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September 2012 Issue 18

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Editorial

I went to GenCon this year, like I've done every year for about a quarter century, and, like usual, Sunday came and I was driving home before I knew it. I think that the slogan should be "The Fastest Four Days in Gaming," but I'm thinking no one else will think that's a particularly compelling line. Alas, such is the way of things: when I'm having a great time, the time always goes by too fast.

It had been a while since I'd judged any role-playing events, and this year I decided I'd take a look at the Paizo messageboards to see whether there was anything planned that I might be interested in. I don't have an intimate knowledge of the Pathfinder Society, though I had worked in organized play for Wizards of the Coast and I figured there were bound to be relevant similarities. However, I was also a little afraid that, as I didn't know the default setting for Pathfinder, that I might not be able to handle running scenarios that might be heavily dependent upon the little details of a fleshed-out world.

To my great surprise, I discovered that there were openings to GM the Kid's Track events. These events were half-events (so I ended up running two of them per slot), and were effectively variations on the Beginner Box materials. I had not gotten into the Beginner Box prior to GenCon, so I was a little at a loss—but, I had adequate time prior to every slot to look up any monsters and make sure I had all the appropriate stats to run the encounters without having to address any notes or resources.

I had no idea what to expect. At 8:00 AM on Thursday, the other GM running Kid's Track had a full table, and I had no one. I didn't give up though; I anticipated that, at a Con, things might just be running a little behind schedule. Thankfully, that's what happened. However, I only had two kids show up at the table (I was supposed to have four). So, after waiting as long as I could afford to wait, I talked the father of the players into joining us in the adventure. And, thankfully, one of the overflow Paizo judges walked by and volunteered to take the remaining chair. The interesting tidbit about these players was their ages: they were a 5-year-old boy and his 9-year-old sister.

After that half-slot was finished, and the encounter went the right way (i.e. the PCs won), my next table was similarly under-populated. Again, I had two kids as players, and again I had parents join in. This time, however, both players were girls. By noon on Thursday, 75% of my players were female. This is an encouraging sign. You might be saying to yourself, "Yeah Dave, but that's not a very good sample, 3 out of 4 might just be a fluke." And, of course, you'd be right. However, by Saturday at noon, after I'd run six half-slots of adventures, more than half my players (not counting any parents—just the kids) were female. This is a big deal. I remember walking the streets of Milwaukee during the GenCons of the 1980s seeing 100 male gamers for every 1 female gamer. I remember the transitional years of the 1990s: though attendance by women at the conventions was higher, it was still only a tiny fraction of the attendance by men (and, while there were quite a few boys, there were very few girls). But, at some point, after WotC bought TSR, after the switch to Indy, and after some other shifts in society generally, GenCon became more open to attendees of all makes and models.

Still, for a long while, many of the women and girls at the cons were wives, girlfriends, and daughters who were being dragged along by their gamer guys. As a regular attendee of the event, I've noticed the switch taking place over time. For a while, many of the women and girls attending GenCon weren't necessarily there to play RPGs (I have no idea how many 6-year-old Princess Leias I've seen on Saturdays at GenCon...). That switch happened at some point as well.

And so, here we are. At GenCon 2012, I had about two dozen players at various tables over three mornings, and more than a dozen of those players were girls—most of them between 9 and 12. This is a significant shift in the community and portends, I hope, great new things for the game. Over the last 20 years or so there have been significant and important contributions from people other than middle-aged white guys. There are many voices to add to the still-sizeable sea of the dominant group. And, from what I've seen lately, the influence of girls and women on the game is significant and growing.

Finally, kudos to Mike Brock and the team at Paizo for organizing these events and going out of their way to be accommodating to younger players. I had a GREAT time running the Kid's Track events and look forward to running them again as soon as I can get to another convention where they're being offered. If you love the game, consider becoming one of the most important ambassadors the game has: a convention GM.

David Paul Editor-in-chief



What Treasures Lie Within the Kobolds' Vaults, Guarded by Fearsome Dire Weasels?

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Cataclysmic Creature Jemplate

By Steven D. Russell; Illustration by Joe Shawcross

Legends and prophecies foretell the coming of creatures imbued with sufficient destructive power to change the course of recorded history. Indeed, some are powerful enough to end entire civilizations. These beings come in many forms—the embodiment of a righteous deity's judgment, the unintended creation of cataclysmic misuse of magic, a primal force of nature wreaking havoc on mere mortals, and many others.

Cataclysmic creatures are beings of such terrible power that only the mad dream of unleashing them upon the world. The wise among mortals and immortals alike dare not even speak the names of these monsters for fear of summoning them to exact their harsh judgment upon the earth. Cataclysmic creatures are enormous, power-filled versions of the base creature. Their very countenances strikes fear into the hearts of even the bravest warriors, and their aspect swell with divine power.

Creating a Cataclysmic Creature

"Cataclysmic" is an acquired template that can be added to any creature.

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

CR: becomes 25

Alignment: Changes to Lawful Evil.

Size: A cataclysmic creature is a size category larger than the base creature, or larger (maximum Colossal, Adjustments for size are not included in this template).

AC: +10 natural armor, +2 deflection bonus, +3 divine bonus

Hit Dice: Die type changes to d12. The creatures HD total becomes 30 HD and receives maximum hit points per die make adjustments for BAB, CMD/CMB, Saves, Skill points, and Feats

Saves: +2 divine bonuses to all saving throws.

Speed: all modes increase by 30 ft..

Defenses/Qualities: DR 25/- **Immune** ability drain, acid, disease, death by massive damage, damage cold, electricity, fire, mind affecting , stunning, paralysis, **SR** 37

Special Abilities: A cataclysmic creature retains all the special abilities of the base creature, plus the special abilities as described below:

Divine Puissance (Su): A creature with the divine retribution special attack adds a +5 enhancement bonus to his melee and ranged attack and damage rolls, and deals an additional +5d6 points of divine damage upon a successful hit.

Divine Retribution (Su): A creature or object successfully hit by a cataclysmic creature must also succeed on a Fort save or suffer 300 points of divine damage (DC 25+ cataclysmic creature's Charisma modifier). A successful save results in half damage and it becomes immune to further uses of this cataclysmic creature's divine retribution and word of cataclysm for 24 hours. Creatures that hit the monster with natural weapons or unarmed attacks must make this save as well or suffer its effects, creature that attack with melee weapons have the divine retribution secondary affect trigger on their weapon.

Divine Rejuvenation (Su): Three times per day, an cataclysmic creature can restore all lost hit points as a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Word of the Cataclysm (Su): Once per day, an cataclysmic creature can utter a word, unleashing tremendous destructive power. The word causes earthquakes. tsunamis. tornados, hurricanes. firestorms, massive electrical storms, acid rain, and other kinds of natural disasters dealing 300 points of damage to all creatures and objects within a 12,000 ft. radius, centered on the cataclysmic creature (who is immune to its effects). A successful Fort save (DC 25+ cataclysmic creature's Charisma modifier) results in half damage and it becomes immune to further uses of this cataclysmic creature's divine retribution and word of cataclysm for 24 hours.

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

Feats: An apocalyptic creature may select any feat, even those normally restricted to a class. It must still meet all qualifications for the feat, besides class affiliation.



Ruin from the Depths CR 25

XP 1,638,400

cataclysmic mutant sahuagin LE Large monstrous humanoid (aquatic) **Init** +9; **Senses** blindsense 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +34

Defense

AC 37, touch 20, flat-footed 32 (+2 deflection, +5 Dex, +3 divine, -1 size, +17 natural,)

hp 630 (30d12+270)

Fort +21, Ref +31, Will +20

Defensive abilities divine rejuvenation **DR** 25/-**Immune** ability drain, acid, disease, death by massive damage, cold, electricity, fire, mind affecting , stunning, paralysis **SR** 37 **Weaknesses** light blindness

Offense

Speed 60 ft., swim 90 ft.

Melee +5 trident +44 (1d8+23 plus 5d6/19-20), +5 bite +39 (1d4+16 plus 5d6) 1 +5 dagger +39 (1d4 +16 plus 5d6), and +5 claw +39 (1d4+16 plus 5d6) **Special Attacks** blood frenzy, divine puissance, divine retribution (DC 29), word of cataclysm (DC 29)

Jactics

Before Combat Ruin from the Depths usually arrives at a location he has been sent to destroy and warn a small group of people. He then waits until dusk of the following day, and unleashes his word of cataclysm. during this trip and his time of waiting he sends all the sharks he can away from the area.

During Combat Ruin from the Depths waits until dusk to use his word but will defend himself from attack with his divine retribution and will kill any one

who attacks him and their perceived allies, though he will allow those who do attack him to flee.

Morale Ruin form the Depths fights to the death, because if he were to flee the divine powers would simply destroy him for his failure.

Statistics

Str 32, Dex 20, Con 28, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 19 Base Atk +30; CMB +42; CMD 47

Feats Blind-Fight, Bleeding Critical, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Great Cleave, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical(Trident), Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Multi Attack, Multi Weapon Attack, Power Attack, Staggering Critical, Weapon Focus (trident), Weapon Specialization (trident)

Skills Handle Animal +34, Perception +34, Ride +38, Stealth+34, Survival +34, Swim +44

Languages Aquan, Common; speak with sharks

Ecology

Environment any Organization solitary, pair, or patrol (3–5) Treasure none

Special Abilities

Blood Frenzy Once per day, a sahuagin that takes damage in combat can fly into a frenzy in the following round. It gains +2 Constitution and +2 Strength, but takes a -2 penalty to its AC. The frenzy lasts as long as the battle or 1 minute, whichever is shorter.

Speak with Sharks A sahuagin can communicate telepathically with sharks to a distance of 150 feet. This communication is limited to simple concepts, such as "come here," "defend me," or "attack this target.



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The Vibrant Virtuoso: A Tribute to 101 Bard Feats

Reading through 101 Bard Feats, I came up with some nifty ideas based on the content within. Please enjoy! By Thomas LeBlanc Illustrations by Public Domain

Performing Speaker's Companion

"The rat danced around with teensy cleats strapped to its feet, keeping perfect rhythm with its trainer. I could not take my eye off the bugger. Even though it was mangy, something kept drawing my eye to it. I was so impressed; I tossed in a few extra coppers." -Lady Meliose

If you have the Speaker's Companion feat, your animal companion adds Perform to its list of racial skills. The animal can be trained to use miniature instruments if its physiology allows for it. The animal does not gain the ability to speak. When your companion uses aid another to provide a bonus to your Perform skill check, the bonus is increased to +4. This ability replaces the link special ability of the druid animal companion.

Feats

Practiced Maestro (General)

"There goes the Buried Poet, the ground dances to his drum and will swallow you whole."

Prerequisites: Ability to perform at least one masterpiece, Perform (any) 8 ranks.

Benefit: Reduce the number of bardic performance rounds used to activate all masterpieces you know by 1 round. The number of rounds needed to activate a masterpiece can't be reduced to zero; one round must always be used to begin a masterpiece.

Special: This feat doesn't reduce the number of actions needed to activate a masterpiece.

Tactical Insight (Combat)

"Tha' lil bookworm may not have been much of a fighter, but he sure knew where 'n' how to hurt 'em!" **Prerequisites:** Tactical Naturalist, 5 ranks in any Knowledge skill.

Benefit: When using the Tactical Naturalist feat, your allies gain an insight bonus to damage equal to your naturalist class ability bonus.

Tempting Lure (General)

"It was a blessed sight; the piper played and the demon didn't flee the holy army marching toward it!" **Prerequisites:** Know Thy Enemy, 8 ranks in any Perform skill.

Benefit: Whenever you fight a creature, you can make a Knowledge check based on its type, provided that you have at least one rank in the appropriate Knowledge skill. If you make a successful check (DC 15 + its CR) you know how to draw its attention. You can expend 2 rounds of bardic performance as a free action to keep that type of creature from leaving. Each creature of that type within 90 feet receives a Will save (DC 10 + 1/2your bard level + your Cha modifier) to negate the effect. Each creature must be within 90 feet, able to see



and hear you, and capable of paying attention to you. You must also be able to see the creatures affected. If a creature's saving throw succeeds, you cannot use this ability on that creature again for 24 hours. If its saving throw fails, the creature will not move away from you or flee combat, either by movement of magic. If the creature drops below 10% of its total hit points, it can attempt another save with a +2 bonus.

This ability is an enchantment (compulsion), mindaffecting ability that relies on audible and visual components to function.

Special: A bard may choose to take this feat in place of the benefit normally granted by the versatile performance class feature at 2nd, 6th, 10th, 14th, or 18th level (losing only the benefit granted at that level, not all levels) so long as she meets its prerequisites.

Equipment

Gong Shield: A gong shield has the same effect as a normal shield, with the exception that the shield reverberates when used to attack. Shield bashing a creature with a gong shield adds a circumstance bonus equal to the shield bonus to Perform (percussion) checks until the end of your next turn. A gong shield can be created from a masterwork light or heavy metal shield by increasing the cost by 20 gp.

Howling Hammer: This modified hammer grants a +2 circumstance bonus to Intimidate checks when swung. Ridges around the face of the hammer create a howling sound that is audible up to 200 feet from

where it is swung. Any masterwork weapon with hammer in its name can become a howling hammer by increasing the cost by 100 gp.

Singing Sword: Small grooves and holes are cut into the blade of this sword. When the sword is swung during a Perform (sing) check, the wielder gains a +2 circumstance bonus to the check. A singing sword is created using a masterwork sword by increasing the cost by 30 gp.

Wondrous Items

Hideous Heckler

Aura faint enchantment and transmutation; CL 5th Slot none; Price 3,000 gp; Weight 1 lb.

Description

This tiny bronze figurine depicts a shouting humanoid colored in garish tints. When thrown down and a command word is spoken, the *hideous heckler* animates and begins making distracting motions and noises. Any creature within 30 feet takes a -4 penalty to Perform checks and reduces the DC of their bardic performances or masterpieces by -2. After 1 hour or a second command word is spoken, the figurine ceases moving in a flash accompanied by a bang. This figurine can be activated only once per day.

Construction

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *animate objects, hideous laughter*; **Cost** 1,500 gp

Supporting Cast

Aura faint illusion and transmutation; CL 5th Slot none; Price 5,000 gp; Weight 1 lb. Description

This tiny brass figurine depicts a humanoid wearing motley garb and carrying an instrument case. When thrown down and a command word is spoken, the *supporting cast* animates and begins performing. The owner of the figurine gains a +2 circumstance bonus to Perform checks and increases the DC of their bardic performances and masterpieces by +1. The figurine can only assist in the performance of a single masterpiece, 10 rounds of bardic performance, or one hour of using the Perform skill; afterwards it ceases moving. The figurine can only be activated once per day.

Construction

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *animate objects, minor image;* **Cost** 2,500 gp





KAIDAN CAMPAIGN SETTING

KICKSTARTER

The dark shores of Kaidan beckon, are you brave enough for the journey?

Last year, Rite Publishing, with the support of Cubicle 7 Entertainment, released *"The Curse of the Golden Spear"* trilogy of modules for use with the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game. These critically acclaimed adventure modules introduced players and Game Masters alike to the cursed island realm of Kaidan. Now we are ready to take the next step: the production of a campaign guidebook, detailing more fully the people and places of Kaidan. And we would like your help with this project.

What is Kaidan?

An oriental fantasy-horror setting, Kaidan derives its mythos exclusively from the legends and histories of Japan. The very word, Kaidan, is Japanese for ghost story, or spooky tale, and such a name is apropos. Ruled over by an undying shogun in the name of an immortal child emperor, Kaidan is a land of trapped souls, restless dead, vengeful demons and afflicted spirits. In Kaidan, death is never the end, but only one more unhappy spoke in a bleak and twisted karmic cycle. Here, adventurers are sorely needed, if only to hold back the darkness a little longer.

What do we want to produce?

Complete Gamemaster's Guide to Kaidan (150 - 200 pages) Complete Player's Guide to Kaidan (150 pages) Kaidan Bestiary (100+ pages)

Soft cover printed books with B/W interiors and PDFs.

Jonathan McAnulty. T.H. Gulliver, Will McCardill, Michael K. Tumey







RUINED JOWER

(EL8; XP 4,800)

By Creighton Broadhurst of Raging Swan Press; Illustration by Eric Quigley and Public Domain This encounter begins when the PCs investigate a ruined tower they discover hidden deep in the forest through which they are travelling. The tower is not on the party's map and is clearly very old. Read:

The moss-covered ruined wall of a tumbled tower emerges from the forest. Thick stands of nettles, dense bushes and both saplings and established trees crowd in upon the ruins.

Perception (DC 15): The forest surrounding the tower is strangely quiet.

Survival (DC 15): No obvious pathways lead to the tower; it appears to have lain abandoned for some time.

When the PCs enter the tower, read:

Inside the ruins, undergrowth and trees grow thickly against the tower's crumbling walls. The remains of a well pierce the ground near one wall and rubble covered in weeds and grass lies thickly about the area.

Once the PCs enter the tower, the shambling mound probably becomes aware (Perception +11) of them. However, it does not attack until the intruders encounter the yellow musk creeper.

JACJACS

The shambling mound is far more intelligent than the other creatures lurking in the tower. Although it does not direct the yellow musk creeper (and its zombies), it does react to their actions. Once the PCs are engaged with the zombies, it creeps forward and tries to grab the smallest or least armoured target. If it manages to grapple its target, it slowly retreats while crushing its prey to death.

When intruders come within 30 ft. of the yellow musk creeper, it uses its pollen spray against the nearest target and its zombies lumber forth to do battle. For their part, the creeper and its zombies ignore the shambling mound as they are essentially mindless and don't see it as an ally or enemy.

AREA FEATURES

The area has several features of note:



Trees: A creature standing in the same square as a tree (AC 4, hardness 5, hp 150, DC 15 Climb check) gains partial cover (+2 to AC, +1 on Reflex saves).

Massive Trees: Huge trees (AC 3, hardness 5, hp 600; DC 15 Climb check) fill an entire square. They provide cover (+4 AC, +2 Reflex).

Light Undergrowth: A square filled with light undergrowth costs 2 squares of movement to enter, but provides concealment (20% miss chance). Light undergrowth also increases the DC of Acrobatics and Stealth checks by 2.

Heavy Undergrowth: A heavy undergrowth square costs 4 squares of movement to enter, but provides concealment (30% miss chance). It increases the DC of Acrobatics and Stealth checks (to move quietly) by 2, but bestows a +5 circumstance bonus to Stealth checks made to hide. Running and charging in such squares is impossible.

Ruins: The walls of the tower are ramshackle and the roof and upper floors have long since fallen in. In places, the tower walls still reach 40 ft. into the sky, but in others they are little more than 10 ft. high.

The walls are unsafe, but can be scaled with a DC 20 Climb check. Failure by 10 or more indicates part of the wall collapses, dealing 3d6 damage to the falling character (in addition to normal falling damage).

Rubble (Light): Patches of light rubble lie here and there among the ruins.

Light rubble adds 2 to the DC of Acrobatics checks.

Rubble (Dense): Piles of dense rubble lie against the tower walls.

It costs 2 squares of movement to enter an area containing dense rubble. Dense rubble adds 5 to the DC of Acrobatics checks and 2 to the DC of Stealth checks. Characters on a pile of dense rubble gain the benefits of higher ground (+1 to melee attacks) against characters lower than themselves.

Well: A 5 ft. wide well pierces the ground. It's surrounding wall has long since collapsed.

The well is 30 ft. deep and still contains water. The walls are slick (DC 25 Climb) and a secret niche pierces the wall just above the waterline (DC 30 Perception). The niche contains a dark green cloak within which rests a half-dozen gems:

Cloak of Resistance +1: A neatly folded dark green, damp and mildew-laden cowled cloak (faint [DC 15 Knowledge {arcana} abjuration]; DC 20 Spellcraft identifies; worth 1,000 gp).

Elemental Gem (Water): A blue-green crystal the size of a halfling's fist (moderate [DC 20 Knowledge {arcana} conjuration]; DC 26 Spellcraft identifies; worth 2,250 gp).

Turquoise (5): These small blue-green opaque stones are each worth 20 gp (DC 20 Appraise).

SHAMBIING MOUND (1)

(XP 2,400)

A mass of tangled vines and dripping slime rises on two trunk-like legs, reeking of rot and freshly turned earth.

N Large plant

Init +0; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +11 Sense Motive +0

Speed 20 ft., swim 20 ft.; **ACP** 0; Acrobatics +0 (-4 jumping), Stealth +8 (+16 in swamps or forests), Swim +13

AC 19, touch 9, flat-footed 19; CMD 22 (+10 natural, -1 size)

Immune mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, morale effects, patterns, and phantasms), paralysis, poison, polymorph, sleep effects, stunning, electricity; **Resist** fire 10

Fort +9, **Ref** +5 (electrical fortitude), **Will** +5

Electrical Fortitude (Ex) Shambling mounds take no damage from electricity; rather such an attack

increases its Constitution score by 1d4 points. The shambling mound loses these temporary points at the rate of 1 per hour.

hp 67 (9 HD)

Space 10 ft.; **Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +12 (+14 grapple) **Melee** 2 slams (reach 10 ft; Power Attack [-2/+4]) +11

(2d6+5 plus grab)

Atk Options Cleave, constrict (2d6+7), grab

- **Constrict (Ex [standard])** The shambling mound can crush an opponent with a successful grapple check dealing 2d6+7 bludgeoning damage (in addition to any other effects of the successful check).
- **Grab (Ex [free])** If the shambling mound hits a Medium or smaller target with its slam attack it can start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

Abilities Str 21, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 7, Wis 10, Cha 9 SQ plant traits

Feats Cleave, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (slam)

Skills as above

Languages Common, Sylvan (can't speak)

YEAJOW MUSK CREEPER (1) CR 2 (XP 600)

Coiling around several human skeletons, this wet green plant's sickly flowers smoke with a nasty yellow vapour.

N Medium plant

Init +2; Senses tremorsense 30 ft.; Perception +0, Sense Motive +0

Speed 5 ft.; ACP o

AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; CMD 17 (can't be tripped)

(+2 Dex, +2 natural)

Immune mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, morale effects, patterns, and phantasms), paralysis, poison, polymorph, sleep effects, stunning

Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +1

hp 22 (3 HD)

CR 6

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

Melee tendril (reach 10 ft.) +5 (1d4+4)

Atk Options create yellow musk zombie

Create Yellow Musk Zombie (Su [full-round]) The yellow musk creeper bores dozens of tendrils into a helpless creature's brain within reach, such as a creature entranced by its pollen. This inflicts 1d4 points of Intelligence damage per round. When a creature is reduced to o Intelligence, it dies, and the tendrils break off inside its brain. One hour later, the creature animates as a yellow musk zombie.

Special Actions pollen spray

Pollen Spray (Ex [standard]) The yellow musk creeper can spray a cloud of pollen at a single creature within 30 feet. It must make a +4 ranged touch attack to strike the target, who must then succeed on a DC 14 Will save or be entranced for 1d6 rounds. An entranced creature can take no action other than to move at its normal speed into a space within the yellow musk creeper's reach, at which point an entranced creature remains motionless and allows the creeper to insert tendrils into its brain.

Abilities Str 17 Dex 15 Con 16 Int – Wis 11 Cha 8 **SO** plant traits

Advanced Yellow Musk Zombie (4)

CR 1 (XP 400)

A partly decomposed corpse shambles toward you. Sickly green fibrous vines – ending in yellow flowers - grow from its skin and curl about its body. N Medium plant

Init +2; Senses low-light vision; Perception +2Sense Motive +2

Speed 30 ft.; staggered; ACP o

Staggered (Ex) Slow and ungainly, a yellow musk zombie can only take a single move or standard action each round. It can move its speed and attack as a charge action.

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; CMD 18 (+2 Dex, +4 natural)

Immune mind-affecting effects, paralysis, poison, polymorph, sleep effects, stunning

Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +5

hp 16; DR slashing/5 Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +1; CMB +6

Melee slam +6 (1d6+7)

Abilities Str 21, Dex 14, Con –, Int –, Wis 14, Cha 14 **SO** plant traits

Feats Toughness^B

Gear see below

Two of the zombies carry a small amount of treasure. Because of the yellow vines covering the zombies, characters must make a DC 20 Perception check to locate each set of treasure:

Zombie 1 (Human Male): 12 gp in a belt pouch and a silver holy symbol on a thin gold chain (worth 50 gp, DC 20 Appraise);

Zombie 2 (Half-Elf Female): Matching set of silver earrings and necklace (worth 60 gp, DC 20 Appraise), and a cold iron masterwork dagger.

SCALING JHE ENCOUNTER

To modify this encounter, apply the following changes:

EL 7 (XP 3,200): Apply the young creature template (+2 to on all Dex-based rolls, -2 to all other rolls) to the shambling mound (hp 49) and the yellow musk creeper (hp 16). Remove one advanced yellow musk zombie.

EL 9 (XP 6,400): Add three advanced yellow musk zombies. Apply the giant creature template to the yellow musk creeper (+2 on all rolls based on Str or Con, -1 on all rolls based on Dex; hp 28).



DESIGNER'S NOTE

I originally designed this encounter as part of my home campaign. Sadly, the PCs had suffered a disastrous TPK . Although they had slain many of the denizens of the place, they had all fallen to the seductive charms of a certain Lady that Dances.

Months of game play later, another adventuring party approached the tower and I thought it would be cool to change things around a bit while staying true to the theme of the tower and the adventure path as a whole. So, I had a yellow musk creeper move into the ruins and animate the bodies of the fallen PCs. An opportunistic shambling mound also moved into the ruins (completing the Dancing Lady's new defenders).

When I finally ran the encounter, the look on my players' faces as they had to kill their old characters was priceless!

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

PRD hyperlinks, player/GM views, online play,



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Oorawurms You are what they eat. By Mike Welham Illustration by Public Domain

The creatures collectively known as vorawurms seemingly exist for the sole purpose of devouring their chosen food. Many sages who study the ever-hungry vorawurms believe gods of destruction, gluttony, or the like created these monsters for their own dark purposes, while others posit that the creatures are ancient weapons of war recently awakened to continue their destructive deeds. While their origins or purposes may differ, one thing all vorawurms share is some means to transform victims into their favorite food.

Woodwurm

CR5

This creature emerging from the trunk of a holeriddled tree looks like an enormous brown caterpillar.

XP 1,600 NE Small aberration **Init** +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +9

Defense

AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 15 (+4 Dex, +4 natural, +1 size) hp 52 (7d8+21) Fort +5, Ref +8, Will +6 Immune plant traits

Offense

Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft. Melee bite +10 (1d6+1 plus poison) Special Attacks poison, spray of splinters Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +9) At will—warp wood (DC 14)

Statistics

Str 12, Dex 19, Con 16, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 11 Base Atk +5; CMB +5; CMD 19 Feats Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Stealth), Weapon Finesse Skills Climb +15, Escape Artist +11, Knowledge (nature) +7, Perception +9, Stealth +18 (+26 in forests); Racial Modifiers +8 Stealth in forests Languages Sylvan Ecology Environment forests Organization solitary, pair, or clearing (3–8)

Treasure incidental

Special Abilities

Poison (Ex) Bite—injury; *save* Fort DC 16; *frequency* 1/round for 8 rounds; *effect* 1d6 Dex; *cure* 2 consecutive saves. A victim who reaches 0 Dexterity transforms into wood; the victim can no longer restore Dexterity through rest, and all Dexterity damage must be restored to reverse this transformation. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Spray of Splinters (Ex) Twice per day, a woodwurm can spit the splintery remains of its repast. This takes the form of a 20-foot cone that deals 3d8 points of piercing damage (Reflex DC 16 for half). The save DC is Constitution-based.

The weakest of the known vorawurms, woodwurms are still a literal blight on forests; a single creature can wipe out an acre of trees in a week. Druids and fey creatures alike stop at nothing to destroy woodwurms before the creatures destroy their homes. These natural protectors will even work with loggers and others who view woodlands as a mere resource to end a woodwurm's depredations. Rarely, an insane druid will procure a woodwurm that it uses to attack other druids or to destroy wooden buildings of nearby villages. A woodwurm is content to feed on trees and other plant matter, and it will leave other creatures unmolested while it eats. However, if it begins to run out of food or senses a threat, it will attack fleshy prey. It relies on its poison to transform victims into wood that it can eat later, but it will spray wood splinters at those who seem particularly tough or persistent.

After a month of uninterrupted feeding on plant matter, a woodwurm drops into torpor for close to a year while it digests all it has eaten. The creature lives for roughly 50 years, which gives it plenty of time to lay waste to vast tracts of forested land. Every 10 years, it deposits a bunch of eggs at the base of a tree it has left untouched. These eggs hatch into young, but no less voracious, woodwurms which feast on the tree before moving on to new habitats they can deforest.

Necrowurm

CR7

This maggoty creature is the size of a dog. The stench of putrescence radiates from the thing as it gorges itself on the rotting remains of some humanoid creature.

XP 3,200 CE Small aberration Init +7; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +14 Aura stench (DC 19, 10 rounds)

Defense

AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 17 (+3 Dex, +6 natural, +1 size) hp 85 (10d8+40) Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +10 Immune undead traits; Resist cold 10

Offense

Speed 30 ft.
Melee bite +13 (1d4+6 plus disease and paralysis)
Ranged spit +11 (1d4 plus paralysis)
Special Attacks disease, paralysis (1d6 rounds, DC 19)
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th; concentration +13)
At will—death knell (DC 15)

Statistics

Str 19, **Dex** 17, **Con** 18, **Int** 12, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 16 **Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 23

Feats Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Point-Blank Shot, Skill Focus (Survival), Weapon Focus (bite) **Skills** Escape Artist +16, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (religion) +9, Perception +14, Stealth +20, Survival +20 (+28 when tracking diseased victims); **Racial Modifiers** +8 Survival when tracking diseased victims

SQ positive energy absorption, disease tracker Languages Common, Abyssal



Ecology

Environment graveyards and mass graves **Organization** solitary, pair, or undertaking (3–8) **Treasure** incidental

Special Abilities

Positive Energy Absorption (Su) A necrowurm in the radius of a positive energy effect (such as channel or a *mass cure* spell) absorbs it. The energy neither heals nor harms the necrowurm, but the creature dispels the effect. The caster can avoid this by succeeding at a DC 18 caster level check. The DC is Charisma-based.

Necrotic Fever (Ex) Bite—injury; *save* Fort DC 19; *onset* 1 day; *frequency* 1 day; *effect* 1d4 Con damage; *cure* 2 consecutive saves. A victim who dies of necrotic fever transforms into a ghoul 10 minutes after death (a creature with 4 or more Hit Dice becomes a ghast). It retains none of the abilities it possessed in life and is not under the control of any other creature.

Disease Tracker (Su) A necrowurm possesses the

incredible ability to track any creature it has diseased. Once per day, a necrowurm benefits from the effects of *locate creature* for the duration of the day. Running water cannot block this effect, nor will *mislead, nondetection,* or *polymorph* foil this effect.

Necrowurms devour undead flesh, which makes them the bane of corporeal undead creatures. Groups of the creatures will work together to defeat a powerful lich or vampire, which seemingly would make them desirable to those victimized by such monster. Unfortunately, а а necrowurm inflicts a living creature with a disease that slowly necrotizes its victim's flesh and eventually transforms the victim into an undead creature, which the necrowurm tracks down to feast upon. Lords of underground ghoul empires or necropolises sometimes make dangerous deals with the creatures to attack enemies or convert living populaces. If а necrowurm's benefactor manages to provide the creature with a constant supply of food, then the creature will usually keep up its end of the bargain.

A necrowurm has developed peculiar attributes that give it some advantages when hunting its favorite food. Even though the creature is not undead, it has undead traits, allowing it to shrug off most of the draining attacks of the creatures it stalks. More strange, though, is the creature's ability to negate positive-energy effects. Sages speculate that the necrowurm developed this particular ability because positive energy used to harm undead renders the undead creature's flesh unpalatable.

To the living, the most frightening aspect of the necrowurm is the disease it carries, a necrotic fever more virulent than ghoul fever, but with the same eventual result. The necrowurm also forges a mental connection with the disease it inflicts, allowing it to track down any creature that has contracted it. This allows the wurm to consume other creatures as the necrotic fever kills its victims. A newly created ghoul might terrorize a community for a day before the necrowurm shows up to devour it. Rarely, the creature will inject eggs into the wound; these eggs gestate as the disease progresses. When a victim succumbs to necrotic fever, new necrowurms burst forth from the eggs to consume the newly created undead creature.





Mek'Madius's Hideout Jocations - Waterfall

ADVENTUREAWEEK.COM, LLP by Will Myers and Nathan Land Cartography by Todd Gamble



After weeks of research, searching, and preparation, as well as hiding from the deadly Shard of the Sun, the party now finds itself at the base of Mek'Madius's tower. Situated atop (and inside) a mesa, the only way in, other than scaling the mesa's treacherous sides, is a cave at the base. From the entrance of the cave, the sound of running water can be heard.

The light from outside illuminates this tunnel as far as a set of naturally carved steps. These steps are slick from water that overflows from the waterfall, requiring a DC 20 Climb check to reach the area of the waterfall. Failing this check means falling down the steps, taking 2d6 points of falling damage and possibly knocking over those behind you. If you fall into another person, that person must make a DC 30 Climb check to catch you and not fall. This penalty is cumulative, adding 10 to the DC of the check per additional person involved; i.e. if two people fall, the third person must make the DC 40 Climb check to catch them both and not fall. Due to the enclosed cavern, hearing becomes incredibly difficult around the waterfall. All Perception checks made to hear are made at -5. Stealth checks made to move silently are made at +5. The floor of this cavern is covered with six inches of water, requiring creatures moving at full speed, other than those with a Swim speed, to take a -2 on Dexterity-based skills.

A large pool, 60 ft. across and 40 ft. from the falling water to the edge, sits at the base of the waterfall. While the water is clear, no bottom can be seen. If the pool is examined, there are many large fish swimming past. These fish are the results of the pool's resident, an Aquamia, using a baleful polymorph on various adventurers. The water in the pool is crisp and refreshing, but does not have any special abilities.

A DC 12 Perception check finds the dead body of a man dressed like an adventurer on the wet floor. This was someone who had recently been captured by Mek'Madius and was slowly being turned into an evil minion of Mek'Madius. When he realized he was turning evil, he killed himself. A bloody dagger with a bent tip is held in his right hand. A DC 20 Perception check or a DC 15 Heal check determines that he killed himself and that small portions of the body have turned to crystal. The crystal sections have score marks around them.

While the party investigates the body, Iqus'cath the Aquamia will surface from the pool at the base of the waterfall and observe them. Due to her coloration, she is hard to see while she is in the water (Perception DC 30). She will appear and speak to the party. If they initially seem non-confrontational (treat initial attitude as Indifferent), she will warn them about Mek'Madius's power and explain that the dead man had come to her chamber, stabbing at his chest, trying to pry off the "pretty rocks" and ranting that he was "becoming evil." She tells the party that they should leave now or else they may become Mek'Madius's evil minions. She does not know how captives are made to be evil, but she knows it happens. She says that she fought him recently and captured him for Mek'Madius.

With a successful DC 21 Diplomacy check she will also explain that Mek'Madius has been sending people down to question her. The main focus of the questions is the "Duke of Shadows," which Mek'Madius believes Iqus'cath has information about.

Iqus'cath inadvertently discovered the location of the Duke's prison and is keeping this information secret from Mek'Madius. She is secretly afraid that at some point, Mek'Madius will find a way to make her reveal the information. She cannot leave the pool she now lives in due to there being no outflows for the waterfall, other than spilling out onto the floor.

If the party becomes aggressive, she will try to charm an obvious melee combatant with *charm monster*. If this fails, she will retreat further into the pool, using the water as protection. She may move as far back as the waterfall. PCs entering the water must swim because the pool is very deep.

This creature looks like a woman from the waist up, but below is a snake-shaped tail made of continuously flowing water. Her entire body is vaguely translucent as she is made entirely of water.

Iqus'cath CR 12

XP 4,800

LE Large monstrous outsider (native, water) Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +3

Defense

AC 22, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+5 Dex, +8 natural, -1 size) hp 149 (16d10+64) Fort +8, Ref +13, Will +11 Immune cold, mind-affecting effects; SR 19; Fast Healing 5 Weaknesses fire

Offense

Speed 20 ft., swim 40 ft.

Melee +1 shocking burst trident +14/+9/+4 (1d8+8/19-20 plus 1d6 electricity [1d10 electricity on a critical hit]) or slam +16 (1d8+5 plus suffocation)

Ranged +1 shocking javelin (1d6+5 plus 1d6 electricity) **Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th; concentration +17)

- At will-charm monster (DC 20), ventriloquism (DC 17)
- 3/day—deep slumber (DC 19), interposing hand, major image (DC 19), mirror image, suggestion (DC 19)
- Spells Known (CL 10th; concentration +11)

5th (4/day) – baleful polymorph (DC 21)

- 4th (6/day) fear (DC 20), ice storm
- 3rd (6/day)—haste, lightning bolt (10d6; DC 19), protection from energy (fire)
- 2nd (8/day)—*enthrall* (DC 18), *freezing ray* (works as scorching ray but deals cold damage), *silence*
- 1st (8/day)—cure light wounds, divine favor, mage armor, magic missile, shield, true strike
- o ((at will)—dancing lights, daze (DC 16), detect magic, ghost sound (DC 16), guidance, mage hand, mending, prestidigitation, touch of fatigue (DC 16)

Statistics

Str 20, Dex 20, Con 19, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 25

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +17; **CMD** 31 (can't be tripped) **Feats** Extend Spell, Improved Critical (trident), Improved Vital Strike, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (trident)

Skills Acrobatics +9, Bluff +21, Climb +13, Diplomacy +11, Disguise +11, Intimidate +20, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (planes) +15, Perception +3, Spellcraft +15, Swim +21, Use Magic Device +21

Racial Modifiers +4 Bluff, +8 Swim, +4 Use Magic Device

Languages Aquan, Common

Special Abilities

Fast Healing (Ex) Iqus'cath regains 5 hit points per round as long as she is in contact with water. Her body does not count for the purpose of fast healing.

Spell-like Abilities (Sp) Iqus'cath uses her spell-like abilities as a 16th level caster.

Spells (Sp) Iqus'cath casts spells as a 10th-level sorcerer, and can cast spells from the cleric list as well as those normally available to a sorcerer. Cleric spells are considered arcane spells for Iqus'cath.

Suffocation (Ex) When Iqus'cath hits an opponent with her slam attack, she can start a grapple as a free action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. If successful, Iqus'cath grapples the opponent with a watery hand that begins drowning the opponent (see Drowning on page 445 of the Core Rulebook). Iqus'cath automatically deals her slam damage each round as nonlethal damage. Iqus'cath continues this grapple until the opponent makes a successful grapple check, an Escape Artist check (DC 25), or when Iqus'cath takes damage and cannot maintain concentration on the grapple, similar to a concentration check to cast a spell.

Rite Publishing Presents Coliseum Morpheuon: Anthology of Preams

Edited by David Paul With short stories by Matt Banach, Jess Carson, Ewan Cummins, T.H. Gulliver, L. Jagi Lee Collect Rob (anning Jonatha McAnry, John C. Keek, Steven E. Schend, and Neil Spicer



Twenty Questions with Stan!

By Steven D. Russell

1. Could you tell us a little about yourself? (bio and professional bibliography) I've been writing games, fiction, and comics professionally since 1982. (My first ever sale was a page of comics called "What If Darth Vader Played Tennis.) To date, I've published 2 novels, 15 short stories, more than 60 game products, and a veritable army of comics and other illustrations. I've worked on staff for West End Games, TSR, Upper Deck Entertainment, and Wizards of the Coast, and I've done freelance work for Green Ronin, Malhavoc Press, Viz Media, Gazillion Entertainment, and Harper Collins Children's Books (just to name a few).

I'm one of the founders of both The Game Mechanics, Inc. and Super Genius Games (SGG), and I'm currently the Creative Director and Producer for SGG.

2. What is your home game like?

At the moment, I don't have a home *Pathfinder* game. The last one ended a while ago and a new one hasn't started up yet. However, I am in a group that meets pretty regularly to play various games (*Call of Cthulhu*, various editons of D&D, *Chill*, and anything else that strikes our fancy), and I'm in a weekly D&D (4E) group. So, really, the best answer to the question is "chaotic."

3. What is your favorite Paizo product and why?

I don't think it could be anything other than the *Pathfinder Core Rulebook*. I mean, that's the heart of everything. Not just for the other Paizo products, but for all of the Pathfinder-compatible material that any of the third-party publishers make. It stands alone, and yet has all sorts of interesting niches and permutations for gamers (and publishers) to explore.

4. You're a member of Super Genius Games, how did that start and how would you characterize the company today?

Super Genius got started after I was laid off by Upper Deck in 2007. Hyrum Savage and I actually started it with the idea that we'd do third-party material for the then just-announced D&D 4E. But the terms of the GSL were too risky, and so we looked elsewhere. We began by publishing licensed *Call of Cthulhu* adventures, and looking for other opportunities. That led to a few *Pathfinder* mini-adventures right around the time the beta-test was wrapping up, and we decided that we wanted to do more with Pathfinder, so we contacted Owen K.C. Stephens (whom I knew from our time working together at Wizards). As luck would have it, he had some ideas for Pathfinder support products, but didn't want to go into publishing on his own. The timing was perfect.



We made Owen a partner in the company and began publishing our first "Genius Guides"—short, lowpriced articles. We thought we'd do those for a while, while we put together larger products for print. The idea would be that the electronic products would act as marketing campaign for the eventual print books. We were quite surprised when it turned out that the PDFs were profitable on their own. In fact, the Pathfinder fans were very supportive and encouraging.

Our initial plan was to publish a product a week for three or four months, and then shift away from that crazy schedule. We started that in November of 2009 and have had at least one product every week from then until now. (In fact, this summer we've put out two products every week.) So overall I'd say we're doing pretty well. Super Genius is stronger than it's ever been. We've got a handful of side projects (including Dungeonaday.com, which just finished a Kickstarter to get it back up and running again), but the meat of our business is still the weekly *Pathfinder* products. As long as the fans keep digging them, we'll keep producing them.

5. What is your favorite Super Genius Games Pathfinder Compatible product you worked on and could you tell us a little about it?

That's a tough question. I've had my fingers in a lot of the products SGG has produced, often just helping to tweak some bit of utter genius (pun intended) that Owen has come up with. On the other hand, I've written a few adventures for our "One Night Stand" line that I think are up there with the best adventures I've ever produced.

In the end, though, I think my favorite would have to be the *Genius Guide to the Godling*. I just love the idea of being able to play a character that is literally a demigod, and yet is able to fit in as a regular member of the party. It plays so well into the concepts of the classical Greek demigods like Heracles, Perseus, and Achilles, who fought side by side with mortal companions. It's a fun and mechanically interesting class (or, really, group of classes), and I don't think anyone's ever done anything like it—not for *Pathfinder* or any edition of D&D.

My second choice would probably be the *Genius Guide to the Time Thief*, because it is the best implementation of chronomancy that I've ever seen (Owen did that, so I can be lavish with praise without feeling that I'm patting myself on the back. I mostly helped in the development and editing phases of *Time Thief*.)

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

I also was mostly doing development and editing for Godling, too. So my best moments were pretty subtle ones, adjusting phrasing or helping to clarify the mechanics that Owen wrote. I think that my best moments on a lot of our products come before design even begins-when we're sitting around brainstorming concepts to fill out our schedule. It is often the case that Owen will toss out a throw away idea, or a minor addition to another concept and I'll say, "Hold on! That needs to be product all on its own!" I don't think that was necessarily the case with Godling, but I still think those are my best moments.

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

As I said before, it was allowing players to create a character that from 1st level is an actual, factual demigod. That is a powerful concept, one that a lot of gamers have wanted to play with, but there has never been a way of having it be mechanically reflected in the character. Finding a way to have a low-level character that still felt like a demigod—that, I thought, was pretty ingenious.

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

Owen really had the most challenging parts. As I said, I was mostly working on tweaking and editing. The challenge was to make sure that keeping the godling classes reasonable and playable didn't strip away the mythic power of the concept. They needed to feel like demigods, even when they were low-level characters, and that feeling had to come through the text.

9. Did you learn anything while working on it?

I learned that it's definitely possible to pack a character class with godly power and still have it be



mechanically balanced with more earthly classes. Seriously, if you'd asked me beforehand if this could be done, I'm not sure if I'd have said yes. But Owen showed me how it could be done, and done elegantly.

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

Tough question! There's a lot of great third party products out there these days. But if I could only have one (other than those from Super Genius), I think it would have to be *Psionics Unleashed* from Dreamscarred Press...y'know, because—PSIONICS!

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

Something that adds to the game, and not just in raw mechanical way. We don't need to keep devising new ways to add an extra +2 to every conceivable roll. What we need are products that help people play the game in new and interesting ways. Things that add new possibilities to the vistas that the game presents, that let players make characters that echo the heroes of lore and literature, and help GMs run campaigns that tell stories that could never have been told before.

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

That's easy. Though it might seem self-serving because he's my business partner, I can honestly say that Owen K.C. Stephens is my favorite... and would be even if he wasn't part of Super Genius Games. He is a never ending font of ideas, and he understands how

(and more importantly WHY) the game works the way it does better than anyone outside the halls of Paizo. And I could make a pretty strong argument that, as an outsider, he even has some insights that the Paizo folks are blind to because they're so close to the game line and the company goals.

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

Write. Write all the time. None of us are such good writers that we can't stand to improve a little. After that, I'd say my best advice is to playtest, playtest, and then playtest some more. Make sure that your game design works in the real world as well as it does in your mind and on your computer screen. Let real, live players get their hands on your work and see what they do with it. I guarantee you, they'll find uses and loopholes that you never even imagined.

14. Who is your favorite Illustrator?

You mean besides me? (Joking . . . I'm JOKING!)

That's a tough question because I have different sensibilities than most of the gamers I know. But I also serve the function of being an Art Director from time to time. So my personal favorite illustrators are often people I would almost never choose to do art for a *Pathfinder* supplement.

For my personal taste, I'd choose someone like John Loter or Shag. Closer in line to standard RPG illustration, I'd choose Tony DiTerlizzi or Wayne Reynolds. Back in the price range I can hope to afford, I really like the work that comes out of Shaman Stock Art.

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

You mean apart from the times that the 60% of assembled *Dragonlance* fandom decided I should be strung up by my thumbs? It would probably be a year or so ago when a colleague of mine brought me a loose leaf binder that his daughter used to hold the printout she'd made of the free *Warriors Adventure Game* I designed for Harper Collins. She'd been running the games at conventions, and this was her "player's handbook," and she wanted me to sign it for her.

Nothing means more to me than knowing that I had some part in helping young gamers find a game they can be passionate about.

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

I really can't . . . I mean, not in a way that would be at all satisfying to the readers. I can say that I'm at work on a new project for Super Genius Games that is unlike anything we've ever done before. If all goes well, we might be able to announce it late this year or early next. But, really, I can't be any more specific than that. Sorry.



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

Well, I hit a major goal a couple of years ago when I was able to do a half dozen illustrations the actually went into a hardbound D&D book (the *Player's Strategy Guide*). That was really cool. I recently fulfilled another dream by being allowed to write the editorial for the upcoming October issue of Dragon Magazine.

Let's see . . . I'd like to write an ongoing D&D related comic book, that's a goal still out there unachieved. I'd like to be part of a team that designs a new D&D setting. And, of course, I'd still like to write some more novels, maybe even one of my own creation (as opposed to being in a shared world setting). Come to think of it, I'd like to write an official *Star Trek* novel at some point (I'm such a huge Trekkie). So, yeah . . . I've still got a few goals left to reach for.

18. Can you talk a bit about Dungeonaday.com?

Well, we just finished a successful Kickstarter campaign to get the site funded so that it can come out of hibernation. For those who don't know, Dungeonaday.com features a classic mega-dungeon called "Dragon's Delve"-a 20-level dungeon (plus side quests) that can take a group of characters from 1st to 20th levels. In 2010 Super Genius Games took over the site from Monte Cook, who created it, but by the end of 2011 subscriptions had dropped to the point where we couldn't afford to keep it going, and it was going to cost a thousand dollars a year just to keep it online. With Kickstarter, we raised a little shy of fifteen thousand dollars to pay for maintenance, upkeep, and to create some new material, so now we're getting everything set to reopen the site for new members.

Among the things we're going to be doing is bringing the whole site up to current *Pathfinder* compatibility (including material from all of the currently released hard covers from Paizo). This will, in effect, make Dragon's Delve the biggest *Pathfinder* dungeon available anywhere. We're also going to be adding more illustrations to the site and, of course, new adventure material, too. So I encourage everyone to come by Dungeonaday.com starting in late September (after we've had a chance to collect the funds from Kickstarter and use them to begin implementing our plans).

19. Do you have any other Kickstarter plans in the works?

First we have to make sure that we execute on our promises for Dungeonaday.com. But after that, yes, we are talking about some other projects that have been on the backburner for a while, as we tried to get the resources mustered in order to tackle them properly. If all goes well, Super Genius Games may dip its toes back into the Kickstarter waters before the year's end.

Beyond that, I'm thinking of doing a Kickstarter on my own. A few years ago I did a short print run of a Lovecraftian children's holiday tale I wrote and illustrated called *The Littlest Shoggoth*. It was a modest success, but it really called out to be done in a better format—hard cover, color art, and all that stuff. But the money really wasn't there to do it. But I think it's the kind of thing that could really get some traction in the Kickstarter world. It'd be great to get the funding to make that happen and, if support really rolls in, perhaps fund a few of the other off-beat kids book ideas I've got rattling around—a D&D-esque ABCs, some coloring/activity books, etc.

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

It's weird. I've had success in three distinct fields (more, if you count project management and creative direction), but most people only know me for one of them . . . if, indeed, they've heard of me at all. Some folks think I'm a game designer who also writes some fiction. Others think I'm a novelist who dabbles in cartooning. Still others think I'm a cartoonist who used to design games.

Maybe it's just a bit of ego, but I'd really like to find a way to get more people to be aware of ALL the projects I work on. That having been said, I'm on the verge of doing some spoken word performance projects. So I'd be adding a fourth area that people would need to track.

Anyway, they can keep track of my various projects by following me on Twitter @stannex or at my website http://stannex.com . . . which remains the Home of All Things Stan!







Book Of Donster Gemplates

HEROES

Bv: S. ven D. Russell

D2D





*1 With a Bullet Point: 5 Unseen Servant Feats

by Super Genius Games *Review by Endzeitgeist* 5 out of 5 Stars!

This pdf is 4 pages long, 1 page front cover, 1 page editorial/SRD, leaving us with 2 pages of content for 5 feats to modify the unseen servant spell, so let's check this out!

the feats are:

-Force Servant: The unseen servant counts as a force effect and thus is immune to damage and can manipulate ethereal objects.

-Greater Servant: This feta modifies your unseen servant so it has an effective str-score of 6, can perform tasks of up to DC 14 and keep up with movements like climbing, flying etc., even if you move more than 15 ft.

-Unseen Actor: Your unseen servant can interact with figments you create, adding minor real effects to your illusion and thus making it harder to see through. The unseen servant can slo be used to enhance your stealth. This one's really creative and cool -bravo!

-Unseen Craftsman: The unseen servant can take the aid another action when an unskilled assistant could do so and gain access to your Craft and profession skills.

-Unseen Squire: Your unseen servant can be assigned to other characters to stow items safely away or produce them, prepare a weapon etc. and enables the character with such a squire to accept or pass items as a free action- the servant could also reload a crossbow or firearm (though it takes long), carry a shield or apply a potion to the character. This feat is AWESOME - not only is it clever and cool, just think about it: With some minor reskinning, you'll have a nice framework for some kind of beneficial haunting/friendly spirit-themed characters - Kudos and two thumbs up!



Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are top-notch, I didn't notice any glitches. layout adheres to SGG's 3-column standard and the pdf has no bookmarks, but needs none at this length. Every time I think I'm getting finally tired of these spellfeats one-man-feat-factory Owen K.C. Stephens manages to pump out yet another stellar pdf full of great feats with yet another one or two inside that can only be considered innovative and cool. This is another one, and one that ranks among the more creative and interesting spell-feat BPs. My final verdict for this cool, creative little file will be 5 stars seal of approval - the squire feat alone is worth checking this out.

Endzeitgeist out.

10 **Luckbringer Items** By Rite Publishing Review of Thilo "Endzeitgeist" Graf 4 out of 5 Stars!

This pdf is 7 pages long, 1 page front cover, 1 page editorial, 1 1/2 pages of advertisement and 1 page SRD, leaving 3 1/2 pages of content, so let's check this out!

I'm really glad we get more support for the luckbringer in this series, as it is one of my favorite classes and this pdf provides us with neat tools for fortune's favored class.

First would be the auspicious assault weapon quality, which is interesting and lets the wielder of a thus enchanted weapon 1/day roll an attack roll twice: If he hits once, the attack is a regular hit. If the wielder hits with both attacks, the base-dice amount is doubled, making e.g. a longsword deal 2d8 base damage instead of the regular

1d8. Luckbringers can expend a moment of chance to use this ability an additional time - essentially, all of the items can be used more often in the hands of a luckbringer, but remain potent and valid choices in regular PC-hands.

The Baldric of the prepared Mind as a scabbard can provide you with access to quick draw, dirty trick or equipment trick. There are three variants of the baldric and in fact all but 2 and the quality come in 3 versions as lesser, standard and greater. Boots of Adventitious Timing let you act in a surprise round and add a movement action to the standard action you'd usually get. You still are flat-footed until it's your turn. Again, Luckbringers may use moments of chance to use this class of item (stats for 3 types are provided) more often. The Cape of Risks is one of the items I'd consider pure, elegant genius: Opponents have to succeed at a will-save to attack you with an AoO - simple concept, cool results with more agile stunts and the like becoming possible. Gloves of fortunate deeds let you take 10 when performing acrobatics, swimming or climbing and a limited amount of time, take 20 on such a check - neat!

Luck's Aegis is a powerful armor that grants you a miss chance that is not negated by blind fighting etc. as a nice twist, you also incur a 20% chance of failing with spells, attacks etc. while thusly protected - not only awesome for luckbringers, also an extremely



fitting choice for TPK Games' Malefactor-class! Ring's of fate's unraveling are also an interesting concept: At first, the ring only seems to bestow curses. However, if the pooltarget uses а dependant ability (like ki, moments of chance, grit, motes of time etc.), they suffer damage. Cool since the advent of pool-based seen the classes has mechanics being largely barren bevond the intended purposes. The Rings of Peril grants the luckbringer with the hazard ability an additional moment of chance to spend exclusively on the power. In the hands of non-luckbringers, the item provides access to this ability.

Symbols of good Luck

grants you a 8 luck bonus when activated before a d20-roll, 4 when used after the roll was made. Again, nice idea. Third Eyes of Karma are an interesting kind of retributive item: When suffering 50+ damage, being threatened by unconsciousness or being subjected to an instant-death effect, you may make a full attack against the opponent or cast a single spell before the results of the attack are resolved as normal. Karma can truly be a female dog.

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting in the revised version are very good, I didn't notice any significant glitches that would have impeded my understanding of the pdf. Layout adheres to RiP's 2-column standard and the pdf has no bookmarks, but need none at its BP-length. The items herein are nice indeed and it is cool to see some tools for the excellent luckbringer-class. Generally, I enjoy the new items and their innovative mechanics, though the third eye might be considered rather powerful in certain environments. All in all, though, designs like e.g. Luck's Aegis counteract my minor personal nitpicking regarding general power. Add to that the very low price and I'll settle for a final verdict of 4.5 stars, rounded down to 4 - a nice selection of luck-themed items, especially for the low price.

Endzeitgeist out.

A15: Rise of the Drow, Part 3: Usurper of Souls

By AdventureAWeek.com Review by Thilo "Endzeitgeist" Graf 5 out of 5 Stars!

The final installment of the "Rise of the Drow"-trilogy clocks in at a whopping 252 pages, 1 front cover, 1 page editorial, 2 pages ToC, 8 pages of very readable and informative bios of the AaW-team, 1 page SRD, leaving us with a whopping 239 pages of content. Not bad!

This being the review to the conclusion of the final installment of AaW's Rise of the Drow-Saga and sequel to one of the best underdark adventures I've read in quite a while, the following contains SPOILERS and for your own sake, you should skip to the conclusion if you want to participate in the module as a player.

Still here? All right! Depending on the choices they PCs made in the predecessor modules, they are off to rather different start and later in the adventure, the paths may diverge even further. Anyways, in last adventure, the PCs have entered the drow city of Holoth via either frontal assault or the back door and this is where the module kicks off - with the details on the compound of house Gullion and the attack/infiltration in full swing. Thus, at the beginning, the module is a rather free-form style exploration/infiltration and provides us with information on e.g. the slave dens, in which dinosaurriding drow as well as an advanced tyrannosaurus are guarding the slaves. Worse, indoctrination and clever favoritism has bred a significant amount of slaves that might turn on the PCs when freed! The mushroom gardens also have their shepherds - corrupted mushroom golems, abducted from last module's excellent and innovative finale.

True to the sandboxy style of the presentation, we also get the fully-detailed, many-layered spider-shaped temple of Naraneus, the Queen of Spiders for the PCs to attack and explore and pilfer: Among the loot some rather cool unique drwarven weapons the PCs can find (e.g. an urgosh and a trident) as well as a rather neatly detailed library in which not only several books are detailed, but which also houses a nice secret that can potentially help the PCs deal with a color-coded puzzle. The PCs can also encounter a neat unique mosaic golem and even a book golem. Whether the PCs ignore the temple or clear it out before they enter the steps to the adjacent Tologorith tower remains up to them - also rather nice: Depending on the path they've chosen, the PCs may actually stumble upon a battle between the drow and the crystalline vidre, who are anything but pushovers and not too pleased by the dark elves' (perceived) failures. Tolgorith tower, base of house Gullion and location of the artifact Vidrefacte, will be not a pushover for the PCs to explore: First of all, the massive amount of ritual sacrifices enables to drow to have forbiddances,



guards and wards and unhallow in effect - ouch. Better yet, the defenses and tactics of the drow soldiers actually make sense in the defense of the tower - but fret not, this module does not devolve into a drow slugfest, for the dungeon of the tower contains an unlikely ally for the PCs, provided they survive the beastmasters of house Gullion - in the crypt, the PCs can find a plethora of undead - that don't want to kill the PCs and instead come with an offer under the guidance of Makinnga Gullion:

The mistress of undead on her artifact-level powerful blood throne wants to shatter the Vidrefacte and put an end to the deal with the crystalline, soulconsuming Vidre - and she knows how: By sending her undead allies into the artifact, she plans to subvert its powers, tearing it as under and breaking the tower in the process. Unfortunately, any contact with the artifact could cancel the trial and thus, PCs will have to keep their foe's hands off the artifact. Worse yet, they probably wouldn't survive the tower's collapse unless they agree to a nice ploy - Makinnga suggests they bring her personal belongings of members of house Gullion will be needed in order to create an effect that will postpone the collapse of the tower for the PCs to escape as well as providing them with a camouflage cover that could enable them to flee.

Better yet, we get a sheet naming the respective characters on which the items secured can be tracked easily - nice help for GMs and players alike! Well, and if the players seek combat, they'll have their hands full here as well - Makinnga's allies include a nice gnomish demi-lich that will come to her aid... Said demi-lich is actually rather reasonable btw., and in no way required to be defeated - a nice classic "what you sow is what you reap"-situation.

Now, even with this potential ally, the rest of the tower will not be a cakewalk - take for example a haunt that has the players swarmed by phantasmal waves of poisonous spiders or the penultimate major hindrance between the PCs and the showdown with the mother matron: Maltorya, mad cleric and next in line for the matron's title, seeks to not only defeat the PCs (they happen upon her as she conducts a grueling sacrifice), but pull them to the private demi-plane bestowed upon the house by the dread spider goddess - a place of viscous, extremely lethal poison, airborne spider swarms and a deadly and disturbing confrontation to say the least and the one place I would have LOVED to see further detailed - with a map and scenarios à la "fighting on swinging rope bridges over the sea of poison. Here, the module has essentially missed a chance. That being said, it's not the final confrontation and essentially we get two boss battles at once. Climbing the mandible-like stairs (including painful biting) to the final level of the tower and the battle royale.

I don't use that particular compound often. It is wholly appropriate here - what at first kicks off as the epic showdown with the insanely powerful mother matron for the crystalline artifact quickly becomes an all-out brawl: While it takes some round for the matron to realize that the undead (if applicable and a deal has been struck) seek to destroy the Vidrefacte instead of attacking the PCs. Of course, the PCs may also have problems with the undead and the Vidre that bursts in on the fourth round, making this showdown rather complex. Great help for the DM to run this encounter is provided in the form of a roundby-round table that lists tactics/things happening by group and thus makes handling the groups rather easy as well as providing a nice guideline to making this conflict as cinematic as it should be. If the PCs have scored ALL items, they have 14 rounds to escape the tower - and here, we get another piece of coolness: Instead of just having the collapse be hand-waved (seen that done rather often), we get 11 different things that can happen - write them upon sheets and the roll these bones for chances of collapse, people tumbling out of the tower, exterior walls breaking etc. - climactic, tight in its allotted time and hardcore, the escape will have your players on the edge of their seats. Oh, and if they want to featherfall/fly out of the tower, falling chunks/quakes/errant sonic blasts etc. can hit them there as well, if you as a DM so chose - I can see at least some of the collapsing parts working well in this instance as well. Hopefully, they manage to evade capture and slip out of the ruined section of

Holoth.

Depending on their choices, though, the beautiful city of Embla might be no longer existent, people may have died or survived and it is time to reap the fruits of the labor of their help - Mikannga, if they chose to deal with her, actually honors her deal...for now and the PCs may find themselves even be revered as some kind of demi-gods by the dwarves. As often, though, the best ending, the one of the smartest path with the least casualties is the one that has the heroes remain mostly unsung - a nice parallel with real life, though easily remedied, should you chose to do so.

The pdf also contains lists of XP by used path of all the Rise of the Drow modules and a write-up of Naraneus, the Spider Goddess (including the penumbra and shadow domains - the latter coming with 9 all new spells, one of which is essentially a shadow-themed fireball-clone - that deals untyped damage. That's a no-go. Against a fireball, you can protect yourself. Against a shadow blast? No protection from shadowy untyped energy exists, making this lvl 3-spell vastly superior and unbalanced even when compared to an already very strong corespell like fireball. The Vidrefacte is also fully detailed and after that, we're off to the encounter indexes, which contain full stats both for 3.5 and PFRPG - and also some elaborate backgrounds for several of the characters herein. 8 full color maps are interspersed throughout the pdf and the final pages are taken up by a list of "what has gone before"-style events as well as a chart that provides the most likely outcome of all three main paths the trilogy can have taken.

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are very good, though not perfect: I encounter e.g. a homonymy-error and some other minor hick-ups. Layout adheres to AaW's twocolumn full color standard and Todd Gamble's cartography is, as usual, excellent. Special mentioning deserves the STELLAR cover artwork by James J. Krause, the man behind the awesome fungal golem artwork in part 2 - the BBEG depicted oozes "dangerous, beautiful, fully armed drow lady"-flair. Awesome! The pdf comes with extensive, nested bookmarks and a background-less printer-friendly version. As per the writing of this review herolab-files have not yet been added, but will be.

Here we are, at the conclusion of the Rise of the Drow-Trilogy and oh boy, it ends with a bang! This module is best summed up as "War in a drow city" or "Infiltration of a drow compound". Have we seen similar things before? Yes, in Endless Night, for example. Where this module truly excels is the focus on the grounds of house Gullion and the fact that this place is DEADLY. Dumb PCs WILL die. This module should be considered a free-form, sandboxy, extremely detailed infiltration/escalation that, when handled, should feel reminiscent of e.g. the final section a Bond movie - foes left and right, climactic battles, sneaking, death traps and a furious "blow all up" finale. The individual characters are great, the locations iconic and the finale (and pre-finale including a demi-plane)ROCKS.

That being said, the adventure has one narrative peculiarity a DM should be aware of: In order to grasp what happens in the finale, the PCs are presumed to find and talk to a NPC they could easily miss - while orchestrating a meet-up should prove no problem to any DM, it's the one weak link of a finale that otherwise is just simply epic. Best of all, the whole product oozes a constant sense of a lion's den, looming death and potential for conflict and style. The locations the PCs visit feel vastly more unique than my frame of reference "City of the Spider Queen". In contrast to "Endless Night", the PCs are not glued to infiltration-rails and could just as well try to take the drow spells and blades blazing, though actions like this will have consequences. Their actions obviously do matter - and a couple of useful foreshadowing lets one anticipate what will come of the aftermath of the Rise of Drow Trilogy. I also like how the actions in part GREATLY influence everything that goes on in this module, making a good example that playerdriven narratives and sandboxy environments work perfectly in tandem when handled with care.

Regarding the links with adventure I and II, the ties to 2 are rather dominant, while Part 1 remains essentially a glorified introduction to the whole module - foreshadowing the potential ally by making her an ally of adventure I's BBEG - which would further make the byzantine politics of the drow city obvious. If you're planning on running the Rise of the Drow-trilogy, I wholeheartedly encourage you to read ALL 3 modules and prepare them as one megamodule. Unlike the Monstrous-Arcana 2nd edition trilogies, these modules are strongly linked together in a compelling narrative. Enemies fight smart, the module is full of details (somewhat alike e.g. RSP's Shadowed Keep of the Borderlands") and the challenges are real and evocative. Think of it as one mega-module in 3 parts.

I really like the ambition of the product, AaW's bristling creativity and the finale as well as the option for the PCs to do vastly diverging things throughout the module. Not all is excellent, though: The new shadow domain unfortunately feels slightly repetitive and features a spell that is terribly unbalanced and needs revision. The module also has slightly more minor glitches than what I've come to expect from AaW. Then again, the module is, even SANS stats over 90 pages long - add the stats of your choice (e.g. 68 pages for PFRPG!) and we get a bang-for-buck ratio truly can't complain one about.

That being said, in spite of the options of different paths and the strange allies the PCs can make herein (and probably should, regarding the power-level of the foes in these pages), this module feels a slight bit less polished than Part I and II - there are some ideas like a demi-plane that could have easily be enhanced to be even more memorable. That being said, I'm nagging on a VERY HIGH level here - the finale of the Rise of the Drow-trilogy is a great module, full of tension and flavor. It's just that with some minor tweaks, it could have easily been a legendary module good news being that DMs should not be too challenged by making the very minor modifications to enhance the module even further. The DM/playeraids to handle a complex fight, a sub-quest and the final escape also rock hard and make running this module also a feasible endeavor for DMs with less experience. How to rate this, then? After some rather extensive deliberation, I'm going to settle for a final verdict of 4.5 stars, since the minor weak point coalesce with some missed chances from me considering this excellent. This module offers a lot of band for buck. It is also a better read than "City of the Spider-Queen" and completely different from "Endless Night" in scope and tone - thus, I'll round up to 5 stars.

And If you're interested: If I had to rate the whole trilogy, I'd give it 5 stars, but for now remain just short of the seal of approval.

Endzeitgeist out.



Faces of the Tarnished Souk: Dread Captain Miraxa, Queen Corsair of the Slumbering Sea

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

This installment of the FoTS-series is 18 pages long, 1 page front cover, 1 page editorial, 2 pages of advertisement and 1 page SRD, leaving 13 pages of content, so let's check this out!

All right, as per my standard for reviews of the FoTSseries, I'm first going to take a look at the basic additional crunch: We get the determination armor quality, the smashing weapon quality, 3 versions of the magical eyepatch of awareness and an enchanted spyglass. Two traits are also part of the deal, as are 9 feats, which also show that the character will be a deadly challenge for all but the best of PCs - why? Much like the last FoTS-installment, Miraxa's build utilizes "horrifically overpowered" feats from SGG's Guide, making her not only a gestalt, but also a master of skills and capable of using magic. Miraxa also utilizes multiple archetypes: Two generic ones, the physical exemplar and the spellblaze, which could be applied to any class, and we also get the Titan Mauler and the Sea Reaver archetype for the barbarian and the pirate archetype for the rogue.

If the cover was not ample clue for you, Miraxa is not a regular humanoid, but rather belongs to the race of the draken, a true-breeding race born from halfdragons - the race is btw. fully detailed and gets 2 to Str and Con, -2 to Cha, dark and low-light vision, 2 to all saves, natural weapons and a bonus on linguistic checks. They also come with 7 alternate racial traits as well as favored class options for all Paizo-base-classes but ninja and samurai and a racial feat that takes one of your characteristics and improves it, granting you for example vestigial wings/improving them to functioning ones etc. I like the race per se, but it should not be used for PCs - Draken are more powerful than the standard races. The entry also misses the age, height and weight tables necessary for character creation.

Onwards to Miraxa: The corsair's least powerful CR 7 incarnation already utilizes 3 HO-feats, which with her enhanced stats, increase her CR by 3. Much like the last FoTS-installment, these changes are transparent and make it rather easy to analyze how a given incarnation was built. Her CR 14 mid-level incarnation already sees her CR improved by 5 via these additional tools and has her already looking like a dreadful foe to behold, though her CR 21 high-level incarnation, including her deadly Morningstar Keel Breaker - where unfortunately I have a gripe - the stats of her morningstar are omitted, though I gather it's supposed to have the new smashing quality.



Her character, dreamburning information also make a nice twist - while she is hardened and tough , she also has a very good motivation - she is actually with child and hell hath no fury like a mother's! She could be both a deadly foe or an awkward ally - from villain to ally, she is very versatile in both character and build.

And then there's the coolest bit of additional content the Impending Doom, a mithral-plated dreadnought with multiple cannons and multiple means of propulsion as well as deadly siege engine-class cannons - fully stated and featuring advancement options for the vessel. Great to see these stats supplement the concept of a corsair queen!

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are very good, though the omission of Miraxa's signature weapon irks me. Layout adheres to RiP's classic b/w-2-column standard and the pdf comes with fitting pieces of stock art as well as bookmarks. I'm a big fan of Miraxa as a character and her build is solid to say the least - she's a complex, cool, versatile and deadly fighter and her vessel is the icing on the cake (though I would have loved ships for her lesser incarnations as well). Usually, she would be a supreme candidate for 5 stars, but the lack of stats for her signature weapon is a major bummer for me. Thus, due to the lack of the weapon's stats, I'll be forced to consider her as "only" a good buy, resulting in a final verdict of 4 stars.

EDIT: The signature weapon has been added to V.2 - 1 star!

Endzeitgeist out.

Amethyst: Renaissance

by **Dias Ex Machina Games** *Review by Thilo "Endzeitgeist" Graf* 5 out of 5 Stars!

This massive pdf is 399 pages long, 1 page front cover, 1 page inside front cover, 1 page editorial, 2 pages of ToC, 1 page Index, 1 page SRDs and 1 page back cover, leaving us with a whopping 391 pages of content, so let's check this out!

I'll just come out and say it: I'm not familiar with any old iterations of the Amethyst-setting, thus I can't draw any direct comparisons. What is Amethyst then? Essentially it is a what-if scenario of vast ambitions: What would happen if a logical fantasy setting, with all its consequences, with its magic etc., was thrust upon our technological world. Not a black/white dichotomy, nor a stylized version of fantasy. The ambition is to create a setting in which the problems, social and ecological are very much intact, including all the topics that move us - only that now the force of magic has entered the world and while it does change the options of the people, it is also a force that is at direct odds with technology - but even this dichotomy is too simple to properly explain the intricate web of themes and topics opened by this book. But let me try to explain via the setting's history: Essentially, it presumes that there once was a magical age here on earth, when the world was still called Terros and people worshiped a benevolent entity of unbridled creative energy and chaos- until the arrival of the black gate and a deity of order and syntropy started to lay waste to the world, culminating in the K-Textinction event, resulting in the death of legendary dragon/god amethyst and the extinction of magic from the world. Technology and natural evolution reigned. Until a second impact, a meteorite saw the resurgence of magic. The forces of order and chaos have returned and in-between, mankind has to witness its technology ceasing to work in the presence of magic, thus creating enclaves of the size of nations, cities of hyper-technology in a world where magic looms beyond the walls and dragons and fae have reclaimed the planet. Add to that the legend that there's an artifact that may expel magic again and forever or make the one bearing it a god and we have ample potential for the earth-shattering things your PCs can do in AR. "Which side will you stand on in the end" is a question that will be hard to answer in the setting ...

After a brief description on altered magic (though that is covered in more detail later) and the origin of power for clerics, druids and mages, we are introduced to a glossary before we get into chapter 2, where we are introduced to the variety of races available for character creation in the Amethyst Renaissance setting and from the start an interesting consideration is put into focus: Traditions. Tenebri curse and swear loudly while executing daily affairs, Laudeni never wear undergarments etc. - while these points may



seem boring and mundane, they actually prove a point I often try to make: Races are more than the conglomerate of their stats and should be treated as such. This chapter thus includes a stunning wealth of gestures and peculiarities, from considering silent gestures rude to kowtowing to one's tools and even a complex appropriation of the "metal-gesture", i.e. the devil's horns as both a potential greeting (with a thumb in the fist) or an request for intercourse (with the thumb exposed). Sexuality and the Fae race's take on it is also thankfully covered, being rather open and non-discriminating regarding e.g. homosexuality and monogamous when married, but rather polyamorous before, thus creating further potential for cultural conflicts and misunderstandings. Add to that the existence of a particular form of ironlead that is particularly toxic to fae and an inherent magical nature that disrupts technology, as reflected by a saturation level that can never plunge below 20 and we're in for cool and complex creatures even before we delve into the respective racial entries, which are spearheaded by the Chaparrans, who can essentially be considered wood elves that believe their existence is eternal and changes between being a being of flesh and blood and being a tree. These wild fae are truly deadly experts with their bows, get climb speeds etc. and can even teleport in forests, making them feel truly unearthly.

The Damaskans, on the other hand, can be considered a race of intellectual, bibliophile,obsessive chroniclers of the things that happen in their chosen field. Equipped with a vastly supreme sense of balance, gravity etc. and being universally ambidextrous, they also make for stellar swashbuckling-style characters and warrior-scholars, as their intelligence-modifier influences their combat prowess. Gimfen are a peculiar race of Fae as well, lacking the disruptive field that characterizes many echans (slang for magicusers and magical beings) and being obsessed (and rather successful) with melding magic and technology. While not being as apt as humans, they make for interesting alchemists, tinkerers and could be seen a s a type of gnome/halfling-hybrid, also due to their height. Laudenians then, would make for the classic high elves - a pure first race in decline, their culture is determined by a fear of degradation (as their descendants turned into other fey) and hence they have turned to living in a fabled city in the sky however, they are not only haughty, immortal and rare, they also have lost any connection to nature due to their hatred/fear of the corrupting influence of walking the earth.

The Narros can be considered the strong warrior/miners of the Fae races, determined by a 100% commitment and making for natural born soldiers. Speaking of good soldiers - the Pagus, Fae changed by the black gate do not disrupt technology, but are stigmatized from birth as heralds of the black gate and are prone to old-age insanity. And then there are the Tenebri, a race of deceptively fragile-looking blind Fae with a deadly scream, these beings have allegedly been cursed by a god and are interesting in that they are more or less at war with the Narros and, due to their blindness, have a completely different take on attractiveness etc., thus subverting preconceptions of beauty ideals. The final Fae race then would be the Tilen: Fragile and graceful, vet strong, these beings are essentially fae who have clawed themselves back from undeath and can be seen as a playable Fae vampire race: They have no reflections, are blinded by light etc. - but in a twist of the theme, while they can heal via draining blood, they are passionate and rather non-violent creatures and thus make for a great duality between dark pasts, themes of hereditary sin and kindness in the face of xenophobia and aversion. Among the evolutionary races, Humans are first and detailed just about as much as the other races, taking the fall of old ideologies and virtues and the varied nature as well as the cataclysm that decimated their race into account before going on with the Kodiaks - upright walking bears that are a recent phenomenon and which have only begun to rise from hunters and foragers to farming communities. With such a diverse roster of races, a whole entry is devoted to crossbreeds between Fae and human as well as crossbreeds between the different types of Fae.

And we're only just past the playable races - now, let us turn our heads towards the background of the setting! The section kicks off with an idea I whole heartedly endorse - a selection of backgrounds and organizations for the whole group to belong to essentially providing a way for the player characters to know each other and get a benefit and starting point to properly develop their backgrounds. After that, we

are introduced to new traits, though it should be noted that a new class of traits, so-called Amethyst Traits, are introduced: Every character may only have one of these slightly more powerful traits. Since the setting's peculiarities, religious and belief-based traits are subsumed and/or replaced by supernatural traits that enable a slight tapping into the forces that be via an unexplained natural talent. Traits, to be honest, have swiftly become my least favorite thing to review they provide paltry bonuses, boring one-liners and half of them boil down to "You have been bullied by X/grown up in Y/etc." -BORING. Now this is what this book does perfectly right: Each trait comes with an extensive, long flavor text that immerses one in the respective background and best of all, also roots the character believably and deep in the world of Amethyst Renaissance. This is how traits should be handled. Kudos, respect and two thumbs up - 3pps, take heed, this is how it can be done!

In the next chapter, we deal with classes - rather important, taking the peculiarities of the setting into account- magic is usually channeled by a totem, for example, meaning that wizards may use other things as focus - for example orbs, shields and even more esoteric things. Of course, we also get a variety of new Techan classes, starting with the Grounder (d10, 4+Int skills, full BAB, good fort- and ref-saves) that gains access to brotherhood abilities, improved recoil absorption etc., while the heavy grounder is the heavy arms/explosive specialist variant of the class. We also get the new Marshal base-class (d8, 6+Int skills per level, weird 19/20 BAB-progression, good ref-saves), who can be considered a war-master-like support class with auras to enhance team-mate capabilities and enhanced benefits for teamwork. What I was missing from this class was the option to utilize teamwork-feats/solo-tactics - a good class that could have been better by being more streamlined with PFRPG-content. The mechanic operator (d8, 7+Int skills per level, weird 19/20 BAB-progression, good ref-saves) can be seen as the tech with the customized weapons, including a cool ability called "Shiny Red Button" that enables the operator to do rather deadly stunts with his deadly modified weapons like automatically hitting, dealing additional damage etc. very cool! The Medic (d8, 7+Int skills per level, weird 19/20 BAB-progression, good ref-and will-saves as well as 4 levels of exploits) can be considered the techan combat medic, able to negate e.g. the last hit to strike an ally and use his injections to strengthen allies. VERY cool, though I would have loved more exploits. The next general category of classes is called stalker and can be considered soldier-specialists from the blazing Gunslinger (d10, 4+Int skills per level, full BAB, good ref saves) that can put a deadly ballet of bullets (flurry-style) through his enemies and the diametric opposite, the Sniper, who learns to enhance his single shots to further maximize his deadly potential. The Vanguard (d8, 7+Int skills per level, weird 19/20 BAB-progression, good ref-saves) is the final of the classes herein, gaining knowledge to fight with primitive powers, unarmed attacks etc. -

essentially a mundane, dirty and cool alternative to the esoteric monk. (Also nice: Fighting-game inspired ability-names as inside jokes.)

In a world of both technology and magic, we also need new skills and thus are introduced to new skills dealing with the proper use of explosives, engineering, knowledge (science) and vehicle operation. The setting also includes 7 1/2 pages of feat-LISTS before giving us the feats and they do something I really like: Apart from racial feats etc. you'd expect to find, there also are a vast variety of feats that have background traits as prerequisites, expanding upon the background concepts and making the traits matter that much more. Again, 3pps, take heed - this is a great idea. But are the feats up to the quality? To cut a long, uninteresting and potentially ruinous listing of feats and what they do short (and to stop myself from blowing this review completely out of all proportions) - yes. The feats are well-designed and the techan feats, for explosive, new armors and weapons etc. make for fine additions and since I'm a huge fan of vehicles, especially the nice coverage of them, via both the extensive skill-section and the feats makes this chapter a crunchy winner in my book.

The equipment section is also rather smart, beginning with a cool recap on ever-improving technology and stagnant, unchanging magic before going into the different currencies, ranging from the familiar gold pieces (echan money, including local names for the pieces) to the universal credits used by the techan. Next would be the obligatory entries on different technology levels, up to antigrav and complete reconstruction of beings from dust as well as information on e.g. battery types and EDF - echan disruption fields that represent the disruptive effects of magic on technology as well as means to at least temporarily cancel and/or diminish said detrimental effects. Of course, Echan weaponry is also detailed. If you ever wanted to play one bastard with a REALLY big weapon, fret not, for super heavy weaponry is also covered - if you put that tripod down and aim your foes will know to weep. It should also be noted that auto fire is introduced with cohesive rules and that we get stellar artworks for many new weapons. Have I mentioned the almost mecha-like classes of heavy armor (and their respective lighter counterparts) and the class on shields, both traditional and kinetic and the rather large array of modifications that can be added to armor, enhancing customizability even further? Other cool bits are the AEN, essentially an echan-detection system, camera balls, information on viral/gene therapy, rules for exotic materials and best of all: Vehicles galore - tanks, jeeps, whatever you desire. And then there are the cool vertibird-like airships and even high-tech blimps! HELL YEAH!

In Chapter 7, we get to check out PrCs, for both the echan and techan fractions - from knights of Abraham, the PrC-incarnations of rangers and paladins (not available as base-classes) to the determined Gimfen assassins of the Crimson Leaf to the elite techan angel snipers, infantry support

specialists, sierra madre gunslingers and york gun dancers, we are introduced to flavorful, regional and organizational PrCs that truly feel like they belong to their niches and make sense in the context of the world. mechanics-wise, they offer nice rules. In order to keep this review from blowing further out of all proportions, I'll refrain from listing them all. The chapter on magic is also rather interesting, as it talks about the strange dichotomies of white and black magic, disruption and the concepts of infinite creation vs. absolute syntropy as well as about theories on summoning beings and the effects of magic - both white and black magic change the user - Ixindar's black magic adds corruption points and changes you and even white magic and association with fey has the tendency to slowly turn you into an echan-like being. Also rather cool: Powerful spells are usually limited to being only learnable from an anchor, which means that learning such a spell entails quests of its own and making access to such spells rare and coveted - want polar ray? Get that crystal skull! Antimagic fields can prove lethal to echan beings not associated with İxindar and we also get 4 technology-disrupting EMPstyle spells. The magic items and what's available in Amethyst Renaissance would also cover a whole chapter - it s especially noteworthy that we get an awesome array of artifacts that come with extensive background stories before we get into the sections that especially should be read carefully by DMs.

The following two chapters deal with the leitmotifs of the Amethyst Renaissance setting, ranging from familiar foreignness and constructions of alterity to eschatological ramifications of the cataclysm that was the second hammer and the canonical continuation of human religions, belief, ideologies and science as well as covering the plethoras of alternative models for society as introduced by the Fae and adapted by the echan races - which, of course, is anything but unilateral and in fact a topic not to be neglected. The corrupting influence of Ixindar, transportation and travel, languages, ideologies and warfare - you name it and these pages provide. A gazetteer of the world, introducing us to the bastions, their tech levels, to the kingdoms and also the homes of the worst infections is also provided and makes for a nice lead-in to the new beasts- While most beings can work in the Amethyst-setting, several creatures are replaced by races unique to the setting and thus, the bestiary section kicks off by introducing us to said replacements. Special mention in this section deserves the beautiful representation of the fae and the "degenerated" subtypes that have developed from them. The corrupted Dragons of Ixindar also get a nice treatment herein and the pdf hints at the worst of these beings and their special strengths.

In Chapter 13, the DM gets the grand gamut of inspirations for campaigns - whether you and your group would go for a theme of echan/techan differences, mixed groups or campaigns focused on a place, this section provides even further ideas and guidance for DMs before presenting us with a beginner's adventure, which serves as a nice starting point for both echan and techan or mixed groups. A nice module, though I would have preferred an echan and a techan start scenario. After that, the expertly written narrative that leads us throughout this massive tome concludes and an Index finishes this massive tome.

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are very good - I noticed not a single wording that would have impeded my understanding of the text or rules, though I did notice several passages where text was in italics that wasn't supposed to be. Generally, though, the formatting is excellent. The layout adheres to a drop-dead gorgeous b/w-2-column layout with graphics on the borders and no printer-friendly version, which is a minor bummer. The artworks, oh the artworks: They belong, tops, to the most iconic, awesome, evocative and brilliant pieces I've seen done in b/w and the couple of full-color artworks herein are no less dazzling in their beauty. The pdf comes with extensive bookmarks, though no nested bookmarks, which is a bit of a pity, since nested bookmarks would have imho further improved the ability to navigate this massive book. The pdf also comes with high-res jpegs of 3 full color artworks, a map of Canam and 4 different wallpapers.

Now, this review took me much longer than anticipated due to several reasons - first of all would be the ambition of the setting: Essentially its endeavor of creating a what-if-scenario that is logical is laudable - what is truly stunning, though, is the variety of play styles it can accommodate. Yes, you can play a fantasy campaign laced with sci-fi elements in this setting. Just as easily, you could participate in a technology vs. magic, scifi vs. fantasy war of the worlds, a gritty cyberpunk scenario or even explore themes of ideologies, races, conflicting society models or a theme of technical evolution vs. chaos that is stagnant in its magical creations etc.

Amethyst Renaissance accommodates all of these playstyles and infinitely more. Secondly, this review took forever to write due to the crunch being so different from what we usually see in PFRPG. Due to the peculiar nature of magic an technology in the setting, checking the balance of the classes, PrCs and options makes for a monumental task I can only hope I partially achieved in completing. Balance is precarious and there were many an instance where I actually thought that a given race, feat or other class option was overpowered, since e.g. automatic hits and similar concepts are used. However, the setting's unique balancing factors like the EDF and ideological differences/conflicts, tech levels etc. also mean that there are a lot of uncommon factors that mitigate the relative power of the races and options herein. To make matters perfectly clear: This is probably not a setting to scavenge from, since just about all crunchy elements are tightly inter-connected both with crunchy and fluffy bits to weave a complex tapestry of both exciting and uncommon options.

Amethyst Renaissance is also, and that should be stressed, an intelligent setting: Its logic, coherent approach demands a mature approach both on the side of the gaming group and the designers, as the elements that are relevant social topics in our everyday world still matter in this setting, including unpleasant topics like racism, fanaticism and the escalating clash of ideologies. All while retaining an identity beyond the sum of its component parts. Is this pdf universally balanced? Hard to tell, even for me. If a DM is not careful with regards to feats, equipment etc., I can see such a game being hard work - this is not the fault of this book, though, as the parts actually DO work they way they are intended. Another note for all the people with extensive PFRPGlibraries and a minor problem I see with this pdf should be mentioned, though: Rules concepts like teamwork feats, solo tactics or the gunslinger's grit mechanic have not found their way into this setting. Instead, we have setting specific solutions and rulesrepresentation, which, while they do enhance the individuality of the setting, also mean that adding other content to the setting could prove to be problematic. It is also due to this that I hope we'll get more techan equipment, vehicles etc. in future supplements - introducing other content could prove to be a decision that should be carefully considered.

Finally, I feel compelled to mention one thing: As per the writing of these lines, I really hope for a print version of this book - BUT: This pdf is cheap. I mean it. Ridiculously cheap in fact. 15 bucks for 400 pages? Of content of this quality? Now if that is not an excellent bang-for buck ratio, I don't know what is. I'd honestly be hard-pressed to mention another book that marries stellar artworks, a truly unique and smart setting, innovative rules and interesting ideas while being this damn affordable- At the low asking price, Amethyst Renaissance is a total, complete steal. What's my final verdict, then? I've thought. I've calculated. I've pondered. Is this book perfect? No, there are some minor formatting glitches. There is the lack of nested bookmarks. I'm new to Amethyst and have no idea how this one and its prior d20incarnations interact. What I can say is that this pdf made me want to play in the setting. That its races came more to life to me on these pages than just about ALL races I've reviewed this year. That the ideas are often not adhering to standard PFRPG-solutions, but work well and in unique, special ways. That the baseclasses rock hard and feel cool. That I love the creative ideas, twists and all the unique "clash of culture"-style pieces of information. If my review left you even remotely curious and/or you're looking for a truly new, unique and versatile setting, I'd strongly encourage you to check this pdf out - Amethyst Renaissance is clearly a professional book and a labor of love. And at the low price, I can still justify to give this book my full blessing - thus, my final verdict, in spite of the minor blemishes that can easily be neglected, will be 5 stars.

Endzeitgeist out.

*** 30 Oariant Dragons** by Rite Publishing Review by Thilo "Endzeitgeist" Graf 4 out of 5 Stars!

This pdf is 23 pages long, 1 page front cover, 1 page editorial, 1 page SRD, 2 pages advertisement, leaving us with 18 pages of content, so what kind of dragons do we actually get?

The pdf kicks off with a short IC-introduction and a list that lists the new variants according to the base draconic race they modify -variant dragons for all the basic chromatic and metallic dragons are provided. Essentially, the variant dragons are presented as archetypes or a kind of mini-template - essentially, they replace standard abilities of their base draconic race with a new abilities and modifications. Better yet, each entry provides its introduction written incharacter and often is a plot-hook on its own. As a bonus, we also get spelled out plot hooks to craft adventures from.

Now, if you think these dragons are simple "replace x with y", you'll be positively surprised - I know I was: From the very first dragon on, the Bell Metal Dragon, a variant of the Bronze - attuned to the very vibrations of the multiverse and its infinite cadence, these beings are immune to sound, reverberate with deadly resonances when hit with melee weapons and can also emit deadly thunderous roars. The majestic golden crown dragons, exalted even by the standards of their noble kin, can declare a being to be a vassal, possessing the being and temporarily granting the being the half-dragon template. The Blue wingless Dune Dragons are perfect desert hunters, swimming through the sands, while red furnace dragon may not be able to breathe fire, but have a devastating, alldestroying swallow whole attack.

There also are rather cool and unique ones among these mini draconic templates, first and foremost for example the Hydra-dragon, a variant black dragon with multiple regenerating heads that come at the expense of the powerful natural attacks such dragons usually have. Another favorite of mine would be the bronze variant orichalcum dragon, which can use its breath to enhance its electricity aura and later even add the cold iron and lawful qualities to its attacks. Also neat, the Petrified green dragons with their breath that may turn their foes to stone, while the chaotic neutral Pyrite Gold Dragon may make for some unpleasant surprises for those too trusting in the purity of these paragons of dragonkind, while the root-gnawing dragon would be especially appropriate for norse-tinged campaign, being able to gnaw a Yggdrasil's roots, i.e. tearing gates into the fabric of reality. And then there are the Void dragons - whites that thrive in the airless, cold void between stars and can act as emissaries between cultists and their masters from the Dark Tapestry. And that's just to give you a glimpse of what to expect herein.



Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are good, though I did notice some glitches, none seriously impeded my enjoyment of the pdf. Layout adheres to RiP's 2-column full color standard and the full color depictions of some of the dragons are nice, even though you might already be familiar with some. The pdf comes with extensive bookmarks.

I was honestly surprised by this pdf - I mean, come on, what can you expect in such scant few pages? I was sincerely dreading boring "exchange element a for element b" and similar changes. Instead, author Eric Morton has created a cool gamut of draconic abilities that not only come with well-written prose and are mechanically sound, but also serve their respective niches in a campaign and feel like they do organically belong - whether as mutations or full-fledged species, these beings will enhance the draconic glory in your campaign, enrich the concept of dragons and enable you to pull off new plots - reading the Pyrite dragon and the Void Dragon, for example, made me smile and cackle with glee. However, the editing glitches, while not crucial, are a slight deterrent when reading this book and thus my final verdict will be 4.5 stars, rounded down to 4 for the purpose of this platform.

Endzeitgeist out.

Dungeon Dressing: Pools

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

This pdf is 13 pages long, 1 page front cover, 1 page advertisement, 2 pages editorial, 1 page ToC/foreword, 1 page SRD and 1 page back cover, leaving 6 pages of content, so let's check this out!

Following the format of the Dungeon Dressing-series, the pdf kicks off with basic characteristics and rules that cover different depths, water flow, low temperatures and information on types of pools and their construction.

After that, we're in for a d%-table of cosmetic peculiarities to add to your pools as well as a another massive table featuring 100 different characteristics ranging from slime at the bottom to floating tea-lights and even red eyes casting a disturbing light at the pool.

We also get two deadly traps, the classic vortex pool and the black tentacle pool. Better yet, we get magical pools like the necrotic pool infused with negative energy and the pool of forgotten gods - which should have a limit on how often it works for a character: By donating money to it, characters can permanently raise their attributes. Special mention deserves the excellent web-enhancement dealing two better sample pools, one of which would be a hungry, disturbing aberrant pool called K'Thug Ython, the pool of many maws and even a magical hot spring! Oh yeah, the pdf also offers us a harpoon trap. Now that's the type of web-enhancement (Available from ragingswan.com, btw.) that just rocks.

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are top-notch, I didn't notice any glitches. Layout adheres to RSP'S elegant printerfriendly 2-column standard and the pdf comes in two versions, one optimized for screen use and one optimized for printing out. The pdfs come fully bookmarked. The tables are rock-solid, the ideas herein great, the details evocative and the added traps and magical pools and the excellent webenhancement make for more reasons why you definitely should check out this great little pdf. To cut my usually long ramble short: Excellent pdf for an awesome price and another recommendation for all DMs that seek to expand their repertoire. My final verdict will thus be 5 stars as the excellent webenhancement offsets the problem of the pool of forgotten gods lacking any restriction on how often it can be used.

Endzeitgeist out



101 Featured Alternate Racial Traits

by Rite Publishing Review by Thilo "Endzeitgeist" Graf 4 out of 5 Stars!

This pdf is 17 pages long, 1 page front cover, 1 page editorial, 1 page SRD and 2 pages advertisements, leaving us with 12 pages of content, so let's check out these alternate racial traits!

First among the new races would be the Aasimar and his traits: They now can e.g. gain access to a variety of heavenly spells that are added to their spelllists, regardless of whether they cast via divine or arcane means. Some Aasimars can now also turn incorporeal for a limited time and gain temporal access to a feat they meet the prerequisites for. Second race to be covered would be the catfolk, which can now choose alternate racial attribute modifiers, gain a bite attack and roar to make enemies shaken. Dhampirs can now potentially drain blood to heal themselves, charm others, turn to gas and even drain life once per day as the full-fledged bloodsuckers. Also rather neat, classic vampiric weaknesses like garlic, inability to enter an abode unbidden etc. can now be exchanged for negative energy affinity.

The Drow-traits are especially neat, ranging from whip-proficiency, can hide from even blindsense, inflict wracking pain with a mere touch and endure the most crippling pain as pleasure, while Fetchlings may also serve the bizarre nihiloi and create umbral tendrils and even 1/day, imbue their attacks with strength-draining cold. Goblins, meanwhile, can become Coward's champions, granting them bonuses against brave and valorous opponents, coup-de-grace downed foes faster and even eat the brains of vanquished foes to become temporarily smarter. Hobgoblins get some nice options, too, including the meritocracy-honed ability to roughly judge other creature's capabilities and the ability to 1/day ready a full-round action -rather cool!

Ifrit (I'm still pissed Paizo calls these guys Ifrit in German, that's indistinguishable from effect and mythologically - don't get me started....) can gain access to longstrider 1/day, a natural armor and the ability to 1/day inflict the damage dealt to him/her or one of his allies in the last round via a melee attack as a kind of retributive strike. Kobolds can once per day maximize non-lethal damage they deal or reroll the damage they deal with weapons or touch spells, taking the better result or gain a draconic breath weapon. Some kobolds seem to also actually be of goblinoid descent. They also get one of the coolest abilities herein: The option to jury-rig broken items, including a slight regain of charges, if applicable. Oreads (rant see Ifrit) can gain a trait to reroll CMBs when bull rushing or overrunning foes, or once per day attempt to parry an attack on an ally with an AoO. Like the catfolk, ratfolk also get a second array of racial attribute modifiers and a cool trait that gives them a superior barter edge to get what they want at the cost of a service provided - a great way for the DM to introduce quests. You can now also play medium Dire

Ratfolk and make use of the rat's nomadic tactics, which include 3 kinds of impromptu traps/hindrances they can spring on their opponents.

Sylphs also come with a new array of attributemodifiers and can gain access to misdirection and windy escape, for example. Tieflings get alternate attributes, can hail from a culture that regards them highly (e.g. Cheliax) and get more starting money and those that fully rejected their heritage may even use a special, self-sacrificing interposition maneuver that keeps their ally from harm. Finally, the Undine (rant, see above), come with new attribute modifiers and the new traits that enable them to reverse emotional effects (e.g. turn fear into inspire courage) and the ability to teleport-like change places with close friends.

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are good, though not perfect - I noticed several typos. Layout adheres to RiP's two-column full color standard and the pdf is fully bookmarked.

I'll be honest: I'm not the target audience for this book. Every time I read the names of Paizo's Genasiraces, I feel a swell of nerdrage wallowing up from my stomach and the need to spew bile. That being said, this pdf is innocent regarding that particular gripe. Additionally, I'm rather weary of adding too many races to any given campaign setting and require that a given race add something significant to my table. Thus, all the beings herein are rarely seen in homebrew and usually not as player-characters. As I said, I may not be exactly the target audience. That out of the way, this pdf does do an excellent job in that it offers players a whole plethora of abilities that actually make sense to take as a racial ability.

The tendency of "101 Pirate and Privateer"-traits to offer significant bonuses and special maneuvers, but restricting their usage to situations and 1/day or 1/week means that design-wise, there is a lot going for the traits here and that they will actually matter in game, something painfully absent from the marginal and boring bonuses inherent in most traits. However, I also feel that overall, the traits herein felt less imaginative than in the Pirate-book. There are several variants of interposition-traits and spell-like ability traits. There also are genius ones like the jury-rig trait, though. How to rate this? Seeing that I don't have any balance-concerns with the traits herein and taking the above and the minor glitches into account, I'll settle for a final verdict of 4 stars - this is a good selection of alternate racial options for the non-standard races, though none you absolutely have to own if you don't plan to play such a race.

Endzeitgeist out.

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