

RAGING SWAN PRESS

# GM'S MONTHLY MISCELLANY:

## MARCH 2015



# THE SUNKEN PYRAMID

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A Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Compatible Adventure for 7th-level characters by Creighton Broadhurst and Marc Radle

Only a few miles from a small seaside village, the mysterious underwater edifice known as the Sunken Pyramid lies hidden beneath the waves. The handful of sages and scholars with any knowledge of this massive stone structure debate whether it is a completely natural rock formation, a natural site that has been intentionally modified or something built long ago by human, or inhuman, hands.

Locals and ship's crews alike report signs of increased sahuagin activity in the waters around the Sunken Pyramid. Is the recent rash of disappearances and abductions which have plagued the area connected in any way? Can these abductions be stopped before even more people are taken? Can those already abducted be found and rescued? And what of the strange and often conflicting rumours which whisper of something far more terrible lurking far beneath the Sunken Pyramid?

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*"...this adventure has everything you need to run it successfully. Very well done."*

—DM Jeff (five stars)

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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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## 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:

- **Gibbous Moon Collector's Edition** Creighton Broadhurst and Jacob W. Michaels.
- **Urban Dressing: Dwarven Hold** Josh Vogt.
- **Duergar of the Obsidian Citadel** Matt Morrow.





Welcome to *GM's Monthly Miscellany: March 2015*. I've been expecting you...

By the time you'll read this, Raging Swan Press's Patreon campaign will have been running for about three weeks—hopefully in a spectacularly successful fashion! I'd be delighted if you'd pop over to [patreon.com](https://www.patreon.com/rswanpress) and check it out and possibly back us. Even if you can't make a pledge, just sharing the campaign with your gaming buddies would be tremendously decent of you. The whole point of the campaign is to gather enough support to start paying our brave and heroic freelancers a decent word rate. As you may be aware, freelance game design is not the path to unending riches and it would be nice to be able to pay our freelancers what they are worth (without going out of business!)

In this month's instalment, you'll find excerpts from some of Raging Swan's newest products as well as material from a golden oldie – *Duergar of the Obsidian Citadel*. I've also included a selection of advice articles from those posted weekly at [creightonbroadhurst.com](https://creightonbroadhurst.com) as well as material from my ongoing design of the megadungeon, *Gloomhold*.

In other rather exciting news, my *Borderland of Adventure* campaign has recently restarted after our five-month exploration of 5e. If you want to keep up with our adventures, you can read weekly session summaries on my blog: [creightonbroadhurst.com](https://creightonbroadhurst.com). We are just starting a new adventure path, so now is the perfect time to start keeping up with our adventures.

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).

Mark W. Radle 2011

## TOP 10 PATHFINDER ARGUMENTS

Attacks of opportunity. Cover. Grapple. Three rules that can strike fear into the hearts of players and GMs alike and often result in a "spirited discussion."

The Pathfinder Roleplaying Game is a complicated game and rules disagreements are inevitable. Interpreting some rules can be tricky. Such interpretations can cause tempers to flair, particularly when a character's life is on the line. It's been my experience, though, that if a GM knows in advance what likely arguments (or "spirited discussions") will emerge he can revise those particular rules so he can offer clear, quick and decisive rulings.

In no particular order, here are the top ten causes of arguments I've observed in Pathfinder Roleplaying Game sessions:

- **Cover:** Does the target have cover? How do we determine cover? Is it soft cover?
- **Attacks of Opportunity:** Did that action trigger an attack of opportunity? Did the PC's movement provoke an attack? Given we often fight mobile battles this comes up a lot.
- **Realism vs. Rules:** This old chestnut normally rears its ugly head when a player wants to do something important and the rules are not to his liking.
- **Spell Effects:** Unless the spell is very basic – say magic missile for example – the player should have the spell description readily available. Even if his interpretation is correct, taking the time to confirm that fact if someone disagrees is wasted time.
- **Unfair GM Tactics:** I once played under a GM who liked to coup de grace fallen PCs even if the battle was still raging and the villain making the attack was under attack from other opponents. This caused a lot of bad feeling at the table. Monsters should always use appropriate combat tactics for their intelligence, objectives and tactical situation.

- **Combat Manoeuvres:** For some reason, bull rush, trip etc. still slows the game down. I know the process got simplified in Pathfinder, but it still causes us trouble. Don't get me started on grapple.
- **Squeezing:** In natural caverns, squeezing or not is often a pain. If the GM has taken the time to draw the map accurately the cavern walls wanders through squares sometimes making it unclear what is a full square and what isn't.
- **Treasure Distribution:** (Shockingly) players care about treasure and unless everyone gets their first choice item from the haul things can get heated. I still haven't tied down a fair method of distributing treasure. One of my players likes to sell everything and then divide the amount of gold equally among the PCs. I'm not a fan of this method as it reduces the wonder of magic items to mere commodities.

- **My Character Would Do That:** I've touched on this before, but basically if you put the feelings of your pretend character above those of an actual person sitting at the table you need to reappraise your priorities (or leave).

- **Alignment:** It's very rare two gamers agree completely on exactly what constitutes lawful good (or any alignment's) behaviour. Most of these discussions can be fun, but they can really suck time out of the game. Given there is no right answer (except whatever the GM rules) there's not much point discussing alignment at the table if you actually want to get any gaming done.



## BARLOW AT A GLANCE

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A once-idyllic hamlet on the banks of the burbling Clearbrook, Barlow is now a village on the verge of a schism. For recently arrived dwarves, a prosperous future beckons, but the long-time human and fey residents fear a loss of their pastoral way of life.

Founded more than 150 years ago, the village began as a druidic community established when its leader struck up a relationship with the dryad Casalya. For generations, residents lived a simple, rural life, farming and hunting only what they needed to survive and living in harmony with the many fey — pixies, sprites and satyrs, among others — attracted to the new settlement. With not even an inn, villagers welcomed the rare visitors, typically a few travelling merchants a year, to stay in the headman's own home.

When a group of dwarves, weary and wounded, stumbled into Barlow a century ago, the villagers were quick to offer aid. Returning home after a failed expedition to find precious metals in a nearby mountain, the dwarves had been attacked by a gang of redcaps, from whom they barely escaped. The villagers nursed the dwarves back to health. In return, the miners vowed to repay the villagers' kindness — a lengthy process for a village with little use for material goods. Eventually, the dwarves built homes and settled in Barlow.

In time, the dwarves sent for their families and the hamlet saw its population surge, dwarven newcomers soon nearly as numerous as the human inhabitants. Though the dwarves happily accepted the tenets of the village's relationship with nature, they brought a new modernity with them that many of the human and fey residents find disconcerting. Where once flour was ground by hand, now a new mill quickly handles the chore. And while its efforts certainly don't threaten the forest's well-being, second-generation resident Erna Copperspike's new workshop has begun producing fine wooden goods the craftswoman hopes to bring to market.

### DEMOGRAPHICS

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**Ruler** Arvo Varala (N male human expert [farmer] 2)

**Government** Council

**Population** 124 (64 humans, 40 dwarves, 20 other)

**Alignments** N, CN, NG, CG

**Languages** Common, Dwarven, Sylvan

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

**Qualities** Insular, pious

**Danger** 0; **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:

**Arli Casalyan** (CG female fey human ranger 1) A descendent of Casalya and fierce advocate for Barlow's pastoral way of life.

**Arvo Varala** (location 10; N male human expert [farmer] 2) The head of the village council is a skilled farmer, and is angered by the recent thefts.

**Brengen Leer** (location 2; NG male old human druid 4) The village's spiritual leader and mediator.

**Casalya** (location 1; CG female dryad) The mother of Barlow, she rarely now interferes in village affairs.

**Erna Copperspike** (location 7; N female dwarf expert 3) A woodworking proponent of greater trade and industry.

**Hyla Lawsprite** (location 9; CN male sprite bard 3) The eternally nosy self-appointed "Sheriff of Barlow."

**Thifan Granitehelm** (location 8; NG male old dwarf expert 4) The last survivor of the original dwarven settlers.

### NOTABLE LOCATIONS

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

1. **Casalya's Tree:** Casalya's bonded tree is the heart of Barlow.
2. **Casalya's Amphitheatre:** Village gatherings take place in the terraced seating around Casalya's tree.
3. **Vorman's Mill:** The new gristmill harnesses the Clearbrook to grind grain into flour.
4. **New Shrine:** The dwarves have built a small shrine to their own gods.
5. **Charred Ruins:** The village inn recently burned to the ground and has not yet been rebuilt.
6. **The Dwarven Distillery:** One of the new dwarven-made buildings, where they have begun fermenting liquor in greater volumes. Among dwarves, it's simply known as the distillery.
7. **Erna's Workshop:** Erna Copperspike's woodworking shop, where she and a few apprentices craft fine goods.
8. **Thifan's Home:** The dwelling of the aged former miner also serves as a frequent gathering spot for younger dwarves.
9. **Barns:** The barns at the outskirts of Barlow hold the community's livestock, mostly cows, pigs and sheep.
10. **Farm fields:** Barlow's fields mostly produce rye and root vegetables, primarily for the villagers' own consumption.

### MARKETPLACE

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**Resources & Industry** Light farming, fishing, hunting, decorative and functional woodwork (artwork, furniture, tools, traps)

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

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

- **Potions & Oils** *oil of shillelagh* (50 gp), *potion of barkskin* (300 gp), *potion of endure elements* (50 gp)
- **Scrolls (Arcane)** *charm person* (25 gp)
- **Scroll (Divine)** *call lightning* (375 gp), *daylight* (375 gp), *faerie fire* (25 gp)



## VILLAGE LORE

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

**DC 10:** When the druid Barlow Rous fell in love with the dryad Casalya, his followers founded the eponymous settlement around her tree. The settlement welcomes friendly fey and many of the human villagers have fey ancestors. Casalya still lives in the village.

**DC 15:** A recent influx of dwarves has brought new prosperity to the village as they begin to market fine wooden goods and dwarven spirits. So far they have limited their production to avoid angering the fey.

**DC 20:** Long ago, the dwarves unsuccessfully sought precious metals in the hills at the Clearbrook's source. Wild animals in the woods attacked the miners and the survivors retreated to Barlow, where they settled. Since then, hermits have lived in the caves.

For more about Barlow, and the investigation, refer to "Whispers & Rumours" and "Gathering Information" on page 15.

## VILLAGERS

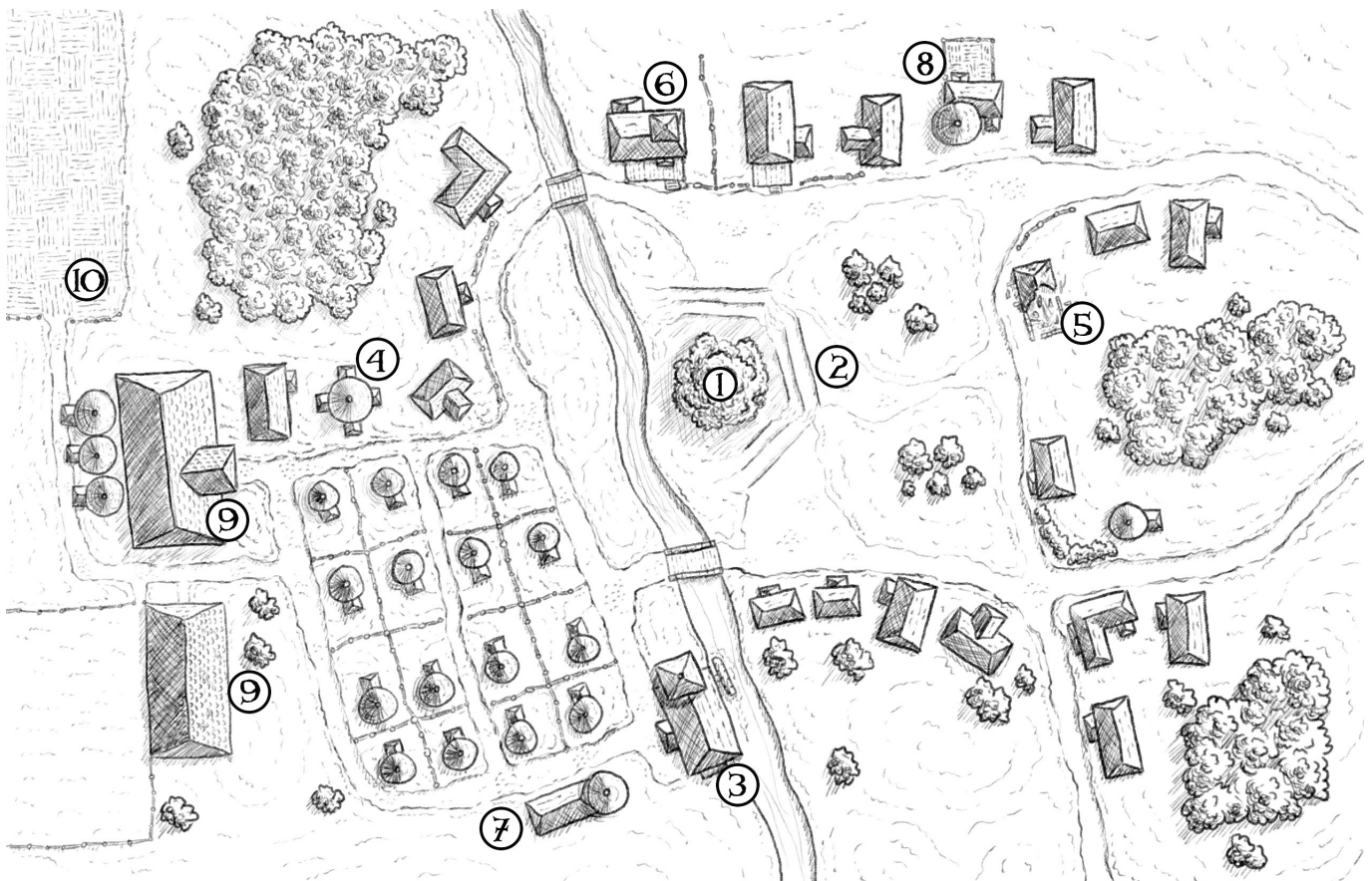
**Appearance** The human residents typically have tanned skin, but often have brightly coloured hair or eyes or some other odd trait revealing their fey heritage. Dwarves tend toward neatly trimmed hair and beards.

**Dress** Humans wear wool clothing, often dyed in bright greens or other colours and decorated with elaborate embroidered flowers or woodland creatures. Dwarves dress more soberly, often wearing long leather vests in which they carry the tools of their trade.

**Nomenclature (Dwarf)** *male* Daim, Doric, Falgen, Reidral; *female* Barili, Chera, Mora, Olalsia, Thinon, Wynadear; *family* Runeshield, Strongstave.

**Nomenclature (Fey)** *male* Abararl, Adenen, Ash, Koko, Tob; *female* Alaneo, Aphid, Ashphodel, Cala, Vereyl; *family* Ambershine, Dapplesprout, Quickfly, Sunsage.

**Nomenclature (Human)** *male* Erreharl, Kiral, Timos, Voz; *female* Analia, Camline, Hermi, Vremi; *family* Aral, Ferren, Fyrom, Liale.



## DWARVEN HOLD: SIGHTS & SOUNDS

Use this table to generate the sights and sounds the PCs experience as they move about the dwarven hold. Ignore inappropriate results and simply re-roll.

D%	
1	A set of massive stone and iron gates rear above the street, guarded by squads of armed dwarves.
2	A long string of mining carts trundle by, wheels squeaking, heavily laden with ore.
3	A trio of dwarves saunter passed, pickaxes and shovels slung over their shoulders.
4	Coarse laughter comes from a nearby tavern, which is crowded with rowdy dwarves.
5	A statue of the hold's mayor looms over nearby buildings from its position in the central square.
6	A series of cavernous openings lead into deeper tunnels beneath the hold.
7	Huge, ornate murals detailing the hold's history cover the rock wall.
8	Heat blazes from the open mouth of an active forge opening onto the street.
9	Thick, oily smoke roils out of half-a-dozen chimneystacks, filling the air with a gloomy haze.
10	Herds of pack goats clop by, guided by a lone dwarf wielding a leather whip.
11	Molten lava oozes through a stone channel cutting down the middle of the hold.
12	The hold's enormous stone walls block out any sight of the area surrounding the settlement.
13	A heavily armed and armoured dwarven patrol tromps around the corner, alert for trouble.
14	A scattering of smashed tankards litter the street, suggesting a recent brawl.
15	A blonde, effeminate elf stands arguing with a surly dwarf who keeps making rude gestures.
16	A dwarf strolls past with what has to be the most elaborately braided beard in the whole hold.
17	A gaggle of dwarven children scamper past, swinging wooden swords.
18	Dwarves cluster around a set of maps, muttering as they point out various landmarks and notes.
19	A dwarven bard passes by, strumming on a lyre as he hums to himself.
20	Huge rats scurry through the area, glancing at the party with beady red eyes.
21	A spider as big as a dwarf's head clings to the rocky ceiling, poised to drop onto its prey.
22	A pile of rubble indicates a recent cave-in where a tunnel used to be. A team of miners are preparing to remove the obstruction.
23	Faint splashing echoes around, hinting at an underground waterfall in the vicinity.
24	A massive warhammer leans against a wall, looking well worn despite fresh polishing.

25	A female dwarf stumps by, scowling and wearing an iron helm fashioned like ram horns.
26	A series of rotting orc heads are stuck on spikes outside the hold.
27	A dwarf hefts a sack that looks to be bulging with precious gems of all kind.
28	The passing cart is stacked high with ingots of silver and gold, stamped with the hold's official seal.
29	The odd-looking pony pulling a nearby wagon is actually a mechanical construct.
30	A group of dwarves use hammer and chisels to engrave a series of runes on a wall.
31	Everyone on the street stills as a distant explosion shakes the area.
32	Rough dwarven voices and laughter fill the air, giving the neighbourhood a cheery feel.
33	Battered and dented dwarven shields are lined up against a wall like a memorial.
34	The shimmering liquid spraying from the hold's central fountain appears to be molten silver.
35	A stout dwarf eyes the area, burly arms crossed to show off the golden bracers he wears.
36	Stacks of boxes have been carefully cordoned off, with numerous warning signs posted about.
37	The smell of burning and ash tickles fill the area, but it's hard to say where it's coming from.
38	An oversized oven roars with flames as a dwarf shovels fresh coals inside.
39	Several female dwarves chat as they carry barrels of food down the street.
40	A pack of dwarven children run around, laughing as they play a game of "orcs and elves."
41	Five dwarven warriors escort a massive, green-skinned orc in chains.
42	A dwarf with grey skin and black eyes peers out from the window of a jail cell.
43	A tall human hunches and hurries along, trying not to bump his head in the tight, low tunnels.
44	This row of craggy buildings look like they're carved straight from the mountain itself.
45	The crowded tavern is bustling with dwarves, all of whom seem in high spirits.
46	Sets of gigantic chains bolted to the outer gates connect to a network of gears and cogs.
47	An ancient-looking dwarf totters by, armour almost wholly rusted to scrap.
48	A bleached dragon's skull is mounted above the door, toothy maw gaping in death.
49	Barges coast along the river beside the hold, bringing in large shipments from upstream.
50	Grumbling dwarves haul large crates around, their contents rattling loudly.
51	The sound of crashing hammers and hissing bellows of a forge fills the air.



52	A harsh metallic grinding fills the air as a nearby gate is winched open.
53	The earth rumbles, but everyone goes about their business without apparent concern.
54	The smell of stale ale drifts about, the ground stained by countless spilled drinks.
55	Deep drums pound nearby, accompanied by guttural dwarven chanting.
56	A dwarf strides by, his face and bare arms covered in thick, black tattoos.
57	Screaming death threats at one another, several dwarves clash in the middle of the street.
58	Shoulders slumped, a band of dwarven mercenaries trudge by, blood fresh on their armour.
59	A dozen wagons roll along in a merchant caravan, heading for the market.
60	A dwarf races through the street, hollering something about striking it rich.
61	A mining party sets out for their claim, packs and wagons bulging with gear.
62	The minstrel singing on the street corner doesn't look like she's been tossed a single coin all day.
63	A band of elves keeps getting all sorts of dirty looks from the dwarves around them.
64	A dignified procession fills the street as a group of dwarven nobility stroll past.
65	Dwarves labour to roll ale barrels along the road without knocking anyone over.
66	A dwarven ruffian toys with a crooked knife as he watches the street traffic.
67	The bartender eyes everyone passing his tavern and makes sure drinkers get a good look at the cudgel sitting behind the counter.
68	Not only is this dwarf missing a beard, he also doesn't appear to have any eyebrows.
69	Several dwarven monks shuffle past, hands tucked into their sleeves in meditative poses.
70	What looks like a statue of a grey-skinned, robed man occasionally blinks and nods at passers-by.
71	A dwarven guard sits astride a giant beetle that has been outfitted with a saddle.
72	Servants struggle to bear an obese dwarf noble along on his cushioned travelling chair.
73	This dwarf looks like nothing more than a massive collection of scars from head to toe.
74	A dwarf clomps along in such thick armour, his whole body and face are entirely hidden.
75	A paladin's hands glow with divine light as he places them on another dwarf's head in blessing.
76	A skinny dwarf woman giggles to herself as she pulls intestines out of a dead goat.

77	Two dozen dwarves stand on a giant chess board, acting as living game pieces.
78	Lifelike statues of legendary dwarves line both sides of this street.
79	An old dwarf sits on the corner, regaling a group of children with stories of war heroics.
80	A dwarf sprints past, screaming as flames engulf his thick beard.
81	A shabby dwarf lies in the gutter, drooling, empty tankard clutched to his gut.
82	The local blacksmith sings praises to the god of the forge, in time with his hammering.
83	A spellcaster with a peaked cap and golden robe strides along, staff in hand.
84	A guard squad gazes down over the area from their perch high atop the hold walls.
85	A young dwarf casts furtive glances around as he chisels his name into a wall.
86	A stream of black-robed dwarves stride by, faces heavily lined in mourning.
87	Dwarves yell and place bets as a pair of wrestlers grapple in their midst.
88	A grim-faced dwarf watches the crowd, a bolt cocked in his crossbow.
89	Dwarves grunt and strain as they are led through a series of battle training manoeuvres.
90	Gleaming helmets have been lined up on this ledge, facing passers-by.
91	The stones here look charred, some having even cracked in half due to the heat.
92	Clumps of blue-green glowing mould spot the walls, providing steady illumination.
93	A bonfire has been lit in one of the guard towers stationed along the hold walls.
94	A large metal cage hangs from a chain that can be lowered into a seemingly bottomless pit.
95	A deep gulley cuts down the middle of the hold, with numerous bridges crossing over.
96	At least ten dwarves cluster around a halfling wearing a rather dapper vest.
97	A quartet of short, hooded figures stride down the street, features hidden in shadows.
98	Two dwarves greet one another in the middle of the street with a fierce head butting.
99	A troop of armoured dwarves march off from the main gates, looking ready for battle.
100	A crowd of dwarves have begun a boulder-throwing competition, heaving huge stones across a ravine.

## DUERGAR OF THE OBSIDIAN CITADEL

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Dwelling deep below a chain of active volcanoes, the Duergar of the Obsidian Citadel perfect the art of crafting instruments of war. These they sell for precious gold, or even better, trade for the innocent lives of others. Sallying forth from their noisome fortress, they use their natural stealth and invisibility to raid the surface world for the things they cannot produce – things of peerless beauty such as fair maidens, epic poetry and talented minstrels.

### ECOLOGY & SOCIETY

The duergar dwelling in the sprawling fortress complex of the Obsidian Citadel live in a strict hierarchal structure. Ruled by a hereditary king, the heads of the clans form a small council to assist in governing. Intrigue and corruption are rife among the ruling class as clans jostle for power and influence. Yet, one thing they agree on is that every duergar must contribute to furthering the Obsidian Citadel's needs – creating the fine weapons, armour and other quality items for which it is famed.

To this end, duergar are apprenticed at an early age, taught to pump billows and bend steel with a hammer. When a duergar reaches adulthood, his training is further refined based on one of three competencies he has shown – strength, intelligence or guile. Separated from his fellows, he is taught either the arts of war, magic or stealth. A duergar who shows no skill at the forge brings great shame to his family and clan. He is either killed in an "accident" or exiled from the citadel. Only those with great strength (or rich parents) can redeem their honour by joining an elite force of duergar fighters, The Destroyers, who practice not the art of creation but destruction.

The duergar take great pride in their work, making them haughty and cruel when dealing with outsiders. Dedicated to their craft, they have lost the ability to create other things of beauty such as song, poetry and other forms of expressive, benign art. Yet their black hearts remember those things, craving them as much as their desire to forge instruments of war. To

fulfil this need, they sneak into the surface world, using their scouts and infiltrators to find beauty (whether objects or people) and steal them away to their lightless halls. Stealth and invisibility are their allies and few people outside the citadel suspect the duergar. What the duergar cannot steal, they trade for; flesh is even more valuable than gold to them.

**Appearance:** Physically, the duergar of the Obsidian Citadel appear much the same as others of their kind. However, a male's beard grows long and wispy and the females sport stringy, dark hair. Their armour is stained black and the stench of volcanic gases clings to them.

**Male Names:** Berg, Fiak, Hvittr, Kiljan, Povi, Ragn, Teis, Vafri.

**Female Names:** Daga, Impi, Malaat, Olu, Saaga, Ylva, Zylla.

**Clan Names:** Darkhelm, Kilaxe, Nightstar, Shattershield.

**Religion:** The folk of the Obsidian Citadel have little love for the gods, believing that the gods drove them deep into the earth because of their jealousy of the duergar's smithing skills. When a duergar finds religion it is usually through a dark power that offers them rewards, riches and dominion over their kin.

### LAIRS

The majority of the duergar live in the vast cavernous halls of the Obsidian Citadel, named from the stone from which it is hewn. Laid out in a grid pattern, the king's palace sits at the centre. Tunnels of hot magma nearby, coupled with the heat from the numerous forges, causes the air to be oppressive and stiflingly hot. Numerous, well-patrolled tunnels lead deeper into the Ebon Realm. Other tunnels run to the surface, ending at cave entrances along the charred peaks of the volcanoes. It is these caves that the duergar use to trade with outsiders. Usually, a small forge sits in the cave so the duergar can work his craft when not dealing with, or stealing from, customers.

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### IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

*Duergar of the Obsidian Citadel's* design enables a GM to easily insert the featured tribe into a home campaign. The duergar can provide a source of magic weapons and armour to intrepid adventurers willing to risk dealing with them.

A group of duergar marauders laden with the latest spoils of their surface raids – objects and folk of great beauty – accidentally could run across a group of PCs.

Alternatively, those who have sold loved ones to the duergars often later have regrets and would willingly pay a group of adventurers to infiltrate the Obsidian Citadel to rescue those they hold most dear.

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### TRIBAL LORE

A character making a Knowledge (local) check may know some information about the tribe. A successful check reveals all information gained by a lesser check.

**DC 12:** The black armour identifies this stocky, gray-skinned humanoid as a Duergar of the Obsidian Citadel.

**DC 17:** The Duergar of the Obsidian Citadel are known for their fabulous weapons, armour and other items. However, some of those objects carry potent curses.

**DC 22:** The Obsidian Citadel secretly sends out raids against the surface world. The duergar hunt for people and objects of peerless beauty to brighten their barren halls.

## COMBAT & TACTICS

The training the duergar receive at the Obsidian Citadel focuses on an individual's natural talents and innate magical abilities. Thus the strong become fighters, the nimble serve as scouts and the shrewd train to be wizards. Coupled with their ability to grow in size and turn invisible, the duergar have developed unique and deadly tactics.

Within the environs of the Obsidian Citadel, duergar warriors led by a captain make regular patrols, sweeping the numerous passageways leading in and out of the fortress. A typical hallway leading into the Obsidian Citadel is 20 ft. wide and 10 ft. high (to allow the duergar to make full use of their *enlarge person* ability). This way, two patrol members can hold the passageway while the others turn invisible to slip behind intruders from a connecting hallway. If given enough room, the enlarged duergar fan out about 5 ft. apart so they can use their reach while their allies shoot crossbows at enemies that get between them.

Additional, duergar bands patrol day and night in a ten-mile radius on the surface, relying on their Survival skill to navigate the harsh landscape. Patrols above ground make extensive use of scouts who range ahead to warn of dangerous monsters and possible intruders. Because of the number of travellers coming to do business, the duergar offer to provide an armed escort through their land (for a hefty price, of course). Troublemakers are dealt with quickly and decisively.

In battle, half the warriors enlarge themselves and hem their enemies together while the scouts and other warriors turn invisible to surround or flank their foe, targeting lightly armoured and spellcasters first. The captain of the patrol typically charges his silver steed into clusters of the enemy.

The duergars' desire to possess objects of beauty drives them to frequently raid the surface world. Such groups consist of mostly scouts with one or two infiltrators, a wizard and a small contingent of warriors lead by a captain. The latter are mostly for protection and the guarding of slaves once they are acquired. The raiding party travels by night, using the duergar affinity for stealth to move through the surface lands undetected. Scouts slip into settlements to select potential targets like art objects, beautiful men or women, skilled artists and so on. Once a target has been selected, a Obsidian Infiltrator sneaks in to steal the item or victim. The infiltrator has 24 hours to make it back to his allies hiding outside the settlement before they give him up as lost and move on. If a duergar is caught in a town or city, it can be assumed a raiding party is nearby. Under no circumstances do raiding parties attempt to rescue captured allies. If discovered and attacked, the warriors, scouts and captain give their lives so that the wizard and infiltrators can escape. The life of an average duergar warrior is cheap compared to the training required to become a wizard or infiltrator.





## HOW TO MAKE AN OLD SCHOOL CHARACTER

If you want an Old School feel to your Pathfinder Roleplaying Game you've got to go back to the very beginning...

I've talked a lot recently about the Old School style of play and my desire to marry it with the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game in my design of Gloamhold. One thing it's important to remember about Old School play is that the experience starts way before party's first dungeon. If you are going to do Old School properly, you've got to start with character generation.

With that in mind, I've roughed out some Old School guidelines for use in Gloamhold and Old School style play. These rules in no way support optimisation or min/maxing — to a certain degree you are at the mercy of the dice. This has some upsides, and it has some downsides:

- **Upside:** Character generation is quicker, as players have fewer choices to make.
- **Downside:** Characters are not optimised; they are less effective than those created using more modern methods. A GM should keep this in mind when crafting adventures.
- **Upside:** Characters are mechanically similar; thus their personas becomes much more important in differentiating them from their fellows. This promotes roleplaying.
- **Downside:** Characters develop more organically and are not as designed as with other methods. This can lead to an unbalanced party, as it removes some of the choices from the generation process.
- **Upside:** Characters are more rounded because the player isn't assigning scores to attributes. With this method, there is no such thing as a dump stat.

For this method of character generation, use only the options presented in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*. A close reading of the rules below will undoubtedly show I have done away with certain aspects of Old School character generation. In particular, I don't include class restrictions for demi-humans or racial prerequisites; I wasn't wildly keen on those in the Good Old Days and I'm still not wildly keen on them now!

### STAT GENERATION

Point buy is not Old School. In Old School you roll your stats and you assign them in the order you rolled. You've got two options:

- **Old School:** 4d6 drop the lowest, in order.

- **Hardcore Old School:** 3d6, in order.

If your character has an overall negative stat modifier, discard the character and re-roll (unless you don't want to).

### CHOOSE CLASS AND RACE

Choose your race and class as normal, and apply the relevant racial modifiers.

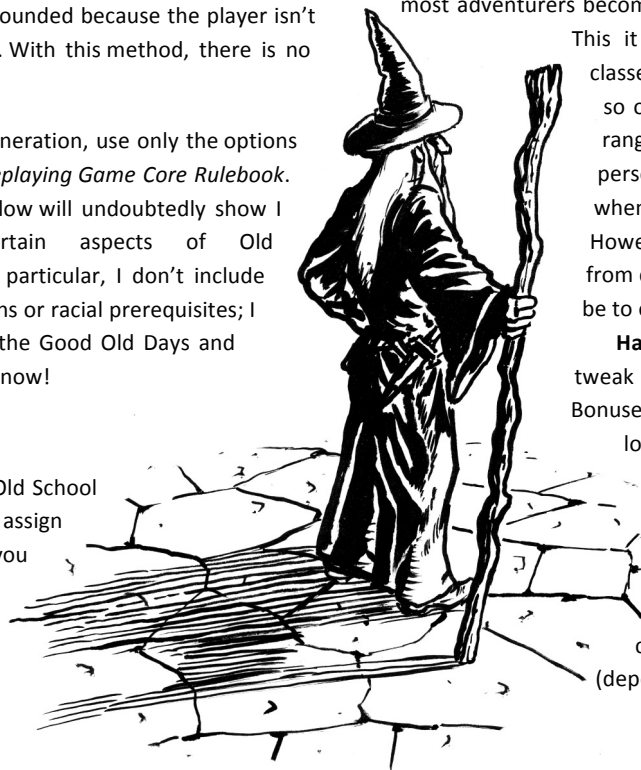
**Hardcore Old School:** If you want a hardcore Old School experience, use the following class prerequisites:

- Barbarian: Str 13, Dex 13, Con 13
- Bard: Dex 12, Int 10, Cha 15
- Cleric: Wis 10
- Druid: Wis 12, Cha 15
- Fighter: Str 9
- Monk: Str 15, Dex 15, Con 11, Wis 15
- Paladin: Str 12, Con 9, Wis 13, Cha 17
- Ranger: Str 13, Dex 13, Con 14, Wis 14
- Rogue: Dex 9
- Sorcerer: Cha 12
- Wizard: Int 10 (universalist), Int 13 (abjurer, conjurer et al)

These prerequisite limit your choices somewhat, and result in most adventurers becoming clerics, fighters, rogues or wizards.

This it turn means characters qualifying for classes such as barbarian, paladin, monk and so on are exceptional folk. Even sorcerers, rangers and druids are special people. I personally like this approach, because when everyone is special no one is special. However, it removes even more choice from character generation, which may not be to everyone's taste.

**Halfway House:** Alternatively, you could tweak the above prerequisites slightly. Bonuses for high abilities scores start much lower in 3rd edition et al, than in earlier versions of the game. For example a Strength score of 17 gives a +1 to hit in 1st edition, but a +3 in Pathfinder. With this in mind, some of the higher prerequisites could be reduced by 2 or 4 points (depending on your preference).



## SKILLS

Your character probably had a job or trade before he became an adventurer. Perhaps he worked with his family in the fields or was apprenticed to a craftsman. To simulate this, spend a free skill point on a Craft or Profession skill to account for his early training.

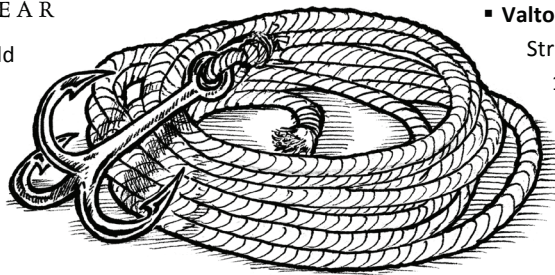
**Hardcore Old School:** If you'd rather, you can randomly determine which background skill your character knows. Roll a d20:

1. Craft (armour)
2. Craft (weapons)
3. Profession (farmer, fisherman or miller)
4. Profession (architect, engineer or scribe)
5. Craft (jewellery)
6. Craft (baker, brewer or butcher)
7. Craft (carpentry or stonemasonry)
8. Profession (miner)
9. Profession (sailor)
10. Profession (merchant/trader)
11. Profession (carter)
12. Craft (tailor, leatherworker or cobbler)
13. Craft (artist: paintings or sculptor)
14. Handle Animal
15. Heal
16. Perform (choose any one)
17. Craft (choose any one)
18. Profession (choose any one)
19. No skill of measurable worth
20. Roll twice on this table; ignore this result hereafter

Knowing what your character did before he became an adventurer might give you an insight into why he took up such a danger-filled life. Perhaps a gambler adventures to clear his debts while a merchant or trader could have become fascinated with foreign cultures and travelling. Similarly, your character could have hated his profession or trade so much he became an adventurer to escape it. Alternatively, he could have been so bad at his previous job his master threw him out onto the streets; with no other options the life of an adventurer beckoned.

## STARTING WEALTH AND GEAR

Roll your starting gold as normal. To add depth and detail to this facet of character generation consider how he came into these funds.



When buying gear:

- Don't buy anything from the Special Substances and Items table.
- Don't buy any cold iron, mithral or adamantite items.
- Be sure to buy the staples of dungeoning equipment: rope, pitons, flasks of oil, a light source and so on. If you'd rather skip this step, buy one of these equipment bundles.
- Keep 10% of your wealth back for in-game expenses. This money could be spent on bribes, fines and taxes and (of course) paying your hirelings' or specialist's wages and fees.

## EXAMPLE ADVENTURING PARTIES

Just for fun, I've rolled up two starting adventuring parties using this system. I haven't fully fleshed out these characters, but they still give you a sense of the kind of group you could expect to see adventuring in Gloamhold. I picked a group size of six for these groups as I have six players in my home campaign.

### GROUP 1: HARDCORE OLD SCHOOL

- **Etune Lightstep** (NG female halfling rogue 1; Str 9, Dex 14, Con 9, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 16; Profession [gambler])
- **Aldal Garsten** (NG male dwarf fighter; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8; Profession [miner])
- **Ylermi Rantanen** (LG male human wizard [evoker] 1; Str 9, Dex 12, Con 7, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 10; Craft [jewellery])
- **Firatis Natityrr** (CG female half-elf bard 1; Str 8, Dex 15, Con 7, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 15; Profession [carter])
- **Ilari Eskola** (LG male human cleric [Darlen] 1; Str 14, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 9, Wis 17, Cha 13; Profession [architect])
- **Aune Pasanen** (CG female wizard [universalist] 1; Str 5, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 8; Craft [tailor])

### GROUP 2: OLD SCHOOL

- **Amallaemar Uthliavar** (NG female half-elf wizard; Str 9, Dex 10, Con 8, Int 15, Wis 11, Cha 11; Craft [sculptor])
- **Elgal Torsten** (NG male dwarf rogue 1; Str 8, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 13, Wis 16, Cha 10; Profession [engineer])
- **Urmis Lankinen** (LG male human cleric [Darlen] 1; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 13, Wis 18, Cha 16; Craft [armour])
- **Ogan** (NG female half-orc cleric [Kalron] 1; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 8, Wis 15, Cha 11; Perform [wind])
- **Valto Itkonen** (CG male human barbarian 1; Str 18, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 11; Profession [merchant])
- **Leneal Ningel** (NG female gnome druid 1; Str 9, Dex 9, Con 17, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 16; [Craft [leather]])



The seething, foam-flecked waters below Rivengate are particularly hazardous. Many underwater dangers – jagged rocks fallen from above, savage rip tides and more – await explorers attempting to access Rivengate and the areas beyond. Only skilled or lucky captains dare to sail into the gloom of Rivengate’s gaping maw. Within flows the dark and treacherous Murkwater.

Extensive landings provide access to Rivengate’s surviving halls. Battered by the Murkwater’s remorseless tides, the first of these landings has partially collapsed. Yet moored alongside is the battered and rotting hulk of a large fishing boat sunk during a storm last winter. The others four landings, cracked and worn by time and tide, are intact. Malformed and sickly seaweed grows voraciously to the landing’s sides and abnormally large, but misshapen and often sharp, barnacles also cluster here in great profusion. Hidden by the seaweed they lurk ready to rip any unfortunate climber’s hands to shreds. The slippery seaweed makes climbing onto the landings at low water difficult.

If the tide is right, explorers can pass even deeper into Gloamhold. The Murkwater is tidal; adventurers must time their explorations carefully for the tide is exceptionally strong which makes travel in the wrong direction dangerous, difficult and tiring as such explorers must row against the tide. The vicious tides are not the only danger lurking in the Murkwater, for unwary explorers.

Below the river itself runs a twisted, flood network of caverns – the Breathless Narrows – and in several places the two waterways intersect. In these places, the denizens of the Breathless Narrows often lie in wait for passing vessels. During particularly stormy weather, small localised whirlpools often form in these locations, adding an extra level of danger for explorers.

### THE FANE OF BONES

Roughly halfway along its course, the Murkwater widens and flows through the Twisted Warrens. Here, it widens dramatically into a lofty cavern named by explorers as the Fane of Bones.

Careful examination of the area reveals it is only partially of natural origin. The ancient troglodytes dwelling in the Twilight City excavated this area as part of their flood defences, and winter storms still regularly inundate the cavern. Cracked and pitted bones along with scraps of weapons and armour and detritus washed in from the sea form a high tide line of sorts, providing mute testimony to the winter storms’ savagery.

Many passageways and galleries – leading into the Twisted Warrens – stud the walls and four squat ziggurats dominate the cavern. Built to celebrate the troglodytes’ many victories over their surface dwelling enemies within lie interred the vanquished foes of their ancient civilisation. Survivors of explorations into the ziggurats describe in hushed tones horrible, eldritch symbols picked out in bones decorating the walls and of a legion of mindless undead ready to destroy all interlopers. Yet more symbols set at the apex of each ziggurat tell of a terrible ritual to control and direct the undead sleeping within each mausoleum. Mercifully, specific details of the ritual remain lost.

### THE THREE SISTERS

Beyond the Twisted Warrens, at three points along the Murkwater’s course, forlorn and time-worn fortifications – the Three Sisters – ward Gloamhold’s inner reaches. Each citadel features massive stone locks designed to regulate the flow of water into and out of the Sunless Lake. Still in good repair, the Three Sisters are incessantly claimed and fought over by Gloamhold’s denizens. Few surface dwellers have passed through the greatest and final of these structures, the Forbidden Gate. Beyond lies the tenebrous precincts of the Twilight City.



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