blue-black water, a gentle drop of less than five feet. Beyond this frozen chamber to the east lies a larger, ice-floored cavern.

The current slows in the shallow lake that continues under Hrolffa's court beyond, requiring DC 10 Swim or Strength checks. The water negates any benefits from cold weather clothing until dried.

10. Warm Rapids

A warm torrent rushes past, gaining speed as it flows down the rocky channel. The water gurgles and splashes against the rounded stones and boulders that litter its way.

Above, venting geysers spew and pop; below, the warm and noisy rapids descend into a silent trickle.

The rapids descend 40 ft. over its course, spilling over a little waterfall. Too shallow for swimming, DC 15 Balance checks ensure characters do not fall down in the fast-moving stream (already modified for conditions).

If a character slips in the water, the character must make a successful DC 15 Strength check to avoid being swept 30 ft. downstream and taking 1d6 hp damage from buffeting rocks.

Monsters: Water elementals in the rapids make things more difficult for the heroes, increasing their Balance and Strength DCs and harassing them further downstream.

11. Steam Pools

Thick blue water bubbles out of the cracks and pits of the large cavern's gray stone floor. Steam jets explode with sudden force, spraying scalding droplets and puffing clouds of lingering vapor that roll up an icy tunnel in the north wall.



The odor of metal and rock tings the air with the earth's secrets. The warm waters quickly swirl toward a stony stream that exits the south side of the ice-domed hot springs.

Geyser Hazard (CR 5)

Geysers erupt throughout the cavern each round, but a PC may avoid them with a successful DC 28 Survival check. One PC may be designated as the guide whose success or failure effects all nearby companions. Up to two characters may use Aid Another to improve a guide's Survival check. A failed check results in 5d6 fire damage (DC 14 Reflex save for half damage).

Monsters: Steam mephits can make quite a nuisance of themselves in this humid cavern. Even if they hesitate to attack characters, they increase their Survival check DCs by +2 by altering the natural rhythm of the geysers. If so disposed (bribed), they provide a +2 bonus to Survival check rolls to avoid the nasty vapor jets.

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Cults and Heresies of Zobeck

By Wolfgang Baur

Most citizens of the Free City are hard-working, thrifty, and honest, the foundation of a prosperous polity and the envy of nations of serfs, peasants, and slaves. But there are always exceptions.

While Zobeckers are mostly honest, they also have their share of bandits and robber barons; trade and commerce are nothing if not cutthroat enterprises. And to gain an edge in that eternal struggle, some merchants and barge captains turn to dark masters, pledging blood and souls.

The Red Goddess

The goddess of the poor and the debauched has a cult that simply cannot be stamped out, no matter how hard the Watch and the Griffon Riders try. The Red Goddess Marena lusts for flesh and death, and her taste for death and sacrifices is unquenchable. Her followers snatch citizens from the streets; children are warned that the Red Bride will take them away if they do not obey their parents.

Marena's shrines are small ones, little more than an altarstone smeared with blood, but she is exceedingly popular with both the very wealthy (who enjoy her debaucheries) and the very poor (who lust for revenge or at least protection against her plagues). Her sign, of a small red-stained skull, is a common bit of beadwork or broach, though technically even her symbol is forbidden within the city walls.

Her more devout followers use strangling sashes, and her kobold followers are said to be quite inventive in their sacrifices. Kobolds are quite insanely fond of the Red Goddess, though she seems to offer them little in return. Rumor has it, though, that she is seen as a kobold equivalent to Yarila and Porevit, the dual fertility god, and that Marena blesses all kobold eggs to hatch and grow stealthy.

Mammon, Arch-Devil of Wealth

In a city where everyone seems to be growing rich, for some it is never quite enough. The arch-devil Mammon has repeatedly made inroads among the guilds and the merchants of Zobeck, and his shrines are always fine ones, with floors of hammered coins and with idols of gold and silver. As the devil of wealth, his promises are exactly what Zobeckers want to hear. And indeed, anyone who is successful in business soon finds himself hounded by rumors of a pact with Mammon.

The reality is much less than the rumor, in this case. Mammon does prey on the wealthy merchants of the city, but rarely does he grant wealth. Rather, he plays on the fears of those who are already rich that they might lose their good fortune, and in this way ensnares them into his vile service, coupling with devils and abasing themselves to win the Golden Devil's favor. Dwarves seem more than usually tempted by Mammon's offers to make their wealth safe, and to make it breed.

Pacts with the Scáthesidhe

Not all cults are those of demons, devils and dark gods. The Lords and Ladies of the Shadow Kingdoms are also fond of pacts and gifts to foolish men and women. Sometimes the shadow fey take children, leaving changelings in behind to lead stolen lives. More often the Scáthesidhe take grown men or women as lovers, and many of those do not return.

Worst of all, the fey often show humans the truth of their own realms, which are so beautiful and so desirable that they make strong men weep and beg to return. In this way, the fey gain devoted followers, keeping paradise forever just out of reach.

Kobolds and dwarves seem remark-



ably resistant to fey blandishments. Gnomes are, if anything, fey lackeys and thralls, serving the Shadow Court as its couriers, toadies, and (sometimes) arcane enforcers.

Cults of the Yellow Sign

Little known outside the Arcane Collegium — though perhaps some hint can be found in the records kept at the Blue House and the Spyglass Guild, the cult of the Yellow Sign is one of alien magic and power granted to those who are initiates in a mystery thought to be tied somehow to the wellsprings of Star & Shadow magic. The magisters of the Collegium say little about it, though they look worried when the subject comes up.

What is known is that the Cult of the Yellow Sign is an Eastern cult, tied to the worship of Khors the sun god, and to the imminent return of a messiah or herald of some great power. This herald is sometimes called Hallisar, sometimes simply the Shining One, and he speaks directly to the minds of those who grant him obsequance and worship.

What Hallisar wants is unclear; a Pure Land and a Great Cleansing are both popular images in the repetitive, mind-numbing chants and screeds that his followers produce. His cultists seem to have some mastery over space and time, appearing and disappearing within the city at will, and no shrine to the Yellow Sign has ever been found.

The Clockwork Mages are experimenting to see if they might isolate some clue or fraction of his origins or determine the weaknesses of the cult, so far without success.



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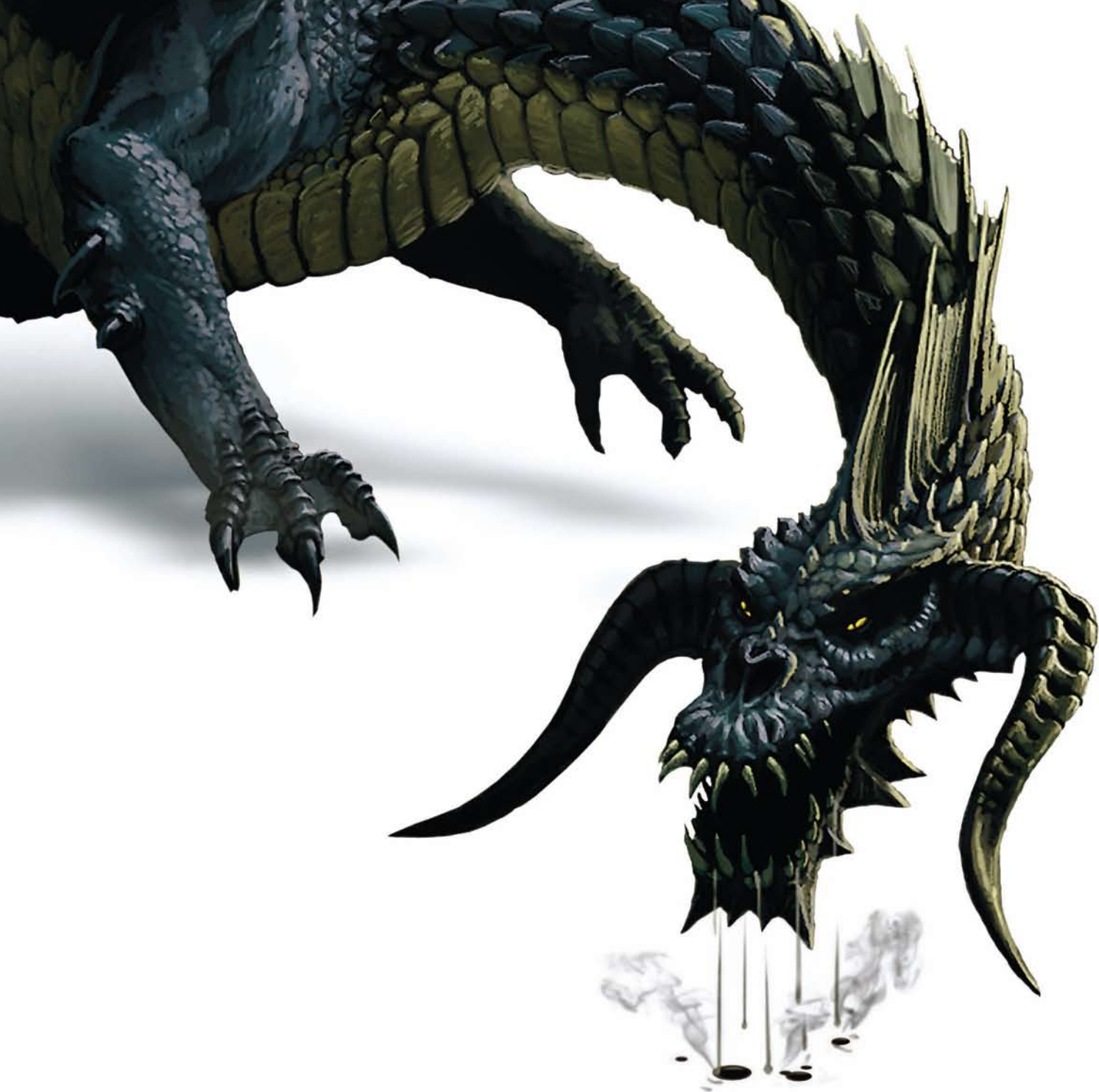
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