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# GM'S MONTHLY MISCELLANY:

MAY 2014



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# GM'S MONTHLY MISCELLANY: MAY 2014

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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: May 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:

- **Subterranean Enclaves: Severed Umbra** Mike Welham.
- **Dungeon Dressing: Dungeon Entrances** Greg Marks.
- **Tribes Most Foul: Goblins** Creighton Broadhurst.

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## FOREWORD

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Time seems to be really flying here at Global HQ. It's already May, and this is the fifth GM's Monthly Miscellany. (If you don't already have previous issues, go ahead and download them for free from wherever you got this one!)

Herein you'll find excerpts from some of Raging Swan's newest products including the first in a line: *Subterranean Enclaves: Severed Umbra*. Designed in a similar fashion to Village Backdrops, Subterranean Enclaves are intended for underground adventures set in the Ebon Realm. Additionally, we've included material from *Dungeon Dressing: Dungeon Entrances* and a golden oldie – *Tribes Most Foul: Goblins*.

I've also included a selection of advice articles from those posted weekly at [ragingswan.com/articles](http://ragingswan.com/articles) as well as material from my own Borderland of Adventure campaign. This month, I present some of my own house rules. I've had to omit a few such rules as I've shamelessly stolen them from other publications (and I don't have the space to reprint them wholesale). The remaining material has been slightly scrubbed to remove the intellectual property of other companies but it is otherwise pretty much as I use it myself. If you want to keep up with our

adventures, you can read weekly session summaries on my blog: [raging-swan.livejournal.com](http://raging-swan.livejournal.com).

The image below is by Matt Morrow and it depicts the entrance to the Fane of the Undying Sleeper – the location for a 3rd-level adventure of the same name. The adventure releases this month and features a new encounter format I've been playing around with for a few months. The format is designed to make it even easier for a GM to prepare and run the module. I'd love your feedback on if it achieves this goal. You can grab a free sample at [ragingswan.com/undyingsleeper](http://ragingswan.com/undyingsleeper).

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](mailto:creighton@ragingswan.com).



## GAMING ADVICE: WHAT HAS GAMING DONE FOR ME?

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ON THE FACE OF IT, SITTING AROUND WITH FRIENDS ROLLING DICE IS A FUN WAY TO PASS SOME TIME. WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT, THOUGH, THE BENEFITS OF GAMING GO MUCH DEEPER...

As part of plotting my boys' initiation into gaming, I was pondering the other day exactly why I game and what gaming has done for me over the last thirty years.

When you think about it, the benefits of gaming go way beyond mere fun. Obviously, I love this hobby – or I wouldn't still be doing it – but the more I think about it the more I realise it has hidden benefits I really want to pass onto my boys.

For me, the benefits of gaming fall into four main categories:

- **Maths and Reading:** I started gaming when I was ten years old. After school, I used to rush home to do more reading and maths. Of course, I didn't realise it at the time – I just wanted to whack orcs – but gaming gave me a real boost in (probably) the two most essential life skills. I think it's fair to say, a large part of my life-long love of reading comes from gaming. Later on, when I started writing my own adventures and supplements, gaming gave me the impetuosity to learn how to write properly.
- **Teamwork:** Gaming taught me the benefits of teamwork. After all, if you go into the dungeon on your own you are going to die (horribly). Gaming is a cooperative experience. If the party works together, they'll likely triumph over their enemies. If they don't disaster likely looms. The ethos of teamwork is another incredibly important life skill.

- **Good Friends:** This is a huge one for me. With only one notable exception, all the long-term friends I have made have all been through gaming. I'm very lucky in that my main group has had an extremely stable roster of players. Of the seven of us, I've gamed with two of them for the best part of 20 years. Of the others, I've gamed with one for over a decade and the others for less time – but in two cases probably around five years or so. Looking at my wider group of friends, I've chums scattered all over the UK and the world I met through gaming.
- **A Great Job:** As you may know, I own Raging Swan Press and publish Pathfinder compatible games under that brand. That's right, I get to sit at home and game when most of my friends are at their proper work! How cool is that? While I'll likely never earn enough to buy a desert island, I have immense job satisfaction and a great quality of life. (Even better than that, I often write or commission projects that I'll be using in my Borderland of Adventure campaign making my campaign prep considerably easier!)

Has gaming done anything else for you? If it has, why not let us know what that is in the comments below and remember you can download this – and every other advice article – for free at [ragingswan.com/articles](http://ragingswan.com/articles).



## SEVERED UMBRA AT A GLANCE

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Swallowed by a massive sinkhole and cut off from both the surface and underworld decades ago, Severed Umbra represents a seemingly impossible story of survival. Now exposed to the surface, the village serves as a way station for explorers intending to delve further into the underworld.

Severed Umbra comprises the remnants of the slums underneath the city of Fairhaven and a dark folk enclave that surrounded a subterranean lake. When the slums fell into the lake many residents as well as the surprised dark folk died. In the disaster's aftermath, the survivors realized they must work together to survive. Thus languished the survivors and their descendants until a group of adventurers tunneled down into Severed Umbra, suddenly granting the population access to the wider world. Today, the odd mix of the inhabitants' spirit of cooperation still holds, to the bewilderment of visitors.

Now led by the aging human aristocrat Jenndra and the conniving dark stalker Morden, the folk of Severed Umbra harvest fungi and domesticate the lizards they found in their subterranean home. They had the foresight to mine gems and silver, otherwise worthless to their survival, but now essential to the village's prosperity. Phosphorescent moulds illuminate the village's caverns, and the non-dark folk inhabitants have similarly glowing irises.

The people of Severed Umbra treat visitors with respect, and seem blissfully unconcerned with events on the surface. They also meet questions regarding the strange mix of races with blank stares.

### DEMOGRAPHICS

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**Ruler** Jenndra (CG female old human aristocrat 3) and Morden (CN male dark stalker warrior 5)

**Government** Autocracy

**Population** 121 (43 humans, 27 half-orcs, 18 half-elves, 17 dark creepers, 14 halflings, 2 dark stalkers)

**Alignments** CG, N, CN, CE

**Languages** Common, Dark Folk, Halfling, Orc, Undercommon

**Corruption** +1; **Crime** +0; **Economy** +1; **Law** +1; **Lore** +1; **Society** +1

**Qualities** Insular, prosperous

**Danger** +5; **Disadvantages** None

### NOTABLE FOLK

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

**Cerise Indra** (location 4; CE female halfling wizard [evoker] 9) A wild-haired halfling, this evoker incinerates the dead.

**Flick** (location 6 and 8; CG female dark creeper expert 2/cleric 7) The strange rag-tailor Flick worships a benevolent deity, and ministers to the people of Severed Umbra.

**Gurga** (location 2; N female half-orc druid 6) Gurga oversees the subterranean lizard farm and acts as adjunct healer.

**Jenndra** (location 10; CG female human aristocrat 3) The shrewd yet fair Jenndra is Severed Umbra's elected co-leader.

**Kraark** (location 5; CN male half-orc expert 3/barbarian 3) Kraark is married to Gurga and is Severed Umbra's smith.

**Mad Bren** (location 3 and 7; CE male halfling expert 3) Mad Bren, who has wild hair and hyperkinetic energy, raises mushrooms to feed the lizards and the villagers.

**Morden** (location 10; CN male dark stalker warrior 5) Morden is the well-spoken, raspy voiced co-leader of Severed Umbra.

**Vishell** (location 1; CG male half-elf commoner 3) Vishell plies Umbra Lake's waters to spear fish to feed his fellows.

### NOTABLE LOCATIONS

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

1. **Umbra Lake:** Severed Umbra surrounds a subterranean lake, which provides fish and mostly fresh water for the residents.
2. **Gurga's Corral:** Giant lizards raised for meat roam this area.
3. **Shadow Arms:** A hastily-built wooden structure acts as a tavern and inn for surface visitors.
4. **The Foundry:** Cerise Indra applies her mastery of fire to help at Kraark's Smithy and to dispose of the dead.
5. **Kraark's Smithy:** Kraark fashions tools, weapons and armour – business has increased as more explorers visit the village.
6. **Ragwoman's Outfitters:** When not at her shrine, Flick oversees this clothing shop, which employs halflings and dark creepers.
7. **Mad Bren's Gardens:** Edible mushrooms fill the gardens.
8. **Dark Shrine:** Despite its sinister name, this location serves as a quiet, safe place of healing.
9. **The Vault:** This building stores valuable ore and semi-precious gems harvested from the surrounding mines.
10. **Village Hall:** Jenndra and Morden spend most of their time here, overseeing the day-to-day running of the village.

### MARKETPLACE

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**Resources & Industry** Exotic food, shelter, trade

**Base Value** 650 gp; **Purchase Limit** 3,750 gp; **Spellcasting** 3rd; **Minor Items** 2d4; **Medium Items** 1d4; **Major Items** –

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

**Potions & Oils** *cure light wounds* (50 gp), *lesser restoration* (300 gp), *protection from law* (50 gp)

**Scroll (Divine)** *continual flame* (375 gp), *hold person* (150 gp)

**Weapon** *sleep arrow* (132 gp)

**Wondrous Item** *necklace of fireballs type I* (1,650 gp)



## VILLAGE LORE

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

**DC 10:** Fairhaven's slums were lost when a sinkhole swallowed them decades ago.

**DC 15:** Severed Umbra recently restored contact with the surface when adventurers discovered the village.

**DC 20:** The village houses a mix of humanoid descendants from Fairhaven's slums and dark folk, who have curiously worked together for their mutual survival.

**DC 25:** Severed Umbra rests alongside a vein of silver and near a cache of precious gems; rumours say the village sits on an untapped vein of more exotic ores.

## VILLAGERS

**Appearance** The villagers vary widely in hair and skin colour, but the non-dark folk feature iridescent eyes of blue, green or violet.

**Dress** The villagers have adopted the dark folk style of raggedy dress, but non-dark folk do not wear nearly as many layers.

**Nomenclature** *male* Bren, Kraark, Morden, Vishell; *female* Cerise, Flick, Gurga, Jenndra, Valeen; *family* none.

## 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 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.

| D6 | RUMOUR   |
|----|--|
| 1  | Umbra Lake hides the remains of a gigantic serpent and its treasure. They are said to lie at least 100 ft. below the surface.  |
| 2  | Vishell and his sibling are the only original survivors of the cataclysm spawning Severed Umbra; neither talks about their experiences.                                  |
| 3  | While exceptionally strange that a dark creeper became a divine caster, Flick claims her deity spoke directly to her and told her of the necessity for a village healer. |
| 4  | Gurga spotted a xorn that emerged from the ground and took one of her lizards.   |
| 5* | Cerise has become increasingly agitated by the arrival of so many visitors and plans to destroy the village.   |
| 6* | Jenndra and Morden are lovers, and plan to extend their rule to encompass Fairhaven.   |

\*False rumour



## DUNGEON ENTRANCES: DRESSINGS & FEATURES

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

| D%    |  |
|-------|--|
| 01-02 | A cave-in, rock fall or collapsed wall has covered the entrance and requires several hours of excavation to clear a path. Once half the rubble is cleared, a DC 10 Knowledge (engineering) is needed to prevent the rubble from collapsing again, negating the progress made so far.   |
| 03-04 | The entrance has been barricaded with boxes, chests and barrels in defence of the dungeon. There are signs of a struggle: sprays of blood, a few old bones, and a discarded boot. Given the barricade has been pushed aside, it appears that whomever attacked was able to successfully breach the entrance.                       |
| 05-06 | As above, but the barricade appears to have been arranged to keep something in.  |
| 07-08 | Large-sized, clawed footprints of some creature track in and out of the entrance.  |
| 09-10 | The entrance has been overtaken by nature. Trees (or giant mushrooms, shrubs or other flora appropriate to the climate) partially occlude entry.   |
| 11-12 | The entrance has been covered by an illusion making it appear as the surrounding landscape (DC 14 Will disbelieves; CL 7).   |
| 13-14 | The entrance shows signs of recent cleaning and maintenance.   |
| 15-16 | The entrance is covered with dense spider webs.  |
| 17-18 | Seven rotting humanoid heads have been mounted on spears in a semicircle before the entrance. All of them have been roughly severed and are too decayed to recognize. The smell is overpowering.   |
| 19-20 | A crudely painted blue door on the side of a monstrous conifer provides a magical entrance to the dungeon. Turning the shiny brass door knob reveals a blinding aquamarine light. Travellers find themselves in a new location when it clears.   |
| 21-22 | A cart hitched to a donkey is parked near the entrance. The donkey happily chews on grass, ignoring anyone approaching. The cart is filled with booty looted from the dungeon including old doors, torch sconces, old furniture and a large statue of a smiling elven maiden swaddled in a shawl. The goods can be sold for 60 gp. |
| 23-24 | Splashes of different colours paint the area near the entrance. Their purpose is not clear.  |
| 25-26 | A large branch, wilting but still green, lies in front of the entrance.  |

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| 27-28 | A triggered pit lies just inside the entrance. It is ten feet across and blocks entry further into the dungeon. The pit is twenty feet deep and has iron spikes at the bottom. There are no bodies at the bottom, but brown stains of dried blood suggest that someone did indeed fall into it.   |
| 29-30 | A dented helmet with a blood encrusted feather plume lies on the ground near the entrance.  |
| 31-32 | A pair of torches flank the entrance. One burns with a magical cold flame, while the other is unlit. The flame for the active torch is permanently extinguished if the torch is removed from its sconce.  |
| 33-34 | A big red "X" has been drawn on the wall or floor near the entrance.  |
| 35-36 | Placed facing the entrance are hundreds of eyeballs of all sizes and colours, floating in jars filled with a clear, thick liquid. They do not radiate magic.  |
| 37-38 | The corpse of a female halfling explorer lies just outside the entrance, a dried stain leaving a trail into the entrance from where she crawled. She appears to have died within the last three days from multiple bite wounds. Much of her equipment is missing, but she still carries a pouch that has 12 sp and an unlabeled <i>potion of protection from evil</i> . |
| 39-40 | A trail of 27 silver coins, spaced evenly, leads into the entrance. Ominous blood splatters are clearly visible along the path the coins take.  |
| 41-42 | A copper coin with the number one crudely etched upon it has been wedged into a crack, crevice or under a stone near the entrance.  |
| 43-44 | A crow picks at a tangle of colourful string caught in a thorny bush. Careful inspection reveals it has tassels and appears to have been torn from a thin material, such as a shawl. The scrap is no bigger than a man's finger, but looks of good craftsmanship.   |
| 45-46 | Faint acrid smoke periodically wafts from the entrance. It is not enough to provide concealment.  |
| 47-48 | A long abandoned campsite is hidden in the underbrush a bow shot from the entrance. There is a ring of stones for a small fire and three depressions that suggest someone slept there. Those that excavate the fire pit find the remains of old animal bones and a partially melted brass cap for a scroll tube.  |
| 49-50 | Scorch marks mar the entrance and a wand made of yew, snapped into three pieces, lies discarded on the ground. If the entrance was barred or otherwise blocked, the obstruction has been damaged by the flames and is now at 50% of its original hit points.  |



|       |  |
|-------|--|
| 51-52 | A large wooden pole with a crossbeam atop it has been set into the ground before the entrance. An orc in a rent chain shirt has been crucified upon it. Several arrows pierce his body.  |
| 53-54 | Half of a set of mangled battered manacles, now covered in rust, lie atop a rock. The top of the rock shows damage from where something heavy was pounded against it.  |
| 55-56 | A burnt out torch stub is wedged into a crack in the wall. Soot stains the wall behind it. If lit, it burns for one minute.  |
| 57-58 | Shattered red glass litters the floor inside the entrance. In the middle of the shards lies a carved bone stopper shaped as a fist with one finger pointing out. It is worth 2 gp.   |
| 59-60 | A grave has been dug in the dirt (or piled under rubble if the floor is not easily excavated) and a shield lies on top. The top half of the heavy steel shield is painted blue and the bottom is yellow. Emblazoned upon the front is a longsword, point down, with a pair of feathered wings sprouting from the middle of the blade. Inside the grave is a set of humanoid bones. |
| 61-62 | A large brown bear sleeps in front of the entrance. It has randomly wandered by, and if the party returns later, it has moved on.  |
| 63-64 | The smell of sweet, flowery perfume hangs in the air. There is no obvious source, but the odour dissipates over thirty minutes.  |
| 65-66 | A crumpled piece of parchment has been tacked to the wall or a nearby tree. In Common, it reads "Wanted Dalat Thunderrock, For Banditry and Murder." It gives a description of a burly dwarf missing one arm.  |
| 67-68 | Several small niches have been carved around the entrance. Each contains some small keepsake in remembrance of the fallen: a dagger, a silver necklace (5 gp), a brass ring (15 gp), three feathers tied together with a green string and a blue enamelled steel gauntlet; among others. In all, they are worth 35 gp.   |
| 69-70 | A reinforced wall of stone blocks has been erected across the entrance (AC 3, hardness 8, hp 90, DC 35 Break).   |
| 71-72 | A maggot-infested corpse of a large dog lies inside the entrance. The corpse is only a day or two old. One of the dog's legs lies ten feet away from the rest of the body.   |
| 73-74 | Lightning has struck nearby and turned the ground to glass.  |
| 75-76 | A dozen caltrops have been spread before the entrance. They are old and dirt encrusted and easily missed (DC 15 Perception).   |
| 77-78 | A brown cloth sack with a loaf of hard, stale bread has been discarded in the entryway. A coin-sized hole has been gnawed through the cloth and rodent droppings lie nearby.   |

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| 79-80  | Three empty, dark glass bottles lie haphazardly on their sides. They smell of strong alcohol, but are empty.  |
| 81-82  | Written in Draconic sloppily over the entrance in dried blood are the words "Welcome to Hell." Fingerprints in the blood make it clear the writing was done by a small clawed hand.   |
| 83-84  | A piece of paper is trapped against the side of the entrance, fluttering in a slight breeze. A closer inspection shows a sketch of the entrance with three armoured men entering seen from behind and a young woman in leathers with a sketch pad in the foreground. The quality of the sketch is very good and might be sold for 5 gp. There is enough detail in the sketch to identify the woman, if she is ever encountered. |
| 85-86  | The entrance is chipped and shows signs of having been pried open. A bent crowbar lies in a nearby corner.  |
| 87-88  | Two dozen caltrops have been scattered outside the entrance and a large puddle of flammable oil is inside the entrance. Bloody rags are discarded further inside.   |
| 89-90  | A wagon of weathered timber, missing all of its wheels, rests on two logs in front of the entrance. Tall grass grows up around it and the hardware is heavily corroded with rust, suggesting the wagon has been here for some time.   |
| 91-92  | Wisps of colourful light dance before the entrance, shedding light for twenty feet. The lights can be suppressed with a <i>dispel magic</i> against caster level 5, but return after an hour.   |
| 93-94  | The stub of a purple candle rests in a puddle of wax. If lit, the candle has enough wick left to burn for fifteen minutes.  |
| 95-96  | A DC 15 Perception notes a tripwire strung across the entrance way. Those that don't spot the tripwire must make a DC 12 Reflex saving throw or fall prone. If seen, the tripwire can be avoided with a DC 5 Acrobatics check or cut by doing 2 points of damage with a slashing weapon.  |
| 97-98  | A wooden stool, sized for a Medium creature, is next to the entrance. Placed next to the stool is a crude wooden box. The word "fee" is written in Common on the side of the box.   |
| 99-100 | A statue has been dragged in front of the entrance, gouges in the ground making it clear it came from inside the dungeon. The statue portrays a snarling, fanged woman with a serpent's tail and six arms. Each arm holds an actual metal weapon that can, with some care, be removed from the statue's grip. The weapons carried include a spear, a longsword, a dagger, a trident, a khopesh and a kama.                      |

## TRIBES MOST FOUL: GOBLINS OF THE BLACK FUR

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The Goblins of the Black Fur are a vicious band of depraved scavengers and killers. Led by the cunning, ruthless and perpetually hungry greater barghest, Amare Kutha, they are a threat to all who explore their woodland domain.

### SOCIETY & ORGANISATION

The Black Fur tribe is warlike and merciless in pursuit of food and treasure. Driven onwards by the depraved lusts of their mistress, Amare Kutha (page 5), the tribe is locked in a vicious war with a nearby clan of gnomes, the Glittergems. They also prey upon the nearest human settlements and few that come within a score of miles of their lair escape their notice.

Amare Kutha holds absolute power in the tribe but is served by three lieutenants (Jerix, Grort and Verixal [page 5]) all of whom hunger for her favour, but are terrified of her power.

**Wolf Fur Cloaks:** To emulate their fell mistress, goblin warriors lust after the wolf fur cloaks that mark a goblin as an elite warrior of the tribe. These cloaks must be crafted of fur cut from the body of a wolf slain in single combat by the warrior. Wearing them bestows much prestige upon its owner and comes with many privileges including the right to have many wives, the right to a voice in tribal conclaves and so on.

**Appearance:** Black Fur goblins are scrawny creatures who possess wide, ungainly heads. Many file their teeth to sharp points and decorate their bodies with swirls of black paint. Their skin is dull orange in hue and their eyes reddish to yellow in colour. They wear dirty leather and fur clothes of dark colours.

Much of their weapons and armour are of gnomish craft – looted from the bodies of their fallen enemies.

### ECOLOGY & LAIR

The Black Fur tribe dwells in the cliffs of a gigantic sinkhole hidden deep in an all but impenetrable tangle of deep woodland many miles from the nearest human settlement. The sinkhole is over 200 feet deep in places and its walls are of almost sheer rock. Thick vines and creepers grow upon its walls and the goblins have carved deep warrens into the cliffs. Bats and birds dwell in the nooks and crannies of the sinkhole's cliffs; the goblins hunt them sporadically for food or to alleviate boredom.

A shallow lake fills the bottom of the sinkhole, but here and there small islands of rubble wreathed in vegetation – deposited when the sinkhole collapsed – emerge from its chill waters. Several of these islands are used to incarcerate the goblins' prisoners – trapped by chill water and high cliffs, the unfortunates are tormented by the sight of unattainable freedom so close at hand.

### COMBAT & TACTICS

Black Fur warriors are ferocious, in battle. They prefer striking from three-sided sudden ambush, leaving one direction free for their prey to flee. This is a ruse as more hidden warriors lurk in that direction to pick off exhausted, isolated enemies.

In battle, the younger, unproven warriors attack first – partly in a bid to prove themselves and partly because they are cajoled into it by the wiser, more experienced warriors.

Goblins love fire, and the Black Fur tribe is no exception. They often use fire in their ambushes to channel and terrify their prey and their lair is riddled with traps featuring precariously balanced flasks of alchemist's fire brewed by Verixal.



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### TRIBAL ROSTER

The tribe comprises the following members:

- 78 warriors (NE goblin warrior 1)
- 206 non-combatants (including 113 young)
- 33 goblin dogs
- 8 sergeants (NE goblin fighter [mobile fighter] 3)
- Verixal (NE female goblin cave druid 5)
- Grort (NE male goblin fighter [mobile fighter] 5)
- Jerix (NE male half-fiend goblin ranger [shapeshifter] 4)
- Amare Kutha (LE female greater barghest rogue [thug] 2/fighter 1)

---

### IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

In your campaign, the Black Fur Goblins can dwell in any remote, wooded area. Bitter enemies of the gnomish Glittergem clan, they can come to the PCs' attention when the gnomes beg for aid in fending off their repeated attacks. Alternatively, the PCs may have to mount a rescue mission when a friend falls into the tribe's clutches.

Finally the GM could determine the tribe's lair has connections to the Ebon Realm. As such, the PCs may have to win past the goblins to reach the deep tunnels or the goblins themselves may be displaced into the surrounding woodland by nameless terrors emerging from below.

## NOTABLE PERSONALITIES

The majority of the tribe are normal goblins. A few members are, however, exceptional:

- **Amare Kutha (LE female greater barghest rogue [thug] 2/fighter 1):** Amare has ruled the Black Fur for decades. When she happened upon the goblins they were the Gory Eye tribe (named for their practise of consuming their fallen foes' eyeballs). Amare slew the previous chieftain and set her new minions to gather the souls she needed to grow.
- **Verixal (NE female goblin cave druid 5):** Often gravid and heavy with child, Verixal rarely leaves the tribe's lair preferring instead to explore the deeper passageways and caverns. Six of her children have survived to maturity and live with her in a

### AMARE KUTHA

CR 9 (XP 6,400)

*This snarling, bipedal canine beast grasps a long spear and advances rapidly toward you.*

Female greater barghest rogue (thug) 2/fighter 1  
LE Large outsider (evil, extraplanar, lawful, shapechanger)  
**Init** +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +18, Sense Motive +15  
**Speed** 40 ft.; **ACP** 0; Acrobatics +20 (+24 jumping), Climb +22, Stealth +21 (fast stealth), Swim +19

**AC** 29, touch 14, flat-footed 24; **CMD** 34  
(+6 armour [+2 mithral shirt], +5 Dex, +9 natural, -1 size)  
**Fort** +13, **Ref** +15 (evasion), **Will** +11  
**hp** 140 (12 HD); **DR** magic/10

**Space** 5 ft.; **Base Atk** +11; **CMB** +19 (+23 vs. trip)  
**Melee** +2 long spear (reach 10 ft.) +20/+15/+10 (1d8+12/x3) or  
**Melee** bite +17 (1d8+10) and  
2 claws +17 (1d6+7)  
**Atk Options** Combat Reflexes, sneak attack (+1d6)  
**Special Actions** change shape (goblin or wolf, *polymorph*)  
**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 9th; concentration +13 [+17 casting defensively or grappling])  
At will—*blink*, *invisibility sphere*, *levitate*, *misdirection*  
1/day—*charm monster* (DC 18), *crushing despair* (DC 18),  
*dimension door*, *mass bull's strength*, *mass enlarge person*

**Abilities** Str 25, Dex 20, Con 23, Int 20, Wis 16, Cha 18  
**SQ** rogue talent (fast stealth)  
**Feats** Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Great Fortitude, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (long spear)<sup>B</sup>  
**Skills** as above plus Appraise +20, Bluff +19, Diplomacy +16, Intimidate +19 (frightening), Knowledge (dungeoneering) +12, Knowledge (local) +11, Knowledge (planes) +8, Linguistics +10, Survival +14

**Frightening (Ex)** When Amare uses Intimidate to demoralise a creature, the duration of the shaken condition increases by 1 round. If the target is shaken for 4 or more rounds, she can instead make the target frightened for 1 round.

**Languages** Common, Infernal, Gnome, Goblin, Worg

**Gear** as above plus *cloak of elvenkind*, *silver raven figurine of wondrous power*

dank, isolated cave. There she teaches them of the Ebon Realm's beauty and nurtures dreams of slaying Amare and taking her place as chieftain.

- **Grort (NE male goblin fighter [mobile fighter] 5):** The tribe's most skilled warrior and informal war leader, Grort leads the tribe's major forays. He is coarse (even for a goblin) and enjoys eating his victim's warm flesh.
- **Jerix (NE male half-fiend goblin ranger [shapeshifter] 4):** Amare's bastard progeny, Jerix has inherited some of his mother's abilities. He views himself as Amare's natural successor, but his arrogance has won him few friends among the tribe and his fiendish abilities make him an object of fear.

## TRIBAL LORE

Characters with ranks in Knowledge (local) may know something about the Goblins of the Black Fur. A successful check reveals all information gained by a lesser result:

**DC 11:** The Goblins of the Black Fur dwell in the cliff walls of a gigantic sinkhole hidden deep in the woods.

**DC 16:** Skilled warriors of the Black Fur wear black fur cloaks made from the fur of wolves slain in single combat.

**DC 21:** The tribe is led by a powerful chieftain rumoured to have a wide range of magical powers.

### GRORT

CR 4 (XP 1,200)

*This three-foot tall, scrawny humanoid moves with dextrous ease. It has a widely, ungainly head.*

Male goblin fighter (mobile fighter) 5  
NE Small humanoid (goblinoid)  
**Init** +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +1, Sense Motive +1  
**Speed** 30 ft.; **ACP** 0; Climb +6, Ride +13, Stealth +14, Swim +6  
**AC** 22, touch 16, flat-footed 17; **CMD** 20; Mobility  
(+5 armour [+1 chain shirt], +4 Dex, +1 dodge [Dodge], +1 shield [mwk light wooden], +1 size)  
**Fort** +6, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2; +1 vs. paralysation, slow and entangle effects  
**hp** 47 (5 HD)

**Space** 5 ft.; **Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +5  
**Melee** mwk short sword +12 (1d4+3/19-20)  
**Ranged** spear (range 20 ft.) +10 (1d6+1/x3)  
**Atk Options** Spring Attack, leaping attack (+1)  
**Leaping Attack (Ex)** When Grort moves at least 5 ft. before attacking, he gains a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls.  
**Combat Gear** *elixir of fire breath*, *potion of cure moderate wounds*

**Abilities** Str 13, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 6  
**SQ** agility (+1), armour training (1)  
**Feats** Dodge, Mobility, Spring Attack, Weapon Finesse<sup>B</sup>, Weapon Focus (short sword)<sup>B</sup>, Weapon Specialisation (short sword)<sup>B</sup>  
**Skills** as above  
**Languages** Goblin  
**Gear** as above plus wolf fur cloak, belt pouch, 5 gp, 12 sp

## FROM MY CAMPAIGN: HOUSE RULES

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Like any GM, I have house rules for my campaign to better suit my style of play. My house rules are in flux; those listed below are the ones I'm currently using. Others have been discarded after player feedback.

Keep in mind when reading these rules that I'm somewhat of an old school gamer and prefer a grittier, lower-magic version of the game than that presented in the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook. The rules I use are designed to help achieve my goals; if you like high fantasy, superhero style gaming, they will likely not work for you.

I also prefer campaigns in which the PCs do not race to 20th-level in a few months of game time. As well as using the slow advancement track, some of my rules are deliberately designed to slow down the pace of advancement. I find this enables me to tell much better, more coherent stories. It also means we have progressed through over two years of game time – PCs have even celebrated birthdays which is a new experience for us!

### ABILITY SCORES

Roll 3d6 six times for each ability and take the best score. A player may swap one pair of values – for example swapping your Intelligence score for Wisdom – to qualify for a class they really want to play.

**Creighton's Thoughts:** I much prefer the PCs to be the centre of attention, not their shiny magic items. Giving the PCs better stats somewhat mollifies the lack of ready access to magic items for sale (see later house rules for more details). This stat generation method also means players almost always qualify for the class they want to play as individual statistics are normally above average.

### 0-LEVEL SPELLS

Spellcasters' 0-level spells do not represent an unlimited resource and a spellcaster cannot treat them as at-will powers.

A spellcaster memorises, knows or has access to 0-level spells as normal but can only cast a limited number of such minor spells per day. At 1st-level, a spellcaster can use his 0-level spells a total of 3 + spellcasting stat modifier per day. Spellcasters gain an extra use of their 0-level spells for every two level of the relevant spellcasting class they gain.

For example, a 1st-level wizard with an Intelligence of 16 could use his 0-level spells a total of 6 times per day. When he reaches 2nd-level he can cast seven 0-level spells per day.

**Creighton's Thoughts:** I hate with the flaming passion of a thousand fiery suns unlimited 0-level spells. Unlimited *detect magic*, for example, enables the PCs to find all hidden magic items and to dodge pretty much every magic trap. *Detect poison* similarly is tremendously helpful and means a party member should never be affected by a poisoned trap.

### BUYING MAGIC ITEMS

There are no magic item shops with a limitless inventory of items for sale. Most settlements, however, have retired adventurers, their dependants, down-on-their-luck merchants and nobles and so on that desire to sell their magical items. Characters can seek out and purchase these items, but there is no guarantee the items they want will be available.

**Creighton's Thoughts:** I hate magic item shops. I realise how in a game featuring dragons and suchlike that realism is a strange thing to strive for but shops stuffed full of magic items are a step too far for me. That's something to be avoided in my book! I have lists of what is available at any given time in a settlement. (For this, I use *So What's For Sale Anyway?* and its companion supplements). Sometimes the PCs are lucky, and sometimes they are not.

Additionally, ready access to magic items downgrades them from wondrous items to a mere commodity. This rule has a knock on effect of PCs keeping magic items they would normally sell and promoting more inventive use of magic items. The PCs have a less designed, more organic feel to them.

### CRAFTING MAGIC ITEMS

The material cost of crafting magical items remains unchanged, but the time it takes to craft items has increased by a factor of seven. Thus, to craft a item it takes one week per 1,000 gp value (or fraction thereof). NPCs able to craft magic items do exist and may take contracts to produce such, but they must be found and convinced to do so.

**Creighton's Thoughts:** This rule exists purely to slow down the PCs' advancement by providing pauses between adventures for any required crafting. It also acts as a foil for PCs deciding to go into business making magic items, because of their relative scarcity.

### HENCHFOLK

The Leadership feat is unavailable for use in my campaign. Instead, when a PC reaches 3rd-level he may begin to employ henchfolk using the rules laid out in *Henchfolk & Hirelings*.

### SCARRING

If a character is reduced to a negative hit point total greater than half his Constitution score the injury is deemed so severe that even magical healing cannot remove the resultant scarring. Determine randomly which body part is scarred and note such on your character's description.

**Creighton's Thoughts:** This rule is a throwback to a little known 1st edition rule. It has no real game application; I just think it's a cool piece of flavour.

## NEAR DEATH EXPERIENCES

The world is a dangerous place and near death experiences will be plentiful. Characters reduced to below 0 hit points (but that do not die) suffer a traumatic event than magical healing cannot completely remove.

**First Instance:** During an adventure, the first time a character is reduced to negative hit points (and subsequently healed) he is considered fatigued until he undergoes a week of bed rest.

A DC 20 Constitution check made when the character regains consciousness removes this effect.

**Second Instance:** During an adventure, the second time a character is reduced to negative hit points (and subsequently healed) he is considered fatigued until he undergoes two weeks of bed rest.

A DC 20 Constitution check made when the character regains consciousness reduces this duration to one week.

**Third Instance:** During an adventure, the third time a character is reduced to negative hit points (and subsequently healed) he is considered exhausted until he undergoes three weeks of bed rest.

A DC 20 Constitution check made when the character regains consciousness reduces this effect to fatigued for two weeks.

| CONDITION                     | MODIFIER |
|-------------------------------|----------|
| Diehard feat                  | +2       |
| Endurance feat                | +2       |
| Great Fortitude feat          | +1       |
| Improved Great Fortitude feat | +1       |
| Orc Ferocity racial feature*  | +2       |
| Per previous check made       | -1       |

\*or similar race or class feature

Any magical effect that can remove the conditions noted above works as normal.

**Creighton's Thoughts:** Being close to death should be a traumatic experience. Bouncing back from such an event, with no short-term side effects seems a little odd. This rules provides the PCs with another reason to avoid unconsciousness!



## GM ADVICE: FOUR REASONS TO HAVE A BARROOM BRAWL

BRAWLS ARE CHAOTIC AFFAIRS WITH COMBATANTS USING WHATEVER IS AT HAND TO SMASH AND BASH THEIR ENEMIES INTO SUBMISSION. IN SHORT, THEY ARE TREMENDOUS FUN!

I love running barroom brawls.

Barroom brawls are one of the quintessential events that occur in taverns, inns and pubs of a certain quality. Alcohol mixed liberally with folk used to solving problems with violence is an explosive combination. The great thing about barroom brawls, though, is that although people get hurt, it's rare that anyone dies. This means the players can let their hair down and try some crazy stuff they'd never try in a "proper" battle.

One of my earliest gaming memories is of running a village brawl back while I was at school. Recently, I ran a barroom brawl in my *Borderland of Adventure* campaign that culminated in the party being thrown out of town!

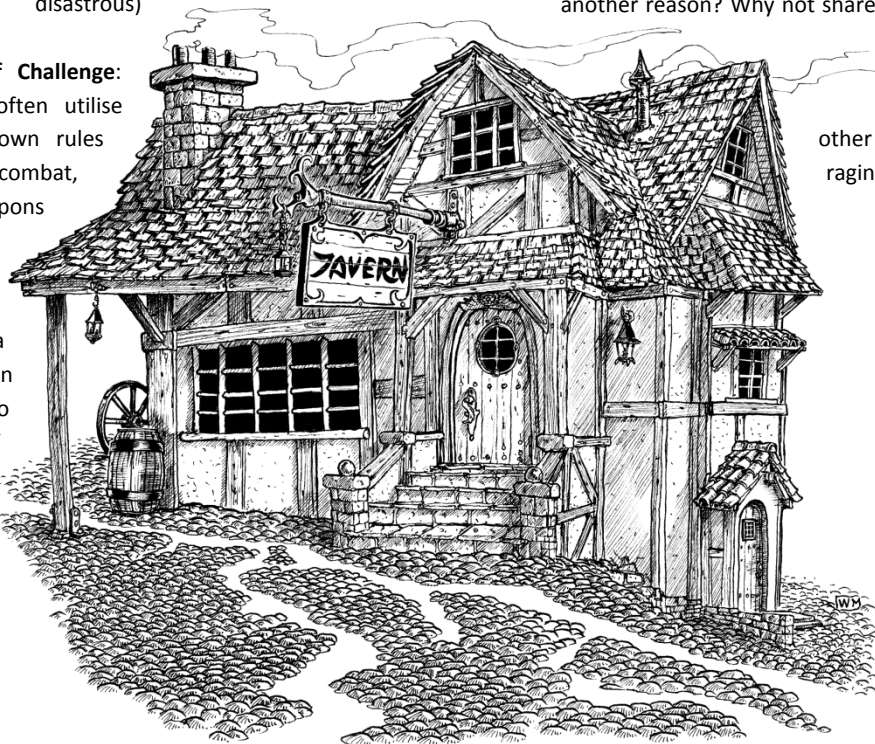
I've run brawls for several reasons:

- **Change of Pace:** The great thing about barroom brawls is that although people get hurt, they rarely die. This means the players can try all manner of hair-raising, insane tactics without having to worry about their PC's imminent demise. They are a great way for the players to blow off steam after a successful (or disastrous) adventure.
- **Different Type of Challenge:** Barroom brawls often utilise lots of lesser known rules (such as unarmed combat, improvised weapons and so on). Such events offer different challenges to a normal dungeon delve. They are also a sneaky way of introducing the PCs to lesser known rules they might need in the near future.

- **Introduce an NPC:** Brawls are a great opportunity to introduce NPCs to the party. If they save someone from a serious beating they could make a friend for life who may be able to help them in the future. However, they can just as easily make an enemy. Such an enemy is different to their normal adversaries. Instead of just trying to kill them, he could make the PCs' lives a misery in town – rubbing their reputation, stymieing their information gathering and so on. Perhaps the party brawl with another group of adventurers and from this innocuous beginning a deadly rivalry slowly grows.
- **Start An Adventure:** A barroom brawl is a much better start to an adventure than a mysterious stranger approaching the party with an offer of employment. Things can get broken or stolen in a brawl. They are also excellent cover for theft, kidnap, assassination and more. A prospective employer could even deliberately start a brawl to judge the adventurers' capabilities.

Remember the reasons above are not mutually exclusive. A brawl can serve several purposes at the same time.

Have you featured a barroom brawl in your campaign for another reason? Why not share it in the comments below and remember you can download this – and every other advice article – for free at [ragingswan.com/articles](http://ragingswan.com/articles).





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