

Rite Publishing Presents

PATHWAYS

January 2012 Issue 11



PATHFINDER
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Heroes of the Jade Oath



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By Frank Carr

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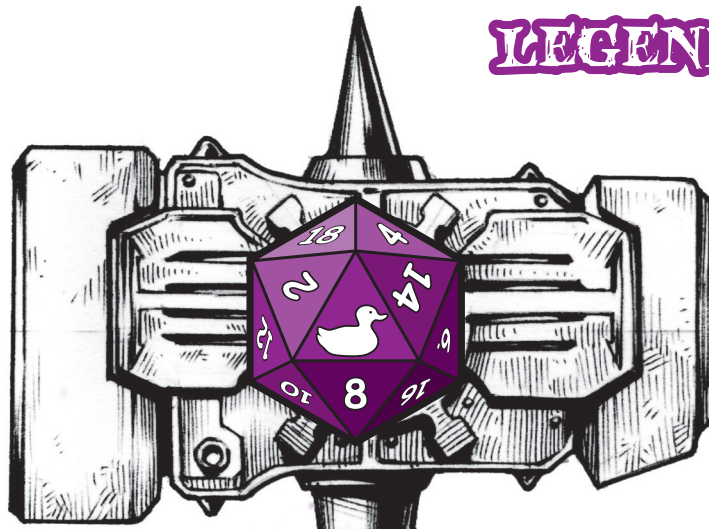


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I thought I'd start this month with an update on my crazy adventure. First, it isn't done, and so that's that. In my group of about 15 players (any five to ten of whom are available for any given session) is flexible and we have at least three other GMs in the group. So, the fact that my daily grind sometimes interferes with my cranking out adventures at a fast pace is no big deal—there's always someone else's campaign to play in, or always another adventure to tackle.

The core of the adventure remains the same: each player will be playing one head of an ettin. I am writing specific rules for this one-shot adventure so that each head is in control of the ettin once each round (in effect, every ettin body has two activations every round, but the ettin itself can only do so much each time). No single controller, for example, will be able to make two attacks, despite this being an option for the usual monster by the same name. Creating the rules for this is plenty challenging and loads of fun. One of the issues I face is making sure that any rules I introduce aren't broken (either to the players' advantage or disadvantage); I am let off easy because of the fact that I'm designing rules specific to this one adventure. If I were working out a system for long-term game use, I'd have to be a lot more careful and undertake more testing.

Design and development are fascinating. And, for me anyway, writing (when I have all the time in the world) is an opportunity for self expression. I don't fancy myself an artist, however, in the specific sense in which art is tied to creativity, I think that anyone who writes role playing game adventures is an artist (as, frankly, is anyone who designs anything for role playing games, including those who create characters). So, at times like this, I get to be something other than an editor, something more than a technical writer: I get to make up stuff.

In some respects, I realized that this adventure would have to be "normal" and in other respects it would have to be unique. I couldn't, I recognized, just go for unique. Unlike the good old days, when clueless (or underprepared) GMs could think of no other means of introduction, the characters would somehow always end up in a smoky, noisy tavern somewhere and happen, through fortuitous events perhaps, end up on the same team. Since the players in this adventure aren't going to be sticking with these characters, my needs in this area are much different than in a traditional adventure. That said, there still needs to be a meaningful reason for the ettins in the adventure to be hanging out together. My solution to this is that there are several ettin communities that share a region of hills and caves between some range of mountains and the vast open spaces between those mountains and the civilizations of the various smaller folk. Those communities are both internally full of strife and committed to being in conflict with one another (as is typical, I would guess, of communities of monstrous, evil creatures). Nevertheless, every year, as the amount of daily daylight wanes, the few religiously inclined members of each community remind the others that it's time to make the appropriate sacrifices to the sun gods so that the waning daylight issue will be resolved and spring will return. To accomplish this task, of course, every community sends

an elected ettin to carry its sacrifice to the sacred meeting place where he will join the elected ettins from the neighboring communities and that small group of ettins jointly trek high into the mountains to the cave of sacrifice (appropriately closer to the sun, of course, so that the sun god will be more likely to see them and accept their sacrifice).

Anyway, there's the "hook." The players will have to have an encounter or two so that they can learn how to play one head of an ettin. It's bad enough when one player in the group is always charging into battle before the spellcaster can toss his fireball in there. It's going to be worse in this case when one player charges an enemy, because now another player's character's body is going to be in the fray even if he didn't want to be there. Before they screw this up and really have problems with the BBEG that they're all expecting to face, they're going to have to learn how to function in this new way. So, I have two encounters planned. The first is against a couple of hill giants and their arctic wolf; that little group is out hunting game and they'll spot the ettins carrying loot.

To give the ettins a fighting chance, I'm going to have a few extras tagging along. One community of ettins has a whole bunch of goblin slaves, so the ettin from that group will have three goblin servants (one of whom will be a shaman). Another community has a weak alliance with some neighboring orcs (the ettins and orcs have some common enemies); that ettin will have an orc ranger/barbarian ally. And another ettin has a pet brown bear. Players, being players, will try to keep these extras alive (despite the fact that they're playing evil monsters). These tagalongs will therefore be both a benefit and a hindrance—we'll see how the players do.

After the players survive this challenge (and the next) they'll eventually find themselves high up in the mountains, entering the sacred chamber where they believe they'll be able to make their sacrifice. This, naturally, is where the twist comes in. For a generation or so, a powerful ogre mage has taken it upon himself to co-opt this ritual for his own ends. He enjoys toying with the many weaker-willed hill dwellers and has found this particular annual ceremony too fun to pass up. Every year he casts spells on the elected ettins so that they amuse him with their infighting and their struggles against the slaves he's taken. He also enjoys taking their sacrificial offerings and adding them to his collected treasure. He always makes sure at least one ettin survives, but he also makes sure that the ettin is appropriately addled so that the other ettins in the communities of the foothills don't think anything is amiss (the wise men of the ettin communities know that this necessary sacrifice sometimes involves loss).

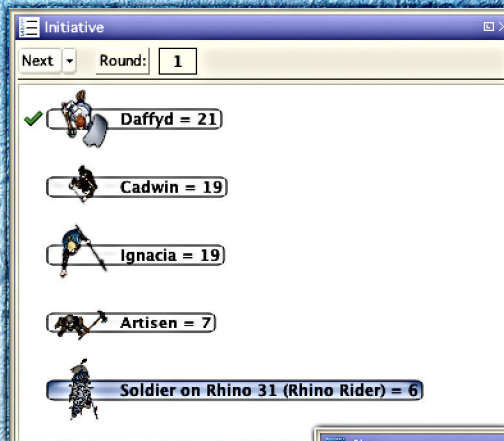
This year, perhaps, things won't go according to his nefarious plans, and the ettins will discover the ruse. Maybe they'll even put an end to the ogre mage's interference, finish with their sacrifice, and bring some prosperity to their miserable lives.

I'll let you know how it goes.

David Paul
Editor-in-chief

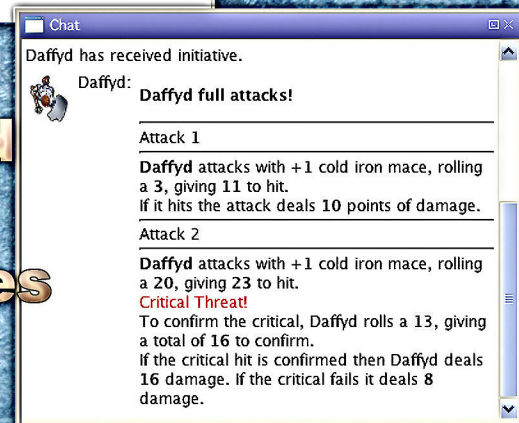
The Breaking of Forstor Nagar

A Pathfinder adventure for 4 8th levels PCs



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Daffyd

Male human NG cleric 8 of Lada
Init +3; Senses Perception +10

DEFENSES

AC 19 touch 9 flat-footed 19
hp 59 (currently 47)
Fort +10, Ref +4, Will +14

OFFENSE

Speed 30
Melee +1 cold iron mace +8/+3 (1d8+2)
Spells (CL 8, +14 concentration)
4th—cure critical wounds, death ward, holy smite, imbue with spell ability
3rd—cure serious wounds, dispel magic, magic vestment, protection from energy, searing light
2nd—calm emotions, cures moderate wounds, remove paralysis, restoration, lesser, shield other, spiritual weapon
1st—bless, comprehend languages, cure light wounds, cure light wounds, endure elements, obscuring mist, protection from evil
0—create water, guidance, light, mending

Domains: community, protection

STATISTICS

Str 13, Dex 8, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 18, Cha 13

Base Atk +6; CMB +16; CMD 7

Feats Child of the Temple, Channel, Improved Channel

Special Abilities: Aura (Ex), Aura of Protection (3 rounds/day) (Su), Calming Touch (9/day) (Sp), Charisma (17), Resistant Touch (9/day) (Sp), (DC 17), Unity (1/day) (Su)

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Poison Dragon Creature

Oni from the far east will go to great lengths to steal and corrupt a dragon egg, tainting the dragon within with the oni's vile essence. This abomination grows faster and stronger, than other of its kind does, if returned to the nest it will eat its siblings, and upon reaching the young adult stage it form changes to resemble that of eastern dragons. A poison dragon's power eventually kills the dragon long before a normal dragon would die, but during that time and they poison water supplies, livestock herds, commit genocide, and devastate entire ecosystems. They enjoy devouring the innocent young of all races but they especially favor human flesh. Their poisonous blood causes them constant and intense pain, leaving them in a constant state of spiteful hostility, even the most innocent of inquires can provoke them to commit shocking acts of carnage and brutality.

Creating a Poison Dragon Creature

"Poison dragon creature" is an acquired or template that can be added to any true dragon (referred to hereafter as the base creature).

A poison dragon creature uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

CR: +2

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

Defenses/Qualities: Immune poison

Speed: young adults or older loose wings based fly speed.

Special Abilities: A poison dragon gains the following special abilities.

Accelerated Aging (Ex): A poison dragon only requires half the number of years to reach an age category but die within 50 years of reaching the great wyrm age category.

Contaminated Blood (Ex): Each time a poison dragon is hit with a slashing or piercing weapon, all creatures within a 10-ft. radius must succeed on a Reflex save (DC $10 + \frac{1}{2}$ the poison dragon's HD + its Constitution Modifier) or be sprayed by the creature's contaminated blood. A creature that fails its save is poisoned.

After a poison dragon is wounded in combat it can shake its body as a free action scattering the blood as a ranged touch attack (range increment 10ft.) It can only do this once per round and only if it has been wounded again since used this ability previously.

Contaminated Blood—contact: save Fort (DC $10 + \frac{1}{2}$ the poison dragon's HD + its Constitution Modifier) ; frequency 1/round for 6 rounds; effect 1d6 Con; cure 2 consecutive saves.

Corrupt Breath (Ex): If the base creature has a breath weapon that deals damage half the damage dealt by that breath weapon is as normal for the base creature (i.e. fire damage for a gold dragon, cold damage for a silver dragon, ect.), but the other half results directly from the corrupting power of the oni and is therefore not subject to being reduced by resistance or immunity.

Cursed Hoard (Su): If a creature other than a poison dragon takes an item from a poison dragon's hoard, at least one item they take will be cursed. See

Cursed Items in the Pathfinder® Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook™

Poison (Ex): Bite—injury; save Fort (DC $10 + \frac{1}{2}$ the poison dragon's HD + its Constitution Modifier) ; frequency 1/round for 6 rounds; effect 1d6 Con; cure 2 consecutive saves.

Taint Water (Sp): Once per day an adult or older poison dragon can poison (as its contaminated blood) 10 cubic feet of water. The ability spoils liquids containing water. Liquid-based magic items (such as potions) and items in a creature's possession must succeed on a Will save (DC equal to the dragon's frightful presence) or become poisonous (though they still have their standard effects). This ability is the equivalent of a 1st-level spell. Its range is equal to that of the dragon's frightful presence.

Toxic Breath (Ex): Instead of its base breath weapon, a poison dragon can replace it with toxic gas. Creatures within the cone or line must succeed on a Fortitude save or take 1 point of Con damage per age category (Fort save half). The save DC is the same as the its normal breath weapon. A creature that makes its saving throw against the toxic breath is immune to further toxic breath attacks from the same poison dragon for 24-hours.

Spell-Like Abilities (Sp): A poison dragon gains the following spell-like abilities, usable at will (unless otherwise noted) upon reaching the listed age category.

- Young—*putrefy food and drink**
- Juvenile—*accelerate poison** or *pernicious poison***
- Adult—*contagion* or *poison*;
- Old—*cloud kill (3/day)* or *diminish plants*;
- Ancient—*blood-mist*;
- Great wyrm—*horrid wilting (1/day)*.

* See the Pathfinder® Roleplaying Game: Advanced Player's Guide™

** Pathfinder® Roleplaying Game: Ultimate Magic

Abilities: Increase from the base creature as follows: Str +4 (+2 to attack and damage, +2 to Climb and Swim skill checks, +2 to Strength, and CMB checks, +2 to CMD, +2 to the DC of any of the creature's Strength-based DCs) +4 Con (+2 to Fort, +2 hp per HD, +2 to any of the creature's Constitution-based DCs).



The Empress of Bitter Flames CR 20

XP 307,200

CE Gargantuan dragon (fire)

Init -1; **Senses** dragon senses; Perception +35

Aura fire (5 ft., 1d6 fire), frightful presence (240 ft., DC 27)

Defense

AC 33, touch 5, flat-footed 33

(-1 Dex, +28 natural, -4 size)

hp 341 (22d12+198)

Fort +22, **Ref** +12, **Will** +21

DR 10/magic; **Immune** fire, paralysis, poison, sleep;

SR 29

Weaknesses vulnerability to cold

Offense

Speed 60 ft., fly 250 ft. (clumsy), swim 60 ft.

Melee bite +32 (4d6+21 plus poison/19-20), 2 claws +32 (2d8+14/19-20), tail slap +30 (2d8+21), 2 wings +30 (2d6+7)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft. (20 ft. with bite)

Special Attacks breath weapon (60-ft. cone, 16d10 fire, DC 30), contaminated blood (Ref DC 30), corrupt breath, crush (4d6+18, DC 30), poison (Fort DC 30), tail sweep (2d6+18, DC 30), taint water, toxic breath (Fort DC 30, 8 Con Dmg), weakening breath

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 22nd; concentration +28)

At will—*accelerate poison, bless, contagion, daylight, detect evil, diminish plants, geas/quest, putrefy food and drink*

Spells Known (CL 11th; concentration +17)

5th (5/day)—*teleport, true seeing*

4th (7/day)—*black tentacles, greater invisibility, stonework*

3rd (7/day)—*dispel magic, haste, heroism, rage*

2nd (8/day)—*aid, bear's endurance, invisibility, silence, whispering wind*

1st (8/day)—*alarm, divine favor, mage armor, shield, shield of faith*

0 (at will)—*detect magic, detect poison, light, mage hand, mending, open/close, prestidigitation, read magic, stabilize*

Tactics

Before Combat Jaws of winter always seek to activate any passive defensive items in its belly. They wait to attack from surprise till they have identified a magic item worth consuming.

During Combat: These wolves often trigger their jaws of severing the first round, both to gain the use of a powerful magical item and to terrify their foes.

Morale Jaws of Winter flee if they feel they are overmatched, if they discover their opponent is immune to critical, or cold damage.

Statistics

Str 39, **Dex** 8, **Con** 29, **Int** 22, **Wis** 23, **Cha** 22

+4 Con (+2 to Fort, +2 hp per HD, +2 to any of the creature's Constitution-based DCs).

Base Atk +22; **CMB** +40; **CMD** 49 (53 vs. trip)

Feats Alertness, Critical Focus, Extend

Spell, Improved Critical (bite, claw), Iron

Will, Multiattack, Power Attack, Quicken

Spell, Stunning Critical, Vital Strike

Skills Diplomacy +31, Fly +10, Heal +31, Knowledge (arcana, history, local, nobility, and religion) +31, Perception +35, Sense Motive +35, Spellcraft +31, Swim +47; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Swim

Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic, Elven, Halfling, 2 more

SQ change shape, cursed hoard, detect gems, fast flight, luck

Ecology

Environment warm plains

Organization solitary

Treasure triple

Special Abilities

Detect Gems (Sp) The Empress of Bitter Flames can detect gems three times per day. This functions as *locate object*, but can only be used to locate gemstones.

Fast Flight (Ex) The Empress of Bitter Flames is treated as one size category larger when determining his fly speed.

Fire Aura (Su) The Empress of Bitter Flames is surrounded by an aura of fire. All creatures within 5 feet of her take 1d6 points of fire damage at the beginning of her turn, she can activate or suppress this aura as a free action.

Luck (Sp) Once per day The Empress of Bitter Flames can touch a gem, usually one embedded in the dragon's hide, and enspell it to bring good luck. As long as The Empress of Bitter Flames carries the gem, it and every evil creature within 80 ft. receives a +1 luck bonus on all saving throws. If she gives an enspelled gem to another creature, only that bearer gets the bonus. The effect lasts 1d3 hours plus 24 hours. This ability is the equivalent of a 2nd-level spell.

Weakening Breath (Su) Instead of a cone of fire, The Empress of Bitter Flames can breathe a cone of weakening gas. Creatures within the cone must succeed on a Fortitude save or take 1 point of Strength damage per age category (Will save half).

Rite Publishing Presents

Five Room Dungeon

The Rabbit Hole



By Ben McFarland, Clinton J. Boomer, and Matt Banach

The Path of Destruction

by T. H. Gulliver

Illustration by Mark Hyzer

"The ancient and cursed islands of Kaidan, whose very name means 'ghost story' in Japanese, is a mist-enshrouded realm of exotic races, oni demons, and yurei ghosts, ruled by an undying shogun, nobility and imperial court, enforced by ruthless samurai, with all social castes bound to an endless cycle of twisted reincarnation. The empire of Kaidan is, by definition, haunted.

Included in this tome are 30 haunts and several unique and horrifying undead variants, all inspired by classic Japanese ghost stories. This volume is organized in nine creepy storylines to help you envision the horrors that await your adventuring party in the dark realm of Kaidan."

— #30 Haunts for Kaidan

Throughout Kaidan there are gates to Jigoku and Yomi. Most gates are difficult to open, requiring the most powerful of magic or the greatest of sacrifices. Outside of a little seaside hagato—an inn and tavern—on the island of Yonshu, was a tiny well. The well provided the tavern with enough water for its guests and their mounts. It was also one of the most easily opened gates to Jigoku. All it required was a single soul to unlock it. In one week, it was given two and opened twice.

The owner of the inn, Katsu, his wife Takaro, and a mute servant girl, Shizuka, were not aware of the gate in the well. Katsu was proud of his inn, pleased with his wife, but particularly fond of Shizuka. Katsu watched Shizuka often. When the girl did chores outside after dark, he would hold the hagato's prettiest lantern—a beautiful lantern decorated with peony flowers. He always found her beautiful in its light.

This was the beginning of Katsu's troubles and the troubles of many who travelled between Kurakage and Hara. When Takaro began to sense that her husband's eyes were following Shizuka too often, and that he was too willing to help the servant, she grew jealous and devised a scheme. One afternoon, she took thirty pieces of silver from Katsu's purse and hid them behind a loose stone in the inner wall of the well. When her husband noticed the money missing, Takaro blamed the girl.

To Takaro's outrage, Katsu defended the girl, claiming that she could not have stolen the silver as she had been busy in the tavern that afternoon. Katsu suggested it must have been a recently departed guest who took the coins. Shizuka, though, was terribly upset. Lacking the words to deny the theft, she packed her few belongings into a bag, preparing to flee to seek



work in Kurakage or another town. Takaro watched her pack and was pleased.

Before dawn of the day she intended to leave, Shizuka did her chores as usual. While drawing water for boiling rice, she noticed a glimpse of silver in the niche in the well's wall. She leaned forward as far as she could and was about to retrieve the coins. Takaro, watching as always, knew the girl would redeem herself if she found the coins and decided to put an end to her problem with one quick push.

Shizuka's neck broke on the way down. The gate to Jigoku opened for the toll of a single soul. An oni called Ochita came through before the gate closed again. Life at the inn returned to normal for a couple days while the oni explored the fields and mountains.

Katsu believed his wife when she told him Shizuka fled with his silver. Ashamed of his foolishness and trusting nature, he apologized to his wife and accepted her decision not to hire another serving girl. He began to do the chores Shizuka once did. His wife, however, to Katsu's puzzlement, insisted on fetching the water from the sea instead of from the well.

Ochita was watching now. She was always watching. One evening, while Katsu chopped wood by the peony lantern's light, Ochita took Shizuka's body as her own and climbed from the well. Where the peony lantern shone on the broken and mangled corpse, Katsu saw only the beautiful young girl, returned to him. He set down the axe, used his robe to dry the girl's hair, and took her in his arms. He did not notice any change when they stepped out of the lantern's light.

His wife, Takaro, stepped out of the inn and flew into a disgusted rage when she saw her husband, stroking and kissing the girl's twisted corpse. Grabbing the axe they used for chopping wood, Takaro committed murder for the second time in one week. She shoved the two corpses into the well and the gate to Jigoku opened a second time. A second oni slipped through the open gate, this one called Chionomuhito.

Each night for a week, Ochito and Chionomuhito seized the corpses of Katsu and Shizuka and climbed from the well. They danced around the hagato, only crawling back into the well before the sun rose. When the corpses passed through the light of the peony lantern, they became whole and beautiful. Once out of the light, they were broken and mangled. Takaro watched in jealousy and horror. On evening of the seventh day, Takaro walked slowly to the cliffs overlooking the sea and threw herself onto the rocks below.

Ochito was delighted with Takaro's newly mangled corpse and took it as its own. Chionomuhito, no longer having the living Takaro to torture, travelled northeast to a tengu village where it could create new mischief.

Several haunts in this #30 *Haunts for Kaidan* owe their origin to the pain and anguish caused by Ochito and Chionomuhito. The destruction they caused throughout the Oniba province of Yonshu Island left many smaller villages abandoned by all but the few undead creatures they created.



Rite Publishing Presents

The Secrets of Forgotten Magic Items



by Will McCardell

Lord of the Earth Node

By Creighton Broadhurst of Raging Swan Press;

(EL16; XP 76,800)

In this encounter, the PCs discover the cavern-lair claimed by Razlynvuren, a crystal dragon of great size and age. Razlynvuren lairs here because the boundaries between the Material Plane and the Elemental Plane of Earth are particularly weak in the surrounding areas and he enjoys the elemental feel of this weakness.

The rock of this cavern is of a dark hue and the very air itself seems heavy and laden with primal energy. Minerals glimmer in the cavern walls, caught in the light cast by several flaming stalagmites. Toward the back of this large chamber, a shadowed passageway leads into darkness. A confused mishmash of stone walls, beds of loose gravel and angled sections of floor dominate this chamber.

Razlynvuren's tremorsense ability makes him extremely difficult to surprise. If he senses approaching travellers, he casts *mage armour*, *false life*, *stoneskin*, *resist energy* (acid, cold, electricity and fire), *protection from energy* (acid, cold, electricity and fire) and *shield*.

Razlynvuren is not hostile to travellers unless they are scions of obviously evil races (drow, duergar and so on). Unless the intruders are immediately hostile, treat him as indifferent. A DC 18 Diplomacy check renders him friendly and a subsequent DC 8 Diplomacy check renders him helpful. If the PCs render Razlynvuren helpful, he allows them to rest in his lair's outer chamber and provides other reasonable assistance (including casting spells) as the GM determines.

Razlynvuren

For the last few centuries of his 1,100 year life, Razlynvuren has dwelled in this cavern, stirring himself only occasionally to hunt for food in the surrounding caverns and passageways.

Background: A creature of the earth, Razlynvuren wandered for many years before stumbling upon his current home. Since his arrival, he has defeated encroaching duergar miners, drow raiders and even several purple worms. He has alliances with an elder xorn and several ancient, powerful earth elementals that lurk in the surrounding rock.

Personality: Generally good-natured, although impressively vain, Razlynvuren can appear standoffish and aloof. Very touchy about his appearance, derogatory comments send him into a rage, which only intense flattery can assuage.

Razlynvuren is obsessed with tidiness and order in his cavern home; in this regard he is more than a little obsessive and compulsive. He also enjoys manipulating the surrounding stone – to him the outer cavern is perfectly ordered.



Mannerisms: During conversation, Razlynvuren shifts and moves so that his scales shimmer in the light.

Distinguishing Features: Centuries ago, Razlynvuren was struck by an *enervation* spell. The necrotic magic blackened one of the scales on his belly. He is self-conscious of this blemish and rarely shows the affected area.

Tactics

Razlynvuren vigorously defends his home. He charges attackers using Greater Overrun and his frightful presence to devastating effect and breathes on bunches of foes. He uses *dominate person* against powerful warriors and the like (instructing them to attack enemy spellcasters) and *wall of stone* to separate isolated characters from their fellows. If reduced to fewer than 100 hit points, he retreats using *dimension door* or his burrow ability.

Area Features

The area has several features of note:

Illumination: Many *continual flames* cast upon perfectly smooth stalagmites illuminate the outer cavern. Darkness shrouds Razlynvuren's inner cavern.

Rock: The rock of the cavern walls is of dark hue and contains many minerals of exotic, rare types.

Enhanced Magic: Spells and spell-like abilities with the earth descriptor or that use, manipulate or create earth or stone (including those of the Earth domain and the elemental [earth] bloodline are enhanced [such spells have a caster level 2 higher than normal]).

Impeded Magic: Spells or spell-like abilities with the air descriptor or that use or create air (including those of the Air domain, spell-like abilities of the elemental [air] bloodline and spells that summon air elementals or outsiders with the air subtype are impeded [the spellcaster must make a DC 20 + spell level concentration check to successfully cast the spell; failure indicates the spell fails but is still lost]).

Razlynvuren CR 16

(XP 76,800)

This huge dragon's scales glimmer with a multitude of colours. Its wings comprise sheets of flexible glass and its teeth and claws are of multicoloured crystal.

Male wyrm crystal dragon

LN Huge dragon (earth, extraplanar)

Init +3; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., dragon senses, tremorsense 120 ft.; **Perception** +31, **Sense Motive** +31

Dragon Senses (Ex) Razlynvuren sees four times as well as a human in dim light and twice as well in normal light.

Speed 60 ft., burrow 30 ft., climb 30 ft., fly 200 ft. (poor); **ACP** 0; **Acrobatics** -1 (+11 jumping), **Climb** +33, **Fly** +17, **Stealth** +17

AC 39, touch 7, flat-footed 39; **CMD** 45
(-1 Dex, +32 natural, -2 size)

Immune paralysis, sleep, sonic

Fort +20, **Ref** +14, **Will** +20; **SR** 27 (ray reflection)

Ray Reflection (Ex) Razlynvuren's scales reflect ray spells back at the ray's source if the ray fails to overcome his spell resistance

hp 310 (23 HD); **DR** magic/20

Space 15 ft. (frightful presence 330 ft.); **Base Atk** +23; **CMB** +36 (+40 overrun)

Frightful Presence (Ex) Creatures within 330 ft. of Razlynvuren with fewer than 23 HD must make a DC 29 Will save or become shaken (or panicked if it has 4 HD or fewer) for 5d6 rounds if they see him charge or attack. A creature making a successful saving throw is immune to Razlynvuren's frightful presence for 24 hours. This is a mind-affecting fear effect.

Melee bite (reach 20 ft.) +32 (3d8+16/19-20),
2 claws (reach 10 ft.) +32 (2d6+11),
2 wings (reach 10 ft.) +30 (1d8+5) and
tail slap (reach 10 ft.) +30 (2d6+16)

Atk Options Greater Overrun, Greater Vital Strike, Improved Overrun, Power Attack (-6 attack, +12 damage [+18 with bite and tail slap, +6 with wings], crush (DC 28 Reflex; 2d8+16), razor sharp

Razor Sharp (Ex) All Razlynvuren's natural attacks deal slashing damage.



Special Actions breath weapon (50 ft. cone; 22d4 sonic [DC 28])

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 11th; concentration +19)

5th (5/day)—*dominate person* (DC 23), *wall of stone*

4th (8/day)—*dimension door*, *stone shape*, *stoneskin*

3rd (8/day)—*displacement*, *haste*, *heroism*, *protection from energy*

2nd (8/day)—*bear's endurance*, *false life*, *invisibility*, *mirror image*, *resist energy*

1st (8/day)—*alarm*, *comprehend languages*, *mage armour*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *shield*

0—*arcane mark*, *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 23rd; concentration +19)

At will—*colour spray* (DC 18), *glitterdust* (DC 20), *rainbow pattern* (DC 22)

3/day—*prismatic spray* (DC 25), *stone to flesh* (DC 24)

Combat Gear

Abilities Str 33, Dex 8, Con 25, Int 20, Wis 21, Cha 26

Feats Greater Overrun, Greater Vital Strike, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Improved Overrun, Improved Vital Strike, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack, Power Attack, Vital Strike

Skills as above plus Diplomacy +34, Knowledge (arcana) +31, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +31, Knowledge (geography) +20, Knowledge (planes) +31, Spellcraft +31, Use Magic Device +34

Languages Aklo, Common, Draconic, Ignan, Terran, Undercommon

Gear as above

Outer Cavern

This cavern features many strangely-ordered stone walls, weirdly-angled sections of floor and areas of loose rock (the result of Razlynvuren's incessant burrowing, *walls of stone* and *stone shapes*).

Inner Cavern

This cavern serves as Razlynvuren's bed chamber and treasury. Niches in the wall (created by multiple *stone shape* spells) hold his treasures – all neatly catalogued and ordered. Razlynvuren himself slumbers upon a great bed of gravel and rock dust (again created by multiple *stone shape* spells) 20 ft. deep.

Razlynvuren's Hoard

Razlynvuren keeps the following items neatly stored in his treasure:

Coinage: 58,537 cp, 21,468 sp, 1,527 gp, 547 pp

Amulet: Flecks of adamantine stud this gold amulet (1,200 gp; DC 20 Appraise values).

Ewer: Images of dwarven knights decorate this silver ewer (400 gp; DC 20 Appraise values).

Harp: Carvings of bucolic scenes of love decorate this Darkwood harp (250 gp; DC 20 Appraise values).

Statue: Craved from oak and stained black this statue depicts a coiled naga (150 gp; DC 20 Appraise values).

+1/+1 Orc Double Axe: Dried bloodstains cover this plain, unadorned Medium axe (faint [DC 16 Knowledge {arcana} evocation]; DC 18 Spellcraft identifies; price 4,660 gp).

+1 Light Fortification Studded Leather Armour: This suit of burnished Medium-sized studded leather armour appears in perfect condition; no blemishes mar its surface (strong [DC 24 Knowledge {arcana} abjuration]; DC 28 Spellcraft identifies; price 4,175 gp).

Wand of silence (4 charges): This tapered iron rod dully reflects the light (faint [DC 17 Knowledge {arcana} illusion]; DC 18 Spellcraft identifies; price 360 gp).

Ring of Counterspells: Mystic protective runes adorn this otherwise plain golden ring (moderate [DC 19 Knowledge {arcana} evocation]; DC 26 Spellcraft identifies; price 4,000 gp).

The hoard's total value is 25,943 gp.

Scaling the Encounter

To modify this encounter, apply the following changes:

EL 15 (XP 51,200): Apply the young creature template to Razlynvuren (+2 on all Dex-based rolls, -2 on all other rolls; hp 264).

EL 17 (XP 102,400): Apply the advanced creature template to Razlynvuren (+2 on all rolls [including damage rolls] and special ability DCs; AC 43, touch 11, flat-footed 43; CMD 49; hp 356).

This article uses material from *GameMastery Guide* and *Bestiary 2*. All relevant information is included herein.

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



Rite Publishing Presents

The Secrets of the Oracle



By David Mallon

Left Behind Forgotten Magic Items

By Will McCardell

Through its many revisions, *The Secrets of Forgotten Magic Items* gained and lost a number of options. This article deals with a couple of the options that were originally in the product but later were cut. The goal is to provide some insight into why they were kept out of the final version of the product, as well as to provide the options for those who still wish to use them. In addition, three new items are presented at the end of the article.

Wyrne Scrolls

Much like how a warrior keeps multiple weapons on hand to deal with any sort of challenge, a wyrne scroll allows a spellcaster to power a scroll with his own magic.

A wyrne scroll always contains one spell. Every wyrne scroll is characterized by a giant circle on the paper made up of 5 curved segments. The magic symbols for the spell itself are inside this circle.

A wyrne scroll allows the spellcaster to use his own spell slots or spells-per-day to fuel the magic of the scroll. By spending a spell slot or spell-per-day of a spell level equal to or higher than the spell on the wyrne scroll as a part of the action to cast from the scroll, the scroll is not necessarily used up after casting the spell. Since it is fueled with the spellcaster's own spells, the spellcaster uses his own caster level and casting ability to set the DC. After being used, a wyrne scroll loses one of the curved segments that made up the circle. Once all the curved segments are gone, the spell on the scroll fades away. Effectively, wyrne scrolls have 5 charges, and by using the scroll it loses a charge.

For example, if a wizard has a wyrne scroll of *fireball* and he only has *haste* prepared, he can cast *fireball* by using up the spell slot that *haste* used.

The spell on the wyrne scroll must be on your class spell list for you to be able to use it. Use Magic Device cannot bypass this restriction. A wyrne scroll's base cost is 1/5th of a scroll of equivalent spell level. The DC to craft a wyrne scroll is equal to 20 + the caster level of the spell.

Why was it cut?

The idea behind wyrne scrolls was that spellcasters would use up their own slots to power the spell, and this idea was the primary balancing factor of the item, as well as the reason for the cheap cost. After playtesting and many debates, this item was eventually dropped from an early draft due to the sheer versatility that it gave casters. One of the balancing factors of casters is that they must choose ahead of time which spells to use, and this item, even



if priced five times as much rather than a fifth as much, tore that idea asunder. If a GM still wishes to allow this item type, it is recommended to make the base cost five times the base cost of a scroll of the equivalent spell level.

Cruth Galdr Runes

The printed rules for cruth galdr runes make the runes surprisingly cheap. Even the largest of runes will require only an equivalent of 360 gp. There were many factors that influenced the decision to make them inexpensive. One of the biggest reasons was that they were stationary. Unlike almost all magical items, these generally stay in place. This alone reduces the value of the items considerably, leaving runes used for combat mostly in the realm of NPCs and the groups of players who lure enemies into ambushes. Another was the length of time necessary to engrave them. Except for a select few runes, the number of actions necessary to engrave them is prohibitive to be done on-the-fly in combat. The fact that these generally benefited whoever was inside the rune, rather than the allies of the engraver, was another factor. This creates a sort of "King of the Hill" type game when these are in play during combat. Finally, runes such as the *dowsing*

runes and the *runes of harvest* meant that village priests and shamans needed to be able to purchase the goods necessary to craft cruth galdr runes. For these reasons, and myriad others too small to mention, the price was intentionally kept low.

But the mechanics for creating cruth galdr runes were not always this way. In an earlier draft of the runes, there were two material components for creating a rune: an athame with a charge remaining; and silvery powder of eldritch origin that was laid on the ground, and then engraved through by the athame. The rules for this system follow. This system is compatible with all the runes presented in *The Secrets of Forgotten Magic Items* with only minor tweaks:

Each square costs 250 gp worth of silvery powder.

Each completed rune reduces the charges of any athame used to engrave the rune by one. If you are interrupted when engraving a rune and you do not resume engraving it before the rune's time runs out, the athame loses a charge.

The *runes of harvest* does not require any silvery powder.

The runes engraved with the Athame of the Demiurge do not require any silvery powder.

These original rules were based on the very first rune, the *runes of eldritch might*. Many of the consumable items that increase the caster level of a spell cost roughly 200-250 gp, so the rules were set to emulate that. In play, a square can require 100 through 250 gp. A GM who wishes to use this alternative method of crafting runes should choose a cost within that range to use.

New Items

New Enchanted Flask

Satiating Flask:

Cost: 3,000 gp

Caster level: 5th

Effect: Drinking a magical liquid from this flask provides life-sustaining nourishment, as a *ring of sustenance*. In addition, it provides a +2 alchemical bonus to the next saving throw the drinker makes against a disease (within 24 hours).

New Dweomer Sigil Scroll

Sigil of Eldritch Repositioning:

Cost: 45,000 gp

Caster level: 13th

Effect: Upon casting a 1st level or higher spell with the aid of this zweomer sigil scroll, you may teleport to a nearby space as if using *dimension door*. This movement does not provoke attacks of opportunity. You must be able to see the space you are moving into, and you cannot take other creatures with you. You may teleport up to 10 feet away from your current position.



New Cruth Galdr rune

Dweomer Sigil Rune

CL: 7th

Squares: 9, in a 3x3 grid

Action: 5 full-round actions

Time: 1 round

Description: The complex formulae on the zweomer sigil scroll to be engraved.

Effect: Any spell cast by a spellcaster while standing in the center square of the rune is affected by the zweomer sigil scroll.

Special: Engraving this rune requires a copy of the zweomer sigil scroll to be made into a rune. This zweomer sigil scroll is used up in the creation of the rune.



Rite Publishing Presents

101 Hazards and Disasters



By Steven D. Russell

Who Watches the Night Haunts

By Rob Manning

Illustration by Mark Hyzer

The Night Haunts are a clandestine group of vigilantes performing seemingly random acts of justice in the Evocative City. Hachaliah Barker and his crew try to right wrongs of all sizes throughout the City. Most of the time, these activities go against the wishes of those in power. They keep their missions extremely secret, leaving trails to point to other criminal organizations in the City to throw off pursuit. Ambra Vanderette and others trusted by Hachaliah have spread the Night Haunt vigilantism into many small cities throughout Questhaven and other lands. This organization tries its hardest to protect the everyday citizens from the evils of those who think they have the power to alter innocent lives for their benefit.

Use the following hooks as the beginnings of mysteries in any urban setting.

1. Murder in High Heels

A serial murderer has struck again. This, the eleventh victim, lies face down in the water near the pier. Her head removed to confound divining clergy, the only clue left behind is a tiny locket wrapped around her wrist.

The secret:

A married pair is committing these murders. They alter their methods for each grisly beheading, confounding investigators. They lost their only child to a pox epidemic and now see random people as the embodiment of the lax healers.

The Night Haunts intervene:

Drawn into this through one of the victim's families, the Night Haunts spread the word around to the local dive bars and gossip mongers. They are looking for information.

2. While the City Sleeps

A daring second-story man breaks into upper-class mansions at night and pilfers jewelry and other objet d'art.

The secret:

Recently, he observed a high-ranking official murder a prostitute while burglarizing his home. He is on the run from a hit squad.

The Night Haunts intervene:

The Night Haunts have hidden the burglar away in a safe house. They need someone to provide protection for him or they need someone to verify the man's story.



3. Parasite

A numbers racket has added a bonus multiplier to its weekly gamble. This fourth number has nearly doubled the racketeers' intake, as many gamblers try to double or triple their winnings; usually to no avail.

The secret:

The sudden influx of coin has caused the numbers runners and others low on the racket's food chain to get greedy. Many are uniting to stage a mutinous coup.

The Night Haunts intervene:

Not wanting a street fight but still wanting the chaos to disrupt the racket, the Night Haunts use divination

powers to pay out the most popular number choices week after week. The racket is beginning to lose money and is thinking of shutting down.

4. Paralyzed

One gang in town, The Blue Bloods, is opening the books and promoting several of its high earners to 'captain' status. Word of the reorganization gets out, bringing up old rivalries between the proposed nominees. The resulting bloodshed frightens those living in the terrorized neighborhood.

The secret:

The masters of the Blue Bloods deliberately fed these rivalries, knowing this was going to happen. They were looking to thin the herd of their followers before a few strong contenders overthrew their leadership with new ideas.

The Night Haunts intervene:

One of the bloodiest battles takes place on the docks and it stretches over several weeks as three small sets vie for dominance through the district. The Night Haunts need infiltrators to help disassemble one or more of the sets before the battles graduate into a full scale war.

5. Saint and Sinner

A new recruit to Doctor Otto Simms Peculiar Paraphernalium recently manifested a split personality. Myza Dobry performs as a contortionist in the sideshow and her dependence on painkillers allowed a disgruntled underworld boss to infiltrate the Night Haunts; at least tangentially.

The secret:

Myza has a high tolerance to painkillers and is feeding the underworld boss false information.

The Night Haunts intervene:

After nearly losing a list of double agents spread throughout the City, Hachaliah now gives information through Myza that implicates other underworld figures. Eventually, this will result in either one or the other underworld gang to be exposed. Hachaliah weans Myza off the painkillers with magical help.

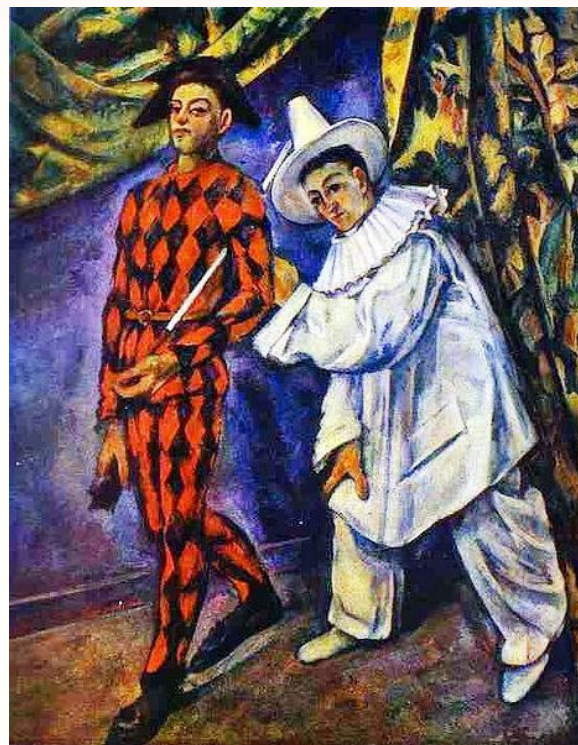
6. Almost Human

A necromantic grave robber is not satisfied with waiting for the delivery of fresh cadavers to the cemetery. A recent rash of body stealing from crematoriums, embalmers, and even churches riles the general populace. Zombies are wandering the streets in growing numbers.

The secret:

This is the work of a cult. They worship a massive olive slime dominating an underground chamber beneath the City.

The Night Haunts intervene:



After researching the cult, the Night Haunts need volunteers to destroy the creature and free its followers. They know the cult's location and approximate numbers.

7. Under the Rose

A new gang has muscled its way to the top. These murderers leave a rose on each of their victims. The Night Haunts have left them alone as they eliminated several smaller groups. Many rumors implicated the Night Haunts as either allies of the new gang or full-fledged members.

The secret:

The Night Haunts did sanction the Rose with aid in its first few steps infiltrating the City. After the Rose began making pacts with devils, the new direction of the Rose's gang overstepped the patronage of the Night Haunts.

The Night Haunts intervene:

The Night Haunts want to clean up their own mess after letting the Rose loose on the City's streets. But, the devilish group has eluded their pursuit for too long. The Night Haunts need this threat eliminated quickly, before the Rose does too much damage.

8. Strange Ways

A lunatic escaped from the Bedlam Asylum has found a way to disintegrate gold coin, leaving only a pile of worthless rust behind. Banks, moneychangers, and the nobility are near riot in their fervor to have this woman caught.

The secret:

Little Luca, the transmuter in question, perfected her process after decades in solitary inside the asylum. She originally was an accountant of some renown, but slipped into insanity and now wants to destroy all gold.

The Night Haunts intervene:

The Night Haunts try to lure Little Luca into a trap by making it known throughout the City that most of the merchants are transporting their gold to a hidden vault in the Warehouse District. After setting the trap, they need someone to capture Luca and anyone (or anything) with her.

9. X-ray Eyes

The day of the trial of Xutor Po, a widely-hated criminal, ends in chaos. Somehow the *zone of truth* protecting the court malfunctions and Xutor's representatives manipulate the loophole and rush the proceedings, eliciting a not guilty verdict. Xutor disappears in the throng outside the court. Xutor's decapitated head appears on the court's steps the next morning.

The secret:

Xutor's defenders caught the court flat-footed. They had become too dependent on magic to protect the truth. Unfortunately for Xutor, he was not well-liked in the underworld of the City and a powerful rival found him before the law found him.

The Night Haunts intervene:

Dogfish, the leader of the lizardman gang that rules the sewers under the City, found Xutor hiding in his gang's territory. The Night Haunts deal with Dogfish from time to time, but both groups deny having anything to do with Xutor's beheading and both want to know who was able to perform such a feat without witnesses.

10. Naked City

Two small groups of bandits team up to take down a jewelry store. Once underway, the plan goes awry and the groups take hostages and barricade themselves inside the store. Tensions rise and the two groups splinter into their original teams.

The secret:

The jewelry store is a front for another, bigger gang of thugs. The hostages are armed and soon the entire city block could turn into a war zone.

The Night Haunts intervene:

The Night Haunts have members of their own inside the bigger group of thugs. They have already diffused an immediate retaliation of the robbery, but they need help getting the others to lay down their arms and leave the neighborhood before the law gets involved.



Rite Publishing Presents

Faces of the Tarnished Souk:

Bonetongue, Steward of Dead Dreams



By Matt Banach and Justin Sluder

Twenty Questions with Jonathan McAnulty

By Steven D. Russell

1. Could you tell us a little about yourself?

I was born in El Paso, Texas and grew up in Missouri, New Mexico, and Pennsylvania; I've since lived in Ohio and West Virginia, so I've seen a good deal of our country. I began roleplaying when I was about 9 and a friend introduced me to Dungeons and Dragons, which I then introduced to my brother. For my tenth birthday, I spent my birthday money on the Dungeons and Dragons Basic Boxed set (Moldvay) and haven't looked back since. I have degrees in Bible and I work full-time as a gospel minister, a pursuit I enjoy as much as gaming. My wife and I homeschool our four kids and they are all, to one degree or another, gamers (I started them on roleplaying when they were about four), so I have a ready-made gaming group that moves with me. I've been doing freelance game writing for a little over two years now, and, while it is sometimes tricky to juggle work, family and writing, there is nothing like actually seeing your name in print, on a cover, to motivate you to want to do more.

2. What is your home game like?

My home game is a family activity, me and the kids, with Sandra (my wife) sometimes joining. I am typically the GM though the kids have begun running their own games more and more without me, and I do sometimes hand over the reins just to see how they are doing on that aspect of the game. We don't play RPGs quite as often as I would like, but we try to have a few games each month, with a goal of roleplaying once a week. I use the family for playtesting, but apart from that we tend to focus on campaigns over one-shots. Currently we are playing the Kingmaker AP, though we are also doing some Kaidan adventuring and this coming year I want to try and experiment with some other systems more, like One Ring, Call of Cthulhu and Mouse Guard.

3. What is your favorite Paizo product and why?

I'm a sucker for monster books, so I really like the Bestiaries. However, the APs are my favorite products. I'm a bit behind in my reading of them, but I have been a subscriber to them from the first and think the combination adventure/campaign guide/bestiary to be a great thing. *Rise of the Runelords* may be my favorite, just because it was first and I think in future years it will be one of the shared memories of the gamer collective. My kids still talk about playing through that campaign (which we finished) two years later, and there are some good memories associated with the adventure.



4. You have done a lot of work for Rite Publishing, how did that start and how would you characterize it today?

It's all Trevor Gulliver's fault. He saw an opportunity to do some writing for Rite (an open call if I remember correctly) and asked me if I wanted to co-write with him. We had never met in person, but we had done some online gaming together and had done some other fiction writing together, so I said sure. Our application was accepted and a short time later we churned out an *Evocative City Site*. I was then asked to help finish up *Coliseum Morpheuon*, and from there I moved on to working on the Kaidan project, doing a few other small things in between, including the well-received *The Secrets of Divine Channeling* and *101 Malevolent Magic Items*. It has been a fun experience, one I am very grateful for (thanks Trevor), and one which has encouraged me to continue to do more writing.

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

I'm pretty fond of most of them, and my latest project is normally the one I am most enthused about, but I think the Kaidan trilogy is probably my favorite work thus far (though on a different day it might be *Coliseum Morpheuon* or *101 Malevolent Magic Items*). Kaidan (Michael Tumey's brain-child) is a fantasy-horror interpretation of Japan as it might have been if it had been taken over by an undead child emperor and all his undead relatives. The adventure trilogy introduces western characters to this eastern world, trapping them on one of the islands and terrorizing them until they can find a way to leave.

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

You mean, other than actually having the pleasure of seeing the hardcopy of the adventures for sale at the Paizo booth during this year's Gencon? During the actual work, I enjoyed taking the Japanese stories which served as a base for the adventures and then giving them stats and an RPG spin. Probably the best moment, though, was getting the chance to write up the art order for the Dark Path cover and see it come to life. I don't get to do a lot of art orders, but I when I do, it's fun to see my words given artistic form by someone else. The Dark Path cover served as my computer wallpaper for quite a while.

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

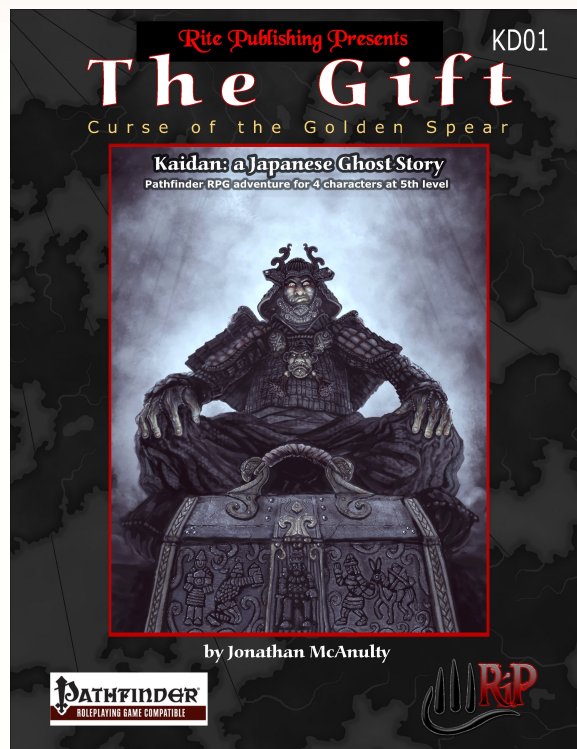
Close to the beginning of the project, I was trying to come up with a simple in-game reason for the way things worked metaphysically in Kaidan, something that could be easily shoehorned into any existing campaign world. My solution was that Kaidan was a spiritual trap – there were no new souls being created and souls who died in Kaidan were forever anchored to the archipelago and kept from moving on to their spiritual reward. Combine this with the penchant, on the islands, for individuals to turn into ghosts or other undead entities, and you have a nice recipe for a lot of nasty unpleasantness, including the possibility of psychotic, soulless individuals (and animals) being born and a twisted wheel of reincarnation.

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

In all honesty, the most challenging aspect of Kaidan was trying to do things in a way that was creative and true to the setting and yet would not fly directly in the face of anything Paizo might put out for their own oriental products at a later date. I knew Paizo was going to be coming out with its own samurai and ninja classes and also had a good idea they might be creating a good number of oriental monsters. The timeline did not allow the possibility of waiting to see what they produced first and there was a danger of putting out material that would be obsolete in a matter of months. I think, personally, we threaded the needle pretty well. *Bestiary 3* did have some of the same monsters I did for Kaidan and while their takes were different than mine, that, in my opinion, is no big deal as it just gives the GM more ways to surprise players. I am confident that a GM can mix and match anything in the Kaidan adventures with anything in the "official" products without difficulty.

9. Did you learn anything while working on it?

I learned a great deal about Japanese folklore and history that I had not known before. While I would not claim to be an expert, I think I could discuss Japanese history much more intelligently today than I could have done a year ago or so.



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

I particularly like monster books, which means that *The Tome of Horrors Complete* is right at the top of my list of must-have products (and its massive size makes it hard to compete against). Among the smaller monster books put out (which would be all of them) I would have to mention *Book of Beasts: Monsters of the River Nation* from Jon Brazier.

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

I like the books I buy to be well edited, readable and inspiring. An RPG book is good if I read it and immediately start thinking of ways to use the material inside of it.

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

I don't know that I have a single favorite designer. I think that there are a number of very talented people out there and I have an especial regard for those individuals who have been in the business the longest. For adventure writing, I would say that Richard Pett is the one writer who I would place highest on my list of names I watch for on a cover.

13. What advice would you give to would-be-freelancers?

My main advice would be to keep asking for work until someone agrees to let you write for them. Don't

give up on that. But once you have an assignment, make the most of it. Finish it cleanly (make it easy on the editor), on time and under word count. Make a good first impression and you are likely to get asked to do more work.

14. Who is your favorite illustrator?

Wayne Reynolds is the first name that comes to mind, at least for cover work. Though I don't know that he is my favorite, his pieces are almost always attractive and there is a reason the big names consistently hire him. Jason Rainville, who did the covers of both *Coliseum* and *Dark Path*, does work I like a lot (and I don't just say that because he graces books I wrote) and I look forward to seeing his name become more well-known. Interior-wise, I like Rick Hershey's work. And while I don't like all of his work, I have to say that Larry Elmore has probably produced some of my favorite game-related images ever, though Jeff Easley is probably a close second.

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

Most of my favorite fan response thus far has mostly been in the form of positive reviews, which always make me happy. But I was especially pleased when we released *Frozen Wind* as a free Pathfinder compatible adventure and I was told by one reader that it was going to be converted by them for their L5R campaign. Having someone like my adventure enough to do the work of converting it was, to me, high praise.

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

I have a PFRPG adventure coming out soon which involves terrorists, bomb throwing apes and a monkey alchemist. That was a fun one to playtest and I'm looking forward to see how it's received.

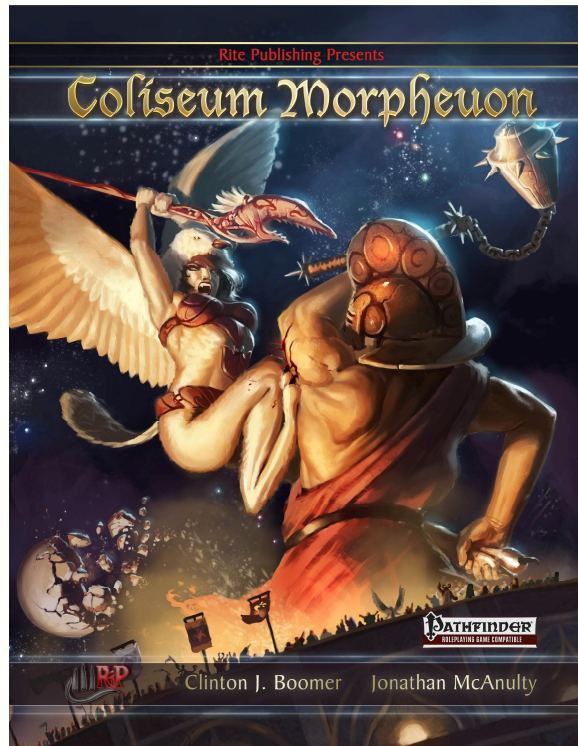
I'm also finishing up *The Way of the Samurai* (though a recent move and job change has slowed that up some) which is being done in the same style as *The Way of the Yakuza*. We are taking the samurai concept and making it far more than just a class concept, incorporating a variety of archetypes (including several for the PFRPG samurai class itself), adding on an honor mechanic, and a system for statting up a samurai clan to facilitate with role-playing interactions with samurai NPCs. Once I'm done with *The Way of the Samurai*, I then have the first level of a mega-dungeon that needs to be filled and polished up for another product.

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

I would like to keep producing RPG work for as long as possible. While I don't anticipate ever doing it as my primary occupation, my goal is to become well known enough until any number of companies feel comfortable asking me to do work for them. I'm not there yet, but I'll keep plugging away in the meantime. I would also like to branch out and do some non-RPG



Dark Path
Illustration by Jason Rainville



game design work. I have a couple of game ideas that I am pursuing, creating demo copies for, and it is a goal to get some of those published one day.

18. Do you do any writing apart from game design?

I think a lot of roleplayers are drawn to the concept of writing and I'm no exception. I've written a fair number of short stories, though only a few of them have seen the light of day and I've finished one novel which has officially received a rejection letter from Baen, so I've made it that far. I also write a fair amount of religious material, mainly for classes I teach and, eventually, I'm going to be putting some of that together for publication.

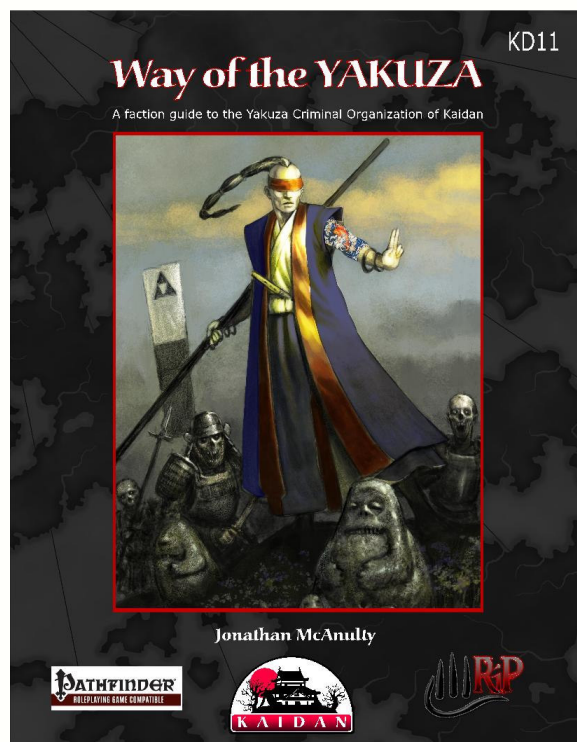
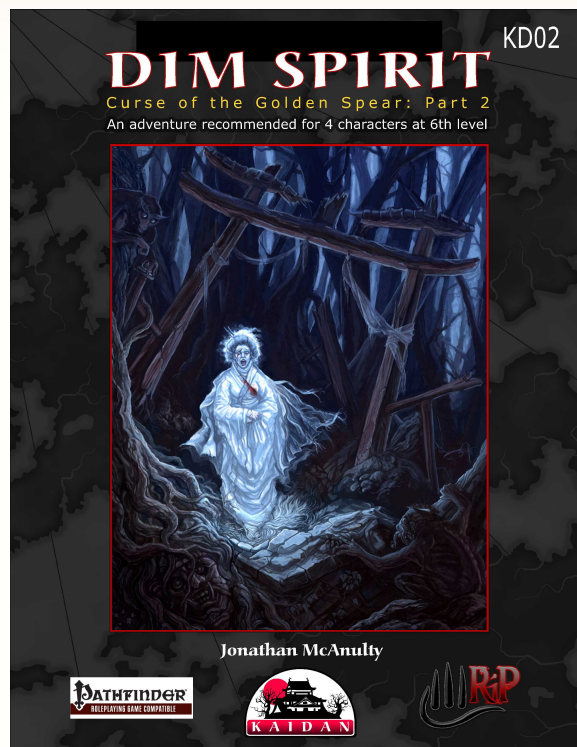
This coming year, I have a goal of doing more fiction writing with the aim of releasing it electronically. I think we live in a very exciting time for would-be writers and there are more opportunities than ever for getting published, though that naturally means that there is also more competition than ever before.

19. What do you feel was the most ingenious part of *Kavit M. Tor's Emporium of Collectible Curiosities* that you have devised?

I am really fond of a power I gave to Kavit called "Warp the Store." The idea is that Kavit is in control of his store: it's a mini-plane of sorts (albeit a very small one) and he is in charge. To reflect this, he has the ability to make distances in the store shrink or grow and this is reflected in two fairly simple movement mechanics. I think it is a really simple power but one that will, I think, give players trying to fight Kavit no end of misery. I don't know if I would actually call it an ingenious bit of design but I think it is at least clever and I'm pretty happy with it.

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

I always try and give just a little something extra in each thing I write, whether it be an extra chart or a few extra details. With adventures I approach the work trying to figure out how it will be perceived from both sides of the table. This means for the GM, I want to provide all the relevant information for the encounter(s) as succinctly and as thoroughly as possible, so that the adventure runs smoothly. I try to think about what I, as a GM would like in each situation and provide it. For the player side, I try to think about how the game narrative will flow and what will make for a memorable session. I dearly love feedback (even the negative as it allows me to improve), and especially like hearing how people have used the things I have written.



TRIBES ANTHOLOGY I

A Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Compatible Tribes supplement by Creighton Broadhurst and Eric Menge



Raging Swan produces affordable, high-quality gaming products that a GM can easily insert into a personal campaign.

Learn more about these exciting products (and others!) at ragingswan.com and benefit from our Free PDF and Dual Format PDF initiatives.

VILLAINS II

A Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Compatible GM's Resource by Creighton Broadhurst and Martin Tidswell



RODS OF WONDER

A Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Compatible Player's Resource by Creighton Broadhurst



Infamous Adversaries: Temerlyth the Undying

By Total Party Kill Games
Review by Thilo "Endzeitgeist" Graf
5 out of 5 stars!

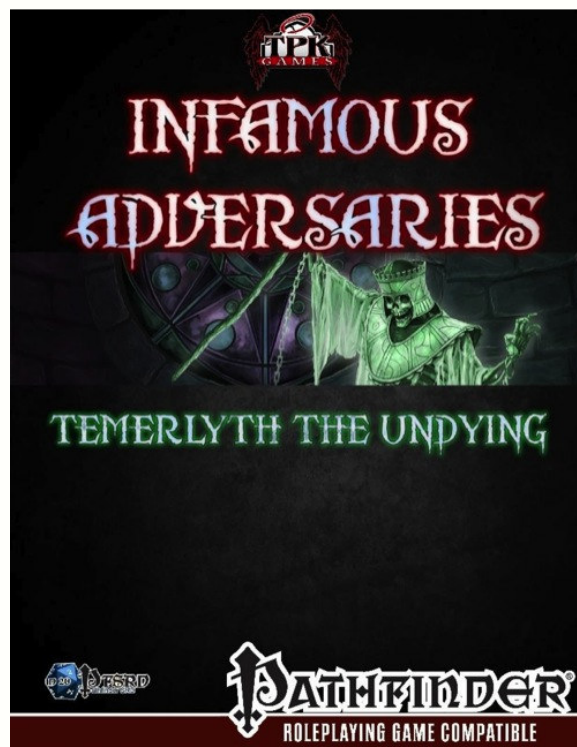
The latest installment of TPK Games' Infamous Adversary-line of NPCs is 17 pages long: 1 page front cover, 1 page editorial, 1 page advertisement, 1 page SRD, leaving 13 pages of content for the Undying.

Temerlyth is the first of TPK Games' adversaries that fulfills my complexity criteria with regards to NPC-supplements, i.e. creating him would take some time, as he is an elven lich alchemist 6/wizard (enchanter)6/lorekeeper 3 and thus cannot be considered an easy statblock to create. What is up with this guy, then? Well, once upon a time an elven nation relocated to another forest, only said forest was already home to savage were-wolves. In a twist of their colonial arrogance and endeavors, the elves actually found themselves on the losing side of a battle they started themselves. Consumed by an ever-growing obsession of wanting to eradicate lycanthropy once and for all and save his people, the elven noble Temerlyth gradually descended down a slippery slope of evil and corruption. To the extent that his wife wanted to run off with a human woodworker. Finding out about her plans of abandoning him proved to be the final straw to break the by now fragile grasp the elf still had on his sanity. In a fit of vilest rage, he slew her and her lover as well as his children, reanimating them as his undead slaves. These minions all get their individual stats as well.

While his nation has crumbled to ruins, his people long-since forgotten, Temerlyth still roams the world, twisted into an undead monstrosity, forever seeking a way to eradicate lycanthropy once and for all and thinning the ranks of the shapechangers while conducting his amoral experiments in his dread laboratory Silvermote. A new spell, Silvermist, is also included in the pdf to reflect the innovations of Temerlyth. The spell is a combination of concealment and damage against lycanthropes. Neat!

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are top-notch, I didn't notice any glitches. Layout adheres to TPK Games easy-to-read two-column standard and while I have already seen the b/w-artworks apart from the cover in e.g. Kingdom of Graves, I liked them. TPK games have hyperlinked just about any component that could confuse you in the statblocks to the Pathfinder-SRD, making looking up particular rules very easy. It should also be noted that Temerlyth comes with a special second 6-page version in b/w that is



particularly printer-friendly. I already commented on how I liked that this adversary is complex, but I think I should also mention that his allies, i.e. his undead family and their stats do a lot to enhance the value of this pdf. Aptly written by author Richard Hunt, professionally presented, complex and somewhat relatable character with more than one dimension, the driven, sophisticated lich gets a final verdict of 5 stars!

Endzeitgeist out.

Fantastic Maps

DUNGEONS

LAIRS

DRAGONS

LOCKED IN ICE

<http://tinyurl.com/fantasticmap>



Battlemaps for real and virtual tabletops

The Secrets of Forgotten Magic Items

By Rite Publishing

Review of Thilo "Endzeitgeist" Graf

5 out of 5 Stars!

This pdf is 22 pages long, 1 page front cover, 1 page editorial, 1 page SRD and 1 page advertisement, leaving 18 pages of content for forgotten magic items.

What are forgotten magic items, you ask? Have adventurer's left them behind while looting? No, essentially this book is about options. Options that not only might change how you might look at magic items, but also cater to different playstyles and go beyond what you'd usually expect from your magic loot. But enough of vague rambling, let's place these new options under closer scrutiny, shall we?

The pdf begins, as any such pdf should, with a short discussion and pieces of advice on how to integrate the items herein into your campaign by using a simple system that places you as the DM in control of the availability of the knowledge about them and their spread before providing some basic information on iron, mithral and adamantite vials before delving into the first quite intriguing alternate rule: Overloading potions. By adding a reagent (that costs 5gp per spell-level of the potion), you can make the potion a kind of makeshift throwing weapon/bomb with an additional minor detrimental effect based on the school of the overloaded potion's spell. We also get a new item to carry overloading powder and 2 new feats expanding upon the mechanic, finally making potions a bit more versatile. The bomber-archetype for the rogue, while nice and focused on the new mechanic, is a bit uncomfortably close to the alchemist for my tastes, who will, at least in my games, have exclusive access to this option. When compared to this rather massive modification on how a class of items can work, contingency potions almost feel mundane: They work like you would expect them to, by drinking them and picturing a contingency that will trigger them. A feat lets you have two potion contingencies in effect at once.

Now that we've covered enchanted potions, what about their containers, the flasks? A new item-class is introduced along-side two feats that let you add up to two properties to an enchanted flask in addition to the first one. 14 possible enchantments are provided and range from making the contents cool (a boon for dwarves everywhere) to the option of spraying the content like a hose. While this seems rather mundane, the example given is rather intriguing: If you put a potion of cure light wounds into a flask enchanted with magic hose and showering magic, you can point it at a target and heal not only the direct target, but also everyone in the 5-ft. splash-range. The possibilities are quite exciting and it is one of these

Rite Publishing Presents

The Secrets of Forgotten Magic Items



by Will McCardell

design that make you wonder why you haven't had the idea yourself. Neat!

Next up are scrolls and two new feats offer some long overdue options: Substituting your own casting ability modifier and, for a price, even your own caster level when casting from a scroll. Moreover, we get morescrolls, i.e. scrolls that can be used by anyone who can make an int-check of 10+ level of spell. Good idea, although I'm not sold on the name. Cognizaid-scrolls grant you a benefit to knowledge checks or re-rolling them, which makes for a great way to recycle spare scrolls you won't use. The ritual to transform a regular scroll into a cognizaid is sufficiently cheap to make this a viable option. Ever wanted to make your own sorcerous origami servants out of scrolls? The Arcanami (supported by a feat and a bloodline) make this possible as well.

Dweomer Sigil scrolls are interesting in that they modify other spells being cast while holding them. And yeah, they are not used up by the casting, making them permanent items that add interesting effects ranging from elementally-infusing summoned monsters, dimming lights, changing the area of effect to a telekinetic ram-like effect to making illusions harder to disbelieve. We get 32 dweomer sigil scrolls.

The final new category of items is the section on Cruth Gald-runes, which is evidently by the description of them, inspired by old Norse staves. To support the runes, we get a new kind of dagger to carve runes, the athame, a new item creation feat and a new subdomain for the rune-domain. Cruth Gald-runes take up a selection of 5'x5' squares depending on the rune and every square on the floor/an object can only contain one rune. You can try to actively disrupt the effect of a rune by obscuring its shape or simply using the erase or dispel magic spells. The runes are rather interesting in that they reward preparation and take quite a lot of time to draw. However, their effects are rather interesting - from a kind of fort that fires force missiles at foes to creating wall of force-like bridges, they offer some interesting possibilities. Some of them also come with subsumed effects that can be triggered by burning out the rune in one activation. We get 16 Cruth Gald-runes along a new feat to carve them faster.

The pdf loses by providing us with an artifact-level athame and convenient tables for the market prices of the items in this pdf.

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are good, I did notice some relics like "*"s and minor punctuation glitches, though none impeded my ability to comprehend the new rules, which is a necessity in a crunch-focused book like this. Layout adheres to a full-color 2-column standard and the artworks are neat. The pdf is fully bookmarked. This pdf caught me by surprise, to be honest. I expected some items in the vein of the Loot 4 Less-line by SGG and instead got new definitions of what magic items can do, a whole array of added possibilities for magic items. The boxes that explain design decisions and their intentions and the concise, easily understandable writing of author Will McCardell makes these rather hefty modifications easily comprehensible.

I already mentioned it: This pdf is all about options and, depending on the magic-niveau of your campaign you can scavenge alternate rules and or easily customize the components for your game, making this an innovative resource that is very easy to implement into a running campaign, offering maximum flexibility. This pdf essentially is a humble tome that offers a wide variety of options that reminded me pleasantly of e.g. spagyric devices and similar modifications. There are not that many crunch-heavy books that mostly omit fluff and still make for awesome reads, but this is one of them. I thoroughly enjoyed the options contained herein and have, apart from the minor editing glitches but one complaint: I would have loved to see more options for e.g. Dweomer Sigil scrolls and Cruth Gald-runes. Thus, my final verdict will be 4.5 stars, rounded up to 5 and a

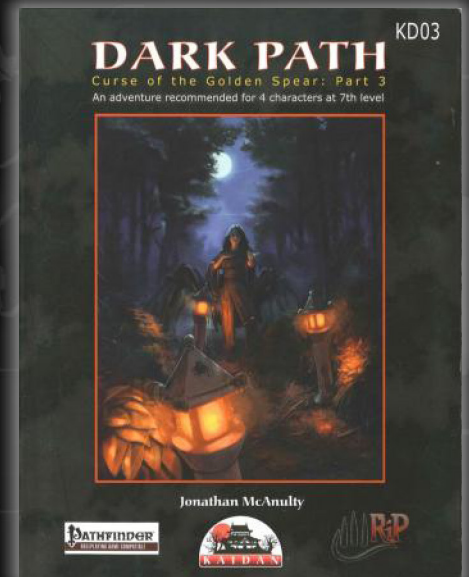
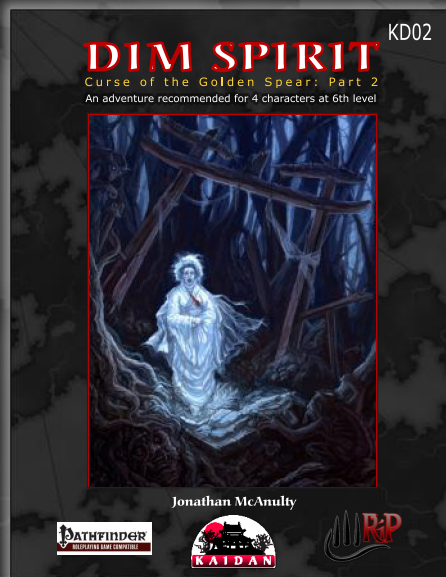
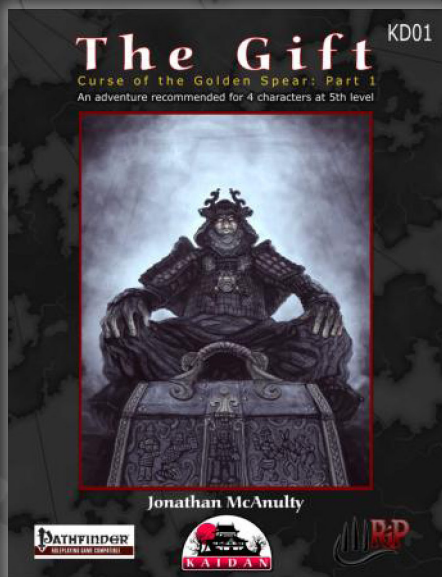


hearty recommendation for all of you who want to add more options to their items and redefine what scrolls, potions and runes mean for you.

Endzeitgeist out.

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



Random Encounters Remastered

By Purple Duck Games

Review of Thilo "Endzeitgeist" Graf

5 out of 5 Stars!

This pdf is 35 pages long, 1 page front cover, 1 page editorial, 4 pages of SRD, leaving 29 pages of content, so let's check them out, shall we?

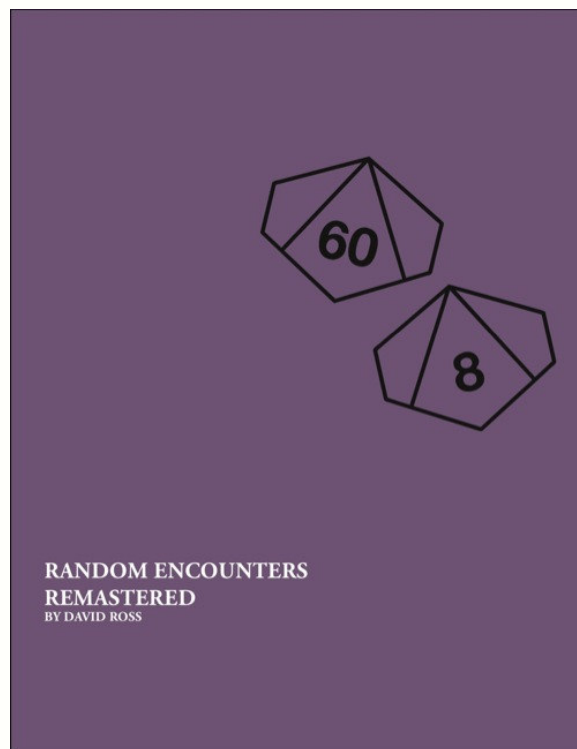
If you've been following my reviews, you might know that I have a strange relationship with random encounters - I consider them essential to a campaign setting and its organic feel (and am an adherent of anything goes - if the lvl 2 adventurers think they can take the wyrm, watch them burn...). On the other hand, none of my random encounters are truly random - I have a set of tables, pre-drawn maps environmental hazards etc. to make the encounters feel less amorphous and more like they belong into the world. I was rather glad that Raging Swan's excellent random encounter-pdfs and especially Caves & caverns added greatly to that toolkit and now David Nicholas Ross offers us this toolkit:

After a rather enlightening and aptly-written discussion on what makes for an interesting random encounter and how to fix ones that are not, we delve into the vast array of additional information to add spice to your encounters via dispositions, i.e. elements like readiness, disguises etc.

The very first table deals with watery maydays and there are terrain features. Oh the terrain features. I love them. Good terrain features make not only combat much more exciting and memorable, it also rewards smart players and offers additional strategies. At the end of said features, we get a new hazard, the widowmaker (CR 5). After these tidbits, we are introduced to tables. Huge, expanded tables organized by environment that use the dispositions introduced earlier. The first table go up to 460, some go even beyond 500! They come with sources and are organized with CR-information, making them very useful indeed. We get these extended tables for eerie woods, jungle rivers, planar strongholds (including effects of wild magic and a wild magic d%-table), a restless volcano (including a CR 15 hazard and rules for lava flows etc.), treacherous mires, and underworld battlefields, which actually come with rules for bloody rivers that are tainted by the legendary Styx.

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are top-notch, I didn't notice any glitches. Layout adheres to Purple Duck Games' two-column standard and contains some neat pieces of b/w-artwork. The pdf is extensively bookmarked



and small enough to be carried on an e-reader. I already talked about how I personally handle random encounters and to be honest, I was rather afraid that this pdf and RSP's books would contradict each other, when the opposite is the case: This pdf is a great toolkit that can easily be used to add depth and variety on the fly to any encounters, by they already completed ones or ones you create with the rules herein. This pdf is humble and handy to have around and delivers a lot of tables and organizes them in a way that makes this pdf rather useful, not only as a random encounter toolkit, but as a reference by (exotic) terrain. Combine it with e.g. Caves & Caverns for extra fun. Oh, yeah, I forgot the final verdict: While I would have loved to see more environmental hazards and complications, that's nothing to hold against this pdf. My final verdict for this very useful little pdf will be 5 stars.

Endzeitgeist out.

Rite Publishing Presents

IN THE COMPANY OF MONSTERS

1st-20th Level Playable Racial Classes

By Jonathan McAnulty, T. H. Gulliver and Steven D. Russell

Available in Print and PDF!



Faces of the Tarnished Souk: Bonetongue, Steward of Dead Dreams

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

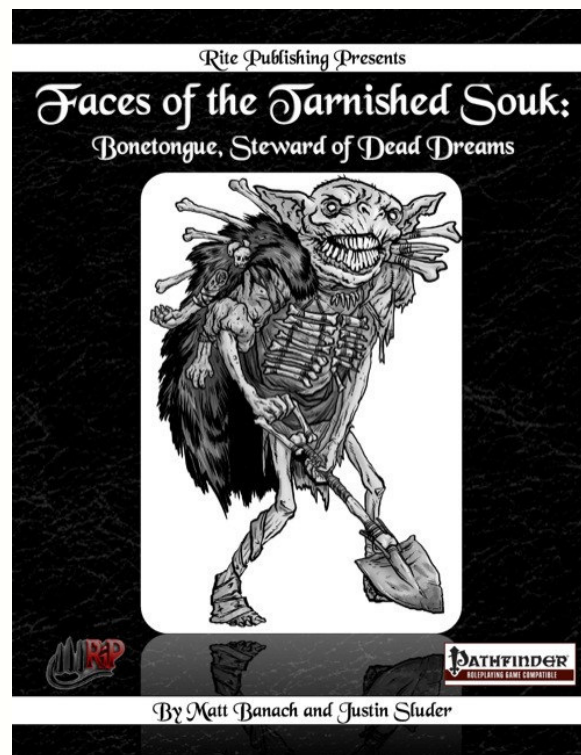
his installment of the FoTS-series of NPCs is 18 pages long, 1 page front cover, 1 page editorial, 2 pages of advertisements and 1 page SRD, leaving 13 pages for the 3 incarnations of bonetongue.

Who is bonetongue? Bonetongue is a somber, serene guarding of the dead, full of compassion to the point where he lost his dreams in duty to his watch. He is the sad custodian of the defeated, the wise and benevolent shepherd of those fallen in the Coliseum Morpheuon. Also, he's an immensely powerful white necromancer who happens to be a goblin that can't die.

Rite Publishing have a nice track record of excellent templates and complex characters and this installment of the FoTS-series is no exception providing 5 templates: OGREkin, mystic creature, foul creature, death scavenger and eternal creature. The base-class is also interesting, finally providing a way to play white necromancers - if you don't happen to know it, be sure to check out KQW #19. For this particular pdf, you don't necessarily need the class-write-up as all pieces of information necessary to run bonetongue are included. We also get new spells, summon dead I to IX and a spell called bone swarm, three new feats (one of which deals damage to people whose spells you counter) and 5 new magic items. I particularly enjoyed the fast-digging gravedigger's shovel, the coins placed on the eyes of a dead creature and a very cool ring that transforms foes into ashes and an urn to store the souls of the fallen until their resurrection.

The three different incarnations of bonetongue are an interesting evolution of the same character and range from CR 6 to CR 18, as we've come to expect: What is new, though, is that each incarnation of bonetongue comes with 3 variants, a Death-Scavenger, a Foul and a Mystic variant, i.e. minor statblock modifications that help you further customize your personal incarnation of bonetongue, which is awesome.

The background-story and advice on how to use the goblin caretaker is awesome and he makes for an interesting ally for the PCs, perhaps even more due to his relative pacifism and the hinted evolution of the character throughout a Coliseum Morpheuon story-arc. Being an eternal creature, bonetongue can only die via very specific circumstances and he fully knows that, standing up to foes to protect the innocent even if it means his death. A couple of times.



Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are quite good, although I noticed some minor formatting glitches like tabs not lining up etc. Layout adheres to the classic b/2-s-column standard by RiP and the pdf comes with bookmarks. The b/w-artwork of bonetongue is nice indeed. Bonetongue is an interesting character, as he is one of the few relatively unambiguous allies for the PCs in the FoTS-series. While he is solemn and may yet break his vows, his pacifism, wisdom and the fact that he's a white necromancer are enough to constitute an interesting character indeed. With the notable exception of a certain Ghost-light, this FoTS-installment is my favorite primary caster in the series as of yet - almost constituting a nice Yoda-like mentor. One that might yet crush all the depravity of the Coliseum below an army of vengeful dead. If it can't be helped, that is. My final verdict will, once again, be 4.5 stars due to the minor glitches and the fact that I would have loved a reason why he is eternal and a more specific means of granting him final death. I'll round up to 5 for the purpose of this platform, though...

Endzeitgeist out.

WAY OF THE SAMURAI



Jonathan McAnulty
COMING SOON

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



Way of the Wicked—Book One:

Knot of Thorns

By Fire Mountain Games

Review by Shane O'Connor

5 out of 5 Stars!

I can't tell you how long I've waited for this. I think that at some point, every GM (and quite possibly every player too) has entertained the thought of running an evil campaign, or at least playing an evil character. After all, who could resist the temptation of being the uber-cool arch-villain, unbound by moral codes and social niceties, doing what you please and may the gods have mercy on those who cross you? Of course, this flight of fancy tends to run headfirst into some very real problems when put into practice, and so no one's every really marketed an adventure – let alone an adventure path – for Pathfinder (or its ancestor game).

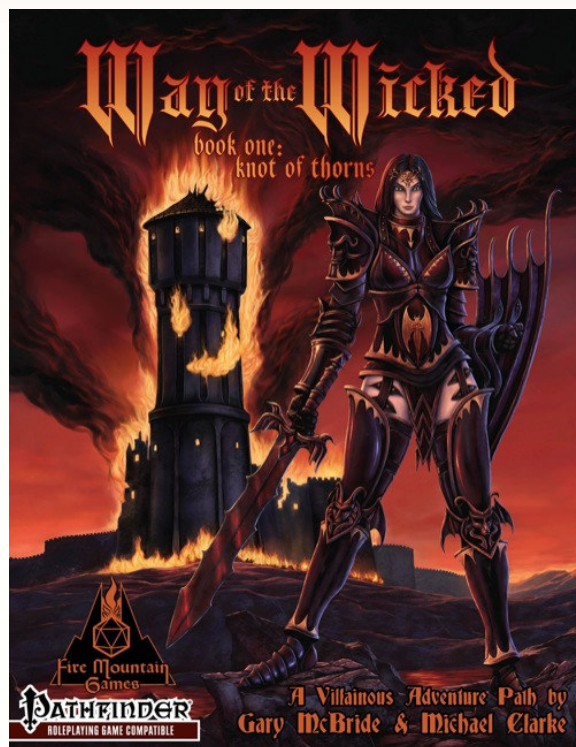
That's all changed with Fire Mountain Games' new adventure path, Way of the Wicked. It all begins here with book one, Knot of Thorns.

Let's cover some of the technical aspects of the book first. The single PDF file is exactly one hundred pages long, making it a fairly substantial work. Bookmarks are present, but only to each of the book's major sections; you won't find nested bookmarks to more specific parts of each section, so you may need to do a bit of scrolling.

The artwork in the book is notable for its quality; something all the more impressive for the book having had but a single artist. Each piece is a full-color illustration that is clearly professional in its detail; this is especially true for the maps, which I found to be quite pretty (and wished that there was a map pack available as well). My only complaint about the maps was that they use a scale of having one square equal 10 feet, which I always find slightly off-putting, since Pathfinder uses a default 5-foot square assumption. If you're redrawing these, make sure to scale the locations appropriately.

The pages themselves are nicely decorated, being set against a dark background and having page borders on three sides. Having said that, there is no printer-friendly version of the book available (nor, for that matter, an e-publishing version), so this may be a strain on your printer.

Following a single-page introduction where the author exhorts conquering the world rather than saving it, the adventure opens with a background for the course of the campaign. Set in the island nation of Talingarde, where the faith of the sun-god Mitra has become the state religion, a deposed prince turned worshipper of Asmodeus seeks to subvert the current order and have the Devil God's faith ascend to become the religion of the kingdom, complete with a new king on the throne. For this, he has crafted a diabolical plan utilizing nine teams to create unrest and thwart attempts to solve the problems he'll create. It's with these teams in mind that he turns to your PCs.



The adventure starts out with your characters already being the bad guys. You've been found guilty of committing major crimes (not wrongly, either; your PCs being criminals is a major part of the backstory; see below) and sentenced to prison to be executed or sent to a life of hard labor. However, thanks to a mysterious benefactor, and a lax administration, you have a chance to escape.

This first part of the adventure is a fun prison break, not only for the heightened tension in that you're working from a disadvantage (you don't get to keep your gear in prison), but also due to the different angles from which this scenario can be run. Are you just trying to make for the exit as fast as you can, or do you take bloody revenge on everyone around you and arm yourself with their equipment?

Following their escape, the PCs make their way to their patron and are given the choice to swear themselves to Asmodeus (which, perhaps appropriately for a devil god, isn't much of a choice at all) and begin their training. This part of the adventure is heavier on the role-playing, as this part introduces a lot of key NPCs and the chance to build relationships with them, along with internalizing the fact that they're now serving the forces of Hell.

The adventure's third act consists of a journey to their first assignment. A long sea voyage, this scenario is broken up by a number of encounters, which are broken up into three groups of making the voyage, completing their task, and after the trip. This is also the most open part of the adventure, as not only can the order of events be shuffled quite a bit, but new encounters can be added or deleted as necessary; this is where a lot of the restrictions on the PCs come off.

The fourth and final part of the adventure is a mission of infiltration and destruction. Outmatched and outnumbered, the PCs have to bring down a fortress filled with soldiers of the forces of goodness. Very cogently, the adventure adopts a method of granting "Victory Points" for various actions, with the end results of their mayhem being tabulated by how many points they've achieved via their acts of disruption.

That's the end of the adventure, and if it sounds short, then it's only because I'm doing it a disservice. There's a lot that happens throughout Knot of Thorns, so much so that your characters are supposed to end the adventure when they've just reached 6th level. Interestingly, while there's plenty of bloodshed going on throughout the book, a great deal of the XP the PCs are supposed to gain comes from story-based XP awards for accomplishing various tasks. I'd go so far as to say that I've never seen an adventure that relied so much on story awards. This is comforting, as it makes it easy to arbitrarily increase or decrease the XP the PCs are given as they move through the series of unfortunate events they're causing.

The book doesn't end with the adventure, however. The last twenty pages or so are devoted to what's essentially a player's primer. We're given an overview of Talingarde's history, some of its more notable locales, and a quick overview of some of its major organizations. It's in this last section that I think we come to the book's single biggest oversight – there's no information on the sun god Mitra. To be fair, the church of Mitra is covered (albeit briefly), but that's not enough. What are Mitra's domains and sub-domains? What is his holy symbol and favored weapon? We don't know, because the book doesn't tell us. True, none of that information is directly pertinent, but if GMs want to deviate from the material here and make up their own Mitran clerics (or inquisitors or similar divine spellcasters), the missing information becomes more pertinent. Hopefully we'll see something on this from Fire Mountain Games soon.

The author then includes a section on how to run a villainous campaign. Specifically, he outlines five problem areas, and how this campaign attempts to avoid them (where possible; otherwise he includes advice for making things go smoothly). This section was, to my mind, very cogent in its reasoning. I'd always held that the major problems of an evil game were PvP conflicts, and someone being so evil that it squicked out the other players. All of these, as well as other problems ("why can't we just send minions to do our evil for us?") are covered, with sound reasoning given for why and how to handle them.

Subsequently there's a short guide on PCs in a Way of the Wicked campaign. Interestingly, goes through the character creation guidelines and recommends specific changes, the sum total of which are to make the PCs more powerful, since they're evil outcasts in a good nation. I'm not sure that this is necessary, but then I'm slightly biased against increasing the level power the PCs have, since my group includes a couple power-gamers.

What's most interesting here are the new campaign traits. Remember how the game starts with your PCs being condemned criminals? There are twenty campaign traits here, each of which is a crime – which trait you pick is the crime that you performed, and were caught and lawfully sentenced for. I was really impressed with this simple yet elegant way of bringing the characters background, and evil nature, into the spotlight. This serves as a brilliant method for highlighting what the PCs did to start them on the road to villainy, and why they throw in with the powers of darkness.

The book closes out with a two-page synopsis of the entire adventure path, outlining what happens in each of the six adventures.

Overall, I found myself very impressed with the opening act for Way of the Wicked; this promises to be an adventure path as epic as anything by Paizo. The campaign's themes are tightly focused, and the tenor of the adventure steers away from the problems that usually come from having a group of evil characters. The challenges are diverse, from infiltration to puzzles to deception to combat. You've never seen such a good job of being the bad guy.

Of course, the book isn't without its flaws. The CR for the triton oracle seems to be off, for example, and the tactics section of Father Donnagan's stat block seems to be an incorrect cut-and-paste. But the major problem that I think people might have with this campaign is that, even more than other adventure paths, this one is an exercise in railroading.

The first two acts of the adventure basically force the PCs to go in the specified directions, and while the third act – as mentioned above – starts to loosen the tight grip around the characters, it's never truly removed (though in many cases it's less visible). The PCs are bound by the goals that are set for them; their only freedoms lie in how to accomplish them – to put it another way, they're free to do what they want, so long as they want to do what their patron says. In theory they can go their own way, but the adventure talks about what to do if the PCs go off the rails at various points, and its never good (in some cases, it flat-out says that they get slaughtered).

Of course, that may very well be a necessary evil (pun intended) for an evil game, as it's much easier for an evil game to fall apart. I certainly don't think it's a deal-breaker, as the adventure offers a great "us against the world" scenario that's a great inversion of the usual "points of light" backdrop. Follow the Way of the Wicked, and be the darkness that snuffs out the light.

WINGS OF TWILIGHT



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

Artwork by Rowena Aitken

HANS CUMMINGS



101 Not So Simple Templates

by Rite Publishing

Review by Shane O'Connor

5 out of 5 Stars!

One of the best things to come out of the d20 rules is, in my opinion, templates. Being easy ways of customizing your monsters helps to make what would otherwise be generic creatures have a special, unexpected slant to them. Of course, saying templates are “easy” ways of customizing your monsters is a relative term. In fact, templates virtually always require tweaking a monster beforehand. Hence why Pathfinder offered us the new simple templates, micro-templates that made comparatively small changes, complete with “quick” rules that told us how to change a monster on-the-fly.

Rite Publishing’s second book of templates goes with this approach, trying to keep the new material in line with existing simple templates...but not everything herein is quite so simple, as the title acknowledges: 101 Not So Simple Monster Templates.

The title’s honesty is slightly undercut by the fact that this book doesn’t actually have one-hundred-one templates in it, but rather ninety-three. You wouldn’t know it unless you actually counted, though, so it’s not like that’s a deal-breaker.

The templates themselves run quite the gamut in what they offer. Some of these templates are indeed worthy of being called simple, such as templates for creatures that are blind, deaf, or missing an arm. Others are based around turning the base creature into another creature-type, such as the Banshee Creature template, or the Lich-Touched template (which gives the base creature the lich’s paralyzing touch).

Some may find the aforementioned templates to be something of a deal-breaker, as these seem like something easily constructed on your own. That may be, but that’s not the fault of the book – after all, this is focused on simple templates, and that will mean that many of the templates take a single idea and implement it. That the book exhibits a range in the templates it offers is a virtue, not a vice.

Speaking of a range, there are plenty of templates in here that aren’t quite so simple, either. The Walking Fortress Creature template makes the creature into a titanic monstrosity with an actual fortress on its back. A Riven Magic Creature not only shrugs off magic, but drains and destroys it as well. There’s a lot here for those looking to put an unexpected spin on their everyday monster. Most helpful is the chart at the end



of the book that ranks the templates by their CR adjustment, ranging from -5 all the way to +4.

The book doesn’t offer any example creatures, and in only a few places are there sidebars that discuss what’s presented. Likewise, while the lion’s share of the templates offer both quick and rebuild rules, not all of them do. In many cases, this is because the template is effect-based, and so the quick and rebuild rules are identical. Sometimes, though, the template just offers one or the other. Again, that isn’t particularly bad, but keep an eye out for the templates that assume that you’ll make things like ability score adjustments ahead of time.

Ultimately, this book is overflowing with templates that are simple and not-so-simple. In fact, some of these are templates of such creativity that they could have gotten the full template treatment. Whether you want your monster to have an exceptionally powerful bite attack (Gnawing Creature) or be the personification of death itself (Grim Reaper Creature), look no further than 101 Not So Simple Templates.

ANCESTRAL RELICS



Michael K. Tumey
COMING SOON

30 ANCESTRAL RELICS

Ancestral relics are powerful magical items, powered by the very souls of a family member. Of near artifact quality, these rare creations become progressively stronger as your honor increases. Likewise, if you suffer a loss of honor, the ancestral relic becomes weaker.

Ancestral relics are priceless, and the secrets to their manufacture were forcibly lost by imperial decree over 600 years ago. At that time, the crafting of Ancestral Relics was the province of the onmyoji wizards, who jealously guarded the secrets 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



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