

## **BRAVE THE LABYRINTH** Issue #5 • December 2014

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## see pg. 31 for Submission Guidelines for Brave the Labyrinth - Issue #6

# BEETLE NOTES AND READER MAIL





I want to thank you for taking the time to download (or purchase) the latest issue of *Brave the Labyrinth*, a fanzine created by the fans, for the fans, and of the fans. This fanzine is our way of "giving back" something to the Labyrinth Lord community as well as saying a big "thank you" to Dan Proctor for releasing **Labyrinth Lord™** for our enjoyment and use. I also want to thank all of our contributors, without whom this fanzine would not be possible.

Small Niche Games would like to again highlight the *Guidebook to the City of Dolmvay*, a massive OSR city sourcebook that was funded by Kickstarter and is available as a free (PWYW) product so be sure to download it from RPGNow.com when you get the chance!

Also on the horizon is the *Time of the Dying Stars*, a novella series set in the City of Dolmvay. An excerpt is available in this issue. The full novella is available now!

We still want to hear from you! Let us know what you liked, what you didn't like, and what you would like to see in future issues. If you have comments, please send them to smallnichegames -AT- gmail -DOT- com with [**BtL] Comments** in the subject line.

The PDF of this product is offered for free under the Pay What You Want program designed by RPGNow. If you'd like to make a donation to keep *Brave the Labyrinth* going, please send \$1, \$5, or whatever you like via PayPal to smallnichegames -AT- gmail -DOTcom. These donations will be used primarily to offset the cost of commissioned artwork for current and future issues. Thanks for reading, and I hope to hear from you soon!

Peter C. Spahn Small Niche Games smallnichegames -AT- gmail -DOT- com



## THE EBON LORD

#### by Brandon Baker

"I have seen horrors unimaginable spawned in the dungeons of the Ebon Lord."

-the White Wizard of Callisto

#### **Erebus (Demon Lord)**

No Enc 1 (Unique) Align: Chaotic (evil) Move: 90' (30') Armor Class: -7 Hit Dice: 150 hp (22 HD) Attacks: 2 Damage: As weapon Save: F22 Morale: 10 Hoard Class: VI, VII, XXII XP: 14,000

Erebus resembles a slightly taller and more heavily muscled dark elf, standing six-feet tall with ebony skin and white hair. His eyes are a bright red color and he has pointed ears. For those who are very observant, he has six fingers and toes. He wears only a loincloth and a necklace of rubies. If encountered anywhere outside his lair, he will be armed with a magical sword and a shield (see below). If encountered in his lair, his sword and shield will not be far from his reach.

Erebus hates most every kind of life. The only living things that Erebus does not hate are beings he has created. Most of Erebus's creations have been single beasts. Some have been pairs, yet for one reason or another all are sterile and soon die. The Vexare seem to be the only exception to this, with their ability to procreate.

Erebus delights in torture. He will torment a creature for years before he tires of his sport and either tortures them to death or throws them into a room with hungry Vexare. If a particular creature intrigues him, he will experiment on that creature (another one of Erebus's pastimes). Erebus conducts all sorts of biological experiments with his victims, from replacing limbs to modifying the abilities of a creature (the Labyrinth Lord can use the Mutation Tables in **Mutant Future**<sup>™</sup>) to seeing if two different species can produce offspring (the Labyrinth Lord can refer to the Vivimancer in *Theorems & Thaumaturgy* and assume that Erebus has access to all Vivimancer spells.)

Erebus's ruby necklace acts like a *medallion* of thought (90'). He also wears bracers of defense. The Shield of Erebus will absorb and store up to 45 levels of spells, and can discharge each level as a *lightning bolt* that deals 1d8 hit points of electrical damage (no saving throw allowed). The Sword of Erebus is called *Dwarfskinner* and is a sapient sword with an Intelligence of 11 that can detect good and detect evil up to 60' and can teleport its wielder up to 30' away (3 times per day).

At any one time, Erebus is guarded by 2d6 albino Vexare Beasts (see the **Vexare** in *Brave the Labyrinth: Issue #3*). These Vexare beasts are very special beasts. They walk upright and can fight with weapons. They cannot be goaded into a frenzy, but fight to the death to protect Erebus. These beasts can only be commanded by Erebus.

If confronted by a party and they seem to be gaining the upper hand, Erebus teleports as far away as he can. When Erebus teleports, he appears to dissolve. Afterwards, the party finds themselves a target of the Vexare race. If members of the party are captured by Erebus, he tortures them to death as noted above.

## **ELF VARIATIONS**

#### by Gavin Norman

"There are other worlds than these, and the race of elves has visited them all. . ." —Heltariion the Starseeker

These elf variations may be used in addition to, or as a campaign-specific replacement of, the standard elf race/class presented in the **Labyrinth Lord**<sup>™</sup> core rulebook.

### **Phase Elf**

Of the many species of elves, phase elves are perhaps the oddest. They originate from an inter-dimensional space which is utterly inaccessible to other races, and about which they never speak.

Physically, they appear similar to other elves—tall and slender, with pointed ears and elegant features. It is, however, always possible to identify a phase elf by his or her eyes, which are either pure black or pure white, without an iris or pupil. Their hair also tends to be of unusual hues such as violet or cyan (although this is not unknown in other species of elf).

What makes phase elves truly unusual is their double personality—each individual has two independent but interconnected personae. The two personae have complete knowledge of the other's actions and usually share the same name, but their personalities and goals are often at odds. The two personae are sometimes even of different alignment. On any given day, only one of the two personalities is manifest in the physical world, with the other having shifted into the phase dimension.

A phase elf PC thus has two classes—usually Magic-User and Fighter—one for each personality. At the start of each game day, the player can choose which personality manifests. The phasing of personalities typically occurs at the moment of waking in the morning. When a phase elf switches personalities, the only noticeable change is that the colour of his or her eyes inverts (white becomes black and vice versa). However, at the moment of phasing, the character's personality and class abilities switch.

For example, when a phase elf's fighter persona is manifest, the character functions exactly as a Fighter, losing all spell-casting ability. Likewise, when the character's magicuser persona is manifest, he or she gains the ability to memorize and cast spells, but must abide by the armor and weapon restrictions of the Magic-User class.

Both personae share the same hit points (1d6 Hit Dice), and use the same saving throws (the standard elf matrix). Attack rolls are made using the matrix appropriate to the class of the manifest persona.

Phase elves use the Magic-User experience table, and can advance to a maximum of 8th level.

### **Void Elf**

Grounded members of an ancient star-faring race, void elves are tall, thin, and have skin as black as the void of space. Their eyes also speak of their cosmic origins—instead of a normal circular iris, their pupils are surrounded by a star with a varying number of points.

Some void elves have maintained the knowledge their race cultivated during their time in the stars, while others have regressed to a more primitive state. However, both types of void elf typically worship star gods and cosmic entities that are beyond the ken of other races.

Void elves use the standard elf attack, saving throw, Hit Dice, and level advancement charts. They may use any weapons and armor, and may advance to a maximum of 10<sup>th</sup> level.

In contrast to standard elves, void elf adventurers have no special affinity for magic, and cannot cast spells from scrolls (although they are able to use other Magic-User items as normal). Instead of innate magic, this species has, over the course of countless millennia among the stars, developed psychic powers. Each day, a void elf can use one psionic power from the list below per level of experience.

Additionally, void elves have a special unarmed "nerve grip" attack which they can use to disable opponents. A normal unarmed attack roll is made at a -4 penalty to-hit. If the attack succeeds, the target is stunned for 1d6 rounds.

## **Void Elf Psionic Powers**

1. Telepathy: Allows language-transcendent, mental communication with a target within 100'. Communication can be maintained as long as the character concentrates.

2. Mind Control: With deep concentration (no moving or other actions), the character is able to completely control the actions of a target of equal or lesser Hit Dice. The target can make a saving throw vs. spells to resist.

3. Telekinesis: The character can move objects or creatures up to 20 lbs per level with her mind. The target can be moved up to 20' per round, for up to one round per level. Creatures may make a saving throw vs. spells to resist being moved.

4. ESP: The character can detect the presence of sentient minds within 60', and after one turn of concentration, is able to tune in and read the surface thoughts of one target in range. Lasts for one turn per 3 character levels. ESP is blocked by stone or lead.

5. Psionic Blast: A blast of mental energy which can disrupt the neural structure of a target within 60'. Causes 1d4 hit points of damage per character level (saving throw vs. spells for 1/2 damage).

6. Suggestion: A subtle mind trick that lends persuasive power to the character's words. Affects up to 2 Hit Dice of targets per character level. The character must speak a short command or suggestion and the targets must make a saving throw vs. spells or obey for up to 2d4 rounds.

7. Mind Probe: Placing her hands on the target's temples, the character can delve into the other's mind and look for the answer to one question per round. The target can make a saving throw vs. spells to resist each round of probing. The power lasts for one round per character level.

8. Clairsentience: The character can see or hear (not both) through the senses of another being within 100'. The power lasts as long as the character concentrates fully.

9. Precognition: Grants insight, extending one or two minutes into the future, regarding what would happen to the character if he or she were to take a specified action.

10. Mental Barrier: Protects against all psionic powers, as well as mind-affecting spells such as *charm person, suggestion*, and similar magical effects. The power does not require concentration and lasts for one turn per level of the character.

## Backgrounds and Characteristics

The following charts may be used to inspire some ideas about a phase elf or void elf character's origins and culture. A single background should be rolled—this gives some idea about the character's interests and skills outside of his or her life as an adventurer. Multiple rolls on the characteristics chart may be made to give some additional flavor to the character.

1d8	Phase Elf	Void Elf
1	Quantum leaper	Star Priest
2	Warlock	Astrologer
3	Wanderer	Navigator
4	Temporal Anomaly	Science Officer
5	Dimensional Traveler	Captain
6	Dream Fragment	Elite Guard
7	Legion	Monk
8	Lunatic	Visionary

1d20	Phase Elf Characteristics
1	Has an unusual number of fingers (roll 1d6 + 2, re-roll if you end up with four!).
2	Has hair which animates or changes color depending on mood.
3	Lies as a matter of course.
4 5	Guards its true name with its life.
	Has an imaginary friend (though of course claims it is real) with whom it converses.
6	Finds humor in almost anything, even at totally inappropriate moments.
7	Is deeply superstitious, having a long list of things which bring good or bad luck.
8	Speaks to itself in a private language which only it understands.
9	Showers friends with gifts.
10	Has the attention span of a gnat.
11	Avariciously seeks wealth of a particular kind (emeralds, pearls, platinum, gold rings, etc).
12	Lives by an odd conception of time, often mixing up past and future.
13	Appears to be moving and speaking backwards.
14	Has detailed memories of a past life (possibly as another race).
15	Has a habit of speaking personal names backwards, and will not reveal the reason why.
16	Speaks in a fractured, semi-grammatical manner, preferring silence.
17	Apparently sprang into existence fully formed, having no memory of a childhood or family.
18	Acts on behalf of a secret master or organization.
19	Finds it impossible to distinguish good from evil.
20	Sometimes phases out of existence briefly while conversing.

#### 1d20

#### **Void Elf Characteristics**

- Practices an elaborate form of kung fu. 1
- Can telepathically communicate with "the masters" , who give dubious advice. 2
- Refuses to have anything to do with religions, clerics, or their deities. 3
- Moves as if in zero-gravity. 4
- 5 Can generate minor electrical shocks.
- 6 7 Is a master of psychology, and endlessly analyses opponents and allies.
- Traces its ancestry to another world.
- 8 Values logic and rationality over all else.
- 9 Insists on things (people, items, plans, etc) being assigned numerical values.
- 10 Can navigate by the stars.
- 11 Only have a 1 in 6 chance of needing to sleep each night.
- Pines after space travel, but for some secret reason can never return to the void. 12
- 13 Loves all forms of art, especially incomprehensibly convoluted pieces.
- Is obsessed with returning to the stars. 14
- 15 Can smell ethereal creatures. A most unpleasant aroma.
- 16 Refuses to use a personal name of any kind.
- Is plagued with dreams of space-trauma. 17
- 18 Spends an hour each day in meditation.
- 19 Never dreams while sleeping.
- 20 Ruthlessly suppresses all emotions, but releases them periodically in a fit of insane rage.









## **PRAY FOR US** Patron Saints of the Church of Law and Order

#### by James M. Spahn

"In the Light we suffer, in the Light we strive, in the Light we overcome. Avalen."

-Father Willem Scorn

The Church of Law and Order, based in the city-state of Valenon, has a deep and rich history. In its sermons and hymns there are countless pious heroes who have served the forces of Law and Order. The greatest among these are those few who are canonized as saints.

Saints were once mortal beings who lived such pious and dedicated lives that their spirits have lived on beyond mortality and now dwell in the higher planes of Law and Order where they watch over those who remain faithful.

Many of those dedicated to the Church of Law and Order select a patron saint to whom they ask for guidance in their daily lives. Patron saints typically hold purview over a specific aspect of life or subculture in the world of Amherth.

With the Labyrinth Lord's permission, characters who worship the forces of Law and Order as decreed by the Church may select a patron saint. If the character remains true and faithful to the holy beliefs of the Church, they receive a small blessing from their patron saint (see below).

A character does not need to be of Lawful alignment to have a patron saint, although the vast majority of those who select a saint are Lawful. A character can pray to many saints, but cannot have more than one patron saint. If a character who currently has a patron saint wishes to change to a new patron saint they must spend one hour each day for the next three months in prayer, asking for the patronage of their new saint. During this time, they do not receive the benefits of their former patron saint.

At the end of this three month period there is a 65% chance that the new saint will bless the patronage. character with their Lawful characters receive a +10% bonus to this roll. Clerics (and Paladins, if using the Advanced Edition Companion<sup>™</sup>) receive a +20% bonus to this roll. Characters who are of Neutral alignment suffer a -15% penalty to their roll, while those who are of Chaotic alignment suffer -25% penalty. These modifiers are а cumulative.

Described below are several patron saints of the Church of Law and Order. The Labyrinth Lord is encouraged to expand on this list if they so wish.

#### St. Aleena the Beautiful

Aspects: Adventurers

Symbol: Studded Mace

**Patron Ability:** Worshipper receives a +2 bonus to any saving throw, once per day. Must be declared before saving throw is rolled.

#### St. Alfar the Doubter

Aspects: Elves Symbol: Hands in Prayer Patron Ability: +2 bonus to all saving throws vs. *confusion, geas* or *quest* spells

#### Saint Bando

Aspects: Halflings Symbol: Bare feet Upon a Road Patron Ability: Worshipper receives -2 bonus to Reaction Adjustments with halflings.

#### Saint Beatrix

Aspects: Children, Innocence Symbol: Patched Cloth or Blanket

**Patron Ability:** Worshipper receives a +2 bonus to all saving throws made to resist magical effects that alter alignment.

#### St. Brandon the Navigator

Aspects: Sailors, Navigation, Fortune at Sea Symbol: Sextant

**Patron Ability:** The character always knows which way is north, even when underground or disoriented.

#### St. Callor

Aspects: Death by Illness or Disease Symbol: Cowled Skull

**Patron Ability:** +2 bonus to all saving throws vs. disease

#### St. Clarissa the Wild

Aspects: Animals Symbol: Sleeping Dog Patron Ability: -4 bonus to Reaction Adjustment when interacting with animals.

#### St. Emiliana the Red

Aspects: Purity, Womanly Virtue, Songs Symbol: Unbroken Ring

**Patron Ability:** Once per day, worshipper may make a Wisdom check to detect if an individual is lying. Only female characters may select Emiliana the Red as a patron.

#### St. Garan the Mighty

Aspects: Warriors

Symbol: Helm Over Crossed Swords

**Patron Ability:** Worshippers normally prohibited from wielding bladed weapons may carry a sword which has been blessed by the Church of Law and Order. He may even wield it in combat without breaking his holy vows, if he is a class that is normally not allowed to wield such weapons. If he wishes to wield a different blade, that weapon must be blessed by a highranking member of the Church of Law and



11 O Regeles a la servición de la s Order in the Valenon.

Lawful characters who can normally wield swords may, instead, have a single weapon blessed by the Church. That weapon receives a +1 bonus to attack vs. Chaotic foes in addition to any other bonuses.

#### St. Gregor of Carech

**Aspects:** Merchants, Earned Wealth **Symbol:** Scale and Coins

**Patron Ability:** Able to appraise the worth of non-magical wealth (such as coins, jewels or art objects) after one turn of examination per 1,000 gp of wealth. This allows them to detect counterfeit or forged objects.

#### St. Harald of Plenty

Aspects: Surplus, Bountiful Harvest, Excess Symbol: Horn of Plenty

**Patron Ability:** Worshipper may cast *purify food* & *drink* once per day, even if they are not a Cleric. Clerics may cast *purify food* & *drink* once per day in addition to their normal number of permitted spells.

#### St. James the Elder

Aspects: Laborers and Craftsmen Symbol: Square and Compass

**Patron Ability:** Worshipper selects an area of specialty crafting (such as woodwright, stonemason, or blacksmith). They may identify the quality of items relating to their area of specialty on 1-2 on 1d6.

#### St. Johanna the Maiden of Battle

Aspects: Women and Children in Need Symbol: Crossed Sword and Spear

**Patron Ability:** +2 to attack rolls and damage when protecting or defending children.

#### St. Jon of Naponek

**Aspects:** Those Who Travel and Work Upon the River

Symbol: Crossed Oars

**Patron Ability:** Whenever the player character makes a Drowning check they may roll twice and take the better of the two rolls.

#### St. Josep the Fighter

Aspects: Common Sense, Streetwise, Symbol: Brawling Fist with Starburst Patron Ability: +1 to attack and damage

when fighting unarmed.

#### St. Keth the Scribe

**Aspects:** Writing, Books, Storytelling **Symbol:** Rolled Scroll and Quill

**Patron Ability:** The character may select one additional language which they can read and write.

#### St. Klaus

Aspects: Winter Joy

Symbol: Sack of Gifts Patron Ability: -2 bonus to Reaction

Adjustment when interacting with children.

#### St. Kristoff

Aspects: Travel

Symbol: Compass Rose

**Patron Ability:** When making overland travel rolls to determine if the character is lost, worshipper reduces their chance to become lost by -10%.

#### St. Leandra the Lady of Blossoms

**Aspects:** Life, Fertility, Springtime **Symbol:** Cherry Blossom

**Patron Ability:** +1 bonus to all saving throws vs. disease and death.

#### St. Lucilla the Kind

Aspects: Poor, Sick, Needy

Symbol: Healers Hilt Bound in Cloth

**Patron Ability:** The worshipper may lay on hands once per day, healing 2 hp to the target. They may use this ability on themselves.

#### St. Luwagen of Castel

Aspects: Artists

Symbol: Quill and Ink

**Patron Ability:** Worshipper can identify the value of art objects with a 1-4 on 1d6 after one turn of examination.

#### St. Margaret of Calesto

Aspects: Poor and Downtrodden Symbol: Open Flame Patron Ability: -2 bonus to Reaction

Adjustment with beggars or the poor.

#### St. Mari of Galask

Aspects: Family, Hearth, Home,

Symbol: Loom

**Patron Ability:** Character may always build a campfire in the wilderness, even when wood

is wet or resources are limited.

#### St. Meschil Prophecy

Aspects: "Visionarres", Mental Illness Symbol: Hilt with Sunburst

**Patron Ability:** +1 to all saving throws vs. mind-affecting spells, such as *charm person* or *confusion*.

#### St. Mikael the Victor

**Aspects:** Glorious Battle, Knights, Chivalry **Symbol:** Spear-Pierced Dragon

**Patron Ability:** Character may cause weapon to glow with holy light once per day for three rounds. Weapon does +2 damage vs. Chaotic foes and glows with a 5' radius.

#### St. Mincival the Grand

**Aspects:** Etiquette, Entertainers, Romance, Chivalry

Symbol: Rose or Lute

**Patron Ability:** -2 bonus to Reaction Adjustment with nobles or other chivalric NPCs.

#### St. Pater of Willhelmsberg

Aspects: Family, Watchmen Symbol: Shield

**Patron Ability:** -1 bonus to Reaction Adjustment with City Watchmen or other types of Lawful guards.

#### St. Poul of the Shield

**Aspects:** Redemption, Loyalty to Friends **Symbol:** Claw-Scarred Shield

**Patron Ability:** Once per day, worshipper may bless an ally with a protective prayer, granting them a -1 bonus to Armor Class for three rounds.

#### St. Raymont

**Aspects:** Morality, Law, Punishment **Symbol:** Sword and Scales

**Patron Ability:** If the worshipper suffers damage from a critical hit, they receive a +2 bonus to-hit on their next attack if made against the foe who just critically hit them.

#### St. Ronnad of the Flagon

Aspects: Drink, Food, Taverns Symbol: Frothing Mug

**Patron Ability:** Character must consume twice the normal amount of alcohol to suffer penalties from intoxication.

#### St. Seth the Walker

Aspects: Magic, Death, Secrets Symbol: Bird Skull

**Patron Ability:** +2 to saving throws vs. death.

#### St. Sha-Un of Corrland

Aspects: Discipline, Redheads, Wrestling Symbol: Cloverleaf

**Patron Ability:** +2 damage when fighting unarmed and while not wearing armor or carrying a shield.

#### St. Timhart of Paratime

Aspects:: Maps and Mapmakers

Symbol: Traveling Knights on Horseback

**Patron Ability:** Worshipper can decipher basic information on maps, even if they are in an unknown language by rolling a 1-2 on 1d6.

#### St. Tara the Sailor

Aspects: Sailors on the Open Sea

Symbol: Three Sailing Ships

**Patron Ability:** Worshipper pays 25% less when hiring Seafarer specialists.

#### St. Valen of Vay

Aspects: Truth, Justice, Law, Order

Symbol: Sword in Ground or Sword Hilt

**Patron Ability:** Once per day, a Lawful worshipper (only) may enchant a single target with an *aura of truth*. The target must make a saving throw vs. spells or suffer a sharp pain when they knowingly tell a lie. This lasts for three rounds.

#### St. Waldon

**Aspects:** Peaceful Death **Symbol:** Deathbed

**Patron Ability:** Once per day, the worshipper may bless a target who has been slain within the past hour. That target cannot be turned into an undead creature via the *animate dead* spell.

#### St. Wallis of the Hood

**Aspects:** Thieves, Generosity, Loyalty to the Crown

#### Symbol: Broken Manacle Chain

**Patron Ability:** Once per day, the worshipper may re-roll a failed surprise check, but must take the results of the second roll, even if it is a failure.

## TOOLS, KEYS, AND MAGIC ITEMS FOR ALL CHARACTERS (who like to Break & Enter)

#### by Adam Rizevski

"That chest was already open. I promise."

—Evin Turnbull

One thing I encountered playing *Labyrinth Lord*<sup>™</sup> is that there weren't nearly as many interesting items for Thieves as there were for the core Fighters, Magic-Users, and Clerics. Classes with Thief skills typically spend most of their time (and the Labyrinth Lord's d% rolling) looking for traps, disarming traps, and picking locks. I thought it would be fun to include some specialty Thieves' Tools and magical keys to add some flavor and make that tedious task a bit more interesting.

The items below are naturally aimed at characters with Thief skills, but some tools and many of the keys can be used by anyone who needs a particular door or lock opened (or securely shut, as the case may be). Certainly, in any circumstance where the party does not have a Thief, some of these items would be invaluable to gaining access to a dungeon's vast treasure.

### **TOOLS OF THE TRADE**

The following tools are available for purchase by the characters, at the Labyrinth Lord's discretion.

#### **Crowbar/Prybar**

While not a terribly complicated tool, the crowbar is a staple of low-level thieves, burglars, graverobbers, and Fighters with more brawn than sense. Its use is fairly simple—wedge the bent end into what you need moved and push down until it moves or the bar breaks.

The crowbar grants a +1 bonus to force doors checks. It's also significantly less noisy than simply applying one's weapon, boot, or shoulder to the problem, though not as quiet as a lockpick, of course. If the force doors check should come up with a natural 6 (an automatic failure), the crowbar snaps or bends far out of shape and is useless until repaired.

#### Cost: 2 gp

#### **Masterwork Thieves' Tools**

These tools were crafted by the brilliant artisans employed by the Thieves' Guilds of the Elves or Dwarves. Each set consists of a wide variety of perfectly honed tools made of adamantium and mithril. Flawless crystal lenses and razor sharp wire-cutters make this kit invaluable for unlocking the toughest of locks and disabling the most ingenious trap mechanisms.

Masterwork Tools provide a +10% bonus to Pick Locks and to Remove (but not to find) Traps checks, including magical traps.

Cost: 300 gp

#### **Assassin's Tools**

"As soon as the lock gently clicked open, the assassin vanished inside like a swift shadow."

These tools were created by an assassin cult named the Unseen Brotherhood and are enchanted with shadow magic. Each peice in the set is needle-sharp and very durable.

Immediately after making a successful Pick Locks check on a door, the user may attempt to enter the room unseen, gaining +15% to Hide in Shadows and Move Silently checks to pass through and close the door behind him. This effect must be used immediately or be wasted. This effect cannot be used on the same door more than once in a 24-hour period.

A set of Assasin's Tools typically holds up to six doses of poison as well as specialty tools for applying and deploying these poisons safely. If the character is an Assassin already, the set doesn't provide any special benefit, since he already uses poisons safely. Normally, when applying a poison to a weapon or otherwise using a poison, a 1d20 roll of 1 results in exposure to the poison, forcing a saving throw vs. poison to avoid the consequences. When this set is used for this purpose, it grants a second saving throw vs. poison to prevent damage or death if the user is exposed.

Note that one doesn't receive this bonus when one rolls a natural 1 to-hit with a poisoned weapon and is exposed, only when applying poison to a weapon with the help of this set. If found, Assassin's Tools are 50% likely to already have 1d6 doses of random poisons as part of the set.

Find and Remove Trap checks made to set or create a trap using these tools gains one of the following, without increasing the trap's cost or difficulty:

+15% chance to be set up correctly

+1 to the trap's attack roll

+1 die of damage

-2 to a single saving throw associated with the trap

Cost: 300 gp

#### **Goblin Thieves' Tools**

While these tools are typically made of scrap metal and carved bits of bone, they are oddly durable and reasonably precise. In fact, the types of tools included in this set suggest a focus on bypassing, rather than disabling traps. Due to their crude nature, Goblin Thieves' Tools can also be disguised as little more than utensils and food scraps.

A Thief can make a Pick Pockets check to hide this kit amongst his belongings, although he runs the risk of it being thrown out as garbage if it's found. Whether this succeeds or not depends on the HD of the person searching the Thief's belongings, so the Labyrinth Lord should be sure to make note of the Pick Pockets result.

The set also provides a +5% bonus to a Remove Traps check to disable mundane traps, but no bonus against magical traps. When a mundane trap is disabled, the Thief may make a separate Remove Traps check at half the normal chance of success in order to bypass the trap. Failing the check just means that the trap was disabled, but the Thief cannot bypass it. Success means the Thief and his allies can bypass the trap, and the Thief can arm it again in no time. He can also disarm or bypass the trap later without making an additional check.

Cost: 40 gp

#### **Spellthieves' Tools**

Created by the shadowy Conclave of Spellthieves, these tools make it very easy for a Thief with a talent for magic to safely break into any location protected by magical wards and steal its secrets. Spellthieves' Tools grant a +10% chance to find and disarm magical traps, even ones that would normally activate as soon as they are read.

Once per day, the Thief may also expend any prepared 3rd level spell in order to mimic a *knock* spell.

A special crystal eye-piece included with the

set can be used to produce a *read magic* effect at will.

Cost: 500 gp

## SINGLE-USE PICKS AND KEYS

All of these items either break or lose their magical charge once they've been used. This means that they're relatively cheap and easy to make.

#### **Beginner's Pick**

This apprentice's pick is skillfully designed to be forgiving and easy-to-use. When used on any lock, the Pick Locks attempt can be made four times instead of the normal three times. Whether the lock is opened successfully or not, after four attempts, the pick is blunted and becomes useless.

#### **Catburglar's Ease**

The handle of this key resembles a long, smiling cat with a curved tail. When this magical key touches a pane of glass no larger than 5'x5' and of ordinary thickness, it causes the pane to vanish for one turn (10 minutes). The pane reappears when the time has expired, no matter what is inside the frame at the time, so a Thief must be careful not to push his luck.

The key can be used twice before it snaps in two, so if the thief takes longer than ten minutes inside a location, the key must be used again to make his escape.

If the window is larger than 5' x 5', an appropriately sized piece of glass vanishes, but the window shatters under the stress.

#### **Crusader's Key**

This thick, ornate key is made of gold-plated bronze and is covered in runes of divine protection and free movement. When touched to any portcullis or gate, the key's magic reduces the portcullis or gate's weight to that of a wooden door for three turns. This makes it much easier for a single person to lift. Keep in mind that complex locks or bars might continue to hinder attempts to get through.

#### **Door to Nowhere**

This enchanted key is made of mithril and quicksilver and looks thin enough to snap with your thumb and forefinger, but it is actually quite strong. It was made by fey beings who were curious of mankind, but cautious enough to desire a deceptively quick getaway.

When placed in the keyhole of any door and turned, the key turns to dust and the door becomes a portal to a small pocket dimension, much like the space provided by the *rope trick* spell. This pocket dimension holds up to five humanoid creatures and appears to be a riot of bright, ever-shifting colours and light in all directions, but the floor is solid. Characters can stay in this space for up to six hours before being ejected through the same door in the direction from which they entered.

While the door is closed, only the handle or knob appears to remain on the inside of dimensional space. If the door is opened again from the outside, it works normally as expected.

Exiting the Door to Nowhere requires the original door to be closed before being opened again. If the door is purposefully left open or blocked, the person inside holding the handle knows this as soon as he touches the doorknob or handle, but does not know the specific nature of the blockage as one cannot see out of a Door to Nowhere. If there's nothing blocking it, the door can be pulled closed from inside with a tug, then opened again. If the door cannot be closed or if the door, doorframe, or both are removed, those inside the extra dimensional space are ejected into the nearest open space from where they entered the Door to Nowhere when time runs out. Once the door is opened again from the inside and the occupants have left the Door to Nowhere, the spell ends, even if there was time left.

At the Labyrinth Lord's discretion, doors that are locked, stuck, barred, *arcane locked*, or otherwise prevented from opening normally, and doors that are very small, very large, or otherwise of a strange shape or composition are ineligible for a Door to Nowhere unless those impediments are removed or a different door is selected. In that case, the key simply doesn't work. Under normal circumstances, when a Door to Nowhere is exited, the door returns to its original state, whatever that might be. So an *arcane locked* door might be opened by a Door to Nowhere key, but as soon as the spell ends, the door is once again shut and *arcane locked*.

#### **Naturalist's Key**

This twig has been grown or magically bent by a Druid into the shape of a key. The key can be put into the lock of any unlocked wooden door or chest. Doing so warps the wood and causes the door or chest to become quite stuck. The key becomes a part of the wood and cannot be removed, but it can be turned by its owner, which unsticks the door or container again. Otherwise, only by destroying the object can it be opened.

Forcefully removing the lock or breaking the key causes the door or container to become permanently stuck. If this key is used on an entirely metal door or metal chest, the door or chest is permanently stuck and the key cannot be turned.

#### **Pick of Fortune**

Some Thieves believe in luck and others believe they make their own luck. These picks have been passed down through the years by successful thieves until they were enchanted to provide a measure of luck to whoever possessed them.

So long as a pick of fortune is held in one hand, it improves the chance of success for any single Thief Skill (except Hear Noise) by +20%. This can raise the range of success above 100%, guaranteeing success. Using this ability requires little more than a mental command and a will to succeed.

Once used, the pick becomes mundane.

#### **Trickster's Key**

These were once mass-produced by a gnome Thief and Illusionist named Froogal Pendashawl as gifts to colleagues during parties. Most were used to confound guests trying to leave the gnome's home at the end of night. Contests were often held to see how long a partygoer could prevent a guest from leaving.

Each key is made of gold-plated copper and inscribed with a few simple runes. When placed

in a keyhole and turned, the user rolls 1d12 for a single effect:

- 1. The door's handle or doorknob, keyhole, and hinges appear to be on the opposite side (that is, left to right and vice versa).
- 2. The door appears to have no handle, doorknob, or keyhole on any side.
- 3. The door becomes *invisible* until someone tries to move through it or knocks on it.
- 4. The door's handle or doorknob grows a *magic mouth* and speaks a predetermined phrase up to ten words long.
- 5. The door's handle or doorknob appears to grow a mouth full of sharp teeth and tries to bite whoever touched it. The mouth attacks as a 3rd-level Fighter and does 1d4 hit points of illusionary damage (that is, once disbelieved, all damage incurred vanishes).
- 6. The door's handle or doorknob appears to move to a random location on the door just before being grasped. This effect occurs for 2d4 rounds.
- 7. The door is *arcane locked* and has a *magic mouth* effect. The *mouth* asks the person at the door what the most embarrassing thing to happen to him was. No matter what the reply is, the *arcane lock* vanishes as the *mouth* laughs manically.
- 8. When the door's handle or doorknob is gripped, the victim must make a saving throw vs, paralyze to avoid being unable to move (and unable to let go of the door) for 1d4 rounds. His hair stands on end comically during this period.
- 9. When opened, the doorframe becomes a mirror that shows the room behind and the character sees himself dressed as a buffoon or jester. Of course, the mirror isn't there and can be passed through.
- 10. When opened, the user is presented with a very convincing image of being a mile above his present location. Wind, birds, clouds, and so on are very realistic. If the

victim wasn't paying attention, he might walk out before realizing his situation and think he is falling. If he fails a saving throw vs. spells, he'll be unconscious for one turn because of fright.

- 11. When opened, the user is presented with the image of a long hallway with a minotaur charging down the hall at him. The image is very convincing—the sound of the minotaur's hooves, his war cry, and the vibration of the ground beneath the victim's feet all seem very real. If the door is left open, of course, the image of the minotaur vanishes once it reaches the doorframe.
- 12. The key's user can choose an effect or come up with one of their own. The Labyrinth Lord has the final say on any suggestions. As a general guideline, they should be non-lethal, non-damaging, and simply try to impede the opening of this particular door.

Most of these effects may be disbelieved or avoided with a successful saving throw vs. spells, but only once the illusion is interacted with. Once an illusion is seen through, triggered, or successfully bypassed (often by opening the door and walking over the threshold), the key's effect ends.

Once used and removed from the lock, the key becomes a useless and twisted piece of copper.

## MAGICAL LOCKPICKS AND KEYS

These items are permanent magic items. They are much more expensive to make and much rarer to find.

#### **Giant's Lockpick**

Named as something of a joke, a *Giant's Lockpick* is a thick granite key about a foot long and weighs about 10 lbs—far too large to fit in any conventional lock. One end is round and blunt and covered in deep notches and the other has a handle big enough to put one's hand into.

Two times per day, when held by the handle, pointed towards a door, and a command word

bellowed (usually something simple like "OPEN!" or "GROND!"), the stone key increases in size and weight to become about six feet long and eight hundred pounds. At that point it has essentially become a battering ram that moves on its own (so the user should remember to let go) at great speed towards the targeted door and smashes into it, with a force doors check as if it had a Strength of 19.

The Giant's Lockpick stays in this form until a second command word is used. In the meantime, it can be picked up and used normally as a battering ram.

If someone is standing between the *Giant's Lockpick* and the door, the Labyrinth Lord should make an attack roll (as a 6th-level Fighter) that, if it hits, deals 3d6+4 damage.

#### **Skeleton Key**

This rare key is made by a Master Locksmith from the fingerbone of a Prince of Thieves. It increases the user's Pick Locks skill to 99% and automatically disables any nonmagical lockbased mechanical trap if that check succeeds. (A lock-based mechanical trap is one that is triggered when a lock is picked, turned, or unlocked.)

Once per day, turning the key in a lock also acts as a *knock* spell. This can be used after the lock has already been picked or to guarantee its success.

#### Spy's Scope

This ornate key is made of green jade and features a very realistic eye painted on the handle. The key has a peculiar *silence* effect that surrounds it at a radius of about four inches. This means it can be placed and turned in a lock completely silently.

Twice per day, when turned inside a lock, the bearer may choose to replicate the effect of a *clairvoyance* spell with the 'eye' of the spell being the keyhole on the opposite side of the door. The 'eye' is invisible, has natural darkvision, and can be turned in any direction via a mental command, but cannot otherwise move from that spot. Sound, however, is not trasmitted, but a Thief character might be able to employ his Hear Noise ability at the same time.

## WEREWULFS AND FAMILIARS

#### by Keith Kilburn

"I'm gonna need a bigger axe. . ."

-Tharn of Nurblik

## **Dire-Werewulf of Nurbilk**

No. Enc.: 1 Alignment: Chaotic Movement: 210' (70') Armor Class: 4 Hit Dice: 6+4 Attacks: 3 (claw/claw/bite) Damage: 2d4+2/2d4+2/1d6 Save: F6 Morale: 9 Hoard Class: XX XP Value: 2,480

A Dire-Werewulf of Nurbilk is an extra-large bipedal lycanthrope, that looks as though it was either bred from hill giant stock or was in fact a hill giant turned werewolf. The creature stands between 8-10 feet tall depending on who is describing it and is wide enough that two men could stand abreast of one another and still have room to fight it. The beast is indigenous to the Nurbilk province which is mostly hilly farmlands and forested regions. It has black fur, gleaming red eyes, and large cavernous like jaws with a tremendously powerful bite that can rend armor and kill a lesser man trapped with one bite.

A Dire-Werewulf of Nurbilk surprises on a roll of 1-3 on 1d6. It is capable of three attacks in any given round. Two are from its claws which have been known to rend chainmail when they strike a blow. The last it reserves for creatures that get too close and consists of a bite capable of tearing flesh from bone.

Any human bitten by the Dire-Werewulf of Nurbilk for damage equal to or greater than 50% of their total hit points, but not killed or consumed by said creature, is inflicted with lycanthropy. Demihumans must make a saving throw vs. poison or be killed from the ravages of the disease. Even if they succeed in making the saving throw, the demihuman in question walks away from the encounter with a wound that never heals correctly and is always painful or tender to the touch. Humans can be cured by a *cure disease* spell, but suffer similar afflictions.

Like all lycanthropes, dire-werewulfs may only be hit by silver or magical weapons.

A Dire-Werewulf of Nurbilk has preternatural senses that allow it to hear, smell, and see better than normal humans, as if it had infravision. Furthermore, if it stalks prey and they use *invisibility* or an illusion-based spell to cloak their presence (or an item that conveys similar abilities), a Dire-Werewulf of Nurbilk can detect their presence on a 1-3 chance on 1d6 and can attack without penalty.

Dire-Werewulfs of Nurbilk are rural dwellers that prefer forests, open farmland, and wooded areas with access to hunting lands, rivers, or secluded grottos of some sort. What they are like in their human(oid) form is anyone's guess and is open to speculation. They are pack master of any pack they are a part of and have no trouble dominating lesser lycanthropes of all shapes and sizes. A Dire-Werewulf of Nurbilk is usually found as pack master for 2d6 werewolves.

No one knows for certain how the Dire-Werewulf came into existence, just that it was stalking the countryside of Nurbilk and that it killed what it wanted in its hunt for food. Whole heads of cattle, errant farmers, and a few unfortunate children that were caught outside while the beast was on the hunt never lived to tell the tale.

Was it a giant turned lycanthrope, mage experiment gone wrong, or just some twisted perversion of nature? It really doesn't matter, because the creatures have migrated from Nurblik and are now spreading across the Known Lands.

### **Droc-Lamoire**

No. Enc.: 1 Alignment: Chaotic Movement: 30' (10') Fly: 150' (50') Armor Class: 4 Hit Dice: 3 Attacks: 3 (claw/claw/stinger) Damage: 1d3/1d3/1d4+1 + special Save: F3 Morale: 9 Hoard Class: XIII XP Value: 290

A droc-lamoire is a diminutive creature that appears as a 2' humanoid with leathery, bat-like wings, a barbed tail, and sharp, twisted horns. Its skin is a dark red and its horns and jagged teeth are a gleaming white. They come from one of the lower planes of existence, serving dark masters for even darker purposes. Droclamoire speak their own secret language and always seek to convince their master that not only are they more powerful than they really are, but that they are the only droc-lamoire in existence.

Droc-lamoire attack with their clawed hands and a wicked stinger on its tail. In addition to inflicting damage, this stinger injects a powerful poison which is so deadly that those who fail their saving throw vs. poison are instantly slain by it. Those who make the saving throw lose one point of Dexterity for 2d6 rounds. The effects of multiple stings are cumulative.

All droc-lamoire are able to *detect good*, *detect magic*, or become *invisible* at will. They regenerate 1 hit point per round and once per day they can cast *suggestion*, as per the spell. Droc-lamoire are immune to attacks based on cold, fire, or electricity, and resist all other spell attacks as if they were 7 HD creatures. They have an innate 25% magic resistance and can be harmed only by silver or magical weapons. A droc-lamoire can and does use magic items it has pilfered from its victims.

Although a droc-lamoire's body can be destroyed on the physical plane, it is not so easily slain. When its physical form is lost, its corrupt spirit instantly returns to its home plane where it reforms and, after a time, returns to the physical world to resume its work (usually about 1d6 months later).

A droc-lamoire's main purpose on the physical plane is to spread evil by assisting evil wizards and priests. When such a person is judged worthy of a droc-lamoire's service, the droc-lamoire comes in answer to a *summon familiar* spell or through some other type of demonic summoning. They may even choose to appear on their own if the person in question is powerful enough to garner their attention.

While they are technically in the service of this master, droc-lamoire retain a basic independence and ambition to become more powerful someday. Once it has contacted its new "master", the droc-lamoire begins at once to influence his actions. Although the droclamoire maintains the illusion that the summoner is in charge, the actual relationship is closer to that of a workman (the droclamoire) and his tools (the master).

The droc-lamoire confers some of its powers upon its master. A telepathic link connects the two whenever they are within one mile of each other. This enables the master to receive all of the droc-lamoire's sensory impressions, including its infravision. The master also gains the droc-lamoire's magical resistance and is able to regenerate just as the droc-lamoire does. While the droc-lamoire is within telepathic range, the master acts as if he were one charater level higher than his actual level. Conversely, if the droc-lamoire is more than a mile away, the master acts as if he were one character level lower. If the droc-lamoire is killed, the master instantly loses four character levels, although these can be regained in the usual manner.

### Ghaimean

No. Enc.: 1 (2d12) Alignment: Neutral Movement: 60' (20') Fly: 240' (80') Armor Class: 2 Hit Dice: 2 Attacks: 1 (claw or breath weapon or stinger) Damage: 1d6+2 or 1d10+5 or 1d3 + special Save: MU2 Morale: 9 Hoard Class: XIX XP Value: 83

Ghaimean are a species of small flying lizards that resemble miniature dragons and come in a variety of color hues. They make their lairs in the hollows of fallen trees or in large caves, often dwelling amongst pixies, sprites, and other forest folk. They are playful creatures whose personality is very catlike. They have magical powers that they can share with others, so they are often sought as companions.

A ghaimean has fine scales, sharp horns, and razor-sharp teeth. Its tail is about 2 feet long (longer than the ghaimean itself), barbed, and very flexible. Ghaimean are intelligent and understand 1d8 different languages. Although they cannot speak, they can communicate via a limited form of telepathy, conveying emotions and simple words. Ghaimean vocalize animallike noises such as a rasping purr, a hiss, or a growl.

A ghaimean can deliver a vicious bite with its small jaws, but its primary weapon is its stinger-equipped tail. The creature can strike with lightning speed, gaining a +4 bonus to attack rolls. Any creature struck must make a saving throw vs. poison or become violently ill, with all attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks suffering a -4 penalty. Ghaimean also have a fiery breath weapon and while not nearly as potent as those used by the great drakes, the ghaimean's breath still does 1d10+5 hit points of damage and sets combustible items aflame (No matter the color hue, a ghaimean only spits fire).

Ghaimean have a chameleon-like power that allows them to adjust their coloration to blend with their surroundings. They can blend into any typical forest background with a 75% chance success, becoming almost invisible to detection by normal means. Ghaimean have infravision with a 60' range and can *detect invisible*, as per the spell.

Ghaimean are omnivorous, but prefer to eat meat, raw if they have to, but cooked is much better. Their diet consists chiefly of rodents and birds, with occasional fruits and berries. Ghaimean strangely have a 'sweet-tooth' and have been known to raid bakeries and make off with chocolates and pies.

In the wild, ghaimean live solitary lives, protecting small hoards in their nests. These "treasures" consist of whatever shiny objects they can retrieve or steal from unsuspecting creatures they deem to be evil.

Ghaimean have a lifespan of 25-40 years. They gather to mate once every two to three years, in early spring, and gatherings of dozens of ghaimean are not uncommon. After mating, males and females separate. Females lay speckled brown eggs in clutches of two to twelve which hatch in mid-summer. Females raise the young by themselves, assuming that some natural predator doesn't manage to gain access to the clutch of eggs.

Ghaimean hibernate in winter; the young leave the nest in spring to complete their first hunt. Ghaimean eggs can be resold for up to 15,000 gold pieces while a hatchling is worth as much as 30,000 gold pieces.

A ghaimean very rarely takes a human or demihuman as its companion. Some may view a ghaimean as a pet, but the ghaimean will be sure to correct this misunderstanding. There are two ways to become a ghaimean companion. One is to use magic such as a *summon familiar* spell to summon one. Another way is to find the ghaimean on an adventure and persuade it to become a companion. There are no hard and fast rules for such a thing and the Labyrinth Lord should come up with a suitable reason to bestow such a gift.

A ghaimean willingly obeys its companion, provided that it is well-fed, groomed, and gets proper attention. A ghaimean refuses to serve a cruel or harsh master, even under the effects of a *summon familiar* spell. Anyone who mistreats a ghaimean finds the familiar's shared abilities withdrawn at unexpected times, usually to the caster's detriment.

If one elects to take a human or demihuman companion, it can bestow *clairaudience* and *clairvoyance* at a distance of up to 240 yards. A ghaimean is highly magic resistant (25%) and can transmit this magic resistance to its human companion via physical contact. These abilities are in addition to the normal benefits of a *summon familiar* spell.



# AMPULEX THE EMERALD JEWELER AND HIS EMERALD JEWELRY

#### by Paul "greyarea" Go

"I claim the wizard's necklace. The green stones will go perfectly with my eyes." —Hethar Teemon right before her disappearance

Ampulex the Emerald Jeweler was a powerful mage who, when he was about to die, decided to save himself in a unique way—he split up his soul into jewelry by which he can take over others. The jewelry, once worn, begins a slow transformation of the wearer, eventually replacing the wearer's mind and soul with that of the Emerald Jeweler.

Ampulex lived a thousand years ago. He specialized in entrapment spells of various sorts, and was recognized by other mages of his time as being one of the best practitioners of the *trap the soul* spell, which he used to defeat many wizards in battle. His brilliant green robes and his penchant for trapping souls in gemstones afforded him the nickname the Emerald Jeweler and garnered him many enemies.

Ampulex's tower resembled a javelin impaled in a field near an emerald mine. It was taken under siege by a group of the most powerful heroes of his age. They destroyed wave after wave of monsters he summoned to protect him, while he frantically crafted new spells to defend himself from the advancing forces. Curses and dweomers assailed his home until finally, trapped in his treasure room, Ampulex created a new spell in an effort to defeat death. When the ironbound doors crashed in and the alliance of paladins, mages, and clerics stormed the room, Ampulex finished his spell and disappeared. Gods, demons, and other extraplanar intelligences were contacted in an effort to find Ampulex, but the Emerald Jeweler evaded them all. Nothing was left but to divide his spoils. Ampulex's rings, brooches, necklaces, tiaras, bangles, and other treasures were divvied up amongst the victors and spread across the lands.

Ampulex the Emerald Jeweler became as legend and his vaunted jewelry went from valued loot to family heirlooms to treasured antiques—always emerald and always waiting to be worn.

### **Emerald Jewelry**

Emerald Jewelry is cursed jewelry that has been imbued with the soul and dark magics of Ampulex. They take the form of rings, necklaces, brooches, tiaras, bangles, or other common jewelry, and always contain at least one emerald. If not identified as a magic item, it appears as jewelry worth 800-1200 gp.

An item of Emerald Jewelry acts as a minor *ring of spell storing* that is able to hold only three spells. It radiates magic to a *detect magic* 

spell and its spell-storing abilities can be discovered with an *identify* spell.

When the fifth spell is cast from the item of jewelry, Ampulex's curse is activated, beginning the slow transformation of the wearer. First, the wearer's eyes turn green and she acts as if a *geas* has been placed upon her to find more spells and fill a spellbook (if possible). The character tries to store as many spells as possible in the jewelry item. If the character is not a spellcaster, he or she seeks out spellcasters to load the item with spells.

Within 1d3 weeks, the wearer becomes Chaotic as if he had donned a

*helm of alignment changing* (if the wearer is already Chaotic, then no change is made).

If the item is not removed with a *remove curse* spell after this stage, the wearer's class changes to Magic-User in 1d3 weeks. (This should be done in concert between the player and Labyrinth Lord so that other players are not aware of why this might be occurring.)

If the item is not removed with a remove curse spell, in 1d6 months the player changes into the Emerald Jeweler (this is not a physical change in the character-the character's race, sex, size, and other characteristics remain the same, other than eye color-but the character's soul is subsumed by Ampulex and the character gains the mad mage's abilities).

The Emerald Jewelry that allowed the transformation has the following stored spells now available: *summon monster V, trap the soul, anti-magic shell.* It continues to work as a *ring of spell storing.* 

The reborn Ampulex the

Emerald Jeweler gladly works with his new companions if they allow it. If they seem hostile, he may disguise the fact that he has taken over the new body until he can attack and/or leave them. His mission is to start afresh and create more Emerald Jewelry.

Of course, Ampulex stored his soul among many pieces of Emerald Jewelry, so it is quite possible for multiple Emerald Jewelers to be active in the world.

Emerald Jewelry can only be destroyed with a *wish* or *holy word* spell. Once the character is transformed into Ampulex, only a *limited wish* 



or wish spell can break the curse.

#### **Ampulex the Emerald Jeweler**

AL C(E), MV 120' (40'); AC as original character; MU16; hp 19; #AT 1; Dmg as original character; S 8, D 13, C 11, I 18, W 6, Ch 9; SA spellcasting; SV MU16; ML 11, XP 25,800.

Spells:

1st: allure, burning hands, dancing lights, detect magic, feather fall, floating disc, hold portal, identify, light, magic missile, mending, message, read magic, sleep, unseen servant;

2nd: detect good, detect invisible, false gold, false trap, knock, pyrotechnics, strength, web;

3rd: dispel magic, fireball, fly, lightning bolt, tongues, summon monster I;

4th: fire trap, ice storm, mnemonic enhancer, polymorph others, summon monster II;

5th: faithful hound, hold monster, magic jar, secret chest, wall of force, wall of stone;

6th: *anti-magic shell*, *death spell*, *disintegrate*, *geas*, *reincarnate*, *stone* to *flesh*;

7th: delayed blast fireball, limited wish, phase door, simulacrum, statue, summon monster V;

8th: clone, mind blank, summon monster VI, trap the soul.

### Story Hooks

The following story hooks may be used to introduce Ampulex the Emerald Jeweler to the PCs.

The party finds an item of Emerald Jewelry among a treasure trove and a character who dons it becomes cursed.

The local mages' guild has discovered that these pieces which were once only considered mythical might in fact exist. They hire the party to find one for the guild to study.

A new Ampulex has arisen and is wreaking havoc. The party is a new breed of heroes who rise up to stop his reign of terror.

The party is approached by a local thieves' guild. One of their rogues stole a piece of

Emerald Jewelry and has been acting strangely. The party is hired to investigate.

Andrea the Purehearted has finally agreed to marry Lord Korley and he has given her a wonderful emerald ring to prove his love. As the wedding day approaches, she seems to have taken more of an interest in magic rather than planning the ceremony. . .

There is talk of a dark wizard's alliance forming in the West. These wizards are known for their cruelty and are identified by the green robes they wear.



## BEETLEMIRTH



### How a froggle becomes a man...

Q: What magic item is a must-have for new parents living in the Great Desert of Herth? A: A diaper djinni. . .get it???

## BEETLE REVIEWS THE CAVES OF ORTOK

by Joe Johnston

"I can't swim! I can't swim!"

-Thaden Gemcutter

Megadungeons, those incredibly expansive adventures that feature many dozens or even hundreds of encounters, are a marvel to behold. Like a work of scrimshaw, the hours of labor that went into the construction of such an artifact humbles the observer. Playing a megadungeon is quite a commitment for both the players and the Labyrinth Lord, but the advantage of such a scenario is that the Labyrinth Lord's prep time for each session is light.

Another style of RPG play favors shorter adventures that are loosely connected and can be completed in one or two sessions. The challenge of creating this type of adventure is that it must be both modular (something that can be effortlessly dropped into nearly any existing campaign) and immediately enticing. When an adventure is only ten rooms, the mystery and action of the thing must develop quickly and boldly.

An excellent example of this type of work is InfiniBadger Press's *Caves of Ortok* (CoO), written by Jason Paul McCartan. Part of its **Vignette Scenario** series, CoO includes one wilderness map, two dungeon maps, nine encounter areas, one new monster, and fourteen pre-generated player characters. That is a lot of content for what might be one session of play. The cartography is high quality, as are the interior illustrations. The layout is professional and clean. The content is organized in a clear and logical fashion (this is not always a given). The monsters and treasures are wellgeared toward a low-magic game. This is a fantastic value, especially considering that it is sold under the Pay What You Want model.

#### **Into the Grotto**

The adventure of CoO is wonderfully Old School. Here is the flavor of the setting:

An evil force infests an isolated stretch of coastline, perhaps menacing the locals. Should nosy adventurers investigate the area, they notice from the overlooking cliffs a repulsive and bone-chilling 20-foot tall statue of an ancient alien sea god brooding malignly on a small and vicious rocky island in the ill-favored grotto that is the locus of the adventure. This volume of water is also known to host all manner of hostile giant wildlife, quite apart from whatever has recently moved in.

Additionally, those with an interest in arcane trinkets have no doubt heard the persistent rumor that the long-dead and evilly famed mage Ortok created a treasure cache of his most puerile dweomercraft in this very area. Sane persons, on hearing such details, would obviously avoid the gods-forsaken strand entirely.

All this atmosphere is merely the prelude to the real adventure!

To add more grist to the mill of player imagination, CoO includes a list of 20 rumors that do more to obfuscate than clarify the situation at the sea cliffs.

#### Is this just The Final Enemy Lite?

While this review attempts to be coy about the specific nature of the threat found in the sea caves, gray-bearded grognards will no doubt draw comparisons between CoO and the TSR product *The Final Enemy*, written by Dave Browne and Don Turnbull, which was the concluding module to the very excellent Saltmarsh series. Both are coastal adventures featuring similar threats. Both are adventures for character levels 3-5.

However, Browne and Turnbull wrote an adventure that is composed mostly of a frontal assault on a heavily fortified enemy that takes place underwater. The flavor of CoO is a little less tactical and a lot more personal. What is more, Ortok's cache of magical loot is quite unknown to the primary antagonists.

This module leaves the question of what it means to successfully steal the treasure of a time-traveling, reality-transcending mage unanswered. An educated guess is that little good will come to the PCs for doing so.

Another important aspect of CoO is the bounty of non-combat puzzles that the PCs must overcome. There are few enough nonmelee challenges in regular-length adventures. Finding that nearly a third of the encounters in CoO require player problem-solving is outstanding.

#### **System-Specific Conversions**

InfiniBadger provides versions of CoO for several fantasy RPG retroclones, including Labyrinth Lord<sup>™</sup>. Because of this, there is a mild "advanced" flavor to both the monsters and the pregen character roster. The main villains are found in the Advanced Edition Companion<sup>™</sup> rulebook. For those who favor pure "basic" fantasy rules, this may cause some small speedbumps. However, the AEC provides wonderfully compatible monsters to the basic game and descriptions of PCs that include race can be interpreted merely descriptive as information and have no in-game consequences.

#### Small Nits

A few small critiques of this excellent product follow below, in the spirit of enhancing this already great product.

Although illustrations are notoriously expensive, the following few would have been welcomed: a depiction of the giant statue on the island and an in-game picture of the room with colored tiles for the PCs. The first would be a great way to set the mood for the location. It might even make a superior cover to the existing rather generic coastline graphic. The second would help game play, much like the illustrations included in TSR's *Tomb of Horrors*.

The solution to the puzzle in room #8 does not appear to be very obvious or hinted at through clues in the rest of the adventure. This complaint is obviously subjective and perhaps other players will find puzzles of this nature to be common and manageable. As always, a careful reading of the adventure is strongly advised.

Finally, the issue of how to manage PCs drowning is raised by encounters in this adventure, but rules for such are not explicitly cited or provided. Some custom table or ability check in the text that prevents the Labyrinth Lord from digging out the rule would be welcome. Failing that, merely citing the existing rules in the current RPG system of choice would be an acceptable solution. In the case of **Labyrinth Lord**™, page 46 of the of core rulebook will be of considerable help.

Again, these complaints are small and mostly trivial observations of an otherwise excellent product.

#### Conclusion

This is a great playing aid for any Labyrinth Lord who wants to extend an existing adventure or merely throw together a one-session game. CoO provides enough hooks that it could be extended into several sessions worth of RPG fun or tied into a larger campaign. If this is an indication of where InifiniBadger wants to take its **Vignette Scenario** series, the future is bright for us all.

CoO proves that great adventures can come in small packages.

## **EYE OF TERROR** (an excerpt from the *Time of the Dying Stars*)

by Peter C. Spahn

Dolmvay. The White City. The City by the Sea. The shining capital of the Duchy of Valnwall and the birthplace of the Church of Law and Order. The city had long been a bastion of light and goodness in the civilized world. Its faith and mettle were about to be tested as never before.

Allar mor Vandus spat upon the ground and cursed. The moon was full in the sky as he stood beneath the iconic Son of Sons monument and gazed out over the sleeping city. Lights from streetlamps and open windows twinkled like stars in the night sky. The walled fortress of the Ducal Palace and the holy city of the Valenon shone bright like jewels in a crown, reflecting off the waters of the River Dolm which divided the city in two before emptying into the sea. Dozens of ships were moored along the river and dozens more could be seen just off the shore in King's Bay.

A chill wind whipped through Allar's robes. The Son of Sons was an enormous stone tribute to the enemy, the great St. Valen of Vay, Champion of the Old World and founder of the Church of Law and Order. The statue depicted St. Valen kneeling before his fabled sword which was thrust into the ground before him, symbolically marking the boundary between Law and Chaos.

Allar was a servant of that Chaos. A disciple of the darkness that devoured the weak and gave men the will to live and fight and be strong. Soon, very soon, Dolmvay would be reborn. Its rulers would be toppled. Its churches razed. The light that had burned for centuries would be extinguished as the city was forged anew in the fires of Chaos and Destruction. And Allar mor Vandus would be the keeper of that flame.

Allar retrieved a small bottle from a thong around his neck. Imbued with dark magic, the bottle felt heavy in his hand. It was made of smoked glass and filled with brine, and a single human eyeball floated inside. Allar blew upon the bottle and watched as blood-red lines streaked across the eye's white surface.

A silent shadow moved in the darkness at the base of the monument and Allar felt a chill wash over him. *He* had come.

"Master," Allar said as he took a knee and bowed his head.

"Arise, priest. I have no time to waste on ceremony."

Its voice was gravely and deep, and reverberated in a way that pained the ears. Allar did not know if the movement of its wide, toothy mouth matched its words. He suspected that at least part of its speech was telepathic, but he dared not look directly at it for fear of gazing into one of its many eyes---the enormous one in the center of its rounded body or the dozen or so others that blinked at him from the ends of quivering stalks.

It was called Oxxolu the Allseeing, and it was one of the few beings in this world that Allar truly feared. In truth, Allar did not know if it was even *of* this world. Legends said that the Eyes of Terror, as they were known, had come to Amherth long ago to enslave the race of men.

Allar stood and faced it, keeping his eyes averted. Oxxolu hovered before him, making him feel small in its presence.

"You curse the very city you would rule," it said.

"Not the city, my lord. Only those who govern it by sword and prayer and rule of Law."

"The Law and Order of a Church you once willingly served."

Allar shook his head. "Those days are long past. I serve only you now. The Church's corruption and weakness have caused this once-great city to fall to decay. I dream of a city, a kingdom, a *world* grown strong in the Darkness of blessed Chaos."

"These dreams must wait. The Time of the Dying Stars approaches and we are still woefully unprepared. The Pral Voreg?"

"I have located it, my master, though it cost me much. It may be the last of its kind left in the hands of men. It lies in the treasure house of a merchant named Henri don Tergil."

"Why? Why is it not here?"

"This Don Tergil is a strange man. His family has long been a friend to elves and dwarves and other lesser races. His manor home is guarded by magical wards to repel even the strongest priests of Chaos. Recovering the Pral Voreg requires skill and subtlety. I have hired thieves. The plan is in motion even as we speak."

In truth, Allar had many plans, all layered upon one another. Some were firmly in place. Others were fragile and could be upset by the tiniest complication. All would help him achieve his ultimate goal. He tried not to think about what would happen after the Pral Voreg was recovered. He still did not know the extent of the Eyelord's mental powers and was fearful that his own thoughts might betray him. "Plans mean nothing," Oxxolu said. "Only results."

"You shall have them, my master. The Pral Voreg shall be yours within the week. I swear it by the light of the Waxing Moon."

Oxxolu uttered an unpleasant sound that set Allar's teeth on edge. It took him a moment to realize the Eyelord was laughing.

"Be wary, human. That is no oath to take lightly. Especially now. I shall await your summons when you have the Pral Voreg in hand. Do not fail me."

"I will not, my master."

The thing that was Oxxolu retreated silently into the shadows and was gone.

Allar waited several long moments after the last of its eyes had faded from view. He knew he played a dangerous game. Oxxolu had granted him power and made him nigh invulnerable. No weapon made of this world could kill him now. Oxxolu had promised even more and Allar had emptied all the treasure vaults of Chaos to do its bidding. A small price to pay for the promise of such great reward.

But the Eyelord was no fool. Had it guessed? Did it know? Allar would need Oxxolu's might in the lower depths of Dolmvay's sewers, in the Halls of Vol Arthax where no man had dared to tread for thousands of years. But once they had achieved their goal, once the magic of the Ancients had been revealed, Allar would be the one to seize power. And then he would need the Eye of Terror no longer. . .

**Note:** Download Time of the Dying Stars: Book One at RPGNow for FREE!

*http://www.rpgnow.com/product/140303* /Time-Of-The-Dying-Stars-Book-One-PDF

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If you've never been published before, chances are you've been gaming for years, and you can't roleplay for that long without coming up with some cool ideas. So take some time, jot some of those ideas down, and send them in. Who knows? You might get a call from a big-time publisher. You gotta start somewhere! :-)

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### Issue #6

Issue #6 is currently scheduled for publication in the first quarter of 2015. We look forward to seeing your submissions!

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