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GM'S MONTHLY MISCELLANY:

APRIL 2016





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GM'S MONTHLY MISCELLANY: APRIL 2016

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:

- **I Loot the Cleric's Body** Taylor Hubler.
- **Urban Dressing: Marsh Town** Josh Vogt.
- **Village Backdrop: Silver Bluff** Mike Welham.

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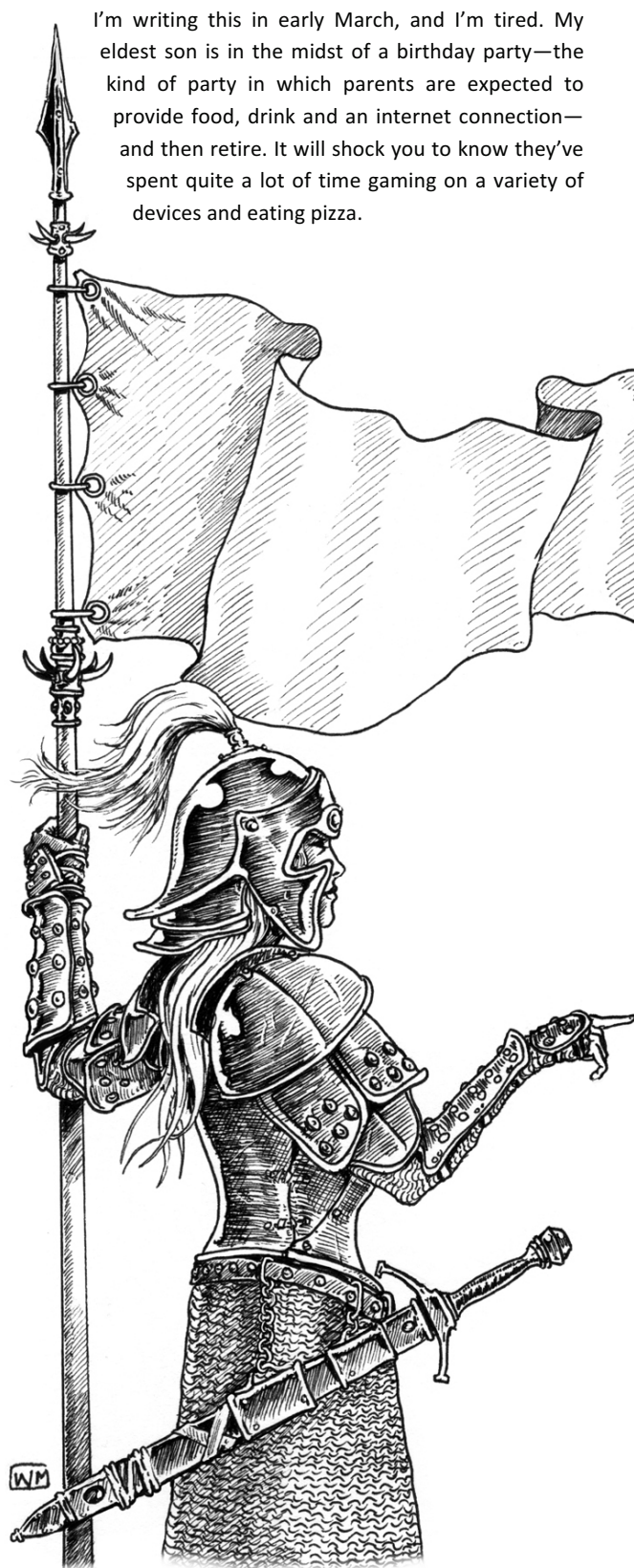
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I'm writing this in early March, and I'm tired. My eldest son is in the midst of a birthday party—the kind of party in which parents are expected to provide food, drink and an internet connection—and then retire. It will shock you to know they've spent quite a lot of time gaming on a variety of devices and eating pizza.

I've been struck how much fun they are having and how they hurl themselves into a variety of games. Sure there's a fair amount of shouting; given they are all boys there's also a huge amount of competition, but at the end of the day they are having fun.

It's somewhat different to how I game. (Of course, there's pizza!) Roleplaying isn't a computer game. My son and his friends are competing; on Wednesday nights we play cooperatively (well, we try). It's an important distinction and one that reminds how rich and rewarding hobby gaming is.

In any event, herein you'll find excerpts from some of Raging Swan's newest products including *Village Backdrop: Silver Bluff*, *I Loot the Cleric's Body* and *Urban Dressing: Marsh Town* (which is the last in a long an illustrious line—unless you count *GM's Miscellany: Urban Dressing II*). I've also included a recent article I wrote about the point of gaming—sometimes something we can forget in the rush to optimise and crush our enemies—and a short design piece on the four things modern dungeons seem to lack. You can read the article—and scores more as well as campaign summaries—at creightonbroadhurst.com.

You might also be aware that Raging Swan Press is now on Patreon. We signed up at the start of April 2015, and it's going rather marvellously. The thrust of our Patreon campaign is to be able to afford better rates of pay for our freelance game designers. As I'm sure you know, the economics of 3PP are notoriously tight, but Patreon gives us at Raging Swan Press a way to increase our freelancer rates. At time of writing, we've already increased our word rate to seven cents a word, which gives me a warm, fuzzy feeling inside. We want to pay more, but to do that we need your help! If you sign up, you get our supplements earlier than normal and cheaper than normal. Even better, you can pledge what you want and cancel when you want. If you are interested in taking a look at the campaign, check out patreon.com/ragingswanpress or head over to patreon.com and search for Raging Swan!

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.

FOUR THINGS MODERN DUNGEONS SEEM TO LACK

In my campaign, we are about three-quarters of the way through the second adventure. With the exception of a couple of deaths and some close shaves, things seem to be generally going to plan.

Certainly, I'm pretty sure generally the chaps are having fun (which is the point of gaming after all). However, I've been growing a little bit dissatisfied with the design of the dungeon and how it relates to the party's progress and the general flow of the game.

Don't get me wrong, generally it's a pretty good adventure and it has had some excellent encounters, but it highlights for me the changes in design philosophy between early and later versions of the game.

NOTHING CHANGES

The party have been in the dungeon now for the best part of a month—if you factor in time spent exploring the surrounding wilderness and trips back and forth to the nearest city for rest, resupply and reinforcements.

In that time, bugger all has changed in the dungeon. In the main, today's designers are great at telling you what has happen prior to the party reaching an encounter area and they often provide a tremendous sense of the various NPCs' motivations. However, we rarely get any information about what happens if the party attack and retreat or simply take a long time to reach certain areas. Thus—at least to me—the dungeon doesn't seem a very dynamic place. Of course, I can decide what happens myself—I'm not a complete idiot—but it would be nice to have some guidance from the designer.

NO WANDERING MONSTERS

Gah! I love wandering monsters. I do, I do, I do (as long as they make sense in the overall context of the dungeon).

I find it baffling that none of the dungeon's denizens ever seem to move around. Surely, the more organised groups occasionally move about, go foraging to food or whatever. Don't they get bored just sitting around? Apparently not. This dungeon—and most of its inhabitants—are passive, which allows the party to dictate the pace of their exploration.

While I can understand this from a publisher's point of view—wandering monsters take up valuable page space and don't add much to the story—they do add a tremendous amount to the feeling of verisimilitude to the dungeon. They also make it feel so much more dynamic and "lived in."

NO EMPTY SPACE

Again, from a publisher's point of view I understand the lack of empty space in the dungeons. By empty space, I mean unoccupied rooms that may—or may not—contain anything interesting. Describing empty space takes up space (how ironic is that?) which leaves less space and word count for challenges and the overall storyline.

That said, empty space is very important in a dungeon.

- It gives the various factions and groups breathing space and a way to move about without being constantly in conflict with one another.
- It increases the amount of ground the party covers between fights (and rests). This adds to their sense of accomplishment when they look at the map. That might sound really trivial, but it's an important factor often overlooked
- It provides a good change of pace as it allows the party to use other skills, slow down and so on.

Basically, at this point in the dungeon, every time the party enter a new area they trigger a fight or walk into a trap. There's not a lot of surprise or suspense to that formula. Door, fight, loot, door, fight, loot etc. It also means that on the map their process looks pitifully slow, which is a bit disheartening.

LEVEL INAPPROPRIATE ENCOUNTERS

With very few exceptions, all the encounters in the dungeon are level appropriate. Of course, I'm not bemoaning the fact that I haven't been able to slaughter the party out of hand, but sometimes its fun for the party to deal with very hard or very easy encounters.

Running away is always a useful skill to cultivate while crushing weak foes is fun! And again—of course—it builds a sense of verisimilitude into the dungeon. Finally, having level inappropriate encounters adds to the sense of tension. While as a GM, I would never just spring a CR+5 encounter on a group, clever groups can pick up on the "subtle" signs (perhaps scorched and splintered bodies, great gouges out of the walls and so on) that something rather tough lurks ahead. If, after that, they chose to rush ahead that's their problem.

SILVER BLUFF AT A GLANCE

Silver Bluff sprung up among inhospitable mountains after the discovery of a rich source of difficult-to-mine silver that gave the village its name. The climate and treacherous land require hard people to live and work here, and few of the locals are friendly to outsiders. As the silver lode played out, the villagers planned to abandon the village, but an amazing find of powdered adamantine renewed the inhabitants' desire to remain in Silver Bluff. Tensions had run high when the silver petered out, so it was no surprise that someone or something murdered one of Silver Bluff's residents just after the adamantine discovery. The gruesomeness of the deed caused the most jaded villagers to blanch. Thus, the villagers are even more wary of one another and on edge when strangers arrive.

Howling winds drive through the valley in which stands Silver Bluff, and they intensify near Mount Argent, seemingly originating from the massive seam in the earth separating the main village from the mountain. Despite terrible and frightening conditions, villagers spend most of their time in the mines and in huts arrayed at the mountain's base.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Ruler None

Government Anarchy

Population 99 (11 humans, 47 dwarves, 8 half-elves, 18 half-orcs, 15 halflings)

Alignments LN, LE, N, NE

Languages Common, Dwarven, Orc

Corruption +4; **Crime** +4; **Economy** -4; **Law** -6; **Lore** 0; **Society** -4

Qualities Insular, notorious

Danger +30; **Disadvantages** Anarchy

NOTABLE FOLK

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

Anja Varda (location 1; LN female half-orc fighter 6/druid 1) Anja runs the guesthouse, and watches over the pack mules vital for trade between Silver Bluff and points beyond.

Colm Indra (location 3; N male halfling expert 2) This halfling crafts and repairs mining equipment.

Csilla Kreeg (location 9; NE female dwarf barbarian 3) Taskmaster at the mining base camp, Csilla breaks up fights between ill-tempered miners.

Philbert Minje (location 2; LE male half-elf rogue 9/expert 2) The assayer guards Silver Bluff's funds and pays miners for ore extracted from Mount Argent.

Vitor Kreeg (location 5; LN male dwarf cleric 5) Csilla Kreeg's brother ministers to the villagers, often travelling to the mines to mend broken bones.

Zaran Shattersword (location 10; N female human ranger 8) The current hero of Silver Bluff, Zaran found the powdered adamantine that revived the village's fortunes.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Most of the village comprises barely sturdy huts. A few locations, however, are of interest to adventurers:

1. **Varda's:** The most accessible location in Silver Bluff features one of the village's friendlier faces. Anja Varda's modest inn houses the village's infrequent visitors and adjoins the stable where pack mules rest between trips through the mountains.
2. **Assayers:** If anything remotely approaches the "law" in Silver Bluff, it is Philbert Minje's office. From here, he pays miners for their hauls when they return from Mount Argent.
3. **Colm's:** To the chagrin of dwarves living here, Colm Indra has proven to be the best smith in the region. When not crafting picks and mining equipment, he produces quality metal items.
4. **Barracks and Tavern:** Miners spend their time here between their days-long shifts in Mount Argent.
5. **Mountain God's Respite:** Here, Vitor Kreeg proselytizes about his god while healing the sick and injured.
6. **Screaming Chasm:** Before Silver Bluff's founding, a bridge crossed the chasm warding Mount Argent. Ten years ago, something destroyed the bridge. Screaming sounds from the chasm during the dead of night.
7. **New Bridge:** A month after the old bridge's destruction, the new bridge was completed. The ramshackle bridge threatens to collapse and fall into the chasm at any moment.
8. **The Stone Giant:** This massive stone humanoid figure predates regional civilizations by centuries.
9. **Mining Camp:** Huts arrayed at Mount Argent's foot provide some small protection from the wind.
10. **Mount Argent:** The mountain's rich seam of silver made Silver Bluff prosperous, but its depletion nearly spelled the village's end, until powdered adamantine was discovered.

MARKETPLACE

Resources & Industry Mining, smithing

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

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

- **Potions & Oils** cure light wounds (50 gp), lesser restoration (300 gp)
- **Scroll (Divine)** daylight (375 gp), locate object (375 gp), move earth (1,650 gp)
- **Weapons** +1 adamantine greatsword (5,050 gp)
- **Armour** masterwork breastplate (350 gp)

VILLAGE LORE

A PC making a Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local) check may know something about Silver Bluff. A successful check gains all the information revealed by a lesser result.

DC 15: Silver Bluff is a mining colony, whose folk mine a seam in Mount Argent in difficult and dangerous conditions. Its inhabitants barely get along with each other, let alone with strangers.

DC 20: Mount Argent's namesake silver is running out. The miners were about to abandon the area, but one of them discovered large deposits of powdered adamantine.

DC 25: Howling windstorms, emanating from the chasm near Mount Argent, periodically batter Silver Bluff.

VILLAGERS

Appearance Dirty and haggard from long hours in the mine and the land's hostile conditions, the villagers look like they are spoiling for a fight (with anyone).

Dress Villagers dress in simple, functional clothes, usually made of leather to protect them while in the mines or dealing with windstorms. Most people wear cloths around their necks for quick protection against flying debris.

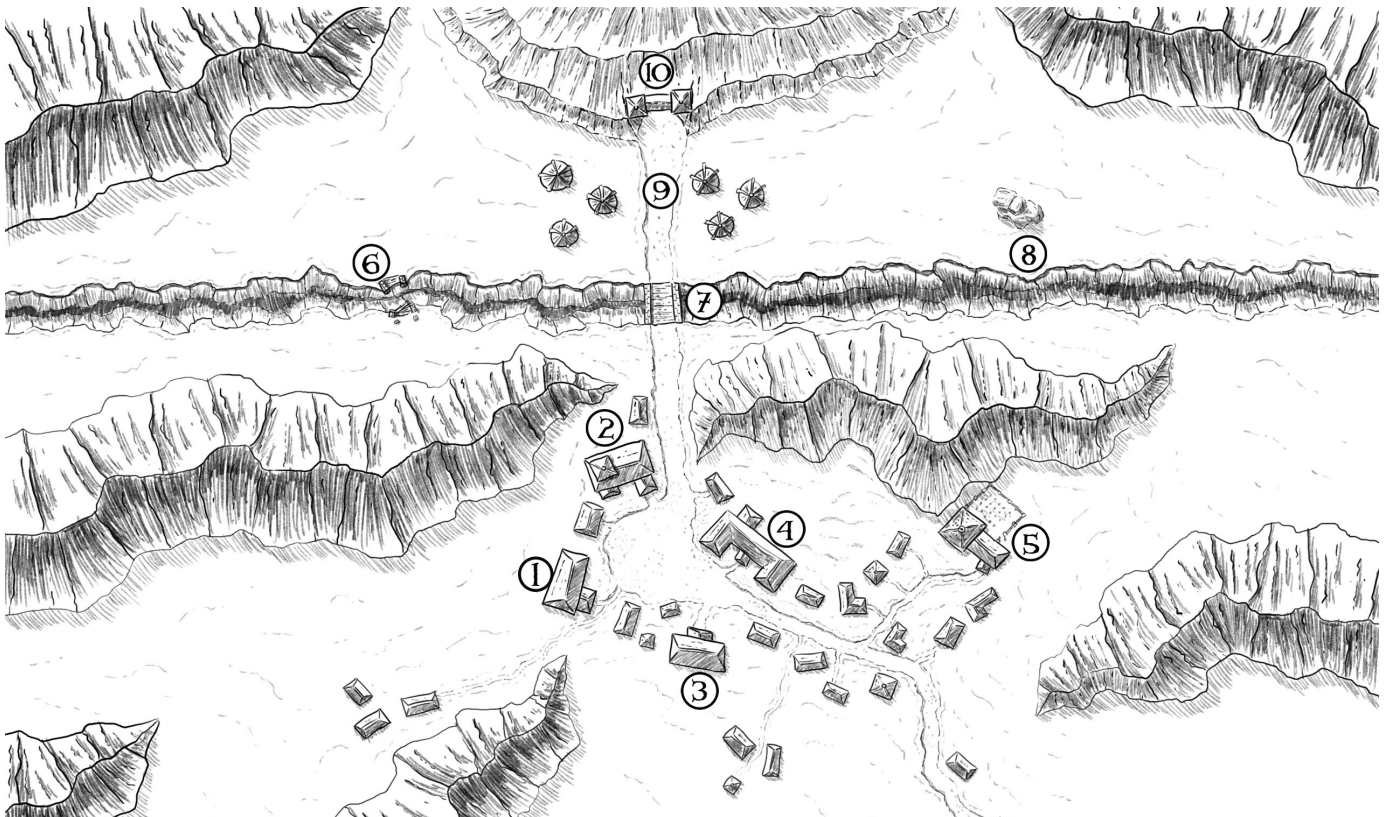
Nomenclature *male* Bogdan, Colm, Kanar, Philbert, Vitor; *female* Anja, Csilla, Marzi, Yasmina, Zaran; *family* Kreeg, Minje, Varda.

WHISPERS & RUMOURS

A PC can use Diplomacy to gather information about Silver Bluff 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	Minje accidentally mentioned the mine's sale to an investor fell through just before the adamantine dust was discovered. He was upset he was going to have to stay here.
2*	The last group passing through here was squirrely. I bet the one with the weird purple eyes stayed behind and hides in the mountains. He must have done in Kanar.
3	The Stone Giant turned south and moved ten feet closer to the chasm last week.
4*	Someone saw a tentacle at least ten feet long shoot up out of the crevasse near the old bridge.
5	The elf with the lute seemed to know about the area. He claimed it was an ancient battleground where godlike beings used massive machines as proxies.
6	The windstorms in the valley between Mount Argent and Silver Bluff have been growing stronger, of late.

*False rumour



LOOTING THE CLERIC'S BODY: POUCH CONTENTS

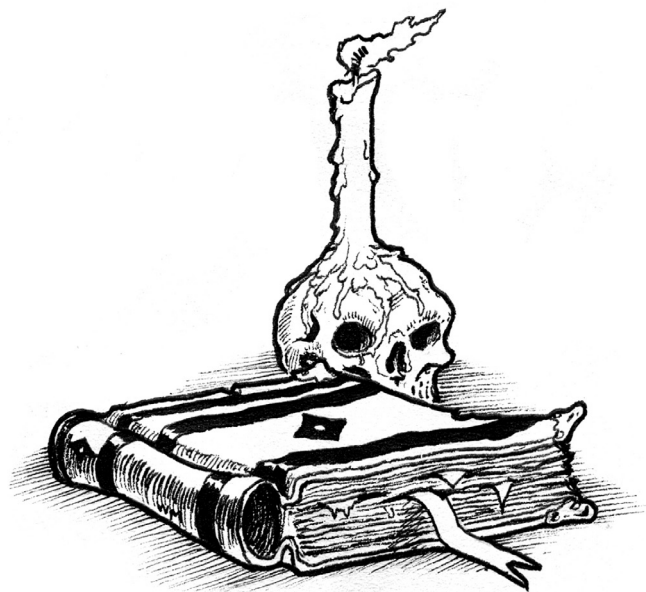
Beyond their coinage, clerics often carry strange odds and ends as well as minor pieces of small equipment in their pouches. Use this table, to generate such items.

D%	
1	Cursed fortune telling cards.
2	A detailed and extensive chart of the stars, planets, comets and other celestial bodies. The chart is designed to be used to read the omens of the sky.
3	A set of hag's knuckle bones, etched with scrying runes and kept in a leather bag.
4	Poisoned trail rations wrapped in black wax paper.
5	A scribbled note that reads, "Don't trust the owls."
6	Holy water contaminated by a murder victim's blood.
7	Rusty and bent nails.
8	A jar of various humanoids' eyeballs.
9	A tube full of hallucinogenic powder.
10	Salted giant spider poison sacks.
11	A symbol drawing kit with string, chalk, compasses and a notebook with detailed notes and diagrams.
12	A dozen vials of snake venom.
13	A collection of silver needles designed to prevent the resurrection of a corpse.
14	A preserved dead raven.
15	A broken spyglass with a personalized inscription engraved on the case.
16	A bag of deep fried cockerel talons.
17	A pocket watch that runs backwards.
18	A goat horn trumpet.
19	A book on diseases with an envelope glued to every other page. Half of them contain a sample of diseased flesh, a soiled rag or a lock of hair.
20	A mix matched set of playing cards with five unique suits.
21	A key ring with fourteen keys. Each one is a different size, style and material.
22	A collection of tweezers of various sizes.
23	A ripped piece of floral print fabric smelling faintly of perfume.
24	A sketchbook full of drawings of local residents doing everyday tasks.
25	A small utility knife with a broken tip.
26	A pair of copper and gold dowsing rods with oak handles.
27	An unfinished ivory scrimshaw comb.
28	Horn rimmed reading glasses with thin leather wrapped around the earpieces.
29	Eleven small rocks, each one wrapped separately and labelled by location found.

30	A potion vial filled with a black coloured sand. It is labelled, "Home".
31	A small pouch containing over twenty different broken bootstraps and shoelaces.
32	A silver locket with a lock of red hair. The hair detects as evil; a DC 15 Knowledge (planes) check reveals it to be hair from a devil.
33	A charm made from a silver coin wrapped in copper wire.
34	A tin filled with a homemade ointment meant for poison oak rashes.
35	Three small vials labelled with names and filled with ashes.
36	Sun dried and salted anchovies wrapped in wax paper.
37	A pouch full of gambling chips.
38	An ivory and silver smoking pipe carved with the face of an old dwarven man.
39	A metal pocket warmer with half a coal stick inside.
40	A book of folk songs and poems.
41	A calligraphy kit with quills made with feathers taken from rare birds.
42	A green glass and silver drinking flask with a dragon design on the face.
43	A manual detailing folk remedies, woodsman techniques and farming processes.
44	Twenty burnt out wands tied together with a silk ribbon.
45	Large steel scissors sturdy enough to shear through bone and sharp enough to pierce leather.
46	Five flasks of oil that burn with a green coloured flame.
47	An ear trumpet made of copper and brass that whispers unholy things to people who listen.
48	A silver signet ring with the crest of a long dead noble family.
49	An impressive collection of handmade fish hooks made of different materials.
50	A copper case full of wax. The wax bears the impression of a key.
51	A long leather strap with six defiled holy symbols tied to it.
52	A collection of love letters the priest wrote but never sent.
53	Two simple silver wedding rings with the bands cut and twisted to be made unwearable.
54	A white handkerchief with the priest's initials embroidered on one corner.
55	Nine claws from dangerous predators kept in well-worn belt pouch.
56	Flint and steel kept with a tin of char cloth. Those with knowledge of geology can identify the flint as a rare stone from a far off land.

57	A handaxe with a brand new head but an old handle. A crude deer has been carved into the handle.
58	A set of hand painted ivory playing cards. Five of the cards have noticeable chips on their edges.
59	An unusually large and strong hammock.
60	A small shovel with a rusted head that needs to be replaced.
61	A chunk of rare cheese wrapped carefully in clean cloth and kept with a sharp cheese scraper.
62	A complete board game with mix matched pieces from over a dozen different sets.
63	A set of calligraphy brushes with frayed and poorly cleaned bristles.
64	A letter of sale and ownership for a piece of land deep in the wilderness.
65	A small pouch full of loose gears and cogs.
66	A sketchbook with drawings of tavern signs and patrons.
67	A piece of jade carved and polished to look like a fish.
68	Personal field notes with pressed flowers and leaves between each page.
69	A vial of rare perfume made from a desert flower that blooms only once every century.
70	A copper scroll tube with tight fitting bronze caps. If the cap is twisted in just the right way, it opens a hidden space for a single scroll.
71	A half-pound of dark chocolate with a feline design on the top of the bar.
72	A small coffee bean grinder kept in a black leather case.
73	A single child's shoe with the heel ripped off.
74	A handwritten receipt from a local blacksmith. It has a date in the future for when the piece being made can be picked up but it doesn't mention what the blacksmith is making.
75	Three glass eyeballs of different sizes and colours.
76	A silver bracelet with the priest's name inscribed on it.
77	A tin full of stale crackers.
78	Handwritten grievances with the political and economic systems of the kingdom.
79	A battered copy of an epic poem.
80	An invitation to a royal ball that took place many years ago.
81	Three small potatoes of unusual colour wrapped carefully in wax paper and kept in a leather sack.
82	A waterproof backpack.
83	A bag of buttons. A few of them are blood stained.
84	A spinning top with twelve sides; each one has a symbol on it.
85	A lute made of fine wood, pearl and red copper.

86	The shattered pieces of a small cast iron cauldron. If reassembled, an infernal rune can be found carved into the cauldron's bottom.
87	An unmelted icicle wrapped in polar hare skin. It is cold and slippery.
88	The hand of an ape, with the wrist attached to an ornate copper cap. It detects as magical but has no power.
89	A pouch full of wildflower seeds wrapped in a scrap of stained red silk.
90	A preserved human tongue resting on a bed of salt in a simple pine box.
91	A white mouse in a wicker cage.
92	A set of short sticks that can be screwed into each other to make one ten-foot-long pole.
93	A few dozen seashells taken from far off exotic beaches.
94	More belts, straps and bindings than any one person should need.
95	A leather drinking flask filled with pure ethanol.
96	A set of chisels, drills and files. They have been kept clean and sharp; any craftsman (DC 10 Craft [any] check) can tell they have never been used.
97	A roll of copper wire, wire cutters and small round nose pliers.
98	A half full potion vial marked, "Tears of my enemies."
99	A black parasol with a bronze eagle's head for a handle.
100	A silver compass with two needles. One points north, and the other magically points in another random direction.



MARSH TOWN: SIGHTS & SOUNDS

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

D%	
1	Every surface is slick with green and black moss, making each step potentially perilous and ready to tumble the unwary to the ground.
2	Eerie screeches cut through the air, but the townsfolk act as if nothing is wrong.
3	Every door has a garland of dried herbs tied above the threshold, and occasional sigils are carved into the wooden frames.
4	The incessant drip of water follows the party everywhere; a slow, steady, maddening plop of liquid that intrudes on every thought.
5	A winged shadow whisks by; those who glance up see a creature with leathery wings disappear into the trees.
6	Two red, bulbous eyes watch the party from just above the surface of the murky water.
7	Frogs chirrup in a cheerful chorus that seems out of place for the dismal state of this town.
8	Swarms of tiny insects hover about the party, no matter where they go. Swatting at them only seems to make them buzz louder.
9	Sagging willow trees form a gray curtain along one edge of the town, drooping branches hiding anything beyond.
10	This boardwalk ends in a jagged plank of wood with strange char marks.
11	A whole home appears to have collapse and lies toppled, half-sunken into the marsh.
12	Turtles squat on rocks and logs all around town. There must be hundreds of them.
13	A massive roar makes the whole town and surrounding trees tremble. Everyone pauses for a moment before resuming their activities.
14	A sulphuric stench engulfs the town.
15	A patch of mud burbles and bubbles, releasing a cloud of foul, green gas into the area.
16	Warped boards creak underfoot with every step, and no surface in town feels particularly solid.
17	A stand of thorny vines appear to be writhing slowly all on their own.
18	Shouts come from over near the docks, followed by several loud splashes and cheers.
19	A single temple steeple rises above the moss-covered trees. Looks like a bird nest sits atop it.
20	Planks of wood form makeshift boardwalks across stretches of rank water, connecting the town's structures.
21	A man pushes a wheelbarrow along, which looks to contain nothing but mud.

22	The stone statue of one of the town's settlers has begun to sink into the earth, and is now only visible from the waist up.
23	A food vendor offers a variety of well-cooked snake-on-a-stick skewers.
24	Through a window, the party see a variety of animal skins being stretched out to cure.
25	Townsfolk drag buckets through the water and sift through the contents they dredge up.
26	A person staggers by, entirely nude, but also coated almost completely in a thick layer of mud.
27	The insects have become particularly aggressive, biting every inch of exposed skin.
28	A nest made of muddy twigs contains a handful of eggs—but these have been cracked open and now stand empty.
29	Small stacks of rocks, like miniature cairns, are spaced out every fifty feet, leading deeper into the marsh.
30	A gnome works on a strange brass contraption that chugs black mud out of several pipes.
31	Grave headstones lean at awkward angles all along this thickly overgrown hillside.
32	A robed woman walks by, carrying a jar filled with dozens of black leeches.
33	Townsfolk walk the marsh on stilts, striding through the water as easily as walking on land.
34	A woman with a hook for a hand patrols the town; her other hand clutches a small crossbow.
35	A pair of strange, cloven tracks lead down the path here. They're fresh, made just minutes ago.
36	A halfling screams for help as he flails in the water, unable to gain purchase.
37	A troll's tongue has been nailed to this door, and it continues to writhe of its own volition.
38	The town's message board has mouldering parchments pinned to it, with charcoal sketches of people who've gone missing recently.
39	Townsfolk slosh around the submerged roots of certain trees, searching the cavities underneath.
40	Large teeth, talons and swatches of scaled leather hang in the windows of this shop.
41	Twangy music played by two old-timers sitting on a porch and plucking at their banjos floats through the town.
42	Barrels of salted meat are set outside the butcher's shop, with prices marked in chalk on the sides.
43	Crafters slap together a line of bricks, using the mud all around them as spackling to hold the wall together as it dries.
44	A burst of fire spouts from the rickety chimney of a nearby house.
45	A woman staggers past in plate armour, soaked from head to toe.

46	A performer sings off-tune and is well into the thirtieth round of a popular drinking song.
47	Light rain falls as the wind stirs the trees and churns up the water.
48	Two boats launch from the docks, bobbing in the shallow water as they are poled along.
49	Kids run past, laughing as they fling gobs of mud at each other in mock battle.
50	The wall of this temple has collapsed, exposing the interior and letting vines and other plants grow throughout the building.
51	A pair of mangy cats toy with a bloody bird corpse, bright feathers scattered everywhere.
52	For a brief moment, the sun slices through the cloud cover, bright light making the town appear even dingier than normal.
53	Enormous lizards blink from their perches atop a pile of rotting logs. They appear unimpressed.
54	A boy holds a small wooden spear and eyes the water, looking for a frog to skewer.
55	With a mighty splash, an alligator erupts from the water and chomps a bird out of mid-air.
56	A woman uses a rusty blade to scrape layers of mud off the walkways. She holds her hand out for a coin as the party pass by.
57	Harsh bird cries erupt from nearby trees, as branches quake and leaves flutter to the ground.
58	An emerald viper slithers across the road.
59	Someone has hung a wind chime made of dried bone from the eaves of their ramshackle home.
60	A pile of rotting nets lies abandoned by the path; a few mouldy bones are tangled in the webbing.
61	Mushrooms grow throughout town, and the townsfolk occasionally pluck one as a snack.
62	Townsfolk appear to have planted moss gardens all around, cultivating crops of vibrant colours and varying growths.
63	The water ripples as something swims away just under the surface, its body not quite visible.
64	A trapper glares at the party suspiciously as he tends to repairing one of his snares.
65	Several dead humanoid reptiles are hung up on display in the town centre.
66	Low stone walls stretch along here, but are mostly overgrown with leafy vegetation.
67	What looks like a hand sticks up out of the mud.
68	Flies buzz around a rotting animal corpse.
69	A low cackling comes from a thatched hut.
70	A refined-looking woman walks along, leading a large lizard on a leash.
71	The town gates have large, humanoid mud statues on either side—rumours circulate these are inactive golems.
72	Every town guard has rusting weapons and armour, and mud clings to their old boots.
73	The trees form an oppressive roof over part of the town, casting deep shadows.

74	The ground squishes underfoot; it is disturbingly soft and moist, almost like water-logged flesh.
75	Dozens of trees thrust up from beneath the dark water, forming a watery forest that stretches out across the marsh.
76	Two kids launch a raft of rough-hewn logs lashed together by crude ropes.
77	A hunting party of halflings trundles into town, carrying many animal corpses strapped to wooden poles.
78	A humanoid frog ambles through town, a quiver of arrows and bow strapped to her back.
79	Everyone in town seems to have patches of moss growing on their skin.
80	A skull-shaped ball of moss could contain a skull or just a large rock.
81	This lone hut has been brightly painted to stand out from the drab surroundings.
82	A series of wooden signs warns anyone from venturing further into this area of the marsh.
83	Vibrant purple flowers grow all over the area, but smell of pepper and make anyone who sniffs them sneeze for hours afterward.
84	A centipede the length of a man's forearm crawls out from under a door and scurries off.
85	Bright berries dangle from bushes, but the townsfolk carefully avoid them.
86	Ghostly lights flicker in the distance, barely visible through the thick tree line.
87	Most houses are built off the ground, letting the sluggish marsh currents remain undisturbed.
88	There appears to be a body lying face-down in the muck just down the way. It isn't moving.
89	Dead fish bob along the current, creating a stink.
90	A man tends to a large crop of reeds in a watery patch; bulging fruits hang heavy off the stalks.
91	The pale strands draping from the surrounding trees could be dead vines or giant spider webs.
92	Odd stone pillars stand around town, with druidic symbols chiselled deep into them.
93	Green-blue moss covers the whole surface of the water, creating the illusion of a grassy field.
94	The townsfolk are in the habit of taking daily mud baths, citing its healthy effects on their skin.
95	The air hangs heavy and thick with the promise of coming rain.
96	Insect shells crunch underfoot.
97	Almost every roof has several bird nests on it, and bird droppings coat most of the walkways.
98	It looks like a giant rat walking on hind legs just ducked behind that nearby building.
99	Every tree in sight looks to be dead or dying, some having already collapsed under their own weight, exposing black cores.
100	With a low drone, a massive insect appears silhouetted against the moon, wings a blur, and sword-like proboscis poised to stab deep.

MARSH TOWN: BUSINESSES

Use this table, to provide the basic details of businesses the PCs come across as they explore the marsh town. Some may be inappropriate based on the locale's set up; ignore such results and simply re-roll.

D%	
01-02	The Slivers (Carpenter) is run by two sisters in constant demand to build new wooden structures and repair old ones.
03-04	Rack and Pull (Repairs) offers rapid repairs for tools, farming gear, weapons, carts and most other work implements.
05-06	Fumings (Smith) is run by a pot-bellied blacksmith who keeps the town's metal goods from rusting away.
07-08	The Trot (Constable) is staffed by three guards who swap patrol shifts every few days.
09-10	Clamps' (Trapper) deals in snares but also sells furs, fresh meat and other animal goods.
11-12	The Sinkhole (Jail) is little more than a deep mud pit with an iron gate latched over the top, where criminals are held before trial.
13-14	Pylough's Plots (Deeds) offers cheap deals on unsettled marshland for pioneering souls.
15-16	The Stinks (Lab) is overseen by a husband/wife team who perform strange experiments on the substances and specimens gathered from the marsh.
17-18	Bobbin' (Fishing Supplies) is owned by a half-deaf halfling who cheerily supplies all his customers' fishing needs.
19-20	The Hauls (Docks) is where the day's catch is brought in, be it fish, marsh snakes, alligator or other delicacies.
21-22	The Swills (Drinking Den) keeps its varied wine and ale selection chilled thanks to a surprisingly deep, well-constructed root cellar.
23-24	The Drenched Duck (Inn) provides cheap beds and cheap meals for travellers passing through.
25-26	E'erfound (Tracker) can help you find anyone and anything around town or throughout the marsh itself—for a price.
27-28	Plucksies (Mulcher) collects garbage from around town and carts it off into the marsh to keep the homes and paths clear.
29-30	Lemsey's (Lender) has a seemingly endless supply of wealth to offer those in need, at ridiculously high interest rates, of course.
31-32	The Digs (Archaeologist) scouts out ruins and sites of historical import throughout the marsh.
33-34	The Barbers (Mercenaries) are actual brothers who began as barbers until they discovered another, more profitable use for their razors' sharp edges.

35-36	Thatcher's (Roofer) tends to the town's constantly leaking and rotting roofs.
37-38	Bucket n' Barrel (Supplies) stocks travel and camping gear for anyone wishing to venture into the marsh's wilder areas.
39-40	Dunghill (Gambling Den) offers plenty of rigged games to keep townsfolk from getting too attached to their coin.
41-42	Straps n' Stitches (Leatherworking) can take any sort of skin or fur and turn it into clothing or hardened leather armour.
43-44	Redfeather's (Fletcher) crafts fine bows and arrows for hunting marshland creatures.
45-46	The Bald Raven (Oracle) communes with the marsh birds in attempts to scry the future.
47-48	The Slops (Mud Quarry) is a questionable mining operation run by a couple dwarves who believe the area holds a motherlode of precious gems.
49-50	Knacker's (Bone Sculptor) is owned by an artist who converts animal bones into disturbing sculptures he plants around town.
51-52	"Stick in the Mud" (Lawyer) is the nickname for the local legal expert who also acts as a judge when needed.
53-54	Underbog (Cemetery) is the town's most recent burial ground, after the first two were flooded.
55-56	Wendings (Transportation) offers both wagon and boat rides, guided by a family of gnomes who've lived in town for several generations.
57-58	Mossmeat's (Farmer) provides much of the town's fresh produce, though how they get certain crops to grow in the wetlands is a mystery.
59-60	Daily Catch (Fisher) sells a variety of freshwater fish caught in the area, including the infamous skipfin.
61-62	Three-Twined (Netter) is run by a half-elf who has a knack for turning both vines and ropes into sturdy nets.
63-64	Firm Foundings (Mason) works in town, shoring up buildings in danger of being engulfed by the soft earth.
65-66	The Quills (Insurance) gladly sources insurance policies for adventurers wishing to seek their fortunes within the depths of the marsh.
67-68	Lastgasp (Leecher) is the purview of an elven healer who supposedly has the ability to telepathically communicate with the leeches she uses in her healing craft.
69-70	Burning Torch (Alchemist) conjures up all manner of tinctures and potions from ingredients scrounged up from the marsh.
71-72	Pickering's (Scavenger) is a shanty filled with "valuables" the old proprietor brings back from monthly trips into the marsh.

73-74	The Gulps (Restaurant) is actually rather popular, especially for its skipfin fried platter.
75-76	Old Aggy's (Marsh Witch) specializes in the application and removal of all manner of curses and hexes.
77-78	Mudplows (Boats) crafts clunky but practically unsinkable boats for plying the marsh's waterways.
79-80	Skimmer's (Maps) does a lively business helping people not get lost along the marsh's winding paths.
81-82	The Clutch (Bounty Hunter) is run by an elf who has set up shop tracking and capturing wanted people hiding in the marsh.
83-84	The Rusting (Bank) is where most townsfolk store extra coin, when they're not stashing it about their own homes.
85-86	Boughbends (Tree Tender) works to keep nature from encroaching too much on the town, trimming trees or removing rotted ones.
87-88	The Weeping Canvas (Paintings) incorporates only natural elements such as coloured clay and moss in its highly textured works of art.

89-90	Edga and Sons (General Store) is where everyone goes for all their miscellaneous essentials (and gossip).
91-92	Whistler's (Animal Handler) is run by a stout woman who displays her mastery of beasts by showing off her tamed albino alligator.
93-94	Them Stones (Druid Circle) is a meeting area for local druids, many of whom are looked at with suspicion by the townsfolk.
95-96	Heads n' Hooves (Taxidermist) turns any animal head or hide into a trophy worth displaying on a wall.
97-98	Snuffler's (Forager) is owned by a half-orc who spends most of his time digging up pricey mushrooms in the marshy environs.
99-100	Sucker's Roost (Mosquito Hunter) specializes in tracking and eliminating the giant mosquitoes that make the marsh their home.



WHAT'S THE POINT (IN GAMING)?

At the end of a recent session of my tremendously marvellous campaign, we sat around chatting for a bit as you do. Talk inevitably turned to character concepts and what people were planning on playing next (if/when they die or fancy a change).

One of the players was enthusiastically telling us all about his next character. He'd decided to drink deeply from the multi-classing well and was planning a—wait for it—fighter/cleric/monk/rogue/sorcerer (at 5th-level!) One of the other chaps blurted out—rather harshly, I thought—, “What’s the point?” This rather took the wind out of the first player’s sails.

But luckily, I had the answer, and even more luckily, the answer was tremendously simple. (Which is good, because I like to Keep it Simple [Stupid] as you may know).

The answer is: to have fun.

It’s pretty much that simple. Sure, gaming can be challenging. Sometimes it can be frustrating. Sometimes you want to crush your dice into dust, load them into a cannon and fire them into the heart of the sun. But the objective is—or should always be—to have fun.

I think sometimes we forget that. In our rush to optimise or to complete the quest, crush the villain or sack the dungeon we sometimes forget we are there to have fun.

- Who cares if the plot isn’t moving along as fast as it could be, if everyone is having fun?
- Who cares if the players are having more fun roleplaying in the town than delving in the dungeon, if everyone is having fun?
- Who cares if the GM got a rule wrong, if everyone is having fun (and no one died as a result)?

The point of the game is to have fun.

But more than that, the point of the game is for everyone to have fun. Fun can sometimes be hard work (like anything that’s worthwhile), but superior players (and GMs) keep this in mind above all other things.

It’s your responsibility to have fun, and to make sure everyone else has fun.

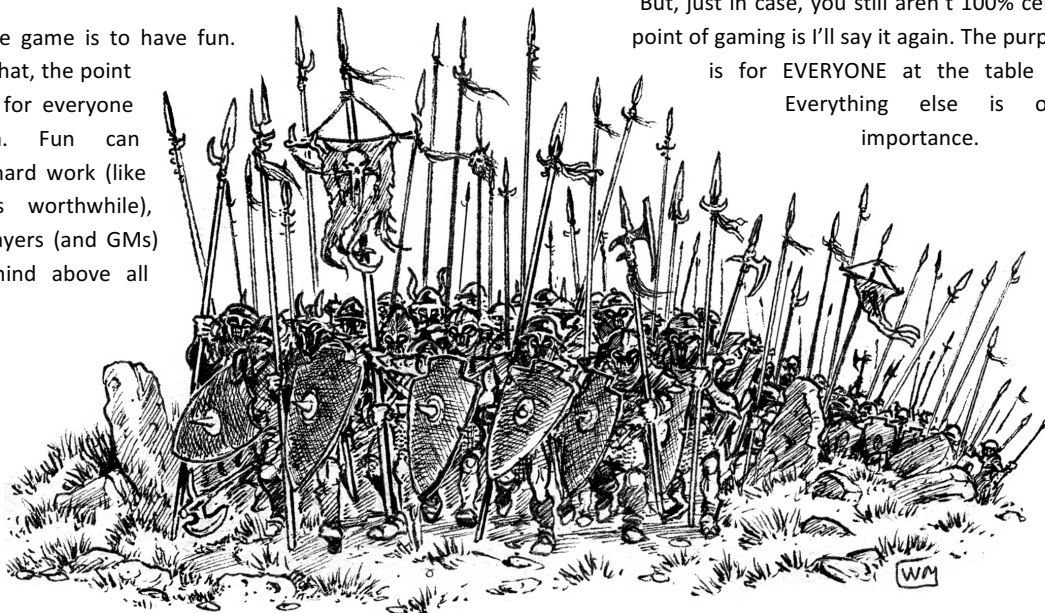
Of course, characters will have different personalities and often they’ll argue between themselves (normally when it’s time to divide up the treasure and everyone wants a certain item). But these are relatively minor issues in the grand scheme of things.

However sometimes larger problems develop. For example, here are some things that are absolutely not fun. If you are doing any of these, please stop:

- You argue over a rule that ultimately has so little bearing on the game its not even funny. Eventually, you win the argument because no one else cares and you get to move a whole extra 5 ft. This is an excellent way to spend 20 minutes.
- You berate other players for their actions because they stop you doing what you want to do. (Not that you ever bother to tell them what it is you want to do). Clearly your fun is more important than their’s and they should get out of your way. Even better than this is when you think you are in charge and you get annoyed when no one follows your commands.
- You deliberately create a character that hates members of a certain race or culture. There is a member of that race or culture already in the party. Because it’s what “your character would do”, you withhold healing or other important assistance from the character you hate.

As I hurtle to the end of this post (or possibly rant) I realise I’ve used over 600 words to talk about something so basic, so foundational to the hobby that everyone should just get it.

But, just in case, you still aren’t 100% certain what the point of gaming is I’ll say it again. The purpose of gaming is for EVERYONE at the table to have fun. Everything else is of secondary importance.



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