



CHARACTER MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE FOR PLAYERS AND GMS

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Abi	lity Scores: 7	10 of 7	0	Attack Bonus	Basics O	Skills	Feats
STR		*	+1/+3	Attack Bonus: +6/+1 Attack (Melee): +9/+4 Attack (Range): +7/+2	16* +3* Strength 12 +1 Dextenty 20* +5* Constitution 11 0 intelligence	+4 Acrobatics +0 Appraise +1 Bluff +7 Climb	Acrobatic Armor (Light) Armor (Medium) Great Fortitude
CON	12 16/20	*	+1	Combat Maneuvers CM Bonus: +9 CM Defense: 18 / 17Fi	16 +3 Wisdom 12 +1 Charisma 4 Barbarian 3 Cleric	+6 Diplomacy - Disable Device +1 Disguise -4 Escape Artist	Weapons (All Martial Shield Proficiency Weapons (All Simple Focus: Climb (Climb)
INT	11	\$	0	Defenses Fortitude Save: +14	7 Level 35000 XP	-2 Fly +7 Handle Animal +9 Heat	Throw Anything Toughness +7
WIS	16	\$	+3	Reflex Save: +3 Will Save: +9	95/95 HP 57 82/230lbs, Lgt Encu 17 / 97c8 / 15ELAC	+9 Perception	
CHA	12	\$	+1	Armor Class: 17 / 9 Tch / 16 Fi Miscellaneoux	+1 Initiative 40 / 30 Speed	+2 Ride +7 Sense Motive - Sleight of Hand	
	Spent: 20 of	20		Initiative: +1 Speed: 40 / 30 feet Hit Points: 96/95 Encumbered: 57.82/230lbs, Lgt Medium (6' space, 5' reach)	+6/+1 Attack Bonus +9/+4 (Melee) +7/+2 (Ranged) +9 CMB 18 / 17FI CMD +14 Fortitude Save +3 Reflex Save +9 WW Save	+5 Spellcraft -4 Stealth +9 Sunwal +3 Swim - Use Magic Devic	

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Editoral

by Dave Paul

Back in issue 34 my editorial focused on a Pathfinder adventure I had written that was a little bit outside the box. The adventure is designed for between 6 and 8 players, and what makes it substantially different from the usual adventure (is there such a thing as a usual adventure?) is that six of the players play three ettins. Those six players play in pairs, two player control one ettin. This meant that I had to break the normal ettin rules and create a special kind of ettin that had, in effect, two turns each round.

Unfortunately, I wanted to have something ready for play for GenCon 2014. Instead, I have something that is ready-enough for a pick-up game, in the lobby of someone's hotel, or somewhere at an otherwise-empty table in a room somewhere in the convention center. But, due to other circumstances in life being what they sometimes are, I have only been able to complete two playtests of this, and it really needs more. (Anything, I think, that breaks the existing rules, needs multiple tests, with different play groups.)

If fortune smiles instead of spits upon me, I might have a playable version ready for distribution a few months from now. And, if I do, I'll beg some of my fellow Riters to attack it with fury before releasing it to the public. Both playtest groups have really enjoyed playing it. But, of course, some of that might be because some of the players already knew each other, had gamed together before, and were having fun just because they were gaming together.

I have noted several changes that need to be made. Some of them are changes to the characters, some are changes to the adventure itself (including changes to a couple of monsters, a couple of encounters, and one of the maps). I don't think I'll have the time between now and winter to get all this done, thanks to my penchant for repeatedly taking on more projects than I can hope to get done.

I do have a bit of information to share about the last playtest. The players really, really liked the lowintelligence of the ettins and the problems associated with the ettin language. Again, from the PRD:

Ettins have no language of their own but speak a pidgin of Giant, Goblin, and Orc. Creatures that can speak any of these languages must succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence check to communicate with an ettin. Check once for each bit of information: if the other creature speaks two of these languages, the DC is 10, and for someone who speaks all three, the DC is 5.

I decided that this would be great fun since both a goblin and an orc are available as other characters to play (rounding out the 6-to-8 players). Both the goblin and the orc have a 12 Intelligence, and, both of them speak both Goblin and Orc. So, the goblin and orc players can communicate with each other with no problem. The goblin and the orc, per the rule above, need a 4 to understand the ettins. I figured that was low enough that the goblin should already have developed an ability to communicate with the ettin who owns it. So, those three players (two for that ettin, one for the goblin) can share information. The ettin who befriended the orc can similarly communicate. And, if the players do this right (but all the characters are chaotic evil, and the ettins, even without a language barrier, just aren't smart), those six should be able to share information. However, since all the ettins are from different ettin clans, I've ruled that they generally have trouble understanding ettins outside their own clans, so, with the -2 for having a 6 Intelligence, they need to roll a 7 to understand each other on this adventure.

In practice, this is what this looked like. There is a natural tunnel winding into a cave in a mountainside. Two of the ettins are in the tunnel (which is only about 20 feet wide) along with the goblin and a grizzly bear (the pet of the third ettin). The ettin who is friends with the orc is outside with the orc, waiting for something bad to happen to the others. I described the tunnel to the players with something like:

There is no light here, except the light pouring in from the daylight outside. Though it's winter, the cave entrance faces south and it's early enough in the afternoon that you'll have light, at least in this tunnel for a couple more hours. Anyone with darkvision, or a torch, could see farther, but, you can see that the tunnel extends at least 40 feet into the mountain, and that there appear to be natural tunnels leading away to the right and left, somewhere in the darkening region ahead. There are, as well, several statues here. Starting about 15 feet from the entrance, you see what look like statues of goblins or hobgoblins, and, further in, a statue of an ettin and another statue of a stone giant. The ettin statue has no heads-the necks are still there, but someone or something has lopped off the heads. One of the goblinoid statues is missing an arm, and the other is missing part of its left leg from the knee to the ankle.

The ettin with its bear pet is working its way toward the other tunnels, the ettin with the goblin slave is standing between the goblin statues and the stone giant statue, and the goblin is standing about midway between the ettins,

trying to listen for noise in the tunnels. Meanwhile, the ettin and orc outside are sure that there's something in the mountain (they've heard tales of dragons and giants and wizards living up here) that's going to turn their buddies into statues. As soon as I say to the goblin's player "You hear something and let out a cry to the others," and tell them to all roll initiative, the fun starts. The orc and ettin outside want to know what's going on, so, they yell, but, the ettins inside fail their Intelligence checks and don't know what they're yelling about. The goblin and orc are too far apart to communicate effectively, especially once the ettins all start yelling insults at one another (it's pretty easy to provoke a good role player into insulting the others when he's playing a dumb, easily provoked chaotic evil giant). So, of course, the bad guys lurking in the tunnels have all kinds of advantages...

As promised last time, I'll let you know how this continues to develop. And, as promised, I'll make sure, once I have it in distributable form, the *Pathways* readers get a copy.

Happy gaming.





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)eep Dragon Creature Semplate By Steven D. Russell, Illustrations by Johnny Morrow

Most who encounter dragons see them soaring through the sky on mighty wings, and because this is what surface folk see most often, this is all they believe exists. Yet not all dragons live upon the Sunlit Lands. Some lurk deep beneath in The World Below, in dark caves, in forgotten delves burrowing about creating vast new galleries. These deep dragon creatures possess unique gifts and adaptations that allow them to slide through otherwise impassible dungeon corridors, transverse the treacherous depths of lightless lands and stalk prey in the dark depths where night never ends. Deep Dragons have duller hides and longer, more serpentine bodies in comparison to their surface kin; they never have wings and cannot fly, but can burrow and have vicious claws.

Creating a Deep Dragon Creature

"Deep Dragon" is an acquired template that can be added to any dragon type.

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

CR: +2.

Armor Class: +2 natural armor

Defensive Abilities: DR 5/adamantine (if the Deep Dragon creature is CR 10 or higher this becomes DR 10/adamantine, if CR 15 or higher this becomes DR 15/adamantine); Immune acid, fire; Weakness Light Blindness

Speed: Deep dragons gain Burrow at half their base speed; Deep dragon creatures cannot fly, they lose both their wings and this mode of movement.

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

Compression (Ex): A deep dragon creature can move through an area as small as one-quarter its space without squeezing or one-eighth its space when squeezing.

Deep Gaze (Su): Buried suggestion, see below, 30 ft., Will (DC 10 +1/2 the deep dragon creature's HD + its Cha modifier) negates (special). As suggestion, except the target need not understand the deep dragon creature and the effect is permanent until discharged. The dragon telepathically implants the suggestion into the subject. The suggestion planted must not take place immediately. When it occurs, it must be based on an event or an amount of time going by. At least three days must pass before the suggestion compels the subject. During the period while the suggestion is buried, neither divination spells nor Sense Motive will reveal that the subject is under the effect of an enchantment. The subject does not attempt his saving throw until the triggering event occurs. The death of the dragon does not end this effect.

Earth Glide (Su): A young or older deep true dragon creature glides through stone, dirt, or any sort of earth except metal as easily as a fish swims through water. Its burrowing leaves behind no tunnel or hole, nor does it create any ripple or other signs of its presence. Move earth cast on an area containing an earth gliding deep dragon creature flings the dragon back 30 ft., stunning the creature for 1 round unless it succeeds on a DC 15 Fortitude save.

Fiery Acidic Blood (Su): Any creature that damages a deep dragon with a piercing or slashing melee weapon must make a Reflex save (DC 10 + 1/2 the deep dragon creature's HD + its Con modifier) or be subject to the damage equal to the deep dragon's spittle (see below) as it is sprayed with blood. Melee weapons with reach don't endanger their users in this way.

Fiery Acidic Spittle (Su): All deep dragon creatures have a thick, gooey spittle that is hot enough and acidic enough to sear and corrode both flesh and rock. Normally, as they tunnel through the earth they secrete this fluid to soften stone. In battle, the deep dragon creature deals an additional amount of damage based on its Hit Dice, half the damage is acid the other half fire.

Hit Dice	Bonus Damage
1-5 HD	+1 d6
6-10 HD	+2d6
11-15 HD	+3d6
16-20 HD	+ 4d6
21+ HD	+5 d6

Serpentine Reach (Su): Due to the serpentine nature of their longer, narrower, widening bodies, increase the deep dragon creature's reach by 5 ft.

Shredding Stone (Su): A deep dragon creature's front claws are treated as if they are one size category larger than the base dragon. The deep dragon's claws threaten a critical on a 19-20, and the dragon gains a +4 bonus to confirm critical hits with its claws.

Abilities: Increase from the base creature as follows: Str +4 (+2 to attack and damage, +2 to Climb and Swim checks, +2 to Strength, and CMB checks, +2 to CMD), Dex +4 (+2 to ranged attack rolls, AC and touch AC, initiative checks and Reflex saves; +2 to Acrobatics, Disable Device, Escape Artist, Fly, Ride, Sleight of Hand, and Stealth checks; add +2 to any of the base creature's Dexterity-based DCs), Con +4 (+2 hp per HD, +2 to Fortitude saves, and any of the base creature's Constitution-based DCs).





Vureemgyrtu the Ancient Deep

CR 19

XP 204,800 Ancient Deep Copper Dragon CG Huge dragon (earth) Init +6; Senses dragon senses; Perception +32 Aura frightful presence (300 ft., DC 27), slow (15 ft. DC 27

Defense

AC 43, touch 10, flat-footed 43 (+2 Dex, +33 natural, -2 size)

hp 356 (23d12+207)

Fort +22, Ref +15, Will +19

Defensive Abilities compression, fiery acidic blood (DC 30, 5d6), uncanny dodge; **DR** 15/magic and adamantine; **Immune** acid, paralysis, fire, sleep; **SR** 28

Weakness light blindness

Offense

Speed 40 ft., burrow 20 ft. ; climb stone, earth glide **Melee** bite +34 (2d8+19 plus 5d6 acid and fire/19–20), 2 claws +32 (4d6+13/17–20), tail slap +27 (2d6+19) **Space** 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft. (20 ft. with bite)

Special Attacks breath weapon (100-ft. line, DC 30, 20d6 acid), crush, deep gaze (DC 27), fiery acidic spittle, mass laughter (DC 27), serpentine reach, shredding stone, slow breath

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 23rd)

At will—grease (DC 17), hideous laughter (DC 18), stone shape, transmute mud to rock, transmute rock to mud, wall of stone

Spells Known (CL 15th)

7th (4/day)—reverse gravity, teleport object (DC 23) 6th (7/day)—antimagic field, mislead, programmed image (DC 23)

5th (7/day)—mind fog (DC 21), polymorph, sending, teleport

4th (7/day)—confusion, rainbow pattern, stone shape, stoneskin

3rd (7/day)—dispel magic, haste, suggestion (DC 19), tongues

2nd (7/day)—glitterdust (DC 18), invisibility, phantom trap, pyrotechnics, see invisibility

1st (8/day)—*expeditious retreat, magic aura, obscuring mist, shield, silent image* (DC 18)

o (at will)—*dancing lights, detect magic, ghost sound* (DC 17), *light, mage hand, message, open/close, presti- digitation, read magic*

Jactics

Before Combat

The Ancient Deep prefers to trick her opponents into getting lost in the labyrinthine Adamantine Mines of Kilwich beneath Questhaven, and has a habit of creating amusing, if not extremely violent, traps there. She reserves those for the fell denizens of The World. She will often cast *mislead, polymorph, haste, see invisibility,* and *shield* before entering combat. And she will use her deep gaze during conversations with opponents.

During Combat

Vureemgyrtu, when forced into combat, often uses *mislead*'s illusionary image to tell jokes for her *mass laughter* and cast humorous insults at her opponents. She waits to unleash her frightful presence and slow aura until she truly reveals herself. Against lesser opponents she uses, *grease, hideous laughter*, disarm and trip attacks, but against greater foes she opens with her breath weapon followed by melee attacks.

Morale

If forced to flee she uses *wall of stone* to cut off potential adversaries or seal them away, leaving the area via either her earth glide ability after using her slow breath or she casts *teleport* if she is in a hurry.

Statistics

Str 37, Dex 12, Con 27, Int 22, Wis 23, Cha 22 Base Atk +23; CMB +38; CMD 50 (54 vs. trip) Feats Combat Expertise, Greater Trip, Improved Critical (bite, claw), Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Improved Vital Strike, Power Attack, Quicken Spell, Spell Focus (illusion), Vital Strike Skills Bluff +32, Craft (traps) +42, Diplomacy +32, Fly +18,Knowledge (geography) +32, Knowledge (history) +32,Perception +32, Perform (comedy) +29, Sense Motive +32,Spellcraft +32, Stealth +18, Use Magic Device +32

Languages Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Giant, Gnome, Halfling

Special Abilities

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Climb Stone (Ex) Vureemgyrtu can climb on stone surfaces as though using the *spider climb* spell. **Mass Laughter (Sp)** Vureemgyrtu can tell a fantastic joke once per day as a standard action. All creatures within 90 feet per age category must make a Will save (DC 27) or laugh for 9 rounds, as if affected by *hideous laughter*. The save DC is Charisma-based. This is equal to a 6th-level spell.

Slow Aura (Su) Vureemgyrtu is surrounded by an aura of slowness. All creatures within 15 feet of the dragon must make a Will save (DC 30) or be affected as per *slow* for 1 round. The DC of this save is equal to the dragon's breath weapon. Vureemgyrtu can suppress or activate this aura at will as a free action.

Slow Breath (Su) Instead of a line of acid, Vureemgyrtu can breathe a cone of slowing gas. Those in the cone must make a Fortitude save or be slowed (as per the spell *slow*) for 1d6 rounds plus 9 rounds.

Trap Master (Ex) Vureemgyrtu receives a +9 on Craft (traps) and Perception checks made to locate a trap. She can also use Disable Device to disarm magic traps as if she had the rogue's trapfinding class feature.

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GM Advice: Principles of Megadungeon Design

by Crieghton Broadhurst, Illustrated by Mohammed Agbadi

DUNGEONS (AND MEGADUNGEONS) ARE AS OLD AS THE HOBBY ITSELF. DESIGNING A MEGADUNGEON IS HARD, THOUGH. IF YOU DON'T GET THE DUNGEON'S METAPHORICAL FOUNDATIONS RIGHT, YOU ARE WASTING YOUR TIME.

Over the last forty years, countless dungeons and hundreds of megadungeons have graced GM's campaigns all over the world. Designing such a locale is a gigantic undertaking. Getting its design right first time, is essential.

When designing a megadungeon keep in mind the following criteria:

LAYOUT & DESIGN

- **Name**: The megadungeon should have a cool, flavoursome name.
- Multiple Entrances: There should be several different ways of getting into the dungeon. While all might not be obvious (secret entrances are cool after all) most should be easy to find by all but the most blinkered explorer. Entrances set in the midpoint of the dungeon provide access to dungeon levels both above and below the entranceway.
- The deeper you go, the more dangerous it is and the greater the rewards. This is a tradition of dungeon design. It holds true for megadungeon design as well. However, it is better restated as the further from the main entrance you go, the greater the danger and greater the rewards. Some dungeons, after all, may go up not down but could run for miles and miles at roughly the same depth.
- Each level (or sub-level) should have its own distinctive flavour. This flavour shouldn't be unnecessarily odd just for the sake of flavour. For example, a sub-level of twisted natural passageways home to degenerate and feral derro seeking a way down to a deeper level is an example of good flavour. A level dominated by a mad alchemist who has no connection or relevance to the greater dungeon is bad flavour.
- Sub-Levels: Smaller, self-contained areas, sub-levels enable the designer to inject different kinds of flavour or monsters into the dungeon.



Sub-levels may only be accessible from one normal dungeon level. Some may be secret while others may provide safe haven for explorers discovering their location.

- There should be multiple connections between levels and sub-levels. The PCs should have freedom of choice to decide which parts of the megadungeon they explore. Access points between levels often serve as choke points. The more access points there are, the easier it is for dungeon denizens to move about and the more choices the players have. Some connections should be hidden or secret. Not all should proceed only to the next level; some may provide access to multiple levels or may miss one or two levels out (for example a connection might exist between levels 1 and 4).
- Secret & Remarkable Connections: Not all connections between levels and sublevels should be a standard staircase. A dried up well shaft, flooded passage or chasm wall are all good examples of other connections.
- Players should have meaningful choices: This doesn't mean the party gets to choose which door to use to get to the villain's throne room. Rather, it means the layout of the complex enables the PCs to pursue multiple paths through the dungeon, exploring different areas, sub-levels and levels in the order they choose. In short, wherever possible, they should enjoy freedom of movement through the dungeon and not be forced down a set path.
- Links to the deepest dungeon of all. The megadungeon should have one or more links

to the Ebon Realm. This link provides tremendous design freedom to include strange, ancient monsters that crawl up from the lightless depths in search of prey. It essentially answers loads of tricky questions about how and why certain monsters came to be in the dungeon.

- **It should all make sense (to a certain extent)**. Realism is good to a certain extent, but realism for realism's sake is pointless. Worrying about the minutia of dungeon design is time spent not crafting exciting encounters and flavoursome dungeon levels and encounters. Enough information should be present for a GM to answer most basic questions about the dungeon, and no more. For example, deciding where the dungeon's denizens get their drinking water is important. Worrying about the minutia of the dungeon food chain is not.
- **Minor Elevation Shifts**: Dungeon levels should rarely be flat. Minor shifts in elevation can confuse explorers. Are they on the same level or are they not?
- **Extra-Dimensional Spaces**: Used sparingly, extra-dimensional spaces can provide an interesting change of pace to exploration.
- **Level Size**: The dungeon levels should be of various sizes. Not all should fit on a single piece of graph paper. Some especially large levels may use a larger scale per square.

HASTORY & MANUTA

- Details, details, details. But not too many details. Empty rooms are boring. Standard corridors are boring. Dungeon dressing is an excellent cure for boring areas. Are the flagstones broken and cracked? Does dried blood splatter the wall in an otherwise empty room? Such details build on the sense of verisimilitude and give the feeling the dungeon is a live setting.
- The megadungeon needs a decent reason for existing. A dungeon that exists because it exists is an example of lazy, lame design. The megadungeon must have or have had a reason to exist. Did an ancient race use it as their lair, or did a wizard retreat underground to continue his strange (and undoubtedly dangerous) research? Whatever the reason, it will have left its mark on the dungeon's layout, architecture and style.
- There should be secrets to uncover. Be it secret doors, lost treasures or shocking discoveries about the dungeon itself, the complex should have secrets. The PCs should be able to uncover these as a result of good, attentive play.
- Relevant and discoverable back story: The dungeon must have a relevant and discoverable

back story. The greatest back story in the world is basically pointless if the PCs never get to interact with, discover and understand it. Knowledge of the dungeon's history shouldn't be automatic – they should have to work for it. Gaining knowledge of some or all of the complex's history should provide insights into the dungeon (and perhaps even in-game advantages).

DENIZENS & CHALLENGE

- Wheels within wheels: The megadungeon should have an overall boss or super villain. This individual doesn't need to be in charge of everyone in the dungeon, but he should be the most powerful and influential figure therein. He will have many sub-leaders or vassals; many of these will command their own level or sub-level.
- Away with the 15-minute adventuring day. As a player and GM, I love challenging fights. However, if every room contains a life or death struggle in which one or more PCs end up unconscious or dead, the dungeon turns into an unending grind. The PCs do a room or two and then retreat to rest. That's boring game play. Instead, the dungeon design should promote longterm delving. Parties should be able to explore at least a dozen rooms before resting. Easier fights, unoccupied rooms and easily if dealt with properly battles are all excellent tools to prolong the adventuring day.
- **Wandering Monsters**: Monsters don't just sit in their chambers waiting to be slaughtered. Some move about the dungeon – either because they are scavengers or because they have things to do. Having random encounters adds an extra lair of uncertainty to exploration and adds to the sense of realism of the place.

NEARBY

• **Settlements**: One or more settlements should lie within relatively easy reach of the dungeon. This provides explorers somewhere to retreat to between forays. Here they can rest, recruit help, buy and sell magic items and so on.

So that's what I keep in mind when designing a megadungeon. Have I missed anything? Let me know. And remember you can download this – and every other advice article – for free at ragingswan.com/articles.

ABOUT CREIGHTON

Creighton Broadhurst lives in Torquay, England where, apparently, the palm trees are plastic and the weather is warm. He shares a ramshackle old mansion with his two children ("Genghis" and "Khan") and his patient wife. Famed for his unending love affair with booze and pizza he is an enduring GREYHAWK fan.

An ENnie Award winning designer (Madness At

Gardmore Abbey) Creighton has worked with Expeditious Retreat Press, Paizo and Wizards of the Coast. He believes in the Open Gaming License and is dedicated to making his games as fun and easy to enjoy as possible for all participants. Reducing or removing entry barriers, simplifying pre-game prep and easing the GM's workload are the key underpinning principles of the products he now releases through Raging Swan Press. You can read his thoughts on game design and game play (and session summaries from his campaign) at creightonbroadhurst. com.

Raging Swan Press releases *GM's Miscellany: Dungeon Dressing* at the end of July. The 350-page book is available in both PDF and print.





Fully funded and working on stretch goals for extra pages!



(sample page layout)

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Sean K Reynolds Games

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An Introduction to World Building

By Elton Robb Illustrated by Alberto Demetrio Muraro and Elton Robb

"You create your own universe as you go along." –Winston Churchill

Every author, playwright, filmmaker, player and game master creates worlds as they write books and plays, make films and act. However, some do it deliberately, and when they do, they join an exclusive club. You belong to this club of game masters and players of roleplaying games, and of writers of fantastic fiction.

So, what is world building anyhow? This article is the first in a series that is designed to help you in that task. World building can be an intensely creative and personal experience, but sometimes you need a push in the right direction. This series of articles is designed to help you be inspired, to help you organize your thoughts, and to help you express yourself. Above all, you are the master architect. You reach down from the heavens with a compass in hand as you build your world. If any suggestion or chart here gives you a result that you don't like, feel free to throw it out. It's your world, not mine. However, it all begins with one beautiful thought growing in your mind.

"In the Beginning"

What's in a world? An obvious place to start is the world you already inhabit. There are seven continents to fill. Each continent has its own beautiful array of climates and ecosystems; each is capable of supporting life, as we know it. There are a beautiful, myriad number of nations, creeds, and peoples with their own resources, history, and beliefs. The variety of animals and plants on this planet is astounding; Earth is incredibly rich and diverse.

But your campaign world will be simpler; it will have four basic components: people, places, monsters, and adventures. What is the story you want to tell? Who are the NPCs of your setting? Are there any champions of good and evil who will interact with your party? Do the player characters work for or take orders from someone? Where do they live when they aren't exploring a dungeon? What kinds of monsters are nearby and why are they being a nuisance? What kinds of opportunities can be found? Are you interested in high fantasy, traditional fantasy, perhaps swords and sorcery? These are the kinds of questions to consider as you build your campaign.

There's nothing wrong with a campaign of dungeon delving with a lot of hack and slash. There's nothing wrong with a "slay the bad guys" campaign. Start with a village and a nearby dungeon and send the players off for fun and wonders. The dungeon needs a map and a key;



the village probably requires less than that. A blacksmith, a church, a guild or two, a couple of gathering places, maybe a wizard's school, and certainly some interesting people are enough.

Then on the other hand, let's say you read *A Game* of *Thrones* or *The Wheel of Time* and you feel inspired to create a campaign worthy of Tolkien or Michael Moorcock. You will want to run a campaign full of kingdoms, intrigues, politics, and swindles and your campaign setting will need more attention and work. You will need to map a sizeable continent, and devise new and interesting kingdoms, principalities, creeds, nations, and peoples. You also need to create a host of non-player characters for your players to interact with. Each and every non-player character will have different goals and resources, from the bum on the street, to the noble in the palace.

For a game master, you also use the preconceptions of the players to your best advantage and to their best advantage. Your world is a pseudo-medieval world? Tell them so. "The world is like the movie, Conan the Barbarian" or "the world is like *A Game of Thrones.*" You tell them straight up what your world is like, and the players will fill in the blanks. Details such as lords and knights, ladies and witches come to color your world in various ways, and they will come from the players. A few phrases such as "desert planet," "Ice Age" or "jungles and dinosaurs" will fire your players' imaginations. By conjuring universal images that they are familiar with, you will supply your players—and yourself—with the means to communicate your world.

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"Every job has the perfect tool." – Steve Martin, *Roxanne*

Despite the grandeur of building an entire world, the tools you actually need are few: one roleplaying game that is set in a non-descript world (*Dungeons & Dragons, Pathfinder, Rolemaster, RuneQuest*, etc.) and some way to record your ideas (for some, this will be pens and paper, for others a laptop, yet others a stack of index cards).

This article assumes you are familiar with the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game, the Bestiary*, and the *GameMastery Guide* rather than the others. A PDF copy of the *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* accessory *World Builder's Guidebook* is handy but not necessary. If you're using a computer, you'll want a good word processor. You will also need Adobe Photoshop, Photo Elements, or something like it if you can get it, a copy of *Campaign Cartographer*, and ... a webpage or wiki. Another tool is Lone Wolf's *Realm Works*. See several of the previous issues of *Pathways* for more details about Lone Wolf's *Realm Works*.

In addition to the supplies above, you may find it useful to gather reference materials you wish to use. Various GURPS world books and the *Pathfinder Player's Companions* can come in handy. Including the *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* Historical Reference books can also be of help. Of course, if places from your favorite fantasy novels and computer games have you inspired, incorporate them into your world design.

Thoughts about a Wiki

A wiki very well could be your best friend. A wiki is a piece of web software that allows you to write articles efficiently without messing with code or the hassle of getting a webpage. Some customization is important, to be sure, using Cascading Style Sheets (CSS); that can be covered elsewhere. But a wiki is the most efficient place to post your entire world. All of the following (and more) can be in one place.

- Your maps of the world, continent, kingdom, city, or adventure region,
- · Character data for all of your major NPCs,
- A log or short form for your minor NPCs (perhaps with hard copies on those 3x5 cards),
- A record of adventures, including the treasure that was found, character developments, and foes overcome,
- A collection of special notes, rule changes, new items and custom spells, and similar customized touches for your campaign setting,
- Statistics for any unique or unusual monsters,
- Notes on the calendar for the passage of time,



- A tickler file with notes or wish lists from the players, noting motivations and what they want to get out of the campaign,
- Notes of the places and sites of interest in your campaign setting, including major NPCs, adventure opportunities, local customs and societies, and anything else you might find necessary to describe a region.

The cons of using a wiki include the following.

- There are limits to using someone else's art to illustrate what you are trying to express. Many artists who copyright their work have the legal right to challenge your use of their work. However, there are public domain works and works that have free licenses. Also, it can get expensive to commission artwork that you need for your world.
- Anyone can edit your work. Most wikis have the CCby-SA (Creative Commons) license that goes with it.
- Your work and the way you want to express can be censored. The rules on a public wiki are for everyone. So be sure to read the terms of service for your public wiki service, like wikia.
- Someone may copy your work. If this will be a problem, it's probably best not use a wiki.
- Finally, if you elect to use a private wiki using the MediaWiki software, then be prepared to pay monthly or yearly for a domain name and server space; or buy your own server. Privacy is expensive, but it might be worth it.

World building is a powerfully creative and personal process and it may get intense. Sometimes, it reaches into areas that are beyond your personal genius. There is nothing wrong with asking someone for help. There is nothing wrong with commissioning a map from a professional cartographer, text from a writer, or other work from other professionals. But world building is a creative exercise, and it requires imagination. Imagination is probably your most important tool.

17

One World Three Campaign Settings

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Twenty Questions with Scott Gladstein

by Steven D. Russell



1. Could you tell us a little about yourself?

I'm Scott Gladstein and I am the owner of Little Red Goblin Games, LLC out here in Phoenix, Arizona. I

have a degree in game development from the University of Arizona. My name is on pretty much every Little Red product, new and old (Legendary Levels, Invoker, Tome of Munitions, Necropunk, Dragon Tiger Ox, etc.). I've contributed material to a number of other publishers' works either as a layout guy or writer.

2. What is your home game like?

We actually have a really fun "Pathfinder pasta potluck" thing that we run at our house every month or so. I cook up a themed pasta dish and everyone comes over and runs a thematically relevant one-shot for a few hours. Before that I was running a game at a local college that had 12-14 players in it. It was quite insane but a LOT of fun (they were all part of a penal legion).

3. What is your favorite Paizo product?

Hmm. Well outside the core rulebook I think *Ultimate Combat* added a lot to the game. I'm not head-over-heels in love with the gunslinger but I did enjoy the utility it provided for martial characters. I've always had a soft spot for *Goblins of Golarion*, though.

4. You are currently the producer for Little Red, how did that start and how would you characterize the company today?

Well I actually started putting game material on a blog I ran while still in college. I got a lot of positive feedback and whatnot. I parlayed my experience working on video game titles into the skills I would need to develop and test hobby game titles and found I already had a lot of the tools. I had a few professors who had experience in the hobby field before. My first products were... less impressive than I wanted them to be. They were selfedited with some artwork a friend of mine did in about 20 minutes. I exported it from OpenOffice as a PDF. Needless to say, we do higher quality work now.

I'd characterize Little Red as risk-takers. We really like to color outside the lines and explore topics other publishers won't or don't want to touch. We believe that lore informs mechanics (not the other way around), a strong and identifiable core aesthetic is important, and organic/new mechanics triumph over set-in-stone mechanics any day. 5. What is your favorite Pathfinder Roleplaying Game compatible product you worked on and could you tell us a little about it?

I'm probably biased because we just finished it, but our "Detective's recent Handbook" was a love letter to Holmes and the mystery genre (which I am a huge fan of). We just had so much fun writing it and playtesting it (it even ran in one of our pasta potlucks!) However, my heart is always in the Necropunk campaign setting.



We've published a number of supporting books and our advanced players guide (which is just FULL of new material) is due out soon.

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

So I actually got the idea for Necropunk while listening to some music (Empire of the Sun's first album). I ended up working for about 12 hours straight of the product before I ever showed it to anyone. By the end I was exhausted, burnt out from energy drinks, and my ears were numb from pumping relevant music into them for that long. Doing a "jam" session like that is the best feeling in the world, and, when you are proud of that work once you've finished it, it is the best.

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

The social combat system was a lot of fun to work on, and, if fully utilized, really changes how the game is played on a very fundamental level. I also have a lot of love for the way the magpie class plays.

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

We basically had to rewrite half the system from scratch. It was akin to writing "d20 Modern" for Pathfinder while adding a half dozen new subsystems. By the time we were done I had to make an entirely new character sheet.



Necropunk was (and still is) the largest product we've worked on. We, as a team, really had to operate on a much higher level than we ever had in the past. It helped us grow as a team and put in place a lot of guidelines that allow us to tackle larger projects now.



It was also a fascinating experience being able to write a setting-specific system in terms of lore and mechanics.

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

There are so many out there. It's a pity more GMs don't look to 3rd party products for their game. Some of my favorites include *Heroes of the Jade Oath/Kaidan* (Rite Publishing), *Cerulean Seas* (Alluria Publishing), which has some of the best production value out there, and I wouldn't dream of making a list like this without including *Fistful of Denarii* (Tripod).

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

Playability. I know it's kind of a cop-out, but any product that doesn't lend itself to being easily played isn't worth the word count. That boils down to simplicity and utility of concept, ease of implementation (within a game), and it should fit in well. A lot of people would say "balance," but at the end of the day the GM is the final arbiter of what that constitutes.

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

In the 3rd party, I've had the pleasure of working with a lot of talented people. Keep your eyes on folks like Mike Myler and Morgan Boehringer. In-house, in recent months, Dayton Johnson (Dragon Tiger Ox) and Christos Gurd have been showing what they are made of so expect more good things from them.

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

A good freelancer writes within their word count and delivers their work on time. I always appreciate a freelancer's willingness to accept critiques and make changes. A design professor of mine told me that the only bad ideas are the ones you are too in love with to ever change (or scrap if it isn't working). Oh, and communication. Send your contact a message every few days-even if there hasn't been much progress. It is KEY.

14. Who is your favorite tabletop RPG Illustrator that you have worked with?

I have two answers for that. Andrew "Viking" Bortniak has been our art director here at Little Red since almost the beginning. I cannot stress the importance of an art director within a company. He sees things I would NEVER notice until it was too late (and that's not



a dig at me-he is just THAT GOOD). On top of that he does fantastic work and always deliver on time, even if it means working overtime.

Jack Holiday (Dragon Tiger Ox, A Dream of Mars, etc.) is probably one of my favorite freelance illustrators. He has a fantastically detailed style and is very communicative.

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

The words, "So I used this in my campaign/game and..." in a comment. That means work I produced saw use in a game. My job is done and my heart is happy.

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

Well I announced it, at least in part, in a post on the Paizo board recently but we are going to be rebuilding our fan-favorite "Legendary Levels" line into a full book later this year. Like the original it will cover post 20th level play and handle issues like godhood, universe-altering magics, and a lot of abilities only really suited to the highest level of play.

17. Do you have any goals for Little Red that you have yet to obtain or overcome?

Honestly, I want Little Red to launch its own core system. We've done it in the past with TV the RPG and Doodle Dice Monsters but I'd love to see these design, art, and editorial teams we've established take on something like that.

18. Can you tell us a little about Liber Influxus Communis: the Book of Collective Influence?

I actually worked on a book with a number of other 3rd party designers recently that showcases their skill via a contribution of a class. I contributed the survivor to the book and having done some editorial work on some of the other classes, I am very impressed by the work of the other designers.

19. You Came From Video Games, Do You Guys Have Any Of Those?

Yeah, Little Red Goblin Games actually produced a number of video games before we shut that side down somewhat recently. Our mascot "Red" was

actually the main character of a game and one of our old designers, Maverik Bishop (that was seriously his name, how cool is that?), did the voice acting for it! You can check it out here: <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7zmoP_uaTHQ</u>

We also have a few apps that support our products on our <u>website</u> (a dice roller, online initiative tracker, a Welshen language dictionary, etc.).

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

Hmm... we eat a lot of Thai food while we work? We pay way too much attention to our Paizo.com threads? We use a lot of our content (and other 3rd party martial) in our home game? (Scott has a rule that you can use ANY Little Red product in his game and it has come back to bite him once or twice). Our mascot actually has stats in our first sample product (as pygmy goblins of Red Water Cay)? We have a 100% refund policy on all products (not 100% in love send it back)? We call our art director "Viking" because most people do? We love to showcase new designers in our work and give them a chance to break into the industry because we wished someone had done that for us? Scott's Pembroke Welsh Corgi is legitimately named "Captain Kirk" and makes frequent appearances on video chats as a "shoulder corgi"? Yeah... I think that about sums it up.





Now Available From Little Red Goblin Games!





Reviews

RETRIBUTION

Retribution, Collectors Edition Publisher: Raging Swan Press Reviewer: Thilo Graf Rating: 5 stars out 5

This module clocks in at 71 pages, 1 page front cover, 1 page editorial, 1 page advertisement, 1 page ToC, 1 page CRlists, 1 page advice on reading statblocks and 1 page advice on running the module

for novice DMs, 1 page SRD and 1 page back cover, leaving 62 pages of content, so let's take a look!

I will break my own format for reviewing with this module. The original Retribution was the first Raging Swan Press-product to see the light of day and I bought it on a whim back in the day, long before I was a reviewer. I expected it to suck, frankly, and did so out of a morbid curiosity. I was utterly flabbergasted at what I found. Retribution is probably as close to a traditionally gothic (in the "Castle of Ontranto" "Name of the Rose"-style, not the association commonly used for this term...) mystery as you can get in a module. It breathes psychological depth, symbolism, has an unprecedented level of detail for the NPCs in here and to this date remains one of the best 1st level modules I've seen for any iteration of D&D or d20-based systems like Pathfinder.

Retribution is one of those non-optional relics of good gaming I'd consider a must-own for any PFRPG-DM – why? Because it's not over the top, it's not grindy, it is the perfect, absolute incarnation of atmosphere and mood, with diverse challenges, smart and unobtrusive subtext and, better yet, it retains this fascination throughout, evoking a level of grit and desolation that is simply entrancing – both while reading and while playing it.

My players still talk about this one, and it's been more than 4 years since we ran it and it made second place on my first best-of-list.. Now it's back and got a collector's edition – and honestly, I was afraid. I feared something akin to what happened to Star Wars. Almost perfect cult classics don't do face-lifts well in many cases.

This collector's edition kicks off with a n abbreviated primer on the village of Swallowfeld before getting into the meat of the module – which I will NOT SPOIL. Seriously – just think monastery full of eccentric clerics, snowstorm outside, glorious psychological underpinnings, a great (and easy to run!) banquet scene, slowly rising tension – a furious finale. Social skill challenges to bypass certain obstacles, a dungeon now with a small dressing table, improved artwork...generally, organization is perhaps the most significant improvement here – you get the respective content like magic items etc. on the page you'll need them -the collector's edition requires next to no page-flipping.

Conclusion

Editing and formatting, as almost always in RSP's offerings, is flawless. Layout adheres to a two-column b/w-standard and the pdf comes with two versions – one optimized for screen-use and one to be printed out. The pdf comes with excessive bookmarks. It should be noted that the pdf features improved artworks for many a piece and also features one version for screen-use and one for print-use.

Creighton Broadhurst's master piece "Retribution" didn't have much to gain by this Collector's Edition – it was already one of the best 1st level modules I've ever read. On the other hand, it had a lot to lose – and does something smart. It applies RSP's by now acquired knack of making extremely user-friendly books and applies it to the classic, very cautiously streamlining presentation and adding minor bits and pieces herein that do not stick out like sore thumbs and rather organically fit with the module.

I do have the print version (one great reason to get this, imho!) and it should be considered a steal at the low price. – with paper, spine etc. all being up to my standards.

Now let me get one thing clear – this module can be run by even novice DMs (in spite of a banquet scene!) and offers one of the best playing experiences I had for Pathfinder. Additionally, the further streamlining almost makes it possible to run this module sans preparation - one read should suffice for almost all DMs. Beyond that, the improved streamlining of the layout makes the running of this legendary module even easier. This would be a serious contender for my Top-Ten-list of 2014, but let's face it, the first edition already made such a list and this one is very close to it. Hence, I remain with a final verdict of 5 stars + seal of approval and one general announcement - people, if you don't have the original Retribution, this is your chance; You literally have no reason not to get this gem and having it as a print edition made me feel all fuzzy and warm. This has its place on my shelf of honor and is truly a must-own for any PFRPG-DM's module-library.

You can get this superb module, one of the all time classics, here on OBS and here on d2opfsrd.com's shop!

Endzeitgeist out.

Prestigeous Organizations: The Order of the Nullblades Publisher: Interjection Games Reviewer: Thilo Graf Rating: 5 stars out of 5!

This pdf clocks in at 14 pages, 1 page front cover, 1 page SRD, leaving us with 12 pages of content,

so let's take a look!

So what are the Nullblades? Essentially, they can be considered an organization fiercely opposed to the MACS-suffering casters - megalomanical arcane caster syndrome that tends too infect just about every highlevel spellcaster. You know the drill - the point where the friendly arch-wizard experiments a bit too much and makes the fabric of reality unravel, transforming the town of Bimberton into undead oreo-cookies. And this makes sense in-game to me - there would probably be an organization like this, annoying, harassing and potentially, eliminating spellcasters they deem an issue. The organization and its stance on members, relationships with other classes, buying potions (only from bards and alchemists!), the chance of there being a chapterhouse in a given settlement - 6 possible amenities to be found in a chapterhouse - all of these (and the at times hilarious humor) render the organization a joy to read and highly entertaining. That being said, I'm a bit sad that chapterhouses don't have an influence on a settlement's statblock/kingdom building rules-information or prestige-mechanics based benefits - there's a hierarchy and benefits, why not codify them in the given system?

Oh well, the pdf also features a new 10-level PrC, the Nullblade, which provides full BAB-progression, 1/2 fortsave progression, d10, 2+Int skills per level. The class gets a 15 feet-lead-based aura that hampers concentration (and extends to 30 feet at later levels, increasing its potency throughout the PrC-progression) and become immune to lead-poisoning and more resilient versus diseases and toxins. furthermore, they may detect and identify magic a will and may choose up to 5 techniques (the talents of the class) over the course of their ten levels. A total of 20 techniques are provided for the PrC. These include preventing the teleport of foes, dealing damage to foes that fumble concentration, granting himself temporary SR and even forcing foes to stutter-cast, i.e. only be able to cast the last spell they cast for a round – a bunch of powerful, yet never overpowered abilities here. And, as a capstone, how could it be any other way - antimagic field-generation.

We round off this pdf with two pregenerated NPCs complete with story-hooks, background, appearance and tactics, reaching a neat level of detail one usually only sees in releases by Raging Swan Press. First would be Drimble Underhill, a fighter 6/Nullblade 3 halfling, second would be Cerabiel, an elven bard (arcane duelist)7/bard 2/ nullblade 4 – a surprisingly varied and cool build, if I may say so.

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are very good, I didn't notice glaring glitches. Layout adheres to Interjection Games' two-column b/w-standard and the pdf comes sans bookmarks, which is a slight bummer. The pdf's artworks Bradley Crouch has humor – I've rarely enjoyed the subtle (and not so subtle) jibes herein, but rest assured – this is no joke. Indeed, this PrC ranks among the better takes on the innumerable anti-magic archetypes and PrCs I've read over the years and the Nullblade, honestly works rather well. The organization makes sense, the NPCs are neat and the PrC does what it sets out to do – make a magic-bane fighter. Now not all is perfect, as mentioned above – kingdom building/prestige/settlement-rules would have been the icing on the cake. Then again, this pdf is FREE. FREE is very hard to beat at this level of quality and thus, my final verdict will clock in at 5 stars.

You can get these magic-hating lead-lovers here on OBS – for FREE!

Endzeitgeist out.

In the Company of Dragons

Publisher: Rite Publishing **Reviewer:** Mark Knight **Rating:** 4.5 stars out of 5! lay dy on

Have you ever wanted to play a Dragon? Perhaps you already have in the old 2nd Edition

Council of Wyrms campaign. Maybe you

are a GM that really wants to offer up some surprising modifications to a Dragon and do not know where to start. Well, let me tell you, I have a product that you will be interested in come 1 August 2014. Written by Wendall Roy this book adds to the In the Company of series that Rite Publishing offers for players to take on the roles more traditionally considered monsters. The book is geared for Pathfinder and/or 3.5 and there would be some work converting to other systems.

I have always been a fan of Dragons and yet have had trouble getting the tone and approach right in game. I have bought several supplements that take an in depth look at the Dragon type but I have never really been truly satisfied that I get the motivation or approach right. I was suitably sceptical when I heard that this book was on its way and it offered me some private amusement at the thought of PC's trying to fill the role of these marvellous menacing creatures.

I now have to apologize for that presumption because from the moment I started reading this book it got me. The tone of the source book for much of it is from the point of view of Thunders in Defiance a Dragon who is seeking the help of us ephemerals to educate his wards in the ways of the material plane. I'll not go into too much detail here but the background given to the formation of the dragons and their current situations and habitats is compelling and brilliant. The story captivated me,

made me laugh and made me intensely curious. Take for example my favourite paragraph:

"In the material plane, dragons are seen as forces of destruction and hoarders of wealth by most ephemerals. I will not disagree with this assessment, but it is a very narrow view of our kind. There are exceptions to the rule, but as a whole ephemeral societies avoid rousing the anger of dragonkind and we have little to do with your settlements unless they encroach upon our territory (or possess something we covet)."

The tone that is included in this is fantastic. It tells me of the nature and the superiority complex that Dragons have as well as their duplicitous nature. The back-story here is top notch and scary. Hidden here is the idea of an area completely populated by dragons and a fantastic notion of the Well of Oblivion the home of those that follow the Undragon. Great stuff that can be woven into existing campaigns or introduced with the idea of playing a dragon.

The presentation of the book is also top notch. Some great artwork is included and nearly every page has something new and intriguing for you to look at. The layout is exceptional and it all combines into a nice mini book that is really easy to read on an iPad, tablet or computer.

Rules for Dragons

The rules for playing a dragon offer up the rules as a racial template for a character much like any other. They then talk about some alternative racial traits and some archetypes for existing classes. the one thing that I was disappointed with here is the lack of dragon breath. It is not gone completely, but only one class archetype takes it on (a variant of the Sorcerer). To me a dragon needs a breath weapon but apart from the archetypes of the sorcerer and the new class included in the book this is not a staple. Moving away from the archetypes though they offer up a Racial class called the Draconic Exemplar. That is a class that basically increases you to be like a dragon as opposed to focussing on a class (though you can multi-class). It gives breath weapon and modifications to that breath weapon as a possibility and offers a heap of different paths for you to take as a dragon.

You are treated as a taninim (the name the dragons call themselves) and start as a Small creature, likely being a young dragon. There are some archetypes that have you increase in size over your levels including the Draconic Exemplar and your character may end up a Gargantuan beast by the end of their career which is pretty cool when you come to think about it. A nice unique race the dragon is actually very well balanced in the long run and I can not think of a single reason why I would say no to having one in my game.

Dragons and the GM

Largely being a GM though I am more excited about the idea of using this book as a tool kit. A tool kit in which I can create a multitude of alternatives for dragons. Think of this little 39 paged book as a gold mine of ways to surprise your character with one of the most feared and sought after foes! From mirrored scales to complex essences you will find this booklet invaluable if you want to mix things up. In fact it sets my evil GM mind to thinking there are so many possibilities in this little book I do not know where to start...

I wholeheartedly suggest you consider getting this book if you are a GM and dragons figure prominently in your games. If you are a player and want to play as a dragon grab it and thrust it under your GM's nose. then start whining if they say no. Then if they still say no, tell them to come see me and I will slap them for their stubbornness. It is dragons for dragon's sake! Seriously, I give this a four and a half dragon egg out of five review. This book is brilliant and cheap at \$5.99 so get out there and grab it when it releases on 1 August 2014!

I won't mince words here - this took me forever to get done and not due to page-count or the like, but due to the amount of issues. Balancing is completely all over the place - from ridiculously weak options to utterly overpowered ones, which constitute btw. the majority of this release, this feels like an alpha. How most of the content herein could get past any playtesting is beyond me. Several options will even be overpowered in the most high fantasy of games. The Warlock class needs to be scrapped and rebuild from scratch - it is the most broken class I've seen so far for PFRPG in any publication. The archetypes offer issues. The PrC is weird. Even mysteries and curses aren't flawless and sport the other crux of this pdf: Ambiguities. A LOT of them. If the balance-concerns you might have, that aren't even consistent within one mystery or archetype, don't break this pdf for you, the latter will. There are so many imprecise wordings and glitches in here, it's painful, partially taking cool concepts and rendering them unusable or unnecessarily obfuscating what exactly an ability is supposed to do. Scaling either exists and is OP or doesn't and makes for utterly ridiculously weak options. Crunch-writing is all about getting math, syntax and semantics right and this one doesn't for any even remotely consistent stretch of text.

Mythic Minis: Feats of Seafaring

Publisher: Legendary Games **Reviewer:** Thilo Graf **Rating:** 5+ stars out of 5!



This Mythic Mini clocks in at 3 pages, 1 page front cover, 1 page SRD, 1 page content, so let's take a look, shall we?

This time, we're all about seathemed feats, so let's check this out! The mythic version of "Corsair" extends its benefits to any aquatic environment and doubles the bonuses while on board of a ship and also allows you to treat foes as flanked via mythic power. Solid. The "Hoist the Colors" mythic feat allows you

to intimidate foes via your flag and, with mythic power, even whole crews/vessels and similar military units and yes, more power, more severe fear-effect. Awesome, mythic - nothing to complain about!

Naval Commander comes as a regular and mythicaugmented version - it allows you to aid another ALL target allies on your ship. Which is damn cool even before expending mythic power to make the bonus LAST. Two thumbs up, especially since bonus to atk is still limited to once per ally/turn!

Savy Seafarer also offers two versions - the regular one offering bonuses to ship/repair/survival-themed actions, increasing the bonus with familiar vessels. The mythic version further increases these bonuses...and allows you to TRACK VESSELS OVER WATER. Yeah. THAT is what I want in mythic - epic options, more roleplaying potential, stunning derring-do, doing things that transcend the powers of regular PCs. Two thumbs up!

Finally, mythic Sea Legs kilsl most penalties to acrobatics and climb and also lets you move sans delay through water-themed terrain, but does not protect you from it. Solid.

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are top-notch, I didn't notice any significant glitches. Layout adheres to Legendary Games 2-column full-color standard and the pdf has no bookmarks, but needs none at this length.

See, this mythic mini is what I'm talking about -feats that are bland and subpar in their regular, non-mythic version get better and worthwhile. The new feats are glorious and actually vastly increase roleplaying potential while breathing the spirit of mythic gaming, offering both rules and simply new hinges on which to base storylines and scenes. This one's just awesome and well worth 5 stars + seal of approval - if your mythic campaign goes anywhere near pirates and similar themes GET THIS!

Endzeitgeist out.

Threats: Dawn of the

Dwimmerlaik (Diceless)

Publisher: Rite Publishing **Reviewer:** Thilo Graf **Rating:** 5 stars out of 5!

The second of Rite Publishing's ecology-style sourcebooks detailing threats for the LoGaS-setting is 26 pages long, 1 page front cover, 1 page editorial, leaving 24 pages of content, so let's take a look!

As per the tradition by now, this sourcebook is written in glorious in-character-prose and depicts documents of the dwimmerlaik - a narrative by one of these threats in LoGaS, taking a cue from LPJr Design's "First One"-pdf and doing something smart - establishing from the getgo that, what follows, are lies. The origin-myth depicted, analogue to Shakespeare's Tempest blended with several classical topoi from mythology, starts with the ascension of the race, elevation from shackles and wilderness and the overcoming of an all-powerful, Typhonian god-like father-figure (though the latter should be taken not in the nourishing way...) to the awakening into autonomy and a new racial self-consciousness that resounds even in nomenclature: The Dallaik became the Dwimmerlaik, "That which is superior." From there, the race set out to erect their world-spanning empire.

Now it should be noted that 2 cool 5-point powers for exalted channeling are provided here as well – one to project one's astral self to other worlds (and if you require inspiration there, just read the weird fictions of old for a vast array of potential hooks to use this...) and one that allows astral projecting dwimmerlaik to place marks while projecting – these work as a kind of tracing beacon...and if you don't have about 20 different great ideas for stories resolving around the combination of these powers by now, think harder or drop me a line. Seriously, these are narrative gold.

Now the weapons/artifacts of the first Dwimmerlaik, those that vanquished and consumed Eos, are also are depicted in here, as is a list of the 8 houses of the race – a kind of rigid, caste-like system. However, the genesis of the race demanded retribution from the nigh-all-powerful Typhonians. While the battle was fierce and indeed, yet another of the beings fell, the resulting onslaught saw the dwimmerlaik at the verge of extinction, with reality, the grand stair or *something* intervening and saving them, destroying Selene, their adversary – at terrible cost for their homeworld Caliban as well as for numerous worlds.

Since then, the Dwimmerlaik have taken back to the stairs...and the Gossamer Lords and Ladies have appeared – here, though, the stair turned against the Dwimmerlaik, offering an uncomfortable possibility that some time, the age of human Gossamer Lords may end as well...still, the war rages between teh Dwimmerlaik and the Lords...

We also are introduced to a ruthless meritocracy as a culture, placing strength above all and seeing lies as a



means to end, as a device to prove cultural superiority and expose weakness - a compelling dystopia. The somewhat ancestral worship-like basis of their religion is interesting - the dwimmerlaik essentially create a Grand Narrative in the traditional term – their devotion belongs to the conglomerate history they create, the representation of the collective of their achievements and failures as well as their own unconscious, by the very definition of their object of worship. Glorious and potentially enlightening, this takes the concept of a historic pluralism and makes it work in context of a society by acknowledging the need for a grand narrative on one hand, while on the other putting it into a relativistic perspective by their ideology regarding truth. Glorious and so full of potential!

Birth and Death, life and recreation (like psychic duels called Shavde) are also explained. The Gossamer Lady that delivered this document gets btw. full stats, as does Cicarus, the legendary Witchknife dwimmerlaik assassin and the guardian of Caliban, the oldest of Dallaik and final chronicler of the race. Yeah. Awesome.

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are top-notch, I didn't notice any glitches. Layout adheres to RiP's two-column full color standard, with most of the artworks being topnotch original pieces of the highest caliber, while some others are thematically fitting stock. the latter is the minority, though. The pdf comes fully bookmarked for your convenience.

Writing an ecology on arguably the primary antagonists of the LoGaS-setting must have been a daunting task first one requires a society that is sufficiently unique to not elicit yawns when compared to similar races throughout fantasy. Secondly, LoGaS, more than any other setting, thrives on ambiguity, on the option to develop ideas and determine truth. These seem to directly contrast what one would require from an ecology-style book.

Author Andrew Peregrine found an elegant and exciting way to circumvent this conundrum, by providing ample doubts...and via a subtle trick: Much of the respective narrative potential rises from the deliberate blanks in the interaction of potential truths in here, weaving a stunning panorama of world-spanning and epic confrontations, strange creatures and a society alive and organic...and mysterious. This book is an inspiring joy to read an well worth 5 stars + seal of approval, not only for LoGaSplayers and DMs, but also for those starved for inspiration for their own world/plane-spanning antagonist empire...

You can get this supplement here on OBS and here on d2opfsrd.com's shop - unleash the Dwimmerlaik!

Endzeitgeist out.

Under the Knife: The Grafter, a Tinker Prestige Class **Publisher:** Interjection Games Reviewer: Thilo Graf

Rating: 5 stars out of 5!

This Tinker-expansion clocks

in at 6 pages, 1 page front cover, 1 page SRD, leaving us with 4 pages of content, so let's check out the Grafter!

Mechanically, we have a 5-level PrC with 10 ranks heal, 7 ranks knowledge (engineering), skill focus (heal) and 3rd level invention/blueprints as prereqs. The class gets d8, 3/4 BAB-progression, good will-and fort-saves and 4+Int skills per level, but ONLY heal and intimidate as class skills. They also get full invention-progression, with the important caveat that BP per blueprint DO NOT increase via grafter level.

Got that? All right. At first level, a grafter gains a grafting pool equal to class level X 3. These points can be used as BP to apply inventions to the grafter's own body when preparing inventions and do not replenish, unless the grafter removes a given graft to free points. Inventions with limited uses per day refresh upon blueprint-preparation and at 3rd level of the class, the grafter may apply grafts to others as well. Inventions that require activation also require at least int 3 (no grafted oozes, sorry) or int 11 on behalf of the controller in the case of controlled unintelligent foes (like undead). This also provides an interesting precedent for similar master/minion relationships with other creatures such as constructs. A given creature can maintain a total of grafter's int-mod in BP as grafts at a given time.

Now there are restrictions - skill bonuses, class skills and proficiencies cannot be granted via these grafts and any untyped bonus for an automaton becomes an enhancement bonus for an intelligent grafted creature. If a graft requires a given feat via an invention and the base creature also has that feat, it can take the followup invention as a graft, but graft-granted abilities cannot be used as prerequisites to qualify for feats etc. Got that? Good!

At first level, the grafter also learns to add int-mod to wis-mod regarding heal-skills (NOT a fan of two attributemods to one skill). As you may have noted, grafters can be somewhat neutered in their grafting capabilities by their graftees simply walking away - this is remedied at 3rd level, when they get full control over their grafts, allowing them to declare them obsolete when resting and thus making them break/reclaim their grafting BP... which allows for nice roleplaying potential: "Yes, Mr. Ogre...I can graft you so you can eat those knights in the castle." *ogre flies off with rotor* "I declare it obsolete." Ogre falls...far. (Though this does, unfortunately, not work - design-inventions can't be grafted ...)

At 4th level, the class nets those grafted with 5 BP or more one of 5 bonuses (HP, CMD, fort, COn or natural armor) as long as they remain enhanced by you. At 5th



level, the grafter may artificially increase his graft-pool temporarily by expending his infuse automaton ability, allowing for even more flexibility in that regard.

It should also be noted that the grafter at 2nd level learns a so-called implant, essentially an invention that can only be applied to organic beings and not automata. He also learn another one every class level after that (though it should be noted, that, like regular inventions, only one of a kind can be applied to a given being, i.e. no doubling of a given implant on a creature). Some of these have level restrictions as well.

I was talking about implants. What about an adrenaline injection unit, that nets a bonus of +4 to Dex (or Str...) for one round as a swift action class levels x 2 per day times? Vastly improved carrying capacity? A noseinstalled flame-thrower? (If you're like me and grew up with Sonic, remember the final boss of Sonic & Knuckles and chuckle...) A limited use +5 insight bonus to attack? Limited times per day auto-succeed saves versus toxins and diseases, even if you have failed the save? Immunity to fear at the cost of gaining no morale bonuses? Fortification-like metal plates that help versus sneak attacks? Simply more Hp? Auto-heal via stimpack when reaching o hp (but not when dying immediately)?

The most powerful of grafts allow you to grant yourself (and others) dragon-like energy lines (and even cones!) as breath weapons and implant artificial brainstems that temporarily revive your minions as double HD fast zombies that retain their weapon and armor proficiencies - great if your villain just has to run...or if your fighter has no scruples about that sort of last ditch-effort to take down a villain...

Now, I know what you're asking - how does the PrC play with all those inventions? Well, there are (as can be imagined in such a wide field) some cases, where the interaction between inventions and implants, for example, take a VERY experienced player to handle. Take Augmented (or Definite) Structure: +1 Hp per HD of the base-creature at 2 BP cost. Does that one stack with the structural augmentation implant for +5 maximum Hp at 1 BP? (Answer: Yes it does - bonus-types stacking...) What I'm trying to say here is -know the rules, tinker and this book - this is complex as hell.

It should be noted that by now, prior ambiguities as to e.g. arms/legs etc. and inventions have been cleared up and via the now established transparency between implant and invention-usage, another source of potential confusion has been streamlined away.

The revised rules also properly cover action economy for graftees of varying intelligences by being treated like an alpha using the invention, thus eliminating some of the ridiculously action-economy breaking potential builds I could construct. Great to see this smoothed and made work!

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are top-notch, I didn't notice any glitches. Layout adheres to Interjection Games' twocolumn b/w-standard and the pdf has no bookmarks, but needs none at this length. Artworks are thematicallyfitting stock.

Okay, Bradley Crouch's Grafter's V.1.0 struck me as awesome, but unrefined. I wrote a review and then, life happened. For a time, I was actively out of the reviewing game as you may know and then, I get back and I find this beast. I check back ... and by now it actually works. At least I couldn't, from the top of my head, break it and reading this revised edition provided no angle for me to break this beast -and this deserves accolades. No, seriously. Fixing glitches to provide a better experience for one's customers is great, especially when always trying to stretch the boundaries by trying insanely complex rulesstunts and classes and actually getting the job more than done deserves applause. The grafter as such took a mindbogglingly complex base class and made it more complex while also opening its benefits up to other classes, adding some significant value to your tinker-class in game. Well worth a final verdict of 5 stars + seal of approval.

Endzeitgeist out.



Rite Publishing Presents

In the Company of Dragons

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- State

by Wendall Roy



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