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Christina Stiles Faith Hunter Raven Blackwell

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It's a century after the Seraphs returned to Earth, fulfilling with fire and sword apocalyptic predictions from ancient scripture. Most of Earth's population died in the plagues and resulting wars -- and then came the ice age.

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Id of Faith Hunter,

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Mankind has survived, but not without change.

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New races were born following the Time of Plagues: kylen, half-seraph winged warriors; mules, half-human fighting machines; and neomages like Thorn St. Croix, who could work magic with energies left over from the Creation.

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RAXATH'VIZ, THE CREEPING ROT





The one thing I'm not going to do this month is talk about 5e.

Really.

Well, I should probably say something. I mean, everyone else is.

So, here's what I'm going to say:

Pathways is devoted to Pathfinder. True, Pathfinder owes its origins to D&D, but, Pathfinder is autonomous. Like the post-adolescent child who has come of age, it no longer needs to tell its parent "You don't own me!" and it can acknowledge its past without being chained by it.

Okay. That was easy. Let's move on.

This month I think you're going to fall in love with a gorgeous, slimy recluse of a woman. She's all business and no nonsense. And, if you dare impose upon her (perhaps you seek her legendary wisdom, perhaps you lust after her treasure), you'd better set your affairs in order before you leave because you aren't coming back. Adventurers are always snagged by the lure of "and no one has returned to tell the tale." Why don't they listen? Go back to the cover. Take another look. That's her.

You see that piece of jewelry on her head? If you actually ever see it, it'll probably be the last thing you'll need to see. You'll have one of those moments of epiphany. The clouds will part and your problems will be solved. Trust me.

I, for one, cannot wait for my bumbling players to advance their characters to her lair. Frankly, I think I'll turn it into a "teachable moment" and then when they're rolling up new characters we'll all have a good laugh.

But seriously, take a look at this incredibly welldesigned critter by Jonathan McAnulty. She's brilliant.

If you've been enjoying Kaidan, or are considering offering the setting to your players (or begging your GM to run it), take a look at Moso's Bluff. If you're itching to play, read the first paragraph and promise yourself not to read the rest. If you're a GM, give it a serious look your players will thank you. There are, of course, only so many ways to set up a short adventure of this type, and canny players will be familiar with the twists and turns. But, that doesn't mean it can't be great fun. There is a rich, robust flavor of the setting and the NPCs. The markets smell of fish, the barrels are filled with squirmy snacks for the locals, and the old woman with only a dozen remaining teeth still smiles as she lies to me about how much money the eels cost. Get lost in the gambling houses of this place; get a tattoo. Enjoy yourself.

There are a couple of spells in this issue which you might find interesting if you have the sort of player who is willing to explore some of the psychological depths that can manifest in characters who seem to come alive.



With *inconsolable grief*, the caster sends someone's psyche into the chasm of grief. Anyone familiar with depression and a willingness to explore that level of the human experience in an RPG can probably go somewhere fascinating with this. On the other hand, if you just want to ruin an orc barbarian's day, this might do the trick. And, if your adventuring buddy is having trouble getting out of bed in the morning (or getting out of bad in the middle afternoon – this is depression we're talking about), maybe *remove depression* will do the trick. Like an electroshock or a burst of ketamine, *remove depression* will suffice for a short-term lift out from underneath the fog clouds of despair.

There are some wonderful channeling effects in this issue as well. If you're not using *The Secrets of Divine Channeling*, you might want to take a closer look. There are some fantastic ideas here that give a great, flavorful game even more flavor. It's a little like finding a new dish to add to an already-favorite meal. If you've never really considered divine channeling, look at this month's offerings. Death and undeath are perennial favorites among role players and there's plenty here for GMs and players alike.

If there's anything you *want* to see in *Pathways*, write to me and ask.

See you next month!

David Paul Editor-in-chief

Fire-breathing



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Sublime Creature Template

by Jonathan McAnulty Illustrations by Colby Stevenson

Positive energy fills and enlivens all naturally born beings to one degree or another. It is the very essence of life. Sublime creatures are individuals and beings with a much stronger connection to this wellspring of energy than is normal. Preternaturally strong and healthy, they nearly glow, so strong is the life force within them. While some sublime creatures are born with their abilities, others are beings who have been blessed by the gods or have been exposed to sources of pure positive energy.

A sublime creature is the epitome of health and beauty, being more comely than other members of its race.

Creating an Sublime Creature

Sublime is a template that can be added to any living creature. The creature is distinguished by its strong aura of positive energy, and its extraordinary health and beauty.

A sublime creature uses all of the base creature's statistics and special abilities, except as noted here.

CR: +2

Armor Class: Increase natural armor by +2.

Speed: Increase all the base creature's natural speeds by 10 ft.

Defense/Qualities: fast healing (equal to Charisma modifier); **Immune** aging, disease, positive energy damage; **Resist** Negative Energy 10, increase the base creature's Cold and Electricity resistance by 10.

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

Ageless: Though the sublime creature is not truly immortal, it does not suffer the ravages or negative affects of old age. Upon reaching maturity, sublime creatures gain Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma as normal for a member of their species, but are otherwise unaffected by the passing of time. Creatures that advance based on age categories such as dragons still gain the benefits of this advancement. Sublime creatures never die of old age and they are immune to any spells or effects which cause aging.

Channel Positive Energy: The sublime creature may channel positive energy as a cleric. Substitute the creature's racial HD (minimum 1 for creatures with no racial HD) for cleric level to determine how effectively the creature can channel. If the creature has actual cleric levels (or other class levels which grant the ability), the creature's racial HD and relevant class levels stack when determining the effect of the channeling.

Positive Energy Affinity: The sublime creature's affinity for positive energy is such that it is immune to any damage caused by positive energy effects or attacks. Additionally, any healing spells, or other effects, derived from positive energy are doubly effective when applied to the sublime creature (roll as normal for the effect, adding any bonuses such as those derived from class level, and then multiply the result by two).

Strong Life-force: In addition to its Constitution modifier, the sublime creature also adds its Charisma modifier to its HD when determining hit points.

Abilities: Increase from the base creature as follows: Strength +2 (+1 to attack and damage, +1 to Climb and Swim checks, +1 to Strength, and CMB checks, +1 to CMD, +1 to any of the base creature's Strengthbased DCs); Dexterity +2 (+1 to Init, Ranged attack rolls, AC, touch AC, and Ref saves; +1 to Acrobatics, Disable Device, Escape Artist, Fly, Ride, Sleight of Hand, and Stealth checks; add +1 to any of the base creature's Dexterity-based DCs); Constitution +8 (+4 hp per HD, +4 to Fortitude saves, and any of the base creature's Constitution-based DCs); Intelligence +4 (+2 extra skill points per HD; +2 to Appraise, Craft, Knowledge, Linguistics and Spellcraft checks; +4 to any of the base creature's other Intelligence-based DCs); Charisma +8(+4 hp per HD, +4 to Bluff, Diplomacy, Disguise, Handle Animal, Intimidate, Perform, and Use Magic Device; +4 to Channel Positive Energy DCs; +4 to any of the base creature's Charisma-based DCs).

Feats: Gain Toughness as a feat.

Skills: +4 racial bonus to Diplomacy.



Kallia, The Sibyl of Eldorus

CR 20 (XP 14,400)

sublime celestial greater medusa oracle 10 LE Large monstrous humanoid **Init** +1; **Senses** Darkvision 60 ft., can see perfectly in fog or mist; *Perception* +19

Defense

AC 27, touch 15, flatfooted 24 (+4 armor, +2 Dex, +2 deflection +1 dodge, +8 natural, +1 shield, -1 size) (opponents suffer -4 penalty to confirm critical hits) hp 359 (8d10+10d8+270); fast healing 8

Fort +11; **Ref** +11; **Will** +14

DR 5/evil; **Immune** aging, disease, positive energy damage; **Resist** Cold 20, Electricity 20, Acid 10, Negative Energy 10; **SR** 25

Offense

Speed 40 ft., swim 40 ft. (can walk on any fluid surface)

Melee *the serpent's fangs* +17/+17/+12/+7 (1d4+5 plus poison (DC 24)/19-20) or snakes +17 (1d4 plus poison)

Ranged +*2* composite shortbow +19/+14/+9 (1d6+5 plus poison/x3)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

Special Attacks channel positive energy (9/day, 4d6, DC 22), petrifying gaze (DC 24), poison (DC 20), poisonous blood, smite evil 1/day (+8 to hit, +18 damage)

Spells Known

5th - 4/day commune, geyser (DC 23)

4th – 7/day cure critical wounds, unholy blight (DC 22), wall of ice

3rd – 8/day bestow curse (DC 21), cure serious wounds, speak with dead, water breathing

2nd – 8/day augury, cure moderate wounds, slipstream (DC 20), spiritual weapon, zone of truth (DC 20)

1st – 8/day cure light wounds, doom, obscuring mist, sanctuary (DC 19), shield of faith*, touch of the sea (DC 19)

Orisons (at will) – bleed (DC 18), create water, detect magic, detect poison, purify food and drink, read magic, resistance, stabilize, virtue

Mystery Waves – fluid nature, fluid travel (10 hours/day), water sight (scrying 10 rounds/day)

Jactics

Before Combat: Prior to combat Kallia casts *shield of faith* and raises a thick fog (which does not hinder her own vision). As she prefers to rely on stealth, she maneuvers to her best advantage, perhaps using *wall of ice* to separate her foes from one another before she strikes. She slices her skin with her weapons, coating them in poison before attacking (inflicting 1 hit point of damage to herself each time, though it heals quickly).

During Combat: Kallia relies on hit-and-run tactics, using fog and the many pools and watery tunnels of her home to her advantage. She strikes from the mist, using her diadem to create momentary tunnels of sight so that she might petrify a target, and then retreats to attack from a different position. If necessary she uses *wall of ice* to further control the battlefield, dividing allies from one another.

Morale: Kallia has lived a very long time and has no wish to die. If reduced to half her hit points and unable to flee further, she parlays, offering her services as an oracle. In such circumstances, she always abides by the letter of her agreement.

Statistics

Str 16, **Dex** 15, **Con** 23, **Int** 16, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 26 **Base Atk** +15; **CMB** +19; **CMD** 31 (can't be tripped)

(35 vs bull rush, drag, grapple, and reposition)

Feats Ability Focus (petrifying gaze), Alertness, Double Slice, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Toughness^B, Two Weapon Defense, Two Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (composite shortbow)

Skills Acrobatics +15, Bluff +14, Diplomacy +25,Disguise +14, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (nature) +16, Knowledge (planes) +16, Perception +19, Sense Motive +16, Stealth +17, Swim +15; **Racial** +4 Diplomacy

Languages Aquan, Common, Celestial, Draconic, Infernal, Terran, understands any spoken language SQ ageless, positive energy affinity, strong-life force Curse tongues (Celestial)

Gear diadem of obnubilation, the serpents fangs, +2 composite shortbow, bracers of armor +4, 20 arrows, dagger

Ecology

Environment The Isle of Eldorus, any coastal region or island

Organization solitary

Treasure standard; diadem of obnubilation, the serpent's fangs, +2 composite shortbow, bracers of armor +4

Special Abilities

Petrifying Gaze (Su) Turn to stone permanently, 30 feet, Fortitude DC 24 negates, The save DC is Charisma-based.

Poison (Ex) Bite – injury; save DC 20; frequency 1/round for 6 rounds; effect 1d6 strength damage; cure 1 save. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Poisonous Blood (Ex) The blood of a greater medusa is highly poisonous, even to the touch. A creature contacting the blood is exposed to the poison of the medusa as described above. The blood loses its potency one hour after being exposed to air.

Description

Upon the lonely isle of mist The sea's queen's daughter, vigil keeps. Ophidian hair, face divine, A heart of rage which never sleeps. Betrayal dark has stained her soul.

Her lover dead, by her own gaze, His flesh is cold, eternal stone. Beware you men who seek her shores! Before you leave, your sins atone. For in the fog, your death shall toll.

Stanzas from the *Ballad of Kallia*, as recorded by Qwilion of Questhaven.

My ironic tale begins with the sea, the watery realm to which I was born but which is forever denied me. My face, lovelier than the visages of a thousand fair maids, cannot be seen by mortal men, and, though I long for love's embrace, I have, through betrayal, and my own folly, slain the only man who loved me. All know my ballad, my tragic tale, but I myself am long forgotten by the world so that few know where to find me.

Once, I served gods and kings, speaking words of doom and hope. I dwelt in luxury surrounded by a hundred blinded slaves. Now I seek only solace in solitude. I despise those who know the joys forever denied me. There is only hate in my heart for the world. Yet I am fearful to depart this mortal coil, for the sins of my past shall surely follow me to the throne of the gods. Thus I shun all, content to feed eternally on my bitter rage. Those who visit my desolate shores, seeking wisdom, treasure or fame, find only a cold, hard death. I kill them gladly, though I know that each life made stone adds another weight to the too, too heavy burden that already crushes down upon my soul.

Each minute of each hour, day and night is spent yearning for that which once was mine. Fuldais! Your noble visage, once so wondrously sightless, haunts my heart. What I would not give for one more hour with you, my darling. Were that I could climb the heights and find you! Oh that I could descend to the depths and see you there! But you will never be found by me. Where you have gone I can never follow. Is there salvation for one such as me?

Is it possible there are yet those who do not know my tale? Daughter of Laumus, divine daughter of the sea, I was cursed with unseeable beauty. Long did I despair, but noble Fuldais, handsome and tall, prince among centaurs, knew me and loved me, for he was cursed with blindness. Cursed I say, but for me a blessing. Bliss I knew then, but foolishly I longed for Fuldais to behold me with his own eyes, and foolishly I gave voice to my desire. Fuldais, noble Fuldais, left our home and sought long a cure for his eyes, but his victory was his doom and my damnation. In my anger I slew all within our courts and cursed the very heavens and all who dwelt therein. Now I am alone. Alone forever.

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Knowledge (history) or Knowledge (religion)

Common DC 15 Kallia is the name of an ancient seeress, a prophetess who lives on a distant fogcovered island amid massive ruins.

Uncommon DC 20 Kallia is a medusa oracle who, in ages past, turned her centaur husband to stone. She is quite ancient and quite deadly. *Read excerpt of the Ballad of Kallia*.

Rare DC 30 Kallia is the mortal daughter of Laumus, a demi-deity of the sea. It is this celestial connection that gives Kallia much of her power, and though, due to the heritage of her mortal father, she cannot truly dwell below the waves, she has great power over water and vapors.

Obscure DC 40 Kallia is said to burn with the very essence of life. Her mortal frame is powerful beyond understanding and she cannot be easily or lastingly injured, for her wounds knit with an unnatural speed. The divine light that burns within her is as great as that which burns within any paladin of righteousness, but her heart is now filled only with hate and evil.

Epic DC 50 Kallia is destined to fight and slay a great evil, or so it was foretold at her birth. She knows this destiny and spurns it, so bitter is her rage. It has been said that she will never heal until some soul willingly journeys to the heights of heaven to bring back her beloved. Yet that path is fraught with its own dangers and the soul of Fuldais has journeyed long in aether plains, so that finding him would be difficult indeed.

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New Treasure

Diadem of Obnubilation

aura strong conjuration transmutation; **CL** 9th

slot head; price 36,000 gp; weight 2 lbs Description

This golden, stylized tiara, allows the wearer, as a swift action, to raise a fog around herself at will, as fog cloud. Fog conjured by the tiara lasts for an hour before dissipating. Additionally, the diadem of obnubilation grants the wearer limited telekinetic power over fogs both conjured and natural. This telekinetic power has three effects. First, all fogs or mists within 30 feet of the wearer are immune to the effects of wind. Second, the wearer may, once per round, as a swift action, create a clear line of sight between herself and any square within 30 feet. Such a tunnel of visibility lasts for only a few seconds, closing at the end of the wearer's turn. Finally, anyone wearing the diadem receives a +4 to all saves made to resist an effect related to a fog or gas (acid cloud, gaseous breath attacks, etc.).

Construction

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *fog cloud*, *telekinesis*; **Cost** 18,000

The Serpent's Fangs

aura moderate transmutation; CL 10th slot none; price 20,000 gp each; weight 1 lb each Description

A twin pair of daggers, *the serpent's fangs* are each forged from a single piece of grey steel. Their stonelike surfaces are finely etched, and copper wire highlights the pummels. These blades, which function as +2 *keen daggers*, are crafted to be used with poisons. Any single dose of poison applied to the blades has its DC increased by +4 and remains potent for two successful attacks (instead of the normal single attack).

Construction

Requirements Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *keen edge*, *poison*; **Cost** 10,000 gp each

New Feats

Improved Poisonous Blood [Monstrous]

Your system is so toxic that venoms have no chance of hurting you.

Prerequisites natural poison attack, Poisonous Blood

Benefits You are immune to all poisons.

Poisonous Blood [Monstrous]

Your system is so toxic that venoms have little chance of hurting you.

Prerequisites natural poison attack

Benefits You gain +4 to saves made to resist poisons other than your own.

Regenerative Limbs [Monstrous]

Your fast healing allows you to reattach limbs

Prerequisites fast healing

Benefits Your fast healing allows you to reattach limbs that have been severed.

Normal Fast healing does not typically allow limbs to be reattached, an ability more typical to regeneration.

Ecology Encounter

The Isle of Eldorus: Kallia's home, the small island of

Eldorus, is a rocky island covered, primarily, with numerous pools and the ruins of her ancient palace. Once grand, the massive structure has long since fallen into squalid disrepair. The plethora of springs and pools covering the island are connected by a system of subterranean aqueducts, allowing Kallia to easily outmaneuver and surprise unwanted visitors. Making the island even more inhospitable are the frequent, thick fogs which roll in from the sea, obscuring all vision. So thick is the habitual fog that many adventurers blunder into pools and drown before ever they encounter Kallia's dread gaze. Kallia is at home in these fogs and uses them to her best advantage, opening tunnels of vision between herself and lone explorers, so that whole bands of men are picked off, one by one, the survivors never knowing the fate of their own comrades until it is too late and the fog rolls away to reveal the lovely, and deadly, visage of Kallia to them as well.

Adventure Seeds

Mid Level – Many treasures litter the island of Eldorus, some in the vaults of Kallia, others upon the petrified remnants of long dead heroes. One such treasure, a fabled sword named Raksliban, was last seen in the hands of a hero who was journeying to speak with Kallia. The sword is the key to slaying a dread evil and the PCs must venture to Eldorus, find the sword, and escape: all without being turned to stone.

High Level – Kallia is a mighty oracle and now, as danger and darkness engulf the lands of men, divinations warn that she alone holds the secrets of both doom and salvation. But can she be made to share what she knows?

Epic Level – Kallia's time is at hand, but she has long turned her back on the world. The PCs are tasked with winning her support in the cause against the evil that threatens all. Such a task will pit them, not only against the ancient seeress, but against angelic and demonic forces alike, as they journey to the celestial realms to find Kallia's love and return him to the world of men.



The Breaking of Forstor Magar A Pathfinder adventure for 4 8th levels PCs



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

Live Stat Blocks

- 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

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Malevolent Manifiestations

by T. H. Gulliver

Destroying Haunts

I've had a lot of fun in coming up with the means of destruction for the haunts in the #30 Haunts series (#30 Haunts for Houses, #30 Haunts for Ships and Shores, #30 Haunts for Objects, and #30 Haunts for Kaidan). In a horror-themed campaign, the PCs may encounter multiple haunts. Surviving the haunts may satisfy the players, but if the haunts are in a residence or well-traveled area, the heroes may want to destroy all the haunts. The steps that heroes must take to ensure that haunts never again trouble the living vary widely and offer potentially interesting side treks. Unfortunately, they are often impossible to guess. Many haunts are satisfied with the recovery of the remains of the suffering souls whose grief caused the haunt to manifest. Others require PCs to cast specific spells, make public proclamations revealing secret crimes, or dismantle and wash the haunted objects in wine or holy water. Reviewers have asked just how PCs are expected to discover these means of destruction.

Ask Them

It has been proposed in another Pathfinder Roleplaying Game treatment on haunts that, at the GM's discretion, when a haunt is reduced to 0 hp, haunts and PCs could attempt to communicate through a series of knocks. The PCs could call out numbers, letters, or words for the haunts to select, perhaps through a "talking board." Through such a method, haunts can communicate 1d10 words per minute which PCs can understand with a Linguistics check of 15 + the haunt's CR.

Through this 'rapping spirits' approach to communicating with haunts, the PCs are active participants in discovering the means of destruction. They interrogate the haunts and devise systems of communication through which the haunts can respond. This keeps the challenge interesting and I prefer it to any method that would require a single skill check. Such a method could be generally applied to any and all haunts PCs encounter. Any PC with 5 or more ranks in Knowledge (religion) would be aware of such an approach to communicating with haunts.

Ask at the Tavern

If GMs wanted to get the PCs out of the haunted house and into the town, the means of destruction could be discovered through a series of Knowledge checks. Such an approach opens up role-playing opportunities and requires interaction with NPCs. Depending on the background of the haunt, PCs could gain insight through Knowledge (history), Knowledge (religion), and Knowledge (local) checks.



Knowledge (history) checks could allow PCs to identify the time period from which the haunt likely stems and key events from that era that might have caused the haunt. Knowledge (local) checks could allow the PCs to discover specific individuals whose pain, hate, or anger might have been the source of this haunt or furnish local rumors about that person's life and their suffering. Knowledge (religion) could help a PC to link the haunt's background to its means of destruction, revealing how the lack of closure or satisfaction in the suffering person's life resulted in this lingering manifestation of his or her pain. In all cases, an appropriate DC for these Knowledge checks would be 15 plus the haunt's CR. The DC could be reduced for general and less helpful information and increased for more specific information.

Destroying the Ghostly Guardians

PCs can destroy the *Ghostly Guardians* haunt from #30 Haunts for Objects when they give the crown to a rightful heir to the king. Knowledge of history would enable the PCs to identify the origin of the crown, who originally wore it, and, perhaps, the circumstances of his death. Knowledge of religion would reveal that the finding of the heir as a likely means of destruction.

Successful Knowledge (nobility) and Knowledge (local) could point the PCs toward the butcher's adopted son as the only living descendent. As this haunt is CR 7, the GM should set all Knowledge checks at a DC of 22.

The Ghostly Guardians CR7

XP 3,200

LE minor haunt (a crown, 15 ft. radius), persistent **Caster Level** 7

Notice Perception DC 15 (to notice muted voices pledging loyalty beyond death)

hp 31; **Weaknesses** *hide from undead*; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 hour

Effect A withered corpse clad in dusty but untarnished armor sits on an old, bare, stone throne, a crown gleaming upon its head. If any living creature approaches the throne, dozens of phantom warriors rise from the earthen floor and stand between the king and those who would approach. Their translucent spears and shields form a protective barrier as the spell *repulsion* (DC 19 Will negates).

Destruction When a direct descendent of the king claims the crown, the haunt is destroyed.

Making it Easier

The GM can make all this easier by giving all the haunts the same means of destruction, which is reasonable if they share a common source of suffering. In #30 Haunts for Kaidan, I gave most haunts that shared a common background the same or similar means of destruction. The GM can also link the means of destruction to the PCs' overall goal. If haunts lurk in the slave holds of the *Ship of Ghouls*, then destroying the ghouls and seizing the ship could be a means of destruction for all of the haunts. As the paladin smites the necromancer ghast captain, all of the groaning and creaking haunts could cease immediately.

Make It Rewarding

Tomb raiders survive haunts. Heroes destroy them. Tomb raiders, moving efficiently and quickly on to the next source of graves to rob, are rewarded in gold. Heroes are rewarded with position, assistance, healing, warm meals, the friendship of the king, and the love of a grateful town.





By J.H. Gulliver

TRIBES ANTHOLOGY I

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A Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Compatible GM's RESOURCE by Creighton Broadhurst and Martin Tideswell

Rods of Wonder

A Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Compatible PLAYER'S RESOURCE by Creighton Broadhurst





Thieves, Cutpurses & Pickpockets (ELvar.; XP var.)

By Creighton Broadhurst of Raging Swan Press

A young urchin – unseen by many – dodges through the crowd, taking a coin here, an apple there.

As passersby gather to watch a street performer, a dextrous man of unremarkable appearance mingles with the crowd.

A young woman drops a heavy load in the bustle of the crowd. As kind-hearted travellers rush to assist, her accomplices' deft touch liberate the good folk of their coin.

In any society, there are always those who seek to take what does not belong to them. Pickpockets, cutpurses and thieves are often encountered in towns and cities. Their thefts rarely end in violence or death; indeed their marks normally don't realise they have been the victim of theft until the thief has long since left the area.

Most such thieves are not evil or malevolent. Rather, they may steal to feed their family, because it is their only skill or simply because they enjoy it.

Use these stat blocks, encounter groups and distractions presented here to create interesting and memorable encounters with a settlement's pickpockets. At the GM's discretion, a pick-pocketing can be a minor annoyance, a sign of escalating tensions with the local thieves' guild or the start of the PCs' next adventure.

TACTICS

A pickpocket detected at work flees immediately; only when cornered do they resort to violence. When injured, they surrender and try to bribe their attacker to let them go.

CUTPURSE CR 1/	′з ((XP
135)		
This thin human clutches a stained cloak close	abou	t his
body.		
Human expert 1		
CN Medium humanoid (human)		
Init +1; Senses Perception +4, Sense Motive +0)	
Speed 30 ft.; ACP o; Acrobatics +5, Climb -	-4, Es	cape
Artist +5, Stealth +5		
AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; CMD 12; Dodge		
(+2 armour [leather], +1 Dex, +1 dodge)		
Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +2		
hp 5 (1 HD)		
Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +0; CMB +0		
Melee dagger +0 (1d4/19-20)		
Ranged dagger (range 10 ft.) +1 (1d4/19-20)		
Combat Gear dagger (2)		
Abilities Str 11, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 10, C	ha 8	
Feats Dodge ^B , Skill Focus (Sleight of Hand)		
Skills as above plus Knowledge (local) +4, Sleig	ht of H	Iand
+8		
Languages Common		

AREA FEATURES

The area has several features of note:

Stealth and Detection: In a crowd, the maximum distance at which a Perception check can be made to identify a specific individual is 2d8 x 20 feet. In areas of dense crowd, this range drops to 2d6 x 10 feet.

Additionally, the background noise of a crowd makes Perception checks that rely on sound more difficult, increasing the DC of the check by 2 per 10 feet, not 1.

Crowd: Crowds are a natural hunting ground for cutpurses. The bustle of so many folk provides effective cover for their activities and also serves as a handy distraction if they should have to flee.

Moving through a crowd is difficult. It costs 2 squares of movement to enter a square containing a crowd. Characters making a DC 15 Escape Artist check need spend only 1 squares of movement to enter a square containing dense crowd.

Additionally, crowds are easier to hide in, granting a +2 circumstance bonus on Stealth checks.

Crowd (Dense): In places, a crowd of people can get densely packed; perhaps the people are moving through a narrow gateway, or are watching a street performer.

Moving through a dense crowd is difficult. It costs 4 squares of movement to enter a square containing dense crowd. Characters making a DC 20 Escape Artist check need only spend 2 squares of movement to enter a square containing dense crowd.

Additionally, dense crowds are easy to hide in, granting a +5 circumstance bonus on Stealth checks.

Distraction: Cutpurses and pickpockets are drawn to

URCHIN	CR	1/4	(XP	
100)				
This small urchin is covered in d	lirt, wears i	rags and	d looks	
hungry.		-		
Young human expert 1				
CN Medium humanoid (human)				
Init +3; Senses Perception +4, S	Sense Motiv	ve +o		
Speed 30 ft. Run ; ACP 0; Acrobatics +7, Climb +2,				
Escape Artist +7, Stealth +11				
AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 11; CMD 10				
(+3 Dex, +1 size)				
Fort -1, Ref +3, Will +2				
hp 3 (1 HD)				
Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +0; CMB	-3			
Melee dagger -1 (1d3/19-20)	-			
Ranged dagger (range 10 ft.) +4 (1d3/19-20)				
Combat Gear dagger (2)				
Abilities Str 7, Dex 17, Con 8, In	t 11, Wis 10	, Cha 8		
Feats Run ^B , Skill Focus (Sleight	of Hand)			
Skills as above plus Knowledge (local) +4, Sleight of Hand				
+8	,	C		
I and a good Common				

street performers, criers and zealous preachers and the like. Such folk hold the attention of those nearby, making the cutpurses' job much easier.

Distracted targets suffer a -5 penalty to Perception checks.

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Cutpurses and pickpockets normally work alone, but sometimes form larger groups to fleece wary or wealthy targets. Not all members of the group actually steal from the marks. Some may be involved in creating a distraction while others might keep an eye out for the watch or be ready to hinder a target's pursuit of a fleeing thief.

- EL 1 (400 XP): cutpurse (3); expert cutpurse (1); urchin
 (4)
- EL 2 (600 XP): expert cutpurse (1) and urchin (4); urchin (6)
- EL 3 (800 XP): cutpurse (3) and expert cutpurse (1); expert cutpurse (2)
- EL 4 (1,200 XP): cutpurse (3) and expert cutpurse (2); expert cutpurse (3); urchin (12)
- EL 5 (1,600): cutpurse (6) and expert cutpurse (2); expert cutpurse (4); urchin (16)

These groups can belong to the local thieves' guild or other independent group. Urchins often serve as distractions and lookouts while the older, more skilled members of the group do the actual stealing. At the first sign of trouble, the gang melts away into the crowd and does not bother the PCs again – unless they are paid to do so or the PCs seem to be particularly wealthy (or inattentive).

SKILLED CUTPURSE CR 1 (XP 400)

This thin human wears a good quality cloak over his fine studded leather armour.

Human expert 3

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; Senses Perception +5, Sense Motive +0

Speed 30 ft.; Nimble Step; **ACP** 0; Acrobatics +5, Climb +4, Escape Artist +7, Stealth +7

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13; CMD 13; Dodge

(+3 armour [mwk studded leather], +1 Dex, +1 dodge) Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +3

hp 16 (1 HD)

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

Melee mwk dagger +3 (1d4/19-20)

Ranged dagger (range 10 ft.) +3 (1d4/19-20)

Combat Gear dagger (2), smokestick (2), tanglefoot bag (1)

Abilities Str 11, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 8
Feats Dodge^B, Nimble Step, Skill Focus (Sleight of Hand)
Skills as above plus Appraise +4, Bluff +4, Disguise +5, Knowledge (local) +5, Sleight of Hand +10

Languages Common

Gear as above plus belt pouch, 6 gp, 12 sp

DISTRACTIONS

Organised groups of pickpockets may stage distractions to divert their targets' attentions. Alternatively, they may make use of street performers, altercation, accidents and other non-related events, to mask their activities.

In any manufactured distraction, a character can make a DC 20 Sense Motive check to realise that something is amiss.

At the GM' discretion, the distractions listed below can either be genuine – in that the thieves take advantage of a distraction not of their own creation – or can be manufactured by other members of their gang. To determine what distracts the PCs, roll on the table below:

D20	DISTRACTION			
1	A thief in an upstairs window pours a chamber pot of foul-smelling liquid onto the crowd below.			
2-3	Stray dogs race through the crowd, knocking over children, small baskets and so on.			
4-6	The PCs are asked to settle an argument.			
7-10	A street performer juggles flaming torches. A small crowd has gathered to watch.			
11-12	A seemingly mad preacher stands on a small box, haranguing the crowd while delivering some divinely inspired message.			
13-14	A nondescript man asks the PCs if they'd like to buy some fine jewellery (or other luxury item) at a very low price. He badgers the PCs until they look at his wares.			
15-17	Several ruffians start a brawl in the street. They push and shove each other against passersby.			
18	A small crowd of urchins darts through the crowd, laughing, fighting and calling each other names.			
19	A man hurtles through the crowd on a horse clinging to its mane for dear life.			
20	A runaway cart crashes into a nearby building.			

PICKING POCKETS

Picking pockets requires the Sleight of Hand skill (which can be used untrained).

- Action: Using Sleight of Hand is normally a standard action, however a character can use it as a move action by taking a -20 penalty on the check.
- **Success**: A DC 20 Sleight of Hand check indicates you succeed on taking something from the target.
- **Spot Pick Pocket**: The target of the Sleight of Hand attempt can make an Perception check opposed by the Sleight of Hand check to notice the attempt.
- **Try Again**: After an initial failure, a second attempt against the same target requires a DC 30 to succeed.



Sacred Sepulchers: Priests of Death, Murder and the Undead By Jonathan McAnulty

Across time, continents and cultures, all mortal creatures are bound together by a single common certainty: the inevitability of death. While a great number of intelligent creatures do their utmost to ignore this eventuality, it is often the duty of priests, especially those priests devoted to the domain of death, to prepare their followers for their fate. Indeed, a good deal of religion, regardless of alignment, is centered on the event of death: encouraging a proper life prior to the moment of departure, offering consolation to the bereaved, and allowing a glimpse of what may be hoped for after death.

While a majority of religions urge their adherents to accept death as a natural part of the cycle of life, and, perhaps, as a gateway to realms celestial, certain cults take such acceptance of death to a higher level, actively encouraging murder as a holy endeavor by which the faithful may touch the hem of the divine. Most such religions are naturally evil, though the specific doctrines may differ from deity to deity and cult to cult. Chaotically aligned death-cults often espouse murder as a means by which the powerful can dominate the weak, while lawfully aligned faiths likely preach death as a reward bestowed upon the deserving, which often means those individuals the cult has been paid to eliminate. Clerics in these groups are often skilled assassins, using divine spells to bolster their trained skills.

Not every god encourages followers to embrace death. A few play on the fear of death as a tool to keep their followers in line and advance their own interests. Chief among such deities are those gods of undeath and it is a fear of death which bolsters the congregations of such beings. Priests of undeath serve as conduits of unholy power for their masters, bestowing undeath, through spells, to those followers who have pleased them and their lord. While many ignorant, in their dread of dying, assume that gods of death and undeath share common goals, nothing could be further from the truth. There is an almost universal animosity between religions that see death as natural (indeed desirable) and those that see death as something to be avoided through means unnatural.

Sacred Tomes of Death, Murder and the Undead

GMs can use the following texts as religious books in their campaigns. Each of the following sacred writings is associated with the domain of Death, or one of its associated subdomains.

The Banks of the Silver Spring

A beautiful and poetical book of scripture, much beloved, this thin tome allegorizes death to a river,



likening life to a hard, barren land through which we must journey. Only by crossing the waters of the river of death, called the Silver Spring, can one find a realm of peace and security, or so the book argues. Within the pages of this manuscript one finds many poems, parables and biographical tales, each one serving to illustrate the spiritual truths taught within. Though there is a focus on death, and the foolishness of fearing death, the book has much to say as well upon what constitutes a successful life. Oft used at funerals, the book is very comforting and can be useful when dealing with grieving persons. A person who spends an hour reading the book gains a +4 bonus to any Diplomacy check made to deal with someone suffering from depression (see optional Diplomacy rules below). This bonus lasts for 12 hours.

The Scarlet Thread

All creatures are bound by the threads of fate, destined to die at an appointed hour, or so the pages of The Scarlet Thread teach. According to the philosophy within, it is impossible to escape one's destiny; when you are to die, you will die. By this reasoning, the book goes on to explain, the assassin is nothing more than a sacred tool in the hand of the divine, carrying out the will of the fates. Alongside the philosophical apologetics of the text are many more practical lessons concerning the multitude of ways in which one man may kill another. Indeed, many argue that book is little more than a thinly disguised "howto" manuscript for would be murderers. Nevertheless, it is generally agreed that the pages were divinely inspired and thus sacred to several assassin-deathcults. Those who spend one hour reading the book gain a +2 profane bonus when confirming critical hits. This bonus lasts for 12 hours.

The Eternal Autumn Breath

Most associate undeath with horror and the undead are typically considered both monstrous and unclean. Not so within the pages of The Eternal Autumn Breath, where elegant words of beauty are used to describe the realm of the undead. Containing numerous odes to the undead, this book of poetry describes such creatures endearingly and romantically, encouraging mortal men to embrace the "beauty of bone and ethereal night." Though written poetically, the book contains numerous tidbits of useful information concerning the undead, and anyone who uses the book in conjunction with a Knowledge (religion) check to identify an undead creature gains a +4 circumstance bonus to the check so long as they take at least an hour to study the book prior to making the roll. This book is found in the libraries of necromancers, priests of undeath, and undead hunters alike. It has also, for some odd reason, proven popular with female readers of a certain age.

Dealing With Grief

(optional Diplomacy rules)

Sometimes, dealing with people is made more difficult by their animosity towards you, but there are other factors and moods which can affect social interaction, such as grief and depression. Depression affects not only a person's interaction with others, but can be a factor in how well they perform other tasks, imparting a possible penalty to all Skill checks. Characters suffering from depression also receive temporary Charisma damage, the affects of which stack with any possible Skill penalties. Restoration will not heal this damage as it is a mental, not a physical condition. Characters suffering from depression may make a DC 15 Will save each day, and if successful, their Charisma damage is healed by 1. Those that fail their save by 5 or more are not allowed to make a new Will save for 1 week. Any effect which alleviates the depression removes the damage. When the Charisma damage is healed enough to reflect a new mood condition, the character is assumed to have the new mood.

Starting Mood	Cha Dmg	Skill Penalty	Diplomacy DC
Inconsolable	-8	-8	25 + creature's Cha modifier
Depressed	-4	-4	20 + creature's Cha modifier
Sad	-2	-	15 + creature's Cha modifier
Calm	-	-	10 + creature's Cha modifier
Cheerful	-	-	-



Through the use of Diplomacy, you can attempt to temporarily modify a non-player character's mood. The DC of the check depends on the character's initial mood, adjusted by its Charisma modifier. If you succeed, the character's mood is improved by one step (Inconsolable to Depressed, Depressed to Sad, etc.). If your check exceeds the DC by 5, the character's mood is improved by another step, though it may not be improved more than 2 steps through the use of Diplomacy. Such a mood improvement lasts an hour, but when the hour is up, the Charisma damage is reduced by 2, as if the character had healed. At the GM's discretion, characters who are made cheerful are more likely to be helpful to you, decreasing the DC of future Diplomacy checks by 2.

New Spells Inconsolable Grief

School Necromancy [Grief, Mind-Affecting]; Level Brd 2, Clr 2

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, M/DF (a pinch of ash)

Range Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target One living creature with an Intelligence of 3 or higher

Duration Special

Saving Throw Will negates and subsequent Will saves reduce duration (see text); **Spell Resistance** Yes

You target one creature, which if it fails its initial Will save, suffers 8 points of temporary Cha damage and a -8 penalty to all Skill checks, as it is overcome with feelings of grief. Each round thereafter, the target is allowed a new Will save, the success of which reduces the Cha damage and penalty by 1 each. *Remove depression* counters and dispels *inconsolable grief*.

Remove Depression

School Abjuration; Level Brd 1, Clr 1 Casting Time 1 standard action Components V, M/DF (rose petal) Range Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels) Target One living creature with an Intelligence of 3 or higher plus one additional creature per four levels, no two of which can be more than 30 ft. apart Duration 1 hour and 1 week; see text Saving Throw Will negates (harmless); Spell Resistance Yes (harmless)

A targeted creature suffers no effects from depression for 1 hour and for the week thereafter receives a +4 bonus to all saving throws made to overcome a condition of depression. *Remove grief* counters and dispels *inconsolable grief*.

Channeling Effects for the Subdomains of Murder and Undead

The following effects use and supplement rules from *The Secrets of Divine Channeling*. If you do not have that book, sensorial imagery describes noticeable effects which accompany the use of channel energy. Minor channeling effects are available to characters through either GM fiat, or the possession of the appropriate trait or class. Combat Channeling effects and Major Channeling effects are made available to a character through the acquisition of the appropriate feats. The DC of any saving throw is 10 +1/2 character level + Charisma modifier. Effects granting bonuses are either sacred or profane bonuses. None of the effects stack with themselves, though they may stack with other, similar effects. For more information, consult *The Secrets of Divine Channeling*.

Murder

Sensorial Imagery: A pale off-white energy, heavily streaked with scarlet, accompanied by a faint smell of copper.

Minor Channeling Effect: A Scarlet Kiss: You can, as a swift action, employ one of your uses of channel energy to inflict bleed damage with a slashing or piercing weapon when you successfully damage a target with that weapon. The amount of bleed damage is equal to the number of dice you would normally roll when channeling energy. Targets immune to bleed damage are immune to this effect.

Combat Channeling Effect: The Assassin's Cloak: You can, as a standard action, employ one of your uses of channel energy to create an area of effect more suitable to assassinations. Within the range of



your channeling, for the duration of the effect, all creatures receive a bonus to Stealth checks and a bonus to confirm critical hits. The bonus for both, and the duration of the effect in rounds, is equal to the number of dice you would normally roll when channeling energy (2d6 equals +2 to Stealth and +2 to confirm criticals for 2 rounds, etc). This effect is not subject to selective channeling.

Major Channeling Effect: The Assassin's Touch: You can, as a standard action, employ one of your uses of channel energy to target a single living creature within range of your channeling with a death effect. Roll the number of dice you would normally roll when channeling energy and cause that much damage to the target (Fortitude save for half). If the damage dealt reduces the target to less than 0 hp, the target is dead, no save. Furthermore the target, if not killed outright, must make a Will save. Failing the Will save results in the target being stunned for 1d6 rounds.

Major Channeling Effect: Blade of Vengeance: You can, as a standard action, use one of your uses of channel energy to charge all weapons within the range of your channeling with incredible powers against the living. When used against an living creature, on a successful hit, the weapon, in addition to its regular damage, deals damage equal to the amount of energy you would normally generate through your channeling (3d6 equals an additional 3d6 points of damage against the living, etc.). This charge lasts for a number of rounds equal to the number of dice that would be rolled and is discharged as soon as the weapon strikes a target. Weapons that strike a nonliving target lose the charge without doing additional damage.

Undead

Sensorial Imagery: A pale, off-white energy, with black streaks, and a faint smell of dust.

Minor Channeling Effect: Aura of Undeath: You can, as a standard action, employ one of your uses of channel energy to imbue objects or creatures with an undead aura, or to strengthen an undead creature's existing aura. You may imbue a number of creatures or objects equal to the number of dice you would normally roll when channeling energy and the duration of the effect is a number of hours equal to the number of creatures you can affect (1d6 equals 1 creature/object for 1 hour, 2d6 equals 2 creatures/objects for 2 hours). You may, if you choose, affect fewer creatures or objects than the maximum. Doing so allows you to double the duration of the effect on the remaining recipients (though you may not more than double the duration of the effect). Creatures affected by this effect are considered to have the strength of their aura of lawfulness increased by one step (no aura becomes a faint aura, a faint aura becomes a moderate aura, a moderate aura becomes a strong aura, etc.). Living creatures may negate this effect with a Will save.

Combat Channeling Effect: Strength to the Undead: You can, as a standard action, utilize one of your uses of channel energy to imbue all undead creatures within range of your channeling with unwholesome energy. All undead creatures affected by this effect gain a bonus to attack and damage rolls equal to the number of dice you would normally roll when channeling energy (2d6 equals +2, 3d6 equals +3, etc.) and lasting an equal number of rounds (a +2 bonus would last 2 rounds, +3 would last 3 rounds, etc.). The bonus damage is considered negative energy damage.

Major Channeling Effect: Knit the Dead Flesh: You can, as a standard action, use one of your uses of channel energy to completely heal a single undead creature within the range of your channeling. The creature cannot possess more HD than an amount equal to double the number of dice you would normally roll when channeling (3d6 would heal up to a 6HD creature, 4d6 would heal up to an 8 HD creature, etc.). The target is healed of all injuries, but not of any magical or supernatural afflictions, such as petrification or paralysis.

Major Channeling Effect: Cloak of Undeath: You can, as a standard action, utilize one of your uses of channel energy to create an area amicable to the undead. The area affected is stationary and equal to the range of your channeled energy. All undead who remain within the area affected gain regeneration and a bonus to saves made vs. positive energy effects. The amount of both the save and the regeneration is equal to the number of dice you would normally roll when channeling energy and the effect lasts an equal number of rounds (3d6 would equal regeneration 3, +3 to saves, and would last 3 rounds, etc.). This effect is not subject to selective channeling.





WAY OF THE SAMULRAI

WAY OF THE SAMURAI

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

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

The Way of the Samurai

by Jonathan McAnulty

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

Jonathan McAnulty COMING SOON





Moso's Bluff by Ron Lundeen of Run Amok Games Illustration by John Wigley

Rite Publishing's *Way of the Yakuza* establishes the Yakuza as a criminal organization in a Kaidan campaign, or any other campaign with a pervasive criminal network. This article introduces Daremo, a blind bard and troubleshooter for the wicked Izumioshiro Ikka family, and embroils the PCs in a short investigation and double-cross by the crafty Daremo. This short adventure uses several elements from *Way of the Yakuza* and is suitable for PCs of 5th or 6th level.

The Setup

The PCs are relaxing in a large bakuto parlor (a combination gambling house, saki bar, and brothel) owned by the Kurashishi-Gumi yakuza family, either because they have performed some task for the Kurashishi-Gumi or because they are just passing through. The PCs are approached by a blind bard who introduces himself as Daremo. Daremo is tall and attractive with a pleasing voice and a long robe of blue and orange. He wears a long topknot and a band of orange cloth tied over his blank eyes. Daremo is a killer-for-hire, but he masks his true self with a veneer of calm amicability. He is not above overplaying his blindness as a handicap in order to manipulate others; in truth, Daremo's blindness hardly hinders him, particularly at close range.

Daremo asks to speak to the PCs discreetly, as he has a favor to ask. Once alone, Daremo frankly admits that he is a furosha, or itinerant troubleshooter, and has worked for several yakuza families. Right now, he has been tasked by the obayun of the Kurashishi-Gumi to uncover a spy within this very bakuto parlor. Daremo has identified the spy—a prostitute working under the name Blue Chrysanthemum—but Blue Chrysanthemum fled the bakuto parlor before Daremo could corner her. Daremo believes she has fled to her twin brother's tattoo studio (which, depending on the needs of your campaign, could be just across town or a few days away).

Daremo asks the PCs to travel to the tattoo studio, find out whether Blue Chrysanthemum is hiding there, and return her to the bakuto parlor alive or dead. If the PCs balk at this mission, Daremo stresses that she is a criminal and a dangerous spy connected to the vicious Izumioshiro Ikka family. Daremo is reluctant to go, because he believes that Blue Chrysanthemum has hired a gang of archers to protect her, and the blind bard has no good defense against archers. Daremo needs outsiders, as he would lose face requesting help from the obayun of the Kurashishi-Gumi. Daremo offers to pay the PCs 100 gp each upfront for this task.



All of the above is true, but Daremo is not telling the PCs the whole story. Daremo's work for the obayun of the Kurashishi-Gumi is genuine, as the PCs can confirm by asking around the bakuto parlor, but Daremo is also serving the Izumioshiro Ikka family as an assassin. Daremo's true target is Hanwu, Blue Chrysanthemum's twin brother, who offended the Izumioshiro Ikka family years ago and has lived in hiding ever since as a simple tattoo artist. Daremo intentionally scared Blue Chrysanthemum here in the bakuto parlor, guessing that she would flee to her brother's secluded tattoo studio. Now Daremo knows where the twins are hiding. He is using the PCs to soften up these two dangerous fugitives before he swoops in with a band of undead servants to murder everyone left standing-including the PCs.

The Bodyguards CR5

On their way to the tattoo studio, the PCs discover that Blue Chrysanthemum has indeed hired archers to protect her. A gang of tengu ambushers watches the roads between the bakuto parlor and the tattoo studio and attempts to ambush anyone conclusively travelling from the former to the latter. The tengus erect an ambush and attempt to catch the PCs by surprise.

Jengu Archers (4) CR1

XP 400 each Male tengu rogue (kyodai archetype) 2



N Medium humanoid (tengu) Init +3; Senses low-light vision; Perception +9

Defense

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +3 Dex) hp 16 each (2d8+7) Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +2 Defensive Abilities evasion

Offense

Speed 30 ft. Melee rapier +4 (1d6+1/18-20) and bite -1 (1d3) Ranged masterwork composite short bow +5 (1d6+1/ \times 3) Special Attacks apple attack +1d6

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

Jactics

Before Combat Tengu prefer to attack from hiding in order to maximize their sneak attacks. They prefer to attack from a position that cannot be reached easily by foot, such as from atop a tall building or tree.

During Combat These archers fight together well. Generally, one readies an attack each round to disrupt spellcasting while the others concentrate on targets with potent ranged attacks.

Morale If this band is reduced to only one tengu, the survivor surrenders and admits to being hired by Blue Chrysanthemum and Hanwu.

Statistics

Str 12, **Dex** 17, **Con** 12, **Int** 8, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 10 **Base** Atk +1; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 15

Feats City Tough, Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +8, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (local) +3, Linguistics +7, Perception +9, Stealth +10 **Languages** Goblin, Giant, Kaidanese, Tengu, Yakuza Cant

SQ fearsome, gifted linguist, rogue talent (finesse rogue), swordtrained

Combat Gear *potion of invisibility* **Other Gear** masterwork composite shortbow with 20 arrows, rapier, leather armor

Special Abilities

Gifted Linguist (Ex) Tengus gain a +4 racial bonus on Linguistics checks, and learn 2 languages each time they gain a rank in Linguistics rather than 1 language.

Swordtrained (Ex) Tengus are trained from birth in swordplay, and as a result are automatically proficient with sword-like weapons (including bastard swords, daggers, elven curve blades, falchions, greatswords, kukris, longswords, punching daggers, rapiers, scimitars, short swords, and two-bladed swords).

The Tattoo Studio

CR6

When the PCs arrive at the tattoo studio, the only person in evidence is a man in his early thirties with a



long, thick mustache and ink-stained fingers. This is Hanwu, the proprietor of the tattoo studio. If asked about Blue Chrysanthemum, he immediately recognizes the PCs as agents intending his sister harm. He nervously tries to convince the PCs that he has no idea who they are talking about, but if pressed he attacks. Blue Chrysanthemum, hiding in the back of the tattoo studio, rushes to aid her brother in the second round of combat.

Hanwu



XP 1,200 Male human transmuter (horimyo archetype) 5 N Medium humanoid (human) Init +2; Senses Perception -1

Defense

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +3 Dex) hp 27 (5d6+10) Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +3

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee tattoo needle (treat as dagger) +2 (1d4/19–20) **Ranged** tattoo needle (treat as dagger) +4 (1d4/19– 20)

Arcane School Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th; concentration +13)

7/day—*telekinetic fist* (1d4+2 bludgeoning)

Transmuter Spells Prepared (CL 5th; concentration +13)

3rd—excruciating deformation (DC 17), lightning bolt (DC 17), spiked pit (DC 17)

2nd—cat's grace, glitterdust (DC 16), owl's wisdom, scorching ray

1st—alarm, dead man's ink, erase tattoo, mage armor, magic missile

o (at will)—dancing lights, detect magic, detect poison, mending, prestidigitation

Opposition Schools Enchantment, Illusion

Jactics

Before Combat Hanwu has *mage armor* cast when the PCs arrive

During Combat Hanwu uses his *spiked pit*, *glitterdust*, and *excruciating deformation* spells to keep the PCs off-balance, then *scorching ray* and *lightning bolt* to finish them.

Morale If Blue Chrysanthemum is reduced to 10 hit points or less, Hanwu surrenders, offering his life for hers.

Statistics

Str 10, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 18, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 12 **Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 18

Feats Combat Casting, Country Hooligan, Craft Spell Tattoo, Craft Wondrous Tattoo, Defensive Combat Training, Great Fortitude

Skills Appraise +10, Craft (tattoo) +17, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (history) +12, Knowledge (local) +9, Sense Motive +7, Spellcraft +12, Stealth +8, Survival +1

Languages Infernal, Giant, Goblin, Kaidanese, Yakuza Cant

SQ bonded tattoo (+3 to Sense Motive, stores *glitterdust*, +1 to Dexterity [already included]), physical enhancement +2 (applied to Dexterity, already included)

Combat Gear *spell tattoo of cat's grace, spell tattoo of fly, spell tattoo of jump, spell tattoo of see invisibility, wand of magic missile* (CL 3, 14 charges); **Other Gear** tattoo needles (treat as daggers), masterwork tattoo kit

Blue Chrysanthemum CR 3

XP 800

Female human expert 1/rogue 3 N Medium humanoid (human) **Init** +4; **Senses** Perception +10

Defense

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +2 Dex) hp 22 (4d8+4) Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +2 Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +1

Offense

Speed 30 ft. Melee dagger +4 (1d4/19–20) or sap +4 (1d6 nonlethal) Ranged masterwork hand crossbow +5 (1d4/19–20 plus poison) Special Attacks sneak attack +2d6

Jactics

Before Combat Blue Chrysanthemum applies poison to her hand crossbow bolts and uses her *spell tattoo of invisibility*.

During Combat Blue Chrysanthemum strikes from a distance, gaining sneak attack when possible. She targets the most significant threats to Hanwu.

Morale If Hanwu is reduced to 10 hit points or less, Blue Chrysanthemum surrenders, offering her life for his.

Statistics

Str 10, **Dex** 15, **Con** 12, **Int** 14, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 16 **Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 14

Feats Deceitful, Skill Focus (Profession [courtesan]), Weapon Finesse

Skills Appraise +6, Bluff +11, Disable Device +6, Disguise +12, Escape Artist +9, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (local) +9, Perception +10, Profession (courtesan) +9, Sense Motive +6, Sleight of Hand +9, Stealth +9

Languages Kaidanese, Tengu, Yakuza Cant SQ rogue talent (read tells), trapfinding +1

Combat Gear blue whinnis poison (2 doses), *spell tattoo of see invisibility*; **Other Gear** masterwork studded leather armor, masterwork hand crossbow with 10 bolts, dagger, sap, *quick fox tattoo*, disguise kit, loaded dice

Each twin surrenders if the other is reduced below 10 hit points, each offering his or her life in exchange for the other. If the PCs hold their attacks, Blue Chrysanthemum and Hanwu explain that they live in hiding from the wicked Izumioshiro Ikka family, and that they suspect the blind bard is an assassin sent by the Izumioshiro Ikka that has cornered them both at last.

Daremo Arrives CR7

When the combat between the PCs and the twins is resolved—either through force or discussion—Daremo arrives along with four undead servants pulled from his *robe of bones*. Daremo intends to assassinate the twins and murder any PCs that get in his way. If the PCs have already killed the twins, Daremo intends to eliminate them as loose ends.

Daremo the Moso CR7

XP 3,200 Male human bard (moso archetype) 8 NE Medium humanoid (human) Init +2; Senses blind (25 ft. sensory range), Perception +12 (- visual, +22 auditory)

Defense

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +2 Dex) hp 53 (8d8+8 plus 9 temporary hit points) Fort +4, Ref +10, Will +7; +4 vs. bardic performance, language-dependent, and sonic Defensive Abilities *displacement* **Immune** gaze attacks, visual effects, illusions, and attacks relying on sight

Offense

Speed 60 ft.

Melee masterwork naginata +11/+6 (1d8+5/x4) **Special Attacks** bardic performance 22 rounds/day (counterfear [+4 vs. fear], countersong, dirge of doom, inspire competence +3, inspire courage +2, song of life [DC 18, 2d6], ward)

Bard Spells Known (CL 8th; concentration +12) 3rd (3/day)—*displacement, good hope, slow* (DC 17) 2nd (5/day)—*calm emotions* (DC 16), *gallant inspiration, sound burst* (DC 16), *tongues*

1st (5/day)—charm person (DC 15), cure light wounds, expeditious retreat, grease (DC 15), vanish o (at will)—ghost sound (DC 14), light, lullaby, mage hand, resistance, summon instrument

Jactics

Before Combat Daremo pulls two human skeletons and two fast goblin zombies from his *robe of bones* to accompany him, controlling each with his *wand of command undead*. Daremo uses his *spell tattoo of false life* (for 9 hit points, included above) and casts *displacement, expeditious retreat*, and *good hope* on himself before entering combat.

During Combat Daremo inspires courage on himself as a move action, then attacks with his naginata. If no foes are in melee, he casts *slow* on those within his sensory range (25 feet). He directs his undead allies to limit the number of PCs able to attack him at once.

Morale Daremo has no wish to die on this mission. If reduced below 20 hit points, he uses *vanish* and his Stealth skill to escape, using any remaining undead as a screen.

Base Statistics Without his *expeditious retreat* in place, Daremo's speed is 30 ft. Without his *good hope* in place, Daremo's statistics are **Fort** +2, **Ref** +8, **Will** +5, **Melee** masterwork naginata +9/+4 (1d8+3/x4); **Skills** decrease all skills by 2.

Statistics

Str 14, **Dex** 14, **Con** 10, **Int** 12, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 18 **Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 20

Feats Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (naginata), Skill Focus (Perform [String]), Stand Still, Toughness

Skills Bluff +22, Diplomacy +22, Knowledge (local) +14, Knowledge (nobility) +10, Perception +12 (visual, +22 auditory), Perform (oratory) +17, Perform (string) +22, Sense Motive +17, Sleight of Hand +14, Spellcraft +10, Stealth +14, Use Magic Device +17 **Languages** Kaidanese, Yakuza Cant

SQ bardic knowledge +4, lore master 1/day, versatile performance (oratory, string), well-versed

Combat Gear spell tattoo of cure light wounds, spell tattoo of false life, wand of command undead (9 charges); **Other Gear** masterwork chain shirt, masterwork naginata, robe of bones, masterwork biwa

Rewards

If Hanwu survives and Daremo is chased away or killed, Hanwu is grateful for the PCs' aid. He must go into hiding elsewhere, but first offers each of the PCs a *quick fox tattoo* at his cost (that is, 3,000 gp).

Scaling this Adventure

CR 3: Remove two tengu archers and make Hanwu a 2nd-level horimyo wizard. Daremo remains an 8th-level bard, but has no 3rd-level spell slots available (having used them earlier in the day) and no *robe of bones*.

CR 7: Add four more tengu archers to the ambush encounter and add a wood golem to Hanwu's tattoo studio as a guard. Instead of his minor undead, Daremo is accompanied by three brutish gargoyles (which, unlike the undead, benefit from Daremo's *good hope* spell and inspire courage ability). Daremo also bears a *fiery dragon tattoo*.



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







Twenty Questions with Owen K.C. Stephens

By Steven D. Russell

1. Could you tell us a little about yourself?

I was born in 1970 in Norman, Oklahoma. That's the home of the University of Oklahoma, which meant it had a much higher influx of college-age people than most of central Oklahoma, and thus had a lot more hobby stores, book stores, movie theaters, and pop culture influence than other towns its size in the Midwest, and that had an important influence on my formative years. There were several comic shops (my favorite being the Bibliophile, which changes names several times but only went out of business last year) and Metropolis (which had as many imported Japanese anime models as comics, and sadly went away decades ago). I was primed to be a fan of science fiction and fantasy, and was supported in this by my parents who were themselves literary geeks.

I was introduced to RPG gaming by my uncle in 1979 (though my uncle now claims no memory of the event) and was instantly hooked. He had a 1st edition *AD&D Dungeon Master's Guide*. That's it – no *Player's Handbook*, no adventures, just the DMG. I wanted to play the game that book talked about, and wrote up the rules we needed to play a game. It wasn't much like a proper D&D game, but it was a lot of fun, and for the past 30 years I've never gone long without running or playing in an ongoing RPG campaign.

As my notes for my own campaigns, house rules, adventures, custom classes, and organizations grew, I was encouraged by his wife Lj (a gamer in her own right, before she ever met me) to get some of the material published. My first efforts were accepted by publishers that went bankrupt before the work could be published. Unable to take a hint, in 1997 I attended the TSR Writer's Workshop in Seattle. Shortly afterward, my first professional work was published in issue 251 of *Dragon*, and I saw a potential career.

I moved to the Seattle area in 2000 after accepting a job at Wizards of the Coast. Although I was part of the 3rd edition D&D playtest, I was hired to work on the new d20 Star Wars RPG. I got to work with JD Wiker, Andy Collins, and Jeff Grubb (among others) and at one point shared a cubical with Monte Cook. Fourteen months later I was laid off, and returned to Oklahoma and picked up my freelance career with considerably greater skill and more contacts. Since then I've written freelance for numerous companies, including WotC, Paizo, Green Ronin, White Wolf, Steve Jackson Games, Goodman Games, and Upper Deck, on projects including the Star Wars Roleplaying Game Saga Edition, Thieves' World RPG, EverQuest RPG, numerous D20 Modern and Dungeons & Dragons books, The Guide to Absalom and other Pathfinder RPG books, and in 2010 became the Lead Developer for Super Genius Games (who I was already working



for as a freelancer). Under that title, I've overseen the production of a Pathfinder-compatible PDF product every single week since November 2009 (most of which I wrote myself).

2. What is your home game like?

My home game is a testbed for new ideas, as well as a semi-formal playtest group for things I am readying to publish (or turn-over as a freelancer). As a result it's a pastiche of fantasy campaigns and settings I have enjoyed, with enough "odd" elements thrown in for me to shoehorn in monsters, classes, and feats I need to see in play, The core geographic element of the campaign is the Rune Peaks, a huge set of nearly impassible mountains that range from the Great Glaciers of the north, through the vaguely European/Celtic Crosstimbers and Marchlands, across the seas of the Mare Noct Minor, across the Egyptian-themed Ankhara, into the Great Desert, and the more Arabic-flavored lands of Tarse beyond that. There are three threads of adventurers moving though different regions of that campaign world, and the players have a lot of overlap. They have thus discovered that there's a power-struggle going on among many supernatural beings who wish to be in a position to become gods, as a single godhood is likely to be available for capture soon. Cultists wish to use this godhood to release the Elder Things that existed before the current world to destroy and remake it. "Lamplighters" are champions who promote the cause of specific fallen titans and dead or forgotten gods who could be restored to full divinity. Genies and outsiders struggle to use the power to claim the Fourfold Throne which would make them masters of all elemental planes. Godlings move to claim enough power to become full gods. The players generally have begun as typical adventurers, facing off against kobold slavers and goblin raiders, only to discover the hidden struggle as they gain levels. As the PCs pick sides and make enemies, they become embroiled in a more planar conflict by the time they begin to hit 12th-15th level.

Because I allow all Paizo-produced *Pathfinder RPG* material and all SGG material in my campaign, some characters are a tad exotic (a lapith ranger tempest, or bardic cult-hunter who has given up the performer and spellsinger base archetypes to pick up execution and devoted archetypes from other classes), but all the players make sure their characters have strong concepts tied into the world's background. In a way it's a nice design element, because characters feel unique, rather than just "a fighter, a rogue, a cleric, and a wizard."

3. What is your favorite Paizo product that you have not worked on and why?

I'm a huge fan of the *Advanced Player's Guide*, at least in part because I think it set the tone for how Pathfinder has expanded since. The Core Rulebook is essentially an update of rules from earlier games, and while it's very well done there aren't a lot of new ideas for character concepts in it. The *Advanced Player's Guide*, on the other hand, has lots of concepts for classes, spells, feats, and even whole new rules, It was exciting to see how the Pathfinder game was going to grow, and the material in it is interesting and wellbalanced.

4. You are currently a part of Super Genius Games, How did that start, and how would you characterize the company today?

Super Genius Game was begun by Hyrum Savage and Stan!, both of whom I got to know years ago when the d20 boom first began. Before the Pathfinder RPG came along, they were producing material for Savage Worlds and call of Cthulhu, and Stan! approached me to see if I would be interested in writing a Call of Cthulhu adventure, which ended up being *Midnight Harvest*. That let me become familiar with SGG's expertise with editing, art direction, layout, and marketing of game books, all of which were areas I didn't have more experience.

So when the Pathfinder RPG was announced and the Beta Playtest released, I had an idea to create new Pathfinder-compatible products, using the best material from an existing game company I was in touch with. However, as confident as I was I could do the writing, I knew I'd need help with every other part of the book's creation. I approached Stan! and Hyrum, and they agreed it was a great idea. We got the



agreement of the company I was going to use for material, and began working on a 160-page book. While that was proceeding along, we decided to release some small PDF products, as a cheap and fast way to introduce ourselves to Pathfinder fandom. Those sold much, much better than we expected, and I kept having ideas for new PDFs, while at the same time production problems (such as cover art) began to make our original 160-page book look unlikely to ever see the light of day. Eventually Stan! and Hyrum offered me a permanent position as Lead Developer of Super Genius Games, and we moved forward with a PDF-based business plan.

Right now, I'd say Super Genius Games is one of the top tier Third Party Publishers for Pathfinder. Our focus is on small, weekly PDF releases, though we've done two print books and are always looking at ways to expand our business. We're a tiny little company right now, but we've grown steadily for two years, and I personally have hopes of building something bigger and tackling some bigger projects to go with our expanding capacity.

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

I'm a huge fan of *The Genius Guide to the Time Thief*, which was released by Super Genius Games back in July of 2010. It's a new core class (time thief) that focuses on manipulating time as her primary class power. Rather than travel through time by days or years (which can be a huge pain for a GM), the class uses tiny manipulations to give herself bonuses, with game rules designed to take the guesswork out of time control magic.

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

Honestly, it has to be my first contract with Jenny Poussin, who is our cover-girl for this book (as well as providing all the interior illustrations). I had seen numerous posts from Jenny in forums and in social media talking about how much she enjoyed the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game, and I knew she was a professional model, so I decided to take a long shot and see if she'd be interested in doing a photo-shoot for us. Her response was overwhelmingly positive, and I've enjoyed talking to her fairly regularly ever since. She was originally concerned she should keep her professional work and her hobby separate and asked us to credit her as Veronic F, but has since decided to embrace being a huge geek as well as a model and budding actress.

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

I'm actually very proud of the core powers of the time thief, the ability to spend motes of time (and later bigger slices of temporal energy known as aevum) to create effects and bonuses based on manipulating time. I wanted a game mechanic that didn't work the way any other class did, and a point-based system that gives you powers through rewinding time slightly, or accelerating your own time so everything else seems slow turned out to be a perfect fit for my desire to have something new, flexible, but not too complicated.

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

Game balance, which is often the case when writing a new class or rule set. You want to make sure a player who has decided to be a time thief doesn't regret that decision, but you also have to make sure the GM (and for that matter players who picked traditional classes) are also okay with it. The time thief went through more playtesting than most of our classes, and a lot of powers got removed as a result of that process. On the other hand, there were also things I had originally placed many more restrictions on that, in play, turned out not to be as scary as I had originally feared.

9. Did you learn anything while working on it? Sometimes the ability to do something new and different, something "cool," is more important to players than being the best at something.

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

That's a tricky question, for a lot of reasons. I think one of the most gorgeous products is undeniably Alluria Publishing's *Cerulean Seas Campaign Setting*. In addition to being beautiful, it's a well written and sizeable book on par with anything else that's been offered for Pathfinder by anyone.

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

To me the most important things are that a product have interesting ideas and well-balanced game rules. There are lots of other things I like to do personally as a designer, but at their core those are matters of taste and play style. As long as a product gives me something new and out of the ordinary, and solid rules to support it, I think it's done its job.

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

Wow, rough question! I'm a fan of a lot of other designers, and in general I don't categorize them by



"favorites." I do, however, tend to think of various designers as being much better than average in certain areas. For example, for wahoo high-concept ideas, I love Clinton Boomer. For adventure material, I'm a big fan of Greg A. Vaughn. For monster ideas I'm a big supporter of Sam Hing (who got an ENnie nomination for *Mythic Menagerie: Kingdom of Graves*, for example).

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

Put your name in front of editors and developers, in a positive light, as often as possible. Obviously that means you need to contact the people who might hire you, and the best way to do that is either according to their stated submission guidelines (if they have any), or a polite note asking about submissions. And, obviously, try to be the person who gets mentioned for turning things over early, or doing unusually good work, and avoid being mentioned as a diva or someone who is constantly late. But it's more than that, too. This is a small industry, and little things can go a long way. Before I got published I brought people cups of water when they were stuck in GenCon booths, and offered to do reviews on their websites. Everything you can do to associate your name with good things in the minds of someone who might pay you to write game material is helpful.

14. Who is your favorite illustrator?

As a developer, that has to be Jacob Blackmon (who I'd almost rather keep a secret). Jacob turns things over early, often with short deadlines and little notice, and produces exactly the art I ask for. It isn't always easy for an illustrator to respond to "I need an evil-



looking swan," but Jacob always exceeds my expectations!

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

Way back in 2001, I worked on *Starships of the Galaxy* for the d20 Star Wars RPG. A few weeks later, I got a death threat from a fan who felt that by giving the "wrong" size for the Executor (Darth Vader's command ship) I was trying to make the Empire look weaker, and thus make the Rebellion look less heroic. That remains the most extreme reaction I've ever provoked with game material.

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

I'm working on the next Loot 4 Less book right now. Fezzes are cool.

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

I'd like to be flown out to Norway to be a guest at a convention.

18. Can you talk a bit about *The Genius Guide* to the Godling, and its follow-up books. Why do you believe they are so popular?

The original idea behind The Genius Guide to the Godling was "What if you want to play Perseus?" I was a big fan of classic Greek mythology and the mythic heroes and heroines who were descended from the gods, but still acted as mortals. Originally I assumed it would be a niche product, since you can write up Perseus as a fighter and Hercules as a barbarian. But I think the idea of heroes who have a mote of divinity, who draw on powers from their heritage in much the same way sorcerers do but have loftier parents or grandparents, really struck a cord with gamers. I also think that the fact the books all try to give you flexible character design options without automatically making you better at everything you try has helped them be accepted by a lot of GMs, and that's crucial for the long-term success of third-party products. I know a number of GMs who have decided to run all-godling campaigns, which I think is the ultimate compliment for a game writer's work.

19. With Super Genius Games, you've written or developed a product every week for more than two years. How do you keep the ideas and writing fresh after doing the same kind of thing more than 104 times?

I admit that some of it is just discipline – if you've committed to a weekly schedule, you have to be good at overcoming writer's block, and doing so quickly. When all else fails, I look at my mortgage statement. If I don't produce products, we don't make any money!

But there are tricks to it as well, of course. For one thing development is a very different kind of activity than writing, and I often see the occasions when I get



to work on a manuscript from one of our regular freelancers (most often Sam Hing or Marc Radle) as a break from game design. I first got into game writing as an outgrowth of looking at professionally-produced ideas and thinks "That's neat, but what if we changed one little thing..." and that's a big part of development too.

For me, the other crucial thing is to play a lot of games. In addition to having outside playtest groups, I run two games that serve as playtests, and many product ideas come from something I or one of the players mentions in game. Many feats and spells start life as a player saying "Gee, I wish there was some way to..." and then suggesting some great extra rule.

It's also important to take time to absorb other kinds of entertainment. I read a lot, watch movies in theaters and on Netflix, and play games other than Pathfinder. That gives me a multitude of ways to run into a new idea, which can spark an entire game product.

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

I always tell people I love hearing from gamers and that SGG is always looking for new freelancers. What I rarely bother to mention is that I, personally, am disorganized, forgetful, and often way too busy. So if you drop me an email:

(owen@supergeniusgames.com)

and you haven't heard from me in 2 weeks, never be afraid to drop me a polite follow-up. That kind of initiative, as long as it's kept short and professional, really is another good example of getting your name in front of me in a positive light! **Rite Publishing Presents**

In The Company of Monsters **1st-20th Level Playable Racial Classes** By Jonathan McAnulty, T. H. Gulliver and Steven D. Russell

Jop Jen Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Compatible products of 2011

by Thilo "Endzeitgeist" Graf

This is my personal list of my favorite Pathfinderproducts of 2011. Note that some of the books here might not be the highest-scoring ones, but reflect my personal preferences. Without further ado:



10. Necromancers of the Northwest: Intrepid Explorations - The Island of Life. A great little sourcebook for an exciting mini-setting with a disturbing twist on reincarnation - the island of life is a place where mutations reign, sorcerors-turned trees enslave dryads and a herd of intelligent equines roams the plains. Disturbing!

Publisher's Note: These lists of the top products from 2011 are created independently by the respective reviewers but are done so at the request of Rite Publishing for publication. This is the second year we have had Endzeitgeist and Dark Mistress produce this list as they are the most prolific reviewers available. Rite Publishing has no influence over what appears on these lists.

Steven D. Russell Rite Publishing



9. LPJr Design: NeoExodus Campaign Setting-While not perfect, I really enjoy the fresh ideas the setting brings to the table and the unorthodox creativity that suffuses the nations of NeoExodus. The campaign setting features detailed information on several nations, some cool PrCs and an intriguing setup of advanced nations tethering on the edge of open warfare. The non-standard races also rock and while not perfect (there are some balance hick-ups and typos), the freshness of the approaches makes sure that the setting has a place on my shelf.

From the original review:

"...we get a more than aptly written, concise and cool history of the world of NeoExodus, its trials and tribulations and thus paints an imaginative, cool backdrop against which the crunch is set. It is only fitting that the first thing we'll read after the history of the world would be a list of unique elements that distinguish NeoExodus from other campaign settings and help you portray the differences in mood, themes and approaches. Major threats to the stability of NeoExodus, global threats so-to-speak, are mentioned and after that, we'll get into the write-ups of the different respective nations, which all come with basic information on settlements, forms of government, laws, population, currency etc. and even coats of arms. Fluff-only write-ups for the movers and shakers of the nations are provided alongside new hazards, detailed elaborations on how the land operates etc."



8. Headless Hydra Games: Mor Aldenn–City of Mages: Setting Guide the other campaign setting that surpassed my expectations - by far. The HHG guys have gone a long way, from a 1-star player's guide to this campaign setting and I'm looking forward to seeing more of their products. Their production values are top-notch for the low price and the stellar maps, old-world fluff and the prevalent aspect of magic in the city of mages makes sure that this book is a valid and interesting option you might want to check out.

From the original review:

"Jason Kimble's 12-page short story Demon Dreams actually paints an understandable, logic and exciting city rife with adventure, social structures and most of all, doesn't fall into the "Alert the Mages"-scheme, but rather provides valid reasons why the mages don't immediately act and why one of the most powerful figures of the city remains behind the scenes. Clever and a nice read.

After that, we get a guide to the city, including a b/w-2-page map, information on the archmages and governing bodies, guilds, religions (including some sample religious tales) and, most of all: The 3 laws of magic that serve as the judicial foundation of how Wizardry is practiced in Mor Aldenn. Local holidays, festivals, organizations etc are covered as well and after reading this mere paragraph, the city makes more sense to me than after the lecture of the whole player's guide."



7. Super Genius Games: Krazy Kragnar's Magic Staff Emporium - Even among the stellar rules-supplements by SGG, this pdf ranks as a stellar example of excellent design. Marc Radle's tige vierges are a stroke of genius - essentially blank staves, they make for not only exciting design choices, but the ramifications of their existence ensures a whole new, vast array of possible adventures - after all, they are weapons of mass destruction in the making...

From the original review:

"Evocative descriptions, full construction notes, recharging information and neat ideas (like the Staff of 4 Winds or the Staff of the white Necromancer), there just isn't anything to complain about with regards to these staves - most even come with additional minor benefits in addition to their chargedependant abilities. Especially due to a neat piece of additional service: Each and every staff herein gets its own piece of surprisingly gorgeous artwork from author/illustrator Marc Radle -it's just great to show them off to your PCs and something I frankly didn't expect at this price point. Very cool!"

"....The scaling staves and especially the tige vierges are just strokes of genius that had me facepalm for not coming up with the idea myself - elegant, simple, cool and full of story-telling and mechanic potential. For the low price, you get a top quality, stellar product that shines even among the excellent pdfs by SGG innovation, nothing to complain about, added storytelling potential..."


6. Open Design: Streets of Zobeck I love the gritty, dark urban noir adventures and will review it eventually. Ben McFarland created a great anthology here and while the book has more glitches than I'm truly happy with, the noiresque adventures with all their grit and grime pleasantly reminded me of Thieves' World and similar settings, making Streets of Zobeck a well-deserved entry into this list and a nice return to the city of clockworks.

From the original review:

"...each of the locations is iconic and comes with its own, highly detailed map. The Black Lotus, an opium den led by the enigmatic, kabuki-style painted man who offers any magical favors you require would be only one example. Of course, we also visit the black market in the eponymous cartways of Zobeck. Once we're done shopping with illicit goods, we show up at the neutral ground of the city's underworld, the botanical rooftop garden of Hommal for a nice tea (or other substance) we'll visit the old Stross bathhouse/massage parlor, before we, refreshed, but somewhat disturbed by the glimpse of a shadowfey in the pool, go to the silken scabbard to relax with the prostitutes there. It is also here, where we find Tyron, king of fixers, the best of a kind of rogues (new archetype + new roguish talent) who can get/repair just about anything - for the right price/favor!'

"...the artworks by Glen Zimmerman, distinct, creepy, grimy and dirty is simply AWESOME and something that truly helps the feeling of this noir-anthology."



5. Rite Publishing: Breaking of Forstor Nagar - And Ben McFarland again - this awesome full-color beauty with full MapTool-support is just too beautiful and makes for a neck-breaking tour-de-force as the PCs infiltrate a city of ice beset by a horde of cannibals on a rescue mission - remorhaz-powered gardens are only one of the great ideas herein. A blockbuster action-movie adventure if there ever was one.

From the original review:

"I'm jaded, let's face it. I've seen and read so many RPG-books, it's hard to excite me and especially adventures often fall short of my own high expectations..."

"This pdf is Ben McFarland's roaring rampage through an insidiously well-crafted, yet simple plot, taking flying, invisibility and similar tools at the PCs disposal into account, while providing a huge amount of awesome ideas. The tour de force through the city of grinding ice along its harrowing conclusion and nail-biting, exciting escape has me asking for more. This pdf is a stellar example of peak performance of all the talents that go into crafting a good book - from formal criteria, cartography, editing, writing, art, layout, writing and innovation (this being to my knowledge the first PFRPG-adventure that has specifically been designed for use with VITs), Breaking of Forstor Nagar would be a prime candidate for 5 stars even without the support. With it and facing the raw quality of the combination of stellar performances by the individual participants who collaborated in this book, I can only say that I'd give this 6 stars if I could."

4. Gaming Paper: Citadel of Pain - In my humble opinion the best dungeon released this year - by far. Imaginative, cool and weird, the collaboration of Lou Agresta and Rone Barton features the vast variety of excellent ideas - from intelligent torture devices and strange factions to the unique hodge-podge of races and cultures in the citadel, this adventure not only makes for an awesome adventure, but also for a great read.

From the original review:

FRMING PRP

"...the society Lou Agresta and Rone Barton crafted rivals e.g. the strange societies of China Mièville in imaginative potential and iconic quality. Even better, the duo of authors have managed to create an adventure, that thanks to the tracker makes it easy for the DM to handle complex faction politics and ensure modularity. The crowning achievement of adventurewriting any sandboxy adventure, at least to me, is utter modularity and freedom of choice. While printed adventures always have to somewhat rely upon minor guidelines to ensure the story works, I've rarely seen an adventure that can be modified this easily and I guarantee that no two ventures to Rogthandor will be the same - there are that many possibilities.

... there are a lot of great ideas herein and, sometimes, adventures make players ask themselves questions: Is it right to slaughter all these humanoids that don't hurt anybody and are oppressed by cruel ruling castes? Is it right to eradicate the sentience of an intelligent item begging for quarter, even if it's evil? Where does being a hero end and being a murderer begin? Even if the general populace is not evil, is it right to release them into the world?"



3. Raging Swan Press: Caves & Caverns - This is the absolute best underdark sourcebook I could hope for - half excellent encounters, half cool terrain feature toolkit, all perfect presentation. The plunge into a lake of maggots through swarms of millions of mosquitoes and the spherical quartz-chariot ridden by the beautiful xorn-princess are already legendary and will feature heavily in my games. Perhaps the best encounter-book released by RSP so far.

From the original review:

"The toolbox in the beginning of the pdf is awesome and should be consulted by any DM planning an extensive venture of PCs into caves or the underdark be it the now legendary Empire of Ghouls or a similar venture. The encounters of the second chapter are on par with the stellar quality of most Raging Swan files and even surpasses the most imaginative and iconic NPCs yet presented by them in some regards. That being said, giant-lovers, aficionados of dragons and fans of eldritch horror get a bit of a short stick here, with most of the encounters ranging in the low- and especially mid-level range and centering on humanoids and denizens from the elemental planes."

"...when all is said and done, you get an excellent resource for the Underdark that oozes passion, heart's blood, quality and feels like a labor of love - all while providing one of the most easily usable books I've read in quite a while. Whether you shoot for the cavern-rules, the encounters or both..." Rite Publishing Presents



2. Rite Publishing: 101 New Skill Uses - a work of design genius, extremely usable, brilliantly conceived, smartly presented and useful for just about anyone, this is the crown-jewel of the 101-series and will enhance any game it is introduced to. This pdf should be considered obligatory for every PFRPG-group out there, is cheap, concisely presented and written and just a joy to behold. All the options this pdf opens for a Dm are just awesome.

From the original review:

"Pathfinder-group should own this book.

No exceptions.

There's simply no way around it, this pdf is one of those rare, humble books that via great design and without adding complex mechanics makes the game much more fun. The content is so easy to implement that no one should be stupefied by the new skill uses. Characters don't have to be changed to make use of the content of this pdf. In fact, the new skill uses open up whole revenues of new character options and adventure writing, making any campaign it is introduced to more rewarding. This humble pdf BLEW ME AWAY. Many skill uses I had house-ruled until now finally get cool, concise and balanced rules and some aspects are introduced via the skills that plainly feel awesome to me....this pdf is simply a goldmine of ideas and crunchy goodness."

"If you want to expand your players' options without forcing them to spend feats, go buy this. If you are stumped with regards to writing adventures and would like to add some new options, go buy this. If you're just curious, again, go buy this. If you're tired of house-ruling fast disable, sabotaging magic items, fast climbing etc., go buy this."



1.Open Design: Midgard: Northlands- No surprise there - I love the Scandinavian culture, their sagas and participated in the creation of this - all in all, this is my favorite sourcebook ever, as it actually is the first one I know of that gets the mindset and poetry of the sagas right. From excellent rules, imaginative monsters, cool options and iconic locations, Northlands is my absolute favorite Pathfinder book out there and while I'm not a big fan of the layout, I still consider this book to be my personal best of 2011.

From the original review:

"It does more than an awesome job of providing a backdrop that is not only easy to scavenge from, but rather should be considered THE resource for just about any adventure/campaign set in the north. Even better, for those of you out there who are interested in the topics, the book contains some nice insiders and new takes on classic tropes - if you'll excuse me now, I'm off to Holmgard and beyond."

Honorable Mentions:

Rite Publishing - Kaidan Trilogy: Excellent selection of awesome horror-adventures. Well-written, tight in themes and mood and unique in flavor and fluff, these missed the top ten only by a minor margin.

Frog God Games - Slumbering Tsar is shaping up to be not only a deadly epic adventure, but also one of the most exciting old-school modules ever - 2012 will probably see this as part of my list.

Endzeitgeist out.



Jop Jen Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Compatible products of 2011 By Dark Mistress



10) The Breaking of Forstor Nagar by Rite Publishing - Want a different type of adventure? How about one where you have to break into a city under siege, find key NPC's and then escape the city while the enemy pours into the city streets? If that sounds like a interesting adventure to your then pick this up. You won't regret it.

From the original review:

"...The adventure set up and concept are top notch and very cool. There is a real feeling of urgency and for any good aligned PC group there will be added pressure of trying to save as many people as possible. The encounters are well done, the encounter maps show you everything you need an there is a few twists and turns in the adventure to keep you on your toes. I really liked the adventure."

"But I didn't think it was perfect I do have two nitpicks about it. One is one of the encounters it is very hard to save a NPC and some players I think will be annoyed with how it happens as they can do almost nothing to stop it. The other nitpick is I wish there had been a overview map of the city. I wouldn't have had to have been a detailed one just a vague one to give the GM a sense of the size of the city and help give a better sense of describing the flight threw the city. Second one is a bigger issue, while the adventure is great. It could have been one of the all time great 3pp adventures for Pathfinder, it still might be. But having the map would have helped."



9) Ultimate Options: New Arcane Discoveries by Super Genius Games - There is 30 new arcane discoveries to help give wizards some new choices and add some more variety to the new Arcane Discovery system. If you are a fan of them then this book is a can't miss.

From the original review:

"...I liked the majority of the new discoveries and I like Academician a lot as a archetype. A couple of the discoveries I was meh about but a few of them like Genie Servitor is just outstanding and so perfect for Arabian Night style setting. I really have nothing negative to say other than I wasn't a fan of all the stuff, but that is more a matter of taste than anything wrong with them. My only other comment is when do we get a follow up PDF of more of them?"



8) The Genius Guide to 110 Spell Variants by Super Genius Games - Within this book is a 110 new spells that are variations of existing spells with cool and new twists. Some of them are added to other classes spell list, some are minor variants while other ones are more major variations. Either way they are well done spells that stay well balanced with the existing spells. While adding some nice variety as well.

From the original review:

"...There was a couple of spells I wish they would have had a bit more information about. Torchbearer, which works like dancing lights. The name suggest it holds a torch but other than saying it works like dancing lights it doesn't say. Also there is one spell listed twice. Rejuvenate Familiar is listed as a 1st level and a 4th level spell. All and all the product is very well done and the spell range from, that's pretty neat to why didn't I think of that."



7) Caves and Caverns by Raging Swan Games - Simple a book for running games in the underdark. With advice on how to do it, random encounter tables, random tunnel tables and pretty much everything you would want or need to run a game set in the underdark outside of the core rule books.

From the original review:

"... The encounters ranged from solid to in a few cases outstanding. Most of them was good or very good in design. The first chapter and random tables of the second chapter is reason enough to pick this up for anyone planning to run any games in the underdark. The encounters are just a bonus and a good bonus at that. The only negative thing I can say and this is more of a nit pick than a real problem is, the encounters tend to be more mundane and by that I mean creatures you would obviously expect to find and/or are common. I would have liked to have seen a few not a lot but a few more uncommon type encounters. Otherwise I really have nothing negative to say and that is a nitpick."



6) Random Encounters Remastered by Purple Duck Games - A new way to handle random encounters. It uses a single chart for all levels and works out well. Plus it adds in random terrain and other features to truly make each encounter feel different from any other random encounter. This is the first of the series, really the whole series could have been a single book. This is my naming the whole series as a top ten of the year.

From the original review:

"...It starts off talking about how to use the product and what makes a random encounter interesting and more than just combat. It is a well written start that helps one set up memorable random encounters that will be just as fun and interesting and the main adventures. With plenty of terrain write ups and other examples of things that can be added to random encounters."

"... the random encounter tables they are set up for any level. How they manage this is you add to the number rolled based on the party level. ...each one also has a disposition and terrain features..."

"...The tables and advice was really well done. Some of the choices seemed a bit odd to me as a first product.But all the tables where outstanding along with adding in terrain and the disposition tables just added a lot of value.I think these are the outstanding random encounter tables."



5) #30 Haunts for Objects by Rite Publishing - Using the new Haunt rules, this book ties them to object's instead of locations to give them a nice haunted feeling to them. They objects are well written with interesting histories and haunts. Fans of haunts should not miss this product.

From the original review:

"I honestly could have listed a lot more examples I liked virtually all the haunted objects to one degree or another. Though a few of the objects I felt could have used a bit more history and or explanation to them. I also felt a few of them could have gone a bit further. That and I wish there had been a lot more of them, especially of the smaller more personal objects one could place in a dungeon, haunted house etc and expect the PC's to maybe pick up and keep."

COOLOGICACIO COLOGICACIO COLOGICACIO PHANTASIA COOLOGICA Diferente te cata free alleren Constantingen Constantinge

4) Phantasia Zoologica Volume 1: Cats, Dogs, and Horses by 4 Wind Fantasy Gaming - Tired of just having a cat, or two or three types of dogs or horses? Well then this is the book for you. Within you will find dozens of different breeds of cats, dogs and horses. Each with their own stat blocks and slightly or in some cases major differences in their abilities. Other than a lot of mundane variations their is also some fantasy versions of each animal as well.

From the original review:

"There is art for each animal in the book which I found to be a big plus. Editing and layout are good. Now I am a bit biased I really like products like this that add the little details. Even with out the magical and undead versions I found this to be a useful book. If you would like to have a some differences in animals. Like some dogs that hunt better than others, or might be tougher and more suited to combat. Each breed has things they are good at. If that interest you then I highly recommend picking this up. So what's my rating? I am giving it a 4.5 good but not perfect. I would have liked to have seen a bit more on a couple of entries like Puss-n-Boots and a list of those that would make good improved familiar choices, but all and all a solid book."



Open Game Content: The text on pages 2 through 37 are open game content.

3) Legendary 1: Legendary Blades by Purple Duck Games - Tired of your PC's having a golf bag of magic weapons? Wish your character could have a magic sword she keep her whole career? Well then pick this book up. With in you will find weapons that gain in power as you level up. Each has a set of themed powers to fit the weapon and with well done histories about the weapons as well.

From the original review:

"The writing and prose are concise and do a great job of making the blades interesting in spite of the limitations in space and the setting-neutral background.

For the very low price, you get excellent blades and a HUGE amount of content. While the abilities could have been a bit more on the far-out side of things for me, I can't help but like what Mark Gedak and Stefen Styrsky have done here. I love leveling weapons and this file provides them for an extremely fair price. I have high hopes for the sequel. (Which has just been released!) And a file for leveling armors."



2) Gothic Heroes: Pregenerated Characters by Legendary Games - A collection of PC's that are meant to tie in with Paizo's Carrion Crown Adventure Path. They are ready made with full art, backgrounds that tie into the AP. Interesting back stories and some stand up artwork to be used for mini's as well.

From the original review:

"There is black and white and is very good to outstanding, with a nice parchment background, very pretty PDF. Editing and layout was very good I didn't notice any errors. The characters where well done, with very interesting histories with ties to the recent Carrion Crown AP. I am honestly not a huge fan of premade PC's or NPC's I tend to like my own. But these was done well enough that each of them inspired me in one way or another I plan to use all of them as NPC's in my upcoming game I am running. There is bookmarks to key things that might not be common knowledge, there is also notes on where to find some information not bookmarked. There is also a print friendly version of the document, though while it does do away with the parchment look it still have some background images so it is not as print friendly as it could be. My only other complaint about the whole product is the lack of a paper mini for the Eidolon and the familiar."



1) Midgard: Northlands by Open Design - A campaign setting book for the world of Midgard. Set in the far north, this is one of the better campaign books I have read and really captures the feel of the norther cultures well. It has everything you need to either run a campaign setting there in Migard or any generic northerlands campaign setting.

From the original review:

"Everything about this book was well written and interesting. If you are looking for a new campaign setting then this book has what you need, if you are looking for information to add to a existing setting to cover the northlands of a campaign world then again all you need is here. Or even if you are just looking for idea's for adventures and characters from such a environment. I really have nothing negative to say about this, other than to say this book does for the northlands what Tales of the Old Margreve did from Grim Tales folklore forests. I highly recommend this book if the subject interest you in the slightest."

Honorable Mention

Tome of Horrors Complete- I still do not own this book for Pathfinder yet. I do own all three of the originals and they was simply fantastic and i am sure the updated one is as well. I did not list it in my top ten because I do not own the Pathfinder version, but I wanted to list it as a honorable mention anyways.

Trust me, I'm a Succubus.

ANCESTRAL RELICS

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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101 Pirate and Privateer Traits



By Steven D. Russell