

FIGHT ON!

a fanzine for the old-school renaissance

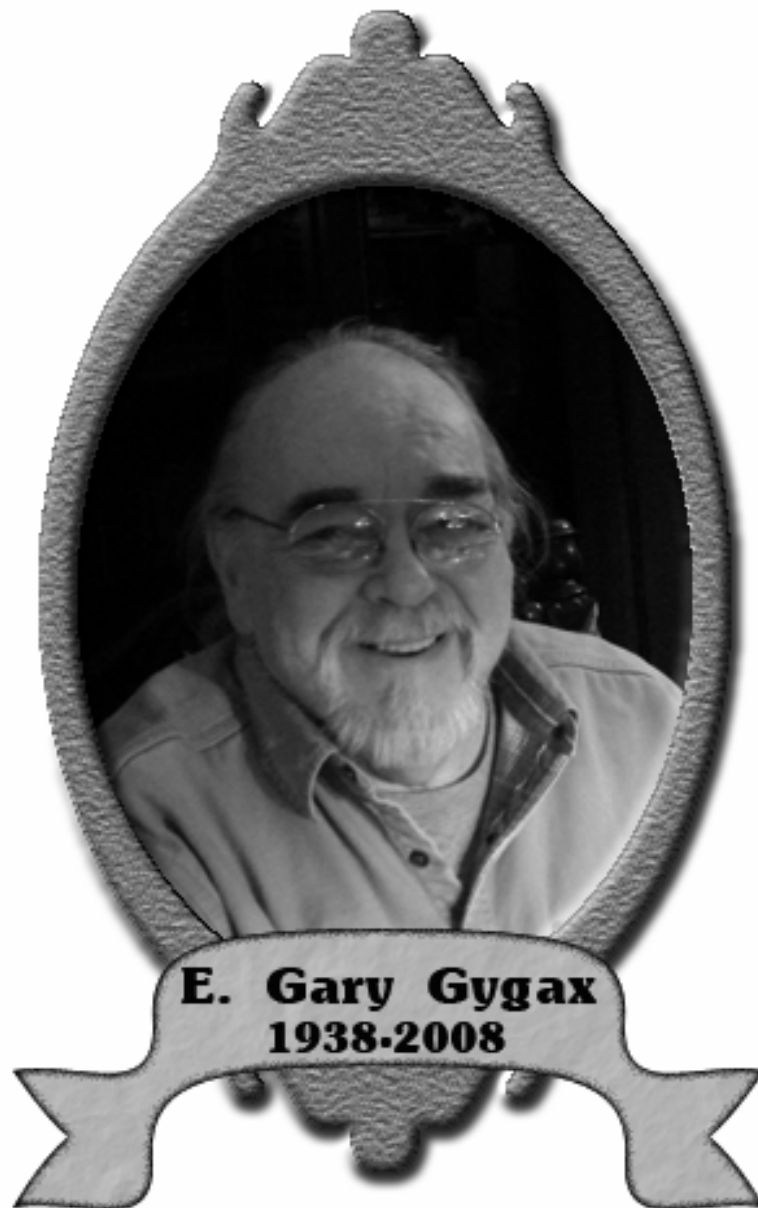


for Fantasy Role Playing Campaigns played with Pencil, Paper, and Your Imagination

Issue #1

Spring 2008

dedicated to Gary Gygax,
who opened the door to wonder



"We have attempted to furnish an ample framework, and building should be both easy and fun. In this light, we urge you to refrain from writing for rule interpretations or the like unless you are absolutely at a loss, for everything herein is fantastic, and the best way is to decide how you would like it to be, and then make it just that way...[W]hy have us do any more of your imagining for you?"

- *The Underworld and Wilderness Adventures*, p. 36

Welcome, weary traveler! Enter here the inn of years gone by: the dark prince yet holds the corner table, seeking mercenaries against the usurper. Perhaps your band will heed the call: I see you now, valiant swanmay in shining mail, melancholy sorcerer with pursed saturnine lips, wild red-haired barbarian, dark witch of the sunken fens – and of course the dwarf. Is it the glory of battle you seek? Justice? Coin - or mayhap a kingdom of your own in the offing? All these are within your reach: you have but to pick up the dice.

Fight On! is a journal of shared fantasy. We who read and write for this magazine are a community of role-playing enthusiasts unified by our love of the freewheeling, do-it-yourself approach that birthed this hobby back in the 1970's. We are wargamers who write our own rules and fantasists who build our own worlds, weekend warriors sharing dreams of glory and authors collaborating on tales of heroism and valor. We talk, paint, draw, write, act, costume, and roll dice in service of our visions.

We game. And you're welcome to join us.

- Ignatius Ümlaut, Publisher and Editor



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Index of Illustrations & Cartography: cover art by Andrew Reyes; *Fight On!* logo by Jeff Rients. Gary Gygax photo by Rhuvein. Interior art by Santiago Luis "Zulgyan" Oría (2, 30), Keshner (3), Andrew Reyes (5, 24, 26), James Maliszewski (8), Stefan Poag (11,14), Gabor Lux (12), Calithena (17), Tomás Banzas "Germille" Illa (22, 25), Coffee (29). We also used public domain art from <http://karenswhimsy.com/> (19, 20) and <http://www.wpclipart.com> (27).

Standard Abbreviations: Core character types as used in many (not all) games are Warrior, Mage, Priest, and Rogue. A character's overall power is Rank (e.g. "The hero of Marchand is a Rank 4 Warrior"). Monsters are rated in terms of Wound Dice, Wounds, Defense Class, Attacks, and Damage as follows: "Four jackal-headed guardians, WD 3, Wounds 15, 13, 10, DC 5, 2 attacks (bite/spear) for 1d6 damage". Many authors will have their own individual approach to the rules and abbreviations will be modified appropriately.

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Thanks, and enjoy issue 1 of *Fight On!*

The Devil's in the Details

first in a series by Kesher

The dice fall, the pencil scratches—a character is built. Strictly speaking only a modest spangle of detail is needed, but the Devil likes to gild with a heavy hand. Therefore, we defend ourselves with the magic number five: five details added to the structure like boons from indulgent fairies; just enough to get going without the weight of history collapsing her into a scripted doom. In this column I'll share the tables I use to create character details in my own campaign world of Otherness. Some are based on race, some on culture, some on class. Needless to say, all are optional. If rolls bring up conflicting results, roll again or work with your GM to invent a solution. First up: Dwarves!

Their thick beards are tangled with secrets. They kindle lights in darkness, their songs echoing down straight paths tunneled through silent stone.

MANY DWARVES (Roll 1d20 three times, or just pick three details from this table):

1. Learn to play a musical instrument from a very young age.
2. Can kindle a light if they need one.
3. With appropriate materials, can build an ad-hoc object to accomplish a simple purpose.
4. Admire anything that has been finely crafted, including poems, games, trade agreements or even arguments.
5. Are morbidly embarrassed by their curse-deformed feet, wearing stone shoes to hide them.
6. Have bald heads, thick beards and rough, fissured skin.
7. Keep secrets extremely well.
8. Wear long-piped hats colored to match their clans whenever journeying out under the sun.
9. Wear jewelry and finely-crafted clothing.
10. Are capable of killing for a cause they believe in.
11. Will keep their word unto death.
12. Love ritual and ceremony.
13. Abhor spontaneous displays of emotion.
14. Refuse to discuss whether or not dwarven women exist.
15. Claim dwarves invented books.
16. Fervently follow the teachings of a particular philosopher.
17. Respect someone who argues well.
18. Find humans to be at times frustrating, but mostly amenable.
19. Find halflings to be extremely irritating and unreliable, but admit their pipeweed is unsurpassed.
20. Are bemused by elves and therefore keep their distance.

SOME DWARVES (Roll d16 (1d8 and a high/low die) to determine one detail from this table):

1. Shun the world in order to perfect a craft or art.
2. Excel as generals or teachers of combat.
3. Become obsessed and dangerous.
4. Long to explore the Sea.
5. Break their stone shoes, openly display their cursed feet and run "wild", rejecting other dwarves.
6. Befriend and train animals.
7. View the other races as all insane.
8. Cannot endure the sun.
9. Search for dark secrets in silent, lost places.
10. Believe the world would benefit from dwarven rule.
11. Can learn a new language in just a few hours, from an able teacher.
12. Abjure all pleasures, shaving their beards, wearing only simple robes and eating stones.
13. Cultivate gardens above-ground.
14. Are deadly philosophers.
15. Are consummate con artists.
16. Know how to make gunpowder.



YOUR DWARF: Choose, roll, or create one additional trait that suits your fancy, subject to GM approval.

Equipment is another good way to personalize characters. In Otherness, players building dwarven characters roll on the following table 1d3 times before

buying equipment with starting gold, thus ensuring their gear has the right flavor:

SOME COMMON TRAVELING GEAR (d16):

1. A compact or collapsible musical instrument.
2. A well-maintained axe, hammer or short sword.
3. A crossbow or throwing axe.
4. A shortcloak and long-piped hat in clan colors.
5. A finely detailed beard clasp.
6. A carved wooden box containing essential tools.
7. A favorite book of poems or philosophy.
8. A broad belt with an intricate buckle.
9. An exquisite lamp, oil and a tinderbox.
10. A pencase and sheaf of parchment.
11. A steel-frame travel pack.
12. A coil of sturdy rope with a grappling hook.
13. A hammer and chisel.
14. A broad-bladed dagger.
15. A well-used beard-grooming kit.
16. A shirt of chain links, tightly interlaced, polished and well-oiled.

It's entirely possible that the dwarves of Otherness are different than those in your world; feel free to change or replace entries on these tables until they work for you. Even better: foil Old Scratch with tables of your own.

Next issue: Elves!

Q: What exactly do cursed dwarven feet look like?

A: Some say the webbed paddles of water fowl; others believe the taloned clutch of the fierce raptor; a minority swears on the cloven hooves of goats. One thing is certain: those who speculate within earshot of a dwarf learn to regret their loose tongues...

Q: What's the dwarven word for gold?

A: Myn.

The Swanmay

a new race by Calithena

Swan maidens, as featured in the ballet *Swan Lake* and Poul Anderson's *Three Hearts and Three Lions*, provide an interesting role for some players. Here is how I handle them in my Advent campaign.

- Swan maidens tend to be both wise and beautiful. When rolling attribute scores, I allow swanmay characters to substitute a 6 for any single other die on their Wisdom and Charisma rolls.
- The special power of a swanmay is to transform back and forth between a human woman and a swan. To do this, they need their feathered shawl, which they receive for free at first level. In swan

form they can fly at a rate of 150 feet per turn and retain full hit points and intelligence, but can't really do anything an ordinary healthy swan couldn't do. This transformation takes about a minute, during which the swanmay is vulnerable and cannot attempt any other actions. (Her attention is totally absorbed by the transformation process.)

- Swan maidens who are polymorphed can't use their power to change out of their new form, but I generally give them a bonus (usually +2) on saving rolls vs. any inimical shapechanging effects.
- If a swanmay's shawl is captured, the person possessing it can treat her as charmed, though the swanmay is in no way fooled about the nature of her servitude. Swan maidens cannot be tricked into giving up their shawls – they will wake up if there's a non-magical attempt to steal them in their sleep – but the shawl can be taken by force. If a swanmay's shawl is destroyed, she loses one rank and her ability to shapechange permanently. Only a wish, divine intervention, or some kind of profound restoration magic can ever again make her what she once was.
- If a swanmay attains rank 8, she has access to a third form – that of a beautiful human woman with swan's wings – in which she can fly as a swan while having access to her normal abilities, subject to the restrictions above. The shawl is not accessible in this form, having merged with her human body.

I allow swan maidens to advance as either warriors or priests as human characters of the same classes would. Swan maidens can breed with humans, with the offspring's race following the parent's. I generally limit them to female players, since I prefer players to be the same sex as their characters, but in a small game I might allow a mature male player to attempt one. Swan maidens are always of lawful and/or good alignment. I don't begrudge people who want to try an interesting character a few extra abilities, but if balance is an issue for you or your players you might consider levying a 10% penalty to rank advancement points to make up for the extra powers the Swanmay receives. Enjoy!

Flexible Sorcery

variants by Jeff Rients, with Jason Cone and Calithena

What can wizards do in your game? The default model for many GMs is to have mages cast spells from a list, either marking them off as they go or perhaps using some form of mana to power the spells. These are tried and true approaches, but sometimes it makes a fantasy game feel more magical if things are more flexible and magic can be used in different ways. Here are a few options that might flavor your campaign.

Spontaneous Magic: Mages in fantasy fiction often can make many small spells without trouble, yet in many roleplaying games they only have a small-to-middling number of fairly potent spells instead. For GMs who prefer a different approach we offer the following: Mages should be allowed to extemporize small spells based on their current spell list. Thus a mage who currently has Exploding Orb of Plasmatic Fury committed to memory could light a candle or campfire without incident; one who has studied a telekinetic dweomer might nudge a box off a mantel; one who can cast Slumber might be able to make someone yawn momentarily; and so on. The possible effects should always do little to nothing directly – certainly no more than one point of damage even in the best of circumstances for example – but player creativity can sometimes give them great indirect effects in play. They also allow your mages to help out in little ways and do the neat tricks that wizards in some books do.

As your mage casts the spells on her list, she also gradually loses the ability to create these spontaneous effects, representing the decrease in magical force that working greater enchantments (i.e. ordinary spells) inevitably causes. If you use a mana point system instead of spells that disappear with use, simply have the minor magical effects cost one mana point each instead.

Counterspelling: When facing a magic-wielding foe a magic-user may elect to counterspell in lieu of casting a spell of their own. The base chance of successfully

negating an enemy casting is equal to a roll of 7 or better on two six sided dice. If the counterspeller has fewer levels of magic use compared to the opponent (use hit dice for spell-wielding dragons, demons, etc.) then die roll is penalized by one pip for every two full levels/hit dice of inferiority. (Thus a rank 3 mage attempting to stop a mighty rank 10 opponent would need to roll a 10 or higher to counter his mighty nemesis' spell!)

A counterspeller wishing to increase the chance of success may use the magical energies locked up in a prepared spell. Erasing a spell from memory gives a +1 to the counterspell roll. If the spell sacrificed is of higher level than the target of the counter then the modifier is increased to +2. If the target of the counterspelling does not actually cast a spell there is a 3 in 6 chance that the sacrificed spell is lost anyway.

An unmodified roll of 12 always counters a spell, while a natural 2 always fails no matter what other modifiers might be involved. All the penalties and difficulties associated with spellcasting also apply to those using employing counterspells. As a rule of thumb enemy magic-users will opt to counterspell 2 out of every 6 opportunities to do so, while magical monsters will only attempt to counterspell on 1 out of every 6 occasions.

Magical Duels: Two spell-wielding entities may opt to use Magical Dueling to settle their differences or they can be inadvertently drawn into such a confrontation when they simultaneously attempt to counterspell the



other. No creature can force a Magical Duel upon another; either both must be willing or they must be drawn in through a double counterspell. Proposing a duel takes but a brief moment of eye contact and if refused, the challenger may still cast a spell or otherwise act that round.

Once a duel is joined the participants each roll 2d6, adding their level in magic use. Spell-wielding monsters use their hit dice instead. As with counterspelling, a memorized spell may be sacrificed for a bonus. Add the level of any committed spell to the die roll. Duels that originated as mutual counterspelling make use of whatever spells were sacrificed for counterspelling. If the two resulting die rolls are tied, the duel is not resolved and will automatically continue into the next round. Magical energies crackle about and between the duelists. Anybody in the line between the combatants and anyone coming within 5' of either participant will be blasted, taking 1d6 damage and being hurled back 5 times that many feet, knocking them to the ground.

For non-tie results the winner of the duel rolls 2d6 and consults the chart below, adding one if they are 5 ranks/wound dice more powerful than the loser and subtracting one if vice versa:

1. Smoke pours out of loser's ears. Loser takes 1 point of damage. Duel continues next round.
2. Loser takes d4 points of cold damage. 10' radius around loser becomes covered in an inch of ice.
3. Thunderclap: loser must save versus spells or be stunned for 1 round and unable to take any action. Automatically deafened d6 rounds, during which time no spells may be cast.
4. Loser catches fire, taking d4 damage each round for d4 rounds or until extinguished.
5. Loser hurled back d6 x 10 feet, taking d6 damage. Damage is doubled if the loser hits a solid surface.
6. Loser drained of d6 spells, starting with the highest level first. If the die roll indicates that more spells are drained than known, the caster loses all spell use for d6 days.
7. Loser zapped for 3d6 electrical damage, save versus spells for half.
8. Loser's mind enfeebled. Roll d6 for duration: 1) d6 rounds, 2) d6 turns, 3) d6 hours, 4) d6 days, 5) d6 months, 6) d6 years.
9. Loser transformed into a random small mammal, bird, or reptile. Roll save versus spells or lose all memories and intelligence.
10. Loser visibly ages and withers, roll d4-1 points of loss to each ability score.
11. Black lightning crackles around loser. Take d6 damage and lose that many levels. Caster drained below level 1 die, but three nights later rise as wraiths.

12. Loser encased in amber in suspended animation. Only a rod of cancellation, successful dispel magic, or a wish magic free the loser.
13. Loser explodes! Killed with no trace of body or possessions remaining. Everyone within 10' takes d6 damage.

Magical Duels may continue for as long as both parties desire. Either participant may break off the duel after the first round, excepting for a tie roll or result 1 on the table above. Most foes engaged in a Magical Duel may take no other actions. Even speaking a few words to comrades is difficult. A two-headed dragon might be able to breathe with one head and duel with the other and a high Rank mage would probably be capable of issuing a simple mental command to a golem or familiar.

The Ring of Twelve

This steel ring is circled by 12 small moonstones. It allows its wearer to call forth up to 12 exact copies of himself, to help in his endeavors. However many duplicates are invoked, a corresponding number of moonstones will flare brightly, then turn a dull and fractured grey. Those called will perform whatever immediate task the user desires, though if still alive when the task is completed they will by no means cease to exist, and their reactions to their originator will vary. Roll 2d6:

- 2: murderous hate
- 3-4: scornful dislike
- 5-6: wary distrust
- 7-8: genial acceptance
- 9-10: sincere camaraderie
- 11-12: devoted admiration

The long-term effects of such doppelgangers and their reactions are left to the imaginations of the player and DM. Once the moonstones are all burnt out, the ring becomes merely a source of amusing anecdotes or, perhaps, painful memories. – *Kesher*

The Idol of Irizandhe

This treasure is a jade idol of a dancing girl, worth about 500 gold coins. If a male character takes possession of it, he dreams of a woman who resembles the idol every d3 nights. As long as he possesses the idol this effect may not be removed; only powerful curse-removing magic or appropriate in-game action (exorcism? a quest to avenge the spirit trapped within?) can end the dreams. If the idol is sold, the former owner will start dreaming about a real woman (PC or NPC) who he now believes to resemble the statue instead. These dreams will not end until the former owner wins the love and loyalty of the woman in question or magic ends the curse; if the owner is rejected before then he must make a save to avoid going permanently insane. – *Calithena*

The Ruined Monastery

By James Maliszewski

“The Ruined Monastery” is a short dungeon locale designed for a party of rank 1 characters. I have assumed that the surface ruins of the monastery contain neither inhabitants nor treasure. Enterprising referees are, of course, free to alter this assumption if it better suits their vision of the place. Likewise, the dungeon has but a single level but there is ample room for expansion, as noted at the end of this text. “The Ruined Monastery” is dedicated to the memory of E. Gary Gygax, co-creator of the original *Dungeons & Dragons* game and an important early influence on my life and the lives of countless others. It’s hardly an exaggeration to say I wouldn’t be the person I am today without Gary Gygax. The only way I can repay the debt I owe to him is by continuing to share and enjoy his creation. This dungeon is but a very small example of my commitment to do just that.

Background: The monks of Saint Gaxyg the Gray were dedicated to the service of a Lawful deity who undertook devotions and good works in equal measure, winning them the esteem and affection of the folk throughout the land. Dedicated to the preservation of knowledge and the battle against Chaos, the monks established a monastery above a series of subterranean caves where foul monsters and other aberrations dwelled. The monks hoped that their presence would serve to contain these abominable horrors and so they did – for a time. While the monastery stood strong, it was a beacon of light in a world of darkness. Pilgrims flocked to it in order both to learn from the wise monks and to gain spiritual edification from their teachings. Novices regularly entered the monastery and its numbers grew large enough that the monks were able to delve deeper into the caves beneath the monastery and drive back the creatures they found there. So successful were the monks that one abbot decided to establish a crypt within the caves themselves, as a testament to the progress of Law even within the very domain of Chaos and as a reminder that this progress came at great cost. In doing so, the monks also amassed items of mysterious origins and magical potency, along with other treasures, all of which they either put to good use or stored away, lest they fall into the wrong hands.

Alas, the taint of Chaos touches all things, even a bastion of Law such as the monastery of Saint Gaxyg. After several centuries and a succession of weak abbots, the monks grew lax and, bit by bit, the monsters beneath the monastery reclaimed the caves. Rather than fight them, as had their monastic predecessors, the entrance to the caves was barred and the monks settled into comfortable laxity. No

longer exemplars of Law, the wealth of the monks attracted the envy of local lords, one of whom assembled a raiding party to take the monastery by force and seize its treasures. This he did, razing the monastery to the ground and looting its contents after killing the remaining monks.

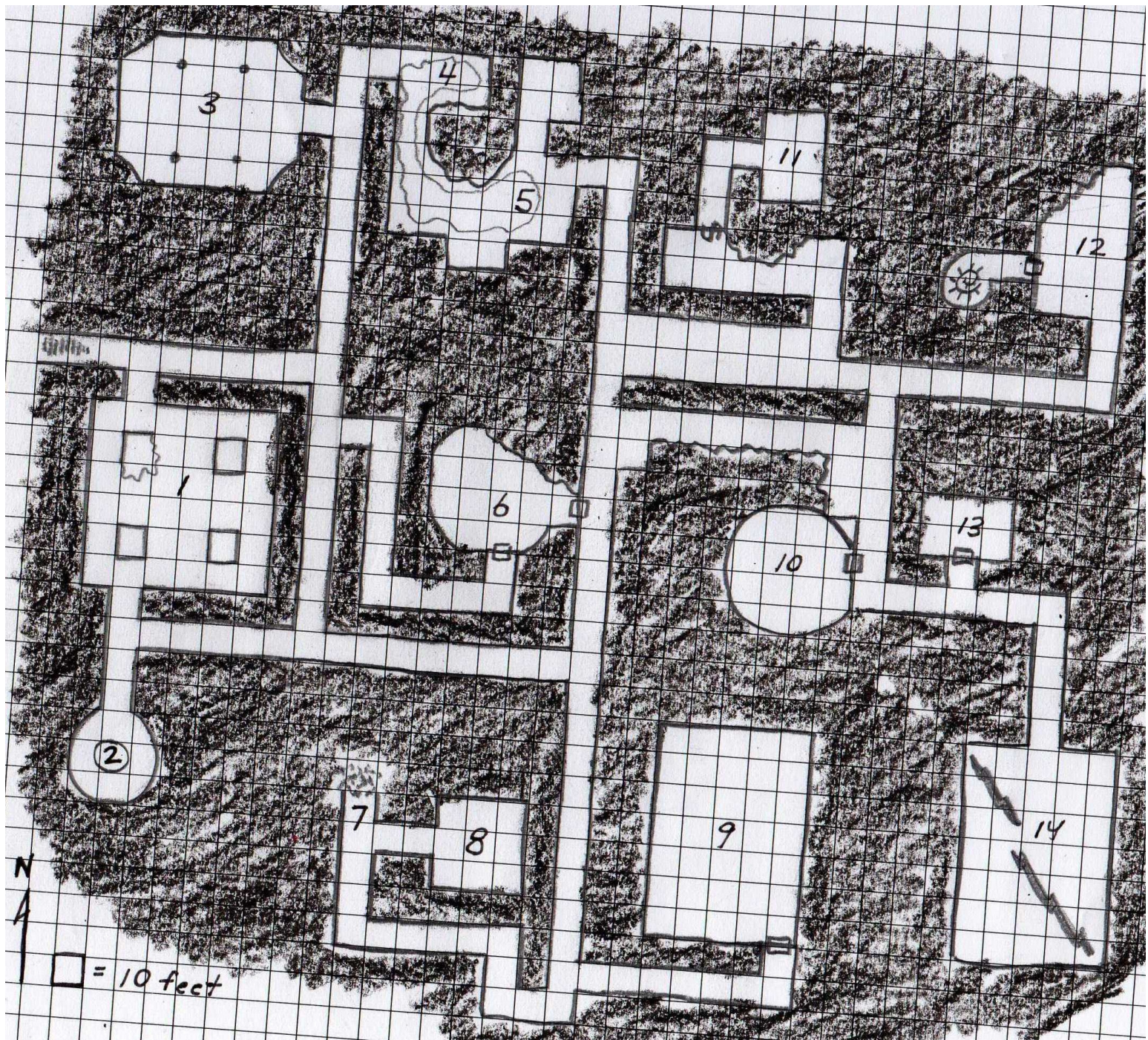
Decades after the sack, all that remain are the rooms and caverns beneath the old monastery. The surface ruins are overgrown with weeds and brambles, forgotten by most of the local folk whose ancestors once benefited from the monastery’s protection and spiritual counsel. Of late, an evil and ambitious young cleric named Melchert has gathered a group of goblins into his service and is determined to explore the monastery’s ruins. He hopes to find a way into the caves beneath so that he might find riches and more powerful allies in his war against Law ...

Rumors: Roll 1d8 and consult the following table once for each character wishing to explore the ruined monastery. Read the result to the player of that character alone. The result represents a rumor the character has heard about the ruins while acquiring equipment and provisions for the exploration. Some rumors are true, while some are not. Those that are false are indicated in parentheses after the rumor.

1. The monastery rests upon a cave complex tainted by Chaos.
2. The last abbot of the monastery was an evil cleric who dabbled in demonology. (False)
3. The last abbot of the monastery died while in possession of a great treasure. (Partially False)
4. Goblins have overrun the ruins of the monastery.
5. The Order of Saint Gaxyg plans to rebuild the monastery. (False)
6. Shadowy individuals have been seen entering and leaving the ruins of the monastery under cover of darkness.
7. The ghosts of the murdered monks haunt the ruins of the monastery. (False)
8. The crypts beneath the monastery are filled with undead.

Wandering Monsters: At the end of each turn, the referee should roll a six-sided die to determine if the characters encounter a wandering monster. A roll of 6 indicates such an encounter. Use the following table to determine the type and number of the monster.

1. 2-5 Goblins
2. 1 Tunnel Wolf
3. 1-6 Skeletons
4. 1-4 Large Spiders
5. Green Slime
6. 1-6 Giant Rats



Map Key: As noted above, the surface ruins of the monastery are not noteworthy, having been thoroughly razed decades ago, leaving behind only a few stone walls and other rubble.

1. Hall of Meditation. Before its ruin, this room was a place for prayer and meditation, devotions aided by the beautiful mosaics and friezes that once decorated its walls. Four large pillars are covered with carved stone bas-reliefs, all portraying scenes from the life of Saint Gaxyg. Most of this pious artwork has been either deliberately defaced or damaged by the sack of the monastery. Two sides of the northwest pillar

have crumbled, creating a fault in the stone ceiling that allows a thin sliver of sunlight to pierce the darkness of the chamber. The fault has also allowed rainwater to pool in the room, which has in turn encouraged the growth of various discolored fungi that dot the floor and walls. The Hall of Meditation is currently inhabited by 7 giant rats (DC 7, wounds 4, 4, 4, 2, 1, 1, 1) that will attack anyone who enters the room. Although they have no treasure of their own, the chamber contains two items of some value. The first is a votive candleholder worth 100 sp either to collectors or devotees of the deity to whom the monastery is dedicated. The second is a lovingly

carved statue of Saint Gaxyg made from a rare wood not native to the local region. The statue is worth 100 gp solely because of its exotic origin, but is probably worth far more to those who revere the memory of the saint.

2. Moon Pool. This circular room once contained a small pool that reflected moonlight from an aperture in its ceiling. The monks often used the room for deeper meditations than could be achieved in area 1. Now, the pool – and indeed the entire room – is coated with greenish slime (7 wounds). Anyone entering the room runs the risk of either stepping on the slime or touching it on the walls. Beneath the surface of the pool is a beautifully fashioned hinged metal sphere with a clasp on one side. Opening the reveals that its interior contains a small silk cushion that is soaked with water after years submerged in the pool. Resting on the cushion is piece of hardened yellowish matter that, on closer inspection, looks like a phalange – the skeletal tip of a human finger. This is a relic of Saint Gaxyg, hidden hastily in the pool to avoid its falling into the hands of those who might desecrate it. In the hands of a Lawful character, the relic grows warm when Chaotic creatures are within 50 feet, while in the hands of a Chaotic character, the relic deals 1-6 points of damage that cannot be healed except through the magic of a Lawful cleric. Neutral characters gain neither a bane nor a boon from touching the relic, though it does feel uncomfortably cold to the touch.

3. Study Room. Monks once used this chamber for quiet reading and study. The room contains the splintered remains of many tables, chairs, and desks, as well as shattered bookshelves and scroll niches. The western wall has collapsed, filling the area near it with rubble. There are still a handful of books and scrolls in the room that have not yet been rendered unreadable, but most are beyond repair. 4 goblins (DC 6, wounds 5, 4, 3, 3) are in the room at present, gleefully tearing up the few remaining legible tomes under orders from Melchert (see room 12). The goblins are cowards and will attempt to surrender to opponents who slay one or more of their number, offering to serve as guides to “secret treasures” in other parts of the ruins. This is a lie, of course, and the goblins will in fact lead anyone gullible enough to believe them to area 7 (see below) to be ambushed by their comrades. Between them, the goblins possess 100 sp and 20 gp. The Study Room also contains a few historical and religious texts that might be of interest to antiquarians. One book makes explicit mention of the caves beneath the monastery. The referees is encouraged to use this book to spur the players to further exploration of the ruins if he desires to expand the dungeon beyond what is

presented here. These books are worth up to 100 gp if the characters can find the right buyer, probably in one of the larger cities of the region.

4. Supply Room. This room once held reams of paper, ink, and quills for use by the monks. In the sack of the Monastery, part of the roof above collapsed and over the decades rain has poured into the room, creating a large pool that extends into area 5. In addition, the water has damaged the writing supplies to the point of uselessness. The room now contains a mound of moist, undifferentiated wood pulp and the ink that spilled and mixed with the rainwater stains the floor.

5. Scriptorium. This large room was the Monastery’s scriptorium. The collapse of the roof wrought great damage to it, crushing tables and chairs. The large pool that began in area 4 can be found in this room. The pool is deeper here and has a decidedly blackish coloration. Despite its appearance, there is nothing sinister about the pool’s water, although it is not potable. The real danger in the room is found in a pile of books located in the southeast corner of the room. The books are covered with a yellowish mold and anyone who disturbs them releases a cloud of asphyxiating spores into the scriptorium. Characters in the cloud (about 10’ in radius) must successfully make saving rolls against poison or die.

6. Workshop. The monks of the monastery did not shy away from manual labor. While many tended the fields and vineyards on the surface, others devoted their efforts to woodworking and carving. This room served the latter monks. Its benches, tables, and cabinets have long since been smashed or otherwise damaged, but there remain a handful of functional tools, such as saws, adzes, hammers, and knives. While none were designed to be used as weapons, some can be made to serve as such, should the characters have need to do so.

7. Collapsed Passageway. This passageway once connected to another room beyond, but the sack of the Monastery brought the roof down and forever sealed it. This fact has not stopped 3 goblins (DC 6, wounds 4, 4, 2) and their tunnel wolf servitor (DC 7, wounds 11, +2 damage) from attempting to dig through it in the mistaken belief that buried treasure lies beyond, which is what the characters find them doing when they enter this area (unless they are in the company of the surviving goblins from area 3, who will speak loudly as they get closer in order to warn their fellows, who will prepare an ambush by hiding in area 8 nearby). Like all goblins, these are cowards and will try to negotiate if clearly outmatched in

combat, promising almost anything in return for their lives.

8. Wine Cellar. This room functioned as a storage area for wines produced by the monks. Over the decades, most of the bottles herein have either been smashed or stolen away, but a few unbroken bottles remain. The vast majority of them have long since turned to vinegar, making them thoroughly unpalatable but not dangerous. A small number (1 in 6 chance) are in fact poisonous, requiring a saving throw to avoid death should a character drink more than a small amount of the rancid wine.

9. Dormitory. This large room once functioned as a communal rest area for many of the monks. The place is littered with the remnants of wooden pallets, as well as fragments of clothing and other less pleasant refuse. There is a crack in the tiled floor that allows a charnel stench to waft into the room from the crypts below. The crack is quite narrow, however; no one – not even a halfling – can squeeze through it into the level below. The crack is wide enough, though, to allow someone to peer through into the roughhewn caverns beneath this level. Should the referee intend to develop the ruins further, he should decide what, if anything, a character might see by looking through the crack.

10. Larder. This circular room contains the shattered remains of wooden barrels and crates, as well as sacks and bags that have at least partially rotted away. The content of these containers is impossible to determine with certainty now, but it's likely they held foodstuffs and other perishable supplies long since gone. The room is now inhabited by a pair of large spiders (DC 8, wounds 6, 5) that will drop down from their webs in the upper part of the room to attack anyone foolish enough to enter it. Within these webs is the desiccated husk of an earlier adventurer who fell victim to the giant arachnids. On his corpse is a coin purse containing 10 gold pieces and a scroll case containing a scroll which wards off the undead.

11. Priest Hole. A magical secret door detectable only by characters of Lawful alignment hides this chamber from sight. Characters of any other alignment who attempt to look for the secret door will simply be unable to locate it or pass through it, no matter how hard they try or skilled they are at finding secret doors under normal circumstances. This does not change even if non-Lawful characters are in the immediate presence of a Lawful character who finds and uses the secret door. The enchantment placed upon the door is powerful enough to keep characters of any other alignment from entering the room beyond. This room is a hiding place where monks

Monstrous Companions - *Calithena*

Fighting bands of monsters can be more interesting when there's a little variety. Aside from the up-powered leaders commonly encountered, many intelligent races of the underworld use servitor creatures in battle and labor, such as the tunnel wolf in room 7 above:

Tunnel Wolf: # Encountered 1-6 (with goblins), DC 7, WD 2, Move 90', Treasure Nil. Everyone knows of the goblin-folk's ancient alliance with the wargs. Sometimes when a stunted warg-child with healthy jaws is born it is not eaten by its mother: instead it is given to the goblin-folk, deep in their caves. The goblins treat it with rare elixirs known only to their strange science, and its body grows long and lean while its head and jaws swell to a fearsome, preternatural size. They use these beasts as tracking animals and cavern guardians in the depths. A tunnel-wolf's head is larger than a lion's, and their fearsome jaws do +2 damage on a hit. Their bodies are horse-length, but low and thin, and they cannot run or charge into combat. A tunnel-wolf will typically be encountered with a goblin patrol, and two goblins will strike with spears around either side of the beast while its savage jaws rend the intruders to pieces.

Likewise, if the ghouls in area 14 are stragglers from a lower level, the horrid Death Maggot might be found among their bone-gnawing compatriots farther down:

Death Maggot: Number Encountered 1-4 (with ghouls) or 2-12 (feasting on a charnel-field), DC 6, WD 5, Move 90'. If encountered in a charnel-field rather than with ghouls (40% if random setup) the corpses in the field will have the following treasures: d20 x 100 copper 20%; d6 x 100 silver 30%; 1-4 gems/jewelry 20%; 1-2 magic items 10%. Bloated white worms the size of draft horses, with great gaping maws full of rotten teeth, death maggots are often found in the company of ghouls. They are undead creatures and thus immune to fear and susceptible to priestly banishment. Halflings and other small characters battling them are swallowed whole if the Death Maggot rolls a natural 20 on its attack; this is not necessarily a disadvantage, as the death maggot's stomach acid only does 1d4 per round, and a small character with a dagger may be able to cut its way out more efficiently without worrying about being bitten.

would sometimes secret themselves in times of danger. The abbot fled here during the sack of the Monastery. A poisoned blade had already wounded him when he fled here for safety. Unable to eliminate the poison, the abbot died here, still clutching the key to the locked door in area 12 that Melchert seeks to open (see below).

12. Chamber of the Master. This ruined room was once the private study of the Monastery's abbot. Most of the northern portion of the room was destroyed in the sack. There is a single locked door on the western wall that leads to a set of stone stairs that descend into the crypts below, although there is no way of knowing this simply by looking at the door itself, which is made of thick, metal-reinforced wood. The lock, while not magical, is extremely difficult to open without the key, which was in the possession of the last abbot at the time of his death (and can now be found in area 11). Spells which open doors will work. Currently within the chamber is the Chaotic cleric Melchert (rank 3, DC 4, wounds 11), the self-proclaimed "master" of the Monastery. He has memorized the spells cause light wounds and protection from good, the second of which he will cast immediately upon seeing the characters. He wears a suit of chain mail and carries a shield +1. Melchert commands 4 skeletons (DC 7, hp 3, 2, 2, 1), which stand guard at the room's entrance and will immediately attack the characters as soon as they enter. Melchert wishes to avoid both death and capture. If either appears imminent, he will try to flee from the room, making his way toward the corridor that leads to areas 10, 13, and 14. If possible, he will hide in area 13 and consume one or more potions of healing, hoping that the characters believe he has entered either area 10 or area 14, where they will encounter monsters that might slay or at least delay them. Should he succeed in tricking them thusly, Melchert will then beat a hasty retreat out of the ruins and not return for several days. When he does so, he brings with him goblin reinforcements with which to continue his search for the key to the mysterious door in area 12.

13. Vestry. This room is where the abbot and other clerics of the monastery would dress before religious ceremonies held in the Chapel (area 14 below). Consequently, the room contains several wooden closets and cabinets that once held vestments of various sorts. Most of them have long since been looted or rotted away, along with that other ritual paraphernalia that was stored here. At the back of one of the cabinets, there is a collection of glass vials, some of them broken and others filled with what appears to be dirty water. In point of fact, two of them are potions of healing. Melchert in area 12 (see above) knows of their existence and will flee to this area to use them if his life is in danger.

14. Chapel. This room was once a chapel where private religious ceremonies were held (as opposed to the demolished temple on the surface, which in the past was open to pilgrims and other non-clerical visitors). The room had been decorated lavishly with icons, carvings, and statuary, most of which were long ago



desecrated or looted. The room is now dark and dank and only the shattered altar and broken choir gives any indication of the place's former purpose. A foul odor emanates from a large crevasse in the center of the room, the result of a shift in the earth that cracked the tiled floor and created an opening to the crypts below. Characters who enter the room must save against poison or suffer a -1 penalty on all attack rolls while in the room. 2 ghouls (DC 6, wounds 9, 6) reside here now, having emerged through the opening in the floor to explore this level. They fearlessly attack anyone who enters the room. They possess no treasure, but their defeat opens the possibility of descending into the crypts through the crevasse should the characters wish to continue their explorations of the ruined monastery. Details of the crypts and their inhabitants and treasures are left to the Referee to determine.

Further Development: This adventure barely scratches the surface of how the ruined monastery might be used as a site for exploration. The staircase in area 12 can reach the crypt level of the monastery. This level is the first of several natural cavern levels infested with undead and other Chaotic creatures. Should the referee wish it, the ruins can be extended downward indefinitely, with each new level more tainted by Chaos than the last and the ultimate source of the taint far removed from the surface and very powerful indeed. Referees are encouraged to use the ruined monastery as a starting point for their own dungeon by adding to it or altering as they see fit.

The Tomb-Complex of Ymmu M'Kursa

by Gabor Lux

playtested by Gabor Acs, Kalman Farago, Laszlo Feher, Matyas Hartyandi, and Gabor Izapy

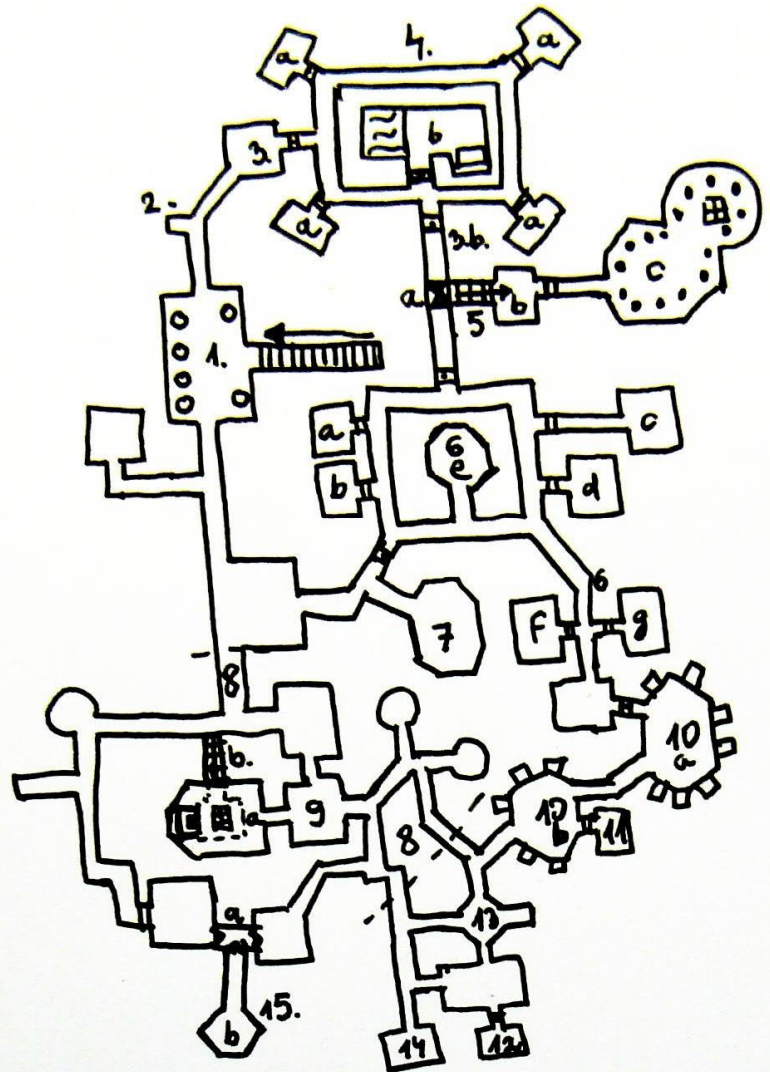
The tomb-complex of Ymmu M'Kursa is located in the lowermost reaches of the undercity of Khosura, a decadent city-state in the deserts of Fomalhaut. This is just one of the multiple burial vaults below Khosura's dusty streets and empty palaces, but its isolation from other areas of the undercity has mostly spared it from the attention of grave robbers... at least so far. In addition to fixed encounters, characters adventuring in the tomb-complex may encounter random monsters (1:6 probability). Roll for an encounter every second turn while the party is moving, or when a noisy altercation develops. Isolated rooms are safe as long as doors are secured and there is little noise; however, if the PCs are careless, 1d2+1 groups of monsters will team up for a coordinated siege.

1. Shadows (1d6)
- 2-3. Skeletons (3d10)
4. Wraith (1d3)
5. Ghouls (2d6)
6. Wights (1d6)
7. Mummy (1)
- 8-9. Zombie (2d8)
- 10-11. Two groups
12. Named undead in tomb-complex leading other monsters (Referee's choice)

1. A vaulted anteroom smelling of dried mold and funereal dusts. Stone plaque, "THE TOMB OF CRYPTS", sunk into the floor (underneath the slab there is a pit full of human bones that claw, grab and bite at investigating characters; six attacks (rank 2) per round for 1-6 damage and try to drag down PC, no treasure). Six decapitated statues of men in togas. If a skull, severed head, etc. is placed on a stump, the statue speaks: "We are the men of Konoth, and such is our thanks", casting a spell at his rescuer: save vs. wands or an invisible sword decapitates the PC.

2. Small vaulted recess, faded orange and blue stucco. Large reddish reed baskets, and a wall inscription, "KONTI MEKARRI". The baskets contain endless coils of yellowed and old linen strips (mummy wrappings). If the coils are disturbed, they spring into action as an animated object, +4 on first attack. Mummy Wrappings: WD 4, DC 9; Atk strangulation 2d6/round and incapacitation unless save vs. petrification is made.

3. Locked black-iron door flanked by two braziers burning with an unnatural yellow flame. The door is



reinforced with interlocking bands of polished brass; these form intricate geometric patterns which spell out "YMMU" in the middle. A poison needle trap is hidden in the lock. b) is identical except there are no braziers.

4. The tomb-complex proper; humid and cool air with a hint of incense. There are four side crypts and a central tomb; each of their doors sealed with a nonmagical leaden seal impressed with the symbol of Ishtar. If but one seal is broken, Ymmu and his 48 guardians attack en masse, but otherwise remain in their resting places

a) Four sealed side crypts, each inhabited by 12 rotting, mummified cadavers whose heads have been replaced with ass's skulls. They exude the reek of the grave intermixed with moldy spices, and attack while braying infernally. Zombie-skeletons of Ymmu (48): WD 2; DC 8; 1d8 damage from claws; turned as zombies.

b) Beyond a tarnished bronze portal lies the tomb of Ymmu. The western half of his chamber is occupied by a shallow pool fed from a copper wall basin (the waters are curative, 1d8 points per day). As the rising mists of the pool mingle with the vapours of a heavy copper censer (fed with scented oils and the hair of dead men), they form 1d6 incorporeal phantoms which attack along with Ymmu; dissipate upon a hit but reform again next round. Ymmu looks similar to his guardians, but wears a moldy-grey burial shroud and his claws are sheathed in golden hellfire. *Ymmu M'Kursa*: WD 8; DC 0; attack with claws does 1d12+disease+special; only hurt by magic weapons, +2 to saves but -2 vs. fire and +1 damage against him per die; if Ymmu rolls a natural 20 on an attack, opponent must roll a save vs. petrification or be turned to stone and a save vs. paralysis or be held (until released); turned as vampire. *Phantoms* (1d6): WD 3 (but only 1 wound each); DC 9; damage 2d4; reform next round up to a maximum of 6; holy water poured into the pool, dispel magic or bless on water or censer breaks enchantment.

Ymmu's burial shroud and misshapen paw are magical. A heavy golden urn (500 gp) by his sarcophagus holds scented human hair, and a golden mirror (400 gp) hanging on the wall hypnotizes characters to attack their comrades (save vs. spell, one time only).

The burial shroud of Ymmu M'Kursa: this yellowed burial shroud is cursed as the wearer doesn't heal naturally and in fact loses 2 hit points after each night of rest; otherwise functions as cloak +2.

Ymmu's paw: this desiccated, misshapen extremity is a cursed +1 weapon which may be wielded by affixing it in place of the character's own severed hand. It inflicts 1d6+1 points of damage; 1d8+1 if used in conjunction with the burial shroud. On a natural 20, it causes petrification and magical paralysis unless a separate save is made against both effects. The wielder of Ymmu's paw doesn't heal naturally.

5. a) The tomb of Ramm. No visible entrance except fresco door on the stuccoed east wall, inscription "RAMM: ENTRY FORWARDS, MESSAGE BACKWARDS". Under the layer of stucco, the outlines of a stone portal are revealed, along with secret panel – impressing it opens 40' pit underfoot. To the west, a smaller panel activates iron skewers hidden in the gaps of the wall (4d8 damage). The way beyond is through a stone plug on the bottom of the pit, which reveals a set of descending stairs.

b) Polished brass door, ram's head in a hexagram, inscription spelling out "RAMM". Faint resonation of muffled gongs.

c) Fantastically opulent crypt of brass-inlaid green serpentine, slender pillars and a gilded dome with a painting of the night sky. Brass gongs continually beaten by invisible hands, and a faint light from ever-burning lamps hanging from long chains... In the innermost sanctum, a large, intricate brass cage made of interlocking puzzle parts (may be carefully disassembled by a rogue as a lock at -20%, 2500 gp value but takes two expeditions to transport above ground) holds an opalesque glass coffer (1800 gp)... Within the coffer, swirling, shimmering mist is in fact the vampire lord Ramm, who is dressed in a robe of scintillant colour he uses against characters once he exits this grave – which he can do through small holes in the glass. Ramm wears a regal purple cloak and robes embroidered in gold with a ram's head, golden slippers and bracers of the same (600 gp). He attacks unless appeased with appropriate gifts or sacrificial victims (even so, there is a 25% probability of a surprise attack). Ramm is utterly inhuman in outlook after his mind has wandered among the stars for untold times, and may not be meaningfully communicated with. WD 8, DC 1, vampire with magic robe of scintillant colours. Ramm's glass coffin holds 2000 gp in gold bars and four potions (roll 4d3):

1. Acid bomb: when bottle's seal is broken, dull green vapours escape in 20' radius cloud; damage 2d4 per round (10 rounds duration).

2. Yellow essence: a heavy gas with the properties of a liquid extracted from the stuff of other worlds. Extremely volatile; this substance quickly heats up without flames, enough to melt metal and burn any organic matter (1d6*10 damage if swallowed or applied topically).

3. Green essence: origins as above; catalyst which turns bodies of water into glass from the surface down – depending on volume, may be enough for a thin crust (e.g. on a small lake; collapses under own weight) or entire glassification (a well or underground pool).

6. A tomb—complex choked with dust and dry mold, grey walls and remains of old cobwebs. All separate crypts are labelled with stone plaques as follows.

a) "THE TOMB OF VORDAK THE DRAGON KNIGHT": dusty black velvet on walls, heavy silver chalices and candelabums (400 gp value total). Skeletal form of Vordak sits on throne in heavy black plate mail +1 and kite shield (green dragon in black field), clutching a decorative longsword... animates when intruders approach. Vordak the Dragon Knight: WD 8; DC -2; 2 attacks with sword, strength/damage bonus as ogre, turned as spectre.



b) “THE TOMB OF TAUNUS WHO IS THREE”: an unusually wide and bulky sarcophagus; looted and no treasure.

c) “THE TOMB OF BERISTO THE GODLESS”: den of multi-coloured drapes, curtains and rugs (all dusty, no value); wight in tattered colourful garments attacks in frenzy. Faintly magical cloth strips are remains of shredded cloak +1. Beristo the Godless: WD 4; DC 5; drains energy; silver or magic to hit, turned as mummy.

d) “THE TOMB OF OTOGOSTER, DISCIPLE OF YOL”: putrid blackness on walls and ceiling; casket sealed with three protective runes (warding glyphs) which may only be safely bypassed by a priest of a good deity (rank 5+). The body in the casket is black and grossly bloated under rotten black clothes; a putrid sack filled with grotesque lumps deposits its load if attacked with cutting weapons. Otogoster is instilled with the divine presence of the protoplasmic god Yol; a colony of slimy, weakly phosphorescent cells resembling frog eggs. Otogoster attacks as zombie if closely examined, grasping character by the neck (+4 on first attack). Otogoster, Disciple of Yol: WD 2 (3 wp); DC 8; dam. 1d8 plus strangulation (see room 2).

e) “THE TOMB OF MINIONS”: octagonal common grave – narrow ledge overlooking pit of dry bones.

Barely audible laments from underneath bones – Vilstin the Moneylender (3rd level rogue), sent here by the curse of a magic-user and unable to escape on his own. A greasy fellow of enormous girth and whiskers, complains constantly of lost fortunes, but promises rescuing party a palace in return for safe passage to the surface... an empty, ruined structure currently inhabited by the magic-user and close to collapse.

f) “THE TOMB OF KERETH RAUTA”: Wraith in billowing robe continuously recites from a black grimoire, reflects all spells and blows directed at self. If interrupted (successful priestly turning vs. spectre or some other method), he drops the volume and flees shrieking through the wall. Anyone touching the book must save vs. spells or be compelled to take it up and continue the wraith’s recitation in his place, withering into a wight in 1d4 hours and a wraith in 1d6 days unless released by remove curse or dispel evil spell. Otherwise, the book contains spells concerning conjuration and necromancy (Referee’s choice). Kereth Rauta: WD 5; DC 3; magic weapons to hit, attack drains energy and does 1d6.

g) “THE TOMB OF GWYLNIN, DAUGHTER OF GWYLNIN”: Heavy iron sarcophagus is decorated with scenes from the life of the warrior-maiden Gwylnin. Inside, no body is found.

7. An abandoned embalming room, with slabs for the preparation of bodies, three badly corroded copper chests holding embalming salts (100 gp value each), shelf of vials (embalming fluid, cause nausea on ingestion, one is deadly poison).

8. Catacomb of undistinguished dead: passages and domed circular rooms are filled with stiff, embalmed and enshrouded bodies propped against the walls in various stages of decay. Some exhibit curious deformations – elongated canines, small horns or other bone irregularities. No treasure, but double probability of random encounters, with additional separate checks if bodies are disturbed.

9. a) Chambers constructed of massive stone blocks, millennia-old. Inscription before entrance reads, “FANAURE”. Metal grille in floor above sacrificial ash-pit. Fanaure, a primitive stone idol sitting on a throne, is a debased and bloodthirsty demi-god with the intelligence and manners of a mentally retarded child. It demands sacrifices and worship in its roaring voice, shaking the earth by pounding on the walls, ground and ceiling like a loosed element of nature. Fanaure is extremely petulant and self-absorbed; he believes that sacrifices are “his due”, and unless someone arouses his temper and makes the mistake of entering his room (which he cannot leave due to his bulk), he is too lazy even to slay a sacrificial being on his own. He has no powers save his semi-divinity. Fanaure: WD 12 (96 wp); DC 0; stone fist 3d10; +2 magic weapons to hit, immunities as stone golem.

b) Stairs lead down to a pit of ashes and blackened bones, victims burned to appease the great Fanaure. A 200 gp bracelet is found under a deep layer of ash, but characters searching will contract a wasting disease.

10. a) Low-ceilinged grey chamber, all but two of the arched exits have been walled over – these lead to small recesses where mummified cadavers are manacled to the wall. All wear large (1' diameter) bronzes disk around the neck with the inscription, “I AM THE SERVANT OF KUTH”.

b) As above, but one of the walls appears new upon careful examination. Behind there is no body but a heavy coffer: 2000 sp and 400 gp, vial of black glass with poison. To the east, corroded iron door bears polished brass letters spelling “KUTH, MERCHANT OF TOIL” – no visible opening mechanism but easy to break down (roll random encounter).

11. Small burial chamber, three upright stone sarcophagi and innumerable clay pots containing stale oil, wax, tar, spices or other substances. Within two sarcophagi are Kuth's concubines (zombies in faded but still colourful garments), and in the third is Kuth

the slave merchant. Preserved with wax treatment, appearance is remarkably lifelike; otherwise behaves as mummy. 800 gp in a boxful of gems (low individual value). Zombies (2): WD 2; DC 8; claws 1d8. Kuth: WD 5+3; DC 2; 1d12 plus disease; saves -2 against fire and takes +1 damage per die.

12. Black iron door with inscription, “THE TOMB OF YLIASTER, ACCURSED SORCERER”. Within tomb, 2' glass prism – gazing into depths draws Yliaster's faded form back from the underworld. If prism is smashed, Yliaster is immediately returned to his damnation, but places a triple curse on PC with last breath. If left intact, images within the prism grant illusionist spells (Referee's choice). Yliaster, shadow guardian: WD 7; DC 2; attack drains 1d6 Str and paralyzes; magic weapons to hit, lifesteal once per day (save vs. death magic or drop unconscious at 0 hp and roll constitution shock to survive), silence 3/day, turned as spectre.

13. Round opening in the floor sealed by snugly fitting stone plug; writing on rim, “THE TOMB OF WINDS”. Trapped air elemental escapes through dungeon passages if the plug is removed, may kill wandering monster groups or smash down barriers.

14. Idol of lamb constructed from greenish stone, gemstone eyes removed. Glyphs on the base form a charm monster spell (may be copied into spellbook or traced on a piece of parchment). However, unless some sacrifice is made in exchange, the idol casts the same spell on the offending character... turning him into a complete ‘flower power’ pacifist until rescued from this horrid fate.

15. a) Dusty passage; colony of yellow mold has completely infiltrated crumpled over skeleton propped against southern secret door... coughs up the yellow spores if investigated.

b) Form of perfectly preserved raven-haired woman in standing rectangular slab of transparent material (high-grade plastic, treat as glass-steel): red and black clothing, short blade and holstered laser pistol (30 charges) in belt. The slab is completely impervious to all forms of harm save magical energy (e.g. magic missiles) and disintegration. Either method frees Lady Sky, 9th level lawful and good amazon from stratospheric city... grateful for rescue to sensible limits, but uninterested in romance. Clothing made of synthetic textiles is a nonmagical DC 2 base defense, short blade is laser sword (as scimitar, 2d6 damage while charged, 15 charges). There are 8 replacement cartridges for the sword.

Setting Up Your Sandbox

by Calithena

One rewarding way to game is to play a ‘sandbox’ campaign. The idea here is that players forge their own destiny: they go where they want, do what they want, set their own goals and make their own fate. This can be among the most enjoyable styles for several reasons. One big one is that it lets players focus on the kind of game they want to play. If they want to take on your toughest dungeons, they can do that; if they want try to become the King of Ilthar or get involved with court intrigues in Valon or Solara, they can do that; and if they want to find out what’s just off the edge of the map, they can do that as well. Another is that in general it preserves the sense of exploration of a shared imagined world to feel like you can go anywhere in it.

GMing a sandbox campaign requires a good working feel for your fantasy world and the ability to improvise in play. Another important skill the ability to make connections between the new and the old, figuring out who’s related to who, who are allies and who are enemies, and so on. But in this article I don’t want to talk about how to run a sandbox campaign so much as how to get one going in the first place.

Getting them there. If you’re starting your game with Rank 1 characters, experience shows that the ‘sandbox’ is often not a functional style. Many options will be beyond their power to pursue, and if the players as well as the characters are new to your setting they won’t have the background knowledge to make meaningful choices about what to explore. You need to give them both. The way to begin a sandbox, therefore, is often with one or two prepared adventures. These adventures should introduce the setting and include at least minor urban, village, and/or wilderness components that give PCs a chance to interact with NPCs and find out what’s going on in the wider world. Introduce friends, relatives, and mysterious strangers that pique the players’ interest and make them want to know more. Maps, famous sites of mystery and danger, political struggles in the broader world, and so on can all be mentioned here and there in the adventure as players pursue a more local quest to help those in trouble, unravel a mystery, or simply find treasure and gain experience. When characters reach Rank 3 or so and have a basic familiarity with what’s going on you’ll be more than ready to hand over the reins.

On the other hand, if you’re starting a game with higher-ranked characters, you may be able to jump right in. The main thing then will be to write up short descriptions of interesting places and situations

featured in the setting, so that players have a little information to base their choices on up front.

Once you have that in place, all you have to do to get things started is make a map, get yourself a rough picture of what’s going on in the various parts of it, and come up with some situations that might serve to hook players into it (if they don’t immediately hare off towards the nearest area for adventure, that is).

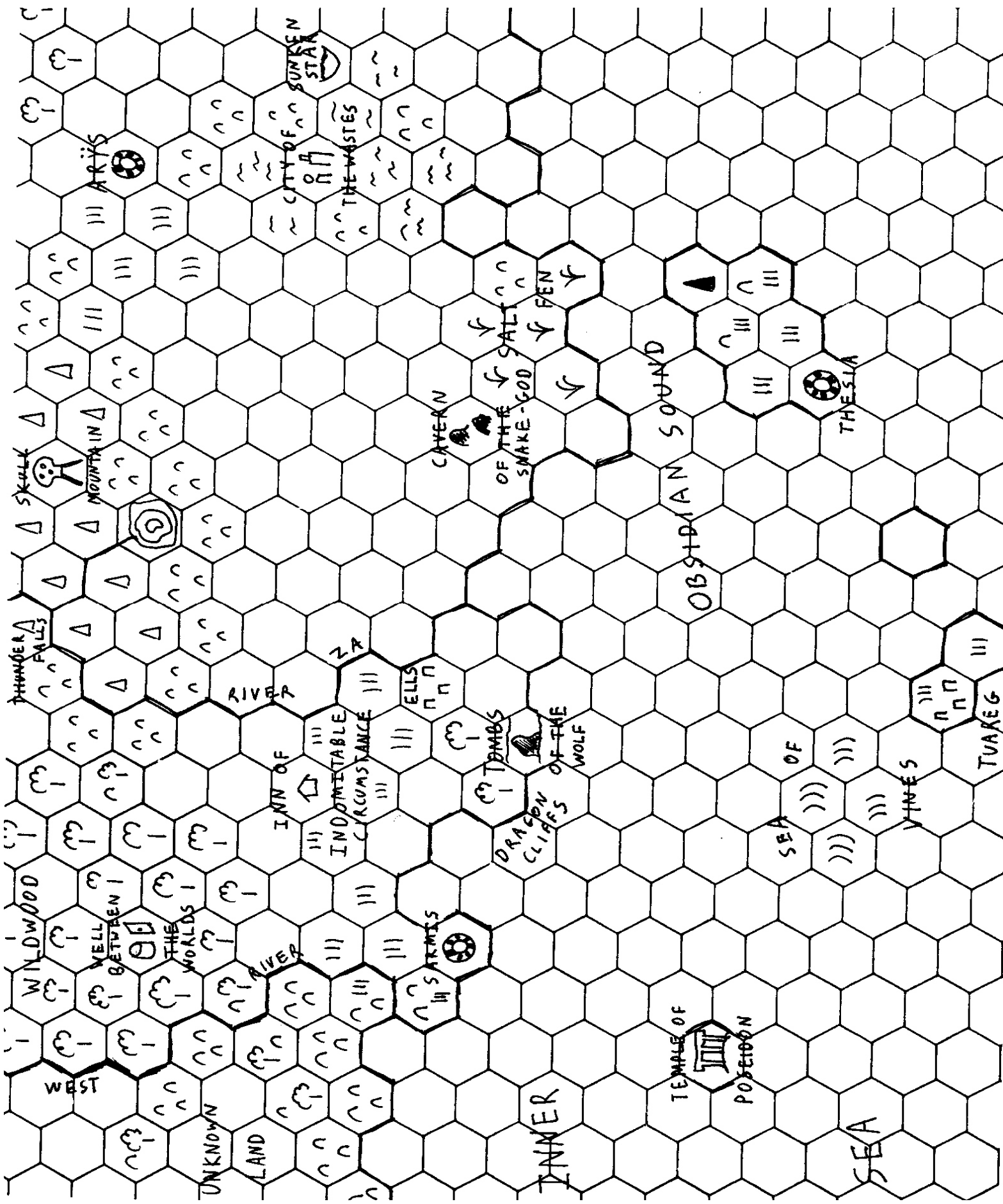
Make a map. This is absolutely essential: players need a visual guide to the possibilities for exploration. On your map you should have at least two or three each of the following obviously marked:

- Areas of human habitation: countries, cities, villages, taverns, temples, places where people go to communicate and congregate.
- Areas of wilderness: forests, mountains, haunted wastelands, places where people are not.
- Areas for adventure: dungeons, cavern complexes, ancient towers, teleporting mansions or wandering huts, crashed spaceships, colonies of inimical intelligent species, ruined temples, and so on, places where power and fortune can be won and mysteries discovered and, sometimes, solved.
- Areas of mystery: places on or just off the map that are simply unexplored, unknown, and open.

On the next page you’ll find a sample map of my Sarmis mini-setting with several of these detailed. Often in practice I’ll opt for a visually cleaner (and colored) map with attached lists explaining what the different landmarks are, but here I’ve just labeled everything directly on the map for simplicity of presentation. (Some location names may evoke more familiar ones - the homage is likely intended.)

Block it quick. Geopolitically, this map centers around the city-states of Sarmis, Arÿs, and Thesia. The first two are generally more warlike, while Thesia is focused more on trade. To the south across the Obsidian Sound are pyramid-builders and worshippers of foreign gods; among these the serpent-lord Set is most inimical to the northerners, and often sends boats with his minions and other servants to corrupt the northlands. Tuareg and Ells are small villages which might be visited, as could the Inn of Indomitable Circumstance; many other such sites are not shown. The Wildwood and its unknown western valleys, the northern mountains, the wastes of the east, and of course the southern seas themselves all afford ample opportunity for new discovery, on and off the map.

The GM also forms a rough idea of the kind of adventure that will be found at the various marked locations. The Cavern of the Snake God and Temple of



Poseidon are medium-tough adventures with potent supernatural foes at the end; the City of the Wastes and Sunken Star are deadly, with high technology and radiation; Skull Mountain is a megadungeon containing ancient evil and holding all manner of challenge; the Dragon Cliffs/Tombs of the Wolf area is probably the best introductory spot for a new, lower-rank group in the area, with weaker undead, strange slimes, giant insects, pterosaur-like pseudo-dragons, and an ancient religious mystery; the Well Between the Worlds is a mystery spot that might be attempted by characters of any rank, with rewards for a puzzle to solve; and so on. The GM also has a suspicion that most of these areas are linked by deep underground passages, opening on to a whole subterranean world, though there is no need to introduce such subtle interconnections at the start.

As players go to these locations more detailed maps will be needed – but the main thing up front is to be able to roughly describe rumors and reports about each to players who want to know more about them. A GM must be able to invent (or create on her own time in advance of play) the histories, mysteries, and treasures that make these places worthy goals of adventure for would-be heroes. This leads us to...

Available situations. Once your players find their feet running around your sandbox they'll often create their own situations, but up front it's a good GM's job to provide options, tailored for your group and current whims. Here's a sample; I'm imagining a group averaging Rank 4 with committed adventurer-type characters and players interested in action-adventure and character development, starting out in Sarmis:

1. A grim-faced phalanx of spearmen arrives from Arÿs; goblin warriors have been pouring fourth from the mouth of Skull Mountain, plundering the countryside. Recently they have captured General Alexandra, war-maiden of Arÿs; these men are her soldiers and looking for heroes to lead them into the maw of death to bring her back.

2. The Council of Thesia has accepted two hundred talents of gold (200,000 gold pieces) to allow the servants of Set to build a temple in their town square; construction is already proceeding. The priestesses of Pallas wish to thwart this and are looking for spies willing to risk the ire of the Thesian council to turn aside this menace, with a handsome reward for success.

3. Galleys full of crocodile-headed warriors from the south have been plying the coast between the Tombs of the Wolf and the Caverns of the Snake-God. Their purposes are unclear, but they slaughtered twice their number of Sarmitian corsairs who sought to pick them off far from home.

4. From the Inner Sea sails an armada of white ships. The elves are abandoning their northern forests for a promised land in the distant south, at the source of the unfathomed Nyl. The ancient fey-folk and their vessels swell the harbor of Sarmis, and their massive train depletes the countryside; yet their silver is true, and boundless opportunities await those skilled or guileful enough to profit from Queen Ermazahd's retinue.

5. Farmers looking for new land wish to enlist warriors to help them find and settle the wild lands to the West. Among them are many marriageable sons and daughters, and no true leaders – perhaps the PCs will come out kings or councilors of a new city-state!

6. A (nominally chaste) priestess of Pallas has developed a romantic interest in one of the characters; her superior suspects her intention to stray. She originally joined the priesthood to avoid marriage to one of the most powerful Councilors of Sarmis, who still has his eye on her. To make matters more difficult, all priestesses sleep within the magically secured compound at night, which means that wooing or trysts will involve nighttime adventures of extreme difficulty – with possible additional complications in the dungeons below.

In play, you'd start with characters meeting in Sarmis, buying equipment, perhaps looking up one or two old friends, and so on. *As quickly as possible*, introduce *all* of the prepared situations, at least three but probably no more than six or seven. Be prepared to answer (which will sometimes mean making up answers) all their questions about the map, the missions, and so on; let them roleplay with NPCs, scrounge rumors at the bars, research in the library at the Lower Temple of Pallas, and so on. There should be a sense of multiple options, some of which may wind up being tied together if they wind up going in multiple directions at once. What you'll tend to find is that players start making their own path soon enough. They get interested in things and follow them up; your job is to reward them for this by making the things they follow up on interesting. And that's where all the solitary fun of making up fantasy worlds, adventures, and stories comes into play – you give it back to your players, not as a spoon-fed, up-front dose, not as author to audience, but as oracle to petitioner. It's their questions and interests that should ultimately drive things along.

This can seem difficult, but it's not as difficult as it seems, and making things up is fun. Don't worry if some of the things you make up aren't so good: the players will tend to seek out the good stuff, and even the bad stuff often gives us our biggest laughs and best memories months and years down the road. The stuff of pure gaming joy isn't always what you might encounter in a well-written novel.

Puissant Priestly Powers

by Santiago L. “Zulgyan” Oría

New blessings for religious spellcasters are detailed herein. You can introduce them into your campaign any way you wish. For example, certain spells could be granted only to followers of a particular deity; in my campaign Bless Journey is granted only by Caminaru, the evil god of travel, blamed for all traveling perils and misfortunes, and the spell is named “Caminaru’s Blessing” to represent his withholding of harm. Other spells can be contained in long forbidden tomes of secret theological truths. Spells such as *Tentacles of Demogorgon* might attract the interest of the malevolent power behind the spell. Other spells may be granted temporally, found on frescos in ancient ruins, or simply added to the standard tables. The decision lies with the Referee – go with whatever sparks your imagination!

LEVEL 1

Enforce Reverence: with a deep and commanding voice the priest utters words such as “Kneel before me!”, “Bow down you worm!”, “Revere he who is great!” or “Pray for your pitiful life.” Affected subjects must immediately cease all action and obey. Creatures of WD/Rank lower than the priest’s are not entitled to a saving throw, unless this number is 6 or higher. Duration is 1 round per level of the caster, no concentration needed. Multiple targets can be affected, but spell duration is divided by the number of affected subjects. Thus, a rank 6 priest can affect 2 creatures for 3 rounds or 3 creatures for 2 rounds. Affected subjects are aware of what is happening but can not help it. Any threat upon those affected will immediately cancel the spell, enabling reaction by starting normal combat.



Command the Lowly: the priest gives orders to “normal-men” of Rank/WD no higher than one. Peasants, commoners, barmaids, town criers, petty guards or soldiers and other ordinary folk are good examples of who can be affected by this spell. Sample orders are: “Go away”, “Loan me your horses”, “Attend to the following cult gathering or The Mighty will smite thee”, “Do not hear the lies of that heretic”, and so on, even including long or delayed term tasks. Three men are affected per level of the cleric. Extraordinary orders, such as fighting, handing in big sums of gold, or worse, will grant bonuses to saving throws.

LEVEL 2

Bless Journey: the referee (or “the gods”) will allow the party to avoid the next tough or very hard random encounter (by making it never happen). The reversed version, *Curse Journey*, will cause the cursed party to have a hard random encounter at some point during their travel. These spells can not be cast more than once per day on the same party. Duration: 1 day.

Tithe: compels subject to hand over 10% of the valuables he or she is carrying. His guards or cohorts may still try to get you, you thief!

Undead obedience: the cleric can retry a failed attempt at turning, or add one pip to each die on the first attempt.

LEVEL 3

Condemn to Darkness: affected subject will attack at -1 when exposed to daylight and opponents will attack him at +1. On the following day, if this curse has not been removed, modifiers raise by one. After two days, the affected subject will be destroyed and turned into dust if exposed to daylight. He is aware of the need to hide in the darkness in order to prevent his disintegration. Spells to remove curses or dispel magic will neutralize this affliction, as can this spell itself (cast reversed).

LEVEL 4

Eye for an Eye: affected subject will lose as many hit points as he deals out in combat, and will be subject of the same effects he produces by magic, receiving normal saving throws against them (for example, if he casts a death ray upon someone, he will also have to save or die). Duration: 1 turn/level.

Censorship: the priest forbids a subject he sees to speak or write ill or evil of his god, religion, or fellow devotees. He does so by uttering a commanding order to the subject. Should the affected subject speak any evil about his faith, he will be punished with divine retribution in the form of two dice of damage per level of the priest, save for half damage. Other forms of retribution may be specified with referee approval.

Merdyr: restore life upon an opponent defeated within the last turn. He wakes up with 1 hit point.

LEVEL 5

Serpents: multiple serpents grow from the priest's body. They spring out and attack those engaged in melee with the priest using his or her own base chance 'to hit'. They deal 1 point of damage only, but those bitten must save vs. poison or die. Duration: 1 round/level.

Tentacles of Demogorgon: a dread demon of the terrible abysses beyond lends the invoking priest the power of his tentacles, by transmuting the priest's arms and legs into similar wormlike extremities. The change in the priest's legs is mostly cosmetic, but the priest can strike with each arm-tentacle each round and they hit as flails for full regular damage. In addition, the strike of the tentacles causes a terrible wasting disease which does an additional 1d6 wound points per round until a save vs. polymorph is made; if several saves in a row are failed opponent's limbs may rot off entirely. A spell to cure diseases will automatically stop the wasting disease from doing any further damage.

Enchanted Holy Symbols

by Jeff Rients

A player in my group (Doug Vandebergh) recently observed that despite their ubiquity as clerical equipment, magical holy symbols are rare (non-existent?) in published materials. Here are my own attempts to fill that void.

Lunar Ankh of Ramudo - This silver holy symbol is decorated with seven moonstones that glow slightly under the night sky. A lawful cleric of at least 3rd level may use this device to turn lycanthropes once per day. Werewolves and wereboars turn as wraiths, weretigers as mummies, and werebears as spectres. Lycanthropes in human form are unaffected.

Sacred Scripture of St. Woostarian - This smallish sacred text has covers inlaid with silver. In addition to containing holy epistles, this book functions as a holy symbol of Law. Furthermore, in the hands of a Patriarch or Matriarch it may be used as an enchanted bludgeon, smiting foes normally only vulnerable to magic weapons.

Talisman of Thirteen Runes - This device has been inscribed the sacred runes of all gods of the pantheon known as the Twelve, and may be used as a holy symbol by a cleric of any alignment who is devoted to any member of the Twelve. The owner may store a single clerical spell of any level within the talisman, a

thirteenth rune appearing when the talisman contains a spell. Casting the spell works like using a scroll.

Wicked Frog Totem - This small stone statue of a grinning ithyphallic toad may be used by anti-clerics as an unholy symbol. The Frog Totem only works when mounted upon the top of a rod or staff. In addition to its use as an unholy symbol, an anti-cleric may use it cast Charm Monster once a week.

Silvered Skull of Azerg - This relic of the anti-saint Azerg is decorated with a silver inlay of the eight-pointed Arrow of Chaos. When held in the left hand it functions as an unholy symbol and any allied undead within 3" of the wielder are immune to turning.



Nature's Nasty Node

by Makofan

This wilderness encounter is designed to challenge parties of Rank 4-7. It can be dropped into any campaign. The encounter revolves around an attempt by the PC's to purify a warped nature node. Nature nodes are magical pools of pure power, normally found in deep nature – sylvan woods, virgin forests, dense

marshes and hidden valleys. They increase growth in plants in a one mile radius, and provide renewable mana for creatures of nature like sylphs, dryads and fauns. This nature node has been corrupted by the powers of Chaos, and unnaturally twists everything it touches.

The Twisted Nature Node

All creatures who bathe or live more than one month within 1 mile of the twisted node, gain one Rank/WD and one point of intelligence. They are also converted to chaos if not chaotic already. All spells cast by non-chaotic characters within this radius have a one-third chance of failing. The monster stats given below have already had the chaos node effect built in.

No affected creature will ever leave this 1 mile radius voluntarily. If forced to leave, a save against magic at -4 will successfully dispel the enchantment, and the creature immediately loses the Rank, intelligence point, and alignment change. Lawful priests must seek some sort of atonement before gaining any more experience. Failing the save will drive the person back to the node as soon as they are unrestrained. Magic that removes curses can overcome these problems.

Adventure Hook

The adventure begins when the PC's are setting up evening camp. A nature-priest steps into the clearing and asks for help cleansing a dark spot in the forest. If they are reluctant, he adds the following inducements: they are close to the lair, so they are already in danger, and there is sure to be lots of magical treasure at the site. Cruimlach (Rank 7, DC 6, wp 31, Priestly Sickly +1) will never participate in combat, explaining that he is saving his resources for the cleansing.

The Approach

The nature node is deep within a cavern. Untold years ago, a tower was built on this site by those seeking to control it, but it has long since crumbled to ruin. The area around the clearing is a meadow overgrown with grass and flowers higher than a man's head. The grass is red and purple, while the flowers are a riotous confusion of colours. Many ruined stone statues are scattered about, unrecognizable now to any newcomers. Each round of searching will reveal 1-2 of these, but also incur another check for the basilisk roaming. There is a base 50% chance that the party will encounter the basilisk from room 9 doing his evening hunt for prey, not counting further searching. Roll surprise naturally for both sides, but encounter distance will be 10 feet.

The Tower

The small tower's upper stories have collapsed, but the ground level walls are jagged but intact, being some 8-10 feet in height. All open-air rooms (rooms 1-4 and 7) have webs for ceilings, where a nest of 6 giant spiders

spend their time. The spiders are reasonably well camouflaged from both the air and the ground. Burning the webs will send them scurrying quickly to the stone walls, which they will then use to avoid the flames and converge on the party en masse. The party will be attacked immediately by a spider when they enter room 1, and then each round of combat will see 1-2 more spiders until all are in the fray. Circling the ruins will reveal a cave 20' up in the hill covering the rock caverns, with bear tracks leading to it (If asked, Cruimlach will identify the tracks as large bears). Characters who enter from the bear cave (rooms 5 & 6) will only be attacked by the spiders if they investigate room 4 or 7. (6 Giant Spiders: WD 5, DC 6, Move 15, Damage 1-6 plus save vs. poison or take 2d6 additional.)

1. Entrance. There is a bit of a bare patch in front of this open doorway, otherwise the room is unremarkable except for its gloominess due to the overhead webs, and the way its walls, like in all of the rooms, are set into the hillside encompassing the cavern.

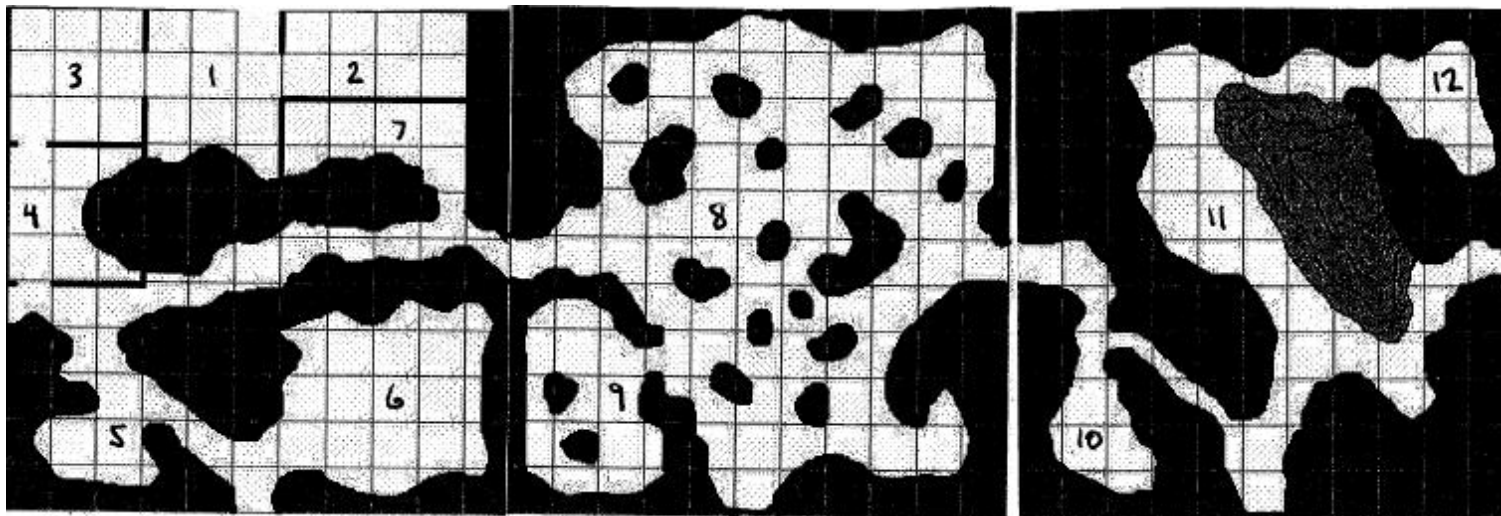
2. Barracks. Nothing remains of the former occupants except some obscure rusting metal parts. Tossed in and among the debris are 6200 copper pieces – the pixies in charge of the lair steal all of the treasure from the spider's victims, and toss the unwanted copper in here.

3. Well. An uncovered well is in the middle of this room. Drinking the brackish water (30' down in the 90' deep well) will cause vomiting and weakness (fight at -2 for the rest of the adventure unless save vs poison) but will give the twisted node's powers for 7-12 turns. This water loses its potency when removed from the node.

4. Feast Hall. The intelligent spiders drag their prey to this room for digestion and consumption. It is foul-smelling and littered knee-deep with corpse-husks.

5. Pool. This natural cavern is where the bears drag any carcasses that they do not finish in one sitting. It stinks of bear feces, and is covered with bones of all types. If entered from the spider area (rooms 1-4), any investigation will bring the bears from room 6 in single file to investigate. A small puddle perhaps 5 feet across contains (half-embedded in the mud) 13 rubies worth 500 gold pieces each which the pixies have missed.

6. Bear Lair. This is where the bears live. There is an exit to the outside, with an opening about 4' high. There is a 1 in 3 chance the bears will be napping, giving the party the opportunity to attack first, or sneak past. (War Bears: WD 7, DC 5, Move 18, 2 attacks for 1-6 damage each, if both attacks hit the bear hugs and automatically hits for 2d6 next round (bear hug!), will keep fighting one round after being killed.)



7. Boring Room. Nothing to see here, folks.

8. Lair of the Basilisk. This is a damp cavern with some limestone drip. If not encountered outside, the basilisk will be here somewhere among the labyrinthine stalactites and stalagmites. Rubble from the adventurers it has stoned then eaten will be trod underfoot, alerting the basilisk, who will then surprise the party on 1-3. Surprised characters will meet its gaze and must save vs Turn to Stone or be turned to stone (go figure). Basilisk: WD 7+1, DC 4, Move 9, Damage 1-6 with claws and/or turn to stone with gaze.



9. The Basilisk's Hoard. Another limestone room, minus the size and rubble. The pixies think of the basilisk as their pet, and let the basilisk keep any magical items they can not use, plus silver and platinum as it likes the color of them. Piled in a nest of orange-coloured pine needles are 5700 silver pieces and 450 platinum pieces, a double-barrelled crossbow +2 (can fire both bolts in same round vs same target, but takes 2 rounds to reload), a Silver Shield of Reflecting +1 (acts like a mirror vs gaze attacks) and a Cursed Scroll which polymorphs the reader into a snake. If read while Cruimlach is around, he will reverse the effect if asked.

10. Guard Post. Two pixies are hovering here, playing darts instead of standing guard. Roll surprise normally. They will turn invisible as soon as they have a chance to act, and will flee to room 11 to warn the others. The room doubles as a larder and has pixie loaves, mead etc. (2 Pixies: WD 2, DC 6, Move 18, 1 attack, either magic pixie darts (ranged, 1d6, 2 per pixie) or sleep daggers (1 point damage and save vs. magic or fall asleep).

11. Nature Node. This natural cavern features a frothing lime-green pool that emits an unnatural, sickly olive mist. Vision here is limited to 20'. Camped here are 10 pixies floating and frolicking (normal chance of surprise unless alerted by the guards in room 10). The leader, a rotund pixie with 3 wound dice, wields a wand of paralyzation (13 charges); the other pixies are as in room 10. Each pixie wears a gold necklace set with emeralds, worth 400 gold pieces.

After the pixies are killed, Cruimlach will purify the node. (If Cruimlach has been slain, perhaps he gave the secret of how to do this to another character, or perhaps an Elf PC can know or roll to know the ritual.) He asks if anybody has a magic sword of neutral or no alignment to sacrifice to ensure the efficacy of his cure. If a player acquiesces, he will permanently gain 1 point to his prime requisite once the pool is purified. If no blade is forthcoming, the druid will grumble but use his own personal magical sickle. He will wait until midnight, then wrap the provided blade in mistletoe, wade waist deep into the pool, chant for an entire hour, then immerse the blade. An incredible fragrant explosion smelling like rose petals will burst forth, and the pool will change to a normal, natural green color. All effected creatures in a 1 mile radius will be cured of their affliction. The druid will thank the party and leave in the morning. The party can not use the cured nature node – only pure creatures of nature will benefit.

12. Pixie Treasure. This room has a normal sized treasure chest, and a pixie-sized chest (both locked – keys on pixie leader). In the large chest are 1400 gold pieces, hidden among which is an angry adder who attempts to bite the first hand to reach in (1 point damage and save vs poison or die). It is DC 7 and has 3 wound points. In the small chest are two rings, a plain silver ring of protection +2, and a red-gold ring of fire resistance. Careful inspection will reveal contact poison on both rings – it can be washed off with alcohol.

Postscript: Tribute to Bob Bledsaw. In the spirit of the old Judges Guild, create your own node with these random tables! Roll on the Setting Table to find where the node is located. Roll once on the Boss table to see who is in charge of the node, and then on the Fantastical Table to find their pet. Now roll twice on the Normal table for the natural denizens. Remember to give all creatures an extra level. Roll once on the Agent Table for the adventure hook, and how it can cure the node. Now give each normal denizen one roll on the Treasure Table. Give the Fantastical Monster a roll on the Fantastic Treasure, two rolls on the Guarded treasure and one roll on the Normal table. Give the Boss a roll on the Wielded Table, two rolls on the Guarded table, and two rolls on the Normal Table. If you get a result already used earlier, use the treasure in brackets instead. Assign monsters into the areas as you see fit – have fun!

BOSS

1. Stone Giants (1-2)
2. Harpies (1-3)
3. Pixies (2-20)
4. Medusae (1-2)
5. Green Dragon (1)
6. Minotaurs (1-4)

NORMAL MONSTER

1. White Apes (1-4)
2. Giant Spiders (3-12)
3. Giant Toads (3-12)
4. Tiger Beetles (1-3)
5. Giant Pythons (1-4)
6. Cave Bears (1-3)

NORMAL TREASURE

1. 6200 cp (5500 sp)
2. 5700 sp (1600 gp)
3. 1400 gp (500 pp)
4. 450 pp (5800 sp)
5. 13 gems worth d6x100 gold each (1600 gp)
6. 11 pieces of jewelry worth d6x100 gold each (350 pp)

FANTASTIC TREASURE

1. Double-Barreled Magic Crossbow +2 (see area 9)
2. Spear of Dragonslaying

FANTASTICAL

1. Wyvern (1)
2. 5-Head Hydra (1)
3. Gorgon (1)
4. Cockatrice (1)
5. Basilisk (1)
6. Chimera (1)

SETTING

1. Sylvan forest
2. Deep forest
3. Vast swamp
4. Mountain valley
5. Barren desert
6. Badlands

3. Flaming Sword
4. Ring of Walking on Water
5. Wand of Treasure Detection
6. Staff of Healing

GUARDED TREASURE

1. Cursed Scroll (Scroll: Protection from Magic)
2. Potion: Undead Control (Potion: Giant Strength)
3. Potion: Animal Control (Potion: Long Life)
4. Reflecting Shield +1 (Cursed Spear, attacks wielder)
5. Chaotic Sword (int 5 ego 5) +1/+2 vs shape-changers (10 arrows +1)
6. Ring of Fire Resistance (Ring of Delusion)

WIELDED TABLE

1. Shield +2
2. Ring of Protection +2
3. Wand of Paralyzation
4. Chain Mail +2
5. Ring of Invisibility
6. Growth Potion plus Elven Boots

AGENT TABLE

1. Druid/Neutral Magic Sword
2. Elves/Magical Part
3. Unicorn/Dip its horn
4. Treant/fight Earth Elemental
5. Bandits/Rabbit foot (fake cure)
6. Werewolves/Virgin sacrifice (attack party)

It is up to you to breathe life into these rough sketches and ideas, but in 5 minutes you can have a ready-made tailor-made wilderness encounter that may take your party the entire evening!

(Editor's Note: *Bob Bledsaw, founder of Judges Guild and one of the heroes of our hobby, is seriously ill. We wish him all the best and hope for a miraculous recovery, and plan to dedicate the third issue of **Fight On!** to him. – Ignatius.*)

The Space Wizards

by Paul Czege

Introduction: This is a campaign seed, probably for very high-level play, which Paul originally wrote for his Niche Engine RPG – you can read about it online at www.indie-rpgs.com/forum/index.php?topic=22419. We thought it had just the sort of wild psychedelic flavor that characterized some of the best 'epic level' games of olde, and wanted to bring a version of Paul's setting to *Fight On!* You can use this material straight up as situation for your high level game, with appropriate introduction, or you can introduce the power of the space wizards (detailed in a sidebar on the next page) by appropriate magic items for prominent PCs and NPCs

gradually discovered in play and let the massive power thus acquired gradually bring about campaign-transforming paradoxes on its own. Enjoy! - *Ignatius*

The Circumstances: Twelve hours ago, ending a four day duel with the wizard Shukalest, the wizard Laibogar destroyed the world. Months previous, Laibogar had cast a spell designed to snatch an arcane secret directly from Shukalest's own mind. The spell worked, but with it also came the wizard's growing obsession with the Lord Mercenary Cagda's seventeen year old daughter Enagea. And when Shukalest's contrived interest in breeding war dogs was successful in luring the girl to employment at his citadel, to run the breeding and training program, it threw Laibogar into a jealous rage. Impulsively he strapped his Space Wizard to his back and turned his powers to slaying Shukalest.



The Space Wizards: The age of men came to the world many millenia after the age of the Space Wizards had come to an end. Yet the power of the Space Wizards still holds sway over the fate of mankind. It was they who created the Horologe to regulate the flow of time. And it is the power remaining in their small corpses that human wizards tap for the great magics they do.

Laibogar vs. Shukalest: A magician can work mighty spells by extending his mind into the cellular remnants of an alien wizard neurosystem to make use of the creature's own native magical power. The human wizard likely only possesses a single Space Wizard corpse, which he wears strapped to his back. There are fewer than a dozen known to exist. And in magical use the body of the alien becomes animated, gesturing with its hands, lifting its arms, and contorting its face. A magical battle is a horrific thing to behold. Then there are the progressive physical disfigurements use of a Space Wizard inflicts upon the practitioner. The battle between Laibogar and Shukalest was fatal for both wizards in the first few moments, as each almost

immediately managed irreversible corruptions to vital organs of the other. But such is the working of magic that once initiated it takes an actual break in a wizard's concentration for physical death to overcome him. And so the battle between Laibogar and Shukalest continued with increasing madness for nearly four days after they'd already slain each other.

In the battle's final moments a disturbing tableau played out. Laibogar seized the framework of the landscape and bent it to his will. He puppeted a nearly nude Enagea into a kiss with the horribly orally disfigured Shukalest, and when the wizard saw not terror, but revulsion in her eyes, he went mad. He cast a spell that rendered every woman in the world infertile. It was Laibogar's countering of that spell by drawing powerfully upon the planet's fundamental generative energy that destroyed the world.

Space Wizards in the Game (Calithena)

These alien corpses are rare and powerful artifacts. Probably they can only be used by humans: it is up to the individual GM whether nonhuman characters can use them at all, but certainly no extraplanar or divinely connected characters of any kind. Though it is very likely that only magic-using characters will attempt to master one, in fact any non-priestly character can eventually learn to work a Space Wizard. Mastering this lore takes a good deal of time, however. A good rule of thumb might be 2d12 months of solitary study, modified up or down in accordance with a character's Wisdom score.

Once a character makes contact with the vestigial mind of the Space Wizard within, the being may be animated to alter the fabric of reality in fundamental ways. Any *physical* spell known to any character class may be cast; the structure of reality and even natural law may be altered in any way the character can specify. However, no-one's mind or morals may be directly affected by the use of the Space Wizard, and under no conditions may the Space Wizard be used to raise the character's own attribute scores.

Very minor effects (GM call, but say the equivalent of 2nd level or lesser spells) exhaust the user of the space wizard for a full day, causing them -2 on all rolls for the next 24 hours. This penalty is cumulative per use. More potent effects require the permanent sacrifice of 1 point from any attribute score except Intelligence or Wisdom. Really awful, world-transforming effects automatically require a sacrifice of one point each from Constitution and Charisma. There is no way to regain these points save through the rare miracles, potions, etc. that sometimes arise in any game. Note however that the deities will never help any magus employing a Space

Wizard, though they will also not dare to interfere with such for fear of their own destruction.

While the Space Wizard is in use, and as long as it is in use, an owner cannot die unless he is totally annihilated by some cosmic force or until one or more of his attribute scores reaches 0. The Space Wizards cannot annihilate each other and in fact there is no known way to destroy them save immersing them in a black hole. Characters get saving throws against individual Space Wizard effects as normal, but the world does not. Any time a Space Wizard is employed directly to reverse the effect of another Space Wizard's previous modification, there is a 50% chance the attempt simply will not work.

The Horologe: When the world began to shake itself apart the witch queen Tshilaba went to the Lord Mercenary Cagda and told him the whole of what she believed had happened: Laibogar, fighting with Shukalest over Enagea, had cast a spell that had broken the world. A hurried alliance was formed. Tshilaba and her apprentice would help Cagda reach the Horologe and stop it, to stop time. It was believed that the pure Space Wizards would then eventually return to find time stopped, and would fix the world. In exchange, Cagda agreed to do whatever it took to help Tshilaba and her apprentice and people escape the world to another dimension before the returned Space Wizards imposed a feared punishment upon them for having perverted the remains of their brethren for magical power.

When Time Has No Meaning: Tshilaba, Cagda, and her apprentice were successful in stopping the Horologe. But all were surprised by the result. Yes, currents no longer moved in the streams and seas, the wind no longer blew, the heavens no longer turned, and the animals were frozen in place. But the human soul turns out not to be subject to the authority of time. And so the human population just went on operating their bodies as if alive.

With time stopped, there was no need to consume food, but for a while, until all the crops had been pretty much depleted, people ate for pleasure. With time stopped, flames give off light, and never go out, but don't deplete the wood that fuels them. And some otherwise mortal injuries have little effect.

Initially, as word spread of what Laibogar had done, there was a pogrom against the world's wizards. Enraged mobs overwhelmed them, one by one, and buried them alive. Cagda did nothing to help Tshilaba and her apprentice. And the study and practice of wizardry has been made unlawful.

The nature of warfare has changed as well. A sword is useless unless you can sever a man's head, to ruin him from controlling his body.

Cagda and Enagea: Most folks live from day to day, their memories of life from before having faded. But Cagda has grown obsessed with trying to fix the situation. He has been re-training himself to fight with a sword. He had hidden Tshilaba's Space Wizard and has begun using it to study wizardry. He has learned some minor magic, and how to heal small injuries. And he believes he has figured out how much time has passed since Laibogar cast the spell that broke the world. His plan is to find and unbury Tshilaba and her apprentice, enlist them in winding the Horologe back to before Laibogar's spell, restart time, and then slay the wizard before the spell is cast.

His daughter Enagea hasn't spoken since the horrible battle between the wizards, has turned cruel, and seems incapable of taking pleasure in anything. Cagda desperately wants her to have a second chance at happiness.



Conclusion: There is a lot to unravel here. Can Cagda (or a PC playing an equivalent role) and his allies manage to wind back the Horologe, restart time, and slay Laibogar? If they do, will this doom the human race

by leaving Shukalest's spell of infertility uncountered? What the players decide here will amount to a choice between impotent eternity and a return to humanity with the knowledge of certain impending doom. What if the pure, living Space Wizards return? What if ancient scrolls bearing the runes of Hawking the Maimed's Invocation of Utter Darkness are found, summoning black holes capable of destroying the desiccated alien husks? And how will PCs use the power of the Space Wizards themselves?

Only you and your group can find out.

Creepies & Crawlies

by Andrew Reyes & Jeff Rients

ONE-ARMED GOONDAR

Number Appearing: 1

Intelligence: highly intelligent

Alignment: law

Type: mammal

Speed: 15

DC: 5

WD: 2+2

Special Characteristics: can't be surprised or backstabbed

Damage: 1-8 (sword)

Size: L

Description: A green-skinned giant with four legs and a single arm sprouting from the middle of its chest. Because it has to get all its shirts and pants specially made, the One-Armed Goondar is always following up on leads in an effort to locate a good tailor. A Goondar is nearly impossible to sneak up on, as its torso is capable of quickly rotating 180 degrees.

THAUMAGRUDGE

Number Appearing: 1 or 2-8

Intelligence: semi-intelligent

Alignment: chaos

Type: mammal

Speed: 9

DC: 7

WD: 4

Special Characteristics: Hostile to magic users, Web

Damage: 1-3 (Dagger)

Size: M

Description: The thaumagrudge is a bizarre beast -- tripedal, possessing of two sinewy tentacles atop its white-furred torso. Its origin is unclear but most likely magical. It attacks mages on sight, wielding an oddly-curved dagger, seeking to kill. Upon a successful hit, the thaumagrudge may immediately wrap its tentacles

around its target, which is then treated as if Webbed. It is theorized that thaumagrudges are decadently-mutated former magic-users themselves; this may explain their violent malice towards wizards.



DINGORINE

Number Appearing: 3-30

Intelligence: unintelligent

Alignment: neutral

Type: mammal

Speed: 6

DC: 6

WD: 1d4+1

Special Characteristics: mean!

Damage: 1-4 (bite)

Size: S

Description: This small badger-like canine roams deserts and moors in large packs. They will attack any group they outnumber, but are scared away by fire. Giants and ogres generally avoid dingorines as a pack of them chewing your feet and ankles can make walking and stomping much less fun than usual.

SPOTTED SKEPTIC

Number Appearing: 1-12

Intelligence: highly intelligent

Alignment: chaos

Type: mammal

Speed: 6

DC: 7

WD: 3-1

Special Characteristics: hates priests

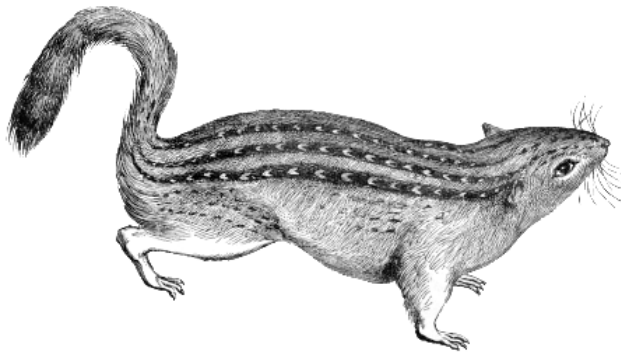
Damage: 1-6 (mace)
Size: L

Description: This subrace of sickly, bespotted ogres blames their affliction on the gods. They are the last survivors of a nasty plague that swept the realm a century ago, afflicting human, demi-human, and humanoid alike. Priests rooted out the disease, but their spells were unable to completely cure infected ogres. All of monsterdom drove the Spotted Sceptics into exile, but their ability to pass the disease on to other races seems to have faded.

PHANTOM STRANGLER

Number Appearing: 1 or 1-6
Intelligence: highly intelligent
Alignment: chaos
Type: undead
Speed: 9
DC: 4
WD: 4+1
Special Characteristics: invisible
Damage: 1-6 (strangle)
Size: M

Description: These undead manifestations would be nigh impossible to fight were it not for their apparent need to make noise while attacking. Most Phantom Stranglers laugh hideously but some will sing showtunes or gossip about nearby monsters while choking the life out of you. Phantom Stranglers turn as wraiths.



UNSEELIE SQUIRREL

Number Appearing: 1-8
Intelligence: unintelligent
Alignment: neutral
Type: mammal
Speed: 9
DC: 6
WD: 6
Special Characteristics: hate elves, poisonous
Damage: 1-4 (bite) plus poison
Size: S

Description: These fearsome green rodents haunt the forests that elves dare not tread. Any wood elf can instantly recognize the distinctly pungent aroma of a nearby Unseelie Squirrel nest. These beasts are sometimes trained by thouls as attack animals. A successful bite forces the victim to make a saving throw versus poison. Elves who fail are instantly slain but all others only sustain an additional 1-8 points of damage.

SWAMP BEAST

Level: 6
Intelligence: highly intelligent
Alignment: neutral
Type: reptile
Speed: 9
DC: 4
WD: 9-1
Special Characteristics: no head
Damage: 1-8 (sword)
Size: L

Description: These large, scaly creature resemble gigantic lizard men with faces on their torsos and eyes on long, snaky stalks. They speak Dragonish and are one of the few races on friendly terms with much of dragonkind. As such, they are privy to secrets known to few. But few are those who enter their marshy domains in search of hidden knowledge and return to tell the tale.

BRAIN GOLEM

Number Appearing: 1-3
Intelligence: they're made of brains!
Alignment: neutral malevolent
Type: construct
Speed: 9
DC: 2 (3+5 in games with Advanced Armor)
WD: 8
Special Characteristics: see below
Damage: 1-6 (brain suck) + save or die (see below)
Size: L

Description: These peculiar monsters are magical constructions, made by assembling cranial matter into an ogre-sized humanoid shape and binding it together with incantations of force and magical metal. The brain golem attacks with its giant hands, grayish-pink assemblages of brainstuff which seek the target's face (-4 on attack rolls) which will suck the brains of anyone struck out through their eyeballs unless a save vs. dragon breath is made. Brain golems are immune to almost all magic except fire, which does normal damage; they are completely immune to cold, acid, lightning, and most other forms of non-kinetic energy. Poison hurts them though, and confusion or feeblemind magic affects them normally. A failed saving throw vs. charm spell will cause them to cease all action for one round.

In the Time of the Broken Kingdom

editorial by Ignatius Ümlaut

Thank you for buying and reading the first issue of *Fight On!*

Back in the 1970's, when this whole thing got rolling, the gaming world was very different. There was a lot we didn't know back then, but there was a sense of community and camaraderie across the gaming world that often feels lacking today. People played in different games and worlds, of course, but there was still a sense that we were all part of one big fantasy multiverse. Even worlds with such a unified aesthetic as M.A.R. Barker's Tékumel showed signs of acknowledgement to this tacit sense of being part of something larger: consider the hobbits and dragon in the Jakállá zoo, or the multidimensional Gij & Sons trading company, or multiplanar adventures landing characters in Mexico. That was nonetheless a fairly 'closed campaign' for the day: consider the following report from, "It's Only A Game...Or Is It?", by Moira Johnston in the August 1980 issue of *New West* (a mainstream magazine!):

The liberal immigration policies of [Deanna Sue] White's D&D-based 'open universe' allows characters to visit from other worlds and universes, making Mistigar an intergalactic entrepot. "Whenever I'm in L.A., I call to see if Deanna's having a run," says Clint Bigglestone, Bay Area fan and producer of the FRP convention, DunDraCon. His characters adventure through Mistigar, returning to the Bay Area with wounds and stories that spread Mistigar's network of contact...The FRP network has become so sophisticated that it is now possible for jealous, upstart worlds from all over the country to attack Mistigar. Two attempts to thwart her world have already been thwarted, one by Bigglestone, whose characters discovered, while campaigning through Dave Hargrave's world near San Francisco, that evil members of Hargrave's Black Lotus Society planned to attack Mistigar. Loyal to White, Bigglestone's characters attacked and killed the plotters...

Johnston also describes players mailing their characters halfway across the country to visit or defend or attack other worlds, and wonders if her son's character surviving a run in Greg Stafford's Snake Pipe Hollow might find himself mailed away to defend Mistigar.

Back then, we didn't all just talk about our games together: we played together. Today we often content ourselves with smaller communities: our own group's game world, the fandom of worlds like Tékumel, Glorantha, Greyhawk, Blackmoor, Arduin, the Forgotten Realms, the World of Darkness, and so on, communities devoted to the particular ruleset we like

best, even communities of game designers. But there are still pieces of the older gaming world all over the contemporary gaming landscape, if you look around carefully. Just as any big old city still has some of the haunts that people loved a century or centuries ago if you poke under the surface, the world of gaming today is still marked by the vestiges of the glorious old civilization we began with. *Alarums & Excursions* is still going; there are still people running games with old brown books from the 1970's; there are still fantasy worlds run by multiple GMs with lots of players over time and games open to all comers; still visionary GMs trying to find the deeper aesthetic sensibility that goes into a fantastic creation like Glorantha or Tékumel; still tinkering GMs who houserule until they get the game they want. Even among those who have permanently moved on to new rulesets or new approaches, there are still many artifacts of the old days yet among us. And there are still players who prefer to put their imagination first and the rules second, trusting the GM and the group's sense of fair play to adjudicate when the rulebook gives no guidance, willing to face challenges of creativity as well as, or even in preference to, challenges of dice probability and character build.

And so, too, does the vague sense that we are all part of a greater fraternity persist. Aristotle said those who do things together are in a certain sense friends, and perhaps this is unavoidable, especially in a hobby where we share fantasies such as these.

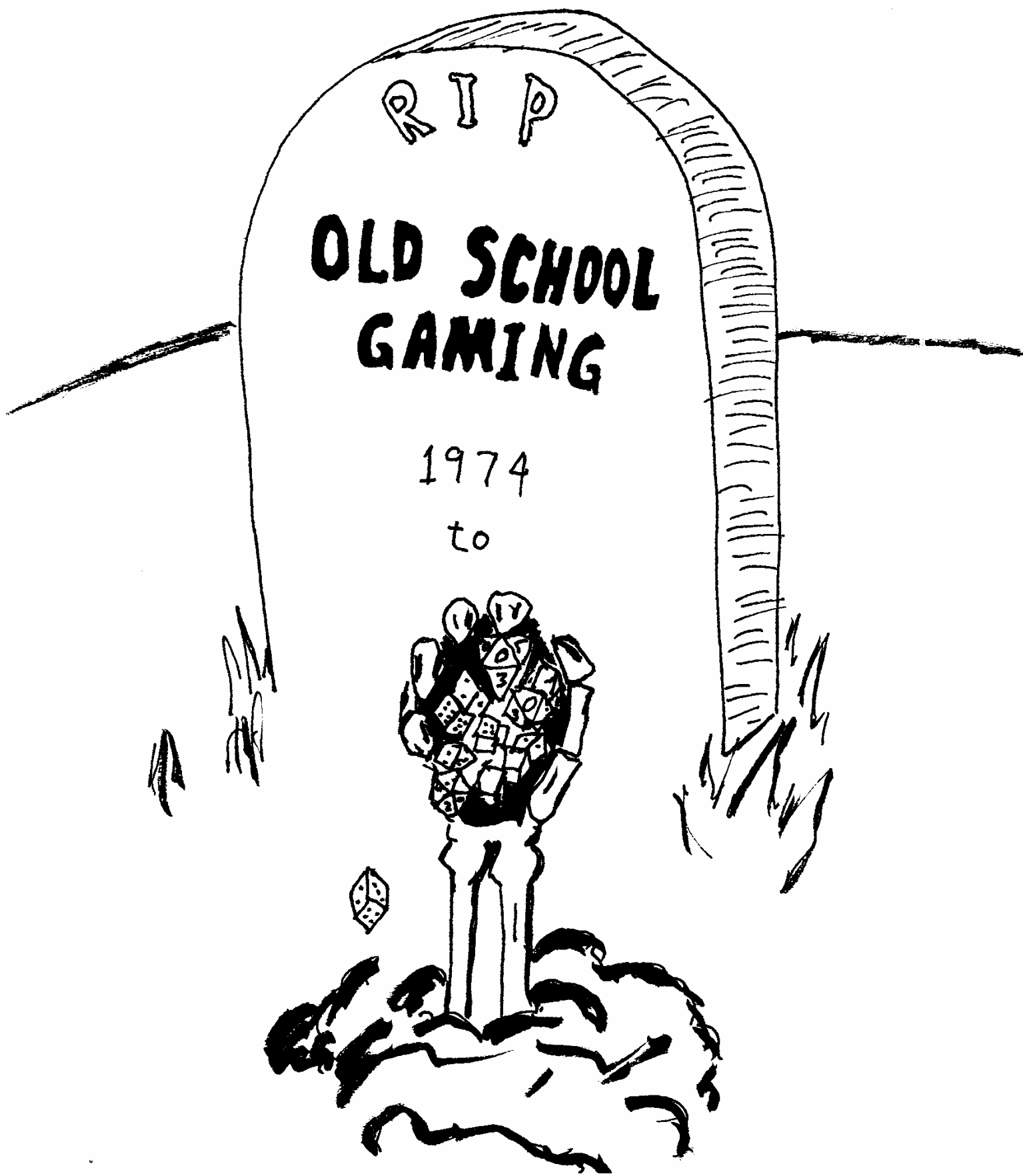
If it is anything, *Fight On!* is a magazine devoted to preserving all these threads of old-school gaming, and to sustaining what's left of and and perhaps even building up a little more of that old greater community we all started from before we began to wander down our separate paths. We welcome creative contributions from all games and all styles of play. Even those who work in more current systems might find useful material here, or even enjoy writing for us, freed of most of the burdens of game-mechanical characterization of your creations.

Fight On! would especially like to hear from gamemasters who run open games and don't mind new players or out-of-town visitors coming for a session or three. In future issues we will always have space to advertise such games, and even for the GMs of such games to post brief reports on the latest events in their worlds.

We're here to support our community. Send us whatever you like, we'll print as much as we can. Gary may have passed on, but no-one can stop the rest of us from gaming just the way we like until they pry our icosahedrons from our cold, dead hands.

Until then, fight on!

- Ignatius



Artifacts, Adjuncts, & Oddments

various contributors

Harpy Cloak: This exotic object is made from the skin and feathers of a harpy killed by deceitful means. When worn, it allows the owner to charm others as per the first level spell, once per day. The charm lasts as long as the cloak is worn. However, the spite of a murdered harpy is not to be trifled with: the cloak scrapes and vexes the wearer, causing 1d3 pts. of damage each consecutive day it is worn. Additionally, no amount of washing can remove the slight fecal waft caked in the ragged feathers. – *Kesher*



Jug of Oozes: The holder of this secret, antediluvian jug can pour forth a randomly generated Ooze. The ooze takes 1d3 rounds to pour, or 2d6 rounds if a Gelatin Cube is rolled. The jug has a hidden curse: there is a 1% cumulative chance that the user of the the jug will be magically sucked into it after each ooze poured, so as to feed is generating capability. This sucking is very difficult to resist and the percentage will only re-set to 1 after something has been successfully sucked in. Anything taken into the jug will almost surely die: if you need to roll treat as double damage from every kind of ooze the jug can generate every round, with no 'to hit' necessary. Determine type randomly as follows:

1. Ochre Jelly
2. Black Pudding
3. Green Slime
4. Grey Ooze
5. Yellow Mold
6. Gelatin Cube

– *Santiago Luis "Zulgyan" Oriá*

Incendiary Grenades: Created by a mad alchemist from the distant future, these explode in a fiery inferno. They can be thrown up to four times a character's strength score in feet, or slung twice that distance. They explode in a 10' radius around their landing point, doing 2d8 damage to all in that area and setting them and their possessions on fire. There is no save against the initial effect, but characters and equipment may take normal measures and/or make saves in subsequent rounds to put the fires out. Each round they keep burning does 1d6 additional damage to characters and whatever makes sense to their equipment. – *Calithena*

Wand of Doors: Made of mahogany with meteoric iron in elaborate chasing, this slender but sturdy 18" wand can be invoked with the keyword "VERBOT". A READ LANGUAGES spell cast upon the wand will reveal this keyword embedded in the chasing. When invoked, a sturdy wooden door will appear in any space that has four sides to anchor it. The maximum area filled is equal to 100 square feet. This door will be 2 inches thick, have a handle facing the caster, and be locked. Only the caster can open the door without picking the lock or bursting down the door (standard dungeon strength door). – *Makofan*

Wyrmdread: In the time of the elf-dragon wars, the moon-folk forged five blades of surpassing power to battle dragonkind. Two of these blades were destroyed in wartime; a third, Felldrake, today rides the hip of Nividar, Prince Consort to Ermazahd, Queen of the Elves. The fate of the fourth is shrouded in legend, but the fifth, Wyrmdread, was long ago lost by the elven warrior who bore it in the Tomb of the Wolf.

Wyrmdread is a +3 sword that does double damage to all dragons and other archosaurs, and triple damage to blue dragons and/or other dragons who rely on electrical energy. The sword is intelligent and egotistical, and a bearer must prove itself to the blade before it will generally go along with what the bearer wishes. It is very aware of its environment, and will detect foes before they detect the blade's bearer 50% of the time (otherwise roll as normal for surprise, etc.). It also has the ability to detect hidden passages and adds a substantial bonus to any attempts its wielder makes to hide, ambush, etc., so long as it regards these attempts as legitimate tactical measures rather than rank cowardice. All lightning and other electrical energy aimed at Wyrmdread will automatically be absorbed by the sword (no saving throw required), and the sword can discharge up to 20d6 of such energy in lightning bolts until it runs out, up to one bolt per round. When found Wyrmdread will already have stored up 1d6-1 dice of electrical energy in the blade. – *Calithena*