







is here: http://www.5esrd.com

the hadition

From the makers of

FSRD

It's basically d20pfsrd.com but for that other game.

Join the team- help make it the best SRD for 5e it can be. Email jreyst@gmail.com to join!

Jable of Contents

Bladeleaf Creature Template Animated leaves by Steven D. Russell	8
10 Strange Village Traditions They do what?! <i>by Creighton Broadhurst</i>	12
20 Things to Loot from a Dead Kobold No take candle! <i>by Creighton Broadhurst</i>	15
Hill & Mountain Spell Showcase Over the mountains and through the woods by David J. Paul	18
Greenskeeper (Skald Archetype) Lo, there I see my father <i>by Wendall Roy</i>	21
Living Armory: Sybiotic Plant Items They really grow on you by Matt Roth	25
Departments	
Editorial	3
Interviews	31
Reviews	38

Paths Less Traveled

OGL



Compatibility with the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game requires the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game from Paizo Publishing, inc. See <u>http://paizo.com/pathfinderRPG</u> for more information on the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game. Paizo Publishing, inc. does not guarantee compatibility, and does not endorse this product.

54

55

Pathways #56 © 2016 Steven D. Russell, Open Gaming License Copyright © 2007 Wizards of the Coast. All rights reserved, Pathfinder is a registered trademark of Paizo Publishing, inc. and the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game and the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Compatibility Logo are trademarks of Paizo Publishing, inc. and are used under the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Compatibility License. See http://paizo.com/pathfinderRPG/compatibility for more information on the compatibility license.

Additionals: Some art work is also used in accordance with the <u>Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 License</u> and the <u>Creative Commons Attribution no Derivative Works 4.0 License</u>.

Editorial

by Steven D. Russell, Illustration by Bruno Balixa

I would like to deviate from my recent editorials and write about topics that may seem more esoteric and philosophical but are in fact eminently practical and certainly of prominence at the moment and within gaming: diversity, inclusion, equity and justice. If this is a little too "soap-boxy" for you, so be it.

Many folks in the broader RPG community have made contributions on social media over the last few years about these topics. Some, including trolls (which is a great word to use with gamers, right?), have revealed the dark side of how some feel about these topics. Wikipedia refers to the "Gamergate controversy" though from what I understand, the problem isn't that there's a controversy, the problem is that there are people who are threatening and abusing other people. Some others, including many prominent names (and companies) in the community, have advocated strongly on the behalf of the marginalized and oppressed within (and outside of) the gaming community. It's more than just a shame that straight women, lesbian women, gay men, bisexual women and men, transgender people, non-binary conforming people, people of color and other gamers have been ridiculed, attacked and threatened.

I recently attended the 2016 National Conference on Race & Ethnicity in Higher Education in America. One of the reasons this issue is a little later to press than I'd like is because I took a week out of my schedule to attend the conference (and the conference was thousands of miles and three time zones from home). A colleague and I represented our university at this conference with a poster presentation (title: "Learning Communities as Campus Change Agents") where we had the honor and pleasure to present in a room with 49 other presentation teams from around the country. The presentations covered topics from the successes of undocumented students at the University of California, Davis, to the challenges faced by professors of color at American universities, to successful mentoring programs for first-generation students in business colleges, to microaggressions in the classroom, and more.

There were hundreds of workshops and seminars at this conference, and a half-dozen keynote speakers (several of whom were among the indigenous people of North America) ranging in age from young teens (including hip-hop artists from the San Francisco area) to the elderly (both Danny Glover and Dolores Huerta were keynote speakers). Workshop and seminar topics covered an enormous breadth of topics within and tangential to higher education. Like GenCon, when I attend NCORE, there are usually at least a dozen things I'd like to do at any given time-slot and I have to give up going to so many wonderful things so that I can attend something else. At one of the workshops, a team from Stanford University made this impactful statement: "Diversity is a fact; inclusion is a practice; equity is the goal." This is not limited to higher education. The same is true of the gaming community. At a game shop, at a convention, the participants and attendees are diverse. Those running games, conducting seminars, and managing conventions can choose their policies to be inclusive. But even inclusivity is not, by itself, enough. Equity is the goal.

My own life is dominated by a handful of employment and entertainment pursuits, the most noteworthy and time-consuming of which are higher education (to include teaching, administration, assessment, and committee and community service) and gaming (to include writing, editing and designing content, and also spending some time playing, thinking about, planning for, and communicating about the games themselves). In both areas, and in society at large (at least in the US, where I do most of my work), there are social and political tensions, and in some cases, there are direct harms and threats, usually aimed at individuals who either identify as, or are labeled as, belonging to groups that have historically been under-privileged, under-served, or otherwise disadvantaged. Many of the aforementioned troll types behave as if the reality of diversity is itself bad or otherwise injurious to them. Inclusion, for them, is anathema. There could never be a willingness to concede even the possibility of equity.

For as much fun as it sometimes is, for me personally, as a GM, to role-play the evil nemesis that the party has to face and contend with, and for as much fun as it can be to have the enemies of the party act in ways that are brutal or inhumane or unjust, the aim of the scenario, adventure, campaign, etc., is always for good to triumph. Evil in whatever form, and through whatever modes, must ultimately be vanquished, conquered, or suppressed. The form of that evil manifests in all sorts of ways (undead, outsider, dragon, etc.).

(Continued on page 6)

Rite Publishing Presents

Gateway Pass Adventure Path Part 1: Brighton Road









Where the adventure comes to you!



Adventuring is hard! Inconvenient!

You have to find the dungeon, check for traps, set up camp, go back to town when supplies run low...

Wouldn't it be easier if the adventure came to you?

Now, with the Gateway Pass Adventure Path, it will!

Bring your 6th-level characters to two action-packed weeks at the Brighton Outpost in the Gateway Pass, and experience the intrigue and excitement first hand! Uncover conspiracy! Face bloodthirsty bandits! Hunt awful creatures intent on consuming the locals, and destroy them!

This story of betrayal, corruption, and revenge takes place on the frontier of two small kingdoms, in a small border fort struggling to return to prominence. When the player characters arrive on the scene, adventure follows close behind them. The *Gateway Pass* series offers opportunities for a developing location and regular NPCs as the characters discover adventure in their own backyard! The first in s six-part adventure path for the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game*, come explore just what happens when adventure comes to you!





(Continued from page 3)

Sometimes that evil manifests as a non-human or inhuman monster. Sometimes that evil manifests as a human (or humanoid). In our actual lives, it's reasonable to consider the possibility that all evil is human evil. It's reasonable to ask every member of the human community what this means and what impact they can have.

We play a game where the vast majority of players get together and find ways to use teamwork, problemsolving skills, and tenacity to overcome groups and individuals representing terrible injustices, inequities and oppression. In my own experience, the gaming community, overall, has been welcoming. But I'm also a white, straight, cisgendered, not-currently disabled man. It's been easy for me to feel welcome at conventions, tournaments, game shops, and people's homes. Who are we inviting to game with us? Who *should* we be inviting to game with us?

Diversity is a fact; inclusion is a practice; equity is the goal.

Happy gaming.





TPK



5th Edition Compatible

Bladeleaf Creature Template

by Steven D. Russell, Illustrations by Dio Mahesa

Plant creatures often suffer the axes and fire of humanoid creatures, even more so when such creatures can attack from a distance, or worse from flight by spell or breath weapon. But fortunately, both evolution and the intelligent design of the gods who favor the kingdom of plants allow them to become more than what they were, and ensure their survival in the extraordinary worlds of fantasy. Some of them become a whirling storm of death; they become bladeleaves. The leaves of these plants are incredibly long and thin, though often its limbs are bare as leaves lay upon the ground. They are far more impulsive than any other plant and often act rather hastily.

Creating a Bladeleaf Creature

"Bladeleaf" is an acquired template that can be added to any plant creature with leaves.

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

CR: +1

Armor Class: Natural armor improves by +10.

Defensive Abilities: fast healing 5 (if the bladeleaf's CR is 6 or higher increase to 10, if 12 or higher increase to 20, see living form); **DR** 5/slashing, magic, and cold iron (if the bladeleaf's CR is 6 or higher increase to DR 10/ slashing, magic, and cold iron, if 12 or higher increase to 15/ slashing, magic, and cold iron); **Immune** cold, electricity, fire.

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

Animate Leaves (Su) A bladeleaf can shed its leaves as a standard action. When shed, the leaves often change to autumn colors and become hard and sharp as steel, animated into a swarm by the will of the bladeleaf. The animated leaves are treated as a swarm (see below). If the swarm is destroyed, the bladeleaf can completely re-grow all its lost leaves in 1 minute. The bladeleaf may reattach these shed leaves as a standard action, in which case they return to their normal color and texture. The bladeleaf controls the swarm as a free action and can maneuver it out to a distance of 300 ft. Animated leaves create the following statblock:

Animated Leaves

N Fine plant (swarm)

Init +XX [As base creature]; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +XX [as base creature]

DEFENSE

AC XX, touch XX, flat-footed XX (+XX Dex [As base creature], +XX natural armor [base creature's natural armor -8], +8 size)

hp ½ base creature normal hp total

Fort +XX, **Ref** +XX, **Will** +XX [All as base creature]

Defensive Abilities plant and swarm traits; **Immune** cold, electricity, fire, plant traits, weapon damage [Plus any defensive abilities, resistance, immunities, weaknesses possessed by the base creature].

OFFENSE

Speed 90 ft. fly (perfect)

Melee swarm (damage equal to creatures primary melee attack, plus bleed and distraction) [If the base creature's natural attacks did extra damage, e. g. fire damage, energy drain, etc., the swarm attack does that extra damage as well.]

Space 10 ft.; Reach 0 ft.

Special Attacks bleed (half swarm damage), distraction (DC 16), sundering storm

ABILITIES

Str 1, **Dex** XX, **Con** XX, **Int** XX, **Wis** XX, **Cha** XX [Str become 1, all others are as base creature]

Base Atk +XX; CMB -; CMD -

Feats As base creature

Skills As base creature; **Racial Modifiers** +16 size modifier to steal, plus any racial modifiers possessed by base creature

Languages as base creature (understands but cannot speak)

SQ Hive Mind

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Hive Mind (Su) If the base creature has an Intelligence score of 3 or higher, the creature swarm has a hive mind. So long as it has at least 1 hit point per HD, it retains its Intelligence score, but if its hit points fall below that number, it becomes mindless. As a mindless creature, it becomes immune to mind-affecting effects.





Leafmarrow

CR 9

XP 4,800

NG Huge plant Init –1; Senses low-light vision; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 7, flat-footed 21 (–1 Dex, +14 natural, –2 size)

hp 114 (12d8+60) fast healing 10

Fort +13, Ref +3, Will +9

Defensive Abilities plant traits; **DR** 10/slashing, magic, and cold iron, **Immune** cold, electricity fire

Weaknesses vulnerability to fire

OFFENSIVE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 slams +17 (2d6+9 plus 1d6/19–20)

Ranged rock +7 (2d6+13)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks animate leaves, rock throwing (180 ft.), trample (2d6+13, DC 25) sundering storm (1d6 DC 21)

STATISTICS

Str 29, Dex 8, Con 21, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 13

Base Atk +9; CMB +20; CMD 29

Feats Alertness, Improved Critical (slam), Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (slam)

Skills Diplomacy +9, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (nature) +9, Perception +12, Sense Motive +9, Stealth –9 (+7 in forests); Racial Modifiers +16 Stealth in forests

Languages Common, Sylvan, Treant

SQ animate trees, double damage against objects, treespeech

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Animate Trees (Ex) A treant can animate any trees within 180 feet at will, controlling up to two trees at

a time. It takes 1 full round for a tree to uproot itself, after which it moves at a speed of 10 feet and fights as a treant (although it has only one slam attack and lacks the treant's animation and rock-throwing abilities), gaining the treant's vulnerability to fire. If the treant that animated it terminates the animation, moves out of range, or is incapacitated, the tree immediately takes root wherever it is and returns to its normal state.

Double Damage Against Objects (Ex) A treant or animated tree that makes a full attack against an object or structure deals double damage.

Treespeech (Ex) A treant has the ability to converse with plants as if subject to a continual *speak with plants* spell, and most plants greet them with an attitude of friendly or helpful.

Animated Leaves

Animated Leaves

N Fine plant (swarm) Init -1; Senses low-light vision; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 17, flat-footed 23 (-1 Dex, +6 natural armor, +8 size)

Hp 57 (special)

Fort +13, Ref +3, Will +9

Defensive Abilities plant and swarm traits; **Immune** cold, electricity, fire, plant traits, weapon damage

Weaknesses vulnerability to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 90 ft. fly (perfect)

Melee swarm (2d6, plus bleed and distraction)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 0 ft.

Special Attacks bleed (1d6), distraction (DC 21), sundering storm (DC 21)

ABILITIES

Str 1, Dex 8, Con 21, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 13

Base Atk +9; CMB -; CMD -

Feats Alertness, Improved Critical (slam), Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (slam).

Skills Diplomacy +9, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (nature) +9, Perception +12, Sense Motive +9, Stealth +7 (+23 in forests). **Racial Modifiers** +16 Stealth in forests.

Languages Common, Sylvan, Treant (understands but cannot speak)

SQ Hive Mind



Available Now at DriveThruRPG, Open Gaming Store, Paizo, and Tabletop Library!

11

TISCH

RY SHELLEY

BE TH BA THORY

1560 CE

TOAN OF ARC 1412 CE

Short biographies of eight amazing women (from Earth)!

And crunch inspired by these women.

- Blood Inquisition
- The War Queen's Chariot
- The Cenobite (Inquisitor) archetype
- 5 New Creeds
- Radioactive Discoveries
- Noble Priest (Paladin) archetype
- Visionary (Paladin) archetype
- Order of the Crow
- Frankenstein's Monster





By Creighton Broadhurst, Illustration by Eckert Marco

Villages can be funny old places rife with local superstitions, strange practises and odd traditions.

Such practices have often been followed for hundreds of years, and are deeply ingrained in the local culture. Luckily—for the GM—such practices are a great way to add flavour and depth to a village. They can even spawn adventures!

Use the table below to generate the details of a village's strange traditions.

 The villagers—even the children—all wear jangling necklaces or bracelets. Some are made of bone while others are of silver or even gold.



The villagers believe the jewelry's' jangling keeps the evil spirits away. All the houses also have wind chines (for the same reason).

- 2. No children are allowed out after dark, without an adult. The villagers will not speak of the reason for this, but if a child does go out alone after sunset panic ensues.
- 3. The local tavern serves an array of fine ales. Each of the regulars has their own named flagon—each with a flip up lid to keep out flies, dust and suchlike. Some are ornate works of art passed down through the generations. Travelers must make do with an array of battered and cheap normal flagons.
- 4. The village has a very large population of cats; every family seems to have at least three or four such pets. Consequently, there are no vermin whatsoever in the village. It is illegal to harm a cat, in the village. Those doing so must seek both owner's apology and that of the cat!
- 5. When one of their fellows dies, the villagers have a unique set of burial rites. The deceased is laid out amid the menhirs of a nearby stone circle for the birds and other forest predators. Once the skeleton is picked clean, the bones are collected and placed in a central, subterranean ossuary and church. Each family uses their ancestors' skeletons to create amazing, but macabre, sculptures out of nothing but bone.
- 6. No one is allowed to wear the color red within the village's precincts, by order of the local lord. Some villagers may inform the lord of PCs wearing the dreaded color, while others may breathlessly make the PCs aware of their terrible error. Anyone caught wearing red must pay a handsome fine.
- 7. A decade ago, fire devastated the village. Now, the villagers have an inordinate fear of such an event occurring again. House troughs full of water stand in front of every house, and buckets are close at hand. In the same way as the village has a local militia, it also has a fire brigade of sorts. They run weekly practices, one of which just happens to be in progress when the PCs arrive at the village. The sight of a dozen villagers throwing buckets of water at a seemingly not on fire house may give the PCs cause to wonder if the villagers are entirely sane.



- 8. The villagers are friendly—nauseatingly so toward adventurers. Nothing is too much trouble for such "honoured" visitors. The PCs receive better service than others in any local businesses and unattached members of the opposite sex literally throw themselves at eligible members of the party.
- 9. The villagers hate members of a certain race halfling, elf, dwarf or gnome—and want nothing to do with such individuals. Bizarrely, they are also particularly friendly towards the members of another race and treat such folk as honoured guests.
- 10. The villagers have their own local currency and do not accept payment in any other form. The coins they use come from an ancient hoard

discovered on the land when the local lord built his manor or castle. If the party wants to buy anything in the village—even a drink at the tavern—they must get some of the local currency from the lord's representative. Surprisingly, the exchange rate is not good...

GM's Miscellany: Dungeon Dressing

If you enjoy the table above and like dungeon dressing, check out *GM's Miscellany: Dungeon Dressing* from Raging Swan Press—Endzeitgeist's choice as the number one book of 2014! Crammed with over 300 pages of information and charts designed to bring your dungeon alive, *GM's Miscellany: Dungeon Dressing* is an essential part of any GM's arsenal.



OFFICIAL DES CONTENT

THE VIRTUAL TABLETOP Is Now a Reality!





Fantasy Grounds Virtual RPG Tabletop Application

20 Things to Loot from a Dead Robold

By Creighton Broadhurst, Illustrations by Rick Hershey and Ryan Sumo

Kobolds. Getting killed by kobolds is tremendously embarrassing. The best way to avoid this embarrassment is to kill the kobolds first (and then of course loot their bodies)!

Use the table below to determine what the PCs find when they loot a kobold's corpse. Of course, kobolds are not particularly powerful creatures and so they rarely carry much of worth.

- 1. A half-eaten rat wrapped in a scrap of dirty, gore-stained cloth.
- 2. A tangle of strings—of varying colors and lengths—fill this small pouch. Hidden deep within the ball lurks a shiny black pebble.
- 3. This kobold has hoarded much wealth; in his pouch the PCs find four silver coins—tarnished and bent—a dozen coppers and a single gold piece bent almost in half.
- 4. This kobold carries a rudimentary tripwire—a length of thin string wrapped around two small wooden pegs—in his pouch along with a length of tiny copper bells that can be wrapped around the tripwire.
- 5. Four half-burnt candles along with a much-used flint and steel wrapped carefully in a strip of sack cloth.
- 6. A broken dagger—sized for a human—whose blade ends in a jagged stump. The shard of the blade—covered in dried blood—is also in the pouch.
- 7. The kobold wore a crude necklace crafted from finger bones; some still have fingernails attached.
- The kobold wore comically oversized boots obviously once worn by a human. To make them fit, he has padded them out with rags. Hidden in the rags are three worn silver coins.
- 9. The kobold wore a bandolier from which hang many small securely stoppered flasks. Each is filled with a noxious substance—excrement, rank water, vomit and so on. The flasks are flimsy and designed to break apart when they hit something solid.

- 10. An almost empty wine flask along with the bodies of several large spiders fills the kobold's pouch. Each of the spiders has had its legs removed and one of the bodies is half eaten.
- 11. A small pouch worn around the kobold's neck contains four teeth—one broken, a selection of smooth pebbles and a dirty grey feather.
- 12. The kobold wore the remnants of a white silk undershirt. The undershirt has been cut off at the waist and arms to fit the kobold and is



filthy (and odorous). It is valueless to the PCs, but several other members of the tribe have had their eye on the garment for some time. The PCs could use it as a bribe or may even see several warriors fighting over the shirt if they return to the scene of this battle without looting the shirt.

- 13. Hidden in a bulging pouch, the PC finds many rags wrapped around a broken mirror. Half of the glass is missing and if the PC searches without being careful he could cut himself on the remaining glass shards.
- 14. The kobold carried the remains of a tattooing kit in a well-made leather pouch. Clearly oversized for the kobold, the pouch contains two (bloody) needles, three small vials of ink black, blue and red—and several crude doodles of the kobolds' tribal sigil.
- 15. A ripped section of damp fishing net woven about three short lengths of rope, fills a sack hanging from the kobold's belt.
- 16. The kobold wore a tarnished silver-plated signal whistle (worth 2 gp) on a short length of leather twine around its neck.
- 17. An empty flask smelling of strong spirits and several sheets of stained parchment fill the kobold's pouch.
- 18. A mummified, but rank, rat paw stuck transfixed on a piton. Dried blood covers the rat's claws, which has stained the pouch holding the gruesome trophy.
- 19. A ragged belt pouch holds the ornate silvered hilt of a dagger. The blade is missing, but the hilt is worth 15 gp.
- 20. This kobold has amassed a small collection of smooth shells. Each has been pierced through its centre and a threaded silver wire holds them all together. The wire is worth 2 gp, and the whole thing can be worn as a necklace (if one is Small sized).

GM's Miscellany: Dungeon Dressing

If you enjoy the table above and like dungeon dressing, check out *GM's Miscellany: Dungeon Dressing* from Raging Swan Press—Endzeitgeist's choice as the number one book of 2014! Crammed with over 300 pages of information and charts designed to bring your dungeon alive, *GM's Miscellany: Dungeon Dressing* is an essential part of any GM's arsenal.



PATREON.COM/RAGINGSWANPRESS

Hill and Mountain Spells Showcase

By David J. Paul, Illustration by David Rabbitte

The debate had gone on for hours. Scattered across L the stained, heavy oak common room table were at least a dozen plates smeared with the grease of whatever fowl had been served. Several mugs, now empty of mead, stood guard near the plates-except for the few that had been toppled by some hamfisted rampaging diner. The mess hall of the priory was filled with the noise of argument, the residual odors of greasy meats and the belches of overly stuffed men, and the lights of more than a dozen lanterns in addition to the large fire always burning in the evenings. Arianna had started the argument when she suggested that the best way to handle a gang of enemy spell casters was with spells. As one of less than a half-dozen spell casters the men in the room even knew personally, her opinion held some weight. However, given their own long-standing biases and conspiratorial beliefs, there were at least five main competing suggestions for the problem.

This, of course, was anticipated. While Arianna enjoyed a robust debate, especially with her friends back in the capital city, she knew better than to actually debate these warriors. By which one isn't to suppose that she was frightened of any of them; she wasn't



frightened by the entire collection of them. Rather, there's very little to be gained by debating people who are unfamiliar with either the rules of debate or the subject matter being considered. Instead, she wished to get a rousing row started so that she could be left alone to actually consider the real problem she'd been troubled with lately: how best to forecast the rise and fall of political power in the neighboring territories so that her adventuring company would have the best chance of actually succeeding in its quests without political interference over the next several decades. Such things take careful planning, including creating "chance" encounters between people at the right ages so that just the right rivalries and passions can form and at just the right times.

A crashing sound suggested something had broken on the flagstone floor. This snapped her attention to the present moment.

"Why don't you get it?" one of the nearly-drunk guards managed to get out in between sprays of saliva and sweat. "A team of wizards is just going to turn you all into fish! Then where will you be? Have you ever been turned into a fish?"

Most of the others laughed. It was hard not to. Everyone had been drinking since before the first course; the fourth course had been finished more than an hour ago; and no one had had a good fight in weeks. The men were all too well trained to actually brawl with one another. That would tempt the outrage of Tacton or Chandus who, all the men knew, could best any ten of them even if he had no shield and only a wooden sword. Nevertheless, this knowledge didn't keep them from having their emotions boil over.

"Of course I've never been a fish. Neither have you!" shouted another of the contestants as he rose to his feet. "And furthermore, wizards don't really turn anyone into anything. That's all a bunch of nonsense. Set fire to trees? Sure. Bring lightning and hail from the thunderclouds? Of course. But turn people into fish? Never. It's never happened."

Several of the others nodded vigorously. In fact, the men had never seen anyone transformed into anything else. Arianna, herself fond of assuming the form of a hawk to spend time with her own favored familiar hawk, took special care never to transform within sight of the common warriors. Palin, the party's druid, also exercised great caution. Living among highly superstitious folk was one thing; having to rely heavily upon them to guard one's stronghold and possessions was another.

Arianna looked up from where she remained calmly seated. She addressed no one in particular and everyone at once. *"You* may not have seen a wizard transform someone," she began, instantly quieting the room and holding everyone's attention, *"but I have."*

This was all the authority the men needed. They knew that Arianna was a wizard of the highest rank. They'd seen her disintegrate powerful foes, create walls of stone, iron and ice from nothing, and if the legends about her were true, bring the dead back to life. The noise in the hall disappeared as they awaited her next words.

"As a matter of fact, I've seen witches turn wizards into giants. It was an amazing and terrible thing: a small group of elven wizards, powerful in their own right, turned instantly into cruel, sadistic giants. One moment, the wizards had the upper hand in the duel of magic between the witches from the fen and the wizards from the wood. The next moment, all but one of the elves had transformed into giants and were beating the daylights out of one another and the one remaining elf." Arianna shook her head slowly, expressing grief as though she could remember seeing the scene again clearly. "It's true the best way to stop wizards is with magic."

A moment later, one of the men regained his thoughts, "But, it wasn't the magic that stopped the wizards, it was the giants!" Clearly, he needed another drink.

nother ook her ne could 's true ined his stopped needed

Mob of Giants

School: Transmutation (polymorph); **Level:** Sorcerer/Wizard 6, Witch 6

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Components: V, S

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

Targets: One humanoid/level no two of which can be more than 30 ft. apart

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates and Will partial; see text; **Spell Resistance:** Yes

You transform the targets failing their Fortitude saves into hill giants. Each target's size changes to Large and it gains the giant subtype. In the new form, each target gains a +6 size bonus to Strength, a -2 penalty to Dexterity, a +4 size bonus to Constitution, +4 natural armor bonus, and a lowlight vision. The targets do not gain rock catching or rock throwing. The subjects also suffer a -4 penalty to Intelligence and Charisma and become outrageously selfish, greedy and aggressive. Each round on an affected creature's turn it may act normally if it makes a Will save at the start of its turn (though acting normally is modified by the fact that the subject's Intelligence and Charisma are lower and it is a hill giant). If it fails this save, it behaves as a chaotic evil, selfish and aggressive giant would act (it is appropriate for the GM to suggest an appropriate course of action for the target).

Creatures (such as allies, for instance) can voluntarily fail the Fortitude save but cannot voluntarily fail any of the Will saves.

If you cast *mob of giants* in temperate hills, all the save DCs are increased by +2.

BOOK OF NEROIC RACES advanced Subscription

Available Now at



TERPRISES

Greenskeeper (Skald Archetype)

By Wendall Roy

Greenskeepers are the bridge between their civilization and the arboreal world. They are most often found in cultures that live in heavily wooded areas or in close proximity to many plant creatures. Greenskeepers have less talent for esoteric knowledge and eldritch power than the average skald, but they compensate for this by having advanced powers to interact with, befriend and manipulate the natural world. These poet-warriors and plant whisperers have even been known to imbue their allies with the resilience, vigor and power of the mightiest of trees.

Class Skills: A greenskeeper replaces Use Magic Device with Survival on his list of class skills.

Green Empathy (Ex): At 1st level, a greenskeeper can improve the attitude of a plant creature as if using the druid wild empathy ability, with an effective druid level of his skald class level. The typical wild plant creature has a starting attitude of indifferent. A greenskeeper can also use this ability to influence an animal, but he takes a -4 penalty on the check to do so. This ability replaces bardie knowledge

This ability replaces bardic knowledge.

Plant Magic (Su): At 1st level, a greenskeeper can affect plants with his magical powers. Whenever the greenskeeper casts or uses a mind-affecting or language-dependent skald spell or ability, it affects plant creatures as if they were humanoids who understood his language. In addition, the greenskeeper adds the following spells to his class spell list:

1st – entangle 2nd –tree shape 3rd – plant growth 4th – command plants 5th – tree stride 6th – liveoak

This ability replaces the Scribe Scroll bonus feat.

Woodland Stride (Ex): At 2nd level, a greenskeeper may move through any sort of undergrowth (such as natural thorns, briars, overgrown areas, and similar terrain) at his normal speed and without taking damage or suffering any other impairment. Thorns, briars, and overgrown areas that have been magically manipulated to impede motion, however, still affect him.

This ability replaces well-versed.

Song of Bounty (Su): At 3rd level, a greenskeeper gains access to a raging song that produces a bounty of food from the surrounding vegetation. By expending 1 round of raging song, the greenskeeper causes enough fresh berries, fruits and vegetables to provide one day's nourishment to a Medium sized creature to burst forth from the vegetation. Enough food for an additional Medium sized creature is created each round the greenskeeper continues to perform the song. Food created by the song of

bounty that is not eaten within 1 hour quickly rots and is reabsorbed back into the environment. This ability can only be used outdoors and in an area where some form of vegetation is present.

This ability replaces the song of marching raging song.

Green Secrets (Su): At 5th level, a greenskeeper can tap into the energy of the natural world and channel it into spells he would otherwise not know. Once per day, the greenskeeper can cast any spell on the druid spell list as if it were one of his skald spells known, expanding a skald spell slot of the same spell level to cast the desired spell. Casting a spell with green secrets always has a minimum casting time of 1 full round, regardless of the casting time of the spell.

At 11th level, a greenskeeper can use this ability twice per day. At 17th level, he can use this ability three times per day.

This ability replaces spell kenning.

Song of Verdance (Su): At 6th level, a greenskeeper gains access to a unique raging song. Allied creatures within 60 feet gain fast healing 1, +1 for every 4 additional levels above 6th the greenskeeper has attained. Plant creatures double the fast healing gained from this raging song.

In addition, the greenskeeper gains the ability to root himself to any natural surface softer than solid rock as a full-round action. While rooted, the greenskeeper cannot move from his space but gains tremorsense 60 ft. and a +10 bonus to CMD to resist bull rush, drag, overrun, reposition, and trip combat maneuvers. The greenskeeper also extends a network of fast-moving, strong roots through the area, granting him a slam primary natural attack that deals 1d6 points of damage and threatens all spaces within 60 feet to which he can trace line of effect through the ground. This slam attack also has the grab universal monster ability, and does not move creatures adjacent to the greenskeeper when he successfully grapples them with it. The greenskeeper remains rooted until the raging song ends, he is forcibly moved from or knocked prone in his space, or until he takes a full-round action to end the effect.

This ability replaces the song of strength raging song.

New Rage Powers

The following rage powers were specifically designed to complement the greenskeeper archetype, but any barbarian or skald meeting the prerequisites can take them. The "verdant"-named powers are a new group of blood rage powers. Blood rage powers grant powers in a theme, and only one group of blood rage powers can be selected by a character.

Arboreal Menace (Su): The barbarian's rage seeps into nearby vegetation, causing that vegetation to grab fiercely at hostile creatures. Opponents adjacent to the barbarian at the end of his turn become entangled unless they succeed at a Reflex save with a DC of 10 + 1/2 the barbarian's class level + the barbarian's Charisma modifier. Entangled creatures can attempt to break free as a move action, making a Strength or Escape Artist check against the same DC. This ability does not function in terrain that lacks grass, weeds or some sort of vegetation. The barbarian must be at least 8th level and have either the intimidating glare or verdant blood rage power to take this rage power.

Briar Charge (Su): The barbarian's rage is attuned to the energy of the natural world, allowing him to charge through difficult terrain caused by natural or magically manipulated undergrowth. The barbarian still suffers any damage or effect of the undergrowth that would normally affect him. The barbarian must be at least 4th level to take this rage power.

Resinous Sap (*Su*): The barbarian oozes a sticky, amber sap instead of blood while raging. Any slashing or piercing weapon that damages the barbarian becomes stuck unless its wielder succeeds at a Reflex save with a DC of 10 + 1/2 the barbarian's class level + the barbarian's Constitution modifier. Such a weapon can be pulled free of the barbarian only with a successful Strength check against the same DC. This ability has no effect on unarmed strikes or natural weapons. The barbarian must be at least 6th level and have either the lesser verdant blood or the renewed vigor rage power to take this rage power. *Thorn Immunity (Su):* The barbarian's skin resists thorns and barbs, turning them away harmlessly as he passes by. The barbarian reduces any damage taken from natural or magically manipulated terrain (such as *spike growth* or *spike stones*) by 2, +1 for every 4 additional levels above 8th the barbarian has attained. The barbarian does not gain any protection against energy damage caused by terrain, caltrops, or manufactured environmental hazards. The barbarian must be at least 6th level and have the briar charge rage power to take this rage power.

Treant's Crush (Su): The barbarian's fists pound through stone and iron with the supernatural might of a treant. When the barbarian makes a full attack against an object or structure, his unarmed strikes and natural attacks deal double damage. The barbarian must be at least 12th level and have either the greater verdant blood or the strength surge rage power.

Verdant Blood (Su): The barbarian gains a +2 enhancement bonus to his natural armor bonus to AC. This enhancement bonus increases by 1 for every 4 additional levels above 6th the barbarian has attained, to a maximum of +5 at 18th level. The barbarian must be at least 6th level and have the lesser verdant blood rage power to take this blood rage power.

Verdant Blood, Greater (Su): The barbarian's skin erupts in long wooden thorns, allowing his natural attacks and unarmed strikes to do an additional 1d6 points of piercing damage. In addition, any creature striking the barbarian with a melee weapon that lacks reach, an unarmed strike, or a natural weapon takes 1d6 + 1/2the barbarian's class level piercing damage. A creature that successfully starts or maintains a grapple on the barbarian takes 2d6 + 1/2 the barbarian's class level piercing damage. The barbarian must be at least 10th level and have the lesser verdant blood and verdant blood rage powers to take this blood rage power.

Verdant Blood, Lesser (Su): The barbarian reduces the hit point damage taken each round from bleed effects by 1, +1 for every 4 levels the barbarian has attained. The barbarian also reduces any ability damage or ability drain from bleed effects by half this amount.



Rite Publishing Presents

An the Company of Treants





by Jonathan McAnulty

Rite Publishing Presents

101 Hill & Mountain Spells







by Dave Paul



By Matt Roth, Illustrations by Jason Rainville and JOHN

Equipment, the backbone of any tried and true adventurer, comes in shapes and styles to suit all manner of combatant and scholar. Yet, in rare circumstances, the innate magical auras of enchanted equipment can twist into, within and around the uncanny survival instinct of plant life. The outcome is neither truly plant nor equipment, but a strange, symbiotic mixture of the two. With the original enchantments replaced, some may view the emergence of these verdant items as a curse. Others, secluded in druidic enclaves, seek true mastery of nature to coax a kinship between cold, lifeless steel and the untamed beauty of nature.

Regardless of how or why you may find one of these living items, their strange means of survival necessitates special care. All symbiotic plant items have a Care requirement, somewhat similar to the negative effects imposed by their curse. A plant item's care requirements must be met in order to properly use the item—some may require minimal care, while others may place a heavy burden on the user to keep them alive. Most symbiotic plant items are grown by accident, flourishing even in these strange variant forms, by growing into a suitable item. GMs may wish to allow nature-inclined PCs or NPCs to craft these items, but the process should be a long and arduous lost art.

As part of the Care requirement, each symbiotic plant item has a required Frequency and a maximum Health. Frequency represents how often a plant requires care or nutrition. Unless otherwise stated, a plant item will lose 1 Health if not cared for during its frequency period. If the plant's health reaches 0, it dies; the item returns to its original magical or mundane counterpart, and the symbiotic item is irreversibly lost. Most plant items that are cared for properly restore lost health at a rate of 1 per Frequency period.

Though these items are often the product of a strange happenstance of nature, they are not unobtainable by other means. Great fey creatures may possess one of these treasures to bestow upon those who are worthy, while ancient dragons may possess one as a bizarre curiosity. A lost cache of druidic knowledge may even hold the secrets to their creation—though such endeavors are often no easy task. Though any item may grow a symbiote under the right circumstances, it still requires a particular level of magic to facilitate the symbiosis, as noted under each item.

But beware, for sharing your equipment with another living being may not be as simple as it seems. The more advanced and unique the growth, the more difficult it becomes to care for!

Growing Symbiotic Items

Though each of these items includes their value in gold pieces, these items are strange and unique pieces of equipment. Because of the interaction they require with the wearer, few stores (if any) would have such items easily available for purchase.

Instead, the gold piece value is provided as a benchmark for the relative value and power of these items. Characters starting at a suitable level might choose one of these items to define their character, or find them as a level-appropriate reward for their adventures. Particularly curious PCs might seek the knowledge to grow these items on their own. Growing a new symbiotic plant is no easy task, and may be an entire adventure of its own!

New Symbiotic Plant Items

Carriongrasp Blossom

Aura strong necromancy; CL 9th Slot hands; Price 16,000 gp; Weight 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

A soft, silk-like substance grows over these leather gloves, spreading from a transient gray flower embossed deep into the form of the palm. The flower smells faintly of rot, though it appears to be a healthy blossom.

A *carriongrasp blossom* is a parasitic plant that bears more similarity to a form of undead than an ablebodied plant. While worn, the wearer is treated as though he possessed the negative energy affinity universal monster rule. Additionally, a 10-footradius *defoliate* effect surrounds the wearer, wilting and eventually killing all plant life in that area. This defoliation effect removes all non-magical cover, concealment, or terrain modifiers provided by plants. Magically animated plants (such as those from *entangle*) must succeed at a DC 14 Fortitude saving throw (treating them as an attended object owned by the spell's caster) or wilt to uselessness. (The wilting effect is constant, plant death requires

longer-term exposure. Grasses and weeds are killed after 1 minute of constant exposure; shrubs, bushes, strong vines, small trees and the like are killed after 10 minutes of constant exposure; large trees, massive fungal colonies, etc. are killed in 30 minutes; and plants like massive trees are killed in an hour.)

Once per day, the gloves can be used to cast *blight* (DC 16). Whatever damage inflicted by this spell is also added as temporary hit points to the wearer. If used on a plant that isn't a creature, roll 9d6 to determine the temporary hit points gained by the wearer. These temporary hit points last for 12 hours.

Care A *carriongrasp blossom* receives all of its nutrition from the consumption of other plant life, and must use its *blight* ability to receive proper care. If its *blight* ability kills a plant creature, the *carriongrasp blossom* is restored to maximum health. The blossom rejects any attempt to end the symbiosis between glove, plant, and wearer, and the sudden shift when removing the gloves deals 1d4 points of Constitution damage to the wearer (no save).

Frequency 1/day; Health 3

CREATION

Magic Items any magical gloves worth at least 7,500 gp

Flowering Purity

Aura moderate conjuration; CL 8th Slot none; Price 20,315 gp; Weight 2 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

The perfect ivory steel of this longsword is crossed with the soft stem of a flowering lily. In place of a point, the blunted sword ends with an immaculate white lily that defies all attempts to tarnish its beauty. When used, this weapon acts as a +1 merciful mithral longsword, but can never be commanded to deal lethal damage.

When struck by *flowering purity*, creatures must attempt a DC 11 Fortitude saving throw or have a lily of purity lash itself around the creature. This lily negates all effects from curses, diseases, or poisons active on the target creature, as well as any alchemical, enhancement, profane, resistance, or sacred bonuses, for 1d4+1 rounds. The DC to resist this effect increases by 1 for every successful hit by *flowering purity*, resetting to DC 11 after a failed save.

A planted lily may be torn away from a creature as a standard action that provokes attacks of opportunity.

Care When carried, *flowering purity's* proximity to the wearer grants an innate resistance to impurities. She gains a +2 bonus to saving throws against curses, disease, and poison. However, all positive



alchemical, enhancement, profane, resistance, or sacred bonuses are half as effective (negative bonuses are unchanged). Once per week, *flowering purity* must be 'fed' with a pure substance (e.g., perfect soil, pure water, etc.) by being immersed in it for 8 consecutive hours.

Frequency 1/week; Health 3

CREATION

Magic Items any magical longsword worth at least 8,000 gp

Ironroot Nettle

Aura moderate transmutation; **CL** 5th **Slot** none; **Price** 6,500 gp; **Weight** 15 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

A lace of tough, ruddy roots weaves through this shirt, giving it the appearance of living, woody chainmail. Its iron-firm edge is coarse and serrated, drawing blood with the slightest pressure.

When worn, *ironroot nettle* is treated as a +1 *impervious chain shirt* with masterwork armor spikes. Though nonmagical, the spikes automatically deal 1 point of bleed damage to any creature that hits the wearer with a natural or unarmed attack or any creature that grapples with the wearer. Bleed



damage inflicted by *ironroot nettle* stacks with itself, but cannot damage an individual creature more than once per round.

The roots that compose the armor spikes may be further enchanted with weapon enhancements, but if the plant dies all such enhancements are lost. This armor contains no metal and may be worn by druids without penalty.

Care *Ironroot nettle* gains both its strength and its sustenance from iron-rich blood. When worn, its roots subtly sink into the wearer's capillaries to siphon blood, this leaves the wearer more susceptible to bleed effects and fatigue, shown via similar symptoms to anemia. All bleed effects have their die increased by one step (bleed effects of 1 become 1d2). The wearer of *ironroot nettle* suffers a -4 penalty to any saving throw to resist the fatigued condition (e.g., forced march, *touch of fatigue*) and the fatigued condition now imposes a -4 penalty to Strength and Dexterity, and a -2 penalty to all mental ability scores.

Frequency 1/day; Health 7

CREATION

Magic Items any magical clothing or light armor worth at least 4,000 gp

Oakenheart

Aura strong transmutation; **CL** 9th **Slot** ring; **Price** 24,000 gp; **Weight** – lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This emerald ring is carved in the likeness of a huge acorn. It pulses with a soft light when worn, emulating a heartbeat. When worn, this ring empowers its wearer with the hearty endurance of a mighty oak. This grants a +2 enhancement bonus to natural armor, a +2 bonus on saving throws against poisons and mind-affecting effects, and a +2 bonus to Combat Maneuver Defense when resisting bull rush, drag, reposition, or trip attempts. The wearer may use *speak with plants* at will, but may only converse with trees. The effects of this ring often take the form of obvious visual transformations as the oak and its wearer become one.

Care Instead of sleeping, you transform into an oak tree during periods of rest, as *tree shape*. If you fall unconscious, this effect triggers after 1 minute if you do not awaken. While in tree form, you remain as aware as you would be while sleeping and may make Perception checks with penalties normal for a sleeping creature. While sleeping, you must have access to fresh air and soil, or you awaken fatigued. Sleeping in an environment hostile to an oak tree (such as a dungeon floor, a glacier, or a desert plain) does not qualify as providing proper care to this plant.

Frequency 1/day; Health 7

CREATION

Magic Items any magical ring worth at least 12,000 gp

Pygmy's Guise

Aura strong transmutation; **CL** 9th **Slot** head; **Price** 7,500 gp; **Weight** 3 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

Caked with a thin layer of greenish brown mold, this wooden, full-face mask boasts a nest of vines that dangle like dreadlocks across its top. A rootlike projection on the backside of the mask is shaped to fit into the wearer's mouth.

When worn, the *pygmy's guise* allows the wearer to interact with vegepygmies as one of their own. It grants the wearer immunity to russet mold and vegepygmies will treat the wearer as though she were a vegepygmy. It grants the wearer the ability to 'speak' and understand vegepygmy, but prevents all other forms of speech beyond the most basic sounds.

Spells with verbal components may instead be cast in vegepygmy, but the strange, nonverbal language imposes a 20% spell failure chance on such spells. These spells are otherwise treated as though they were cast using the Silent Spell metamagic feat.

Care The *pygmy's guise* requires exposure to russet mold to renew itself, and remains a dangerous carrier of the mold for a full frequency period after exposure, though this is still far less dangerous than a full patch of russet mold (requiring all creatures that approach within 5 feet to succeed at a DC 13 Fortitude save or become exposed to the mold). This effect is negated while exposed to sunlight. Regardless of when the *pygmy's guise* is removed, its removal immediately exposes the wearer to russet mold and she must save as normal.

Frequency 1/week; Health 4

CREATION

Magic Items any wooden headgear worth at least 1,000 gp

Sakura Wind

Aura moderate conjuration; CL 7th Slot shoulders; Price 8,500 gp; Weight 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

Soft scents and rosy petals fall in the wake of this beautifully woven cape. Living cherry blossom petals grow like scales down its length, ruffling in an unseen wind.



When worn, *sakura wind* grants its wearer a +2 dodge bonus to AC against small ranged piercing weapons (such as arrows and bolts), often shown with a flourish of petals and an unexpected gust diverting near misses. Once per day as a move action, the wearer may turn as immaterial as cherry blossom petals and move with the *sakura wind* to any visible spot up to 100 feet away. This movement creates a severe blast of wind along its path (as *gust of wind*). Movement from this ability is prevented by any creature or object that would impede a gust of severe wind, causing it to immediately halt in an open space before the interceding object.

Care Once per frequency period, the wearer must stand in a strong or stronger wind and allow the flowing petals of *sakura wind* to drift aimlessly for at least an hour.

Frequency 1/week; Health 3

CREATION

Magic Items any magical cloak worth at least 4,000 gp

Sunleech Weave

Aura strong evocation; CL 9th Slot shoulders; Price 22,000 gp; Weight 5 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This thick, ebony cloak is actually a hyperphotosynthetic vine wrapped in upon itself dozens of times. Light warps around the folds of the vine, casting dancing shadows that should not exist. On command, the cloak can unravel itself to discharge massive quantities of ultraviolet light as bursts of magical and solar energy. When activated, the cloak sheds light as *daylight* and counters its natural light-dampening for 10 minutes (see Care requirements). The cloak may manifest any one of the following spell-like effects per activation.

- Cloak of Light (as *greater stunning barrier*, 1 charge)
- Solar Wind (as *fly*, 2 charges)
- Ultraviolet Tendrils (as *black tentacles*, 3 charges)
- A *sunleech weave* retains a maximum of 5 charges, and regains 1 charge per hour of exposure to bright light.

Care A *sunleech weave* consumes enormous quantities of light to survive, reducing the ambient light by one step in a 15-foot radius around it, to a minimum of supernatural darkness in areas of complete darkness. This does not grant the wearer any special ability to see through such darkness. The *sunleech weave* must spend at least 4 hours per day absorbing bright light from a natural source (which need not be the sun).

Frequency 1/day; Health 7

CREATION

Magic Items any magical cloak worth at least 10,000 gp

Rite Publishing Presents

Chan the Company of Dragons & Fey POWERED BY



Coming July 2016 via Hero Jab!

Family Friendly Gaming for Everyone Player und Adventures

After School Adventures



After school Aquen

Advent

Adven

playgroundadventures.net

DATHFINDER

By Justin Andrew Mason

Twenty Questions with BJ Hensley

By Steven D. Russell

1. Could you tell us a little about yourself?

I am 36 years old, a child at heart, and I've always seen the world just a little bit differently than those around me. When people ask me what I do my most simple answer is that I bard. I started out in life at a very early age and I've always enjoyed creating, in pretty much any medium, I write, I edit, I paint, draw, design maps, build terrain, work with clay, and am always on the lookout to learn something new. I've been a fan of roleplaying games literally as far back as I can remember. I love books and crafting fantasy realms and decreed around the wise age of 5 that I would one day write the books I loved so much. So far it seems to be going well.

I've had the idea of Playground Adventures in my head for many years but as a mother in a household with six kids it took me a great deal longer than I would have liked to get it off the ground and I frequently wish I had more time and funds to do a number of other products. My children were raised playing roleplaying games or hanging out in homemade forts under the table listening to the adults play and adding their own occasional input. Each of my spawn has at least one amusing story of a teacher reaching out to me to inquire about the imagination games they played on the playground or their advanced creative ideas. In fact, I was once asked to share our experience-based adventure chore chart with the elementary school for the teacher to use as a motivation tool. One of my children continues to win vocabulary and story awards each year and my nine-year old just scored a hundred percent on his annual reading assessment test. (The only one in the whole grade to do so!) All of them read at grades far beyond their current level of school and my oldest read so many books he broke the school's reward program and the teacher started creating new awards and purchasing new books just for him. I attribute every one of these skills very much to the games they've grown up immersed in and the encouragement of imaginary play. We believe so strongly in this that we even named our home The Imaginarium! We have a plaque and everything! It has been the joy of watching them grow and seeing firsthand how useful these games can be for both fun and education that motivated me to really focus on creating our company.

One thing some people may not know is that like many other 3PPs, the entire cost of launching PGA



came directly from our own pockets and even now I work very hard freelancing so that I can pay our people a slightly more reasonable amount for their work. My most recent projects beyond PGA include work for Rogue Genius Games, Kobold Press, Rite, Adventure a Week, Frog God Games, Legendary Games, Everyman Gaming, and Zombie Sky Press. I also work as the Director of Marketing for Lone Wolf Development, and Volunteer as an RCRF board member.

On the occasions when I'm not creating or playing games I spend a good deal of time running children to events, watching school sports or band programs, volunteering at their schools, and working on my own art or writing projects outside of the game industry. I am lucky enough to have a partner who also works with me to make my visions for PGA a reality and our books would not be as lovely as they are without his creative layout skills. Aside from six goofy children, I number my dogs, Fluffy and Princess Azumi, among the family and enjoy dog agility events and horse racing. My goal for the year to find more time for video games, exercise, and fishing with the family.

2. What is your home game like?

My home game is a huge mix of everything I've encountered since I was a child. If we can imagine it (and like it) it probably exists. We have a small Pathfinder campaign run by my son Merlin where we are all members of an academy for those with psionic powers. My nine-year old insists he is going to start a game soon as well but he's super secretive about the details. His notebook says top secret and everything! And naturally I run our Playground Adventures releases with all the kids for fun and playtesting. In our adult games we are currently restoring a massive city built inside a mountain and claiming the region as our own and my own campaign ranges all over the multiverse and can be as simple as step and fetch in the city or as complex as mutli-world space battles where the fate of the multiverse hangs in the balance. I very rarely run pre-made adventures that aren't designed by my own company but I do intend to run AAW's Snow White soon. Shhhh, don't tell my players, it's a surprise!

3. What is your favorite Paizo product?

Goblins of Golarion! I loved that book so much I read it from beginning to end in one sitting and have gone back and read it again twice since. The goblins of Golarion directly appeal to my humorous nature and I now collect all things Pathfinder goblin related. I'm quite fond of the little critters and hope to see them journey into



space next year because I get a giggle from the mental image of goblin pirates assaulting space faring ships. Imagine the misfires! I can absolutely see them stuffing their own crew into cannons to board enemy ships (or in place of ammo)!

4. You are currently the Owner of Playground Adventures, how did that start and how would you characterize the company today?

For as long as I can remember, I've loved to create. As a child (and still today) I lived with my head in the clouds, forever crafting make-believe realms of magic and myth. When I was quite young I was introduced to a delightful game known as Dungeons and Dragons, I embraced it and played as frequently as possible. There were so many amazing places to explore and it was as if I had a wonderfully perfect, never ending, choose your own adventure novel.

As I grew older, and had children of my own, I realized something I had previously been unaware of. This game that I enjoyed had great potential as not only a family tradition, but a teaching tool. Young children possess a vast imagination that when encouraged is capable of brightening their lives, and that of those around them. Table top roleplaying games can provide a fun and creative learning environment for the whole family. I have seen children who hated math happily adding and subtracting to account for the mechanical nature of the game. Those who shun novels are somehow more easily inspired to read the rulebooks or campaign settings lying around the house (and every now and again develop a love for novels in the process). RPGs are capable of being an interactive classroom for problem solving, arithmetic, reading, writing, creative thought, and so much more.

The problem I discovered when introducing my own creative crew to this wonderful world I love, is that there are so few family-friendly adventures. If you're creative and have a lot of time on your hands, you can easily convert adventures or write your own. And for years, that is exactly what I did. But especially as little gamers grow older and want to run games for friends, or younger family members, this can prove to be a problem if you have firm family-friendly rules in your home. I began to wonder if other parents were out there searching for family-friendly adventures as well. And that is how Playground Adventures was born. My desire to give this spectacular experience to my own children, and those around the world, inspired me to do what I always have, to create.

Today I am still creating, I have a fantastic party with me on this adventure and am grateful for all the hard work they do for PGA. My vision hasn't changed much since the launch as we are a fairly new company but overall people seem to love what we do and we plan to continue chugging along making family-friendly content for a good long time!

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

This is a hard one! There are so many I have loved. I would have to say at the moment I am enamored with our new After School Adventures, especially the educational shorts, Fun & Facts. They play directly into my belief that roleplaying games are a fantastic tool for education and they're just a whole lot of fun to make.

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

This is a series of adventures that we will release over time and thus far my favorite part has been receiving the hundreds of pitch ideas from the many people who responded to our open call. There are so many fantastic ideas and fun things to learn and it's been mostly a pleasure to get to know these people and peer into their imaginations for a bit. As a parent with too little time myself I had always planned to do short adventures that could be played a few hours at a time with a beginning and end, because many children absolutely do not want to stop mid campaign but get tired and cranky when it goes on too long. When the idea first came to me I had in my mind that we would include some facts bars and kids would pick up the occasional science, math, or history fact as they gamed. What I hadn't considered was the idea of including a project that allowed physical interaction along with the forays into the imaginary. When Justin Mason turned over his first pitch and it included a science experiment I was so excited I bounced off the walls for the remainder of the day and immediately told everyone else we needed more of these amazing hands on adventures.

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

Obviously I am enamored with the science projects and other fun, hands-on ideas we have



planned. As an adult who can't sit still myself, I greatly appreciate the idea that we can do something hands-on with the children who have a much harder time sitting still than I do. Whether it's a preplanned science project or a small origami session, I think these will be wonderful learning tools for many children.

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

I would have to say the hardest part about these is keeping them trimmed down to a time frame that CAN fit in a few hours. It's surprisingly hard to keep things simple! In fact, our Master of Puzzles has such a hard time doing this that the line evolved to include miniature adventure paths with longer stories. I now have an Adventures in Wonderland board game adventure though, so I can't complain!

9. Did you learn anything while working on it?

Not everyone can write within a limited word count. It takes a pretty special group of people to make 1,000 or so words both fun and interesting, especially while adding in an educational element.

10. Other than your own work and Playground Adventure's products, what is the best Pathfinder Roleplaying Game compatible product out there?



This is an extremely difficult question, I don't get near as much time as I would like to read all the products available and there are a great many I have read that I like quite a lot. I think one of my biggest favorites out right now is the Southlands Campaign Setting. But I believe the Talented Bestiary from the Four Horsemen and Rogue Genius Games actually makes the top of my list, as someone who really doesn't care for monster design but always wants something different for a game I find that book extremely appealing.

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

The story. I know a good many people who argue that mechanics come first and that's okay, for me it's always the story. I can dismiss a lot in the way of mechanics if the story is good enough but if the story is awful and the mechanics are perfect I'm probably just not interested.

12. Who is your favorite product designer for Pathfinder Roleplaying Game-compatible titles?

This is a difficult question as I have so many favorites and there are a great many excellent designers out there but if I absolutely had to pick just one it would probably be Stephen Rowe. He has proven time and again that he can turn over excellent work on a short deadline and I've yet to read anything of his from my company or anyone else's that I didn't like. One of my favorite things I've seen him do is an amusing post over at Kobold Press about a Lich who's pretty well just over it all. I laughed till it hurt, and I hope to see more of that guy in the future.

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

Manners, self-promotion, and follow directions! First and foremost, get yourself out there! We can't hire you if we don't know you exist, some companies allow for submissions at any time

of the year and a politely-worded query can't hurt. Do send a well-mannered inquiry, do not send your latest 50,000-word adventure. There's a good chance that whatever you want to do is not what they are hiring for and unsolicited submissions are almost never accepted in any area of publishing, gaming or otherwise. Many large companies have set open calls or contests you can keep an eye out for; carefully follow their submission guidelines and pay close attention to any style guides they provide. I cannot stress enough how important manners and following directions are to me personally and I suspect others as well. Always be respectful, these are people you want to work for and manners go a long way to endearing you to them. If you don't get the job you want, or your feedback on a project is less than stellar, handle it with grace and a thank you for their input. Many publishers, myself included, keep an eye out for those who immediately start downgrading a

company for rejecting their work and make mental notes not to hire them. I don't want someone who can't handle criticism or is unable to work as a team member for the greater good of my company.

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

While there are a great many artists I adore, especially those who do the more oil style art like mine, I have to admit my favorite person to work with is Jacob Blackmon. He does good work, he can output art at a speed that is mind boggling, and he is always pleasant and polite. Plus, he illustrated our terror bear for Pixies on Parade, which will endear him to me for pretty much forever.

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

I've had several parents who have gushed about how exciting it is to see games geared toward their gamer tots or even adults who loved playing through Pixies on Parade and that always makes me smile. But the best is the kids, mine and others, who get so excited to play the game their parents do. We love seeing colored pages or smiling little gamers at the tables playing our adventures!

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

Absolutely! We are currently working very hard on a hardback book full of amazing goodies for players and GMs alike! Keep an eye out for Toolkits and Toy Boxes!

17. Do you have any goals for Playground Adventures that you have yet to obtain or overcome?

I think our biggest hurdle right now is just getting in front of people; we receive some pretty complimentary fan email and everyone we talk to seems to love what we do but there are a lot of people out there and we are by no means on the radar of more than a tiny fraction of them. We plan to have a booth at GenCon this year and are looking forward to hosting games and meeting new people!

18. Can you tell us a little about your Adventures in Wonderland?

Of course! I've always loved wonderland and have wanted since day one to foray into that realm for family friendly gaming. I initially had the idea to write them myself but naturally the time constraints I have kept them on the back burner so I instead asked one of our freelancers to give it a go as an after school adventure. And I'm glad I did! J Gray did such a good job on imagineering we not only agreed to a series of miniature adventure paths but hired him on as our Professor of Puzzles! He made a fun adventure for chapter one and went above and beyond by turning it into a board game of sorts to keep players engaged and help introduce those unfamiliar with them to grids and miniatures. I've just finished reading Chapter Two: Down the Rabbit Hole and think it will be just as fun as the first!

19. Playground markets itself as "family friendly" will there be content for older players as well or is your focus strictly young gamers?

There will be! And many of our current offerings have appealed to both children and adults. We get a good deal of adults who adore Pixies on Parade, for example. We also have a few products in the works that will be marketed for teen and up, one of which is a lengthy adventure featuring content from Ed Greenwood, but we won't release this line until we get our rating system firmly in place.

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

I'm a touch ADHD and constantly busy. Aside from raising my own little army of six, this is my full time job. There are days I sit down at the computer at 7:00 AM and barely leave it till bed time and I always seem to leave with just as much work to do as I did when I started. My email is weeks behind and I remember most things via a large accumulation of Post-it® Notes that occasionally also go unnoticed. Please don't feel slighted if I haven't answered you. If you haven't heard from me in a reasonable time frame absolutely reach out and see if your missive was eaten by the void of my not-so-stellar memory.


Want more Adventure within the Imperiums Campaign Setting?

Feast Hall of Ash

AMPAIGN SECCIF

AMPAIGN SECTING

AN ADVENTURE FOR 4 CHARACTERS OF LEVELS 2-3

Dark Sails and L

ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE

PART TWO OF THE PLIGHT OF THE TUATHA ADVENTURE PATH BY WILLIAM MOOMAW

GI

SECC

Continue The Journey:

- Part One: Feast Hall of Ash
- Part Two: Vasily's Woe
- Part Three: Dark Sails and Dark Words
- Plight of the Tuatha Campaign Guide
- And More!

AVAILABLE ONLINE AT IMPERIUMSCS.COM!

ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE

ords

ATHFIDER ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE

BRING ENDZEITGEIST TO GEN CON!

ROGUE GENIUS GAMES

LEGENDARY GAMES

KOBOLD PRESS

EVERYMAN GAMING

RITE PUBLISHING

AAW

FGG

LPJ

PATHWAYS MAGAZINE





Book of Icons (13th Age Compatible)

Publisher: Rite Publishing **Reviewer:** Endzeitgeist **Stars:** 4 stars out of 5

This massive pdf clocks in at 46 pages, 1 page front cover, 1 page editorial, 1 page SRD, 1 page back cover, leaving us with an impressive 42 pages of content, so let's take a look!

All right, at this point it's not a big secret that I'm not the biggest fan of 13th Age's vanilla icons – while recent installments of 13th Age Monthly and similar supplements have added dimensions to some of them, I still consider them to be a bit too archetypical. Similarly, the rather freeform approach to icons can be challenging for a GM, which is why this pdf provides pretty much a rather simple, yet more streamlined and concise nomenclature regarding icons and the interaction with them.

A proxy, for example, would be an NPC that serves as a reliable intermediary/liaison between PCs and icon, meaning that your low level PCs don't always get to hassle their icon, diminishing the effectiveness of actually interacting with them. An investment is a gift, an object or piece of information that provides a permanent advantage in the grand scheme of things, while an event would be a single occurrence that fits the theme of the respective icon. Similarly, the pdf provides the term of "thematic adjustment", which means that the GM reskins a given area to fit more closely with the themes of the respective icons.

As a nice nod to one of the cooler aspects of Rite Publishing's conversion of the superb Breaking of Forstor Nagar-module, the pdf also provides dead simple, elegant basic rules for hazardous terrain/ attacks by the terrain. Two thumbs up!

Now before I get into the nit and grit of the respective icons featured within these pages, I'd be grossly negligent to mention an aspect that may well enhance your 13th Age GMing prowess, particularly if you are a relatively new GM-the rather handy stepby-step break-down and explanation of Relationship Dice and how to handle icons in the game. This section is VERY detailed and, particularly for GMs that aren't as good at improvising, pure gold – with advice on staging events, balance-considerations regarding aforementioned investments and thematic adjustments, it is a handy section to have, though one more experienced GMs won't require. Now I mentioned new icons, so what's their schtick? Well, basically, the 6 new icons herein are based on 6 cards of Tarot's major arcana, with the first, the Fool being reimagined as the adventurer. (And yes, dear fans of the Persona-franchise, I'm thinking the same thing here and really want to expand that aspect...) The general presentation of the respective icons in this supplement sport information regarding heroic, ambiguous and villainous adventurers and d8 themes that can be mixed with the following to provide contexts relevant for the icon. Each of the icons sports a d6-table for proxies, events and investments that can be blended with the aforementioned leitmotif. Each of these d6-tables sports negative spins for the respective entries.

Based on the reversed fool, the revolutionary would be the next icon – where the adventurer is happy-go-lucky and all about the challenges in a given moment, the revolutionary is methodical and exists to take a stand – particularly in the regular 13th Age context with its plethora of established icons, this guys makes for an interesting addition as a more methodical wildcard. The order, in contrast, based on the Emperor-card, is, as the card shows, perhaps the most redundant of these – while one can envision it as a cabal that enforces the status quo, the obvious thematic overlap with the emperor icon and similar icons is apparent, though conflict between the two may make for an interesting narrative.

A similar duality can be seen with the Cult of One, based on the reversed emperor – this one is basically rooted in the belief of individual exceptionalism and can be used to spin it in a priestess-like believe in a messianic figure or twisted towards an ideology seeking to create a new species under an enlightened leadership...and history has certainly provided ample of examples how horribly wrong this type of ideology can turn out. The Monster, based on the devil arcana, would be an icon that is useful for the opposition: Brute, vile, tainting evil, this icon would be the mirthless, raving sledgehammer as opposed to the diabolist's razor or the crusader's pragmatic discipline – the icon of vile perversion, mutation and unwholesome change.

The more elegant and less overt evil icon herein, the tempter, also based on the devil arcana, could be bast summed up as the more subtle part of that, providing some overlap with the diabolist – basically, you can envision the methodology here as the devilish equivalent to the monster's demonic brute force, more Faustian than brute force.

This pdf does not stop with these icons, though: The book also sports some handy tools to add depth to the game, beginning with 10 abbreviated NPC-

write-ups, several of which sport unique abilities alongside general guidelines and backgrounds as well as trappings. Beyond these, the book also sports no less than 7 sample organizations, ranging from the Fireworks, Demolishing and Quarry Blasting Company to the order of knight-hospitalers and adventurer guilds, the respective entries sport information on goals, structure, status and key areas of influence – but, as often, all may not be as it seems, which means that the GM is also presented with 6 secret agendas that include a claim for domination, being fronts for invaders from beyond and similar unpleasant, if classic twists.

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are top-notch, I noticed no significant glitches. Layout adheres to Rite Publishing's two-column full-color standard with nice, full-color artworks...though fans of Rite Publishing may have seen a couple of them before. The pdf comes fully bookmarked with nested bookmarks for your convenience.

Patryk Adamski's Book of Icons is a good read and particularly useful for less experienced GMs – anyone who has had issues with the presentation of icons in 13th Age and handling them in-game can consider this to be a useful, nice sourcebook – which is also pretty much the theme for this book: The general presentation of the new icons, NPCs etc. is overall solid, easy to grasp and well presented, providing some additional structure to the icon-rules, while retaining the flexibility championed by 13th Age. Novice GMs and those who had/expect to have issues with icons and relationship dice should consider this well worth the investment.

At the same time, while certainly not a bad book, personally, I didn't take much out of this book as a longtime veteran GM and someone who can improvise PFRPG-statblocks and whole adventures, I had no issues adjusting to the icon-mechanics of 13th Age. The new icons presented herein, by necessity of them being setting-agnostic, felt a bit opaque to me and while I like the Tarot-idea, the restriction to only 3 cards means that the new icons on their own can't really replace a pantheon of existing icons and, more jarringly to me, they offer quite a bit of serious thematic overlap with 13th Age's default icons – unnecessarily so, at least in my opinion. By emphasizing other aspects of e.g. the tempter or the order, they could have been made more distinct...but perhaps that's just me being spoiled and expecting something akin to what **Icons of Parsantium** or the Midgard icons delivered regarding facets and depth.

Please take my criticism of this book with a grain of salt, for, as mentioned above, I may simply not be the target audience – for less experienced GMs and those struggling with integrating icons, this pdf may well be a godsend, though veteran GMs get decidedly less out of this book. My final verdict will hence clock in at 4.5 stars, rounded down to 4 for the purpose of this platform – a good offering, though one that could have done a bit more to also provide material for the veterans.

You can get this handy book here on OBS!

Genius Guide to the Talented Witch

Publisher: Rogue Genius Games **Reviewer:** Endzeitgeist

Stars: 5 stars out of 5

This HUGE book clocks in at 57 pages, 1 page front cover, 1 page editorial 1 page SRD, leaving us with...54 pages of content. Yep, that's right... brutal!

The witch class, as rebuild in the talented line, mostly is identical in chassis to the base witch – though one noticeable discrepancy is an upgrade in skills per level from 2 + Int to 4 + Int, which may not be required for the witch in general and/or constitute a glitch.

At this point, I am assuming you're familiar with teh concept of the talented class redesigns – basically, you have class features as a grab-bag, taken from archetypes and codified as two types of "talents" – hence, talented. D'uh. Anyways, talents are usually less valuable, while edges constitute more crucial class components. The talented witch begins play with 4 edges and 1 talent and then gets a talent at 2nd level and alternates between gaining talents and edges at every level. Major talents are unlocked at 10th level, grand talents at 18th level. Got that? Great. Now you already basically know how the class operates.

Where appropriate, brackets denote the type of archetype an ability is taken from and edges and talents are grouped by basic type – want a hag-style witch? Consult that line and you get them all – bite, claws, etc. Want a familiar? that's an edge. Occult prowess via Psychic Sensitivity? Edge. Patron? Edge. Speaking of which – you *can* be patron-less! Oh, and you can be either a spontaneous or prepared witch via these rules (yes, spells per day tables provided) – but here's the thing: Spellbook or similar spellcasting conduit that allows you to learn spells beyond leveling? Well. Edge. And no spellcasting does not simply progress – you have to take one edge on a level sufficiently high to get access to spells of a new level – which means full spellcasting with eat your edges like crazy. And

no, you can't combine prepared and spontaneous spellcasting to make a low-level abuse-scenario in e.g. an E6-campaign. Sorry...wait. No. I'm not. That's a good catch.

Beyond the massive, ridiculous amount of edges, over 140 talents await. Yes, you read that right, and yes, once again, they are grouped by category. Beyond this, however, the pdf also collates all hose familiar options including special benefits for your convenience. And the Improved Familiars. And TEMPLATED Improved Familiars. Oh, have I mentioned the list of patrons? The list of patron domains? Or the huge, massive, compiled witch spell list that incorporates all the big Paizo hardcovers, including Occult Adventures? These massive, exceedingly handy appendices are very, very useful, not just for players aspiring to make talented witches, but also for GMs.

Oh, right, hexes...I should talk about them, right? Well, they're talents marked with an asterisk. Yes, that simple. And yes, the pdf does remember to state the synergy-clause for feats and abilities like Extra Hex etc..

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are top-notch, I noticed no significant glitches. Kudos! Layout adheres to Rogue Genius Games' two-column full-color standard and sports a blending of full-color artworks of different styles, several of which, though not all of them, fans of 3pps may recognize from other publications. The pdf comes fully bookmarked with nested bookmarks for your convenience.

Stephen Rowe of the four horsemen is definitely a BEAST. This massive tome transcends in scope even the older talented class-pdfs, is crafted with his trademark precision and makes a lot of sense from a customization standpoint – with this, you can make just the witch you always wanted - which witch? Well, the witch which I wanted to make was a whitehaired dwarf with bonethrall that masquerades as a bum. Got the rules. What more can one ask for? Well, not much - just one piece of advice - with great power comes...*slap* Sorry. this one's so trite, but it's true - the customization options here are powerful, but they also place responsibility on the player, so choose wisely, young padawan! My final verdict will, also thanks to the *HUGE* and extremely useful amount of supplementary lists etc., clock in at 5 stars + seal of approval.

You can get this glorious tome <u>here on OBS</u>!

Oh, and btw.: The MASSIVE Talented Bestiary, which codifies monsters to be modular and awesome is currently being funded with only 4 days to go, so check it out here!

Endzeitgeist out.



In The Company of Dragons (5e)

Publisher: Rite Publishing **Reviewer:** Endzeitgeist **Stars:** 4 stars out of 5

The conversion to 5e of the massive book on playable dragons clocks in at 29 pages, 1 page front cover, 1 page editorial, 1 page SRD, 2 pages of advertisement,

which leaves us with 24 pages of content, so let's take a look, shall we?

Okay, so the first thing you need to know as a 5th edition player – the In the Company of...-series started off as a PFRPG-exclusive line of unusual races that codified monstrous races as balanced player options, often utilizing a class to represent progression into becoming a proper full-blown member of that race. This class was optional and thus allowed you to play the race sans progressing in it, at the cost of losing the ability-progression you'd associate with the respective monstrous entity. In the Company of Dragons was arguably the biggest of these books and will become even bigger soon, with an upgraded kickstarted version waiting in the wings.

You have to know a couple of other things: I LOATHE the concept of playing dragons. As a person. I hate it. Seriously. Not as much as I hate Dragonlance and dragon companions, but still. I want my dragons to be the huge, big, bad bosses, the nigh-unbeatable army-squashing apex-predators. It's a personal thing, though and, diligent review that I am, I actually reviews the original ItC:Dragons. And, picture me saying this through gritted teeth...I actually really liked it. Damn.

Why? Well, the reasons for this are manifold, but at least partially are found in the superb in-game prose provided: You see, Rite Publishing's crunch books tend to be actually good reading experiences. I know, odd, right? Kidding aside, ItC-books are written from the perspective of a member of a given race, which here would be the taninim -a kind of protodragon that lives in an isolated area/demiplane/ suit your needs-type of locale (hence allowing easy integration into a given campaign setting), roughly aligned with Rite Publishing's Questhaven setting that is assumed as the backdrop of all their books. Before you groan - integration into just about any setting is dead simple – no big hassle required. So yeah, by making this decision, the author managed to make dragons viable sans making wimps out of the dragons our players came to fear.

Here's the next thing, though: Beyond this interesting narrative framework, the dragons

depicted herein actually also, in the PFRPG-version, had a fearsome array of power and customization options to tailor-make just about any type of dragon you wanted...and they were pretty high up on the PFRPG-power-scale. (In play, this did even somewhat out since most people will try to take down the big, nigh-impossible to overlook dragon...) Anyways, enough of a history lesson – why should you care? Well, as you may have noticed, 5e has a bit of a different design aesthetic and power-level than PFRPG: A conversion of such magnificent beasts has to walk a very thin line indeed...but does it succeed?

Well, racial traits-wise, taninim get Con and Cha-increases by +1, darkvision, proficiency in in Perception and Insight and may hold weapons in your claws, but make attacks with them at disadvantage and only walk half your speed. The quadruped stature of taninim means that your slotarray is changed and they get a bite that uses Strength and deals 1d4 piercing damage...oddly sans gaining proficiency in the bite. 3 subraces are provided truescales get +1-increases to Str and Wis and a "fly" speed of 30 feet. That should be flying speed in 5e. In a formatting glitch, Deadly Tail is written twice and nets you 1d8 (2d8 if Large or greater in size) Strengthgoverned bludgeoning with a range of 10 ft....as a bonus action. Not "as a bonus action when making a melee attack". As a bonus action. Oh, and you get a wing attack that deals 10-ft.-AoE-damage to nearby foes and has the potential to knock them prone on a failed Dex save with DC being governed by Strength.

Lung dragons get an increase of Strength by 2 and walking as well as climbing speed of 40 feet as well as +1 natural armor and spines that deal damage to creatures grappling the lung. Lung are proficient with their claws and deal 1d6 base damage with them. Feykin dragons increase their Dexterity by 2 and are of a tiny size, with a base walking speed of 20 ft and a fly speed of 30 feet. They gain advantage on saves versus being charmed and "cannot be put to sleep." They also learn one sorceror-cantrip governed by Charisma.

So, base-race-wise, we do have an issue here – base flying speed. Now while there already are precedents for flying races in 5e, a GM should take heed in this regard and always remember what great targets those flying PCs make... Apart from the minor hiccups mentioned, though, this iteration of the taninim can be considered a well-crafted option.

The pdf also provides class options: The Scaled Juggernaut fighter gets a new fighting style, namely claws and scale – which nets proficiency with claws (base damage 1d8) and also nets you +1 AC. Claws are improved at 7th level, increasing their base damage and making them count as magical. 3rd level nets you resistance to fire and cold and adaption to extreme temperatures. 10th level provides proficiency in all saving throws and at 15th level, you can combine a Dash with a melee attack that can drop foes prone on a failed save and at 18th level, these juggernauts can make claw attacks after reducing a foe to 0 HP – as a free action. 5e usually codifies this type of behavior with bonus actions.

The dread white worm, the undragon of taninim myth, also gets a new cleric domain - with generally solid spell-selections and the option to use channel divinity to consume damage you incur. Any amount of damage. God-strike of deadly annihilation? No problem...at least if you still have a channel divinity uses left. Personally, I would have prefered a scaling amount of damage absorbed here - absolute "I absorb everything"type of abilities tend to cause issues sooner or later. 2/day, you can, at 6th level, disgorge a massive swarm of nasty grubs. Pretty awesome – at 17th level, when failing a death saving throw, you can spend your reaction to reassemble your body at full HP, at the cost of suffering "1 point of exhaustion" - which should be "level of exhaustion." The ability can only be used 1/day – but still: Damn cool.

Sorcerors may elect to become trueblood sorcerors, gaining a draconic essence (more on that later) at 1st level, but there is a chance of material components being consumed in you casting spells – and yes, this means that these sorceror have to eat the components before casting spells...which can btw. result in rather hilarious roleplaying for the more disgusting components. These sorcerors also get a breath weapon with short rest recharge that increases in potency and can be improved via "sorceror points" – which do not exist – that should be "Sorcery Points". Higher levels increase these potencies and unlock a second draconic essence.

The pdf also contains the conversion of aforementioned racial paragon class, obviously the draconic exemplar, who gets d12 HD and no armor, weapon or tool proficiencies with saves being Str and Int and three skills chosen from Arcana, Athletics, History, Insight, Intimidation, Nature, Persuasion and Survival. The class gets no starting equipment, but begins play with proficiency in claws that scale from 1d6 to 1d12. Claws can be used as an attack action AND as a bonus action. You also get an AC of 10 + Dex-mod+Con-mod, courtesy of your scales. Your size increases at 5th level from Small to Medium, then by one step every 5 levels thereafter, with corresponding weight increase. Similarly each increases by +5 ft. at 10th level and 20th level. As a minor complaint, I think Lung taninim should probably get some

replacement benefit here. Bite attacks scale up from 1d6 to 2d10 in base damage. The base class also provides a draconic gift – 3 are provided and grant abilities at 1st, 6th, 11th and 17th level. The Gift of the Behemoth allows you to regain hit points (short rest recharge) as a bonus action and renders you immune to being frightened. Personally, I think Pinion Strike needs a save – striking a foe with an opportunity attack automatically sens the creature prone to the floor...which is a bit...well. Odd. Flinging foes sans dealing damage is cool and trampling foes similarly rocks.

Gift of the ancients provides elemental bonus damage to bite and claws (OUCH) as well as a shield and reflecting magic that targets you back at the caster is nasty. While this is wording-wise pretty much in line with established wording, it imho could have used a bit of clarification regarding AoE-effects for e.g. spells like fireball etc. - since 5e got rid of the "target"-line in the spellstatblock, this can otherwise be a bit problematic/ cause confusion. Not a bad gripe, mind you, but one I noticed. The gift also nets you an elemental aura. The gift of the third eye provides a charming gaze that improves over the levels. On a nitpicky side, the 6th level ability's light should probably specify the spellcasting attribute for it on a design aesthetic level, but as written, it is functional.

The class also undergoes dracomorphosis, which is the name for all the aforementioned attack/size/ weight-increases - with feykin dragons gaining the option to ignore them for spells based on Cha gained instead and advantage on Dexterity (Stealth)-checks. I already mentioned draconic essence - these basically determine sclae-color, damage type of your breath weapon and its shape and also offer a compulsion, basically a drawback – to e.g. have to save when trying to retreat, etc. – a total of 20 such essences are provided and allow you to tailor the chassis to generate the taninim you want to make. Aforementioned breath weapon is, fyi, unlocked at 2nd level and 3rd level provides a single alternate humanoid form so your taninim doesn't have to wait outside the dungeon that's too small for him. Ability score improvements work as usual and extra attacks are gained at 5th and 14th level. 7th level provides advantage on initiative rolls and 9th renders your claws magical. At 13th level, you can crush foes beneath you and at 18th, you get a terrifying roar - recharge durations for these class features make sense.

The pdf provides also a significant selection of feats and while their formatting looks rather Pathfinder-ish, they still very much are products of 5e – i.e. they provide significant benefits, usually more than one...and if they provide only one benefit...well, then they at least offer one brutal benefit – take Appendage Severing. This one makes your bite crits incapacitate targets until the start of your next turn and makes them drop an item they're holding. Similarly, size-increases for non-paragonclass taninim are cool and necessary feats like Flyby Attack are included – though here, the wording could be clearer - "If you target a creature with a melee attack, you no longer provoke opportunity attacks when you fly out of that creature's reach." All right. For how long? As written, one attack suffices to never provoke opportunity attacks from that target again -which is clearly not the intent. A high-level, balanced option to decapitate foes can be btw. also found here – and yes, it has legendary action, head-less etc. caveats.

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are very good on a formal level, slightly less refined on a rules-level – while the basic rules-language is precise and to the point, there are some minor hiccups to be found here. Layout adheres to Rite Publishing's two-column full-color standard and the pdf sports a ton of glorious dragon-artworks in full-color. The pdf comes fully bookmarked for your convenience.

Wendall Roy and Joe Trotter's conversion of this book to 5e proved to be honestly much better than I imagined it would be - the taninim as an intricate, customizable power-house have been transported well to the 5e-rules and generally are a fun race to play...but also, much like in PFRPG, a very strong race. While I'd hesitate to call it overpowered, the race itself is certainly on the strong side and honestly, when comparing lung with truescales, I think the lung got the short end of the stick. There are some components that I consider to be a bit strong, with most of them being that due to bonus actions for additional attacks not being tied to melee, allowing for a bit to much flexibility for my tastes. As for rules-language, while there are some minor Pathfinderisms herein, these do not unduly impede the functionality of the options presented herein.

All in all, this is a well-crafted, if not perfect conversion of an exceedingly hard to convert book and as such, this must be called impressive. Still, with the couple of flaws noted throughout the review, I can't award this my highest honors. Hence, my final verdict will clock in at 4.5 stars, roundd down to 4 for the purpose of this platform.

You can get this massive racial book <u>here on</u> <u>OBS</u> and <u>here on d20pfsrd.com's shop!</u>

Endzeitgeist out.



In the Company of Unicorns

Publisher: Rite Publishing **Reviewer:** Endzeitgeist **Stars:** 4 stars out of 5

This installment of Rite Publishing's series of racial sourcebooks clocks in at 41 pages, 1 page front cover, 1 page editorial, 1 page SRD, 2 pages of advertisement,

leaving us with 36 pages of content, so let's take a look! This review was moved up in my review-queue as

a prioritized review at the request of my patreons.

So, this time around, it's unicorns – but what type? Well, obviously not the classic arcane mysticism of the middle ages that equated the unicorn with Jesus Christ - but neither is this just a rehash of the classic, noble trope, though this does feature in the equation. The unicorns, or re'em as they call themselves, as depicted herein, are a noble breed with a tendency towards good and an ancient history. The re'em, as depicted herein in vivid prose, do feature a long and storied history and they have, indeed, retreated from many interactions with fickle men. If anything, the theme and general feeling the prose evoked was one of subdued melancholy and yet, hope - the closest emotional analogue would probably be the blending of the aesthetics and mindset of the wonderful classic "The Last Unicorn" with a fantasy world with e.g. traditions like the Great Gallop of the herds both making sense from an in-game point of view and aptly taking visual associations from the classic piece of animation, blending them in an evocative manner. And yes, should you be new to the series this reads well, for the prose and racial information is written from the perspective of one of these unicorns and yes, there are regional differences in fluff, with unobtrusive nods to the implicit Questhaven setting of Rite Publishing shining through here and there sans compromising adaptability.

Racial stats-wise, the re'em receive +2 Con and Wis, -2 Dex, are small magical beasts (but do not gain any traits save those listed), have low-light vision and darkvision 60 ft and are quadrupeds, which modifies carrying capacity and limits slots and armors. They gain +2 to Knowledge (Nature) and Survival and increase all conjuration (healing) spell CLs cast within 10 ft. of them by +1. Re'em get +2 natural AC and a 1d4 natural horn attack that receives 1.5 times Str-mod to damage. It should be noted that the latter may not specify that it's obviously a primary natural attack, but since they don't gain hoof-attacks per default, I'll let that stand as an obvious and negligible minor gripe.

The Re'em get a full-blown age, height and weighttable and may choose two alternate arrays of ability modifiers: +2 Int and Wis, -2 Con (not a fan, a bit lopsided) and +2 Str and Cha, -2 Int. Interesting: These choices do also modify the "minor" racial traits for a better rounded variant than usual in each. A powerful aura of corruption (+1 CL for negative energy-based spells and SPs), walking across water, fire resistance 5, endure elements vs. the cold and +1 to atk. vs. lions and leonine foes (like chimeras, dragonnes, etc.) can be found. Battling unnatural foes, SR equal to 6 + level, free movement over desert terrain, swim speedtransformation as a swift action...the alternate racial traits are diverse and varied...and they come with an important secondary balancing mechanism beyond the limited slots. Unicorns, obviously...have no hands, which makes certain operations not as simple as one would expect them to be.

The race also sports FCOs for the druid, fighter, hunter, magister, oracle, paladin, ranger, sorceror, taskshaper and witch hunter classes as well as for the racial paragon class introduced in this book, the Silvermane Exemplar.

However, unlike many a racial booklet, this sports an intriguing component - the Re'em Hero universal archetype, which nets the racial paragon's natural attack progression and a very limited array of alicorn abilities and options for growth (Medium at 5th, Large at 10th level) – however, at the same time, this archetype does cost the classes: Re'em alchemists lose throw anything and bombs, for example. Similarly, the class-array, which cover the traditional classes and the ACG-array alongside some classics from Rite Publishing and Rogue Genius Games is extensive and varied in the modifications employed - sorcerors are, for example, locked into the new unicorn bloodline, though the progression of bloodline powers and feats. These, just fyi, allow you to alleviate certain conditions a limited amount of times per day, cleanse targets and later gain some immunities traditionally associated with unicorns.

Beyond this universal archetype, the pdf also sports two class-specific ones, with the Forest Guardian Druid gaining the option to attune herself to a limited selection of domains and spontaneously cast the attuned domain spells, while the Arboreal Equine ranger gains woodland stride and basically is a hunter-themed short and simple archetype.

Now I already mentioned the racial paragon class – so what does it offer? The Silvermane Exemplar gets 2+Int-mod skills per level, d10 and only proficiency with natural attacks. The class gains full BABprogression and good Fort- and Ref-saves. At 1st level and every odd level thereafter, the class gains a so-called alicorn ability. These abilities are powered by a pool equal to 1/2 class level (min 1) + Charisma

modifier. For as long as the character has at least one of these pool points, they can manifest mage hand at will as an SP, eliminating the crippling factor of not having hands – which is btw. pretty important for the universal archetype also has this option. Additionally, a point from this pool can be expended to enhance temporarily the silvermane's horn in a way similar to the magus' enhancements, with net bonuses increasing by +1 every 4 levels thereafter. At 5th level, a similar weapon property-exchange can be used.

So that would be the base functionality. Beyond this, the alicorn abilities are pretty diverse: The Alicorn charm allows the silvermane to expend a point from her pool to create a talisman that cannot be regained while it exists. Said charm can then be enchanted and reabsorbed, granting potentially, at least for some time, a significantly powerful god-horn at higher levels... though only for a couple of days and the higher the power, the lesser its duration will be. Not for every campaign great...but unique and costly enough. The abilities thus run a gamut between unique utility and modifications and active/passive benefits - increased reach while the silvermane has at least one point in her pool. Short-range, scaling and upgradeable teleportation makes for a pretty powerful tool for a full BAB-class, particularly since it is available at 1st level. However, the fact that it is limited by the pool and that it has a mishap chance when teleporting beyond line of sight act as balancing mechanisms here. Shapechanging into an alternate form, increased damage output foe ONE natural attack, better armor...pretty cool. At the same time, first level unassisted flight powered by the pool can be problematic, though, once again, the pool does limit this sufficiently for most rounds. At 7th level, pounce can be chosen and evil exemplars can ooze powerful toxins. And yes, at high levels, *telekinesis* and trampling is possible. Limited SPs can also be found. I mentioned natural attacks, right? Well, 6th level provides hooves 11th bite and 16th a tail attack, all of which are properly codified regarding their type. (Though, as a nitpick you should ignore, damage-type, if relevant, needs to be looked up.) Now, like the universal archetype, these exemplars grow – to Medium size at 4th, to Large size at 8th level, with both allowing for investments to be used to further enhance the bonuses gained.

Investments? Yep, for the silvermane exemplar chooses at herd at first level, of which 6 are provided. Herds may be changed at 4th level and every 4 levels thereafter, also allowing for the reassignment of the investments chosen and reflect changing playstyles and party-dynamics. Each herd grants a herd ability that ranges from active at-will *stabilize* per touch to adding Cha instead of Con to Fort-saves and maximum negative hit points. A minor complaint: Some of these grant class skills – I assume the bonus is lost upon changing herds? Or isn't it? I'm not sure whether this is considered to be retraining or more akin to a multiclass operation in terms of its rules. Still, a none-too-grievous glitch. Each herd also sports several investments to choose from - these are gained at 2nd level and every even level thereafter and determine the capstone final investment gained. Unless otherwise noted, these investments have a save of DC 10 + 1/2 class level + Cha-mod when required and generally, the abilities tend to be less directed at resource management, though tie-ins do exist - certain alicorn abilities like Trample, etc. that only work while the silvermane has points can e.g. be made available at all times with one such investment of the ferocity herd, which btw. can also gain DR, combat feats - you get the idea.

Basically, each herd is somewhat akin to a mystery with a huge bunch of revelations you can freely choose. On a formal level, I noticed e.g. a nonitalicized ability header here and one instance of the investment-header missing between herd ability and investment list. Indeed, the editing here is not as tight as in the rest of the pdf – take e.g. the Magic herd's alicorn bolt that can cause class level x d6 untyped magical damage a very limited amount of times per day in a 60 ft.-line....only to then talk about "damage of the selected type." I *think* this ought to instead provide a proper damage type...untyped damage, in spite of daily limitations, is always clunky in its interactions with creatures, defensive capabilities etc. Overall, somewhat baffling since e.g. the rune-traps they can make get the usual energy type codification done right. Pretty cool - one ability takes the "hit chance"-idea and provides it as a quasi-hex. In case you missed that Rite Publishing-idea: It's pretty much the opposite of a miss chance: When you'd miss, you still have a chance to hit the target! And yep, hex-24hour-caveat keeps it in line. I also like an exclusive resistance to antimagic effects and spells, representing the uniquely magical nature of these beings.

If you'd prefer your silvermanes less magical, I'd like to point you towards the nature herd, where *dominating* enemies, alicorn pool-powered fascinate effects via tail whirling, favored terrain and an animal companion at -3 levels beckon. On the downside, the moonlight globe gained here once again deals untyped damage...and by now we all know how I think about that...even though I do love the visuals evoked here. One ability that may be in line with lore and restricted in daily uses, but also remains very frustrating, would be a curse available at 12th level: Save or suck, spellcasters – if you fail, that's it – no



more arcane spellcasting. Not even SPs. Curse. Have fun. I've seen those mechanics before and I didn't like them back then - I still don't like them here, though at least the limited uses mean that this won't be used all the time...and it requires an attack. Still: GMs beware, silvermanes are very mobile and one attack can wreck your BBEG. Cool on the other hand: Size-increases to a maximum of HUGE and a cornucopia of alternate movement rates...which are somewhat underpriced at 10th level: Burrow 30, Climb 90, Fly (good) 90 ft, Swim 90 ft, blindsense 30 ft., scent, constrict (which attacks?), ferocity, grab, jet, poison, pounce, rake, trample, trip, web, +6 Str, -4 Dex, +6 natural armor. Granted, this lasts only one minute per level and has a daily cap...but still. Look at these qualities! Seriously??? All of them? At once? WTF?? I am pretty positive that this was supposed to be a list to select some of these abilities and not the totality, for trying to get all of these via buffs etc. is exceedingly costly...plus, the silvermane already is a pretty powerful class. As written, this ability's pretty broken, in spite of its limitations.

That being said, while there are some problematic components herein, there similarly are some awesome bits and pieces to be found here – the purity herd, for example, gains a pala-like lay on horn, use alicorn points to enhance saves of allies, send the undead to their resting places and tear down illusions with their horns and even reduce the severity of the most problematic of conditions. Silvermanes belonging to the proud herd gain a kind of resistance against being forced to roll multiple times and take the worse result and, at 10th level, they may perform combat maneuvers sans incurring AoOs – which is cool, particularly since the investment has the prerequisite of requiring 2 combat maneuver feats - but what constitutes a "combat maneuver feat" - I assume the usual Improved Trip/ Disarm/etc., but cases could be made for diverging interpretations. This is particularly baffling to me since the unseen herd actually properly specifies feattypes when it comes to Blind Sense and Blindsight as abilities gained. Still - the proud and unseen herd, with focuses on not being impeded and stealth respectively probably constitute my favorites herein.

Beyond the final investment granted by the herd, the class gains aa winged apotheosis with wing attacks, Leadership and similar powerful tricks as a capstone, making the character truly formidable...and very hard to kill. The class also has archetypes – the honored companion is an interesting one: Basically, you get a Bonded Rider (as per the new feat) and play the mount...which is interesting. And yes, regular re'em will NOT be ridden! Blackmanes would be the corrupt anti-silvermanes – with auras of corruption, alternate alicorn abilities and the corruption herd, these would be the evil unicorns so dreaded. Oh, and the specialize in Betrayal feats – basically the evil brother of teamwork feats, which alongside a selection of racial feats, close this pdf – these btw. can grant you an alicorn ability, more investments, mighty kicks...the like. And yes, I really get some evil ideas while looking at these betrayal feats.

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are rather good – though admittedly not as tight throughout the whole pdf as in quite a few Rite Publishing releases. There are some hiccups on a formal level, though none too much. More significant would be that the ruleslanguage sports some instances where damagetype classification or slightly more precise ruleslanguage would have helped. Layout adheres to Rite's two-column full-color standard and the pdf sports gorgeous artworks and comes fully bookmarked for your convenience.

BJ Hensley and Steven D. Russell have glimpsed into my twisted mind. Why? Because, believe it or not...I absolutely adore "The Last Unicorn." I always have the track on my MP3 player and have, unlike 98% of movies, watched it more than once without being bored out of my wits. (Yes, I mean America's version of the song, just fyi.)

Yeah, I'm a guy and I love the iconography, the subtext - everything about unicorns is simply evocative to me. And know what? I really like this pdf. I really enjoy how the hand-less/shapechangeissues have been addressed. I love how many aspects work. At the same time, though, there are some grains of sand in the machinery of this pdf - while the majority of options works exceedingly well, even while juggling complex concepts, there are a couple of hiccups. Take e.g. the aforementioned short-range teleportation that is a component of how the silvermane retains its movement superiority (powerful for full BAB-classes) - it does not note that it is a conjuration [teleportation]-effect, nor a CL, which means that its upgrade at 8th level, which duplicates dimension door, may now suddenly no longer work under certain conditions, while the teleport worked before. YES. I know, I know. I'm a stupid bastard. Any GM worth her or his salt can handle that and knows how it works. I know. Still, RAW, this is in here.

Still, the like would not and does not sink the pdf. While the silvermane is a very powerful melee combatant, the slot-restrictions and later, size-increases alongside the pool-based mechanics sans means of regaining the points actually evens out what looks much worse on paper than

one would expect – while not too great for lowmagic campaigns and grittier adventuring, in most campaigns the silvermane and options herein will even out as a balanced option. In grittier campaigns, less combat-focused silvermanes will probably still work if predicated by a proper agreement between players and GM...so yeah, overall, this is a nice job. At the same time, a couple of the abilities do sport some uncharacteristic oversights pertaining damagetype, some minor paste-errors...and some less minor hiccups. Similarly, not a fan of the save-or-suck tricks or the use of untyped damage in some cool abilities.

But then again, this is pretty much "The Last Unicorn - the class"...with literally everything you expect to see. And it's a great read that actually gets me excited, that inspires me. So...how do I rate this? Well, I have to say, I do consider this somewhat less refined that the take on rakshasa and the hiccups do extend to the mechanics in some instances. However, at the same time, this does make up for a lot in evocative prose, unique abilities and the sheer fact that it does not go the easy route – the vast majority of options in this book are unique and not something other classes could do - so it's not a "I poach class feature xyz" experience and when it does stumble, it at least does so valiantly in the pursuit of uniqueness instead of redundancy. In the end, I will hence settle on a final verdict of 3.5 stars, rounded up to 4 for the purpose of this platform, with the caveat that GMs should take a good look at how some of the abilities interact before allowing them.

You can get this cool, if not perfect book <u>here on</u> <u>OBS</u> and <u>here on d20pfsrd.com's shop!</u>

Endzeitgeist out.



Into the Wintery Gale Mini-Dungeon: Ways of the Old

Publisher: Justin Andrew Mason **Reviewer:** Endzeitgeist **Stars:** 5 stars out of 5

This pdf clocks in at 2 pages and is a mini-dungeon. This means we get 2 pages content, including a solid map (alas,

sans player-friendly version) and all item/monsterstats hyperlinked to d20pfsrd.com's shop and thus, absent from the pdf, with only deviations from the statblocks being noted for the GM.

Since this product line's goal is providing short diversions, side-quest dungeons etc., I will not expect mind-shattering revelations, massive plots or particularly smart or detailed depictions, instead tackling the line for what it is. Additionally, it should be noted that this is intended for use in conjunction with the upcoming "Into the Wintery Gale"-saga. This being an adventure-review, the following contains SPOILERS. Potential players may wish to jump to the conclusion.

.

Still here?

All right!

Sorrow's Snekkja may be the key to quenching the evil slumbering within Serpent Lake – unfortunately, the most reliable source who may know about this elusive item would be the well-known skald Boddi Boddason, whose last known destination was the crypt of a forgotten jarl – hence, the pdf are off to examine exactly this complex – and the PCs indeed find it...and the hints of Boddi's presence, drawing them further and further into the complex, only to find a makeshift office...and the skald deceased...but thankfully, his journal does provide a hint...but the PCs will have to escape the powerful aptrgangrs that stand guard within these confines – and yes, the combat here can be avoided, the curse broken – if the PCs are well-versed and smart enough to realize the option...

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are very good, I noticed no significant glitches. Layout adheres to a beautiful 2-column full-color standard and the pdf comes sans bookmarks, but needs none at this length. Cartography is full color and surprisingly good for such an inexpensive pdf, but there is no keyless version of the map to print out and hand to your players. The pdf does sport one nice piece of original full-color art – kudos!

Justin Andrew Mason's fourth mini-dungeon does it right: We have a great, flavorful build-up; evocative read-aloud text...and non-combat means to resolve the danger. Traps and even a bit of investigation set-up (optional) are provided – this is great and makes the formula work in spite of its brevity. My final verdict is 5 stars.

You can get this great mini-dungeon <u>here</u> on <u>OBS</u> and <u>here on d20pfsrd.com's shop!</u> **Endzeitgeist out.**



Letters from the Flaming Crab: Culinary Magic

Publisher: Flaming Crab Games **Reviewer:** Endzeitgeist **Stars:** 5 stars out of 5

This installment of the Letters from the Flaming Crab series clocks in at 12 pages, 1 page front cover, 1

page editorial, 1 3/4 pages of SRD, leaving us with 8 1/4 pages of content, so let's take a look!

As in the first installment, we begin with a missive from captain Kelly Shell, captain of the planesand worlds-jumping eponymous Flaming Crab, conveniently translated and compiled for us by J Gray. This page also consolidates Craft (cooking) and Craft (baking) into Craft (culinary), which is a sensible step.

So, how does culinary magic work? Well, each dish has a name, a difficulty for Craft (culinary) to make the dish, a description, list of ingredients, how many servings the dish yields, how long it takes to make the dish, actual directions for making the dish...and, obviously, magical benefits for consuming the dish. It should be noted that the cost for the dishes has been left open – since e.g. availability of owlbear eggs etc. fluctuates widely. While this does leave quite a bit of control in the hands of the GM, it ultimately does feel like a bit of a cop-out: At least a guideline for pricing (perhaps akin to how 5e classifies its items by scarcity?) would imho have been appreciated.

Now here is a cool benefit for all of us who are inclined to actually try recipes from books like this – one can actually create these dishes – sure, IRL I don't have manticore meat for the respective chilli but I can substitute other meat for it! The relatively detailed step-by-step cooking directions make this component rather interesting, particularly if you're like me and enjoy making food. Benefits-wise, we can find coin-like cookies that enhance one's Appraise-checks, tacos that provide temporary hit points or fire resistance providing curry - though that requires a Fort-save to consume. Also irl. Why? It includes a naga jolokia - a ghost pepper, one of the hottest ingredients known to man. As a dedicated chilli head, I urge caution in this one regard – ghost peppers are ONLY for the dedicated chilli head, so if habaneros already pose an insurmountable obstacle for you, I'd suggest confining this recipe to the realm f fantasy alone...however, if you are like me and LOVE the really brutal heat...well, then this one can be pretty awesome!

Polymorph-duration enhancing sandwiches, black-eyed peas that grant you low-light vision and darkvision, Diplomacy-enhancing herb twists – I really, really enjoyed these recipes – not only for their benefits, but also due to their quality of breaking down the line between in- and out-game.

This is not where the pdf ends, though -a total of 9 traits provide connoisseur-options for the core races, longer duration from magical food or better Craft (culinary) – and yes, they get bonus type/trait-class right. 4 feats provide means to get more magical recipes, more servings and even ingredient substitution.

The pdf also sports mundane items – from the armored apron that nets you DR 2/slashing and fire resistance 2 (and may be a bit too inexpensive) to batter mixes, frying pans or hand juicers, these are generally cool. 4 magic items further complement this book, including declouding whisks, vessels that grant resistances to the consumer based on the food's temperature, breadboards that can generate food...pretty cool. The pdf also sports the culinary weapon property that enhances cooking and reduces prep time.

Finally, the pdf offers two archetypes - the kitchen witch gets a special athame that provides spells (but unlike a familiar can't learn new ones apart from leveling). To make up for his shortcoming, the athame increases autonomously in power and the kitchen witch receives 4 more hexes chosen from a list. Finally, at 4th level, the kitchen witch gets a unique and cool ability - they can bake hexes into their food, which allows them to either affect targets or share the hex's effects with allies. This can be used 3+ athame's enhancement bonus+ Int-mod times per day and allows you to grant some otherwise less useful hexes to allies...or royally screw over any adversaries you tricked into eating your food. And guess what? I really like this archetype. It does something unique. Kudos!

The second one would be the Performing Chef bard, who gets Culinary Magic as a bonus feat, diminished spellcasting and an appropriately modified proficiency list. Instead of some of the classic performances, the archetype gains a nauseating performance, TWF-ing and an attack that adds Intimidate to his assault...and they use Perform (culinary) instead of Craft (culinary) while also being capable of quickly storing and drawing items. Once again, a fun archetype.

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are top-notch this time around – I noticed no hiccups or issues. Layout adheres to Flaming Crab Games' 2-column fullcolor standard and the pdf has some nice interior artworks in B/w. The pdf comes fully bookmarked for your convenience.

J Gray, David S McCrae, Angel "ARMR" Miranda -congratulations! Why? Because this humble little pdf is imho all killer, no filler. Get it? Filler? Culinary...All right, I'll hit myself for that one later. But for now: This is a surprisingly wellcrafted, humble and inspiring pdf – the recipes

are neat and work IRL and are appropriate for just about every table – from the gritty to the fantastic, one could make a point that these could even make sense in a no-magic setting. Yeah, that *is* pretty awesome. The supplemental material provides similarly is rather tight – from the neat traits to the items and archetypes, there is not much to complain about. Scratch that – I actually have no viable gripes, only criticism on the level of "okay, I would have done this slightly different, but it works this way and conforms to the requirements of concise rules-language."

In short – after the already very promising first letter, this one knocks the ball right out of the park – culinary magic herein is balanced fun, and can actually provide some different snacks for you and your group, irl. What more to ask? Well...I, for one...want seconds! The concise presentation and balanced archetypes provide a great addition and make sure that this pdf will leave you wanting more. Fun, unique and flavorful, this is a great example for a 5 star + seal of approval pdf.

You can get this awesome little pdf <u>here on</u> <u>OBS</u> and <u>here on d20pfsrd.com's shop!</u>

Endzeitgeist out.



Lucien's Guide Legends & Lies Publisher: Rite Publishing Reviewer: Endzeitgeist Stars: 5 stars out of 5

This installment of the Lucien's Guide-series for Rite Publishing's critically acclaimed Diceless system clocks in at 18 pages, 1 page

front cover, 1 page editorial, leaving us with 16 pages of content!

This pdf, presented as an account of famous Lucien, depicts various legends and ominous tales that make their rounds among the blessed beings capable of navigating the Grand Stair – generally, the respective entries begin with a brief legend that can be encountered, to then go on and discuss the truth... or one of it, behind the respective legend. The first of these we encounter would deal with Doorghuls – the legend of mimic-like creatures, masquerading as doors, waiting to swallow hapless travelers...

The second legend herein is a more complex one and one that will bring smiles to fans of the Dark Tower – it pertains the Fall of Gilead, reimagined as an inconceivably powerful world, one possibly shut down or destroyed by the Dwimmerlaik...or... well...perhaps they have chosen isolation? Instead of King's gunslingers, the fabled champions of this iteration of Gilead were the paladins and we do get concise rules for the 57 point paladin armor as a sample relic of fabled Gilead. By the way, have you heard about the darkened doors, that seemingly can't be opened, sealed from one side or another? For what reason, none can fathom...

Know how the Grand Stair is reasonably free of detritus? Well, in the drowned expanse, this is not the case, with partially and fully submerged doors leading...somewhere. To be more precise, the realms of a once unified lizard-like people called the Notar -and these fellows, as a whole race...can NATURALLY navigate the stairs. It's not rocket science to grasp the implications of such a race existing...and lets you gulp when thinking about the progenitors that engineered them. Lucien, btw., does not believe in the Old Ones that presumably exist beyond Eidolon and Umbra.

If you've read my review of the Gossamer World detailing the ramifications of colonization by the Incursion, you'll already be familiar with some of the problematic implications of this empire – which consider the Stair foremost a logistic problem – one they are methodically solving, step by step... and sure, their empire may have collapsed...but perhaps, they are just preparing themselves to rise...this time, with magic as well.

The legend of the infinite door is dismissed pretty quickly, but the nature of dragons and their interaction with the Stair...well, let's just say it's hard to find reliable sources. Oh, btw. – there is a section of the Grand Stair called God's Passage – where doors range from 60 ft – 200 ft....and if that doesn't unnerve you, you probably are a fool... particularly since they all lead to dead worlds, burning under a red sun. The pdf also talks about the forest of doors and Old Man Cavendish, who has lived through all tragedies of the Stair. Really cool: The cupboards – think of the Grand Stair, but only for interconnected cupboards...as though for mice or similar beings...

Finally, the pdf talks about broken stairs – the hypothesis being that the Grand Stair may shed sections of it, which then tumble as separate entities through time and space, but continue operating on a smaller scale...which is narrative gold.

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are top-notch, I noticed no glitches. Layout adheres to Rite Publishing's twocolumn full-color standard with ample of high quality, glorious full-color art and the pdf comes fully bookmarked for your convenience.

Rob Donoghue's Lucien's Guide to Legends and Lies is a truly inspiring read that provides not only ample intriguing ideas and narrative potential, it also lets you ask some important questions pertaining the nature of the Grand Stair, while providing an indirect glimpse at the psychology of those that travel its expanses as a social entity. This is an inspired pdf and well worth a final verdict of 5 stars + seal of approval.

You can get this inspiring guide <u>here on OBS</u>! **Endzeitgeist out.**



Mythic Monsters: Norse

Publisher: Legendary Games **Reviewer:** Endzeitgeist **Stars:** 5 stars out of 5

This installment of the Mythic Monsters - series clocks in at 34 pages, 1 page front cover, 1 page inside of front cover, 1 page editorial, 1 page SRD, 1 page ToC, 2

pages of introduction, 2 pages of advertisement, 1 page inside of back cover, 1 page back cover, leaving us with 23 pages of content, so let's take a look!

Okay, we begin this installment of mythic monsters not with feats or the like – no, we begin this with a pretty glorious array of monster options – namely 3 templates. It should be noted that both this series' installment on giants and colossal threats work exceedingly well with these: Two are relatively simple: The MR 1 CR +1 Runecaster and Tricksome Traveler templates are neat beyond codifying teh tropes of the runecaster like absorbing magic and that of the trickster traveler with many faces that can't be tied down, they are cool. More interesting than those two (which are already pretty damn cool), at least to me, would be the MR 3 CR +3 Jotun Thane template, which requires the base creature already have the giant and jotunblood giant templates – generating a mass of difficult terrain, unshakeable and suffused with mythic might conspire to make this template one of my go-to-upgrades for the often rather weak builds of giants in published modules. The pdf also sports some advice for building not yet fully grown linnorms, including an array of abilities associated with them -once again providing a helpful, cool selection of options for the GM.

But we're all here for the monsters, right? So let's see what this has to offer: We begin with the Cr 12/MR 5 Einherji: Beyond making the Challenge

of Single Combat, the base creature's signature ability more potent, these beings gain a complex, evocative form of ecstatic rage - including mythic power-based option to insert intervals of calm. Oh, and they are potent versus giants and emit an appropriately unearthly golden aura. All in all, a thoroughly well-crafted upgrade for a cool base creature. One of the most popular and well-known legends in the North pertains to the waterfallinhabiting Fossegrim, which is represented here in a CR 5/MR 2-iteration that features a powerful means of inciting unnatural lust as well as powerful, water-based abilities, the option to assume treasure forms and gain strange gifts from these watery tempters. The additional abilities here deserve special mention, for they allow the crature to function as our own mythology dictates instead of as a slimmed down version. The creature also comes with a neat full-color artwork, just fyi.

At the same CR and MR, the mythic Huldra is upgraded by getting increases of the base creature's abilities as well as access to a captivating song ability, once again coming closer to the real world mythological approximations. And then, there are the linnorms - and boyo, are they impressive: The cairn linnorm clocks in at CR 22/MR 9 and wrecks terrain as easily as the walking dead - it can even consume ghosts and become incorporeal! And you thought corporeal dragons were bad news... The CR 17/MR 7 crag linnorm may ignite creatures with his breath or poison and turn even exceedingly potent metal items into useless slag. This would btw. as good a place as any to comment on the options to enhance linnorm death curses with mythic power to *really* make the slayers rue the day they buried their weapons in the body of these fearsome predators.

The fjord linnorm clocks in at CR 20/MR 8 may forego tail attacks in favor of lethal blasts of water and devastate whole coastlines with their mythic power-enhanced tidal waves. They btw. also get a 1-page artwork. The ice linnorm at CR 21/ MR 8 can encapsulate itself in a powerful ice shell, greatly increasing the staying power of these adversaries...oh, and said shell can be detonated in an eruption of devastating shards. The CR 23/ MR 9 Taiga linnorm can extend its spikes and awaken the forests to annihilate the foolish mortals that dared to intrude upon their territory. The CR 25/MR 10 tarn linnorm can not only use multiple breath weapon forms, it can modify the cooldown of them via the surge die – which is an awesome idea!. Oh, and assuming a fluid form makes them more durable and dangerous...not that their lethal build would have required that, mind you!

49

The legendary norns, at CR 22/MR 9, lavishly depicted with a great piece of full color artwork, receives all the powerful abilities associated with the threads of fate - these can be manipulated to exert control over mortals...and manipulated to destroy them. Their shears are brutal and... snipping the threads is actually represented via a powerful save-or-die ability with a cooldown... nasty! At CR 10/MR 4 the svartalfar all get death attacks and may deliver a select array of SPs via a quickened variant of spellstrike...and their shadow dodge can be used more often via mythic power. The absolutely lavishly-rendered CR 15/MR 6 mythic valkyrie can negate death effects, fight on when mortals would have been eviscerated and they have a cool blessing that renders them nigh-unstoppable through metal...oh, and they can properly evoke the memories of battles once fought, both with magic and their powerful skald abilities...and constitute the very best take on the concept I have ever seen for any d20-iteration. Pure awesomeness that is only enhanced by the glorious artwork. While no Sleipnir is in here, an artwork of the creature can btw. be found.

And then there would be a single creature, which, on its own, is already more than ample reason to get this pdf – the most majestic build for the Fenris Wolf I have ever seen -at CR 30/MR 10, this beast can bite of hands (Hej Baldr!), emit a dread howl, grow to Huge size, create friggin' rivers with his saliva, burst forth with ridiculous speed, control all kinds of wolves – glorious. The one-page artwork of the chained wolf, standing in a sea of blood and armors of the slain is probably one of the coolest renditions of the creature I have ever seen. On a minor nitpick – two paragraphs of its fluff are bolded when they shouldn't be – but that's cosmetic.

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are top-notch, I noticed no grievous glitches. Layout adheres to Legendary Games two-column full color standard. The original pieces of full color art provided are high-quality and awesome – particularly the one-page full-color picture of the Fenris Wolf is simply awesome -if I had the financial means, I'd hang that as an original in print in my home...yeah, that awesome. The pdf comes fully bookmarked for your convenience.

Mike Welham, Jason Nelson, Alistair Rigg – gentlemen, you did it. Whenever I think I have seen the best this series has to offer, you one-up yourselves. The linnorms herein are consistent and sport similar abilities, but also feature very distinct and unique modifications. The supplemental templates are great. The artworks are simply superb (Kudos to Michael Jaecks, Matt Lewis, Chris McFann, Andrea Saavedra and Tanyaporn Sangsnit!) and the builds are as brutal as northern mythology. When I return to the savage north with my campaigns, be it via the Northlands Saga or AAW games' frontier-modules in Rybalka, I'll take this book and cackle with glee – what is in here simply makes you gush, grin and dream about the evocative, legendary confrontations awaiting -a true beauty, well worth a final verdict of 5 stars + seal of approval.

You can get these glorious creatures <u>here on</u> <u>OBS</u> and <u>here on d20pfsrd.com's shop!</u>

Endzeitgeist out.



Nobles of Porphyra Publisher: Purple Duck Games Reviewer: Endzeitgeist Stars: 5 stars out of 5

This massive supplement clocks in at 52 pages, 1 page front cover, 1 page editorial, 1 page SRD, 1 page blank, leaving us with 48 (!!!) pages of content, so let's take a look!

So...guess what – this actually is a prestige archetype book, one that takes the noble scion PrC and codifies it as a proper 20-level base class, though the set-up herein is obviously more versatile in this one – but there is more to this book than that: Beyond extensive observations regarding what it means to play a noble and the wealth available to them, the noble scions do receive a significant stipend each level, to be precise 750 gp times the class level and bonuses to skills according to the respective families they have and areas they belong to – it is here that the "of Porphyra"-component comes into play: The pdf provides a balanced, varied list of diverse regions of the setting for your perusal.

Beyond the aforementioned stipend, the nobles also get a weekly allowance of non-monetary favors equal to 25 gp times class level for top theatre seat, great rooms, etc. – this is known as prestigious influence. Unspent favors from this allowance do not stack, thankfully. At 3rd level, noble scions receive +1/3 class level to Diplomacy, Intimidate, Knowledge (Local) and Knowledge (Nobility) – this ability is called fame and fortune and 4th level nets an expert cohort called servitor...and no, he does not fight. 7th level nets Leadership and at 13th level, a cohort can be one level lower than the scion and all followers increase their levels by +1,

with 19th level providing a cohort at the scion's class level and followers increasing their level by a further +1. As a capstone, these guys can roll twice on the appropriate social skills and 1/day treat one such roll as a 20.

So that is the basic framework – and it already is much more solid and feasible than the problematic aristocrat-NPC-class. This framework out of the way, we are introduced to the respective variants of noble scions: The first here being the bloodline scion, who gains 1/2 BAB-progression, d6 HD, good Will-saves and 4+Int skills as well as some basic proficiencies. Bloodline scions receive a sorceror bloodline and spontaneous Cha-based spellcasting of up to 6th level as well as related benefits: Bloodline feats at 6th level and every 6 level thereafter, with bloodline power progression at levels 1, 3, 9 and 15, with the capstone being exchangeable for the aforementioned general noble scion capstone. The class gets Eschew Materials at first level. The pdf does provide a CR 10 bloodline scion/wildblooded-sample character -each of the versions herein does sport such a complex sample character, all with detailed background stories... and, rather cool, there are quite a lot of neat fullcolor artworks here!

Similarly interesting – the chevalier takes the cavalier class and applies the noble scion – for full BAB-progression, full proficiency, d10 HD, good Fort-saves, level 1 mount and challenge, with well diversified class abilities – Banner at 5th level, tactician at 1st., etc. – all in all, this one is smooth and well-crafted.

The eldritch noble gets 1/2 BAB-progression, good Will-saves, d6 HD, very basic weapon and armor proficiencies and choose either wizard or witch at first level, gaining full 8th level Int-based prepared spellcasting – but losing the additional tricks like hexes, schools and the like – basically a full caster noble.

The enlightened noble, with 3/4-BAB-progression, proficiency with simple weapons, light armors and rogue-y weapons, 8+Int skills and d8 HD alongside good Ref- and Will-saves. These guys are based, roughly, on the investigator. The class receives full studied strike progression and studied combat and applies inspiration to the nobility-themed skills instead – once again, a neatly-crafted variant/ hybrid! Similarly, should you prefer a more rogue-y focus...well, the scheming noble, with a similar chassis, instead applies this design-paradigm and combines it with rogue talents, sneak attacks etc.

The hierarch cleric gets 3/4BAB-progression, good Fort-and Will-saves, d8 HD, 4+Int skills per level, proficiency with simple weapons, sword cane and fighting fan and light, medium and heavy armor as well as with the deity's favored weapons. This one would be the Wis-based prepared spellcaster with full spellcasting progression of up to 9th level. On a nitpicky, aesthetic point – the spellcasting/aura/ etc. entries often read "cleric" instead of "hierarch cleric"... Yeah, I'll punch myself now for that one. It's needless nitpickery. And no, these guys do not get channel energy.

The monster scion is based on the summoner class, with 3/4 BAB-progression, good Will-saves, d8 HD, 4+Int skills, proficiency with simple weapons, lance, long sword, rapier and light + medium armor, which do not provide arcane spell failure. They are spontaneous spellcasters via Charisma and gain up to 6th level spells. These guys get a hereditary eidolons - which are native outsiders and cannot be summoned. They are pretty hard to kill, gaining full HP into negative HP, but, upon being killed, need to be replaced via a ceremony and some time. Cool: Fame and fortune can later be applied to outsiders and the ancestral eidolons introduced herein get new evolutions for dual creature types, becoming extra-dimensional, fluid growth between sizes – all in all, neat.

The noble virtuoso gets d8 HD, 3/4 BABprogression, good Ref- and Will-saves, 6+Int skills per level, proficiency with simple weapons, longswords, rapier, sap, short sword, shortbow and whip as well as shields and light armors. They get access to bardic spellcasting (via Cha, obviously) and free spellcasting sans penalty in light armor. The class receives, obviously, bardic performance progression, 10th level jack of all trades, etc. – all in all, solidly dispersed ability arrays here – but at the price of bardic knowledge and lore master.

The Renaissance Man, at d8 HD, good Fort- and Will-save progression, 3/4 BAB-progression, 2+Int skills per level, proficiency with simple and martial weapons as well as light armor. This one gets Intbased spellcasting from the magus spell-list, 1st level arcane pool, 2nd level spellstrike, 4th level spell combat, 5th level spell recall and arcana at 3rd level, +1 every 3 levels thereafter. Medium armor, however, is delayed to 14th level and similarly, the hybrid does pay a price regarding the regular magus-progression.

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are very good on a formal level and also rather precise on a rules-language level. Layout adheres to Purple Duck Games' twocolumn full-color standard. The pdf sports several

beautiful full-color artworks and the pdf comes fully bookmarked for your convenience.

This book was much more work than the relatively brief review here may show – basically, it represents a significant array of hybrid classes between Noble Scions and a significant assortment of classes. The interesting component is that the pdf manages to get the WBL-increase and small favors afforded to nobility done rather well: The respective changes made make sense and, when compared to the base classes, provide a distinct identity that is similar to, but not identical to the respective base classes. The concept is interesting and there certainly is more than one set-up for a campaign that makes sense with one or more player characters belonging to the nobility – I know I've had such a set-up planned for quite a while.

Beyond solid crunch, Carl Cramér's nobles of Porphyra (with additional design by Justin Sluder and August Hahn) also sport a significant array of interesting characters – for a more than fair, low price. Nice crunch, cool fluff – what more could one ask for? In fact, one can, arguably, make one's own additional noble scion-hybrids by extrapolating from the classes provided here and using the general noble scion tricks in this book. All in all, this is a nice, cool pdf and well worth 5 stars.

You can get this nice book <u>here on OBS</u> **and** <u>here</u> <u>on d20pfsrd.com's shop!</u>

Endzeitgeist out.



Shunned Valley of the Three Tombs

Publisher: Raging Swan Press

Reviewer: Endzeitgeist **Stars:** 5 stars out of 5

This adventure clocks in at 28 pages, 1 page front cover, 2 pages of advertisement, 1 page editorial, 1 page ToC (including tables for

statblocks by CR), 1 page SRD, 1 page back cover, 1 page of advice on how to read statblocks, leaving us with 20 pages of content, so let's take a look!

This product was moved up in my review-queue as a prioritized review at the request of my patreons.

All right, so what do we get here? Well, first of all, we get a incredibly gorgeous b/w-map of the Duchy of Ashlar: The cartography by Simon Butler, Dan Dyson and Tommi Salama employed herein is...well glorious. Oh, and guess what? If you're like me and get a LOT of Raging Swan Press books to supplement your gaming experience... you'll notice something. The map tells you, which direction the lonely coast is, where deksport can be found – and indeed, in this duchy, you can see Wellswood, longbridge, ashford -some of the unique villages and places my groups have visited and come to love (or abhor) – oh, and the map also sports a wide array of as of yet unexplored places. And, in case you're asking – this whole region, contextualized, can easily be dropped into just about any campaign setting, though theme-wise, settings like Greyhawk, The Lost Lands or the like probably work best – and yep, the Shadowed Keep of the Borderlands is also mentioned.

There is a second important thing to note about this module: It is explicitly made for (relatively) new players - Core is assumed to be known, but that's basically about it. Hence, the challenges in this adventure are somewhat less pronounced than veterans would expect. At the same time, it should be noted that this pdf does not necessarily feature themes explicitly designated as "kid-theme" – it is not gory or grimdark or anything...it is just fantasy. I tested this module with my kid-group and ran into no issues. This is very much an adventure that allows the GM to utilize tropes of adventuring and fantasy, but sans being inappropriate. So yes, I'd consider this appropriate for all but the youngest and most sensitive of kids. The pdf also provides extensive scaling advice for each encounter - by +1/-1, which means that you can also run this for more seasoned adventurers sans the players becoming bored. One more thing - while this module introduces PCs and players to some of the classics, its structure allows the GM to include ample options for rest...or not, allowing for pretty concise control over the pacing of the module itself. And no, thankfully my most loathed adventuring clichés, the shadow and ogre bosses are absent from these pages. Thank Gygax!

All right, this is as far as I can get sans diving into SPOILERS. Potential players of this module should jump to the conclusion NOW.

••

All right, only GMs around? Good. We begin this module in the town of Dulwich, with 3 basic adventuring hooks and 4 entries of village lore being provided – this, as a whole, sets the stage for the motivation to explore the valley. A table of 6 rumors, some of which are false, some of which are correct, provide further information and, as a whole, this section of setting-up the module already indirectly teaches the value of doing one's legwork.

^{••}

The overland journey by movement speed has convenient travel durations noted and sports the option of getting lost. a brief 12-entry table of minor events during the journey features mechanicallyrelevant, fun little encounters that range from woodland critters to deep gulleys and streams.

The valley itself can be pictured as one that sports, obviously, multiple tombs - said tombs are the mini-dungeons in this book, but they are not the only graves there: Cairns can be looted and a table of items can be found there. Similarly, an 8-entry dressing table for the valley allows you to customized the dressing and generate more atmosphere. From the small waterfall to tracks, the valley has several interesting locations as such - but the interesting component, at least to me, would be that the mini-dungeons (usually only a couple of rooms) sport unique challenges: In the tomb of the stone woman, one can, for example, face an animated statue, with some traps that are painful, but not necessarily lethal, teaching this component of adventuring. And yes, from chests to sarcophagi, the level of detail provided in this pdf is excessive and makes running this very easy.

The tomb of the champions features unique adversaries and has a completely different flavor – inside lie the now undead remains of two erstwhile champions of the hobgoblins, emphasizing the component of combat in the exploration here. Finally, there would be a third mini-complex, wherein an owlbear and its young lair – these caves can be seen as introductions to animals and terrain – with bat guano, a bat swarm, uneven footing and the like, the focus here is admirably different.

This, however, is not nearly the extent of adventuring the pdf contains - beyond fully depicted random encounters, the module also sports a rival adventuring group that can act as a major complication for the PCs, feigning friendship and loyalty, while waiting to backstab them. Beyond these low-lives, there is another optional encounter that will introduce the necessity of ROLEplaying to PCs and players alike: The ghost of a perished adventurer haunts this valley's lake and putting her to rest is one of the more unique challenges in this pdf. It's not hard, mind you – but it makes it clear that sometimes, words are more powerful than thrown spells and drawn swords. These addin-encounters, including an owlbear, obviously can also be used to save the PCs - if the aforementioned adventuring group's too much to handle...well, then the arrival of a pack of wolves or said owlbear may act as a save ... and teach the valuable lesson of

considering that the world is dynamic. (Fyi, in case anyone wondered: My kids are worse munchkins and power-gamers than my adults and walked all over the combat challenges...but still had a lot of fun, particularly relishing the chance of putting the ghost to sleep!)

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are top-notch, I noticed no glitches. Layout adheres to Raging Swan Press' elegant two-column b/w-standard and the pdf features copious b/w-artworks (some of which I've seen before). The cartography is excellent, though no map-key-less versions are included. The pdf comes fully bookmarked for your convenience and in two versions – one optimized for screen-use and one for the printer. Kudos!

Creighton Broadhurst's Shunned Valley of the Three Tombs is a great example of a first level module I would have loved to have back in the day. Why? Because it actually teaches the basics of adventuring. Watching for traps, not assuming that violence is always the solution, taking care of terrain, knowing that the world's dynamic... all those important little lessons are taught in a pretty concise manner by showing, not telling. The challenges are sufficiently moderate to make sure that the players don't get wiped out while learning these, though this does not mean that they can act foolhardily: This is an adventure and as such, it sports danger. Now granted, veterans may not necessarily be too blown away by the mechanic components, but the dressing and atmosphere may make this a feasible option for these as well, particularly if they prefer a campaign's start to be less lethal than the things to come.

Beautiful in its simplicity and level of detail, this is a great introductory module for the game we all know and love – and for this purpose, it should be considered to be a 5 star+ seal of approval module. Veterans and grognards who have seen it all may be slightly less intrigued, though the old-school vibe and aesthetic employed here may tug at one's heart's string. Still, for experienced and jaded audiences, this may be slightly less compelling and should be considered the equivalent of a 4 star module. One final note: Fans of Raging Swan press need this module -the contextualizing map of the duchy is awesome and truly evocative!

You can get this fun introductory module <u>here on</u> <u>OBS</u> and <u>here on d20pfsrd.com's shop!</u>

You can join Raging Swan Press' patreon <u>HERE</u> and never miss a supplement!

Endzeitgeist out.



OPEN GAME LICENSE Version 1.0a

The following text is the property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and is Copyright 2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc ("Wizards"). All Rights Reserved. 1. Definitions: (a) "Contributors" means the copyright and/

or trademark owners who have contributed Open Game Content; (b) "Derivative Material" means copyrighted material including derivative works and translations (including into other computer languages), potation, modification, correction, addition, extension, upgrade, improvement, compilation, abridgment or other form in which an existing work may be recast, transformed or adapted; (c) "Distribute" means to reproduce, license, rent, lease, sell, broadcast, publicly display, transmit or otherwise distribute; (d) "Open Game Content" means the game mechanic and includes the methods, procedures, processes and routines to the extent such content does not embody the Product Identity and is an enhancement over the prior art and any additional content clearly identified as Open Game Content by the Contributor, and means any work covered by this License, including translations and derivative works under copyright law, but specifically excludes Product Identity. (e) "Product Identity" means product and product line names, logos and identifying marks including trade dress; artifacts, creatures, characters, stories, storylines, plots, thematic elements, dialogue, incidents, language, artwork, symbols, designs, depictions, likenesses, formats, poses, concepts, themes and graphic, photographic and other visual or audio representations; names and descriptions of characters, spells, enchantments, personalities, teams, personas, likenesses and special abilities; places, locations, environments, creatures, equipment, magical or supernatural abilities or effects, logos, symbols, or graphic designs; and any other trademark or registered trademark clearly identified as Product identity by the owner of the Product Identity, and which specifically excludes the Open Game Content; (f) "Trademark" means the logos, names, mark, sign, motto, designs that are used by a Contributor to identify itself or its products or the associated products contributed to the Open Game License by the Contributor (g) "Use", "Used" or "Using" means to use, Distribute, copy, edit, format, modify, translate and otherwise create Derivative Material of Open Game Content. (h) "You" or "Your" means the licensee in terms of this agreement.

terms of rins agreement. 2. The License: This License applies to any Open Game Content that contains a notice indicating that the Open Game Content may only be Used under and in terms of this License. You must affix such a notice to any Open Game Content that you Use. No terms may be added to or subtracted from this License except as described by the License itself. No other terms or conditions may be applied to any Open Game Content distributed using this License. 3. Offer and Acceptance: By Using the Open Game Content You indicate Your acceptance of the terms of this License.

4. Grant and Consideration: In consideration for agreeing to use this License, the Contributors grant You a perpetual, worldwide, royalty-free, non-exclusive license with the exact terms of this License to Use, the Open Game Content. 5. Representation of Authority to Contribute: If You are contributing original material as Open Game Content, You represent that Your Contributions are Your original creation and/or You have sufficient rights to grant the rights conveyed by this License. 6. Notice of License Copyright: You must update the

COPYRIGHT NOTICE portion of this License to include the exact text of the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any Open Game Content You are copying, modifying or distributing, and You must add the title, the copyright date, and the copyright holder's name to the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any original Open Game Content you Distribute.

7. Use of Product Identity: You agree not to Use any Product Identity, including as an indication as to compatibility, except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of each element of that Product Identity. You agree not to indicate compatibility or co-adaptability with any Trademark or Registered Trademark in conjunction with a work containing Open Game Content except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of such Trademark or Registered Trademark. The use of any Product Identity in Open Game Content does not constitute a challenge to the ownership of that Product Identity. The owner of any Product Identity used in Open Game Content shall retain all rights, title and interest in and to that Product Identity.

8. Identification: If you distribute Open Game Content You must clearly indicate which portions of the work that you are distributing are Open Game Content.

Product Identity: The following items are hereby identified as Product Identity, as defined in the Open Game License 1.0a, Section 1(e), and are not Open Content: All trademarks, registered trademarks, proper names (characters, deities, etc. excluding the names of classes, monster names, spells, and other game mechanics), dialogue, plots, storvilnes locations characters attworks and storylines, locations, characters, artworks, and trade dress. (Elements that have previously been

designated as Open Game Content are not included in this declaration.)

Open Content: Except for material designated as Product Identity (see above), the game mechanics of this Rite Publishing game product are Open Game Content, as defined in the Open Game License version 1.0a Section 1(d). No portion of this work other than the material designated as Open Game Content may be reproduced in any form without written permission.

9. Updating the License: Wizards or its designated Agents may publish updated versions of this License. You may use any authorized version of this License to copy, modify and distribute any Open Game Content originally distributed under any version of this License. 10. Copy of this License: You MUST include a copy of this

License with every copy of the Open Game Content You distribute.

11. Use of Contributor Credits: You may not market or advertise the Open Game Content using the name of any Contributor unless You have written permission from the Contributor to do so.

12. Inability to Comply: If it is impossible for You to comply with any of the terms of this License with respect to some or all of the Open Game Content due to statute, judicial order. or governmental regulation then You may not Use any Open Game Material so affected.

13. Termination: This License will terminate automatically if You fail to comply with all terms herein and fail to cure such breach within 30 days of becoming aware of the breach. All sublicenses shall survive the termination of this License.

14. Reformation: If any provision of this License is held to be unenforceable, such provision shall be reformed only to the extent necessary to make it enforceable.

15. COPYRIGHT NOTICE

Open Game License v 1.0a Copyright 2000, Wizards of the Coast. Inc. System Reference Document, Copyright 2000, Wizards of

Williams, based on material by E. Gary Gygax and Dave

Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Reference Document. © Taumhar Kotepang Game Reference Document, 2011, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Author: Paizo Publishing, LLC. Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook. © 2009, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Author: Jason Bulmahn, based on material by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, and Skip Williams.

Puthfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary. © 2009, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Author: Jason Bulmahn, based on material by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, and Skip Williams.

Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 2. © 2010, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Authors Wolfgang Baur, Jason Bulmahn, Adam Daigle, Graeme Davis, Crystal Frasier, Joshua J. Frost, Tim Hitchcock, Brandon Hodge, James Jacobs, Steve Kenson, Hal MacLean, Martin Mason, Rob McCreary, Erik Mona, Jason Nelson, Patrick Renie, Sean K Reynolds, F. Wesley Schneider, Owen K.C. Stephens, James L. Sutter, Russ Taylor, and Greg A. Vaughan, based on material by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, and Skip Williams. Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 3. © 2011, Paizo

Publishing, LLC; Authors: Jesse Benner, Jason Bulmahn, Adam Daigle, James Jacobs, Michael Kenway, Rob McCreary, Patrick Renie, Chris Sims, F. Wesley Schneider, James L. Sutter, and Russ Taylor, based on material by

Jonitha Tweet, Mont Cook, and Skip Williams. Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 4. © 2013, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Authors: Dennis Baker, Jesse Benner, Savannah Broadway, Ross Byers, Adam Daigle, Tim Hitchcock, Tracy Hurley, James Jacobs, Matt James, Rob McCreary, Jason Nelson, Tom Phillips, Stephen Radney-MacFarland, Sean K Reynolds, F. Wesley Schneider, Tork Shaw, and Russ Taylor.

Pathfinder Roleplaying Game GameMastery Guide. © 2010, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Author: Cam Banks, Wolfgang Buar, Jason Bulmahn, Jim Butler, Eric Cagle, Graeme Davis, Adam Daigle, Joshua J. Frost, James Jacobs, Kenneth Hite, Steven Kenson, Robin Laws, Tito Leati, Rob McCreary, Hal Maclean, Colin McComb, Jason Nelson, David Noonan, Richard Pett, Rich Redman, Sean K reynolds, F. Wesley Schneider, Amber Scorr, Doug Seacat, Mike Selinker, Lisa Stevens, James L. Sutter, Russ Taylor, Penny Williams, Skip Williams, Teeuwynn Woodruff.

Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Class Guide © 2014, Paizo Inc.; Authors: Dennis Baker, Ross Byers, Jesse Benner, Savannah Broadway, Jason Bulmahn, Jim Groves, Tim Hitchcock, Tracy Hurley, Jonathan H. Keith, Will McCardell, Dale C. McCoy, Jr., Tom Phillips, Stephen Radney-MacFarland, Thomas M. Reid, Sean K Reynolds, Tork Shaw, Owen K.C. Stephens, and Russ Taylor. Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide. ©

2010, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Author: Jason Bulmahn Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Race Guide. ©

2012, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Authors: Dennis Baker, Jesse Benner, Benjamin Bruck, Jason Bulmahn, Adam Daigle, Jim Groves, Tim Hitchcock, Hal MacLean, Jason Nelson,

Stephen Radney-MacFarland, Owen K.C. Stephens, Todd Stewart, and Russ Taylor. Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Monster Codex. © 2014,

Paizo Inc.; Authors: Dennis Baker, Jesse Benner, Logan Bonner, Jason Bulmahn, Ross Byers, John Compton, Robert N. Emerson, Jonathan H. Keith, Dale C. McCoy, Jr., Mark Moreland, Tom Phillips, Stephen Radney-MacFarland, Sean K Reynolds, Thomas M. Reid, Patrick Renie, Mark Seifter, Tork Shaw, Neil Spicer, Owen K.C. Stephens, and Russ Taylor. Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Mythic Adventures © 2013,

Paizo Publishing, LLC; Authors: Jason Bulmahn, Stephen Radney-MacFarland, Sean K Reynolds, Dennis Baker, Jesse Benner, Ben Bruck, Jim Groves, Tim Hitchcock, Tracy Hurley, Jonathan Keith, Jason Nelson, Tom Phillips, Ryan Macklin, F. Wesley Schneider, Amber Scott, Tork Shaw, Russ Taylor, and Ray Vallese. Pathfnider Roleplaying Game NPC Codex. © 2012, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Authors: Jesse Benner, Jason Bulmahn,

Adam Daigle, Alex Greenshields, Rob McCreary, Mark Moreland, Jason Nelson, Stephen Radney-MacFarland,

Patrick Renie, Sean K Reynolds, and Russ Taylor. Patrick Renie, Sean K Reynolds, and Russ Taylor. Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Magic. © 2011, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Authors: Jason Bulmahn, Tim Hitchcock, Colin McComb, Rob McCreary, Jason Nelson, Stephen Radney-MacFarland, Sean K Reynolds, Owen K.C. Stephens, and Russ Taylor. Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Campaign. © 2013, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Authors: Jesse Benner, Benjamin

Bruck, Jason Bulmahn, Ryan Costello, Adam Daigle, Matt Goetz, Tim Hitchcock, James Jacobs, Ryan Macklin, Colin McComb, Jason Nelson, Richard Pett, Stephen Radney-MacFarland, Patrick Renie, Sean K Reynolds, F. Wesley Schneider, James L. Sutter, Russ Taylor, and Stephen Townshend.

Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Combat. © 2011, Patiso Publishing, LLC; Authors: Dennis Baker, Jesse Benner, Benjamin Bruck, Jason Bulmahn, Brian J. Cortijo, Jim Groves, Tim Hitchcock, Richard A. Hunt, Colin McComb, Jason Nelson, Tom Phillips, Patrick Renie, Sean K Reynolds, and Russ Taylor.

Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Equipment. © 2012 Paizo Publishing, LLC; Authors: Dennis Baker, Jesse Benner, Benjamin Bruck, Ross Byers, Brian J. Cortijo, Ryan Costello, Mike Ferguson, Matt Goetz, Jim Groves, Tracy Hurley, Matt James, Jonathan H. Keith, Michael Kenway, Hal MacLean, Jason Nelson, Tork Shaw, Owen KC Stephens, and Russ Taylor,

Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Technology Guide. © 2014, Paizo Inc.; Authors: James Jacobs and Russ Taylor. Anger of Angels. © 2003, Sean K Reynolds.

Advanced Bestiary. © 2004, Green Ronin Publishing, LLC; Author: Matt Sernett.

Book of Fiends. © 2003, Green Ronin Publishing; Authors: Aaron Loeb, Erik Mona, Chris Pramas, Robert J. Schwalb. The Book of Hallowed Might. © 2002, Monte J. Cook. Monte Cook's Arcana Unearthed. © 2003, Monte J. Cook.

Path of the Magi. © 2002 Citizen Games/Troll Lord Games; Authors: Mike McArtor, W. Jason Peck, Jeff Quick, and Sean K Reynolds.

Skreyn's Register: The Bonds of Magic. © 2002, Sean K Reynolds. The Book of Experimental Might. © 2008, Monte J. Cook

All rights reserved. Tome of Horrors. © 2002, Necromancer Games, Inc.; Authors: Scott Greene, with Clark Peterson, Erica Balsley, Kevin Baase, Casey Christofferson, Lance Hawvermale, Travis Hawvermale, Patrick Lawinger, and Bill Webb; Based on original content from TSR.

Kobold Quarterly Issue 7, © 2008, Open Design LLC, www. koboldquarterly.com; Authors: John Baichtal, Wolfgang Baur, Ross Byers, Matthew Cicci, John Flemming, Jeremy Jones, Derek Kagemann, Phillip Larwood, Richard Pett, and Stan! The Tome of Horrors III, © 2005, Necromancer Games,

Inc.: Author Scott Green

Pathways #58 © copyright 2016, Steven D. Russell

LOOKING FOR MORE? TRY THESE ON FOR SIZE!

Here

AVAILABLE NOW AT DRIVETHRURGP PAIZO AND D20PFSRD.COM

JATHFINDER