

RAGING SWAN PRESS

GM'S MONTHLY MISCELLANY:

MARCH 2014



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GM'S MONTHLY MISCELLANY: MARCH 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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Thank you for purchasing *GM's Monthly Miscellany: March 2014*; we hope you enjoy it and that you check out our other fine print and PDF products.

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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:

- **Village Backdrop: Riverburg** Brian Wiborg Mønster.
- **Dungeon Dressing: Ceilings** Aaron Bailey.
- **So What's The Zombie Like, Anyway?** Greg Marks.

To learn more about the Open Game License, visit wizards.com/d20.



FOREWORD

This is an exciting month for Raging Swan Press.

For starters it is our fourth birthday – which is a hell of a milestone. (I noticed recently on Paizo that Raging Swan Press now has 217 Pathfinder compatible products available which means on average we’ve released slightly more than one product a week since 2010!)

Secondly – and related to our birthday celebrations – Raging Swan Press is releasing five print products this month! Releases include collector’s editions of two of our most popular adventures (*Retribution* and *Road of the Dead*) and our first hardback editions (*All That Glimmers*, *GM’s Miscellany: Wilderness Dressing* and *Scions of Evil*). It’s been a hell of a lot of work, but I hope you enjoy the results as I’ve immensely enjoyed revisiting some of our “golden oldies.”

In any event, herein you’ll find excerpts from some of Raging Swan’s newest products as well as some simple templates from another golden oldie – *So What’s The Zombie Like, Anyway?* I’ve also included a selection of advice articles from those posted weekly at ragingswan.com/articles as well as material from my *Borderland of Adventure* campaign. This month, I present

locations from a pirate town the PCs are about to reach in their quest to discover who is orchestrating the attacks on their homeland. 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.

The picture below is by Matt Morrow and depicts the Bat God’s servant from *Against the Cult of the Bat God* by John Bennett. The module, for 5th-level characters, is set on the Lonely Coast and releases late next month. With more than a hint of Lovecraft, the adventure includes both investigation and combat aplenty for your heroes!

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'S ADVICE: 8 TIPS FOR BEGINNING GMS

GMINING IS ONE OF THE MOST REWARDING ASPECTS OF ROLEPLAYING. IT'S ALSO ONE OF THE MOST DAUNTING, PARTICULARLY FOR NEW GAMERS. LUCKILY, IT'S ACTUALLY PRETTY EASY TO DO WELL.

I've been gaming for 30 years and in that time I've seen thousands(ish) of gamers take their place for the first time behind the screen. Recently, my youngest son ran me through his first dungeon. Rules, logic and verisimilitude were all thrown aside in the pursuit of fun. We had a great time – I even survived – and it got me thinking about advice for beginning GMs.

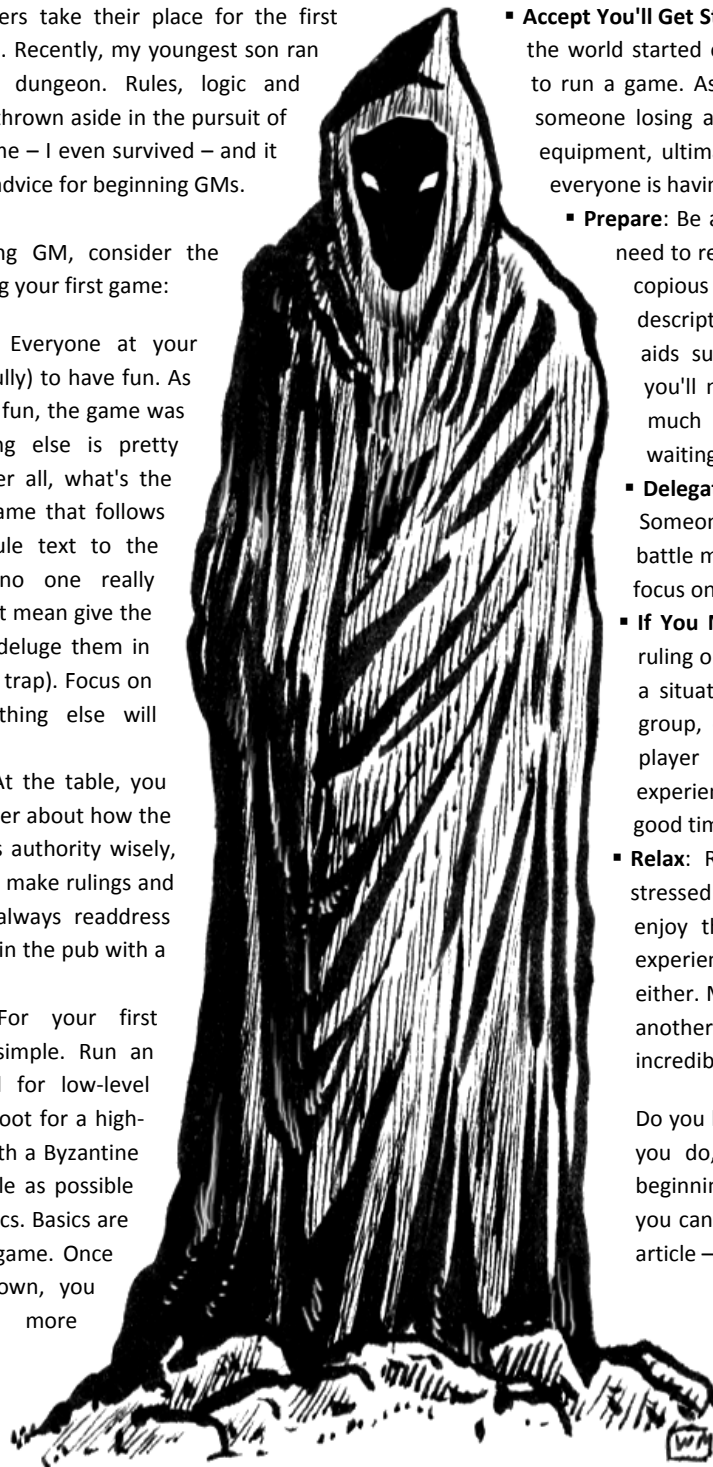
If you are a beginning GM, consider the following when planning your first game:

- **Remember Rule 0:** Everyone at your table is there (hopefully) to have fun. As long as everyone has fun, the game was a success. Everything else is pretty much irrelevant. After all, what's the point in running a game that follows the rules and module text to the letter, but which no one really enjoyed? That doesn't mean give the PCs an easy ride or deluge them in treasure (unless it's a trap). Focus on the fun and everything else will come.
- **Remember Rule 1:** At the table, you are the ultimate arbiter about how the game is run. Use this authority wisely, but don't be afraid to make rulings and move on. You can always readdress them after the game in the pub with a beer!
- **Keep It Simple:** For your first adventure, keep it simple. Run an easy dungeon crawl for low-level characters – don't shoot for a high-level game or one with a Byzantine plot. Keep it as simple as possible and focus on the basics. Basics are fundamental to the game. Once you've got those down, you can advance to more

complex adventures.

- **Accept You'll Get Stuff "Wrong":** Remember the best GM in the world started out knowing next to nothing about how to run a game. As long as your errors don't end up with someone losing a character or a major piece of magical equipment, ultimately it doesn't really matter as long as everyone is having fun (see "Remember Rule 0" above).
- **Prepare:** Be as ready as you can for the game. If you need to read the module three times, do so. Make copious notes, look up relevant rules, spell descriptions and so on and prepare any game aids such as maps, figures and anything else you'll need. Doing all that before the game is much easier than doing it with your friends waiting.
- **Delegate:** You don't need to do everything. Someone else can run initiative, clean off the battle matt and so on. Let them help, so you can focus on running the game.
- **If You Need Help, Ask:** If you get stuck with a ruling or need some advice about how to handle a situation, simply ask. You can either ask the group, or speak privately with an experienced player or GM. Gaming is a cooperative experience and your friends want you to have a good time – remember that.
- **Relax:** Relax and enjoy the game. If you are stressed out about running the game, you won't enjoy the experience. If you don't enjoy the experience, chances are your players won't either. More importantly, you won't want to run another game which is a shame as GMing can be incredibly rewarding.

Do you have other advice for a beginning GM? If you do, why not leave it below and help a beginning GM improve his game and remember you can download this – and every other advice article – for free at ragingswan.com/articles.



RIVERBURG AT A GLANCE

In the Darkclaw Forest, just below the point where three rivers meet and form the Greater Gurden River which flows lazily to the coast, stands the village of Riverburg. It rises from the muddy waters on sturdy poles, and stilts supporting the platforms on which the buildings stand. The Singing Bargeman Inn was the beginning, built 240 years ago, as a safe place to rest for the bargemen travelling up and down the rivers. Over the years, more platforms have been built and connected to each other, slowly transforming the lowly river inn into a village. The name Riverburg was first used as a sarcastic name for the village by the bargemen, referring to the mostly ramshackle look of most of the platforms, but the name stuck and the villagers liked the grandiose sounding name. Today Riverburg is known for the river guides making their living guiding barges through the treacherous waters of the three rivers upstream.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Ruler Mayor Tarden Neuporter

Government Autocracy

Population 178 (161 humans, 11 halflings, 4 half-elves, 2 half-orcs)

Alignments NG, N, NE

Languages Common, Halfling

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

Qualities Notorious, strategic location

Danger +10; **Disadvantages** None

NOTABLE FOLK

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

“Boss” Huggins (location 2; NE male human rogue 5) Boss Huggins is the guildmaster of the Rivermen’s Guild. A big bald, sweaty man, he is rarely seen without his two bodyguards Trask and Grask (NE male half-orc fighter 3)

Father Olgart (location 6; NG male human cleric 5) An elderly cleric of the Goddess of Light. He is currently trying to raise funds to restore the local temple.

Jarelia (location 8; CG female human expert 2) Jarelia runs the Dusky Sylph, the local brothel.

Old Pew (location 7; N male human fighter 7) Old Pew is the local drunkard; he is usually trading tall tales for drinks at the Singing Bargeman.

Shallya Radover (location 5; CG female human expert 3) A slim, silent woman. She is in charge of the market platform and settles the many minor disputes between vendors.

Syll Jollybottom (location 1; CN male halfling bard 2) The eldest Jollybottom brother entertains the guests at the Singing Bargeman, and enjoys trading tales with travellers.

Tarden Neuporter (location 3; LN male expert 2) Tarden is a small man with rat-like features; he has been the mayor for the last eight years.

Vill Jollybottom (location 1; LN male halfling expert 2) Syll’s younger brother. He is tall for a halfling, and works as a bartender and cook at the Singing Bargeman.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

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

1. **The Singing Bargeman Inn:** One of the few two-storey buildings in Riverburg, the Singing Bargeman is also the only inn. It caters mostly to bargemen travelling up and down the river. The whole Jollybottom family lives in the adjoining building (and work in the inn).
2. **Rivermen’s Guildhall:** A big one-storey building, intricate woodcarvings of bargemen and other river scenes decorate its walls.
3. **Tarden Neuporter’s Home and Office:** A small, unimposing house serves as the mayor’s home and offices; here he oversees Riverburg’s daily affairs.
4. **“Boss” Huggins Home:** This plain-looking house, provides no clues as to who lives within.
5. **The Market Platform:** This large platform is where the villagers buy, sell or barter their goods.
6. **The Hall of Light:** The former temple of the river god, now serves as the temple of the growing congregation of Father Olgart.
7. **Old Pew’s Home:** This ramshackle rickety house precariously balances on only three stilts.
8. **The Dusky Sylph:** A large two-storey building, only the dark blue silk draperies adorning the walls hint at what lies within.
9. **The Gate Platform:** A drawbridge connects Riverburg to the riverbank; it is also where the constabulary have their office.
10. **The Moaning Caves:** The caves located a few miles into the Darkclaw Forest occasionally emits long drawn moans. Legends tell the caves connect to the Ebon Realm.

MARKETPLACE

Resources & Industry Fishing, hunting, river guides

Base Value 700 gp; **Purchase Limit** 3,750 gp; **Spellcasting** 3rd; **Minor Items** 2d4; **Medium Items** 1d4; **Major Items** –

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

- **Armour** +1 studded leather (1,175 gp)
- **Potions & Oils** cure light wounds (50 gp)
- **Scrolls (Arcane)** water breathing (375 gp)
- **Scroll (Divine)** delay poison (150 gp), water walk (375 gp)
- **Weapons** +1 flail (2,308 gp)

VILLAGE LORE

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

DC 10: Riverburg is built on the Greater Gurden River, originally as a place to provide rest and safety to the rivermen.

DC 15: Today very few barges make the trip up river without a guide from the Rivermen's Guild.

DC 20: The biggest danger to the barges and their crew on the river is the Darkclaw River Pirates.

VILLAGERS

Appearance Most of the villagers seem to have a smear of dirt on their clothes at all times, the Rivermen's Guild members are an exception to this as are the workers at the Dusky Sylph.

Dress The villagers dress in practical well-worn clothes related to their jobs. Hunters wear browns and greens while fishermen favour brighter colours such as yellow or red. The members of the Rivermen's guild are easily recognizable in their light blue shirts and white trousers.

Nomenclature *male*

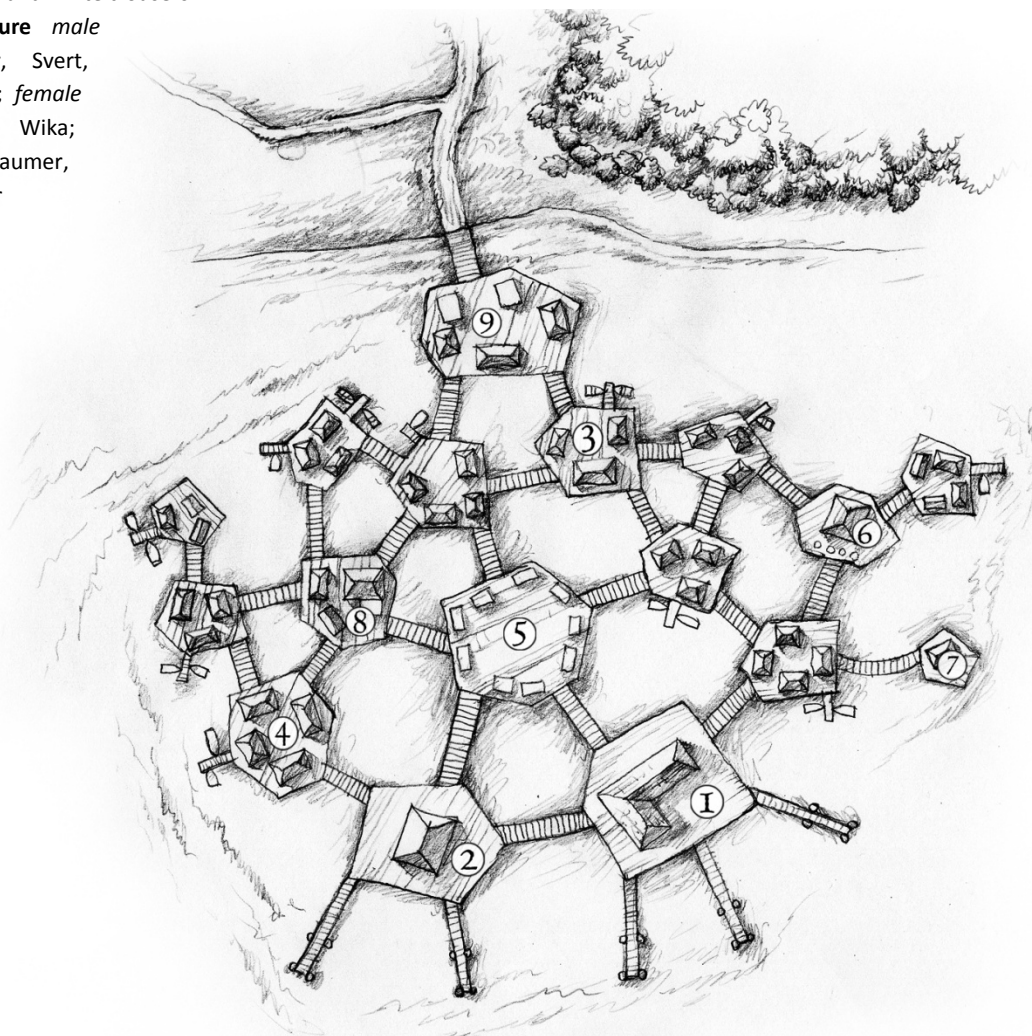
Djens, Holger, Svert,
Tallion, Walen; *female*
Hilda, Ursula, Wika;
family Baumer,
Dellier, Hanster

WHISPERS & RUMOURS

A PC can use Diplomacy to gather information about the village and its surroundings. 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	There is treasure in the Moaning Caves; treasure and death.
2	Father Olgart has been seen visiting the Dusky Sylph, but no one knows why.
3	You can get anything on the market platform if you know who to ask.
4*	Jarelia consorts with demons I say, lust demons to be sure...but demons nonetheless.
5	On foggy nights, Boss Huggins has been seen rowing up river with one of his bodyguards.
6	There is more to Old Pew than meets the eye.

*False rumour



DUNGEON CEILINGS: DRESSING & FEATURES

Use this table to generate interesting features for your ceiling. Some features listed below may be inappropriate based on your dungeon's setup – ignore or modify such entries as appropriate.

D%	
1	A section of the ceiling appears to have melted; molten rock has dripped onto the floor below.
2	A fresco of a ruling noble has been vandalised with the words "Power to the rebellion."
3	Dark green moss and lichen has grown across the moist stone ceiling.
4	The prints of wet bare feet are visible across the ceiling.
5	A haze of green flame wreaths the ceiling. A DC 15 Knowledge (dungeoneering) check reveals it as highly combustible natural gas.
6	Long, thick viscous globules of a dark brown slime hang down from the rough stone ceiling.
7	Stuck upon the ceiling is a long white funeral gown which flutters in an unseen draught.
8	A long, thin ladder leans against the wall. A pot of whitewash balances on the top rung.
9	The mouldering corpse of a dungeon denizen lies partially buried by the rubble of the collapsed ceiling.
10	The vaulted ceiling is decorated with numerous pennants and banners.
11	A profusion of javelins, crossbow bolts, arrows and axes are imbedded in the ceiling.
12	A tatty canvas has been strung up as a hammock between two rafters.
13	Silk streamers in a multitude of colours hang from the ceiling.
14	Of shattered plaster and charred stone, the ceiling is crackling with arcs of red lightning.
15	The buttresses supporting the vaulted ceiling have been sabotaged. A DC 15 Knowledge (engineering) check reveals a loud noise could trigger collapse.
16	A crimson pool collects as blood drips from the rafters. A DC 12 Perception spots a corpse slumped among the trusses.
17	Soft glowing runes mark the eaves of this high, vaulted ceiling.
18	The ceiling is cold. This causes condensation to form and water to drip down into the room.
19	The vivid illusion of a beautiful sunrise on the ceiling is flickering and failing.
20	Several blocks of stone have been removed from the ceiling to reveal a small storage niche.
21	A small black cat is meowing softly as it perches among the rafters and trusses.
22	Glowering eyes peer at you from the shadowed ceiling. Light reveals no lurking creatures.

23	A bucking and swaying sack hangs from the ceiling. Inside is an irritated and angry cat.
24	A rope hangs from the ceiling above a huge chasm which has swallowed a large section of the floor.
25	The skeletons of unlucky individuals are impaled on spikes protruding from the ceiling.
26	The boards which make up the ceiling have become swollen leaving several unsightly bulges.
27	The impaled body of a humanoid lies on the floor grasping a stalactite which has broken off from the ceiling above.
28	Thick roots of several trees have grown through the ceiling forcing several blocks of stone to fall.
29	A russet-coloured mould is growing in thick clumps across the ceiling and walls.
30	Bloodied and lifeless, a body lies next to scrawled words written in blood "Look above....for we are all lost."
31	A lit lantern sits on the floor. A trail of gore and ichor splatters the floor, one wall and ceiling.
32	A beautiful dream catcher hangs from the ceiling.
33	An inexpertly hidden net hangs from the ceiling.
34	Dark green algae covers the trusses of the ceiling as if the chamber had been submerged in water.
35	A dark black tar-like substance is dripping from the ceiling. It sizzles when it hits the floor.
36	Deep gouging claw marks are visible in the stone ceiling.
37	An owl hoots and tilts his head to watch the party from its perch among the rafters.
38	A huge humanoid-shaped dent has been made in the metal ceiling.
39	Two chains attached to iron rings in the ceiling swing gently. Broken manacles lie on the floor.
40	Several large hewn logs are being used to brace the ceiling.
41	A thick caustic smell fills the chamber as white vapours emerges from the chamber's ceiling, rafters and pillars.
42	Nailed across the ceiling is a banner with the word "Welcome" in large bright green letters.
43	The ceiling appears in a state of mid-collapse; fractured stone hangs impossibly in midair.
44	Thick curling tendrils of steam sprays into the room through small holes in the stone ceiling.
45	The faint sound of grinding from above is accompanied by falling sawdust. A DC 12 Knowledge (nature) check identifies termites as the source.
46	A rough and teetering scaffold tower has been built to repaint a section of the ceiling.
47	A red tinted light glimmers on the ceiling.
48	Soot covers the ceiling.

49	A section of plaster has cracked and fallen to smash on the floor; thick dust covers everything.
50	The coffered ceiling has had several panels vandalised; one once protected a secret niche.
51	The ceiling has a subtle mauve glow. A DC 13 Knowledge (arcana) check identifies it as similar to <i>faerie fire</i> .
52	Hundreds of dark but luscious green vines have crept up the pillars and now blanket the ceiling.
53	A multitude of furniture is stacked precariously in one corner. The tower reaches the ceiling.
54	The wooden buttresses supporting the ceiling have begun to bow; signs of cracking are evident.
55	Many cracks run through the ceiling.
56	Many of the glass panes comprising the ceiling have been smashed; glass litters the floor.
57	The unadorned rafters and ceiling has been hung with macabre trophies of skulls and bones of humanoids.
58	A once elaborate fresco, the ceiling has been vandalised and several portraits removed.
59	The lifeless body of an unfortunate rogue hangs from his malfunctioned climbing harness.
60	The lifeless body of a knight in full plate is stuck to the metal ceiling with his sword skewered through his chest. Beneath him is a pressure pad slick with blood.
61	Several small holes pierce the ceiling. They are spy holes.
62	The ceiling is suspiciously low. A DC 15 Knowledge (dungeoneering) check reveals it as a suspended ceiling.
63	An 'X' has been marked on the ground beneath a large stone medallion on the ceiling.
64	The ceiling is thick with a frost which glows with a bright crystal-like shimmer.
65	The plain plaster walls are covered in pencil work in preparation for being painted. It depicts the outlines of a flight of dragons.
66	A section of one of the pillars has broken and a metal strong box is wedged in the gap to support the ceiling.
67	The ceiling is a forest of stalactites; among it lives a bat colony that swarms if disturbed.
68	The imprint of a large gauntleted fist in the stone ceiling is easily visible.
69	A perfectly round hole pierces the glass ceiling; shattered glass lies beneath the hole.
70	The paint and plaster on the ceiling has thinned enough to make out the sigil of a deity beneath. A DC 14 Knowledge (religion) check reveals it as the symbol of the goddess of ill fortune.
71	The metal ceiling is stretching and rivets are breaking; water is spurting through the gaps.
72	The stalactites have been removed from the ceiling. They have been stacked nearby.
73	A sign says, "Ceiling unsafe."

74	A bloodied notepad of sketches and notes about hundreds of frescos and vaulted ceilings lies on the floor.
75	The chamber is thick with viscous spider web. A DC 13 Perception check reveals five cocooned corpses secreted into a dark corner of the ceiling.
76	The ceiling has small magical lights; several have gone out while others blink intermittently.
77	Screaming emanates through the iron grill ceiling. Blood rains down and the screams cease.
78	Several climbing pitons have been driven into the stone ceiling. A long rope connects each pin allowing easier climbing (+5 bonus to Climb).
79	Ornamental gargoyles decorate each corner of the ceiling
80	A shoeless body lies broken on the floor. A DC 13 Perception check spots shoes stuck to the ceiling.
81	Several pillars lie smashed over the segmented body of a gargantuan centipede.
82	Sections of the ceiling have been repaired with permanent <i>walls of force</i> .
83	The ceiling has been covered with a layer of slippery orange ooze (+5 to Climb DC).
84	Several horse bridles are tied to a thick chain wrapped around the ceiling's thickest rafter.
85	Several sheets of parchment are stuck against the ceiling from a strong draught.
86	A set of platemail-covered legs protrude through several broken boards in the ceiling.
87	A huge boulder has shattered the ceiling and now rests precariously on three pillars.
88	Hundreds of candles flicker on the ceiling's rafters. Wax covers the rafters.
89	A large block of stone hangs in a primitive crane ready to be hoisted into a gap in the ceiling.
90	Dust and dirt falls from the ceiling as a small tremor shakes the ground.
91	Refuse and sewage drains through a large opening in the ceiling.
92	The ceiling is teeming with thousands of shiny scarab beetles.
93	A noose looped over the rafters hangs around the neck of a mouldering corpse.
94	A stone block has fallen from the ceiling. Blood splatter surrounds it.
95	The painted depicts a summer sky.
96	A grinning skull painting decorates the ceiling.
97	A mass of rusted chains hang from the ceiling.
98	A damp patch mars the ceiling. Cold water drips from it onto the floor.
99	Thick, wet cobwebs cover the ceiling. They are so damp they resist natural fire; only magic can burn them away.
100	Roll again to determine the ceiling's dressing. The ceiling is also trapped. Refer to pages 6 – 7.

SO WHAT'S THE ZOMBIE LIKE ANYWAY?: ZOMBIE TEMPLATES

For almost any party of adventurers, a single zombie is no challenge. However, zombies can gather into hordes or swarms of scores or even hundreds of individuals. Sleepless, indefatigable zombies in these numbers prove fatal to all but the most powerful, or fleet of foot, adventurers. However, a pack of identical zombies is boring; consider adding one of these templates to several members of the horde to create more interesting battles. To aid this, and for your convenience, stat blocks for a human zombie and fast human zombie appear below.

FROZEN ZOMBIE (CR +0)

Whether animated in cold climes, trapped in an ice house or slain by magic with a cold descriptor, with no body heat of their own and their slow moving speed, zombies are particularly prone to freezing. This makes them even more resistant to damage and slows them even further.

If the zombie is not magically frozen, but simply frozen due to the weather conditions, it becomes a normal zombie if warmed to normal room temperature.

Quick & Rebuild Rules: **DR** —/5; **Resist** cold 5; **Vulnerability** fire; **Speed** 20 ft.

GRINNING ZOMBIE (CR +1)

A frozen grin is the terrifying hallmark of the hungry dead, and the grinning zombie takes that smile to new levels with an overly large fanged mouth and atrophied arms that exist only to drag food into its gaping maw. Such zombies can often be heard rapidly clicking their teeth together when standing still.

Quick Rules: Replace the zombie's slam with a bite attack that does 1d8+6; -1 Stealth; +2 bonus to rolls related to Str.

Rebuild Rules: **Melee** Replace the zombie's slam with a bite attack; **Feats** Improved Natural Attack (bite); **Skills** -1 racial penalty to Stealth; **Ability Scores** +4 Str.

LEGLESS ZOMBIE (CR -1)

Zombies are relentless, even when horribly maimed. The legless zombie has nothing below the waist and its innards drag on the ground behind it as it uses its hands to drag itself forward.

Quick Rules: -20 ft. speed (minimum 5 ft.); the zombie is always prone.

Rebuild Rules: **Speed** -20 ft. (minimum 5 ft.); **Special Qualities** Prone: the zombie is always prone and cannot stand.

FAST HUMAN ZOMBIE

CR 1/2 (XP 200)

The putrid stench of death emanates from this shambling corpse. The creature's pale flesh is rotting from its body and it regards you with dull, hate-filled eyes.

NE Medium undead

Init +2 **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0, Sense Motive +0

Speed 40 ft.; **ACP** 0; **Acrobatics** +2 (+6 jumping)

AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; **CMD** 16

(+2 Dex, +2 natural)

Immune mind-affecting effects, death effects, disease, paralysis, poison, sleep effects, stunning, nonlethal damage, ability drain, energy drain, damage to physical abilities, exhaustion, fatigue, massive damage, any effect requiring a Fortitude save (unless it affects objects or is harmless)

Fort +0, **Ref** +2, **Will** +3

hp 12 (2 HD)

Space 5 ft.; **Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +4

Melee slam +4 (1d6+4)

Atk Options quick strike

Quick Strike (Ex) Whenever a fast zombie makes a full-attack, it can make one additional slam attack.

Abilities Str 17, Dex 14, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 10

Feats Toughness

Gear rotting clothes

HUMAN ZOMBIE

CR 1/2 (XP 200)

A partly decomposed corpse shambles toward you. Grave dirt clings to its body and tattered burial shift. Its cold, dead eyes regard you with merciless indifference.

NE Medium undead

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0

Speed 30 ft.; staggered; **ACP** 0

Staggered (Ex) Slow and ungainly, a zombie can only take a single move or standard action each round. A zombie can move its speed and attack as a charge action.

AC 12, touch 10, flat-footed 12; **CMD** 14

(+2 natural)

Immune mind-affecting effects, death effects, disease, paralysis, poison, sleep effects, stunning, nonlethal damage, ability drain, energy drain, damage to physical abilities, exhaustion, fatigue, massive damage, any effect requiring a Fortitude save (unless it affects objects or is harmless)

Fort +0, **Ref** +0, **Will** +3

hp 12 (2 HD); **DR** slashing/5

Space 5 ft.; **Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +4

Melee slam +4 (1d6+4)

Abilities Str 17, Dex 10, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 10

SQ undead traits

Feats Toughness^B

Gear rotting clothes

SCREAMING ZOMBIE (CR +1)

The screaming zombie sits or moves quietly until it sees potential prey, at which point it lets out a ear-splitting scream that can deafen and even damage foes. Of course, this screaming tends to attract other zombies.

Rebuild Rules: **Special Attacks** *Death's Scream (Su)*: As a standard action, the zombie lets out a scream of brutal sound in a 30-ft. radius that does 1d8 damage +1 point per 2 HD (maximum of +10) and deafens all creatures in the radius for 1d4 rounds. A creature can attempt a Fortitude saving throw to halve the damage and avoid being deafened. Creatures that cannot hear are not deafened but are still damaged. This saving throw is equal to $10 + 1/2$ the zombie's Hit Dice + the zombie's Charisma modifier.

ZOMBIE LIMB SWARM (CR +2)

More horrifying than the walking dead themselves, a zombie limb swarm is an animate pile of grasping arms, kicking legs and rolling heads eager to chew on the flesh of the living. Creatures falling into the swarming grasp of these vicious limbs rarely escape.

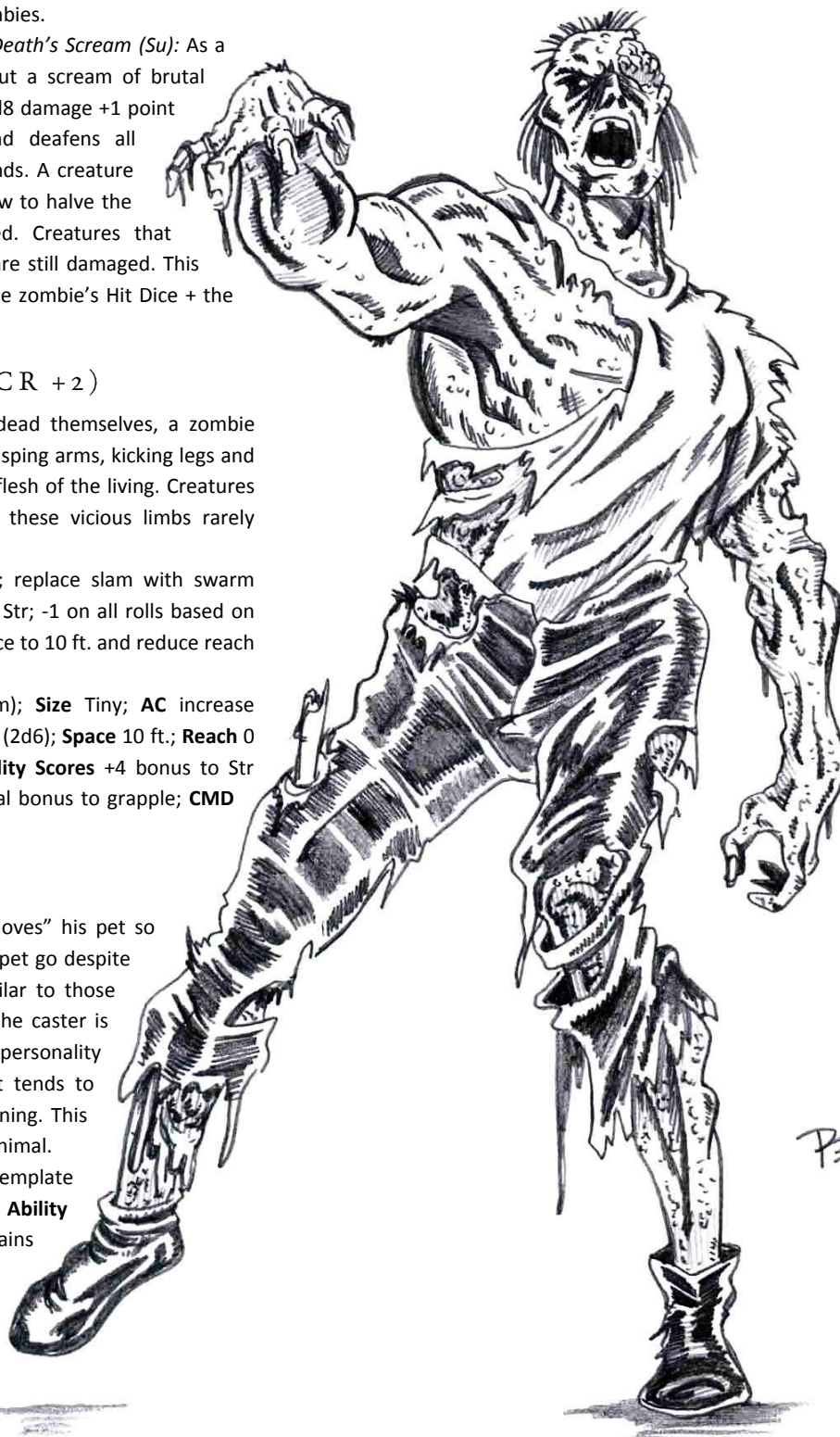
Quick Rules: gain swarm traits; replace slam with swarm (2d6 damage); +2 on rolls based on Str; -1 on all rolls based on Dex, size becomes tiny; increase space to 10 ft. and reduce reach to 0 ft.

Rebuild Rules: **Subtype** (swarm); **Size** Tiny; **AC** increase natural armour by +3; **Melee** swarm (2d6); **Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.; **Special Attacks** distraction; **Ability Scores** +4 bonus to Str and -2 penalty to Dex; **CMB** +2 racial bonus to grapple; **CMD** +2 racial bonus against grapple.

ZOMBIE PET (CR +1)

Sometimes a talented spellcaster "loves" his pet so much that he is unwilling to let the pet go despite death's icy grasp. Using rituals similar to those for animating a humanoid corpse, the caster is able to bind some of the animal's personality and traits to the corpse, though it tends to become even more vicious and cunning. This template can only be applied to an animal.

Rebuild Rules: Use the zombie template with the following modifications: **Ability Scores** Int 2; **Feats** The zombie gains Improved Natural Attack and Toughness as bonus feats; **Special Qualities** The zombie pet retains all special qualities it had in life and does not gain the staggered special quality.



FROM MY CAMPAIGN: PIRATE TOWN

THE SCORCHED ANCHOR

This raucous tavern stands near the docks and rarely closes. Frequented by pirates and other scoundrels it serves as neutral ground between rival crews; brawls and murders are rare here.

- **DC 10 Knowledge (local)** Brawls are rare at the Scorched Anchor, despite its rough and ready clientele.
- **DC 15 Knowledge (local)** Fardulf, the tavern's proprietor, is a powerful wizard. It is his reputation that keeps the peace.

The Scorched Anchor has been a fixture of the town's social life for the last few years. During that time, it has had but one owner:

- **Fardulf Nantua** (N male human wizard [evoker] 7) is reputed to have personally sunk several ships during his brief pirate career. As such this loud, gregarious fellow is respected and feared by his clientele.

A huge scorched anchor hangs on chains from the ceiling of the common room. The anchor is the only surviving piece of the *Black Knave*, a pirate ship Fardulf destroyed at the culmination of a bitter rivalry between himself and its captain. He hangs it here to remind himself (and others) of his greatest victory.

The offering at the Rusty Anchor is basic, but wholesome.

- **Food & Drink** meal 3 sp, ale 4 cp, wine (pitcher) 2 sp.
- **Accommodation** The Scorched Anchor does not have any rooms for travellers.

OVLON'S

Run by a bad-tempered duergar weaponsmith, much of this establishment lies underground in extensive, multi-level cellars dug out by its owner in a bid to escape the harsh light of the surface world.

- **DC 10 Knowledge (local)** Ovlon is a bitter, foul tempered man, but makes the best weapons in town.
- **DC 15 Knowledge (local)** Ovlon is a duergar. His workshop is actually in the cellars below his shop.
- **DC 20 Knowledge (local)** Ovlon has a few magical weapons for sale.

Ovlon is the best weaponsmith in town, and he knows it. A fugitive from his subterranean home, he has powerful allies among the town's rulers. These allies enable him to live here in relative peace, but he must occasionally complete commissions

on their behalf. This reliance chafes Ovlon's pride and he dreams of the day he is once again a free man.

- **Ovlon Urnivin** (NE male duergar fighter 3/expert 2) is a skilled weaponsmith as famed for his bad temper as his creations. He emerges from his forge at night to drink in the various nearby taverns.

Ovlon employs only human apprentices and forbids any light in his subterranean lair. Thus, much of the mundane work is carried on upstairs while Ovlon works in the lightless depths on special commission and the like.

A racist, he charges dwarves and those of elven descent 10% extra. He has a few special items for sale:

- **Special Item for Sale** +1 cold iron falchion (4,450 gp), +1 scimitar (2,315 gp), masterwork cold iron longsword (330 gp).

THE PENS

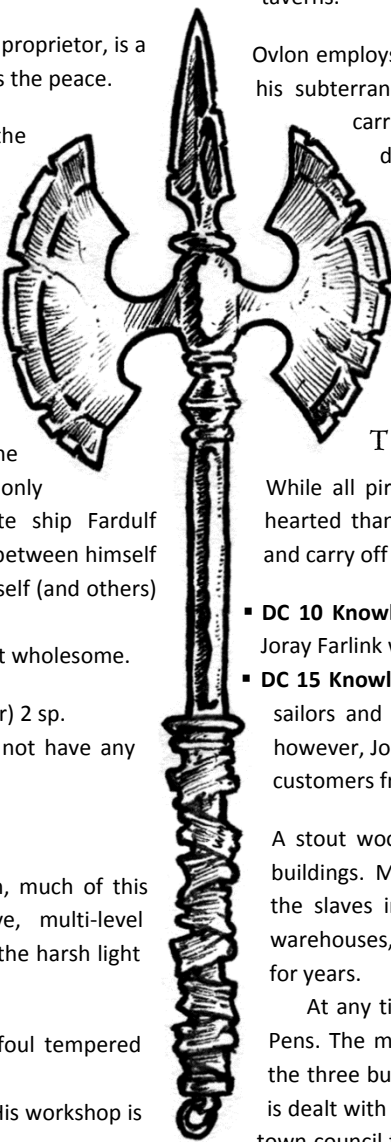
While all pirates have a black heart, some are more black-hearted than others. Several of the crews engage in slavery and carry off the survivors of their raids to be sold here.

- **DC 10 Knowledge (local)** If you need a slave, visit the Pens. Joray Farlink will sell you what you need.
- **DC 15 Knowledge (local)** Normally, only captured merchants, sailors and the like are thrown into the Pen. On occasion, however, Joray has secured specific types of slave for his best customers from the town's populace.

A stout wooden stockade surrounds three squalid, stinking buildings. Manned guard towers topped with ballista keep the slaves in (and troublesome do-gooders out). Originally warehouses, the Pens have served as the town's slave market for years.

At any time, there are between 30 and 100 slaves in the Pens. The manacled slaves are free to move about between the three buildings as they please, but any attempt at escape is dealt with harshly. Joray occasionally rents out slaves to the town council to do the jobs no one else will do. In return, he is handsomely compensated.

- **Joray Farlink** (CE male middle-aged human fighter 3/rogue 5) is entirely without morals or scruples. Once a pirate, he discovered that selling other people's spoils makes for an easier and far less dangerous life. He is a brutal, odious man with absolutely no redeeming features.



- **Slaver Guards** (NE male human fighter 3) Thirty guards keep the slaves in line. They are as brutal and inured to suffering as Joray.

Joray dwells on the top floor of a stout stone tower in an opulent fortress- apartment. Once a wizard's home, the building fell into Joray's hands after the previous owner angered the wrong pirate captain. His guards dwell on the lower levels.

- **Adventure Hook:** Persistent rumours speak of hidden tunnels and chambers below Joray's tower. Joray himself has failed to find them and so their treasures may yet lie unclaimed.

THE PIT

This deep pit is used by the townsfolk to dump rubbish that would not wash out to sea. The town has no formal burial ground. Thus, the bodies of the slain also often end up dumped here.

- **DC 10 Knowledge (local)** Scores of huge rats dwell in the pit and sneak forth at night to gorge on the day's leavings.
- **DC 15 Knowledge (local)** Some sadistic pirates hurl drunks, defeated enemies and so on into the pit to be consumed by the ravenous rats.

Dug by slaves, the pit was once 50 ft. deep, but now rubbish, bones and so on fill the put over half full. In the near future, the pit will be filled in and another dug nearby.

WHISPERS & RUMOURS

A PC can use Diplomacy to gather information. This takes 1d4 hours and requires a DC 10 check. A PC 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.

WHAT'S FOR SALE, ANYWAY?

The following items are for sale in the town, when the PCs first arrive:

- **Armour** +1 breastplate (1,700 gp), +1 leather (1,160 gp), +1 studded leather (1,175 gp)
- **Potions & Oils** bear's endurance (300 gp), grease (50 gp)
- **Rings** force shield (8,500 gp), sustenance (2,500 gp)
- **Scrolls (Divine)** doom and sanctuary (50 gp), inflict moderate wounds (150 gp), speak with animals (25 gp)
- **Wand** ghoul touch (37 chgs.; 3,300 gp)
- **Weapons** +1 greataxe (2,320 gp), +1 shock short sword (8,310 gp), +3 heavy flail (18,315 gp)
- **Wondrous Items** harp of charming (7,500 gp)

D20	RUMOUR ¹
1	A secret hoard of gold is hidden beneath the docks, buried deep in the silt.
2	The captain of the <i>Singing Harpy</i> needs new crew, and he is not above press ganging likely recruits.
3	When the mist rolls in from the east, murder will visit the town.
4	The <i>Black Raven</i> made port last night with dozens of barrels of brandy taken in a raid. Unfortunately, it turns out some of the brandy was being used to preserve several strange corpses. Several people have died after drinking the brandy.
5	Strange ripples have been seen in the harbour. Something odd is living in those murky waters.
6	Several pirates have been murdered recently. Each had their eyes gouged out and replaced with worn silver coins of unknown origin.
7	Ghosts of long-dead sailors haunt the breakwater and yet seek to entice the living to a watery grave.
8	The <i>Sea Shadow</i> is always on the lookout for new recruits. Word is that new crewmen do not last long aboard that ship.
9	The crew of the <i>Ebon Wind</i> are cannibals. Detestable folk, they eat all who fall into their clutches – sometimes the captives are still alive!
10	All the ships' captains are to meet in council; a big score is in the wind!
11	Brawling is rife; 23 people died last night as a result of arguments.
12	The air smells of storm; something big is going to make landfall soon.
13	A reward has been posted for Derk Hilgar apparently he was caught in the arms of his captain's mistress.
14	Some of the waterfront buildings are so badly built, they'll likely collapse during the next storm.
15	Someone stole the <i>Blood Sword's</i> figurehead last night. When it's found, there'll be hell to pay.
16	The crew of the <i>Blood Shadow</i> captured a powerful cleric on their last foray. They are selling her spellcasting services to the highest bidder.
17	The famous pirate Gert Tralstar possesses a magic sword that floats on water. It's impossible for its owner to drown.
18	This town is built on a pre-human burial ground. Bored or drunk corsairs can often be spotted digging random holes in search of forgotten burial goods. One day, the dead will rise and claim us all!
19	Five years ago, the <i>Scanty Maid</i> was reported lost with all hands after a fierce battle with a rival crew. Why, then, has the ship's first mate been seen skulking about town?
20	Roll again; wildly exaggerate the indicated rumour using fantastical elements a superstitious pirate might believe exists.

¹ These rumours can be true or false, as the GM requires.

GAMING ADVICE: 6 WAYS TO HELP NEW PLAYERS

NEW PLAYERS ARE THE LIFEBLOOD OF OUR HOBBY. WITHOUT THEM, THE ROLE-PLAYING HOBBY WILL INEVITABLY FAIL. THIS WOULD BE A BAD THING AND SO IT'S UP TO ALL OF US TO MAKE A NEW PLAYER'S FIRST FEW GAMES AS STRESS FREE AND EXCITING AS POSSIBLE.

I love introducing new players to the game - gaming has given me so much in life and I want to pass that gift onto others. My own boys (aged 7 and 9) have already played a couple of basic games and we'll soon be trying the Pathfinder Beginner's Box. In preparation for doing so, I've thought long and hard about how in the past I've introduced new players to the hobby. I've come up with the following tactics, to make the first few games as easy as possible:

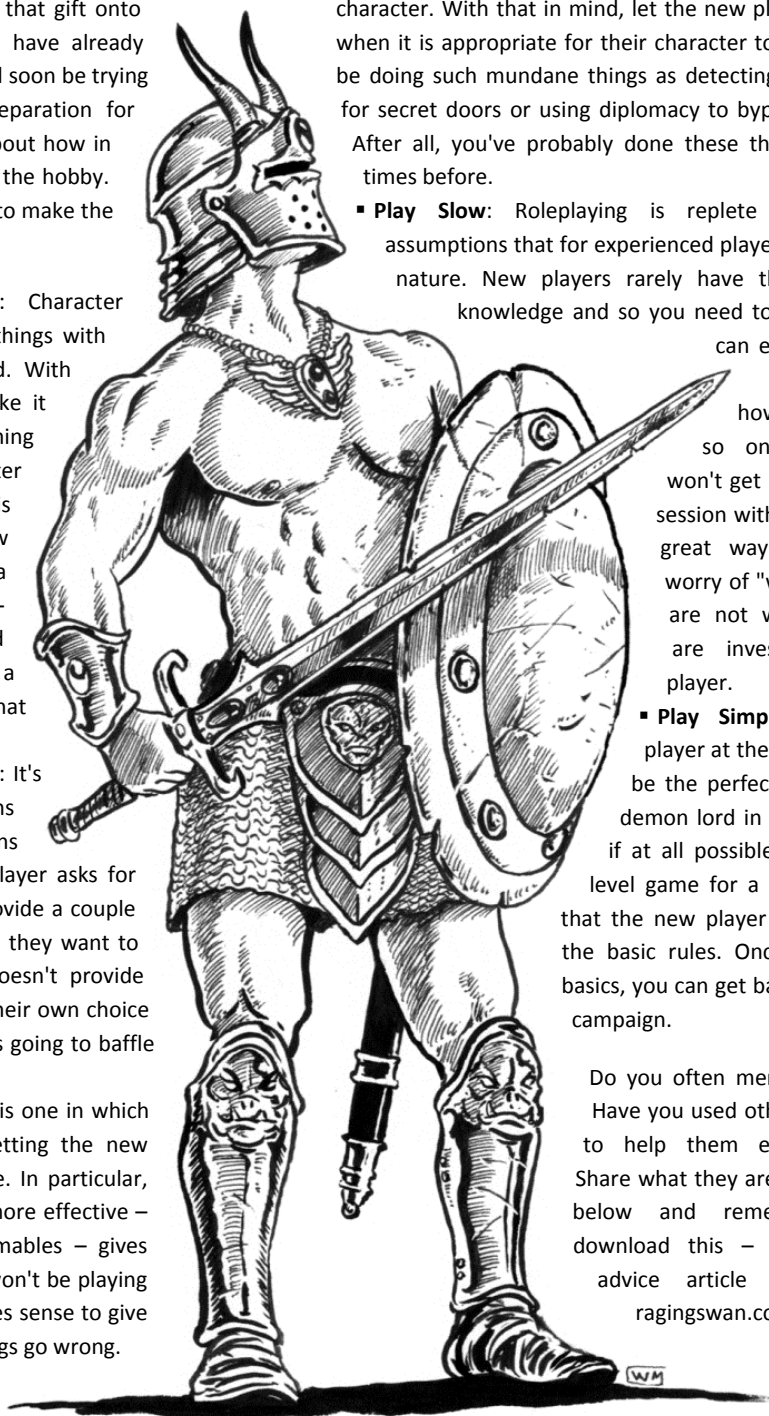
- **Help With Character Generation:** Character choices is one of the most baffling things with which a new player has to contend. With literally thousands of choices to make it can be a frustrating, time-consuming experience. Helping with character generation not helps speeds up this process, but helps you to get to know the new player. He'll probably have a preferred style of game play - although he doesn't know it yet - and helping him design a character is a great way of gaining insights into that style.
- **Provide Choices (But Not Too Many):** It's best to keep the first couple of sessions simple, both in terms of tactical options available and plot. Similarly, if the player asks for suggestions as to what to do next provide a couple of choices and let them pick the one they want to do. Giving them only one option doesn't provide them with the opportunity to make their own choice while giving them too many choices is going to baffle them and slow game play to a crawl.
- **Give Them More Stuff:** If your game is one in which you often find treasure, consider letting the new player have more than everyone else. In particular, treasure that makes their character more effective - magic weapons, armour and consumables - gives them more survivability. Given they won't be playing at an optimal tactical level yet it makes sense to give them a little extra cushion in case things go wrong.
- **Give Them Time In The Spotlight:** Part of the fun of roleplaying is

learning how the game works and achieving things with your character. With that in mind, let the new player take the lead when it is appropriate for their character to do so. This could be doing such mundane things as detecting magic, searching for secret doors or using diplomacy to bypass an encounter. After all, you've probably done these things thousands of times before.

▪ **Play Slow:** Roleplaying is replete with rules and assumptions that for experienced players come as second nature. New players rarely have this foundation of knowledge and so you need to play slow so you can explain things such as setting details, how rules work and so on. Accepting you won't get as much done in a session with a new player is a great way of ditching the worry of "wasting time." You are not wasting time, you are investing in a new player.

▪ **Play Simple:** With a new player at the table, it might not be the perfect time to attack a demon lord in its lair. Consider - if at all possible - playing a low-level game for a session to two so that the new player can get a grip of the basic rules. Once they know the basics, you can get back to your normal campaign.

Do you often mentor new players? Have you used other cunning tactics to help them enjoy roleplaying? 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.



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