





# By Frank Carr





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"I'm writing a crazy adventure and thought I'd share some of my madness with you. The core of my group includes quite a few people who really, really don't share similar opinions on things. Sometimes, this spills over into our games. I cannot tell you how many times the magic user tossed a fireball into the corridor, feigning ignorance about the shape of the place after the fighters walked out later, covered in scorch marks.

(Ah, 1st edition sessions, how I miss you sometimes.) At a session at least a decade after we'd gotten to know one another quite well, while listening to an hour-long debate about some irrelevant point, I blurted out the following: "You know what guys? Some day I'm going to write an adventure where the two of you have to control the same creature, and you're going to have to figure out how to get along." Everyone got a good laugh; my friends were laughing about what it might be like for everyone to control one head of a hydra, or for three of the most argumentative among them to each control the head of a chimera.

Not every group, I suppose, has a rules lawyer. I can assure you, however, that when a group has more than one, and they occasionally disagree, things can get weird. I don't, however, think that it's going to be a good idea to put both of them in charge of the head of any single creature. Don't get me wrong, it's not because I don't want to incite conflict at the table—for this adventure I really, really do. No, I think I'll get more bang for my buck if I spread the rules lawyers out a little bit.

Here's where the adventure started (it has since taken a better turn, but I wanted to share where these things sometimes start): Fun Times at the Ettin Village Harvest Festival! It's okay to start with crazy. If you're into RPGs, you're into creativity. If you're into creativity, you have to be willing to shut off the editor, to shut off the critic, and just go with an idea, even if it's not a good one. A brief glance at the ettin in the Bestiary shows that they hang out with goblins, orcs and bears. Also, they have a thing for javelins. So, this sounds to me like maybe some javelin throwing competitions followed by some goblin throwing competitions. What are goblins for, after all, if not projectiles?

An ettin's strong point isn't going to be its ranged attacks. Probably, we'll get more bang for our buck with something melee. So, with bears around, I'm thinking some good bear wrestling competitions ought to be fun. What's cooler than wrestling a bear at a county fair? After some healthy grizzly grappling, it'll be time for another contest that's more of a challenge. And, since we've already had throwing and wrestling, we might as well have some more events with a similar feel.

(Brief aside: last year I spent some time as an assistant track coach at a school. Prior to that year I knew approximately nothing about track or field events. After spending a season shivering in the cold with a bunch of ungrateful kids, I learned more about teen drama than track, but, I picked up a few things. And, sadly, it spilled over into my adventure design on this one.)

The next event is orc hurdles. There probably isn't much that's better than watching a bunch of ettins in a running competition, but, watching them jump over quaking orcs (who probably would have to be tied up or something to justify them being stuck in the unenviable position of serving as hurdles for lumbering orcs) would be even better. Given that ettins are naturally larger and faster than orcs (provided the orcs are runof-the-mill orcs and not sprinter barbarian orcs), the hurdles in this case could even be mobile—heck, that's better than tied up. Jumping over a running orc is even better than jumping over a stationary orc.

So, you see how this goes. Sometimes, brilliant ideas lead down some pretty nutty trails. If I manage to get this thing finished before too long, I'll share the results. Oh, and with any luck, I'll have GMed it too and can let you know how they liked it. My plan is to give each ettin an adventure-specific form of dual activation (so the ettin's body gets two turns each round, one for each head) and to give each of the ettins a handful of special abilities that allow each "brother" to affect the other in some cruel (and funny) way. The ettins will be in competition with each other, to be sure, but, so will the players. I'm going to put them together in pairs that really will encourage conflict (but, good, creative, funny conflict-the adventure has to be set up to work within this context, player conflict can be bad, but it can be turned into something good-think Paranoia). I'm going to set things up so that there are some cool trophies for the players to compete for (nothing that they'll really be upset over if they don't win, but trophies that everyone will be happy with at the end of the session). Each "brother" will gain more than the other if the winning move comes on his activation, so, the special abilities will encourage the creative use of manipulating each other's activations (staggering your brother with brilliant logic-after all, ettins are both cunning and have their own weird language-could work for one).

Anyway, part of the message here is this: play with the game. Break it. Push it around. Have fun with it.

David Paul

Editor-in-chief

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# Erudite Strangler Creature Template

by Michael Welham

No creature truly benefits from learning things it was not meant to know. It always must pay a price of some sort, usually its sanity, its loved ones, or both. A creature which accepts a strangler symbiote in response to its promises of knowledge and power pays a price as well, but one it strangely enjoys. The symbiote carefully chooses a bloodthirsty, savage creature upon which to bestow its gifts, and, in exchange, that creature commits murder of the most personal sort: strangulation. First, an erudite strangler slays all its kin and fellow tribespeople, then it makes its way into genteel society as an example of a "reformed" creature. By day, the strangler shows off its vast intellect to curious onlookers, all while choosing its next victim, and, by night, it prowls for its marked victim. The nature of its "gift" ensures it travels frequently to avoid suspicion, but eventually someone pieces clues together and confronts the strangler—lethally. By this time, the true architect of the murders has found a new savage to fill with its ancient knowledge and thirst for death.

# Creating an Erudite Strangler Creature

"Erudite strangler" is an acquired template that can be added to any intelligent corporeal creature. An erudite strangler creature uses all the base creature's statistics and abilities except as noted here.

#### **CR:** +2

Alignment: Change the creature's alignment to any evil.

**Armor Class:** An erudite strangler gains preternatural senses from its symbiote. This grants the creature a +2 insight bonus to armor class and replaces any shield bonus with an additional insight bonus equal to the shield bonus.

**Defenses/Qualities:** The creature gains uncanny dodge and the following defenses:

*Cloak of Madness*: The symbiote's constant dark whispers inure an erudite strangler to madness. The creature gains a +8 bonus to saving throws to avoid mind-affecting compulsion effects.

*Genteel Veneer*: An erudite strangler always exudes an aura of gentility, and observers cannot help but believe the creature is civilized and intends no harm. The creature benefits from *undetectable alignment*, if it has fewer than 15 HD, or *mind blank* if it has 15 or more HD. This effect may be dispelled, but an erudite strangler can restore it as a free action.

Attacks: An erudite strangler retains all the natural weapons, manufactured weapon attacks, and weapon proficiencies of the base creature. However, it eschews manufactured weapons (except those it can strangle victims with, or to wear down a victim first) in favor of grappling and garroting.

**Spell-Like Ability:** The creature gains the following spell-like ability with a CL equal to the creature's HD (minimum 7):

 $_{3/day}$  – quickened black tentacles

**Special Abilities:** The creature gains the following special abilities.

Stunning Knowledge (Su): An erudite strangler's symbiote possesses wide-ranging knowledge, including deeply personal information about the foes it faces. Once per opponent, per combat, as a free action, the creature may speak a dark truth about the opponent. The target must make a Will saving throw, whose DC is equal to 10 + 1/2 the strangler's HD + the strangler's Charisma modifier, to avoid becoming stunned for 1 round. A target benefitting from *protection from evil* or a similar effect is immune to this ability.

**Abilities:** Increase from the base creature as follows: Str +6 (+3 to attack and damage, +3 to Climb and Swim skill checks, +3 to Strength and CMB checks, +3 to CMD), Dex +4 ( +2 to Ranged attack rolls; AC and touch AC, Initiative, and Ref saves; +2 to Acrobatics, Disable Device, Escape Artist, Fly, Ride, Sleight of Hand, and Stealth checks, add +2 to any of the base creature's Dexterity-based DCs), Con +4 (+2 hp per HD and Fortitude saves), Int +10 (+5 extra skill points per HD; +5 to Appraise, Craft, Knowledge, Linguistics and Spellcraft skill checks; +5 to any of the base Intelligence-based DCs; creature's 5 bonus languages), and Cha +4 (+2 to Bluff, Diplomacy, Disguise, Handle Animal, Intimidate, Perform, and Use Magic Device; attempts to influence others; Channel Energy DCs; and any of the creature's Charisma-based DCs).

**Feats:** Gain Deep Study, Improved Garrote and Improved Grapple (or Greater Grapple/Garrote, if the creature already possesses Improved Grapple/Garrote) as bonus feats even if it does not meet the prerequisites.

**Skills:** An erudite strangler gains Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (dungeoneering), Knowledge (history), Knowledge (planes), and Knowledge (religion) as class skills. It must put at least one rank provided by its increased Intelligence into each of these skills. The creature also gains a +8 racial bonus to Perception checks.

Environment: Change to any urban.



### Arcagnoll CR3

**XP 800** Erudite Strangler Gnoll CE Medium humanoid (gnoll) **Init** +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +10

#### Defense

AC 19, touch 16, flat-footed 13 (+2 armor, +2 Dex, +4 insight, +1 natural) hp 15 (2d8+6) Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +0 Defensive Abilities uncanny dodge

#### Offense

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

**Melee** 2 claws +6 (1d4+5) or battleaxe +6 (1d8+8/x3) **Special Attacks** strangle, stunning knowledge (DC 13)

**Spell-like Abilities** (CL 2; Concentration +5) 3/day- quickened *black tentacles* 

#### Tactics

**Before Combat** An arcagnoll uses stunning knowledge, then grappling the target.

**During Combat** The creature uses quickened *black tentacles* to immobilize multiple foes, which it attempts to strangle a lone foe. It will attack obviously powerful opponents with its axe, but will not deliver the killing blow with its weapon if it can help it.

**Morale** An arcagnoll flees if it is reduced to 5 hit points or less, covering its escape with remaining uses of quickened *black tentacles*.

#### Statistics

#### Str 21, Dex 14, Con 17, Int 18, Wis 11, Cha 12

**Base** Atk +1; CMB +3 (+5 when grappling or garroting); CMD 13

**Feats** Deep Study, Improved Grapple, Improved Garrote, Power Attack

**Skills** Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +8, Knowledge (history) +8, Knowledge (planes) +8, Knowledge (religion) +8, Perception +2, Stealth +3

Languages Aklo, Common, Dwarven, Elven, Gnoll, Gnome

SQ cloak of madness, genteel veneer

#### Ecology

**Environment** any urban **Organization** solitary **Treasure** standard

#### Description:

"I performed for them, like a circus animal. I gave them the name of the 13th king of some moldy dynasty, and they 'oohed'. I told them of planets they had never seen in their night sky, and they applauded... Then, when they thought me locked away in my gilded cage, I hunted down one of those clapping dandies and looked him in the eyes as I choked him to death."

--Excerpt from <u>Memoirs of an Arcagnoll</u> as translated by Qwilion of Questhaven

During one of my hunts, I came across a curious creature—prior to this encounter I never would have described something as "curious." It seemed like some sort of dark, writhing plant, but then it spoke in my mind, telling me about all the knowledge and power it could provide me. Power appealed to me; I could not care less for knowledge, but the strange creature promised the knowledge it gave would also give me power. I only had to do one thing to achieve this power...

Thus, on the night of a successful hunt, one for which I provided uncanny insight, the clan feasted well. As my former brethren slept blissfully from overeating, and the guards drowsed at their posts, I crept through camp and strangled each and every one of them. One guard, G'narth, was more alert, but my new ally bundled up on my back told me about a time G'narth fled from a battle unnoticed by the others. Speaking of this, I surprised G'narth, freezing him in his tracks and giving me an opening to choke the life out of him.

In a weird twist of fate, an adventuring party happened by the scene of my slaughter. My new ally advised me to hide, but not well enough they couldn't find me. It had to work hard to convince me not to fight the humans who entered the camp, but the thing assured me I would gain even more power by playing a trick on the humans. I pretended to be a scholarly savage, beaten and tortured by my own clanspeople for my intelligence. I claimed I hid as another clan attacked and killed everyone else. A couple of simple demonstrations of knowledge later, and the group escorted me to town.

There, I gained an audience with a high-ranking noble, who showed me off as an example of a"noble savage" and expressed regret about his people's treatment of all those they regard as barbaric. I wanted to kill him first, but my tentacled friend stayed my murderous impulse, instead pointing out a fair maiden the noble had his eye on. That night, I left my quarters—surprised at first about my free run of the place, then assured that my eloquence earlier had rendered my host complacent—and found the lady, who thought I was there to continue some blathersome discourse. She was genuinely shocked when my hands wrapped around her throat, silencing her screams as the life drained out of her. I returned as unnoticed as I had left.

A couple more of these weekly hunts later, and my ally convinced me to leave for another town to renew my hunts without fear of suspicion. I have repeated this at ten towns now, and my partner gives me more crumbs of lore as I continue my killing spree. It has filled my head with so much information, some of which terrifies me, that I welcome the respite which comes with a fresh kill. Now, however, it tells me that I am hunted, and it must find a new host soon, which terrifies me most of all.

#### Lore

Knowledge (local or nature)

*Common (DC 3)*: This creature is an arcagnoll. It is blessed with intelligence far beyond that of a typical gnoll.

*Uncommon (DC 8)*: The creature has an uncanny knowledge of esoteric facts, especially regarding ancient history, the stars, and obscure gods.

*Rare (DC 13)*: An arcagnoll has no need for weapons, which supports its genteel appearance. However, a rash of strangulations follow his travels from town to town.

*Obscure (DC 23)*: The creature bears a symbiote which feeds it knowledge, as the creature feeds its desires by choking victims to death.

*Epic (DC 33)*: The symbiote an arcagnoll carries desires to uplift savage creatures and use them to commit murder. It learns all its secrets from unknown masters which have a plan for the random path of death the symbiote embarks on.

#### Ecology Encounter (EL3)

The party sees an arcagnoll (which the party may have previously encountered in a social situation) savagely attacking an orc outside the town's gates.

*Encounter Enhancements*: Foggy, nighttime encounter.

*Twist*: The orc is the new host for the symbiote, and, assuming the party rescues the orc, it proves surprisingly intelligent and claims the gnoll attacked out of jealousy. Later on, the creature targets one of its rescuers for strangulation.

#### Garrote Opponent Combat Maneuver

You can attempt to strangle an opponent as a standard action with some cord-like weapon (you grab a woman's scarf, a rope, an actually strangling cord, or a professional assassin's razor wire) or a choke hold as part of a grapple. If you do not have Improved Garrote Opponent, or a similar ability, attempting to Garrote Opponent provokes an attack of opportunity from the target of your maneuver and your opponent is also able to hold her breath (which is why most garrote attacks are preformed against unaware and flat-footed opponents). Opponents add +4 to their CMD if wearing Full Plate or a Leather Collar -or-+10 if wearing a Gorget. If your combat maneuver check is successful, you move into the target's square and begin doing Garrote damage (1d8 for a Mediumsized creature, plus your Strength Modifier). In addition, a target that was not able to hold their breath must make a DC 10 Constitution check. The check must be repeated each round, with the DC increasing by +1 for each previous check. If the target fails one of these Constitution checks, she begins to suffocate. In the first round, she falls unconscious (o hit points). In the following round, she drops to -1 hit points and is dying. In the third round, she suffocates

and dies. Moving into the target's square generates Attacks of Opportunities from other foes, but not the target. You both receive all the standard penalties of the Grappled condition. If your combat maneuver check exceeds the CMD of the target by 10 or more, add a +2 circumstance bonus to the DC of the Constitution Check. If your combat maneuver check fails by 10 or more, you leave yourself open to a counterattack from the target of your maneuver granting the target a +5 circumstance bonus to its attacks against you for 1 round.

If You Are Garroted: If you are garroted, you cannot speak or cast spells with verbal components. you can attempt to break free as a standard action by making a combat maneuver check (DC equal to your opponent's CMD; this does not provoke an attack of opportunity) or Escape Artist check (with a DC equal to your opponent's CMD). In addition, you could attempt to sunder the strangling cord. If you succeed, you break free and can act normally.

#### Feats

#### Deep Study

You have esoteric knowledge which goes well below the surface.

**Prerequisites:** Int 16, at least 1 rank in any Knowledge skill.

**Benefit:** For each Knowledge skill in which you have ranks, you have a deep understanding of one narrow subject within that knowledge set, such as all the intricacies of a particular deity for Knowledge (religion). You gain a +8 bonus on Knowledge checks related to this subject, and you may take 20 on this check as you reflect on the sum of knowledge you have about the subject.

#### **Greater Garrote Opponent (Combat)**

You are skilled at strangling and choking your opponents.

**Prerequisites:** Combat Expertise, Improved Garrote Opponent, base attack bonus +12, Int 13.

**Benefit:** You receive a +2 bonus to your Combat Maneuver Bonus when performing this combat maneuver against a foe. This bonus stacks with the bonus granted by Improved Garrote Opponent. In addition, you add a +2 to the DC of the Constitution Check against the effects of this maneuver.

#### Improved Garrote (Combat)

You are skilled at strangling someone.

Prerequisites: Int 13, Combat Expertise.

**Benefit:** You do not provoke an attack of opportunity when performing a garrote opponent combat maneuver. In addition, you receive a +2 bonus to your Combat Maneuver Bonus when performing this combat maneuver against a foe. You also receive a +2 bonus to your Combat Maneuver Defense whenever an opponent tries to perform this combat maneuver against you.

**Normal:** You provoke an attack of opportunity when performing a garrote opponent combat maneuver.

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KOBOLD PUBLISHING

# Malevolent Manifestations

by T. H. Gulliver

#### Acheflour Bloodgift, Fleshgrafter

The sample fleshgrafter included in #30 Fleshgrafts could make an interesting NPC, one your PCs might encounter while tracking down a fleshgraft augmented foe, but his evil inclinations and membership in a guild of assassins would make me hesitant to lie down on his operating table.

If your players want to augment their characters with an array of fleshgrafts, they could come to an arrangement with Acheflour Bloodgift. Use Acheflour in your campaigns as a fleshgrafter who can help or hinder the PCs. She may show up as a foe when one of her employers sends her after an object the PCs possess. Alternatively, she can be a powerful benefactor, exchanging fleshgrafts for coin or credit.

#### Acheflour's Appearance, Background, and Motivations

During her childhood and adolescence, Acheflour's tiefling heritage revealed itself in ways that were subtle or unseen by most humans but were obvious to her. As she grew, she first denied and resisted, then accepted, and, eventually, embraced her infernal ancestry. She even changed the spelling of her last name from the archaic 'Blodgifu' to 'Bloodgift' to boast of the little devil within. Her desire to resemble on the outside what she knew herself to be on the inside attracted her to the art of fleshgrafting.

She has augmented her appearance with a thickened red hide stretched over implanted silver dragonscale plates and bone. Six razor sharp horns form a sinister and deadly crown. Her eyes of arcane sight are pure white with no visible pupils. A red, fleshy cape that hangs from a metallic frame grafted to her shoulders expands into a set of wings. Not being one for handto-hand combat, she rarely makes use of her retractable claws other than to make an impression. A pair of wandsleights, one for each forearm, allows her access to additional spells as needed, but she tends to stock them with wands that allow her to effect a devilish appearance.

Although she is a powerful fleshgrafter, she has little interest in accumulating wealth or power. She desires only to augment her own body. She sells her services as a fleshgrafter and as a spellcaster to gain the funds she needs for further augmentations.

Her appearance and abilities are intentionally devilish but she is not evil. In fact, the more she alters her appearance, the more comfortable she is with herself and the world she is creating for herself.



#### Acheflour Bloodgift

CR 13

Female tiefling cleric 3/mystic theurge 8/wizard 3 N Medium outsider (native) Init +2; Senses darkvision (60 ft.); Perception +3

#### Defense

AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 18 (+2 Dex, +4 mage armor, +4 natural) hp 44 (3d8+11d6-14) Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +13 **Resist** cold 5, electricity 5, fire 5

#### Offense

Speed 30 ft.; Fly 50 ft. **Melee** +2 flaming burst longspear +10/+5(1d8+2/20/x3)or retractable claws +9/+4(1d4/20/x2) or gore +7 (1d6/20/x2) Special Attacks bleeding touch 1 round (6/day) Spell-Like Abilities bleeding touch 1 round (6/day), darkness (1/day), rebuke death (6/day) Cleric Spells Known (CL 11, 7 melee touch, 9 ranged touch): 6th (1/day) heal (DC 19), blade barrier (DC 19) 5th (2/day) summon monster v, insect plague, breath of life (DC 18)

4th (3/day) cure critical wounds (DC 17), giant vermin, planar ally, lesser, summon monster iv

- 3rd (5/day) inflict serious wounds (DC 16) x2, bestow curse (DC 16), cure serious wounds (DC 16), invisibility purge (DC 16), summon monster iii
- 2nd (5/day) cure moderate wounds (DC 15) x2, bear's endurance (DC 15), eagle's splendor (DC 15), inflict moderate wounds (DC 15) x2
- 1st (5/day) cause fear (DC 14) x2, cure light wounds (DC 14), doom (DC 14), obscuring mist, summon monster i
- o (at will) resistance (DC 13), bleed (DC 13), mending, stabilize

Wizard Spells Known (CL 11, 7 melee touch, 9 ranged touch):

6th (1/day) circle of death (DC 19)

5th (2/day) feeblemind (DC 18), teleport

- 4th (3/day) black tentacles, scrying (DC 17), arcane eye
- 3rd (5/day) fireball (DC 16) x2, clairaudience/clairvoyance, flesh culture, gentle repose
- 2nd (5/day) bull's strength (DC 15), spider climb (DC 15), detect thoughts (DC 15), flaming sphere (DC 15), flaming sphere (DC 15)
- 1st (5/day) enlarge person (DC 14), disguise self (DC 14), mage armor\*, charm person (DC 14), hypnotism (DC 14)
- o (at will) resistance (DC 13), touch of fatigue (DC 13), message, bleed (DC 13)

\* already cast and included in stats

#### Statistics

**Str** 10, **Dex** 15, **Con** 8, **Int** 16, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 12 **Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 19

**Feats** Arcane Strike, Brew Potion, Craft Magic Arms & Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, Graft Flesh, Scribe Scroll, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (longspear), Wizard Weapon Proficiencies

**Skills** Appraise +13, Bluff +3, Diplomacy +9, Fly +15, Heal +15, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Knowledge (religion) +13, Linguistics +10, Sense Motive +13, Spellcraft +13, Stealth +4

**Languages** Common, Draconic, Dry-Tongue, Dwarven, Elven, Infernal, Orc, Salt-Tongue, Undercommon (Dry-Tongue and Salt-tongue are trade languages used in the Many-Storied Empire.)

**SQ** arcane familiar nearby (a gibberer named sigbert), aura (Ex), channel negative energy 2d6 (4/day) (DC 12) (Su), cleric domain: death, cleric domain: healing, combined spells (4th) (Su), deliver touch spells through familiar (Su), empathic link with familiar (Su), fleshgrafts (bullheaded, eyes of arcane sight, hide+4, retractable claws, wandsleights (x2), wings), hand of the apprentice (6/day) (Su), share spells with familiar, spontaneous casting

**Combat Gear** +2 *flaming burst longspear; wand of fire shield* (27 charges, CL 11), *wand of scorching ray* (16 charges, CL 9)

#### Special Abilities

Arcane Familiar Nearby Acheflour gains the Alertness feat while Sigbert is within arm's reach.

**Arcane Strike** As a swift action, Acheflour can add +3 damage to her weapons and her weapons are treated as magic for the purpose of overcoming DR. **Aura (Ex)** Acheflour has a Neutral Evil aura

corresponding to her Abb's alignment. Bleeding Touch 1 round (6/day) (Sp) Melee

touch attack deals 1d6 bleeding damage.

Darkness (1/day) (Sp) Darkness once per day.

**Fleshgraft (Bullheaded)** Acheflour's razor sharp horns were forged from the horns of an auroch but she has sharpened, polished, and hardened the bone until they resemble shiny black metal blades. Acheflour can use the horns to make a primary attack. This gore attack does 1d6 points of damage.

**Fleshgraft (Eyes of Arcane Sight)** Acheflour's pure white eyes can see magic auras within 120 feet as the spell *arcane sight*. She can use this power up to five times per day for up to ten minutes per time with a maximum of 30 minutes per day.

**Fleshgraft (Hide +4)** Acheflour has a protective hide that covers her entire body.

**Fleshgraft (Retractable Claws)** Acheflour's retractable claws allow her to do 1d4 points of slashing damage.

**Fleshgraft (Wandsleight)** Acheflour has small sphincters in each of her forearms that allow her to hide wands in pouches of flesh beneath the muscle. The wandsleights allow her to activate the wands as if they were held in her hand. They also grant a +10 bonus to Sleight of Hand checks to conceal the wands. **Fleshgraft (Wings)** Acheflour's wings are crafted from those of a juvenile red dragon. The wings are supported by a very thin frame. They hang from her shoulders like a cape when not in use.

**Hand of the Apprentice (6/day) (Su)** Acheflour can throw a melee weapon she is holding 6/day.

**Rebuke Death (6/day) (Sp)** Heal 1d4+1 damage to creatures at negative HP





# 1001 Spells by Steven D. Russell





# Sneak Thieves

By Creighton Broadhurst of Raging Swan Press;

#### (EI4; XP 1,200)



The dark folk creep through the lightless depths of the world in search of wealth and mischief. In this encounter, a pair of dark folk lurk near a small subterranean lake. The foul creatures know that travellers often rest by the lake and that slumbering explorers are relatively easy to rob. Read:

The floor of this large cave slopes gradually down to the waters of a subterranean lake. Several old campfires-now nothing but ash-stud the ground, and the detritus of previous expeditions lies scattered about. About 15 feet from shore stands a high-sided rocky island topped by a cairn of tumbled stones.

The dark folk use their see in darkness ability to lurk beyond the range of the party's vision and wait until the majority of the party are asleep or otherwise distracted. Only then do they sneak closer to steal choice items.

Stench: The dark creepers stink, and their overpowering stench of sweat and spoiled food may alert the PCs to the lurking danger. PCs making a DC o Perception check (DC 10 for sleeping PCs) notice the dark creeper's horrible stench. (Remember to modify the DC by the distance between the PCs and the dark creepers.) It is possible that a PC awakens as a dark creeper plunders his pack!

#### Tactics

The dark folk are not looking to get into a fight; rather they simply want to steal as many shiny trinkets and as much food as possible without being noticed. One dark creeper skulks into the PCs' camp while the other waits nearby. If the dark creeper in the camp is spotted, the other hurls a few stones into the lake as a distraction before using *darkness* to suppress any light sources.

The creeper in the camp grabs what he can (short swords are particularly coveted among them) and flees. If confronted with a *daylight* spell or other source of bright light, both flee.

#### Area Features

The area has several features of note:

Illumination: The party likely has light sources that provide a zone of both normal and dim illumination. Beyond that, the darkness of the Ebon Realm blankets the surrounding tunnels and chambers.

Lake: The water of the lake is cold, clean and calm (DC 10 Swim check). Scores of sightless white fish swim in its depths. The lake is roughly 40 feet deep at its deepest point. In other places along its shore, similar slabs of rock slope downwards creating other places of refuge. Several lead to small, selfcontained tunnel systems.

A character with the proper equipment that makes a DC 10 Profession (fisherman) or Survival check catches enough fish to feed himself for a day.



The character can feed one additional character for every 2 points by which his check exceeds 10. A character can try to fish in the lake with improvised equipment, but suffers a -2 penalty to such checks.

Shelving Stone Beach: A great slab of stone slopes downwards toward the lake. This slope does not impede movement, but it grants the benefit of higher ground (+1 on melee attacks) against opponents below the attacker.

Rocky Island: A rocky island juts out of the lake (see "Rocky Island" below for more information).

Old Campfires: Circles of scorched stones show where previous explorers built campfires. All are filled with ash and scorched wood. The detritus of previous expeditions surrounds each; there is nothing of value here.

#### Dark Creeper (2) CR 2 (XP 600)

Filthy, smelly black rags cover this small humanoid from head to foot. Only its hands and pale, white nose are visible.

CN Small humanoid (dark folk)

Init +3; Senses see in darkness; Perception +4, Sense Motive +0

See in Darkness (Su) A dark creeper can see perfectly in darkness of any kind, including that created by *deeper darkness*.

Speed 30 ft.; ACP 0; Climb +8, Stealth +12

AC 16, touch 14, flat-footed 13; CMD 14

(+2 armour [rag armour], +3 Dex, +1 size) Weakness light blindness

Light Blindness (Ex) Dark creepers are blinded for 1 round if exposed to bright light such as sunlight or a *daylight* spell. They are dazzled as long as they remain in the bright light.

Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +1

hp 19 (3 HD); death throes

**Death Throes (Su)** When a dark creeper is slain, its body combusts in a bright white light, leaving its gear in a heap on the floor. All creatures within a 10 ft. burst are blinded for 1d6 rounds (DC 13 Fortitude negates). Dark creepers in the area are automatically blinded for at least 1 round.

#### Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +2; CMB +1

**Melee** dagger +6 (1d3/19-20 plus black smear poison [DC 15 Fort {1 save}; *freq.* 1 round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d2 Str])

Atk Options poison use, sneak attack (+1d6) Spell-Like abilities (CL 3rd; concentration +2) At will—darkness, detect magic Combat Gear black smear poison (3)

Abilities Str 11, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8 Feats Skill Focus (Sleight of Hand), Weapon Finesse Skills as above plus Sleight of Hand +7 Languages Dark Folk

Gear as above

#### Rocky Island

A rocky island some 15 feet from shore stands opposite a small spur of rock that ends in a crumbling mass of rubble. A DC 15 Knowledge (dungeoneering) check reveals that the two were probably once linked by a narrow ridge of rock but that it has since collapsed.

**Surrounding Water**: Much of the water surrounding the island is 15 ft. deep. However, the water between the island and the small spur of rock it was once connected to is only 5 feet deep.

**Steeped Sides**: The rocky island has steep, natural flanks worn smooth by the waters of the lake. They can be scaled with a DC 20 Climb check.

**Stone Cairn**: A pile of stones standing on the island is clearly unnatural. Its features are:

- **Green Mould**: Characters making a DC 15 Perception check from shore note that a thin covering of green mould grows over the stones. Characters on the island automatically notice the mould. A subsequent DC 15 Knowledge (dungeoneering) check reveals the mould to be harmless. A DC 10 or lower check misleads the character into believing the mould is a variant of the dreaded green slime.
- **Rusted Iron Shield**: A rusted heavy iron shield lies atop the island. Crudely scratched into its surface (in Common) is the inscription: "Here lies Belivar, slain by the lurkers in the dark." The inscription is dated roughly two years ago.
- **Skeletal Remains**: If the PCs loot the cairn, it takes one hour of hard work to reach the skeletal remains within. The remains are of a human (DC 10 Knowledge [local] check confirms) who seems to have died from a number of deep slashing wounds to his face (DC 15 Heal check confirms). The remains are clad in rotting clothes; there is seemingly nothing of value here. A DC 25 Perception check, however, reveals a large gold

ring stamped with the heraldic device of a rearing wyvern (worth 300 gp; DC 20 Appraise check).

#### Development

If spotted, the dark creepers flee. However, if cornered and given no choice, they surrender. The dark creepers speak a very rare language, Dark Folk, and so it is unlikely the PCs can communicate with them without magic. If they manage to do so, use the notes below to portray the dark creepers.

**Appearance:** Clad in black, filthy voluminous robes, both dark creepers smell terrible. If the robes are removed, the PCs discover their true form – akin to that of a small degenerate human; their skin is pale and unnaturally moist and their eyes are milky white.

**Brak**: The braver of the two, Brak is a shade taller, but every bit as smelly as Krorz. Brak is rabid in his love and devotion to someone he refers to as the "Dark One." He tries to escape at every eventuality.

**Krorz**: Krorz is a little bit slow and a pessimist; he sees capture as the consequence of serving his master, but endures with fatalistic silence. Krorz does not try to escape; however, if the party is attacked by more of his brethren, he immediately joins the fight on their side, striking at the nearest PC.

**Gathering Information**: PCs able to communicate with the dark creepers can gain more information about the surrounding tunnels: The PCs can make a Bluff (opposed by the dark creepers' Sense Motive [+0]), Diplomacy (DC 24 to render them merely unfriendly) or Intimidate (DC 11) check to gain this information. Provide small (+2/-2) modifiers to these checks based on the players' roleplaying of their conversation with the dark creepers.

**Success**: The dark creepers tell the PCs of the lake's extent and of the presence of several similar beach-like areas. They also tell of a small cavern system which houses a strange, ancient stone door which no dark creeper has ever passed through.

**Failure**: The dark creepers tell the PCs of the lake's extent, and describe a network of tunnels nearby across the water that houses the ancient burial places of an unknown people. This is a lie; the creepers try to lead the PCs to a sprawling labyrinth of narrow tunnels and fissures in the rock; here they hope to escape the party and return to the brethren.

#### Scaling the Encounter

To modify this encounter, apply the following changes:

**EL 3 (XP 800)**: The dark creepers are young and inexperienced. Apply the young creature template to both dark creepers (+2 on all Dex-based rolls, -2 on all other rolls; hp 13).

**EL 5 (XP 1,600)**: Apply the advanced creature template to both dark creepers (+2 on all rolls [including damage]); DC 15 Death Throes; AC 20, touch 18, flat-footed 17; CMD 18; hp 25).

If you enjoyed this random encounter, check out *Caves & Caverns* at ragingswan.com/caves

**Rite Publishing Presents** 

# 101 Not So Simple Monster Templates



By Steven D. Russell

# The Fleshgrafter's Foe

By Ron Lundeen of Run Amok Games

Rite Publishing's *#30 Fleshgrafts* provides a host of gruesome body modifications. Fleshcrafters who peddle these modifications earn powerful friends and sometimes even more powerful enemies. This article introduces Sorbus Venn (a fleshgrafter NPC to provide modifications for the PCs), a new fleshgraft Sorbus created, and an encounter with an otherworldly warrior bent on eliminating Sorbus because of his work.

#### Sorbus Venn, Fleshcrafter

Sorbus Venn spent his childhood working with his father in the infirmary of the local military, tending to every kind of horrid battle-wound. Although Sorbus developed a strong fear of combat, he grew fascinated with the intricate workings of the body. His skill with surgery flowered into a love of fleshcrafting.

Sorbus studied magic only as an afterthought, turning to summoning to study the bizarre anatomies of outsiders and other, stranger creatures. Sorbus is nearly always accompanied by his eidolon assistant Cloven, a satyr-like creature with four arms and a keen eye for detail. While Sorbus works on a patient, Cloven catalogues body parts, hands over instruments, chatters with onlookers, and keeps a detailed log of the procedure for Sorbus' later review.

Sorbus is a bookish, whip-thin man with a friendly demeanor. He is happy that fleshcrafting makes him a good living, but the unsavory individuals that sometimes seek his services make Sorbus a little nervous.

#### Sorbus Venn



XP 1,600 Male human summoner 6 N Medium humanoid (human) **Init** +1; **Senses** Perception +1

#### Defense

AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +1 Dex) hp 30 (6d8) Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +7 Defensive Abilities shield ally

#### Offense

Speed 30 ft. Melee dagger +3 (1d4-1/19-20) Ranged masterwork light crossbow +6 (1d8/19-20) 6/day-summon monster III Summoner Spells Known (CL 6th; concentration +9) ord (4/day), hear's and manage heats, posist anomaly

2nd (4/day)—bear's endurance, haste, resist energy, summon monster II



1st (5/day)—daze monster (DC 14), endure elements, enlarge person, mage armor

o (at will)—arcane mark, detect magic, guidance, mage hand, mending, open/close

#### Tactics

**Before Combat** Sorbus avoids combat if possible, seeking a safe place to hide until danger has passed. **During Combat** If Sorbus finds combat inevitable, he directs Cloven to block attackers, summons durable allies with *summon monster II*, and then casts *haste* on his summoned creatures.

#### Statistics

**Str** 8, **Dex** 13, **Con** 10, **Int** 16, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 16 **Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 14

Feats Craft Wondrous Item, Great Fortitude, Magical Aptitude, Graft Flesh

**Skills** Diplomacy +9, Handle Animal +8, Heal +9, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +8, Knowledge (history) +8, Knowledge (local) +8, Knowledge (nature) +8, Knowledge (planes) +8, Knowledge (religion) +8, Profession (butcher) + 6, Spellcraft +14, Use Magic Device +14

#### Languages Common, Draconic, Dwarven

**SQ** bond senses (6 rounds/day), eidolon, life link, maker's call

**Combat Gear** wand of cure light wounds (50 charges); **Other Gear** +1 studded leather armor, masterwork light crossbow with 10 bolts, dagger, *cloak of resistance* +1, healer's kit, 94 gp

#### Cloven, Eidolon

N Medium outsider (extraplanar) Init +2; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +16

#### Defense

AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+4 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural) hp 37 (5d10+10) Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +4; +4 vs. enchantment spells and effects Defensive Abilities evasion

#### Offense

**Speed** 30 ft. **Melee** gore +9 (1d4+4) and 2 hooves +4 (1d4+2)

#### Tactics

**Before Combat** With his substantially superior Perception, Cloven is much more likely than Sorbus to notice approaching danger.

**During Combat** Cloven fights defensively, interposing himself between his master and enemies. **Morale** Cloven is not a brave combatant, but he doesn't fear being sent back to his home plane, so he fights until slain.

#### Statistics

**Str** 18, **Dex** 14, **Con** 13, **Int** 10, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 11 **Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 22

Feats Dodge, Stealthy, Toughness

**Skills** Acrobatics +9, Disable Device +10, Escape Artist +8, Heal +8, Perception +16, Sleight of Hand +10, Stealth +12

Languages Common, Draconic, Dwarven

**SQ** link, share spells, devotion, evolutions (ability increase [Int], gore, hooves, limbs [arms], limbs [arms], limbs [legs], skilled [Perception], unnatural aura)

#### Sorbus' Invention

Sorbus had the recent good fortune to come across a treatise regarding the rare Leng spiders, a race of bizarre outsiders with unique web-spinning abilities. Sorbus created a simple fleshgraft based on the Leng spiders' ability to fashion sturdy webbing into serviceable weaponry. Because this fleshgraft is useful and cheap, Sorbus has performed this enhancement for many patrons. If the PCs perform a substantial service for Sorbus, he may offer to provide them with this fleshgraft free of charge.

#### Web Weapon Extruder (Graft)

Aura none; CL 3rd

# Slot none; Price 600 gp; Weight none Description

This forearm fleshgraft allows the host to occasionally exude a few feet of tough, sticky fibers that can be connected to a heavy object, such as a rock or chunk of metal, to create a weapon. As a full-round action once per day, the host can create a masterwork flail or masterwork bolas, provided he has access to heavyweight objects of the proper size (such as loose rocks or skulls). The resulting web weapon can be used by anyone, but the sticky fibers impart a -2 penalty to attack rolls when used by a creature without a web weapon extruder or spinneret glands fleshgraft. After 24 hours, the extruded fibers break down and detach from the weighted objects, becoming worthless sludge.

#### Construction

**Requirements** Graft Flesh, *cure light wounds, web*; **Cost** 300 gp

#### Sorbus' Enemies (CR 9)

Leng spiders are locked in a near-endless battle with the other intelligent inhabitants of that far-off plane, the humanoid denizens of Leng. One such denizen, Master Ygirin, learned of Sorbus' popular fleshgraft. Master Ygirin believes that Sorbus must be secretly attempting to spread the Leng spiders' influence and plans to murder the fleshgrafter and anyone with him. Master Ygirin brings his two trained yeth hounds for this attack. If the PCs are present in Sorbus' laboratory for Master Ygirin's attack, they can earn Sorbus' trust and favor by defending him from the implacable Master Ygirin.

#### Master Ygirin, Denizen of Jeng CR8

XP 4,800

CE Medium outsider (chaotic, evil, extraplanar) Init +4; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +16

#### Defense

AC 21, touch 15, flat-footed 16 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural)

**hp** 95 (10d10+40); planar fast healing 5

**Fort** +11, **Ref** +11, **Will** +6

**Defensive Abilities** no breath, unusual anatomy; **Immune** poison; **Resist** cold 30, electricity 30; **SR** 19

#### Offense

Speed 40 ft. Melee bite +14 (1d6+2 plus 1d6 Dexterity drain), 2 claws +14 (1d4+2) Special Attacks sneak attack +5d6 Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th; concentration +15) Constant—tongues 3/day—detect thoughts (DC 17), hypnotic pattern (DC 17), levitate, minor image (DC 17)

1/day—locate object, plane shift (DC 20, self only)

#### Tactics

Before Combat Compared to others of its race, Master Ygirin is hasty and violent. It rushes into combat with little provocation.

During Combat A skilled combatant, Master Ygirin prefers to use its sneak attack when possible. If it cannot obtain flanking with its yeth hounds, it uses its Improved Feint feat. If a reasonable opportunity appears, Master Ygirin draws and throws its curious crystal orb (which functions as a *javelin of lightning*). Morale Master Ygirin is determined but not suicidal. If reduced below 25 hit points, it escapes back to Leng via plane shift.

#### Statistics

Str 14, Dex 18, Con 19, Int 18, Wis 17, Cha 21 Base Atk +10; CMB +12; CMD 27

Feats Combat Expertise, Deceitful, Dodge, Improved Feint, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +22, Diplomacy +5, Disable Device +14, Disguise +12 (+16 as humanoid), Intimidate +10, Knowledge (planes) +17, Perception +16, Profession (sailor) +8, Sense Motive +16, Sleight of Hand +17, Spellcraft +12, Stealth +17, Use Magic Device +18; Racial Modifiers +4 Disguise when disguised as a Medium humanoid

Languages Aklo; tongues

Combat Gear blue crystal orb (functions as a javelin of lightning), wand of shatter (15 charges); Other Gear 1,400 gp in rubies

#### Special Abilities

Dexterity Drain (Su) The otherworldly teeth and tongues of a denizen of Leng deal 1d6 points of Dexterity drain with a bite. Constructs, elementals, and other creatures that do not possess flesh are immune to this effect. A successful DC 19 Fortitude save reduces the Dexterity drain to 1 point. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Planar Fast Healing (Su) A denizen of Leng maintains a connection to Leng at all times, and when away from Leng, it has fast healing 5. It loses this ability on Leng or in areas where planar connections do not function. If killed, a denizen's body dissolves into nothingness in 1d4 rounds, leaving behind its equipment. A slain denizen reforms in Leng, similar to a slain summoned creature; it can only be permanently killed if its fast healing is negated.

Unusual Anatomy (Ex) A denizen's internal anatomy varies from individual to individual, and has a 50% chance to treat any critical hit or sneak attack against it as a normal hit.

#### Yeth Hounds (2)

#### CR 3

XP 800 each

NE Medium outsider (evil, extraplanar) Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +9

#### Defense

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13 (+2 Dex, +3 natural) **hp** 30 each (4d10+8) Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +6 DR 5/silver

#### Offense

**Speed** 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (good) **Melee** bite +7 (2d6+4 plus sinister bite and trip) Special Attacks bay

#### Tactics

During Combat Each yeth hound bays in the first round of combat, then helps Master Ygirin gain flanking.

Morale The yeth hounds are completely loyal to Master Ygirin and fight to the death.

#### Statistics

Str 17, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 10 Base Atk +4; CMB +7; CMD 19 (23 vs. trip) Feats Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Fly) Skills Fly +16, Perception +9, Stealth +9, Survival +9 Languages Abyssal (cannot speak)

#### Special Abilities

Bay (Su) When a yeth hound howls or barks, all creatures except other evil outsiders within a 300-foot spread must succeed on a DC 12 Will save or become panicked for 2d4 rounds. This is a sonic mindaffecting fear effect. Whether or not the save is successful, an affected creature is immune to the same hound's bay for 24 hours. The save DC is Charismabased.

Flight (Su) A yeth hound can cease or resume its flight as a free action.

Sinister Bite (Su) A yeth hound's bite is treated as evil-aligned for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction. In addition, a good-aligned creature bitten by a yeth hound must make a DC 14 Will save or be shaken for 1 round. If the victim is already suffering from a fear effect (such as the hound's bay attack), the victim is instead completely overcome with fear and can do nothing but cower for 1 round. This is a mindaffecting fear effect. The save DC is Constitutionbased.

#### Scaling this Encounter

CR 7: Remove one of the yeth hounds, apply the young simple template to Master Ygirin, and remove Master Ygirin's crystal orb. Sorbus' first action in combat is to cast haste on the PCs.

**CR 11**: Replace the yeth hounds with hounds of Tindalos, add the advanced simple template to Master Ygirin, and give Master Ygirin a belt of incredible dexterity +2.



Chronicles of Storm, Volume 11: The Jade Renku

By Matt Banach, Illustrations by Hugo Solis and Eric Lofgren

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# Renku of the South in Summer

In the Sunblood Sea

Simmer in the night

Seventeen thousand islands

Dreams come to Javasriya

Priests pass coin and blade

Two-tailed devil whispers lies

But lava waits for no monk

Infecting minds with forked tongue

The way of Kamojhea

Blessed black markets

Naga hiss prayers

Mountain temples fry

F zekiel stumbles south

Rivers flow backwards

The flood waters come

Larger than men's woes

Wu-lin spells sizzle

Dawn's light purifies

Fever burns what flame cannot

Pray your house is high enough

An eldritch plague bubbles up

Gnashing hungry yellow tusks

Through Lan Trangh's raw hills

Crawling Dragon Mountain plods

Trust withers as disease spreads

Crowded jungles fill with screams

Red fists smash cannibal skulls

As the shadow puppets dance

Pain, clean as bright mountain streams 12 Green shoots spring from ashen ground In a strange valley 13 Giant stone jars sit in rows Lids becoming loose Birds pass a floating fortress 14 While careful hands knit flesh whole Mandragorans bloom 15 Flowered vines, sweet pollens swirl Green geisha giggle The wizard bows deep in thanks 16 Long golden sleeves wave farewell In ev'ry village 17 Young fools sing songs of heroes While wise men plant rice The nightmare strolls, grinning wide 18 His prey, weaker for the strife Passing spirits nod 19 As dusk cools steaming cities Wheel turns unbroken Prayers to the setting sun 20 Fly west as night approaches Renku of the West in Autumn

Morning's chill retreats Dawn's light kiss on stony cheeks Proud mountains blush gold

The wizard rises weary His bones ache with shorter days 2

23



Through pale moonlit sky	11
A floating garden drifts by	
Petals fall like stars	
Nightmare's noose drops silently	12
Just rain upon his shoulders	
Just fail upon his shoulders	
On a bed of flame	13
	1)
A widow joins her husband	
Their love, eternal	
Grand adventures grown hollow	14
Stale emotions rot his mind	
Crescent knives glint red	15
As murderers bless crossroads	
With harvests of blood	
Desert ghosts rimed with black salt	16
Make cheap offers for loose souls	
Lost in the darkness	17
Tsiwang's high mountain temples	
Shine like guiding stars	
A hunter's perfect arrow	18
Reminds the wizard his path	
A lone leaf tumbles	19
Dawn over Red Sky Plateau	
Wheel turns unbroken	
Tails flicking 'cross crimson sands	20
The devil comes for his due	

# Renku of the Eternal Center

An empire stands	1
United and divided	
Strong despite itself	

2

Endless rain pounds like war drums The final storm approaches

Webs collect, unswept	3
More ministries than lanterns	
Shadows gather strength	
Lightning flashes - two figures	4
A stern glare, a wicked grin	
Empress forgotten	5
Legless eunuchs conspire	
Bold in empty rooms	
A familiar face mocks him	6
Twisting salt deep in old wounds	
Atop dragon bones	7
Ghostly footfalls fill the streets	
Their steps, memories	
Explosions burn black the sky	8
The wizard isn't subtle	
Gold shutters rattle	9
Bureaucrats hide their bald heads	
Worried 'bout their necks	
From smoke and mist, the chain strikes	10
The nightmare laps at spilt blood	
Crops from ancient earth	11
Power, still, in things long dead	
Fallen dragons stír	
Fingers curled 'round breathless throats	12
Laughing as they bring down Hell	
Dutiful undead	13
Held up by stones from Heaven	
The Ghostwall stands firm	
The two-tailed man spits curses	14
Promising the Khan's vengeance	
Críckets hear thunder	15
And turn to the horizon	
As the sky shatters	



Wu-lín depríved their tea cups Have no patience for devils	16
Yin dances with yang In a land without strangers Guanxi's web is strong	17
As rain becomes falling ash The wizard forgives his past	18
Dawn cleanses dusk's woes The world breathes in and out Wheel turns unbroken	19
Mu's misty gateway returned Storms depart the land of jade	20

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# Twenty Questions with Jean-Philipe Chapleau

By Steven D. Russell

#### 1. Could you tell us a little about yourself?

My name is Jean-Philipe Chapleau, but I go by JP. I was born in Montreal as a little French Canadian boy. French is my first language, and it is still the language we speak at home today.

My first contact with RPGs came through a fighting fantasy book, *The Citadel of Chaos*. From there, the love grew. I was introduced to D&D (the OLD red box) because I was the only kid on the block who understood English. I think that my background and things I read as a child have given me a unique perspective and taste in RPGs, and that translates to the game table.

After graduating as a computer engineer from Sherbrooke University in '98, I spent a year in France, two and a half in Ireland and have been living in Colorado since 2005 (I have no intention of moving or leaving).

While abroad, I wrote adventures for local conventions in France, Ireland and Canada. Getting a submission of mine included in Pagan's *More Tales of Terror* got me thinking I could do something more.

From 2000-03, I wrote a number of adventures for a number of various game systems such as Call of Cthulhu, Legend of the Five Rings, 7<sup>th</sup> Sea, the World of Darkness and even the Sailor Moon RPG. Yes. Sailor Moon.

It was not until 2003 that I really began contemplating writing in a more professional manner. That year, I joined the RPGA and began work on a number of adventures for different regions. These adventures were designed for others to run and play, without me being handy to help or guide them run the adventure.

I was a triad for Living Greyhawk (2003-2008, spending 03-06 with the Province of Quebec and 06-08 with the Colorado Triad). When that campaign was killed, I moved to the Moonshae Isles of Living Forgotten Realms, a position I held until January of 2010. A divergence of opinions on the campaign, a dislike of 4e and a lack of interest lead me to quit that position.

Later in 2010, I was named Venture-Captain for the Denver area. A position I proudly occupy.

My writing credits include about 50 RPGA adventures (mostly LG with a few LFR). I won two of Chaosium's adventure contests (*BRP Adventures 2008* and Cthulhu Invictus 2010 (*The Gods Hate Me*)) and am published in their monographs. I wrote the Hong Kong chapter in the upcoming *Companion to the Masks of Nyarlathotep* and in Miskatonic River Press' *Lux in Tenebras*.

More recently, I have been working with LPJ Design on their NeoExodus line, updating their products from 3.5 to Pathfinder RPGs. I did a number of books with him including a Campaign Book that



really includes everything you need to run a successful game of NeoExodus.

I maintain a full list of the products I was paid for here (<u>http://chapleau.us/writing.php</u>).

#### 2. What is your home game like?

When I run a home game, I really like to create an intricate storyline that is complex and involved. I strongly encourage players to take notes so they can remember what happened. I like to use the foreshadow technique and to present elements or NPCs that seem unimportant initially that turn out to be big parts of the story later.

When I start running, I frequently provide my players with a number of paths for them to choose and I go with the flow. I frequently laugh that I provide them with ropes to hang themselves with, but that's another story...

When I don't write everything down and plan the whole story ahead of time (usually because I plan to get a product published), I frequently see my campaign as a series of major plot points, or a finitestate machine (remember the "graduated as a computer engineer", above?) where HOW the PCs go from point A to point B, is up to them. This makes the path they take more tailored to them, while keeping to my overall idea.

Players: Happy.

GM: Happy.

#### 3. What is your favorite Paizo product and why?

The Inner Sea World Guide (and its ancestor the Pathfinder Campaign Setting) is my favorite Paizo product. When I first read it, I kept getting the feeling that Golarion was an "old setting," a setting that had seen a LOT of play and evolution over the years. I felt this when I first read Greyhawk and Dragonlance, but not when I read Forgotten Realms or Eberron.

Golarion felt like it had a coherent, not-fullyrevealed history. It felt like the movements of people made sense and that countries did not war against each other, just because.

I wanted to know more about every nation I read. I think the key was just that: I wanted to know MORE. It was enough to make me think "I could see my PCs do something here..." (Sorry pre-4e FR, but I never felt that way about you.)

In short, the world made sense to me.

#### 4. You have been doing a lot of work for Louis Porter Jr. Design, how did that start and how would you characterize it today?

Louis posted on a Facebook page that he was looking for authors one day, I said I was willing. We emailed back and forth, and pretty soon, I began writing an adventure for NeoExodus. He liked it and gave me more projects to work on.

I enjoy working with LPJ, as he and I have a similar sense of humor. We are both creative people who aren't afraid of saying "no" to an idea. Ask him, he'll tell you that I'm the one who always say "no" to him, but it's the other way around, HE says NO to ME. (Note to readers: we are still looking for more writers.)

#### 5. What is your favorite *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game* compatible product you worked on and could you tell us a little about it?

The NeoExodus Campaign Setting is my favorite. It is packed full of goodies: a full history, a full gazetteer, new races, new character options (archetypes, feats, prestige classes and spells), I really like the end product. And the art, which is one of the hallmarks of all of LPJ's products, makes for a total package.

One of the biggest issues I had as an adventure writer for NeoExodus was that there was no cohesive campaign book. There was a history, there was a campaign guide, there were monsters, but all of them were in different books, with really little to tie them together, unless you had ALL of them. Researching products and stories was hard. So one day, I simply told him that we were going to do a campaign book including everything I as a GM and an author needed.

So I started gathering a number of 3.5 PDFs, taking the best of each and reformatting everything into a single book.

# 6. What was your best moment working on that product?

Getting a hardcopy of the book in my hands, it made it feel... Real. I know this sounds strange, but holding the book in dead tree format—that I hadn't printed on my printer—felt real. Although I had other things published and bound before (More Tales of Terror, The Chaosium adventure contests) this one was the first one that was mine.

I find it funny to say "mine" because throughout the writing of it, I kept saying that this was aimed at



GMs and authors who were not me or LPJ. I got to sign the books at Neoncon and that feeling was new to me.

I liked it.

# 7. What do you feel was the most ingenious part of that product?

The races, no doubt, the races of NeoExodus. They are one of the most unique and immediately different races. The races of NeoExodus are really "out there." There are mutated monkey-men, plant-men, psionic rats, arcane crystals, and scorpion-people to name but a few. The only core race found in NeoExodus is human. Humans have a number of unique and new sub-races, specifically designed for NeoExodus.

Many settings out there simply re-skin elves and dwarves, or add other subtypes of these races. Going back to 2e, my favorite TSR setting was Dark Sun, because everything felt different. The races were unique and created completely different flavor.

# 8. What was the most challenging aspect of working on it?

The scope. Although I had tackled projects with a similar scope before, a big book (final page count is around 160 pages) is a massive time investment. Not that I would not do it again, I would. Writing and evaluating other books for material that should make the core book; coming up with new material that expands and completes what is there.

It's much more than I thought it was and it gave me a new perspective on world creation. Like most GMs, I built worlds before, slowly adding elements as my players evolved through it and as ideas came to me.

But writing a campaign setting for publication is different. You need to think of pretty much everything at once, expand it, review it and then edit (or trim) it.

#### 9. Did you learn anything while working on it?

I learned a lot about the publishing aspect of the whole thing. Sure I had other things published before, but I was never as involved in the process from writing to publishing as I was this time. I learned a lot. And LPJ will tell you, I still have more to learn.

# 10. Other than your own work, what is the best *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game* compatible product out there?

The setting that intrigues me the most is *Kaidan*. I'm a huge fan of Asian settings.

As a non-setting product, I have to say LPJ Design's *Debatable Actions*. It does have a variable level of complexity that allows a GM to use these rules as a kind of "fighting with words." The idea is something I had been toying with for a while when Louis said "I've got that." I'll admit I am a fan of the lighter rule set, but the complex one has sparked a few ideas... which reminds me I must provide LPJ with my outline for the adventure that uses them. I should've said "Kobold Quarterly." Now he'll remind me I have to do it.

# 11. What in your opinion makes a good *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game* compatible product?

Personally, I favor supplements that add elements to the game without changing it. I am not interested in non-core system to gathering information, how to determine cover, use spell-points or mana points, re-introduce a tracking feat, or alignments as a "point total."

I love settings and adventures, and look for those first. For me, you never have enough of those. Adventures can be changed and modified to suit a GM's campaign.

#### 12. Who is your favorite designer of *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game* compatible products?

There are quite a few guys I like... But I have to say Sean K Reynolds. I like his style and his approach.

I own quite a few of his products. I got to meet him in Denver back in '10 and I got to know him better at a few later conventions. Not only am I a fan, but a friend also.

#### 13. What advice would you give to would-befreelancers?

It stands in one word: Git-r-dun. So many aspiring writers out there have (often good) ideas and want to get their stuff published; when they talk to you, they are fully ready, willing and able to do it. Then they get assigned a task and start giving a thousand excuses and nothing ever comes from it. If you can't self-motivate and complete the project, you should not be a freelancer.



Treat this as work, not a hobby: with the seriousness you would give any other jobs.

OH! And another thing... your stuff, no matter how good you think it is will be edited, critiqued, and frequently harshly and often unjustly; but always passionately. If you cannot take the heat, keep writing for your home group, and be good at it. Gamers are opinionated and vehemently so. They will love or hate you with a passion.

#### 14. Who is your favorite Illustrator?

That is a difficult one. I am a huge fan of Wayne Reynolds. I have to say Wayne Reynolds. There are a lot of good artists out there. I am always astonished by some of the guys working for Louis. The art in the NeoExodus book looks ASTOUNDING!

# 15. What has been your most memorable fan response to your work?

"Not getting stuff thrown at me" is my usual response. From the days of Living Greyhawk, to me it's all been about playing the game. When I or someone else runs an adventure I wrote or edited, and I see players enjoy their time, that is the most memorable for me.

Out of all of those, I think the first interactive I wrote in Montreal "All the Pasha's horses and all the Pasha's men" and the one I did in Denver "The Siege of Durwich" really stand out, for a lot of people today talk about the event as something special.

#### 16. Could you give us an exclusive hint or teaser about an upcoming product you're working on?

I would make sure you all attend PaizoCon next year... I am working on a big project that will be revealed in 2012. I can safely say that it'll be big, unique and memorable!

# 17. Do you have any goals as a game designer that you have yet to obtain or overcome?

I would like to get a book or adventure published by one of the larger companies (Paizo, WotC), something beyond organized play.

I also dream of completing a full-blown campaign. NeoExodus allows me to come very close to that.

# 18. Can you talk a bit about the world of NeoExodus and what makes is such a unique campaign setting?

NeoExodus, in its current incarnation is "a traditional fantasy setting that deals with themes generally reserved to science-fiction." As such it is a sword-and-board setting but themes we plan to approach include the nature of humanity, the nature of good vs. evil, zealotry, and politics. Politics play a huge part of NeoExodus. We wanted NeoExodus to cater to fans of highly political settings such as Arcanis (who has dropped d20 for its own system), and deal with themes I saw a lot of in Midnight, all in Pathfinder.

I already talked about the races, well... I have to mention them again. They are so unique and interesting...

Another thing: adventures. For me, the only way to really experience a setting is to PLAY. Why do all the old guys like me remember the super-modules of the 80s? I remember playing Ravenloft, Desert of Desolation, The Temple of Elemental Evil, and Egg of the Phoenix among many. Because I can tell you that my "Ibutt the Gnome" got killed by a worg in I6. Or that the three paladins in the group fought over the holy avenger in I13... Louis and I have half-a-dozen adventures and about as many in the works right now. All of them for NeoExodus and written in a way that everything present some of the concepts we want people to discover "our way."

It's one thing to say "we want NeoExodus to be political," but without supporting in through adventures, it's just another setting that plays like all the others. Yes, there will be sourcebooks, but in the short term, we will be releasing adventures for NeoExodus.

#### 19. What draws you to organized play?

When I first heard of the concept of a worldwide campaign, I was very wary and saw a number of problems with it. Then I attended a two-day event in a frozen bar in Montreal. I really had a great time and kept on playing.

With three kids and a non-gamer wife, I do not have a lot of time to organize a gaming group.



Organized play allows me to play when I can and miss when I cannot, and keep the missus happy. I was able to play in two countries and in over ten states with my characters, earning rewards and making friends along the way.

The Denver group for whom I serve as Venture-Captain is one of the most dynamic gaming groups I have ever had the opportunity to play with. Shout-out the RM Pathfinders!

One question I get asked often is about a NeoExodus organized play. I cannot give a definitive answer, but we are definitely into it. We need a few authors and it just might happen...

# **20.** Is there anything else that folks should know about you and/or your work?

I genuinely love to hear when people play material I wrote, whether good or bad. Feedback allows me to see what works, what does not, what I should emphasize, what I should ignore, and get better next time. Let me know what you think of NeoExodus at <u>ip@chapleau.us</u>





#### In The Company of Monsters

by Rite Publishing *Review by Eric Hinkle* 5 out of 5 Stars!

Rite Publishing has a well-deserved reputation for producing the nest 3rd party Pathfinder PDFs, and this collection of six of their best only reinforces my opinion.

It consists of six PDFs which have been released individually, so be warned, if you have them this won't contain too many major revisions.

It starts with In The Company of Gargoyles, which takes the D&D/Pathfinder Gargoyle and turns it into a PC race. The background information is given in first person, and very well presented. There is also a 20 level racial paragon class, the Stonewarden, which has a number of unique powers called 'Enticements' to choose from to individualize your gargoyle, all of them centered around being more closely connected to the earth or becoming a better guardian. The chapter closes with some new feats, spells, and even a few magic items for gargoyle and non-gargoyle PCs alike.

Next is In The Company of Giants, which does for giants what the prior chapter does for gargoyles. You wouldn't think you could turn Large-to-Colossal giants into a PC race, but you'd be wrong. It has a 20 level racial paragon class which has been modified to allow multi-classing, a welcome change. Like the first chapter, BG info is given in first person from a jotun (the race's name), and new feats made for them round it out.

Then is a chapter on Ironborn. In many ways these are Eberron Warforged, with adaptable bodies and a very open-for-customization racial template, but their backgropund is quite different. No paragon class, but it has its own bloodline for sorcerers and feats for building your own Ironborn.

Then comes my favorite chapter, In The Company of Minotaurs. It describes minotaurs as a PC race, making them both unpleasant and yet honorable in their own way, and gives them a 20-level racial class with feats, a sorcerer bloodline, alternate racial traits and favored class options. And it gives some examples of weapons and other gear for the minotaurs to boot. VERY well done!

Then we get a chapter on Restless Souls, basically a template for PCs who died but have returned to something like life. They're not undead, but they come close in ways, and they have a distinctly creepy feel. There are a number of feats and spells to choose from for your new revenant which cover a great many of the 'classic' undead abilities from legend and gaming.

Last is the Wyrd of Questhaven, easily the most original in the book. Crossbred elves and ogre magi



(!), the Wyrd have a flavorful 7-level paragon class, a prestige class, their own sorcerer bloodline, and a number of feats and spells along with a sample character using rules from another Rite Publishing PDF, the Luckbringer, which is not included here (but all the necessary rules are included for using her).

Truly an awesome array of new and original PC races for any campaign, with plenty of supplemental material even if you don't use the races themselves.



# The Curse of the Golden Spear Adventure Trilogy set in Kaidan



A three part campaign arc, **The Gift**, **Dim Spirit**, and **Dark Path** is an adventure trilogy set in the cursed land of Kaidan and is suitable for a group of 5th level characters. Drawing inspiration from Japanese folklore, and fully compatible with the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game, Kaidan is a land of horror and mystery. In Kaidan, demons stalk the land in human form, the dead seldom rest easy, and life is cheap. This adventure serves to introduce players and game masters alike to the cursed realm of Kaidan.

Rave reviews make this adventure trilogy an instant classic!

Jonathan McAnulty
NOW AVAILABLE







#### Hex Crawl Chronicles 1 Valley of the Hawks-PFRPG Version

By Frog God Games Review by Thilo "Endzeitgeist" Graf 5 out of 5 stars!

This module is 42 pages long, 1 page front cover, 1 page editorial, 1 page ToC, 2 pages of advertisements and 1 page SRD, leaving 36 pages of content, so let's check out this Hex Crawl.

Hex Crawl? Yep, it's a kind of adventure that has unfortunately gone nearly extinct in this day and age. If you're looking for a wholly spelt-out adventure with a linear story, this kind of adventure is not for you the closest analogy being in computer games Fallout 2, Baldur's Gate 1 or Arcanum - you have this map (which is full of numbered hexes, hence hex-crawl) and you move around on it, stumbling across random encounters, settlements, dungeons, NPCs etc. The true motivation of these kind of adventures comes from a sense of discovery, a wonder at the strangeness and yet familiarity of the things we find drives a good hex crawl - the aim is to simulate an area and provide a sandbox in the truest sense of the word - a playing ground with power-balances that your PCs can change. The amount of information necessitated to make such an endeavor work has the logical conclusion of providing not the full statblocks for all the NPCs - you'll encounter some abbreviated ones in this book, which you can expand upon. From here on, SPOILERS reign, so please potential players, stop reading and jump to the conclusion.

So how does John Stater's Valley of the Hawks hold up? The Valley of the Hawks is inhabited by 3 different human ethnicities and offers a plethora of settlements - interestingly enough, for example, the Northmen are dusky-skinned, rather civilized individuals, offering a nice twist from standard cultural clichés. Were I to go over the vast amount of information, adventure-seeds etc. contained herein, I'd be writing this review for a week - just to give you an overview: Most settlements have either a tyrant, an external force, a cult devoted to some depraved (or just savage)god/demons for the PCs to stomp out and from slavery to love triangles, kidnappings and enmities, the PCs can encounter a vast array of potential allies and foes, who in their at times primal feeling, succeed at hearkening back to the classics of the Swords & Sorcery-genre while capturing the atmosphere of wonder and astonishment that should be the essence of wilderness adventures at a kind of magical frontier.

Even better, the pdf also has room for easter-eggs -Let me just say two words: Kill-Bunnies! Humanoid bipedal, bloodthirsty rabbits haunt one of the hexes! AWESOME! Have I mentioned the mechanical milkmaids or the space-vampires with their crashed space-ship? The wise Owl-folk? The elves of the



Winter Court? The mini-dungeon called Temple of the Snake-men (complete with its own map)?

#### Conclusion:

Editing and formatting is top-notch, I didn't notice any glitches. Layout adheres to an easy-to-read twocolumn standard and the b/w-artworks rock. The maps are awesome as well and the pdf is extensively bookmarked.

Writing-wise I was wowed by the cultural microcosmos presented herein, the vast amount of information, the easter-eggs, the huge array of adventure hooks and most importantly, the wonder of discovery and vast amount of content crammed herein. Try as I might, I can't bring myself to say anything negative about this adventure-sandbox. If you're willing to expand upon the basic information herein, I think you could easily spend a year in the valley of hawks. This pdf gets my Endzeitgeist seal of approval as well as the full 5 stars - check it out!

Endzeitgeist out.

**Rite Publishing Presents** 



#### \*30 Fleshgrafts

By Rite Publishing Review of Thilo "Endzeitgeist" Graf 5 out of 5 Stars!

This pdf is 17 pages long, 1 page front cover, 1 page editorial, 1 page SRD and 2 pages advertisements, leaving 12 pages of content, so what exactly are fleshcrafts?

The IC-narrator Pers Veilborn explains the fleshgrafts of originating after the Days of Dark Rain destroyed the Tamar-people (remember them from #30 Traps for Tombs?) in a perfect example of a great moodsetting piece of prose that delivers enough hooks to bring this evolution of a dark cataclysm to your game. Essentially, fleshgrafts are semi-sentient additional limbs, appendages and body modifications that can be grafted to your body via anew feat and be preserved via a new spell. If you're thinking Chaositech now, that would be a somewhat fitting parallel, especially with the bones of steel, for the modifications might empower you, but also make a disturbing creature out of you. The grafts all come with auras, take up slots and construction requirements.

What grafts do we get? Want retractable wolverineclaws? It's there. A maw like a leech that lets you drain grappled foes? It's there. Wings are available in 3 versions. 2 different kinds of tentacles, Mantis claws, spitting acid and webs - it#s there. You might even put a troll-organ into your body, thus growing angry pustules you can pop to regenerate. Of course, there are also eyes and e.g. the ability to exchange eyes with familiars/animal companions/servants. Deadly third eyes can drive foes mad or even petrify them while skingrafts enable you to emulate disguises of donor skins. Classics like horns, gills, fooling detect-spells, flesh-pouches and swim-speeds are also included in the delightfully disturbing array.

We also get the Gibberer as a creature to attach and extract fleshgrafts (think gibbering mouther in less powerful) and two multiclassed, fully stated NPCs ready to inflict upon your PCs - both belonging to the fleshgrafting Wardens of the Darkened Heart, of course!

#### Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are very good, I didn't notice significant glitches, though one of the extensive bookmarks for example, features a question mark instead of an apostrophe. Layout adheres to the fullcolor 2-column standard and the artwork is stock, but fitting for the theme. Oh boy, how have I gibbered with glee when reading this - from the excellent prose to the concisely, yet balanced fleshgrafts presented herein, a sense of alien dread and disturbing potential for not only DMs, but also players pervades this pdf. The grafts are powerful, but the cost of becoming a monster is readily apparent when reading the respective sections. It's ideas like the trollish pustules



and their disturbing activation that really drives home a sense of wrongness not often seen in item-books. Add to that the ease with which you can add to the existing grafts, the hook-ladden prose, the idea for the secreat society of fleshgrafters and the 2 sample NPCs as well as the process of adding new grafts and we're in for a delightfully sick new addition to the array of any aberration, doomsday-cult or similar threat - or even to heroes. If you ever wanted to create ReMade à la China Mièville, there are your tools. My only and minor gripe is that I wanted the option to make gibberers familiars - that would make for a nice Pathways-article, btw.! Taking the low price into account, my only minor gripe is not sufficient to weigh T.H. Gulliver's extremely well-written latest contribution to the #30-series down and continues the reign of 5-star verdicts he gathers. When do we get 101 additional fleshgrafts?

If not abundantly clear by now, my final verdict will be 5 stars and the Endzeitgeist seal of approval.

Endzeitgeist out.
# WAY OF THE YAYKUZZA

## WAY OF THE YAKUZA

Greetings, my friend. If you have come for knowledge, enter and have a seat. Pardon, that I do not rise and greet you properly, but I am not as young as I once was. As the hair grays, the bones grow weak. But I've outlived more than most and I'll wager there's a few more I'll yet outlive.

Yes, indeed. I've seen many young bo-kan like yourself come through those doors over the years. Full of spirit and ready to take on anyone, be they demon or men. Most do not last long. Perhaps you will be different? ...Or, perhaps not. Only time will tell, for ours is a dangerous path, yet we would choose no other.

In every village and every town, our presence is felt. Though others see only the gambling houses and sake shops, we know the true reason we fight. We are the champions of our people, and the heroes of the outcast. It is we who defend our way of life.

Come, I shall instruct you in the way of the yakuza, that you may be prepared for the road you have chosen...

## The Way of the Yakuza

by Jonathan McAnulty

A Faction of Kaidan designed for use with the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game

# Jonathan McAnulty **COMING SOON**







### Pazuzu's Fury

By Raging Swan Press Review of Thilo "Endzeitgeist" Graf 5 out of 5 Stars!

This pdf is 24 pages long, 1 page front cover, 1 page blank inside front cover, 1 page overview, 1 page editorial, 1 page ToC and SRD, 1 page explanation on how to read the statblocks, 1 page advertisement and 1 page back cover. That leaves 17 pages of content for the harpies of Pazuzu's Fury.

The first chapter (6 pages) details the fluff of this particular tribe (or is it flock?) of harpies, offering e.g. a particular myth for the origin of this particular flock of harpies, which I definitely liked. While I admit to really liking Pazuzu's real-world mythology background, I like how he is supposed to have acted in this myth (if the GM decides the origin story is correct) and how something new is done with the harpies. We also get 6 pages of new tribal feats, some of which enhances the deadly songs of Pazuzu's Fury, some of which could be used for any airborne creature to devastating effect. None seemed overpowered or too weak. One, though, "Death from Above", might be considered to be potentially fatal for PCs, so be warned. Pazuzu's Fury also gets 5 new spells, many of which interact with bardic abilities and might interest players playing bards. The chapter ends with a page with the new exotic weapon of choice of the harpies, the aptly-named gutripper and 3 new magic items, of which none really impressed me. In fine Raging Swan tradition, they get their artworks, though.

The next chapter details stat-blocks, allies and encounters (10 pages).The chapter kicks off by providing 4 sample encounters as well as a side-bar on aerial combat, 8 stat-blocks of different harpies (casting and non-casting, from CR 6 to CR 10) as well as the corrupting aspect of Pazuzu, a kind of minor avatar-like creature (CR 10). Two pages are devoted to a sample lair, albeit without a map and some ideas for other lairs. The final page of the products features 5 adventure hooks, one of which "The Ugly duckling" is absolutely awesome. I've got three words for you (or 4, depending on how you count the compound): HALF-CELESTIAL HARPY PALADIN. 'Nuff said.

### Conclusion:

I'm starting to feel like a broken record – here before you is yet ANOTHER excellent entry of Raging Swan's TRIBES series. An intelligent, cool revision of a tried and true old creature, mixed with interesting mechanics, old-world-style fluff, nice tie-ins into the lonely coast and beautiful artworks. While I was missing a map for the lair and would have liked to see the aspect at a higher CR, it seems hardly fair to detract a whole star for that. Thus, my final verdict will be 4.5 stars, rounded up to 5, continuing the trend



of extremely high quality Raging Swan has set for itself. Well done!

#### PAZUZU'S FURY



# Rite Publishing Presents: Frocative City Sites Barker's Circus and Sidyshow

# By Rob Manning





### Faces of the Jarnished Souk: Kahrvass Fleymbrow, Smith of Burning Desire

By Rite Publishing *Review of Thilo "Endzeitgeist" Graf* 5 out of 5 Stars!

This installment of the FoTS-series is 17 pages long, 1 page front cover, 1 page editorial, 1 page SRD and 2 pages of advertisements, leaving 12 pages of content for the new FoTS-installment, so let#s check it out, shall we?

As has become the tradition for the FoTS-series, we are introduced to the new NPC in one page that contains the background information of the NPC, advice on how to use him and information for Coliseum Morpheuon's dreamburning rules. Kahrvass is an interesting character in more than one way background-wise, his mastery in any craft and the burning desire with which he throws himself into his work is contrasted by a void inside he forever seeks to fill, an emtiness that might eventually consume him. Thus, as both a supplier of magic weapons/armor/ trinkets and adventure hook, Kahrvass offers more than one way to use him.

The pdf provides a new template, the Cr +1 Magma Creature with 3 different sample creatures, 3 new dreamcatcher items, the new dream-smashing weapon quality, the reborn dreamer trait and the brand of burning desire, a rather interesting new magic item that works via a short ritual. Kahrvass comes in three relatively straightforward progressions: The Azer-smith starts as a CR 8 advanced artist and develops by adding the aforementioned magma-template (and more levels) to a CR 15 NPC to finally become a CR 20 entity that can craft just about anything. It should be mentioned that his spell-lists are beyond extensive and take a lot of work off your hands - neat.

As you may have gleaned, the true focus of this particular FoTS is not battle, but rather item-creation and thus we are offered a wide variety of tools to make the system more viable: The 20-lvl Artisan class is a great idea to salvage what I considered always a downside of the crafting system - The Dwarven smith without any access to spells usually wouldn't be able to create magic items without help from casters. The Artisan-class remedies that by providing a class that gains access to just about all spells available, but only for the purpose of item creation. The design of the class is awesome and I'll use it for my master craftsmen from here on out. Especially due to the fact that they still need to transcribe the spells to their portfolio, needing e.g. PCs to acquire new spells for them, they make for a viable and cool addition to any PFRPG-game and add adventure hooks as well. We don't stop with this one cool new class, though, but also add a whopping 14 feats centering on crafting,



intensifying auras and the like. I especially loved the idea to implement the apprentice/journeyman/ mentor-system of traditional European guilds via feats, another innovation I have already used for quite some time and will now supplement with these feats.

### Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are top-notch, I didn't notice any glitches. layout adheres to the classic 2-column b/w-layout by RiP, the artwork for Kahrvass is neat. The pdf comes with bookmarks, which is nice. Kahrvass provides so much more than an interesting NPC for use in your campaign - if you're like me and the necessity of wizards for crafting always bugged you, this pdf is pure gold. Were it only for the NPCs, I'd give this pdf 4 stars - the new Artisan-class and feats, though, add a spectacular amount of content to this installment of FoTS, making it well worth the low asking price. Thanks to the excellent additional content and the value it adds to one's game, my final verdict will be 5 stars.

Endzeitgeist out.

**Rite Publishing Presents** 

# #30 Fleshgrafts





By J.H. Gulliver

### Caves & Caverns

By Ragin Swan Press Review by Dark Mistress 5 out of 5 Stars!

This product is 88 pages long. It starts with a cover, credits, ToC, and Intro. (5 pages)

### Forward (3 pages)

This talks about the design idea, what's in the chapters and the authors thoughts. It also has tables listing that list CR's in order and page number, by creature type and random monsters by EL.

#### Chapter 1 (16 pages)

This chapter talks about adventuring in the underdark or in this book they call it the Ebon Realm. It talks about travel times, tunnel sizes, skill checks and how they help, languages of the realm, air and bad air with how to notice and over come it, cave-ins, darkness and light sources, spells with dark and light descriptors, the varies types of floors one is likely to encounter and the problems they can present, different types of obstructions one can encounter, types of walls and climbing checks etc, water and what it can cause, floods and underground rivers, a sample cavern with full page map, it ends with a glossary of terms.

#### Chapter 2 (61 pages)

It starts but listing all the common creatures in the underdark by CR and listing which book they come from. Next it lists all the creatures by creature type, followed by 4 monster random encounter tables by tunnel type and 3 feature/hazard encounter tables by tunnel type. Next we get nearly 100 cave and cavern dressing to help make things look better in a random table.

After that we get to the encounters in the book. There is 25 primary encounters in this section that range from CR 6-13 with most falling in the 9-12 range. Each of these encounters have a bit of information about the encounter, full stat blocks, tactics of the creatures and advice on how to scale the encounter. In addition to those there is also a section on Drow (8 stat blocks and 4 brief encounters), Duergar (4 stat blocks and 1 brief encounter), Svirfneblin(4 stat blocks, 1 encounter and a little on a settlement), and Troglodytes (4 stat blocks and 2 brief encounters)

It ends with a OGL, about the authors, ads, and back cover. (4 pages)

Closing thoughts. The art work is black and white and ranges from pretty good to very good. Editing and layout was very good I didn't notice any errors. The encounters ranged from solid to in a few cases outstanding. Most of them was good or very good in design. The first chapter and random tables of the second chapter is reason enough to pick this up for anyone planning to run any games in the underdark.



The encounters are just a bonus and a good bonus at that. The only negative thing I can say and this is more of a nit pick than a real problem is, the encounters tend to be more mundane and by that I mean creatures you would obviously expect to find and/or are common. I would have liked to have seen a few not a lot but a few more uncommon type encounters. Otherwise I really have nothing negative to say and that is a nitpick. So what's my rating? Well what choice do I really have? I am giving it a 5 star review.

Trust me, I'm a Succubus.

## Rite Publishing Presents

# Faces of the Tarnished Souk: Kahrvass Fleymbrow, Smith of Burning Desire



By Matt Banach and Justin Sluder

### 101 Renegade Class Feats

by Rite Publishing *Review by Dark Mistress* **4** out of 5 Stars.

This product is 21 pages long. It starts with a cover and credits. (2 pages)

### 101 Class Feats (16 pages)

This has new class feats for fourteen 3pp classes. Armiger by Super Genius Games – 7 new feats, Counter Assault was my fav for them. It allows the PC to counter all attacks against it from one enemy.

Corsair by Green Ronin - 7 new feats, Greater Dirty Fighting was my fav feat. It allows the PC to add a condition on a dirty fighting attack such as blinded etc.

Divine Channeler by Rite Publishing -9 new feats, Efficacious Channeling feat adds a +1 to the die of channeling and the DC.

Dragon Rider by Super Genius Games – 7 new feats, Steed Breath, gain a breath weapon like your steed.

Gladiator by 4 Wind Fantasy Gaming – 7 new feats, Signature Finishing Move, if you do complete all parts of your Signature Move you do bonus damage.

Godling by Super Genius Games – 7 new feats, I don't have any of these books so can't really pick a feat as I am not sure how effective or good they are.

Guttermage by oone Games -7 new feats, Guttermage Kiss, this feats is a curse that causes vermin to flock to the target.

Luckbringer by Rite Publishing – 7 new feats, Improved Narrow Escape, allows the PC to use Narrow Escape more often.

Taskshaper by Rite Publishing – 7 new feats, Baleful Touch, with a touch you can cast Baleful Polymorph.

Time Thief by Super Genius Games -7 new feats, Steal Mote of Time, lets a PC steal motes of time from foes which just is a way for a Time Thief to recharge.

Vanguard by Super Genius Games - 8 new feats, Arcane Defense, spend a spell to gain extra AC.

The War Master by Super Genius Games – 7 new feats, Tactical Teamwork, cause one alley to know a teamwork feat that the another alley has.

Witch Hunter by Super Genius Games – 7 new feats, Spell Anthema, causes the target to lose their highest level spell or spell like ability for the day.

Wolf Shifter by Paizo Fans United – 7 new feats,



Essence of the Beast, allowed to pick other animals other than a wolf.

It ends with a OGL and ads. (3 page)

Closing thoughts. The art work is a mix of color and black and white, it ranges from ok to pretty good. Editing and layout is good I didn't notice any errors. The book does a good job of adding some new feats to the classes to help add to them and expand on them. Some of the feats could be used by anyone but most are limited to that class or similar classes, such as time thief and time warden able to use most of the new time thief feats. Most of the feats was just ways to improve or add extra special abilities the classes have. I thought some of the feats where on the strong side perhaps to strong. Most of them where perfectly fine. What I think the book does best is expand those classes and likely make people interested in some of the classes they don't own. For me it was the Corsair. So what's my rating? I thought it was a good book but not perfect. I am giving it a 4 star rating.

Trust me, I'm a Succubus.

# ANCESTRAL RELICS

### ELICS

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and the re forcibly years ago. tral Relics i wizards, is of their

manufacturing. These wizards would make the Relics for any house which desired one, whether they were noble or commoner. However the price was steep.

It is known that the creation of the relics demand the soul of a prominent member of the household and that the individual was sacrificed in a most gruesome and murderous way. Of some debate is whether the sacrifice was voluntary or not. Regardless, the ancestor's soul is what fuels the item.

## **#30 Ancestral Relics**

by Michael K. Tumey

An Item Book for Kaidan designed for use with the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game









### Jegendary Classes: The Rook

by Purple Duck Games *Review by Megan Robertson* 5 out of 5 Stars!

Without ado, this work dives into a description of the Rook, a new base class that revolves around the use of trickery and subterfuge both magical and mundane. Suggested roles are anything from con-man to diplomat... and any budding politician might fancy this class too!

Rooks are spellcasters, with their own spell list from which any known spell can be cast without the need for prior study (after all, many tricks and scams rely on quick wits and instantaneous reactions), and they get the Eschew Materials feat as a bonus at first level. Their primary characteristic is Charisma.

To enable some measure of customisation, each rook has a distinctive outlook on life - and how to manipulate it to their advantage, of course! - called a schism. Specific bonus abilities and spells can be gained as the rook rises in level, based on the schism chosen. They can also select from a collection of 'rook talents' as they gain experience, many of these involve subterfuge, disguise and abilities to gather or manipulate information.

The schisms described are quite interesting. The Demagogue, for example, attracts a loyal and devoted following who hang on his every word and do his bidding. A Glamerspex is talented at altering perceptions and confusing those whom he meets... to the extent that two new status conditions are introduced to cope with his victims: befuddled and beguiled. The Necrotist deals with the darker side of things, skirting the margins between life and death, whilst the Schade is the arch-manipulator, rarely leaving the shadows but sending minions made of shadow itself to do his bidding.

An example rook, a tengu glamorspex, is detailed in full - as example or for use as character or NPC as you desire. There are also notes on how well - or not various races do at being rooks, spell lists (mainly drawn from existing published spells, but including advice on what new spells will be suitable for adding to those available to rooks in the future), and a selection of new feats, gear and indeed spells

It's an intriguing class, best suited to an urban, intrigue-filled environment, and perhaps better as an NPC than as a player-character... but I am sure there are devious players out there who will leap upon the chance! Whilst weak in combat, the class is neat and original, and should do well in campaigns where interaction and intrigue feature.





LEGENDARY V: EASTERN AND EXOTIC WEAPONS

# WAY OF THE SAMULRAI

## WAY OF THE SAMURAI

Now the enemy is arrayed against us. Now the day is at hand when we shall risk everything for our lord and master! For this we have prepared all the days of our miserable lives. Now you shall learn what it means to be samurai! Fate is in the hands of the gods, our armor is on our breast, success is in our legs! Let us go forward without fear and may our swords find a bloody sheath before we die.

Taira Motomori to his troops at the Battle of the Six Bridges

### The Way of the Samurai

by Jonathan McAnulty

A Faction of Kaidan designed for use with the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game

# Jonathan McAnulty **COMING SOON**







### Evocative City Sites: Barker's Circus and Sideshow

by Rite Publishing *Review by Megan Robertson* 5 out of 5 Stars!

Roll on up! Roll on up!

The circus is a magical place to visit even in the real world, and can be a fertile source of adventure in your fantasy world as well. Perhaps your characters are enjoying a night off, or they are meeting someone amidst the crowds... You might even want to run a game centred around a group of performers... and I even had one group who got in with a bunch of travelling players as an investment opportunity!

Here we have a town base for a travelling circus and associated 'carnival' sideshows, complete with descriptions of some of the fantastical and bizarre acts and exhibits. The actual location is described in detail too: thus you have the option of using the whole as presented or picking out acts, sideshow exhibits or the setting itself as suits your needs. Every NPC has a backstory, things you might pick out to weave into your plot or develop new ones... the ringmaster is a philanthropist, perhaps he has a job for your characters, or they may be in need of humanitarian aid when they've fallen on hard times, for example. Or perhaps he helped someone that they are looking for, and can point them in the right way - or misdirect them, if he distrusts their motives.

Adventure seeds, a whole packet of maps and plans, detailed NPC stats, everything you need to bring the magic of the circus to your game.

Roll on up! Roll on up!







ATHFIND



# Wings of Twilight

# Available Now for Kindle and other e-readers at Amazon.com and Smashwords.com



Artwork by Rowena Aitken

Hans Cummings

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# The Breaking of Forstor Magar City of Grinding Ice



## by Ben McFarland

