## The Book of Beginnings

Alex Riggs, Joshua Zaback, Justin Holloway

BATTIETETITADETR ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE

## THE BOOK OF BEGINNINGS A Novel Approach to Starting Campaigns

#### a creater Decar o

DESIGN Alex Riggs, Joshua Zaback, Justin Holloway

ADVENTURES BY Alex Riggs, Joshua Zaback

CHARACTER DESIGN Justin Holloway

EDITOR Rosa Gibbons LAYOUT Joshua Zaback

MAPS Alex Riggs

ADDITIONAL THANKS David Mesick



Necromancers of the Northwest, LLC 9111 242nd St SW Edmonds, WA, 98026 www.necromancers-online.com

Product Identity: The following terms are hereby defined as product identity, as defined in the Open Gaming License version 1.0a, Section 1(E), and are not Open Content: All trademarks, registered trademarks, proper names (characters, deities, etc) dialogue, plot, storylines, location, characters and trade dress.

Artwork: All art in this book is property of its respective artist, and Necromancers of the Northwest, LLC claims no rights or privileges to any art presented herein other than having recieved the artist's permission to include it.

Open Game Content: Except for material designated as Product Identity or Artwork (see above), the game mechanics of this Necromancers of the Northwest game product are Open Game Content, as defined in the Open Game License version 1.0a Section 1(d). No portion of this work other than Open Game Content may be reproduced in any form without written permission.

Compatibility with the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game requires the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game from Paizo Publishing, LLC. See http://paizo.com/pathfinderRPG for more information on the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game. Paizo Publishing, LLC does not guarantee compatibility, and does not endorse this product.

## CONTENTS:

Chapter 1: Tarot Character Creation

Chapter 2: Astrological Character Creation

Chapter 3: Choose Your Own Adventure Character Creation Chapter 4: Mini-Adventures The Thief of Veloc's Rest

The Sack of Osfelden

Terror Aboard the Harpy's Feather

The Fall of House Sahr

## SIDEBAR: TERMINOLOGY

For legal reasons, this book will refer to the person running the game as the "Dungeon Maestro", or "DM" for short. This term reflects the fact that a Dungeon Maestro runs the game in a fashion similar to a maestro directing an orchestra: weaving together diverse and unrelated pieces to form a cohesive story. It acknowledges the complexity of the job without adding an unnecessary sense of the grandiose. Similar titles would set the person running the game above the players, minimizing their importance in the game's story and conclusion. This change is in name only, and in no way indicates a change in the responsibilities of the DM.

6 4 20 10 10 10 20 20

## FOREWORD:

Pathfinder—and, more to the point, the system it's based on—is no stranger to age-old debates. Edition wars spring easily to mind, but they are hardly the only example. Should DMs fudge their rolls for the betterment of the game, or should they let the numbers come as they may? Should games be more sandboxstyle, allowing players to drive the action and go where they want, or should the DM have a story in mind when he starts and lead the players along for what will hopefully be an entertaining ride? Kick-in-the-door style adventures, or high roleplaying where everyone stays in character all night. And then, of course, there's character creation: rolling stats versus point-buy.

Proponents of point-buy are quick to point out that it has the advantage of letting you play whatever kind of character you want, rather than making you bow to the ability scores you generate randomly. They also make the valid point that point-buy ensures that every player has an equal chance at having a powerful character, and no one is unbalanced because of lucky (or unlucky) rolls. By contrast, those in the dicerolling camp complain that point-buy encourages min/maxing, powergaming, twinking, or whatever derogatory term you prefer for those who place mechanics over storytelling. They also generally say that the characters produced by dice tend to be more interesting because their flaws provide both depth of character and a challenge to be overcome, while exceptional characters are special by virtue of the fact that they are rarer (and the extra effectiveness probably doesn't hurt).

At the risk of overstating things, my hope is that this book will put an end to this debate. I know it won't, but it makes for a dramatic statement, and it serves to highlight the very real function of this book: to provide an alternative to these two options. I long ago became disillusioned with both dice-rolling and point-buy, having had my share of bad experiences with both. My very first foray into game design occurred when I got my hands on an issue of Dragon magazine which had an article which allowed you to use Three Dragon Ante (or, with some work, tarot) cards to randomly distribute point-buy points when making a character. Intrigued by the idea, but unsatisfied with the execution, I devoted a few weeks to perfecting it (or at least altering it to my tastes). Though it has been popular with my own gaming group, I never quite got around to releasing it once Necromancers of the Northwest came into being some time later.

When an anonymous fan requested that we make a book designed to cater to Ist-level "starting" adventures, I saw my opportunity. What could be more suited to a starting adventure than alternate systems of character creation? And so the Book of Beginnings was born. Included herein you'll find my tarot character creation system, as well as two others. One is a fairly simple astrological character creation system that modifies the classic "4d6, drop the lowest" system of dice rolling, with liberal doses of extra flavor. The other, brainchild of designer Joshua Zaback, allows you to create a character via a series of checks designed to make character creation into a fun "mini-adventure" you get to play before you even, well, play. Also included are several "mini-adventures" designed to give DMs a good starting point for a Ist-level adventure that can bring the party together and get them headed on the road to being great heroes.

-Alex Riggs, Design Manager



TAROT CHARACTER CREATION

## INTRODUCTION:

Tarot character creation is designed to be used with any d20 system which accommodates point-buy character creation, and is based loosely on an article from Dragon Magazine #346, entitled "Three Dragon Readings" and written by Craig Shackleton. Tarot character creation allows players to keep all the fun of randomly-generated ability scores that dice rolling can create, while minimizing the chance that one party member will be significantly more, or less, powerful than the others (after all, no one wants to play a game being overshadowed by "Sir All-Eighteens, Knight of the Realm"). It also has the added benefit of creating a built-in tarot reading, giving suggestions about your character's bacground, strengths, and personality. And don't worry: it looks complicated at first, but after a couple of times you'll find that it's quite simple.

## WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

TThis method of character creation will require a full deck of tarot cards, or some way to simulate them (whether a computer program, a similar deck of cards, or something else). You'll also need some way of keeping track of points. Coins or tokens will do nicely, though in a pinch pen and paper will work as well. Though not necessary, players and DMs both will get the most from this character creation method if the person performing the reading knows the meanings of the cards, so a book or website about tarot may prove very useful.

#### **STEP 1: POINT POOLS**

First, divide your tokens into several piles. Set nine tokens aside in a "Nature" pile, three in a "Spirit" pile, and two in a "Nurture" pile. Leave spaces for a "Body" and a "Mind" pile, but do not put any tokens in them yet. Next, create one pile for each ability score (Strength, Dexterity, etc.) and place seven tokens in each pile. Finally, put six tokens in a final "floating pool" that the player will be able to spend points from as he pleases. When this is done, you should have 62 tokens laid out in a manner similar to Diagram 1-1.

#### **STEP 2: DRAW THE CARDS**

Have the player whose character is being generated draw II cards from the deck and place them facedown in a pile. Add as much theatrics to this as you desire, having the player shuffle the cards and handpick them from the middle of the deck, or just grabbing II off the top. Be sure to shuffle thoroughly, and to keep track of the order in which the cards were drawn, as this will determine what they do. Also be sure not to rotate any of them, as some cards do different things depending on whether or not they are upsidedown once they are flipped over.

## **STEP 3: THE NATURE CARD**

Reveal the first card. This is the character's "nature card" which is sort of a "quick summary" of the character as a whole, painting a picture of the character in very broad brushstrokes. For an explanation of what the card means, a table with a brief description of the meanings of each of the tarot cards has been included in the back of this document. For more in-depth information on card interpretations that don't relate to ability scores, try the internet or your local library.

Even if you choose to ignore the tarot reading part of the character generation and are simply looking for an ability score array, this will probably be the most important card in determining what that array will look like.

Consult table 1-1: Nature Cards and, based on the card drawn, divide the tokens in the nature pile and move them to the piles indicated in the table. If there's a remainder, let the player decide which side it goes to. (For example, if the nature card was "The World" and the number of tokens in the nature pile was uneven, the player could decide whether the extra token went to Body or Mind, but could not choose to put it in Dexterity)

#### STEP 4: THE SPIRIT CARD

The Spirit card represents the little things about a character's personality that make them different from everyone else of their nature. Think of it as a "twist" on the Nature card.

Consult Table 1-2: Spirit Cards and, depending on the card drawn, divide the tokens in the

## **DIAGRAM 1-1: POINT ALLOCATION**



e contration o

#### SIDEBAR: OTHER POINT-BUY VALUES

The method included here is essentially designed to randomize placement of points in what would otherwise be a more conventional point-buy system. As written, it tends to leave players with more total points than most point-buy systems, because the randomization process makes the characters somewhat less efficient than they would otherwise be. That said, if you want to use a different number of points use the following array at the beginning instead.

Epic: Use the system as presented.

Heroic: Put 6 tokens in each of the ability scores instead of 7, and put 8 tokens in their floating pool instead of 6.

Average: Put 6 tokens in each of the ability scores instead of 7, put 6 tokens in the nature pile instead of 9, and put only one token in the nurture pile.

Weak: Put 4 tokens in each of the ability scores instead of 7 and put 7 tokens in their floating pool instead of 6.

#### spirit pile evenly amongst those listed.

## STEP 5: THE BODY CARD

The Body card describes the character physically, and the points from the body pool are divided between Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution. For the purposes of Table 1-3: Body Cards, the other three ability scores do not exist, so entries listing "each" or "random" refer only to physical ability scores. Under no circumstances should points from the Body pool go directly to any mental ability score.

## TABLE 1-1: NATURE CARDS

CARD	EFFECT
Swords (any)	2/3 Body 1/3 Mind
Pentacles (any)	2/3 Body 1/3 Mind
Wands (any)	1/3 Body 2/3 Mind
Chalices (any)	1/3 Body 2/3 Mind
The Fool	1/3 Body 1/3 Mind 1/3 Pool
The Magician	1/3 Mind 1/3 Dex 1/3 Int
The High Priestess	2/3 Mind 1/3 Con
The Empress	2/3 Body 1/3 Mind
The Emperor	2/3 Mind 1/3 Body
The Hierophant	1/3 Mind 1/3 Body 1/3 Spirit
The Lovers	1/3 Body 1/3 Mind 1/3 Cha
The Chariot	1/3 Body 2/3 Dex
Strength	2/3 Body 1/3 Str
The Hermit	All Spirit
The Wheel	1/3 to three random abilities
Justice	1/3 Body 1/3 Mind 1/3 Wis
The Hanged Man	1/3 Body 1/3 Mind 1/3 Dex
Death	1/3 Body 1/3 Mind 1/3 Wis
Temperance	1/6 to each ability
The Devil	1/3 Con 1/3 Int 1/3 Cha
The Tower	1/3 Str 1/3 Int 1/3 Cha
The Stars	1/3 Body 1/3 Mind 1/3 Cha
The Moon	1/3 Mind 1/3 Int 1/3 Wis
The Sun	1/3 Body 1/3 Str 1/3 Con
Judgement	1/3 Str 1/3 Con 1/3 Wis
The World	1/2 Body 1/2 Mind

## STEP 6: THE MIND CARD

This card, not surprisingly, represents a character's mind. This can have some grey areas and overlap with cards like nature or spirit, but in general is more specifically concerned with how the character thinks and how they perform in more esoteric and intellectual arenas. Mechanically, it determines distribution of the character's "mind points" between the three mental ability scores: Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma. For the purposes of Table 1-4: Mind Cards, these are the only three ability scores, and so entries referring to "each" or "random" only include those ability scores as potential options. Under no circumstances should points from the mind pool go directly to any physical ability scores..

## TABLE 1-2: SPIRIT CARDS

CARD	EFFECT
Swords (any)	Str, Dex, Int
Pentacles (any)	Str, Con, Wis
Wands (any)	Dex, Int, Cha
Chalices (any)	Con, Wis, Cha
The Fool	Str, Dex, Int
The Magician	Dex, Int, Cha
The High Priestess	Str, Con, Wis,
The Empress	Dex, Con, Cha
The Emperor	Str, Int, Cha
The Hierophant	Con, Int, Wis
The Lovers	Con, Wis, Cha
The Chariot	Str, Dex, Int
Strength	Str, Con, Wis
The Hermit	Dex, Con, Wis
The Wheel	All to Random
Justice	Str, Con, Wis
The Hanged Man	Dex, Int, Cha
Death	Dex, Int, Wis
Temperance	Dex, Con, Wis
The Devil	Str, Con, Cha
The Tower	Str, Int, Cha
The Stars	Dex, Int, Cha
The Moon	Int, Wis, Cha
The Sun	Str, Dex, Con
Judgement	Str, Wis, Cha
The World	Str, Con, Wis (rev)
and the set of a subscription of	the second s

TABLE	1-3:	BODY	CARDS

CARD	EFFECT	CARD	EFFECT	CARD	EFFECT
Ace of Swords	All Dex	Queen of Pentacles	2/3 Str 1/3 Con	Knave of Chalices	2/3 Con 1/3 Dex
Two of Swords	2/3 Dex 1/3 Str	King of Pentacles	2/3 Str 1/3 Con	Knight of Chalices	2/3 Con 1/3 Dex
Three of Swords	2/3 Dex 1/3 Str	Ace of Wands	1/3 Each	Queen of Chalices	2/3 Con 1/3 Dex
Four of Swords	2/3 Dex 1/3 Str	Two of Wands	2/3 Dex 1/3 Str	King of Chalices	2/3 Con 1/3 Dex
Five of Swords	2/3 Dex 1/3 Str	Three of Wands	2/3 Dex 1/3 Str	The Fool	1/3 Each
Six of Swords	2/3 Dex 1/3 Str	Four of Wands	2/3 Dex 1/3 Str	The Magician	2/3 Dex 1/3 Str
Seven of Swords	2/3 Dex 1/3 Str	Five of Wands	2/3 Str 1/3 Con	The High Priestess	1/3 Each
Eight of Swords	2/3 Dex 1/3 Str	Six of Wands	2/3 Str 1/3 Con	The Empress	2/3 Dex 1/3 Con
Nine of Swords	2/3 Dex 1/3 Str	Seven of Wands	2/3 Str 1/3 Con	The Emperor	2/3 Str 1/3 Con
Ten of Swords	2/3 Dex 1/3 Str	Eight of Wands	2/3 Con 1/3 Dex	The Hierophant	2/3 Con 1/3 Str
Knave of Swords	2/3 Dex 1/3 Str	Nine of Wands	2/3 Con 1/3 Dex	The Lovers	2/3 Con 1/3 Dex
Knight of Swords	2/3 Dex 1/3 Str	Ten of Wands	2/3 Con 1/3 Dex	The Chariot	2/3 Dex 1/3 Con
Queen of Swords	2/3 Dex 1/3 Str	Knave of Wands	2/3 Dex 1/3 Str	Strength .	All to Strength
King of Swords	2/3 Dex 1/3 Str	Knight of Wands	2/3 Con 1/3 Dex	The Hermit	2/3 Con 1/3 Dex
Ace of Pentacles	All Str	Queen of Wands	2/3 Str 1/3 Con	The Wheel	All to Random
Two of Pentacles	2/3 Str 1/3 Con	King of Wands	1/3 Each	Justice	2/3 Con 1/3 Str
Three of Pentacles	2/3 Str 1/3 Con	Ace of Chalices	All Con	The Hanged Man	2/3 Dex 1/3 Str
Four of Pentacles	2/3 Str 1/3 Con	Two of Chalices	2/3 Con 1/3 Dex	Death	2/3 Str 1/3 Con
Five of Pentacles	2/3 Str 1/3 Con	Three of Chalices	2/3 Con 1/3 Dex	Temperance	1/3 Each
Six of Pentacles	2/3 Str 1/3 Con	Four of Chalices	2/3 Con 1/3 Dex	The Devil	1/3 Each
Seven of Pentacles	2/3 Str 1/3 Con	Five of Chalices	2/3 Con 1/3 Dex	The Tower	2/3 Str 1/3 Dex
Eight of Pentacles	2/3 Str 1/3 Con	Six of Chalices	2/3 Con 1/3 Dex	The Stars	2/3 Dex 1/3 Str
Nine of Pentacles	2/3 Str 1/3 Con	Seven of Chalices	2/3 Con 1/3 Dex	The Moon	2/3 Dex 1/3 Con
Ten of Pentacles	2/3 Str 1/3 Con	Eight of Chalices	2/3 Con 1/3 Dex	The Sun	1/3 Each
Knave of Pentacles	2/3 Str 1/3 Con	Nine of Chalices	2/3 Con 1/3 Dex	Judgement	2/3 Con 1/3 Str
Knight of Pentacles	2/3 Str 1/3 Con	Ten of Chalices	2/3 Con 1/3 Dex	The World	1/3 Each
States and states	and the second		the second second second	and the part of the second	A LOW DOWN TO MAKE A LOW TO MAKE A

#### e casta a caso

## SIDEBAR: HOW LOW CAN YOU GO?

You may have noticed that this system uses far more points than most point-buy systems. The reason for that is fairly simple: normal point-buy assumes that characters start with an effective "8" in each ability score (or, in some cases, "10"). This is mostly to minimize players' ability to use a "dump stat" (one that they completely give up on and leave disproportionately low) to fuel higher scores in other abilities (fighters with no Charisma but with exceptional Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution being the popular example). Because the points are randomly distributed during the tarot reading, players won't be able to min-max this way. And while never having an ability score below eight can help ensure that your characters are always well-rounded, it also means that certain favorites, such as the incredibly sickly mage or the fighter who has to count on his fingers are out of the question. When you get right down to it, a character can be made as fun and interesting by a particularly bad score as by a particularly good one. To that end, the Tarot character creation system assumes a starting score of 3. Each point from 3 to 8 costs one point, and then from there it continues as normal point-buy. In most cases a character will have at least 8 in each ability score anyway, but it is now possible to go as low as 3. In order to balance everything out, an extra 30 points were added to bring each ability score from 3 to 8.

e service more a

TABLE	1-4:	MIND	CARDS

CARD	EFFECT	CARD	EFFECT	CARD	EFFECT
Ace of Swords	All Int	Queen of Pentacles	2/3 Cha 1/3 Int	Knave of Chalices	2/3 Wis 1/3 Cha
Two of Swords	2/3 Int 1/3 Wis	King of Pentacles	1/3 Each	Knight of Chalices	2/3 Wis 1/3 Cha
Three of Swords	2/3 Int 1/3 Wis	Ace of Wands	All Cha	Queen of Chalices	2/3 Wis 1/3 Cha
Four of Swords	2/3 Int 1/3 Wis	Two of Wands	2/3 Cha 1/3 Int	King of Chalices	2/3 Wis 1/3 Cha
Five of Swords	2/3 Int 1/3 Wis	Three of Wands	2/3 Cha 1/3 Int	The Fool	All Cha
Six of Swords	2/3 Int 1/3 Wis	Four of Wands	2/3 Cha 1/3 Int	The Magician	All Int
Seven of Swords	2/3 Int 1/3 Wis	Five of Wands	2/3 Cha 1/3 Int	The High Priestess	2/3 Wis 1/3 Cha
Eight of Swords	2/3 Int 1/3 Wis	Six of Wands	2/3 Cha 1/3 Int	The Empress	1/3 Each
Nine of Swords	2/3 Int 1/3 Wis	Seven of Wands	2/3 Cha 1/3 Int	The Emperor	2/3 Int 1/3 Cha
Ten of Swords	2/3 Int 1/3 Wis	Eight of Wands	2/3 Cha 1/3 Int	The Hierophant	All Wis
Knave of Swords	2/3 Int 1/3 Wis	Nine of Wands	2/3 Cha 1/3 Int	The Lovers	2/3 Cha 1/3 Wis
Knight of Swords	2/3 Int 1/3 Wis	Ten of Wands	2/3 Cha 1/3 Int	The Chariot	2/3 Int 1/3 Cha
Queen of Swords	2/3 Int 1/3 Wis	Knave of Wands	2/3 Cha 1/3 Int	Strength	2/3 Cha 1/3 Wis
King of Swords	2/3 Int 1/3 Wis	Knight of Wands	2/3 Cha 1/3 Int	The Hermit	2/3 Wis 1/3 Int
Ace of Pentacles	1/3 Each	Queen of Wands	2/3 Cha 1/3 Int	The Wheel	All to random
Two of Pentacles	2/3 Int 1/3 Wis	King of Wands	2/3 Cha 1/3 Int	Justice	2/3 Wis 1/3 Cha
Three of Pentacles	2/3 Int 1/3 Wis	Ace of Chalices	All Wis	The Hanged Man	2/3 Int 1/3 Cha
Four of Pentacles	2/3 Int 1/3 Wis	Two of Chalices	2/3 Wis 1/3 Cha	Death	2/3 Wis 1/3 Int
Five of Pentacles	2/3 Cha 1/3 Int	Three of Chalices	2/3 Wis 1/3 Cha	Temperance	1/3 Each
Six of Pentacles	2/3 Cha 1/3 Int	Four of Chalices	2/3 Wis 1/3 Cha	The Devil	2/3 Cha 1/3 Int
Seven of Pentacles	2/3 Cha 1/3 Int	Five of Chalices	2/3 Wis 1/3 Cha	The Tower	2/3 Int 1/3 Cha
Eight of Pentacles	2/3 Wis 1/3 Cha	Six of Chalices	2/3 Wis 1/3 Cha	The Stars	2/3 Cha 1/3 Int
Nine of Pentacles	2/3 Wis 1/3 Cha	Seven of Chalices	2/3 Wis 1/3 Cha	The Moon	2/3 Wis 1/3 Int
Ten of Pentacles	2/3 Wis 1/3 Cha	Eight of Chalices	2/3 Wis 1/3 Cha	The Sun	1/3 Each
Knave of Pentacles	2/3 Wis 1/3 Cha	Nine of Chalices	2/3 Wis 1/3 Cha	Judgement	2/3 Wis 1/3 Int
Knight of Pentacles	2/3 Int 1/3 Wis	Ten of Chalices	2/3 Wis 1/3 Cha	The World	1/3 Each

#### Step 7: The Nurture Card

The Nurture card represents a character's first forays into adulthood. It might refer to the character's first job raking manure in the stables, or it might refer to how they ran away from home at a tender age or lived as an orphan on the mean streets of the local capital. Whatever the case, it gives a small boost to a single ability score, most likely one related to whatever the event in question is. Take all the points from the nurture pool and put them in the ability score indicated on Table 1-5: Nurture Cards.

## **STEP 8: THE 'HISTORY' CARDS**

The last six cards all use the same table, the History table. If you aren't worried about the flavor parts of character creation (generating ideas about the character's personality and backstory based on the readings) then the order of the last six cards is unimportant. No matter where they are drawn in these six slots they'll all do the same thing.

All of the History cards move ability score points between the piles, adding extra randomization to the process and creating a slightly more organic character. For the purposes of flavorful tarot readings, these cards have all been assigned different meanings as they relate to the character's past and personality.

Home Life: The first history card indicates what the character's life at home and with his family was like, especially as a child. This card indicates things such as being an orphan, constantly striving to earn the respect of a parent, or obsessively protecting a younger sibling.

CARD	EFFECT	CARD	EFFECT	CARD	EFFECT
Ace of Swords	Dex	Queen of Pentacles	Con	Knave of Chalices	Con
Two of Swords	Str	King of Pentacles	Con	Knight of Chalices	Cha
Three of Swords	Str *	Ace of Wands	Int	Queen of Chalices	Wis
Four of Swords	Str	Two of Wands	Dex	King of Chalices	Cha
Five of Swords	Dex	Three of Wands	Dex	The Fool	Dex
Six of Swords	Dex	Four of Wands	Dex	The Magician	Int
Seven of Swords	Dex	Five of Wands	Int	The High Priestess	Wis
Eight of Swords	Int	Six of Wands	Int	The Empress	Dex
Nine of Swords	Int	Seven of Wands	Int	The Emperor	Str
Ten of Swords	Int	Eight of Wands	Cha	The Hierophant	Wis
Knave of Swords	Dex	Nine of Wands	Cha	The Lovers	Cha
Knight of Swords	Str	Ten of Wands	Cha	The Chariot	Dex
Queen of Swords	Int	Knave of Wands	Dex	Strength	Str
King of Swords	Int	Knight of Wands	Cha	The Hermit	Wis
Ace of Pentacles	Str	Queen of Wands	Int	The Wheel	Int
Two of Pentacles	Str	King of Wands	Cha	Justice	Con
Three of Pentacles	Str	Ace of Chalices	Wis	The Hanged Man	Dex
Four of Pentacles	Str	Two of Chalices	Con	Death	Int
Five of Pentacles	Con	Three of Chalices	Con	Temperance	Con
Six of Pentacles	Con	Four of Chalices	Con	The Devil	Cha
Seven of Pentacles	Con	Five of Chalices	Wis	The Tower	Str
Eight of Pentacles	Wis	Six of Chalices	Wis	The Stars	Cha
Nine of Pentacles	Wis	Seven of Chalices	Wis	The Moon	Wis
Ten of Pentacles	Wis	Eight of Chalices	Cha	The Sun	Con
Knave of Pentacles	Wis	Nine of Chalices	Cha	Judgement	Str
Knight of Pentacles	Str	Ten of Chalices	Cha	The World	Con

## TABLE 1-5: NURTURE CARDS

**Family:** The Family card actually has more to do with how the character's family interacted with and was perceived by their community than the character's own personal relationships with her family members (something governed more by the home life card). This card indicates things such as a character with royal blood, or an outcast driven out of town because his mother was deemed a "witch".

**Relationships:** This card can deal with any kind of relationship, friends, co-adventurers, and the like, but most likely refers specifically to romantic relationships. This card might say that your character is an incorrigible womanizer, that they lost a loved one and have yet to recover, or that they are deeply involved in a loving relationship.

Life Events: TThis card is sort of a catch-all for major events that might have changed a character's life. Here is where goblins attack their town, or a powerful mage takes an interest in them, or their father dies tragically fending off a dragon.

Ambitions: This card speaks of the character's strongest, most heart-felt ambition.

CARD	EFFECT	CARD	EFFECT	CARD	EFFECT
Ace of Swords	+1 Str, Dex, Int -1 Con, Wis, Cha	Six of Pentacles	+1 Int, -1 Cha	Knave of Wands	+2 Dex, -2 Wis
Two of Swords	-1 Str, +1 Cha	Seven of Pentacles	-1 Str, +1 Dex	Knight of Wands	-2 Con, +2 Cha
Three of Swords	-1 Str, +1 Wis	Eight of Pentacles	+1 Dex, -1 Cha	Queen of Wands	-2 Str, +2 Int
Four of Swords	-1 Dex, +1 Wis	Nine of Pentacles	+1 Str, -1 Dex	King of Wands	-2 Str, Con, Wis +2 Dex, Int, Cha
Five of Swords	-1 Int, +1 Cha	Ten of Pentacles	+1 Int, -1 Pool	Ace of Chalices	-1 Str, Dex, Int +1 Con, Wis,Cha
Six of Swords	+1 Dex, -1 Pool	Knave of Pentacles	-2 Dex, +2 Wis	Two of Chalices	-1 Dex, +1 Cha
Seven of Swords	+1 Dex, -1 Con	Knight of Pentacles	+2 Str, -2 Cha	Three of Chalices	-1 Wis, +1 Cha
Eight of Swords	-1 Dex, +1 Con	Queen of Pentacles	+2 Con, -2 Int	Four of Chalices	+1 Con, -1 Cha
Nine of Swords	+1 Int, -1 Wis	King of Pentacles	+2 Str, Con, Wis -2 Dex, Int, Cha	Five of Chalices	+1 Wis, -1 Cha
Ten of Swords	+1 Wis, -1 Pool	Ace of Wands	-1 Str, Con, Wis +1 Dex, Int, Cha	Six of Chalices	+1 Con, -1 Wis
Knave of Swords	+2 Dex, -2 Wis	Two of Wands	-r Str, +1 Int	Seven of Chalices	-1 Int, +1 Wis
Knight of Swords	+2 Str, -2 Cha	Three of Wands	-1 Con, +1 Int	Eight of Chalices	+1 Str, -1 Cha
Queen of Swords	-2 Con, +2 Int	Four of Wands	+1 Dex, -1 Int	Nine of Chalices	-1 Dex, +1 Int
King of Swords	+2 Str, Dex, Int -2 Con, Wis, Cha	Five of Wands	+1 Str, -1 Pool	Ten of Chalices	+1 Cha, -1 Pool
Ace of Pentacles	+1 Str, Con, Wis -1 Dex, Int, Cha	Six of Wands	+1 Str, -1 Int	Knave of Chalices	-2 Dex, +2 Con
Two of Pentacles	+1 Str, -1 Con	Seven of Wands	+1 Str, -1 Wis	Knight of Chalices	-2 Int, +2 Cha
Three of Pentacles	+1 Con, -1 Int	Eight of Wands	+1 Dex, -1 Wis	Queen of Chalices	-2 Str, +2 Wis
Four of Pentacles	-1 Str, +1 Con	Nine of Wands	-1 Con, +1 Cha	King of Chalices	-2 Str, Dex, Int +2 Con, Wis, Cha
Five of Pentacles	-1 Con, +1 Wis	Ten of Wands	+1 Con, -1 Pool	The Fool	-1 to each score +6 pool

Their major goal for adventuring, most likely. It might show a rebel trying to remove an unjust king, it might show a mage seeking great personal power, or perhaps it will show that all your character really cares about is the money.

**Fears:** This card indicates one of your character's darker fears. It may relate to a childhood trauma, or indicate something about the character's life that he couldn't stand to lose. It may just reveal a phobia the character suffers.

## USING HISTORY CARDS

For the most part, Table 1-6: History Cards is fairly straightforward. "+1 Int, -1 Con" means take 1 from the Constitution pile and put it in the Intelligence pile. If it lists multiple piles to add to and subtract from, do so from all of them. If it ever instructs you to remove more tokens from a pile than the pile has, just remove as many as it has, and only add that many to wherever it instructs you to put them.

a few of the second of the second of the	
The Magician	-2 Str, Con, Wis
all and all	+2 Dex, Int, Cha
The High Priestess	+2 Str, Con, Wis
get	-2 Dex, Int, Cha
The Empress	+2 Con, -2 Pool (r)
The Emperor	Str and Int, take two from the lower and give them
	to the higher
The Hierophant	+2 Wis, -2 Pool (r)
m I	Of Dex and Cha, take two from the lower and give
The Lovers	them to the higher
The Chariot	+2 Dex, -2 Pool (r)
Strength	+2 Str, -2 Pool (r)
and the second second	Of Con and Wis, take two from the lower and give
The Hermit	them to the higher
	Reassign each ability score pile randomly to a new
The Wheel	ability score. Each pile must be assigned to a
The mater	separate ability score.
	Take three points from the ability score with the
Justice	most points and give 1 to each of the three scores
THE L	with the least points.
71 11 114	
The Hanged Man	+2 Int, -2 Pool (r)
Death	Of Dex and Wis, take two from the lower and give
Deatti	them to the higher
	Take two points from each of the three ability
Temperance	scores with the most points, and give them to the
a -let and I	three ability scores with the least points (r)
m Ded	Of Con and Cha, take two from the lower and give
The Devil	them to the higher
and the second second	Of Str and Int, take two from the lower and give
The Tower	them to the higher.
C. SALES	
The Stars	+2 Cha, -2 Pool (r)
The Moon	-2 Str, Dex, Con
and the second second	+2 Int, Wis, Cha
The Sun	+2 Str, Dex, Con
and the second	-2 Int, Wis, Cha
Judgement	Swap the largest and smallest piles.
C. CROC MAS	Take half the points from the ability score with the
The World	most points, and add them to the ability score with

Under no circumstances should you add extra points to make up for the difference.

Some entries list "(rev)" at the end of their effect. This means that if the card is upside-down (or "inverted" in tarot-speak) when you flip it over, you should reverse the effect. For example, if the Empress card was upside-down when you revealed her, you would take two points from the Con pile and put them into the character's pool.

Finally, some entries refer to the pile with the most or least points. In the event of a tie, let the player decide which pile to use, from those tied for most or least.

## STEP 9: ADDING IT UP

Now comes the time to determine the character's base ability scores. At this time you should only have tokens in the six ability score piles and in the character's pool. Count the number of tokens in each ability score pile and refer to Table 1-7: Ability Scores to determine what the character's score is for that ability (for example, a character with 10 tokens in her Strength pile would have a Strength score of 13).

You may find that some ability scores with "remainders", such as one that has one too many points to be a score of 15, but not enough points to be a score of 16. In this case, the point "trickles down" to the next highest ability score, until eventually it finds a place where it can count for something. If there is a tie for next-highest, let the player decide where it goes (for example, a character with 12 tokens in her Intelligence pile would have one point too many for a score of 14, but one point too few for a score of 15. The extra point goes to her next highest ability score, Strength, which has 10 tokens, increasing it to 11, for a score of 14).

## STEP 10: THE POOL

Now let the player spend whatever points he has in his pool, placing them into ability score piles and buying higher ability scores, as in dicated on Table 1-8: Buying Ability Scores.

## TABLE 1-7: ABILITY SCORES

TOKENS	ABILITY SCORE
0	3
1	4
2	5
3 1 1	6
4	7
5	8
6	9
7	10
8	
9	12
10	13
ш	14
13	15
15	16
18	17
21	18

## SIDEBAR: READING THE CARDS

Di caro

0.000

Table 1-8: Card Meanings provides a very rough idea of the meanings of each card. The first of the two listed meanings is what the card indicates when right-side-up, the other what it means when up-sidedown. The only exception are the Aces, which can also be taken to mean basic elements.

If you find the idea of using the tarot readings to create backgrounds and personalities for characters to be intriguing, you might want to try the internet or your local library for more information on tarot. Or make it all up—it's your game!

NAMORA DEVICE

## TABLE 1-8: CARD MEANINGS

CARD	EFFECT	CARD	EFFECT	CARD	EFFECT
Ace of Swords	Air/Objectivity/ Slyness	Six of Pentacles	Shrewdness/ Manipulation	Knave of Wands	Enthusiasm/ Inexperience
Two of Swords	Truce/Impasse	Seven of Pentacles	Re-evaluation/ Melancholy	Knight of Wands	Boldness/ Bravado
Three of Swords	Clarity/ Heartbreak	Eight of Pentacles	Craftsmanship/C ompliance	Queen of Wands	Attention/ Distraction
Four of Swords	Contemplation/P rocrastination	Nine of Pentacles	Discipline/ Sameness	King of Wands	Direction/ Oppression
Five of Swords	Individuality/ Irrationality	Ten of Pentacles	Abundance/ Extravagance	Ace of Chalices	Water/Refresh- ment/Inundation
Six of Swords	Perspective/ Victimization	Knave of Pentacles	Caution/ Carelessness	Two of Chalices	Attraction/Lust
Seven of Swords	Justification/ Presumption	Knight of Pentacles	Practicality/ Waste	Three of Chalices	Celebration/ Insanity
Eight of Swords	Restraint/ Restrictions	Queen of Pentacles	Comfort/ Laziness	Four of Chalices	Satiation/ Boredom
Nine of Swords	Insight/Worry	King of Pentacles	Acquisition/ Possession	Five of Chalices	Regret/Despair
Ten of Swords	Detachment/ Ruin	Ace of Wands	Fire/Inspiration/I nflexibility	Six of Chalices	Plentifulness/ Debauchery
Knave of Swords	Practice/ Pretense	Two of Wands	Choice	Seven of Chalices	Imagination/ Illusion
Knight of Swords	Incisiveness/ Bluntness	Three of Wands	Planning/ Scheming	Eight of Chalices	Longing/ Obsession
Queen of Swords	Perception/ Paranoia	Four of Wands	Achievement/ Overconfidence	Nine of Chalices	Luxury/ Gluttony
King of Swords	Intellectualism/ Elitism	Five of Wands	Confrontation/ Strife	Ten of Chalices	Fulfillment/ Delusion
Ace of Pentacles	Earth/Blessing/O bligation	Six of Wands	Victory/ Arrogance	Knave of Chalices	Intensity/ Superficiality
Two of Pentacles	Comparison/ Deliberation	Seven of Wands	Resolve/ Defensiveness	Knight of Chalices	Zeal/Intolerance
Three of Pentacles	Consistency/ Variance	Eight of Wands	Responsiveness/R eaction	Queen of Chalices	Empathy/Pity
Four of Pentacles	Conservation/ Greed	Nine of Wands	Martyrdom	King of Chalices	Composure/ Rigidity
Five of Pentacles	Need/Poverty	Ten of Wands	Tenacity/ Stubbornness	The Fool	Innocence/Folly

<b>TABLE 1-8</b> :	CARD	(MEANING!	CONT.)

CARD	EFFECT			
The Magician	Mastery/Trickery			
The High Priestess	Intuition/Assumption			
The Empress	Fertility/Overprotection			
The Emperor	Authority/Rigidity			
The Hierophant	Faith/Fanaticism			
The Lovers	Unity/Obsession			
The Chariot	Asvancement/Heedlessness			
Strength	Assertion/Aggression			
The Hermit	Introspection/Isolation			
The Wheel	Revolution/Repetition			
Justice	Balance/Prejudice			
The Hanged Man	Transcendance/Treachery			
Death	Conclusion/Reduction			
Temperance	Mediation/Extremism			
The Devil	Sensuality/Licentiousness			
The Tower	Demolition/Destruction			
The Stars	Openness/Denial			
The Moon	Mystery/Lunacy			
The Sun	Energy/Giddiness			
Judgement	Revival/Evaluation			
The World	Wholeness/Materialism			



# CHAPTER 2: ASTROLOGICAL CHARACTER CREATION

## INTRODUCTION

This alternate character creation method, based loosely off of modern astrological conventions, is designed to help create a concept for a character in addition to generating his or her ability score array. The basic method isn't substantially different from more conventional forms of dice-rolling (though some creative twists have been added), but there are small mechanical benefits and drawbacks associated with each sign. By default, players determine their character's sign using a d12, but see Sidebar: What's Your Sign, below, for other options.

#### FORMAT

Each astrological sign is presented in the following format.

Name: This is the name of the astrological symbol.

**Description:** This section details the personality traits typically espoused by those born under this astrological sign. Information here is for flavor purposes and intended as a guideline, and players are free to ignore it if they so choose, though in a campaign where astrology was particularly important, NPCs may assume player characters will behave in a fashion typical to those with their sign.

Ability Score Array: This section lists the number of d6 the player should roll to determine each ability score, listed separately. No matter how many dice are listed, the player uses only the three with the highest results, ignoring any extra (for example, if a sign called for you to roll 5d6 for your Strength score, and you got the results 6, 5, 4, 4, and 2, your Strength would be 15 (6+5+4), and you would ignore the other results). **Favored Classes:** This section lists the favored class options which are available to characters born under this sign. A character may choose any of the classes listed as a favored class for their sign, but must choose their favored class from among the options listed here. See the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook for more details on favored classes.

**Traits:** This section describes any additional mechanical benefits or drawbacks characters of this sign possess.

## THE SATYR

Those born under the sign of the satyr typically have very fiery personalities, and are especially well-known for their passions. Though you can quickly become incited to anger, you are more a lover than a fighter, and typically your passions are more romantic in nature. You are an excellent and devoted lover in the short term for trysts and flings, but are usually too flighty for long-term relationships.

You are quick to take a cause as your own, and often can be found championing some issue or other with all your heart. Like with lovers or enemies, however, your devotion to various causes lasts only until something else diverts your attention—while the flames of your passion burn bright, they do not burn very long.

Ability Score Array Str: 4d6 Dex: 4d6 Con: 4d6 Int: 4d6 Wis: 3d6 Cha: 5d6

#### Favored Classes

Those born under the sign of the satyr may choose bard, paladin, or sorcerer as their favored class.

## SIDEBAR: WHAT'S YOUR SIGN?

Though theoretically players could be allowed to pick and choose whichever astrological sign they like, the system is designed with the understanding that players will randomly determine their astrological sign using a d12. Alternatively, a character's birthday can be determined randomly using dice, and that date used to determine the character's sign. First, roll 1d12 to determine which month of the year the character was born in. Then, depending on how many days there are in the month, roll either 3d10-2 (for a 28-day month), 2d10+1d12-2 (for a 30-day month), or 1d10+3d8-3 (for a 31-day month) to determine which day the character was born. Then, consult Table 2-1: Astrological Signs to determine which sign the character was born under. If your campaign uses a non-Gregorian calendar, consult your DM for how to randomly determine your astrological sign.

0.600 2000000

## **TABLE 2-1 ASTROLOGICAL CHARACTER GENERATION**

SIGN	Dist minutions							
	DATE	STRENGTH	DEXTERITY	CONSTITUTION	INTELLIGENCE	WISDOM	CHARISMA	
Satyr	Mar 21 - Apr 19	4	4	4	4	3	5	
Minotaur	Apr 20 - May 20	4	4	5	3	5 5	3	
Doppleganger	May 21 - Jun 20	4	5	3	4	3	5	
Chuul	Jun 21 - Jul 22	5	3	5	3	4	4	
Sphinx	Jul 23 - Aug 22	4	4	3	5	4	4	
Nymph	Aug 23 - Sep 22	3	4	3	4	4	6	
Archon	Sep 23 - Oct 22	4	3	4 4	4		4	
Manticore	Oct 23 - Nov 21	6	4	4	4	3	3	
Centaur	Nov 22 - Dec 21	4	4	5	3 -	4	4	
Chimera	Dec 22 - Jan 19	5	3	4	4	15-0.4	4	
Merfolk	Jan 20 - Feb 18	3	4	22 - 24 - 1 - A	4	5-00	4	
Elemental	Feb 19 - Mar 20	4		4	4	4	4	

#### Traits

Those born under the sign of the satyr are usually quite bold, and therefore gain a +2 bonus to saves against fear. They are also particularly susceptible to charm magic, however, and suffer a ~2 penalty on Will saves vs charm effects.

#### THE MINOTAUR

Those born under the sign of the minotaur are typically considered to be both patient and reliable individuals. You are a very determined individual, and once you decide what path you're going to walk, there is virtually no force that can shake you from your goal. You are extremely devoted to your partner and this devotion is often misconstrued as possessiveness. You have many material possessions and tend to save rather then spend your wealth. Some of those born under the sign of the minotaur carry a not undeserved reputation for greed.

Your strong will ensures that you will never be driven to do something you don't want to, but you can be a strong asset to a leader who's taken the time to earn your trust.

#### Ability Score Array Str: 4d6 Dex: 4d6 Con: 5d6 Int: 3d6 Wis: 5d6 Cha: 3d6

#### Favored Classes

Those born under the sign of the minotaur may choose cleric, ranger, or barbarian as their favored class.

#### Traits

Those born under the sign of the minotaur possess an exceptionally strong will and therefore receive a +2 bonus on Will saves versus spells with the charm descriptor. They are also stubborn and bullheaded, and therefore receive a -2 penalty on all Bluff and Diplomacy skill checks.

#### THE DOPPELGANGER

DICE ARRAVS (D6)

Those born under the sign of the doppelganger are an extremely adaptive group of individuals. You are a natural-born conversationalist with a gift for subtle eloquence, though the occasionally bought of nervousness can sometimes keep your voice from being heard. You try hard not to make to much a splash and can sometimes go unnoticed. While many born under the doppelganger find this affinity for blending into the crowd to be undesirable, others use it to their advantage: padding their pockets with ill-gotten gains, or finding some other way to get themselves into trouble. Many of those born under the sign of the doppelganger have difficulty forming lasting relationships due to a flighty and inconsistent nature, so you will have to work hard in this area.

Versatile, naturally cunning, and adept at blending in with a crowd, most of those born under the sign of the doppelganger enjoy traveling at length, preferring not to stay in one place too long.

## Ability Score Array

Str: 3d6 Dex: 6d6 Con: 3d6 Int: 4d6 Wis: 3d6 Cha: 5d6

#### Favored Classes

Those born under the sign of the doppelganger may choose rogue, bard, or sorcerer as their favored class.

#### Traits

Those born under the sign of the doppelganger possess an innate cunning and receive a +2 bonus on Bluff checks made outside of combat. Because they are often impatient with repetitive tasks, Craft and Profession skills can never count as class skills for them, and they must always pay two skill points for each rank in these skills.

#### THE CHUUL

Those born under the sign of the chuul are perhaps best described as cautious individuals with a protective nature. You have a strong nesting instinct, preferring to have family close by to you at all times, and you choose quiet, comfortable dwellings. You don't care to show off wealth or status, preferring to keep such things to yourself. You form strong attachments to your companions but can sometimes be a little too clingy, which can put a strain on your personal life.

You draw strength from your emotions and are in general a fairly passionate person.

#### Ability Score Array

Str: 5d6 Dex: 3d6 Con: 5d6 Int: 4d6 Wis: 4d6 Cha: 3d6

#### Favored Classes

Those born under the sign of the chuul may choose fighter, barbarian, or cleric as their favored class.

#### Traits

Because of the cautious nature of those born under the sign of the chuul, they gain a +2 bonus to AC while taking a full defense action, and they also qualify for the Combat Expertise feat, regardless of their Intelligence score. In addition, due to their slow and reserved line of thinking they suffer a -2 penalty to initiative rolls.

#### THE SPHINX

Those born under the sign of the sphinx are well known for their cleverness and creativity. You often find ingenious answers for problems, and are a born academic. You have an ability find solutions outside the box, and are good at thinking on your feet. Though you excel in social situations, some see your strong sense of self confidence as arrogance or self-centeredness. You enjoy the company of others, but you never blend into the crowd, instead always striving to prove your worth and seek greatness.

You will frequently find yourself in leadership positions, but should take care in directing your companions, for sometimes you will come off as bossy and this can put a strain on your relationships.

#### Ability Score Array

Str: 3d6 Dex: 4d6 Con: 3d6 Int: 6D6 Wis: 4D6 Cha: 4D6

#### Favored Classes

Those born under the sign of the sphinx may choose monk, rogue, or wizard as their favored class.

#### Traits

Those born under the sign of the sphinx are natural-born thinkers and leaders. They receive a +1 bonus on all trained Knowledge skill checks, or they may instead choose to gain one Knowledge skill as a class skill. Their focus on intellectual pursuits leaves them at a marked disadvantage when dealing with day-to-day physical challenges, and they receive a -2 penalty to Acrobatics, Climb, and Swim checks.

#### THE NYMPH

Those born under the sign of the nymph exude charm and grace. You are an exceptionally attractive individual with a strong personality. You give great thought to your personal appearance, and usually act with great attention to social etiquette. You possess an effortless, calm grace that many are envious of. Romantically you are considered to be an ideal partner, but suffer from a stigma of being unattainable. In your other personal relationships you tend to be quiet and reserved (unless etiquette would dictate otherwise), and sometimes your opinions go You possess a considerable amount of refined charm and social grace, but tend to be something of a perfectionist, which some find off-putting.

Ability Score Array

Str: 3d6 Dex: 4d6 Con: 3d6 Int: 4d6 Wis: 4d6 Cha: 6d6

#### Favored Class

Those born under the sign of the nymph may choose bard, sorcerer, or druid as their favored class.

#### Traits

Those born under the sign of the nymph possess a nearly unearthly attractiveness, and their spells or abilities with the charm descriptor are automatically affected as though by the extend spell metamagic feat. Due to their timid nature, those born under they sign of the nymph receive a -2 penalty to their CMD.

#### THE ARCHON

Those born under the sign of the archon are well known for their strong sense of justice and equality. You believe in peace and justice for all, no matter the cost. Though you prefer to take a diplomatic approach to problem-solving, you aren't afraid to get your hands dirty in the pursuit of actions you believe to be moral. In your relationships, both romantic and platonic, you tend to seek cooperative balance, giving no more weight to one side of the relationship than the other. You abhor unnecessary cruelty and go out of your way to put a stop to it whenever you can; you can't stand to see the innocent suffer, often volunteering your time to help whenever you can.

For you, justice is paramount; however, you have a strong sense of what justice means, and it may not always agree with the ideas of established kingdoms.

#### Ability Score Array

Str: 4d6 Dex: 3d6 Con: 4d6 Int: 4d6 Wis: 5d6 Cha: 4d6

#### Favored Classes

Those born under the sign of the archon may choose paladin, cleric, or monk as their favored class.

#### Traits

Those born under the sign of the archon are natural born diplomats and so receive a +2 bonus on Diplomacy checks. Their desire for fairness can sometimes hold them back in combat, and they suffer a -1 penalty on attack rolls vs flat footed or flanked opponents.

#### THE MANTICORE

Those born under the sign of the manticore have very intense personalities. You are prone to very strong bursts of emotion, and many born under the sign of the manticore are said to have short, explosive tempers. Your strong personality and tendency for violent outbursts makes forming lasting relationships difficult for you; however, you are fiercely loyal to the friends you do have, and make for a wonderful ally and companion. You are a very passionate and motivated individual and once you set your sights on something there is no force in the world that can stop you from reaching your goals.

Though you pursue goals with admirable passion and enviable focus, you should take care to be aware of your surroundings, and be aware of the effect your strong emotions have on those around you.

## Ability Score Array

Str: 6d6 Dex: 4d6 Con: 4d6 Int: 4d6 Wis: 3d6 Cha: 3d6

#### Favored Classes

Those born under the sign of the manticore may choose fighter, barbarian, or rogue as their favored class.

#### Traits

Those born under the sign of the manticore are highly driven individuals with little patience for those who would stand in the way of their goals, gaining a +2 bonus on initiative rolls. However, in their haste to get things done they often leave themselves dangerously exposed and suffer a -2 penalty to AC during the first round of combat, and after charging.

#### THE CENTAUR

Those born under the sign of the centaur are well known for having an abundance of energy. You are an extremely positive person, and even when situations are at their worst you continue to think positively. You are ambitious as well as idealistic, and always strive to change the world in a way you believe to be better. You are honest to the point of tactlessness and straightforward to the point of bluntness. You are a modest individual, never taking undue credit and often downplaying your role in things. You prefer simple pleasure to lavish ones.

You tend to be a strong but quiet supporter of any cause you feel worthy, however, you never jump into things without thinking things over thoroughly.

#### Ability Score Array

Str: 4d6 Dex: 4d6 Con: 5d6 Int: 3d6 Wis: 4d6 Cha: 4d6

#### Favored Classes

Those born under the sign of the centaur may choose druid, paladin, or ranger as their favored class.

#### Traits

Those born under the sign of the centaur have a great abundance of energy, allowing them a +2 bonus to Fortitude saves and Constitution checks vs fatigue. Their extremely honest nature means that they are unaccustomed to lying and suffer a -2 penalty to Bluff and Sense Motive checks.

#### THE CHIMERA

Those born under the sign of the chimera (sometimes referred to as the dragon) are very ambitious individuals. You stride towards your goals with both great determination and great discipline, never relenting until you meet your end. You have a great love for material things, and tend to hoard objects that reflect your wealth and status. It is often said that those born under the sign of the Chimera have long memories; this is epically true of grudges, and those who wrong you would do well to remember that it is well within in your nature to hunt them down and exact whatever you're due. In relationships you tend to be reserved and pessimistic, believing that things are usually too good to be true. Though it is difficult to earn your trust, those that do will find you to be uncommonly loyal, and your allies grudges often become your grudges.

#### Ability Score Array

Str: 5d6 Dex: 4d6 Con: 4d6 Int: 4d6 Wis: 4d6 Cha: 3d6

#### Favored Classes

Those born under the sign of the chimera may choose ranger, fighter, or wizard as their favored class.

#### Traits

While some call them fatalistic, those born under the sign of the chimera know that their caution is likely to reward them. They receive a +1 bonus to the saving throw of their choice. However, theirr cautious and pessimistic nature can lead them to lose hope in the face of certain dire situations and so they receive a -1 penalty to a saving throw of their choice. Both choices are made at character creation and cannot thereafter be changed.

#### THE MERFOLK

Those born under the sign of the merfolk are friendly and inventive people. You are a true original, standing out from the rest of the crowd. Though you have many friends, you tend to keep yourself at a distance, and have some difficulty forming lasting relationships. Honesty is important to you and is a quality you have in great abundance – you loathe keeping secrets and have trouble not speaking your mind in a conversation. You will have many romantic interests in your life, though these tend to be short affairs focusing on the physical. You often spend time undertaking humanitarian endeavors, seeing great potential in the underprivileged.

You can frequently be unpredictable, and this can be both a blessing and a curse. It gives you an edge against villains who spend time planning against you, while straining relationships with order-driven allies. Ability Score Array Str: 3d6 Dex: 4d6 Con: 4d6 Int: 4d6 Wis: 5d6 Cha: 4d6

#### Favored Classes

Those born under the sign of the merfolk may choose druid, monk, or wizard as their favored class.

#### Traits

Those born under the sign of the merfolk gain a +2 bonus on all saving throws vs divination spells, as their mercurial nature makes it difficult to predict their actions. However, their attitude toward dishonesty means that they can never have Bluff or Sense Motive as class skills.

#### THE ELEMENTAL

Those born under the sign of the elemental are the most versatile of all, never specializing in any one field. You adapt to changing conditions quickly and can do many things well. You get along well with others but are more of a follower than a leader, and because of this some consider you to be weakwilled. You often change your appearance and can blend seamlessly into many different social groups; however, you have many secrets and share them only with those who you honestly trust. When presented with a problem, you tend to work with others towards reaching a satisfactory conclusion. While you rarely adopt leadership roles, those who are perceptive will notice that you often manipulate events behind the scenes.

Most of those born under the sign of the elemental have malleable natures. They pursue a wide variety of activities to achieve lofty, but closely guarded, personal goals.

Ability Score Array Str: 4d6 Dex: 4d6 Con: 4d6 Int: 4d6 Wis: 4d6 Cha: 4d6

#### Favored Classes

Those born under the sign of the elemental may choose any class as their favored class.

#### Traits

None.



# CHAPTER 3: "CHOOSE YOUR OWN" CHARACTER CREATION

## INTRODUCTION:

Choose Your Own Adventure character creation allows your players to jump straight into the action, turning character creation into a kind of game (complete with rewards and consequences for successes and failures) which both allows you as a DM to set the stage for your campaign and generates characters who have a fairly well-defined back-story.

Choose Your Own Adventure character creation is designed to be used with any d20 system which uses the default six ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma), and which expects those scores to be somewhere between 10 and 20 at first level. The system is highly modular, however, and DMs are very much encouraged to modify the system for their own personal use. In fact, at the end of the chapter there is a guide designed to help DMs create their own Choose Your Own Adventure adventures that best fit their campaign and game.

#### USING THE EXAMPLE:

Included below is an example adventure which can be used to create new first level characters. Your players will be presented with a series of problems and questions, to which they must choose an answer from those provided. Depending on which answer they choose, they will make an ability check (the ability they use is determined by the answer they chose). If they succeed on the check, they add a single point to the ability score they used (note that this is an ability score point, not a point-buy point, see Sidebar: Choose Your Own Adventure Point-Buy for more information), and proceed to the next question.

## STEP 1: CHOOSE YOUR RACE

Before beginning the Choose Your Own Adventure adventure, each player should choose his or her character's race, as well as his or her name and gender. Though the latter two are primarily for flavor purposes, the former will provide the character with an ability score bonus which will effect the outcomes of his or her various ability checks during the adventure.

#### STEP 2: CHOOSE YOUR BACKGROUND

The first question in the example adventure has the player choosing his or her character's background, based on their parent's profession. Their answer to this question will determine which series of questions they are given for their childhood. For example, the child of a blacksmith will face a different series of problems (BI-B3, in the example) than the child of a priest would (PI-P3). In addition to different specific questions, different paths provide different levels of opportunity for increasing each specific ability score, so a blacksmith's son will have more questions involving Strength and Constitution than a priest's son will.

## STEP 3: ANSWERING QUESTIONS

ion), and Each character will be presented with a number of questions based on his or her

## SIDEBAR: CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE POINT-BUY

The reason Choose Your Own Adventure character creation uses raw ability score points instead of point-buy points is very simple: when you are adding new points all the time and regularly making ability score checks, it can be very difficult to keep track of how many points a character has actually added to his ability score. Using raw ability score points simplifies play greatly, but does mean that characters are more likely to come out of character creation at different power levels. The disparity in effectiveness is generally less than when characters are generated with dice arrays, but still more than point-buy.

If you decide to have your Choose Your Own Adventure adventures use point-buy points instead of ability score points, be prepared for players to have some amount of difficulty keeping track of how many points they have in which ability scores. Also note that you will need to generate more questions to account for the difference. Additionally, you might consider simplifying matters by changing the ability score checks to % difficulties or something else which doesn't force players to constantly track both the number of points and the modifier applied to their various scores, a task that becomes especially difficult when racial adjustments need to be taken into account. choices. In the example adventure, the only answers which change which questions they will get are their choice of parentage, their choice of career, and any choice which causes them to be expelled from their chosen career (in which case they take on a different one). Below is a sample question, which we will examine:

Mi7: Your enemy drives you back into the small, walled city of Forsberg. The enemy is tenacious, and it quickly becomes clear that you will have to hold back their numbers and survive the siege until reinforcements arrive in 3 days. You are given a choice of assignments in defending the keep. What do you do?

oFire at the enemy from the walls. (Dex or Int) 12 oHold the door against their attempts to ram it open. (Con) 12 oDefend the battlements in man-to-man combat. (Str) 12

Mi7: This is the question's title, short for "military 7" which indicates that it is the seventh question in the military line. This is useful for navigating through the questions based on the answers the characters give, but serves no other purpose.

**Flavor Text:** This section explains to the player what situation their character has found him- or herself in, and makes the question fun and exciting rather than a tedious and uninspired series of d20 rolls.

**Answers:** These are composed of three parts, outline below:

Flavor Text: Each of the answers has a flavorful "in character" explanation, which explains what the character is doing to solve the problem outlined above.

(Ability Score): This section list the ability score (or scores, as the first option indicates) that will be used to make the check. In the case of two or more scores with "or" as an option, the character chooses one of the ability scores and makes a check with it. In the case of "and", the character still only uses one ability score, but in the case of a success will add a point to both of the ability scores listed.

*Difficulty:* The number listed at the end indicates the DC of the ability check in question. In many cases

the DC will vary depending on which answer the player chooses. Note that in some cases additional instructions will be given in parentheses after the DC.

Once the player chooses his or her answer, he or she makes an ability score check with the appropriate ability score. If the check is a success, the player adds one point to the ability score he or she used. If the check is a failure, the player instead adds one point to his or her lowest ability score. If he or she has two ability scores tied for lowest, the player may choose which of the two ability scores to add the point to. Note that a character cannot have more than 18 in any single ability score (20 after racial adjustments). If a character would exceed that cap, he or she may place any points which would be put into the maxed-out ability score into any other ability score of his or her choice.

## EXAMPLE ADVENTURE: THE CHILD OF HAMDALE

You are born in the sleepy village of Hamdale, a frontier town at the edge of the kingdom of Alamoor. Like any town, Hamdale is home to a wide variety of people. Which of the following occupations do your parents hold? (No roll is required for this question: players simply choose which answer they prefer).

> oBlacksmith (proceed to BI) oPriest (proceed to PI) oHedge-wizard (proceed to HI) oFarmer (proceed to FI) oScholar (proceed to SI) oHunter (proceed to UI)

**B1**: One day, while you are helping your father shoe a particularly restless horse belonging to a nearby lord, a loud noise spooks the horse, and instinctively you know it is about to kick violently. If you do nothing, your father will be struck, and quite possibly injured seriously. What do you do?

o Leap forward and attempt to push your father out of the way before the blow falls. (Str) 5

o Position yourself between your father and the horse, taking the hit yourself and shielding him from the blow. (Con) 5 o Do nothing, it isn't your place to take a blow for your father. (Int) o

**B2:** No one in Hamdale is too good to work, and when you reach a certain age you are forced to take responsibility for certain chores, though you have some choice as to what you will do. What chore do you choose? (Continue re-rolling until you succeed. You cannot retry a specific chore)

o Work at your father's forge. (Str or Con) 8

o Do your best to avoid work. (Dex) 5

o Study in the hopes of going to a university. (Int) 5

- o Cook and clean around the house. (Wis) 5
- o Beg for money in the street. (Cha) o

**B3:** One night, while you are in your father's forge while you shouldn't be, you accidentally knock over a shelf full of tools, and are horrified to discover that you have damaged a suit of armor that was commissioned by a very influential lord. He's coming to collect it in the morning, and your father will be very upset with you. What do you do? (This check applies to two different ability scores. Use the benefit of EITHER of the two abilities listed, and apply a +1 bonus to BOTH scores if you succeed. If you fail, apply a +1 bonus to your TWO lowest ability scores).

o Attempt to fix the armor yourself using your father's forge. (Str and Con) 12 o Go to your father immediately and confess, accepting whatever punishment he deems appropriate. (Wis and Int) 5 o Toss the armor in the lake and lie to your

father, telling him that you saw a shady figure running off with it. (Dex and Cha) 8

**P1:** Shortly after weekly service at the chapel, you catch acolyte Matthew stealing from the donation bowl. You confront him, and he tells you that he is stealing to pay healer's costs to help his sick sister recover from red ache. His desperation lends credence to this, but you know that the missing money will not go unnoticed. What do you do?

o Replace the lost coin with your own meager savings. (Wis) 5

o Convince him to turn himself in, explaining that the priests will likely forgive him and may offer aid to his sister. (Cha) 5

o Take responsibility for the theft yourself, accepting punishment on Matthew's behalf. (Con) o **P2:** Father Gregor comes to you one day before you rest. You have been here for some time, and he is wondering whether or not you would like to help out with new chores for a change of pace. What do you do? (Continue re-rolling until you succeed. You cannot retry a specific chore)

o Serve as an acolyte, helping to run the rituals and services. (Wis or Cha) 8

o Study in the hopes of going to a university. (Int) 5

o Muck out local stables, donating your earnings to the church. (Con) o

o Haul lumber at the nearby lumber camp, do nating your earnings to the church. (Str) 5 o Do your best to avoid work. (Dex) 5

**P3:** High Priest Michael visits from the Jeweled City. He has a less than flattering reputation, and he repeatedly insults your town and church. What do you do? (This check applies to two different ability scores. Use the benefit of EITHER of the two abilities listed, and apply a +1 bonus to BOTH scores if you succeed. If you fail, apply a +1 bonus to your TWO lowest ability scores).

o Point out the scriptures which praise humility and homeliness as virtues, and engage him in religious debate. (Wis and Cha) 12 o Get into a brawl with him and his retainers to teach him a lesson about disrespecting your town. (Str and Con) 5

o Sneak into his room with forged documents implicating him as a heretic, only to "discover" them later while cleaning his room. (Dex and Int) 8

HI: Your father is away on errands, and while you are sweeping you knock over the cage containing his imp. You know that if he returns with his imp wreaking havoc within his shop, there will be severe repercussions. What do you do?

o Attempt to compel it into the cage by invoking its true name. (Cha) 5 o Trick it back into the cage by outwitting it.

(Int) 5

o Beat it into submission and return it to the cage by force of arms. (Str) o

H2: Your father is extremely busy as of late, as a slew of new orders has come in from the local fighter's guild and he asks you to help out around in any way you can. What do you do? (Continue re-rolling until you succeed. You cannot retry a specific chore)

o Brew potions for his customers. (Int or Cha)8

o Cook and clean around the house. (Wis) 5

o Do your best to avoid work. (Dex) 5

o Muck out local stables, giving your earnings to your father. (Con) 5

o Haul lumber at the nearby lumber camp, giving your earnings to your father. (Str) o

H3: While you are transporting a spellbook to a customer, Henry, the local bully, and his thuggish friends decide to pick a fight with you to amuse themselves. You know him to be brutish and crude, and he has harassed you before. You know that the book contains many spells that would make him think twice in the future. What do you do? (This check applies to two different ability scores. Use the benefit of EITHER of the two abilities listed, and apply a +1 bonus to BOTH scores if you succeed. If you fail, apply a +1 bonus to your TWO lowest ability scores).

o Open the book to a random page and try to cast the spell within. (Int and Cha) 12 o Drop the book and use your fists to teach Henri and his cronies a lesson. (Str and Dex) 8 o Stand your ground, unafraid but not fighting back, and take their blows with stoic pride. (Wis and Con) 5

F1: A nest of foxes takes up residence near your farmhouse. They raid the henhouse regularly and become a major nuisance. Your father needs to deliver the crop to market, so he asks you to set up for the night with a sling to ward off the foxes while he is gone for the evening. You want to go to the Summer Festival with your friend Billy instead, but your father stresses the importance of your watch. What do you do?

oStay up all night watching the hens, struggling not to fall asleep. (Con) 5

oSneak off to the Summer Festival and back, hoping that nothing happens while you are gone. (Dex) 5

oConvince Billy to take over part of your watch, allowing you a chance to go to the Summer Festival. (Cha) o

F2: Father decides it's time for you to start helping put food on the table. What do you do? (Continue re-rolling until you succeed. You cannot retry a specific chore) o Tend to the crops and animals on the farm. (Con or Dex) 8

oCook and clean around the house. (Wis) 5 oHaul lumber at the nearby lumber camp, giving your earnings to your father. (Str) 5 oBeg for money in the street. (Cha) 5 oStudy in the hopes of going to a university. (Int) 0

F3: You and Billy are herding sheep when he breaks his leg. He can't walk without assistance, and you're miles way from home and other settlements. What do you do? (This check applies to two different ability scores. Use the benefit of EITHER of the two abilities listed, and apply a +1 bonus to BOTH scores if you succeed. If you fail, apply a +1 bonus to your TWO lowest ability scores).

o Run back as fast as you can to get help before a rabid wolf or wandering ogre gets to him. (Dex and Con) 12

o Mend the leg yourself with the supplies on hand. (Int and Wis) 8

o Help billy back, providing him with moral support and half-carrying him. (Str/Cha) 5

SI: Fellow student Rigel starts a debate about your most recent paper in front of your tutor, master Alaundro. He mocks your arguments in front of everyone, taking great pleasure in making fun of you. What do you do?

o Logically disprove his argument, showing that it relies on circular logic. (Int) 5

o Point out that your argument is perfectly valid, and that Rigel is simply trying to discredit you in front of your tutor. (Wis) 5

o Slip away unnoticed while everyone laughs at one of his jokes. (Dex) o

S2: Though studies take up much of your time, your father and Alaundo agree that you should have some kind of extra chore to occupy your time and build character. What do you do? (Continue re-rolling until you succeed. You cannot retry a specific chore)

o Take on extra studies to prepare you for the university. (Int or Wis) 8

o Muck out local stables, giving your earnings to your father. (Con) 5

o Haul lumber at the nearby lumber camp, giving your earnings to your father. (Str) 5 o Beg for money in the street. (Cha) 5 **S3:** Your father has recently finished a thesis on the nature of sphinxes, and proudly given you a copy so that you can be the first to see his work. You are distraught to find that his paper contains a serious miscalculation, however, and that if it is published as is, your father will be a laughing stock amongst his fellow scholars. You try talking to your father about it, but he dismisses your concerns. What do you do? (This check applies to two different ability scores. Use the benefit of EITHER of the two abilities listed, and apply a +1 bonus to BOTH scores if you succeed. If you fail, apply a +1 bonus to your TWO lowest ability scores).

o Sit him down and demonstrate the error logically, one step at a time. (Int and Wis) 12
o Intercept the thesis and alter it secretly before it can go to the local printing press. (Dex and Cha) 8
o Coerce the local printer into refusing to publish it by threatening him with violence. (Str and Con) 5

**UI:** Your father is teaching you the basics of hunting out in the woods, when a wild boar charges out of the brush at you and there isn't time for your father to assist. What do you do?

o Ready your spear, and pray. (Str) 5

o Attempt to roll out of the way and shoot the boar as it passes. (Dex) 5

o Run away as fast as you can, discretion being the better part of valor. (Wis) o

U2: Times are lean, and your father asks you to help out a little more to share the burden during a particularly harsh winter. What do you do? (Continue re-rolling until you succeed. You cannot retry a specific chore)

o Hunt game in the woods, providing food to eat and skins to sell. (Str/Dex) 8

o Study in the hopes of going to a university. (Int) 5

o Beg for money in the street. (Cha) 5

o Cook and clean around the house. (Wis) o

o Muck out local stables, giving your earnings to your father. (Con) 5

U3: You return home one day to find a ferocious bear trapped in a snare just outside your home. He is injured, but very much alive, though it is clear that he will not live unless released and given treatment. You won't be able to get into your cabin while the bear is still there. What do you do? (This check applies to two different ability scoresUse the benefit of EITHER of the two abilities listed, and apply a +1 bonus to BOTH scores if you succeed. If you fail, apply a +1 bonus to your TWO lowest ability scores). o Take up your weapon and try to finish the beast off. (Str and Dex) 12 o Gain its trust and heal it, releasing it into the wild once you've nursed it back to health. (Wis and Cha) 8 o Wait it out, surviving off the land until it dies of starvation. (Int and Con) 5

**CAREER:** On your thirteenth birthday, when you are finally considered an adult, you must choose a career to follow. You have several options, and the choice is yours. (No roll is required for this question: players simply choose which answer they prefer).

> oJoin the king's army, enlisting as a soldier. (Proceed to Mit) oEnroll in a small, out-of-the-way monastery. (Proceed to Mot) oSet out to live in the wilderness. (Proceed to W1) oAttend a magic academy. (Proceed to Mat) oSet out for the big city to earn your

fortune. (Proceed to CI)

Mi1: Nearly as soon as you arrive at the barracks you are equipped and started on basic training. You are set to a variety of tasks designed to increase your physical fitness. (Make separate ability checks for Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution, then add 1 point to whichever score you rolled highest on).

Mi2: Your new drill sergeant—a half-orc named Maugroy—is a cruel and malicious person, taking great pleasure in inflicting pain upon recruits, especially you. What do you do?

o Force Maugroy to respect you with brute force (Str) 10 (regardless of success or failure, the character must succeed on a DC 12 Charisma check or be discharged from the army for attacking a superior officer, in which case he or she should proceed to either W3 or C3) o Suffer through the abuse with dignity. (Wis or Con) 10 (regardless of success or failure, the character receives a -1 penalty on his or her ability check for

#### Mi4)

o Attempt to frame him for being a spy, handing the evidence over to the camp's commander. (Dex or Cha) 10 (if the character succeeds, he or she receives a +1 bonus on his or her ability check for Mi4, but suffer a -2 penalty instead if they fail).

**Mi3:** Every soldier must go through basic training. You find yourself excelling at one exercise in particular. What is it?

- o Mountain climbing (Str) 12
- o Forced march (Con) 12
- o Obstacle course (Dex) 12
- o Wilderness lore (Wis) 12

Mi4: You've been serving for some time, and the opportunity arises for promotion to an officer rank. Do you apply for it? (Only characters who succeed on this check qualify to become paladins. Characters who fail their check add one point to their Constitution, instead of their lowest ability score.)

o Yes (Cha) 12 o No (Con) 0

Mi5: One day a messenger arrives at the camp, with a message that war has broken out and you are all needed on the front lines. You may now choose your character's class. No roll is required for this question, but the character must meet the minimum prerequisites for his or her chosen class. The minimum prerequisites for each class are provided below:

- o Fighter: Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution 12+
- o Ranger: Dexterity 12+ and Wisdom 12+
- o Rogue: Dexterity 12+

o **Paladin:** Strength 12+, Charisma 12+, and the character must have successfully become an officer in Mi4.

Mi6: You've been tasked with holding a picket line when you see an opportunity to flank the enemy and cause major damage to their troops and aid your own. You've been ordered not to leave your picket, however. What do you do?

o Take the opportunity, abandoning your position. (Str or Dex) 12

o Hold your position, fulfilling your duty. (Con or Wis) 10

o Quickly ask for permission from your

commanding officer, then, if they grant it, go on the

#### offensive. (Int or Cha) 8

Mi7: Your enemy drives you back into the small, walled city of Forsberg. They are tenacious, and it quickly becomes clear that you will have to hold back their numbers and survive the siege until reinforcements arrive in 3 days. You are given a choice of assignments in defending the keep. What do you do?

> o Fire at the enemy from the walls. (Dex or Int) 12

o Hold the door against their attempts to ram it open. (Con) 12

o Defend the battlements in man-to-man combat. (Str) 12

**Mi8:** Impressed by your recent performance, your commander decides to promote you, and gives you a choice of where you are promoted to. What do you choose?

> o The 14th infantry company, the "Black Wolves." (Con) 14 o The 7th heavy cavalry company, the "Centaurs." (Str) 14

o The 12th scouting division, the

"Trackless Ones." (Dex) 14

Mi9: In what appeared at first to be a routine skirmish, you stumble upon an enemy general, Karakov, a master swordsman. Seeing the opportunity to deal a terrible blow to the enemy, you order your men to attack. As his bodyguard and your soldiers clash in battle, you find yourself alone against this furious whirlwind of destruction. What do you do?

> o Throw yourself at him in a furious assault, hoping to deal a lethal blow before he can muster a defense, let alone a counterattack. (Str or Dex) 18

o Take up a defensive position and hope that you are able to last long enough for him to tire and make a fatal mistake. (Int or Con) 15

o Feint, attempting to throw him offbalance and strike while he's distracted. (Cha) 12

o Order your men to focus on Karakov, rather than engaging him directly yourself. (Wis) 10 **Moi:** When you arrive at the monastery you are given a long list of religious, philosophical, and scientific texts to read, to expand your knowledge and improve your mental abilities. (Make separate ability checks for Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma, then add 1 point to whichever score you rolled highest on).

Mo2: As you read the various doctrines and scripts the monks provided you with, you discover that several of their teachings differ wildly from what is widely accepted outside the monastery, calling for self-flagellation as a ritual cleansing of bodily impurities, and you begin to suspect they may be heretics of some kind. What do you do?

o Voice your concerns to the abbot, reasoning out the flaws in their heretical doctrine. (Wis) 10 (regardless of success or failure, the character must succeed on a DC 12 Charisma check or be politely but firmly told he should leave the monastery, in which case he or she should proceed to either W3 or Ma3). o Accept their doctrine, regularly inflicting bodily harm on yourself for your spiritual health. (Str or Con) 10 (regardless of success or failure, the character receives a +1 bonus on his or her ability check for Mo4) o Play along with the practice, but refrain from doing anything particularly unpleasant to yourself. (Int or Cha) 10 (if the character succeeds, he or she receives a +2 bonus on his or her ability check for Mo4, but suffer a -I penalty

**Mo3:** The abbot explains to you that the monastery possesses several different roads to enlightenment and that the time has come for you to choose one. What do you choose?

- o The study of metaphysics. (Int) 12
- o The study of applied theology. (Wis) 12
- o The practice of religious debate. (Cha) 12
- o Physical exercise. (Str) 12

instead if they fail).

**Mo4:** One day, the abbot pulls you aside and explains that he has been observing your progress, and is most impressed. He explains that, if you like, he thinks that he could teach you quite a bit about arcane spellcasting, but that it may take away focus from your other studies. Do you accept? (Only characters who succeed on this check qualify to become wizards. Characters who fail their check add one point to their Wisdom, instead of their lowest ability score).

**Mo5:** After some time at the monastery, the abbot informs you that you are to be inducted from acolyte to a full monk. You may now choose your character's class. No roll is required for this question, but the character must meet the minimum prerequisites for his or her chosen class. The minimum prerequisites for each class are provided below:

o Cleric: Wisdom 12+

o **Monk:** Strength or Dexterity 12+ and Wisdom 12+

o Paladin: Strength 12+ and Charisma 12+

o Wizard: Intelligence 12+, and the character must have succeeded on their check in Mo4.

**Mo6:** Now that you are a full-fledged monk, the monastery requires you do good services in their name. What do you do?

o Offer your healing services to anyone in need. (Int or Wis) 12

o Perform for the children at the orphanage. (Dex or Cha) 10

o Help rebuild homes and towns destroyed in the war. (Str or Con) 8

**Mo7:** One day, while you are travelling back to the monastery from doing good works, you come upon a man being chased by a mob. He begs you for sanctuary, but the mob's leader explains that the man is a warlock and must be slain. What do you do?

> o Give a sermon on forgiveness, attempting to soften the hearts of his pursuers. (Wis or Con) 12

o Offer to serve as the man's legal counsel in a fair and unbiased trial. (Cha) 12

o Hand the man over to the mob. (Int) 12

**Mo8:** For months, a schism has been brewing over the interpretation of a passage in your monastery's scripts. One side prefers the old reading, citing the importance of tradition, while the other side preaches tolerance towards other religions and beliefs. The debate is fierce, and you

o Yes. (Int) 12 o No. (Wis) o

are forced to pick sides. What do you do?

o Side with the traditional message. (Int) 14 o Do your best to remain moderate without

angering both sides. (Wis) 14

o Adopt the newer, more compassionate reading. (Cha) 14

**Mo9:** A man comes to your monastery claiming to be the prophet of your deity. You have never heard of him before, and he is not known to have been part of the church. He begins preaching to the local populace, misleading them with false doctrine and prophecies in the name of your church. He performs a number of miracles, and many of the monks are quite taken with him, but you aren't so sure. What do you do?

o Engage him in a religious debate, attempting to prove his teachings as heretical. (Cha) 12 o Pray for a miracle from your deity to disprove his false miracles and show him to be the false prophet he is. (Wis) 18

o Lay a cunning trap which will reveal his heresy as well as the falseness of his miracles. (Int) 15 o Sneak into his quarters with incriminating and heretical texts, only to "discover" them later. (Dex) 10

WI: As you make your way out into the wilderness, you quickly learn that even simple survival will prove difficult, as you must hunt and forage for yourself, living off the land. (Make separate ability checks for Strength, Constitution, and Wisdom, then add 1 point to whichever score you rolled highest on).

W2: A druid who lives in the nearby woods takes offense at your moving in, and begins to constantly harass you, sending small woodland creatures to pester you and entangling the undergrowth around you as you sleep. What do you do?

o Avoid the druid, moving elsewhere. 10 (Dex) (regardless of success or failure, the character must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution check or be forced to give up on life in the wilderness, in which case he or she should proceed to either Mi3 or C3). o Fight the druid, beating him into submission. (Str or Dex) 10 (regardless of success or failure, the character receives a -1 penalty on his or her ability check for W4)

o Attempt to befriend the druid, or at least outlast his childish pranks. (Wis or Cha) 10 (if the character succeeds, he or she receives a +1 bonus on his or her ability check for W4, but suffer a -2 penalty instead if they fail).

W3: You find yourself running low on food again. How do you go about finding more?

o Hunting wild game. (Str) 12

- o Picking edible berries. (Wis) 12
- o Subsist on moss and lichens. (Con) 12
- o Fish in a nearby stream. (Dex) 12

W4: Once you have been living in the wilderness for some time, an eccentric monk hermit by the name of Owen moves into the area. After speaking with him, you learn that he seeks a pupil to pass on his knowledge to, but that not all are worthy of such an honor. Do you attempt to prove yourself worthy of becoming his disciple? (Only characters who succeed on this check qualify to become monks. Characters who fail their check add one point to their Strength, instead of their lowest ability score).

> o Yes (Wis) 15 o No (Str) 0

W5: You have now survived in the wild long enough to feel at home, and you no longer struggle simply to survive. You may now choose your character's class. No roll is required for this question, but the character must meet the minimum prerequisites for his or her chosen class. The minimum prerequisites for each class are provided below:

> o **Barbarian:** Strength or Constitution 12+

o Druid: Wisdom 12+

o **Ranger:** Strength or Dexterity 12+, Wisdom 12+

o **Monk:** Wisdom 12+, Strength or Dexterity 12+, and the character must have succeeded on their check in W4.

**W6**: You encounter a mother bear that has been injured by hunters. She has managed to drive them off, but you know she will not be able to hunt properly, and both her and her cubs will perish in the coming winter without food. What do you do?

> o Hunt extra for the bears, providing them with the food they need. (Str or

#### or Con) 12

o Attempt to heal the bear, gaining its trust and then tending to its wounds. (Wis or Cha) 10 o Set a series of snares and traps which will lure animals to within the bear's reach and cripple or trap them. (Dex or Int) 8

W7: One night you have a dream in which a spirit visits you and tells you that in order to determine your path and future, you must undergo a vision quest. What do you do to bring about the vision you seek?

o Fight with animals until the vision comes to you in a life-or-death moment on the battlefield. (Str or Dex) 12

o Harvest special herbs and berries which will put you in a trance and induce a vision. (Wis) 12 o Fast for several days and nights until your hunger allows you to have a vision. (Con) 12

W8: During a windstorm, a tree falls and crushes your home. While you aren't injured, you must seek new shelter. What do you do?

o Move the debris out of the way and attempt to rebuild. (Str) 14

o Take the event as a sign and seek out a new place to build your home. (Wis) 14

o Take the event as a sign and live under the stars, without any kind of home. (Con) 14

W9: Loggers move into the area and dam the river to aid in their efforts. It has a major impact on the flora and fauna in your forest and many creatures will die without that river. The loggers, however, are armed, and refuse to remove the dam in the name of progress. What do you do?

o Go on a hunger strike until the loggers relent. (Con) 18

o Call on the forest to aid you in your fight, summoning animals and bringing to life the trees themselves to stand against the loggers. (Wis) 12

o Go to them alone and fight them by yourself. (Str) 15

o Flee to another part of the forest, unable to stand against the loggers. (Dex) 10

**Mai:** As you enter the academy, you are enrolled in a number of basic classes to form the groundwork of your education, and to prepare you intellectually for

more rigorous courses to come. (Make separate ability checks for Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma, then add 1 point to whichever score you rolled highest on).

Ma2: One of your professors, a man named Shalazar, repeatedly harasses you and other students, mocking you and making your life difficult. What do you do?

> o Get back at him with a clever prank. (Cha) 10 (regardless of success or failure, the character must succeed on a DC 12 Charisma check or be expelled from the academy, in which case he or she should proceed to either Mo3 or Mi3).

o Do your best to avoid him, transferring out of his class at the first opportunity and en during as best as possible until then. (Dex or Con) 10 (regardless of success or failure, the character receives a -1 penalty on his or her ability check for Ma4).

o Strive to be the best student you can be, demonstrating the man's cruelty through your own behavior. (Int or Wis) 10 (if the character succeeds, he or she receives a +1 bonus on his or her ability check for Ma4, but suffer a -2 penalty instead if they fail).

**Ma3**: You pass your first series of classes, and the time has come for you to choose a focus for your studies. What do you choose?

o Magical theory (Int) 12

- o Raw sorcery (Cha) 12
- o Magical philosophy (Wis) 12
- o Battle magic (Dex) 12

**Ma4**: One of your professors is attempting to put together a class focusing on the manipulation of divine magic, and would like to see if you are a good candidate for the curriculum. The curriculum is demanding, and may get in the way of your other classes. What do you do? (Only characters who succeed on this check qualify to become clerics. Characters who fail their check add one point to their Intelligence, instead of their lowest ability score).

o Yes (Wis) 12 o No (Int) 0 **Ma5:** You pass another series of classes, and have become an upperclassman. You may now choose your character's class. No roll is required for this question, but the character must meet the minimum prerequisites for his or her chosen class. The minimum prerequisites for each class are provided below:

o **Bard:** Dexterity or Intelligence or Charisma 12+

o Sorcerer: Charisma 12+

o Wizard: Intelligence 12+

o **Cleric:** Wisdom 12+, and the character must have succeeded on Ma4.

**Ma6:** Your friend Walter is hosting a party that you decided to attend. It is a major violation of school policy, and when the campus security crashes the party, you know you must act quickly, or there will be severe consequences. What do you do?

o Attempt to talk your way out of the situation with a plausible lie. (Int or Cha) 12 o Run as quickly as you can, putting as much

distance as you can between you and your

pursuers. (Dex or Con) 10

o Take the time to push something heavy in front of the door to block pursuit, and then make your escape. (Str or Wis) 8

**Ma7:** The time has come for your midterms, and you are given a number of options as to what the tests will entail. What do you choose?

o A mage's duel, slinging spells on the battle field against your opponent. (Dex) 12 o A written exam, detailing various studies on

magical theory. (Int) 12

o A complex challenge in which you and your classmates attempt to fool one another with complex and detailed illusions. (Wis or Cha) 12

**Ma8:** It's time for your finals, and you must prove your skills as a mage. There are a number of different options. What do you choose?

> Bind a minor demon under the supervision of one of the instructors, and compel it to obey. (Cha) 14

o Conjure a functioning model of the

multiverse, with all the planes moving in proper alignment. (Int) 14

o Create a magical shield and repel a barrage of magical assaults from your peers. (Wis) 14 **Ma9:** You must begin work on your graduation project. How do you showcase your talent?

o Use only your force of will to carve a statue from a special, psychoreactive stone. (Cha) 15

o Create the schematics for your own style of golem. (Int) 18

o Make peaceful contact with a creature from another plane, and interview it to learn more about the other planes. (Wis) 12 o Engage in a mage's duel, slinging spells against your peers in an arena-style fight. (Dex) 10

**C1:** As you arrive in town, you soon realize that finding work isn't as easy as you'd hoped. You make contact with Thomas Quinn, a man who claims to be able to find you a job. First, however, he says that he must find out what job you'd be best suited for. (Make separate ability checks for Strength, Dexterity, and Intelligence, then add 1 point to whichever score you rolled highest on).

**C2:** Thomas Quinn believes he has found three different jobs which might be suitable for you. Which do you choose?

> o Enlist in the king's army. (Str) 10 (regardless of success or failure, the character should proceed to Mi3).
> o Join the local mage's academy. (Int) 10 (regardless of success or failure, the character should proceed to Ma3).
> o Join the local thieves' guild. (Dex) 10

**C3:** The thieves' guild, a local chapter of the Silver Ravens, offers you advanced training in a number of fields, though you can choose only one. Which do you choose?

o Training in cat-burglary, and the art of stealth. (Dex) 12

o Training in general thuggery, and the art of motivating people with injury. (Str) 12 o Training in lock-picking and disabling traps. (Int) 12

o Training in confidence games, and otherwise scamming marks. (Cha) 12 C4: Vorthello, a mage who works for the guild, pulls you aside one day and explains that he believes you possess the potential to be a powerful sorcerer, if you will allow him to unlock your powers. Do you accept? (Only characters who succeed on this check qualify to become sorcerers. Characters who fail their check add one point to their Intelligence, instead of their lowest ability score).

o Yes (Cha) 12 o No (Int) 0

**C5:** After some time, "Big Rick", the head of this chapter of the guild, informs you that you're ready to start doing work for the guild. You may now choose your character's class. No roll is required for this question, but the character must meet the minimum prerequisites for his or her chosen class. The minimum prerequisites for each class are provided below:

o Bard: Dexterity or Charisma 12+

o Fighter: Strength 12+

o Rogue: Dexterity 12+ and Intelligence 12+

o **Sorcerer:** Charisma 12+, and the character must have succeeded on C4.

**C6:** A while back you had to borrow gold from a shady moneylender to get through some tough times.. Later, his loan sharks track you down to seek the money you don't have, giving you only 24 hours to pay up before they take the fee out of your hide. What do you do?

o Give them the slip, lying low until the whole thing blows over. (Dex or Int) 12

o Intimidate them into backing off. (Str or Cha) 10

o Cheat at dice to gain the money back quickly. (Int or Wis) 8

**C7:** Your guild tasks you with "removing" a major player in a rival guild. How do you get rid of him?

o Sneak into his quarters late at night and stab him. (Dex) 12

o Poison his food. (Int) 12

o Intimidate him into either stepping down or moving away. (Str or Cha) 12

**C8**: The town guard raids your guild headquarters, arresting you and other members who failed to escape. They charge you with a series of robberies. What do you do? o Attempt a daring prison-break. (Dex) 14 o Stand trial, confident in your ability to convince the court of your innocence. (Cha) 14

o Cut a deal with the guards, offering them information and testimony in exchange for your freedom. (Int) 14

**C9:** Swiftly, suddenly and without warning, a new guild arises, and their ruthless crime boss quickly and methodically destroys your guild. In a skirmish, his thugs beat you up and take your possessions, leaving you for dead in the street. What do you do?

o Perform a daring midnight raid on their base, attempting to steal back your possessions and maybe even depose this new leader in the process. (Dex) 18 o Approach this new crime boss and convince him to take you into his organization. (Cha) 15 o Set a clever trap, allowing you to recover your possessions. (Int) 12 o Write off your losses and move on with your life. (Wis) 10

## BUILDING YOUR OWN ADVENTURES

The adventure included above is just a sample. It is highly recommended that DMs who feel comfortable doing so build their own Choose Your Own Adventure adventures for their players. For one thing, playing through the same adventure repeatedly will cause the process to lose its wonder as players concern themselves more about finding "the right path" for the ability scores they want and pay less attention to the actual story.

Additionally, by building your own adventures you can tailor them to your group and campaign, both flavorfully (using the questions in the adventure to familiarize your players with your campaign setting's recent history and perhaps with some prominent figures and places in your campaign setting) and mechanically.

Due to space and time constraints, the example adventure is actually quite simple. Given all the time in the world, each class choice would lead to its own separate tangent of questions, and players would be given choices at various points which could direct them to other tangents (for example, a character's answer in question Mi6 might change the course of the war or cause the character to be promoted, changing the questions he is presented with later). This can obviously quickly balloon into hundreds (perhaps even thousands) of questions, which is precisely why we limited our example to the relatively few branches it has.

One of the things we did try to include was a wide variety of variations on the basic "make an ability score check based on your answer" mechanic, providing questions which apply to two ability scores, questions where some or all answers had two options for ability scores, questions where one or more answers re-directed you to another tangent, and questions which provided a bonus or penalty to a later question. You should feel free to make as much or as little use of these "alternative" question styles as you like.

Another of the main choices we made when creating the sample was to ensure that all ability scores were treated equally (or, at least, as close as possible), and that they generally showed up in equal amounts and ran the gamut from the easy options to the hard ones. This was done primarily to make sure that a player could easily generate whatever kind of character they wanted, but did in some cases create some odd pairings and abilities being used in slightly odd ways. If your group prefers simulationism over game balance, this isn't necessary, and you can apply whichever ability score makes the most sense in the situation.


# CHAPTER 4: MINI-ADVENTURES

# THE THIEF OF VELOC'S REST Written by Joshua Zaback and Alex Riggs

# SYNOPSIS:

In The Thief of Veloc's Rest, the PCs must match wits with a daring sorcerer-thief who has been robbing the citizens of Veloc's Rest for rare ingredients required to perform a magic ritual. The town's citizens are in an uproar, and only the PCs can track down the culprit.

# **BACKGROUND**:

The sleepy town of Veloc's Rest has been experiencing some unusual robberies of late. The thief, a handsome young sorcerer named Althir, has been stealing components for a demonsummoning ritual he found in an old tome. The ritual calls for a variety of hard-to-find ingredients, and the local populace is left bewildered and angry by the rash of unexplainable thefts he's left in his wake. Once he has all the ingredients, Althir plans to complete the ritual-which must be cast at the site of a hero's grave—at the nearby shrine and resting place of Veloc Pedit, the town's namesake. Unfortunately for Althir, however, he isn't a very good sorcerer. For one thing, he didn't do his research well enough to realize that the ritual is a fake. For another, while stealing the final ingredient from the local clockmaker, he accidentally left behind the book containing the ritual, and won't be able to complete the fake summoning without it. The PCs are hired by the local mayor to track the thief down and recover the stolen goods, a task that may prove easier said than done.

# CAST OF CHARACTERS:

• Mayor Sam Neles (N Human Aristocrat 2), a somewhat portly man concerned more with his own fortune than that of the town's.

• Thomas the clock maker (NG Human Expert 3), a kind old tinkerer who can be a bit distracted by his work.

• Rea, the clock maker's wife (NG Human Commoner 2), a warm-hearted old lady who's always quick to serve delicious home-made snacks. • Benjamin Fields (N Human Expert 1), local chef and restaurant owner, an impatient and overworked man with a quick temper and a sense of selfentitlement.

• Hannon (CG Human Commoner 1), a simple but friendly young man who works for Benjamin at the restaurant.

• Luca (CG Human Commoner 2, Aristocrat 1), a land owner with a small plantation near town, has a strong sense of family and community.

• Emanthia (LN Human Aristocrat I), Luca's wife, an arrogant housewife with too much time on her hands.

• Margo, Luca and Emanthia's seven year old daughter, a shy girl who frightens easily.

• Fredrick (LG Human Expert 3), local bookseller, a talkative man with large stores of knowledge.

• Amelia (LN Human Commoner 2), owner of the Fair Weather Inn, takes her business seriously but isn't unkind about it.

• Althir (CN Human Sorcerer 3, Rogue 1), an up-and-coming sorcerer with more looks than brains who has turned to crime in order to summon a demon.

# GETTING STARTED:

Most likely, the adventure starts when the PCs accept Mayor Neles' request that they help him get to the bottom of the recent string of robberies. The PCs could be wandering adventurers already, or they may just be capable members of the community. Alternatively, if the PCs are all from Veloc's Rest, they could each also have had items stolen from them. This will require minor alterations to the ritual (adding the components stolen from the PCs) but can give them a more personal incentive for finding the thief, and provide something to bring the party together.

# THE MAYORAL MANOR

When the PCs arrive at the mayoral manor, they find that the mayor is quite upset that his house has been robbed. He makes his feelings of violation quite clear to the PCs, and may have several emotional bursts, though he always apologizes immediately, stating that he "forgot himself". The manor is fancifully furnished, featuring several busts and portraits of a knight, which PCs who succeed on a Knowledge (local) check (DC 12), identify as Sir Veloc Pedit, the town's namesake, who died from mortal wounds after defeating an ogre-mage in a ferocious on the nearby bluffs.

The mayor doesn't waste time getting down to business, explaining that the item stolen from him is far dearer to his heart than all of the well-polished treasure in his home: a lillend-feather cloak which belonged to his great-grandfather and, according to legend, also belonged to Sir Veloc Pedit, the tragic hero of the town. Throwing his hands up in frustration, he declares that this thief has gone too far, and that he'll pay them 500 gold each if they just bring back his cloak.

If the PCs ask what he means by the thief "going too far", the mayor seems surprised that they don't already know, and explains that there has been a rash of odd thefts lately: a barrel of salt and some extract from The Flaming Fish, gold dust and a silver knife from the Luca household outside of town, Harold Carver's porcelain teapot, Oliver Smith's wedding ring, his cloak, and a clock from the clockmaker's.

PCs investigating the manner find precious little in the way of leads: the door appears to have been picked, and nothing was taken but the cloak. A thorough questioning of the guards reveals that several of them fell asleep at their post, and though one claims to remember hearing strange murmurings before falling unconscious, the other guards (as well as the mayor) suspect he is making up stories to cover for his failure.

#### THOMAS, THE CLOCKMAKER

The clock maker and his wife receive the PC's with a warm welcome to their quaint little two-story shop, positioned on a terrace overlooking where a nearby river passes close to their town. The shop itself consists of sundrenched stained-oak tables laden down with many desk clocks, ticking quietly. Hanging on one wall are a number of wall clocks in a variety of different styles, arranged in neat rows of five, though PCs who are paying attention (DC 10 Wisdom check) will notice that there is a conspicuous empty spot near the middle where a clock has clearly recently been removed. Placed against another wall is a grouping of tall, carefully polished grandfather clocks, their pendulums swinging in perfect unison.

Kind old Rea, the clockmaker's wife, exclaims that they must be starving and then retreats up a flight of stairs behind the sturdylooking rosewood counter where her elderly husband sits carefully tinkering with a series of small, intricate gears and mechanisms housed inside a beautifully-crafted oval-shaped desk clock. Any attempt to talk to the clockmaker at this point is met with replies of "in a minute" or simple grunts of acknowledgment. Before long she returns, bearing a long tray of sweetbread and red tea, and she smiles warmly at the PC's insisting that they take a seat at some stools placed around the long counter. Once the PC's are seated and enjoying Rea's home-cooking, her husband, finally pulled from his work by scent of fresh baked sweet breads, makes his way over to where the PC's and his wife are seated, taking up the remaining cup of tea and settling in to talk to the PCs with a hint of a twinkle in his eye.

When the PC's ask about the robbery he scratches his well-trimmed white beard and shakes his head, clearly not knowing what to make of the whole affair. He explains that the only thing that was taken was a single clock, and a broken one, at that. He describes the clock as a desk clock, not especially large, made of yew. He also mentions, with a touch of bitterness, that the thief could have at least been a little less clumsy about the whole thing

If the PCs ask what he means by this, he explains that the thief must have hit one of the clocks on the way out, because it stopped the night of the robbery. He hasn't gotten around to examining what's wrong with the clock yet, as he's currently quite busy with other projects, but he suspects the clockwork was misaligned when the clock was jostled.

If the PCs ask to look at the clock he happily obliges them, and is amazed to discover a black, leather-bound book crammed inside the clock's casing. The book, entitled "On the Nature of Celestial and Otherworldly Humours, Entities, and Phenomena" appears to be incredibly old, and has visibly suffered from its time in the clock, its

spine badly damaged. Luckily, the book appears legible (though the writing is archaic, making it occasionally difficult to comprehend), and a quick skim gives the impression that the book is a detailed treatise on creatures and places from other planes. Thomas has absolutely no idea what the book could be doing there, having never seen it before in his life (in fact, the book is Althir's: when he was in the clockmaker's shop the previous night trying to pry some of the wood off of the yew clock, he was startled by the chiming of one of the clocks, and attempted to silence it by stuffing his book in the clock's gears. Panicking, he decided to grab the yew clock and run, removing the wood later at his leisure. It wasn't until he returned to his inn room that he realized he had left the book behind). Either way, Thomas is perfectly happy to let the PCs take the book with them.

Whether the PCs ask about the clumsiness comment or not, he eventually returns to his original train of thought, proclaiming that he isn't concerned about the loss of the clock, but won't stand for the idea of someone terrorizing Veloc's Rest. He heatedly declares that if the PCs can find the "blackguard" behind the thefts then they're welcome to keep the clock—in fact, he'll even fix it for them. After this outburst his wife calmly scolds him, reminding him that he's too old to be getting excited like that, and it isn't good for his health.

Should the PCs realize that the missing wall clock can't be related to the stolen desk clock and decide to ask about it, Thomas explains that the customer who bought the clock asked that the purchase remain secret, and that he really can't tell them about it. A DC 20 Diplomacy check, however, can convince him to share the information, though he dismisses off-hand the idea that the clock might be connected to the thefts. Should the PCs convince him, Thomas relates that a local named Oliver Smith recently purchased that clock for his anniversary, and that Oliver requested he keep it secret so that word didn't get back to Oliver's wife.

# THE CARVER RESIDENCE

Harold Carver, a broad shouldered cooper, takes the PCs aside when they arrive at his shop and quietly explains that the teapot in question wasn't stolen, but that he accidentally broke it. It was very important to his wife, having belonged to her grandmother, and he couldn't bring himself to tell her, so when he heard about the thefts it seemed like the perfect solution. He asks that they don't tell his wife, and apologizes for getting them mixed up in the whole mess. Should any of the PCs possess the spell mending and offer to repair the pottery for him, he is incredibly grateful.

# THE FLAMING FISH

"The Flaming Fish" is the name of a local restaurant which was also a victim of the recent crime wave. The restaurant itself is a low, flat building made of carefully worked wood and covered with ornate carvings representing scroll work. A large decorative carving of a fish, painted in blue and red, rests over the entrance to the restaurant itself, and serves as the source of the restaurant's name: though the red paint in no way makes the fish appear on fire, a joking customer coined the name and it stuck, much to the chagrin of Benjamin Fields, the proprietor and head chef of the Fish.

If the PC's arrive during lunch or dinner hours they find the restaurant to be packed with business, with many patrons surrounding each of the round tables of solid dark wood. They sip at large pewter mugs filled with a steaming liquid that smells faintly of sweet fruits, though the scent of grilled fish and fried potatoes is easily overpowers the fragrance of the drinks. During these times mister Fields is far too busy to speak with the PC's, so he passes them off to one of his workers, Hannon, a young man who smells strongly of fish and is happy enough to talk to the PCs, though he continues his work of peeling potatoes as he does so.

Hannon explains that just a few days ago the restaurant stores were robbed and two rather strange items were stolen. The first was a barrel of salt, and Hannon tells the PCs that he suspects the entire thing was some kind of practical joke or attack on the restaurant, as the lack of salt has greatly hurt the quality of the food, and customers have been complaining about the lack of seasoning ever since the salt disappeared. The second item to go missing was their stock of "essence of will o' the wisp," a substance that he explains is only really useful as a seasoning, at least as far as he knows. Though the substance is exotic, it isn't actually all that valuable, so Hannon doesn't really know why anyone might want to steal it, though he does suggest that it might be an attempt to cover up the theft of the salt. Hannon himself wasn't around at the time of the theft, and doesn't know much about it. He wishes the PCs good luck, but otherwise doesn't

know much about it. He wishes the PCs good luck, but otherwise doesn't know what he can do for them.

If the PC's don't show up during peak hours they get to talk to the restaurant's owner, Benjamin, in person. Benjamin is a taller man with dark skin and brown eyes. He keeps his black hair carefully gathered into a short tail at the base of his neck, and he maintains a carefully trimmed goatee. Benjamin is very frustrated by the robbery, and complains about how slow the mayor has been to act in the matter. His ire only worsens if the PCs let slip that the mayor is only really interested in the recovery of his cloak, and that they weren't explicitly hired to recover any of the other missing items. The loss of an entire barrel of salt has been real strain on his restaurant and the loss of profit-not to mention the complaints-has made him quite irate. As a result he is a little short with the PCs: flying off the handle at them for asking simple questions and providing them answers in aggravated shouts. He doesn't have an more information than Hannon, however, and once he tells them everything he knows he storms out of the room, telling the PCs to "go bother someone else" as he departs.

#### THE SMITH RESIDENCE

Oliver and Natalie Smith receive the PCs graciously enough, inviting them inside and giving them a seat before answering the PCs' questions. Nathan very hurriedly tells his story, explaining that he left the ring at home when he went to go bathe in the river the other day, and when he returned it was gone. Further, he found the basement ransacked and vandalized, with terrible, unrepeatable things written on the walls. He sealed the basement and isn't allowing anyone in until he has a chance to clean the place. At the end of the story his wife sighs sadly and remarks how terrible it is that this should happen only a week before their anniversary. Oliver adamantly refuses to allow the PCs to investigate the basement, though a successful Diplomacy check (DC 20) or any serious threat of violence will convince him to quietly confide the truth to them (see below).

In actuality, Oliver pawned the ring in order to buy his wife a clock from the local clockmaker for their upcoming anniversary. The clock is currently stored in the basement, which is why he is trying to keep his wife out. He swears that he plans to buy the ring back as soon as he can, and his wife needn't know. If the PC's visit the local pawnshop they can find the rings there in the pawn master's store room.

# LUCA'S HOMESTEAD

Luca's homestead is a large, three-storied wooden house surrounded by a low stone wall overgrown with rose vines, which are in full bloom when the PCs arrive. Beyond the main house is a large field filled with healthy looking crops swaying gently in the breeze which extends some ways into the distance before running up against some rocky hills near a local river. The house itself has been painted with both great care and attention to detail, and is the color of fresh cream with dark stained wood trimming. Flower boxes hang from all the windows and each one is filled to bursting with colorful little bell shaped flowers, with a pleasantly sweet smell. The door is good solid wood and bears a knocker in the shape of bear's head, made from cleanly polished silver.

Luca himself answers the door after the second knock and invites the PC's inside. Luca is a tall man in his early middle years, with a strong build and a warm smile. He invites the PC's into his sitting room to take tea with him while he explains about the robbery. His wife Emanthia, a strikingly beautiful woman obviously of good breeding, strides into the sitting room haughtily and sets down a tray laden with porcelain teacups and fine little cakes, before glancing disapprovingly at the PCs and turning to leave without explanation. If the PCs try to stop her from leaving, she makes a comment about how her home had been violated by enough undesirables lately, and having no desire to have to play hostess to any of them, then continues on her way.

Once his wife has left the room, Luca makes a polite apology to the PCs, explaining that since the robbery the whole family has been a little shaken up. He goes on to explain that his private treasury was robbed of 5 pounds of gold dust and a silver dagger which belonged to his late father. Luca is puzzled by the robbery, which he finds odd because he had many more valuables left untouched, including more gold dust, and wonders why anyone would only bother to take about one-third of the dust. A man of moderate means, he's not too worried about the gold dust, but is very interested in recovering the dagger, due to its sentimental value. He guesses wryly that the mayor has only commissioned the PCs to recover his own cloak, and tells the PCs that if they can get the dagger back to him he'd gladly provide them each with a horse from his stables.

If the PCs ask to see the scene of the crime Luca takes them to a small room with a thick, iron-bound oak door and a complex lock. The room inside is large for a closet but small for a room, and contains several shelves of valuable items, including bars of silver, a few pouches of gold dust, some ornate pottery, a small case of gems, etc. All told, there is probably about 1,500gp in assorted treasure. PCs who succeed on a DC 12 Perception check notice a small holeperhaps an inch or two in diameter—in one corner of the ceiling. If the PCs point the hole out, Luca is surprised to see it, and after a moment's thought remarks that the other end should be his daughter, Margo's, room.

True enough, when the PCs check Margo's room they find the hole in one corner of the floor. Margo, a girl of about seven years, is quite alarmed at the sight of the PCs and hides under her bed when they arrive. Her father successfully coaxes her out from under it with some soothing words and quick explanations, but she remains too frightened and disturbed to talk to the PCs, and refuses to answer any questions about the hole or the theft unless the PCs succeed on a DC 12 Diplomacy check.

If the PCs can win her over, Margo explainswith regular stops to compose herself—that she awoke the night of the theft to find a strange man in her room. According to her description, the man was "old" with black robes and glasses. He was huddled over the floor "digging", and when she sat up to get a better look at him he turned and glared at her. Then he said some "scary words" and waved his hands and she doesn't remember anything else.

In fact the man was actually Althir, magically disguised to appear old just in case someone caught him in the act. He used the stone wall outside to climb in the girl's window and punched a hole in the floor with his dagger, using mage hand to grab the items he needed. When Margo interrupted him, he put her to sleep with sleep.

# FREDERICK'S RARE BOOKS

If the PCs found the book at the clockmaker's, any inquiries about it will likely direct them to Frederick's Rare Books, in town. Alternatively, the PCs may arrive at Frederick's another way: if they ask around town looking for the man Margo described, they will quickly find that if he has been in town, he hasn't been seen much. PCs who ask about the man at the bookstore, however, find that Frederick clearly remembers the manthough getting the story out of him without having to endure seven unrelated ones may prove a very difficult task.

Fredrick is an old man with short white hair and penetrating sky blue eyes. His shop is small and made to feel even moreso by the large collection of books which fills his shelves and spills over onto tables and desks. A very learned and well-read man, he tends to display his knowledge in extensive and frequent tangents onto unrelated but thoroughly "fascinating" bits of lore and information, including the lives of various long-dead scholars, the eating habits of various animals and vermin, and the histories of ancient civilizations. If left unchecked, his rambling can go on indefinitely, as new tangents arise from old until soon he is talking about something entirely unrelated to the original topic. Often these lectures begin with the phrase "Oh, that reminds me of a book that would be just perfect for you!"

If the PCs have come to ask him about the book he is quite surprised, and if they mention how they found it he becomes very distraught, not appreciating books being handled in such a fashion, especially such "highly sought" ones. He explains (without prompting) that not one but two different people came to his shop the other day who were interested in the book: first an older gentleman in black (secretly Althir, disguised with magic), who, Frederick admits, may not have asked for the book by name, but after Frederick talked to the man he was certain this was the book for him. The man agreed to buy it, but discovered he had forgotten his coinpurse, and said that he would be back for the book. Perhaps an hour later a handsome younger man showed up asking for the book by name, and Frederick (who ruefully admits having entirely forgotten the older man at the time) sold it to him. "It's a lucky thing," Frederick remarks, "that the older gentleman never came back, since it would have been very embarrassing to have to explain to him.

Still, it is a bit odd. I suppose his purse must have been stolen along with all those other things."

The tangent safely completed, Frederick returns to his original train of thought, telling curious PCs about the nature of the book itself. The book was penned by a scholar and theologian named Laucian about three hundred years prior, and gives an extensive description of various planes, demons, devils, and angels, as well as information for summoning them. Or, at least, that's what it claimed to do. Frederick quickly explains that everything in the book, from the planes to the beings described and especially the means to summon them, is entirely false (in fact, any PC reading the book who succeeds on a DC 10 Knowledge (the planes) check quickly discovers that the author of the book seems to have no idea what they're talking about). The purpose of the book was apparently to misinform and discourage those who would attempt to summon outsiders by providing them with fake rituals.

If the PCs are clever, they may realize that the book and its rituals are at the heart of the odd robberies. It takes about 4 hours to find the ritual in question, though this time can be reduced to 20 minutes with a successful Linguistics check (DC 10). The ritual supposedly summons the demon Aust, who is said to grant the power to read minds and become invisible, among other, greater "magicks". The summoning "spell" can only be performed at the site of a hero's grave, and calls for I lb of gold dust, which must be mixed into a magic circle of salt. The "summoner" then ingests the "essence of a spirit of air" and spill his blood over the circle with a silver blade. Finally, the feather of a lillend must be burned on a fire fueled with yew wood, and the smoke inhaled. The ritual also contains an incantation which must be recited throughout the process.

If the PCs ask about the old man, instead of the book, he happily tells them the same story about the man's interest in the book, and how the younger man bought it, but doesn't go into detail about the nature of the book unless the PCs specifically ask. If the PCs ask about the younger man (whether they also ask about the book or not) Frederick tells them that he believes the man is staying at the Fair Weather Inn, and that they should inquire about him there.

#### THE FAIR WEATHER INN

The Fair Weather inn is an upstanding high quality establishment built not too long ago and it is

the most popular place in town for visitors. The innkeeper Amelia is a no nonsense business woman and it isn't her policy to give out information on her guests, but if the PC's mention that it has something to do with the robberies and that they are operating with the Mayor's authority, she reveals that a handsome young mage named Althir is currently staying at her inn, and that he can be found on the second floor. When the PCs visit Althir, he explains that he is in town researching the legend of Veloc Pedit, the town's namesake (see above for details). If asked about the book he purchased, he explains that he did buy the book (he explains that he has always admired Laucian's work and was ecstatic for the chance to buy a copy of the rare book. He goes on to say that, unfortunately, the book was stolen in the recent rash of thefts. This is of course a lie: Althir himself is the one behind the thefts, which he is committing as part of a ritual described in the book. He really doesn't have it, though: when he was robbing Thomas the clockmaker he was startled by the clocks chiming the hour and fled, shoving the book inside one of the clocks in his confusion, though he doesn't tell the PCs that. If at any point Althir begins to believe that the PCs are on to him, he leaps out the window (taking Ido damage in the fall, without a successful Acrobatics check) and heads off at a run, summoning a mount at the earliest opportunity to speed his escape. He only does this as a last resort however, and if he believes he can fool the PCs he pursues that route instead.

Should the PCs be foolish enough to return the book to Althir, it is entirely possible that the adventure basically ends then and there. Althir happily thanks the PCs for the book, and then takes the first opportunity to end the interview, explaining that he would love to get back to his reading. With the book in hand, he waits for night to fall and then heads to Veloc's shrine at the top of the bluffs, where he has already secreted away all the stolen components. He performs the ritual and, disappointed with the result, disappears, most likely never to be seen or heard from by the PCs ever again. If the PCs find out about the ritual before speaking to him, and determine that the shrine is the most likely place for the ritual to occur, consider delaying Althir a day or two and letting them find him just before (or during) the ritual, and if you are feeling especially generous you could allow him to complete the ritual, discover that it was a fake, and return to exact revenge on the bookseller, giving the PCs one last chance for closure. If the PCs happen to mention to Althir that the ritual in the book is a fake, he ignores them, confident that he could never have made so basic a mistake.

# THE SHRINE OF VELOC

If Althir escapes the inn, the PC's can track him with a Survival check (DC 14, 17 at night). More likely, the PCs arrive at the shrine after determining it to be the most likely place the thief will go to perform the summoning ritual found in the book. The shrine itself isn't much to look at, being little more than a marble bier-like tombstone at the top of the bluffs to the west of town. The shrine bears the carven image of a knight on top of the bier, and the side bears the inscription Here lies Sir Veloc Pedit, who gave his life and slew the One-Eyed Lord Tryar Zilwe to save a nation. May he be rewarded in the next life for his valor in this one. Althir has buried his stolen goods beneath the monument, and a successful Perception check (DC 20) will allow the PCs to notice the disturbed earth from where he buried them.

Althir comes to check on his components each night, to ensure himself that they haven't been stolen. If the PCs arrive at night time, they most likely find him there. During the day he stays at the Fair Weather Inn, pretending to study the legend of Veloc Pedit, but mostly just brooding over the loss of his precious book and plotting to get it back.

If the PCs encounter Althir at the site he gives up any pretense of innocence and immediately breaks into a fight, opening with a sleep spell. Depending on who makes their save and who doesn't, Althir either fights the rest or flees. Though he's a thief and a would-be demon summoner, Althir isn't a murderer: he won't coup de grace sleeping PCs, though he won't hesitate to kill anyone who's actively fighting him. Depending on whether the ritual has already been performed or not, the PCs may be unable to recover the cloak, book, essence of will o' the wisp, or the gold dust. The dagger is recoverable either way. As for the salt, Althir grew thoroughly sick of transporting the full barrel of salt when he reached the bottom of the cliffs, and only took a handful of the stuff for the ritual. The rest he left at the bottom of the bluffs, and can be found in the bushes by determined PCs.

Althir, the Thief of Veloc's Rest CR 3 XP 800 Male human sorcerer 3/rogue 1 CN Medium humanoid (human) Init +7; Senses Perception +4 DEFENSE AC 14, touch 13, flat-footed 11 (+1 armor, +3 Dex) hp 21 (3d6+1d8+4) Fort +2 Ref +6 Will +1 OFFENSE Speed 30 ft. Melee dagger +3 (1d4+1/19-20) Bloodline Spell-like Ability (CL 3) 6/day-laughing touch (+2) Sorcerer Spells Know (CL 3; Concentration +6)1st (6/day)—disguise self, entangle (DC 14), mount, sleep (DC 16) o (at will)-dancing lights, detect magic, ghost sound, mage hand, open/close Bloodline fey STATISTICS Str 12, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 7, Cha 16 Base Atk +1; CMB +2; CMD 15 Feats Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Stealthy Skills Bluff +10, Climb +8, Disable Device +10, Escape Artist +5, Perception +4, Sleight of Hand +9, Stealth +12, Use Magic Device +10 SQ bloodline arcana, woodland stride Languages Broken Abyssal, Common Combat Gear bracers of armor +1, masterwork dagger Other Gear 35 gp, 10 sp, everburning torch,

masterwork thieves tools, wand of expeditious retreat (20 charges), wand of floating disk (5 charges\*), wand of read magic (50 charges)

\*He uses I of the 5 charges to get the barrel of salt to the bottom of the cliffs.

#### TROUBLESHOOTING

There are several points in this adventure where the PCs may hit a snag. If the game seems to have come to a halt because the PCs have missed a vital clue, here are some things you can try:

If the PCs miss the book, Thomas comes to them the next day and tells them that he was awakened in the night when the burglar returned to his home. The burglar (an elderly gentleman matching the description Margo gave) was in the process of opening the damaged clock when Thomas confronted him. Thomas tried to stop him from fleeing, grabbing him in a tussle, but the thief got away. Thomas managed to secure what he was after, however: the book. As before, Thomas has no idea why the book is in the clock or what it even is.

If the PCs miss the description of the elderly man, then things are probably OK. As long as they have the book, they'll be led to Althir eventually, as well as the description of the old man. In the event that it becomes important, however, Luca can discover the hole and talk to his daughter himself, informing the PCs afterwards.

If the PCs don't realize the shrine is the only place for the ritual, you have a couple of options. Subtle mention of the shrine and its purpose may cause players to have a sudden epiphany. If that doesn't work, consider having townsfolk mention eerie lights on the cliffs at night, near the shrine. Farmers or fishermen might argue over whether the lights are signs of a haunting, or of tomb robbers. Either way, it should get the PCs in gear right away.

# THE SACK OF OSFELDEN Written by Joshua Zaback

# SYNOPSIS

In The Sack of Osfelden, the quiet port town of Osfelden is attacked by vicious slavers, seemingly from nowhere. With the townsfolk weakened by a slowacting poison the slavers put in the town's water supply, only the PCs can stop the slavers from pillaging and raiding. What's more, an assassin is using the chaos of the attack to cover an attempt on the life of the local Baroness, and unless the PCs can catch on to the ploy and arrive in time to stop it, he will succeed at his grim errand.

# BACKGROUND

Several years ago, Rexx Adraxis, son of Dynous Adraxis, the Archduke of Thane, led his father's armies in an invasion of the nearby nation of Orfanes, a vast nation consisting mostly of flat, grassy plains dotted with old growth forests, and which had the misfortune of being a soft frontier for the Archduke to conquer. The invasion went well for Thane at first, but fell apart at the battle of Casterwin Forest, where a final defense was mounted under the command of then knightcaptain Harriet Gwaieth, whose desperate military tactics won the battle and routed the Thanish army when she captured Rexx himself, who returned to his father bitter over the embarrassing defeat.

His indignation only grew as the years passed on and his father, a military man with a strong sense of honor, forbade the use of assassins on such a petty vendetta. Rexx was forced to watch as Harriet was granted a Barony, which by all reports she managed quite well, and now has a happy family. By the time Dynous Adraxis passed on from illness ten years later (four weeks before the start of the game) Rexx had come to believe that Harriet was the source of all his problems.

With his father no longer around to keep him in check, Rexx decided that his first major action as Archduke would be to remove his longtime nemesis, and so he immediately called for Medauve Riure an assassin of no small repute who Rexx had picked for the job long ago. Though Rexx has no doubt in Medauve's ability to dispatch the baroness (who hasn't held a sword in nearly ten years), he is no fool, and is deeply concerned about the political repercussions of assassinating her, should it become known that he was the one responsible, as he rightly believes that Thane isn't ready for another war with Orfanes.

Still, Rexx was determined, and set in motion a scheme to disguise the assassination. He reached out to a group of outlaw slavers and pirates, the Band of the Wolf, and offered them a small fortune to assault the city for him, tempting them with talk of the easy pickings in the town to supplement the pay. Their leader, Jerrold Yellow-Eyes Navarre, was suspicious of working for the noble, but found the pay too tempting to resist.

Rexx had Medauve dose the local wells with a slow-acting poison which drains the strength of its victims, ensuring that the town's militia will be too weak to fight, and the town populace will be too weak to resist the nets of the slavers. Once he felt certain the poison had taken its toll on the town, he used a pre-arranged lantern signal to call in the Band of the Wolf to make its devastating attack, and then set off towards the Baroness' manor.

# GETTING STARTED

There are a number of ways to introduce your players to The Sack of Osfelden. The most important things to remember are that the PCs must have a good reason to get involved in the attack, and they must not have been in the town for too long, or else they would have been affected by the poison as well. If the PCs are already a group, they could simply be passing through and staying at an inn (for example The Gatehouse, an inn located near the entrance to the city). Shortly after the attack begins, a harried-looking woman bursts into the common room of the inn, begging for help from the obviously well-armed PCs, when a pair of rough-looking and smirking slavers burst through after her and begin rounding up the people in the inn. Alternatively, the PCs could begin play as members of the town guard (or even the

Orfanes army) who had been called away for several days prior. This could have been to deal with a minor problem on the outskirts of the small barony, to ensure that a vital shipment of food or other supplies makes it through an area heavily infested with bandits, or to escort a prisoner to a larger town, where he can be tried by a magistrate for his crime. Whatever the case, they return only to find smoke rising from the town, and a strange ship with sails bearing a wolf head on a black background docked in the harbor.

Finally, the PCs could be hired on as caravan guards (separately or together, depending on your preference) with a caravan carrying grain to Osfelden. After an uneventful trip to the town, they are astonished to see the town under attack when they finally arrive. The caravan master, concerned that his grain will be stolen or rot before he can find someone to buy it, sends the PCs into the town to find out what's going on while the rest of the men stay with the caravan to protect it.

# TIME AND THE ADVENTURE

The Sack of Osfelden is designed to be a very fast-paced adventure, with the players racing against the clock to stop the slavers before they retreat with half the town in their holds. To keep the PCs under pressure, we recommend using a timer (preferably one the players can clearly see) to keep track of how much time is left. The amount of time you want to give your players may vary depending on your group and play-style, but we recommend 20 minutes (though, due to travel time, roughly two minutes will pass in-game for each minute used at the table). Because combat usually takes much more time at the table than it does in the game, it's usually best to pause the timer during combat, though you could instead increase the allotted time to something more like two or three hours and have the timer run through combat, forcing the PCs to think twice about whether a fight is really worth their time.

If you don't want to time the adventure, keep rough track of how much time has passed in the game, as several events (when the boat leaves and when the Baroness is killed) depend heavily on how much time has passed in the adventure before they occur.

# THE POISON

The town's water supply has been tainted with trace amounts of belladonna over the last two or three weeks, leaving the populace weakened and unable to properly resist the slavers. Each day a character drinks from the town's water supply, she must succeed on a DC 12 Fortitude save or suffer 1 point of Strength damage. Unless otherwise noted, every member of Osfelden currently has 6 points of Strength damage, already included in their statistics.

PCs with ranks in Heal and a healer's kit can attempt to mix a fast-acting antidote for the poison with a DC 15 Heal or Craft (Alchemy) check, a process which takes about five rounds per dose. One healer's kit has enough ingredients for three doses.

# 1) THE TOWN SQUARE

When the PC's arrive at the town square (whether through the nearby town gates or from the inside of The Gatehouse inn) they are confronted by two large men wearing stained leather jerkins, and pulling large barbed nets containing screaming townsfolk towards a large wooden cage which already contains several townsfolk, including women and children alongside the men. The slavers whack at the prisoners in the nets with short clubs, demanding that they be silent, but this only elicits louder and more panicked screams from the prisoners, both in the net and in the cage.

When the slavers spot the PCs they yell for backup, claiming that they have "live ones here", and drop their clubs in favor of wicked-looking daggers. Two slavers answer the call, moving up to the battle on the first round of combat from their position about 60 feet away.

One of the slavers possesses a crude, iron key which unlocks the rusty padlock securing the cage holding the townsfolk, but if they escape, or the PCs decide to release the prisoners stealthily, a DC 15 Strength or Disable Device check removes the lock on the cage, freeing the prisoners inside. Once freed, the captured townsfolk thank the PC's for freeing them and explain that the slavers arrived suddenly, and that their militia was easily overpowered. If the PCs question this state of affairs, or begin to brag about how the slavers weren't that hard to fight, one of the captured townsfolk, himself a member of the militia, cries out angrily that it isn't a matter of skill, but that something was sapping his strength. Indeed, a DC 12 Heal check reveals that all the townsfolk seem to have been poisoned (see The Poison, above).

Several of the captives can be convinced to join the PCs in fighting the slavers. Though weakened by the poison, they are still angered and still desire to defend their homes. Once freed, they begin to mutter and murmur amongst themselves about whether or not to join the PCs, some arguing for and some against. Left to their own devices they will eventually decide to retreat outside of the town, but PCs who succeed on a DC 15 Diplomacy check can convince two of the men to join them, and those that beat the DC by 10 or more manage to convince another two. These men follow the PCs as long as they continue to oppose the sailors and free the captives, though they do not fight to the death, and any individual townsperson reduced to less than 1/2 their maximum hit points retreats to a safe place.

As the dust settles after the fight, if the PCs take a moment to look around they find that the town is clearly under attack, with many burning buildings and sounds of desperate struggle coming from every direction. More of those large, wooden cages are being brought downhill towards the docks, where a massive ship with black sails bearing a wolf's head insignia is currently towering over the local merchant vessels. Its wide gang planks have been converted into loading ramps, and caged townspeople are being loaded onto the massive ship.

#### Slave Taker (4) CR 1/3 XP 135

Human warrior I NE Medium humanoid (human) Init +1; Senses Perception +0 DEFENSE AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +1 Dex) hp 11 (1d10+1) Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +0 OFFENSE Speed 30 ft. Melee dagger +4 (1d4+2/19-20) Ranged net +2 touch (entangle) STATISTICS Str 14, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8 Base Atk +1; CMB +3; CMD 14 Feats Exotic Weapon Proficiency (net), Weapon Focus (dagger) Skills Climb +6, Profession (sailor) +4, Swim +6 Languages Common NPC Gear dagger, net, masterwork leather armor

# Townsperson (recruitable) CR 1/3 XP 135 Male or female human commoner I N Medium humanoid (human) Init +1; Senses Perception +2 DEFENSE AC II, touch II, flat-footed 10 (+1 Dex) hp 8 (1d6+2) Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0 OFFENSE Speed 30 ft. Melee Ranged STATISTICS Str 12 (6), Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9 Base Atk +0; CMB +1 (-2); CMD 12 (9) Feats Alertness, Athletic Skills Climb +7 (+5), Perception +2, Profession (any) +4, Sense Motive +2, Swim +7 (+5) Proficiencies Club Languages Common NPC Gear None

#### 2) THE UNTAMED BEAST

A short ways further into the town, outside a burning two-story home, a pair of gruff-looking men—clearly slavers—stand facing a local man dressed in plain brown robes. One of the two slavers holds a fearsome looking lion on the end of a short chain. The slavers and their lion attack the man, and unless the PCs intervene one of the slavers kills him with a javelin to the throat—but not before he casts Enrage Animals (see New Spells, below), causing the apparently tame lion to rear up on its hind legs and, with a roar, attack his former masters, who flee in panic, at which point the beast turns on the PCs. If the PCs do intervene, the slavers focus on the robed man, but flee if the lion is successfully enraged.

A DC 10 Handle Animal check will successfully



calm the beast, allowing the PC's to get around the creature without fighting it (it happily begins to devour the corpses of any of the slain). A DC 25 Handle Animal check allows a PC to give a command to the fighting beast, and with 3 weeks and a DC 20 Handle Animal check, PCs who capture the lion can train him to be their loyal combat beast (see combat trained animals in the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook).

If the druid survives the fight, stays with the building. If the PCs ask him to join them, he apologizes and explains that his faith prevents him from meddling in such affairs, and that he wouldn't have fought the slavers at all had they not attacked him first. He wishes the PCs luck, but otherwise can be of little help to them.

Hamar Oakleaf, the druid CR 1/2 XP 200 Male human druid I N Medium humanoid (human) Init +0; Senses Perception +7 DEFENSE AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10 hp 10 (1d8+2) Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +5 OFFENSE Speed 30 ft. Melee quarterstaff +1 (1d6+1) [quarterstaff -2 (1d6-2)] Ranged sling +0 (1d4+1) [sling +0 (1d4-2)] Spells Prepared (CL 1st; Concentration +4) Ist—cure light wounds, enrage animal, obscuring

#### mist

o (at will)-detect magic, light, stabilized D Domain spell; Domains Weather Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1st; Concentration +4) 6/day-storm burst (+0) STATISTICS Str 12 (6), Dex 10, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 17, Cha 11 Base Atk +0; CMB +1 (-2); CMD 11 (8) Feats Augment Summoning, Spell Focus (conjuration) Skills Climb +4 (+2), Heal +7, Knowledge (nature) +6, Perception +7, Spellcraft +4, Survival +9 SQ natural bond (weather domain), natural sense, orisons, wild empathy Languages Common, Druidic NPC Gear staff, feather token (tree)

Raider (2) CR 1/2 XP 200 Human warrior 2 NE Medium humanoid (human) Init +2; Senses Perception -1 DEFENSE AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +2 Dex) hp 19 (2d10+4) Fort +4, Ref +2, Will -1 OFFENSE Speed 30 ft. Melee battleaxe +5 (1d8+2/x3) Ranged javelin +4 (1d6+2) STATISTICS Str 14, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 7 Base Atk +2; CMB +3; CMD 14 Feats Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (battleaxe) Skills Climb +6, Profession (sailor) +4, Swim +6 Languages Common NPC Gear masterwork battleaxe, leather armor, javelin x6

Statistics for the lion can be found in the Pathfinder Bestiary.

#### 3) ROOFTOP AMBUSH

As the PCs continue to make their way towards the docks they discover another wooden cage filled with local townsfolk, this one apparently unguarded outside a local tavern (The Sea Witch). A DC 18 Perception check allows a PC to notice a pair of slavers keeping a look-out on the tavern's roof while their companion loots the tavern, and allows PCs who succeed on the check to act duringthe surprise round, as the look-outs begin hurling

javelins at them. Once under fire, PCs looking for a way up onto the roof won't see anything promising from the outside, but those who go into the tavern can find a stairway up onto the second floor, and from there another onto the roof.

Their companion inside the tavern has no interest in fighting any more than he has to, and decides that the best course of action is to hide inside the tavern. PCs who search the place and succeed on a DC 16 Perception check find his hiding place behind the large ale barrels. If discovered, he surrenders and begs the PCs for mercy, claiming that he wants to repent for his evil ways, and he offers to help the PCs against the other slavers. A successful DC 10 Sense Motive check reveals that he is lying. In fact he plans to betray them as soon as possible, and run away as soon as they are too busy to chase him.

He is legitimately interested in saving his own skin, however, and a successful Intimidate or Diplomacy check (DC 10) will convince him to tell the PCs everything he knows. He can explain about the poisoned water supply (see The Poison, above), stating that Captain Yellow-Eyes was guaranteed an easy score, because the townsfolk would be weakened. He doesn't know who guaranteed that to the captain, but will gladly make up any lie he thinks will keep him alive. He doesn't know anything about the attack on the Baroness, but he can tell the PCs that he has strict orders to stay away from the Baroness' manor.. He can also inform the PCs that raids such as this one are typically over quickly, and that they don't have much time before captive-laden ships begin pulling out from the port.

# Raider (2) CR 1/2

XP 200 Human warrior 2 NE Medium humanoid (human) Init +2; Senses Perception -1 DEFENSE AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +2 Dex) hp 19 (2d10+4) Fort +4, Ref +2, Will -1 OFFENSE Speed 30 ft. Melee battleaxe +5 (1d8+2/x3) Ranged javelin +4 (1d6+2) STATISTICS Str 14, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 7 Base Atk +2; CMB +3; CMD 14 Feats Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (battleaxe) Skills Climb +6, Profession (sailor) +4, Swim +6 Languages Common NPC Gear masterwork battleaxe, leather armor, javelin x6

# 4) THE HEALER

When the PC's reach the gates separating the docks from the nicer districts, they find themselves under attack by three slavers. The slavers have already captured all the prisoners they desire, and were getting ready to leave when the PCs approach. Two of them block the PCs path through the gates while the third lobs alchemist's fire at them and shouts for them to back off, and that they don't want any trouble. They will not relinquish their captives, but if the PCs retreat out of sight they will grab the captives and make a run for the ships.

Just beyond the gates a number of women stand tied together with coarse hempen rope. If the PCs deal with the slavers and free the captives, they are very grateful. One of them, a young hedge-doctor named Amara, frantically pushes herself forward and insists that the PCs must listen to her. If allowed, she goes on to tell them that she is certain that the townsfolk have been poisoned, and that the poison is leaving them vulnerable. What's more, she thinks she knows what poison it is, and how the townsfolk can be cured (see The Poison, above). She tells them that she has all the ingredients at her shop, and that if the PCs meet her there, she can prepare a few doses they can give to the townsfolk, who may be able to help them if their Strength is returned to normal.

#### Raider (2) CR 1/2

XP 200 Human warrior 2 NE Medium humanoid (human) Init +2; Senses Perception -1 DEFENSE AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +2 Dex) hp 19 (2d10+4) Fort +4, Ref +2, Will -1 OFFENSE Speed 30 ft. Melee battleaxe +5 (1d8+2/x3) Ranged javelin +4 (1d6+2) STATISTICS Str 14, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 7 Base Atk +2; CMB +3; CMD 14 Feats Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (battleaxe) Skills Climb +6, Profession (sailor) +4, Swim +6 Languages Common NPC Gear masterwork battleaxe, leather armor, javelin x6

#### Fire-bomber CR 1/2

XP 200 Human warrior 2 NE Medium humanoid (human) Init +3; Senses Perception +0 DEFENSE AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +3 Dex) hp 19 (2d10+4) Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +0 OFFENSE Speed 30 ft. Melee handaxe+4 (1d6+1/x3) Ranged alchemist's fire +6 touch (1d6 fire plus splash damage) STATISTICS Str 12, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 7 Base Atk +2; CMB +3; CMD 14 Feats Point Blank Shot, Throw Anything

Skills Climb +6, Profession (sailor) +5, Swim +6 Languages Common NPC Gear alchemist's fire x4, masterwork handaxe, leather armor

## 5) AMARA'S APOTHECARY

If the PCs follow Amara up on her offer, meeting her at her shop (or following her there) after freeing her, they arrive to find the place under attack by slavers, the door open and the three of them departing, Amara tossed over the shoulder of one (who sets her gently on the ground before wading into battle himself). This band also includes a mage, who begins the fight with his sleep spell, hoping to take out as many of the PCs as possible, and keep them as slaves after killing the rest. If the PCs arrive with Amara, rather than after her, they still encounter the three exiting the shop, and the slavers are delighted to find someone to capture after ransacking an empty building.

It takes Amara roughly five minutes to mix ten doses of the antidote (she doesn't have the ingredients for any more), which she promises should take effect almost immediately. If she is asleep when the PCs encounter her, and they have given her at least five minutes to work, they can find her antidote on a table in her shop, or she can take them to it herself if she is awakened. Otherwise they must wait the five minutes for her to mix the potion. A successful Craft (Alchemy) or Heal check (DC 15) allows them to reduce this time to two minutes. Townsfolk given the antidote indeed recover any ability score damage caused by this poison (but not other poisons, or other sources of ability score damage) at a rate of 1 point/round.

#### Raider (2) CR 1/2

XP 200 Human warrior 2 NE Medium humanoid (human) Init +2; Senses Perception -1 DEFENSE AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +2 Dex) hp 19 (2d10+4) Fort +4, Ref +2, Will -1 OFFENSE Speed 30 ft. Melee battleaxe +5 (1d8+2/x3) Ranged javelin +4 (1d6+2) STATISTICS Str 14, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 7 Base Atk +2; CMB +3; CMD 14 Feats Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (battleaxe) Skills Climb +6, Profession (sailor) +4, Swim +6 Languages Common NPC Gear masterwork battleaxe, leather armor, javelin x6

# Slaver Wizard CR 1/2

XP 200 Human wizard I NE Medium humanoid (human) Init +2; Senses Perception +0 DEFENSE AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10 (+2 Dex) hp 7 (1d6+1) Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +2 OFFENSE Speed 30 ft. Melee Ranged Special Attacks hand of the apprentice (6/day) Spells Prepared (CL 1st; Concentration +4) Ist-sleep (DC 14) x2 o (at will)-detect magic, message, read magic STATISTICS Str 8, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 17, Wis 10, Cha 13 Base Atk +0; CMB -1; CMD 11 Feats Eschew Materials, Magical Aptitude Skills Appraise +7, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (geography) +7, Profession (sailor) +4, Spellcraft +9, Use Magic Device +4 Languages Common, Giant, Goblin, Orc SQ arcane bond (parrot [use raven stats]) NPC Gear quarterstaff

#### 6) THE MYSTERIOUS FIGURE

As the PCs pass this point, if less than 6 minutes have passed since the beginning of the adventure, those who succeed on a DC 10 Perception check (consider making the check in secret, to avoid raising suspicion if they fail) notice a man who seems very out of place. Dressed all in black, his clothes appear to be made of satin or silk or some similarly rich material. A cloak and hood (also satin) mask much of his features, but it is clear that he is too clean-shaven to belong with the slavers.

The man, in fact Medauve Riure, is hurrying, and though he notices the PCs he hopes that they will focus on the battle around them rather than pursuing him. He heads to a building across the street from the Baroness' manor, ignoring the PCs unless they engage him, in which case he takes the first opportunity to hide and escape, returning to the building as soon as the coast is clear.

The building itself has little special about it, being a simple cobbler's, but the upstairs has a kitchen has a window directly opposite one on the Baroness' manor. If Medauve has any reason to believe he is being observed, he uses his Boots of the Roofwalker (see below) to quickly run up and leap across the distance (the window is not visible from the building's entrance, meaning PCs who are following Medauve are unlikely to be able to see him) and into the manor, where he begins setting about his grisly task.

#### Medauve Riure CR 8

XP 4,800 Male human rogue 5/assassin 4 NE Medium humanoid (human) Init +4; Senses Perception +12 DEFENSE AC 22, touch 16, flat-footed 22 (+6 armor, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 deflection) hp 62 (9d8+18) Fort +4, Ref +10, Will +2; +2 vs. poison Defensive Abilities evasion, improved uncanny dodge, uncanny dodge, trap sense +I; OFFENSE Speed 30 ft. Melee Short sword +11 (1d6+1/19-20) Special Attack death attack, sneak attack +5d6, true death STATISTICS Str 13, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8 Base Atk +6; CMB +10 (+14 on grapple); CMD 22 (24 vs. grapple) Feats Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (garrote), Improved Grapple, Improved Unarmed Strike, Greater Grapple, Weapon Finesse Skills Acrobatics +15, Bluff +11, Climb +12, Craft (alchemy) +9, Disable Device +15, Disguise +7, Escape Artist +11, Perception +12, Sense Motive +8, Sleight of Hand +11, Stealth +20 Languages Common, Elven SQ hidden weapons, poison use, rogue talent (combat trick [agile maneuvers]), rogue talent (ledge walker), trapfinding NPC Gear +2 chain shirt, boots of the roofwalker

(see New Spells and Magic Items, below), cloak of elvenkind, masterwork garrote, masterwork short sword, ring of protection +1

#### 7) THE BARONESS' MANOR

Surprisingly, the manor itself is completely untouched, and it seems clear that none of the slavers have touched it. There are no guards inside or outside the building (once it became clear that the slavers weren't attacking the house, the baroness ordered them to help rescue as many citizens as they could). The manor is a three-story affair, though not nearly as ostentatious as it might have been, especially in the furniture: though the manor bears some vases and paintings, they are fairly plain and simple, giving the place a homey air more than an aristocratic one.

The manor is home to the Baroness, as well as her husband (Bertram, a local man and longtime member of the town council) and their two children (Adam, a six year old boy, and Samantha, a three year old girl), as well as Robert Frostweld, their only manservant. Bertram is currently in the children's bedroom on the third floor, comforting them, while Harriet paces restlessly in her office on the second floor, and Robert prepares tea to calm everyone's nerves in the kitchen on the ground floor.

If the PCs arrive before Meduave kills the Baroness (either in the first 12 minutes of the adventure, or within 15 rounds of when he disappears into the manor, if they pursued him in encounter 6), they find him in her office, in the process of strangling her with a garrote. Upon seeing them he immediately makes for the window, preferring to return at a better time. If the PCs move to intercept him, he tries to tumble through them or move around them, only attacking with his weapons if absolutely necessary.

Before he goes, the PCs are able to get a good look at his face in the well-lit room. He has black hair, slightly long for a man, and is rather pale. Though it's clear he was attractive when he was younger, years of bitterness and pragmatism have stained his face, leaving him unpleasant to look at. PCs who succeed on a DC 15 Perception check will notice that his hair hides a tattoo, emblazoned on his forehead in black ink. The tattoo is the symbol of an open eye, which appears to be staring sternly at those who look at it, and PCs who succeed on a Knowledge (Local) or Knowledge (Religion) check (DC 15 and 20, respectively) identify the symbol as one used to mark someone accused of (as opposed to found guilty of) murder in some of the more distant cities of Thane. The same information can be found from any NPC with at least 5 ranks in Knowledge (Local) or 10 in Knowledge (Religion).

If the PCs arrive after Meduave kills the Baroness, they instead find her body slumped over the desk. She has a single, large stab wound in her torso, which goes clear through, but PCs who take the time to examine her (DC 15 Perception check or DC 10 Heal check) discover that she also has some bruising on her throat indicative of strangulation. They also find the rest of the house's inhabitants dead, with similar stabs and bruising.

#### 8) MASTER OF THE WOLVES

Closer to the docks two slavers are busy carting a wooden cage full of prisoners towards the ships, now only a few stone's throws away. Overseeing this, and guarding the slavers from any retaliation by the locals, is the Band of the Wolf's main beastmaster, who uses a whip to command a pair of vicious, combat-trained wolves. As soon as he sees the PCs he shouts for the others to hurry the cage onto the boat.

It takes the two men nine rounds to drag the cage from where it starts (60 feet further from the PCs than the beastmaster) to the docks and onto the slavers' massive boat. If the PCs can stop the slavers before they reach the boat, they can free them, earning their gratitude (though even if they don't make it, the slaves and their captors will simply be aboard the boat, allowing the PCs to free them if they make it aboard on time). One of the prisoners, Sven Hammerman, a member of the town council, promises them a reward of 500 gold pieces once the attack is all over. Of the townsfolk, two can be recruited to join the PCs with a successful DC 10 Diplomacy check, and two more if their check result is 25 or higher.

#### Beastmaster CR 1/3

XP 135 Human expert 1 NE Medium humanoid (human) Init +2; Senses Perception +0 DEFENSE AC 12, touch 9, flat-footed 12 (+3 armor, -1 Dex) hp 9 (1d8+1) Fort +0, Ref -1, Will +1 OFFENSE Speed 30 ft. Melee whip -2 (1d3+2) STATISTICS Str 15, Dex 8, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 13 Base Atk +0; CMB +2; CMD 11 Feats Animal Affinity, Skill Focus (animal affinity) Skills Climb +6, Handle Animal +10, Profession (sailor) +3, Swim +6 Languages Common NPC Gear masterwork studded leather armor, whip

#### Raider (2) CR 1/2

XP 200 Human warrior 2 NE Medium humanoid (human) Init +2; Senses Perception -1 DEFENSE AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +2 Dex) hp 19 (2d10+4) Fort +4, Ref +2, Will -1 OFFENSE Speed 30 ft. Melee battleaxe +5 (1d8+2/x3) Ranged javelin +4 (1d6+2) STATISTICS Str 14, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 7 Base Atk +2; CMB +3; CMD 14 Feats Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (battleaxe) Skills Climb +6, Profession (sailor) +4, Swim +6 Languages Common NPC Gear masterwork battleaxe, leather armor, javelin x6

# Townsperson (recruitable) CR 1/3

XP 135 Male or female human commoner 1 N Medium humanoid (human) Init +1; Senses Perception +2 DEFENSE AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10 (+1 Dex) hp 8 (1d6+2) Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0 OFFENSE Speed 30 ft. Melee Ranged STATISTICS Str 12 (6), Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9 Base Atk +0; CMB +1 (-2); CMD 12 (9) Feats Alertness, Athletic Skills Climb +7 (+5), Perception +2, Profession (any) +4, Sense Motive +2, Swim +7 (+5) Proficiencies Club Languages Common NPC Gear None

#### 9) THE DOCKS

If they arrive before the full 20 minutes (40 in-game) are up, then they are still able to catch the ship before it leaves. If the ship is still in the docks, the pier is guarded by two more of the slavers, these being from among Yellow-Eyes' chosen elite, and equipped with chainmail and long spears. Their preferred tactic is to bullrush any incoming enemies into to the water and letting the surf take care of their problems for them (the water is roughly 20 feet deep here, and can be navigated with a successful DC 15 Swim check).

After defeating the guards the PCs can enter the cargo hold and start freeing captives. The process takes several minutes, , and unless they are especially quick, the ship will leave port while they are in the middle of this process, the captain and crew unaware that their ship has been boarded. The PCs find no less than thirty captives willing to join their cause (though the townsfolk are much less willing to aid the PCs if the ships have yet to take off and they can still safely leave in peace). There are enough clubs and daggers in the hold to arm whatever force the PCs can muster, as well as nearly 2,000 gold worth of looted treasure (all various art objects, none of which should be more difficult to transport than a painting).

#### Yellow-Eyes' Elite (2) CR 1

XP 400 Human fighter 2 NE Medium humanoid (human) Init +6; Senses Perception +0 DEFENSE AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor, +2 Dex) hp 21 (2d10+6) Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +1; +1 bonus on will saves against fear OFFENSE Speed 30 ft. (20 ft. with armor) Melee longspear +6 (1d8+3/x3) STATISTICS Str 15, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8 Base Atk +2; CMB +4 (+6 on bull rush); CMD 16 (18 vs bull rush)

Feats Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longspear) Skills Climb +3, Profession +6, Swim +3 Languages Common NPC Gear masterwork chainmail, masterwork long-

# 10) YELLOW-EYES' LAST STAND

spear

The climactic finale occurs as the PCs, leading their army of freed captives, storm the deck of the ship for a confrontation with the crew. In addition to Yellow-Eyes himself, a salty, one-armed old sailor who prefers to use his decrepit appearance to trick his opponents into lowering their guard, there are five of his chosen elite and twenty regular raiders. With the freed townsfolk at their back, the numbers should even out for the PCs, and you can either have the subordinates and captives focus on each other or simply have their battle fade into the background, but either way the other NPCs should avoid getting in the way of the real fight: the PCs versus Jerrold Yellow-Eyes.

# Jerrold "Yellow-Eyes" Navarre CR 3

XP 800 Male human fighter 2/rogue 2 NE Medium humanoid (human) Init +5; Senses Perception +6 DEFENSE AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+6 armor, +1 Dex, +1 dodge) hp 34 (2d10+2d8+10) Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +1; +1 bonus on will saves against fear OFFENSE Speed 30 ft. Melee scimitar +8 (1d6+4/18-20) Special Attack sneak attack +1d6 STATISTICS Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 8 Base Atk +3; CMB +6; CMD 18 Feats Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Feint, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (bluff), Weapon Focus (scimitar) Skills Acrobatics +6, Bluff +9, Climb +10, Diplomacy +4, Intimidate +4, Perception +6, Profession (sailor) +8, Sense Motive +6, Sleight of Hand +6, Swim +10 Languages Common, Elven NPC Gear +1 scimitar, masterwork breastplate

Yellow-Eyes' Elite (5) CR 1 XP 400 Human fighter 2 NE Medium humanoid (human) Init +6; Senses Perception +0 DEFENSE AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor, +2 Dex) hp 21 (2d10+6) Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +1; +1 bonus on will saves against fear OFFENSE Speed 30 ft. (20 ft. with armor) Melee longspear +6 (1d8+3/x3) STATISTICS Str 15, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8 Base Atk +2; CMB +4 (+6 on bull rush); CMD 16 (18 vs bull rush) Feats Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longspear) Skills Climb +3, Profession +6, Swim +3 Languages Common NPC Gear masterwork chainmail, masterwork longspear

# Raider (20) CR 1/2

XP 200 Human warrior 2 NE Medium humanoid (human) Init +2; Senses Perception -1 DEFENSE AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +2 Dex) hp 19 (2d10+4) Fort +4, Ref +2, Will -1 OFFENSE Speed 30 ft. Melee battleaxe +5 (1d8+2/x3) Ranged javelin +4 (1d6+2) STATISTICS Str 14, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 7 Base Atk +2; CMB +3; CMD 14 Feats Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (battleaxe) Skills Climb +6, Profession (sailor) +4, Swim +6 Languages Common NPC Gear masterwork battleaxe, leather armor, javelin x6

Townsperson (recruitable) (30+) CR 1/3 XP 135 Male or female human commoner 1

N Medium humanoid (human) Init +1; Senses Perception +2 DEFENSE AC II, touch II, flat-footed 10 (+1 Dex) hp 8 (1d6+2) Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0 OFFENSE Speed 30 ft. Melee Ranged STATISTICS Str 12 (6), Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9 Base Atk +0; CMB +1 (-2); CMD 12 (9) Feats Alertness, Athletic Skills Climb +7 (+5), Perception +2, Profession (any) +4, Sense Motive +2, Swim +7 (+5) Proficiencies Club Languages Common NPC Gear None

# CONCLUSION

The PCs are lauded as heroes by the townspeople for saving them from the slavers. To show their gratitude, they offer the PCs all the treasure that the slavers took. Additionally, they might offer the PCs the captured boat. Though the boat itself is worth far more than the rest of the treasure (and rather more than 1st level PCs should possess) if the PCs are unable to sell it, it is little more than a means of transportation, allowing the PCs to have exciting nautical adventures, perhaps seeking out more pirates to defeat and plunder, or becoming pirates themselves.

Most likely the festivities are cut short with news of the Baroness' demise (though if the PCs intervened and prevented the assassination, she remains alive, having doubled her security). Either way, the PCs are likely to realize there is more to the Baroness' death than first meets the eye, and may decide (or be prodded towards) investigating the matter for themselves. Whether the assassination attempt succeeds or not, it isn't long before Rexx decides that he is, in fact, ready to risk a war with Orfanes and begins an all out invasion, though before then he may continue to send pirates and slavers to weaken their coastline. The PCs may also encounter Medauve again, especially if they become a thorn in Rexx's side, though next time it may be they who are his targets.

# NEW SPELLS AND MAGIC ITEMS:

#### ENRAGE ANIMALS

School enchantment (compulsion) [mindaffecting]; Level druid 1, ranger 1 Casting Time 1 standard action Components V, S Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels) Targets animals within 30 ft. of each other Duration 1 minute/level Saving Throw Will negates; Spell Resistance yes

This spell excites and angers animals, rendering them particularly ornery and difficult to control. Only ordinary animals (those with Intelligence scores of 1 or 2) can be affected by this spell. All the subjects must be of the same kind, and no two may be more than 30 feet apart. The maximum number of HD you can affect is equal to 2d4 + caster level.

The affected creatures' attitudes towards any other creature shift one step towards hostile for the duration of the spell, and any Handle Animal check or similar ability targeting an affected animal suffers a -2 penalty. This spell counters and dispels the spell calm animals.

# BOOTS OF THE ROOFWALKER

Aura faint transmutation; CL 3rd Slot feet; Price 5,400 gp; Weight 1 lb.

#### DESCRIPTION

As a swift action the wearer can activate one of the following abilities: *jump* – 3/day and *expeditious retreat* – 3/day.

#### CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, expeditious retreat, jump; Cost 2,700 gp

# TERROR ABOARD THE HARPY'S FEATHER Written by Alex Riggs

# SYNOPSIS:

In this adventure, the PCs have all booked passage (separately or together) on The Harpy's Feather, a large, oceangoing vessel. Unbeknownst to the PCs, however, one of the crewmen on The Harpy's Feather, Gerric Thorne, was bitten by a wererat while the ship was last in port. He appeared fine at the time of the incident, but by the time the full moon arises and he starts showing symptoms, the Feather is already well beyond any hope of help. As the corpses of crew and passengers begin to pile up, the PCs must band together or else find themselves the next victims.

# CAST OF CHARACTERS:

The following characters feature prominently in the adventure. You should familiarize yourself with their personalities, as the PCs will likely want to interview or question them at length. You may also want to prepare a few sample crew members, as the PCs are likely to want to talk to several members of the ship's crew throughout the adventure.

• Captain Louis Rodanese (LG Human Expert 4): The captain of The Harpy's Feather, Captain Rodanese is a stern, no nonsense man who takes his responsibilities as captain very seriously. He isn't unfriendly, per se, and has a reputation for fairness, but has a strong sense of professionalism and always places the safety of his crew, passengers, and ship ahead of everything else.

• Gerric Thorne (CE Human Wererat Expert 1): A minor deckhand, nothing much set Gerric apart from his fellow crewmembers until the last time the Feather was in port, when Gerric was bitten by a wererat. A man of meager wealth, Gerric was afraid that if he told the captain about the incident he might not be allowed to return to the Feather, and so he kept the encounter to himself, hoping that he had managed to avoid the lycanthrope's curse. He is terrified when he begins waking up with blood on his hands and clothes, but still too afraid to come forward. He wants nothing more than for the entire problem to just go away.

• First Mate Martin Jorien (NE Human Expert 3): A very determined and ambitious man, Martin Jorien is jealous of his position of relative authority and takes every opportunity to use it. Hated by most of the crew, who resent being bossed around by the harsh but physically unimposing youth, Jorien returns the feeling, often assigning harsh penalties to his detractors.

• Madame Sorianne Mulaude (N Human Aristocrat 2): A very wealthy noblewoman, Madame Mulaude is getting on in the years, and has decided to spend her last years traveling the world. She is very accustomed to a "certain standard of living" and is highly critical of just about everything on the Feather. She is absolutely mortified when the deaths start, and cannot wait for the Feather to make port again. She has a pampered white cat, Monsieur Whiskerton, who she constantly coddles and pampers.

• Vivian Mardrent (N Human Commoner I): Vivian is on the Feather fleeing the attentions of a local landholder who wouldn't take "no" for an answer. She has high hopes of starting a new life once the Feather makes port. She is a relatively quiet and kind woman, not to mention very beautiful, and becomes very frightened when the killings begin.

• Elosio Hererra (CG Human Ranger 2): A robust man from a faraway land, Elosio has many opinions and never shies away from sharing them. A brash man of action, he is traveling on the Feather in search of adventure. When the killings begin he is very loud in his cries for action, appointing himself in charge of ferreting out the killer. When angered he is quick to call for a duel, complaining that his honor has been besmirched, but if the offending party is relatively contrite he will usually forgive the offense without violence.

• Laurnis Gedric (NE Human Rogue 2): An accomplished thief, Laurnis booked passage on the Feather after a particularly exorbitant string of crimes and is looking to find somewhere quiet to pawn off his ill-gotten gains.

• Adam and Vanessa Tanner (N Human Expert 2; CN Human Commoner 2): The Tanners are young and passionate lovers, recently married and fleeing Vanessa's father, Joseph Golmant, a merchant of moderate wealth who did not approve of their union.

# **GETTING STARTED:**

The easiest explanation for why the PCs are all aboard the feather is that they are travelling together. If you intend for this adventure to be the beginning of a series of adventures, and not a stand-alone adventure, you should probably determine the destination of *The Harpy's Feather* in advance, and allow each player to determine their character's reason for traveling there (alternatively, if you prefer to do things simply, the party could be travelling together, rather than separately). Once the PCs are aboard the Feather they almost can't help but get involved in what follows, which will unfold on its own.

# **BOARDING THE HARPY'S FEATHER:**

Before the action starts, give your players a little time to get acquainted with the ship. Have a deckhand (perhaps even Gerric himself) offer to give them a tour, either separately or as a group. This should help get your players familiar with some of the key locations onboard. Additionally, either as additional tour members or (better yet) as separate encounters, allow the PCs to get passably acquainted with their fellow passengers. They might encounter Madame Mulaude berating a deckhand for the conditions of her room, or Elosio Hererra might call them over for a drink, insisting that they listen to tales of his previous adventures and conquests.

It is important during this time not to draw too much attention to Gerric, or your PCs will start to wonder why this in particular deckhand is being made so important. Having him give the PCs a tour is an excellent way to introduce him without arousing suspicion—especially if you appear to have to make up his name on the spot or draw it from a random name list.

# THE FIRST DEATH:

The first murder does not occur for several days, until the Feather is well out to sea, on the night of the first full moon after the ship leaves port (feel free to mention the phase of the moon to the PCs, but be sure not to draw too much attention to it, or they'll immediately suspect lycanthropes). Gerric, cursed by a particularly potent string of lycanthropy (see Bloodfang Wererats, below) transforms for the first time and begins hunting about the ship for blood. He shortly finds it in the form of a deckhand (Peter Ventemar) who he murders in his bed three rooms away before retreating back to his room, his bloodlust sated for the night.

The deckhands sleep in an entirely different area of the ship from the passengers, so unless one of the PCs decides to wander through that area on that in particular night, the murder is not discovered for several hours. In that time Gerric has awoken, discovered blood on his hands much to his horror, and quietly slunk off to wash them. The body is discovered by another crew member ("Billy" Abrams) who quickly raises the alarm.

Once the body is dealt with, Captain Rodanese calls all the passengers for a meeting in the parlor (see Locations on the Ship, below), where he explains the facts of the situation and that someone on the boat is likely a murderer, and that regrettably the passengers are all in danger. He apologizes for the situation, and advises that the passengers all be especially careful while he attempts to uncover the culprit. Madame Mulaude faints at the news, and when she comes to she is hysterical for the better part of the day. Laurnis Gedric remains especially quiet, and takes the first opportunity to return to his rooms, where he will spend most of the rest of the trip, if the PCs let him. Elosio Hererra loudly proclaims that the "rogue" responsible for the death shall not go unpunished, and that he shall find the culprit and bring him to justice, and calls loudly for the other passengers (specifically calling to at least one PC) to join him in this venture. Adam and Vanessa Tanner engage in a hushed and earnest conversation, after which Adam reveals melodramatically that Vanessa was gone from his room most of last night, and he doesn't know where she was. Elosio immediately dismisses the possibility that a beautiful young woman could be the culprit, but the PCs and other passengers may not be so easily swayed.

In fact, Vanessa was seduced by Elosio the night before, and spent most of the evening with him. She feels awful about the entire thing, and if found out her only excuse is that she was "swept up" by his charismatic presence and tales of "daring do". Vanessa doesn't want to endanger her marriage, however, and only confesses to this if it seems likely that she is going to be killed or imprisoned for Peter's death, or if the PCs uncover the truth for themselves. In either case she begs them not to tell her husband.

A DC 15 Diplomacy check and a few hours canvassing the crew asking about Vanessa or other strange happenings the night of the murder is enough for the PCs to find someone who remembers seeing Vanessa enter Elosio's chambers, at which point the PCs should be able to draw the right conclusion about her activities that night. Though the PCs aren't likely to get a chance to see the body, which was ceremoniously thrown overboard prior to the meeting in the parlor, a separate DC 15 Diplomacy check canvassing the crew for information about the body (or directly asking Captain Rodanese) will get the PCs a description of the wound Peter suffered: a jagged, wicked looking cut on his throat. The best guess anyone on board has is that it was some kind of strange serrated dagger, but in actuality it was one of the wererat's long, vicious nails.

If the PCs talk to the captain and express a desire to help, and if the captain feels he can trust them, he will call them over to examine any future murder scenes with him, and may grant reasonable aid in the PCs' investigations, such as allowing them to search a passenger or crewman's room. His trust only goes so far, however, and if the PCs are too fast and loose with it he will quickly stop involving them in the investigation.

# THE SECOND MURDER:

The first night after Peter is murdered, Gerric once again transforms and stalks the ship in search of \someone to slay. He finds Adam Tanner, who, after a quarrel with his wife (either due to her admission of infidelity or due to her unwillingness to explain where she was the previous night) decided to take quarters elsewhere, and moved in with the crew as there weren't any more passenger rooms available. Unlike with the previous victim, Adam is awake when Gerric comes to kill him, and puts up a fight. He manages to give Gerric a nasty cut on his claw before Gerric rips into his throat and tears it out, leaving Adam to bleed out on the floor. The sound of the fight quickly brings a number of crewmen to investigate (and the PCs, if they either succeed on a DC 20 Perception check or have gained the cooperation of captain Rodanese, who summons them to see the scene of the crime). ). By the time even the fastest help arrives, however, Gerric has made his escape, heading straight back to his room and falling unconscious, only to awaken a few moments later as

himself. Luckily for him, his fast healing closed his wound almost immediately, so while he left a trail of blood from the scene of the crime, it stopped a little ways short of his room.

Presumably the PCs are summoned to the scene of the murder, but if for whatever reason the captain doesn't trust them they can find out the following information from one of the deckhands with a DC 15 Diplomacy check. By the time anyone arrives on the scene, all that remains is Adam's corpse and a lot of blood. The PCs find a dagger in Adam's hand, its blade wet with blood. They find his throat ripped open, and with a DC 15 Heal check are able to determine that whatever caused the wound was jagged and uneven-clearly not the knife in his hand. They also can't fail to miss the trail of blood leading out of the room, and clever PCs will conclude that it belongs to the murderer, and that he was injured in the fight. If they follow the trail, they find that it leads down the hallway about 10 feet, stopping outside of the late Peter Ventemar's room (searching the room turns up nothing of particular interest). If the PCs think to check for the whereabouts of all the crewmen and see if anyone is missing, they find several crewmen missing from their rooms, though all of them are supposed to be on duty. They find Gerric asleep in his room, and if they check him for wounds (DC 12 Heal check), find he has a faint scar on his hands that's nearly healed and looks to be several weeks old.

If the PCs investigate the other passengers, they find all but Vanessa in their rooms, though that doesn't mean much with the head-start the killer had. Vanessa, upset by her fight with her husband, can be found in the parlor, where she had spent the previous hour or so moping and pining (you should decide in advance whether or not basic healing magic would allow her to remove any trace of wounds, because your PCs may very well ask you that as soon as they find out she's uninjured). Of the remaining passengers, Elosio suffers from a wicked cut on his right hand, which, if questioned about, he indignantly proclaims that he got while playing a game of knives with one of the crewmen. He doesn't remember who it was, and it takes a DC 20 Diplomacy check and several hours for the PCs to track down the crewman (James Miller) in question.

The PCs can have either Gerric or Elosio confined to their quarters and put under guard if they succeed on a DC 20 Diplomacy check (25 for Gerric, as the evidence against him is much weaker) to convince captain Rodanese. He is conferring with his first mate, Martin Jorien, at the time. Martin is attempting to convince the captain to confine the PCs to quarters (or, if they have been particularly rowdy, he may even be pushing to have them thrown overboard). His argument is fairly insubstantial, and is based largely on his general dislike of heavily-armed adventurers who are acting with more authority than he feels they should have, but he makes it very loudly. Though the captain dismisses the claims (probably...if your PCs are exceptionally violent or suspicious, he may seriously consider the accusation) it isn't long before everyone on the Feather knows about the incident.

#### THE THIRD MURDER

Even if the PCs manager to get Gerric confined to his quarters, it proves not to be much of an obstacle to him. Once he's transformed he simply slips out of the porthole in his room and claws his way along the outside of the ship (if the PCs anticipate this and have him moved to a room that doesn't have a porthole he breaks out and kills his guard, which should settle the fact that he is, in fact, the killer). If he is still at large, it's even simpler for him. On the third night he stumbles across first mate Martin Jorien, who barely has time to let out a scream before he is slaughtered.

By now the PCs may have set someone to watch Gerric or other suspects. Depending on how the PCs set up this surveillance, they may or may not be aware of Gerric's disappearance. Elosio, if he isn't confined to quarters, is busy "entertaining" crewmen with his stories in the mess hall at the time of the murder. Vanessa is alone in her room, lamenting the death of her husband (and feeling guilty about her affair with Elosio). She turns to any PC around her for comfort.

Madame Mulaude is in the parlor with her cat, Monsieur Whiskerton. She will complain endlessly to the PCs about anything and everything, and PCs who listen to her ranting are rewarded with the knowledge (mingled in with other stories and complaints) that her cat has taken an intense disliking to Gerric. Madame Mulaude assumes it's because Gerric is a "common and dirty sailor type" and that the cat has "refined taste and won't settle for that sort of company" but clever PCs may find the information useful. Laurnis Gedric remains in his room, and won't allow any of the PCs inside under any circumstances. If they get suspicious enough to force their way in, they find nothing amiss unless they begin searching his belongings, at which point they find several paintings and pieces of expensive jewelry amongst his possessions. Clever PCs will realize that something is amiss, but likely won't know what to do about it, and will most likely realize he isn't the culprit.

Vivian actively seeks out a PC, preferring male PCs with high Strength and Charisma scores, and asks if she can stay with them for a time because she doesn't feel safe. Suspicious PCs may feel that she is setting them up for a trap, but in fact she is entirely on the level. If none of the PCs will take her (or they otherwise aren't to her taste) she instead turns to Elosio for comfort, and he is happy to have her.

Once word of the murder gets out, however, Elosio levels his suspicions that the PCs (or, at least, one of them) are the culprit. He points out that they had a quarrel with the deceased (based on the first mate's own suspicions of the PCs) and-if it's true-that they had little in the way of an alibi. The PCs (or single PC) must make their own case for their innocence, which requires a successful DC 25 Diplomacy check (with a bonus of +5 per successful argument in favor of their innocence) or be confined to their quarters. Anyone who was confined to quarters previously is released, regardless of whether the PCs are found guilty, because it seems clear that anyone confined to their quarters couldn't have committed the murders.

# THE ATTACK

On the fourth night, when Gerric transforms, he finds his way to one of the PCs' rooms. Which PC is up to you (they may have taken to sharing rooms at this point), and if one of the PCs is confined to his quarters Gerric may start there. Luckily for the PC their door is in bad need of oil, and lets off a terrible noise as the wererat sneaks into the room (mentioning this when the PCs first board the boat will create a greater sense of consistency and will clue in any other PCs who hear the noise that something is happening in that room) automatically waking any of the room's occupants. Gerric attacks savagely and fights until either his opponent is dead, he hears someone coming, or he is injured. If he manages to kill his target before any help arrives on the scene he heads back to his quarters. If he can't make a clean escape, however, he heads up to the deck and jumps overboard, later clinging to the outside of the ship and climbing back aboard once the PCs are convinced that he's gone for good.

#### Gerric Thorne (Human Form) CR 2 XP 600

Male human afflicted bloodfang wererat expert 2 (augmented humanoid) CE Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger) Init +I; Senses low-light vision, scent; Perception +6 DEFENSE AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10 (+1 Dex, +1 dodge) hp 12 (2d8) Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +4 OFFENSE Speed 30 ft. Melee dagger +2 (1d6+1/19-20) STATISTICS Str 12, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 6 Base Atk +1; CMB +2; CMD 13 Feats Dodge, Stealthy Skills Bluff +3, Climb +6, Escape Artist +8, Perception +6, Profession (sailor) +6, Sense Motive +6, Stealth +8, Swim +6 Languages Common SQ change shape (human, hybrid, and dire rat; polymorph), lycanthropic empathy (rats and dire rats)

# Gerric Thorne (Hybrid Form) CR 2 XP 600

Male human afflicted bloodfang wererat expert 2 (augmented humanoid)

CE Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger) Init +3; Senses low-light vision, scent; Perception +6 DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 14, flat-footed 12 (+3 Dex, +2 natural, +1 dodge)

hp 16 (2d8+4); fast healing 2 Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +4 Defensive Abilities DR 5/silver OFFENSE Speed 30 ft. Melee bite +4 (1d4+4 plus disease and curse of lycanthropy; DC 15) STATISTICS Str 16, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 6 Base Atk +1; CMB +3; CMD 16 Feats Dodge, Stealthy Skills Bluff +3, Climb +7, Escape Artist +10, Perception +6, Profession (sailor) +6, Sense Motive +5, Stealth +10, Swim +7 Languages Common SQ change shape (human, hybrid, and dire rat; polymorph), lycanthropic empathy (rats and dire rats)

# SPECIAL ABILITIES Curse of Lycanthropy (Su)

A natural lycanthrope's bite attack in animal or hybrid form infects a humanoid target with lycanthropy (Fortitude DC 15 negates). If the victim's size is not within one size category of the lycanthrope, this ability has no effect.

# Disease (Ex)

Filth fever: Bite—injury; save Fort DC 13; onset 1d3 days; frequency 1/day; effect 1d3 Dex damage and 1d3 Con damage; cure 2 consecutive saves. The save DC is Constitution-based.

# Lycanthropic Empathy (Ex)

In any form, natural lycanthropes can communicate and empathize with animals related to their animal form. They can use Diplomacy to alter such an animal's attitude, and when so doing gain a +4 racial bonus on the check. Afflicted lycanthropes only gain this ability in animal or hybrid form.

# CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

Unless the PCs manage to block Gerric's escape, the adventure doesn't end when he leaps off the ship. It doesn't take much work for the PCs (or the captain, for that matter) to determine that the only missing person is Gerric, and that he is therefore likely the culprit. If you'd prefer, Gerric could return to his room before the headcount is complete, thus leaving the PCs to assume that the wererat was never actually a part of the crew. In this case, Gerric will need some way of explaining why he is soaking wet with seawater.

Left unchecked, Gerric continues killing. His next target is Elosio, then Madame Mulaude. If the PCs wisely acquire the silver cavalry sabers from the parlor, and he finds out about it, Gerric targets that PC, hoping to kill them in their sleep and throw the saber overboard where it won't be a threat to him. Eventually the PCs either confront the wererat and dispose of him, or they find a good place to hide and wait for the ship to reach port.

When the PCs do reach their destination (whether they successfully deal with Gerric or not) you may have some difficulty keeping them together as a party if they boarded the Feather separately and are pursuing different interests. Think ahead and see if you can't find ways to connect their various goals, even if it's as simple as "they all need to reach a specific city, which is far away". If Gerric survives, he might come back to haunt the PCs later, or they may find themselves running into surviving passengers (or booking passage aboard the boat) again in the future.

Alternatively, Gerric could be an assassin or agent hired to cause trouble on board the ship. Whether there is a specific target (perhaps the PCs) and the other deaths are simply to provide a cover for the intended death, or because the larger merchant organization the Feather is associated with has crossed the wererat's employer, Gerric still makes for a deadly enemy for the PCs. With this option, once the PCs slay the wererat they find a letter or note on his person which indicates that he was hired for some purpose (whether or not that purpose is clear to the PCs is up to you), which can lead to an adventure as the PCs seek out the lycanthrope's mysterious employers

# LOCATIONS ON THE FEATHER:

The Passenger Quarters: These rooms connect to a single long corridor on the uppermost deck at the stern (front) of the ship which leads into the parlor, and are home to the Feather's passengers. The doors are wooden and boast simple locks. The rooms are relatively well-furnished, but PCs used to luxury are due to be disappointed. Roughly half the rooms are designed to house couples, and these feature a larger bed.

The Parlor: This room is surprisingly luxurious and comfortable, considering it's found in the bowels of a boat. Its red carpet is slightly mildewed, and there are a few scuff marks and scratches on the otherwise comfy furniture. The fireplace in the corner is an illusion, meaning it doesn't provide any heat, but it does add to the room's ambience. The two silver cavalry sabers (treat as longswords) hanging over the fireplace, however, are not illusory and belong to the captain as an award for his prior naval service. The parlor is designed to be a place where the passengers can intermingle and relax, and is located on the uppermost deck between the passenger quarters and the mess room, and must be passed through in order to reach the passenger quarters.



The Mess Room: This large room has several long, thin wooden tables lined on either side by benches, and is where meals are served (though passengers can choose to take their meals in their rooms or in the parlor). Adjoined to the mess room is the galley where food is prepared. The mess room is on the uppermost deck between the parlor and the storage rooms.

Crew Quarters: The crew quarters are small and cramped, but at the very least each crewman gets his own room. Crew quarters can be found on the second and third decks on the front half of the boat.

Storage Rooms/Cargo: The rest of the ship, consisting of a small section of the first deck, half of the second and third decks, and the entire fourth deck serve as a storage area for the ship's supplies and any cargo she might be carrying. Passengers who spend too much time in these areas may be politely asked to leave.

*Miscellaneous:* Though the Feather is designed to carry passengers, it is still a boat, and space is still at a premium, meaning that hallways are never more than 5 feet wide. Most rooms in the ship have portholes, and all doors on the ship are made of wood.

# **BLOODFANG WERERATS**

Gerric is infected by a rare and especially potent strain of wererat lycanthropy which makes him different from other wererats in several ways. Firstly, once he makes his first transformation at the full moon, he

continues to transform once each night regardless of the phases of the moon. Second, whenever he is transformed he suffers from an intense bloodlust, and must immediately seek out a living, sentient creature and slay it. Natural lycanthropes of this type can resist this urge with a Wisdom check (DC 12 + 1 per previous night) but few choose to do so.

Bloodfang wererats are different mechanically, as well. They have fast healing (5 for natural bloodfang wererats and 2 for afflicted), and their Strength bonus when in hybrid form is +4, rather than +2. To reflect these differences, the CR adjustment for bloodfang wererats is one higher than for typical wererats.

# THE FALL OF HOUSE SAHR Written by Alex Riggs

# SYNOPSIS:

In this adventure, the PCs have run afoul of a Nora'ka, a forgotten and spiteful demigod of revenge. Berevan Sahr, one of the few priests remaining who worships Nora'ka, has them pulled into a nightmarish realm where he intends to exact a terrible vengeance in the name of his deity. The PCs must navigate his hellish stronghold and weaken his grip on the realm if they are to have any hope of defeating him and escaping with their lives.

# **BACKGROUND**:

In the past, Nora'ka was a fully-fledged goddess of vengeance and painful retribution. One would utter a prayer to Nora'ka that their enemies would be punished for various slights or injustices. In more extreme cases, Nora'ka was known to make pacts with mortals, exacting their vengeance (or allowing them to exact it personally) in exchange for ownership of their soul and eternal servitude in undeath. Unfortunately for her, Nora'ka was exceptionally vengeful herself, and eventually her list of enemies became too long for her to maintain. Stubbornly, she refused to forgive any slight, and eventually overextended herself, falling from power into obscurity.

Berevan Sahr, a minor noble in a backwater province, devoted himself to Nora'ka after Terese Lonvit, a woman he had long pined for from afar, married his older brother Alvir. One of Nora'ka's most prominent clerics, an ettercap named Reektep'parr, inducted Berevan into Nora'ka's priesthood and showed him how to access to the Realm of Dreams, a quasi-real plane that mirrors the material plane but is twisted by the thoughts, dreams, and desires of mortals. The Realm of Dreams is a dangerous place, but Berevan's status as lord of the local castle allowed him to control the dream version of his family's demesne, subjugating the dream-castle's existing occupants, a clan of tengu.

Once he had dragged Terese and Alvir into his dreamscape stronghold and taken over the family's estate in the material plane, Reektep'parr gave him a massive tome which contained the list of Nora'ka's enemies and how they had wronged her He ordered Berevan to begin taking vengeance on these enemies, so that Nora'ka might eventually be returned to power. Using his tengu agents, he began luring these victims to his dream-castle, where he would inflict terrible retributions upon them. Before long, the names of the PCs were at the top of his list.

# **GETTING STARTED:**

You will need to determine what the PCs have done to earn the ire of Nora'ka. Luckily, as Nora'ka is the demi-god of revenge, and known for her vehement grudges over even the smallest perceived slights, this need not be anything spectacular. Most likely it wasn't even the PCs themselves who angered her, but an ancestor of theirs. Talk to your players and determine if any of their characters have adventurers in their family tree. One approach is to have the PCs all be descendants of a party of adventurers who struck a mighty blow against Nora'ka, explaining why they are being "punished" as a group. Alternatively, if one or more players are adamant that their character comes from a purely mundane background of commoners, the PCs' a ncestors might still have angered Nora'ka by disrespecting one of her shrines or angering one of her priests, back when she was still in power. The offender may not even have realized he or she had earned the ire of the dark goddess, and the PC could be completely baffled by the accusations Berevan levels.

If the PCs begin the adventure as an already formed party, the adventure begins when they receive a mysterious letter requesting their presence at the Sahr manor (see below). If the PCs begin play without being intimately familiar with each other, however, you have two options: the simpler of the two is to just give each of the PCs a separate version of the letter mentioned above. Alternatively, if you prefer, the PCs need never meet in the material plane: Berevan's tengu can slip them doses of dream essence (see Dream Essence, below) in their homes (or wherever else they happen to be), causing them to wake up in Berevan's dream-castle. In the latter case, the PCs will skip straight to the Dining Room.

#### THE LETTER:

Berevan sends the PCs the following letter, along with 50 gold each, to lure them to his castle on the material plane. Though he sends one of his tengu minions to deliver the letter, the tengu does not deliver the letter in person, as Berevan is concerned that they will be less likely to come if they see one of the crow people. Instead, the PCs likely find the letter one morning, a tengu having slid it under the door during the night. The letter is written with the assumption that the PCs are all descendants of an adventuring party who dealt a terrible blow to Nora'ka at the height of her power, and may need to be adjusted depending on your PCs' backgrounds.

#### Dear Adventurer.

A delicate situation has arisen and I require the aid of a capable champion to act on my behalf. My house still keeps fresh the memories of your ancestor, who stood valiantly in the face of the dark goddess Nora'ka and was instrumental in her defeat, and so I can think of no better champion for my cause than yourself. If you will grant me the honor of coming to the Sahr estate in Hillsford. Iwould be very pleased to further discuss the situation and what needs to be done, as well as what would serve a suitable payment for you. In the meantime, take the enclosed gold as a token of my respect and esteem for both you and your noble ancestor.

#### Sincerely, Lord Berevan Sahr

#### SAHR ESTATE:

The Sahr estate is in fact a rather imposing stone castle, set in the heart of the Hillsford region, and about a half-day's ride from any of the nearby townsteads, most of which are simple farming communities and none of which is larger than a small village. When the PCs arrive (either together or separately) they are greeted by Erlton, Berevan's chamberlain, who offers to have their things taken to their rooms and show them to the parlor. He explains that Lord Sahr is very busy, but is eagerly awaiting dining with them that evening. Eventually all the PCs should arrive in the parlor, where, if they arrived separately they might be surprised to find that they weren't the only ones summoned by Berevan.

Berevan has kept his religious conversion and frequent trips to the Realm of Dreams to himself, not confiding in any of his staff, including Erlton. Despite this, many of the staff have noticed Berevan's darkening temper since he became the head of the household, as well as the numerous disappearances of houseguests (in fact, these guests were other enemies of Nora'ka that Berevan has already exacted his vengeance on). Some even whisper that Berevan was responsible for the deaths of the late lord and his wife, but none are willing to say so openly. Despite these concerns, the staff are all close to Berevan, most of them having served the house of Sahr since before the priest was born, and are not willing to betray him-though, at your option, one or more servants might try to spur the PCs to flee the castle before they, too, disappear. If they do, they aren't open about it, and the most that they will say is that the PCs should leave, not that they are in danger or that anyone has disappeared previously.

The castle (and, by extension, the parlor) is furnished richly but sparsely, as many of the pieces which once adorned its halls have been sold off in the years since the castle's heyday. Generally speaking the material castle should give the impression of being somewhat old, but should not be overly intimidating to the PCs. It is not especially dark or dreary: leave that kind of embellishment for the dream version of the castle, below.

After the PCs have had a chance to get acquainted with one another (something which may not take much time at all, if they arrived as a group) dinnertime arrives, and Erlton leads them to the dining room, where the banquet table is set with a delicious looking feast. Unbeknownst to the PCs, however, Berevan has had his tengu minions poison the food with dream essence (see Dream Essence, below). He arrives shortly after they do, and begins to engage in small-talk until he is sure that all the PCs have been exposed to the dream essence, dismissing any talk of their business as something to be discussed after the meal is finished. His hateful, smiling face is the last thing they see before sleep claims them.

# FEATURES OF THE DREAM CASTLE

When the PCs come to, they find themselves in the Realm of Dreams' version of Sahr manor. Twisted to reflect the soul of its new master, the castle has a dark and gothic motif, and the leering faces of gargoyles stare at the PCs from every angle. No matter how much light the PCs bring to bare the castle should remain dimly-lit and full of alcoves and corners which could contain lurking enemies, waiting for the opportunity to strike.

PCs looking through windows see a dark and dreary landscape surrounding the castle, as Berevan's lands have been twisted by his psyche much as the castle has. Those attempting to exit the castle by any means find themselves walking in through the castle's front door, as the master of the castle has cut it off from the outside world, trapping the PCs.

The first time (and only the first time) the PCs enter a new room (other than the trophy room or Berevan's sanctum) they are struck by a very vivid, lifelike vision of some horrible act of torture. These visions are not illusions, but actually a view into the nightmare prisons Berevan has created for his victims (see Master of the Castle, below). The visions are brief-quick flashes, making it difficult to discern much detail—and then vanish. Depending on your group's play style and how much you want to play up this element of the adventure you can expand upon the descriptions included here, but be sure to consider the feelings of your players, as some may not appreciate spending an extensive amount of time on such dark imagery. Each of the rooms' descriptions also contains information about how to free that room's prisoner, but information on the prisoners can be found in The Trophy Room, below.

# THE DINING ROOM

The PCs awake in the dining room of the castle, and are horrified by a vision of a swarm of spiders feasting on the still-living body of a man bound to the dining room table. The vision lasts only a few moments and then fades, revealing the table to instead be laid out with a sumptuous-looking meal featuring roast goose, mashed potatoes and gravy, fresh-baked bread with butter, sweet potatoes, sweet fruits and a large bowl of some kind of delicious looking stew (boar with carrots, peas, and diced potatoes). Several decanters with wines of various flavors, as well as a large horn of mead are also laid out.

As the PCs dig in (or decide not to, whether unnerved by the grisly image or concerned about poison), the voice of Berevan Sahr rings out through the room, and he steps from the darkness beyond the doorway and into the dining chamber. He mocks the PCs, gloating that they have fallen into his trap and that here, in his demesne, they have no chance of defeating him. He exchanges taunts with the PCs, laughing if they attack him (he is in fact nothing more than a projected image of his real self, though he doesn't tell the PCs that. See Master of the Castle, below) and declaring that their struggles are pointless, and that "the Dark Goddess Nora'ka will punish you eternally for your crimes." Berevan follows the PCs in this way through the adventure, relishing in their setbacks and difficulties, and occasionally providing not-so-helpful commentary or outright tormenting them with talk of the ways in which he intends to have them tortured for eternity (groups with different play-styles may prefer not to be followed by Berevan, and if you feel your players aren't enjoying his presence you should quickly and quietly find a way for him to depart, either appearing to grow bored of them or infuriated at something they say or do).

Eating all (or at least most of) the food on the table releases Simon Hodlands, see The Trophy Room, below, for details.

# THE KITCHEN

As the PCs enter this room, they are greeted by the vision of a huge iron cook-pot, tended by a towering and leering demon, who pokes and prods at the figure of a woman, her head just visible above the water, who appears to be being cooked and boiled alive. As the vision passes, they find the room to be a kitchen, and completely devoid of any such oversized cookware. The room is, however, inhabited by three of Berevan's tengu servants, who look to Berevan for orders if he is present (he casually motions for them to attack), or simply attack the PCs if he isn't.

The kitchen is fully functional, and is a cramped and busy place. Counters should divide the room into 5' wide strips, filling the room with bottlenecks and chokepoints. The counters are about 4' high, and can be moved onto with a move action, granting higher ground. Feel free to complicate the fight further, however, with heated stoves (sections of the counter which do fire damage to anyone touching them), pots of boiling stew (splash weapon



which deals 1 point of fire damage and blinds the target if they fail a DC 10 Reflex save), barrels of grease which can be knocked over (treat as the grease spell, DC 10), etc.

Searching the room reveals just about anything that can be expected to be found in a medieval castle's kitchen, as well as a few rarer ingredients, such as ankheg meat and lizardfolk eggs, which can be identified with a DC 15 Appraise check. Killing the head chef (one of the tengu, differentiated from the others by a large chef's hat) frees the spirit of Katie Allen, see The Trophy Room, below, for details.

Stats for tengu can be found in the Pathfinder Bestiary.

# THE MAIN HALL

Awaiting the PCs in the main hall is the projected image of Terese Sahr, wife of the late Alvir Sahr and, if Berevan gets his way, consort to the new ruler of the castle. Either because of her connection to the previous lord of the castle, or because Berevan has proclaimed her to be his lady, she shares some of his power as master of the castle (see Master of the Castle, below). Her ability scores remain unaltered, and she cannot imprison people in nightmare realms, but she can project her image in the same manner as Berevan, and she can see into the various nightmare prisons Berevan has created.

Terese implores the PCs to set free the castle's prisoners, telling them that she can explain more upstairs. Then, unable to maintain the image any longer, she fades away. A pair of spiral staircases lead up to a balcony on the second floor, and in the northwestern corner of the room there is a doorway which opens to a dark and cramped stairwell leading downwards to the cellar. The balcony at the top of the stairs is trapped with a dementia mist trap.

#### Dementia Mist Trap CR 3

Type mechanical; Perception DC 20 Disable DC 15 Effects Trigger location;Reset repair Effect poison gas (dementia mist); never miss; onset delay (1 round); multiple targets (all targets within 10 ft.)

#### Dementia Mist

Type poison, inhaled; Save Fortitude DC 13 Frequency 1/round for 4 rounds Effect 1d2 Wis damage; Cure 1 save

#### THE ARMORY

As the PCs enter this room, they see a flash of a dark and horrific torture chamber, where a vicious, one-eyed ogre is slowly sliding a jagged longsword into a shirtless man who dangles from chains attached to the ceiling, and who already has a number of blades sticking through him, giving the impression of a pincushion.

Far more decorative than functional, as the castle's defenders, the tengu, use little in the way of weapons or armor, the armory is still a very impressive sight. Numerous armor stands display various suits of highly polished and decorative armors, ranging from salamander-hide (treat as masterwork hide armor) to polished and lacquered black full-plate, complete with a raven feather cape. Various weapons hang from the walls, and PCs who take the time to search the room can find one of any simple or martial weapon. Banners also hang from the walls, alternating between the banner of House Sahr (a raven's head on a green background) and the banners of various other houses and organizations, which a successful DC 15 Knowledge (History) check reveals all belong to houses who were either allies or defeated enemies of House Sahr.

Mounted prominently at the far end of the room is a brightly polished heavy steel shield which bears the raven's head emblem of House Sahr. This is one of Berevan's items of authority (see Master of the Castle, below), and if the PCs take or destroy it they will weaken Berevan's grip on the castle. The shield is trapped however, and PCs who attempt to remove it from the wall trigger a poisoned dart trap (cunningly hidden behind the shield itself) which has been modified to deliver medium spider venom instead of the usual greenblood oil.

Removing all of the weapons from the room releases Jonah Masters, whose ghost arrives almost immediately to thank the PCs and offer them what aid he can (see The Trophy Room, below, for details).

#### Poisoned Dart Trap CRI

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 20 **Disable** DC 20 Effects

Trigger touch; Reset none

Effect attack +10 ranged (1d3 plus medium spider venom)

# THE PARLOR

As the PCs enter this room they are met with a blast of heat as though from a roaring inferno. In fact, the room appears to be filled with fire: the curtains, carpet, and even the furniture burning in a brilliant red haze. Curiously, though everything in the room is ablaze, none of it appears to be damaged or burnt, except for the room's occupant, a single man with charred and blackened skin who runs wildly and uncontrollably around the room, flailing his arms and screaming.. Like the other visions, this one quickly passes, revealing the true nature of the room.

The parlor is in fact comfortably furnished, with a plush red carpet and luxurious redcushioned sofas. A warm fire crackles gently in the fireplace, and a decanter of red wine rests on a table near an ornate cherry-wood armchair. A sword hangs from the wall, its cross-guard fashioned to resemble wings and its pommel carved in the shape of a raven's head (this is the Sword of House Sahr. See Master of the Castle, below, for details). Other objects of note include a portrait of Berevan (in which he holds a rod in one hand and a silver orb in the other), a grandfather clock, and a gold rod (the one pictured in the painting, if PCs look closely) resting on a stand in a glass display dome. None of these items are of particular importance, though the rod is trapped with a shocking grasp trap, which goes off if any PC touches the glass dome.

Putting out the fire in the fireplace releases Aden Bremerson, see The Trophy Room, below, for details.

#### Shocking Display Case Trap CRI

Type magic; Perception DC 26 Disable DC 26 Effects

#### Trigger touch; Reset none

Effect spell effect (shocking grasp, attack +6 melee, 2d6 electricity damage); multiple targets (all targets touching the display case).

## AUDIENCE CHAMBER

This room is clearly where the lord of the castle holds court: a lush red carpet bisects the room, and luxurious curtains and drapes hang along the walls. At the far end of the room, atop a raised platform, is a lavish throne of pure gold, studded with a fortune in diamonds, rubies, emeralds and sapphires to form a mosaic of the crest of the house of Sahr. Seated atop the throne is a man in resplendent robes and wearing a crown. Strikingly, he appears quite depressed, and, perhaps even more strikingly, he looks directly at the PCs as they enter, holding up his hands, as though to warn them away.

After a moment the vision passes and the room changes. The only obvious difference

difference is the lack of the man on the throne, but some of the furniture has changed as well: the throne, for example, is now carved from polished oak (and bereft of gems), and though the carpets and curtains may have once been fine, they are now older and faded. Added to the room, however, is a crown, which rests atop the throne (this is in fact the crown of house Sahr, see Master of the Castle, below). The crown is in slight need of polish, but is made of pure gold nonetheless.

Though the room is one of the least intimidating, as the vision which greets the PCs is less horrifying than those in most other rooms, it is in fact a very deadly trap. Four tengu hide behind the curtains (DC 25 Perception check to notice them), waiting until the PCs set off the sleep trap in the middle of the room, at which point they charge in and subdue any PCs who are still conscious, then bind all the PCs and take them to Berevan's room for their final confrontation. Berevan gloats for some time and then (once you've allowed the PCs to attempt Escape Artist checks and similar) begins imprisoning them one by one in nightmare rooms (see Master of the Castle, below).

Breaking the throne releases Alvir Sahr, whose ghost immediately flies here from the trophy room to converse with the PCs (see the Trophy Room, below, for details). If Berevan's image is traveling with the PCs, he tries to persuade them from destroying the throne, and throws a fit of rage if they do so, leaving their party to see the in rage until the final confrontation.

#### Sleep Trap CRI

Type magic; Perception DC 26 Disable DC 26 Effects

**Trigger** proximity (alarm); **Reset** none **Effect** spell effect (*sleep*, Will save DC 20 or fall unconscious); multiple targets (all targets within a 10 ft. radius).

Stats for tengu can be found in the Pathfinder Bestiary.

# THE CELLAR

The cellar is home to a vicious (and infrequently fed) ghoul, who Berevan keeps around as a very neglected pet. Unless the PCs have a way of hiding their scent, as well as their sound, the ghoul is waiting for them as they enter the cellar, and lays into them ferociously, focusing on the nearest, easiest target until they are slain and then dragging the corpse off to the corner, where he focuses on devouring the remains. If attacked while eating, he will defend himself, but once he has a meal, if the PCs leave him alone he will leave them alone.

PCs searching the room find a large stock of wine bottles, most of them emptied, but some full, and a handful both full and quite expensive. PCs who succeed on a DC 10 Search check (to find the wine) and a DC 15 Appraise check (to identify the vintage) can walk away with a 250 gp bottle of elvish Zinfandel, as well as two more 50 gp bottles of orcish bloodwine.

Stats for ghouls can be found in the Pathfinder Bestiary.

#### THE UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

This hallways is elegantly decorated with a variety of paintings and vases, as well as several busts and three or four suits of decorative armor. Closer examination of the room reveals that one of the suits of armor is wearing a cloak bearing the insignia of house Sahr (this is in fact the Cloak of House Sahr, see Master of the Castle, below).

The hall itself consists of a long series of doors on either side, which lead to several different rooms. Many of the rooms are servant's quarters or otherwise unremarkable. The four important rooms on this floor are: the Trophy Room, Terese's Room, the Library, and Berevan's Room.

# THE TROPHY ROOM

This room consists of a long hallway, lit by torches every 10 feet, and flanked on each side by two rows of statues, which, after a short ways, become two short rows of empty bases where statues could stand. PCs who wait for the image to fade are surprised to find that it doesn't, and the room remains the same no matter how long they remain in it. A close examination of the statues reveals that the statues each show a single figure in some state of terrible agony (most mid-scream, or with their hands outstretched, as though begging for aid), with a simple plaque at the bottom bearing their name and a brief description of the "crime" that the figure in the statue committed. PCs who attempt to break or damage the statues find them completely indestructible. There are perhaps two or three dozen statues all told, though there are roughly that many more empty bases, which, upon examination, can be seen to contain names and crimes, and want only for statues.

Most of the plaques-including one for each of the PCs, if they bother to look-list crimes such as "angering the Dark Goddess Nora'ka", but a handful list crimes which seem to be more personally related to the castle's master, such as a maid who "spilled tea on her master, Berevan Sahr", and Berevan's own brother, Alvir Sahr, whose plaque reads simply "betrayed his brother". Several of the statues radiates a strong magical aura of abjuration and necromancy (a DC 15 Knowledge (Arcana) or Spellcraft check allows a PC to come to the conclusion that they are some kind of magical prison for souls), and these are the statues of the prisoners whose spirits can still be freed (see Master of the Castle, below). The rest have passed on entirely, their souls eternally tormented by Nora'ka's servants, leaving simple stone statues behind.

Once a prisoner is freed, his or her statue crumbles to dust, and the prisoner's ghost appears in its place, floating gently above the stand where their statue once stood. Most (but not all) wait here for the PCs to come speak to them. When the PCs arrive, they thank them for freeing them and, in most cases, provide a useful piece of information.

PCs who have been in other rooms of the castle may recognize several of the tortures depicted in the statues. The individuals who can be saved are:

• Simon Hodlands, who is trapped in a nightmare version of the dining room, and who is depicted as being covered almost entirely in a swarm of tiny spiders. The crime listed on his plaque is "angering the Dark Goddess Nora'ka", though in fact, like the PCs, he himself committed no crime: it was his great-grandfather who committed the sin by striking one of Nora'ka's favored priests in a barroom brawl. Simon was brought here in a manner similar to the PCs, and is of little help to them, being but a simple cobbler. He does, however, know about the sleep trap in the audience chamger, and can warn the PCs about it.

• Jonah Masters, who is trapped in a nightmare version of the armory, and who is depicted with an alarming number of blades protruding from his torso. The crime listed on his plaque is "angering the Dark Goddess Nora'ka", and he is the great-great-grandson of Lindsey Masters, a paladin who proved to be quite a thorn in Nora'ka's side. Though Jonah did not follow in his great-great-grandfather's steps, and is himself a scribe at a small monastery, he is wellacquainted with his ancestor's career, and will tell the PCs about it if they ask. He can also tell the PCs more about Nora'ka (see Background, above), offering encouragement but warning the PCs that even if they escape their problems with the dark goddess will be far from over. Unlike most of the souls trapped here, Jonah actively seeks out the PCs before departing, rather than waiting for them here.

· Aden Bremerson, who is trapped in a nightmare version of the parlor, and who is depicted with his skin cracked and blackened (his statue is of a slightly darker stone than the others). The crime listed on his plaque is "questioning the will of his lord", and he is a farmer who once lived on Berevan's land, and who was imprisoned here after expressing concerns that the recent lord's new tax rate would leave the local farmers without enough food. He is very familiar with Berevan's life as a young noble, if not so much with his life as a dark cleric, and can tell the PCs about Berevan's obsession with Terese (see Background, above), as well as informing him that Berevan has never been the kindest of lords, and that he overworks the peasants on his land.

 Katie Allen, who is trapped in a nightmare version of the castle's kitchen, is depicted curled up inside a large cauldron. The crime listed on her plaque is "spilled tea on her master", and she was once one of Berevan's maids. She can tell the PCs about Berevan's obsession with Terese, as Aden can, but she knows nothing of his governing policies. She does, however, know a bit about Berevan's change in personality, and can tell them that for several months he had a mysterious visitor at late hours who was always completely covered (this was in fact Reektep'par, who was instructing Berevan in how to enter the Realm of Dreams, but all Katie knows is that he was very unsettling, started appearing around the time Berevan began to change, and that the two of them were up to all hours of the night as strange

noises came from Berevan's room). She is quite anxious to leave, and will only wait for the PCs up to six hours before her spirit departs to its final resting place.

· Alvir Sahr, who is trapped in a nightmare version of the audience chamber, is depicted simply standing, a solemn and forlorn look on his face. The crime listed on his plaque is "betrayed his brother", and in fact Alvir was Berevan's older brother, before Berevan, jealous of Alvir's relationship with Terese, cast him into a nightmare prison. Originally Alvir was tortured like the others, and he quickly passed on, but Berevan refused to allow Alvir's spirit to be claimed by Nora'ka, and has been careful not to over-tax his brother ever since, preferring to force him to watch as Berevan continues his dark works on his brother's throne. He thanks the PCs for freeing him, and then warns them that unless they cut Berevan off from his power over this place they have no hope of defeating him. He can tell the PCs about the four items of authority (see Master of the Castle, below), though he doesn't know precisely what they are or where they can be found. If the PCs possess any when he speaks to them, or bring any to him, he can identify which items are, or are not, items of authority for the castle, though he doesn't know for sure what specific benefits any item has. He implores the PCs to put a stop to his brother, and if possible to free Terese from whatever torment Berevan has set upon her.

# TERESE'S ROOM

This room actually contains no door, and is instead sealed off from the rest of the castle with a shimmering wall of force. The room beyond appears pristine, and is clearly the home of a delicate young woman, with finely polished furniture, fresh flowers, and lace and doilies prevalent. The room has a single occupant, Terese Sahr. Wife to the late Alvir Sahr, Terese was the object of Berevan's obsessions and desires, and when Berevan imprisoned Alvir in a nightmare prison he declared that he was taking Terese as his lady, setting her up here. She is no fan of Berevan's, however, and refuses to cooperate with him, which is why he has confined her to her room.

As long as Berevan lives the wall of force will stand (unless it is successfully dispelled, in which case it is suppressed for 1d4 rounds). It is not actually sheer, and in fact there is a small hole in the bottom where the tengu deliver her food on a regular basis.

If the PCs pass by her room, Terese calls out to them, attempting to grab their attention. She explains about Berevan's love for her and how he deposed his brother, as well as his horrible nightmare prisons. She does not know about the items of authority, but she does know that the people entrapped in Berevan's hellish torture chambers can be freed by seemingly simple actions around the castle. She does not know the specifics of how to rescue any of the prisoners, but can at least point the PCs on the right track. She cares little for herself, but can't stand to think of all the innocents suffering in the nightmare prisons, and begs the PCs to set them all free.

# THE LIBRARY

This room is a small, personal library which predates not only Berevan's ownership of the castle, but also the tengu he found inhabiting the place. PCs who take the time to examine the various dusty books in the library find three to be of interest.

The first appears to be a magical research journal, its author anonymous. In it, PCs find a series of observations on the nature of the dream castle, which explain the various powers the master of the castle possesses (see Master of the Castle, below), and which also discusses the items of authority. The book does not name specific items (or, at least, not the current items), but the author speculates that because they appear to be of such a personal nature, they may change depending on who, precisely, the master of the castle is. He does explain that he believes that there are four at any given time, however, and can relate what each of the four does, even if their form might vary.

The second is a spellbook, which contains the spells ray of enfeeblement, false life, spectral hand, and halt undead.

The third is set with a burning hands trap on its inside cover, which goes off if the book is opened, quite possibly destroying most of the books in the library.

#### Burning Book Trap CR 2

Type magic; Perception DC 26 Disable DC 26 Effects

Trigger touch; Reset none

**Effect** spell effect (*burning hands*, 2d4 fire damage, Reflex DC 11 for half damage); multiple targets (all targets within a 15 ft. cone).

# BEREVAN'S ROOM

The door to this room is locked, though it can be opened with a DC 20 Disable Device check or forced with a DC 15 Strength check. In fact, as soon as the PCs give up on trying to open the door the lock gives an audible click and the door slowly falls open with a long and ominous creaking noise (the handiwork of Berevan, who finds the whole thing quite amusing). If Berevan is with them at this point, he bows sarcastically, proclaiming that as fun as it has been to adventure together, he must depart so that their climactic battle can commence.

On the other side of the door the PCs don't find the relatively simple bedroom they might expect, or anything even remotely resembling the corresponding room in the waking world. Instead, the door opens into what appears to be a starry void, with a long and unnecessarily winding pathway which appears to be made entirely of human bones. The path stretches on to the apparent horizon, where they can barely make out a circular stone floor floating in the void, decorated into a sort of study.

When the PCs arrive at the platform, they find Berevan waiting for them. As long as the PCs seem willing to indulge him, he gives a gloating speech about how foolish they were for crossing Nora'ka and how much torment awaits them when the battle is finished. He does his best to make light of whatever accomplishments they achieved in the adventure, though depending on how busy the PCs have been he may have a little trouble downplaying their victories. When the time for speeches is over, Berevan wades into combat, spending the first one or two rounds trying to imprison the PCs with the lowest Will saves before wading into melee or (depending on which PCs remain and whether his physical ability scores remain augmented) hitting them with wave after wave of negative energy.

#### Berevan Sahr CR 3

XP 1,200 Male human cleric 4 NE Medium humanoid (human) Init +4; Senses Perception +4 DEFENSE AC 20, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+7 armor, +3 Dex) hp 41 (4d8+20) Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +9 OFFENSE Speed 30 ft. Melee Lynx Paw +8 (1d8+4) Ranged Special Attack Channel Negative Energy (2d6) (DC 13) - 6/day, Imprison in Nightmares DC 17 Spells Prepared (CL 4th; Concentration +8) 2nd-aid, desecrate, sound burst (DC 16), touch of idiocy\* Ist-bane (DC 15), cause fear (DC 15), divine favor, doom, protection from good\* o (at will)-bleed (DC 14), detect magic, light, read magic \*Domain spell; Domains Evil, Madness Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th; Concentration +8) 7/day—vision of madness (+7) 7/day-touch of evil (+7) STATISTICS Str 18 (12), Dex 18 (8), Con 18 (14), Int 10, Wis 18, Cha 13 Base Atk +3; CMB +1; CMD 11 Feats Combat Casting, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Lynx Paw), Extra Channel Skills Knowledge (religion) +7, Knowledge (planes) +7, Spellcraft +7 SQ aura of evil Languages Common NPC Gear +1 breastplate, cloak of resistance +1, masterwork lynx paw w/ whip (found in Into the Armory)

#### Imprison In Nightmares (Su):

As a standard action, Berevan may choose to imprison a single target within 30 ft. that he can see. If the target fails a Will save (DC 17, -1 for each item of authority that has been destroyed, see Master of the Castle, below, for details) he or she is immediately imprisoned in a nightmare version of one of the rooms of the castle, where unspeakable torments are visited upon him or her. The target is unable to escape, and takes I point of Constitution damage each day (no save, and the target does not heal ability damage while so imprisoned) until he or she perishes, at which Point their soul continues to be tormented, taking I point of Wisdom damage each day. When someone imprisoned in a nightmare realm has Wisdom damage equal to or greater than their Wisdom score, his or her spirit is completely consumed by Nora'ka, and they cannot be resurrected by any means (though a wish or

miracle can recover the soul, allowing them to be subsequently resurrected). Everyone imprisoned in this way creates a statue in the Trophy Room (see the Trophy Room, above, for details). This ability is Charismabased.

# CONCLUSION

With Berevan's death many of the darker things about the castle dissolve as so much smoke. The nightmare prisons all cease to be, releasing anyone imprisoned up to this point, and freeing Terese from her confinement in her room. The PCs are no longer held in the castle by Berevan's will, and are free to wander out into the rest of the Realm of Dreams, or to return to the waking world (this can be accomplished by any means you desire, such as a portal or simple spell, but the easiest solution would be to have it occur when the PCs sleep within the Realm of Dreams).

Defeating Berevan does not mean that his dark goddess or her other minions will leave the PCs alone, however. To the contrary, if they learned anything about Berevan's patrons they know that they are far from in the clear. Even if they didn't, they find several religious tomes dedicated to the worship of Nora'ka that should clue them in to that deity's vindictive and petty nature. One of the tomes is a book listing each and every person and quasi-person who has angered or offended the deity, as well as their crimes. PCs searching the book can find their names, written over those of their various ancestors and tracing back to the ancestor who originally angered Nora'ka.

The PCs can now seek out Nora'ka and attempt to destroy her once and for all, or just go about their business as adventurers, dealing with repeated attacks and assassination attempts by Nora'ka's henchmen until it finally becomes clear that the goddess of revenge has no intention of leaving them alone. Ultimately, the campaign could lead to the PCs stumbling upon the fact that Nora'ka is preparing to make a triumphant return, and that if they don't stop her she will make things very unpleasant for them indeed.

Alternatively, Nora'ka may have her hands full with other problems and be too busy to deal with the PCs, simply making a note of their slight and waiting to visit her revenge upon their great-grandchildren. In this case, the PCs are free to explore the realm of dreams, or perhaps even settle down to running the castle, something which may prove to be quite the adventure in and of itself. One of the PCs may gain the hand of Terese, or they may be employed by her to protect the castle. Alternatively, perhaps Terese was already a ghost, and so the castle is left without a legitimate heir, split between the PCs.

The tengu, who were never fond of Berevan and served him primarily out of fear, are grateful to the PCs, and, if the PCs seek them out, explain that they only did what they did for fear of being imprisoned by Berevan. They prefer to stay in the castle, but will leave if the PCs insist upon it—at least, as long as they believe that the PCs will be around to tell the difference.

# DREAM ESSENCE

This potent liquid is milky white, and can only be found in the Realm of Dreams. Any object native to the Realm can be broken down into dream essence through a relatively simple arcane ritual, and the object destroyed in this way typically reforms after 2d4 days. In the Realm of Dreams the substance is worthless, but on the material plane it can have a potent effect, causing creatures to fall comatose, their spirits dragged off to the Realm of Dreams, specifically to the rough location within the realm that the dream essence came from. Creatures with 4 or less hit dice do not get a save to prevent this effect. Creatures with 5-9 hit dice can resist the effect with a successful DC 14 Will save, and creatures with 10 or more hit dice are immune to the effect unless they choose to be transported.

# MASTER OF THE CASTLE

Berevan Sahr gains a number of benefits while in the dream castle, due to his status as the lord of the castle in the material plane, as well as his rudimentary knowledge of dream control. Firstly, while in the dream version of the castle Berevan's Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution scores are set to 18. Additionally, he can use the spell project image at will, as long as both he and the image remain inside the castle. The range of this effect is considered to be the entire area of the castle, and he is always considered to have line of effect to the image as long as it remains within the castle, but unlike normal uses of the spell he cannot have his spells originate from the image. This ability has limitless duration.

Finally, as master of the castle Berevan has the ability to imprison others in hellish nightmare realms within his castle (see Berevan's statistics for the details of the attack). Targets who fail their save vanish from the spot, and are transported to a terrible nightmare prison, creating a statue of them in the trophy room (see above). Each prison is intimately tied to one of the rooms in the castle, and is under Berevan's complete control, allowing his prisoners to be tortured in a variety of ways. Though the tortures often take deadly form, they are only quasi-real, and prisoners of these nightmare dungeons take only a single point of Constitution damage each day (though they do not heal Constitution damage as long as they remain in the nightmare prison). When they die, their spirit remains trapped, taking one point of Wisdom damage. When a character trapped in a nightmare realm has Wisdom damage equal to their Wisdom score, their soul is absorbed by Nora'ka, and they are unable to pass on to the next life. This prevents them from being resurrected by any means, though a wish or miracle spell can rescue the victim's soul from Nora'ka, allowing them to be subsequently resurrected. If Berevan is slain, anyone still trapped in a nightmare realm is freed, though those who have already died from Constitution damage remain dead, and those whose spirits have been claimed by Nora'ka remain trapped.

Because Berevan's powers are dependant on his status as master of the castle, they can be taken away by removing Berevan's connections to the castle. This can be done by claiming or destroying his items of authority, which are scattered throughout the castle. Each item that remains unclaimed and undestroyed grants Berevan a +1 bonus to the save DC of his Nightmare Imprisonment supernatural ability, and several items grant him a specific benefit, as described below:

• Shield of House Sahr: Sets Berevan's Constitution score to 18 as long as he remains within the dream castle.

• Sword of House Sahr: Sets Berevan's Strength score to 18 as long as he remains within the dream castle.

• Cloak of House Sahr: Sets Berevan's Dexterity score to 18 as long as he remains within the dream castle.

• Crown of House Sahr: Allows Berevan to use his project image spell-like ability.

If the PCs claim or destroy any of these items, Berevan loses the special benefits they grant. Only destroying the items reduces the save DC of Berevan's Nightmare Imprisonment ability, though each PC gets a +2 bonus on their saves versus that ability for each item of authority in his or her possessions. Further, a PC in possession of any of the above items gains the listed benefit, so a PC with the Shield of House Sahr would have his Constitution score set to 18 and gain a +2 bonus on saves versus Berevan's Nightmare Imprisonment ability. Permission to copy, modify and distribute the files collectively known as the System Reference Document ("SRD") is granted solely through the use of the Open Gaming License, Version 1.02

This material is being released using the Open Gaming License Version 1.0a and you should read and understand the terms of that license before using this material.

The text of the Open Gaming License itself is not Open Game Content. Instructions on using the License are provided within the License itself

The following items are designated Product Identity, as defined in Section 1(e) of the Open Game License Version 1.0a, and are subject to the conditions set forth in Section 7 of the OGL, and are not Open Content: Dungeons & Dragons, D&D, Player's Handbook, Dungeon Master, Monster Manual, d20 System, Wisards of the Coast, d20 (when used as a trademark), Forgotten Realms, Faerin, proper names (including those used in the names of spells or items), places, Red Wisard of Thay, the City of Union, Heroic Domains of Ysgata, Ever-Changing Chaos of Limbo, Windswept Depths of Pandemonium, Infinite Layers of the Abyss, Tarterian Depths of Carceri, Gray Waste of Hades, Bleak Eternity of Gehema, Nine Hells of Baator, Infernal Battlefield of Acheron, Clockwork Nirvana of Mechanus, Peaceable Kingdoms of Arcadia, Seven Mounting Heavens of Celestia, Twin Paradises of Bytopia, Blessed Fields of Elysium, Wilderness of the Beastlands, Olympian Glades of Arborea, Concordant Domain of the Outlands, Sigil, Lady of Pain, Book of Exalted Deeds, Book of Vile Darkness, beholder, gauth, carrion crawler, tanar'ri, baatezu, displacer beast, githyanki, githuerai, mind flayer, illithud, umber hulk, yuan-ti,

All of the rest of the SRD is Open Game Content as described in Section 1(d) of the License

More information on the Open Game License can be found at www.winards.com/d20.

The terms of the Open Gaming License Version 1.0a are as follows:

**OPEN GAME LICENSE Version 1.0a** 

The following text is the property of Wisards of the Coast, Inc. and is Copyright 2000 Wisards of the Coast, Inc ("Wisards"). All Rights Reserved.

1. Definitions: (a)"Contributors" means the copyright and/or trademark owners who have contributed Open Game Content; (b)"Derivative Material" means copyrighted material including 1. Definitions: (a) Continuitors' means the copyright and/or trademark who have continued Open Game Content; (b) Derivative Material' means copyrighted material including derivative works and translations (including into other computer languages), potation, modification, correction, addition, extension, upgrade, improvement, compilation, abridgment or other form in which an existing work may be recast transformed or adapted; (c) "Distribute" means to reproduce, license, rent, lease, sell, broadcast, publicly display, transmit or otherwise distribute; (d) "Open Game Content" means the game mechanic and includes the methods, procedures, processes and routines to the extent such content does not embody the Product Identity and is an enhancement over the prior art and any additional content clearly identified as Open Game Content by the Contributor, and means any work covered by this License, including translations and derivative works under copyright law, but specifically excludes Product Identity. (e) "Product Identity" means product and product line names, logos and identifying marks including trade dress; artifacts; creatures characters; stories, storyines, plots, thematic elements, dialogue, incidents, language, artwork, symbols, designs, depictions, likeresses, formats, such as an earth the and de the product license incidents are and earth of the received of the product license received determines the received in the content loce store works of the product licenses, plots, thematic elements, dialogue, incidents, language, artwork, symbols, designs, depictions, likeresses, formats, and the product license is an earth of the explicit on the plots of the product license is an ended of the product licen poses, concepts, themes and graphic, photographic and other visual or audio representations, names and descriptions of characters, spells, enchantments, personalities, teams, personas, likenesses and special abilities; places, locations, environments, creatures, equipment, magical or supernatural abilities or effects, logos, symbols, or graphic designs; and any other trademark or registered trademark clearly identified as Product identity by the owner of the Product Identity, and which specifically excludes the Open Game Content; (f) "Trademark" means the logos. names, mark, sign, motto, designs that are used by a Contributor to identify itself or its products or the associated products contributed to the Open Game License by the Contributor (g) "Use", "Used" or "Using" means to use, Distribute, copy, edit, format, modify, translate and otherwise create Derivative Material of Open Game Content. (h) "You" or "Your" means the licensee in terms of this agreement.

2. The License: This License applies to any Open Game Content that contains a notice indicating that the Open Game Content may only be Used under and in terms of this License. You must affix such a notice to any Open Game Content that you Use. No terms may be added to or subtracted from this License except as described by the License itself. No other terms or conditions may be applied to any Open Game Content distributed using this License.

3.Offer and Acceptance: By Usine the Open Game Content You indicate Your acceptance of the terms of this License.

4. Grant and Consideration: In consideration for agreeing to use this License, the Contributors grant You a perpetual, worldwide, royalty-free, non-exclusive license with the exact terms of this License to Use, the Open Game Content.

5. Representation of Authority to Contribute: If You are contributing original material as Open Game Content, You represent that Your Contributions are Your original creation and/or You have sufficient rights to grant the rights conveyed by this License.

6. Notice of License Copyright: You must update the COPYRIGHT NOTICE portion of this License to include the exact text of the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any Open Game Content You are copying, modifying or distributing, and You must add the title, the copyright date, and the copyright holder's name to the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any original Open Game Content you Distribute.

7. Use of Product Identity: You agree not to Use any Product Identity, including as an indication as to compatibility, except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of each element of that Product Identity. You agree not to indicate compatibility or co-adaptability with any Trademark or Registered Trademark in conjunction with a work containing Open Game Content except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of such Trademark or Registered Trademark. The use of any Product Identity in Open Game Content does not constitute a challenge to the ownership of that Product Identity. The owner of any Product Identity used in Open Game Content shall retain all rights, title and interest in and to that Product Identity.

3. Identification: If you distribute Open Game Content You must clearly indicate which portions of the work that you are distributing are Open Game Content.

9. Updating the License: Winards or its designated Agents may publish updated versions of this License. You may use any authorized version of this License to copy, modify and distribute any Open Game Content originally distributed under any version of this License.

10. Copy of this License: You MUST include a copy of this License with every copy of the Open Game Content You Distribute.

11. Use of Contributor Credits: You may not market or advertise the Open Game Content using the name of any Contributor unless You have written permission from the Contributor to do

12. Inability to Comply: If it is impossible for You to comply with any of the terms of this License with respect to some or all of the Open Game Content due to statute, judicial order, or governmental regulation then You may not Use any Open Game Material so affected.

13. Termination: This License will terminate automatically if You fail to comply with all terms herein and fail to cure such breach within 30 days of becoming aware of the breach. All sublicenses shall survive the termination of this License.

14. Reformation: If any provision of this License is held to be unenforceable, such provision shall be reformed only to the extent necessary to make it enforceable.

15. COPYRIGHT NOTICE

Open Game License v 1.0a Copyright 2000, Winards of the Coast, Inc.

System Reference Document Copyright 2000-2003, Winards of the Coast, Inc.; Authors Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Rich Baker, Andy Collins, David Noonan, Rich Redman, Bruce R. Cordell, John D. Rateliff, Thomas Reid, James Wyatt, based on original material by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Ameson. Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook, Copyright 2009, Paino Publishing, LLC; Author: Jason Bulmahn, based on material by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, and Skip Williams.

The Book of Experimental Might. Copyright 2008, Monte J. Cook. All rights reserved. Tome of Horrors. Copyright 2002, Necromancer Games, Inc.; Authors: Scott Greene, with Clark Peterson, Erica Balsley, Kevin Baase, Casey Christofferson, Lance Hawvermale, Travis Hawvermale, Patrick Lawinger, and Bill Webb; Based on original content from TSR.

Hawvermale, Patrick Lawinger, and nu weor, passed on original content room 15k. Liber Vampyr Copyright 2010, Necromancers of the Northwest, LLC: Authors: Alex Riggs, Joshua Zaback, and Justin Holloway. Steps of the Sanguine Path Copyright 2010, Necromancers of the Northwest, LLC: Authors: Alex Riggs, Joshua Zaback, and Justin Holloway. Into the Armory: The Complete Guide to Weapons, Armor, and Equipment Copyright 2010, Necromancers of the Northwest, LLC: Authors: Alex Riggs, Joshua Zaback, Justin Holloway The Book of Beginning: Copyright 2010 Necromancers of the Northwest, LLC: Authors: Alex Riggs, Joshua Zaback, Justin Holloway

# A Novel Approach to Starting Campaigns

This sourcebook for the 3.5 OGL and the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game is designed to help make the game seem fresh and new again by providing three brand-new and customizable methods of character creation which emphasize fun and unique characters. These range from the simple, such as Astrological character creation, to the very involved, like the "Choose Your Own Adventure" style of character creation. Also included are several "mini-adventures" designed to get a campaign off to a good start by providing hooks which bring parties together, and adventures which are both

memorable and fun.

ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE