

Rite Publishing Presents

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PATHWAYS



DOUGLAS DERI



Pathfinder
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LONE WOLF
DEVELOPMENT



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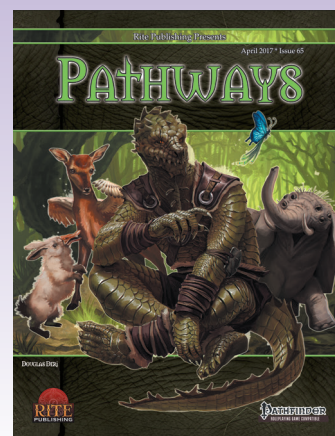
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Editorial

by Dave Paul, Illustration by Momothecat

This month's theme is menageries. One of the reasons I find this interesting is because there are two different senses of the word (at least, that's how I see it) and I find them both useful here. The more common definition is basically "a zoo." The less common definition is basically a strange collection or group of creatures. In our feature articles this month, our writers Sam Hing and Mike Welham tackle each of these. Sam's piece features a creature that is itself a bit of an element of a zoo: a cage. More specifically, a cage golem (a creature that can turn into a cage and hold other creatures). Mike's piece reveals several variants of the bulette. The magazine itself is a bit of a menagerie, I suppose, as every month it contains a weird collection of more-or-less related articles. Keeping with that tradition, the spells showcase piece features three spells from my most recent book, *101 Plains Spells*, each of which offers a different take on collections of creatures (from butterflies and spiders to mastodons). Creighton Broadhurst normally adds a collection of 10 or 20 (or so) interesting things. This month, Raging Swan Press offers the work of Ronald Calbick in Creighton's place, providing you with a dozen new plants. I hope you enjoy them as much as I do.

As I was preparing to write this piece I joked with my wife about how I should write about the menagerie of creatures in our home. In addition to two dogs, three cats and three people, there is this wonderful and terrible assortment of stinkbugs,

ants, the occasional spider and who knows what else lurking in the basement and attic. Out in the woods I've spotted a fox, a raccoon, many rabbits and squirrels, and several woodchucks and several species of bird in the last week or so. Strangely, a gray cat had shown up several nights in a row a few weeks ago – we haven't seen it since. Usually, our own cats do a good job keeping other cats out of the yard, though the hunting is probably good as the woods are surrounded by fields on three sides. Last night, according to my wife and son, there were two more cats outside the house fighting over something. I don't think there have been this many cats in the area in years. Perhaps there's something going on that I'm oblivious to.

I've noticed that in most of the years that I've played these games that our parties of characters have tended to be menageries of the less common definition. In one of my current groups, almost everyone is playing a human, which is rather weird for us. There's one gnome in the party, and there are some interesting non-human NPCs, but we're a surprisingly homogeneous group. Usually we experience the usual anti-elf dwarves and anti-dwarf elves mixed in with all the other races at the table. I'm not quite sure how we ended up here.

What kinds of menageries have you experienced in your playing experience?

Happy gaming.



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Beast Whisperer Creature Template

by Owen K.C. Stephens, Illustration by Douglas Deri

Sometimes among otherwise ordinary groups of creatures, one is born with (or more rarely later develops) a powerful ability to communicate with, befriend, and even command animals, magical beasts, and vermin. This most often occurs among clans of monstrous humanoids, especially centaurs, harpies, and lizardfolk, but fey and giants also have some traditions of beast whisperers, and it is not unknown (though much less common) among other creatures.

Beast whisperers are often seen as conduits to the forces of nature, and it is not unusual for them to take levels in druid, hunter, ranger, or shaman. Where a clan already has a strong tradition of priests or cult leaders, they sometimes see a beast whisperer as a threat to their power and drive it from their ancestral lands. Such lone beast whisperers often forge a new home in the wilds, working with their beast allies and protecting both themselves and the natural habitat of their beast companions.

Creating a Beast Whisperer Creature

Any creature with an Intelligence of 3 or more can be a beast whisperer.

Challenge Rating: +1 CR

Alignment: Any. Most beast whisperers have an element of neutrality to their alignment, but this is not universal.

Hit Points: The best whisperer gains a number of additional hit points equal to double the base creature's CR.

Saves: The beast whisperer gains a +1 bonus to all its saving throws.

Special Abilities: A beast whisperer gains the following abilities:

Beast Cohort (Ex): The beast whisperer gains an animal companion, as the druid class feature, using its HD as its druid level. Alternatively, a beast whisperer of 7 or more HD can choose to gain a cohort, as if it had taken the Leadership feat, but the cohort must be an animal, magical beast, or vermin. If released or killed, the beast whisperer can normally replace its beast cohort in 1d4 days.

Beast Speech (Sp): This functions as *speak with animals* at will, but works with animals, magical beasts, and vermin.

Beast Whisper (Sp): The beast whisperer can form a bond with a creature, causing it to act as an ally. This functions as *charm person* once per day, with a spell level equal to half the beast whisperer's HD, but can target any animal, magical beast, or vermin and has a duration of 1 day per HD of the beast whisperer. The beast whisperer can communicate with any creature it has charmed with this ability, though creatures

with an Intelligence of 2 or less are generally limited to the kinds of communication a trained animal can learn as commands.

A beast whisperer cannot have more total HD of creatures affected by this ability at once than its own total HD.

Familiars (Ex): The beast whisperer gains a familiar, as the wizard class feature, using its HD as its wizard level. At CR 3, and every 3 CR thereafter, it gains an additional familiar, and one of the beast whisperer's familiars gains a feat. Its familiars can take any feat the GM determines reasonable for their size and shape, that either the familiar or the beast whisperer meets the prerequisites for. The beast whisperer can choose one familiar to receive each feat, or apply them to different familiars.

Terrain Empathy (Su): The beast whisperer gains some of its bestial allies' natural familiarity with their home terrain. It treats the terrains in the ecology entry of all its familiars, companions, and cohorts as favored terrains. This functions as the ranger's favored terrain class feature, except the bonus also applies to the beast whisperer's AC when in that terrain. The total bonus is equal to +1, +1 for every 3 full CR of the beast whisperer. This stacks with any favored terrain the beast whisperer may have from class levels.

The beast whisperer also shares this feature with all its familiars, companions, and cohorts. They gain the favored terrain bonus, and the ability to live conformably in all the environments of all his allies. This would not allow a dolphin to move on land or a chicken to breathe underwater, but it would keep a polar bear happy in a blazing hot desert.



Sample Beast Whisperer

The Shadowed Scale

CR 5

Lizardfolk Ranger 3

XP 1,600

Male lizardfolk ranger 3

NE Medium humanoid (reptilian)

Init +4 (+6 warm coastline, forest, swamp, temperate or tropical rivers, warm plains); Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +7 (+9 swamp)

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+1 armor, +2 Dex, +5 natural, +1 shield)

hp 48 (5 HD; 2d8+3d10+15+8)

Fort +10, **Ref** +6, **Will** +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., **swim** 15 ft.

Melee mwk morningstar +7 (1d8+2) or mwk morningstar +3 (1d8+2), mwk morningstar +3 (1d8+1), bite +6 (1d4+2)

Ranged javelin +6 (1d6+2)

Special Attacks favored enemy (human +2)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th, concentration +6)

At-Will: *Beast Speech* (*speak with animals**)

1/Day: *Beast Whisper* (*charm monster**)

*See text of the beast whisperer special ability

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 15, **Con** 17, **Int** 7, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 18

Feats Endurance, Multiattack, Quick Draw, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting

Skills Acrobatics +10, Knowledge (nature) +5, Perception +7 (+9*), Stealth +9 (+11*), Swim +17; Racial Modifiers +4 Acrobatics
*Only in warm coastline, forest, swamp, temperate or tropical rivers, warm plains

Languages Draconic

SQ beast cohort (Medium elephant), beast speech, familiars (platypus [Ability Focus, spur poison], rhamphorhynchus), favored terrain (swamp +2), hold breath, terrain empathy (warm coastline, forest, temperate or tropical rivers, warm plains +2), track +1, wild empathy +4

Gear *bracers of armor* +1, javelins (3), masterwork morningstars (2), 31 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Hold Breath (Ex): The shadowed scale can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to 4 times its Constitution score before it risks drowning.



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12 Dangerous Types of Vegetation

By Ronald Calbick, Guest Designer With Raging Swan Press

The wilderness is home to all manner of potentially dangerous creatures, including a variety of plant-like monsters. Many, such as assassin vines, shambling mounds and treants are relatively well known.

But a fantasy world is sure to give rise to natural vegetation that can be potentially dangerous, even deadly, to the unwary. Some examples of such plants include:

1. **Hertravine (Heart Vine):** A slender, fast-growing vine most often found near slow flowing water sources. Its white blossoms emit a powerful scent that can induce temporary paralysis if a creature remains in its presence for longer than a few minutes.
2. **Crimsony (Blood Berries):** A low, broad bush bearing crimson-coloured berries in early spring. Eating more than a few of the berries causes extreme nausea and even convulsions over the span of several hours.
3. **Petrifica (Stone Plant):** This tall stalk plant is deep grey in colour and often mistakenly believed to be dead or dying. The stalk is coated with a viscous secretion that causes intermittent periods of full body rigidity. It is often used as a coating for weapons (particularly by those who wish to subdue or capture their enemies).
4. **Trygerium (Banegrass):** A type of grass usually found along deciduous forests and meadows identifiable by a slender yellow stripe down its middle. Eating the grass or even ingesting the milk or meat of a domesticated animal that has consumed banegrass leads to vomiting and intestinal illness.
5. **Nadarast (Needle Blossom):** A low-growing flower with bright yellow blossoms fringed with slender thorns. Picking a needle blossom must be done at arm's length as the close proximity of a creature causes it to release the thorns, which cause severe itching and swelling.
6. **Volcillius (Skygrass):** A thick pale blue grass with individual blades that often reach heights of 10 ft. or higher. Skygrass glows beautifully at night and emits small arcs of naturally generated electricity. Individual blades give a small shock, but wading—or falling—into a full clump can prove fatal as a much larger charge is generated by the combined blades.
7. **Widorsin (Spider Sap Tree):** A needle-bearing tree with white bark coated in a milky sap. The sap is exceptionally sticky and can cause burning, tingling and swelling when it comes in contact with skin.
8. **Necrollis (Death Apples):** A parasitic vine that infests the roots of apple trees and causes the apples to become increasingly toxic as time passes. The apples retain their original shape and colour but become increasingly bitter.
9. **Pyrgenium (Fire Rose):** A bright yellow rose with brilliant red and orange colouring that gives it the appearance of a ball of fire. The rose can only be plucked safely on the hottest day of a given year. Doing so on any other day causes it to explode in a small ball of intense fire and heat, leaving nothing but ash.
10. **Dracoren (Dragon Root):** A massive system of roots and tubers, usually underground, but occasionally spreading across vast areas above ground as well. Properly harvested and prepared, dragon root is edible in small portions, but otherwise inflicts burning sores and inflammation in the mouth, throat and abdomen.
11. **Nautorium (Sailor's Pea):** This shallow water plant found mainly in coastal regions bears aquamarine peas often used as ornamentation. Ingestion of a sailor's pea causes an excessive build-up of fluid in the lungs that can result in death.
12. **Ivortobac (Pale Leaf):** An invasive leaf that invades normal tobacco leaf fields. It is nearly indistinguishable from a normal tobacco leaf, being somewhat lighter in colour and smaller in size. Inhaling the smoke from a burning pale leaf can paralyze the lungs and lead to asphyxiation.

Guest Designer

Ronald Calbick is in his 40s and has been playing RPGs since he was ten years old. He's stuck primarily with D&D, starting with the "Blue Cover" boxed set and all the way up through Pathfinder and 5E. He's married, with two grown children, works as a web developer for Fun.com, and is a Gulf War veteran and reserve police officer.

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Plains Spell Showcase

By Dave Paul, Illustration by Jacob E. Blackmon

There are menageries or their like in all of my spellbooks. Each of the products so far as a *death by* ... spell and each summons a swarm of something nasty into the space of the target(s). It's a common enough theme in fiction to see some unfortunate soul overcome by a billion beetles or covered in leeches. Those spells are all great fun even if they're a little redundant. In the *101 Plains Spells* product there are a few others that stand out and seem appropriate for this issue of *Pathways* magazine. A couple of these, *unending plague of spiders* and *mastodon massacre*, are high level spells and so will not be suitable for typical play for some groups. The other, *kaleidoscope of butterflies*, is mostly harmless except for the distraction which can overwhelm someone trying to accomplish something.

My aim here was to give low-level casters a flavorful ability to avoid combat, create a diversion, etc. I imagined a small cloud of butterflies all fluttering around in a space about the size of a 10-foot diameter sphere; a pictured a mass of flapping wings surrounding a person who had her arms up, covering her face, trying to keep herself from being covered in the insects. The low-DC distraction ability is a bit weird. Normally it triggers on the condition that the creature with the distraction ability also damages someone. As the butterflies summoned by this spell cannot normally damage anyone, it normally wouldn't be able to cause the nauseated effect either (though if there were some additional feature, created by another spell perhaps, that allowed the butterfly swarm to cause damage, then it would trigger). The intention of the ability in this case is for the other feature of the distraction universal monster rule to be useful. From that rule: "Spellcasting or concentrating on spells within the area of a swarm requires a caster level check (DC 20 + spell level). Using skills that involve patience and concentration requires a DC 20 Will save."

Kaleidoscope of Butterflies

School: Conjuration (summoning); **Level:** Bard 1, Druid 1, Shaman 1, Sorcerer/Wizard 1, Summoner 1, Witch 1

Casting Time: 1 round

Components: V, S, F/DF (a miniature butterfly net)

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

Effect: One swarm of butterflies

Duration: Concentration + 1 minute

Saving Throw: None; **Spell Resistance:** No

You summon a swarm of butterflies (the species will be native to the area or to a nearby area). This swarm is harmless and does not attack creatures within its area except with its distraction special attack.

If you cast *kaleidoscope of butterflies* in a time and place where butterflies naturally occur, you summon two swarms which appear adjacent to one another.

Butterfly Swarm

A kaleidoscope of color announces the arrival of a mass of thousands of beautiful, fluttering insects.

BUTTERFLY SWARM CR 1

XP 400

N Diminutive vermin (swarm)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 14; (+1 Dex, +4 size)

hp 9 (2d8)

Fort +2, **Ref** +1, **Will** +1

Defensive Abilities swarm traits; **Immune** mind-affecting effects, weapon damage

Weakness swarm traits

OFFENSE

Speed 5 ft., fly 20 ft. (average)

Melee none

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Special Attacks distraction (DC 10)

STATISTICS

Str 1, **Dex** 13, **Con** 10, **Int** —, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 9

Base Atk +1; **CMB** —; **CMD** —

Skills Fly +8, Perception +3

SQ swarm traits, vermin traits

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate or warm forests or plains

Organization solitary, pair, flutter (3–6) or ramble (7–12)

Treasure none

I admit that this may not see all that much use in play. That said, the next time I'm playing a druid

able to cast 8th level spells, I'm definitely keeping this one on standby in case my character is in a place where this will pay off. A 15th level druid should be a scary thing; a 15th level druid bringing 6 rampaging mastodons into the fray deserves anyone's respect.

Mastodon Massacre

School: Conjuration (summoning); **Level:** Druid 8, Summoner 6

Casting Time: 1 round

Components: V, S, M (a piece of mastodon fur)

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Effect: A herd of mastodons

Duration: 1 round/level (D)

Saving Throw: Reflex half (see text); **Spell Resistance:** No

You conjure a small number of mastodons; you summon 4 mastodons plus 2 additional mastodons per level above 14th (to a maximum of 16 mastodons at 20th level). The herd occupies a space at least 30-feet by 30-feet and no more than 60-feet by 60-feet. Within that region, each mastodon appears adjacent to at least two other mastodons but otherwise you may cause them to appear in whatever arrangement fits these limitations. The herd immediately runs in the direction you indicate. The herd moves at a rate of 80 feet per round in a straight line. Any creatures caught in the herd's path take $2d8 + 18$ points of damage per mastodon that completely moves through its space. A successful Reflex save halves this damage.

At the end of your turn, if there are any creatures in the spaces occupied by any mastodons, the mastodons are moved in ways that produces the least overall increase in area in the size of the herd. Such movements may cause any number of the mastodons to no longer be adjacent to other mastodons. On your next turn, to the degree to which it is possible, the mastodons will move so as to return to a formation where each mastodon is adjacent to at least two other mastodons.

If the herd's path would put it in an obviously dangerous area or force it to move through a solid barrier, the herd changes direction before it would pass through that area (or collide with the barrier) and moves in a new randomly determined direction until it reaches another obstacle or the spell's duration ends. The herd will not attempt to move through large, solid structures such as a house; however, smaller, less permanent structures, especially if they are smaller than an individual mastodon, will simply be trampled by the herd.

~~

Frankly, this spell is for all those players who have friends or relatives who hate spiders. There are plenty of examples in fiction of a person, room, home, or region being engulfed by creepy crawly things, and for quite a few people, the mere idea of an unending plague of spiders is enough to keep them from the gaming table. As far as a game feature goes, though, this spell is wonderful in the hands of a GM. A powerful NPC (especially one who the PCs won't encounter for a long time, and who remains out of sight for much of the early campaign) who casts a spell like this in an early part of a campaign sets the stage for what's coming. I mean, what kind of being has the power to just generate an endless stream of swarms of spiders? Think of the fun of having a plague-oriented witch or a blight druid as some kind of nemesis who the PCs aren't going to even hear about for months, who is introduced into the campaign by the oddity that the town that the characters are in just seems to never be able to get rid of spiders. Every day, they're everywhere, and no matter how many of them the townsfolk kill off, no matter how many the local birds eat, there are always more.

Unending Plague of Spiders

School: Conjuration (calling) [see text]; **Level:** Cleric/Oracle 7, Druid 7, Sorcerer/Wizard 7, Summoner 6, Witch 7

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Components: V, S, M (a helpless fly and see text)

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Effect: See text

Duration: Permanent (D)

Saving Throw: None; **Spell Resistance:** No

You open a small portal, no larger than a 2-foot-diameter circle, to a plane where spiders are legion (commonly, though not necessarily, a plane associated with demons or drow). The portal appears on the ground, in a place where spiders might naturally occur (grasslands, forest, within a cave, etc.); attempting to place the portal elsewhere (including places like on a ship) causes the spell to fail. The magic of the spell prohibits creatures that are not spiders from crossing the boundaries of the two worlds, but it serves as a powerful enticement for spiders outside the Material Plane to move through the portal.

Beginning the first round after the portal opens, enough spiders pour forth that every other round a spider swarm appears in a space adjacent to the

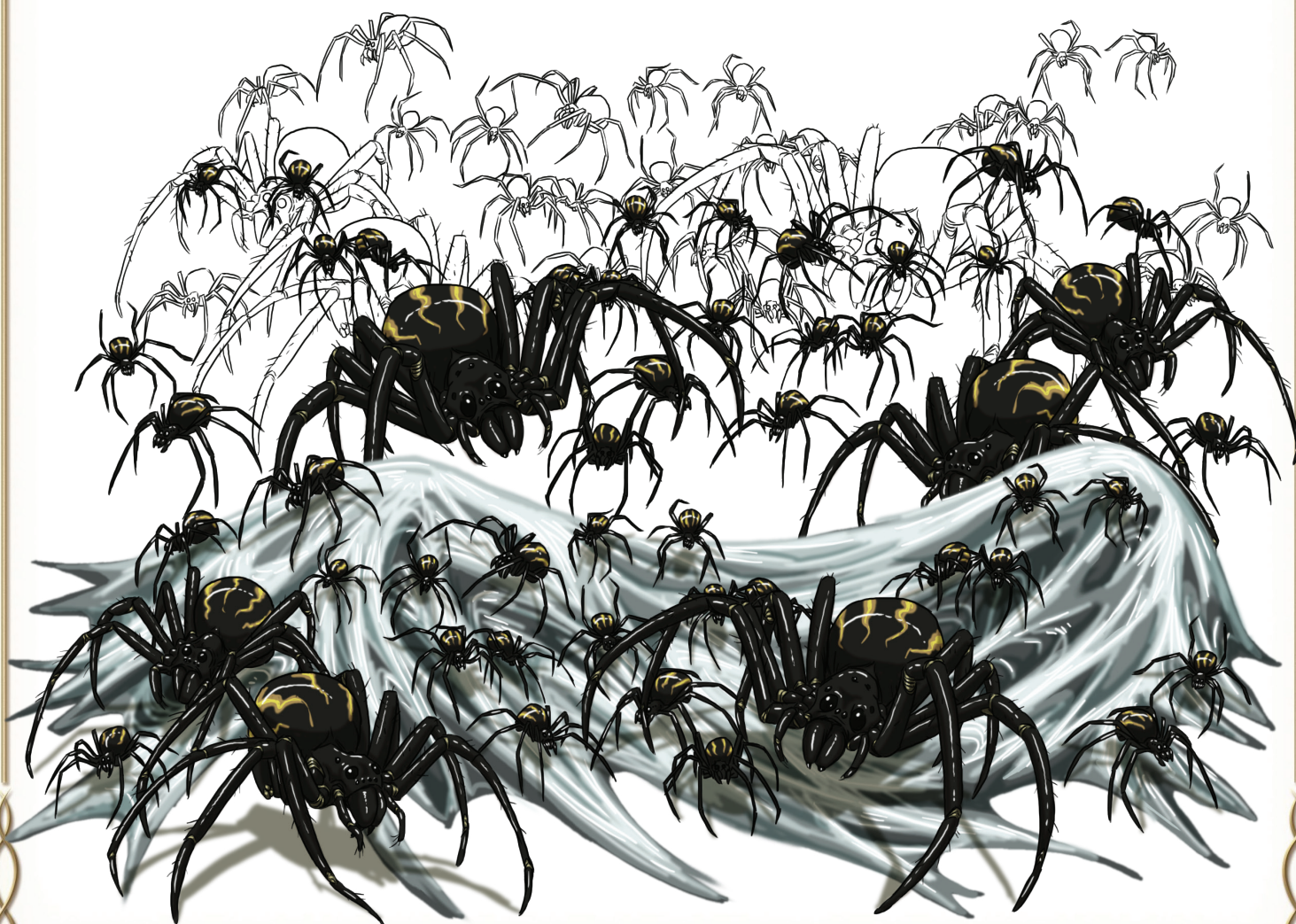
portal and begins moving in the direction you choose (if you do not choose a direction for a swarm, that swarm moves in a random direction). The portal continues to produce 5 spider swarms per minute for a number of minutes equal to your level. Thereafter, the portal produces 1 spider swarm every 10 minutes for a number of hours equal to your level. After that time, the portal produces 1 spider swarm every hour until it is closed. Whenever you are within range of the portal, you may choose which direction each swarm will move when it appears. A swarm moving in the direction you chose will continue moving in that direction, attacking creatures in its space, until it is destroyed. If the swarm arrives at a space where it cannot continue in the direction it had been moving, it will move in a random direction until it can continue moving in the direction you chose. Swarms moving

in a random direction will continue moving in a random direction, attacking creatures in its space, until it is destroyed.

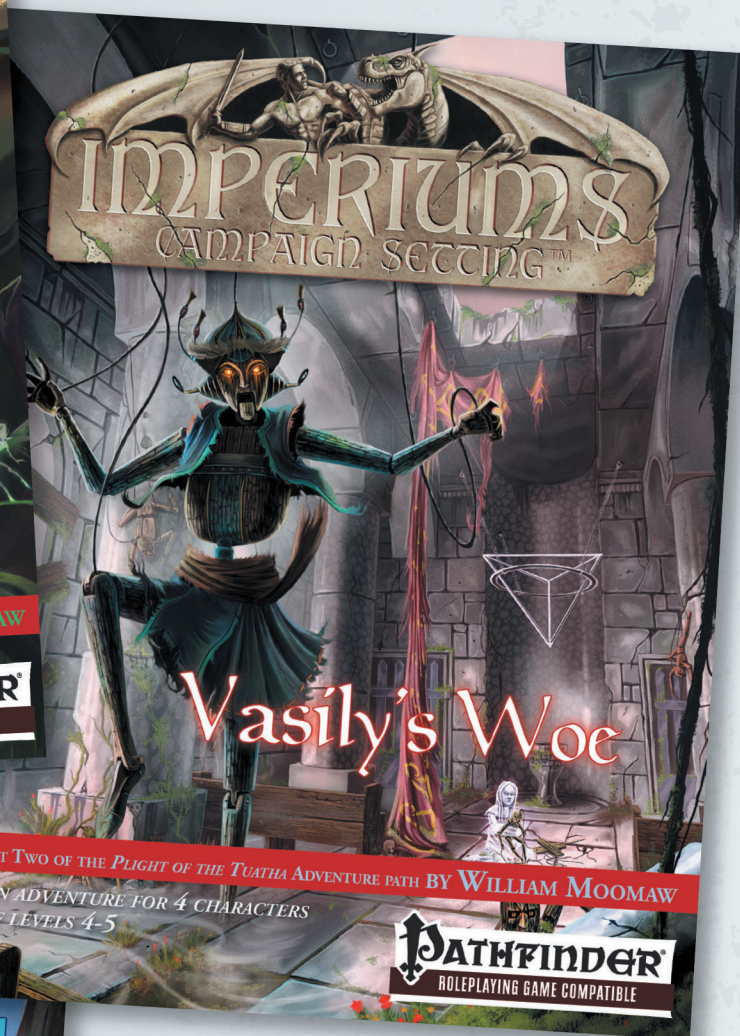
Whenever you are within range of the portal, you may dismiss the spell, causing the portal to close. Others may attempt to dispel or otherwise close the portal (the GM may provide alternative means or rituals by which such a portal may be closed).

The plane to which your portal connects determines the alignment of this spell and of the spider swarms that appear (though a deity on that plane may choose for the alignments to match its own instead). The spell requires offerings worth 5,000 gp which are consumed when the portal opens.

If you are a blight druid or a witch with a plague patron, add +2 to your caster level for all purposes for this spell.



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Cage Golem

By Sam Hing

Zoos and menageries are a fairly common way for the rich and powerful to display their status to both the common folk and their peers. The cost of sending groups of adventurers to procure and transport rare creatures alive and unharmed can often be prohibitive, even to those of high station, as is the cost of caging and maintaining the specimens once captured. Cage golems were created to address these issues, at an overall lower cost to owners.

Kings and rich nobles have used cage golems for both private and public zoos to great success. They make it harder for saboteurs to release dangerous creatures to terrorize the populace, and act as their own guards. In an emergency, such figures can even use the golems as extra defenders to defend the city or estate. Wizards and alchemists use them to hold specimens for study and vivisection, without having to interrupt their studies with day-to-day care. Cage golems with cages made of pure force are most commonly used by spellcasters, either to hold more magically powerful creatures or as aquariums. They have even found use in larger traveling circuses, though few have the resources to have more than one or two golems. They often commission theirs with wheels, so they can be pulled like a wagon, although they often have the constructs unfold and walk into towns and cities for the shock value.

Of course, cage golems have found darker uses as they became more popular. Slavers find them useful to transport their cargo, and may well add would-be vigilantes to their inventory when the golem catches them in rescue attempts. Dark cults use them to hold sacrifices, and to carry them to unholy sites with little risk of escape. At least one vampire lord incorporates them into traps in his tomb, to ensure a steady source of victims, and a few aboleth colonies have several bizarre-looking cage golems to capture sailors and villagers to brainwash and mutate. Cage golems are common in both drow and derro society, with some used as mobile gladiator arenas or equipped as labs or torture chambers.

One group that is less enthusiastic about cage golems is the adventurers that are often commandeered to guide them to specimens to be captured. The adventurers find them loud and conspicuous, and their size is often troublesome. The line of destruction they create through wild areas often attracts angry natives, and creatures

as dangerous as giants and dragons often assume anyone with the ability to have a golem companion must be wealthy. The only thing about the golems that parties of adventurers do appreciate is that they make a safe haven to camp inside while in the wilderness, with protection from both weather and attack, as long as the token that controls the golem remains undamaged and in their possession. At least one group met a grisly fate when an untrustworthy hireling made off with the key that controlled the golem, leaving them with no escape. The group slowly went mad, and their corpses were discovered years later, with the magic of the cage still creating daily food and water, and cleaning their bones to a gleaming shine.

Golem, Cage

With an ear-splitting chorus of clanks and squeals, the large metal cage before you unfolds into a towering mechanical biped.

Cage Golem

CR 10

XP 9,600

N Huge Construct

Init -; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 25; touch 8, flat-footed 25 (+17 natural, -2 size)

hp 128 (16d10+40)

Fort +5, **Ref** +5, **Will** +5

DR 10/magic, **Immune** construct traits, magic

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 slams +23 (1d8+9 nonlethal plus grab)

Ranged 2 darts +16 (1d4 plus poison)

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

Special Attacks cage, poison

STATISTICS

Str 28, **Dex** 10, **Con** -, **Int** -, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +16; **CMB** +27; **CMD** 37

SQ nonlethal damage

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary or menagerie (3-15)

Treasure -

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Cage (Su): The body of a cage golem is made of enchanted steel caging held together by a complex arrangement of hinges, cogs, and locks. If a target of Large size or smaller is successfully grabbed by a cage golem, the golem can, on its next action, form the majority of its body into a cage to hold the victim. If the victim has a readied action, it can make a DC 18 Reflex save to jump free before the cage fully assembles around it. If this save is failed by more than 5 points the target takes 1d6 points of damage as the steel slams into its body. The golem can attempt to add another target to an already closed cage; victims already within may make a DC 18 Escape Artist check to leap out when a new victim is added.

The inside of the cage defaults to the temperature native to the majority of creatures within, and the fencing has a hardness of 30, and takes 100 hit points of damage before breaking. The cage casts *create food and water* up to three times per day, as programmed by its controller, as well as cleans itself once per day. Creatures inside the cage are considered to have full cover from weapon attacks due to the tightness of the caging. Spells and effects directed at targets within the cage are subjected to a caster level 14 *dispel magic* effect. Gas, liquid, and fire-based effects pass through the cage unhindered, unless they are part of an effect that can be countered by *dispel magic*, and are then treated as a spell. The cage has no locking system, as it is sealed by the animating force of the golem itself, though a DC 40 Disable Device check can cause some of its gearwork to slip enough to allow a Medium or smaller target to escape before the golem reseals itself. The golem will pursue those that escape unless otherwise commanded.

A typical cage golem can hold one Large creature, two Medium creatures, four Small creatures, eight Tiny creatures, sixteen Diminutive creatures, or 32 Fine ones. Creatures that are the size of normal insects can pass through the cage unhindered.

Immunity to Magic (Ex): A cage golem is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against the creature as noted below.

A magical attack that deals electricity damage instead slows the golem for three rounds and deals its damage equally to any creatures trapped inside the cage, with normal saves applied.

A cage golem is affected normally by rusting attacks.

A *knock* or similar spell causes a closed golem to open for 1 round.

Nonlethal Damage (Ex): A cage golem's slam attacks deal nonlethal damage only. Its darts deal normal damage.

Poison (Ex): Darts-injury; *save:* Fort DC 18; *frequency:* 1/round for 5 rounds; *effect:* unconsciousness; *cure:* 2 consecutive saves.

Cage golems are constructs found in the service of the rich and the eccentric. They are typically controlled by a key-shaped token, and follow the commands of the token holder to the letter. If the token is ever destroyed, the golem reverts to its cage form, although its internal magics still function, and can only be reactivated if another token is formed from the same batch of steel the golem was crafted from. Those that create the golems often keep several pounds of extra steel aside, just in case the original token is ever destroyed.

Cage golems are built to capture, and despite their great strength they never actually harm their prey. They simply wrap them in their massive fists, and form their cage-like body around them. Distant or agile prey are brought down with poison darts. The golem actively tries to catch targets that are drugged while flying, to prevent damage to the specimen. When not actively collecting specimens, a cage golem folds up its limbs, appearing as nothing more than a heavily built cage.

Powerful spellcasters sometimes craft cage golems that possess a *force cage* in place of steel mesh to hold creatures with breath weapons or other dangerous abilities. Rumors hold that some wealthy owners have commissioned massive versions of these constructs, called habitat golems. These golems allow all but the largest captives to be observed in a more natural manner, while still being contained and moveable.

Construction

Cage golems are made out of the finest steel, although rumors of mithral and adamantine ones persist. It takes a minimum of 2,500 pounds of metal to craft one, as well as elaborate forges, molds, and specially treated wood to stoke the forging fires.

Cage Golem

CL 14th; PRICE 11,020 gp

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Construct, *create food and water*, *cure moderate wounds*, *dispel magic*, *endure elements*, *geas/quest*, *limited wish*, *sleep*, *unseen servant*; creator must be at least 14th level; **Skill** Craft (metal working) DC 30; **Cost** 5,510 gp

A *force cage* golem adds *force cage* to the spell requirements, requires one ton of steel, and costs 10,750 gp for sale, and 5,375 gp to create.

An aquarium golem adds *create water*, *force cage*, and *purify food and drink* to the spell requirements, requires one ton of steel, and costs 10,770 gp for sale, and 5,395 gp to create.

An adamantine golem costs 1,878,961 gp to buy, or 1,252,635 gp to create, and has DR 3/-. The cage can take 150 hit points of damage before breaking. A mithral golem costs 1,878,952 gp to buy, or 1,252,635 gp to create, and has a Dexterity of 16.



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A Bounty of Bulettes

By Mike Welham

Create an encounter with one (or more) of these relatives to the ordinary bulette to surprise players expecting the traditional creature.

Bounding Bulette

This massive creature shows a surprising amount of agility for its size. Its legs quiver in anticipation of taking a leap.

Bounding Bulette CR 11

XP 12,800

N Large magical beast

Init +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent, tremorsense 60 ft.; **Perception** +10

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 16, flat-footed 19 (+6 Dex, +1 dodge, +10 natural, -1 size)

hp 147 (14d10+70)

Fort +14, **Ref** +15, **Will** +8; +4 vs. spells or effects that impede movement

OFFENSE

Speed 60 ft.; light steps

Melee bite +17 (2d8+4), 4 claws +17 (2d6+4)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 23, **Con** 21, **Int** 3, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +14; **CMB** +19; **CMD** 36 (40 vs. trip)

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Sidestep^{APG}, Mobility, Sidestep^{APG}, Spring Attack, Wind Stance

Skills Acrobatics +23 (+35 to jump), **Perception** +10, **Stealth** +10

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Leap (Ex) A bounding bulette can perform a special kind of pounce attack by jumping into combat. When it charges, it can make a DC 20 Acrobatics check to jump into the air and land next to its enemies. If it succeeds on the check, it can follow up with either four claw attacks against foes in reach or a single claw attack. If it chooses a single claw attack, it can then attempt another jump as part of its charge (DC 30 Acrobatics check) to land and attack an additional foe with a single claw attack. When it uses this ability, the targets of its

attacks do not receive attacks of opportunity when it successfully leaps.

Light Steps (Ex) A bounding bulette ignores penalties from difficult terrain.

A bounding bulette is lighter and smaller than a typical specimen, but it is considerably faster and more dexterous. It also trades in the ability to burrow for a hyperkinetic and unpredictable pattern of movement involving leaps in random directions. This species of bulette rarely moves by walking or running on the ground, and it can navigate all but the most impassible terrain. This bulette is less ornery than most bulettes, except when it loses its ability to move about freely. It turns its ire on whichever target it believes trapped it, usually just the closest creature.

Bullettedozer

This four-legged creature's legs create depressions in the ground where it stands. Its entire body appears hewn from rough stone.

Bullettedozer CR 12

XP 19,200

N Gargantuan magical beast

Init -2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent, tremorsense 60 ft.; **Perception** +23

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 4, flat-footed 28 (-2 Dex, +24 natural, -4 size)

hp 168 (16d10+80)

Fort +15, **Ref** +8, **Will** +11

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft., burrow 30 ft.; unstoppable

Melee bite +21 (3d6+9), 2 claws +21 (2d8+9), slam +21 (3d6+9/19-20)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks stone crusher, supreme blow

STATISTICS

Str 29, **Dex** 6, **Con** 21, **Int** 1, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +16; **CMB** +29 (+31 bull rush); **CMD** 37 (43 vs. bull rush, 41 vs. trip)

Feats Awesome Blow, Crippling Critical^{APG}, Critical

Focus, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (slam), Iron Will, Power Attack, Quick Bull Rush^{UC}
Skills Acrobatics -2 (+18 to jump), Perception +23;
Racial Modifiers +8 Acrobatics to jump
SQ dug in

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Dug In (Ex) A bulettedozer benefits from a +4 racial bonus to its CMD against bull rush maneuvers.

Leap (Ex) A bulettedozer can perform a special kind of pounce attack by jumping into combat. When it charges, it can make a DC 20 Acrobatics check to jump into the air and land next to its enemies. If it succeeds on the check, it can follow up with either four claw attacks against foes in reach or an awesome blow combat maneuver.

Stone Crusher (Ex) A bulettedozer ignores the first 10 points of hardness of objects it hits.

Supreme Blow (Ex) A bulettedozer has a 19–20 threat range on its bull rush or awesome blow maneuver checks. If it confirms a critical with the maneuver, it pushes its opponent an additional 10 feet. For a bull rush maneuver, the foe takes 1d6 points of damage if it strikes a solid object. For an awesome blow maneuver, the foe and the object take 1d6 points of damage per 10 feet the foe travels before striking the object.

Unstoppable (Ex) A bulettedozer ignores penalties from difficult terrain.

A living siege weapon, a bulettedozer would be formidable if a creature could control it. The bulette embarks on destructive rampages where it crashes through walls and throws everything smaller than it out of its path, resulting in significant pain or destruction for its targets. Small, daredevil (or deranged) humanoids enjoy clambering on the back of the beast and witnessing the destruction wrought by it up close. The bulette rarely seems to notice such trespasses, but when it does, it gives a violent shake sending its riders flying.

Diamond Bulette

Rather than flesh, this land shark seems sculpted from clear crystal. Its gemlike hide catches the light and disperses it into a rainbow of colors.

Diamond Bulette

CR 8

XP 4,800

N Huge magical beast

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent, tremorsense 60 ft.; Perception +14

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 18 (+3 Dex, +10 natural, -2 size)

hp 105 (10d10+50)

Fort +12, **Ref** +10, **Will** +7

Defensive Abilities diamond mind; **DR** 10/adamantine or bludgeoning

Weakness vulnerability to sonic

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., burrow 30 ft.

Melee 2 claws +15 (2d6+7), slam +15 (3d6+10/19–20)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks bonebreaker, leap, powerful blows, powerful charge (slam, 6d6+14)

STATISTICS

Str 24, **Dex** 17, **Con** 20, **Int** 2, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 9

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +19 (+21 bull rush); **CMD** 32 (34 vs. bull rush, 36 vs. trip)

Feats Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack

Skills Acrobatics +11 (+19 to jump), Perception +14; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Acrobatics to jump, +4 Perception

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Bonebreaker (Ex) If a diamond bulette confirms a critical hit with its slam attack, the target must succeed on a DC 22 Fortitude save or take a -2 penalty on attack and damage rolls and Strength- and Dexterity-based checks. The save DC is Strength-based.

Diamond Mind (Ex) If a diamond bulette fails its saving throw against an enchantment spell or effect, it can attempt the save again at the beginning of its next turn at the same DC. It can only use this ability once per spell or effect.

Leap (Ex) A diamond bulette can perform a special kind of pounce attack by jumping into combat. When it charges, it can make a DC 20 Acrobatics check to jump into the air and land next to its enemies. If it succeeds on the check, it can follow up with four claw attacks against foes in reach, but cannot make a slam attack.

Powerful Charge (Ex) When a diamond bulette charges, it ignores up to 10 points of an object's hardness.

Reflective Body (Ex) A diamond bulette gains an effective spell resistance of 19 against ray spells. If the ray fails to penetrate the bulette's SR, it deflects in a random direction (using the rules for splash weapons), potentially striking another target. If the bulette has an attack of opportunity remaining, it can direct the ray to another target. The attack roll against a secondary target equals the caster's attack roll -2.

Whereas the other bulettes presented here are mutations or evolutions of the original species, a diamond bulette has characteristics of deliberate creation. It is unclear how deep the crystal goes in a diamond bulette, but it has an organic digestive system, at least according to reports of those surviving a trip inside the creature. The dense crystal is not only difficult to penetrate, but it seems to protect the bulette's mind. Its hide also bends light, causing rays to deflect off it, with some control by the bulette if nothing else distracts it. A diamond bulette is just as ill-tempered as other bulettes, so a nearby creature typically provokes it and prevents it from directing rays against its foes.

Drop Bulette

The underside of this extraordinary gigantic floating creature seamlessly matches the features above it.

Drop Bulette CR 13

XP 25,600

N Colossal magical beast

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent, tremorsense 90 ft.; **Perception** +11

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 0, flat-footed 28 (-2 Dex, +28 natural, -8 size)

hp 189 (18d10+90)

Fort +16, **Ref** +11, **Will** +12

DR 10/adamantine; **Immune** falling damage

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft., burrow 30 ft.

Melee bite +23 (4d6+12/19-20), 2 claws +22 (3d6+12)

Space 30 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.

Special Attacks crush (Large creatures, DC 24, 4d8+18), leap

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 18th; concentration +19)

At will—*levitate*

3/day—quicken *levitate*

STATISTICS

Str 34, **Dex** 6, **Con** 21, **Int** 5, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +18; **CMB** +38; **CMD** 46 (50 vs. trip)

Feats Deadly Finish^{UC}, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*levitate*), Skill Focus (Stealth), Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Climb +16, Perception +11, Stealth +4 (+20 Stealth when levitating); **Racial Modifiers** +16 Stealth when levitating

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Crush (Ex) A flying or jumping drop bulette can land on foes as a standard action, using its whole body to crush them. Crush attacks are effective only against opponents three or more size categories smaller than the bulette. A crush attack affects as many creatures as fit in the bulette's space. Creatures in the affected area must succeed on a DC 24 Reflex save or be pinned, automatically taking bludgeoning damage during the next round unless the bulette moves off them. To maintain the pin, it must succeed at a combat maneuver check as normal. Pinned foes take damage from the crush each round if they don't escape. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Leap (Ex) A drop bulette can perform a special kind of pounce attack by jumping into combat. When it charges, it can make a DC 20 Acrobatics check to jump into the air and land next to its enemies. If it succeeds on the check, it can follow up with four claw attacks against foes in reach, but cannot make a bite attack.

A drop bulette has higher than average intelligence for the species, and its specialized camouflage make it a perfect ambush hunter despite its size. It used to live in primordial forests where it could climb trees able to support its weight, but a magical augmentation gave it the ability to float, expanding its potential hunting grounds. A drop bulette enjoys the terror it engenders when it lands on unsuspecting victims.

Earthmover Bulette

A gleam of intelligence shines from this land shark's eyes. The ground trembles of its own accord where the creature stands.

Earthmover Bulette CR 10

XP 9,600

N Large magical beast

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent, tremorsense 90 ft.; **Perception** +14

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 10, flat-footed 23 (+1 Dex, +14 natural, -1 size)

hp 136 (13d10+65)

Fort +13, **Ref** +9, **Will** +11

DR 10/adamantine

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., burrow 40 ft.; earth glide

Melee bite +18 (3d6+6 plus poison), 2 claws +18 (2d8+6/19-20)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 13th; concentration +17)

3/day—*spike stones* (DC 18)

1/day—*earthquake*, *move earth*

STATISTICS

Str 23, **Dex** 12, **Con** 20, **Int** 11, **Wis** 21, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +20; **CMD** 31 (35 vs. trip)

Feats Combat Casting, Improved Critical (claw), Improved Initiative, Improved Vital Strike, Iron Will, Lunge, Vital Strike

Skills Acrobatics +10 (+14 to jump), Knowledge (arcana) +18, Perception +14, Spellcraft +10; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Knowledge (arcana)

Languages Common (can't speak)

SQ arcane attunement, earth disruptor

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Arcane Attunement (Ex) An earthmover bulette treats Knowledge (arcana) and Spellcraft as class

skills, and it gains a +8 racial bonus on Knowledge (arcana) checks.

Earth Disruptor (Su) If an earthmover bulette does not move during its turn, it releases a sonic pulse as a swift action which causes the ground to churn around it. The first round it does this, it churns natural ground in its space and in a 10-foot radius around it, causing it to become difficult terrain. Each consecutive round it uses this ability, it extends the radius by 5 feet. The bulette is unaffected by the difficult terrain it creates with this ability. Creatures caught in the churning ground must succeed on a DC 20 Reflex save or fall prone. The save DC is Charisma-based.

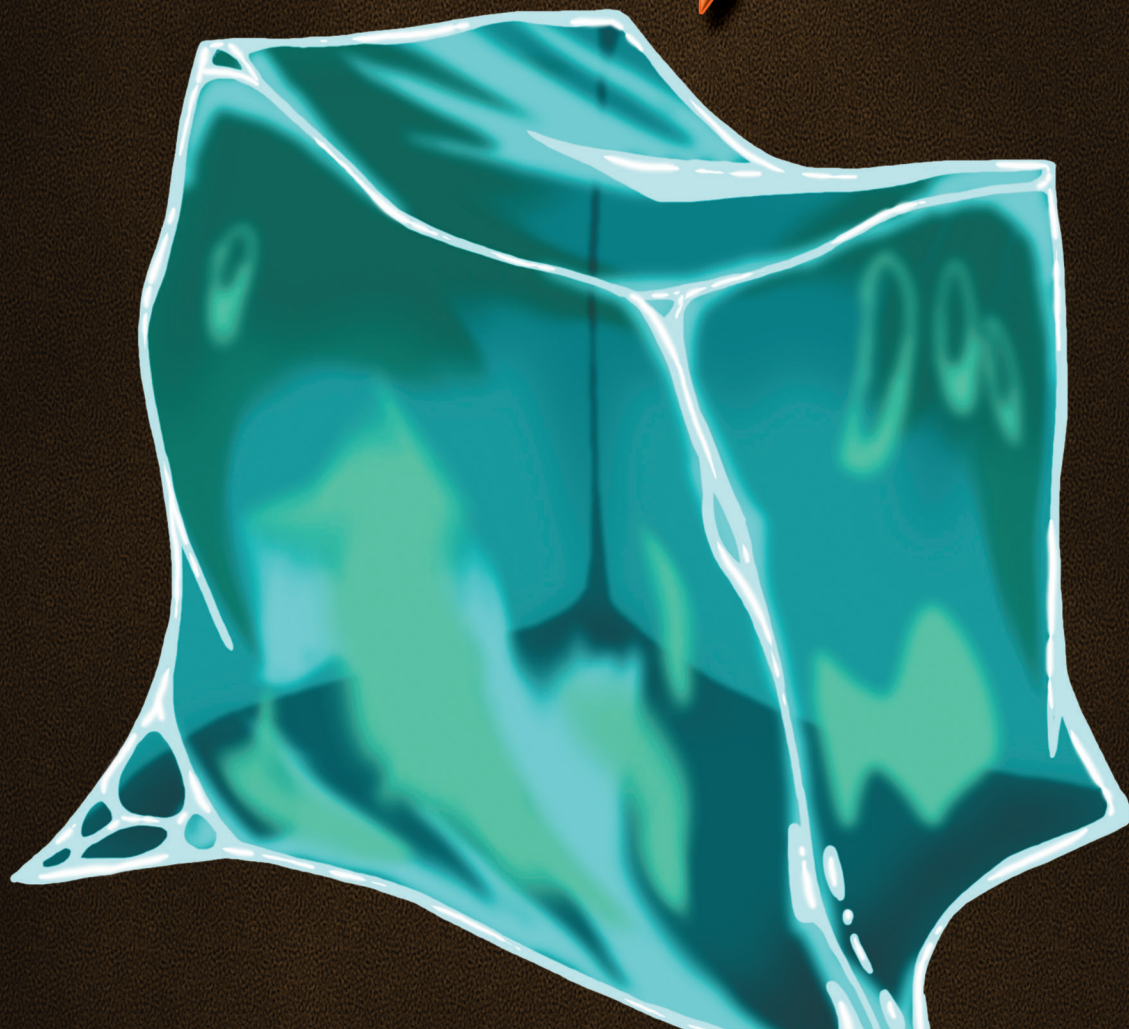
Earthflesh Poison (Ex) Bite—*injury*; *save* Fort DC 21; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d6 Dex, a victim reduced to 0 Dex turns completely to stone, as if by a *flesh to stone* spell; *cure* 2 consecutive saves. Casting *stone to flesh* on the victim removes all Dexterity damage caused by this poison. A victim reduced to 0 Dexterity cannot be restored to flesh by otherwise removing Dexterity damage.

Leap (Ex) An earthmover bulette can perform a special kind of pounce attack by jumping into combat. When it charges, it can make a DC 20 Acrobatics check to jump into the air and land next to its enemies. If it succeeds on the check, it can follow up with four claw attacks against foes in reach, but cannot make a bite attack.

An earthmover bulette is extremely intelligent and often takes command of other bulettes. Magic which affects stone fascinate it, and it befriends creatures demonstrating control over stone. It is far less likely to wantonly attack like other bulettes, and when it does attack, it is much wiler in its tactics, usually ensuring it is on favorable terrain.

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IN THE COMPANY OF GELATINOUS CUBES EXPANDED



by Wendall Roy

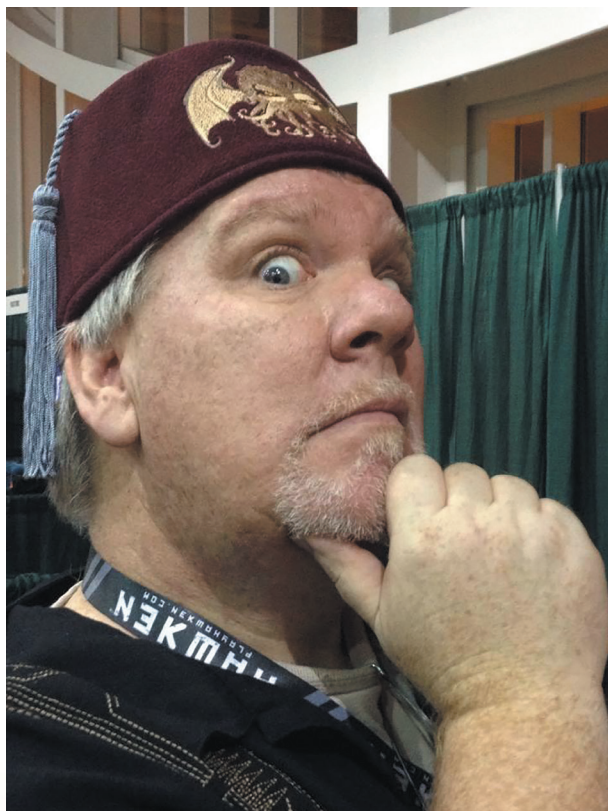


Twenty Questions with Stan!

By Dave Paul

1. Could you tell us a little about yourself?

The short version? [laughs] I'm a long time game industry gadfly. I started playing D&D in 1979, switched to Villains & Vigilantes in '83, taught English in Japan for five years where I co-founded [Japan's International Gamers Guild](#) [listed as Steve Brown] (they're still active ... look 'em up), came back to the States to be an assistant art director at West End Games, got hired to be an editor at TSR, moved to Seattle to be a game designer at Wizards of the Coast but also became a creative director, co-founded The Game Mechanics 3pp publisher, moved to San Diego to be a writer and then a creative director at Upper Deck Entertainment, co-founded Super Genius Games 3pp, co-founded Rogue Genius Games 3pp, returned to Wizards of the Coast as a contractor to be a Producer for D&D ... and that's where I'm at right now. During all that time I ALSO have done reams of freelance game design, published two novels and sixteen short stories, wrote and illustrated long-running comic strips in *Dungeon Magazine*, *Kobold Quarterly*, and as webcomics. There. [laughs] That's the short version.



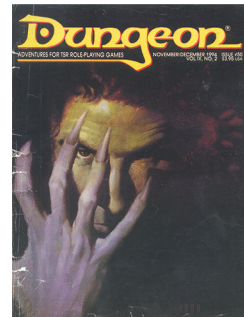
2. What is your home game like?

I've been playing Call of Cthulhu with the same evolving group of people since about 1999. We take turns being Keeper for a mix of short scenarios, Chaosium classic campaigns (we just finished Horror on the Orient Express a couple of months ago), and investigations of our own creation. We've gone through a phone book full of investigators, more Sanity points than you can shake a phallic-symbol at, and only had the universe die ignominiously a handful of times.

I also play in a 5E D&D group that started back when the game was in public playtest, a semi-weekly lunchtime game of kit-bashed 5E Spelljammer (I'm playing a Giff ranger), and a newly started Pathfinder game where we're told we'll be playing through an Adventure Path, but I'm not sure which one.

3. What is your favorite Paizo product?

Dungeon Magazine #90 because it featured the premiere of my BOLT & QUIVER comic strip.



4. What products are you working on currently?

Well, last spring I left the full-time freelance pool and started working in-house at Wizards of the Coast as a Producer for Dungeons & Dragons. So I don't really work directly on the content of any book ... but I have a pretty deep hand in the creation of every book. I spent a lot of time shepherding the recently released [TALES FROM THE YAWNING PORTAL](#) the whole way through production.

On the freelance side, I'm still doing localization for Viz Media. That is, I get literal translations of the contents of various manga, and rewrite the text so that it sounds more natural, reads more entertainingly, and fits into the available word balloons on each page. I find this work a lot of fun ... sort of a mix between writing, editing, and crossword puzzle. I've worked on a lot of titles for Viz over the years, but currently I'm on Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess, Monster Hunter, Ultraman, and Gundam: Thunderbolt Sector.

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

I hate picking favorites ... But I do have a "most interesting," and that's *Bestiary 3*. The reason it's most interesting is that nothing I wrote is actually in the book. The monsters I had designed were pulled (I'm told that it was because the fine folks at Paizo wanted to save them for a DIFFERENT product, and I choose to believe that), but contractually I was a contributor to the book and was sent my three contributor copies ... even though there was no sign of my work anywhere between the covers.

6. How about one where your work DOES show up?

The fact of the matter is that I haven't done primary design on all that many Pathfinder products. Of course, in working with Owen K.C. Stephens on third-party material, I've done conceiving, development, copy editing, and consulting on HUNDREDS of them. And the thing I liked most about those was getting to work collaboratively with Owen.

Over the years, I've come to realize that being up to my elbows in mechanical design is not my "sweet spot," and it's one of the places that Owen really shines. So for me it's always a ton of fun to sit down with him and talk through concepts for new classes, monsters, spells, and even whole mechanical subsystems ... to focus on the story side of the equation, even on the at the table effect side of the equation, and then let him worry about the "how do we get the rules to behave that way" side.

7. Do you have any favorite products you've worked on that aren't Pathfinder Roleplaying Game compatible?

Well, sure ... the WEIRD ones! [laughs]

Things like Gingerbread Kaiju, an edible board game about giant monsters stomping on Tokyo. Or the "[Warrior Cats](#)" RPG I designed for Harper Collins Children's Books. Or the [Pokémon Jr. Adventure Game](#) ... the best selling RPG of all time, I'll have you know.

8. What? Really?

Well, it sold over 800,000 units in its first year, and something like 1.5 million overall. That makes it certainly the best selling out of the gates, and among the top sellers all-time. Sales numbers are hard to come by in the industry, but I believe that back around the launch of 3E D&D the brand team announced that their first year sales were something in the 380,000 range. Y'know, just for a comparison from the same era.



9. What did you learn while working on it?

It really brought home to me the difference between a "hit game" within the realms of hobby gaming, and a "hit game" within the realm of mass-market retail. Most people haven't even HEARD of Pokémon Junior, but in one year it sold more units than D&D, Pathfinder, and any five other RPG lines combined. But then, it was considered a failure because it had been expected to do even BETTER than that, so no follow-up products were ever made.

10. Other than your own work and [Rogue Genius Games](#) products, what is the best Pathfinder Roleplaying Game compatible product out there?

That's a really tough question. There's A LOT of great stuff out there, and I don't have time to read half of it. But if I had to pick one thing, I think it would be the Midgard books from Kobold Press. The books are all top notch individually, and I would love to play in a game set in that world!

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

It's a lot of little things, but they all add up to keeping the end user's experience in mind throughout the creation process. Just because you have a good idea, or something appeals to you, isn't a good enough reason to make a product. There has to be an audience that you're making the product for, and you need to know who that is before you even begin outlining your product. Then you have to keep that audience front and center in your mind throughout the creation process.



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

Owen K.C. Stephens. I like him so much, I formed two companies with him.

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

Practice. Whether you want to be a game designer, editor, illustrator, or graphic artist ... practice. And then put your material out for public consumption, and PAY ATTENTION to what your audience is saying. (Bear in mind, I say "your audience," not "the Internet in general." There are a lot of people out there who are happy to share their opinions about things they haven't read or don't really care about. What you want to know is what do the people who might WANT to buy your product have to say.)

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

I've been lucky enough to work with a lot of the big names in game illustration, and to get to call quite a few of them friends. The best single product experience I ever had, though, was working with Rebecca Guay and Matthew Mitchell on The Bestiary for the too soon forgotten Dragonlance: Fifth Age game. They didn't just read the art order, they read the manuscript and created art that not only supported the text but brought it to life.

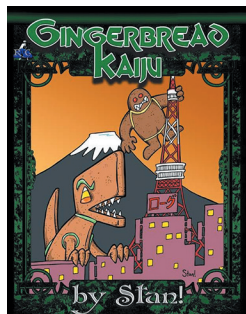
15. What has been your most memorable fan response to your work?

Well, discounting threats of physical violence by anonymous online "fans" who thought that I crossed the wrong canonical line on one of the shared worlds I've written for, I'd have to say it was the first time I met a Dragonlance fan who went (and sometimes still goes) by the handle "electrotal." We'd been corresponding online during the era of Dragonlance: Fifth Age and he was a strong supporter of what the team was doing. He told us he was going to be at Gen Con, and so I told him to be sure to introduce himself. He did, coming up to me saying, "Stan! Oh, man! You're my favorite game designer! I love your work!" It was very flattering, and I spent a good while chatting with him, and eventually asked if there were any other members of the team that he wanted to meet. "I haven't met Steve Miller yet," he said. As it turns out, Steve was standing about ten feet away, so I pointed him out. Electrotal went right up to him and said, "Steve Miller! You're, like, my favorite game designer!" So I said, "HEY! I thought that I was your favorite!" and he responded, "I have A LOT of favorites." [laughs]

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

I can't, really, because any actual PRODUCTS I'm involved with are as yet unannounced ... and I've signed some pretty scary non-disclosure agreements. But I can say that I'm hoping to do more cartooning work this year. I'm not sure what form it will take yet. I have a few comics ideas I'd like to work out, and I've been meaning to take a crack at

doing some short animation. And I've been wanting to improve my skill at caricature so I can start doing that at conventions when I get a table. I guess you should just keep an eye out for cartoons of some sort.



17. Do you have any goals for Rogue Genius Games that you have yet to obtain or overcome?

Well, I want to do an expanded version of Gingerbread Kaiju. If things work out there, you might see that for the holidays this year. But mostly, Owen runs RGG and I just advise and

consent ... so I don't have any particular goals that I'm setting for the company.

18. Can you tell us a little about how you'd revise Gingerbread Kaiju?

Well, increasing the size of the action deck, for one thing. And illustrating the cards so that we can make a printable deck instead of using a poker deck. I want to change the rules so that eating an obscene amount of cookies and candy is an OPTION rather than the core mechanic. And Owen has an idea for how to make a

storyline version of the game. In a world where money was no option, I'd love to sell the game as a boxed set that came with actual kaiju-shaped cookie cutters.

19. Is there any chance of that happening?

Well, in the world of Kickstarter ANYTHING could happen. But right now there aren't any plans.

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

I've spent a lot of time over the past couple of years renewing my love for the sport of sumo. I became a real fan during my time living in Japan, but once I came back to the States I pretty much had to give that up. But now, twenty-plus years later, thanks to YouTube, I'm able to watch the matches the same day they happen. Over the past year I've taken to writing pretty extensively about the major tournaments and posting it (along to a link to one of the YouTube vids) on my blog and my Facebook page ... and I'm having a blast doing it! I think sumo is my new consuming passion ... now I just have to find a way to get PAID for writing about it. If you're curious, swing by Stannex.com sometime, check out the posts, and watch some of the vids.



Gamemaster's Guide to Kaidan

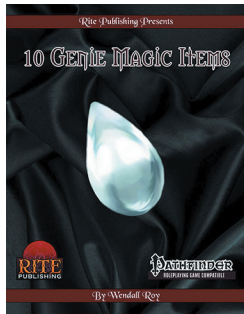
Setting Guide for the Kaidan setting of Japanese Horror



Jonathan McAnulty



Reviews



10 Genie Magic Items

Publisher: Rite Publishing

Reviewer: Endzeitgeist

Stars: 5 stars out of 5

This little pdf clocks in at 8 pages, 1 page front cover, 1 page editorial, 1 page SRD, 1 page advertisement, leaving us with 4 pages of content, so let's take a look!

First things first: The magic items herein are intended as an expansion for the rather cool "*In the Company of Genies*," so if you want to get the most out of it, you'll need that pdf. It should be noted that these items also retain their value for non-genies. I assume in this review that you're familiar with that book; if you aren't feel free to read up on it in my review. I'll be waiting in the meanwhile.

...

All right, we're all on the same page now, so let's begin! The *bracers of crystalline stillness* can generate *silence* and, via a sufficient expenditure of earth empathy points, you can also duplicate *flesh to stone*, though the SP here generates crystal instead of stone...which translates to game over for your foe. OUCH. Thankfully, the item is pretty costly to reflect this power.

The *brush of burning desires* is an *outsider (water) bane iron brush* that can create a *major image* that manipulates and fascinates the creatures it affects... and if you have fire empathy pool points, you can explosively dismiss the illusion, with penalties to the saves of those enraptured by it. Damn cool!! The *cloak of the unbound* helps resist binding effects as well as improving AC and saves versus elementals and outsiders. A whole different beast of item would be the *element-infused breastplate* – beyond being *agile*, the wearer may spend elemental empathy points to change the "mode" of the breastplate to that of the type of elemental empathy points spent – air increases movement and AC, earth yields DR and CMD bonuses, etc. – cool and flexible. Like it!

The *fan of stolen breaths* can take away a creature's ability to speak, with a thankfully non-scaling save to negate. Things become interesting when you expend air empathy points – then you can not only stagger foes by violently ripping forth their breath, you can also fire a violent, concussive burst of air with the stolen breath. Absolutely amazing! The *necklace of elemental accumulation* can store up to two points of elemental empathy (2 if you have

the pool, 1 if you have Latent Elemental Power as a feat) – while points are stored within the necklace, elemental powers are improved, with two points also increasing the damage output. Nice. The *pavise of soothing rains* is a heavy shield of darkwood that can expand to a less cumbersome tower shield variant, hampering fire spells in a unique manner, mitigating spreads to bursts. Oh, and via empathy expenditure, you can combo-activate an AoE-*quench*, *obscuring mist* and heal non-fire-subtype creatures. Damn cool and yes, appropriately priced!

The *ring of elemental knack* is basically a container for an elemental power of the racial paragon class, but under-leveled characters risk mishaps when trying to unleash the power contained inside. Cool: The formulae for daily use determining ties into the point cost. Elegant. Kudos! The *vessel of servitude*, finally, can be used to enslave slain janni, exerting serious power over them.

Oh, and guess what? We once again receive one of the amazing, scaling legacy items, which, this time around, would be the mighty *Eye of Janni* featured on the cover – this powerful gem not only helps when dealing with animals, it also unlocks elemental powers, an animal companion at -5 levels...and at 8th level, allows the janni to temporarily change the dominant element. Whoa, now that is damn hardcore...as befitting of such an item! Higher levels yield attribute bonuses in noble form, a 1/day low-level wild-card SP, drawn from pretty much all sorc/wiz and druid spells with an energy-descriptor and an element-based variant evasion that may even restore elemental empathy. As a nitpick – the latter should have a caveat of daily uses or something that prevents cantrips or minor elemental effects to be used to fully recharge the elemental pool. Then again, I am nitpicking here.

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are top-notch on both a formal and rules-language level – Jason Keely did a great job here. Layout adheres to Rite Publishing's two-column full-color standard and the pdf doesn't sport detailed bookmarks, but needs none at this length. The pdf sports two nice full-color artworks of items, both of which I have not seen before.

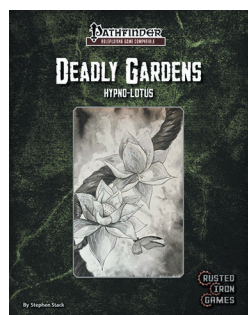
Wendall Roy delivers big time here – the items, with the exception of the slightly less impressive *cloak of the unbound*, universally are interesting, do mechanically innovative and fun things and often sport amazing, high-concept visuals. Brush, fan and pavise in particular are glorious and warrant the VERY low asking price on their own. In short: This is one nice, well-crafted pdf sporting mostly excellent material, with only one item feeling a bit less interesting and

one potential high-level cheese in the legacy item. Summa summarum, we get an amazing little pdf, a must-have option for fans of the superb genie file. My final verdict will clock in at 5 stars.

You can get this awesome collection of items [here on OBS!](#)

You can get the no less impressive "In the Company of Genies" [here on OBS!](#)

Endzeitgeist out.



Deadly Gardens:

Hypno-Lotus

Publisher: Crusted Iron Games

Reviewer: Endzeitgeist

Stars: 5 stars out of 5

This installment of the Deadly Gardens-series clocks in at 5 pages, 1 page front cover, 1/2 page SRD, leaving us with 3.5 pages of content,

so let's take a look!

The pdf begins, as always, with new magical items, the first of which would be the *alluring everbloom crown*, which is a high-priced item that allows the character wearing it to affect plants with mind-influencing effects and 3/day cast *charm monsters*, but only on plants. The second item would be the *moving scythe*, a +2 *plant bane scythe* – the first attack each round with this scythe targets all plant creatures threatened by the wielder – which is powerful, but only works when all creatures threatened are plants. Additionally, 3/day, the wielder can attack ALL CREATURES in a 60-ft.-line, which is extremely powerful – 68K does offset that somewhat, but still...circumstantially, this can be insanely strong.

We also get a total of 7 natural items: Accuser devil eyes can record visually everything that occurs within 24 hours, allowing for easy recollections; blink dog fur can once prevent being unwillingly pulled to the ethereal plane. Bunyip shriek balls can panic foes when squeezed, while chupacabra tongues can temporarily enhance the user's movement. Hypno-lotus petals can be used as a full-round action to grant telepathy with a creature or induce a mind-affecting effect preventing autohypnosis. Necrophidius bone meal fortify the user by providing bonuses versus dazed and paralyzed conditions. Powdered forlarren horn grants DR 5/ cold iron, but also imposes a penalty to saves versus emotion effects. Aforementioned blink dog fur can be used as a power component for *blink*'s percentile miss chance to be rolled twice, while use in conjunction with *dimension door* reduces damage of being shunted into a free space. Hypno-lotus petals can increase the duration of *hypnotism* and *suggestion*. When used with *mass suggestion* you can affect +1 creature and *murderous command* grants a bonus to attacks of affected characters.

All right, I've beaten around the bush long enough: The star of the pdf would be the hypno-lotus, which clocks in at CR 10 and is lavishly and gorgeously rendered by artist Becca Baen. Mind-affecting abilities can affect the lotus and the critter gets a pretty strong mental defense. The petals of the lotus generate a mesmerizing, hypnotic pattern with its leaves...and the plant can make creatures nearby attack themselves and communicate with their charmed thralls. Oh, and their slams and grabs are nasty. Love this critter!!

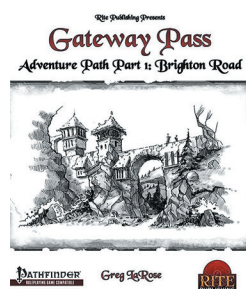
Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are very good, I noticed no significant glitches. Layout adheres to the two-column full-color standard and is still rather printer-friendly. The pdf comes fully bookmarked in spite of its brevity. The b/w-artwork of the creature is amazing.

Stephen Stack's hypno-lotus is an amazing critter. Deadly, versatile and fun. The supplemental material is similarly well-crafted. With no significant glitches or complaints on my end, this can be considered to be an amazing little pdf, well worth the asking price of less than a buck! My final verdict will clock in at 5 stars, missing my seal only due to the imho OP, but cool scythe.

Obey the lethal lotus and purchase it for less than a buck [here on OBS!](#)

Endzeitgeist out.



Gateway Pass

Adventure Path #1:

Brighton Road

Publisher: Rite Publishing

Reviewer: Endzeitgeist

Stars: 3.5 stars out of 5

This module clocks in at 44 pages, 1 page front cover, 1 page editorial, 1 page SRD, 1 page back cover, leaving us with 40 pages of content, so let's take a look!

Well, before we dive into the nit and grit: To me, an adventure path is a campaign that covers the majority, at least 2/3rds, of an adventurer's career. I get why many a publication uses the AP-moniker, but personally, I'd consider anything less than that an arc. I know, I know, not too relevant, but I still felt the need to spell that out.

Anyways, what do Star Trek, Twin Peaks, Esoterrorists in station duty mode, Red Dwarf and daily sitcoms have in common? Simple: A central location. Many a campaign has a hub, from Lankhmar to Feepport and this location and its quirks and NPCs slowly grow upon the PCs, It's one of the points of

criticism fielded against the otherwise excellent CotCT-campaign that the PCs had to leave their home. It thus should come as a surprise, that so far no series of adventures has really capitalized on the notion of the PCs really getting to know their home, their base, and defending it from whatever may come their way. This series of adventures, then, would do just that – the premise centers on two feuding fiefdoms, the Ottonians and Goodchilds, and a border fortress between them. The PCs, via one of various hooks, will be in the employ of the Ottonians, specifically, in the employ of the charismatic inquisitor Nathaniel Lyon, who has opted to reopen the Brighton road, for in the years since the road's closure, the area has become poor and destitute, with many a former soldier falling to a life of crime.

And this is pretty much as far as I can go without getting into serious SPOILER-territory. Potential players should definitely jump to the conclusion.

...
All right, still around? Great! You see, Nathaniel has begun covertly recruiting the less corrupted of the criminal elements, for he suspects something lurking...and how better to ensure plausible deniability than via a band of miscreant low-lives? Opposed to Nathaniel's agenda would be the rebellion slowly engendered by one Robert Cornelius, who is using smuggling tactics and whisper campaigns to build his strength, all in the ultimate goal of ending the serfdom system that has ruined his life. The primary foe of Nathaniel would, however, be the armiger Cadwell Brunson, a former guardsman who has retained his bandit network and seeks to lead Nathaniel into an ambush and eliminate him for once and for all. So these three fully statted individuals would be the power-players here, representing the matrix of intrigue and machinations here.

The PCs, however, won't know any of this right away. Instead, this adventure will begin with a burning wagon crashing into the doors of the Starry Sky Inn, while the PCs are en route to reopen the Brighton Output. Dealing with the fire and bandits constitute an interesting first encounter, though one that does not feature a map or the like – granted, most GMs have a bunch of tavern maps ready... but yeah. In the aftermath of the combat, the GM gets a chance to introduce the PCs not only to the excessive poverty in the area, but also to a helpful witch named Rosin Sinti and their fellow guards, who come with brief, fluff-descriptions to set them apart. En route, tracking can help determine some pieces of information about the environments and a handy random encounter chart is included as well.

The outpost has obviously seen better days – it receives a nice b/w-map and the PCs will have a

chance to start cleaning up the place, fixing roofs... and then there's the dead cleric outside, killed by a storm. Her spirit lingers in the officer's quarters as a haunt, guarding the children she sought to guide to a better life. The kids, all marked by poverty, can make for interesting sidekicks or, in some cases, potential apprentices/cohorts...for their home, the hamlet of Wassail, is one sans perspective for them. Beyond that, the PCs have a chance to deal with a shambling stalker and potentially find a secret tunnel, which may become relevant later. A handy table of 8 random events helps btw. establish a concise mood here. Speaking of mood: From dining to the sheer amount of information herein, the adventure takes a refreshing stance regarding that aspect – we take a bit of time, yes, but from tax costs to be levied to the NPCs, there is quite a bit of roleplaying.

This extends, btw., to day 2, where perceptive PCs get to notice a scout and his hunting crows keeping an eye on the outpost and have their first major social encounter, as they check the wares of Mr. Lilliputian, a dwarven diplomat. And indeed, the PCs can find various discrepancies in his papers... and several pieces of cargo he tries to smuggle through: Black powder weapons and baby rust monsters, to be more precise. (And yes, alternatives are included if you don't like blackpowder firearms in your game.) While in the end, when bribes etc. fail, Lyon does let him off with a warning, this still represents a rather fun encounter.

During the night, a guardsman, however, will have found a rather mysterious death, as his fellow watchman dozed the night away, which will cast a somber tone on Roisin the witch returning – she can act as courier between the output and civilization, offer healing and return every other day...she also has her own agenda, but precisely which, I won't spoil here. In the following days, the PCs will have a chance to deal with a shambling mound hunting in the vicinity. Beyond that, a local baker is probing the waters to come over once in a while to sell cookies, and a pig farmer asks for the possibility to leave some of her pigs she is bound to buy in Norwich here. It is such pieces of local color that make the place feel organic, that make players fond of it in the long run.

Lilliputian will return (and continue his smuggling), though this time, a man named Kier is following hot on his heels, arriving soon after the dwarf has passed through. Kier is a ranger, has no travel papers...and claims that Lilliputian is wanted for carrying contraband across territories. While he is not wrong, having no papers would make it within the purview of the PCs to refuse him...and a similarity between the attire of the man and that of the scout watching them should also make the PCs

rather suspicious. When later, a wealthy merchant arrives, a subsection of Cornelius' men attempt to kidnap the fop in broad daylight, unaware of the strength of the outpost's folks (read: The PCs) – though their knowledge of smuggler's tunnels may help them escape. Later, the PC'll meet a hermit with, surprisingly, imperial travel papers, setting up an interesting mystery for the future.

On day 6, the PCs may get a day off, but the pdf still depicts, in detail, what actually transpires regarding the various NPCs that return. In the following days, the PCs will have a lot of choices on their hands: Do they help Roisin smuggle folks who can't pay the high taxes through the gate? How do they react to the disguised Cadwell, who poses as a Goodchild...and the man seems to know the hermit, who utters some warnings...Daniel, one of the folks, wants forged papers (and may slip off into the night as a deserter later); new guardsmen arrive, And indeed, from day to day, the intrigues subtly grow – trolls need to be dealt with, Kier returns, will-o'-the-wisps haunt the night, drawn by the sorcerous power within one person's blood..

Beyond further smugglers, wine merchants and a Romeo and Juliet-undercover-scene with the children of the rival fiefdoms, there is a lot to be found...interestingly, the latter may actually blow Cadwell's cover. At one point, a fight between heavy drinkers passing through on a gambling night may erupt into violence and Kier...well, he'll find a rather nasty end at the hands of a doppelganger, who is btw., surprise, up to no good.

Beyond aforementioned star-crossed affair is discovered by the hermit, he mentions several key facts about the environment to the PCs...before a frickin' CR 17 green dragon swoops in. And no, the PCs should not try to fight that beast...and instead perhaps establish a tithe or something like that? On their next day, the PCs may find a camp within the woods if they choose to escort the hermit, including several pieces of much needed loot...and encrypted papers...but they'll also have to evade goodchild guards.

Cadwell arrives on day 14, demanding payment from Nathaniel, for he has been blackmailing the inquisitor...and, depending on the PC's actions, he may bring grisly trophies along...and it is here that the PCs get to defend the fortress against the forces of Cadwell. How the adventure ends depends largely on the PC's actions – Nathaniel Lyon may well be hanged...or the PCs could keep him in charge, forgiving him his well-meant duplicity...though not all story ties have been closed...

The pdf comes with a high-res labeled .tif of the fortress and an unlabeled, high-res jpg. for use as a player's map.

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are pretty good, but not perfect - there are quite a few minor hiccups regarding punctuation. Layout adheres to a nice b/w-version of Rite Publishing's standard layout. The pdf features b/w-artworks for all key NPCs, though I have seen most of them before. The cartography is really good, but I do wish that e.g. tunnels, environments, inside of buildings, etc. had also been covered.

Greg LaRose's Gateway Pass is completely different from what I expected – this could actually, theme and atmosphere-wise, be an old-school Bandit Kingdom Greyhawk module, an OSR module or the like; it breathes this sense of antiquity, of a world at a declining stage in its phases, of a place that has moved on. This is a surprisingly low-magic, down to earth module that works rather well thanks to its very dense atmosphere, remarkable characters and details – the details, repetition of characters and the like generate a rather interesting, very organic and believable simulation of an organic world and appropriate consequences.

The level of detail, however, also means that this module requires that the GM tracks quite a few decisions, which, while not hard, could have been better laid out. You see, this is basically a LOT of text and the lack of highlights via bolding, references to consequences and the like can make the module slightly harder to run than it needed to be. I for example, had totally forgotten about the tunnel mentioned and had to look that back up. This module basically represents scenes, but doesn't concisely separate the rules-relevant aspects from the key-story aspects and agendas in the respective encounters – you need to know precisely how it'll work, particularly since, unfortunately, in two cases, an editing glitch of a typo-level made such a key sequence a bit more opaque than it needed to be – I was more than once both tantalized and surprised by some new revelation/note while reading a day's event. Much of this could have been avoided, if the adventure synopsis in the beginning simply featured a cliff-notes version of day-to-day-events for the GM: You know, like "Day 1: Event x, event z; NPC y arrives, NPC W leaves; if a) has happened, then c)."

I also think that the decisions the PCs make regarding smugglers, etc. could matter a bit more and that excelling at a given encounter/acting with tact and smarts, should yield a bit more rewards... but that may just be me.

So, in short, structure-wise, this is not the best module; however, its concept is pretty novel and exciting and the set-up is great. The best component would be the almost realistic atmosphere and (mostly) low fantasy-feeling nature of the proceedings, with

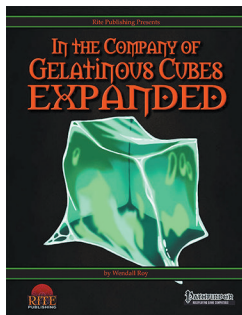
the eerie and fantastic only sometimes rearing their heads...but when they do, they do so rather neatly. You can *feel* like a soldier in a dangerous wilderness, hunting trolls and slowly putting two and two together regarding the agendas and allegiances of the NPCs. In short: This series has plenty of potential.

I was, however, also kind of disappointed to not get maps for the inside of the buildings and the lack of a scale on the maps means that this is a module that's mostly intended for mind's eye-style playing, though in the finale, the works slightly less well than in the rest of the module.

How to rate this, then? I adore the atmosphere herein, as you may have noticed – it's my kind of gritty fantasy, of realism and simulated life; the module achieves the illusion of an organic world. At the same time, the module does have a few drawbacks on the formal side that drag it down a notch. Ultimately, I can't go higher than 3.5 stars, though I will round up due to in dubio pro reo on this one. This is not a go-play module, but if you like gritty fantasy, this may well be worth getting.

You can get this module [here on OBS!](#)

Endzeitgeist out.



In the Company of Gelatinous Cubes Expanded

Publisher: Rite Publishing

Reviewer: Endzeitgeist

Stars: 5 stars out of 5

This expansion for the by now legendary pdf that lets you play a cube of slime clocks in at 10 pages, 1 page front cover,

1 page editorial, 1 page SRD, 1 page advertisement, leaving us with 6 pages of content, so let's take a look!

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

Oh boy, and there we go – not only does this begin with an expanded, longer version of the original booklet's slime-sound, this [metadventurer prick](#) that has been annoying me in my review of his book and its product discussion...now has actually started creeping into the file. WTF? Anyway, ignore his biting remark on the none-too-clever opening joke. I'll take his pizza-rations away and see whether I can starve him off my couch.

But I digress. Back to your regularly scheduled review. So, was playing a hunk of slime not ridiculous enough for your taste? Did you think "Oh boy, I need this to go one step further!" – fret not, for this pdf actually delivers just that with the Mythic Gelatinous Cube Paragon Path.

Let that sink in.

The path only gets access to universal path abilities and the path abilities it features are treated as universal 1st tier path abilities. With mythic adventuring buddy, the cube can suppress its detrimental effects and may, as a movement or 5-foot step, move into an ally's square, displacing the ally to its previous position... which is actually a pretty cool and well-executed ability. Quicker ooze empathy would be covered and the vast variety of ooze abilities now come with mythic iterations. Better sticky pseudopods!

More uses per round of amorphous dodge, powered by mythic power. Using corrosive secretions to destroy stone (we'll take the shortcut through the dungeon!), making improvised tools of slimy resin, adding temporary hit points to itself and the duplicate generated via fission...and have I mentioned being able to ignore serious amounts of acid resistance and even partially immunity? The latter is a bit weird, for the target creature still takes half damage, which means that immunity to acid could be potentially worse than acid resistance, but oh well – that's arguably a numbers game unlikely to happen in actual play.

A doubled slam dance, an end to speedy expulsion's cooldown, gaining an AoO (both original and split) versus the creature that split the cube...there are some actually tactically viable and intriguing options contained herein – even if you don't want to play one, as far as GMs are concerned, oozes can greatly benefit from several of the tricks presented herein, adding some serious scavenging potential to the mythic path.

A pretty wide open ability also allows mythic gelatinous cubes to absorb various magic items and transmogrify them into a new one. The guidelines here are pretty concise and the GM thankfully has the last word, but this still would be an ability that warrants close monitoring by the respective GM – not due to a botch by the writer, mind you, but as a system-inherent consequence of the design of such an ability.

This is not where the pdf ends, though. In fact, I love where it goes next. To paraphrase the flavor text here:

- *Mental glub.*
- *Mental glub.*
- *Mental glub.*
- *heads explode*

Introducing the ID Ooze archetype for the gelatinous cube paragon class! Yes, you can now play a psychic slime! At 1st level, the archetype grants Psychic Sensitivity and at-will *instigate psychic duel* as an SP. It has an effective manifesting level equal to 1/2 level (minimum 1) and uses Cha to govern the saving throw DC. The gelatinous cube may suppress an ooze ability until it rests for 8 hours to gain 2 MP. This replaces ooze empathy and 2nd level's ooze ability. Starting at 7th level, the ID ooze can add anesthetizing slime's effects

to an offensive manifestation, with different effects than the usual ones. This, however, replaces growth. 12th level yields fast healing in psychic duels, though, to prevent infinite healing, only damage incurred in a binary mindscape may be healed thus. The fast healing improves over the levels.

Beyond this interesting specialist, we go one step further with shape flairs – these would be a type of archetype for the racial paragon class, which replaces ooze empathy and anesthetizing slime – a total of 5 such flairs are provided, with cone-shaped gelatinous slimes being first...and beyond getting a spear-like tip, they have a VERY powerful ability that lets them act as a lightning rod upon a filed AoE-save and fire the effects as a ray after that. Oh, and if you're in the cone zone, you'll provoke AoOs when leaving it. Cylinders are smooth in movement and gain both Redirect Attack and free repositions versus smaller foes, among other things.

Dodecahedron shaped oozes get d12 HDs...and is basically a funny way of making sure your d12s get ample of use: They move faster and may substitute attack roll d20s for d12s, which is extremely potent for crit-range enhancers, obviously. Substituting d12 for slam damage and gaining a nauseating strike when you roll a 12 sans modifying it makes for a funny and interesting option. Pyramidal slimes are really good at Bluffing, being four-faced and all. They also may demoralize undead (resembling pyramids) and at the higher levels, they gain the dread ability of the pyramid scheme to siphon the luck of unfortunate demoralized foes. Worse: If a creature is conscripted in two different such schemes, Ponzii, dread Duke of Hell *gates* in and starts unleashing havoc on all present.

Finally, the extremely smooth sphere would be the final shape flair, which gains superb mobility and at higher levels, missing the sphere can incite a horrid rage (Yep, the ability is called "They see me rollin'" – XD); finally, at 17th level, the sphere can temporarily turn black and almost annihilation-level nasty...which is something I feel the strong urge to inflict on my players ASAP.

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are excellent, I noticed no serious glitches. Layout adheres to Rite Publishing's two-column full-color standard and the pdf comes with a nice piece of full-color artwork. The pdf has basic bookmarks, which is a nice feature considering the brevity of the pdf.

Wendall Roy made me laugh more than once with his expansion of gelatinous cube options. Now I would not consider all of the options provided herein perfectly balanced...but we're talking about a gonzo game wherein playing a gelatinous cube is

actually an option. Now, with this pdf, you could conceivably run a module wherein the PCs are all transformed in gelatinous cubes/cones/cylinders/etc. and for such a one-shot, this is absolutely glorious. In fact, while the d12-crit-ability is pretty strong, for the purpose of actually playing the cubes et al., this makes for a pretty amazing supplement.

In short: This is an amazing, fun way of expanding the options of the base file; it is extremely affordable, well-crafted and even innovative in some of its rules-modifications. In short, this is an excellent pdf, well worth 5 stars + seal of approval.

You can get this inexpensive, gonzo pdf [here on OBS!](#)

You can get the original ItC: Gelatinous Cubes [here on OBS!](#)

Endzeitgeist out.



Mini-Dungeon: Doubt not that Stars are Fire

Publisher: AAW Games

Reviewer: Endzeitgeist

Stars: 5 stars out of 5

This pdf clocks in at 2 pages and is a mini-dungeon. This means we get 2 pages content, including a solid map and all item/monster-stats hyperlinked and thus, absent from the pdf, with only deviations from the statblocks being noted for the GM. Oh, and the series now comes in an archive that also contains...*drumroll* a .jpg-version of the map! Yeah, that's pretty amazing! Better yet: GM-friendly version of the jpg's included as well!

Since this product line's goal is providing short diversions, side-quest dungeons etc., I will not expect mind-shattering revelations, massive plots or particularly smart or detailed depictions, instead tackling the line for what it is. Got that? Great!

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

...

Still here?

All right! This can be used as a sequel to the "[Pit your Wits](#)" mini-dungeon, but works well on its own: Following a mutated goblin attack, the PCs have to go down the pit, the walls aglow with coldfire... and worse, there is a deadly substance...and this coldfire substance has mutated the local goblins into goberrations – a variant, weaker faceless stalker...and being too close to the substance is really painful. Dried coldfire can result in a similarly horrible mutation for careless PCs and within this place, raging rubble, cerebriic fungi and worse await...but there indeed is a way down...but do the PCs dare continue?

Conclusion:

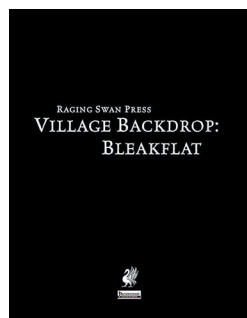
Editing and formatting are very good, I noticed no significant glitches. Layout adheres to a beautiful 2-column full-color standard and the pdf comes sans bookmarks, but needs none at this length. Cartography is full color and surprisingly good for such an inexpensive pdf. The .jpg version included here, which you can easily cut up and hand out to the players as they progress is a huge bonus -and even better: A KEY-LESS VERSION sans the annoying letters/numbers is included as well for full VTT-compatibility!!!. The pdf does sport one nice piece of original full-color art – kudos!

Stephen Yeardley shows what an awesome atmosphere you can generate with a few monster reskins and some deadly terrain. This is a deceptively hard little mini-dungeon and makes great use of the environments. The mini-dungeon is fun and evocative and certainly worth the low asking price. My final verdict will clock in at 5 stars.

You can get this mini-dungeon [here on OBS!](#)

While my review is based on the PFRPG-version, this also exists as a 5e-module, which can be found [here!](#)

Endzeitgeist out.



Village Backdrop: Bleakflat

Publisher: Raging Swan Press

Reviewer: Endzeitgeist

Stars: 5 stars out of 5

This installment of RSP's Village Backdrop-series is 11 pages long, 1 page front cover, 2 pages of advertisement, 1 page editorial/ToC, 1 page

SRD and 1 page back cover, leaving us with 5 pages of content, so let's take a look at the settlement!

Bleakflat! What a name. I have rarely read a village with a name that evoked desolation quite to the extent as this does, so from a nomenclature angle, we're off to a good start. From barren soil rises a rocky bluff far from any dungeons, ley lines, trade routes, or, yes, reasons to traverse the desolate waste. And the leitmotif carries over to the local populace, who, with relatively listless gait, slurp watery mutton soups in silence. Bereft of special talents, armed forces or the like, one cannot help but wonder how the local population manages to fend off the wolves and giant bats that seem to have no compunctions about attacking travelers. Well, the reason is as easily evident as the expert roleplayer may have guessed: The warm and welcoming mayor is actually a vampire who tends to "his" humans as a benevolent farmer would...but relations tend to become strained when his elitist dhampir daughter

(ironically, more despicable than her full-blown undead father...) and her treatment of the humans are concerned...and when he has undead guests, they don't always behave.

The settlement does feature a proper settlement statblock and comes with a nice little marketplace section as well as the classic notes for villager appearances, dresses and nomenclature. As always, we receive 6 whispers and rumors that help keep the PCs on their toes/drive along proceedings and village lore. Cartography is provided by the expert skills of Maciej Zagorski. Notable locations include various families and their interaction with their semi-kinda-benevolent vampire overlord, the blood baths...oh, and the bleakwood, where the vampires sometimes hunt for the thrill and sport of the chase. Yeah. They're vampires. What did you expect? Sparkling? Anyways, the pdf sports some seriously nice b/w-artworks of the dilapidated hovels and is supported by no less than 6 sample events to kick adventuring into high gear if the PCs start to idle. The pdf remarks "Aldrich hopes this is just a phase." This sentence, usually connotated with parents talking about their goth/punk/whatever kids perfectly exemplifies the mindset of the master of this place and really made me smile. Oh, and obviously, horses are not used for riding round here – they are food for the roaming giant bats...

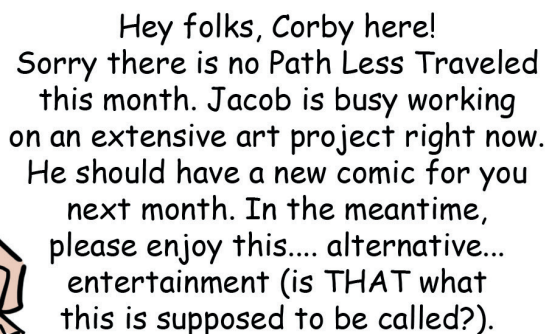
Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are top-notch, I didn't notice any glitches. Layout adheres to RSP's smooth, printer-friendly two-column standard and the pdf comes with full bookmarks as well as a gorgeous map, of which you can, as always, download high-res jpegs if you join RSP's patreon. The pdf comes in two versions, with one being optimized for screen-use and one to be printed out.

Jeff Gomez' Bleakflat is interesting in that its theme of decrepitude is supplemented by a leitmotif of conflict between generations and a bit of social commentary, if you're inclined to read that into the supplement: The population needs their master to survive, but at the same time is slowly destroyed by him. Sounds pretty much like dominant employers in remote communities everywhere to me. Anyways, the settlement is nice, has some thematically consistent angles and can go in several ways, depending on the morality of the PCs and how the GM elects to depict the situation – from full-blown horror to shades of grey "lesser of evils"-gameplay, there is a lot of potential here. Now granted, I would have loved some unique mechanics for the blood baths...but hey, can't have everything, I guess. As a whole, this is a nice, fun village and well worth a final verdict of 5 stars.

You can get this pdf [here on OBS!](#)

Endzeitgeist out.



THE HEAD TRIP part 1: How to Get Ahead!



THE HEAD TRIP part 2: Always Think Ahead...



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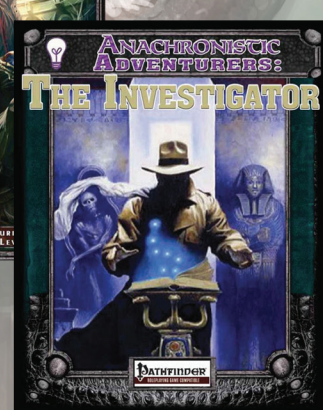
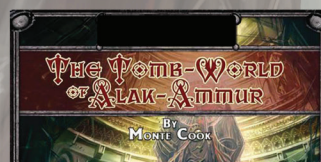
10 KINGDOM SEEDS PLAINS



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