

RAGING SWAN PRESS

GM'S MONTHLY MISCELLANY:

SEPTEMBER 2014



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GM'S MONTHLY MISCELLANY: SEPTEMBER 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:

- **Village Backdrop: Star Run Falls** John Bennett.
- **Alternate Dungeons: Haunted House** Alexander Augunas.
- **Kobolds of the Fallen Halls** Creighton Broadhurst.

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FOREWORD

As I write this, the summer is all but spent. In fact, many people would say – given the recent “marvellous” weather – it’s been over for some time. Summer is always a fun time for me, as I slow down somewhat and enjoy some time with the family. Still, with school fast approaching my thoughts are inevitably turning toward October and beyond.

I’m incredibly lucky in that Raging Swan’s freelancers – by and large – and jolly reliable. Thus, my schedule is pretty much full for the year now and – even better – much of the material is already sitting on my hard drive. I’m looking at an orgy of editing in the near future, which is cool as it gives me an excuse to bravely sally forth to the nearest coffee shop (which is on a beach). I edit better there. Honest.

Herein you’ll find excerpts from some of Raging Swan’s newest products as well as material from a golden oldie – *Kobolds of the Fallen Halls*. I’ve also included a selection of advice articles from those posted weekly at creightonbroadhurst.com.

Normally, I’d also include some material from my own Borderland of Adventure campaign. However, we’ve taken a break from the campaign this month. Several of our players are on holiday, and we didn’t want to progress the story without everyone present. In the meantime, I’m busy transferring our session summaries to my new blog. If you want to keep up with our adventures, you can read them at creightonbroadhurst.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.



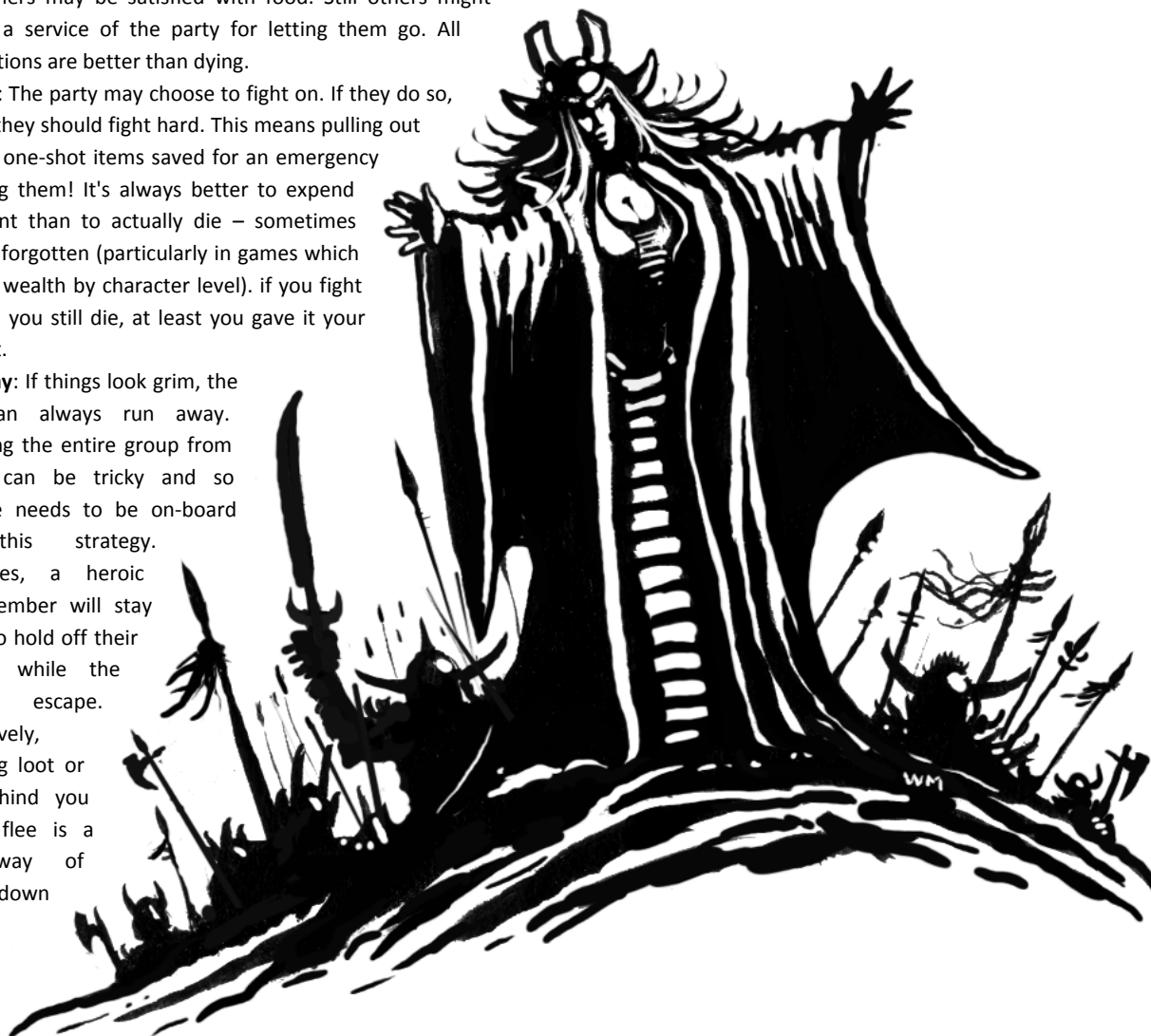
PLAYER ADVICE: LOOMING DISASTER

TPKS RARELY JUST HAPPEN. NORMALLY, THE PARTY GETS AT LEAST SEVERAL ROUNDS WARNING BEFORE THINGS GO HORRIBLY WRONG. WHAT SHOULD THEY DO?

I've blogged before about TPKs (Total Party Kills) and how a GM should deal with them. What I haven't done before is talk about how the PCs can avoid such a catastrophic end to their adventuring careers. Assuming the PCs get some warning of their impending doom they can pursue one of four basic strategies:

- **Bribery:** If you can't run away and you don't want to surrender, bribery is a great choice. Paying your enemies to go away is a time-honoured tactic and there is no reason it won't work on your foes – particularly if they are not your mortal enemies. Some enemies might covet gold or magic, while others may be satisfied with food. Still others might demand a service of the party for letting them go. All these options are better than dying.
- **Fight On:** The party may choose to fight on. If they do so, though, they should fight hard. This means pulling out all those one-shot items saved for an emergency and using them! It's always better to expend equipment than to actually die – sometimes this gets forgotten (particularly in games which focus on wealth by character level). If you fight hard and you still die, at least you gave it your best shot.
- **Run Away:** If things look grim, the party can always run away. Extricating the entire group from combat can be tricky and so everyone needs to be on-board with this strategy. Sometimes, a heroic party member will stay behind to hold off their enemies while the others escape. Alternatively, scattering loot or food behind you as you flee is a good way of slowing down pursuit.

- **Surrender:** PCs almost never use this option. Nevertheless, surrender is a viable option if you want to live to fight another day. Sometimes, PCs are reluctant to surrender because subconsciously they know what they do to those falling into their hands! (And hell, the party are good-aligned, imagine what the evil villain will do to them...) PCs that surrender are rarely killed out of hand. Their foes may imprison them for ransom, save them for a starring role in an upcoming religious ceremony or sell them into slavery. Assuming they are not killed outright, PCs that surrender normally have a chance to escape and to turn the tables on their foes before their doom is upon them.



STAR RUN FALLS AT A GLANCE

The shimmering waterfall known as the Star Run cascades 353 ft. into a large, deep pool about which the elven settlement of Star Run Falls rests in the shade of the surrounding forest. Star Run Falls' citizens live an almost idyllic life in homes magically formed within the trunks of the trees. Open to outsiders, traders regularly come upriver to trade with the elves for fish and furs or consult with the wizards at its small academy. Some visit just to marvel at the Star Run. Even fey visit the elves from time to time with a few of the mysterious creatures being familiar faces in the village. The elves, in turn, keep the surrounding area free of predators such as the goblins lurking nearby.

Recently, a small group of human villagers took refuge in the village after their homes were destroyed in a raid perpetrated by a rising force of goblins and hobgoblins. Though generally less insular than most elven communities, the elves struggle to accept the permanent presence of humans in the village.

However, a new fear grips the village, one that threatens its peaceful tranquillity. An entity only known as the Crimson Shadow King has arisen in the forest, gathering a band of goblinoids including hobgoblins and bugbears about his banner. Elven mothers fear the sudden chirping of crickets drowning out the birdsong in the predawn mornings for that is when it is said the Crimson Shadow King appears to steal newborn elven babies for some unknown, dire purpose. In truth, the Crimson Shadow King is seeking to raise his own army of dark elves to add to his twisted, labyrinthine realm deep within the forest.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Ruler Guardian Ferleden Tayaos (CG male half-elf fighter 3/wizard [universalist] 3)

Government Council

Population 167 (127 elves, 20 half-elves, 15 humans, 5 gnomes)

Alignments CG, LG, NG, LN, N, CN

Languages Elven, Common, Sylvan

Corruption -1; **Crime** 0; **Economy** 0; **Law** -3; **Lore** -2; **Society** +4

Qualities Academy, tourist attraction

Danger 0; **Disadvantages** None

NOTABLE FOLK

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

Grimish Featherknocker (location 1; CG male gnome expert 3) A personable gnome, Grimish runs the village inn, the Star Landing.

Unya Ilyren (location 5; CG female elf ranger 4) Star Run Falls' former guardian, Unya now runs a successful general store.

Alera Solwyn (location 6; CG female elf aristocrat 1) A princess in hiding, Alera fled to Star Run Falls with her guardian, Balas.

Balas Solwyn (location 6; NG male half-dragon unicorn) Alera's guardian, Balas disguises himself as her grandfather.

Hol Stannish (location 4; N male human commoner 2) One of the human refugees, Hol represents his people's interest in the village.

Ferleden Tayaos (location 2; (CG male half-elf fighter 3/wizard [universalist] 3)

Appointed guardian, Ferleden's duties include defence of the village.

Dalaros Vynardis (location 7; CN male elf aristocrat 3) A recent arrival, Dalaros takes great interest in local politics.

Twyno/Twyna Veshara (location 3; CG female/male elf wizard 7) The elven twins who share one body run the local academy.

Ziz (location 9; CN female pixie) A fun loving pixie, Ziz enjoys bathing in the waterfall's pool and playing tricks.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

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

1. **The Star Landing:** The village's one inn, it contains a slender tower offering a panoramic view of the Star Run.
2. **Council Hall:** The village council conducts their business in this elaborate hall formed from the intertwining of many trees.
3. **Star Falls Academy:** Young elves learn magic here under the tutelage of the elven twins, Twyno and Twyna Veshara.
4. **Bellshire:** The human refugees live in this small district.
5. **Unya's General Store:** This general store is a trade hub for merchants coming upriver.
6. **Solwyn House:** Alera and her guardian, Balas, live in this small house in an attempt to hide her true identity.
7. **Dalaros's House:** After losing favour at an elven court, Dalaros now lingers in this modest house, plotting his return to power.
8. **The Star Run:** Thousands of fireflies make this waterfall appear as a flowing river of stars, giving it its name.
9. **Star Run Grotto:** A grotto behind the waterfall serves as home to a tribe of sprites and a few other fey.

MARKETPLACE

Resources & Industry Fishing, hunting, trade

Base Value 600 gp; **Purchase Limit** 2,500 gp; **Spellcasting** 4th; **Minor Items** 2d4; **Medium Items** 1d4; **Major Items** –

When the PCs arrive in Star Run Falls, the following items are for sale:

- **Potions & Oils** *barkskin* (50 gp), *shield* (50 gp)
- **Scrolls (Arcane)** *confusion* (700 gp), *tiny hut* (350 gp)
- **Scrolls (Divine)** *summon monster I* (25 gp)

VILLAGE LORE

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

DC 10: Star Run Falls is an elven village that takes its name from the spectacular waterfall around which it stands.

DC 15: Recently, a group of humans arrived in the village seeking sanctuary, which the elves granted.

DC 20: Rumours of fell creatures in the forest have many of the villagers worried, especially expecting elven mothers.

VILLAGERS

Appearance Tall and slender with pointed ears and almond shaped eyes ranging from brown, grey to green, the villagers wear their dark hair long and unbraided.

Dress The villagers dress in long tunics of green, brown or dark blue. Many wear thigh high boots made from doe skin. They wear little jewellery, except slender pendants or brooches fashioned from gold or silver about a single gemstone.

Nomenclature *male* Kiyden, Norlerden, Pythos, Tarloyn; *female* Anwa, Cerles, Martya, Yevera; *family* Enderleas, Forylaen, Onmonoas, Sirlydeen

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	Dalaros Vynardis used to be a noble from a distant elven court but his brash ways got him exiled to the village.
2*	The human refugees plan on bringing in more of their kind to gain more power over village affairs.
3	Beware if you hear the incessant chirping of crickets in the predawn hours for the Crimson Shadow King is on the hunt.
4	Unya only stepped down as guardian because she was the one who supported allowing the humans to live in the village.
5*	The grotto behind the waterfall contains a pool leading to another world.
6	Ferleden has been especially grim of late, because of the increase of goblins in the forest.

*False rumour



HAUNTED HOUSES: DRESSING

The appearance and characteristics of a haunted house are a vital facet of highlighting the site as a unique and exciting adventure locale. Whether the haunted house is the site of cult activity, the lair of a vampire or the home of a family who perished in a tragic fire, choosing appropriate dressings for the haunted house establishes the tone of the adventure. It also sets the players' expectations for what horrors might dwell among the shifting shadow within the manor's decrepit walls.

FUNCTION

Haunted houses are typically abandoned, though this isn't always the case if the house has only recently become the site of paranormal activity. As a result, haunted houses usually count supernatural creatures, especially undead and evil-aligned outsiders, among their inhabitants. Below are some common examples of how a dwelling can become the site of a haunt.

Death Knell Curse: Powerful witches are able to leave lasting imprints upon the land with their final breaths, transforming themselves into powerful, incorporeal undead through extreme hatred and emotional distress. Often manifesting as ghosts, spectres or wraiths, these witches blight the land and cause strange murders and ill fortune to beset the locals until they move away from the site of the curse. Manors are often at the apex of these death knell curses because a witch's vengeance is directed at an individual or specific group of people, who quickly perish from her supernatural vengeance or flee from their homes for fear of a grisly demise. Products of a witch's death knell curse last for hundreds of years and typically are not stopped until someone is able to find the spirit and slay it, destroying its strange hold upon the building and the surrounding region.

Murder: When a creature dies, any intense emotions it experiences at the time of death are often left behind as a psychic footprint. Fear, anger, hatred and sorrow are by far the most powerful of these emotions and often causes the most dangerous and destructive haunts to manifest. It should come as no surprise an act as evil as murder, which often comprises all three of these emotions and more, is a leading cause of the creation of powerful supernatural entities. Ghosts, spectres, wraiths and poltergeists are all commonly created in this manner, and when created they seldom stray far from the place where they were murdered.

Suicide: In many ways, a haunted house is created by suicide in the same way it is created by murder, though sorrow and self-loathing often fuel the supernatural entities born from suicide rather than fear, anger or hatred as is true with murder.

Summoning Gone Wrong: When it comes to planar magic, mages are often tinkering with forces they scarcely comprehend, let alone control. A single misspoken word or a stray line within

a *magic circle* can cause a spell to backfire with tremendous force, calling an outsider into the mortal realm. In rare circumstances, the outsider may be physically unable to leave the place it was summoned within for reasons even it is unlikely to understand. Perhaps the mage's home is inscribed with warding runes as a fail-safe or the magic is unstable, preventing the creature from straying far from its point of summoning. Even more horrifying are the outsiders who possess unfettered access to the Material Plane, retreating to abandoned structures by daylight only to prey again on mortal flesh come dusk.

Tragedy: Any event causing a suitable amount of negative emotion can create a haunt, whether this tragedy is a massive fire at an orphanage, the demise of a family or the deaths of an entire neighbourhood from an epidemic.

DRESSINGS

Use the table on the following page to generate interesting characteristics for your haunted house. Some of the features listed below may be inappropriate for your haunted house based upon its setup — ignore or modify such entries as appropriate.

Expensive Materials: Some of the haunted house dressings described below include descriptions of expensive art objects. These dressings typically have a gp value equal to the gp award for an encounter with a CR equal to the party's APL –2.

Harvesting Dressings: Canny PCs can harvest a dressing from a haunted house by succeeding at an appropriate skill check with a DC of 15 + the average CR of an encounter within the haunted house. Failing by 5 or more ruins the item.

Modifying Statistics: Some dressings provide bonuses to the creatures encountered within a haunted house. A creature receives these benefits after dwelling within the haunted house for one uninterrupted month. These bonuses typically fade if the creature spends too much time away from the haunted house without regularly returning to it.

Multiple Dressings: A GM may roll multiple times for dressings. Alternatively, a GM may pick dressings to create the desired atmosphere.



D%	HAUNT HOUSE DRESSINGS
01	The haunted house has a constant <i>nightmare</i> effect that targets all living creature sleeping within.
02	Living creatures hunger and thirst twice as fast as normal within the haunted house.
03–05	Disturbing an object in the haunted house causes it to ooze sticky, green slime.
06–08	Mirrors reflect their subjects' images, but endowed with fiendish qualities.
09–10	Cobwebs as thick as curtains fill 1d4 rooms within the haunted house.
11–13	One room possesses a darkwood crown moulding around its doors.
14–16	Dusty skeletons sit in every chair and upon every couch within the haunted house.
17–20	Dirty, white sheets cover every piece of furniture.
21–23	Dust that has settled within the haunted house is impossible to clean off, sticking to everything within the house and resettling moments after it is cleaned.
24–26	All food discovered within the house appears edible, but is actually rotten and sickens for one minute anyone who eats it.
27–28	Threats towards intruders are carved into the walls of 1d4 rooms within the haunted house.
29–30	The gaze of every portrait in the haunted house seems to follow explorers' progress.
31	One room is filled with illusory people (as <i>silent image</i>); the illusions dance in a ballroom, eat in a dining room etc.
34–36	Each time a PC exits a room, the furniture and decorations rearrange themselves.
37–38	Thunderstorms and a strong wind (21 mph) constantly batter the haunted house.
39–40	A graveyard with freshly dug graves sits behind the haunted house. One empty grave per intruder pierces the ground.
41–45	Choking vines cover the outside of the haunted house and seem to grow rapidly if cut down.
46–50	The haunted house includes a moat, river, or pond filled with spectral (or skeletal) fish.
51–54	Every tree within 100 feet of the haunted house is twisted into the shape of an agonized human.
55–59	Every room within the haunted house is supernaturally cold; explorers can see their breath at all times.
60	Creatures that die within the haunted house are transformed into chaotic evil ghosts 5 minutes after death (unless slain by a creature with the create spawn ability, which takes precedent).
61–63	Shadows within the haunted house appear to constant move and the PCs' shadows do not mirror their movements.
64–66	A gilded adamantine weapon hangs over a fireplace.

67–60	A still-beating human heart lies near a corpse in the master bedroom. Its beating echoes throughout the entire house.
61–63	No matter where the PCs are within the haunted house, they hear sobbing whispers.
64–65	A mirror in the nursery (or similar room) reflects living creatures as young children.
66–70	Ghastly sounds of someone gorging on an endless feast whisper endlessly in the dining room.
71–73	Any creature sleeping in the haunted house is only able to speak in Abyssal, Infernal or a similar evil tongue for one day afterwards.
74–76	Blood spilled within the house drains into the floor, accompanied by a faint slurping sound.
77–70	Flowers, fruit and similar plant products brought inside the haunted house quickly wither and rot.
71	The house rumbles any time positive energy is channelled within, causing all creatures to fall prone (Reflex DC 11 negates).
72–75	Antique carving of evil spirits cover the walls in every room.
76–80	Any creature sleeping in the haunted house wakes up covered in tiny bite marks the next morning.
81–83	Living creatures randomly begin crying within the haunted house (DC 15 Will resists).
84–86	Heavy footsteps echo throughout the haunted house's rooms at random intervals. This never occurs in the room explorers occupy.
87–89	Children that pass within sight of the haunted house sometimes make vague, horrifying comments they don't remember saying.
90	The illumination level within the haunted house cannot be raised higher than dim light. Shadows seem particularly thick and bestow a +5 circumstance bonus to Stealth checks made to hide.
91–93	Musical objects within the haunted house randomly play themselves for any living audience that can hear them perform.
94–95	Objects within the house harmlessly break or explode when a living creature passes nearby.
96–97	Spectral voices hiss threats at intruders carrying good-aligned weapons, casting good-aligned spells, holding holy water or similarly blessed objects or who possess an aura of good.
98–99	Supernatural cold fills the house. This does not cause damage, but it uncomfortable for explorers. Roll again and apply the results.
100	The house is a nexus of evil. An object hidden within serves as the altar for a <i>desecrate</i> spell. Roll twice more and apply the results.

KOBOLDS OF THE FALLEN HALLS

Two centuries ago, the green dragons Klauthosk and Yeiarkin annihilated the dwarves of Clan Nurthen, taking the isolated hold of Vongyth as their own. Served by the kobolds of the Blackened Eye their depraved hegemony over the benighted dwarven hold ended in blood and slaughter upon The Crimson Sword's (a band of skilled and daring adventurers) blades. Not all the dragons' progeny perished in the battle, however, and when a rival appeared to challenge the lone survivor's rule over the shattered remnants of the Blackened Eye, bloody and ruinous war swept through the endless, cloying dark of Vongyth. Decades later, the survivors of two degenerate splinter-tribes seek the utter annihilation of the other through sudden ambush and deadly trap in the dusty, forgotten halls of the dwarves' crumbling fortress.

HISTORY

Little known, the dwarves of clan Nurthen were typical of their kind; industrious miners toiling deep beneath the earth in Vongyth (their small, isolated mine-hold). Their small success, however, spelt their doom. A mated pair of green dragons, Klauthosk and Yeiarkin, intercepted several merchants carrying gold bars and other precious metals to market. After torturing (and then eating) the survivors, they learnt the location of Vongyth and exhibiting typical, draconic greed led their kobold minions in a devastating attack on the unsuspecting dwarves.

With acid and fang, they drove the dwarves from their fortress, slaughtering all they discovered. After the orgy of slaughter and looting, the pair settled in the hold and ordered their kobold servants to search out every scrap of treasure hidden therein. Sated by the slaughter and hoard-wealth of the dwarves, Yeiarkin laid several eggs, and with their new home secured, the dragons began to terrorise and loot the surrounding area. Thus did matters stand until The Crimson Swords invaded the hold 40 years ago and slaughtered Klauthosk and Yeiarkin along with scores of their servants. Exulting in their victory the surviving adventurers looted the dragon's wealth and returned to civilisation, but they failed to expunge the menace lurking in Vongyth. A few hundred kobolds survived as did one of

the pair's offspring – Dereghwyr – an odious, vicious creature.

Dereghwyr immediately set about cementing her rule over the depleted kobolds, but the arrival of Antharuthux (a very young black dragon fleeing the slaughter of his brood-mates) threw chaos atop chaos in Vongyth. Dereghwyr immediately sought to slay the newcomer, but failed. Forced into ignoble retreat, she retreated into the fortress' depths to wage a guerrilla war against Antharuthux and his newly subjugated kobold followers. On that day, the Blackened Eye was broken with those falling under Antharuthux's sway taking the mantle of the Bloodied Tail.

For the last twenty years, a silent war of sudden ambush and counter ambush has crept through the halls, passageways and chambers of Vongyth. Scores of kobolds have fallen and now but a remnant survive on either side. Driven on by their implacable draconic leaders, the kobolds continue the fight, dedicated to the utter destruction of their rivals.

APPEARANCE

Kobolds are small, hairless scaly creatures that stand about 3 feet tall and weigh between 35 and 45 pounds. Their hides run the gamut of colours from dark rusty brown to rusty black and two small off-white horns top their small heads. Their eyes are crimson red in hue. Kobolds possess a non-prehensile tail and smell of damp dogs and stagnant water.

Kobolds speak Draconic, in a high, yapping voice akin to the barking of a small dog.

ECOLOGY & SOCIETY

All kobolds nurture a particular hatred of gnomes and fey creatures, but the tribes of the Fallen Halls also loath one another with a deep, burning passion and reserve their most imaginative tortures for rivals falling into their hands.

In kobold society, the strongest rule and the weak serve. Chieftains are always the cleverest, most cunning warriors of the tribe. They carry the best weapons and armour and loyal bodyguards attend them.

Theoretically, kobolds can live to be 135 years old, but in practise, few survive into their fifties. The few older kobolds, who remember a time before Klauthosk's and Yeiarkin's deaths, are repositories of great knowledge.

Females lay eggs, placing them to be protected and nurtured in a communal nursery. Many females die birthing these eggs, or suffer frenzied beatings by the stronger, more numerous warrior males. Thus, there are roughly half as many females in the tribes as there are males. Young are even scarcer, numbering roughly one-tenth of the tribe's warrior strength. Both tribes are slowly dying, the blood of their warriors staining the bones of those who have fallen before them.

IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

Kobolds of the Fallen Hall's design enables a GM to easily insert the kobolds of this doomed, forlorn dwarven hold into a home campaign. The tribes' home can stand in almost any hill or mountain range. Similarly, as the builders were not a particularly successful or prosperous clan that fell decades ago, their presence should not disrupt the campaign back story. A DC 15 Knowledge (local) check identifies Clan Nurthen's crossed axe and hammer device (found throughout the Vongyth).

Neither Antharuthux or Dereghwyr care for the kobolds' fate, seeing their pathetic servants as nothing more than expendable tools. Many of the kobolds recognise their ruler's disdain, but can do nothing to overthrow their harsh, prideful draconic masters. The tribes' societies – never exactly a hotbed of culture – have stagnated under the dragons' rule. The kobolds create no new (crude) art and the only stories they now tell are battle stories designed to whip warriors into a killing frenzy. Most have even forgotten the traditional kobold gods, instead venerating their draconic masters as divine powers.

Doomed to die in the lightless passages under the mountain, the kobolds fight on; their only real goal to survive the next desperate skirmish.

LAIR

Both tribes claim Vongyth's shadowed halls as their own, but in practice, each group controls only a small portion of the hold. The balance of the dusty hallways and passages are a battleground littered with devious traps, the grinning skeletons and mouldering corpses of the fallen and the remnants of the dwarves' fallen civilisation.

Each tribe's domain is heavily fortified; traps litter all approaches and many entrances have been blocked off with strategic rock falls to channel invaders into prepared killing zones. The depth and complexity of these defences has rendered both

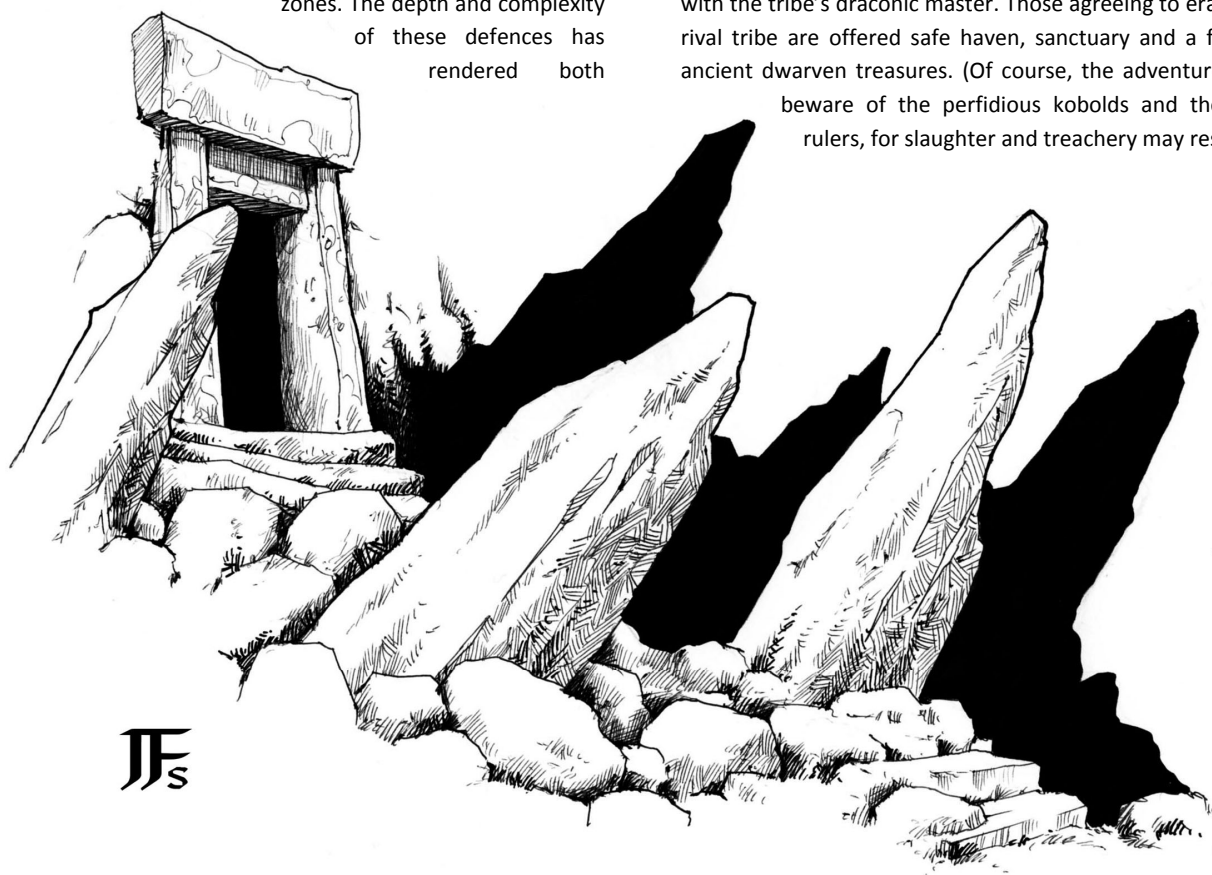
tribes' lairs virtually impenetrable. No serious assault on either lair has been launched for half a decade.

COMBAT & TACTICS

Cowardly and sadistic, kobolds prefer to strike from ambush with missile weapons or to kill from a great distance by luring enemies into devious and deadly traps. When forced to fight, kobolds do so only when they vastly outnumber their foes. They eschew fair fights, instead concentrating on wounded or weakened foes. (Scouts and stragglers are also favourite targets.)

Skilled trap-makers, they enjoy luring opponents into hidden traps. They excel at making concealed spiked pit traps and mechanical traps that fire crossbow bolts and other weapons or tripwires that drop nets onto unsuspecting interlopers. Enemies falling into a kobold pit are often deluged with flaming oil, jars of poisonous insects, or worse shortly thereafter.

Kobolds encountering adventurers exploring Vongyth's dusty halls initially avoid the intruders, instead seeking to gain intelligence as to the interlopers' purpose. The adventurers represent a chance to decisively shift Vongyth's balance of power and thus a (expendable) warrior under a flag of parley approaches adventurers not obviously allied with the tribe's enemies. Adventurers willing to negotiate are granted audience with the tribe's draconic master. Those agreeing to eradicate the rival tribe are offered safe haven, sanctuary and a few choice ancient dwarven treasures. (Of course, the adventurers should beware of the perfidious kobolds and their greedy rulers, for slaughter and treachery may result.)



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PLAYER ADVICE: PRINCIPLES OF SUCCESSFUL ADVENTURING

CHARGE! HACK! MAIM! KILL! SADLY, FOR MANY ADVENTURING GROUPS THIS IS PRETTY MUCH THE EXTENT OF THEIR TACTICAL PLANNING. SUCH GROUPS CHARGE INTO THE DUNGEON WITH LITTLE THOUGHT FOR TACTICS, PLANNING OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS. MOST SUCH GROUPS ARE DOOMED.

You really don't want to be one of those groups. A little bit of forethought and planning can turn a potentially disastrous foray into a stunning triumph.

I remember repeatedly reading pages 107 – 109 of the *AD&D Player's Handbook* almost thirty years ago in an attempt to occasionally survive an adventure. Over almost thirty years of game play I've learnt a fair amount about how to survive a dungeon crawl, but this learning has been pretty haphazard and hard to codify.

Recently, I've thought a lot about the principles of successful adventuring and how to provide a general structure to enhance the chances of a successful delve (or whatever). Luckily, there is a lot of help out there! Some of the best principles I've found come from the British Army. Obviously, these must be modified – designed as they are for a large, modern fighting force. Even with this caveat, though, they are a fantastic resource for adventurers (in any game or genre) to draw upon.

- **Selection and Maintenance of the Goal:** A single, unambiguous goal is the keystone of a successful foray. Selection and maintenance of the goal is the master principle of adventuring. Do not get sidetracked or distracted; that way, disaster lies.
- **Maintenance of Morale:** Morale is a positive state of mind derived from inspired leadership, a sense of shared purpose and values, well being, perception of group worth and cohesion. A party with high morale succeeds where others fail.

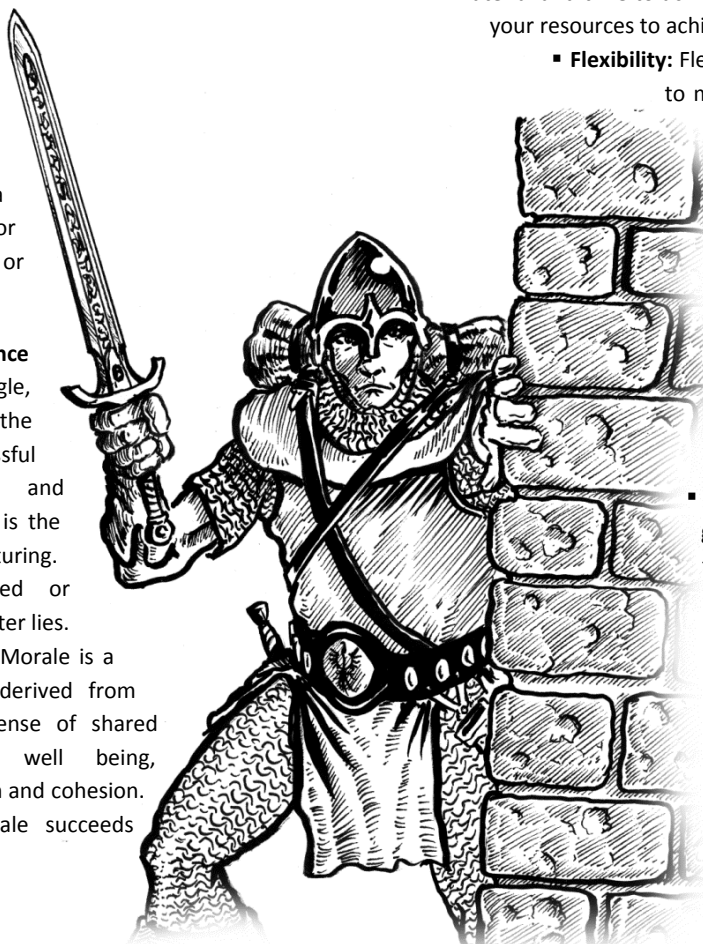
- **Offensive Action:** Offensive action is the practical way in which a group of adventurers seek to gain advantage, sustain momentum and seize the initiative.
- **Security:** Security is the provision and maintenance of an operating environment that affords the necessary freedom of action, to achieve the objective.
- **Surprise:** Surprise is the consequence of shock and confusion induced by the deliberate or incidental introduction of the unexpected to the enemy.
- **Concentration of Force:** This could also be called, “Don't split the party.” Concentration of force involves the decisive, synchronised application of superior fighting power to achieve success.
- **Economy of Effort:** Economy of effort is the judicious exploitation of the party's resources including manpower, material and time to achieve the objective. Use just enough of your resources to achieve your objective.

- **Flexibility:** Flexibility – the ability to change readily to meet new circumstances – comprises agility, responsiveness, resilience, acuity and adaptability.

- **Cooperation:** Cooperation entails the incorporation of teamwork and a sharing of dangers, burdens, risks and opportunities. Every member of the group should participate equally taking into account his abilities, skills and gear.

- **Sustainability:** To sustain a force to generate the means by which its fighting power and freedom of action are maintained. Make sure you are properly equipped.

So there you have it. If you follow the ten principles listed above you will immeasurably improve your chances of a successful adventure.



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