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GM'S MONTHLY MISCELLANY:

FEBRUARY 2014



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GM'S MONTHLY MISCELLANY: FEBRUARY 2014

Featuring material from some of Raging Swan Press's newest products as well as classic releases of yesteryear, advice articles and material from Creighton's own *Borderland of Adventure* campaign, the *GM's Monthly Miscellany* series is a terrific free resource for the busy, time-crunched GM.

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SOURCES

As well as new, never seen before material from my own *Borderland of Adventure* campaign, this instalment of *GM's Monthly Miscellany* presents information from several Raging Swan Press products and advice articles including:

- **Barroom Brawls** Creighton Broadhurst.
- **Dungeon Dressing: Walls** Alexander Augunas.
- **Village Backdrop: Summerford** Alex Connell.



FOREWORD

This month, I'm still slaving away over Raging Swan's 4th birthday celebration products. As it turns out, getting three print products ready for release on the same day entails quite a lot of work! I'm happy to report, though, progress is going well – the collector's editions of *Road of the Dead* and *Retribution* are finished and I've completed layout and all the art and map orders for *Against the Cult of the Reptile God*.

The illustration below – which I think is particularly atmospheric – is by Bradley K. McDevitt and depicts just one of the encounter locales in *Road of the Dead*. Bradley did similar images for each of the encounters so the GM can show the PCs exactly what they see when they first reach an area. I love the concept of “look-see” art in adventures and it's something I'd like to include more of in the future.

So with those tasks in hand, I can focus on this GM's Monthly Miscellany and Raging Swan's normal release schedule. This month, I'm particularly excited to release *Random Encounters: Wilderness* which is the culmination of the Broken Freelancers open call Raging Swan Press put out late last year. Of the 50 or so submissions, I've whittled the offering down to the ten best. I'm keen to see how people react to the material within. Even better, several of the designers have already started working on other projects for Raging Swan Press. Given I'd previously broken a couple of freelancers, this is excellent news for me!

Anyway, in *GM's Monthly Miscellany: February 2014* you'll find excerpts from some of Raging Swan's newest products as well as material from a golden oldie – *Barroom Brawls* and a

selection of advice articles from those posted weekly at ragingswan.com/articles.

I've also included more material from my Borderland of Adventure campaign. This month, I present several notable items the PCs have found (or in one case may be about to find) over the last few years. Sometimes, when the PCs find magical items I prepare special item cards the owner can keep. This not only highlights to the player the item is special but also allows me to add depth and history to the campaign. These items are also occasionally more than they seem. In previous campaigns, some have had other as yet undiscovered powers while more than one has turned out to be sentient! As always, the material from my campaign has been slightly scrubbed to remove the intellectual property of other companies but it is otherwise pretty much as I've used it myself. If you want to keep up with our adventures, you can read weekly session summaries on my blog: raging-swan.livejournal.com.

In any event, I hope you enjoy the material in this GM's Monthly Miscellany, but more importantly I hope you find it useful and that it enhances your campaign. If you've got any comments or questions about Raging Swan Press, I'd love to hear from you. You can contact me at creighton@ragingswan.com.



GM ADVICE: ENHANCING COMBAT ENCOUNTERS

WRITING A COMBAT ENCOUNTER IS EASY: STICK A COUPLE OF ORCS IN A ROOM AND YOU ARE DONE. CREATING AN EXCITING, ENGAGING ENCOUNTER, THOUGH, REQUIRES A LITTLE SOMETHING EXTRA, BEYOND INTERESTING FOES.

Encounter enhancements can add an extra level of excitement to a battle. Don't add these to every combat encounter – they'll just become the norm – but use them to spice up important battles – perhaps an adventure's climax. When designing encounter enhancements don't do so with the goal of screwing over the PCs. Design enhancements that clever combatants can use to their advantage.

Enhancements fall into several basic categories:

- **Time Sensitive:** Applying a time constraint to an encounter adds a level of urgency otherwise not present. For example, if the PCs must slay their enemies before the ceiling caves in, they don't have time to hang about! Similarly, if their foes are giving time for the main villain to escape, the party must cut them down as quickly as possible.

- **Interesting Terrain:** A battle fought on a bridge spanning a chasm is intrinsically different to one fought on a road. Interesting terrain should both set the theme for an encounter as well as providing interesting tactical options to employ or overcome. Even furniture can be interesting. For example, PCs fighting in a library could push over bookshelves onto their enemies or leap atop them to gain other advantages.
- **Hostages:** If the PCs' enemies have hostages, it is likely the party won't be able to use the full range of their abilities. Spellcasters in particular will probably not be able to use their area of affect spells for fear of injuring or slaying the hostages. Neutral observers, such as townsfolk, can also add the same restraint to the party.
- **Changeable Battlefield:** This is related to interesting terrain above, but in some cases the battlefield may change from round to round providing a unique set of challenges. Are PCs fighting on a beach as storm-lashed waves burst about them or are they battling on a high moor as strong winds batter the battlefield? Both situation force the combatants to adapt and provide an ongoing level of uncertainty.
- **Weather:** Weather can be a boon or a curse to combatants. Winds make ranged attacks harder, while fog and mist can make sneaking about easier. Canny combatants work with the weather, not against it,

Do you use other methods to enhance your encounters? Share what they are in the comments below and remember you can download this – and every other advice article – for free at ragingswan.com/articles.



SUMMERFORD AT A GLANCE

Nearly 50 years ago, Janos and Laelia Orctooth established a homestead along the Mauro River. That homestead proved to be an ideal place for passing barges travelling down river to stop to take on provisions and to dabble in trade.

As luck would have it, a few miles away, an iron mine (named Iron Hill for the vast deposits of iron deposited relatively close to the surface) was established months later. In response to this fortuitous development, the family set up a trading post around which sprang up a prosperous village. While Iron Hill is now the village's primary source of revenue, it is also its chief cause of conflict. Kobolds repeatedly attack the mine, killing many of the miners toiling therein. The families of the slain miners are eager to see the mine close, but the traders who profit from the iron brought forth from its deep tunnel are unwilling to acquiesce to their demands.

Fabius Orctooth, Janos' grandson, now serves as Summerford's mayor. His small cadre of guards help keep the uneasy and tense peace between the traders and the villagers, but are powerless to deal with the kobolds plaguing the mines.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Ruler Lord Fabius Orctooth (LN male human aristocrat 3)

Government Overlord

Population 191 (171 humans, 7 half-elves, 6 elves, 3 dwarves, 1 gnome, 1 half-orc, 1 halfling)

Alignments LN, NG, CN

Languages Common

Corruption +1; **Crime** -3; **Economy** +1; **Law** +2; **Lore** +0; **Society** -3

Qualities Prosperous, strategic location

Danger 0; **Disadvantages** None

NOTABLE FOLK

Most of the population are nothing more than peasants, miners or merchants. A few, however, are of interest to adventurers:

Andrus (location 5; N male human commoner 2) A survivor of a recent attack at the iron mine, Andrus can be found deep in his cups at the Rusty Rapier.

Aurelia Tuburo (location 4; NG female human commoner 1) Aurelia is the distressed wife of a deceased miner.

Brenton Ivyhurst (location 5; CG male human expert 2) The owner of the Rusty Rapier Brenton also secretly sells magic items on the black market.

Ezra Olfoot (location 9; NG female human wizard 3) A recent arrival in Summerford, Ezra lives on the outskirts of the village. Rumours of necromancy swirl about her.

Faerevar Erklen (location 6; LG gnome male inquisitor 5) Faerevar runs the foundry, but is secretly looking for enemies of his faith.

Lord Fabius Orctooth (location 1; LN male human aristocrat 3) The grandson of Janos Orctooth, the reclusive Lord Fabius is Summerford's mayor.

Ormen (location 8; N male venerable human druid 8) The Arch-druid of The Green Shrine is Summerford's oldest human resident.

Sir Titus Lytera (location 1; LN male human fighter 4) Captain of the watch and Orctooth's right-hand man.

Timaulth (location 3; CN male half-elf bard 4) Timaulth is the smooth-talking leader of the local merchants' guild.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Most of the village comprises peasant homes. A few locations, however, are of interest to adventurers:

1. **Orctooth Manor:** The Orctooth's much expanded original homestead also houses the village guard.
2. **The Docks:** The real reason Summerford is as prosperous as it is lies in the deepwater shore on the east side of the Mauro which enables trade ships to dock.
3. **Summerford Trading Post:** Run by a guild of merchants, the trading post is the heart of Summerford's economy.
4. **Tuburo Residence:** Aurelia Tuburo's husband was recently killed in a kobold attack on Iron Hill. She is not-so-secretly campaigning for the cessation of all mining activities.
5. **The Rusty Rapier:** Brenton Ivyhurst runs the local tavern, which serves as the unofficial meeting place of the village.
6. **Foundry:** Run by Faerevar Erklen, the foundry turns iron ore from the mine into tradable ingots, which are then sent on into nearby cities.
7. **The Iron Bridge:** The only way across the river for 30 miles. Lord Orctooth charges non-residents a toll to cross the bridge.
8. **The Green Shrine:** Ormen established this druid-haven soon after the Orctooth family founded Summerford.
9. **Olfoot Homestead:** One of the latest arrivals to Summerford, this hedge wizard's home is just outside the village.

MARKETPLACE

Resources & Industry Mining, trading

Base Value 700 gp; **Purchase Limit** 2,500 gp; **Spellcasting** 3rd; **Minor Items** 2d6; **Medium Items** 1d4; **Major Items** –

When the PCs arrive in Summerford, the following items are for sale:

- **Potions & Oils** *arcane mark* (25 gp), *cure light wounds** (50 gp), *disguise self* (50 gp)
- **Scrolls (Arcane)** *obscuring mist* (25 gp), *protection from law** (25 gp), *ray of exhaustion*
- **Scroll (Divine)** *locate object* (375 gp), *sound burst* (150 gp)
- **Wand** *protection from evil* (40 chgs.; 600 gp)
- **Wondrous Items** *elixir of tumbling** (250 gp)

* Item is on the black market from Brenton Ivyhurst (location 5).

VILLAGE LORE

A PC making a Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local) may know some information about Summerford. A successful check reveals all the information revealed by a lesser check.

DC 10: Summerford is a prosperous village whose economy is based on a trading post and a nearby iron mine.

DC 15: A large tribe of kobolds lives relatively close to Summerford and often raid the iron mine.

DC 20: Summerford is known as a trading post, but a small, discrete black market also thrives in the village.

VILLAGERS

Appearance Summerford villagers have pale skin and light coloured hair.

Dress The people tend toward warmer clothes of fur in the winter and lighter vestments during the summer.

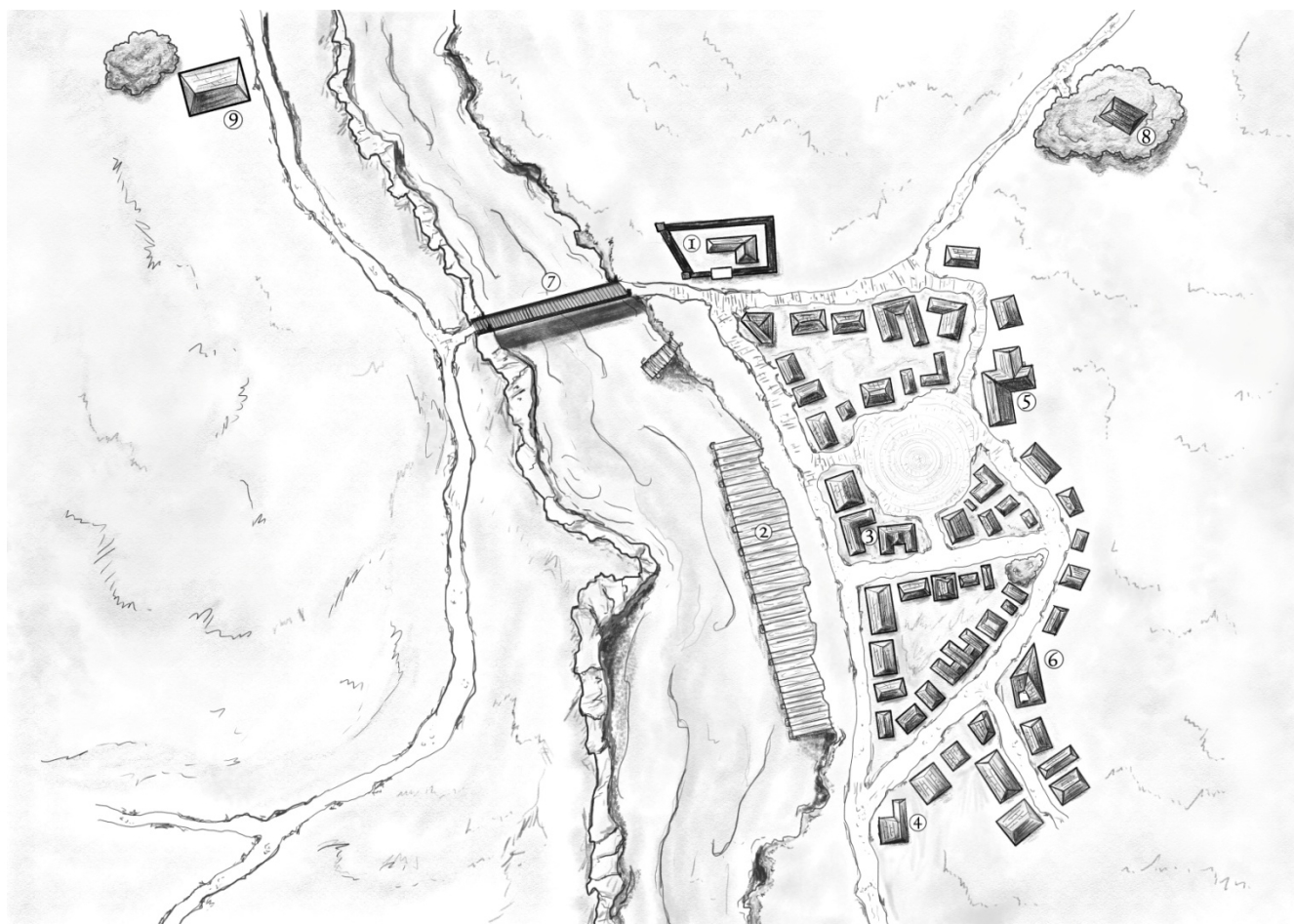
Nomenclature *male* Cassian, Felix, Marcus, Tiberius, Titus; *female* Aemilia, Drusa, Hilaria, Lucia, Sabina, Tatiana, Varinia; *family* Albinus, Cato, Galba, Nasica, Strabo, Varus.

WHISPERS & RUMOURS

A PC can use Diplomacy to gather information about the village and its surrounds. This takes 1d4 hours and requires a DC 10 check. A character exceeding this check gains one additional rumour for each 5 points by which he exceeded DC 10. Use the table below to determine which rumour(s) the PC learns.

| D6 | RUMOUR |
|----|--|
| 1 | The nearby iron mine has been attacked by kobolds more than once, putting a major dent in production. The merchants are fed up with the kobolds. |
| 2 | Sometimes, the barge captains bring Brenton Ivyhurst rare magic items to sell on the black market. |
| 3 | Aurelia Tuburo lost her husband when the iron mine was attacked by kobolds. She's had enough of dead miners and is going to incite a riot. |
| 4* | The reclusive Orctoath family has been consorting with devils in order to remain in power. |
| 5* | Ezra Olfoot has been reanimating corpses; that's why she lives so close to the graveyard. |
| 6 | Faerevar Erklen, the smelter, has an elaborate, golden shrine dedicated to a gnomish god in his home. He tries to keep it hidden from visitors. |

*False rumour



DUNGEON WALLS: DRESSINGS & FEATURES

Use this table to generate interesting features for your walls. As with Table A, this table assumes each result applies to a single wall; at the GM's decision, a dressing may be applied to multiple walls within a chamber or multiple rolls on the table can generate dressings for each wall in the chamber. Instead of rolling on the table, a GM may choose to simply pick which dressings are appropriate for the chamber. Should a feature be inappropriate for a dungeon's setup, ignore or modify the entry as needed.

Some features include the potential for encounters, noted by a CR entry on the table. GMs should adjust the number or type of creatures present as appropriate.

| D% | |
|----|--|
| 01 | The wall is missing without signs of it having been uprooted or removed. |
| 02 | A proclamation of love is carved into the wall; a set of initials surrounded by a heart. |
| 03 | A mould infestation has taken over the wall, reducing its hardness by half. |
| 04 | A patch of deadly russet mold (CR 6) has grown over the wall. |
| 05 | A patch of deadly mindslaver mold (CR 3) has taken over the wall. |
| 06 | An important clue has been inscribed into the wall, either as graffiti or scraping it into the wall's surface. |
| 07 | The wall possesses a patch of space that is lighter and cleaner than the area surrounding it, suggesting an item was hung there for a time and then removed. |
| 08 | The wall contains 1d4 signs of combat, such as nicks or dents from a deflected weapon blow. |
| 09 | Part of the wall is charred save for a humanoid-shaped spot in the centre of the damage. |
| 10 | Someone appears to have recently attempted to clean the wall with soap and water in 1d4 places before giving up. |
| 11 | A light or one-handed weapon is wedged into the wall, likely as a result of a misplaced swing. |
| 12 | Small numerals are etched into the wall, noting the passage of time. |
| 13 | A meaty slop clings to the wall as though a plate of food were thrown at it. |
| 14 | Once-eldritch runes decorate the wall, expended following the casting of a powerful spell. |
| 15 | Several love letters have been stuck to the wall; at the GM's decision, these letters may require translation from an exotic tongue. |
| 16 | The spoils of conquest are proudly displayed upon the wall, including weapons, armour or even severed limbs. |
| 17 | Water oozes from the base of the wall. |

| | |
|----|--|
| 18 | The wall has been smeared with a foul-smelling substance by a superstitious denizen. |
| 19 | A childish illustration has been drawn or carved into the wall's surface. |
| 20 | An animal skin, a paper covering or a similar material obscures one of the wall's dressings from Table A. |
| 21 | The wall has been used as a canvas by an obviously talented artist. |
| 22 | Blood splatter coats the wall. |
| 23 | Damage from arrows, crossbow bolts or similar pieces of ammunition dot the wall. There is a 25% chance several projectile remain embedded in the wall. |
| 24 | Hundreds of sketches of a particular subject adorn the wall; at the GM's decision, these sketches may be of a PC or a prominent NPC. |
| 25 | Any flammable dressings from Table A the wall possessed have been burned away, leaving only charred remains. |
| 26 | Wild flowers have been dried and pressed onto the wall. |
| 27 | Roll once on Table A; a suitable dressing described by your result is actually a wandering mimic (CR 4) in disguise. |
| 28 | Major patches of the wall are damaged and have begun to crumble away; treat the wall as though it had half its total number of hit points. |
| 29 | Roll once on Table A; the wall was repurposed from its original dressings to the result's dressings, but faint traces of the original remain. |
| 30 | A number of wax dolls have been pinned to the wall by their heads; at the GM's decision, these dolls resemble the PCs or a prominent NPC. |
| 31 | The wall is slowly sloughing away in some places. |
| 32 | Damage from acidic corrosion dots the wall. |
| 33 | Water leaks into the chamber from a small opening at the top of the wall. |
| 34 | The wall is scarred and heavily cracked; treat the wall as though it had half its total number of hit points. |
| 35 | Something has made the wall unnaturally smooth to the touch. |
| 36 | Several iron pegs were hammered into the wall without care for whatever dressings that might have already been located there. |
| 37 | A crude drawing of a monster has been drawn onto the wall. There is a 25% chance this illustration correlates to the creature with the highest individual CR in the dungeon. |
| 38 | The wall is a hotspot for germ activity and creatures that come within 5 feet might contract filth fever (DC 12 Fortitude resists). |
| 39 | The wall has been modified to include a trap; see Table C for possible traps. |

| | |
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| 40 | Someone has painted a picture of a person onto the wall. The portrait is covered with darts and other signs of impact; at the GM's decision, this sketch is of a PC or a prominent NPC. |
| 41 | Vines choke the wall, obscuring its surface. These vines offer no protection to the dressings beneath them. |
| 42 | As above, except an assassin vine (CR 3) also lurks on the wall. |
| 43 | Ancient runes written in a long-dead language pepper the wall. |
| 44 | A piece of furniture has been smashed into the wall; its broken pieces litter the ground. |
| 45 | The wall has been recently refurbished. |
| 46 | A religious saying has been written or carved onto the wall. |
| 47 | A holy (or unholy) symbol has been drawn or carved onto the wall. |
| 48 | A severed limb from a fallen adversary has been nailed onto the wall without concern for its existing dressings. |
| 49 | The wall is littered with the notes and musings of a genius artist, writer, wizard or philosopher. |
| 50 | Glittering specks of minerals cling to the wall and create a rainbow of colours in even the faintest light. |
| 51 | Spots on the wall are unexplainably darker than other parts. |
| 52 | The wall has been stained through careless behaviour. |
| 53 | Countless fist-sized holes dot the wall. A bat swarm (CR 2) makes its home in these holes. |
| 54 | A gargoyle (CR 4) clings to the wall, pretending to be part of the wall's dressings. |
| 55 | The wall and its dressings have been unexplainably bleached of their colour. |
| 56 | Curtains cover the wall and any dressings under them the dungeon's denizens find unappealing. |
| 57 | Countless fist-sized holes dot the wall. A centipede swarm (CR 4) makes its home in these holes. |
| 58 | A silken tapestry of spider webs cling to the wall. |
| 59 | Countless fist-sized holes dot the wall. A spider swarm (CR 1) makes its home in these holes. |
| 60 | Cracks, erosion and mould damage have the unexplainable consequence of imprinting a random PC or NPC's likeness upon the wall. |
| 61 | Any metallic dressings the wall possesses have rusted over. If none exist, reroll this dressing. |
| 62 | The wall is covered in a magically engineered mushroom. If it is cut a character can extract 1d4 doses of greenblood oil poison. |
| 63 | The wall is leaking a green, slimy substance. |
| 64 | The wall has been split open by water erosion. |
| 65 | The wall is drenched in a slick oil, increasing the DC to climb it by 10 and causing the entire wall to burst into flames if it is dealt fire damage. |

| | |
|-------|--|
| 66 | Countless fist-sized holes dot the wall. A rat swarm (CR 2) makes its home in these holes. |
| 67 | A dark spirit passed through the wall, sapping it and all of its dressings of any resemblance of warmth, cheer or good tidings. |
| 68 | Letters have been cut from various tomes and pressed onto the wall, spelling out one or more of the PCs' names. |
| 69 | Countless fist-sized holes, now plugged up with mortar, dot the wall. |
| 70 | The wall is defaced with foul language. |
| 71 | A random piece of poetry or philosophy has been written onto the wall. |
| 72 | The wall oozes a gooey, amber sap that has ensnared thousands of insects. |
| 73 | A foul, violet mist leaks into the chamber from cracks in the wall. |
| 74 | Countless fist-sized holes dot the wall. A grey ooze (CR 3) makes its home in these holes. |
| 75 | The wall is coated with a grainy substance that, if licked, tastes like the individual's favourite meal. |
| 76 | The wall is coated with 1d6 doses of medium spider venom. (Contact poison; DC 14 Fortitude). |
| 77 | Parts of the wall have been removed and piled into the centre of the chamber. |
| 78 | The wall possesses a <i>major image</i> (DC 14 Will) that causes the viewer to see an idealized version of its ideal mate. |
| 79 | Countless fist-sized holes dot the wall. A wasp swarm (CR 3) makes its home in these holes. |
| 80 | Countless fist-sized holes dot the wall. A cockroach swarm (CR 2) dwells within. |
| 81-82 | Any dressings on the wall have been perfected by <i>masterwork transformation</i> , changing them into masterwork items. |
| 83-84 | The wall is coated with dust from the Shadow Plane, dispelling magical light effects present within the chamber as a <i>darkness</i> spell would. |
| 85-86 | The wall has been altered by <i>warp wood</i> , <i>stone shape</i> or a similar effect into an imperfect form. |
| 87-88 | Religious symbol is crudely carved into the wall. |
| 89-93 | Roll once on Table A. The resulting dressing is present on the wall, but was clearly added after the wall's construction. |
| 94-98 | A trap has been built onto (or into) the wall following its original construction; see Table C for a list of suitable traps. Attempts to locate this trap with Perception gain a +5 bonus. |
| 99 | Drab paint covers the wall. A DC 20 Perception check reveals the faint outline of another painting below it. |
| 100 | Several bricks have been removed from the wall at human head height to reveal an (empty) once-secret niche. |

BARROOM BRAWLS: BRAWL TRIGGERS

Many events can trigger a barroom brawl: a gambler can be caught cheating, two men may argue over a woman, someone may spill another's pint or simmering animosity may suddenly boil over into violence. A GM can simply determine the brawl's trigger or roll on the table below.

D20 BRAWL TRIGGER

| | |
|-----|--|
| 1-2 | A group gamble at a table. One of the group is accused of cheating, but denies the charge. He refuses to return his winnings and a brawl quickly ensues. |
| 3 | A drunk staggers against a table sending the drinks upon it flying. Those around the table attack the drunk, furious at his clumsiness. The drunk's friends leap to his aid... |
| 4 | An argument erupts at one table and quickly several patrons are fighting. The brawl is a diversion; one of the other customers (perhaps even a PC) is marked for assassination and while the fight distracts witnesses the assassin strikes. |
| 5 | A pickpocket fails spectacularly to lift a purse. The owner notices and tries to grab the thief. He twists out of the man's hands but falls into a nearby table, smashing it and spilling all the drinks on it. |
| 6 | A drunk man staggers to the bar and demands more ale. The barkeep refuses and the man gets belligerent. A regular steps in to defuse the situation and the drunk attacks him. As the regular staggers back, he knocks over another man who leaps to his feet enraged. From there, the chaos quickly spreads... |
| 7 | A prostitute moves around the tavern seeking business. Two drunken men begin to argue over who should enjoy the pleasure of her company first. She draws the two men into a brief bidding war, which ends with one smashing a flagon over the others head. |
| 8 | A server weaves through the taproom with a full tray of drinks. However, when she sets it down, two groups of drinkers claim that the drinks are for them. Both groups are drunk and the ensuing argument turns violent. |
| 9 | A server delivers a drink to a table, but the (drunk) patron refuses to pay. After a short argument, the drunk pushes her away and she falls. Several regulars take exception to this and move to punish the drunk. Others intervene and an epic brawl quickly breaks out. |
| 10 | A small contingent of the Watch enter the tavern and start to belligerently search for a fugitive last seen nearby. The search angers many of the regulars and eventually one hurls a flagon at a guard in protest. As the guards attempt to apprehend their attacker other patrons join in. Inevitably, some of the missiles hit other patrons and a confused melee breaks out. |
| 11 | An old beggar enters the taproom and moves from table to table begging for spare coins and food. A few patrons give him their scraps but one shouts and curses at him before pushing him away. As the beggar falls to the floor, several other patrons move to help him and |

remonstrate with his attacker. Unsurprisingly, the attacker does not take kindly to their opinions and an argument quickly develops. Eventually, it leads to violence. After the brawl, there is no sign of the beggar.

12 Two drunken patrons (one a huge warrior) are dancing (very badly) when one of them trips and falls. The other trips over the first and lands in the lap of a courting couple. Wine gets spilled all over the couple, which enrages the woman. She smashes an empty flagon over the head of her "attacker." By that point, the first dancer has regained his feet and totters over to aid his friend.

13 Two men standing at the bar begin to push and shove each other. They inevitably bump into other patrons and matters go downhill rapidly thereafter.

14 A man weaves his way through the crowd carrying two handfuls of drinks. Suddenly, he trips and the drinks go flying. He is quickly to his feet, accusing a nearby customer of deliberately tripping him. Meanwhile, the three men he has just drenched in beer decide to teach him a lesson.

15 A customer drops his belt pouch and gold and silver coins tumble to the floor. As he tries to retrieve his wealth, other nearby customers scramble to grab the coins. Almost immediately, several fights break out.

16 Two groups of rival warriors or workmen are drinking heavily in the taproom. As they get drunker the two groups exchange insults. Veiled at first, they become more demeaning as the alcohol flows. Eventually, a fight breaks out between the two groups; innocent bystanders get dragged into the melee.

17 Four toughs have been bribed to beat up a customer. They enter the bar, buy drinks and take a table close to their target. They wait until their target is drunk before pouncing. Other customers go to the target's aid and a general melee ensues.

18 A man buying drinks at the bar believes he has been short-changed. The barkeep denies the charge and refuses to pay up. The customer reaches across the bar and tries to grab some coins. Several regulars leap to the barkeep's aid. Seeing this, the customer's friends come to his aid.

19 Two men get into an argument over a woman sitting nearby. As they begin to fight, other patrons gather round to watch. Soon, however, one of the men knocks another customer over and the chaos soon spreads. (Alternatively two women can argue over a man).

20 A fleeing man bursts through the tavern's door and rushes through the taproom knocking over chairs, spilling drinks and so on. Patrons leap to their feet in indignation. Moments later, a small group of guards enter the tavern and try to follow the man. Chaos ensues as the guards try to force their way through a crowd of angry patrons.

BARROOM BRAWL: BRAWL EVENTS

Barroom brawls are chaotic affairs and the most bizarre events can occur during them. Some are to be expected, the innkeeper calling for the watch or opportunistic thieves trying to steal unattended wagers, while others are completely unexpected: tables collapse, kegs of beer spring leaks and chandeliers fall. In the most deadly brawls, fires can accidentally start that if left unchecked can destroy the tavern.

Every round of a brawl, roll on the table below to determine the brawl event before describing it colourfully.

| D% | BRAWL EVENT |
|-------|--|
| 01-40 | No event of note. |
| 41-50 | The innkeeper calls loudly for the Watch. |
| 51-52 | A brawler tips over a table. Atop the table lies a small pile of coins — the pot of some game now unattended. 2d20 cp and 2d10 sp clatter to the floor. Nearby brawlers dive for the coins and try to gather up as many as possible. |
| 53-55 | A brawler kicks over a bench, chair or table. The next person who isn't a PC, to move through the square trips over it and falls prone. |
| 56-59 | A brawler tries to punch a target, misses and smashes a beer keg. Beer gushes out, creating a 15 ft. cone of slick floor (DC 10 Acrobatics check to move at half-speed through the area; failure by 5 or more and the character falls prone). The innkeeper wails at this unfortunate event. |
| 60-61 | A random brawler hurls a flagon or chair at a PC. |
| 62-64 | A small contingent of the Watch arrive to break up the brawl. They use nonlethal attacks to subdue the brawlers, beating them with the ends of their spears. Brawlers fight to get away from the Watch as no one wants to get arrested. |
| 65-66 | A brawler leaps onto the bar and starts to kick half-full flagons of beer into the melee. Every time he scores a hit he shouts in triumph. |
| 67-68 | Someone shouts that the Watch is coming. At that, many of the combatants make a break for the nearest exit. The area around the front and back doors of the tavern get congested as patrons fight each other to get away. |
| 69-70 | One brawler throws another 1d2 x 5 ft. onto a chair or table. The piece of furniture collapses and the thrown brawler lands prone. |
| 71 | Somehow, high-strength alcohol (such as brandy) lands in the fire. All combatants within 5 ft. suffer 1 fire damage as the fire sparks and spits. |
| 72-74 | The innkeeper (or other staff member) gets attacked by a brawler. The innkeeper shouts for help; if a PC assists him, he gets free board and lodgings for one week. |
| 75-76 | Three brawlers gang up on another patron and quickly kick him to the floor. They beat him unconscious in two rounds before moving onto another target. |

| | |
|-------|---|
| 77-79 | Desperate to escape the violence, a patron dives under a table and screams for help. The man is well-dressed and gives his rescuer a reward of 2 gp. |
| 80-82 | Skirting the violence, a patron moves from table to table stealing coins, downing drinks and so on. After three rounds of this, he is spotted and attacked by irate patrons. |
| 83 | A large brawler picks up a bench and belts nearby targets with it. Once he has knocked unconscious a few other brawlers, the rest avoid him and so he goes in search of new targets. He settles on the nearest PC. |
| 84-85 | A female patron jumps onto the back of a brawler and starts hitting him over the head with a flagon. It smashes, blinding him for one round with ale. In the next round, he pulls her off and throws her to the floor. |
| 86-87 | A table collapses dumping the patron on it onto the floor. The patron falls prone. |
| 88 | A patron dives behind the bar and grabs several bottles or brandy or other expensive beverage. On the next round, he makes a break for the door clutching his prizes. |
| 89 | The fight spills out into the street as several brawlers fall through the tavern's door. |
| 90 | A brawler is thrown through a window or door into the street. Three rounds later, the Watch arrives. |
| 91 | Amid the chaos, a thief rifles the pouch of a fallen brawler. If no one stops him, he moves onto his next mark. If accosted, he flees. |
| 92 | A patron lies slumped over a table. Underneath the table, his hound barks ferociously and tries to bite anyone entering an adjacent square. |
| 93 | A brawler staggers out of the melee, blood dripping from a nasty scalp wound (caused by a broken bottle). He screams in agony and flails about looking for assistance. |
| 94 | A brawler stands over his unconscious foe. The two are hated enemies; the brawler gives his fallen foe a good kicking. If no one intervenes, he eventually kills his enemy. |
| 95-96 | A brawler takes this opportunity to knife an enemy. He draws a dagger and tries to stab him in the back. |
| 97-98 | A brawler tries to grab the tavern's ready cash before fleeing. The barkeep notices this attempt and screams for help before attempting to apprehend the thief. There is a 50% chance that any patron grabbing the thief tries to steal some of the money himself. |
| 99 | Fire! Flames from a knocked over torch or similar fire source catch on a tapestry, straw covering the floor and so on. Unless extinguished, the fire advances 5 ft. every second round. (A DC 15 Reflex save extinguishes a 5 ft. section of fire as a full-round action). Characters in the fire suffer 1d6 fire damage and catch on fire. |
| 100 | GM's discretion – something truly bizarre happens; the floor collapses, chickens escape from the kitchen etc. |

FROM MY CAMPAIGN: UNIQUE ITEMS

GRAIL OF ASHENYAR

This elegantly-carved hollow golden horn is slightly warm to the touch and radiates a barely perceptible glow.

Aura Strong conjuration [healing] and conjuration [creation] (DC 21 Knowledge [arcana]); **Identify** DC 28 Spellcraft; **CL** 13th

Knowledge (arcana or history) DC 15 The *Grail of Ashenyar* is a powerful relic of an ancient dragon. Many heroes of good have wielded it over the centuries. It has many powers.

Knowledge (arcana or history) DC 20 Ashenyar was an ancient gold dragon born 1,000 years ago. He dwelled in the mountains and was ever evil's implacable foe.

Knowledge (arcana or history) DC 25 During a battle against demons, Ashenyar was sorely beset and was saved from certain death by the legendary paladin Ilmari Nononen. In thanks, Ashenyar gifted the heroic warrior one of his horns that had broken off during the battle and imbued it with a portion of his power.

Knowledge (arcana or history) DC 30 The *Grail of Ashenyar* is a legendary relic imbued with powers of protection and rejuvenation. However, its possessor often dies in battle against evil's great champions: demons, devils and chromatic dragons.

Powers The *Grail of Ashenyar* has the following powers:

Blessing of the Virtuous (1/month) When bathed in the light of the full moon and blessed with a *prayer* spell cast in a consecrated area by a good-aligned cleric, the *Grail of Ashenyar* is imbued with protective magics. Thereafter, the possessor can cause the grail to fill with a thick, effervescent sweet-tasting golden liquid. Up to 13 creatures can drink from the grail and those doing so are protected as if they had consumed a *heroes' feast*. Once conjured, this liquid

cannot be again called forth until the grail is recharged by completing the above ritual under a new full moon.

Virtuous Reborn (1/year) The grail's greatest power is the ability to banish death itself. Once per year, it can be used to return a slain creature to life. To do so, the possessor must sprinkle 5,000 gp worth of diamond dust into the grail and pray to the powers of goodness and light. Doing so imbues the dust with the power to restore life to the fallen. A corpse covered in the dust is affected as if by a *raise dead* spell. To restore this power to the grail, it must be bathed in holy water within a consecrated area by the light of the first full moon of the year.

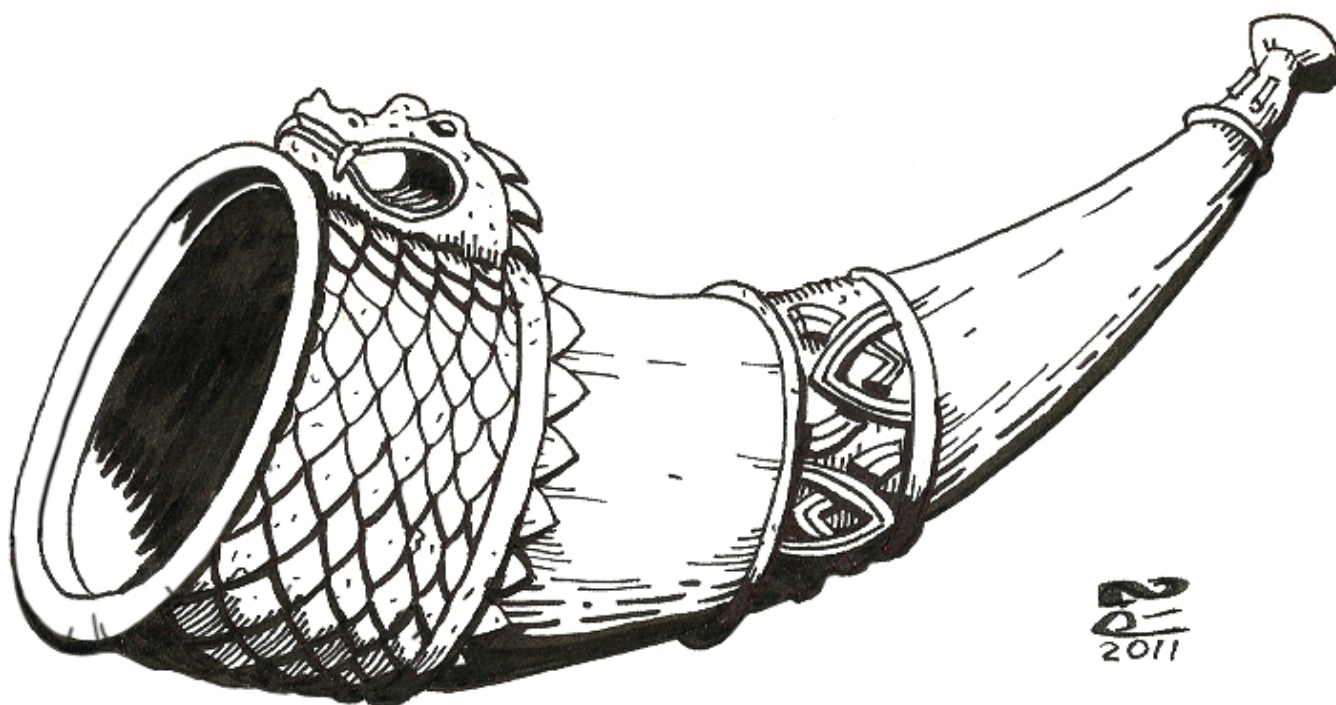
Drawback Powerful champions of evil – demons, devils and chromatic dragons – can sense the Grail when within 100 miles of the relic. The creature senses the direction in which the Grail lies (as if it could visualise it while affected by a *locate object* spell), but does not know its exact location.

Slot None (use activated); **Price** 51,380 gp; **Weight** 4 lbs.

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *heroes' feast*, *raise dead*; **Cost** 25,690 gp

PRICING NOTE

I've priced this item as a staff as it has broadly similar style of powers. However, I have applied an overall 30% discount because of the restriction of use.



ARLAN'S EFFICACIOUS ROD

This rod comprises two twisted iron rods and is tipped with a small transparent red carnelian.

Aura Strong (no school) (DC 24 Knowledge [arcana]); **Identify** DC 32 Spellcraft; **CL** 17th

Slot None (use activated); **Price** 3,000 gp; **Weight** 5 lbs.

Requirements Craft Rod, Extend Spell; **Cost** 1,500 gp

Powers *Arlan's Efficacious Rod* is a lesser metamagic rod of extend spell.

History: Crafted by the pompous, egotistical half-elf diviner Arlan Farseer almost a century ago, this rod has been broken and mended several times. Eventually lost by its owner in an ill-advised game of chance it has passed through many hands over the intervening years. Many minor heroes and protectors of the kingdom have wielded it in defence of the realm.

The rod was lost in battle against the orcs of the southlands some ten years ago. It was not recovered until a wandering band of freeswords – The Crimson Blades – wrested it from a particularly vile and odorous ogre mercenary in the southern foothills on the kingdom's border. The Blades subsequently used the rod to gain a local lord's favour. It languished in the lord's treasure vault until he gifted it to a brave adventurer who rescued his son from ritual sacrifice at the hands of savage orcs.

ELIR'S BANE

This simple, slender golden band is of elven manufacture and is obviously very old. A polished black onyx tops the ring.

Aura Moderate transmutation (DC 17 Knowledge [arcana]); **Identify** DC 22 Spellcraft; **CL** 7th

Slot Ring; **Price** 25,000 gp; **Weight** –

Requirements Forge Ring, jump; **Cost** 12,500 gp

Powers *Elir's Bane* is a cursed ring of evasion.

Curse The ring bestows upon the wearer a -4 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, ability checks and skill checks. Once worn, it cannot be removed, unless successfully affected with a *remove curse*.

This ring is of ancient elven artifice and was likely crafted in one of the near-mythical elven kingdom that dominated the great southern woods before the coming of men a millennia ago. Ruins of those kingdoms yet lie scattered across the region. However, the most famous ruin of that time is the cursed fallen City of Stars, which lie hundreds of miles to the south. It is likely that performing some (as yet unknown) elvish ritual in one of these ruins could remove ring's curse.



HAMMER OF THE MOUNTAINS

This heavy warhammer has a thick haft and is crafted of a dark, glittering metal. Its surface is pristine – no dents, scratches or rust mar its surface. The hammer bears a maker's mark – a crossed sword and hammer.

Aura None

Slot None (use activated); **Price** 3,012 gp; **Weight** 5 lbs.

Requirements None; **Cost** 1,506 gp

Powers The *Hammer of the Mountains* is an adamantite warhammer.

History: This adamantite warhammer was crafted by a legendary dwarven smith two centuries ago to use in his war of vengeance against the orcs and trolls of the surrounding mountains. The hammer was lost in the ruin of his citadel, but surfaced several decades later in the hands of the violent half-orc bandit, Kronk Bloodfang. He was slain after terrorising the kingdom's western borderlands almost five years. The hammer passed through many hands before coming into the possession of a powerful nobleman who used it as a gift to an adventurer who rescued his son from ritual sacrifice at the hands of savage orcs.

SPEAR OF THE NORTH

Wickedly sharp and featuring barbs to tear and opponent's flesh, the shaft of this fine-crafted spear is stained with the blood of countless foe.

Aura Faint evocation and abjuration (DC 16 Knowledge [arcana]); **Identify** DC 16 Spellcraft; **CL** 3rd

Slot None (use activated); **Price** 6,305 gp; **Weight** 9 lbs.

Requirements Craft Magic Arms and Armour, CL 3 creator, *remove fear*; **Cost** 3,153 gp

Powers The *Spear of the North* has the following powers:

Magic Weapon The spear is a +1 *longspear*.

Resist Fear The wielder gains a +4 morale bonus against fear effects.

History: Of ancient design, the *Spear of the North* was originally wielded by the warrior-hero Haragern Kurast during the conquest of what would become the kingdom over four centuries ago. A companion and close confidant of the first overlord of the kingdom, it was carried in many of the crucial engagements of the conquest.

Kurast's descendants carried the spear for over 400 years. It was lost 20 years ago during the fall of the southern lands when its wielder, Kallarn Kurast, was slain by orcs and ogres as he struggled to protect the fleeing folk of some nameless hamlet on the kingdom's southern border.

GM ADVICE: PC REWARDS

NOT EVERY REWARD HAS TO BE IN THE FORM OF MAGIC OR GOLD. SOMETIMES REWARDS DO NOT GLITTER, BUT ARE VALUABLE NONETHELESS.

A GM doesn't have to constantly reward his players with gold and magic items. Providing other types of rewards keeps things fresh and interesting while building the verisimilitude and depth of the campaign world.

- **Favours:** Having a person owe you a favour can be very rewarding. Of course, the "power" of the favour depends on who owes it, but even the humblest peasant can provide neophyte adventurers with shelter, local knowledge and so on. Noblemen, powerful clergy and archmages can offer truly unique, priceless assistance to people to whom they owe a favour.
- **Information:** Information is power. Having the right kind of information to bypass a deadly trap, slay a particular foe or to even find the dungeon is often the difference between glorious success and bloody failure. That's well worth a few pieces of gold!
- **Items:** In games in which the PCs cannot simply buy whatever magic items they fancy having a NPC gift or craft them the item(s) of their dreams is a huge favour. The PC may even be able to make the item slightly different to normal examples of such items perhaps by customising its appearance or slightly tweaking its abilities.
- **Property:** Rundown buildings, small businesses and suchlike can make great rewards. They provide something for the PCs to do outside adventuring and can act as springboards to future adventures.

- **Renown:** Success breeds fame and fame is often a handy thing to have. The PCs may receive preferential treatment in towns, the mention of their names may reduce many of their enemies to quaking cowards and so on. (Of course, this can also work against them as various shadowy cults, evil villains and suchlike can learn about them by listening to the stories of their heroics.)
- **Spellcasting:** Sometimes the party doesn't have access to all the spells it needs – perhaps the classic example is *raise dead*. Often, such spells have valuable or rare material components the party may also not possess. In this situation, having an NPC cast these spells for you is a terrific reward.
- **Story Progression:** As well as clearing the dungeon and slaying its master, in a campaign with an overarching plot the PCs can gain the information required to continue to the next adventure. Alternatively, the PCs could gain information that provides them with a substantial advantage. Gaining such information can provide the players with an amazing sense of achievement.
- **Titles:** Some titles are meaningless while others may come with land and property. All have responsibilities and elevate the holder above the great unwashed masses.

Do you reward your PCs with things not on this list? Why not let me know what they are in the comments below and remember you can download this – and every other advice article – for free at ragingswan.com/articles.



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