YOUR WHISPERING HOMUNCULUS

Richard Pett





A guide to the vile, whimsical, disgusting, bizarre, horrific, odd, skin-crawling, and mildly disturbed side of fantasy gaming



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WHAT'S IN A NAME?

"I am yours to command, Master."

"Indeed you are, Slugmouth, indeed you are . . ."

 $\mathbf{S}_{ ext{o}}$, what exactly is your whispering homunculus?

Well, your whispering homunculus (YWH, if I may, to prevent writer's cramp) is the roleplaying equivalent of a spice added to meat to bring out a particular flavor whilst cooking, or the subtle (or perhaps, some would say, not so subtle) lighting to create the right mood. It's like fancy dress at a party, or fireworks at a concert; it adds a little something singular and brings something unexpected to the fantasy gaming table.

In short, it's something to keep in your back pocket as a GM to add a little different edge to the odd encounter, to add a moment of "*What!*" to the game, or to give your players leave to doubt your sanity.

It was the delightful Scott Gable who first came up with the idea of some new regular columns for the (Huzzah! Award-winning!) Kobold Quarterly website. It's interesting looking back on those emails to see the kernel of an idea develop and sprout fleshy, flaccid wings. I'd been lucky enough to work on a few of Paizo's brilliant *Campaign Workbooks* back in the days of *Dungeon* magazine, and I suggested to Scott that a revised version of those could work well. After various rewrites and ideas bandying back and forth, we settled on the thought of using the workbooks as the basis of the column, to run for five editions, but to add something a little twisted into the mix.

But what to call it?

It needed to be catchy but tick all the boxes of the column being slightly off the wall, mainly for GMs, and used to spice up the odd evening. YWH started out life as

the *GM's Grotesque* (I quite liked that one), but we wanted something more catchy. On the back of that came the *Gamemaster's Minion/Menial*, the *Master's Companion*. Then *Aranias—The Devil of Crunch and Fluff*, the *Master of Lists*, his *Master's Voice*, his *Master's List*, and the *Gamemaster's Golem*. Scott has to take the credit for *Your Whispering Homunculus*, and I have to say I think he hit the right note exactly. Something useful, yet yours to ignore. A servant to assist you whenever you wish, but dismiss when you have more lofty things to interest you. An amusement and a lackey in times of need.

And so here you have it; everything from the YWH columns over the past couple of years or so, with a few extras, which I hope you'll enjoy. I'm totally delighted to have Greg Vaughan, who I have it on good authority never ever sleeps, and the charming and annoyingly talented Mike Kortes, along for this collection. Their own works need no introduction, and if ever I knew a pair of twisted and deviant individuals ripe for possessing the homunculus and his master for this moment, they are them. I hope you enjoy their lists as much as I do.

I have one final thank you: to those good people who've been kind enough to make comments at the KQ website and an even bigger thanks to those who suggested new lists. A considerable *huzzah* to you all and please, regardless of who is contributing, keep those ideas and comments coming.

As with all the strange and spicy ingredients, use them sparingly. The worst thing that can happen to the unexpected is that it becomes mundane.

-Richard Pett, 2nd November 2011



TWENTY DAFT BETS AND DARES

The desk groans under the weight of hefty tomes, journals, maps, papers, and librams. The floor is littered with the rolled husks of half-considered ideas and mistakes. At last, the master sits back in an armchair, his work done. The adventure has been crafted to satisfaction, all the major encounters detailed, every option considered.

Every option?

Suddenly a twisted creature hops onto the desk; the homunculus is grotesque, a vile leathery thing of insect and rat and slime topped with a doll's face. It hops onto a shoulder and whispers in an ear, "But, master, what happens if . . ."

he journey has been long, and at last, the adventurers find a cozy fireside by which to park their battle-wearied limbs and enjoy a quiet night of fine ale and polite conversation.

Well, no.

The appearance of strangers is likely to bring out the worst in people, and the sight of all that well-honed muscle is likely to cause a few jealous looks from locals anxious to keep their admiring partners to themselves. Here are twenty ludicrous bets and dares that the locals make with the PCs to try to get one over them, including how to resolve them. Characters beating the villagers might either be regaled by the villagers or resented, depending upon how they play the encounter (at the GM's option).

Using magic, of course, is cheating.

- **I** *Tam Wadly says he can eat a bucket of raw potatoes quicker than any of you:* Best of five opposed Constitution rolls against Fat Tam's Constitution of +5 wins. Make a Fortitude save (DC 12) at the conclusion or be sickened for a day.
- 2 *Lub Squirmly reckons he can drink a bucket of milk faster than any of you strangers:* Best of three opposed Constitution checks, Lub's is +5, again end the bet with a Fortitude save (DC 12) or be sickened for a day.
- 3 Zort over there says you're all sissies, and he's got a game to prove it coal swallowing—hot coals, of course: Coal swallowing is dangerous and Zort can swallow three pieces before he gives in; the first lump causes 1d6 damage, the second causes the eater to be unable to speak for 1d3 days, and a further 1d6 damage. Subsequent coals deliver 1d6 damage and add 1d6 days to the time before the character can talk again.
- 4 *Poxly says he can juggle four flaming torches at once—and bets you can't:* Best of three opposed Perform checks against Poxly's +8, checks of 15 or lower could result in injury from the flaming torches; jugglers must make a Reflex save (DC 15) or take 1d6 damage.
 - **Bedpan Hambly can pluck a pheasant faster'n any of you strangers can:** Plucking a pheasant is based on opposed Dexterity. Bedpan Hambly, as an expert, gets a +5 modifier in total. Anyone that has Profession (pheasant plucker) can substitute that roll for the check.
 - So you think you're tough, eh—how about a boar wrestling contest?: Use the standard boar statistics (*Pathfinder Bestiary*), but since the boar is oiled before the fight takes place, increase its CMD by +4. Weapons and armor are not allowed. The boar fight takes place in a small corral outside of town.
- 7 Only girls fight with swords in this village. Nape over there wants a proper duel with you—using greased pigs: Again use the boar statistics, but the five pigs in the farmyard don't fight back and they are harder to hit. Add 4 to their AC due to the grease. The idea is to manhandle the pigs from a central muddy pen and into a sty 10 ft. away (which is harder than it looks). The PC must win three consecutive opposed grapples to do so; the first one to get three pigs out wins. The opponent has a base attack of +3, a CMB of +6, and a CMD of 18.
- 8 Tough are ye? You strangers are all the same, pansies! Now, how about a game of Blind Man's Reap?: Blind Man's Reap is played between two people in the old Ricket's dark barn. The opponents are blindfolded and use blunted scythes to beat each other. Use the standard fighting in the dark rules for blindfolded combatants. The scythes deliver subdual damage only but can critical. An opponent has a base attack of +3, a CMB of +6, a CMD of 18, AC 12, and 25 hp.

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- **9** *Round these parts, we play a game called Hotfoot:* Hotfoot involves a large roaring fire and bare feet. The opponents lie side by side and are moved 6 inches closer to the fire each round with feet outstretched, until their feet are actually in the fire. The first round causes 1 fire damage, the second 1d3, third and subsequent rounds cause 1d6. Any normal villager can last only 4 rounds, so if PCs manage more, they win.
- **IO** *We never respect any stranger unless he kisses Old Maud on the lips three times:* Old Maud is the village cow, but she suffers from an appalling skin complaint manifesting itself in boils around her mouth that might, or might not, be catching (it's up to you).
- **I I** *A man's not a man in this village unless he climbs Old Slippery:* Old Slippery is a 60-ft.-high greasy limestone cliff face with virtually no handholds. The climb DC is 25.
- **I 2** *Any stranger who swims Old Fleb's Muddy Mire earns our respect:* The 100-ft.-wide pond is nauseating since all the local slurry pits drain directly into it. Anyone swimming across must make a Fortitude save (DC 10) or be nauseated for a day; the swim DC is 10.
- **13** Well now, we have some strangers! So do we have anyone brave enough to play Tenbber's Folly?: Tenbber's Folly involves crossing over a huge slurry pond by balancing along a slender tied rope. The PCs face a race against Tenbber himself, who has an Acrobatics of +6. The rope is 25 ft. long, and a fall involves a very unwelcome odor and a chance to be nauseated for a day (see #12). The balance DC is 25.
- **I** 4 *Any of you strangers man enough to mount Cip Pickle's Bull and stay on him to a count of thirty?:* The bull is a fearsome beast, and the ride DC each round is 30. Those who fall could be trampled for 1d6 damage unless they make a Reflex save (DC 12) to leap from the corral.
- 1 5 Sheep shearing—that's a man's job. Reckon you can beat wizard Tobber in a contest?: Tobber is a wizard at shearing. Each contestant has six sheep, and sheering each requires the dexterous use of shears: roll six opposed Dexterity checks (count Tobber as +5) to see who wins. If your campaign has Profession (sheep shearer), substitute that skill roll instead.
- **I6** You see them troughs outside? Well, Lungy Lubwell can go underwater and hold his breath longer than any of you lot can: Use the holding your breath rules (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*). Lungy has a Constitution of 17.
- **17** Juggling live chickens—now there's something Batham Jup excels at. I guess you strangers wouldn't be up to that?: Make three opposed Perform checks against Jup, who has a Perform of +8; however, the PCs are given three especially lively chickens and their skill checks are at a -4 penalty.

- **I** 8 We play a little game called "Ten Sacks and a Dozen Yards of Rope" around here. I says you strangers would be too sissy to take part: The game involves two contestants being trussed up with sacks and ropes, which require three Escape Artist checks (DC 25) to escape from. Slippery Dabe usually represents the locals since he has a +9 to his Escape Artist check. If you like, make it more fun by throwing the contestants in the duck pond at the start. Slippery has a Constitution of 10.
- 19 Keppum's Bog is a little over 22 ft. wide—how about a little jump off between you and Leg's Ocker?: The 22-ft.-wide bog requires an Acrobatics check (DC 22); failure indicates the character has fallen into the mire, which has the consistency of quicksand (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook). Ocker has an Acrobatics modifier of +10 and a base speed of 30 ft. If both contestants succeed, jump again.
- 20 We play a fun game round these parts—Wood Axe Chin: Wood Axe Chin involves balancing a wood axe—handle down—on your chin and holding it there for the maximum amount of time. Each round requires an Acrobatics check (DC 15) or the axe falls, making a +3 great axe attack on you. The PCs might be disturbed to see the number of huge gashes in the chin of Tallow, their opponent, who has a +5 modifier to Acrobatics checks.





FIFTY TOPICS OF CONVERSATION

"Master!"

The creature hops spastically on its master's shoulder, glancing around before whispering, "I have an idea."

"What is it, slugling?"

"Master, I know you have toiled to make an answer to all the biggest questions in tonight's tale, but what about the more mundane? Surely not everyone in the village is aware of the terrible fate you have in store for our brave adventurers, nor knows the full extent of the ghastly rumors that abound?"

"True."

"So would it be helpful for you to have such a list of mundane talk and tittle-tattle?"

"Greetings, stout yeoman. My name is Hrathnil the Chunky—Keeper of the Dusky Vermillion Blade of Zsaard, wearer of the Belt of Toot, and bearer of the Bucket of the Archroper Xerses. I am seeking the Dungeon of the Cursed Topaz Harlot. Tell me, my good man, what strange rumors are abroad in these parts?"

"Well, they say Jog Wibberley's got a new shovel."

Not everyone's lips are trembling at the news of the Tarrasque, and not all NPCs provide useful information. Often, what might seem very mundane excites local tongues to wag, or curious gossip has absolutely nothing to do with the PC's latest quest. Here are fifty such topics of conversation. Use them as the results of failed Gather Information checks or when the PCs are on the wrong track, as amusing distractions to the main adventure, or perhaps as adventures in their own right.

They say Miss McGuire's been seen frolicking and prancing on Noxey Moor I again. I heard say from a man at Muckley that a calf with three heads was born last 2 Tuesday. Mind you, that kind of thing is always happening in these parts. 3 Arber's whippet chased a rabbit for four days and nights before finally dying. 4 Rotten weather we're having-strangely rotten, some would say. 5 Twelve bullocks gathered under the Twisted Elm last night-and that means troubles a comin'. A black goose was seen flying over the church yesterday at exactly six 6 o'clock-and we all known what that means. All the ale was sour in the Bloated Pig the day 'afore yesterday and now 7 everyone's come down badly. 8 I heard that the pond at Wimple drained on its own accord last night. 0 Red skoi at noit-ankheg's deloit. 10 Six of Jabel Puddley's sheep gave birth to pigs last year. Them pigs are right over that hedge. Seems to me therefore that they ain't no ordinary pigs, are they? Strikes me they must be devil pigs, come to do no good to the livestock and get up to some sort of sinister porcine mischief. II The church bell rang twenty-seven times last night—dark times are upon us. 12 Joffrey Giles had a nasty accident yesterday-cut his own head off with his scythe. Bad business it was. I 3 I heard that a giant with eleven heads and fourteen arms was seen wandering through yonder meadow two weeks ago last Tuesday. Again. So that's yer name is it? Hmm, we used to have a woodcutter by that name-I4at least we did until he got mad one night and went on the rampage. Tragic, it was-tragic and bloody-very, very bloody. A bloody, tragic business and no mistake. 15 They say the long meadow is going to be drained tomorrow. Nice weather for the time of year. Particularly good weather for hunting 16 badgers, my old auntie says. Gnomes-don't talk to me about gnomes. I once knew a gnome, shifty fellow 17he was-grew his own turnips-if you know what I mean. IX I think that wall over there might have moved overnight.

19	It's alright for you adventurous types, but what about us poor folks that have to pick the cabbages, eh?
20	Young Rog over here, he once found an earwig nearly a foot long.
21	Monsters? No, not round these parts—not unless you count young Watley's monstrous ferret that is.
22	A dungeon? Now what sort of thing would that be, pray?
23	Well, strangers, you've just arrived in time—for tonight we're holding a special festival—we ignorant locals like to call it the Feast on Strangers sorry of strangers. What was I thinking of?
24	I bet you don't know much about chickens. Well, I do. "Chicken" Tolly they calls me. Now let me tell you something—I had twenty chickens here not one minute before you arrived and now they've vanished—now you tell me, just where have they got to and what have you got to do with it?
25	It's funny you turning up. I had a dream about a stranger just like you last night—horrible it was—'specially the bit when you got your head bitten off by that giant, fanged toad you weren't expecting to meet.
26	Well, they keep saying they're going to cobble this road, but they never do—promises, promises, promises.
27	A well's only as deep as the water in it—as my old da' used to say.
28	Danger? Rumor? Dungeons? I'm not sure if I know what you mean, strangers.
29	Well, that's the fifth pipe I've broke inside a week, and if that don't mean something important, I don't know what does.
30	Young Caply over there played dominoes eleven times last night in the Slaughtered Turtle Inn, and each time he played he drew the double blank. Dark days are upon us, I fear.
3 I	Nothin stranger, nothin' at all.
32	Well, you tell me, is it normal for a man's back to crack when he stands up?
33	I'm a hundred and thirty seven—today.
34	They say that oak yonder gets up and walks every night at just about this time. That's why I'm standing here watching it.
35	Ploughs—they're just a waste of good money—every time you get a reliable one, it escapes.

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- 36 Well, I must get on. I've twelve pigs to milk before sunset. Not all of us can stand around gossipin' all night. Tricky business, pig milkin', not that you'd know much about that I expect.
- 37 We did have a monster here once—big horrible thing it was, a little like your friend at the back there.
 - $8 \;\;$ You haven't found any walnuts on your travels, have you? I'm awfully fond of walnuts.
- 39 I bet you're just a group of clever adventurers who never have to do a proper day's work. Have you ever shaved a goat? Repaired a leaking bladder? Shimmied up a church steeple to catch an escaped floatrabbit for a crying child? I thought not. Not used to real work are you, eh? So let me ask you a question, clever breeches, how do you fix a leaking mill-race?
- 40 I wouldn't stay around here, strangers. Awful quiet, it is. We've nothing sinister going on—nothing at all. Now if you don't mind, I've these nine black cloaks to fix before midnight.
- 4 I At last! At last you've come! Tell me, how long will it take you to repair the bridge?
- 42 No good will come of your visit, strangers—every time some heroes turn up in the village, something bad happens. To them or us, but usually to them.
- 43 Eggs is eggs and cheese is cheese—that's what I say.
- **44** Frogs—we've a pestilence of frogs!
 - Well, two weeks last Thursday a chimney fell on the vicar's head, and he hasn't talked since.
- 46 You're in luck, strangers. Today is our annual Dire Ferret Ride! Prepare yourselves for a day of fun that you'll never forget!
- 47 Ropers, eh! Funny creatures ropers are. They have funny mannerisms—not that we've seen any in these parts for a good few weeks.
- 48 If you ask me, it's no coincidence that the farmer's milk turns gray, a magpie is seen flying backward over the village green, and a group of strangers turn up—all in the same hour.
- 4.9 The young Toby lad has run off with the Watkin girl—the whole village is talking about it. Mind you, you can understand them eloping—what with her terrible skin complaint and his peculiar bowels. I'd say it were a match made in the heavens.
- 50 Come here for the butter, have you?



THIRTY UNSETTLING MOMENTS, ASIDES FOR THE WORRISOME

"Master!"

"Wait a moment, vile thing. I am engaged in describing the bowels of the Gorge of Misery and Flame."

"But master, I have something for your players—something that plays upon their superstitions."

"What use would such a chart be, least-thing?"

"Why, to confuse them, master!"

Sometimes, having unsettling things happen that have nothing to do with the adventure can surprise and alarm your players, throwing a spanner in the works and blurring their appreciation of true clues. Here are thirty such moments to use as you see fit during adventures. As ever, don't use such moments too often or your players will get bored with them.

If you like, you could base whole adventures around such events. An example:

2. The children start to sing a song about beheading whenever a certain PC enters the vicinity.

The children are singing the song about beheading because the PC has blonde hair (or hair of whatever color). The man the children saw beheaded in the old river by the troll also had blonde (or similarly colored) hair.

Of course, the troll was careful to point out that if the children tell any grownups about his actions, their heads are going to be the next ones he collects for the talking Decapitating Tree that he has grown in his lair. Whenever the PC tries to talk to the children, they scatter, and it soon becomes obvious that whenever they flee, they head toward the Old River. The tree in this adventure could easily be some sort of treant, or an animated object. The troll could be a standard one, or one with levels in fighter if you'd like to make it tougher.

And now, the list:

T

- Although Benjy the gray cat likes everyone else in the tavern, it hisses whenever a certain PC passes by.
- 2 The children start to sing a song about beheading whenever a certain PC enters the vicinity.
- **3** The spider seems drawn to one PC's leg and constantly crawls up it.
- 4 A strange smell follows one PC throughout the month, a pervasive graveyard stink that is commented upon behind his or her back by others.
- 5 All the birds fly away as the characters enter town, screeching and calling in terror.
- 6 Downstairs in the inn, one particular character is unsettled by the way the man in the portrait's eyes seem to follow him or her. Upstairs in his or her room is an identical portrait that has an identical effect.
- 7 The insect legs the character finds in his or her stew wriggle about despite the absence of a body.
- 8 Throughout their stay in the village, the cockerel keeps appearing by a character's side and crowing, even at night and no matter where he or she hides.
- 9 Troubled Jik warns one character that the "devil rides in the hump upon the character's back." As the rumor spreads throughout the village, all the locals begin to notice the imaginary hump with its devil passenger on the PC.
- **IO** People keep approaching the character and offering their condolences about his or her cousin Maud and the terrible and bizarre gardening accident that caused Maud's sudden death.
- ${f I}\,\,{f I}\,\,$ Throughout the week, the same scarecrow turns up in fields the PCs walk past.
- 12 How come the children's nursery rhyme keeps referring to one of the PCs by name? And worse, why is the rhyme about eating slugs, bugs, and thugs?
- I 3 Every bad person the PCs meet during the next three adventures is rumored to have a henchman called Grust the Merciless. Grust regrettably never makes an appearance.

- **I**4 The same face keeps appearing in crowds everywhere—a rotund, somewhat ruddy complexioned fellow with a huge, flat, red nose. Chug Hoppwell is the PC's biggest fan and takes great joy in following their exploits—he's merely admiring them and has given up his job and home to see them in action as much as possible.
- Everyone in the village seems afraid of one of the PCs. As the PC crosses the street, people cross to the other side; as the PC enters a tavern, a drink is poured and no charge made; when the PC approaches a shop, it closes. The PC resembles an infamous murderer and pirate called Thrashnan who terrorized the village a summer ago. The locals cornered Thrashnan, who had kidnapped a trio of innocent villagers, in a barn. Terrified that he would escape, the locals barred the barn doors and set fire to the place. As he and his prisoners were burning, Thrashnan swore he would come back from the dead. The villagers, of course, will never willingly reveal what happened but begin to discuss what to do about the return from the dead of the infamous killer.
- 16 Throughout the adventure, a wolf pack is heard howling.
- $1\,8 \quad \mbox{In the graveyard, the PCs each find a grave with their name upon it, most dating from the same year a century ago.}$
- I 9 As the PCs enter the tavern, the town clock strikes noon, and at that exact moment, Chape, the tavern owner's dog, expires at their feet.
- 20 The chicken fight abruptly stops as the PCs walk by, and inexplicably, all the chickens rush into the coop, fighting to get into its safety first.
- **2.1** A seventh daughter of a seventh daughter claims she has seen one of the PCs in two distinct dreams she's had. In the first dream, three things happen: he meets her, avoids her, and is then eaten by a huge six-headed crocodile at midnight. In the second dream, he meets her, marries her, and they live happily ever after. After telling her tale, she smiles toothlessly up at him.
- $22 \quad \mbox{As they are playing cards, the PCs discover rather suddenly that twenty aces of spades are in the pack.}$
- As the PCs enter the market, a bard is singing a song about a man who was a werewolf but didn't know it—he came to a town on market day with a bard who sang a song about a man who was a werewolf and didn't know it. In the chorus, it transpires that the werewolf's name is the same as one of the PCs.
 - Rumor has it round these parts that when a group of strangers enters town on the Festival of Saint Garuday, the dreaded Vampire Lamprey of the Great Lake shall rise and eat all the local unmarried women. As the PCs ask what day it is, the townsfolk fall silent.

- 25 The wicker men, whose numbers match those of the heroes, are "merely ornamentation." Or so the locals claim.
- 26 As the PCs enter town, it begins to rain black rain.
- 27 The man in the ancient portrait in the lord's house does indeed look exactly like the character. His name? Deathly Lord Rache the Slayer of Innocents, the devil who swore to return.
- 28 "Sixteen men shall rise, rise up from their graves, this very night they'll rise and take the strangers there." Old sailor's song sung when strangers or groups of heroes enter taverns
- 2.9 Although they can never prove it, all the characters have the uncanny feeling that they are being watched while in town. As they finally leave town, a huge-eyed dog appears from a barn and tries to follow them.
- 30 "Adventurers are yeh?" says the guard on the town gate. "They never last long in these parts on account of the terrible night things—things that are both terrible and which appear nightly..." Swizz concocted by town guards to ensure that traveling heroes stay in town longer than they intended to. Tavern owners are, of course, grateful for such help and reward it generously.





FIFTY PASSERSBY

"Lord!"

"Again, wormthing, what is it now?"

"Surely, you cannot detail everyone the heroes meet in your quest, master?"

"Make your point, useless implet."

"Master, I have devised for you a list of inconsequential passersby, just in case the brave heroes wander from your chosen path or if you need to flesh out someone they talk to."

"Sometimes, grotesque child, you have a use."

We've dealt before with the fact that not every NPC has something interesting to say or a role to play in your adventures. However, the more backdrop you use in your settlements, the more real they become. Here is a list of fifty passersby the PCs might encounter—perhaps the source of local Diplomacy checks, the first person the PCs speak to at a location, or simply a little background color.

- I Jeb Shortstone, a bright, cheerful gnome with a tuneless whistle and huge ears who constantly picks his nose. He looks troubled.
- 2 Corrun Felshhelm, an elderly former fighter who wears the rusted rags of his armor and polishes his saber daily.
- 3 Gronty Grabe, the goodwife with the wispy beard.
- 4 Elmus Toad, the man who walks with the help of a scythe and likes to taunt strangers.
- 5 Blad the Thresher, the deaf farmer who likes pies.
- 6 Tulid Lilly, the dainty girl with the scar ruining her beautiful face.
 - 7 Grist the Miller, the very tall local who is always working.

- **X** Letty Lent, the goodwife with plenty of advice to give out.
- 9 Master Hobb, the obsessively superstitious pig farmer, wears a butcher's apron that is always bloody.
- **I O** Ham, the fisherman who always has food in his mouth.
- **I I** Gooddwarfwife Lerh, the shy dwarf lady who is forbidden to talk to strangers by her father.
- I 2 Young Kag, who is 20 years old and still able to dance.
- I 3 Asdi the Tanner looks unwell.
- Bresj the Armorer has just shaved off his beard after 29 years.
- I 5 Glad Gleddly, the miserable undertaker, has a nervous habit of coughing.
- I 6 Torril the Fair has beautiful blonde hair and follows strangers about hoping to meet a prince.
- I 7 Hullwin has wooden teeth and dislikes dogs; he wears a hood made of black leather.
- **I** 8 Jabe wears a coat made of magpie feathers his father gave him. He loves his job at the smithy and sings all day long. He is one of life's happy people.
- I 9 Mother Queg sings hymns whilst she looks after her huge family of twenty children.
- 20 Lol is a little girl with a pet ferret called Bite.
- 2.1 Maester Hamdle has a huge beard and moustache he oils every day. His breath smells of onions.
- $22\,$ Goodman Crab is missing an arm and has an amazingly deep voice.
- 2.3 Laril is wearing three roses in her hair and takes great pride in her appearance.
- 24 Jab is always wandering about with loaves of bread to deliver. He has no time to stop and gossip.
- 25 Portin is not the brightest and finds he needs to hear things twice for them to sink in.
- 26 Torl wears a bright red hat and cape. His neighbors tease him about it, but being very jovial, he takes it in good spirit.
- $27\,$ Roghk the Dwarf is a dwarf of few words who dresses entirely in gray.

20

- $28 \qquad \text{Mabby doesn't have a chin and is considered the most homely of the local girls. She loves bright things and birds.}$
- 29 Torquil carries a bedpan in one hand and a stuffed crow in the other. He's taking them from his recently deceased grandmother's house to his own.
- 30 Zettan has his three infant sons in tow. Each throws stones at any nearby wildlife and strangers. Zettan fancies himself the hunter and dresses as a gamekeeper. He always has a loaded crossbow with him.
- **3 I** Turgid Bentam the Miller has a three-legged dog named Hoppy.
- 32 Maddy Madwell is always knitting. She carries her favorite chair with her and makes rude comments to passersby.
- **3 3** Jek the shepherd is a young man with ambition—he wants to be a wizard.
- 34 Every third word Gelk the Mason uses is a cuss word. He has ruddy red cheeks from drinking cider and always has a joke to tell.
- **35** Bether is very tall for a miner.
- 36 Jog Wibberley has a pet pig called Spot that walks beside him all day. He's not one for small talk.
- $37 \begin{array}{c} \mbox{Cisilly likes handsome men and is desperate to marry. She makes very fine cakes and has a charming smile.} \end{array}$
- 38 Gorgewell Grudd is a man full of his own self-importance. If he's asked a question, as the local healer, he wants to know why he's being asked what he's being asked.
- 39 Barn is the village simpleton who just smiles and follows strangers about. He dresses like a scarecrow and has straw in his ears.
- 40 Fat Farris is the fattest man for a dozen leagues in these parts. He is a man of few graces who doesn't like gnomes.
- **4** I Bledwerd has one eye slightly higher than the other, something the cruel locals tease the young farmer about.
- 42 Karl smells of cattle.
- 43 Longe Tulip is a lady all right, and she expects to be treated like one. As the best seamstress in the area, she thinks she deserves respect.
- 44 Bodge is very affable and always tries to help those in need. He thinks that's what guards should do. What a shame he gets so violent when drunk.
- 45 Hodge the undertaker is suspicious of strangers. He thinks they might be trying to steal the recipe of his famous Hodge Embalming Oil he uses.



Bellringer Jeb is quite deaf.

Lewis is quick to pick a fight with anyone. The bald innkeeper is sure his wife has many lovers, and when he finds who they are . . .

- $48 \ \ \, {\rm Less\ Tumbleweed\ is\ always\ carrying\ milk\ to\ her\ customers;\ she\ has\ no\ time\ to\ chat\ but\ is\ full\ of\ lively\ anecdotes\ if\ you\ can\ keep\ up\ with\ her\ on\ her\ rounds.}$
- 49

22

Aorg was a warrior until he lost his legs in a terrible fall. Now he walks using stilts but still hankers for tales of adventure.

50 Although Yorb is a dwarf himself, he hates the company of his own kind.





FIFTY STRANGE ENTERTAINMENTS

"Come here, least-thing, I have need of you."

"You have but to ask, oh hairless lord."

"Tonight, our brave adventurers pass through the streets and byways of a city looking for an evening's entertainment, and I have need of performers."

"Bards and minstrels, master?"

"Foolish slug. Make these more memorable, for these very entertainers might have a role to play in the future of our brave heroes."

Performance is not always about the use of a skill check.

The Perform skill is merely the tip of the iceberg when it comes to a profession as diverse as entertainer: Acrobatics, Bluff, Handle Animal, Intimidate, and practically the whole range of skills can be used to entertain and amaze. And these are merely distractions using skills; entertainments come in diverse forms, and in a fantasy world, any wild fancy could be brought to the table of entertainments.

Here is a small sampling of street and circus entertainers that PCs can encounter in a fantasy world. Use them as background color, random city encounters, or even pivotal characters in your cunning and devious plots.

- **I Darrian Clay, the Amazing Slug Man.** Gasp in amazement as Darrian slithers his way through pipe, manacle, and chimney pot as though he were made of rubber!
- 2 **The Plummeting Gnome.** Let Carrabia Shortstone amaze you as she dives from the rooftops into a barrel of treacle.
- 3 Hogweed Hamfist's Heavenly Hoppers. See Hogweed's angelic dancers leap and bound on the very rooftops above you. Scream in terror as they glide from street to street, suspended only by their grace, balance, and strength.

- $4 \frac{Porr}{spin!}$
 - **Porrow Macwilt and his Amazing Tumbling Tortoises.** They tumble, they spin!
- 5 Heppy's Performing Dire Stoat. She can dance, she can sing, she can talk—and all for your delight and amusement!
- 6

Sarrow's Swooping Sparrows. They sway and swing and soar. Sarrow's Sparrows amaze you all!

- 7 The Terrible Goat-Boy. Gaze on the pitiful form of the terrible goat-boy and despair. Weep as he sings for a coin, and pity his broken cloven feet.
- 8 The Incredible Dragon Wife. Stand back and watch, if you dare, the incredible Dragon Wife. She breathes fire from her lips and spouts flame from her nostrils.
- 9 The Three-Headed Sisterhood of Crabe. See the amazing Three-Headed Sisterhood of Crabe. Listen to them squabble and remember—they share the same body!
- **IO** Gutter Court of Arch-Clown Cranberry and his Incredible Tumbling Owlbears. Slapstick tomfoolery abounds in the Gutter Court of Arch-Clown Cranberry and his Incredible Tumbling Owlbears.
- **I I Spider Sisters of Garratt Nunnery.** Stand in awe of the Spider Sisters of Garratt Nunnery! Be amazed as they clamber any wall, any gable, any sill no matter how high, no matter how sheer—and then sing hymns for your delectation.
- I 2 Great Seer Gorg. I am the Great Seer Gorg—ask me a question, any question of knowledge—and I shall answer!
- **I 3** Daughters of the Mare. Coming to this street today—the Daughters of the Mare—the most incredible flying, pegasus-riding acrobats of this or any age!
- I 4 Fisherman of Harg. They say Fisherman of Harg is the son of a mermaid. Watch as he sits in his barrel of water for hour upon hour with no need to breathe air!
- **I** 5 **Paladin.** I am the Paladin, and I fear nothing. Watch as I place my angelic heavenly head into the mouths of lions, tigers, and crocodiles without fear!
- 16 Oleg Slinky's Incredible Acrobatic Bird Men. Be prepared for amazement! Oleg Slinky's Incredible Acrobatic Bird Men swoop and dive and soar. Watch as they streak to the ground, only to turn at the last possible moment. Scream as they soar headlong at each other and veer away with seconds to spare. Blink as they vanish into the sky only to plummet to your quaking heads an eyeblink later!

- I 7 Man-o'-Chains. Oyez! Oyez! Today, for your amazement, the Man-o'-Chains shall wander the streets at dusk. Watch as he labors under his coat of living chains and marvel as he escapes his bonds by biting through solid iron.
- 18 Sorigaribul—the Amazing Naga-Charmer! You cannot tear your eyes away from this serpentine spectacular!
- **I O Hok.** I am Hok, and I shall now become a ball of living flame!
- 20 Hogticore. Fear the coming of the Hogticore! Dare you spend a coin to gaze upon its awful tusked face —and dare you tug its vile barbed tail?
- **2.1** Gracitus the Bringer of Misery. The sign proclaims that "Gracitus the Bringer of Misery" will return to the city square shortly.
- 2.2 Hobbity-Ogre. Let your children ride on the back of the Hobbity-Ogreonly 2 paltry coins.
- 23 The Tarrasque Comes to Town Tonight. Ladies and Gentlemen—our play is entitled "The Tarrasque Comes to Town Tonight!"
- 24 Subjar's Nasal Flute Troop. (Yes, that's it.)
- 2.5 Janneski's Jubilant Jocular Sows. Janneski's Jubilant Jocular Sows are here to sing bawdy songs for your amusement! Wallow in their delights!
- 26 Lamenting Lamia. Listen to the lament of the Lamenting Lamia.
- 27 Leach Feaster. Watch—if you dare—the Leach Feaster!
- $28 \qquad \hbox{Hive Man. The Hive Man will don a beard of living bees! No generous} \\ spectator has ever been stung!$
- 29 Sarg. I am Sarg—and I shall swallow sword, stick, and snake!
- 30 Yoularp. Behold Yoularp—the man who speaks and dances with giant scorpions!
- **31** Goodwife Half-Hedgehog. Goodwife Half-Hedgehog will ride into town today on the back of her human-faced great pig. Famed by kings and queens across the kingdoms, she can tell your fortune for a gold coin and she is never wrong!
- 32 **Dancing Halberds.** Behold the Dancing Halberds—watch them fight as though held in the hands of invisible warriors!
- **33 The Briar Boy.** The Briar Boy—half boy, half thorns—brings you magical wares that cure all ills! Listen to his tales of the forest clearings and the Briar Witch who taught him all a boy should know.

- 3.4 Mongo Mudgely's Magical Flea Circus. Huzzah!
- 3 5 Ash and his Amazing Dancing Ankheg. Behold!
- 36 The Prismatic and Refulgent Puppeteer. The Prismatic and Refulgent Puppeteer is here! Enjoy tales from lands far and wide: tales of daring, tales of misery, tales of heroism—all performed by the incredible living shrunken heads of Org!
- 37 Stilt Dancer. Scream as the Stilt Dancer performs his incredible act of tumbling and balance atop towering 20-ft. stilts!
- 38 The Dark Clowns of Clunn and their Dancing Dead Things. Because you need to see this. Really.
- 39 Sisters Sorrista. High above the street, the Sisters Sorrista battle a gargoyle while balancing on a tightrope that burns and frays before your eyes.
- 40 The Amazing Balancing Dwarves. Balancing! Dwarves! What's not to love here?
- 4.1 Kuppy's Warbling Great-Toads. For all your warbling great-toad amusement!
- 42 Sogg's Swooping Hogfish. If you have to ask what it is, then you need to see it.
- **43** The Prognosticating Mummified Head. Ask the mummified head a question and she shall answer yes or no!
- **4.4 Monks of Bale.** Watch in amazement as the Monks of Bale shatter glass with their chants!
- 4.5 Mother Morris and her Miming Mule. Your day is not complete without a viewing of the Miming Mule!
- 46 Gobel's House of Living Objects. Enter if you dare, the world of living tables, talking chairs, and singing clocks.
- 47 **The Tumbling Swordsmen of Sorl.** Watch them dance and slash and sing, cutting hair and shaving beards with a single swish of their swords!
- $48 \quad \begin{array}{l} \text{The Iron Horse. The Iron Horse is coming! Hear the resounding clang of} \\ \text{its peerless hooves!} \end{array}$
- **49** The Gnome that Knows All. Behold Gavis—the Gnome that Knows All!
- 50 The Graven Face of Garrow. The Graven Face of Garrow will tell you when you will die!



TENTY QUICK VILLAGE [EGENDS

"Lord, you are weary. Rest awhile and allow me, your impling, to provide a modicum of gloss to the journey that commences tonight's adventures. Though the journey is a long one, and the villages along the way are plentiful, a collection of hovels might appear more amusing if they have suitable local legends. Or mayhap, great master, they might aid you in devising side-treks for the journeying.

And whilst you sleep, I shall torment your dreamings with this toasting-fork."

Often, an adventure can span many places in one sitting, offering many overnight stops. Here are twenty village and hamlet rumors to spice up travel. Use them as background, as starting points for side-treks, or as whole adventures on the road.

These legends can be discovered as red herrings when gathering information or as background detail. Their truth or falsity is left to you: perhaps the ghost of a giant really does appear to those who spend the night in his cave, perhaps it's just the prank of an old mad hermit, anxious for either privacy, or to keep a treasure hoard hidden.

- I The village changed its name from Fob's Barrow years ago to hide its grizzly past. They say the whole place is built on the graves of the dead, and it's true that plows occasionally turn up corpses from a battle centuries ago. Some say that two local farmers jealously guard objects they have dug from the earth—treasures that talk or sing as though calling.
- 2 The annual cheese-rolling race will take place at Papper's Mount tomorrow. A crowd of farmers has already gathered in the village, and rooms are hard to find. This year's contest could be fierce, since both the Hat and Hanger families have vowed to win, going as far as to stake their own eldest sons as a wager. The losing son will become a virtual slave of the other family. The families have been in training for weeks, and whoever loses might not take defeat well.

- 3 Quarut's Spire, a famous dolmen in the center of the village green, sits in a pool whose waters are said to cure the bite of lycanthropes. Some say, however, that the friends of those who take the waters themselves become cursed with lycanthropy in their stead.
- 4 The Rocking Stone, lying half a mile above the village, is said to rotate of its own volition at the end of each year. Although a child can turn the 20-ft.-wide stone, no one has ever made it topple. Stories say that if it falls from the cliff, it becomes a stone golem bent on vengeance.
- 5 The Cloven Oak at the heart of the village is rumored to moan during a blue moon.
- 6 The white bulls peculiar to the village are said to be descendants of a huge bull once owned by a farmer at nearby Fallow Farm. Long ago, Farmer Arno Fallow struck and subsequently broke a bargain with a powerful devil. The bull saw the devil and turned white overnight; its master was less fortunate and was never seen again.
- 7 The Staggered Man, a leaning standing stone in a field near the village, is said to have been pushed over by a giant called Gaping Grog, who terrorized these parts once. The stone stands nearly 30 ft. high, leans alarmingly, and is rumored to crush those who sleep under it who have impure souls. Those of pure heart who dare spend the night beneath its shadow are said to be blessed with a year's good fortune.
- 8 The Witching Well, an ebbing and flowing well, fills with water only when people with evil intentions arrive at the village. Just before the PCs arrived, it began to fill.
- 9 Bodkin's Brook lies in a meadow near the village and was once haunted by a trio of hags. A cave called Hag's Sanctuary lies nearby and has been carved to resemble a noble dining hall with stone tables, chairs, and even a chandelier.
- **IO** The Raven Tree, which stands by the main track out of town, has never had less than one hundred raven's nests in it. If the number of birds drops below that figure, dire calamities will occur.
- **I I** The Gaping Maw, a cave above the village, was once the home of a giant. Legend states that anyone who dares spend the night there alone is visited by his ghost and never seen again.
- I 2 Great Crob, a huge ram belonging to farmer Hab at Hab Meadow Farm, is 8 ft. high at the shoulder. Hab charges folks a gold coin to see his remarkably vast sheep. He is anxiously searching for a yew of similar size to enable him to breed colossal sheep that, he believes, would make his fortune.

- **13** The village green has been undisturbed for 10 centuries and is rumored to be protected by a trio of invisible fey. This morning it was ploughed up—what disrespectful strangers would do such a thing and risk the faerie folk's wrath?
- I 4 The Anvil Stone, a huge stone trough lying at the entrance to the village, was stolen from the halls of a famous frost giant jarl called Jaimit Storl. Bards claim that under the stone lies a great treasure. Sadly, no one has ever moved the Anvil Stone—despite the use of carts, shire horses, and magic.
- 1.5 The village is plagued by toads this year; they pop up everywhere—even in travelers' beds. Two villagers claim that they have seen a trio of dire toads in a pond outside of the village. The dire toads, they claim, were talking.
- I6 The hamlet armory has existed for over three hundred years. The great anvil, which the armorer uses on special occasions, is said to bring luck to any weapon forged on it, although those who order weapons for greed are said to be cursed.
- 17 The Pilfering Ferret, the village's best inn, is fabled throughout the lands for its warm hospitality, fine ales, and disturbing ghost cat called Wake-Me-Not. This spectral cat curls up beside those it takes a fancy to and spends the night in bed with them. Waking the cat is said to risk death at the hands of an avenging cat monster known as the Feaster with Teeth.
- **I** 8 The Black Ford, which separates the north side of the village from the south, is said to run with black blood during the dark winter nights. Those of pure soul who drink the waters at this time are blessed with long life; the wicked are covered in warts when morning comes.
- **19** Haber's Ghost Owl allegedly haunts the night air above the village. It has a particular hunger for familiars and is known to swoop and snatch any familiar found alone or separated from its master for even a moment.
- 20 The Green Bog lies a mile outside the village and is said to be bottomless. The local landlord of the Eighty Hart's Inn has promised free ale for a year to anyone who dares walk across it carrying an anvil. Tomorrow, Yurl Queeby intends to try.



TWENTY STRANGE DAYS AND FESTIVALS

"It is true, is it not, slimething, that the worlds we populate are diverse and often horrifying?"

"You speak the glorious truth as always, your mightiness."

"Then it should be true also that such peoples may have the strangest reasons for celebration."

A carnival adds color to a settlement, and for most folk, any excuse will do to brighten up their days. Such festivals also add a little uniqueness to places traveled through, some background and spice to urban settings, and a framework for entire adventures.

- **I** The Joyful Fest of Many Black Birds: Celebrating the presence in town of its thousand ravens, townsfolk go out wearing black and armed with crossbows, trying to kill as many other birds as possible. Dead birds are hung on poles decorated with colored garlands, which are paraded about town until dawn.
- 2 Saint Magil's Month: Local clerics refuse to speak for a month in honor of the martyr Saint Magil, who had his tongue removed by heretics.
- 3 **The Wych Chase:** Unmarried local women dress as witches and are chased by local young men who hope to steal their familiars—curiously unsettling carved cats and bats—an act that allows them to propose to the women they catch.

4 The Slor Pyre: A pyre as tall and broad as a house has steadily been growing on the green for months. Legend states that if it does not burn for two

months and a day each year, the dragon of the pyre will come to the world of humans. Tonight the pyre is lit!

5 The Breaking of Barrels: Quite why all the barrels of cider in the town made on Ciderapple Day are rolled down nearby Breg Hill and smashed on the rocks at their feet is unknown. Why local men stand in the way of the barrels and attempt to leap over them is a matter of male pride, however.

6 **Waiting Ward:** Each year, a new wicker man is placed at the entrance to the village and filled with cockerels. Birds that escape are allowed to live another year while those who don't are killed and roasted at a special feast before the wicker man is burned.

7 Merrily Merrily: Colorful garlands are hung about the Grieving Stone in the center of the village, and Morris Men dance for a day and a night to keep away a devil said to visit the town disguised as a handsome stranger.

8 The Evening of Khallas: The heroic death of a centaur with two heads whose mummified corpse is interred in a local crypt is celebrated when his corpse is paraded around the town at midnight on a bier. Townsfolk don special two-faced masks for the evening in homage to the centaur who slew a giant that once attacked the town.

9 The Thraid of Xis: During a weekend of mask wearing, the locals don curiously grotesque masks to represent lepers who visited the village 100 years ago and whose leader married a beautiful princess staying nearby.

IO Lady Green Hair: Local women dye their hair green to celebrate an abundant harvest and to keep themselves from the lustful attentions of the Green Lord, a nature spirit said to sire 1,000 children a year.

I I The Marriage of Mavven: Two pigs are wed each year in the village. The pigs are dressed in finery, have a proper church wedding, and are paraded about the village in a fancy carriage before being slaughtered and roasted at dusk. Some say the tradition began when the village elder was polymorphed into a pig and found that he liked the form so much he remained in it for all his days, even taking a pig wife and siring many piglets.

- I 2 The Twilight Feasting: By day, the streets are deserted—those who are touched by the sun are considered unclean and barred from the night's festivities. They celebrate the burning of an infamous vampire, a straw manikin of which is paraded through town and burned on a great pyre at midnight.
- **13** The March of the Dead Bishops: The bodies of a dozen former bishops are brought up from a local crypt and into the sunlight for a day. They are carried about the town on magnificent golden palanquins before being returned to the crypt, after which a night of silent prayer is followed by a week of raucous drinking and festivities.

32

- **I**4 Night of the Pale Children: Children dress as ghosts and run around the streets chased by Father Ill-Fortune, who is a man dressed as a black-clothed wraith carrying a scythe. They claim he was responsible for killing 100 local children a score of centuries ago.
- **I** 5 **River's Blessings:** Each villager is blessed in the river that runs through the center of the settlement. The blessing has a twist, however. It takes place only when the river first freezes in winter. Locals have to break holes in the ice for the blessings to take place.
- I 6 Mad Fool's Morn: Throughout the morning, the locals cannot speak the truth. They wish to honor a village idiot who saved the place a century ago.
- **17 The Storm Toad's Cry:** To keep the weather good, the locals sacrifice toads by capturing them and encasing them in clay. Each festival, the old clay prisons from the year before are broken and at least one toad always hops out alive.
- **I** 8 The Lantern Fest: Locals parade about the town by night, each carrying a paper lantern and throwing them into the river to appease the spirit of the river. This spirit creature is said to eat pregnant women. There are three days of feasting on fish after.
- **I9** The Carnival of Blood: Locals dress in black hoods and refuse to shed blood for a week. If any blood is spilt, forty days of rain is sure to follow. The week ends with a huge feast of meat and enormous blood puddings.
- 20 Moon Dies Day: Locals wander the village in terror from the moon above. They are convinced that today of all days might be the day it falls upon them. Some wear helms, others carry shields above their heads, and some spend all day beneath stairs or tables.



ONE HUNDRED **CURIOUS FMPORIUMS**

"Sleep, pretty master. Dream. Let me whisper in your ear whilst you slumber, casting my spell as we go. One day, I shall be inside that head of yours, and I shall be the master. For now, my list is complete—you make things too easy for me. 'A curious market slug,' you said, 'must sell strange and obscure objects from even stranger shops and emporiums.' Now my simple task is over, and I can once again continue my vigil. Whispering, whispering as I cast my own spell to become you."

In a city, not every shop sells potions or adventuring items, and not every street is given over to smithies and armorers, leatherworkers and carpenters. Some markets have darker, stranger, and rarer traders. Use them to fill your streets, give locations for random street encounters, or serves as the basis for clues or intrigue. Be varied not only with the exotic nature of goods available in a larger settlement but also in the owners' and workers' characters. Are the traders desperate merchants down to their last copper and about to be ousted by cruel landlords, or are they haughty snobs who hold clues they are reluctant to share with friends in high places?

- T Longman Sleen-Purveyor of Skins, Tusks, and Fingers of Beast and Monsters
- Dark Shorgwell's Exotic Fish Mart
- Togwort's False Teeth and Barbers
- 2345 Hobbyhorses and Fine Singing Birds
 - Magnificent Chimney Sweep Rods by Larkwell
- 6 Peerless Sables
Tanperenemy, Kifman, and Sludd-Rare Tobaccos and Pipes from across 7 the Known World 8 Living Carpets from Kosk 9 Hog Fetishes and Stuffed Lampreys 10 Bat Hide and Gargoyle Gums to Cure All Ills II The Dragon Teeth Corner Shop I2 Dragon-Scale Objects by Royal Appointment 13 All Things Owlbear **I**4 Maester Foffurd Q. Wentwen-Portrait Artist to Kings 15 The Sitar Shop 16 Shortstone's Luxurious Leather Hats-None Better! 17The Curious Books About Fish Emporium 18 Chirurgical Attire and Butcher's Aprons 19 The Powdered Leech Shop 20 Rare Seeds by the Erbedium Company 2ICatchford Quip-Spire Wig Maker to Royalty 22 The Potion Gourd Market 23 Scrimshaw Bulettes and Other Carvings 24 Capable Barm's Pigment and Paint Hall 25 Cag's Rag and Bone Yard, Antiquaries Our Specialty 2.6 Ornate Gates Bazaar 27The Carven Angelic Anchor and Devil Sail Warehouse 28The Lobster Boy 29 Cannder Horrage—Fire Beetle Dealer 30 Slott's Silver-Threaded Slippers and Gowns 3 I Barghies's Dog Armor 32 Yuttman and Sredge-Silver Ballistae Bolt Makers to the Crown

33	Roses' Carriage-Breads
34	M. Marp—Oiled Cloak Suppliers
35	Singing Coffins by Tirgep
36	The Choker-Skin Book Binding Company
37	The Mammoth Horn Emporia
38	Saints seen in Mundane Objects Entrepot
39	Kobold Skin Attire by T.L. Warrener
40	Zarrs's Colossal Kites
4I	Peacocks and Albino Pheasant Menagerie Suppliers
42	Pig Mask Shop
43	Rare and Exotic Leeches
44	The Gong Emporium
45	False Legs by T. Uldrell
46	Xorn Parts
47	J. Kollis's Elixirs to Cure Lycanthropes
48	The Animated Objects Bazaar
49	Things in Brine
50	Giant Paper Lanterns
5 I	Yellow Hats by Karl
52	Leopard and Tiger Skins Market
53	Leather Elephants Decoration House
54	Squard's Witch Protection and Charm Store
55	Hives by Torrim
56	False Arms by P. Uldrell
57	The Unicorn Horn Brandy Shop
58	Chitin Helms and Armor Establishment

59	Colossal Candles Mart
60	Every Incense
6I	Church-Bell Makers of Threem Street
62	The Hound Collar and Leash Bazaar
63	Trained Mastiffs by Ruddjy Gorsewell, Hound Breaker to the Aristocracy
64	The Griffon Training Mercantile Company (Associated with the Pegasus Training Brotherhood)
65	The Green Slime Removal Company
66	Waterclocks by T. Hubbins
67	The Alchemist's Lab Merchants Warehouse
68	Sailing Ships and Passage by the West Range Seaboard Society
69	The Pantomime Horse Makers and Entertainer's Outfit Bazaar
70	Ertwin's Luxury 10-Foot Pole Store
7I	The Harpsichord Hall
72	Grand Organs by Tord, Cathedral Organs a Speciality
73	Chains for Beast, Bulls, and Monsters
74	The Choker Blood Physicians Store—Charm the One You Love with a Choker Charm Elixir
75	Life-Size Stone Carvings of Monsters Warehouse
76	Rare Maps and Treatises
77	The Hooded Nun Confessionary Cabinet Company
78	The Ship-On-Land Spice Warehouse
79	Mighty Rope Bazaar
80	The Howdah Trade House
81	H. J. Porris—Ship Figurehead Carvers Extraordinaire
82	Powdered Mice and Other Rodent Components
83	Serendipity Antiquarian's Hall

84	Flags to Order by Artrim Horb Witwell
85	The Rope Ladder, Hat, and Hose Store
86	The Gilt and Liquid Gold Mercantile Society
87	Leaded Window Artisan Courtyard
88	Patril McRoggurt's Magnificent Coach and Luxury Carriage Warehouse and Workshop
89	The Powder and Perfume for Gentlemen Trading House
90	Great Fishing Nets and Harpoon Company
91	The Black Pig Iron Ingot Company
92	Rare and Exotic Poultry Market and Auction
93	The Silver and Gold Weather Vane Artisan's Mart
94	Pantaloons and Kirtles
95	Butts, Barrels, and Bags
96	The Black Bread Bakery
97	P. Whatt Builders and Architectural Engineers—Long Ladders and Scaffolding Experts to the Crown
98	The Alembic Market
99	Pews
100	The Exotic Unguent Mart and Bazaar

(For additional exotic shops and curiosities, check out the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Gamemastery Guide*, which the estimable Mr. Pett also contributed to.)



TWENTY MALFUNCTIONING OR DISAPPOINTING MAGICS

"A moment, slug-thing."

"Lord?"

"Magic, magic, magic. Why does magic held in magic items always work? What happens if the wizard gets it wrong?"

"Lord?"

"Are all wizards perfect? Do they never make mistakes, do things for devilment, or learn from their errors? I think not. Everyone makes mistakes, so magic may be flawed or fickle occasionally as well."

N ot every creation of a *wand of fireballs* goes without error, and not all learning spellcasters get things right. Sometimes, wizards deliberately flaw their magic or impart fickle or dangerous magic into their items. These items are not cursed per se: they are simply broken, wrong, or deliberately malfunctioning. Adding the occasional item from this list adds a little flavor to treasure troves, makes magic a little more unpredictable, and spices up more mundane items.

As ever, be careful not to overuse such items. Occasional use can be fun; too many such items annoys players and might make them mistrust magic in general. These items also can be fun in the hands and lairs of nonhumanoid spellcasters, particularly those who only rarely find spellcasters among their ranks.

A Spellcraft check (DC 15 + 1/spell level) identifies the flaw, and a Spellcraft check (DC 25 + 1/spell level) repairs the fault, as long as the character spends 10% of the base cost of the item in question. Repairing an item takes half as much time as creating the item.

- **I** Wand of Unpredictable Fireballs: Although this wand functions as a normal *wand of fireballs*, there is a 1-in-12 chance for each charge used that the *fireball* is centered upon the wand.
- 2 **Wand of Twisted Magic Missiles:** Each charge used allows the wielder to attack with three *magic missiles*; however, one of the missiles attacks a random target in range (including the wielder).
- **3 Bag of Not Always Holding:** Although in general this bag functions as a *bag of holding* of the appropriate type, occasionally things held in it vanish. Every week, there is a 10% chance that one item (a gold coin, a magic item, a sack of silver) vanishes, and a 10% chance that a missing object (including those from previous owners or perhaps even the previous owner) reappears.
- 4 Headband of Almost Always Alluring Charisma: This item functions as a *headband of alluring charisma* of the appropriate bonus most of the time, but there is a 1-in-12 chance that the bonus becomes a negative when dealing with a specific individual.
- 5 **Bracers of Armor for the Front:** This item functions as *bracers of armor* of the appropriate bonus. However, the armor affects only functions against those directly in front of the character in question. Flanked characters gain no AC bonus.
- 6 Disappointing Potion: Disappointing potions last only 10–60% of the time a normal potion would, or they function at half the appropriate benefit. For example, a disappointing potion of bear's endurance would add only a +2 bonus to the imbiber's Constitution.
- 7 Flawed Cloak of Elvenkind: Although under normal conditions the cloak, like a standard *cloak of elvenkind*, adds a +5 bonus to the wearer's Stealth checks, under certain predetermined conditions (such as when it rains, on nights of the full moon, or when within 50 ft. of water), the cloak becomes a normal cloak until removed from that condition.
- 8 **Staff of Uncertain Passage:** This dangerous item malfunctions 1 in 10 times, randomly sending the user to a point dependent upon which spell is used: a *dimension door* sends the user to a random place in the range of the spell, a *teleport* lands the user off target, and an *astral projection* sends the user to a random plane of your choosing.
- 9 Staff of Unpredictably Swarming Insects: The insects summoned attack the summoner 1 in 12 times.
- **IO** Gloves of Arrow Snaring and Attracting: Although these gloves confer all the bonuses of a standard pair of such gloves, they have an unfortunate tendency to attract every arrow fired within 30 ft. of the wearer, as long as a clear line of sight exists between the wearer and the attacker.

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- **II Unsure Sword:** Unsure swords don't always confer the bonus with which they are endowed. Generally, such swords affect every creature except a certain type, generated in the same way that a slaying arrow would be (see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*). Other types of unsure swords exist that confer no bonus against two or even three types of opponents, fail to operate under certain conditions, or just randomly fail to work.
- I 2 Ring of Uncertain Invisibility: When activated, the ring keeps the character invisible for only 1d12 rounds.
- **I** 3 **Spellwrong Scroll:** A *spellwrong* scroll is difficult to detect from a normal scroll with a particular spell written upon it—a second passenger spell is weaved into the runes. If the spell written on the scroll has a range, the range is reduced to 0 when the spell is cast (so a *cloudkill* spell, for example, centers on the caster). If the range is personal, the spell affects the nearest adjacent character (friend or foe).
- I 4 Disappointing Item: Like the *disappointing potion*, the spell held within the item is of a weaker type and either its duration or its effect (your choice) is 10–60% of the standard effect. The choice for duration or effect is made at the time of the item's creation and cannot be changed.
- **I 5 Robe of Crossed Eyes:** Although almost all the time this item functions as a standard *robe of eyes*, whenever the character wearing it is attacked by a *flare* spell, the eyes cross and remain crossed for 24 hours. A character wearing the robe at this time must make an immediate Fortitude save (DC 20) or be nauseated until he or she removes the robe.
- I 6 Jealous Scabbard of Keen Edges: This scabbard does not like to give up its sword, and although it functions as a normal *scabbard of keen edges*, the character drawing the sword must make a Strength check (DC 20) to successfully pull the sword from its scabbard.
- I 7 Unwelcome Spell Item: An unwelcome spell item is a standard magic item that has a secondary spell effect that is (almost) always harmful to the user. The spell in question does not need to have any logical relationship with the item's function, so for example, an unwelcome spell gloves of swimming and climbing always activate a summon monster I spell, summoning an angry giant water spider that attacks random opponents. An unwelcome spell folding boat releases a stinking cloud spell whenever activated. In general, unwelcome spell items are prevalent only in magic items that do not have continuous effects. Generate unwelcome spells randomly, taking into account the caster level required to create the item in question, so, for example, drums of panic only ever have an unwelcome spell of 4th level or lower attached to them.
- 18

Slippers of Spider Climbing and Other Arachnid Habits: These slippers work perfectly as *slippers of spider climbing*, but the wearer inherits some

other, less attractive spider habits. While wearing these slippers, a character finds it difficult to resist trying to catch flies. If flies are present when the character uses these slippers, a Will save (DC 18) is required each round, or the round is spent attempting to catch and eat the flies. Also, the wearer is considered flat-footed during these attempts to eat flies, but if attacked, responds normally.

- **19 Plummeting Carpet:** This device functions as a *carpet of flying* except, when a particular precipitation event occurs, such as heavy rain, snow, or hail, it immediately ceases to function until it is dried out.
- 20 My Item Magic: These items function as the magic item only in the hands of their creator or the person to whom the creator assigns function when they are made. To everyone else, although they radiate the appropriate type of magic, they do not function in any way unless returned to their original owner once more.



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ONE HUNDRED POINTLESS OBJECTS

"Flotsam, jetsam. Do you know their true names, underslug?"

"You, lord and master, are the brains."

"Indeed, I am, and don't ever forget it. Don't think I don't know that you've been fiddling with my spellbooks—the spell magic jar, in fact. Do not consider it, leastlet."

"Never, master, I prostrate myself at your bare toes and rub my worthless nostrils upon them."

"Flotsam, vileness, is floating wreckage, and jetsam is goods thrown overboard to lighten a ship. It raises an interesting point about treasure."

"Treasure, your pointed-hattedness?"

"Yes, treasure. I sit in my study surrounded by a vast array of outré objects, yet almost all are of no value. In describing my chamber, slimeness, would we ignore these things—are adventurers interested only in treasure, or do the decorations maketh the chamber?"

Not everything in the dungeon can be converted into gold, silver, and copper. Throwing in the odd curiosity can help make a place seem more real, and as a consequence, more intriguing. A demented bugbear who has a chamber of bloody axes is one thing; a demented bugbear who has a chamber of hollowed out human hands and thousands of sewing needles is quite another.

Here, then, is a collection of pointless or strange objects to pique a PC's interest. They might be window dressing for your treasure troves, or they might be more. Perhaps that bent needle is a clue to a treasure trove hidden in the chamber for centuries. Maybe the trove is unopened even by its present occupier, whose clumsy attempts to pick the lock belie its amazing construction. What weird objects might lie within the trove?

I Bent hatpin, 6 in. long 2 Giant wig made of wolverine pelts 3 Hat of preserved swan heads 4 Dead stoat in a cage 5 Finger bone labeled "the Finger of Saint Rof" 6 Goblin writing covered in blood 7 8 Graffiti describing a 12-headed horror that lurks nearby Harpsichord riddled with woodworm 9 Wizard's hat with the word 'wizamo' sewn into it 10 Stuffed cockatrice II Barrel with knives thrust into its sides 12 Spiked club with so many nails hammered through it that it is useless as a weapon 13 Titan's helm used as a nest by hundreds of mice **I4** Lice-covered wolverine pelt 15 Hourglass without sand in it 16 Trio of life-sized brass cockerels 17Giant's belt with a buckle made from a cartwheel 18 Brazier filled with moss 19 Perfectly spherical stone, 1 ft. across 20 Sack of carved wooden children's farmyard animals 2ILongsword bent into a knot 22 Jar of pickled raven heads 23 Troll-tusk tankard 24 Section of giant-sized meat hooks 25 Display suit of full plate armor rusted completely 2.6 Display case of mounted stirge feathers 46

27	Small collection of glove puppet mites complete with gaudy costumes
28	Bottle filled with green slime labeled "danger, bottle contains green slime"
29	Pile of 16 rusted sledgehammer heads
30	Amphora filled with dried grass and leaves
3 I	Huge, rusted, sprung mousetrap holding a dead dire mouse
32	Fake leather snake
33	Wooden sign saying "danger, do not enter" lying on the floor
34	Bell jar filled with troglodyte eyes
35	Elaborate brass bound door with horrendously deep scratches on one side
36	The book Know Your Darkmantles
37	Collection of 12 decreasingly sized wagon wheels in a pile
38	Fake red bushy beard for a large humanoid
39	Hollowed mammoth foot holder with eight gnarled, small-sized walking sticks with bat handles
40	Selection of red hats
4I	Bucket of fake theatrical snow made of cotton
42	Rhino-head mask
43	Leather purse filled with rotten teeth
44	Six empty beehives
45	Corked bottle containing 100-year-old water
46	Windmill sail
47	Life-sized carved wooden aboleth
48	Barrel of acorns
49	Remorhaz-tooth necklace
50	Barrel of melted wax
5 I	Puppet bugbear
52	Foldable 10-ft. pole

53 Jar of pickled kobold hands 54 Metal breastplate with an enormous bite taken out of it 55 Scattered set of rusty thieves' tools with blood stains 56 Coracle sized for a tiny passenger 57 Completely flat metal snuff box with an ape motif 58 Twenty mirror frames without mirror glass 59 A 6-ft.-high decorated urn depicting flocking stirges 60 Selection of small rusty kitchen utensils with a thistle-headed crest 6T Anchor designed like an enraged kraken 62 Large gorgon jug 63 Set of brass poultry chess pieces 64 Drawerless cabinet 65 Bucket of enormous rusty keys 66 Collection of toy clay gnolls 67 Set of fake wooden teeth 68 Cake mold in the shape of a starfish 69 Stuffed sloth 70Pile of spellbook covers without pages 7IModel galley made of chicken bones 72Broken cider press 73 Set of chimney cleaning brushes labeled with names 74 The ashes of Imply Smithy of Fen on the Fen, in a simple labeled pot 75 Fisherman's net with a gigantic hole in it 76 Trio of choker-hand candlesticks Polished cloak stand with griffon-head hooks 78Sack of blunted meat cleavers

79	Belt of kitten tails
80	An enormous gnawed bone with huge teeth marks in it
81	Sign saying "beware pit"
82	Jar of crimson ink
83	A knitted octopus
84	Set of fake wooden theatrical maces, axes, and morning stars
85	Ruler with an unfathomable, seemingly random measuring system
86	A double-ended lance
87	Carved yew ewe with a devil face
88	Great helm with 11 curved horns
89	Completely flat, dead mummified rust monster
90	Selection of stirge proboscis quills
91	Mattock head attached to an 18-ftlong handle
92	Tossing caber
93	A dozen richly decorated javelin shafts
94	High leather boot with a rotting foot still in it
95	Penny whistle without holes
96	Stylized roper candelabrum
97	Mirror designed like a gaping whale
98	Fake wooden shark fin
99	Half-eaten disguise kit
100	Single enormous right boot



TWENTY HOLY DAYS

"Ah, the welcome routine of religious festivals—the harvest, midwinter, spring. Such times of joy and celebration that add color to the places they take place in."

"Master, I feel a task coming my way."

"Indeed, sluglet, you do, for I need religious festivals—those celebrations of the lives of martyrs and saints and holy people and those more obscure outré religious festivals that shock and amaze."

"Master, you have but to ask . . . "

Religion dominates the medieval world, and fantasy settings are no exception. The calendars of religious orders dominate the weeks, holidays, and festivities of local people. Although many notable holy days and celebrations are recorded in campaign calendars, you might want to provide a few more local or unusual events to spice up your streets. These ideas are given with a suggestion as to the type of spell most likely to be celebrated at this time: consider this spell either as a taboo or as a bargain while the celebration takes place, perhaps by lowering the price by as much as 30% or by making its casting—even by independent clerics—forbidden.

You might insist that these local celebrations are observed by visiting clerics who face being ostracized by the local church(es) for failure to observe the celebrations appropriately (for, by example, not being blindfolded throughout the holy days). Punishment could range from a lowering of Diplomacy checks when dealing with clerics of the offended church, refusing to deal directly with the PC again, or even worse.

Celebrations last at least as long as listed below, but can last as long as you wish. If you want to assign a random duration, 1d6 days is appropriate.

- **I** The Martyrdom of Saint Hargwell of the Eyes: This celebration marks the martyrdom of the saint, who had his eyes removed by heathens for refusing to recant his faith. His followers wear a bloodied blindfold for the duration of the celebration but are kept fed by locals and guided by local children. (*remove blindness*)
- 2 **The Flaying of the Angel Mortyrr:** Holy men wander the streets, naked from the waist up, whipping themselves with scourges and recalling how the Angel Mortyrr was slain here seven centuries before. (*cure* spells [all])
- 3 The Burning of Saint Welb: Manikins of the saint are burned nightly for a week in commemoration of Saint Welb, who was burned in his church by beasts with men's faces. Each service ends with a vial of holy water being cast onto the ashes of the fire. Huge candles burn in holy places and are the subject of service and prayer. (*bless water*)
- **4 The Resurrection of the Beast:** All fires are quenched at dusk and left cold until the dawn. Lighting a fire is said to bring terrible fortune to those who see it today and risks summoning the Beast, a vile and enormous bestial devil. Those who avoid seeing fire during the night are said to be cured of any curses. (*remove curse*)
- 5 **The Celebration of the Bowing Monk:** Holy men and women bow to everyone they meet for a week and a day, and they hand out lucky prayer scarves of white silk that have a peacock feather sewn in—a ward said to protect those who wear them. (*glyph of warding*)
- 6 **The Tongueless Martyr Orbrant:** Holy folk and pilgrims wear a gag and refuse to speak, to honor the martyr Orbrant, whose tongue was cut out before he was slain to prevent him from revealing the location of an evil brotherhood through *speak with dead*. (*speak with dead*)
- Saint Ashes Day: When Memorus, a local monk, was burned alive by heretics, his broken holy symbol was found and made whole again by his followers, who parade obviously repaired broken holy symbols (some of great size) through the town. Smashing of drinking vessels is said to bring a year's good luck, and sales of tiny clay drinking vessels are common. (*make whole*)
- 8

One Bound Hand: The unnamed saint is celebrated by the binding of each pilgrim's left hand and smearing blood upon it, making it appear like a stump. The hand, in which the saint held a holy symbol, was severed by a demon. Pilgrims and followers do not use the left hand throughout the festival. The saint's hand regenerated, and he later returned with a religious force and slew the demon, dying in the process while still clutching his bloody holy symbol. (*regenerate*)

Saint be Drowned: This celebrates the tale of a local saint who was drowned and whose body rested in gentle repose until a holy bishop could come to

()

resurrect him. Followers cleanse their souls by a holy ceremony where they are dipped into the nearby river by clerics. Flotillas of boats cram the waters during the celebration. (*gentle repose*)

- **IO** Night be Gone: This night celebrates an ancient event when the settlement was beset by zombies and devils after the death of the local hero Torril Quane at the hands of local undead-worshiping cultists. The story goes that a local boy stole into the cultists' lair to recover a fragment of Quane's body, which he returned to the local bishop, who resurrected the hero. The hero subsequently joined the bishop in driving off the evil horde. The locals either dress as zombies or bandage a portion of their bodies in homage to Quane. Throughout the festivities, local boys are given sweets and small coins to honor the boy hero. (*resurrection*)
- **I I Brother Broken Back:** This celebrates a holy man who was offered a deal by a powerful devil: if he could drag a wagon containing a score of monks through the town to a chapel, the devil would spare them. Although the monk's strength left him on many occasions, his monk followers restored it with bread on the journey. Brightly decorated wagons and carriages fill the streets during this festival. (*lesser restoration*)
- I 2 The Blasphemy of Caben: The tale of a brother tempted by a succubus is celebrated in this cautionary story. Visiting a local brother, Caben was charmed by a succubus and spent a night with her, losing all his powers (levels) and waking up as a shade of his former manhood. Luckily, his power was enough to keep him alive and, after being punished and restored by a canon, he returned to the brothel and drove a holy stake through the succubus's heart, killing her instantly. During this festival, men walk the streets armed with stakes while the women seek out husbands among them by attempting to steal a kiss. Once kissed, the betrothal is confirmed and woes betide anyone who breaks the tradition. (greater restoration)
- **13** The Whisper Angel: A holy statue of an angel is said to weep, sing hymns, and make prophesies. During the celebration, the statue is paraded throughout the streets on a huge wagon, and people throw flowers and holy water onto it. Many people touch the statue and ask it questions, with some people claiming to get answers, be cured of sickness, or hear her sing. (*commune*)
- **I** 4 **Tell Me Chancing:** Throughout the week, a special local bread is baked that contains lucky or unlucky tokens. This bread is widely eaten, and each year a tiny, valuable silver holy symbol encrusted with gems is baked into a single loaf of bread, with the finder being allowed to keep the holy object. The celebration is based upon a fabled local priest who cast *augury* spells and dispensed the advice in special breads with messages in jars within them. (*augury*)

- **15** The Silent Song: A religious festival where local holy men and women bind hefty bandages over their ears to honor the memory of Sister Carmen, who had her ears severed after refusing to listen to the profanity of invading warriors. (*remove deafness*)
- 16 The Staggering Crow: Locals don crow masks and speak in humorous caws to celebrate the message brought to this settlement by a crow from Sister Beloved, mother-mistress at a nearby nunnery, which had been raided by hobgoblins. The crow had three arrows in its body but still delivered the message and summoned an army to drive out the hobgoblin invaders. Hunting or eating any bird at this time is forbidden. (sending)
- I 7 The Talking Corpse: Locals sleep on the graves of their family members in the hope that some piece of advice is given. The story goes that a potter in the settlement, when drunk, fell onto the grave of his father, who whispered advice to the good-for-nothing son to buy a horse from market. The horse, it transpired, was the stolen steed of the local king. The king was so overjoyed when he heard that one of his knights had seen the potter with his horse that the king gave the potter his weight in gold. (divination)
- **I** 8 **See-Me-Far:** On this night, mirrors in the settlement are said to have divine capabilities, and those who have pure souls can gaze into them and see what fate is befalling loved ones near and far. (*scrying*)
- **19** Light in the Dark: On this night, paper lanterns are lit and allowed to drift into the sky at midnight to ward away evil gargoyles said to sleep on the clouds above. (*continual flame*)
- 20 Jack-Be-Yesterday: The story of Jack-Be-Yesterday is a somewhat sad one. The woodcutter went into the woods one day to find an oak tree big enough to make a huge table for his wife, who was pregnant with their first child and who had promised him a huge family. Unfortunately, Jack strayed into a strange part of the wood and met a giant, who chopped him in half. When later his bride learned of his horrible death, she prayed that the day had never happened and when she awoke, found her wish had come true. Knowing about the giant, she persuaded her husband to tell a group of passing heroes about the giant, and they went to his lair and slew him. Strangers (particularly those who might be adventurers) are much feted and loved by the locals during this festival; indeed, cynical folk might find the local's showering of gifts and love a little suspicious. (*restoration*)



FIFTY [OCAL DELICACIES

"Stew!"

"Lord?"

"Dumplings!"

"Master?"

"Tripe!"

"Your worship?"

"All delicious meals in their own right, slugthing, but I have need of more exotic meals tonight. I need those meals that truly stay in the minds (and possibly stomachs) of the true connoisseur."

"I have the very thing here master. Hundro Ockpot's Guide to Obscure, Unusual, and Occasionally Revolting Meals, Volume I..."

Meals (Cost/Day) Good (5 sp) Common (3 sp) Poor (2 sp)

he *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* gives an excellent potted description of meals, but categorizing all food in one of three ways misses out on a potentially interesting piece of interaction and color that gives an added dimension to your gaming table.

Regional meals vary enormously, and food within a fantasy campaign offers you a great chance to indulge in some imaginative delights: a meat pie in one town could be a significantly different meat pie in another. People tend to live off whatever happens to be abundant locally, but they soon grow tired of the same old dishes and try to spice them up a little.

Here are some foods to throw at your characters to keep them on their toes, pique their interest, or just make them feel queasy as they tramp the byways and valleys

of your villages, outposts, and camps. In each case, since they are local delicacies, you should consider them common local meals, or, where more exotic ingredients are found, up the price to 5 sp. In general, meals with stranger parts-such as roast stirge-are the result of a happy chance encounter. Although, if you really wish to have that stirge farm outside town, feel free to develop it and its insane owner.

As usual, use these variations sparingly. A town full of truly weird food could be an unusual diversion.

I	Roast hedgehog with spinach
2	Potluck pie
3 4 5	Whole roast stirge with cauliflowers
4	Pig's blood with scrambled eggs
5	Stewed dormice with greengage jam
6 7	Beef tongue with pumpkin
7	Calf's feet jelly
8	Deep fried monkey toes
9	Fermented herring
10	Cow's heart with fresh vegetables
II	Jellied eels
12	Bison liver with boiled potatoes and parsley
13	Grouse pie and cucumber soup
I4	Boiled shocker lizard and cabbage
15	Owl soup with black bread
16	Roast magpie with courgettes and pickled gerkins
17	Fried snails and asparagus
18	Giblet soup
19	Veal cake with marrows
20	Hashed dire game and cabbage

21	Lark pie and jumbles
22	Pickled tongue with apples and hard cheese
23	Roasted whole songbirds with dried fruit
24	Sea slugs with red pepper sauce
25	Steamed dire boar tripe with onions
26	Deep fried blind toad with turnips
27	Strips of dried darkmantle flesh with apple chutney
28	Rook pie and sprouts
29	Boiled giant frog with broad beans
30	Stirge livers and mushrooms
3 I	Larks in onions
32	Potted lobster
33	Goat's head with stewed celery
34	Fermented giant crab meat
35	Ram casserole with horseradish sauce
36 37	Fried ugly fish with baked mushrooms
37	Curried cockatrice
38	Turnip soup with cottage loaf
39	Deep fried dire bat and hardbread
40	Stewed kidneys with sprouts
4I	Broiled ox-tails with orange brandy
42	Rabbits stewed in milk
43	Pickled hams and eggs
44 45 46	Barley gruel
45	Roast sturgeon with turnips
46	Tapioca soup and fried whitebait

47 48 49 50 Toad-in-the-hole

Potted turbot

Boiled sea kale

Garlic fried sparrows with roast potatoes and chives





RANDOM TOPICS OF [OCAL CONVERSATION

"And what have you learned, maggot-thing?"

"Nothing today, master, unless you aren't aware that a seven-headed pig was born on Worm Way last weekend."

"I heard that tale yesterday."

"Your pardon, oh masterfulness."

"Where is the true gossip these days—the leads into mighty tales and buried treasure?"

"I expect not everyone has such lofty goals, master."

"True, funglet. It does, however, give me an idea . . ."

Some time ago, TWH had a list of gossip for local people. At the time, those lovely folks out there on the messageboards suggested a list to randomly develop such gossip. Here that random chart is, and what a fine idea it was. Thank you for the suggestion; I hope you have fun.

A failed Diplomacy check can signal the end of a line of inquiry, or it could open up an entirely new thread of investigation. The chart below is designed to create random bits of gossip or strange starting points for local adventure—all using only a d12.

First, generate the name and occupation of the person, then his or her action and the subject and temperament of the action, and finally, why that person did what he or she did and when. Use your imagination to fill in the gaps. For example, Blait Dandtell, the village drunk, kissed a prince that was really a horse yesterday for a bet. Where this goes and how true it is, is left entirely in your capable hands.

If the random chart generates something very obscure or at odds with itself, either ignore it or embellish it further as you wish.

D12	First Name	Surname	The Local
I	Jog	Boolquaffer	Drunk
2	Blait	Smugg	Innkeeper
3 4 5	Karb	Dandtell	Smithy
4	Dentill	Maquink	Priest
5	Spradge	Bremwish	Watch captain
6	Narky	Fungle	Village idiot
7	Sarky	Toddler	Squire
8	Yupple	Yupple	Turnip farmer
9	Madge	Mikwell	Pig breeder
10	Moniquil	Marmurt	Dandy
II	Quinton	Slabb	Retired adventurer
12	Quaid	Cuccelwhite	Chimneysweep
<u>D12</u>	Action	Temperament	Subject
<u>D12</u> I	Action Imprisoned a(n)	Temperament Ugly	SUBJECT Mermaid
I			
I	Imprisoned a(n)	Ugly Beautiful	Mermaid
I	Imprisoned a(n) Married a(n)	Ugly Beautiful	Mermaid Singing dog
I 2 3 4 5	Imprisoned a(n) Married a(n) Was attacked by a(Ugly Beautiful n) Invisible	Mermaid Singing dog Giant's daughter
I	Imprisoned a(n) Married a(n) Was attacked by a(Attacked a(n)	Ugly Beautiful n) Invisible Two-headed	Mermaid Singing dog Giant's daughter Dire badger
I 2 3 4 5	Imprisoned a(n) Married a(n) Was attacked by a(Attacked a(n) Kissed a(n)	Ugly Beautiful Invisible Two-headed Magical	Mermaid Singing dog Giant's daughter Dire badger Baron's daughter
I 2 3 4 5 6	Imprisoned a(n) Married a(n) Was attacked by a(Attacked a(n) Kissed a(n) Pickled a(n)	Ugly Beautiful Invisible Two-headed Magical Cursed	Mermaid Singing dog Giant's daughter Dire badger Baron's daughter Witch
I 2 3 4 5 6 7	Imprisoned a(n) Married a(n) Was attacked by a(Attacked a(n) Kissed a(n) Pickled a(n) Slaughtered a(n)	Ugly Beautiful Invisible Two-headed Magical Cursed Lycanthrope	Mermaid Singing dog Giant's daughter Dire badger Baron's daughter Witch Horse
I 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Imprisoned a(n) Married a(n) Was attacked by a(Attacked a(n) Kissed a(n) Pickled a(n) Slaughtered a(n) Killed by a(n)	Ugly Beautiful Invisible Two-headed Magical Cursed Lycanthrope Incredibly fat	Mermaid Singing dog Giant's daughter Dire badger Baron's daughter Witch Horse Gnome
I 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	Imprisoned a(n) Married a(n) Was attacked by a(Attacked a(n) Kissed a(n) Pickled a(n) Slaughtered a(n) Killed by a(n) Unmasked a(n)	Ugly Beautiful Invisible Two-headed Magical Cursed Lycanthrope Incredibly fat Plague-carrying	Mermaid Singing dog Giant's daughter Dire badger Baron's daughter Witch Horse Gnome Trollwife

D12	WHY?	When
I	Because of magic	Just now
2	For a bet	This morning
3	Madness	Last night
4 5	Bewitched	Yesterday
5	For money	Last week
6	For love	Last month
7	Because they're related	Last year
8	To end a quest	A decade or so ago
9	No reason	A hundred years ago last Tuesday
10	Because a spouse told him/her to	A long time ago
11	Because family made him/her	In legend
12	In penance to his/her god	They say





FIFTY STRANGE TREASURES

"Everyone has their price, they say."

"Mightyness?"

"Pay attention, slimelet, or the teaching stick may make another appearance before breakfast."

"Your punishments are just and wise, master."

"Now, everyone has his price, they say, but what would your price be, blemish?"

"Ah, that's easy, your vastness. Gold."

"As I thought, gold, and what would you do with gold?"

"Use it to buy objects to aid you, mighty one."

"And what would these objects be, exactly?"

"The strange, the outré, the macabre. Objects from beyond our shores and whispers and secrets from ancient cabals."

"So, gargoyle, everything too has its value . . ."

A magnificent golden goblet set with rubies worth 2,000 gp; a sceptre of platinum wreathed in opals and set with silver worth 5,600 gp; a fabulous earring set with rubies and jade dancing in a circlet of sunshine made of gold worth 3,200 gp. Although it's easy to place a price on standard objects, some treasures might be beyond price or have a price that's difficult to gauge.

Some items might be worthless in their own right, but to the right collector, they have significant value or have a greatly increased value because of their very nature. These objects do not require any hard selling, but locating a buyer might not always be easy. Items listed hereafter are, on the face of it, quite low in value. However, to a collector of the strange, their value might be high. Such objects often require an Appraise check (DC 20) to identify them as beyond merely curious; however, they also require a Diplomacy check (gather information) to locate the right buyer. In a city, the DC check to locate someone interested in buying such items is 15; for smaller settlements, the check increases to 20 or even higher as you judge appropriate.

The first price is the common value of the item, the second is its value to the right collector. As ever, spice up the odd treasure hoard with an object or two from this list, make them the subject of an NPC side-quest during an adventure, or have an object sold cheaply by the PCs become the subject of future gossip.

Ι	A child's toy chariot with the face made from a	2 ~ /20 ~
	stuffed growling dog	2 gp/20 gp
2	A corkscrew set with faces of howling jackals	2 gp/20 gp
2 3 4 5 6	A skull set with glass eyes	2 gp/20 gp
4	A mummified human face	2 gp/20 gp
5	A choker-skull sconce	2 gp/20 gp
6	A leather pig with two heads	3 gp/30 gp
7	A set of fanged false teeth	3 gp/30 gp
8	A two-headed iron snake with cat heads	3 gp/30 gp
9	An unsettling clay figurine of a whale with a	
	mouth full of victims	3 gp/30 gp
10	A pair of fused gnome skulls	3 gp/30 gp
II	A pair of repulsive metal bells designed like bloated women eating fish	4 gp/40 gp
12	A drum, set with gargoyle teeth and woven with choker sinews	4 gp/40 gp
I 3	An ankheg chitin candlestick set with ankheg eyes	4 gp/40 gp
I4	A grotesque mask set with strange lenses over the eyes	4 gp/40 gp
I 5	A book of high quality illustrations of whales	5 gp/50 gp
16	A chair carved to represent a hydra	5 gp/50 gp
17	A door with knocker made of stirge bones	5 gp/50 gp
18	A mounted nightmare head	5 gp/50 gp
19	A broad necklace of fancy stones and cyclops fingers	5 gp/50 gp

20	A mummified baboon head gourd	5 gp/50 gp
2I	A screaming clown mask made from a real clown's face	6 gp/60 gp
22	A preserved, mummified human female head with hair still intact, in a cabinet	6 gp/60 gp
23	A mahogany cabinet containing twenty ape skulls	6 gp/60 gp
24	A walking cane bound in gremlin flesh with a death figure	6 gp/60 gp
25	A treatise on xorns	6 gp/60 gp
26	A crocodile skull paperweight with a hidden(presently empty) vial (discovered on a DC 15 Perception check)	7 gp/70 gp
27	A set of four very large death masks	7 gp/70 gp
28	A huge wooden octopus lamp	7 gp/70 gp
29	A huge leather dog collar large enough for an elephant and set with obsidian teeth on the inside	7 gp/70 gp
30	A whale-shaped bottle filled with ambergris	7 gp/70 gp
3 I	A shrunken head banner with 20 heads set as a pyramid	8 gp/80 gp
32	A collection of stuffed hummingbirds and a small library of books on their habits	8 gp/80 gp
33	An obscenely bloated human skull in a small walnut cabinet	8 gp/80 gp
34	A sea devil's young skull chandelier	8 gp/80 gp
35	A pickled and preserved darkmantle in a display case	8 gp/80 gp
36	The lower jaw of a bulette	9 gp/90 gp
37	A glass cabinet containing a whole naga backbone	9 gp/90 gp
38	A travelling cabinet of dried darklands fungi and lichens with labels	9 gp/90 gp
39	The whole preserved and mounted skeleton of a satyr	9 gp/90 gp
40	An altar piece and lectern made of small skulls	9 gp/90 gp
4I	A monkey puppet made from a preserved mummified monkey 1	0 gp/100 gp

42	A stuffed donkey head with flapping jaw	10 gp/100 gp
43	A black fan made of kobold skin with graphic images of kobold torment	10 gp/100 gp
44	A crimson lacquer box inlaid with a mummified crow head on each side	10 gp/100 gp
45	A crystal locket with a trio of flies embedded inside	10 gp/100 gp
46	A fine fur cloak with a wereboar skull still attached	15 gp/150 gp
47	A wedding dress made of stirge bones and silk	20 gp/200 gp
48	A small ornate mahogany coffin containing fancy pipes with skull bowls	25 gp/250 gp
49	A harpsichord made of rare darkwoods with keys made of carved human bones	30 gp/300 gp
50	Two large crystal brandy decanters with spiders encased in the crystal and set with ruby stoppers	35 gp/350 gp





A PLETHORA OF DI 2 TABLES

"What's this strange object, master? I've just found it beside the wainscoting lying in dust."

"That, Licelet, is a d12."

"Hmm, now I recall, the dice that is much unused and unloved."

"Indeed it is, Licelet, but not by all of us . . ."

know it's very sad, but some of us feel sorry for the humble d12 and regard it as much neglected. As you might know with YWH, I've always tried to tie in tables to dice so that you can easily generate results from any of the tables you wish to use.

Here then is a long overdue list of very simple tables that you can use during or in preparation for an adventure, and each uses the humble d12. I hope you enjoy this bakers-dozen of d12 tables and find some merit in them.

A Dozen Innkeepers Called Mumply

- **I** Jak Mumply wears an apron covered in fresh blood; he has a hair lip and scowls from beneath his heavily greased black comb-over.
- 2 **Rose Mumply**, people try not to notice Rose's beard, but those who do mention it invariably end up on the wrong side of a thrown tankard. As a friend, Rose is as warm as her prodigious facial hair.
- 3 **Loral Mumply** is never in a good mood, looks halfway to undeath, and barely says more than a word a night. His curious tattoos look almost runelike, and some say he was once a powerful necromancer who had his mind eaten away by creatures from beyond.
- **Sidge Mumply**, the ever-cheerful halfling landlady, can drink a pint of ale in one, can outdrink the toughest pirate and outswear the foulest mouthed harlot. Dressed in copious silks and with a flattering leather waistcoat, she takes snuff from a silver snuffbox and eats live crabs for fun.
- 5 **Rognard Mumply** has only just moved here from foreign shores. He still doesn't speak the local language very well and often brings out the wrong drinks.
- 6 **Mitch Mumply** has a pet pig called Almond whom, she claims, is a polymorphed prince.
- 7 **Hardgrip Mumply** the dwarf tavern keeper makes the best meat pies this side of the sea, but invariably ends up unconscious on the bar by midnight after singing several dozen dwarf battle dirges.
- 8 Walter Mumply will talk to anyone he can about his harridan wife Tulip, except when his beloved is in earshot, that is.
- 9 Arran Mumply is a very handsome chap with an enormous bushy moustache and a dandy way with words. He likes nothing better than to regale ladies with unlikely and outrageous tales of his heroism, bravery, and strength.
- IO Munt Mumply the gnome brewer and innkeeper is a retired ranger who keeps his former loyal animal companion Waltar on the bar stuffed. His beloved dire badger companion takes up quite a lot of space and it's often tricky to see Munt beyond his beloved deceased friend. Munt's only other peculiarity is that if you buy him a drink, you must buy Waltar one, too. The odd thing is that the drink somehow always goes without anyone noticing how.
- **I I Carterpark Mumply** could have an argument in an empty room. He has opinions about everyone and everything, but his food and ale are reason enough for the locals to put up with his contrary nature.
- I 2 Zord Mumply is an odd case. He sits at his bar eating boiled eggs most of the day and stares, particularly at strangers.

A Dozen Obscure Rooms

- T Gelatinery: Room for the raising and care of young gelatinous cubes 23456 Spawning Ponds: Room for the breeding of dire toads or giant frogs Slugery: Chamber used to encourage the retention and growth of giant slugs Slime Vats: Large deep vats for the production of green slime and others **Oozery**: Usually well-sealed chamber created to breed oozes and jellies Smellery: Goblin chamber used to collect revolting smells within 7 Mold Larder: Often shelved or otherwise subdivided room within which dangerous molds are fed and nurtured Incubating Vats: Room incorporating ovens, heating areas, and other 8 incubation enhancing devices; room to incubate monster young; or room filled with broody and otherwise very dangerous female monsters sitting on eggs Perch: High and often narrow shelf, not always natural, used as a perch for 0 harpies, gargoyles, and other winged, intelligent creatures 10 **Communicatory**: Chamber for the direct communication with god(s) II Nursery Punishment Pit: Open pit within a goblin nursery area, often with occupying wolverines and so on, used to encourage strength and competition amongst goblin infants
- I 2 Sanctum: Either a chamber used by master torturers to relax away from the screams of their victims or an inner chamber within a mastermind/main villain's chambers where he can relax without the usual accoutrements of skulls, flayed flesh, boiling victims, and so on

A Dozen Minor Afflictions

- I A trio of boils around the nasal area
- 2 Terrible halitosis
- 3 Hiccups
- 4 Too many bent teeth to fit into one mouth
- 5 Copious nasal hair
- 6 Warty lips

- 7 Scabby nostrils
- 8 Phlegmy cough
- 9 One bent eye
- IO An unpleasant fishy aroma
- I I Chattering teeth
- I 2 Inflicted with lice

A Dozen Notably Dressed NPCs

- T She wears a bridal gown which she appears to have worn for some timeyears perhaps.
- 2 His turban is bound with gold thread and his copious silk gown hides a trio of silver-hilted scimitars.
- 3 He's wearing a black jester's outfit.
- 4 The top hat he wears is almost 2 foot high, he leans on a walnut cane with a raven's head, and he grins through pointed teeth.
- 5 He doesn't appear to be wearing anything at all except his hobnail boots.
- 6 He wears his curiously round moon hat at a very jaunty angle. 7
 - He wears a cloak made of rags.
- 8 She is dressed in the back half of a pantomime Tarrasque outfit
- 9 She has a jester's hat on but a formal noble's outfit below.
- 10 She wears a dress of peacock feathers.
- II He is dressed entirely in white.
- 12 She wears a black veil and has on a black gown held aloft by a dozen maids all also dressed in black.

Twelve NPC Moods

Occasionally, it's interesting to spice up some checks with the odd unusual modifier due to peculiar circumstances. The way an NPC feels is one option for you to consider using occasionally. The number in brackets indicated is the optional modifier to attempts made to use a Diplomacy check on that NPC. You might also consider that moods are a changeable thing to have, which might be changed by appealing to an NPC's interest in music, giving a simple gift, or perhaps by even things such as weather.

I	Furious (-2)	7	Lethargic
2	Unhappy (–1)	8	Indifferent
3	Grumpy (-1)	9	Energetic (+1)
4	Annoyed (-1)	10	Cheerful (+1)
5	Tired (-1)	II	Happy (+1)
6	Bored	12	Joyful (+2)

A Dozen Monster Scars and Blemishes

The number in brackets represents a suggested reduction (or in one case increase) in the percentage of the creature's hit points because of its injury.

- I Massive head scar, signs of attack by bladed weapons, and multiple arrow wounds (-30%)
- 2 One limb severed (–25% and modify attacks accordingly)
- 3 One limb withered or broken (-25% and modify attacks accordingly)
- 4 One limb clearly previously broken and badly healed (-20%, reduce move by 10 ft. if leg and any natural attacks by -2 as appropriate)
- 5 Serious head injury that seems to have healed ([-5%] when entering combat. make a Will save [DC 10] or be confused for a round; make a further saving throw the round after to end the confusion effect; once the save is made, no further save need be made for 24 hours)
- 6 Major cut, which despite scar tissues still exposes bone (-10%)
 - Blinded in one eye (-5% and adjust Perception by -2)
- 7 Blinded in one eye 8 Slight burns (-5%)
- 9 Missing 1d3 digits
- I O Ugly blemish, possibly the remains of disease such as mummy rot or filth fever
- I I Shows signs of severe poisoning (discoloration, wheezing when inhaling)
- I 2 Lots of scars from battles (+10%)

Twelve Types of Cider

- I Dabshaw's Ratfest Scrumpy
- 2 Rumper's Kill or Cure Cider
- 3 Poppritt's Poisonous Perry
- 4 Samprord's Sorry Sagardo
- 5 Mother Mebb's Brown Deliverance
- 6 Fester

- 7 Old Jebs' Painful Summer Cyser
- 8 Scobb's Screaming Scumpy
- 9 Old No
- IO Boil's Golden Goose
- I I Lumpkin's Nottobedrunk
- I 2 Forget Tuesday
Inside a Dozen Pit Traps

- I Richly decorated with bas-reliefs of figures making good their escape from a pit trap only to be torn to pieces when they emerge at the top by biting mouths on tentacled limbs
- 234567 Is painted blue
- Has frescoes of cackling gargoyles pointing at the base
- Is wreathed in images of conflagration and fire
- Is signed by the creator Fabian Quart
- Is liberally scattered with cat remains
- Features smiling demonic faces
- 8 Has a warning written in common: do not imbibe the yellow liquid
- 0 Triggers a magic mouth spell that laughs unsettlingly
- 10 Has a second, deeper pit trap at its base
- II Is so full of bodies that the corpses cushion the fall (halving the damage) but burst in a cloud of filth fever
- 12 Has a set of iron rungs nailed into the wall to allow escape

Twelve Unusual Village Squares and Their Features

- T A great elm tree that's been struck by lightning and cleft in three
- A statue of a flumph in a neatly tended garden
- 23456 A giant rusty anvil in the middle of a pond
 - Three too perfect stone maidens dancing in a meadow
 - A longboat on a dolmen
 - A cobbled square with a great cauldron in the center
- 7 An enormous stone hat on a stone island in a lake
- 8 A marble carving of a whale surrounded by roses
- 9 A slowly weathering harp without strings sits on a standing stone
- 10 A stone tower with a huge weathervane depicting a daemon eating the moon
- II A colossal archway of ivy growing around a twinned oak tree
- **I**2 A statue of a gnome riding a dire badger

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Twelve Doors

I	A carved wooden door with a large grinning maw in the center
2	Has countless long nails sticking through
3	Is covered in meaningless fake magic runes
3 4	Has been put in upside down
5	Hinges at the top, not the side
6	Has a cover of beaten bronze with seven circles in it, each with a picture of a kobold in the middle
7	Has a dead mummy nailed to it
8	Has a brass knocker depicting a griffon eating an ochre jelly
9	Has a mosaic of a howling man stuck to it
10	Is made of balsa wood (Hardness 0, 2 hit points, break DC 4)
II	Is very badly scorched
12	Has a dozen full metal helms nailed to it

Twelve Goblin Chieftain's Names

- I His Sincere Majesty the Deformed Mutjack Whellter, Devourer of Giant Leeches and Beater of Dogs XI
- 2 The Great Gubb
- 3 Her Revolting Inflictedness the Arch Gobwench Lorra Krinklehide, Wringer of Necks and Eater of Foals
- 4 Dogwak Flintgrin XXXII
- 5 Puppyfat Halfhead, the Burner of Kennels
- 6 Dark-Souled Mib, Commander of Daylight, Juggler of the Moon and Vanquisher of Mastiffs, Sheep Dogs, and Terriers
- 7 Xotslap Xotlip, slayer of mimics
- 8 Tarquin Thogrudd, the Beater of Bells
- 9 Snarg the Dreadful
- **IO** The Craftwim, wielder of Slamfidge the Twisted, Defeater of the Fire Beetle King, Vanquisher of the Dark Vegepygmy, Slaughterer of Xard the Triple-Headed Raven and Sovereign Lord of all Gobwenches
- I I Empty Lostfund the Bad, Explorer of the Blue Tunnels of Zarm
- I 2 Busckak the Very Bad

A Dozen Local Captains of the Watch

- **I Strict Jak Kebble** is the terror of his men. He's suspicious of everyone and anyone he meets; he is initially unfriendly to everyone. With his neatly trimmed beard and chest of medals he is a strict military man of few words.
- 2 **Sober Jabe**, the drunk guard captain, is rarely seen outside the alehouses and taverns of the settlement. Jabe has a pet hedgehog called Grimtooth, and anyone who has an animal is his friend. He begins as friendly in attitude to any such character.
- 3 **Speedy Hoggwid** the huge captain can barely get out of bed without sweating. He has the most unpleasant body odor of any of the watch (and that against some pretty strict competition) and the most slovenly uniform. That he's related to the local high fliers is the only reason he's got on in life.
- 4 **Marshgas Torbrill** has a trio of pit bulls on very short leashes at all time. His dogs are almost as short-tempered as he is. A very short man, Marshgas makes up for it in temper. Rumor has it that he feeds his dogs steak every night.
- 5 **Soft Pip** is dressed in her very tight leather jerkin. The voluptuous Pip is no pushover: she has risen to the top with her abilities and despite the japes of her fellow guards, all of whom are now petrified of her.
- 6 **Blind Cartwell**—how did he get the job? Well, they say Cartwell has a nose on him that is as good at finding a trail as any dog. He has the Scent feat and goes about sniffing the air whilst he taps his way around town with his white cane.
- 7 Happy Jodd smiled once eleven years ago and hasn't got over it since.
- 8 Fragrant Subb Suggwart works as a tanner in his spare time and reeks of urine.
- 9 Sad Jacob Smiles never stops telling jokes, particularly about dwarves, who he finds very amusing indeed.
- **IO** Mutkin Harper has the best voice in town. You can always tell when he's coming along the street by his fine voice. The other guards are in his choir under duress and find the singing lessons demeaning.
- **I I Jobe Jinkins** is really tall—almost seven foot from boots to head. In fact, rumor has it that everything about him is huge, from his huge boots to his huge nose.
- I 2 Ruttin perpetually smells of fish, his wife is a fishwife, and his entire extended family are fishermen. Some say he turns a blind eye to smuggling.

Twelve Sudden Weather Changes

The weather is very unpredictable, and it occasionally changes suddenly without warning before immediately returning to its former state. These examples are given to you to add to an encounter to change its emphasis in a temperate climate, or to arouse suspicion that magic is afoot. These effects can last anything from a few rounds to a few minutes, depending upon your wish.

- I A quick hailstorm (Pathfinder Core Rulebook, page 438)
- A sudden heavy rain shower (*Pathfinder Core Rulebook*, page 438)
- A single clap of thunder
- 2345678 A sudden gust of strong wind (*Pathfinder Core Rulebook*, page 439)
 - A dark cloud rolls over the sun
- A sudden burst of chill air
- A sudden squall of heavy, oily dark rain (Pathfinder Core Rulebook, page 438)
- A distant bolt of lightning
- 9 A light drizzle accompanied by a sudden mist (Pathfinder Core Rulebook, page 439)
- 10 Clouds suddenly rush across the sky overhead
- II A deluge of rain occurs nearby but doesn't touch the PCs unless they enter it
- 12 A sudden strong wind rushes past, making a roaring sound, and is then calm





IT CAME FROM THE ... TOILET?

By Greg A. Vaughan

"Master! Master!"

"Why do you disturb me, impudent one? Can't you see I am attending to the duties of the privy and require a modicum of privacy?"

"I wouldn't do that if I were you, Master. Things are restless in the bowels of the city this day."

"What? Ah, restless bowels, visiting the privy; you're making a pun! Very good, my incontinent lackey."

"I only wish I was, Master. I only wish I was."

E very adventurer worth his salt has heard of the horrors to be found with an afternoon's sojourn into the depths of any major city's sewer system. Lurking, creepy, bug-eyed things, and the chittering of rats from the shadows. Let's not forget the smell, all common—dare we say it, "regular"—features of the city's bowels. And many would attest that anyone foolish enough to go venturing in such territory should meet the end he so justly deserves. But what, we dare ask, about those cases when the horrors of the darkness below intrude upon the delicate necessities of those in the world above?

Every good dungeon has a privy that the intrepid adventurer might be tempted to search for hidden gold, and every decent tavern should have the jakes where a successful, treasure-laden adventurer must evacuate the over-exuberance of his latest celebration. Even the grandest ball needs a powder room where one can lighten the load of high society a bit.

Provided below is a sampling of encounters and surprises that can occur when your PCs dare to root around in the room with many names and none. Roll 3d10 or choose from the list below when you decide to liven up an imbroglio in the chiffonier.

3	An antique electrum coin—one side showing the head of a medusa and the other pair of oxen (worth 1 gp).
4	Gold dentures (worth 135 gp).
5	Animate sock puppet (treat as Tiny animated object) named Humphrey that hands out sprigs of mint and demands to be tipped.
6	Graffiti carved into a nearby wall that includes a common name and promises a good time.
7	A lady's powder case that is empty except for seven dried cockroaches.
8	The distant sound of goblin song wafting up from below along with the faint scent of oranges.
9	A well-worn work glove; the other half of the pair is missing.
10	A 6-pound brick of dried nutmeg wrapped in oil cloth (worth 12 gp).
II	Pages torn from a book of romantic poetry and put to other—more mundane—uses.
12	A length of hemp rope secured to a nearby object and run down into the darkness of a deep cesspit only to terminate at a severed end a few inches below the rim.
13	A pair of highly polished riding boots—a bit of fabric stuck to the heel of one.
14	An ivory baby rattle with baby teeth instead of dried peas inside (worth 15 gp).
15	A malfunctioning crystal ball stuck on the image of a bald djinni with a large gold earring who occasionally looks at the viewer and gives a thumbs up. It will not scry anything else.
16	Deep claw marks, as if something attempted to climb forth.
17	A small placard that says, "Out of service. Workers below."
18	The tentacle of a curious otyugh passing below, feeling around to see if there is anything interesting or edible within reach.
19	A used toothpick (still good).
20	A small pile of shelled peanuts (not still good).
2 I	A well-thumbed album of woodcuts depicting female kobolds in suggestive poses.

22 A small glass bowl holding two live goldfish. 23 A rod of wonder (5 charges) serving as the dowel for a roll of cleaning rags. 24 A bulging leather pouch that, when opened, gives forth a flatulent noise and holds only lint and collected bits of spider web. 25 Sixty-three glass eyes arranged on the floor so that all look at anyone seated (worth 15 gp each). 26 A silk hanky monogrammed with "B.M." that bears suspicious stains. 27 Two bootlaces tied together into a long miniature noose. 28 Concealed bear trap (Perception DC 17, Disable Device 22, +15 melee attack, 2d6 damage). 29 A small vial of greasy ointment of unknown properties. 30 An ill-used corn cob mounted on a stick.





ONE HUNDRED GOBLIN FEATURES

"Repulsive!"

"Master?"

"The goblin, sluglet. A most unsavory thing, yet each is as different as every man, woman, and child in this fair city."

"I thought they were merely small and nasty, with an ability to put everything into song and a ridiculous fear of horses and dogs, master."

"You thought, did you, slimelet? Tell me, what brought about this world-shattering event?"

"I am merely your tool, great one, and seek in my own humble way to enlighten myself to serve you better."

"Remember that, dunglet, and I'll have no need to destroy you. Now, as I was saying. Goblins. It is my intention to catalog every peculiarity these horrible little bastards have. I'm therefore sending you on a little errand to the Magenta Hills where you'll find a tribe of goblins. Bring me a list of their peculiarities immediately."

"But master, the Magenta Hills are six nights hard flying from here."

"Then hasten away, floplet, hasten . . ."

No two goblins are alike, either in appearance or behavior. This list suggests a number of ideas to spice up goblin encounters with a few unique traits, mannerisms, or deformities for the nasty little bastards. The peculiarities of these creatures might amuse as they emerge from a pack of the little horrors, might serve to determine exactly why a particular goblin earned a nickname or increase in rank, or could add a little spice to the growing hordes of goblin PCs that have appeared in recent years.

As ever, do not overuse such characteristics since they can quickly become mundane.

I Has an extra eye 2 Hasn't any teeth, only gums 3 4 5 Both ears bitten off Ten fingers on one hand Has rotten teeth 6 Has tusks 7 8 Has eyes on top of its head Has curly black hair on its head 9 Has lost its nose 10 Is an albino TT Is sky blue 12 Has four ears I 3 Has a comb-over **I**4 Has lost all the fingers off one hand 15 Is covered in warts 16 Has half its face missing from a wound 17 Collects dung 18 Has a cobweb tattoo on its face 19 Has a tattoo of a goblin dog on its chest 20 Has a hump, which it refers to by the name of Grott, as its imaginary friend 2IWears an eye-patch made of a shell 22 Wears a big curly wig 23 Wears a dress 24 Swears constantly 25 Talks in rhyme 26Talks gibberish

27	Has half a fish sticking out of its tunic
28	Has a hat made of chicken bones
29	Is covered in feathers
30	Wears cabbage leaves
3 I	Is naked
32	Smells of fish
33	Is dressed in sacks
34	Carries a ten-foot pole into battle
35	Limps badly
36	Dresses in orange
37	Has a dried watermelon hat
38	Torments mice constantly
39	Collects cat tails
40	Collects rat heads
4I	Collects sheep skulls
42	Collects ponytails
43	Collects hats and wears them all
44	Collects noses
45	Has an enormous thumb on one hand
46	Has a head that's far too big for its body
47	Burps constantly
48	Giggles to itself without stopping (even in its asleep)
49	Wears a green wizard's hat
50	Is forever breaking oyster shells (or snail shells inland)
5 I	Never meets anyone's eye
52	Sings in an impossibly deep voice

One Hundred Goblin Features

53	Sings
54	Has t
55	Has a
56	Has p
57	Has a
58	Has a
59	Carri
60	Has s
61	Refer
62	Is refe
63	Is refe
64	Screa
65	Has a
66	Is em
67	Has a
68	Is cov
69	Carri
70	Preter
7I	Has a
72	Repea
73	Has a
74	Uses a
75	Wears
76	Has n
77	Steals
78	Has a

84

Sings in a ridiculously high voice
Has two noses
Has a completely burned head
Has pointy buck teeth
Has a pet sheepskin
Has a wooden leg
Carries around the head of its dead uncle
Has sandy hair
Refers to itself in the third person
Is referred to as <i>mistress</i>
Is referred to as <i>horse face</i>
Screams its name (Gronty) at the top of its voice, constantly
Has an enormous stomach
Is emaciated
Has a terrible cold
Is covered in goose fat
Carries a witch's broomstick
Pretends to be able to cast spells
Has a wig made of barley corn
Repeats a word over and over again
Has a stutter
Uses a good holy symbol as an earring
Wears a fez
Has no lower jaw
Steals things habitually during combat
Has a goblin dog puppy in its pocket

79	Carries an oar and pretends to row while it moves
80	Rides a small pig (or at least tries to)
81	Kicks a sheep's head about
82	Never blinks
83	Never talks
84	Pretends to be possessed by a demonic goat
85	Has a beard
86	Wears a false beard
87	Shouts constantly
88	Wears an enormous cowbell it claims makes it invincible
89	Thinks it is invisible courtesy of a magic pipe it smokes
90	Recites poetry constantly
91	Generally has a mouthful of large snails
92	Jumps up and down on the spot very often
93	Has huge human ears
94	Rolls around in an imaginary barrel
95	Howls like a wolf
96	Barks constantly
97	Moos constantly
98	Claims to be a werewolf
99	Has painted its head bright red
100	Says everything twice

For more information about goblins, and a whole host of peculiarities and information about the ugly little blighters, check out *Goblins of Golarion* by Paizo Publications.



TWENTY HUMANOID TREASURES

"This battered tome bound in human skin, not-thing."

"Master?"

"It has value, for the secrets within it."

"Agreed, overlord."

"This candle made from human fat, however, might seem valueless, yet hidden within are jaspers, set therein by some goblin witch for an aid against venom. It is clearly a goblin snake-fighting candle, an object I'm sure few of the civilized races know the true meaning of.

"This horn set with mysterious runes is in fact a variation on a magic scroll which, frost giants believe, can bring down the wrath of the gods on those who wield it. No frost giant would ever dare face a warrior or wizard carrying this object. This rather lurid tapestry seemingly depicting nothing but bloodstains is, in fact, an orcish blood blanket, a powerful tribal totem carried for good luck by orcish warriors and which are, on occasion, imbued with powerful protection and rage magics."

"Your vision is godlike, lord."

"Don't grovel, maggotwisk, I simply never judge a book by its cover . . ."

We've discussed before how some objects have value beyond their mere physical qualities, and how occasionally items might have value simply because of their outré qualities.

Different races also look at different things as precious. For example, to a giant, a much-notched ceremonial great axe handed down over generations might be without price, but to an eager adventurer it is simply a huge great axe. However, these "artifacts" are so important that tribes will go to war over them, take ridiculous steps

to get them back, or avenge damage or destruction. The list below gives some objects to insert into humanoid lairs and the possible uses for them. These objects are not only revered but greatly protected. You might wish, for example, to place elaborate traps around objects below, or place them in treasure troves in pride of place. Maybe a cult of protectors has vowed to die to ensure no one should ever look upon, touch, or mention them.

As ever, use them sparingly; although it might be amusing to find that the legendary artifact of an ogre's lair is just junk, you should never leave your players feeling shortchanged of rewards.

Where items have value, or are inherently valuable, the worth of these objects is left for you to judge. In some cases, the objects might indeed be magic and have the qualities outlined, in other cases the object's only value is to those who worship and revere it.

- I Ceremonial Antler of Human Skulls Throne: This copious throne is made of stone and set with two score sets of great antlers from dire stags. Each antler is festooned with skulls, and in all nearly a thousand skulls are thrust upon the object. Although the throne is of no physical value, its ceremonial value is beyond compare since the skulls are from the enemies of the tribe of humanoids who created the throne many hundreds of years ago. The antlers are said to have been originally set upon the throne by the tribe's first chieftain, who spent his entire life hunting dire stags in the regions hereabouts.
- 2 Fat Candle: This candle is made from the rendered fat of enemies and sits a foot wide and almost three high. Each year the candle is added to at a special ceremony where the fat of the tribe's enemies is rendered and added so that the candle never extinguishes. Set within the candle are hundred of coins, taken from those enemies and placed within the wax.
- 3 Gromb: This axe is used by the tribal leader. It has a shaft made of driftwood bound in elf and gnome hair taken from maidens of those races, and its huge head is notched a score of times. Hammered into its shaft are hundreds of coins, all platinum pieces taken from enemies beheaded by the wielder of the axe over the years.
- 4 Maffen, the Impossible Mattock: PCs finding this weapon might have nightmares about its wielder. Wherever the Impossible Mattock is found, it is two size categories bigger than the creatures that make up the tribe it is found with, and their legend states that their founding king could wield the weapon. Perhaps the great mattock is put to ceremonial use—maybe used as a siege weapon during wars—or perhaps the ancestor still lives.
- 5 The Great Looking Glass: Religious leaders claim that this long and rather shabby mirror enables them to talk directly to the tribe's god. The otherwise

mundane mirror is held behind a plethora of traps, guards, and fanatics who have vowed to protect the artifact with their lives.

- 6 **Candelabrum of Shattered Skulls:** This vast candelabrum is made from the wired skulls of human, humanoid, and monstrous beasts, and it is a colossal ossuary. The skulls are bound in such a way that faces are reshaped and monstrous, leering from the ceiling high above and dancing with incense, candles, and torches. The tribe believes that when under the light of the candelabrum, they can never be harmed, and that the skeletal spirit of the object will rise to protect them in the hour of their darkest need.
- **Brôst:** The great door is said to hold back a terrible demonic figure from the tribe's nightmares. Certainly the doorway is littered with warnings and set with powerful protection runes. That the object is also set with hinges made of platinum might be enough to tempt the most fearful adventurers to dare remove it and see what lies beyond it. Certainly no tribe member would even contemplate such a thing.
- 8 The Sinew Lectern: The lectern is made from the bones of victims of the tribe and held together with sinews of muscle and flesh. Superficially, the vile object has no value, however, the lectern is set with small cupboards and secret compartments that might hide tomes, scrolls, and librams of great antiquity.
- 9 Lamentation of Feathered Forms: This suit of plate armor is set with feathers, some mundane, others of great size, that range from tiny hummingbird feathers around the cuffs to a train of peacock feathers. Within the feathers are set the skulls of nearly three hundred birds. Although not magic, the Lamentation is a powerful tribal artifact whose wearer believes himself invincible. Those taking the Lamentation might soon find that other tribes come searching for the armor, believing stories that its previous owner was attacked while not wearing it and that now, at last, it lies in the hands of fools who do not know its true value.
- **IO** The Crooked Cauldron: Hanging above a fire that never dies, this huge cauldron cooks enemies. Sometimes these enemies are not dead when they fall into the boiling pot, which is revered as an artifact by a tribe that believes it holds the ghosts of not only their enemies but their powerful ancestors. Though the object appears to be nothing more than a massive battered old cook-pot, it might cover what secrets it truly holds. It could also be a mundane cauldron.
- **I I The Ďans:** The great harp Ďans is made from the bones of a dragon, and its strings are rumored to have been made from the sinews of devils and strung here. It is said that anyone who attempts to play the harp becomes part of it.
- I 2 Hrothscar: The remains of Hrothscar are said to be the skeleton of an iron golem, now long since rusted. Hrothscar is now used to immolate the tribe's

enemies at frequent ceremonies, and the burned and blackened hulk of iron is worshiped as a living god by the tribe.

- **I** 3 The Codi: This is a chamber whose presence is known only to the tribe chief and his most trusted religious advisers. It is decorated with incredible, vivid frescoes that detail the tribe's history, maps of the entire complex it is found in, and the lands about it. It also details spells, codices, tricks that have been learned, and other useful (or perhaps useless) information. The access to the chamber is horrifically trapped and littered with false chambers, entrances, and guardians.
- **I4 The Beater:** A siege weapon of great antiquity, the beater is a ram, fully thirty feet long, which can be lifted only by ogres and giants (either prisoners or tribe members). The Beater is said to think and talk to itself, and only one guardian is ever allowed to see it when war is not taking place for fear that the Beater will put words into the chieftain's head and make him go to war against his will. Dire calamities are said to occur if the bronze, steel, and wooden objects are destroyed, since a dozen greater demons are said to be slumbering within it.
- **I** 5 Bonespire: This curious artifact lies at the heart of the domain. It is a single bone, some thirty feet high, that bears the words and thoughts of the tribe's greatest thinkers and inventors. Although very few of the tribe learn to read, on very rare occasions across the centuries, one of the tribe not only understands the words on the Bonespire, but makes things from them. The Bonespire functions as a spellbook; the words and thoughts are nothing less than spells drawn into the Bonespire over the centuries, making it a spellbook of great value. To protect the Bonespire from the ignorant, creatures have been chained into the bone, and only a select few of the tribe are ever allowed to enter the room containing the artifact to look upon the twisted things that watch over it.
- I 6 The Tusk: The tusk is a curved dire narwhale tusk of incredible girth and size, stretching almost fifty feet in length and three feet across. It is said to make those who stand within its confines or touch it immune to harm.
- **17** The Wishing Pool: A deep shaft partially filled with clear fresh water, the well has edges of smooth stone. The tribe cast objects into the pool in the false belief that wishes come true when casting objects of value into it—the greater the value, the greater the wish. However, everyone in the tribe knows that only those who truly deserve their wish coming true actually has it granted. This has led to false claims of wishes coming true. Also, leaders and chiefs let it be known that as long as they live, the well will grant great wishes to them on behalf of the tribe. The tribe, of course, is fanatical about defending their precious well, which contains hundreds of objects of great value as well as many mundane ones.

- I8 Greuskt's Tapestry: This vile hanging depicts techniques of torture and is handed down from chief to chief. It is, without doubt, the most legendary item the tribe has, and it is treated with great reverence. The chief's own Askers—his elite torture squad—study the vast tapestry on an almost daily basis to ensure that the questions they ask are answered by those they torture. Although intrinsically worth little, the object is beyond price to the tribe.
- **19** The Injurous Masters: This object appears to be little more than a pile of skulls and bones that hangs on chains from the ceiling above. The bones in fact belong to tribal elders, and each time one dies his flesh is boiled from his bones and parts of his skeleton end up fixed to those of his ancestors. The tribe believes that these bones animate and that to touch them is the most appalling taboo imaginable. A special religious cult protects the bones and keeps them from the sight of outsiders.
- 20 **The Grotesque Fetish of Zar:** When a child of the chieftain dies, it is not buried or cremated, it is interred within the fetish: a towering thing made from the bones of mammoths among which the forms of the children hang. The chief wraps the dead child in cloth and hangs a necklace of great value upon the body. The fetish is a taboo object for everyone but those priests entrusted with the interment of the children, and even to glance at it risks death. The violation of the fetish is the vilest crime the tribe can imagine, and those who carry out such sacrilege are certain to be hunted and horribly dealt with.



A STRANGE NIGHT OUT ~ TWENTY CURIOUS CHARACTERS

"I've just been accosted."

"Master?"

"Yes, by a man on the street, who kept on insisting on telling me some story about how he had once been a wererat but had now been cured. 'How do you know?' I asked, and with that, he ran off sobbing."

"These are strange times, master, and perilous."

"You don't know the half of it, gnatling. You don't know the half of it. Now shut up and get me some cheese and chutney."

On the face of it, NPCs generally fall into three categories for PCs. Very important ones who give out orders, very nasty ones who act as the enemy, and servile ones who dish out ale and food, mend their armor, stitch their clothes and perhaps, on very rare occasions, become henchmen of a PC.

The servile ones tend to get neglected; who cares if the tanner claims to be a wererat looking for a cure? Why should an important PC bother with the petty hedge-cursed shepherd, and why would a heroine want to fall in love with the strapping but idiot farmhand who claims to have imprisoned a brownie in his tobacco tin?

People are stubborn, however, and often need to get things off their chests. Here are twenty such NPCs, along with a singular way in which they react to the PCs and why. How these stories develop is left to you; are the actions for a single night, or does the relationship develop slowly as the PCs return to the NPC's home settlement? Are these amusing asides or real trouble masquerading as innocence?

- **1 Pock-Faced Ellisa:** Homely Ellisa is used to getting her own way. The only child of a spoiling father and drunken mother, she gets what she wants, or makes those who get in her way regret it. She wants a PC as her husband. Now. Love is like that. Instant. Magical. Not to be refused. It has nothing to do with the child of a gypsy she is carrying . . .
- 2 **Soggwell:** Soggwell isn't happy, but then the life of a wererat isn't a happy one. Perhaps the PCs can cure his (imaginary) illness?
- 3 **Mortigen Burnwid:** Mortigen hates a PC. It could be the way he looks, originate from an inconspicuous act that somehow offends him (such as ignoring him), or be the result of something of incredible trivia (such as sitting in his favorite seat in a tavern). He spends as much time as he can insulting the PC, always out of earshot. Soon, however, the PC might begin to hear names and realize he or she isn't just being paranoid . . .
- **4 Jab Shortstone:** Jab knows all about these traveling types with their wild tales. They talk rubbish, and he's going to prove it by disagreeing with everything they say.
- 5 **Brubnd the Dog:** Brubnd loves one PC—end of story. He or she not only resembles Brubnd's kindly old master or mistress; to the dog he or she is that person. It wants to be with the PC, follows him or her about, sits on the PC's lap, and licks his or her fingers. Sadly, Brubnd belongs to the violent, extremely short-tempered, village idiot Gulpy Ruggwit, and as the evening wears on, Gulpy arrives in the PCs' lodgings, distraught that he cannot find his beloved hound. How terrible it would be if it keeps escaping and returning to the PC...
 - **Mother Twitchel:** Mother Twitchel realizes that as soon as she sees the PCs, one of them is her long lost daughter!
 - **Donkwill Murmiduke:** Donkwill knows that, as soon as he sees the PC's weapon, it's the one he had stolen last Tuesday from his farm.
 - **Lost Latwin:** Latwin knows that one PC is the werewolf his niece ran away with two years ago, and he aims to prove it.
 - **Marmun:** Marmun sees the PCs and realizes that the brotherhood have sent their assassins for him.
- **IO Quaffy:** Quaffy knows for a fact that the PC is an old friend of his, even though the PC has never heard of him. Could it be that the PC is an imposter ghost who has possessed his old friend's body?
- **I I Lott McGrowd:** Lott is sure the PCs will buy his magic eggs and make him rich.

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- I 2 Lean Jak Grimshaw: Jak the landlord refuses to serve the PCs; he has banned them from his tavern once already.
- **I 3 Bodwell Loosemin:** Bodwell knows that if you hang around them long enough, these adventurous types have bottomless pockets. He'll just sit right next to them until they start buying. He's not staring, mind . . .
- **I** 4 Jack Rumpole: Jack hopes the PCs won't reveal him as an imposter. The locals love his stories about how he overpowered those monsters when he was an adventurer, and his tales about wrestling froghemoths, outwitting mariliths, and thrashing krakens are the talk of the town.
- **I** 5 Annywell Mapedydish: Annywell, the local priest, is determined to convert the strangers to the local's faith.
- I 6 Tarb Rustwind: Tarb is convinced that one PC is haunted by a demonic invisible pig named Sabdyne, and unless the PC spends the night with him in prayer, a terrible curse will strike the PC the moment he or she leaves the area.
- I7 Carrick and Flutty: Carrick and Flutty are brothers, each full of aches and pains, and they goad each other mercilessly. Now each has convinced the other that a passing beggar woman (who was, they are convinced, a hedge witch) has cursed each and, come dawn, they will each burst into flames. The increasingly desperate brothers plead for the PC's help. They expect that the witch, who cursed them a week last Tuesday, is sure to appear at any moment to revel in her vengeance. If only they could remember what she looked like . . .
- 18 Farrel Quortwinge: Farrel has second sight, and he knows something bad is going to happen to each PC. He can see a terrible curse when he sees each one. Could it be that the PCs have tangled with someone powerfully evil recently? The spirit must have cursed them—horribly! One is going to be torn limb from limb by a passing drunken giant, another will be disemboweled by a dire pig, a third will fall unexpectedly down a mine shaft, and the rest will die covered in foul-smelling boils that eventually suffocate them. Only Farrel has the cure for the curses, which are destined to happen at noon, two weeks next Thursday, and his curative magic is not cheap on such normally invisible and incurable maladies.
- **I9 Boarstout Tallow:** What a size he is! Eight feet tall and four across. No wonder they say he was sired by an ogre. Tallow is tired of being beaten by the nasty locals but won't leave the place while his old mother is alone in her cottage. He pleads with the PCs to teach the locals a lesson so they'll leave him and his mother alone. Sad thing is, his mother's been dead these two years now, and no one must know. Those who find out, such as old Mister Crudd, have to pay with their lives. Crudd was very tasty in a pie, though. In fact, Tallow still has a slice he keeps for a special friend—if one ever appears.

20 **Mackerell:** Mackerell is totally in awe of the PCs; he longs to travel, be brave, and become rich. How great it must be to be a hero! How the girls must admire your muscles, your wit, your power! What is the PCs' secret? And can it be stolen?





THE HOMUNCULUS AND ITS MASTER

"One day, sleeping lord. I shall be the master . . ."

THE MASTER

CR 10

XP 9,600 NE male human necromancer 11 Init +4; Senses Perception +9

DEFENSE AC 18, touch 18, flat-footed 18 (+4 bracers of armor, ring of protection +4) hp 86 (11d6+44) Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +9

 OFFENSE

 Speed 30 ft.

 Melee +3 arcane bond dagger (1d4+1) or grave touch +3 (shaken 5 rounds)

 Ranged +8 light crossbow +3 (1d8+3 plus poison [wyvern poison])

 Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 11th; concentration +17)

 6th—antimagic field, chain lightning, create undead§

 5th—mage's faithful hound, magic jar\$, symbol of pain, waves of fatigue

 4th—animate dead\$, bestow curse, contagion, dimension door, fear

3rd—explosive runes, fireball, gaseous form, phantom steed, stinking cloud, vampiric touch§

2nd—blindness/deafness\$, fog cloud, ghoul touch, scare, scorching ray, spectral hand

1st—alarm, cause fear, chill touch, hold portal, ray of enfeeblement\$, unseen servant

0 (at will)—bleed, disrupt undead, ray of frost, touch of fatigue

§ Specialist School Bonus Spell (Necromancy); Opposition Schools Enchantment, Illusion

Special Attacks power over undead (9 times/day)

STATISTICS

Str 6, Dex 10, Con 18, Int 20, Wis 14, Cha 10

Base Atk +5; CMB +3; CMD 13

- Feats Brew Potion, Command Undead, Craft Magic Armor and Weapons, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Forge Ring, Greater Spell Focus (necromancy), Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (necromancy)
- Skills Appraise +13, Craft (alchemy) +13, Craft (books) +13, Craft (calligraphy) +13, Craft (traps) +13, Fly +7, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Knowledge (engineering) +13, Knowledge (geography) +13, Knowledge (history) +13, Knowledge (planes) +13, Linguistics +13, Perception +9, Profession (engineer) +9, Profession (herbalist) +9, Profession (scribe) +9, Spellcraft* +18

Languages Abyssal, Aquan, Common, Dwarven, Giant, Gnome, Undercommon

SQ life sight (10 ft.; 11 rounds/day)

- **Combat Gear** *bracers of armor* +4, *light crossbow* +3, 20 bolts, *staff of conjuration* (29), *potion of blur, potion of cure serious wounds, ring of protection* +4;
- **Other Gear** mummified gerbil used as a purse containing 3 glass eyes, a glove puppet xorn, hefty toweled robe used as a smoking jacket, hookah pipe and hedgehog pouch filled with expensive brandy-scented tobacco, *Know Your Xorns: A Simple Richly Illustrated Handler's Guide*, a stuffed raven with three heads, a corkscrew shaped like an ankheg's mouth, a *scroll of mending* sewn into the lining of robe and long forgotten.

TACTICS

During Combat The master avoids combat wherever possible, but if he faces combat he dons his *invisibility* ring and then attempts to withdraw to the edges of combat to cast his best attacking spells, leading with *chain lightning*. If he's at risk of being hit, the master attempts to move away again, using his *potion of blur*, or he wards himself with his *mage's faithful hound*. The master thinks nothing of unleashing his minion into combat, suspicious that the homunculus is secretly mastering his own spellbooks while he sleeps.

Morale The master flees combat when even slightly injured, using all his defensive spells to seek escape (often *dimension door* first).

THE HOMUNCULUS CR 8

A disgusting thing, the homunculus has pig and gargoyle and monkey parts. Small wings sprout from its thin shoulders.

XP 4,800

Advanced NE construct (homunculus) wizard 7

Init +2; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +3

DEFENSE AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +2 size)

hp 40 (2d10+7d6)

Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +6

Defensive Abilities construct traits

OFFENSE Speed 20 ft., fly 50 ft. (good)

Melee bite +6 (1d4–1 plus poison)

Space 2-1/2 ft.; Reach 0 ft.

Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 7th; concentration +7)

4th—animate dead

3rd—fireball, gaseous form

2nd—blindness/deafness, scare, spectral hand

1st—cause fear, chill touch, hold portal, unseen servant

0 (at will)—bleed, disrupt undead, ray of frost, touch of fatigue

STATISTICS

Str 8, Dex 15, Con -, Int 17, Wis 12, Cha 7

Base Atk +5; CMB +2; CMD 14

Feats Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Great Fortitude, Improved Familiar, Lightning Reflexes, Scribe Scroll

Skills Craft (alchemy) +16, Fly +10, Knowledge (arcana) +16, Linguistics +8, Perception +3, Spellcraft +16, Stealth +12

Languages Common; telepathic link

SQ arcane bond (familiar, stirge)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Poison (Ex) Bite—injury; *save* Fort DC 13; *frequency* 1/minute for 60 minutes; *effect* sleep for 1 minute; *cure* 1 save. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +2 racial bonus.

Telepathic Link (Su) A homunculus (usually) cannot speak, but the process of creating one links it telepathically with its creator. A homunculus knows what its master knows and can convey to him or her everything it sees and hears, out to a distance of 1,500 feet.

TACTICS

During Combat The homunculus does as its master commands until things get dangerous.

Morale If it has to, one day it will flee and reveal its true nature. Until that time, the homunculus happily bluffs its way to its master's protection and plays the simple slave.

HOW CAME THIS CREATURE TO BE?

The homunculus was like any other homunculus until a terrible accident created a crucible of wild magic, a pig, the master's favorite pet spider monkey, and the cleaning lady. At that point, the homunculus awakened in an unnatural way. Able to speak, but careful to hide its unique new ability, the homunculus has been busy learning its master's repertoire of spells with the hope of one day taking over and enslaving its master by using a *magic jar* spell.

Its own secret familiar, Titus, usually sits on the gutter (or hangs under the gutter) just outside, ready to do its master's bidding. At present the homunculus bullies its own familiar in a sad reflection of its own maltreatment.

TITUS ~ FAMILIAR STIRGE

XP 200

N Tiny magical beast Init +4; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +3

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 20, flat-footed 16 (+4 natural, +4 Dex, +2 size)

HP 20 (7d10)

Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +5

OFFENSE Speed 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (average)

Melee touch +11 (attach)

Space 2-1/2 ft.; Reach 0 ft.

Special Attacks blood drain, deliver touch spells

STATISTICS

Str 3, Dex 19, Con 10, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 6

Base Atk +5; CMB +7 (+15 grapple when attached); CMD 13 (20 vs. trip)

Feats Alertness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Fly +8, Stealth +16

SQ diseased, empathic link, improved evasion, share spells, speak with master

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Attach (Ex) When Titus hits with a touch attack, its barbed legs latch onto the target, anchoring it in place. An attached Titus is effectively grappling its prey. Titus loses its Dexterity bonus to AC and has an AC of 12, but holds on with great tenacity and inserts its proboscis into the grappled target's flesh. Titus has a +8 racial bonus to maintain its grapple on a foe once it is attached. An attached Titus can be struck with a weapon or grappled itself—if its prey wins a grapple check or Escape Artist check against it, Titus is removed.

Blood Drain (Ex) Titus drains blood at the end of its turn if it is attached to a foe, inflicting 1 point of Constitution damage. Once Titus has dealt 4 points of Constitution damage, it detaches and flies off to digest the meal. If its victim dies before Titus's appetite has been sated, he detaches and seeks a new target.

Diseased (Ex) Due to the stagnant swamps in which they live and their contact with the blood of numerous creatures, stirges are harbingers of disease. Any creature subjected to Titus's blood drain attack has a 10% chance of being exposed to filth fever, blinding sickness, or a similar disease (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core*

Rulebook, page 557). Once this check is made, the victim can no longer be infected by Titus, though attacks by different stirges are resolved normally and may result in multiple illnesses.

TACTICS

During Combat Titus protects its master.

Morale Not applicable. Yet somehow it has such odd feelings, like thoughts awakening in its mind. Perhaps the strange magic of the master is seeping into it. At night it dreams—dreams of magic.





AT THE HORSE FAIR

"Blessed Lord, I was at the window today looking into the streets."

"Foolish insect, keep your face from the window, I cannot risk losing another house to the flames."

"I beg forgiveness, master, but my eyes were drawn to the steeds men use, and it gave me an idea."

A trusty mount of many an adventurer, the horse receives only scant detail in the rules. However, they vary enormously: from sway-backed nag to majestic shire. If you are running a campaign where horses are more prevalent, you might want to consider expanding on their details by assigning traits to some or all such creatures in your campaign as suggested below.

Horse Traits

As a rule of thumb, a horse has a 25% chance of 1d3 good traits and a 25% of 1d3 bad traits; however, you can modify this according to who (if anyone) trained it (see below). The maximum number of traits is 3 times Intelligence (which is usually 2). A horse can have good and bad traits, but if these traits clash (racehorse and plodder, for example), the effects cancel each other out but still count toward the maximum amount of traits a horse can have.

Traits come from training (if any) and character. Although, generally, a horse that has been well trained should have only good traits, they can pick up bad habits as well. The value of a horse with traits is reflected in its gp cost; a horse with one good trait costs 50% more than normal, and each extra good trait doubles that bonus in value: thus a horse with four good traits is worth four times its usual value. A horse with a bad trait is worth half its listed price, a quarter with two, and so on. For horses with a mixture of traits, cancel each good trait with a bad one in terms of cost.

Detecting traits is not always easy, and some traders use their talents to cover up any poor traits (Handle Animal DC 15). Certain unscrupulous dealers use tricks of the trade, such as doping, to hide bad traits; such traders modify the DC of spotting bad traits by 5 with the help of herbs and alchemical substances (Craft [alchemy] DC 25 masks a trait for 1 hour), but the odor, or other signs, of this tampering can watched for (Perception DC 20). Teaching traits through good training is time-consuming. There are several tricks an animal can be taught using the Handle Animal skill (see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*), and teaching traits is handled in a similar way. To teach a trait from any of those listed below requires 8 weeks training and a Handle Animal check (DC 20). Each time the character attempts to stack a trait, the DC increases by 2. Traits count as a trick against the animal's allotted applicable amount.

Bad traits can be removed through proper training (Handle Animal DC 25); each trait requires 8 weeks training. Removing a bad trait doesn't free up a slot for the animal to be taught another skill or trait, and bad traits, like good, count as a trick against the animal's possible maximum amount it can learn.

Only traits listed as doing so can stack.

Good Traits

Cunning: Riders with the Mounted Combat feat add a +1 competence bonus to their Ride skill when hit. This bonus stacks with itself (up to +5), counting as a further good trait each time.

Good-Natured: All Handle Animal checks made on the mount gain a +1 competence bonus. This bonus stacks with itself (up to +5), counting as a further good trait each time.

Racehorse: The mount has a base move of 10 ft. greater than standard.

Sensitive: The horse doubles the bonuses of the Animal Affinity feat for riders that have it.

Sharp: The mount is exceptionally bright and has 1 point more Intelligence than normal, making it a prized mount to train.

Trained: Pick two DC 15 tricks from the Handle Animal trick list. The mount has these as standard tricks it can already perform. These tricks do not count toward the maximum amount of tricks an animal can be taught. The trait takes a single trait slot.

Well-Balanced: The horse augments the Ride skill of the rider, providing a +1 competence bonus. This bonus stacks with itself (up to +5), counting as a further good trait each time.

Well-Trained: Pick a DC 20 trick from the Handle Animal skill list. The mount has this as an inherent trick it can already perform.

Bad Traits

Bad Tempered: The animal decreases the Handle Animal skill of anyone training it or riding it, imposing a -1 penalty. This penalty stacks with itself (up to -5), counting as a further bad trait each time.

Dobbin: The horse has 1 point less Intelligence than normal (minimum 1).

Hard to Train: The animal is incapable of learning two DC 15 tricks from the Handle Animal trick list.

Hateful: The horse negates any skill bonuses from the Animal Affinity feat of riders.

Impossible to Train: The animal is incapable of being taught one DC 20 trick from the Handle Animal trick list.

Plodder: The mount has a base move of 10 ft. lower than standard.

Skittish: The horse is nervous in battle and increases relevant DC checks by 1. This penalty stacks with itself (up to -5), counting as a further bad trait each time.

Willful: The mount decreases the rider's Ride skill, imposing a –1 penalty. This penalty stacks with itself (up to –5), counting as a further bad trait each time.

The Annual Fair

This sample annual fair takes place on a large meadow and draws folk from miles around to sell and trade in horses. It lasts for three days and culminates in the Heffrey Chase, a popular horse race.

The traders are a mixed bunch, from decent folk to shifty thieves anxious to be rid of stolen goods. Diplomacy checks (DC 20) can be used to ascertain the honest traders from the bad; however, these traders know their stuff and demand premiums for their mounts.

Hugo Heffrey's Equestrian Extravaganza (The Heffrey Chase)

The race is a 9-furlong (a furlong is about 1/8 mile) race over 6 jumps. The grand prize is a well-balanced (+5) warhorse. The extravaganza attracts hopefuls from all around, and at the start, some fifty or so riders are ready for the off.

The rules presented here offer one option to run a horse race using the scores of various skill checks; others could include simple run offs between two opponents or use of Perception checks to pick the best route in a cross-country course.

Of course, not only humans race. Hobgoblins in particular are known to race horses as a dare along particularly dangerous trapped tracks. Other animals are used as mounts by other cultures: for example, the infamous *Gruurg Khrargh* (Owlbear Chase) of the orcs and the *Worg-Gumpygrumpy* (Warg run involving baby rabbits as bait) of the goblins.

Players joining in this race face a series of Ride and Handle Animal skill checks, the value of which should be totaled up. If characters fall from their mounts, they score 0 points for that section. Details for each section are given together with the running total of the first three horses (rather than rolling 50 sets of dice). Use of magic is greatly frowned upon and a number of influential merchants have hired watchers to ensure fair play. Cheats are banned for life.

The First Jump, Heffrey's Hang: This hang requires a Ride check (DC 15) to clear. (Remember to keep a running total of the value of all the PC's checks). This is followed by a long straight along the slippery meadow where the rider must spur his or her horse on (Handle Animal, simply add this score to the running total): first place has 44 points, then 43, and 41.

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The River: This is a broad river jump (Ride DC 15); the course then turns sharply: 1st place has 63 points, then 62, and 62.

Boswell's Bonce: This jump is a slight rise that looks like a bumped head (Ride DC 20). Riders then spur their mounts on along a hill over the meadow, adding another Handle Animal check to the total: 100, 99, and 96.

The Elegant: A simple but beautifully carved jump (Ride DC 15): 119, 118, and 113.

Cascade: Designed as part of a waterfall, the jump is easy, but the water makes the animals skittish (Handle Animal DC 15 avoids falling): 141, 141, and 123.

Heffrey's Wall: This notorious jump has been the end of many horses. It's a brutal jump (Ride DC 25), followed by a sprint to the finish line along a very long course, which is thronged with cheering crowds, adding a final Handle Animal check to give the grand total.

The winner in this case totals 180, with second on 174, and third on 170; only the winner gets the prize. If this is a PC, then it will be handed over at a special ceremony in front of many influential locals—such a fine rider might find his or her services in sudden demand.

Other Mounts

Not only horses have unique traits. Many other mounts have their quirks, too: from camels to griffons, riding dogs to dire stoats. When generating traits, do so based upon the animal's Intelligence and modify it according to its size and background. Again, traits affect prices proportionate to the mount in question.





FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY ~ HEAVY RAIN AND WIND IN URBAN ENVIRONS

"Listen to the rain pounding on the rooftops, the waters pouring down swollen guttering and over broken brickwork and hemorrhaged stone."

"It's not fit enough to put a cat out, master."

"Cats, no. Homunculi, yes. Get out and take me some notes about the weather tonight, maggotling. I might have need of them."

he *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook* gives useful rules about various types of weather and the effects it has upon adventures. Anyone who has ventured out on foul nights or attempted to walk through a wood in strong wind or across a hill in a thunderstorm knows that it's not just the weather you have to contend with but also the environment. Tree branches lash at you in the gale; vehicles skid in the rain; creatures panic in the storm.

The For One Night Only rules address those situations further by providing you with some random ideas to use in addition to the standard rules. Use them at moments when, for example, the PCs are battling creatures in the streets, dashing along an alley chasing a slippery thief, or brawling drunkenly outside the tavern. The variant examples here give you options to run some different takes on adventures in various settings and under various effects.

This collection gives you some quick additional variations and encounters for an urban adventure when it rains heavily, a situation that occurs all too readily in many

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European-based fantasy settings. Use them in a single session to spice things up or use them to add to street encounters in your adventure.

Assign areas randomly or choose the most appropriate place yourself: for example, livestock (#8) might appear from an alleyway immediately at the PCs' sides.

- **I Guttering Falls:** A section of iron guttering collapses under the weight of the rainwater and plummets onto the street below: 1d4 random squares within a 20-ft.-square area below the wall are struck with falling, rusting guttering. Characters below are struck, taking 2d6 damage (Reflex DC 15). Characters might notice the guttering, reducing the saving throw DC to 8 (Perception DC 10).
- 2 Slippery Street: The incessant rain has turned a mossy, 20-ft.-square section of the street (or four random 10-ft.-square areas if you prefer) into a slippery area. Acrobatics (balance) checks (DC 5) are required for characters passing through this area. A Perception check (DC 15) notices the slippery sections.
- 3 Slight Squall: For 1d4 rounds, the effects of rain are increased by 50%: -6 penalty to all Perception checks and ranged weapons, 75% chance of extinguishing naked flames per round.
- **Squall:** For 1d12 rounds, the effects of rain are increased by 50%: –6 penalty to all Perception checks and ranged weapons, 75% chance of extinguishing naked flames per round.
- 5 Flying Flotsam—Tarpaulin: An untethered tarpaulin rushes by, striking a random character. The character can make a Reflex save (DC 12) to avoid the tarpaulin. Otherwise, the character is entangled until escape: Reflex save (DC 5) or Escape Artist check (DC 5).
- 6 Flying Flotsam—Hay: Similar to the tarpaulin above, except 1d3 characters are affected. Each must make a Reflex save (DC 12) or be blinded for 1d2 rounds.
 - Hidden Open Drain: Floodwater covers a 20-ft.-square section of the street ahead, disguising a ruptured drain. The drain, which is 5 ft. wide and covered by crude boards, now lies open and is 20 ft. deep. A Perception check (DC 10) spots the hole.

Livestock: Cows, llamas, or similar animals (1d6) either break free from their tether nearby or are accidentally released by a startled passerby on the way to market. The passerby slips in the rain 10–60 ft. from a random PC. The creatures dash randomly about (use a d8 to decide which square the creatures head into), moving 30 ft./round. If they pass through the same square as a character, a Reflex save (DC 8) is required to avoid being barged, and the character is considered staggered for 1 round. If characters attack

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the livestock, use the statistic block for a pony (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*), but do not give the creature any attacks.

- 9 Engorged Drain: A drain bursts and covers a 20-ft.-square section of the street with foul-smelling water as well as 1d4 rats. Characters in this section of the street must make an Acrobatics (balance) check (DC 5) to remain standing; this lasts for 1d4 rounds, until the water washes into other drains nearby. The rats can be dire rats if you wish and might attack if threatened.
- **IO** Chamber Pot: A chamber pot is emptied from somewhere above by an NPC who does not notice people below through the rain. The contents hit a random square, and characters in the square must make a Reflex save (DC 8) or be sickened for 1d2 rounds.
- **I I Smog Street:** A squally wind blows the smoke from chimneys on this street back to the ground. The resulting smog is the equivalent of obscuring mist and fills a random 20-ft.-square section of street. It lasts 1d6 rounds, until the wind blows it in another direction.
- I 2 Flying Slates: Three slates are blown from the rooftops above and strike random squares in the street below. Characters in these squares face an attack from the sharp slates: ranged +2 (1d4/x3).





WHEN YOU'RE ALONE, YOU'RE ALONE

"Tonight, mucoid thing, our brave heroes must venture into the wilds!"

"You are so clever, master, but how will you convey such a sense of wilderness and menace to your subjects?"

"Shadows and string, my pet, shadows and string . . ."

solation and fear can be a challenging mood to achieve in roleplaying games, but they are the very elements that make a great adventure. The problem is how do you capture that feeling while sitting around a gaming table with plentiful supplies of food, drink, and company?

Here are a few suggestions...

Not knowing what's behind you: Natives of different terrains are a damn sight more experienced at crossing it than the PCs are. When writing such encounters, give that local advantage to the enemy: they live in the terrain all day, every day. Orcs should know how to use boats in swamps, climb trees in forests, or navigate by secret signs in sulfur-choked volcanic regions. Use this advantage to hint at what is lurking behind them.

Also, keep the pursuers' identity secret as long as possible: the orcs hang back, use poison arrows, set traps. What is imagined is often far worse than what is really there, unless . . .

Knowing precisely what's behind you: Let them see the monster. Have it chase them, but make it a good 3–4 CRs higher than they can handle; have it attack and then have something happen that makes it flee. In this version, the PCs can climb cliffs faster than the terrible clumsy menace behind them, can seek shelter in a long cave from the gargantuan beast, or run more quickly across open fields than the oozing horror. But the horror never sleeps, of course.

Eventually, they should discover a way to kill the creature through trickery, or brains over brawn.

Setting traps: The PCs must rest, but their enemy might not need to. The enemy

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might keep watch and plan ahead, using signals to tell those ahead of the PCs that they are on their way. Sudden horrific traps, such as walls of iron spikes emerging from the swamp, are terrible because they won't be expected, or maybe the enemy wishes to capture the PCs alive.

Don't be afraid to use psychological weaponry. For example, if the PCs have buried a dear fallen comrade, the bad guys must dig up the body and have it waiting ahead, perhaps restored as undead. Have the enemy desecrate offerings to gods and lay them on the trail, or single out the same PC for attack every . . . single . . . time.

Warnings: Alternatively, NPCs or dire scenes of mayhem deliver warnings of what will happen to the PCs—or what has happened to others. This injects that feeling of loneliness and terror. Suppose the PCs find the bodies of another fallen group of adventurers, and just suppose that something horrible has been done to those bodies. Or maybe warnings are carved into trees, on rocks, on bodies. Specific, credible warnings work best: offer names and details that make it clear that something watches the PCs.

It's Behind You! Try using monsters that have a great escape route, such as vampire spawn. These creatures can keep coming back again and again, generating a war of attrition that slowly wears the PCs down, using up potions and spells. Slowly, rest becomes impossible, hit points drop, and things get desperate.

Summoning: Summoned monsters are expendable, but the summoner is not. Remember that an individual spellcaster can call large groups of creatures and, if well planned, can do so from a safe distance. Consider a druid with *woodland stride* and *trackless step* calling repeated groups of animals to attack the PCs. These attacks wear a group down, but the undergrowth is too thick for the characters to pursue, and they must come up with a plan to lure the druid closer.

THREE SAMPLE SITUATIONS

Here are three detailed situations for you to consider, offering a few specific suggestions. Be sure to gauge the CRs carefully, and remember, if the PCs get fed up fleeing from that monster that you know will kill them, what will you do if they just turn around and wait for it?

Consider, above all, how your players might react to the situation and take it from there. What works for one group might drive another to boredom—no one knows your players like you do.

The Fog

The fog is dense and has lasted days. Visibility is down to just a few dozen yards, and shapes loom within it. Mostly these are trees and rocks, but sometimes, they move away.

The Misrethen are a tribe that has lived in the area for centuries, and they know the lands intimately. They also know all about the fog, and they use a series of guide

shapes to help them move. These guide shapes are slightly altered trees and rocks and are very difficult to spot (Perception DC 35). Each shape depicts animals such as wolves and foxes, and their secret code is known only among the Misrethen. Deciphering them requires a DC 35 Survival check. The code helps the tribe move at normal speed no matter what the situation.

When the Misrethen discover the PCs in their territory, they begin to stalk them, always keeping a good few hundred yards away while whispering and planning. Perhaps the PCs overhear these whispers, or maybe they don't know anything until the first time they are attacked. Long before that, they learn that the Misrethen have a terrible appetite—for human flesh.

The Jungle Volcano

The air is choked with sulfurous fumes and gases. Deep vents open up suddenly in the ground, and the earth shakes.

Then the madman appears.

The madman is fleeing an unseen menace, which has (literally) ripped his companions apart. He doesn't know what the menace is—just that it's something that comes out of the mist. The madman is much higher level than the heroes, as were all his companions.

Elementals make great villains here: they can move where characters cannot, vents and gas do not bother them, they never get tired, and they never need rest. Try thinking of creatures such as will-o'-wisps. You're going to need to make the creature tough enough to frighten the higher-level NPC, so you're also going to have to think of a way for the PCs to finally succeed. Perhaps the menace is a demon bound to an artifact in the heart of the volcano. Or maybe a huge totem holds the key to the creature—a riddle to its former identity that, when presented, forces the creature to dissipate. That disappearance might just be for a limited time.

The Tainted Forest

The forest is thick with thorns and briars, the trees seem diseased, and the air is alive with dreadful biting creatures.

The forest is no ordinary place; this place is evil, tainted by something terrible that lives at its center.

In this grim wilderness, swarms are the menace. They come every night, but before they do, the PCs come upon a frightful scene: the skeletons of a group similar to them, but its bones are bleached. Thinking the skeletons long dead, the heroes search their belongings, only to find that the food is still fresh.

Here the heroes must reach and destroy the menace—think along the lines of shambling mounds or evil trees or perhaps a druid who has good reason to keep folk away—but the swarms come every night, again and again.

The PCs need to find a way of keeping the swarms at bay. Perhaps a root repels them when burned, but the root is hard to find, and there is never enough.



FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY - TROLL TOUCHED

"It is true, is it not, leechling, that we take after our pets?"

"Master?"

"A dog, for example, picks up my habits and serves me, and for my part, my habits sometimes reflect his. I feel he knows what I am thinking. In short, we grow close."

"I do not understand, master. Let me stop sucking this boiled finger and give you my full attention."

"Let us suppose this closeness could take a step farther. Could pets eventually take after their masters in more ways than one?"

"Mmm. An interesting conjecture, lord sire great one."

"Your habits revolt me, stitchling. Take yourself out of my sight, and strap yourself to the punishment chair while I think further upon this issue. I will deal with you in due course."

t is true that we are the product of our environment, and, taking a high fantasy theory to its extreme, it is possible that prolonged exposure to a specific race or type of creature could eventually rub off on those around it. A salamander's followers, for example, would grow unnaturally used to heat; thralls kept in a frost giant steading could grow immune to the effects of the cold; and so on.

Take this idea one step farther, and we have an interesting possibility for exploration: that of creatures over generations becoming like their followers or vice versa.

This example uses trolls as its base creature. Over generations of exposure, the animals and other creatures they keep grow similar to them, inheriting their habits and ways as well as a little of the trollishness that makes them what they are.

Using this idea, we can create a simple template that can be inherited by creatures that have lived in close proximity. The first example below details a wolverine from an ancient troll line of pet wolverines whose race has grown trollish over the centuries. The second gives a method to use this simple template in an adventure, and the third expands this into a potential adventure path.

Perhaps, instead, it is more than simple proximity that causes this, and such templates might occur more readily in areas of wild magic and at the boundaries of strong elemental junctions.

As ever, use this simple template to spice up an encounter, to create a fun new subrace of creatures, or to serve as the basis for further adventures—perhaps to discover why this is happening.

SIMPLE TEMPLATE: TROLL-TOUCHED CREATURE (+1 CR)

Creatures with the troll-touched template are uglier and stronger than their normal kin. Their skin takes on a green tinge, and their mouths might develop tusks.

Quick Rules: +2 to all rolls based on Str or Con, +2 hp/HD, -1 penalty to all rolls made for Dexterity. Regeneration 3.

Rebuild Rules: AC increase natural armor by +2; Attacks increase dice rolled by 1 step; Ability Scores +4 size bonus to Strength and Constitution, -2 Dexterity. Regeneration 3.

Encounter: The Troll Poachers

Use the troll-touched template for an unexpected twist to an encounter. Two trolls, Festwin and Grath, poach venison in this region of wilderness. They have set up a series of traps (whatever type you wish, but bear-traps make a good choice) and wander a well-trod path between simple resting places that are, in essence, little more than ruined barns. These barns, however, have plenty of clues that trolls are about and perhaps even the odd, well-hidden piece of treasure.

The troll brothers do everything together and hunt with the aid of a troll-touched wolverine named the Scar of Trabe, a vicious little horror that has some troll blood in it.

TROLLS (2) CR 5

XP 1,600

hp 63 (see Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary)

THE SCAR OF TRABE: TROLL-TOUCHED WOLVERINE CR 3

This wolverine is huge and has a most peculiar green tinge to the skin beneath its mangy fur. A pair of tusks juts from its crooked maw, and its eyes look at you with the cast of something deranged.

XP 800

N Medium animal

Init +2; Senses low-light vision, scent; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 13 (+1 Dex, +4 natural, -1 size)

hp 28 (3d8+15); regeneration 3

Fort +7, Ref +2, Will +2

OFFENSE Speed 30 ft., burrow 10 ft., climb 10 ft.

Melee 2 claws +5 (1d8+4), bite +5 (1d6+4)

Special Attacks rage

STATISTICS

Str 19, Dex 13, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10

Base Atk +1; CMB +4; CMD 18 (22 vs. trip)

Feats Skill Focus (Perception), Toughness

Skills Climb +12, Perception +10

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Rage (Ex) When the Scar takes damage in combat, it flies into a rage on its next turn, clawing and biting madly until either it or its opponent is dead. It gains +4 to Strength, +4 to Constitution, and -2 to AC. The creature cannot end its rage voluntarily.

Adventure: The Infesting

In this version of the template, things have taken a darker turn with an entire dungeon complex infested with trolls and the troll-touched.

The troll tribes fester beneath a tainted tor, which they have fortified into both an outer and inner fortress. The trolls, however, are constantly hungry and raid the lands of humans. Perhaps the PCs are hired to remove the dungeon full of trolls, or maybe the trolls attack the PCs' own lands.

The trolls are led by H'krrris Zhard, better known as Queen Flayed, a troll cleric whose followers believe that trolls have been born with regenerative powers to worship their goddess with their torn flesh. They wield scourges and have festivals involving the flaying of their own flesh and that of their prisoners.

Queen Flayed rides a troll-touched dire bear, and several troll-touched dire bears guard sections of the troll-infested complex. A large number of female trolls and their young have answered the queen's call, and the place is rotten with trolls and their kind. Their goddess has rewarded the queen with several monstrous beast followers, including some cockatrice, owlbears, and a cabal of phase spiders as her watch guard, all of which are troll-touched. Somewhere deep beneath the ground, a troll-touched demon stirs while troll-touched stirges infest every available space, feeding on the scraps the trolls throw them.

The dungeon has a sick pallor, and the very walls seem to be diseased. A sickness—troll-blight—festers everywhere, and those who come into contact with it develop horrific regenerating boils. Ancient beyond troll counting, the complex beneath the tor is vast, with intricate tunnels, terrible traps, and tainted places where the trolls' religious flaying takes place—a place where their screams have manifested into a demon.

Adventure Path: The Hoar King

In this version of events, Queen Flayed is but a lowly follower of the Hoar King. The Hoar King is living god and legend of all trollkind, and the latter claim he is the living embodiment of their god. They're flocking from all corners of the land to answer his call to claim back the world. An army is gathering, and soon it will attack. Can the PCs overcome the odds and pierce the troll-infested lands, driving a stake into the heart of the troll kingdom and assassinating the Hoar King to prevent a war?

This adventure could begin with a simple encounter with a troll in an unexpected place. The troll is raving mad and has sufficient clues to suggest that he is heading into the mountains to seek his living god. Perhaps the adventure then follows a more normal route until reports of troll attacks begin, and the PCs are embroiled in adventures on the edges of civilization. Drawn deeper into events, they eventually become aware of the Hoar King and his vast army. Faced with impossible odds, the only chance of success is subterfuge.

The PCs head alone into troll-infested lands far from help, slipping past troll enclaves on tortuous and seldom-trod mountain passes before arriving at the Ice Crown, the vast dungeon complex of the Hoar King, which is protected from incursion by ancient magic. Here, the PCs must slip through vast numbers of trolls, passing through enclave and tunnel and troll town before reaching the Hoar King, a giant child foundling taken in by trolls decades ago in the belief that he was their living god.

The Hoar King

This sick giant seems to be two things rather than one. It has trollish blood, complete with tusks and green skin and wicked claws, but the troll part is like a sickness, almost a disease, upon the alabaster flesh of a frost giant. The skin sags and seethes as though allergic to the troll within it. The sickness reaches its zenith in the giant's face, which is a catastrophe of broken lesions, exposed veins, bones, and crooked features.

XP 204,800

Troll-touched frost giant barbarian 10

CE Large humanoid (cold, giant)

Init -1; Senses low-light vision; Perception +20

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 8, flat-footed 21 (+4 armor, -2 Dex, +11 natural, -2 size)

hp 245 (14d8+10d12++112); regeneration 3

Fort +24, Ref +6, Will +11

Defensive Abilities rock catching; DR 2/--; Immune cold

Weaknesses vulnerability to fire

OFFENSE Speed 50 ft.

Melee greataxe +29/+24/+19 (4d6+15) or 2 slams +29 (1d10+11)

Ranged rock +20 (1d10+15)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

Special Attacks rage powers (clear mind, quick reflexes, powerful blow, roused anger), rock throwing (120 ft.)

STATISTICS Str 33, **Dex** 7, **Con** 27, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +20; CMB +21; CMD 31

Feats Cleave, Critical Focus, Great Cleave, Improved Overrun, Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Martial Weapon Proficiency (greataxe), Power Attack, Skill Focus (Stealth), Toughness, Vital Strike

Skills Climb +25, Craft (traps) +7, Intimidate +17, Perception +20, Stealth +11 (+15 in snow); **Racial Modifiers** +4 Stealth in snow

Languages Common, Giant

SQ improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +3

THE ADMIRABLE AND SELDOM ENCOUNTERED ART OF DWARVEN INFUSED ALE

"Gah!"

"Master?"

"Another failure. My attempts to recreate the ancient recipes and techniques of dwarven infused ale have failed again."

"Why do you attach such import to so small a thing, master?"

"Because, moldlet, I wish to learn. No . . . more than wish, need. The ancient art may be useful to me in my research."

The ancient and admirable art of infusing ale with special properties is one that has been practiced by dwarves for centuries. The combination of a (generally) tasty and pleasant drink with a tangible benefit is one that pleases dwarves, who have never shared their secrets with any other races. The ancient art is passed on by word of mouth, and though many normal dwarven ales have been copied (particularly by halflings), the true art of infusion is one only dwarves know.

To become an ale infuser is a commitment to the art of brewing, and one that requires a special feat to master.

New Feat: Infuse Ale [General]

Through study and dedication, you can brew ale specially infused with unusual properties.

Prerequisite: Dwarf, Profession (brewer) 10 ranks.

Benefit: You can brew an infused ale that duplicates the effects of those on the attached list. Brewing an infused ale takes 1 day and requires a successful Profession (brewer) check (DC 25). When you infuse an ale, you must have a sufficient quantity of normal ale (any ale will do, although, by tradition, dwarves frown on the use of nondwarven ales) and have access to a special still that costs 25 gp and weighs 4 lb. Creating an infused ale uses up raw materials that cost 1/2 of the base price.

Infused ale is taken by the quart, and its effects last for 4 hours. Taking multiple doses of infused ale does not stack the effects (although dwarves often do so anyway). When taking such ale, the imbiber must make a Fortitude save (DC as listed) or take the damage indicated for the duration of the infusion.

For more information on drunkenness, see the Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide.

Sample Infused Ales

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All the ales listed below cost 5 gp/quart. This list is not exhaustive, nor does it take into account those master infused ales created by revered dwarf brewers and which are rumored to have considerably greater effects. Infused ale effects are alchemical in nature, not magical.

- **I Tolgruff's Crag:** A thick wheat ale with the aroma of pepper, it grants a +1 bonus to all Climb checks. DC 8 (-1 Wis)
- 2 Mutter's Stab: A dark ale with an aftertaste of chilies, it grants a +1 bonus to all Fortitude saves against cold effects. DC 8 (-1d2 Wis)
- 3 Gogg's Folly: A white ale whose taste is reminiscent of winter firesides, this infused ale grants a +1 bonus to all Perform (storytelling) checks. DC 8 (-1d2 Wis)
- **4 Hort Humprutt's Fighting Ale:** A thick, almost viscous, dark ale that smells of iron, it grants a +1 bonus to all Intimidate checks. DC 12 (-1d3 Dex)
- 5 Norg's Liar: A light pale ale with the scent of apples, it grants a +1 bonus to Bluff skill checks. DC 8 (-1 Dex)
 - **Lompeter's Courage:** A thick ale with the scent of spices and a subtle taste of honey, it grants a +1 bonus to all Perform checks. DC 10 (-1d2 Wis)
- Koddly Sumplugg's Worm of Misery: This is a watery ale that occasionally has a whole (dead) worm floating in it. Eating the worm is said to be especially lucky. The infusion grants a +1 bonus to Swim checks. DC 10 (-1d3 Wis)

- 8 Noddy's Look: A barley ale with an unpleasant aftertaste of salt, it grants a +1 bonus to all Perception checks. DC 8 (-1 Wis)
- **9 Dolgrins' Darkness:** A spicy ale that smells of nutmeg, it increases a dwarf's darkvision (only) range to 80 ft. DC 12 (-1d3 Wis)
- **IO** Agna's Revenge: Fortified by this deep brown ale that smells vaguely of chestnuts, a dwarf (only) receives an enhanced bonus to stability, receiving a +5 CMD when resisting a bull rush or trip attempts while standing their ground, instead of the usual +4. DC 15 (-1d4 Wis)
- I I Slodd's Sour Syrup: This thick gray ale smells of old stone and damp. It grants a +1 bonus to all Perception checks made underground. DC 8 (-1 Dex)
- I 2 Kark's Ruin: This curiously flat ale has a slight greenish tinge and tastes of celery. It grants a +1 bonus to all Escape Artist checks. DC 8 (-1d2 Wis)
- **I** 3 **Ludd's Terror:** This amber ale is very strong and has an unpleasantly earthy aftertaste. It grants +1 to all fear-related saving throws made in the vicinity (60 ft.) of goblinoids. DC 12 (-1d3 Wis)
- I 4 Old Widow Friendly: This ginger spiced ale has a tendency to bring a smile to anyone's lips (possibly due to its sourness). It grants a +1 bonus to all Diplomacy checks. DC 10 (-1d2 Wis)
- I 5 Mockrim's Old Crooked Spider: A dark ale with a thick head that sticks to imbiber's beards, this ale also makes ones' mouth numb and prone to a slight expansion of the lips. It grants a +1 bonus to all Bluff attempts. DC 8 (-1 Dex)
- I 6 Ob: Legendary Ob ale is revered by dwarves and rarely encountered. An ale specifically brewed when there are dragons about, its legendary properties grant a +2 bonus to all saving throws against a dragon's frightful presence ability. DC 15 (-1d4 Cha)
- **17** Harsk Luttmudnam's Silk Purse: This tan-colored ale tastes of blackberries. As well as allegedly making hair on dwarves' beards grow quicker, it also grants a +1 bonus to all saving throws against poison. DC 12 (-1d2 Wis)
- 18 Very Dark: An ale so foul-tasting that only a dwarf could stand it, this unpleasant beverage smells strongly of sugary sweat. This stench is particularly unpleasant to goblinoids, and this ale adds a +2 bonus to all Intimidate checks made against such creatures, provided that the creatures are within 20 ft. of the imbiber. DC 12 (-1d2 Dex)
- **I9** Wenches' Apron Strings: This reddish ale tastes initially of stale bread but is often used to cleanse the palette at banquets since the unpleasant taste

quickly fades. Its cleansing qualities also make it easier to taste poison as it touches the imbiber's lips, granting a +2 bonus to all Perception checks made to detect imbibed poisons when tasted, alerting potential victims. DC 12 (-1d2 Cha)

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Cairn Gorgest's Crimson Pity: A legendarily strong ale, Crimson Pity was imbibed by the legendary dwarf fighter Cairn Gorgest as he ventured into the Poison Writhe, a dungeon infested with green dragons and whose air was indescribably foul. Those imbibing the drink add 2 to their Constitution scores when calculating how long they can hold their breath. DC 15 (–1d3 Dex)



FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY -- HEAVY SNOW IN URBAN ENVIRONS

"A chill night, master. Might you need your warming pan?"

"I have no need of mere mortal warmth, liceling. I have my magic to keep me warm."

"You are mightier than all, oh corpulent one."

"You, on the other hand, can head out into the snow and over the rooftops. I have need of your observations."

"A task, oh great one, I will take with eagerness."

"Don't lie to me, worthless one. You hate the cold and the snow almost as much as you fear me."

One day, sweet master, you will be the dog . . .

The For One Night Only campaign inserts do exactly what they say: give you an option to run different takes on adventures in various settings and under various effects for a single session. This example gives you some quick additional rules, variations, and encounters for an urban adventure when it snows heavily.

It has been snowing for a few days now, and the settlement has taken on an ethereal edge, with drifts of snow and flurries transforming the place into a temporary wonderland.

Today, the snow is at its heaviest . . .

Use the list below to introduce random elements to the day's events, or include them in an adventure to spice up encounters as you wish.

Snow reduces visibility ranges by half, resulting in a -4 penalty to Perception

checks and attacks with ranged weapons. It costs 2 squares of movement to enter a snow-covered square (see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*).

- **I Snow Flurry from Rooftop:** A sudden flurry of snow falls from a rooftop above, covering a 20-ft.-square area of the street below. The conditions within the flurry are the same as heavy snow for 1d4 rounds.
- 2 **Sudden Squall:** The wind whips up, suddenly driving the snow and drifting up the street. The effect is identical to heavy snow for 2d6 rounds.
- 3 Hidden Danger: The snows have drifted over a new sewer pit, which has been opened in the street but been temporarily covered by rough planking. The pit is 10 ft. square and 20 ft. deep; a Perception check (DC 10) is required to spot it. The boards over the pit are poor, and every Mediumsized character that crosses them has a 1 in 4 chance of causing them to collapse. A Reflex save (DC 15) avoids a fall in this event.
- 4 Uncleared Drift: What appears to be a high drift, large enough to bury a Small character, blocks the street ahead. The drift has formed over a large mound of rusty wire across the street, which has been dragged from a nearby building recently. A Perception check (DC 15) identifies the mound. Characters crossing the area of drift-covered wire must make a Reflex save (DC 5) or be entangled.
- 5 **Powder Blast:** A sudden blast of strong wind turns the street into an area of blinding snow, the equivalent of fog for 2–5 rounds.
- 6 Icy Streets Below Snow: Ice forms below the snow on this street, covering a 50-ft. length of the street. Characters making a Perception check (DC 15) notice the icy gutters nearby feeding this icy strip. An Acrobatics (balance) check (DC 7) is required to cross this area without falling, and the DC of all Acrobatics checks made in the area are at +7 DC.
 - **Snow-Blocked Street:** The snows in this street are thick enough to provide cover for a Small character or a character who crawls. Characters moving through snow in this way take a –4 penalty to all Perception checks (stacking these effects with those of the weather and terrain), but gain a +4 to Stealth checks.
- 8 **Covered Pool:** A duck pond some 10 ft. in diameter occupies the central area of this street. The pond has frozen over and is noticed on a Knowledge (local) or Perception check (DC 15). Characters stepping onto the ice break it and fall into the pond unless they make a Reflex save (DC 12). The waters are only 10 ft. deep: falling characters take no damage, and swimming is easy (DC 10). Characters falling into the pond begin to suffer the effects of extreme cold (see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*) until they find a warm place in which to recover and a change of clothes.

7

- **9 Dangerous Play:** A group of four local children rushes out of a side alley and attacks the PCs with snowballs. Snowballs are improvised weapons with an increment of 10 ft. The children attack at +0 base. Characters who take a critical hit with a snowball must make a Reflex save (DC 10) or be blinded for 1 round. The children are driven away by any act of violence or by an Intimidate check (DC 5); however, unscrupulous opponents might seek to benefit from the children's innocent fun and use them to get the better of opponents.
- **IO** The Snowmen: A dozen sinister snowmen have been built in this street. Each has coal for eyes, is of Medium size, and wears a dirty item of clothing. Although the snowmen provide cover for Small characters and appear sinister, they are simply the result of play by local families.





MANGLED MONSTERS

By Mike Kortes

"Come here, Grottling. I have need of you."

"You have but to command, master. What is your next area of study?"

"Mangled monsters . . . now hold still."

When I heard the news that Richard Pett was producing a compilation of his column of the truly weird and fantastical, I thought back on the many strangenesses and oddities he has brought us over the years. I just might have a favorite. My nomination does not appear in his column, though. Instead, you find it in a short horror adventure he wrote back in 2008. The adventure is called "Still Waters" and it has always ranked as a personal favorite of mine, right up there with his better-known classic, "The Devil Box." One thing that is particularly interesting about it is that rather than rely on special mechanics or gimmicks, "Still Waters" is just an old school horror that relies entirely on heaps of atmosphere.

Although several scenes in "Still Waters" were bizarre enough to haunt my memories, one particular scene is a favorite and serves as the genesis for this article. The encounter involves an ambush by a four-armed girallon, one arm of which is broken in many places. The arm flops uselessly side-to-side as the creature attacks. The injury, of course, made the creature less effective mechanically, but at the same time this simple change wound up making the creature far more terrifying and, more importantly, memorable.

This gives rise to this article's current challenge: How else might we mangle and impair classic monsters to similar effect? Can a monster with all its strange abilities be made all the more intriguing with the addition of an unusual injury?

Hydra Stumps

Normally when a hydra head is severed, two grow back in its place, up to a predetermined maximum. But if fire or acid is applied to the stump, new heads will not regenerate, and adventurers have been attempting this trick ever since the early legends of Hercules. This 8 Hit Dice hydra has three such severed stumps. They drag on the ground, oozing puss from infection—yet the creature will not die due to its natural fast healing. The creature is slightly slower, though, since the dragging stumps act like a triple anchor when it moves. When it runs, the other heads bite the stumps at the neck and lift them off the ground, creating a truly bizarre scene.

Modified Statistics (Hydra): AC 18, touch 9, flat-footed 17; **hp** 77; **Speed** 15; **melee** 5 bites +9 (1d8+3); **CR** 6.

Burnt Treant

This pinewood treant is a survivor from a devastating forest fire. Its bark is blackened and crusted, and several of its branches are lost. Because it has already been torched, it is much harder to ignite again—it no longer has vulnerability to fire, though it is by no means immune or resistant. On the other hand, its protective bark is weakened, and it is much more vulnerable to blows. The treant well knows that humanoids started the forest fire, and its mistrust of the two-legged has only increased.

Modified Statistics (Treant): AC 19, touch 7, flat-footed 19; hp 87; does not have fire vulnerability; CR 7.

Hole Golem

With its construct immunities, it takes a lot to slay a stone golem. This old golem, a veteran of many battles, shows off its battle scars with pride. It has a large, irregular-shaped hole blown right through its chest. The PCs can see through the hole to the other side. Remarkably, the hole doesn't slow it down. Although it has fewer hit points, its Armor Class is harder to reflect that it has less surface area in its midsection to attack.

Modified Statistics (Stone Golem): AC 28, touch 10, flat-footed 28; hp 72; CR 10.

Deadhead Ettin

One of this ettin's head saw a medusa—the other did not. The right head has turned to stone. Because of the creature's unique duality, however, the body was saved. Strands of stone now ripple down the creature's chest and back, but it remains mostly a creature of flesh. The ettin continues to carry the petrified head, permanently grafted onto its shoulder. Although still a powerful combatant, the ettin has lost its superior two-weapon fighting ability. As such, it instead wields a single two-handed

long spear, rather than risk the penalty associated with its old combat style. Where suitable, it makes use of its Power Attack feat, making up for its loss of multiple attacks with a single deadly skewer.

Modified Statistics (Ettin): hp 65; **melee** Large-sized long spear +12/+7 (2d6+9/x2); **Reach** 15; does not have superior two-weapon fighting; **CR** 4.

Elemental Sculpture

This massive irregular ice sculpture is a water elemental. Too far from home, the creature was caught in an unexpected sudden drop in temperature and is now paralyzed for the night. If the PCs are carrying heat sources such as torches, after 1d3 minutes the sculpture begins to crack like thunder and then quickly comes to life. The elemental acts as normal, except that it now has the slowed condition for the next few hours. If the PCs have not brought a source of heat, the elemental remains trapped until an hour after sunrise.

Modified Statistics (Greater Water Elemental): hp 123; slowed; CR 7.

Disfigured Nymph

Is a nymph a nymph without her face? Consider the tale of the nymph, Ciamsa. After her deadly gaze blinded three noble-born hunters who invaded her territory, the victims' father had the nymph hunted down. After he captured Ciamsa, he had her face burned off with acid and threw her in prison. But transcendent beauty is more than just a face, and no jailor could bring himself to hold her for long. Now back in the wild, the nymph is as free as nature once again. Her appearance-based abilities are weakened, however. Her blinding beauty ability is gone, and she can use her stunning glance ability only as a full-round action with the Fortitude DC reduced to 19. It might not be long before Ciamsa finds someone with the ability to heal her injury.

Modified Statistics (Nymph): hp 60; limitations as above; CR 6.

Elemental Borealis

This elemental has consumed a large deposit of copper sulfate, which turned the elemental's fire a brilliant bright green, something the elemental is none too happy about. It has, however, no actual game effect at all. The elemental will burn through the last of the metallic salt in a few hours, returning to normal. Perhaps local tribes believe the writhing green flames are a sign of great misfortune or a demand from the gods for sacrifice.

Modified Statistics (Medium Fire Elemental): hp 30; CR 3.

Pudding Jars

Slashing and piercing weapons can split black puddings into multiple puddings. As a fun fact: if otherwise undamaged, a full hit point pudding can split into sixteen separate entities, each with 6 hit points. In theory each mini-pudding can also be captured in a jar if the jar is made of stone and sealed with a lid. If the pudding is scattered throughout an alchemist shop or other place where potions are found, it could make for a strange, if dangerous, encounter.

Modified Statistics (Black Puddings [16]): hp 6; CR 7.



THE UNDISCOVERED BESTIARY: ANKHEGS

"Ankhegs!"

"Bless you, master."

"Don't be flippant, grottling."

"Sorry, master, I thought you'd sneezed."

"Ankhegs. Strange beasts. What do you know of them?"

"Big, buglike, spit acid. Prone to attack farmland using their burrows and often misspelled.

"Ah yes, nothing, but you're simply describing the common ankheg . . . "

Just as there are many different bears, wolves, big cats and types of sharks, so every creature in the *Pathfinder Bestiary* has its variants. Although many of these variants are accounted for by terrain, habitat, and the amount of available prey, there are other, seldom seen variations that might be encountered from time to time.

The undiscovered bestiary brings such creatures out of the shadows and enables you as GM to add the odd unexpected twist to a more standard encounter. In each case, the majority of the creature's statistics echo those from the Pathfinder Bestiary, with the required modifications to standard stat blocks included for ease of use.

This edition of the Undiscovered Bestiary deals with the oft-neglected ankheg (*Pathfinder Bestiary*, page 15).

ANKHEGBAENA CR 4

At first we took the creature as nothing more than the buglike ankheg, but then, as the creature dragged itself from its foul pit, we saw its second head.

The rare ankhegaena has a head at either end of its body and can deliver a dangerous double acid spit with each head.

OFFENSE

Melee 2 bites +5 (2d6+4 plus 1d4 acid and grab)

STATISTICS Skills Perception +12

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Spit Acid (Ex) Once every 6 hours, an ankhegbaena can spit a 30-foot line of acid from either head. Creatures struck by this acid take 4d4 acid damage (Reflex DC 14 halves). Once an ankhegbaena uses this attack, it must wait 6 hours before using it again with that head. Additionally, during this time period, its bite attack from that head does not inflict any additional acid damage. As a result, an ankhegbaena does not use this ability unless it is desperate or frustrated, most often spitting acid when reduced to fewer than half its full normal hit points or when it cannot successfully grab.

DORT'S COPIOUSLY SPITTING ANKHEG CR 5

The mouth mandibles of this ankheg are subtly different from those of a normal ankheg, and those making a Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 25) properly identify the creature as the feared spitting ankheg.

The great explorer Carlot Dort first encountered the copiously spitting ankhegs while on a jungle expedition to the Mwangi Expanse. The acid sack of such an ankheg is considerably larger and more muscular than a standard ankheg, and as such it can deliver more acid, farther, than its more common kin.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Spit Acid (Ex) Up to 6 times a day, a copiously spitting ankheg can spit a 50-foot line of acid. Creatures struck by this acid take 4d4 acid damage (Reflex DC 14 halves). The copiously spitting ankheg does not need to wait to use the attack again providing it still has enough acid left. It can spit up to 6 times in 6 rounds if needs be. Until it has used up its whole reserve of acid by making 6 such attacks in a 24-hour period, its bite still inflicts acid damage as described in the *Pathfinder Bestiary*. The copiously spitting ankheg tends to use its spit attacks as the first line of offense, leading with an onslaught of such attacks.

BOILING-BLOODED ANKHEG CR 4

The boiling-blooded ankheg is virtually indistinguishable from a normal anhkeg, and only a Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 25) initially identifies the creature as anything

other than a normal ankheg. However, when struck, the creature's true qualities come to the fore.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Boiling Blood (Ex) The acid of the boiling-blooded ankheg courses through its veins, driven under great pressure. When injured, the blood of the ankheg sprays outward in a 5-ft. area from the wound (usually the same location as the attacker). Those within the boiling blood area must make a Reflex save (DC 14) or take 1d4 acid damage. If the injury amounts to half the ankheg's initial hit points, or is a critical hit, the damage from acid is 2d4 in a 5-ft. square.

The amount of injuries taken does not affect the ankheg's spit acid ability.

CAUSTIC ANKHEG CR 4

Like the boiling-blooded ankheg, the caustic ankheg is virtually indistinguishable from a normal anhkeg, and only a Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 25) initially identifies the creature as anything other than a normal ankheg.

The acid of the caustic ankheg has twice the potency of that of a standard anhkeg.

OFFENSE

Melee bite +5 (2d6+4 plus 2d4 acid and grab)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Spit Acid (Ex) Once every 6 hours, a caustic ankheg can spit a 30-foot line of acid. Creatures struck by this acid take 8d4 acid damage (Reflex DC 14 halves). Once a caustic ankheg uses this attack, it must wait 6 hours before using it again. Additionally, during this time period, its bite attack does not inflict additional acid damage. As a result, an ankheg does not use this ability unless it is desperate or frustrated, most often spitting acid when reduced to fewer than half its full normal hit points or when it cannot successfully grab.

Caustic Ankheg Acid and Alchemists

The acid of a caustic ankheg is much valued by alchemists, who can distill a particularly potent corrosive from it. Such acid must be kept in glass containers, and a pint of acid is required to make the distillation into a single flask of acid. One pint of acid can be successfully drawn from an ankheg for each Hit Die it has. A Craft (alchemy) check (DC 20) is required to distill the acid, which fetches treble the value of normal acid. Alchemists pay around 10 gp for each pint of caustic ankheg acid.

GREAT CROWNED ANKHEG CR 4

The head of this creature is vast, at least double the size of a usual ankheg, and is crowned in spines. The almost emerald-colored head lolls on its frail neck as though about to fall, and only the hefty chitin around it keeps it from doing so.

The great crowned anhkeg has a head that is too large for its body, and it has developed thick plates to hold it erect in battle. Although this jaw is very strong,

it makes the creature clumsier. Not truly Huge, the creature nevertheless receives partial penalties and bonuses due to its huge head.

DEFENSE AC 18, touch 7, flat-footed 18 (+11 natural, -2 size, -1 Dex)

Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +2 OFFENSE Melee bite +7 (2d8+6 plus 1d4 acid and grab)

STATISTICS Str 20, Dex 8, Con 17, Int 1, Wis 13, Cha 6

Base Atk +3; CMB +8 (+12 grapple); CMD 17 (25 vs. trip)

Skills Climb +10, Perception +8





MAN'S BEST FRIEND

"Damnation!"

"I beg forgiveness, Lord."

"Puppies. I must have puppies. I must!"

"But the dog-fayre in Groggtown, master. All the dogs have been taken there. For racing, for rounding up sheep, for guarding."

"Excuses, excuses! I have no need for them, funglet. GET ME SOME PUPPIES NOW!"

Man's best friend. How many variations and breeds are there in the world? How many more must there be in a fantasy campaign? A hundred, a thousand, ten thousand? And each one, of course, unique, with its own quirks, its own charms, its own infuriating habits.

We have spoken before about the traits of horses and how good breeding might create a magnificent racehorse, a stubborn nag, or a noble shire that never tires. The same is true of dogs, and in campaigns where humanoids abound, dogs are also likely to be prevalent (unless, of course, all your PCs are goblins, in which case the list below will add to the drama of the fear and perhaps set up unusual quirks for legendary dogs to have).

What follows is a list of traits for dogs, together with a list of characteristics for various breeds. Traits are often inherited, whereas characteristics of breed are part of a hound's makeup. To remove a trait (or indeed to add one as a trick if appropriate), a Handle Animal check is required to train the animal. The DC to remove or add such a trait is 20. Habits and abilities of breeds cannot usually be altered. Dogs are either referred to as standard (a dog—*Pathfinder Bestiary*, page 87) or riding dogs (also *Pathfinder Bestiary*, page 87).

Quirky hounds might command higher or lower prices. Remember that specific fairs, markets, and farmer's shops might have large or small dog markets within them. In some places, where hounds are particularly prized, dogs can command tremendous prices when part of a much admired or legendary family of hounds.

Breeds

Breeds have a hundred different names for the same basic type of dog; a tian fighting dog is much the same as an andoran mastiff or an ogre pit-hound. The basic breeds of several dogs are given below, some with local variations for you to consider using as part of your campaign. There are limitless possibilities for creating new breeds of hound for your campaign if you wish, and these are given as but a small sample to hopefully fire your imagination.

Humanoid Breeds

A large number of breeds of dogs are raised by humanoids and some giants. The best known of these, the goblin dog, isn't in fact a hound at all, but those listed below are. They can either be normal dogs or have statistics like those of riding dogs. Sometimes, these dogs are lucky enough to be raised from puppies by kinder folk than their orcish or ogre masters, or they have come from dwarvish or other humanoid groups and are thus more likely to have a nicer temperament.

Foulmaw: The orcish foulmaw eats anything, and its bite carries a weak strain of filth fever (DC 6). This dog is pink and hairless, and it has a broad mouth, filled with jagged rotting teeth.

Dwarf Mining Hound: This short, very fat, dog is like a standard dog but is excellent for tunnelling. When working in loose soil, it gains a burrowing speed of 5 ft.

Gnome Trickery Hound: These standard dogs are very smart, and they can easily learn quite complicated tricks. The DC to teach them tricks is 2 less than standard. These hounds are often pale in color, bordering on barley in hue in some cases. They have wide mouths that seem to form a permanent smile.

Greyhound

A greyhound is lean and built for the chase. It conforms to the riding dog statistics, but its base move is 50 ft.

Goblin-Chasing Greyhound: This hound has been raised and trained to specifically hunt goblins. When tracking goblinoids by scent, its Survival skill is at +8. This large hound has a shaggy dark coat and powerful muscled hind legs.

Spurt Hound: Specifically trained for battle, these hounds are capable of sudden bursts of great speed, and for up to 3 rounds they have a base move of 60 ft., after which it cannot run again for a full minute. These dogs have huge muscled hind legs and narrow, elongated muzzles.

Guard Dog

Guard dogs are invariably big and ugly, conforming to riding dog statistics.

Orcish Gate Dog: This dog has a big maw of very sharp teeth and is fabled for its iron grip bite. The orcish gate dog's bite delivers 1d8+3 damage, and the creature has the grab ability. Orcish gate dogs are always black and short-haired.

Halfling Barrow Hound: The scent ability of these often fat, light-colored, longcoated hounds is legendary, and they are thus used to guard halfling settlements and warn of approaching trouble. The scent ability of these hounds is doubled in range.

Hunting Hound

Hunting hounds are built for speed and to bring down prey; they use the riding dog statistic but gain +2 to their attempts to trip.

Great Elven Deerhound: This magnificent animal is used to hunt deer through forests day and night when elves hunt for sport or sustenance. It is blessed with darkvision (30 ft.). Tall and lean, the deerhound runs with incredible grace and has bright, clever eyes.

Mastiff

A mastiff is a very big dog, like a riding dog, and it is often used in battle as a war dog.

Dwarven Tunnel Battling Mastiff: This enormous dark dog is squat and ugly. It conforms to the statistics for riding dogs and is used to defend narrow spaces in dwarven settlements and fortifications. They are specially trained to repel attacks and prevent opponents rushing past them, and they often operate in ranks with dwarven defenders. These mastiffs do not have Skill Focus (Perception) (lowering their Perception to +5) and instead have the Combat Reflexes feat, enabling them to make up to 3 attacks of opportunity.

Mongrel

Basically any cross-bred dog. This 'group' of dogs comes in a variety of sizes and can conform to either normal or riding dog statistics. They might inherit the best or worst of their parents breeding, so, for example, a halfling barrow hound crossed with a dwarven tunnel battling mastiff could produce a fiercely hardy and loyal beast, or something just lazy, ugly, and fat.

Ornamental Dog

Small and invariably very odd looking, dogs such as poodles fall into this category.

Gnome Odd Dog: Regarded as one of the most ugly little creatures known, the bald gnome odd dog has enormous ears, a long snout, tiny legs, and an elongated body. These hounds are incredibly prized among old gnome families and are used as gifts of great value between them. In some areas, the size of a gnomes' odd dog kennel is a sign of his or her status.

Sheep Hound

Smart and hardy, these hounds are used to herd animals (often sheep). Though few are the size of riding dogs, some breeds do reach that size and, depending upon their task, have to be of an appropriate size to carry out their work.

Halfling Sheep Dog: Doubling as riding dogs, these hounds are incredibly hardy. They gain +4 to their Survival skill checks. These hounds are covered in thick, curly light fur and have squat, stupid-looking faces.

Orcish Sheep Dog: Far from rounding up sheep, these orcish hounds are used to chase them. These small, very ugly dark dogs have a particular scent for sheep and their scent ability around such animals is doubled. Unfortunately they are completely untrainable, and an attack by an orcish sheep dog clearly indicates that orcs are about.

Terrier

Good ratters, these small dogs use the standard dog statistics block but have the ability to burrow 5 ft. per round in soft ground.

Ratting Terrier: Used by adventurers, these short-haired dark terriers can fit into the tiniest of spaces and have been specially trained to hunt and kill tiny animals and creatures. Such terriers have a tendency to fight to the death, however, and have little concept of the dangers of rushing into a swarm of rats, spiders, or worse.

Gnome Treasure Trove Terrier: This small ugly brown dog is much prized for its ability to scent out gems. The terrier can use its Survival check to locate gems within 30 ft. Gnomes jealously guard the training techniques required to make a treasure trove terrier, although occasionally they grant a puppy as a reward for some fabulously dangerous quest.

Wolftype Cross

Wilder than their more domesticated cousins, these wolfhounds almost always conform to the wolf statistics block. These animals are more unpredictable than standard dogs, and any attempts to teach them tricks or command them is at +5 DC.

Domestic Wolfhound: Although often distrusted by the general populace, a loyal domestic wolfhound can prove an invaluable ally and an excellent fighter.

Half-Orc Wolfkin: Half-cast themselves, half-orcs like the idea of something that is partly wild. These hounds are used by civilised half-orcs to hunt orcs (they gain a +2 bonus to their Survival checks to track orcs using their scent ability).

Traits

If using such traits in your campaign, a dog should have 0–2 traits from the following list:

I	Has an annoying habit of barking at shadows
2	Tends to fixate on men or women with hats
3	Howls if separated from its master
4	Is very fat

5	Is very lean
6	Is mangy
7	Chases cats
8	Chases sheep
9	Chases birds
10	Cocks its head to one side when it hears singing
11	Cocks its head to one side when it smells cooking
12	Loves beer and ale and steals them at every opportunity
I 3	Howls when violins are played
I4	Barks at people wearing red
I 5	Cries if it can't sleep on a bed
16	Sleeps almost perpetually
17	Never leaves its master (even if he or she dies)
18	Stands up on its hind legs when commanded to do so
19	Has an almost supernatural ability to catch and kill rats
20	Bites anyone that tries to take anything off it
21	Never goes underground
22	Attacks goblinoids on sight
23	Has brown eyes
24	Has crossed eyes
25	Crawls about as though beaten when near its master
26	Is somehow perpetually muddy
27	Is endlessly lively
28	Grumbles quietly to itself if ignored
29	Is obsessive about sitting on anyone's lap

30	Chews its owner's shoes
3 I	Barks at the moon
32	Hides and shakes when it thunders
33	Hates the rain
34	When it sees water, it has to swim in it
35	Hates a particular random humanoid race and attacks them on sight
36	Slobbers constantly
37	Limps on command
38	Looks like everything is its fault
39	Is incredibly ugly
40	Is never still
4I	Wags its tail at everything
42	Gets so close to fires that it smoulders
43	Smells abominably
44	Is never full
45	Is amazingly faddy
46	Loves pigs (or sheep, or cats, or any other domestic animal you choose)
47	Pretends to be deaf
48	Is very stupid (cannot be taught tricks)
49	Is smart (can be taught an additional trick and all DCs are at 2 less than standard)
50	Occasionally has to be dragged around

THE UNDISCOVERED BESTIARY: BASILISKS

"You see this statue here, grottlet? How lifelike it seems."

"The statue of the corpulent woman, master, but I thought that was—"

"-the unrestored stone form of my good lady wife Lettuce. You are correct."

"Tell me again how it happened, lord, and how your vocal and difficult to please lady wife ended up in such a sad predicament. Pray also tell, if you would, how it is that, with your treasure trove of countless stone to flesh scrolls, you have not brought her back to fleshy form."

"It all began when we ventured into the bowels of the Myre of Gol. These mires, you'll recall, were rumored to be alive with Corbor's Basiliskpede . . ."

There are many basilisks, great and small, and many cunning variations on the basilisk have been encountered, from the horrid boalisk to the terrible and legendary crimson basilisks of old. So dangerous are basilisks that whenever they are rumored to be nearby, hunting parties are often set up to drive them out, or brave adventurers hired to rid the countryside of their menace. Many of the unusual or rare basilisks have been named by the first person to discover them, or, more often, the first person to be killed or petrified by them, and their details entered into the great *Pathfinder Chronicles* for future reference.

Here is an incomplete list of some of the more unusual basilisks encountered, which are detailed within the *Pathfinder Chronicles*.

CHAMELEON BASILISK

We never saw it coming, yet when the basilisk finally moved, three of my companions were stone. It mingled into the very trees and boughs of the jungle about us, making it almost impossible to detect.

Chameleon basilisks might be encountered anywhere, although they prefer to live
in verdant jungles and deep forests where their special abilities enable them to lurk unseen ready to ambush prey.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Chameleon (Ex) The chameleon basilisk's body continually alters hue and shade to match its background. The creature gains a +4 bonus to Stealth checks and has concealment from any creature further than 5 ft. away (attacks have a 20% miss chance).

CORBOR'S BASILISKPEDE CR 5

This reptilian horror resembled the bony form of a basilisk, yet this creature had multiple insectoid limbs that moved in an unsettling way.

The rare Corbor's basiliskpede is almost exclusively encountered underground. The Pathfinder Poet Alexander Corbor detailed the first one ever reported after his adventures in the Candlestone Caverns. The creature has numerous insect legs that allow it to climb the endless caverns of the Darklands.

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

RAN'S HYDRA BASILISK CR SEE BELOW

Here was a true horror. The form of the basilisk was unmistakable—the green flesh, the eight legs all seemingly falling over each other as it moved. This basilisk, however, had eight heads to match those legs, and each leered out at us petrifyingly.

The mercifully rare hydra basilisk is the stuff of legend. It is said that a snake laid an egg and this was incubated by a rooster. Some versions of the tale say it was not a snake, but a hydra that laid that egg...

Like the hydra, a hydra basilisk has a variable amount of heads. The basic creature below has 5, but you can add heads in the same way you would with a hydra, adding a Hit Die for each new head and adjusting the statistics accordingly. Mercifully, cryo and pyro hydra basilisks have not been encountered at present. The fighter Ran first met a hydra basilisk, but the encounter was only learned of some twenty years after the encounter when Ran's body was restored to flesh. Subsequent hunts for the creature proved fruitful, but as yet only male creatures have been hunted and slain.

HYDRA BASILISK CR 7

XP 3,200

N Large magical beast (advanced basilisk)

Init -2; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 7, flat-footed 18 (-2 Dex, +11 natural, 1 size)

hp 85 (10d10+30); fast healing 3

Fort +11, Ref +3, Will +5

OFFENSE Speed 20 ft.

Melee 5 bites +9 (1d8+6)

Special Attacks gaze (each head)

STATISTICS

Str 20, Dex 6, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 11

Base Atk +7; CMB +12; CMD 22 (34 vs. trip)

Feats Blind-Fight, Great Fortitude, Improved Iron Will, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Perception)

Skills Perception +10, Stealth +5; Racial Modifiers +4 Stealth

ECOLOGY Environment any

Organization solitary, pair, or colony (3-6)

Treasure incidental

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- Gaze (Ex) Turn to stone permanently (as *flesh to stone*), range 30 feet, Fortitude DC 17 negates. A creature petrified in this matter that is then coated (not just splashed) with fresh hydra basilisk blood (taken from a hydra basilisk no more than 1 hour dead) is instantly restored to flesh. A single hydra basilisk contains enough blood to coat 1d6 Medium creatures in this manner. The save DC is Constitution-based.
- **Fast Healing (Ex)** A hydra basilisk's fast healing ability is equal to half its current number of heads (minimum fast healing 3). This fast healing applies only to damage inflicted on the hydra basilisk's body.
- **Hydra Traits** (Ex) A hydra basilisk can be killed by severing all its heads or slaying its body. Any attack that is not an attempt to sever a head affects the body, including area attacks or attacks that cause piercing or bludgeoning damage. To sever a head, an opponent must make a sunder attempt with a slashing weapon targeting a head.

A head is considered a separate weapon with hardness 0 and hit points equal to the hydra basilisk's HD. To sever a head, an opponent must inflict enough damage to reduce the head's hit points to 0 or fewer. Severing a head deals damage to the hydra basilisk's body equal to the creature's current HD. A hydra basilisk can't attack with a severed head, but takes no other penalties.

Regenerate Head (Ex) When a hydra basilisk's head is destroyed, two heads regrow in 1d4 rounds. A hydra basilisk cannot have more than twice its original number of heads at any one time. To prevent new heads from growing, at least 5 points

of acid or fire damage must be dealt to the stump (a touch attack to hit) before they appear. Acid or fire damage from area attacks can affect stumps and the body simultaneously. A hydra basilisk doesn't die from losing its heads until all are cut off and the stumps seared by acid or fire.

WORM BASILISK

A ghastly snakelike horror suddenly broke into the chasm, halfway between the climbing group. As we dangled like helpless puppets in the vast deep shaft, the foul green horror began to gaze balefully about it, looking for prey.

Legend calls the basilisk the king of the serpents, and yet the most common form of the creature is an eight-legged lizard. Serpentine variations of the basilisk do exist, including this one.

The worm basilisk is a hunter, able to burrow through stone like the great purple worms of the Darklands, and it has an additional ability to grab an opponent and constrict it.

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., burrow 20 ft., swim 20 ft.

Melee bite +10 (1d8+4 plus grab)

Special Attacks gaze, constrict (1d8+4)

Drow legends tell of creatures known as the great worm basilisks that dwell far from sight in the deep places of the world. These creatures are gargantuan variations of the creature above, some of which have several heads, and all of which have close purple worm ancestors.

For more information on the terrible and legendary crimson basilisk and the horrid boalisk, check out Tome of Horrors Complete by Necromancer Games.



MALIGNANT MAGIC

"Ow!"

"Silence! You are my plaything, to torment as I wish."

"But why, master?"

"Do not waste my ears with your whining. I have simply used a special version of magic missile upon you—magic that has a canker within it."

"Argh! Am I to die then, master?"

"Quiet, slugthing, I merely use the word canker to describe the type of magic it is—malignant magic."

"I have never heard of it, master."

"There are many more types of magic than the world knows, notlet. Now sit back while I see if the spell truly has its evil passenger and you do indeed begin to bleed copiously. If you do not, you will be severely punished."

Numerous sorcerers and wizards, magi and mystic theurges, all obsessively research magic throughout their lives, and sometimes beyond. As well as developing standard spells, they create countless variations, such as *Aaorrad's twisted vision*, to *Zyobkin's deviously delayed blast fireball*. These different spells are invariably named after their creator's, might be found in any spellbook, and can often command a high price. In general, these spells have subtle variations that suit the caster when the standard spell is not appropriate, or where a different component has been discovered and used.

Sometimes a cult or cabal works on a particular spell or type of spell and, after long years of dangerous study, might uncover a wholly new or different subtype of magic. Wild Magic is perhaps the most well known of this type, although First World, Nadir, and Corrupted subdomains are also allegedly recorded in parts of the *Pathfinder Chronicles*.

Malignant magic is another, less well known type of subdomain magic. Malignant magic is magic with an arcane attachment or growth, often of an evil nature, which commands a secondary effect to the master spell, sometimes at a cost to that spell. Malignant magic is occasionally found within spellbooks alongside normal spells.

Let's look at some lower level evoker version of malignant spells, as well as other types of malignant magic.

Casting Malignant Magic

Each malignant magic spell is a variation on a standard spell and is considered to be of that spell's domain. Only a specialist wizard of the master domain of the spell can cast spells with malignant magic attached. Malignant spells use the same level, save DCs, and base statistics of their parent spell, but have an additional malignancy. This malignancy has a chance of draining the caster. Whenever casting a malignant spell, the caster must make a Will save (DC 10 +1/level of spell) or take 1 point of Constitution damage for every two levels of spell cast, rounding up. This temporary Constitution loss is regained in the usual way.

0-Level Spells

Malign Flare

This flare plays host to a malignant thing within it that whispers unsettlingly in the ears of its victims. A malign flare's effects last only 5 rounds; however, those that fail their saving throw are tormented by the whispering things that accompany the spell. Unless deaf, the victim is distracted and takes a -2 penalty to all initiative checks for the duration of the spell.

Ray of Malign and Seething Mephit Frost

The ray created by this spell contains the anger of an ice mephit. The ray causes but a single point of damage; however, those hit by the ray must make a Will save (DC 10 + caster's Intelligence bonus) or be sickened for 1 round.

Vulpor's Malign Light

The light created by this version of the spell is of a sick pallor, and it sheds light in only half the area of a standard *light* spell. However, the shadows cast by creatures within the light have an unsettlingly alien quality, occasionally distorting features and shapes within them. Although the shadows have no effect other than merely being unsettling, they are occasionally mistaken for undead shadows when first encountered.

1st-Level Spells

Dun's Nasty Magic Missile

Each *magic missile* made by this spell is imbued with a vile, lacerating force. If a missile delivers 5 points of damage in a single hit, the victim suffers 1 point of bleeding damage.

Malign Burning Hands

The flames caused by this version of the spell have a violet hue within them. When a character tries to extinguish the flames, he or she finds that they rush away from attempts to put them out. The DC for these flames to automatically extinguish, and the DC saving throw for burned items, is 17.

Vulpor's Baleful Shocking Grasp

Opponents in metal armor, or those who do not drop a metal weapon once struck

by the grasp, take 1d2 extra damage the round after being hit when the baleful electricity within the spell dances around its victim.

2nd-Level Spells

Gust of Baleful Wind

A swarm of almost invisible insects seems to be part of the gust. Creatures within the area of the gust that fail their saving throw are subject to a single attack by the swarm of insects within, taking 1d6 damage plus poison (Swarm-injury; save Fort DC 10 + 1/3 caster levels; frequency 1/round for 3 rounds; effect 1 Dexterity damage; cure 1 save).

Malign Flaming Sphere

The flaming sphere is like a great white-hot mouth of an impossible creature. This sphere moves more slowly than a standard sphere (only 20 ft. per round); when it hits a target, the maw appears to latch onto it. The next Reflex saving throw made by that target is at -2.

Malign Darkness

This darkness is haunted by the voices of things that have not drawn breath for centuries—perhaps these things never had need of breath. Characters within the area of darkness must make a Will save (DC 12 + caster's Intelligence bonus) or be shaken for 1d3 rounds.

Malign Scorching Ray

The fire within the ray seems to have a life of its own, and it almost dances toward its target. Although this version of the ray inflicts only 3d6 fire damage, the malign spirit within the ray moves with more evil hunger and purpose toward its target, and all ranged touch attacks are made with a +4 bonus.

3rd-Level Spells

Malign Fireball

The flames within this fireball are tinged with dark shadows. Creatures within the area of the flames take the standard amount of damage, but they must make another saving throw the round after (as the initial saving throw) or these malignant, shadowy flames continue to burn, inflicting a further point of damage for every level of the caster.

Malign Lightning Bolt

The lightning within this bolt is accompanied by a terrible scream of a creature drawn into the magic and slain as a result. Characters struck by the bolt must make a secondary saving throw (at the same DC as the initial spell) or be deafened for 1 round per caster level.

Malign Wind Wall

This wall of wind is tinged with the acrid taste of burned othur fumes, and streaks of the poisonous gas are entwined in the gusts. These threads of gas form humanoid faces that attempt to kiss those within the wall. Characters within the *wind wall* must make a saving throw (DC 10 + 1/2 caster level) or suffer the effects of burned othur fumes. Once a character has made his save against the fumes, he does not need to do so again.



ADVENTURE SEEDS

"Quiet!"

"Master, you've been staring at that blank page for six hours now. May I at least extinguish this candle you've put on my head?"

"And attempt to write in darkness? That'll make it even harder, idiot!"

E veryone gets a block from time to time, and, when writing an adventure, a block can be infuriating, particularly if you have to provide the adventure at the next session. The *Gamemastery Guide* has some great ideas for locations and ideas for adventures, and one simple question can enable you to use these ideas and other random charts and tables to create an encounter or maybe a whole adventure: **why**?

"Why?" is a great question to use when added to a random table, such as those of YWH, as well as the many others that you have at your disposal. Take *Unique Tavern Traits* in the *Gamemastery Guide* (page 200), and assume we've rolled 33 on the dice for a random tavern.

33-34 Monster mounted head.

Why?

Perhaps the inn is owned and run by a retired adventurer?

What is so special about this head then? Presumably the monster is an important memento of the adventurer's career, quite possibly something from the end of his or her career?

So why mount it? Not only is the head horrific but has great personal significance: It's the head of the adventurer's sworn enemy, defeated on his or her last great adventure.

So what is it? Let's pick a random reasonably tough monster: a spirit naga.

Spirit nagas often gather together in covens, yet this is a lone head. Could there be others?

If there were other nagas, why didn't they attack the adventurer at the time? Perhaps these other nagas were away, searching for a legendary place imbued with dark magic? Did they succeed? If they did, could they bring this dark magic back with them? Perhaps this dark magic could blight crops . . .

So when they returned to their lair, they found their sister dead and swore vengeance.

So presumably the events of this potential adventure take place quite soon after the innkeeper moves in—in other words he and his family are relative strangers in their new home perhaps?

And covens give a link to human witches. Perhaps a coven of witches is fronting an attempt of vengeance against the innkeeper.

Why don't the nagas attack the innkeeper at night? Perhaps they desire more than just his life. Maybe they wish to ruin him and all that he loves first . . .

So, we have the basis for an encounter on the road or maybe even a simple short adventure—simply by asking why.

The Adventure of the Blighted Village

The crops have failed and the sheep are dying. The locals of Hynemoor have turned against the new local innkeeper Jacob Buckbarrow and his family as the source of the blight. All was well until they came along. Although things haven't turned truly nasty yet, they have the potential to do so, and although Buckbarrow is keeping his temper, he has brought out his old sword to sharpen. A local saw this act and the villagers have begun to convince themselves that Buckbarrow means to kill them as well as curse them. Perhaps he is a devil in human skin? This gossip has generated a further lie: that Buckbarrow's beautiful daughter Misella is a witch. Hovin, a young lad who had his advances rebuffed by the beautiful Misella, spread this rumor, and he now claims that he has seen her talking to a devil. The locals have imprisoned the girl in a secret location, and only today did they send for a witchfinder to come to the village and try her as a witch.

The PCs arrive into this powder-keg scenario to find a village with blighted crops and an empty tavern. As they imbibe their ale, a stone comes hurtling through the window, smashing it. Buckbarrow picks up his sword and vows to get his daughter back right then and there, and his wife pleads with him not to since she fears he'll be killed, or might kill someone. If the latter happens, the local justice will have him killed. She turns to the PCs to help her and her family.

Unfortunately for Buckbarrow, things are going to get a good deal worse. Unless the PCs intervene, the witchfinder is ambushed by the naga on his way into the village and persuaded of the girl's guilt. With a host of witches in the village and a group of nagas outside, can the PCs pick the truth from this situation and prevent Misella from being burned as a witch, or do they help Buckbarrow and risk attacking the villagers in an attempt to free the girl? And if the PCs side with Buckbarrow, the nagas are not going to stand idly by and let them help him. They'll use all the charms and witches at their disposal to discredit the PCs or kill them too.

They want vengeance.

Here's another simple adventure idea that has been created by asking why when a random result is generated using YWH charts.

The Adventure of Blurb the Flaming Giant

(Source—Your Whispering Homunculus, Fifty Topics of Conversation)

They say Miss McGuire's been seen frolicking and prancing on Noxey Moor again.

Suggested levels 2-5

Why is McGuire on the moors at night? Because she wants to find out what's happening at Crackle Edge Quarry . . .

And just what is going on up there?

And why?

Grumble. Want my advice? Stay away. They say strange lights have been seen up at Crackle Edge Quarry, and Miss McGuire's been frolicking and prancing on Noxey Moor. Then there's the tiny gypsies that have come to that village of late. Funny folk they are, faces covered and cowled as if they did not wish to be seen. Never drink ale, they say, and if that's not enough to convince you that all is not well, then there's the way they smell too. Smell bad—smell more than the smelliest armpit of the legendary Niffy Bob—the Green Foul-Smelling Twelve-Armed Ogre of Bibcombe.

It's a strange place is Grumble, a mighty strange place indeed, and I'd rather marry my own pig than go there of an evening.

Adventure Background

Nothing seems special about Grumble, a tiny village cluttered around a village green in the hills. In this sleepy hamlet, the most exciting thing to happen was a delivery of new shovels.

But beneath the ground things were hidden.

The battle took place so long ago that no one remembers it. Only a few clues point to the fact that a huge fight took place here between goblins, gnomes, and humans—a battle the goblins lost. The church in the village looks a little too militaristic, the village green looks a bit like an earthwork, and occasionally a plough brings up a rusty spearhead or shield. Yet despite all these clues, the locals remain oblivious, unaware of their history and lacking the knowledge that, as his fellow goblins fell, the great chief Grunty Swabwrist XXXII followed the glorious tradition of his forefathers and fled the battle at high speed, gripping the legendary Worg-Graven in his good hand as he dashed.

The Worg-Graven is an object of goblin legend: a banner, a battle standard, and a magical talisman. The goblins always said it was too bad that Grunty never did learn how to use it properly, since it could (allegedly) summon up worgs of great size to aid the goblins.

And so the great chief fled into the nearby dark tunnels of the vast disused local quarry at Crackle Edge, keeping the artifact with him. And there, sadly, his fevered and frantic dashes through the unstable tunnels in a desperate attempt to discover the Darklands were his undoing. A tunnel collapsed and Grunty vanished from memory. The gnomes and humans knew nothing of the Worg-Graven. As it was, the humans had a huge celebratory feast, and the gnomes tended to and praised their loyal badgers with epic gnomish songs of badger glorification.

So the great item was forgotten-until now.

Grunty's ancestors have returned for their property. Chief Colic Swabwrist XXXII is that most dangerous of goblins: a goblin sufficiently clever to think. With the aid of his trusted (and, in all honesty, fraudulent) wizard and councilor, the frighteningly amorous Gobwench Fatankles, they learned old legends of the Worg-Graven by the campfires of goblin tribes far and wide, heard of its power, and in time figured out its last known whereabouts: at the Battle of Grumpy many centuries ago.

Colic began to search for this place.

It took many years before he reached the sleepy hamlet—a place of pigs and sod cottages and drunken farmers—and on seeing it, his first reaction was to set fire to the place. However, the lands of humans are dangerous, and rumors of attack spread like wildfire. So he and the Gobwench Fatankles hatched a cunning plan.

Using leftover iron they found in a nearby ruin, as well as the skills of their tribe, Colic started a construction project. The resulting giant of iron and wood and thread was a manikin of huge size, and they called this pretend giant Blurb.

Colic then arranged for a small party of locals to be kidnapped and brought before the fake giant in a darkened room, where the locals would see only its coal-like eyes (very coal-like eyes) and hear its deep, booming, megaphonic voice. It commanded them to serve it or die, then told them to begin searching for an item in the quarries nearby. It told them of the Worg-Graven, describing how it is marked with ancient fetishes, runes, and insulting pictures of gnomes. "Serve me!" the giant commanded, "or suffer." And with that, it instructed one villager to return to Grumble and had the others slapped in irons. The released and terrified Bort Buddins ran into town with the news, telling the others that unless they cooperated, their friends would suffer a horrible fate and the giant would then come and eat them, boiled, roasted or jellied.

Since that time, the villagers have cooperated, afraid of what will happen to their friends and terrified of the goblin spies that have come to Grumble to watch them. If asked, the villagers claim that these spies are no more than little gypsies—friendly traveling folk with an odd smell about them.

And the search for the Worg-Graven goes on . . .

Adventure Synopsis

The PCs arrive at Grumble and see that the place is going to wrack and ruin. Crops are dying in the fields, walls have collapsed, and sheep and cows wander around and eat grass in the churchyard around the old church, which is an ancient crumbling

place that looks more like a fort than a church. The villagers are very unfriendly, and they make it plain that there is nothing here for the PCs. Despite the efforts of the villagers to shoo the PCs away, the PCs have plenty of opportunities to discover that something is amiss in the village. The best source of information, the local white witch Miss Mcguire, has been up on the moors keeping an eye on events at Crackle Edge Quarry. She willingly tells them what is happening and begs them to help. This initial part of the adventure focuses on the PCs' interactions with the locals, including the little gypsies.

After that, the PCs locate the followers of Chief Colic Swabwrist XXXII and realize that his horde of goblins is too much for them to attack alone. The PCs then are faced with a question: Can they motivate or scare the locals to become an army to attack the goblin force?

And, while they're trying to persuade the villagers to help them, what if the Worg-Graven is found?





FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY ~ TROG--KIN

"I've noticed you using the word 'sluglet' again, sluglet."

"Master?"

"Copying me. Mocking me, some might say. My old friend Inferdal the Dark Magentine noticed it only last week, and Mumpsicrumb the maid has twice commented upon it to me recently. You will cease this imitation."

"As you wish, mighty one, but I am merely basking in the glory of your potent arcane shadow. As naught but a manufactured thing of your making I am helpless in the face of your overwhelming personality."

We've covered the weighty topic of environs before, as well as how those environments can rub off on those who live within them. Imagine, if you will, the appalling blackness of the darklands. How do such environments affect those within it, what might dark unions produce, and what appalling fate awaits those taken from the sun to live their lives without hope in the darkness?

The insidious and numerous troglodytes thrive in the darkness beneath the world, and those who spend generation upon generation with the trogs could pick up more than their foul scent. The simple template presented here offers an option to spice up those lairs with more than just monitor lizards.

As ever, use this simple template to enhance an encounter, to create a fun new subrace of creatures, or to serve as the basis for further adventures—perhaps to discover why creatures are changing as they have.

SIMPLE TEMPLATE—TROG-KIN CREATURE (+1 CR)

Trog-kin creatures have taken on a reptilian facet: the changed feature could be its eyes, maybe areas of sickly scales, or perhaps the growth of a rotting, flaccid tail. Each gains darkvision to 60 ft. and exudes a vile stench that is unmistakably troglodyte.

Quick Rules: +3 to AC and CMD; **Ability Scores** +2 to all rolls based on Constitution, +1 hp/HD; **Aura** stench (20 ft., DC 10 + Con bonus, 5 rounds).

Rebuild Rules: +3 natural armor; **Ability Scores** +2 Con; **Aura** stench (20 ft., DC 10 + Con bonus, 5 rounds); **Racial Modifiers** +2 Stealth (+4 in rocky areas).

You can add this very simple template to an encounter, using only minimal preparation time, and help add a little extra to encounters with trogolodytes.

Encounter: The Scavengers [EL 7]

This encounter occurs when a group of raiding troglodytes hunt by night. They are alert and very nervous, anxiously seeking out meat from their nearby cave, which descends many miles beneath the skin of the world. The dire trog-kin rats have broad, reptilian eyes. Their tails are mangy and end in sore scales that are prone to come away with sinew and flesh when grasped.

TROGLODYTES (6) CR 1

XP 400 each

hp 13 (Pathfinder Bestiary, page 267)

DIRE RAT, TROG-KIN CR 1

XP 400

N Small advanced animal

Init +3; Senses low-light vision, darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +4

Aura stench (20 ft., DC 13, 5 rounds)

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+3 Dex, +3 natural, +1 size)

hp 6 (1d8+2)

Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +1

OFFENSE Speed 40 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.

Melee bite +1 (1d4 plus disease)

Special Attacks disease

STATISTICS Str 10, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 4

Base Atk +0; CMB -1; CMD 15 (19 vs. trip)

Feats Skill Focus (Perception)

Skills Climb +11, Perception +4, Stealth +13 (+15 in rocky areas), Swim +11; Racial

Modifiers uses Dex to modify Climb and Swim

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Disease (Ex) *Filth fever*: Bite—injury; *save* Fort DC 12; *onset* 1d3 days; *frequency* 1/day; *effect* 1d3 Dex damage and 1d3 Con damage; *cure* 2 consecutive saves.

TACTICS

The clutch uses the trog-kin rats as hunters, loosing the pack in the night and following their stench until the rats find something to eat. The main problem the troglodytes have is keeping the rats from eating the food before they have had chance to eat some themselves, and occasionally a troglodyte will kill a feasting rat so that it can save the food until later.

Before Combat The rats hunt by scent and use stealth, leading the troglodytes on with their own stench. They try to attack by surprise.

During Combat They swarm upon a single target, using their stench to keep other opponents at bay until the troglodytes arrive, then assist them in killing and taking meat.

Morale Although they are cowardly, the rats nibble at unconscious opponents, and they swarm in to feast upon these helpless targets unless driven away. The rats flee if injured.

Adventure: The Hive

The encounter in the first part is merely an aperitif for coming danger, and what is worse, the troglodytes now swarming from beneath the earth can trace their lineage back to ancient times, when troglodytes raised vast cities. Led by the *Gaaarkk-null-Quabith* (Draconic *The Lecher Gargoyle*) (male troglodyte druid 7), who is mounted upon an old male green dragon, the troglodytes are a force that has left the darklands to shame their kind into seizing the world of humans once more. If this force succeeds, an army lies below the world waiting to rise.

Adventure Path: The Breaking Earth

In this adventure path, the troglodytes have already been shamed into claiming back their empire by the *Gaaarkk-null-Quabith*, and vast forces of troglodytes that worship demon lords plague the human lands. These troglodytes have summoned a powerful glabrezu from the Ashen Forge, who, among his army, has a trio of trog-kin crag linnorms as his personal guardians. He calls them the Trine.

In this version, the PCs hear of rampaging groups of troglodytes who move without fear. Great fissures open up beneath the ground, swallowing whole villages, and from these rise armies of troglodytes. Can the PCs defeat the Lecher Gargoyle, his dragon, and his troglodytes before heading into the abyssal flooded home of the glabrezu and his Trine to end the horror?

CRAG LINNORM, TRINE CR 15

XP 38,400

CE advanced Gargantuan dragon

Init +8; Senses darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision, scent, true seeing; Perception +22

Aura stench (20 ft., DC 18, 5 rounds)

DEFENSE

AC 32, touch 10, flat-footed 28 (+4 Dex, +22 natural, -4 size)

hp 217 (15d12+120); regeneration 10 (cold iron)

Fort +16, Ref +15, Will +13

Defensive Abilities freedom of movement; **DR** 15/cold iron; **Immune** curse effects, fire, mind-affecting effects, paralysis, poison, sleep; **SR** 25

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., fly 100 ft. (average), swim 60 ft.

Melee bite +23 (2d8+12/19–20 plus poison), 2 claws +23 (1d8+12), tail +18 (2d6+6 plus grab)

Space 20 ft.; Reach 20 ft.

Special Attacks breath weapon, constrict (tail, 2d6+18), death curse

STATISTICS

Str 34, Dex 18, Con 27, Int 5, Wis 18, Cha 21

Base Atk +15 (+35 grapple); CMB +31; CMD 48 (can't be tripped)

Feats Blind-Fight, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack

Skills Fly +16, Perception +22, Swim +38

Languages Aklo, Draconic, Sylvan

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Breath Weapon (Su) Once every 1d4 rounds as a standard action, a crag linnorm can expel a 120-foot line of magma, dealing 15d8 fire damage to all creatures struck (Reflex DC 25 halves). This line of magma remains red-hot for 1 round after the linnorm creates it. Creatures that took damage on the first round take 6d6 fire damage on the second round (Reflex DC 24 negates), as does any creature that walks across the line of magma. If the magma was expelled while the linnorm was airborne, it instead rains downward during the second round as a sheet of fire no more than 60 feet high and it deals 6d6 damage (Reflex DC 24 negates) to any creature that passes through it. On the third round, the line of magma cools to a thin layer of brittle stone that quickly degrades to powder and sand over the course of several hours; magma that has turned to a sheet of fire is consumed entirely during the second round, leaving behind only a stain of smoke in the air that swiftly disperses.

- **Death Curse (Su)** When a creature slays a crag linnorm, the slayer is affected by the curse of fire. Curse of fire: save Will DC 22; effect creature gains vulnerability to fire. The save DC is Charisma-based.
- Freedom of Movement (Ex) A crag linnorm is under the constant effect of freedom of movement, as per the spell of the same name. This effect cannot be dispelled.
- **Poison (Su)** Bite—injury; *save* Fort DC 25; *frequency* 1/round for 10 rounds; *effect* 2d6 fire damage and 1d4 Con drain; *cure* 2 consecutive saves.
- **True Seeing (Ex)** A crag linnorm has constant true seeing, as per the spell of the same name.

Tactics

Before Combat The members of the Trine exist only to protect their master. If the demon becomes aware of incursion into his lair, he sends the Trine out to attack immediately, with the linnorm rush headlong into combat, seeking out their opponents.

During Combat When the encounter opens, the Trine immediately unleash their breath weapon and continue to do so until engaged in combat.

Morale If two of the linnorm are injured below half their hit points, the entire Trine retreats, heading immediately back to their master to help him make a last stand against intruders.





RANDOM ENCOUNTERS WITH A TWIST

"Was that a stirge?"

"Master?"

T

"A stirge. I just saw a stirge fly past my window."

"The city nights are full of strange things, master, and who knows what one may encounter whilst abroad in the dark?"

I'm not sure how many people use random encounters these days.

They used to be all the rage back when adventures took place in dungeons only, and it was great fun to have a group of trolls, bugbears and the odd gelatinous cube suddenly slither around the corner unexpectedly. I don't use them nowadays, but I do find random monster lists useful in designing encounters.

Not every encounter involves stumbling upon x monster in y terrain at a distance of z, however, and something that can be useful is a list of unusual reasons or events within encounters. This edition of YWH details six potential twists to those encounters and how to run them to give a little something unusual to your adventure.

Weaker Monster Being Chased

The PCs encounter a lower CR creature than they would normally expect to. The creature is fleeing an attacker, which is the coming encounter (an encounter with a much tougher opponent altogether). This second creature is a challenge to the PCs.

2 Tougher Monster Being Chased

With the tougher creature, which is a higher CR than the PCs normally face, it is fleeing a group of lower CR creatures and is itself already injured to a point where the PCs should be able to deal with it; however, the injury might not be that obvious at first. For example, a creature might have been wounded by poison and is slowly dying, or is being paralyzed by the poison,

or is succumbing to a magic effect, such as confusion, making it easier to deal with.

The chasing creatures should be a match for the PCs, but if you want to make the encounter seem more troubling initially, have more creatures than the PCs would normally be able to deal with but have them injured.

3 Higher CR with Inherent Weakness

In this encounter, the PCs can face any level of opposing creature, but they should be aware that it is too tough for them under ordinary circumstances. The creature suffers from an affliction or weakness that allows it to remain a challenge, but also means that the PCs can deal with it.

Weakness can be a simple sickness (such as suffering from the advanced effects of a disease such as filth fever), or it could be a partial loss of sight that significantly reduces the creature's attack chances and perhaps gives the creature a chance to miss blows each round even on successful hits. This latter situation replicates the effects of being obscured.

The creature could also be old, and you can choose to lower its hit points while retaining its special abilities, or you could replicate the aging process in a more complex way by following the rules in the *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* (page 169).

A Tough Lower CR

The easiest way to have a tough lower CR creature is to max out the monster's hit points, which gives the PCs a tough encounter with a bull basilisk or owlbear instead of a normal creature. It is also very easy to rebuild monsters. Simple quick changes include tougher hide (increasing a creature's natural armor bonus), bigger natural attacks (increasing the damage accordingly), or by having the creature be a carrier of disease, which requires those struck or bitten to make an immediate saving throw against the disease carried.

5 The Red Herring

Monsters are not always what they seem. In my side trek 'Hollow Threats' (*Dungeon* 96), the rampaging dragon turtle that terrorizes the coast is, in fact, a hollow dragon turtle shell occupied by orcs who use megaphones to sound like monsters and always attack in mist. Of course, until the PCs arrive on the scene, no one has survived an attack to confirm this fact, but plenty of people have fled the terrible shape that has appeared through the mist and roared, and they can describe the vast shell shape very well.

You can use rumor and tales to build up an encounter before it ever happens, and that apprehension enables you to put a twist into proceedings. One example would be to have kobolds utilize the remains of a larger creature—say a remorhaz carcass or the remains of a griffon. By using cunning but simple wooden props and simple spells, they can give the carcass life and use it as cover to carry out their own nefarious activities.

6 Bait and Switch

The brilliant 1984 UK *Dungeons & Dragons* module *Eye of the Serpent* (UK5 by Graeme Morris) has a wonderful bait and switch trick at the very start of the adventure, where the 1st-level PCs see eagles in the distant mountaintops. The eagles, it soon transpires, are rocs, and they are hunting. The PCs, in the open terrain, are swept up by the rocs and taken to their mountaintop nest, and thus the wonderful wilderness adventure begins.

Not every monster simply growls and attacks; expectant parents are out gathering food and might, as detailed above, bring back live food. An ettin tribe could be away on a long hunt when their trap is triggered by the low-level PCs to start an adventure, or a broody bunch of trollwives might gather up a group of 1st-level PCs, hurl them into a pit nest, and leave them as fodder for their children. Of course, if the PCs attack the troll young, these younglings begin squealing and risk bringing back their angry mothers.

An Example: The Hunting Beast (CR 13)

You can change the athach to any type of creature you wish that challenges the PCs and is appropriate for the terrain it is encountered in.

The deep pines sag about you as you continue your journey. The air is still here, almost suffocating, and the shadows within give little hint of the daylight visible far above.

Allow the PCs to journey on their way through the forest, occasionally making the odd dice check to keep them on their toes, before suddenly six figures dart through the gloom ahead, heading straight for the PCs.

Creatures: A herd of dire boar is dashing out of the forest and away from the athach, which is hunting them and has already slain one of their kind. The boars are encountered 240 ft. from the PCs and run straight toward them.

DIRE BOAR (6) CR 4 EACH

XP 1,200 each

hp 42 each (Pathfinder Bestiary 36)

Tactics: If left alone, the boars not only approach the PCs at full speed, but actually rush past them, only attacking if they themselves are attacked, in which case, petrified that they have been surrounded, they attack until slain.

ATHACH CR 12

XP 19,200

hp 161 (Pathfinder Bestiary 2, page 33)

Tactics: The athach, Gnarlrudd, is after good cruel sport, and it is ambling after the boars, happy that he can catch them and not only kill them horribly to eat, but save their hides for his beloved wife Harpywide, who lives back in their vast timber lodge along with their children Crush, Spite, and Menace. Maybe if he gets lucky he'll take one alive for his offspring to play with later. If he finds that someone else is trying to take his sport from him, however, he'll make that creature pay. Gnarlrudd thrives upon misery, and he happily watches anyone attack the boars, thinking that, once weakened, the sport is going to be all the tastier. If the PCs engage the boars, he lurks back watching, hoping to pick the odd stray character up. If he overpowers a single PC, he runs with them back to his vile home about three miles away, where he prepares something particularly uncomfortable for his victim involving an oven, a pair of iron boots, and a wire brush.

Once discovered, the athach attempts to take a single PC back as a gift for his lovely, fleeing combat with any unconscious characters he can.

The nearby lodge is not only huge—it is more like a castle than a home. Indeed, if you wish, it could be an old castle. The attack upon the home should present a serious challenge to your PCs, any friend of whom is kept in a suitably unpleasant situation (say, suspended over a boiling cauldron of water in case his or her friends foolishly try to rescue them).

Treasure: Gnarlrudd has a silver bound hunting horn made from the horn of a dire bull worth 250 gp, he carries enough dried meat to last him two weeks, and he has a huge twelve pint waterskin as big as a man. The latter is full of fresh spring water. His hefty coat is trimmed in wolverine fur and has buttons made from platinum coins (there are twenty in all); as a curious object in itself, the coat is worth 350 gp. The coat has dozens of pockets, butcher's hooks for game (with three sheep hung on one), and folds, within which are a *potion of invisibility* with a green glass stopper, a chewing stick made from a tree-trunk, a silver penny whistle worth 5 gp, and a Small halfling cloak made of grouse feathers, with silver thread worth 125 gp.



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YOUR WHISPERING HOMUNCULUS

A twisted creature hops onto your desk; the homunculi is grotesque, a vile leathery thing of insect and rat and slime topped with a doll's face. It hops onto your shoulder and whispers in an ear, "But, master, what happens if . . ."

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