

Pathone Corber 2016 * Issue 59

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Editorial

by Dave Paul, Illustration by Julio Rocha

This is the first editorial I've written since Steve's passing. Rite Publishing will never be the same, all the people associated with Rite Publishing will never be the same, and the third party publishing industry that has grown so much in the past decade (and which owes so much to Steve) will never be the same. Most profoundly, Miranda, Steve's wife, the one person connected to Rite Publishing,

whom most people in the industry probably knew least, will never be the same. Given the era, my own eulogy was expressed on Facebook where it remains as a Note on my Facebook page. I and the other core "Riters" have met with Miranda and she expressed her conviction to moving forward with many of Steve's projects. One of those projects is Pathways magazine.



At GenCon 2016 I had the great pleasure of cofacilitating with the award-winning Ben McFarland. The title of the workshop, Spellcraft 101, was a play on terms, and made this play in multiple ways. First, the word "Spellcraft" has this wonderful ambiguity since it's both a skill within the game and a word suggesting the crafting of spells for the game. Second, the term "101" refers both to the fact that Steve Russell and I had written more than 15 books with the words "101 Spells" in the titles and that the term "101" in teaching refers to a class that is designed to introduce students to a topic or new material in that topic. The aim of the Spellcraft 101 workshop, originally planned to be delivered jointly by Steve and me, was to share with the attendees the tips and strategies we'd learned from having written over 1500 spells for Pathfinder.

Alas, our plans were thwarted by the abovementioned tragedy. But, as befits the folks in this industry and the reality of our devotion, I met with the other members of Rite Publishing and we agreed that it would be worth going ahead with the workshop, and Ben agreed to join me. In that workshop, I didn't quite get around to delivering all the information I wanted to convey. Part of this is a consequence of the fact that my life outside of gaming centers on education and so I'd prepared dozens of pages of notes and was prepared to info dump half a semester's worth of material on my class. (It's a good thing Ben was there to keep me from launching into my professorial tendencies....)

But, lucky for me, I have a platform for the delivery of material I didn't get out but really wanted to, and I'm going to use it. In this month's issue of Pathways my Spells Showcase article focuses on my suggestions for the creation of spells for this game. Also in this issue we'll find more of what readers have always enjoyed. Included are a couple of fantastic pieces by the inexhaustibly creative mind of Creighton Broadhurst and Steve's final template and templated creature. The theme of the issue, wonderfully illustrated on the cover, is madness. We've aimed to approach this topic from a variety of different perspectives, giving you several different tastes on the theme.

Happy gaming.



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ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE

Mad Harlequin Creature Template

by Steven D. Russell, Illustrations by Julio Rocha

Deities of madness and genius, rare results from an insanity spell, or just simply the result of a supernatural creature's mind breaking, regardless of the origin mad harlequins are damnable foes. Their temperament changes like the wind, from simple psychopaths with sadistic senses of humor to goofy pranksters. They tend to pick out dark grim wouldbe-heroes as their "arch-nemesis", some avoid killing their "arch-nemesis" instead harming or maiming those closest to them. The loss of their arch-nemesis often sends them on mad kill sprees or into catatonia. Mad harlequin's when not in disguise wear supernatural garnish vestments and always possess frozen grins and a face maimed to look clownish.

Creating a Mad Harlequin Creature

"Mad Harlequin" is an acquired template that can be added to any creature with an Intelligence of 3 or greater.

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

CR: +3

Alignment: Changes to Chaotic Evil.

Defensive Abilities: fast healing 1

DR 5/bludgeoning and good (if the mad harlequin's CR is 6 or higher, increase to DR 10/ bludgeoning,

magic and good; if 12 or higher, increase to 15/bludgeoning, magic, lawful, and good); **Immune** mind-affecting (see absurd thoughts)

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

Absurd Thoughts (Su): A mad harlequin's madness is like a virus, using any mind-affecting spell or effect on it causes it to fail. In addition, the user must succeed on a Will save (DC 10 +1/2 the mad harlequin's HD + its Charisma modifier) or become subject to a random form of madness affliction, with an immediate onset time.

Acid Squirt (Su): Some part of the mad harlequin's outfit can shoot a stream of extremely corrosive acid once per day as a swift action, this requires making a ranged touch attack against any one target within 5 feet. This deals 1d6 points of acid damage + the mad harlequin's Constitution modifier, plus an

additional 1d6 points of acid damage for every 2 HD beyond 1st the base creature possesses, with no splash damage (to a maximum of 10d6 at 18 HD). In addition, the subject is blinded and sickened. The subject gets a Fortitude save (DC 10 +1/2 the mad harlequin's HD + its Constitution modifier) to negate the blind and sickened conditions. For every 3 HD the mad harlequin possesses, the acid and the conditions, unless neutralized, lasts for another round (to a maximum of 6 additional rounds at 18 HD). At 6 HD the blind condition's duration becomes permanent.

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Aura of Confusion (Su): If the mad harlequin is at least 8 HD, it emits a 30-foot aura. Creatures within this aura are affected by *confusion*, a successful Will save (DC 10 +1/2 the mad harlequin's HD + its Charisma modifier) negates. The mad harlequin can activate or suppress this aura as an immediate action.

Breath Weapon (Su): The mad harlequin can breathe a cone of laughing gas as a swift action once every 1d4 rounds. Creatures within the cone must succeed on a Will save (DC 10 +1/2 the mad harlequin's HD + its Constitution modifier) or be subject to *hideous laughter* for 1 round per HD the base creature possesses. The range of the cone is based on the base creature's HD.

HD	Cone	HD	Cone
1-3	15 ft.	13-15	50 ft.
4-6	20 ft.	16-18	60 ft.
7-9	30 ft.	19+	70 ft.
10-12	40 ft.		

Change Shape (Su) as the universal monster ability (shapechange).

Rejuvenation (Su): In most cases, it's difficult to destroy a mad harlequin through simple combat: the "destroyed" or "slain" mad harlequin restores itself in 1 day. Even the most powerful spells are usually only temporary solutions. The only way to permanently destroy a mad harlequin is for the creature chosen as its arch-nemesis (chosen by the GM when the template is applied) to also be slain or destroyed; if that creature is later returned to life (or existence as say an undead creature), the mad harlequin also returns. So most often, this results in self-sacrifice by the chosen arch-nemesis or imprisonment for the mad harlequin.

Vulnerability to Sanity (Su): Remove curse does not remove insanity and hence cannot cure a mad harlequin. However *greater restoration, heal, limited wish, miracle,* or *wish* can restore the creature's sanity and remove this template if it is alive. It suffers a -4 penalty to its save against these spells.

Abilities: Increase from the base creature as follows: Con +6 (+3 hp per HD, +3 to Fort saves, +3 to any of the base creature's Constitution-based DCs) Cha +8 (+4 to Bluff, Diplomacy, Disguise, Handle Animal, Intimidate, Perform, and Use Magic Device; attempts to influence others, and Channel Energy DCs, +4 to any of the base creature's Charisma-based DCs).

Skills: Mad harlequin creatures gain bonus skill ranks and a +8 racial bonus on Disguise; this is always a class skill for the base creature.

Heaven's Harlequin

XP 1,638,800

CE Large outsider (angel, extraplanar, evil)

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, *detect good, detect snares and pits, true seeing*; Perception +33

Aura aura of confusion (30 ft., DC 32), protective aura

DEFENSE

AC 44, touch 11, flat-footed 42 (+14 armor, +1 Dex, +1 dodge, +19 natural, -1 size; +4 deflection vs. evil)

hp 429 (22d10+308); regeneration 15 (evil artifacts, effects, and spells); fast healing 1

Fort +28, Ref +14, Will +23; +4 vs. poison, +4 resistance vs. evil

Defensive abilities absurd thoughts (DC 32), rejuvenation (GM should choose PC whose alignment is closest to LG but with a grim outlook); **DR** 15/ bludgeoning, epic, evil, and good and lawful; **Immune** acid, cold, mind-affecting petrification; **Resist** electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 34

Weakness vulnerability to sanity

OFFENSIVE

Speed 50 ft., fly 150 ft. (good); 35 ft., fly 100 ft. (good) in armor

Melee +5 *dancing greatsword* +35/+30/+25/+20 (3d6+18) or slam +30 (2d8+13)

Ranged +5 *composite longbow* (+9 Str bonus) +31/+26/+21/+16 (2d6+14 plus *slaying* arrow) and acid squirt (+26, 5 ft. 10d6 DC 34),

Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

Special Attacks breath weapon 70 ft. cone, DC 34, *hideous laughter*, 22 rounds).

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 20th)

Constant—*detect good, detect snares and pits, discern lies* (DC 25), *true seeing*

At Will—aid, animate objects, commune, continual flame, dimensional anchor, greater dispel magic, unholy smite (DC 25), imprisonment (DC 30), invisibility (self only), lesser restoration, remove curse, remove disease, remove fear, resist energy, summon monster VII, speak with dead (DC 24), waves of fatigue

3/day—blade barrier (DC 27), earthquake (DC 29), heal, mass charm monster (DC 29), permanency, resurrection, waves of exhaustion

1/day-greater restoration, power word blind, power word kill, power word stun, prismatic spray (DC 28), wish

CR 25

Spells Prepared (CL 20th)

9th—etherealness, mass heal, miracle, storm of vengeance (DC 27)

8th—fire storm (DC 26), unholy aura (2) (DC 26), mass cure critical wounds (2)

7th—*destruction* (DC 25), *dictum* (DC 25), *ethereal jaunt*, *unholy word* (DC 25), *regenerate*

6th-banishment (DC 24), heroes' feast, mass cure moderate wounds, undeath to death (DC 24), word of recall

5th—break enchantment, breath of life, dispel good (DC 23), plane shift (DC 23), righteous might, symbol of sleep (DC 23)

4th—*cure critical wounds* (3), *death ward, dismissal* (DC 22), *neutralize poison* (2) (DC 22)

3rd—*cure* serious wounds, daylight, invisibility purge, magic circle against evil, prayer, protection from energy, wind wall

2nd—align weapon, bear's endurance, bull's strength, consecrate, cure moderate wounds (2), eagle's splendor

1st—bless, cure light wounds (3), divine favor, entropic shield, shield of faith

0 (at will)—detect magic, purify food and drink, stabilize, virtue

STATISTICS

Str 28, Dex 20, Con 36, Int 23, Wis 27, Cha 33

Base Atk +22; CMB +32; CMD 47

Feats Cleave, Deadly Aim, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Power Attack, Toughness

Skills Craft (bows) +31, Diplomacy +36, Fly +32, Knowledge (history) +31, Knowledge(nature) +31, Knowledge (planes) +31, Knowledge (religion) +31, Perception +33, Sense Motive +33, Spellcraft +31, Stealth +21, Survival +31

Languages Celestial, Draconic, Infernal; truespeech

SQ change shape (*alter self, shapechange*)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Slaying Arrow (Su) Heaven's harlequin's bow needs no ammunition, and automatically creates a slaying arrow of its choice when drawn.

Spells (Ex) Heaven's harlequin can cast divine spells as a 20th-level cleric. It does not gain access to domains or other cleric abilities.





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By Creighton Broadhurst, Illustration by Tacosauceninja

Adventurers often find themselves in rowboats. Perhaps they are rowing out to attack smugglers lurking off the coast or fleeing the burning wreck of their own larger vessel.

In such situations, it's fun to have minor incidents of interest occur to add depth, flavour and verisimilitude to their journey. The table below presents 20 such minor events.

- 1. A seagull flies overhead and splatters one of the boat's occupants with excrement.
- 2. A largish wave hits the boat and the people on that side of the boat get soaked.
- 3. The boat bumps into a floating object like a piece of spar.
- 4. A sudden swell threatens to pull an oar from a rower's hands (DC 12 Strength resists). If dropped, the oar floats nearby, but tantalisingly out of reach.
- 5. A seabird alights on the bow of the boat and caws loudly at the occupants.
- 6. Something large bumps against the bottom of the boat.
- 7. A school of fish swims about the boat for a while before suddenly dispersing.
- 8. A large seagull swoops down and tries to grab some food from the hand of one of the boat's occupants.
- 9. The rowboat has a small leak and begins to slowly fill with water. Ten minutes bailing every hour is sufficient to keep ahead of the leak.
- 10. A larger swell rocks the boat. Anyone standing up must make a DC 10 Acrobatics or fall into the water.

- 11. The black shadow of some large aquatic beast glides below the boat.
- 12. A sudden squall passes over the rowboat, soaking everyone within. The rain only lasts 2d10 minutes.
- 13. One of the rowboat's oars suddenly cracks and 1d6 minutes later it snaps in half. Unless the PCs have a spare or use magic to fix the broken oar, their movement rate is halved.
- 14. While rowing, one of the PCs snags a shredded fishing net. Clearly, something large and powerful destroyed it.
- 15. The rowboat passes through a small patch of floating debris. Sadly, there is nothing of value to recover from among the splinters of wood, waterlogged (empty) sack and scraps of sail.
- 16. The boat attracts the attention of a small flock of seagulls. They swoop and soar in the air above the boat. Throwing food into the water distracts them.
- 17. One of the boat's occupants thinks he saw a swimmer about 50 ft. away. A wave obscures him momentarily from view, and no one else spots anything of note. The swimmer does not reappear.
- 18. Angry, black rain clouds darken the horizon. After a few minutes, it is obvious they are moving toward the PCs' boat.
- 19. A fierce wind picks up, and the waves grow bigger. Controlling the boat becomes difficult, and the spray drenches everyone.
- 20. Something thuds against the rowboat's hull below the waterline, and the boat springs a leak. Unless rapid repairs are made, the boat



sinks after about 30 minutes. Energetic bailing can extend this time. A DC 10 Strength check extends the boat's "life" by 10 minutes. Making another check every ten minutes keeps the water at bay, but the bailer suffers a +1 to the DC per previous check made. The other occupants of the boat can use the aid another action. After every hour of bailing, each character must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or become fatigued. Characters failing two checks become exhausted and can no longer bail.

8 Ghost Ships

- 1. A translucent ship—its sails full as if it were running before a storm—passes close by the PCs' vessel. The ship passes so close the PCs can see ghostly figures working desperately in the rigging.
- 2. Halfway to the horizon, the silhouette of a fighting ship languishes as if caught upon hidden rocks. If the PCs' ship moves closer to investigate, the party can hear the roar of breakers crashing on rocks and the screams of men dashed into the sea before the ship fades from view. However, the sea is calm and flat.
- 3. The mast of a sunken ship is the only part of the vessel yet above the waves. Several ghostly figures cling desperately to the translucent rigging. As the PCs' ship draws closer, the mast and the figures fade away.

- 4. A lonely ship's boat bobs in the waves. A black miasma hangs above the boat, resisting the wind's attempts to disperse it. Strangely, although no one is at the oars, the boat is moving against the swell.
- 5. Smoke pours from the blackened hulk of a ruined ship listing baldly. As the PCs draw closer, the ship capsizes and sinks—strangely leaving no wreckage behind.
- 6. A ship barrels out of a nearby fog bank. It moves swiftly and silently through the waters but has no sails aloft.
- 7. Although no ship is visible, the wake of a ship moving impossibly fast first catches and then passes the PCs' vessel.
- 8. Although no ship is visible the sounds of one—the snap of rigging, the cries of its crew and so on—are all around the PCs' ship. The invisible ghost ship stays with the PCs' ship for several hours before disappearing as abruptly as it first "appeared."

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.



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20 Things to Find in a Sea Cave

By Creighton Broadhurst, Illustration by Tacosauceninja

Adventurers are always investigating remote and isolated sea caves in search of ancient shrines and sunken treasures. Such places are rarely devoid of any interesting features, but not all hold the locale of the PCs' next adventure. Use the table below to add minor points of interest to your PCs' adventures in such locales:

- 1. A thick line of seaweed—rife with hundreds of tiny crabs—marks the high tide mark. The tangy smell of salt hangs thickly in the air.
- 2. Flotsam and jetsam bob in the water, bumping against the slick cave walls.
- 3. Deep rock pools dot the cave's foreshore. Surprisingly large crabs lurk within.
- 4. The cold remains of a small campfire stand upon a high, stony promontory.



- 5. A battered rowboat—its mooring line floating nearby—bobs in the water near the cave mouth. Of its occupants, there is no sign, but congealed blood covers the only oar still in the boat.
- 6. A ledge high up on one wall holds a multitude of burnt, melted candles. The rock above is blackened with soot.
- 7. A precarious tower of single stones piled one on top of another stands upon a prominent rock overlooking the water. The slightest touch causes it to collapse.
- 8. A small cairn toward the back of the caverns protects the body of a fallen adventurer. Explorers digging through the cairn discover scraps of bone and rotting or rusted equipment.
- 9. Oval, black barnacles grow in profusion below the waterline of the cave. Most seem normal, but a few have odd purple flecks upon their surface.
- 10. The cave is bereft of seaweed, except for one corner where someone or something has created a great mound of the stuff. Within, swarms of tiny crabs lair.
- 11. A small passageway leads away from the cave mouth. Perceptive PCs (DC 15 Perception reveals) notice signs the ceiling has been at least partially worked. The passageway comes to an abrupt halt after about 30 ft.
- 12. Bizarrely, the shattered curve of part of a stone archway is visible in the water at low tide. Of the rest of the arch, there is no sign.
- 13. Small fish swarm in the waters within this cave. Survival checks made here to get along in the wild gain a +2 circumstance bonus.
- 14. The cave's mouth is wide, but low. Within, the cavern roof is much higher, but its low mouth makes entering the cave several hours either side of high tide impossible without a short underwater swim.
- 15. At the rear of the cave, a small stream of fresh water trickles out of a narrow fissure in the rock.



- 16. A rock fall fills one corner of the cave. It looks unstable, even to the untrained eye. The next storm will carry away several boulders at its base, causing the rest to collapse. Beyond lies a previously unknown and unexplored passageway.
- 17. Remnants of carven stone steps rise out of the water. Several of the lower steps have been all but worn away by the remorseless tides and slick green slime covers much of the remaining stonework.
- 18. Incongruously, a large sodden branch still bedecked with many leaves bobs in the water.
- 19. This cave is, or was, something of a lover's grotto. Graffiti scratched into the walls proclaims many couple's undying love for one another.

20. The rock around this sea cave's mouth is covered by lush vegetation that hangs down and obscures the entrance (DC 15 Perception notices). Within, a pile of large stones serves as a small altar. Crude holy symbols daub the walls and various esoteric sigils (drawn with various different colored chalk) complete the decorations. The air here is noticeably colder than normal.

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Rite Publishing Presents

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Spellcraft 102

By David J. Paul, Illustration by Kuroro7

In November of 2015 I sent this email to Steve:

What do you think about a small Rite Publishingsponsored workshop where I take a group through something like a spell-design process?

I don't know how long they are, but if I had two hours, I could probably work with maybe 20 people (2 dozen?) and help them create a bunch of spells based on the experience I've gained writing spells. Something like a <u>Design Your</u> <u>Own Pathfinder Compatible Spells</u> seminar.

This would be aimed at players and GMs who play Pathfinder, obviously, but also probably at those who have purchased the various 101 spells books and who say to themselves something akin to "I feel like I have so many cool ideas but I'm not sure how to do this."

D on't be afraid to just jump right in and start making up stuff. But, if you want the spells to work, if you want them to be the right level, if you want your GM to accept them or your players to enjoy them, if you are interested in getting published, there are a few useful tips that really matter.

1. Do sweat the small stuff.

Read the <u>Pathfinder RPG Style Guide on the</u> <u>Rogue Genius Games</u> site.

Follow all the advice on the Spells section of that guide. Then read it again. Here's a rule not to break: if you make a 1st level spell, it should not be more powerful than *charm person* or *magic missile*. In other words: **Don't make a spell that's too good**. How do you know if a spell is too good? The same way you know if a feat is too good. If everyone who *can* take that spell *does* take that spell, it's too good. *Magic missile* is too good.

2. Read the <u>Designing Spells section in the</u> <u>Mastering Magic part of Ultimate Magic</u>. Do not forget the Golden Rule: Compare your spell to similar spells, and to other spells of its intended level. Everything here is critical.

A. Don't break the rules.

There are reasons for these rules. Power creep is a problem. Some classes can become too That same day, Steve wrote back: *I encourage it and would happily join in.*

I replied: Let's do it. Rite Publishing Presents: Spellcraft with Steve and Dave.

Steve shot back: *Spellcraft 101* ^(c)

At GenCon 2016, Ben McFarland and I gave that short seminar. I didn't have the time there to address some of the topics I'd wanted to address and so I'm going to use this space to cover some of that. Consider everything in this piece to be my advice, and not necessarily Rite Publishing's advice, and not Ben's advice.



powerful. Even though spells are part of the game, they kinda break the game to begin with. Stick to the rules.

B. Go ahead and break the rules.

For example, one of the rules is roughly: If the range is "personal" and the target is "you," don't include the saving throw line of the spell. With Fire Giant Form in <u>101 Hill and Mountain Spells</u>, I had to include the saving throw line because this spell breaks the rule and requires the caster to make the save.

3. Don't forget: this is MAGIC.

Right? I mean, we're pretending here, but we're pretending that magic is real. I don't know about you, but when I was 10 or 12, Aslan and Gandalf and all the rest seemed mysterious and awesome. Whatever else spells and magic were, it wasn't just fireballs and ice storms. Be creative.

4. Share Your Ideas, Don't Keep Secrets, Have Smart Friends

I am lucky. I am gaming with people with whom I've been gaming since the 1980s. Sure, not everyone falls into this group, but about half of the people I play with regularly are people I've known for more than 30 years. When I think of the totality of my gaming group it includes engineers, IT people, purchasers, people who do quality assurance for gaming companies, retired military,

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a wing chun kung fu sifu (Yip Man branch, William Cheung grand master), a published poet, and a film and music autodidact. In addition, there are former gamers and others I consult with including a journalist, an artist, a friend who has probably read at least two thousand mysteries and detective novels, and, most recently, some of our young kids. All of these people are gold mines. You have your own; utilize them. Sometimes my wife and I will be on a road trip and I'll just start rambling about one of my projects and she'll come up with a half dozen ideas on the spot. You have friends both within and outside of the gaming community who, when your own creativity is feeling depleted, will have ideas for you; all you have to do is talk to them.

I bounce my ideas off of my friends. I will often think I have a brilliant idea for a spell, write it up, and email it to a group of six or eight friends. An hour later I'll find a bunch of "you can't be serious" email replies. **Don't do this entirely on your own, especially at first.** Later, once you build some confidence in your abilities, if you want to drop some sneaky spell on your players, you can be selective about who you seek for advice about a spell. But, pretty much all of the time, you're going to want to get feedback from at least one other person on everything you create.

Every single one of my published spells has gone by the eyes of at least two other people before it gets published, and I always set aside my own work and come back to it later at least twice before I let it go.

5. Write Spells that Someone Else Wants

I really loved working on *101 Swamp Spells*. I have some thoughts about where the creative energy game from when I was working on it (but those are for another time). When I was about two-thirds of the way done, Steve asked me when I was going to have *101 Forest Spells* done. What he didn't know is that I had already started *101 Shadow and Twilight Spells* (which later became *101 Shadow and Darkness Spells*). I had no intention of writing anything but those two books that I wanted to do. Steve wanted me to do more. He pushed me to do more. He assigned me more.

While the <u>5-star review I got from Endzeitgeist</u> for 101 Swamp Spells was amazing, the review for 101 Forest Spells was an even better review and it totally blew my mind. You see, I wasn't writing that product for myself. I was writing it because someone else asked for it. Someone else trusted my ability to do this stuff and so I did it. My own drive to produce high-quality material was still there, but I felt an added obligation because someone else has asked me to do this (and it helped that this someone else was someone I looked up to as a mentor).

In order to write that book, I had to stretch myself. I had to think of things I wouldn't normally have

thought of. I had to do research that I wouldn't have otherwise done. All of this forced me to explore things I wouldn't have explored. In order to write a book of spells for forest-dwellers, I had to really think about what lives in fantasy forests, what kinds of spells would be useful for spellcasters who traveled in such places.

6. Do Lots of Research

Yes, binge watching *Supernatural* counts as research. Research requires you to look both inside and outside the field you're writing for. Yes, if you're writing for Pathfinder, learn as much about the system as you can. But, there will be ideas you get from playing in other systems that you can translate into material for Pathfinder if you give yourself the freedom to explore. Heck, I've been getting some great ideas for spells by playing card and board games that have nothing to do with RPGs.

7. Write. Write some more. Then keep writing.

This piece of advice applies mostly to people who are interested in getting into the business. If what you want is to make a spell now and then because you're playing a spellcaster and your GM is okay with you doing this, or because you're a GM and you want to create content for your home game, you can take a deep breath and ignore this bit of advice.

When Steve was writing 101 1st Level Spells and all the others, he was cranking out one of those books every month. I'm turning out a book about every 21/2 months. Admittedly, I also have one fulltime job, one part-time job, and serve on several committees and boards where I work and live, but, Steve was writing these books at the same time as he was writing other material for Rite Publishing and running a publishing company. (And when I say "running a publishing company" here I mean that he did everything, he did all the finances, he did all the promotion and marketing, he chose most of the art, he handled all the contracts, etc. He was a busy, busy guy.) But, to misquote Isaac Newton, "authors at rest stay at rest, and authors in motion stay in motion."

8. Edit the writing of a creative genius

Okay. This isn't really fair. But if I have any good advice about writing spells, keep in mind that before I wrote any for actual publication I edited more than one thousand spells first, and all of those spells came from a creative genius. Sure, I caught a mistake here or there; sure, every once in a while I had to say "You didn't really mean for your spell to do what you actually said here, right?" because what he actually said isn't what he meant. But, the vast majority of what he wrote was really good.

You might think that this suggestion means that I'm telling you to steal other people's ideas. I am totally telling you to do that. But, with the OGL, there's a correct way to do this. If you're going to publish, all you have to do is steal the correct way and you're safe.

9. Make Lots of Mistakes

I think this is probably the most important piece of advice. I get better at things when I make mistakes. I haven't really found a better way to learn than from errors. Maybe there's a better one, I don't know. Certainly, we don't want to be making catastrophic mistakes from which there is no recovery, but, if all you're doing is making up make-believe stuff for a game that people play, probably there isn't all that much on the line. Part of what this means is that you have to embrace a certain kind of fearlessness. Not the kind of fearlessness that's really pigheadedness and not the kind of fearlessness that's a failure to accept things as they are. Instead, you have to be willing to acknowledge that you're going to screw things up, others are going to catch you and call you on it, and you have to know that these things are all fixable. Also, once you've worked your way through certain kinds of errors, you stop making them and you just produce better quality material.

10. Get Lots of Advice and Encouragement

In every issue of *Pathways*, we interview folks in the industry who shower readers with advice. That's a good place to get information. But, so are your friends. You might think that having your mom write a review of your work on some website doesn't count because, well, it's your mom. But, encouragement is encouragement. Don't reject it. Don't be afraid to let people know you want their opinion. There are all kinds of people who will take time out of their busy schedule to respond to your email with advice. Really. Even people who you don't really know and who you think are really cool. Break the ice, write to them, and ask for advice and encouragement. Sure, some might turn you down, but, go back and check 4, 6, and 9 above.



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Into the Mad Mind

By Anthony Jennings

In a series of three articles, *Pathways* will be introducing new archetypes for many of the character classes in the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game. Each article will be tied together by the common theme of madness. Rather than discuss madness as an illness, these articles will discuss madness in terms of pre-modern and non-Western societies.

This, the first article, will introduce the concept of madness and put it into an historical context that will guide players beyond the modern medical/legal paradigms of madness and offer suggestions on how to see historical and mythical figures such as the Oracle of Delphi as both mad and respected. This article includes a new domain for clerics and a new mystery for oracles. Subsequent articles will include new archetypes for barbarians, druids, and other classes.

Changing Views on Madness

contemporary Western society, medical In professionals, jurists, psychologists, and a host of other specialists have determined that madness is an illness that can be treated like any other illness-through therapy, behavioral conditioning, and prescription drugs. Mental illness is treatable, and society protects those people whose mental illness makes them dangerous to society or themselves through incarceration and drug therapies. This system of treatment is both new and novel. From the 1800s to the early 20th century, society locked away persons with mental illnesses in asylums which only grew larger as Western countries industrialized and urbanized. Prior to the 1800's, polities-kingdoms, nations, churchesincarcerated persons with mental illness in the same jails and prisons as thieves and murderers.

In non-Western societies and early Western societies such as pre-Christian Rome and Greece as well as the later Byzantine Empire, persons who heard voices or hallucinated or claimed to hear direction from gods or God received reverence and fear. Two examples of persons who were revered for their close connection with deities were the Oracle of Delphi and the stylites of early Christianity.

The Oracle of Delphi (also called Pythia) is a wellknown and often alluded to priestess of Apollo at the temple in Delphi. Many powerful Greek rulers would consult the oracle before they made a major decision such as going to war. Contemporary Greeks believed that Apollo spoke through the oracle and gave enigmatic prophecies. Modern scholars who have studied the site of the temple believe that the Oracle of Delphi may have simply been intoxicated from fumes escaping the chasm or the ingestion of venom that induced hallucinations.

The stylites—or pillar-saints—were a group of early Christian ascetics who believed that through fasting, contemplation and praying while living atop a stone pillar they could become attuned with God. Simeon Stylites the Elder climbed atop a pillar and died there 37 years later. Several Emperors of the Byzantine, including Leo and Zeno, traveled to meet stylites often asking questions of them and hoping to receive wisdom. Many feared the stylites because they believed that God had called these men to sit atop their pillars and that God had imbued them with greater wisdom. The early Christian church revered martyrs and men who practiced such extreme asceticism.

New Cleric Domain Enlightened Madness Domain

Deities: Any (The Enlightened Madness Domain does not fall under the control of a single deity. Regardless of alignment, a cleric of any deity or system of belief can select this domain when she chooses her domains. This domain represents the closeness of the cleric to her deity, not a particular area of worship).

Granted Powers: Most clerics feel a strong connection to their deity, but like a moth to a flame, you have come too close and started to burn. This closeness to a divine being brings with it additional powers at the cost of madness.

Cognitive Dissonance (Su): As an action, you murmur one of the many truths of reality that your madness has revealed to you. Beginning at first level, this effect inflicts the shaken condition on a single target of your choice unless the target succeeds on a Will save equal to 10 + 1/2 your level (rounded up) + your Wisdom modifier. At 8th level, you may choose for this to affect up to three targets, or you may choose to have one creature become frightened. At 16th level, you may choose to cause up to 10 creatures to become shaken or you may cause up to three creatures to become frightened or cause one creature to be panicked. The target need not be able to hear you speak for this effect to work. You may use this ability a number of times per day equal to 1 + your Wisdom modifier.

Voice of the Divine (Ex): The constant whisper of your deity's voice in your mind grants you additional resistance to any mind control spells. Starting at 6th level you gain a +5 to all saves against spells with the mind-affecting descriptor.

Domain Spells: 1st—*anticipate peril*^{UM}, 2nd—*share memory*^{UM}, 3rd—*locate weakness*^{UC}, 4th—*detect scrying*, 5th—*contact other plane*, 6th—*legend lore*, 7th—*vision*, 8th—*prediction of failure*^{UM}, 9th—*astral projection*.



New Oracle Mystery

Divine Madness

Deities: Any (The Divine Madness Mystery does not fall under the control of a single deity. Regardless of alignment, an oracle of any deity or system of belief can select this mystery. This mystery represents the closeness of the oracle to her deity, not a particular area of worship.)

Class Skills: An oracle with the divine madness mystery adds Bluff, Intimidate, Perception, and Perform to her list of class skills

Bonus Spells: see alignment^{UC} (2nd), see invisibility (4th), locate weakness^{UC} (6th), confusion (8th), contact other plane (10th), triggered hallucination^{UI} (12th), vision (14th), prediction of failure^{UM} (16th), foresight (18th)

Revelations: An oracle with the divine madness mystery can choose from any of the following revelations.

Revealed Truth (Su): You speak to a creature as a full round action. If the creature fails a Will save, the words linger in its head, and it becomes flat-footed until it acts again.

Divine Voice (Sp): One per day you may call on your connection to your deity to speak a word of power. The sound of your voice spreads out in a 30 ft. cone and every creature within the cone must succeed on a Will save or be deafened for 1 minute and suffer 1d4 damage per oracle level. On a successful save, the creatures are not deafened and take half damage. At 10th level the damage increases to 1d6 per oracle level.

Shared Madness (*Sp*): On a successful melee touch attack you share your deity's whispers with another creature. Like you, the touched creature hears vocal hallucinations and is distracted for 1 minute. While distracted in this manner the target suffers a -2 penalty to all skill checks, saving throws, and attack rolls. This penalty increases to -3 at 5th level, -4 at 10th level, -5 at 15th level, and -6 at 20th level.

Premonitions (Sp): As an immediate action, you may sacrifice one spell that you know for any other spell on the oracle spell list so long as that spell is of the same level or lower than spell you sacrificed. Once you cast the newly learned spell, it is lost, and the original spell returns.

Distracted by Your Demons (Ex): You permanently sacrifice one skill rank in Perception to gain a +20 to all Perception and Sense Motive checks for the next 24 hours. No magic—not even divine

intervention—can restore this lost skill point. At 6th level, you may share this bonus with another character. At 10th level, you also gain *true seeing* per the spell for the duration of this ability.

Followers of the Mad (Ex): How have so many wise men and powerful matriarchs been led astray by the mad? You gain a +1 bonus for every 2 levels you have in oracle on all checks to persuade or intimidate others to join your cause or assist you in an endeavor.

Mark of the Broken Mind (Su): You choose a target and create a sympathetic bond between the creature and yourself. At the start of each of your turns, you take 2 points of bleeding damage as you bleed from the eyes and mouth, and the target takes 1d8 damage per level you have in oracle as sympathetic damage as it feels your pain and madness. At 7th level the damage done to your opponent increases to 1d8 per oracle level plus your Wisdom modifier. At 12th level you the damage increases to 1d10 per oracle level plus your Wisdom modifier.

Infected Blood (Su): Prerequisite: Mark of the Broken Mind. While you are taking bleeding damage from Mark of the Broken Mind, you may use a ranged touch attack to fling your blood at another creature. If struck by your blood, the target becomes sickened for a number of rounds equal to 1 + your Wisdom modifier. At 10th level the target must succeed on a Will save or become nauseated instead.

Just Like Me (Ex): You can detect if a creature within 30 feet of you suffers from madness, a neurosis, or a psychosis. You also know what exacerbates that madness and how to trigger it. Example: Upon entering a tavern you know that the bartender is terrified of spiders. With a few words or a light touch on his skin, you can cause him to scream out in fear or hide from the supposed spider.

The Eyes of the Mad (Su): Upon locking eyes with another creature, both you and it are dazed for 1 round per oracle level. You both receive a Will save against this effect, but the DC of your saving throw is at -3. At 11th level, you automatically succeed at the saving throw. You may use this ability a number of times per day equal to your Wisdom modifier +1.

Final Revelation: Upon reaching 20th level, your connection with your deity has shattered your mind and you are no longer affected by spells with the mind-affecting descriptor.

Once per day, you may cast *symbol of strife*^{UM} without the material component. Creatures affected by this spell do not get a saving throw to resist but spell resistance still applies.

Rite Publishing Presents

An the Company of Treants





by Jonathan McAnulty

Rite Publishing Presents

101 Hill & Mountain Spells







by Dave Paul

Dwellers of the Deep

By Joshua Hennington, Illustration by Publisher's Choice

Deep ones (*Bestiary 5*) are curious creatures. A fish-like race with a knack for magical items and corruption of humanoids, they have a complex society. Their worship of Great Old Ones, Outer Gods, and even the eldest versions of themselves are paramount in their lives; however, it is not the entirety of their existence. They also live to bring humanoids into their folds, allowing them to spread their corruptive worship even further. One of their favored tactics is to use *wands of alter self* and *hats of disguise* (crafted by their priests and arcanists) to mingle with humanoids on the surface through their item use ability. They begin as hermits, allowing their ways to be questionable, but still acceptable, as they contribute on the fringes of society. They slowly make friends, and subtly indoctrinate humanoids into their cults; sometimes, deep ones even outright lie to them about their gods' aims. Once the deep ones have become entrenched in a town, they let more humans in, and even begin seducing their indoctrinated. Those not born into their communities are supposedly welcomed with open arms, though the mannerisms and appearances of the cultists make it a somewhat easy ruse to see through. While the deep ones try to make outsiders feel as welcome as possible, the communities that they grow are usually unnerving.

Deep One Hybrids

One cannot begin to talk about deep ones without speaking of their children. Deep one hybrids are the children of deep ones and humans, beings that are torn between two worlds: one of madness, one of sanity. Most deep one hybrids tend to gravitate towards the wicked side of their family tree, but exceptions exist. Those abominations that join their fish-men kin tend to live complacent (albeit brutal) lives, inducting more humanoids into their local cults, and ruling over small sectors of underlings with heavy-handedness. In deepone-ruled societies, they tend to have a higher place than other humanoids, due to their greater purity. Deep one hybrids tend to be the go-between for humanoids and deep ones to interact, albeit indirectly. While many can see their bloated nature and odd skeletal structure, the witless and unassuming simply believe that they're either obese or slightly deformed. These tend to be the easiest rubes for the hybrids to induct into the cult, as they use any pity humanoids may have for their unfortunate nature as a valuable emotional tool. These sorts of deep one hybrids favor divine classes that honor their favored Great Old One or Outer God, such as cleric, inquisitor, oracle or warpriest.

But as with every people, there are outliers. There are some among the deep one hybrids that seek release from the mad ways of their parents, both humanoid and monstrous. While their inherent nature keeps them from drifting too far from the ocean without suffering madness (but see the Distanced from the Sea, below), most become hermits or apothecaries in port-based areas, never letting on that their heritage is of something even uglier than the hybrid itself. These folk usually tend to be calm sorts, usually taking levels in alchemist or another studious class, such as bard or occultist. While they escape their past, these deep one hybrids usually tend to have a fascination with the occult as a result of their lineage. Some even become renowned scholars in their areas of expertise, and are consulted by important figures.

However, the call to adventure permeates the race of deep one hybrids, like it does for any race. While they are still limited by their sea longing racial trait, most seek adventures near or within the water in which they were spawned. Some join up with other like-minded individuals (who may or may not know of the hybrid's true nature) to sail the seas, plunder shipwrecks, or even become true pirates in and of themselves. Indeed, there is many a tale out there of creatures who, while renowned for their obesity, are actually deep one hybrids who simply had the gumption to amass an enormous amount of wealth for themselves. Like those others that stay in a specific area and study, these deep one hybrids are also drawn to the study of the occult, seeking power greater than any they have seen before-possibly even power to transform them into a normal human. When they inevitably change into a deep one like their parents, however, they often flee their home. Some heed the call to return home, where they will be accepted, and others simply become wanderers. They never really find acceptance, and they are their own worst enemies.

Deep ones' blood runs deep in a family tree. It takes but one copulation to expose a bloodline to their corruptive influence for a long time. When the blood runs true, deep one hybrids are the usual result; when the deep one hybrid blood is reintroduced into humanity, this is when terrors can emerge. Some are deep ones hybrids, some are merely deformed with only minor signs of their ancestry, and a rare few contract the deep one corruption, as presented in *Horror Adventures*.

Integrating Them Into Your Campaign

The plots that deep ones can weave, with or without their children, can be either as vast as a whole shoreline-based nation or as small as a single town. While they have their roots in Lovecraftian tales, they can fill many roles in a campaign: shadowy manipulator, murderous monster, or even unwilling monstrosity, for those unfortunate deep one hybrids that metamorphosed into true deep ones not of their own free will. Furthermore, while the base deep one is merely a CR 1 enemy, you can always give them class levels – they tend to favor divine spellcasting classes, but arcane and psychic spellcasters are not unknown. They prefer taking the Craft Wand feat,



One should never neglect the use of the Deep One corruption, as it can prove to be an invaluable story asset if the environment is suitable. Furthermore, Great Old Ones and Outer Gods need not be the only patrons of a deep one cult. All deep ones grow over the decades, even though their immortality remains. Eventually, if they don't die untimely deaths, all deep ones become Gargantuan-sized monstrosities known as elder deep ones; these creatures have an impressive array of powers, including the ability to grant spells to their followers as if they were deities. This sort of creature makes an excellent end to a mid- to high-level campaign, and can even be the manipulator of a long series of events.

Deep One Hybrid Racial Options

The following options are available to deep one hybrids. At the GM's discretion, other appropriate races may also make use of some of them.

CHAMPION OF INSANITY (WARPRIEST ARCHETYPE)

Most that draw divine power from the maddening pantheon of the Old Cults prefer the traditional path of the cleric, but some prefer a more martial bent. Champions of insanity are those who not only heed the call to lose their minds, but also force others to do the same.

Insanity Focus (Su): A champion of insanity must choose Madness as his blessing, even if it is not a domain granted by his deity. He does not receive a second blessing. In addition, he must choose a Great Old One, an Outer God or an elder deep one as his patron deity.

Dazzling Display (Ex): At 1st level, a champion of insanity receives Dazzling Display as a bonus feat. This feat can be used with any weapon designated with his Sacred Weapon ability.

Sacred Weapon (Su): The base damage of a champion of insanity's sacred weapon does not increase above 1d6. This alters sacred weapon.

Spells: A champion of insanity adds *scare* to his spell list as a 3rd level spell, *fear* as a 4th level spell, and *feast on fear* as a 5th level spell.

Mindwarping Fear (Su): At 3rd level, a champion of insanity gains a +1 bonus to the DC of any spell with the fear descriptor that he casts as a warpriest spell. This bonus increases by 1 at 9th and 15th level. This replaces the bonus feats acquired at 3rd, 9th and 15th levels.

Unknowable Wrath (Ex): At 6th level, when a champion of insanity uses the Intimidate skill to demoralize a foe and exceeds the DC by 5 or more,



Mastery of Madness (Su): At 12th level, a champion of insanity may activate both of the minor and major Madness blessings with the same swift action by expending two uses of his blessings. This allows him to make a creature suffering from one of the prerequisite conditions confused for 1 round, and immediately have its result for confusion selected. This replaces the bonus feat acquired at 12th level.

Deep One Hybrid Favored Class Options

The following options are available to all deep one hybrids that have the listed favored class, and unless otherwise stated, the bonus applies each time you select the favored class reward.

Alchemist: Add +1/2 to the DC of bombs the alchemist creates.

Barbarian: Add +1/3 to the bonus from the superstitious rage power.

Cleric: Select one domain power granted at 1st level that is normally usable a number of times per day equal to 3 + the cleric's Wisdom modifier. The cleric adds +1/2 to the number of uses per day of that domain power.

Druid: Select one domain power granted at 1st level that is normally usable a number of times per day equal to 3 + the druid's Wisdom modifier. The druid adds +1/2 to the number of uses per day of that domain power. Additionally, if this bonus is selected at 1st level, the druid can select the Madness domain with her nature bond.

Fighter: Add +1/4 to the fighter's bravery bonus. Additionally, when the additional bonus from this reward reaches +1, bravery now applies against all mind-affecting effects. This does not count towards actually increasing the bonus from bravery for the purpose of prerequisites.

Inquisitor: Add a +1/2 bonus on Intimidate and Sense Motive checks made against humanoids.

Investigator: Gain a +1/4 bonus on all inspiration rolls.

Kineticist: Add 1/6 to the amount of burn that the kineticist can accept in a day.

Oracle: Add +1/6 to the oracle's level for the purpose of determining the effects of one revelation.

Psychic: When casting psychic spells of the enchantment (compulsion) subschool, add +1/3 level to the effective caster level of the spell, but only to determine the spell's duration.

Ranger: Add a +1/2 bonus to Perception and Survival checks made underwater.

Warpriest: Add 1/2 to the number of times per day the warpriest can use blessings, but he can use these additional blessing on only those from the Chaos, Evil, Madness or Water domains.

Deep One Hybrid Alternate Racial Traits

The following racial traits can be selected instead of existing deep one hybrid racial traits. Consult your GM before selecting any of these options.

Unknowable Herald: Deep one hybrids with this racial trait are gifted beyond the powers of normal folk when wielding the powers of their almighty gods. Deep one hybrids with this racial trait are treated as one level higher when casting spells with the madness descriptor, using Void domain powers and spells, or when using the revelations of the oracle's dark tapestry mystery; this ability does not give the deep one hybrid early access to level-based powers; it only affects the powers that could be used without this ability. However, the deep one hybrid gains no bonus to initiative checks or Reflex saving throws while underwater. This alters the take to the water racial trait.

Distant Lineage: Some deep one hybrids are not direct descendants of deep ones, but simply have a latent amount of the fish-men in their blood; this can crop up at any time, similar to aasimars or tieflings. These deep one hybrids do not possess the final change or sea longing racial traits.

Deep One Feats

The following feats represent either giving in to the madness of the deep, or resisting it.

DEEP COMMUNION

You are one with the deep one corruption that courses through your veins, allowing you to control it to a greater degree.

Prerequisites: Deep one corruption, Corruption Stage 1.

Benefit: You roll twice and take the higher result of Will saves against your corruption, and do not change your race or experience the final change racial ability at Stage 2 of the corruption. However, all attempts to cure your corruption or reduce your manifestation level automatically fail, whether they are spell-based or more mundane means. In addition, you gain the deep one subtype.

DISTANCED FROM THE SEA

You have mastered techniques of self-control, allowing you to stray farther from the sea your parents know as home.

Prerequisites: Deep one subtype, sea longing racial trait.

Benefit: You only make a Will save to avoid Wisdom drain (as per your sea longing racial trait) if you spend 24 hours in an area more than 50 miles away from the sea.

Special: You may take this feat multiple times. Each time you do, add 50 miles to the distance you can spend away from the sea without making the Will save.

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Twenty Questions with Savannah Broadway

By Dave Paul



1. Could you tell us a little about yourself?

While I got a fairly late start playing tabletop, my infatuation with it started early. My father is an artist by hobby, and kept *The Art of AD&D* around for reference material. Of course I made off with it as often as I could, and spent hours poring over the illustrations. My parent's residual sense of Satanic Panic kept me from being able to play as early as I wanted, but eventually, at the age of 17, I played my first GURPS game. It was soon followed by Pathfinder, World of Darkness, and Burning Wheel. Gaming was a huge facet of my college life, and eventually led to my internship at Paizo Publishing. I spent the summer of 2012 in Redmond, Washington, compiling spreadsheets, checking NPC alignments, and being stalked by the Dread Cosmo at my desk in the warehouse, and from then on my path was set.

These days I juggle a variety of odd jobs, depending on where in the Seattle area I'm living, in order to support my freelancing. Like many folks in the field, I'm afflicted by the cruel irony of not being able to game as much as I'd like, but RPGs are easily still the biggest social and mental influence in my life. I'll hopefully be transitioning to freelancing full time in November with another upcoming move.

2. What is your home game like?

I currently have a group that's running through Horror on the Orient Express that meets up bimonthly, wherein I play Doctor Alexander Blevins, M.D., the misanthropic doctor with a heart of... well let's say silver, just to be safe. On off weeks I'm looking forward to taking up my other group's favorite home setting, Adequate Adventurers: When All You Need Is the Job Done. During the week, I also help out Mike Myler with playtesting whatever setting we're working on.

3. What is your favorite Paizo product?

I'd be torn between *Inner Sea Gods* and the *Advanced Class Guide*. Since two of my favorite character types are "clerics of Mephistopheles who pretend that they're not" and "barbarians who are also sorcerers or bards." They're both incredibly handy.

4. You mentioned working and playtesting with Mike Myler. What advice do you have for people who'd like to do playtesting for others?

Plenty of 3pps post up on the Paizo message boards that they need a certain rule set tested, and other folks post up on a Facebook group, like Fans of d20pfsrd. In either case, don't test out all the new goodies with one character. Play a race you know well and then have them take a new class, or vice versa, so you can tell exactly where the problem lies. Beyond that, though, go all out, test the limits, and find out where it all breaks down. Don't be backwards and tell the publisher as bluntly and simply as possible. There's no need to be rude, but

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you do no one any good by covering up potential flaws or confusing rules. And if you think of an addition that could benefit, don't be afraid to suggest it. It may not make it in (and if it doesn't, don't take offense; there are a dozen reasons that it didn't make the final cut: word count, page facing issues, etc.) but there's no harm in suggesting it. Above all, have fun trying something new.



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

I think that my favorite product that I've worked on would have to be *Hypercorps* 2099. It's a science fantasy/ superhero setting that

includes several different eras and areas of play, tons of NPCs, and the Hyper Score, which is similar to the Mythic tiers, but with a superhero flair.

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

Coming up with the term "necromanagers." Working in puns is one of my favorite parts of the job. But, more seriously, I think some of the best moments are when I write in ladies and non-binary folks in prominent roles, like Aurora the rebellion leader, and her gender-fluid second in command, Silvi Popescu.

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

Mechanics-wise, I feel like the Hyper Score adds a really great dimension to the game. There are several different flavors—again, like the Mythic tiers—that allow you to mix and match and come out with a unique, seriously awesome character. Fluff-wise, I feel that the details of the alternate time line were really interesting. It allows for games in several different eras—most distinctly WWII, Modern, and 2099—which lets the setting and the rules feel fresh without having to learn something new every time.

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

Again, I'd have to say the timeline. My section of the book, Wallachia, is one of the oldest, and thus I had to do a lot of reading to make its timeline as accurate as possible. Also, having vampires around gives the country a distinct advantage, which changes a number of important events. In terms of crunch, I had to figure out how to design a CR 33 character, which is absolutely insane, by the way. Vlad III Dracula is the most powerful being in *Hypercorps 2099* (with stats anyhow) and it was both a challenge and a thrill to see how those numbers came out.

9. What did you learn while working on it?

The most important lesson that I learned with *Hypercorps* was discipline. At the time I had just moved back to Washington and didn't yet have a day job, and it was the first time that I really had to make myself set aside time to get things done without any outside structure. Essentially, this was the project that taught me that you can't just write when inspiration strikes—as they say, if you show up to work, the muse will eventually follow.

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

It would be hard to pin "best" on any one thing, but I'd have to recommend Kobold Press' *Midgard Tales*. It's not very recent, but it is chock full of interesting adventures and talented authors, and you can't ask for more than that.

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

I think that the best products walk the line between innovation and playing it safe. If you're just re-doing old material no one's going to be interested, and if you have too many new rules then no one's going to want to wade through it all.

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

It's really hard to pick a favorite, honestly. If pressed, however, I'll admit that the writings of Clinton Boomer are twisted and evocative and beautiful and make my little dark heart glad. His tumblr feed is a thing of wild genius.

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

Put a face to the name. If you can, go to conventions where publishers will be attending and introduce yourself. A well-worded email is great, but nothing beats meeting someone in person. Also, while it's entirely valid to write for free when you're first starting out, don't sell yourself short. Your time is valid, and that means that it's worth something.

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

I generally have little interaction with illustrators directly, but I have to say that Nathanael Batchelor

was really fun to work with. He was very open to my ideas and kept me well updated with his progress, and hey, how many people can you really talk to about Vlad Dracula's moustache?

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

I was at GenCon one year, volunteering for Paizo, when someone looked down at my badge and said, "Oh! You're Savannah Broadway! You wrote Veteran's Vault, right? I love that scenario!" and then proceeded to tell me all about his experience with it. It was the first time anyone had just known me by name, and it really blew me away, honestly.

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

I'm currently editing Richard Pett's *Legendary Planet* adventure, *Confederates of the Shattered Zone*. It's really amazing editing the work of someone that you've looked up to for so long, and of course delightfully creepy to read. My advice would have to be: Choose your enemies wisely.

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

My upcoming goal is to be able to freelance full time. Ultimately, I'd like to have published novels, as well as gaming projects. On a more personal note, I'd like to be able to work a bit more on my own projects—pitching in on someone else's work is great, but I want to find time to write about the Elemental Plane of Soup, or develop rules and a setting for races that are 5 inches tall, or make an adventure path about Drow who run a restaurant.



18. Can you tell us a little about *An Undying Contract*?

An Undying Contract is the companion novel to Hypercorps 2099 and is essentially a series of interconnected short stories, ultimately revolving around Vlad III Dracula, the bargain he made to become the first vampire, and how

that affects the world. It was written by a group of four—myself, Mike Myler, Michael McCarthy, and Louis Loza—but I specifically wrote chapters 1, 5, 11, and the epilogue. Y'know, the parts with undead and devils. Because that's apparently what I do, and I'm pretty okay with that.

19. Is there anything you wish you could have included in that product?

I wish that it could have been longer, ultimately. But hopefully we can one day work towards a sequel. I do appreciate, however, how much material for the RPG that we came up with while writing the piece, like the technocleric archetype.

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

Ihave a soon-to-resume blog (thepurplegnomling. wordpress.com) in which I talk about projects I'm working on, among other things, like crossstitching work or wine label inspired costume design. Since National Novel Writing Month is just around the corner, I'll probably also be posting up excerpts from the resulting urban fantasy piece around then. Other than that, I enjoy a well-mixed Old Fashioned and chatting with fellow gaming folks, and if I can get both simultaneously, then all the better.



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Reviews

Bigli & Zalina Upor Quie 101 First Level Spells Image: Spell Sp

101 1st Level Spells (5E)

Publisher: Rite Publishing **Reviewer:** Gaetan V. **Stars:** 2 stars out of 5

Lacks professional editing and polish. For a \$6 PDF book, I expect a lot more.

Polish issues

• Text Splitting. Text is

regularly split across pages. On page 12 the description of **Escape Grapple** is on the next page, on page 13, the last line of **Glamour** runs on the next page. This isn't a print book, so I'm not sure why we're trying to conserve space over readability here.

- There's a "Summary" section at the front, but it's split across two columns in a way that makes it really awkward to read.
- The **Borrow Skill** and **Glamour** spells both have text alignment problems.

Professional Editing

- Terminolgy layout. In 5e, the wording on things like saves and checks are very standard. The Pass without Trace spell has the following: "... has a +10 bonus to Dexterity (Stealth) checks...". In this book, the spell Keen Senses has the line: "...advantage on Wisdom (perception)..."
- More Terminology. There's a spell called Gloomlight that is a Light spell that adds color to Darkvision. It's a cool idea, but I would expect the wording to look a lot like the Light spell. Instead it fails to copy the structure and becomes unusable as a result.
- There are lots and lots of awkward sentences and just outright typos. Here's a sample from **Avert Attack**: "You're quick spells keep your friends save."
- There are spells with range touch that say you instead of touched creature/object. This is clearly a spell that cannot be used as written.

Lack of rules knowledge

• Some spells reference "Low-light vision" or object Hardness or "full-round action". None of these are things in 5e. I would expect a professional editor to catch this stuff on the first pass.

- Lack of correct terminology affects all kinds of things. The spell **Guilt** not only has some typos, it doesn't really work. It says the target "is denied any action except to protect itself". "Protect Yourself" is not an Action in 5e. This spell should be very specific, something like "cannot take any Actions, Reactions or Bonus Actions". It also has clause to "shake off" the effect, but wording on the clause is completely different from the otherwise similar **Hold Person** spell.
- Spells like Energy Weapon and Energy Missile are very powerful and frankly a little bland.

Overall

This is a book filled with good ideas. There are lots of ideas here that could become staple spells for a campaign.

But the spells are simply not ready "as written". Most of them need some type of editing to come in line with the 5e style.

For \$3 you can get great stuff from Kobold Press that doesn't have this problem.



Adventure Quarterly #7 (PFRPG)

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

The 7th installment of Rite Publishing's quarterly magazine, their spiritual heir to Dungeon, if you will, clocks in at 63 pages, 1 page

front cover, 1 page editorial, 1 page ToC, 1 page SRD, 1 page advertisement, 1 page back cover, leaving us with 57 pages of content, so let's take a look!

As always, this installment begins with a brief editorial by Robert N- Emerson before diving into the modules, but let's take a look at the supplemental material first. Why? Because it is extremely useful: Steven D. Russell provides an article that helps structuring PC subplots in your campaign...and he has a 100-entry-strong table of Pre-Butt Kicking One Liners. This table is incredibly awesome: "We haven't been introduced, so I'll call you 'prey'." or "The only one who can save you now is Orcus... and since I can't bring him here, I'm going to send you to him!" - perhaps it's just me being a big fan of AHHHHNLD's one-liners, but I've been using that table quite a bit.

Anyways, let's talk about what's really important, namely the modules in here. As such the text that follows will contain SPOILERS. Potential players should jump to the conclusion.

All right, still here? Great!

The first adventure belongs to a woefully underrepresented type of module in PFRPG namely, the hexcrawl. Bret Boyd's "Shattered Dreams in Winter" makes use of Ultimate Campaign's exploration rules and has a synergy tie-in with the excellent 101 Not So Random Encounters: Winter, though neither book is required to run the module. SDiW is intended for 1st level PCs and covers a surprising breadth of places - a total of 69 hexes await exploration of a truly gorgeous full-color map that depicts the snowcapped mountains, glaciers and stable permafrost. In this frigid land, remnants and obelisks of the old Nee'Qan culture, lost to the sand of time, stand as monuments to other days, while the freezing cold and copious amount of snowstorms render survival a challenge - even before strange, lethal gasses and magical effects enter the fray. Temperature, random encounters and hazards are provided for your convenience to drive home that this place is not particularly cuddly.

The whole region, from the frontier's towns that provide ample hooks and statblocks, to the mysterious amber scepters one can find and the massive monoliths, the whole hexcrawl is an excellent exercise in indirect, sandboxy storytelling and atmosphere - as a whole, I was reminded of the classic Savage Sword of Conan issue featuring a monolith and an infamous Khitan duke named Leng, crossed with the atmosphere of Dark Soul II's Frozen Eleum Loyce - and honestly, I was truly intrigued by Bret Boyd's offering here - including an uncommon, corrupted outsider from the higher planes as a dread hunter in the snow and the exploration of these strange places, the first module blows me already away and makes for one of the most atmospheric first level modules I know - if anything, the module left me wanting more...this atmosphere can carry a module of thrice the size allotted.

The second module herein brings us back to the wonderful institution for the series, the legendary Ruins Perilous, Questhaven's post-modern dungeon, which acts as a proving ground and means to climb the social ladder in the adventurerrun legendary city. While before, we had themed regions, Mike Welham actually managed to do something truly unique - for this level of the dungeon, intended for fifth level PCs, has a very strong leitmotif I usually don't like - elements. As often, random encounters can be found within, but here's the thing: The level has an outer ring - from said ring, elemental-themed room-sequences exist, allowing access to the center of the level.

The absolutely unique aspect here is that the module manages to depict a sense of fantastic realism - each of the environment-themed gauntlets actually also has a room that features related materials to pass the respective trials and tribulations...which may actually double as traps in the hands of the unwary: A tissue-regeneration trap can, for example, be rather lethal when applied to creatures aligned with the energy type. So, what's the deal? Beyond mephits, the dungeon is all about the powerful living storm bound within the complex and gathering the missing faces of the cube of elemental harmony, which can ultimately be used to bring reason back to the powerful elemental entity. The fantastic realism utilized here is compelling and well-made.

The third module, penned by Nicholas Milasich for 7th level is darker - the House of Butchered Manflesh, which is a dark module with an intriguing twist: The PCs will investigate a mysterious and sullen captain and a trail of pigs into the sewers, where the tragedies of a fleshthemed dungeon, complete with mite kitchens loom; beyond deadly slaughtering machines and the powerful derro butcher, the dungeon seems to have a straightforward "man are meat"-theme, with an evil mistress at the helm - but there is a twist to all of it: You see, the lady of the house is actually a deadly hag who uses wagers and her considerable polymorphing powers to keep their servants in line...and keep a twisted control over the people under her "employ" (read: slavery). Now before you expect something grimdark...turns out that the mistress is screwing over the cannibals to which her meat is delivered: She polymorphs pigs into humans and sells them to the creatures below - her operation must be stopped, sure...but the consequences may well provide even more issues for the PCs in the future. Different in tone and with an interesting twist, this module, while the most conventional of the three in structure, its creative themes make this yet another winner.

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are very good: Apart from minor formatting hiccups, I noticed no significant glitches. Layout adheres to Rite Publishing's twocolumn full-color standard and the magazine sports a significant array of drop-dead gorgeous, original pieces of full color artwork and the cartography by none other than Tommi Salama, is glorious, though I wished we got the usual high-res jpgs and playerfriendly versions.

This installment of Adventure Quarterly is all killer, no filler - from the atmospheric offering
of Bret Boyd to Mike Welham's awesome Ruins Perilous and Nicholas Milasich's uncommon twist on a horror-theme through the glasses of high fantasy, not one of the modules in this magazine disappointed me - all of them have a creative component, something interesting and evocative that sets them apart. In the end, I am left with no serious complaints, with only the lack of playerfriendly maps that were present for all the older AQs being a serious downside that costs this my seal of approval. Still, the excellent modules are very much worth 5 stars and seal material, so yes, I do believe that this is well worth the asking price.

Endzeitgeist out.



10 Barbarian Magic Items (PFRPG) Publisher: Rite Publishing

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

This installment of Rite Publishing's 10-X-series clocks in at 9 pages, 1 page front cover, 1 page editorial, 1 page SRD, 1 page

advertisement, leaving us with 5 pages of content, so let's take a look!

We begin this pdf with two new special qualities: Armor and shields may benefit from the +2 bonus equivalent adversity's bulwark enchantment, which allows for the immediate action-based expenditure of 6 rounds of rage to reroll a save against a debilitating condition (excluding death), affliction, charm or compulsion. The barbarian must take the second result. If the barbarian also has the eater of magic rage power, he gains temporary hit points equal to the originating creature's CR that stack with the rage's temporary hit points. Weapons can be enchanted to gain the felling storm special weapon ability, which allows the barbarian to add a combat maneuver as a swift action 1/round to a successful attack while raging, providing, just fyi, synergy with the maneuvers introduced in Secrets of Adventuring. This enchantment should, for balance's sake, be limited to melee weapons or at last have a price that exceeds +1 for ranged weapons.

So that would be the general enchantments, now let's move on to the items: As has become the tradition with these pdfs, we actually get more than ten items: 5 of the items in this book come in 3 degrees of power: Lesser, standard and greater, and these higher power-levels do not just simply feature a numerical escalation. The Ring of Spiritual Spite allows wearers to expend rage as immediate actions to reduce damage incurred, but only if said damage is drawn from spell, supernatural or spell-like abilities, as well, as the example illustrates, from bonus damage caused by e.g. the flaming special quality. While rules language could have been slightly more precise, the example clears up all gripes I could field here. Higher power levels equal a higher amount of daily activations. Mantles of thorns provide minor natural armor bonuses and reflexive damage for those foolish enough to target the character with unarmed or natural attacks, with higher iterations allowing for more activations per day.

Boots of the Wild Rush would be a better example to illustrate aforementioned differences in powerlevels: The lesser variant allows for the expenditure of a swift action to increase base land speed by 10 ft., with each step above that increasing this by a further +10 ft. Standard versions allow for the expenditure of 3 rounds of rage to ignore natural difficult terrain and the greater version allows for rage-powered short range flight!

Bracers of Epic Deeds provide synergy with Surge of Strength and allow for all those fun over-the-top Conan-esque capers via significant Strength-check, CMB or CMD enhancements, but only 1/day. Standard bracers have synergy with the unexpected strike rage power and allow for 1/ day AoOs versus foes that move into a threatened square and the greater version allows barbarians to disable temporarily, via a special combat maneuver, special monster abilities like gaze attacks and the like - thankfully with a GM-caveat, but oh boy, how cool is THAT?

Similar to that, the lesser version of gauntlets of the breaker allow a barbarian to temporarily disable natural attacks. The standard version makes the barbarian better at wrecking objects and the greater iteration allows the barbarian to seriously impede armor, even natural armor, for a while and limited amounts of time per day. Unlike the bracers, here the progressively better iterations do increase the daily uses of the lesser versions.

Not all items herein feature such a 3-step-version: The Baldric of Restraint nets Quick Draw and lets the barbarian, as a swift action, expend rounds of rage to heal 1 hp per round expended. The helm of the nomad lets the barbarian expend a swift action to perform a smattering of skills that round reliably, counting as having taken 10. Additionally, 1/day, the item allows the barbarian to treat a skill check of the skills in question as a natural 20. As a nitpick: The helm is erroneously referred to as a belt once. That's a cosmetic glitch, though.

If you've been following the series, you'll know the star of the pdf is still coming: Made out of the new material Primal Iron, which counts as cold iron: The Fell Hammer, a massive earth breaker forged by legendary Kahrvass Fleymbrow (see Faces of the Tarnished Souk-series) that begins as a +1 primal iron earth breaker that provides a serious Intimidate bonus. At 3rd level and every 3 levels thereafter, the massive weapon may be enhanced, gaining first a bonus while the wielder is raging, then an upgrade to +2 (and bonus damage while raging!), shaken added to crits (with a 24-hourcaveat to avoid shaken-locks), teleportationhampering (missing an italicization for a spell) and finally, the option, via Hammerfall (puts good ole' "Templars of Steel" in the playlist) to generate a frickin' storm blast that deals serious damage (damage type would have been nice) and blows foes away, extinguishes flames, etc. EPIC.

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are the pdf's weak spot: While the rules-language is exceedingly precise and manages to deal with even complex concepts, there are a couple of minor formatting glitches and punctuation hiccups, though none of them impede the rules themselves to a significant degree. The one missing damage type is the only one of the glitches that is rules-relevant, and it is a minor one. Layout adheres to Rite Publishing's two-column full-color standard and the pdf has gorgeous full color artwork I haven't seen before - particularly impressive, considering the low asking price. In spite of its brevity, the pdf comes fully bookmarked for your convenience - kudos!

Steven D. Russell, may he rest in peace, has written barbarian items here that exemplify exceedingly well what made me a Rite Publishing fan back in the day; there is not a single cookie cutter, bland item in this pdf. Each piece of content you get is evocative, fun and has a serious justification for existing...in fact, reading the pdf will probably make any barbarian player salivate over at least one item; quite frankly, a lot of them. With the equipment herein, the feats of Strength and daring we came to love from the Conan comics become possible. And unlike in some of Steve's previous installments in the series, I have no complaints pertaining balance and pricing this time around.

Indulge me for a second, will you? This was hard for me to write. I was literally afraid of the pdf, since it was the last stand-alone pdf Steven wrote that he published. I really didn't want to bash the pdf, knowing how recently, I had to criticize some of his writing. I shouldn't have worried. As always, when someone observed valid gripes, Steven didn't grumble (for long) - he fixed it. He improved. In short - this pdf is bereft of anything I'd consider problematic. Furthermore, it has this signature quality, this design-voice I will sorely miss; the voice that speaks with flavor and has the crunch to back it up, that lets you do the cinematic, iconic things you wanted to do; that makes roleplaying supplements, even when they're just accumulations of crunchy items, fun to read.

Oh, and that they are mechanically innovative. Did you know that Steve was the first designer to use barbarian rage or bardic performance as a resource to power unrelated effects, feats, etc.? That I encountered magic items with scaling save DCs first in his writing? These are so normal right now, it seems odd...but yeah. So yes, we have significantly more than the promised 10 items on the cover; we have items that directly interact with class abilities and resources of the class. And they do all that while being items you really want to have. This is the antithesis of slapping just a plus and some qualities together. This is fun, evocative and innovative. And I, personally, am grateful for this pdf and what it brings to my table. The hiccups in editing pale before this creativity and with the low price, I can still rate this 5 stars + seal of approval, even when I turn off my emotions and just become review-bot 9000. This is a must-have for barbarian-fans.

Endzeitgeist out.



Addendum: Shape Shifting (Diceless)

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

This installment of the Addendum-series for DICELESS roleplaying clocks in at 20 pages, 1 page front cover, 1 page editorial,

2 pages of advertisement, leaving us with 16 pages of content, so let's take a look!

Shape shifting is contextualized as a power that is neither wholly of the Eidolon, nor of the Umbra; instead, it is an oscillating power of change in between and for this reason, mastery of either and shape shifting are a volatile combination, but more on that later.

Structure-wise, shape shifting is tiered in 4 levels: Lesser Shape Shifting (15 pts.), Shape Shifting (35 pts.), Advanced Shape Shifting (65 pts.) and Exalted

Shape Shifting (85 pts.). Generally, shape shifting has limits - characters must assume shapes of at least animal intelligence - no rocks, grass or the like and the form needs to be substantial for all but exalted shape shifters - no ethereal, smoky, cloudy or the like forms for all but the masters of this ability. One crucial point pertaining shapeshifting would be the respective limits imposed by the Gossamer Reality: A dragon's form in one world may easily be airborne and breathe fire, whereas in another, dragons would be unable to fly and perhaps emit acid. External anatomy like wings, generally can be reproduced via shapeshifting sans hassle, but internal structures like poison sacks, levitation organs or the like may well pose insurmountable tasks for the shape shifter. Similarly, the abilities potentially gained may well turn out to be rather taxing on Endurance of Psyche. Clothes and items worn when shifting are usually dropped or destroyed, though artifacts may be designed to accommodate shape shifter. Speaking of items the pdf does cover the interaction of items with the respective shape shifting power.

Lesser changes can be done quickly in a few seconds, while musculoskeletal rearrangement and profound physiological or psychological changes may require a couple of minutes. One form is designated as the favored form - reversal to this form takes less than a minute.

Shape shifting, as mentioned, is exhausting - an endurance rank of average means that one change is exhausting, while paragons can shape change sans limits. A shape changer also usually keeps a distinguishing mark that sets the creature apart as the shape changer - basically a tell like a streak of white hair, a birthmark or the like. The more powerful a creature whose shape is assumed, the more risky the process becomes, for shape shifting always may affect the core identity of the character - turning into a Mythos-monstrosity, for example, may change the psychology so radically, that the new assumed identity tries to subvert the dominant personality of the shape shifter. Similarly, intense physical trauma may lock a character in a given shape and require tools like the True Name or similar tricks to allow the character to regain his form...and abilities. Finally, overuse may result, particularly when combined with the forces of Eidolon and Umbra in power rejection, which can have rather unpleasant consequences.

Now, what type of shape shifting do the respective tiers of the power convey? Well, more precise timeframes and ramifications for the respective concepts mentioned are depicted in the respective entries for the shape shifting powers and the pdf does mention the limits - lesser shape shifters already may assume hybrid forms, though generally, they are locked into one alternate form; real shape shifters may instead learn a plethora of forms, disguising and impromptu shape shifting, providing a significant upgrade in flexibility - think of that step up a akin to the comparison between a werewolf and a full-blown doppelgänger, including limited control over healing, instinctual shape shifting.

Advanced shape shifters may use their power to become something more than they were; a quasi-avatar of Eidolon or Umbra...or a living icon of themselves, becoming a kind of avatar of the idealized self. It should be noted that brief suggestions for the potential of use with blessings/ curses and similar variant powers are provided and deemed appropriate at this power-level. Aura change, internal reconfiguration and size-change are cool, but beyond that, blood may be formed into tiny creatures to be commanded like spiders or birds and severed limbs may move autonomously from the shape shifter.

At the level of the exalted shape shifter, endurance and psyche retain their dominance, but the other attributes become more important as well-this level of mastery allows for the transformation in whole flocks of beings, regeneration, assuming a composition of an element or state of matter (like fluids or gasses) and better shape change as well as permanent transformation is very much possible here.

The pdf does mention the interaction of shape shifting with other powers like being a warden of the grand stair, wrighting or invocations and does note 4 canonical characters that are assumed to have shapeshifting when these rules are used.

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are very good - while I noticed an odd line-break and minor hiccups, nothing grievous in the glitch section. Layout adheres to Rite Publishing's two-column full-color standard used for LoGaS-supplements and the pdf has several pieces of absolutely gorgeous artworks - the cover artwork, just fyi, is weaker than several pieces of interior artwork. The pdf comes fully bookmarked for your convenience.

Jason Durall's addendum on shape shifting takes one of the big blank spots in Amber's old array and fills it in with a concisely codified take on shape shifting that thankfully does not enter the territory of being restrictive. Instead, this pdf can be imagined as a kind of enabler, as it should be for the context of the high-

imagination LoGaS framework. If there is anything to complain about, then that would be that the shape shifting herein does not necessarily explain the slightly related abilities Umbra practitioners could use and should be considered to supersede those fringe-cases. Still, this is just me grasping for straws to critique something. Overall, this expansion is precise, lacks any glaring glitches or holes I could find and represents a neat expansion for the LoGaS-multiverse. My final verdict will hence clock in at 5 stars.

Endzeitgeist out.



5th Edition Module: Fire & Ice (5E)

Publisher: Rite Publishing **Reviewer:** Endzeitgeist **Stars:** 2 stars out of 5

This module for 5e clocks in at 18 pages, 1 page front cover, 1 page editorial, 1 page SRD, 2 pages of advertisement, leaving us with 13 pages of

content, so let's take a look, shall we?

Wait, Fire and Ice? Sounds familiar, right? And indeed, this module has previously been released as part of Adventure Quarterly #6 for PFRPG, so let's check how well it translates to 5e, shall we?

This being an adventure-review, the following contains SPOILERS. Potential players should jump to the conclusion.

All right, only GMs left? Great! This adventure begins with the annihilation of an adventuring party.

No, not the PCs. A company of competing adventurers has been all but wiped out while trying to thwart an evil organization's plan to harvest divine essences - this organization, the Godling Cabal, is NOT fooling around. The sole survivor of the adventuring party, as it happens, is on the same longship as the PCs, the Brightstar - which, strangely, seems to be making a detour, as PCs with the appropriate background can determine. The tranquility of the journey is interrupted rather harshly, as an icy finger of an iceberg-vessel (!!) hits the ship and the vessel is boarded by magelings and a being called Malkin, who doubles as the primary antagonist. In the first encounter. How does that work? Well, turns out that Malkin is frickin' immortal.

In the original iteration, this was represented with a variety of unique rules-operations and they have been translated here - but the conversion, as a whole, does stumble...quite a bit. One look at the statblocks in the back shows several immediately apparent deviations from 5e-statblock formatting conventions in the details; similarly, Malkin's demieternal ability is still defined as (Su) - something that does not exist in 5e. Similarly, average damage, italicization and the like are mostly absent from the module's statblocks; we have colons where fullstops should be. The immortal ability of the assassin refers to itself as "eternal creature" analogue to the original template, demi-eternal and demi-ternal. In one paragraph. Urgh. Damage dice aren't properly formatted either...I can go on. Now usually, I'd leave that right there...but guess what? There is a bolded note regarding the save to make as the ice hits the ship. It's BOLDED. It sticks out in the text. It refers to a Reflex save and has an erroneously bolded partial sentence.

Upon temporarily defeating the threat, the poor survivor comes clean and asks the PCs for aid and so they're off to the island of pleasure, Mibre including a gorgeous map, mind you. This place is a small paradise, where an order of enigmatic monks poses an interesting puzzle (including troubleshooting advice and means t brute-force it) - here, the conversion is working as intended. The strange order of monks living here will prove to be pretty important, for without their help, the PCs will have a hard time bringing the magical crystal to the plane of fire to sunder it and thwart the plans of the evil cabal. Only by understanding the monks and participating in their tests (sans being killed by the cabal's forces!) do they have a solid chance to destroy the crystal in the plane of fire. Unfortunately, the details of the conversion feature more issues - when e.g. PCs get, for a while, the "construct traits", GMs for 5e are left scratching their heads. Is the constructed nature feature meant?

The pdf does feature notes on the iceberg vessel, but don't expect a write-up as a full vehicle; the maps are functional, but not high-res version of playerfriendly iterations are provided...which is puzzling, considering that the AQ-issue that featured the module had high-res jpgs of the maps included!

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are NOT up to the standard I expect from Rite Publishing; this pdf sports a significant array of conversion relics that even casual observation MUST catch. Come on - the ONE bolded section on a page and it's wrong?? Shakes head Layout adheres to Rite Publishing's two-column full-color standard and the pdf comes fully bookmarked with nested bookmarks. The artworks featured are solid full-color and the cartography by Tommi Salama is nice, though the absence of the existing high-res map-versions feels odd; indeed,

since they act as handouts/ready to go, the rather small depictions of the maps in this iteration of the module is odd - in the Mibre map, you can barely make out the places!

This is one of those heart-rending experiences; you see, in spite of the elemental theme, I actually really like Bret Boyd's module here; and one could have done a worse job converting it to 5e.

...I can't do this. Yes, it always could be worse. But guess what? When I did my very first rough draft of a 5e-conversion, it had less formal glitches in it than this book. Quite literally one prolonged and analytical glance at the formatting peculiarities of 5e would suffice here. Worse, the hiccups aren't purely aesthetic in nature, but drag their baggage into the very mechanics the module uses. Can you run this as written? Yes. But if you're like me, you'll have to acknowledge that the module's conversion is in dire need of an editor/developer who actually knows 5e's formal requirements. This does not do.

And it is a pity, for the module is not bad; in fact, I really like it in spite of the elemental theme, something usually not particularly near and dear to my heart. Still, this conversion is a great example of a good module dragged down by the less than stellar attention that was given to its conversion, to the point where the merits of the module's ideas and story are the one saving grace of it; from the lack of the existing high-res maps to the conversion issues, this one's formal properties are an uncharacteristic mess when compared to just about all Rite Publishing offerings, including other 5e-conversions. The module's story and ideas are all that make me round up from a final verdict of 1.5 stars. If you're willing to look past its issues, there is fun to be had here; if formal precision is something even remotely dear to your heart or the lack of the high-res maps annoys you, then beware.

Endzeitgeist out.



101 Hill & Mountain Spells (PFRPG)

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

This collection of spells clocks in at a massive 52 pages, 1 page front cover, 1 page editorial, 1 page SRD, 2 pages of advertisement,

leaving us with a massive 47 pages of content, so let's take a look!

Okay, so, as has become the tradition with these books, we begin with a general introduction before we get the spell-lists; as always in Dave Paul's spellbooks, the respective environment has a significant impact on the respective mechanics, potentially changing the effects of the spell in question. In this installment, a leitmotif suffusing the spells would be the hybrid nature of hills, serving as a bridge between the wilderness and the civilized realms; as a whole, this duality and focus on the environment is pronounced.

Spell-list-wise, the classic classes, including the APG classes and magus are covered and bloodrager and shaman receive their own spell-lists as well. At least for now, the pdf does not directly provide support for the occult classes.

Now, let us take a look at the spells, all right? We begin with interesting spells, as they take a mechanically relevant stab at depicting altitude sickness and the means to counter it; beyond their mechanical ramifications, the spells have interesting operations done. The save DC for aforementioned spell is increased if the material component is taken from a sufficiently high mountain...which is simple, elegant and just awesome.

The series has been pushing the boundaries of spellcasting and what you can do with it - and so it should come as no surprise that there are spells in this pdf that are hard to judge in terms of their potency: Amphisbaenic caster, to name one prominent example: As a level 7 spell, it allows you to split into your own self and a shadowy duplicate. Yes, we've seen the like before, but bear with me: The duplicate actually has a significant array of options - it's not just an image, it acts like you do; spells are evenly distributed among the two and while the duplicate's effects cause less damage than the real caster's powers, the doubling of actions this entails is impressive and very powerful. It should be noted that the spell features several peculiarities that render it exceptional in the level of precision, but also make it slightly uncommon. The damagedecrease of the duplicate is, for example, an inverse take on usual shadow-themed spells: Where usually, such spells are only 20% real, here, the reduction of damage caused is subject to percentile effects. I am not against such effects, though it is slightly uncommon to employ such mechanics. Beyond that, the spell actually works better for casters with certain patrons or bloodlines, which is something I most definitely appreciate. The dual action mechanic is similarly precisely codified... and still, I'd call OP on this spell, were it not for significant risks involved with perished doubles, making this spell an option casters won't want to spam all the time. This balancing mechanism

makes it actually work out - sure, it's a spell that requires some preparation by the player, but when employed, it is impressive indeed.

Speaking of balancing - the pdf is interesting in that spells like argentine's grace are variants of an already existing spell, increased in potency and balanced via unique, potentially story-hook worthy material components...in this spell's case, just fyi, a silver dragon's scale...

Of course, such variants tend to end up as the rather rare exception to the rule considering the spells otherwise found herein: Want to make your foes magnets for big boulders/avalanches or just conjure them forth to throw at foes or characters? Possible. (cough Giantslayer GMs, get this one /cough)

These would, however, not even be close to the spells you actually will keep in mind when reading this book. For example, which spellcaster than reaches lofty 9th level with actually resist the temptation of smashing enemies by literally letting a mountain top fall on them? Suddenly, "rocks fall, all die" has taken on a whole new dimension. A similar trope that just about every group will probably encounter at one point or another, the spell catapult ally is simply GLORIOUS. Why? Because it actually manages to codify the complex issues pertaining action economy implied by the action, one that is VERY hard to represent in the turn-based combat system, in a compelling and airtight rules-language. And yes, it takes weight and sizes into account.

If the mechanical aspects or high-level awesomeness are not what you're looking for, what about a low-level spell that lets you walk on clouds (long overdue!), the option to make cloud bridges or blasting cones of ash? It should be mentioned that the latter can be taken as a nice example for spell balancing and the value of secondary effects when compared to similar magic effects of the same level.

Not all of the spells are 100% perfect, though - if you look for nitpicks, tehre are a precious few to be found herein - a curse that unleashes an inner beast and devolves the target grants you bite and claw attacks - while the variable, size-based damagevalues are accounted for, the spell does not specify whether the attacks are treated as primary or secondary natural attacks. Established conventions exist to make this omission a non-issue, sure, but it still would have been nice to see that specifically mentioned. An entrancing dance that compels those that succumb to it to accompany you conjures up images of Hekate-rites or the pied piper and cantrip-based infliction of light sensitivity on the target similarly makes sense.

Those of us who are into philosophy will enjoy a spell where the author's expertise show through the illusion deep in the cave, based on the famous allegory of the cave in Plato's work, is genius - not only are the effects well codified, it actually manages to illustrate a complex concept easily, teaching a slightly simplified experience by the mechanics of the system. I LOVE THIS. Considering the fact that many a spellcaster in fantasy worlds is supposed to be hyper-smart, the absence of spells that illustrate complex and intriguing concepts by means of gamemechanics is something that has always galled me... so kudos...not only for the educational aspect this spell contains. While we're at it - what about a spell that eliminates your face and renders your whole body a sensory organ...albeit a deeply unsettling one? You'll get two cookie points from me if you can tell me the theory that one is based on!

If giant form is too generic for your tastes (and/or you need more variety for giant-themed campaigns...), variants for fire/frost giants in this book will have you covered. Transforming into nightgaunts or wyverns may be cool - but not half as cool as making floating hills or mountains. Yes. Floating mountains. Awesome. Using the puntastic Grimm Resistance, you can get a powerful buff versus the fey creatures. Generating a magicpowered movement to compel large amounts of people to dig for you may sound specific...but the spell is basically at least one adventure practically spelled out for you.

Tapping into the characteristics of the savage humanoids living in the hills via an array of spells would be another component of the book. Very unique: Phase runner lets you oscillate between the material and ethereal plane, becoming ethereal while moving and substantial while standing still/ attacking - this sports a LOT of unique applications for tactics - and, interestingly, the spell takes mounts and vehicles and the like into account. Perhaps, you, as a high-level druid, are just fed up with the encroachment of civilization...if you are, just Raise Mountain Range. 2 square miles per level. The summon spells herein are nothing to sneeze at either - they contain actual simple templates to add at your convenience.

Oh, and to make that reference...since I'm from Germany, I need to mention this, in spite of not being the biggest fan of the whole volkstümliche Musik concept - there is a spell in here called yodel. Yes, you can reskin this one to work via smoke signs. Yes, it is kinda funny, but works. Yes, I will probably use it and require my players to actually yodel when trying to use it. Because that's how I roll. ;)

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are very good, I noticed no significant glitches. Layout adheres to Rite Publishing's two column full color standard and features some neat artworks I haven't seen before. The pdf comes fully bookmarked for your convenience.

Dave Paul's spells are the most anticipated spell books for Pathfinder for me; let's not kid anyone. They're pretty much the only spell books I truly look forward to reviewing right now. I'm mostly burned out on spells and the significant majority of spells either is a variant on something or doesn't feel magical enough for me. Dave Paul's spells, on the other hand, either do something mechanically interesting, breathe a sense of the wondrous, stitch shut gaps in what spells let you do, provide unique tactical options...it may sound weird, but I actually prefer his spells and variants of other spells over many an "original" spell. Why? Because even his spell variants stand out with unique rulesoperations or concepts that breathe the spirit of the fantastic to an extent unrivalled by just about every comparable book. It is a boon for a lot of authors that he got into the spell-writing gig only relatively recently; otherwise many a book of magic would have received less praises from yours truly. The terrain-based 101-spell-series raises the roof for the whole concept of spells and this is no different. Evocative and unique, this is well worth 5 stars + seal of approval, with an explicit extra recommendation for fans of giants, dwarves and humanoids and classic Against the Giants/ Borderlands/Giantslayer-style gameplay.

Endzeitgeist out.



#30 Haunts for Battlefields (PFRPG)

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

This installment of Rite Publishing's #30-series clocks in at 16 pages, 1 page front cover, 1 page editorial, 1 page SRD, 1 page

advertisement, leaving us with 12 pages of content, so let's take a look!

We begin this little pdf with a summary of the nature of haunts and how they operate, making the use of this pdf as painless and book-flipping-less as possible. After this brief explanation, persistent and minor haunts are explained and then we're right in the subject matter - haunts for battlefields. This book pretty much offers exactly what it says on the tin, with haunts in the pages ranging in CR from CR 1 to CR 12. The effects of the haunts themselves, are diverse: From an overwhelming sense of battle-weariness to visions of burning barracks that may boil your blood to the haunting choir of prisoners sacrificed or executed, there is a lot to be found in this pdf.

The selection of haunt covers both the common (e.g. ear-piercing screams) to remnants of contagion that can be abated by planting a red spider-lily (all Japanese culture buffs out there, rejoice!). From the unsettling experience of watching dead birds emit unnerving cackles to the very earth growing acidic, detonating pustules, the pdf strikes a lot of tones and it does so well: Both the somber aftermath and experience between the fighting and the pure chaos of warfare have their haunted representations amid these offerings, with destruction often pointing to and underlining the respective truth beyond the creation of the haunt.

In fact, the variance between modes and themes of haunts can be easily evoked by using haunts as transitionary elements - there are some that feature the dins of battle, which could conceivably used as great out- and in-game audio-cues to signify a transition from the somber to the chaotic and lethal aspect of warfare. The very earth grasping for the living, being carried away against one's will by a phantom horde, carpenter's tools used creatively by a torturer, the nascent greed of traumatic pillaging echoing through an area, phantoms of the dying projectile-vomiting acidic blood, rapid decomposition of the fallen and the very earth's mouth trying to swallow those whole that thread upon it - the diversity of the haunts herein is more than sufficient, and they may actually all be stringed together to form a truly nightmarish hell-hole of a battleground, often with means of combining the haunts already included:

When two haunts refer to barracks burning and work potentially well together, the GM simply has his work cut out for himself...

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are top-notch, I noticed no significant glitches. Layout adheres to Rite Publishing's classic two-column full-color standard and the pdf comes with a blend of fullcolor art I haven't seen before. The pdf comes fully bookmarked for your convenience.

It feels almost like another life since I last reviewed a haunt book by T.H. Gulliver. The haunts books for the #30-series, universally remain my go-to default

address for haunts: Precise, deadly, evocative and yet easy to plug into a given context, the books are classics...and so is this one. For a more than fair price, you get an evocative array of fun haunts that enriches the game...or an adventure. I firmly believe that a good GM can string these together as a great adventure locale or even as a mid-level adventure that requires exactly no combat encounters...just this eerie, forlorn battlefield, where the earth itself keens and loathes those that have savaged it. A great and evocative pdf, this is well worth 5 stars + seal of approval.

Endzeitgeist out.



In The Company of Treants (PFRPG)

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

The latest installment of Rite Publishing's massive "In the Company"-series for playable monster races clocks in at a massive 48

pages, 1 page front cover, 1 page editorial, 2 pages of advertisement, 1 page SRD, leaving us with 43 (!!!) pages of content, so let's take a look!

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

Unlike most of these books, we do not begin with the in-character prose that guides us through the book itself - instead, we start with author Jonathan McAnulty noting taking us a long on a short trip through his mind and past, explaining why this book exists in the first place - and personally, I like that. It makes the book feel...well, more direct and establishes a context and theme against which one may process the following information.

After this, we dive right into what has by now become a crucial part of the identity of this series, namely the fact that it reads very well: The introduction to the playable treants featured in this book is narrated by a member of the race, structured alongside a song of the treants, as the narrator explains the mythology, the role of shepherds of trees and then proceeds to detail the life-cycles of treants, misconceptions of other races, the unique society, ethics and relationships with other races. This whole section is provided in stunning, captivating prose and extends its level of detail to nomenclature to the finer details as well, resulting in a truly captivating experience as far as reading material is concerned. Now, an important component of the treant as depicted here is that the treants are plants, yes...but the plant traits, very powerful as a default, have been modified for balance's sake, which is a pretty big (and smart) decision right then and there. Unlike previous installments of the series, the treants provided herein actually are not simply one race: There are multiple options to choose from, the first of which would be the birchwalker.

Birchwalkers gain immunity to humanoidtargeting effects, paralysis, stunning and sleep effects as well as +1 + 1/2 HD to saves versus charms, compulsions, morale effects, patterns, phantasms and polymorph effects - these would be the modified plant traits mentioned above. They get +2 Con and Cha, -2 Wis, low-light vision and are always awake, though their spell preparation etc. work via a meditation, though this does not include penalties to Perception for sleeping. Birchwalkers gain +2 natural armor and are resilient versus starvation, suffocation etc. - they get +4 to Conchecks to avoid the like and gain +2 to Diplomacy, Appraise and Craft. (Here, a cosmetic formatting glitch has crept in, with the artisan racial trait not beginning in a new line; cosmetic, though and not a reason to harp on the pdf. Birchwalkers get +4 to Knowledge (Nature) pertaining trees and armor made for them costs twice as much. They also take +50% fire damage. Alternate racial trait-wise, they can have a slightly faster speed (and minor bonuses versus trip and bull-rush), +2 to Knowledge (nature), +4 to Diplomacy and Knowledge (local) or +4 to Profession (orcharist), increasing a region's plant productivity 1/year via plant growth-y tricks.

The second version of treant we get is the oakheart, who gets the same modified plant traits as well as +2 Str and Wis, -2 Dex, only 20 ft. movement rate (that is never diminished), cannot run, is always awake, gains low-light vision, +2 natural armor, the same photosynthesis-bonus versus starvation/suffocation/etc. (and yes, they still require sustenance!), speak with plants at will, +2 to saves versus spells, SPs and poisons, +2 to CMD vs. bull-rush and trip and the same Knowledge (nature) bonus to deal with trees. They also share the requirements for more expensive armor and being flammable. Alternate racial trait-wise, they can get +2 to Diplomacy and Knowledge (local), 1/day wood shape, +2 to saves versus electricity, cold and heat-based saves or an increased natural AC at the cost of further reducing movement rate, down to 15 ft.

Pretty cool and a nice showcase of 3pp-camraderie - instead of simply replicating another author's work or generating redundancy, there is also the seedlings included. First written by Marie Small and then published by Jon Brazer Enterprises, these characters would be the option to use if you wanted less powerful base race stats and are the version you'll take for the low-fantasy campaigns. While seedling-material is obviously included herein, the original book is by no means redundant and can be pictured as a nice companion-pdf to this book. It's great to see Rite Publishing giving credit where credit is due.

That's still not all, though - there is a FOURTH race of treants in this book, the Willowkin. These fellows also get the modified plant-traits, +2 Dex and Int, -2 Con, darkvision 30 ft, low-light vision, +1 natural armor, photosynthesis, they can speak with plants at will, gain +2 to CMB when making trips and +1 initiative, +2 to Spellcraft checks as well as +1 DC when casting SPs and enchantment spells (not that big a fan of the SP-caveat since I know a couple of classes that cast exclusively SPs...) and 3/day daze, I assume as an SP - the trait doesn't specify, which makes figuring out the DC slightly more opaque than it should be. They also suffer from the more expensive armor and flammable drawbacks like their brethren. While their writeup, like those before, sports some of the cosmetic glitches, I noticed no formal ones. Alternate trait wise, they can get keen senses, +2 to Acrobatics (which should be capitalized, not lower-case) at the cost of natural armor, tremorsense 5 ft. instead of darkvision and 1/day healing by putting his feet/ roots into water - which is a damn cool image.

The pdf provides a significant array of favored class options, but class-specific ones and general ones and then proceeds to provide racial archetypes, the first of which would be the Primal Forest Guardian, a treant barbarian that gets a modified skill-list and proficiency-list. Instead of uncanny dodge, improved uncanny dodge and DR, the archetype gains +1 natural AC per level and +1 DR/- per 2 levels, but also pays for this enhanced defense with reduced numbers of rage per day. Instead of fast movement, they become particularly adept at hurling boulders, trees, etc, increasing the damage output of these at higher levels and they begin play with a slam attack that scales in base damage. Pretty cool: At 11th level, the guardian can elect to forego iterative attacks in favor of an additional slam attack at full BAB, which improves the flow of combat. They do, however, gain less rage powers. Unique: The barbarian actually grows in size, up to Gargantuan at 20th level, with minor attribute

bonuses and a single Dex-loss accompanying this feature. Bonus damage versus inanimate objects is nice, but more interesting would be that prolonged rages may animate trees in the vicinity of the primal guardian.

If you've read the above, you may have begun already contemplating how treant growth and multiclassing work - for you'd be correct in the assumption that all the archetypes herein indeed do sport such options. Their interaction is handled with a rather nice, explanatory sidebox that provides concise and succinct guidelines for the GM and players. Kudos!

The verdant healer would be the treant cleric and, like the barbarian, the archetype receives a modified list of skills and proficiencies and is locked into the healing domain as well as one domain of the player's choice from a brief list. Verdant Healers cannot channel positive energy to harm undead and gain 1/2 their class level to Heal-checks. They gain a scaling slam attack as well as natural armor bonuses that increase every 2 levels, with high levels also providing a bit of DR. At 3rd level, the archetype gains the option to use channel energy as a touch instead, which heals slightly above the median of rolls for regular beings, 6s for plants and allows the healer to even treat attribute damage and at the highest levels, raise dead. Think of this as a channel powered alternate lay-on-hands/mercyish option. They also are experts at brewing potions and gain, as mentioned above, growth, though size-wise, they cap out at Huge at level 20.

The tree master druid takes the tree animation one step further in a bonded forest and would probably be the incarnation of the treant character concept you think of first. This ability is powered by the quickening point pool, here equal to 2 + Charisma modifier, +2 per class level gained. This concept, just fyi, can be found in quite a few of the archetypes herein, with information on pool-behavior when multiclassing being provided as well. Obviously, wild shape is focused on plant shape iterations for a tonal consistency. The fighter archetype provided herein focuses on a combination of tanking akin to the barbarian brother and a focus on hurling devastating stones. The earthborn kineticist is locked into earth (geokinesis) as primary element and gains basic geokinesis as a wild talent and burn gets an interesting modification: Earthrelated burn is reduced by 1 to a minimum of 1, while fire-related burn is increased by 1. Burn can also be accepted in order to temporarily increase the kineticist's defensive capabilities and they may infuse the power of earth in their slams.

The serene master would be a treant monk (which is a pretty powerful option, considering the fact that the armor-restriction is null and void for those guys) - and the combo of modified monk-AC-rules and AC-scaling means, ultimately, that these guys end up with better capabilities to survive the rigors of adventuring. While they do not gain stunning fist (thus locking them out of quite a few archetypes and tricks that use Stunning Fist as a resource), their damage-output is increased. Now here is an interesting option: At 4th level, they can deliver attacks by proxy via trees, allowing them to be supremely lethal combatants in forests. I was pretty skeptical about this one, but it ended up being rather cool, so kudos! (And yes, ki-powered, but balanced regeneration is included, though the ability lacks an activation action.) At higher levels, these guys can also swap places with trees. Prophets of the Glades oracles gain the new deep woods mystery, which sports among its revelations true strike-ish benefits alongside rock throwing as well as establishing an effect that lets your survey a tree and share damage with it...which certainly is powerful, but also evocative and in line with the treant mythology established in fiction. As a minor cosmetic nitpick, that one's name isn't italicized. Pretty cool would also be the second mystery, the weather mystery, which grants you bonuses depending on the current weather! You know...I actually really like this idea! Windy day? Your bonus applies to Dex. Cloudy? Wisdom. I think there's a class concept here. Three sample curses for treant oracles, from being hollow to being fire-scarred or stunted can be found as well.

More classic and in line with what you'd expect is the Woodland Stalker, a pretty straightforward ranger with treant-y abilities. The wald walker rogue is interesting in that it may, among other options, flank with trees a limited amount of times per day and has quite an array of nice, unique talents. The skald archetype provided similarly uses the treant-y tricks like slam attacks and hurling stones, but supplements them with unique performances. The arcane classes aren't left out either: Sorcerers can gain two new bloodlines, the ley line and fey woods bloodlines; the first featuring healing capabilities for the sorcerer and the second being more closely aligned with classic tricks, including a vanilla quickening directed tree attack. Finally, the verdant scholar wizard gets a bonded tree that can aid him when making magic items and divide damage between him and the tree. Additionally, a selection of unique arcane discoveries are provided for the archetype. This one surprised me. Why? Because the bonded tree is narrative GOLD. "Look,

the leaves of our protector's tree are falling...a great calamity is approaching" or "Defend the sacred tree of our guardian!"...damn cool and made me come up with multiple, cool ideas.

The pdf, as has become the tradition with this series, features a racial paragon class, the tree shepherd. Tree shepherds get d8 HD, 4+Int skills, 3/4 BAB-progression, good Fort-saves, proficiency with clubs, great clubs, spears, stones and slings. They begin play with the option to supernaturally animate trees with a range of 50 ft + 10 ft. per level, powered by 4 + Cha-mod quickening points, which are expanded by +3 per level thereafter. The animation takes one full round for the tree to uproot itself, though somewhat annoyingly, the ability does not specifically call that it requires the tree shepherd to expend this action, which means that the activation-action component of the ability could be clearer. The number of trees simultaneously animated and their power increases at higher levels. If a tree is left beyond the radius, it roots itself, but you do not need to spend quickening points again to reanimate it while the original duration persists. Charisma governs the number of trees a shepherd can have activated at a given time. The class also features forest stealth (+class level) while in forests as well as the scaling AC and DR-bonuses some archetypes featured as well. Obviously, the iconic slams and stone hurling can be found as well and tree shepherds get the powerful savage growth of treant barbarians, which means they cap out at Gargantuan size at 20th level.

At 1st level and every 2 levels thereafter, the paragon class gains a forest gift, which would be the talent-selection within this build: The talents themselves run a broad gamut of tricks: Moving a whole forest via quickening expenditure at high levels? Yup. Summoning elementals (maximum power based on shepherd size and point expenditure) may be nice, but personally, I really like the option to call forth mist in a 1-mile radius. Sure, only 60 feet visibility...but I know my players will LOVE this one....and visibility can be further reduced via additional points. Now get a character with mist sight and you have a great setup for a brutal infiltration. Conjuring forth an exhaustion-mitigating spring that also heals, gaining greensight or benefits depending on the season (YES!) render this class, alongside the numerous attribute bonuses, versatile and strong, but fitting for just about every campaign. In fact, I'd probably recommend it more for a lower magic environment that emphasizes magic as something mystical rather than as something common.

That's not even close to what this book has to offer, though: Beyond detailed age, height and weight tables, we get information on treant food and unique mundane and magical items: From fire extinguishing chalky powder to living chests or treant brew rations, there is a lot of cultural uniqueness to be found here.

Speaking of which: The new feat-section, featuring the options to animate vines and bushes, increase your photosynthesis as well as multiple styles render this section rather neat. Beyond the significant array of feats, rules for crafting vine traps alongside 8 sample plant traps (CRs range from 1 to 5) complement the well-ingrained ideas we have on treants. Bowls of light that enhance nearby plants, clubs that can be animated via quickening points or enchanted, returning rocks - the magic items are similarly uncommon and fitting. The pdf goes one step beyond, though, and provides a 20-level NPC class at full BAB-progression, good Fort-save, d8 and 2+Int skills for NPC-treants - which reduces the tricky bits of the previous archetypes to the base and may be a nice option for low-powered campaigns that want a manageable, straightforward treant-PC.

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are good; on a formal level and regarding rules-language, there isn't much to complain apart from a few hiccups. Formattingwise, the pdf similarly sports a couple of minor issues, with in particular line breaks between abilities not being always clear - one more pass in those two disciplines would have made the book a bit more streamlined. Layout adheres to a nice, two-column full-color standard with branchygraphic elements based on public domain art in the margin, providing a nice, fitting aesthetics here. The full-color artworks in the book seem to be not only original, they also are rather beautiful. The pdf comes fully bookmarked for your convenience.

Oh boy, this was work. But also a rather joyous occasion, at least for me. Why? Because I'm honestly glad Jonathan McAnulty has once again written a big, whopping book. Then, I started thinking about treants and started shuddering. I mean, seriously? How can you maintain their power and evocative tricks and retain a sense of balance? It seems like a losing game, no matter what you do: Get rid of the plant traits and the high-power games while whine; don't get rid of them and the low-powered games will start yelling "unabalnced!". How does this book solve this conundrum? Simple. In the best way possible. It's all in here. Want a high-powered treant? Go for birchwalker. If you're like me and

like races to have powers and drawbacks and a unique flair, go for the oakheart. Want a more agile one? Willowkin. Something in line with the core races? Seedling. Better yet, the racial paragon class and archetypes generally sport the "treant"-feeling. They are not simply general archetypes with a racial coat - they feel and play distinctly unique, they are fitting for the races. The cornucopia of supplement information and fluff further enhance this book and render it, as far as player-agenda, table-variation and the pure imaginative potential is concerned, one of my favorites. The mile-mist...the moving of trees...beyond mathfinder abilities (which are there, fret not, my fellow crunchers!), this pdf offers great storytelling devices that may actually be useful above and beyond the limitations of the system. This book codifies what we know of treants from literature and our cultural unconsciousness and provides the definite book on playing the masters of the woods and, personally, my favorite in the whole line alongside the rakshasa-book. That being said, there are a couple of glitches herein, some of which pertain to ability activation and thus, the rules-language. While one can usually glean what they are supposed to be, that does remain as a minor drawback- Mind you, these glitches are few...but they're there.

So...let me reiterate that: As a person, I absolutely adore this book, particularly the extensive means to customize treants to make them viable for just about any campaign. As a reviewer, however, I can't let the glitches that are here slide...and thus, I'd arrive at a final verdict of 4.5 stars. I do know, however, that quite a few of you out there tend to share my opinions and prefer evocative, unique options that emphasize a cohesive theme over formal perfection of bland content. Hence, I will round up for the purpose of all the platforms this pdf has its heart at the right spot and is a fun, great read that will make you want to call forth the shambling, ponderous masters of the forests deep.

Endzeitgeist out.



The Secrets of the Taskshaper (13th Age Compatible)

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

This adaptation of the taskshaper class to the 13th Age rule-set clocks in at 20 pages, 1 page front

cover, 1 page editorial, 1 page SRD, 2 pages of

advertisement, leaving us with 15 pages of content, so let's take a look!

So, what is the taskshaper? In case you are not familiar with the exceedingly awesome background of the class - it is one of the most challenging classes to GM for in PFRPG, defined by the option to basically shapechange and poach abilities from monsters, a class suffused with great background info: You see, as the in-character prose that guides you through this pdf makes amply clear, the taskshaper is a creature changed by the fey, with themes of changelings and the mythological lord Auberyon being part of the deal. As such, after the well-written introductory prose, we dive into the particulars of the class.

The taskshaper has an original form - basically the race you had prior to becoming a taskshaper. They can choose either +2 Dex or Cha, provided they have not already increased said ability score. A smattering of sample backgrounds are provided for your convenience. You begin play with the gear of the latest person you impersonated, up to 50 gp worth and are wanted for a minor misdeed... or you halve starting gold and are not wanted and get decent clothes as well as light armor. And a simple weapon. Armor follows the 11 -> 13 -> 15 progression, shields netting +1.

The taskshaper being a unique creature regarding its flavor, thus proceeds to classify natural weapons by type - tables align these with one-handed or twohanded weapon equivalents and, from different bites to stings and special attacks, this classification is simple, to the point and easy to grasp. Ranged weapons gain a similar classification, just fyi. The taskshaper receives (8+Con-mod) x3 starting hit points, scaling up to x24 at 10th level. Each level nets a feat and 4th, 7th and 10th level provide ability upgrades, as noted. Damage bonus from ability score increases to x2 at 5th level and x3 at 8th level. The Form pool (more on that later) begins at 1st level and upgrades at 3rd, 5th, 7th and 9th level. Ini is Dex + level. AC is 11 + middle mod of Con/ Dex/Wis +level; PD is 11 + middle mod of Str/Con/ Dex +level; MD is 12 + middle mod of Int/Wis/Cha + level. The taskshaper gets 8 recoveries, recovery rate of 1d8 x level + Con-mod, 8 background points (max 5 in one), 3 icon relationships and 3 talents. When transformed, their basic attacks can govern hit damage with Cha instead of Str or Dex, both in melee and ranged combat.

The first class feature of the taskshaper would be perfect imitator, which allows you to assist allies with tasks or repeat a task you have observed. At champion-tier, you can use a feat to learn a wizard spell and cast it 1/day. You cast this via Cha and may replace the spell with another, provided you can learn it from a spellbook. The Epic tier feat can even uncover repressed memories via this copying, provided you beat the MD of the creature. The second class feature would be Moment of Change, which allows you to 1/ battle gain minor bonuses as a free action by reshaping your body. You may also use this ability as a quick action to shapechange into one of your forms known or the combination of forms known. Additionally, you can expend this moment to modify an assumed form. Adventurer feat nets +1 such moment, Championtier's feat increases the aforementioned bonus and nets another moment, while the epic feat provides +2 moments of change per battle. Additionally, 1/ encounter, you regain all moments upon becoming staggered. Here, presentation is a tad bit confusing - the dev's note mentions 10 moments for a scenario of two epic-tier taskshapers duking it off, which is, obviously correct -it's 5 per character. The dev's note does make that sound like it's 10 per character, so a bit of confusion there. Moments of change are regained upon a short rest. Reverting to your original form, just fyi, does not require moment o change expenditure.

The taskshaper class also receives some talents, the first of which allows you to mimic an object - which becomes particularly unique at epic tier, when you can assume full properties of objects, including magical bonuses and special abilities, but the special abilities do require the expenditure of moment of change uses and size-requirements and restrictions still apply, but may be overcome with your shapechanging. Slightly odd from a wording point of view: The epic-tier feat also nets the option to conduct a ritual to make a functional non-combat utility copy lasting for 1 hour per moment of change used - this looks like you create the object, while the reversal clause does imply that reverting to your original form takes longer. Basically, I think the taskshaper turns into this item, but the wording is simply a bit opaque here.

Shift Condition is intriguing - it allows you to expend recoveries to delay/temporarily halt conditions, ongoing damage and last gasp saves, with epic tier allowing you to transfer these to adversaries...thankfully, this does reset the counters. Troll Blood improves your healing capacity, making the save easy to use full effect recoveries, with the epic feat granting you 10 hp of healing for 5 minutes. This is a bit odd, since even a regular troll's regeneration is tied to uses in battle, not a time-frame. Protean Touch makes your face and body malleable, allowing you to freely assume other guises and grants you a free 5-point background, with champion-tier weaponizing this to allow you to prevent touched foes from taking

move or quick actions, while the epic-tier feat lets you grant limited shapechanging to your allies... and gain a touch that can pulverize foes.

So, what exactly do the forms do and how do they work? Well, you begin play knowing 4 forms, learning new forms requires a first-hand experience. Thereafter, provided you can learn a new form, one day of experimentation does the trick. You retain your size unless specifically noted and can speak in forms. Unless specifically noted, items do not change with you. Upon becoming disabled or dying, you revert to your original form and while forms have no duration, you only regain moments of change when resting in your original form. You may also use moments of change to only partially transform parts of your body - these never cause damage to yourself. You retain a certain recognizable quality when changed and forms assumed come with a 20-entry table that sports unique distinctive marks.

Now here is the cool thing regarding the forms - the respective transformations offer some noncombat utility, modifications of defense-stats, natural attacks and provide you with a selection of diverse abilities - you choose multiple such tricks when you assume a form. Beast Form, for example, would allow you to gain +2 to AC and PD in addition to the base form's modifications and make you venomous. Or, you could be venomous and constrict. Or increase damage die of your attacks and gain a 16+-triggered secondary attack. Some suggestions for e.g. which of these traits would be appropriate for e.g. bears, etc. are a welcome bonus. Starting at level 3, aquatic beast forms, ooze and plant bodies are unlocked, while level 5 unlocks the avian beast form, elemental body (air, earth and water). Level 7 nets you access to diminutive and large size, Elemental Body (Fire) and level 9, finally, lets you take the forms of dragons and, yes...even swarms! The forms themselves are varied and unique, their fluff being pretty awesome and they actually also feature quite a few interesting things to consider: Fire Elemental Body, for example, nets you a cool vs. PD attack with ongoing fire damage...but also makes you susceptible to non-flammable liquid and weakened if you have no material to burn.

That being said, personally, I'm a bit of a stickler for precision and partial change and its interaction with the forms could have used a bit of clarification -when I take e.g. the fire elemental's body, does this mean I get aforementioned weaknesses? The ability for the PD-attack mentions that it replaces the regular attacks - but what if one only assumed parts of this form? I assume that's not possible since it and a bunch of the other forms have the "body"caveat, which looks like it means that it is only available for total change...but I am not sure. A bit of clarification for such cases would be nice, even though GMs can probably handle these decisions.

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are top-notch on both a formal and rules-language level. Layout adheres to Rite Publishing's two-column full-color standard, is nice regarding art-direction and the pdf comes fully bookmarked for your convenience.

Patryk Adamski's adaptation of Steven D. Russell's cool taskshaper class works exceedingly well for the most part. While I consider the relatively few moments of change a bit too restrictive, (Boys, I need to take a short break...again.), that is a relatively easily changed component that can be attuned to a given campaign. The unique and complex options of the taskshaper are somewhat simpler in 13th Age than in Pathfinder, but that does make sense and actually does the class some good - the acquisition of forms and their limits ultimately requires no GM-book-keeping in this version, which is pretty awesome. At the same time, there are a couple of instances where the otherwise precise rules-language could have imho used some further clarifications regarding specific interaction with shapechanging objects, partial changes, etc. While these issues are not glaring, they do mean that the GM is required to make some judgment class when the class is used. Still, this does manage to convey the unique nature of the taskshaper to 13th Age - and that is a great thing.

How to rate this, then? Well, while not perfect, this is an inexpensive, evocative addition to 13th Age, one that particularly should be interesting for more experienced 13th Age-players. My final verdict will clock in at 4 stars.

Endzeitgeist out.



#30 Haunts for Objects (PFRPG)

Publisher: Rite Publishing **Reviewer:** Martin S. [Verfied Purchaser]

Stars: 5 stars out of 5

Haunts are great! They are part traps, part undead, but more interestingly, they are useful to create an atmosphere

and tell a story. The haunts contained herein are well crafted and all have nice background that can generate a short adventure or be a part of a greater story. We even get a haunted location, The Temple of the Worm God that could the center of an adventure in itself. The background details are abundant.

All the haunts in this book are narrative gold and will help a GM craft interesting haunted locales.



In The Company of Treants (PFRPG)

Publisher: Rite Publishing **Reviewer:** Jacob B. [Verfied Purchaser] **Stars:** 5 stars out of 5

So far, I have been a fan of every product in the "In The Company Of" series. Rite Publishing continues to

impress me with their excellent material in creation monster races and classes to be played as PCs. Time to get our Groot on!

Uter Studing Grown 101 Fourth Gevel Spelfs Uter Studing Grown Dig Some D. South Mich Georgen

101 4th Level Spells (5E)

Publisher: Rite Publishing **Reviewer:** Jacob B. [Verfied Purchaser] **Stars:** 5 stars out of 5

Rite Publishing continues its excellent work in producing new material for 5th edition fantasy.

Rite Map Pack: Coastal Region

Publisher: Rite Publishing **Reviewer:** Jeremy B. [Verfied Purchaser]

Stars: 5 stars out of 5

Yet another high quality product from the folks at Rite Publishing. This 3rd party publisher produces

some of the most impressive content on DTRPG. The cartography is excellently render. The PDF contains the full map and individually formatted sections of each map. It can be printed and pieced together for in person play. I have not tried to print and assemble, but it seems like it would be easy to do with the provided 1/2 inch overlap. Rite Publishing was also thoughtful to include black and white versions of the map pieces, helping to reduce printing costs for those on a budget.

I am a map junky and really appreciate this product. It's a beautifully designed region that is left blank, ready for the fertile mind of the DM and actions of the players.

5/5 stars. Definitely worth your coin!

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