

# FIGHT on!

we ain't goin' out like that



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

dedicated to Dave Arneson,  
the first Master of Dungeons,  
and creator of the First Fantasy Campaign



“Role-playing is a lot like playing make-believe while we were growing up...I think it's this child-like ability to pretend that makes a good role-player...Role-playing is, above all, unique. There are no other games that combine the disciplines and arts that role-playing does. No other hobby provides as many creative outlets. You are a performer, designer, illustrator, tactician, and philosopher, while socializing with friends. Role-playing is storytelling, theater, and strategy gaming. All of these can be found in no other art form...A group of friends sit around someone's living room, and, by merely speaking to one another, constructs a fantasy which they all share -- playing it in their heads like a film. What computer game can compete with that?”

- “What is a Role-Playing Game, Anyway?”  
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From a dusty barricade they watched the riders approach, reptilian claws pounding salt wind from the desert. The one-eyed elf ceased her squint. “No scavengers, these, nor zombies either. Their shields bear silver device, a twenty-petaled rose....”

Hrunax the Wolf lifted his massive bone bow for a shot, but a craggy ancient hand fell gently on his shoulder. Aethra’s brow rose: the old mage had slipped from his reverie and stood, tears rolling down his cheeks. She had known the wizard a century and never seen him cry.

“The emblem - the sign of the old kingdom. *Our wait here has not been in vain!*” The mage held his staff aloft and called out in the high voice, the Tongue of the Making, and stars seemed to glimmer through noonday sky. Clarion came the responding horn, and the knights rode towards them, to rejoin the broken enclaves of the past...

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Welcome back, valiant readers! The response to *Fight On!* #1 has been overwhelming, as the size of #2 surely indicates. Thank you! We hope you enjoy this second issue as much or more than the first. We have assembled a wonderful list of contributors, including award-winning game designers (Dave Arneson and Vincent Baker), a famous webcomic (Pat Farley), and at least two folks (Steve Marsh and Geoffrey O. Dale) who were writing for TSR, Chaosium, and the Judges’ Guild back when the hobby was young. Many of the heroes of #1 have returned as well, and there are many new contributors well worth reading. Let us know them by their works!

*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 games and do-it-yourself approach that birthed this hobby back in the 1970’s. We can be contacted with submissions, special requests, or anything else at [iggyumlaut@gmail.com](mailto:iggyumlaut@gmail.com), or send them the old fashioned way to 1122 Pearl Street, Ypsilanti, MI 48197. Unless otherwise noted in the article, our authors and artists own all their own work. *Fight On!* only asks for the right to print your work in the issue it’s originally published in, in that form, in perpetuity. Authors and artists own all other rights and may re-use and re-sell their work to others as they see fit. If you don’t know how to reach a contributor about his or her project, contact me and I’ll put you in touch.

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- Ignatius Ümlaut, Publisher and Editor

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# The Tower of Birds

an adventure by Gabor Lux

playtested by Akos Barta (Zorlan, Son of Odbui), Laszlo Simonits (Tio Blackbird), Gyorgy Gergovatz (Hagdor Ordur), Marcell Pap (Habbar al' Hadr) [1]; Kalman Farago (Harmonos, Follower of Karttekeza), Gabor Izapy (Beristo Akelis), Tamas Szabo (Kher'tar) [2]

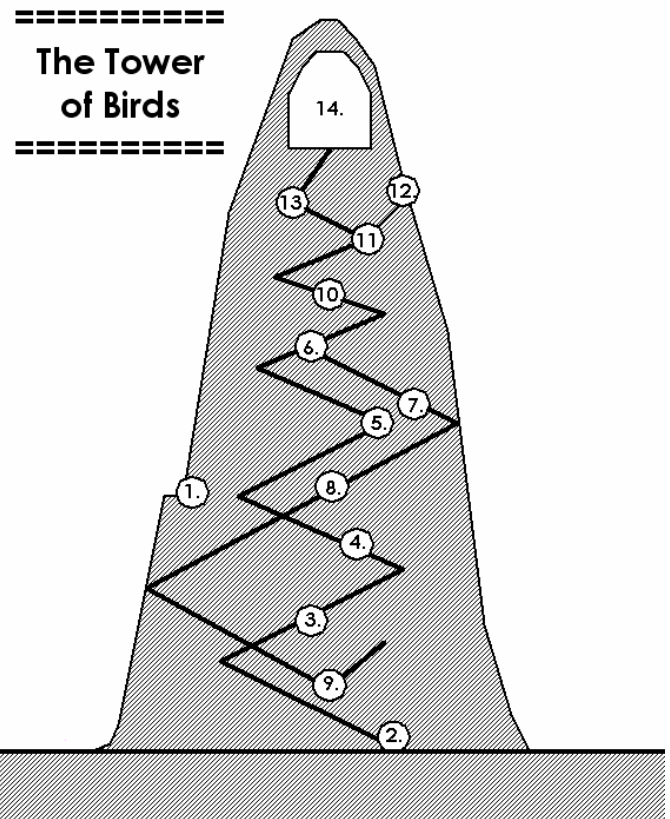
**Introduction:** Deep in the Desert of Regulator and half a day's march from the ancient road of great stone blocks that crosses it, stands the Tower of Birds, a bare stone finger overlooking broken lands. Whether it is a structure manmade or natural, the degraded surfaces do not tell: intermingled with rough cliffsides are polished walls and buttresses, peering windows and a great cleft that cuts through the crown, high above the wide base. The Tower of Birds is not sought by most travellers. Only those who are maddened by thirst will leave the regular road and, choosing a lesser path of jumbled and half-buried concrete, strike for the lifeless hills to follow the circling birds that ever fly in one direction. Theirs is often an unpleasant fate, because while there is water here, it is not easily given.

Near the immense tower (which itself stands on a low ridge), a small, narrowly twisting valley conceals wetlands alive with all kinds of birds. The birds do not fear strangers, contentedly swimming in the small pools, hunting fish in the reedy shallows, or sitting on large nests. The reason for this peacefulness becomes evident at nightfall when denizens of the tower, atavistic and misshapen bird-men, come out to slay those who disturb their lands. Do not subtract them from those encountered later. If, however, the characters use magical flight to enter the tower from above, they will be noticed and attacked by all inside.

**Bird-monsters (6):** Level 2+2, DC 7, attack with 2 claws (1d6) plus beak (1d4), speed 9/18.

1. About 1/3 up the tower, there is a triangular outcropping to the southwest, and behind an artificial balustrade, an arched dark doorway is visible. There is no access to this place from inside, so the only way in is to climb the rocks. The doorway leads to a dark chamber, where a stone throne looks towards the sunlight, flanked by ancient, corroded iron braziers. To the right, in a wall niche, there is a painted wooden chest reinforced with iron bands. The chest is locked, but so fragile it can be easily shattered. It contains four leather scrolls bound with red string – so fragile they disintegrate on touch. There is, however, a bundle of five slender ivory sticks carved with runes in one of the scrolls. The runes, if deciphered, unveil instructions for an alchemical salt mixture which generates strong heat when touched to wet copper or brass – usable, for example, for “writing” on metal. This recipe may be worth as much as 500 gold pieces if sold.

2. [NE, +7/8] The entrance to the tower is to the northeast, half buried in rubble and dust. It is flanked by 2



things which might have been statues, but are so worn that it is impossible to determine what they depicted. A short passage leads to a hexagonal, arched chamber with a rubble-strewn floor. A rambling circular stairway leads upwards in a clockwise direction. It is wide enough for three men and not particularly steep. Occasional niches in the wall contain old clay lamps, dusty and useless.

**NOTE:** this and subsequent entries are designated with compass directions (positions relative to the tower's Z-axis), whether the room opens outwards or inwards, and the degree of rotation up and down until the next location. For example, room 2 is on the northeast slice of the tower, and to reach room 3, the stairs make a 7/8 revolution.

3. [N outwards, +3/8, -7/8] A small empty room. The floors are dusty and worn; little windows peer outside.

4. [SE outwards, +7/8, -3/8] Identical to 3, but an archway leads to the east into an inner room, where old clay pots are piled. The contents of the pots are an old, dried out tarry mass that crumbles on touch. Tiny bones may be found inside if thoroughly examined.

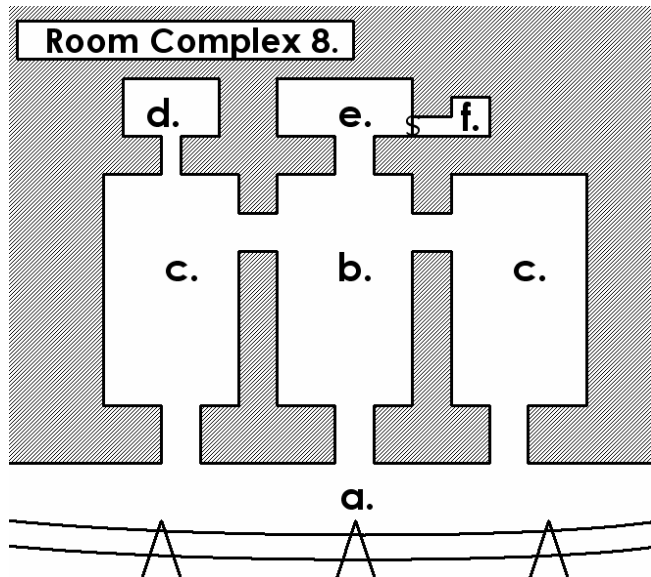
5. [E inwards, +5/8, -7/8] Polished stone blocks forming a low, narrow arched passage lead into an octagonal chamber 15' across. The chamber's walls and floor are tiled with black and yellow ceramics; the high ceiling is cross-vaulted. In each corner, a beautifully carved black stone statue of a falcon stands on a low pedestal. In the



middle, the octagonal rim of a deep well opens – a cold wet smell seeps through the iron grille.

**6. [NW outwards, +5/8 to 10 or -1/2 to 7, -5/8]** A short passage which leads to *another staircase* winding down in a counter-clockwise direction. This second staircase is closer to the outer walls, so it takes longer to make a full turn. Instead of wall niches, there are occasional windows peering outside. All of these are very small and impossible to fit through for even the smallest ordinary characters.

**7. [NE, +1/2, -3/8]** A brief rest in the stairway's descent; three tall niches face inward with human-sized black statues of sitting falcons. The workmanship is impeccable (imagine a replica of the Maltese Falcon).



**8. [S inwards, -1, +3/8]** Room complex.

**a)** Three arched entrances. Intricate brass portcullises half-way down... all stuck and impossible to move without a check to lift gates.

**b)** Mosaics in the floor and on the walls. Dry rectangular basin with blue and yellow tiles and bird motifs.

**c)** Empty rooms. The one to the east has deep, regular horizontal and vertical grooves in the walls – wide enough for a thin blade.

**d)** Fallen human body crumpled in the corner; dry flesh on protruding bones. Tattered green cloak riddled with holes and tears, round metal helmet, curved blade, shortbow and three daggers. Two unstoppered and empty metal flasks lying by the corpse. Pouch w/34 gold coins.

**e)** Half-buried room; the northern and western wall has collapsed. In the southeast corner, a crawlway opens behind a secret door (one of the stone blocks pivots outwards). In the crawlway, a bundle of oilskin holds a crowbar, hammer and chisel.

**f)** Minuscule (7'x7') room. Roughly fitting stones with wide gaps in between, some narrower, others wider. Two apparent features: a block from the north wall has been removed and the handle-ring of a snugly fitting brass chest

is visible; on the floor, a round stone plug is secured with two crossing iron bands bearing locks. Pulling on the heavy (fake) chest activates a trap operated by hidden counterweights. Iron skewers from the walls; 1d4+2 per character, 1d8+1 damage each (save vs. wand to avoid 1/2 of them, -2 to save for every extra character in room). The stone plug, in fact the top of a stone column, is another trap: if the locks are opened and the iron bands removed, massive counterweights propel the column upwards and smash it against the ceiling: 6d8, save vs. stoning to avoid (penalties as above). A hollow niche within the column reveals the real treasure: a gold and silver box (440 gp) with a red velvet bundle. The bundle holds 5 platinum disks worth 200 gp each, a curved *dagger* +1 (red leather grip, sun symbol on pommel), a *protective ring* +1 (blue metal ring with wavy red script) and *bracers of defense* class 5. Symbols engraved on the inside of the steel bracers spell out the *gaseous body* spell, which may be used as a spellbook.

**9. [S inwards, +1]** The stairway ends in a black hall: smoothly polished rocks rise in delicate arches, yellow and black tiles, smell of cold water. Beyond the hall, there is a



short (30'), very steep stairway up to an altar holding a heavy gold decanter. The stairway is flanked by 4-4' niches on each side, and in each niche, there is a large idol of a black bird with red gemstone eyes (worth 20 gold coins each, 16 gems total). The decanter is worth 800 gold, and holds cold clear water. If it is removed from the altar, a trap activates. The black idols shoot red beams from their eyes when someone walks between, inflicting 2d8 points each. A save vs. wands may be attempted against each beam, or some item may be used to protect characters from them (however, even thick wooden items will be destroyed on the first hit, and metal is subject to enormous heat, doing 2d4 damage the first round and 1d4 for each subsequent round until it cools, and requiring a check to avoid dropping if applicable). Destroying an idol also deactivates the associated beam.

**10. [S outwards, +5/8, -5/8]** An intricate brass portcullis bars the entrance to a three-room complex. It lifts easily. Small windows outside. In the innermost room, there are torn remains of silk cushions and two long wooden crates. One is empty, the other has a scimitar with a pommel forming a moustached head (usable and worth 35 gold).

**11. [NE outwards, +5/8, -5/8]** This room is a long gallery in one side of the deep cleft that cuts through the top of the tower. At the end, a smashed statue of an ibis stands in a small alcove. Through the large windows, two black openings on the other side of the cleft are visible, somewhat above the present level (**12**). The climb is treacherous, and a character who doesn't secure his way with ropes and spikes may fall into his doom.

**12.** This place is only accessible from **11**. A dark gallery with no other exits except the two windows is a nest of several different birds; guano, nesting material and eggs obscure an old skeleton. It still wears a beautiful helmet with a golden pegasus device (worth 130 gold) and a sword of such fine workmanship that it has a nonmagical +1 damage bonus (worth 340 gold).

**13. [W, +3/8, -5/8]** Further progress is barred by a brass portcullis. It is stuck, but can be lifted with some work and afterwards closed by pulling hard (open doors check for each). Immediately after the portcullis, a large recess in the wall is visible outwards. A skeleton crouches inside. The recess is closed by thick brass bars set into the rock and impossible to remove.

**14. [CENTRE, -3/8]** The stairs emerge into a vast broken dome (~35' high). Natural light peers inside from the north-eastern crack, where the ceiling has collapsed and revealed the sky. In the walls, there are rows of arched niches, some with stones and debris, some with enormous nests. In the middle stand protruding stone blocks of variable height – also holding birds' nests. To the north, there is an odd, enormous idol: a black bird, polished smooth,



brooding over a black altar where a great ruby casts red light – a light which provides no illumination.

The guardians of the tower are here, waiting to fall through the crack and slay the intruders: accursed bird-monsters, leathery and debased, with a malignant hatred burning in their eyes. They are humanoid, but stooped; they walk with a swift shambling motion, and attack until they or their opponents are slain. If the characters retreat, the monsters try to catch them from both sides – some take wing to enter the tower through the gallery at **11** and assault PCs from below. **Bird-monsters (13):** Level 2+2, DC 7, attack with 2 claws 1d6 plus beak 1d4, speed 9/18.

The only treasure in the dome is the gemstone. It is very valuable – worth at least 2400 gold coins – and magical, as the reddish-black radiance makes apparent. A Vulture-Demon is imprisoned within the ruby, and it may be called to serve the bearer of the stone if the proper command word is known (this should be the subject of another adventure). However, unless the ruby is securely stored (e.g. in a lead box), the demon also tries to master the character. When near civilisation, it compels him to commit murder and evil deeds while asleep. The character is unaware of these activities (except tiredness), but others may not be – probably leading to a curious murder mystery where, piecing together the clues, the investigator discovers that the culprit is... himself. Ω





## The Devil's in the Details

second in a series by Keshner

Welcome to the second installment of a series designed to help you add just a touch of individuality to campaign characters. This issue's column focuses on elves, specifically the elves of Otherness, which differ a bit from some of their multiversal cousins. If any results seem too strange or don't fit the flavor of your campaign, simply re-roll or make up something more fitting. These tables will help determine five traits for an elvish character.

In Otherness an elf advances both as Warrior and Mage, but must choose which role to play at the start of each new adventure. Further, one role is permanently Lawful, while the other is Chaotic. This shift, while understandably stressful for non-elvish companions, seems normal to the elf. The tables below reflect this special nature.

*Their hair is thick with stars and their eyes shine with dew. Strange desires shape their tumbling years, swift sunlight flickering through whispering trees.*

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

1. Live alone in hidden forest retreats.
2. Can hold their breath underwater for an hour.
3. Can coax plants to life in the most barren of ground.
4. Eat meat when Chaotic, are vegetarian when Lawful.
5. Have eyes that shift colors with the light and seasons.
6. Reject all musical instruments, claiming that the voice alone is enough.
7. Are supple and strong, taller than dwarves and shorter than humans, and without physical defect.
8. Find books and writing to be delightful curiosities.
9. Are unaffected by all but the most extreme changes in temperature and weather.
10. Have hair the color of trees, or troubled clouds.
11. Cannot conceal their emotions.
12. Are immune to natural poisons or disease.
13. Can keep a secret when Lawful, but must expose it when Chaotic.
14. Will swiftly die if imprisoned.
15. Understand the fractured speech of birds.

16. Can idly carve wood into objects of heartbreaking beauty.
17. Swear allegiance only to The Burning Year.
18. Find dwarves amusing, and like to tease them.
19. Are fascinated by humans, but rarely trust them.
20. View halflings as mischievous children, or perhaps simple-minded cousins.



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

1. Abjure all created goods, clothe themselves with vines, and wield weapons of living thornwood.
2. Both fear and desire to know the deep places below the earth.
3. Live high on mountaintops, and thus have long white hair and snow-pale skin.
4. Are subject to fey lusts: if female, have mated with a troll; if male, have implacably pursued a human woman who did not want him.
5. Are the get of a human woman forced by a he-elf.
6. Breed new animals in pursuit of a singular vision.
7. Become strange and silent.
8. Can craft weapons as well as any dwarf.
9. Study only war or magic, surpassing their fellows, yet becoming unstable.
10. Are the offspring of troll and she-elf.

11. Have hair the color of sunlight, or autumn leaves.
12. View the other races as aberrations and work secretly for their destruction.
13. Are haunted by murders of crows.
14. Choose Law or Chaos alone, and follow its tenets zealously.
15. Burn their dwellings and ceaselessly wander.
16. Understand the slow, bending language of the sky.

YOUR ELF: Choose, roll, or create one additional desired trait, subject to GM approval.

Equipment is another good way to personalize characters. In Otherness, players of new elvish characters roll on the following table 1d3 times before buying equipment with starting gold, thus ensuring their gear has the right texture:

#### SOME COMMON TRAVELING GEAR (d16):

1. A suit of bark armor, fantastically carved, tough as chainmail.
2. A delicate blade used mainly for woodcarving.
3. A flask of herbs mixed with clear water, restoring vigor, provoking laughter.
4. A tangled ball of restless vines.
5. A sword or spear of living thornwood.
6. A small animal familiar, such as a sparrow, bat or dragonfly.
7. A box of wasps.
8. A sling bag woven of tough, flexible grass.
9. A protected pouch full of useful seeds.
10. A longsword in a hardwood sheath.
11. A hooded cloak and boots woven from spider silk.
12. A wildflower robe.
13. A bow of yew or ash, double-curved.
14. An oakheart helmet, carved to resemble some beast of the forest.
15. A long, thin flute.
16. A coil of soft wood which springs erect when encouraged.

Any vagaries, ambiguities or lacunae observed in the tables above are mere cognitive illusions; they simply await explanation by a creative player or GM. Enjoy!

Q: What happens to those elvish children born from unions with troll or human?

A: By their very nature, elves can be only one thing at a time. While they will inevitably begin life as an elf, at some point they will become the other until their death.

Q: What is The Burning Year?

A: Perhaps a group of ancient elves, perhaps an elvish aspect of the millionGOD. Only elves know for sure, and when asked they simply laugh or fall into joyful reverie.



# The Penguin as Player Character

a new race by Patrick Farley

**Preface:** *Runequest* had its Ducks. As has been pointed out in numerous online forums (*perhaps most prominently by Britt "Tetsujin28" Daniel, who we wish was still alive to see Fight On! - Ignatius*), a lot of things in *Runequest* only make sense if you were a stoner in California in the seventies. Even so, to us Second Gen roleplayers of the 1980s, the "anthropomorphic waterfowl as player character" gag had its obvious roots in *Howard the Duck*, that Marvel cult comic so beloved of the aforementioned California Stoner demographic. Just as Howard was meant to strike a "funny" counterpoint to the self-serious Marvel superhero universe, so the insertion of wisecracking Ducks into an epic fantasy campaign brought a limn of fun to what might otherwise bog down into a glowering Moorcockian, Spinal Tap, black-leather, "I FEED ON POWER!" dorkfest.

And oh, how I'd suffered through such tedious campaigns. You know the DM type of which I speak: the perpetually scowling Frazetta barbarian apparently owning no other shirt besides his Iron Maiden black concert-T, the teenage Nietzsche who filled his dungeons with literal lakes of human blood and who rewarded his players' travails by having them arrive at the Temple of Evil just in time to witness the princess getting knifed on the sacrificial altar, her blood splashing onto the GLOWING BLACK portal to release the Demon Hordes which immediately surged forth and overwhelmed the Land in NEVERENDING DARKNESS... at which point the GM would drolly inform the players, "You're all dead now. *Hur hur hur!*"

So it happened that in 1982, when the time came for me to launch my own campaign world for the first time, that I felt the need to include a race which was neither *fierce* nor *subterranean*, definitely not warlike, and only nominally humanoid. Something less Dokken and more Douglas Adams. I briefly considered including *Runequest's* Ducks, but I'd been born too late to have any special attachment to the by-then-ancient *Howard*. These were the *Eighties*, baby, and if the Eighties had one overriding cultural imperative, it was to pretend that the Seventies had never happened. There was only one smart-ass cartoon waterfowl on center stage in those days, and that of course was Opus the Penguin from Berke Breathed's Bloom County.

***And lo, the Gods of Copyright Infringement did smile upon me...***

Props must be given to the first playtester of a Penguin character, my friend Jeff Wilcox, whose character Opi went on to kick some serious ass in Elderaan between the years 1983-1985. Regrettably, Opi's adventuring career was cut short around level 5 when he made unwise use of a Name That Must Not Be Spoken. (In retrospect, I never

should have allowed the Cthulhu mythos into my campaign. We live and we learn.)



## PENGUIN

NUMBER: 1-100

OCCURENCE: Rare

DEFENSE CLASS: 8

SPEED: 7 (Swim 12-24, and see below)

WOUND DICE: 1

% AT HOME: 30%

TREASURE: 4-24 silver coins per penguin; if at home, 30% chance each for 1-4000 silver, electrum, and gold in lair, plus 30% chance for 1-8 gems, 20% chance for 1-4 jewelry, and 10% chance for a magic item.

ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE: 1-3 or by weapon type

SPECIAL: Ballistic attack, +3 with sling, see below

INTELLIGENCE: Average

ORIENTATION: Chaotic

SIZE: Small (3+ ' tall)

Ages past, when the penguinfolk were but new to the face of the earth, their number was torn by discord, and those of better disposition drove from them those of the birds who were boorish and crass. However, constant warfare between the two divisions of penguinkind continued, with the sensible ones ever victorious, until those of a gluttonous and hedonistic nature were forced to withdraw from the lands of ice and snow and seek safety in the warmer climes of the Human world. Here, in well-lit towns and endless alleyways of twisting taverns and whorehouses and sea shanties hung with unguarded fish, the Sentient Penguinfolk, the "Penguins", found refuge, comfort, and easy filchings. Over the centuries they grew impudent once again and schooled themselves in thievery and the illusionary arts. And if they were strong enough to face and

defeat their former brethren in battle, the Penguins no longer desired to waddle under punishing snowstorms across barren wastelands slick with ice. They no longer desired to plunge into freezing water to hunt for their meager supper of raw fish, having come to their senses and far preferring the balmy weather, hot meals and warm baths of the Human world. Yet they neither forgive nor forget, and above all else they enjoy getting drunk and ridiculing their distant kin – those wild penguins - who drove them out and are now freezing their sorry asses off in the arctic wastelands. *Suckers!*

**Physiology:** Penguins are an intelligent mutant offshoot of the emperor penguin species; squat, stout, with distinctive black and white coloration, touched with a sheen of gold feathers around the throat. Your average Penguin stands 3' to 4' tall and can weigh up to 80 pounds. Penguins can often share clothing with Halflings – arms and armor fitted for halflings will usually (90%) fit a Penguin, although such items as helmets and gloves will need to be custom-made. The most distinct difference between a Penguin and its wild cousins are its “hands.” At first glance the wings of the Penguin resemble ordinary flippers, but on closer examination they are seen to end in three black

fingers and an opposable thumb. These Penguin “hands” are highly dexterous and make Penguins naturally talented at lock-picking and other thievery abilities.

#### Racial Abilities:

- *Defense Bonus:* A Penguin’s blubber gives it DC 8.
- *Breath Holding:* Penguins can hold their breath up to 20 minutes.
- *Feign Death:* All Penguins ‘play dead’ extremely well.
- *Salt Water Potability:* Penguins are able to drink salt water without ill effect.
- *Cold Resistance:* Penguins receive a +3 on saves against cold, and subtract 3 points from each die of damage they receive from a cold-based attack. (For example, a Penguin blasted by a 6d6 *ice cone* would subtract 18 points from the overall attack.)
- *Surprise Bonus in Water:* Having spent their lives as a favored meal of many undersea predators, Penguins have developed a keen awareness of their surroundings while in water. A penguin swimming on the surface of the water has only a 1 in 12 chance of being surprised by any creature approaching from the water. Underwater, this chance decreases to 1 in 20. Needless to say, a Pen-

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Trolls  
Slimes & Oozes



O6d - Pig-Faced  
Orc Champion  
by Kev Adams



DM8 - Purple Worm  
by Richard Scott

COMING SOON:

Hobgoblins, Ghouls & Ghosts, Giant Centipedes,  
Huge Spiders, Kobolds, and more!



DM5a - Gnoll  
by Paul Muller



# OTHERWORLD MINIATURES

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- (*Surprise in water, cont'd*) -guin is an invaluable asset to any party embarking on an underwater adventure.
- *Fishing*: Penguins are master fish catchers, and can, in a pinch, feed themselves and other party members if a plentiful source of fish is nearby.

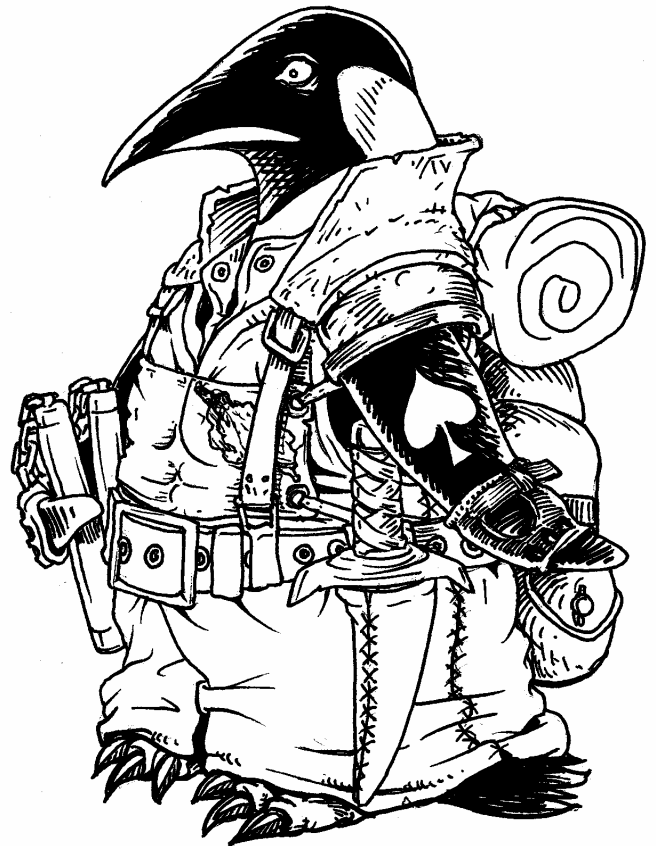
**Movement:** Your typical Penguin waddles along at a base 7 speed, about the same speed as a human in full platemail, and only slightly faster than a gelatinous cube. However, Penguins can move quickly across ice or other slippery surfaces using a toboggan routine which involves lying flat on their bellies and pushing along with feet and flippers. A Penguin moving in this manner can travel at speed 18, although to do so the Penguin must remove all armor. *Oil of Slipperiness* is a highly prized commodity among Penguins, allowing them to toboggan across what might otherwise be impossibly rough surfaces (e.g. stone floors). Whatever the Penguin's limitations on land, the Penguin is a speed demon in water, with speed 12 when paddling on the surface, and shooting up to speed 24 when completely underwater. (See "Ballistic Attack" below).

**Languages:** Penguins speak their own tongue and common, as well as the Oceanic Common Tongue. They can learn only 2 more languages regardless of intelligence.

**Special:** In addition to attacking with handheld weaponry, the Penguin has the following innate attack routines:

*Beak Attack:* An unarmed Penguin can attack with his or her beak, pecking for 1d3 points of damage against man-sized or smaller opponents, 1 point against larger foes. The *beak glaive* is a special Penguin weapon, an actual metal blade fitted onto the Penguin's beak that ups the pecking damage to 1d6/1d4. (For all other combat purposes, treat the beak glaive as a Dagger.)

*Ballistic Attack:* An underwater-swimming Penguin has the ability to "explode" out of the water with terrific force, flying up to 10' high in the air and landing on his or her opponent. This not only helps the Penguin escape aquatic danger, but also gives the Penguin a highly effective surprise attack on enemies standing near the water's edge. A ballistic Penguin launching from the water gets a surprise bonus of +3 on its land-borne opponents. The force of this Penguin rocket will depend on how much speed the Penguin is able to gather while swimming, which will vary according to circumstances. As a general rule, every segment (10 seconds) in which the Penguin can swim unimpeded gives him or her 3 feet of ballistic range, up to a maximum of 10 feet. Note that the Penguin need not swim in a straight line; a Penguin in a 10' diameter well, for example, could swim in tight circles and still build the speed necessary to launch itself out of the water.



**Race Relations:** Penguins are not especially well-liked. With a reputation among common folk for picking pockets, defecating in wells, and biting small children, Penguins are usually not welcome in human and demi-human communities. NPC Penguins will usually be found in larger seaside towns, skulking around the wharfs where their aquatic skills are most likely to land them employment. Aquatic elves are the one race on good terms with Penguins, and to whom Penguins are favorably disposed. Sahagin are the Penguins' bitter enemies, and a Penguin will always attack a Sahagin on sight, no matter how hopeless the odds of surviving such an attack may be.

**Player Characters:** Penguin characters may advance as warriors (same limit as Halflings), thieves (no limit), or mages (illusionists – up to 7<sup>th</sup> level). They may advance in two of these classes at once (paying experience for both, as usual) if you permit multi-classing in your game. Penguins are chaotic and good by nature, but persecution and ridicule from other races has driven most Penguins to an extreme of bitterness which makes true goodness virtually impossible. Hence, most Penguins encountered will simply be chaotic. However, outright evil Penguins are rare. Penguins, like Halflings, simply don't have it in them to go around oppressing others; they would much rather spend their time eating, drinking, and making merry than stomping their flippers into the faces of their enemies.

All Penguins have Constitution and Dexterity of at least 10. Penguin characters have a maximum Strength of 14, a maximum Wisdom of 17, and a maximum Charisma of 12. Because of the race's reputation for double-dealing, the hirelings of Penguin PCs have an additional penalty (1 or 10%) to morale.

**Why Play a Penguin?** Berke Breathed often remarked that Opus the Penguin was just as big of an asshole as the human character Steve Dallas; Opus simply *got away with it* because he was *cuter*. Likewise, a player will discover that a seemingly inoffensive, ridiculous looking bird can get away with the kind of big talk that might get another character garroted. A half-orc pickpocket who is discovered stealing from his own party will probably be executed before the end of the adventure, while a Penguin exhibiting the same behavior will most likely be turned upside down, shaken of his stolen loot, and given a stern finger-wagging, followed by a hearty *Scooby Doo*-ending laugh.

In subsequent decades of Dungeon Mastering, I have come to rely on the Penguin as a crucial element of every game. The Penguin NPC makes for excellent comic-relief and a duplicitous trickster figure for the DM who likes to keep her players on their toes. If no players wish to be a Penguin, I always make sure a Penguin NPC joins the party – invited or not!





# The Dragon-Blooded

a new racial modifier by Calithena

In many games people like to play characters descended from dragons. I allow this on occasion, but at a cost: eventually such characters will become dragons themselves, overcome as they grow in power by the blood of their serpentine ancestor. Furthermore, as the signs of draconic blood become more apparent, social stigma will attach to such characters; and in the Kingdom of Ilthar, where many of my games have been run in recent years, there are whole orders of 'witch hunters' dedicated to purging dragon-bloods from the human population. Still, the challenge of a doomed character – to do great things before being overwhelmed by one's fate – is enjoyable for many, and of course many players enjoy the additional powers as well.

Any character may be dragon-blooded in addition to their base race, and they gain the advantages and disadvantages of both. Characters who have already gained a few levels can sometimes have latent dragon blood awakened, in which case you may use these rules as normal but start applying them at the character's current level instead of 1. The dragon-blooded may be of any character class or philosophical outlook. Such characters tend towards high



Strength, Intelligence, and Charisma, either at generation or over time as the character comes more and more to resemble its final draconic form. At GM option you may wish to add 2 to each of these attribute scores, or require minimums of 13 in each to qualify for dragon-blooded status, etc. Some GMs may wish to levy up to a 20% experience penalty against such characters as well.

Once a character's draconic blood is awakened roll 1d6 on the following table. The character gains the first of two powers associated with the number rolled:

- |                    |                   |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Dragon's Gaze   | 4. Dragon's Claws |
| 2. Dragon's Tongue | 5. Dragon's Wings |
| 3. Dragon's Breath | 6. Dragon's Scale |

Subsequently, each time the character gains a level, her player rolls on this table again. If a previously unrolled number is rolled, the character gains the first power associated with it. If a number is rolled for which the character already has the first power, said character gains the second. But if a number is rolled for which the character already has both powers, a second roll on 1d12 must be made. Add to this roll the total number of dragon powers (up to a maximum of 12) that the character already has. If this total is 18 or greater, the character becomes a dragon and is removed from play, except perhaps for occasional cameo or NPC appearances. If it is 17 or less, the player may choose any power not taken so far for his character (or no power at all) and advance a level as normal. The powers of the dragon-blooded are as follows:

Dragon's Gaze - (1) Infravision, plus the dragonblood can hypnotize other characters by locking eyes with them (save negates). The dragon-blood can move slowly while keeping gazes locked and keeps initiative over the hypnotized foe in the event the gaze is broken. The hypnotized person can't move and cannot lie in response to any question the dragon asks, though he or she can refuse to answer. (2) Character can see invisible characters and objects they look at. Characters who know the dragon is looking for them may save vs. being turned to stone to avoid actually being seen.

Dragon's Tongue – (1) Any time the dragonblood tries to persuade someone else to give in to greed, pride, lust, envy, sloth, wrath, or pride, they must save vs. magic to avoid doing just that. The GM may allow PCs to resist without a save, but should strongly encourage them to go along before letting them off the hook. (2) This character can speak the ancient tongue of dragons, and can use any dragon magic (unavailable to normal human and elvish mages) he or she finds.

Dragon's Breath – (1) The dragonblood can breathe a line of fire, acid, or some other element, doing 1d8 damage per level to a single target (save for half). The

dragonblood must wait 1d3 rounds afterwards before breathing again with either breath weapon. **(2)** The dragonblood can breathe a cone or cloud of the same element over a large group, doing 1d6 damage per level to each target in that area (save for half). The dragonblood must wait 1d6-1 rounds before breathing again with either breath weapon.

Dragon's Claws – **(1)** The dragonblood gains permanent, visible claws, which can be used as weapons in either or both hands and do damage as short swords. **(2)** The claws become magically sharp, and can damage any foe normally, regardless of enchantments or magical limitations on what can attack them.

Dragon's Wings – **(1)** The dragonblood can glide at double foot speed and can fly with effort at ordinary foot speed. The flying is clumsy and the dragon cannot do other things while propelling itself through the air. **(2)** The dragonblood can glide at triple foot speed and fly at double foot speed, and is coordinated and able to function normally in either condition. When charging into combat airborne the dragonblood may make an extra wing buffet attack as well.

Dragon's Scales – **(1)** The dragonblood grows scales which act as chainmail. If the dragonblood is otherwise armored, he gets a +1 defense bonus to that armor instead. **(2)** The scales grow stronger and act as plate mail. The defense bonus if otherwise armored is +2.



her human side favors wisdom, compassion, caring for others, and trying to do the right thing. She often describes herself as having dragon blood and a human heart. Unfortunately, this is often the cause of inner conflict for her, and she is always on the lookout to find a solution that can please her whole personality at once. If she must choose, the human side usually wins out, although this may leave her feeling frustrated and irritable thereafter.

Reyth despises politics, manipulation, cruelty, and cold-heartedness, and values integrity, caring, generosity, and anyone willing to accept her as she is. She values nobility of spirit over nobility in status.

She can often be found in marketplaces, savoring the wealth around her with all her senses, or flying in remote areas such as forests or mountains. As an NPC, she would be useful if the party needs to find and speak to (and not fight) a good- or neutral-aligned dragon; if the plot engages the issue of race relations; and/or if the plot is need of the archetype of a melancholy beauty with a powerful secret.

## Knights & Knaves

first in a new series by Karen Collins

*(We encourage all GMs, players, and amateur storytellers to send us their favorite player and non-player characters! – Ignatius)*

### Reyth Ravenswing, Princess of Dragons

*"I'll be taken as I am or not at all."*

Beautiful but shy, strong of body but gentle of spirit, Reyth (pronounced 'Wraith') is the progeny of a long-dead human Prince and a seductive, shape-changing amethyst dragon. She hatched from an egg that had lain dormant a thousand years and was raised by a wizard. She possesses a magic amulet which lets her take on the shape of a lovely human girl most of the day, but feels a consuming need to take on her natural form in the evenings and, if at all possible, go flying. In spite of her excellent qualities, in general common people are somewhat afraid of half-dragons, so Reyth is often withdrawn if not plainly outcast.

Reyth's personality brings together a unique and interesting mix of human and dragon traits. Her dragon side loves and savors riches and pleasure and all things draconic, but

**Reyth:** 7<sup>th</sup> level Human Dragon-Blooded Warrior, S 17 I 13 W 8 C 11 D 14 C 18. Draconic Powers: Dragon's Gaze (1), Dragon's Tongue (1,2), Dragon's Breath (1,2), Dragon's Wings (1,2). Reyth is usually equipped with a full hooded cloak, chainmail, a silvered and enchanted bastard

sword +2, a shield, bow and arrows, and a magical amulet that lets her take on human form up to three times per day, though she always changes back to her dragonblooded form at sundown and sunrise. She has learned two dragon magic spells in her travels, *detect gold and gems* and *bladebreak*. (The latter creates a defensive shield lasting the caster's level in minutes; any blade weapons hitting the caster must save vs. stoning or break, though they get a bonus equal to their 'plus' score, and artifacts are immune. The caster takes only 1 HTK from the attack if this save is missed.)



## Manx Shearwater, Corsair Captain

*"Never tell me the odds."*

Born Marie Shearwater, the daughter of a fisherman, Manx joined the pirate world as a young teenager after being shipwrecked in a strange seaside town with no friends or money. Though her first years in the underworld were rough, Manx is cunning and decisive. Once she found her footing she became very successful, first as a thief, then as a sailor, and finally as the Captain of her own ship.

Preferring to avoid needless bloodshed, Manx most often opts for the smuggling side of piracy over attacking merchant vessels, although she will do that also if necessary. She runs a small, fast ship, the *Lark*. The ship contains many secret compartments in which to hide goods or people. She keeps her crew minimal to avoid chances of betrayal of secrecy, and looks after their health and rewards them richly; as a consequence, she has a reputation for trustworthiness and reliability to her clients. She made it clear early in her career that any person who challenges her authority will be unceremoniously thrown overboard, regardless of the ship's location.

In spite of the rough world she lives in, Manx is good at heart and has a shameless love of life. Song, drink, good food, and laughter are all that she desires. Although serious when there's work to be done, and fiercely protective of the young and innocent who cross her path, she has a hearty and occasionally dark sense of humor. These things often lead her into situations she didn't plan on, but her experience has given Manx great confidence in her ability to overcome any obstacle.

Manx Shearwater can be found on her ship, at the docks, or in seaside taverns; occasionally she meets with merchants to negotiate for supplies. Just look for the bemused dark-haired beauty wearing a red sash, her trademark. She is particularly useful as an NPC when a party needs to charter a ship in some secrecy – or stow away, but they'd better have a good story to tell once they are found. Ω

**Manx:** 4<sup>th</sup> level Human Warrior, S 12 I 14 W 15 C 13 D 15 C 16. Manx typically wields a cutlass or rapier with main-gauche and goes unarmored or in leathers, though she has a heavy suit of banded armor in her captain's quarters for on-shore adventures. Having ship's stores and crew generally gives her access to whatever basic equipment she needs. In addition, she has a cloak of concealment (bestowed upon her by a grateful passenger, perhaps an elven prince), a magic spyglass (excellent normal function plus can see through walls once/day), and a small ivory idol of a dove which can take life once per day, either to point due north or to carry a message to anyone (specified by name or 'the closest') within ten miles.

## The Monster Machine

by Vincent Baker

This is a tool for creating your own unique, thematically-linked monsters. It works by unnaturally combining two natural materials, as an evil enchanter might, using sorcery to merge and commingle what nature created apart!

To use the tables below, first roll or select two natural materials. Then, in any order or all together:

- Determine your monster's level, defense class, etc.
- Roll or select 3-6 abilities from the lists associated with your two materials.
- Select a weakness associated with one of your monster's two materials.
- Write a brief description, detailing any particular personality or mechanical quirks, as well as your monster's nature, disposition and habits.
- Finally, if you like, go on to create a thematically linked group of monsters to flesh out a unique encounter!

I call them all "monsters" indiscriminately, but you can create all kinds of threats this way, including traps and dangerous locations.



**Natural Materials:** Roll 2d12 to determine the two natural materials your monster is made of. If you get doubles, choose a second material to suit, or re-roll:

1. BONE/HORN/TEETH (LVL 2d4+1, DC 4, Speed 9)
2. FIRE (LVL d12, DC 7, Speed 18)
3. FLESH (LVL d6, DC d3+6, Speed 12)
4. GAS (LVL d4, DC 9, Speed 12 (fly))
5. GLASS (LVL d6, DC 6, Speed 12)
6. ICE (LVL d8+3, DC 2, Speed 6)
7. METAL (LVL 2d4+4, DC 0, Speed 6)
8. SHADOW (LVL d8, DC 7, Speed 15)
9. STONE (LVL 2d4+4 DC 1, Speed 6)
10. WATER (LVL d10+1, DC 3, Speed 9/18 (swim))
11. WIND (LVL d4, DC 8, Speed 24 (fly))
12. WOOD (LVL d8+1, DC 5, Speed 9)

Each material lists LVL, DC and Speed. You may choose the value associated with either material (and may roll before choosing) or an intermediate value. A monster rolls a number of dice for HTK equal to its LVL. Unless special abilities determine otherwise, your monster gets one melee attack per round. The base damage for this attack is 1d4, though often this will be improved by special abilities. The way you visualize its appearance may give it additional attacks (if it has four arms, for instance), or take away its default attack (if it's intangible, e.g.). If monsters get many attacks or potent special abilities you may want to award extra Adventure Points for defeating them.

**Abilities:** Once you have your monster's two materials, select its abilities. Roll or choose 3-6 times (d4+2) on the following tables, or just 4 times if you don't feel like rolling. You can draw from both of your materials' lists. One good way to get started is to roll until you start to have a clear vision of the monster, then choose the rest. Some abilities double up nicely, like Armor, Big, or Mesmerize. For others, just re-roll or choose a different one.

- |                        |                    |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>BONE/HORN/TEETH</b> | <b>FIRE</b>        |
| 1. Armor               | 1. Attack (Burn)   |
| 2. Attack (Impale)     | 2. Flurry          |
| 3. Attack (Rend)       | 3. Frighten        |
| 4. Frighten            | 4. Intangible      |
| 5. Jagged              | 5. Mesmerize       |
| 6. Knock down          | 6. Scorching Blast |

- |                     |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| <b>FLESH</b>        | <b>GAS</b>         |
| 1. Attack (Brawl)   | 1. Drain           |
| 2. Attack (Grapple) | 2. Flurry          |
| 3. Big              | 3. Intangible      |
| 4. Flurry           | 4. Poison          |
| 5. Frighten         | 5. Scorching Blast |
| 6. Mesmerize        | 6. Strangle        |
| 7. Poison           |                    |
| 8. Stealth          |                    |

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| <b>GLASS</b>    | <b>ICE</b>      |
| 1. Attack (Cut) | 1. Armor        |
| 2. Jagged       | 2. Attack (Cut) |
| 3. Knock Down   | 3. Big          |
| 4. Mesmerize    | 4. Bind         |
|                 | 5. Jagged       |
|                 | 6. Knock Down   |

- |                    |               |
|--------------------|---------------|
| <b>METAL</b>       | <b>SHADOW</b> |
| 1. Armor           | 1. Drain      |
| 2. Attack (Cut)    | 2. Flurry     |
| 3. Attack (Impale) | 3. Frighten   |
| 4. Big             | 4. Intangible |
| 5. Bind            | 5. Mesmerize  |
| 6. Jagged          | 6. Stealth    |

- |                      |               |
|----------------------|---------------|
| <b>STONE</b>         | <b>WATER</b>  |
| 1. Armor             | 1. Intangible |
| 2. Attack (Bludgeon) | 2. Knock Down |
| 3. Big               | 3. Mesmerize  |
| 4. Jagged            | 4. Strangle   |

- |                    |                      |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| <b>WIND</b>        | <b>WOOD</b>          |
| 1. Attack (Batter) | 1. Armor             |
| 2. Flurry          | 2. Attack (Bludgeon) |
| 3. Intangible      | 3. Big               |
| 4. Knock down      | 4. Bind              |
|                    | 5. Flurry            |
|                    | 6. Strangle          |

#### Ability Descriptions:

**ARMOR:** Reduce the monster's DC by 2. If you give it Armor more than once, reduce its DC by 2 per.

**ATTACK (BATTER):** Swiping at a creature from a hundred directions at once, batter attacks do only 1d4 damage, but automatically hit (no roll required).

**ATTACK (BLUDGEON):** A standard pounding attack, doing 1d6 damage.

**ATTACK (BRAWL):** Punching, kicking, biting, gouging, goring, pouncing, body-slammings, head-butting for 1d6.

**ATTACK (BURN):** This monster scorches its foes for 1d10 damage in melee.

**ATTACK (CUT):** A standard slashing blade or talon, doing 1d6 on a hit.

**ATTACK (GRAPPLE):** Grapple attacks immobilize; anyone hit by the grapple attack is assumed held firm and can only try to break free. Grappled characters take no damage when originally grappled, but once seized the grappling monster can slowly squeeze the life out of them, doing 1d6 damage per round with no roll to hit required.

**ATTACK (IMPALE):** Impaling attacks do 1d8, or 2d8 (in addition to any other critical effects) on a natural 20.

**ATTACK (REND):** A rend attack requires the monster to already have two or more melee attacks, so adjust the creature accordingly (selecting and deleting abilities as needed). When a rending monster hits with two or more other attacks, it automatically rips its victim for 2d4 additional damage (no additional roll to hit required).

**BIG:** As in, really big. This monster adds 3 to LVL and an extra damage die for all attacks. If you give it Big more than once, give it +3 LVL and an extra damage die per.

**BIND:** This monster has some way to freeze, chain, entangle, paralyze, hold, etc. its foes in place. This can be physical, magical, or psychological. If it uses this ability on you, make a save or be immobilized. If you're bound, it's always impossible for you to move, but with some versions of Bind you may be able to fight or otherwise act where you stand, or roll again on subsequent rounds to escape.

**DRAIN:** If the monster successfully attacks you with a Drain, it temporarily weakens you, draining 1d6 from one of your attribute scores. Specify the attribute when you create the monster. By default, the effect lasts for an hour, but you can specify a longer or shorter duration. Drains versus mental or perceptual attributes can represent intoxication, stupor, or hallucinations.

**FLURRY:** This special attack can work with attacks or with other special abilities. In lieu of all other actions, a flurrying monster may make one specified type of attack (or use one specified ability) against each enemy it can reach. If you're creating a collective monster – a swarm of undead wasps, for instance – use Flurry to represent its many individuals acting in concert.

**FRIGHTEN:** Monsters with this ability are scary. If they surprise you, or if they decide to skip fighting for a round in order to roar, menace, or intimidate, you must roll a save or else spend 1-3 rounds cowering or fleeing and fight at -2 thereafter. On a natural 1 you run screaming away for 1-10 minutes and can't fight them again for a day without serious coaching or magical blessing. If you link this to Flurry, the monster can frighten everyone who can see it.

**INTANGIBLE:** This Monster is utterly immune to most weapons and all physical attacks. Magic weapons and spells with physical effects hurt it 50% of the time (flip a coin). More clever tactics may be highly successful, case by case, according to the GM's call.

**JAGGED:** Monsters with this ability have sharp, spiky protrusions that can cut those who get too close. If you miss your attack roll against such a creature in melee combat, take 1d6 damage automatically.

**KNOCK DOWN:** Generally, if this monster hits you, you get knocked over. In some cases, call for a saving throw or attribute roll to avoid this. If you're creating treacherous terrain as a monster, you can use Knock Down to call for an attribute roll to traverse it successfully: a dexterity roll to walk a slick glass walkway, for instance, or a strength roll to go hand-over-hand along a dangling rope.

**MESMERIZE:** The monster can hypnotically control minds; if it uses this on you, save to avoid being charmed. If you link this to Flurry, the monster can exert this effect against all who can see it at once.



**POISON:** The monster is poisonous, toxic, corrosive or venomous. If it hits you with a poisonous attack, save vs. poison. If you link this to Jagged, any close contact is enough to require a save, including the damage on a miss.

**SCORCHING BLAST:** A gout of fire or other harmful substance, doing half the monster's level (round up) in d6s of damage. The monster can fire it at any single target within 60' as a missile attack. If you link this to Flurry, the Scorching Blast is truly enormous, room-filling, affecting everyone present.

**STEALTH:** This monster gets surprise twice as often as normal and a bonus to initiative. It also can skulk around during combat if it gets a chance, getting behind people or into good positions to fight more effectively. It may also be able to make misleading sounds or images, to distract its victims.

**STRANGLE:** This creature has some way to get into your lungs (gas, liquid, vines) and interfere with your breathing. The first round, this has no effect. The second round, you get a -2 on everything you attempt. The third round and subsequently, you get a -4 on everything and must make a

saving throw or pass out from lack of air. If the creature isn't slain or somehow stopped from doing this within 4d4 minutes after passing out, you die.

**Weaknesses:** Give your monster a single weakness. You can choose one from one of the monster's two materials, a related material (you might choose stone's Slow-moving for a monster of wood, for instance, or wind's Can Be Bottled for a monster of gas), or make one up yourself based on your overall impression of the monster.

Bone/Horn/Teeth - SEES RED: There is some particular easily available thing - a large color swatch, a type of plant, a haunch of meat - which distracts this monster and causes it to direct all its efforts at obtaining it, in lieu of fighting or other activity. The characters can use this to distract and bedevil the monster, potentially even slaying it with ease (though as always there may be complications).

Fire - QUENCHABLE: A bucket of water will do this monster 1d6 damage; more will quickly kill it. Spells that create water are deadly.

Flesh - EMOTIONAL CONNECTION: There is someone or something that this monster loves, worships, serves, or depends upon, and threatening or controlling it exerts substantial influence over the monster as well.

Gas - FLAMMABLE (takes double damage from fire) or EASILY DISPERSED (like Quenchable for fire, but with wind: strong winds will kill it, moderate ones do 1d6).

Glass - SHATTERS: A natural 20 with any bludgeoning attack will destroy this monster.

Ice - SALTMELT: A large fistful of salt will do this creature 1d6 damage, with much more possible from greater amounts.

Metal - BRITTLE (if you subject it to extreme heat one round and extreme cold the next, or vice-versa, any bludgeoning attack that hits on the third round will automatically destroy it) or INANIMATE (a big contraption, doesn't move at all, though you may have to move through it).

Shadow - SUNLIGHT (The monster will avoid sunlight at all costs; forced exposure does 1d6 per round, killing such a monster rapidly) or SUBJECT TO PRIESTS (Such a creature can be turned, commanded, etc.)

Stone - SLOW-MOVING: Slow monsters can only move or attack, never both in the same round, even on a charge.

Water - VULNERABLE TO FREEZING (the monster takes double damage from all ice or cold-based attacks) or VULNERABLE TO DRYING (the monster takes double damage from all fire or heat-based attacks).

Wind - CAN BE BOTTLED: If you can find a way to contain this monster in a bottle, keg, tank, etc., you can take it out of action.

Wood - VERY STUPID (Just about any attempt to trick or misdirect this creature will succeed) or ROOTED (can't move from its base location).

**Description:** For most monsters, all you need is a sentence or two describing it physically and another sentence or two describing its habits. However, if you're doing quirky, limited, or unusual things with the monster's abilities, be sure to describe them. If you're creating a trap as a monster, fully describe how to trigger and disarm it.

### Sample Bestiary

Howling Ghost

Made of: Shadow, Wind

LVL d4, DC 7, Speed 24

Abilities: Drain Constitution, Drain Wisdom, Knock Down (vs Strength), Intangible

A shrieking humanoid darkness with claws and staring eyes. It knocks you down and tears your flesh and mind. Weapons won't hurt it but clerics can banish it as undead.

Weakness: Sunlight

Boiler Golem

Made of: Gas, Metal

LVL 2d4+7, DC -2, Speed 6, extra damage die

Abilities: Armor, Attack (Bludgeon), Big, Jagged

Hulking riveted armor animated by toxic steam. Bludgeons you to the ground and stomps on you. The jets of gas escaping its vents and joints are like mace or tear gas - that's why it's Jagged - so keep your distance.

Weakness: Slow-moving

Mirrorvine

Made of: Glass, Wood

LVL d8+1, DC 6, Speed N/A

Abilities: Attack (Cut), Bind, Mesmerize, Flurry

An animate thorn-vine, whose thorns are blades of broken prismatic glass. Draws its victims in with its dazzling colors, then binds and flays them.

Weakness: Rooted

Frost Warrior

Made of: Ice, Metal

LVL 2d4+4, DC -2, Speed 6

Abilities: Armor, Attack (Cut), Bind (vs Con), Flurry

8 foot tall, appalling armed & armored frozen warriors radiating chill. Their Bind and Flurry abilities go together: when they attack, everyone within melee range has to roll to resist the joint-freezing cold about them.

Weakness: Saltmelt

Swarm of Fire Rats

Made of: Fire, Flesh

LVL 1d12+3, DC 9, Speed 12, extra damage die

Abilities: Attack (Burn), Big, Flurry, Stealth

Apparently normal rats which can, at will, burst into white-hot flame. They infiltrate a campsite (for instance) as normal rats, then all at once ignite. They aren't individually big - in fact, each point of damage done to them is the killing of an individual rat - but they travel in big swarms.

Weakness: Quenchable



**Creating Thematically Related Monsters:** Let's say I'm taken with the boiler golem and I want to build a whole monstrous scene on the same theme.

The Same-But-Moreso Method: Don't roll or choose new materials, just switch up the monster's abilities.

Boiler Juggernaut

Made of: Gas, Metal

LVL: 2d4+10, DC -2, Speed 6, +2 damage dice, 5 attacks

Abilities: Armor, Attack (Bludgeon), Scorching Blast, Big x2, Jagged

A ten-legged monstrosity like a cast iron tick the size of a house, belching tear-gas steam. It has ten spiky legs and it needs only six of them to stand on, so it can use the other four for attacks. Plus under its head it has a nozzle and pilot light, so it can ignite and jet out the fluids that animate it, for a seventh attack. Furthermore, like the Boiler Golem, miss a melee attack against it and you fall victim to the toxic fumes it constantly outgasses.

Weakness: Very stupid

The Same-But-Less-So is legit too, of course, if you want a smaller version instead.

The Choose-Then-Roll Method: Choose one of the original monster's materials and roll a new second material. For example, I choose gas and roll water.

The Distillation Works

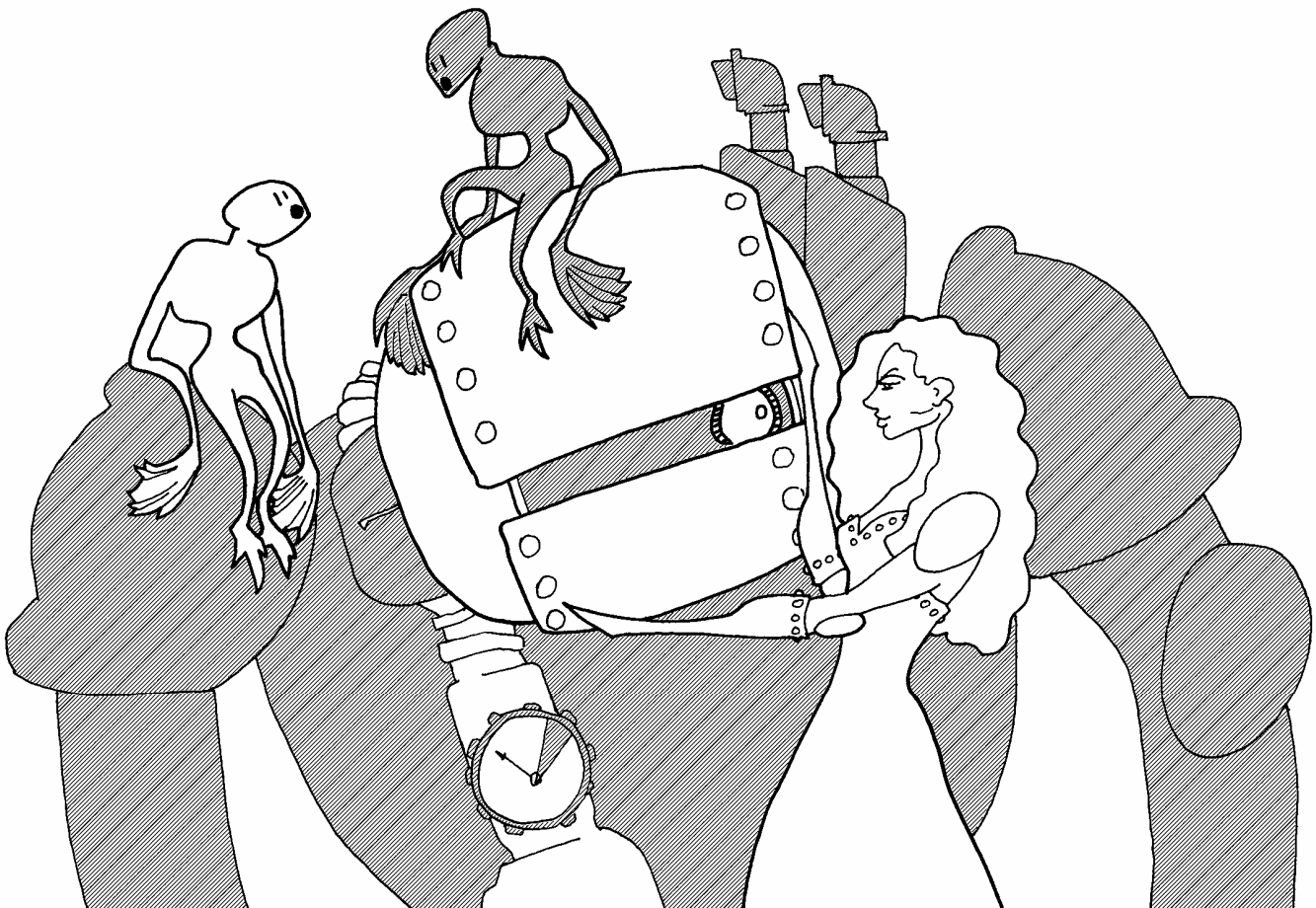
Made of: Gas, Water

LVL d10+1, DC 3, Speed 12

Abilities: Intangible, Knock down (vs. Dexterity), Flurry, Strangle

Not a monster as such, a dangerous room. It looks like this: very big room, all stone, low ceiling. The floor is several feet deep with thick, blobby liquid. Copper pipes laid on the floor carry heat throughout; the heated liquid gives off constant noxious fumes. High on the room's walls are filtered vents, through which the gas escapes to be processed on the other side. There's a narrow walkway just above the level of the liquid, it snakes through the room from entrance to exit and gives access to the pipes' vents and valves. Obviously you can't kill it with swords. There might be a way to destroy it, if there are technos or such in your party. It strangles everyone passing through. Usually passing through takes two rounds, but you can make a Dex roll to run through in one. Unfortunately, failure means losing your footing on the walkway and potentially even falling into the liquid, and that's BAD.

Weakness: Inanimate



**The Roll-Then-Choose Method:** Roll the first new material, then choose a second material to go with it. For example, I roll wood and choose wind.

#### Bellows Imps

Made of: Wind, Wood

LVL d8+1, DC 5, Speed 18

Abilities: Armor, Attack (Bludgeon), Bind, Knock down (vs Strength)

Bellows imps are the laborers who build and maintain these boiler monstrosities for their master. They're scrawny little stick-and-twigs people, but they have enormous power in their lungs and long, strong, clinging fingers, and they're very resilient to attack. They blow gale-force winds to knock you down, then hold you down and bludgeon you with their fists.

Weakness: Flammable

**The Choose-Both Method:** The reason to roll materials is to spark your creativity when you don't have a monster in mind already. When you do have a monster in mind already, no need to roll. You can just choose, of course.

#### The Boiler Golem's Wife

Made of: Flesh, Metal

LVL d4+4, DC -2, Speed 12, 2 attacks per round

Abilities: Armor, Attack (Cut), Mesmerize, Stealth

A tragic figure! She's beautiful (mesmerizingly so, in fact), she's half flesh and half metal, and she loves the boiler golem with all her heart, even though he can't feel anything for her in return. She can't speak but she can communicate with her eyes. She moves silently – her armored body is perfectly oiled – and she has blades for hands.

Weakness: Emotional Connection – loves the boiler golem.

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## The Darkness Beneath

### Level 1: The Upper Caves

by Hackman, with Calithena and David Bowman

**Introduction:** The upper caves of this dungeon lie just beneath the surface (low level, etc.). They are intended for low-level characters, as low as 1 if you have good players or a large party. Though this level was conceived as part of a megadungeon, we have taken pains to ensure that this version is playable by itself without the other levels. There are many unique creatures and items herein, but three factions exert the most influence over the level. Troglodytes and Crabmen battle one another for supremacy, while a renegade Leprechaun and his ten Halfling minions play both sides against the middle. The Leprechaun will want to trick the party out of its goods (or use them to gain even more), but the Halflings are thoroughly evil and will probably try to kill the party outright if given the chance. There is a table for random encounters below; check it

according to your usual procedure. There's also a table for cavern trappings when you need a little inspiration. Finally, there are several spots marked © for 'corpse' on the map; the third table tells you what's on these corpses if players search them. These caves, and especially the many cavern shelves indicated on the map, are somewhat slippery and treacherous to move through. Most of the areas are too large for a torch or lantern to fully illuminate, so the party will always feel exposed to the murky depths just beyond their present vision. I'd not wander off...

#### Random Encounters (d10)

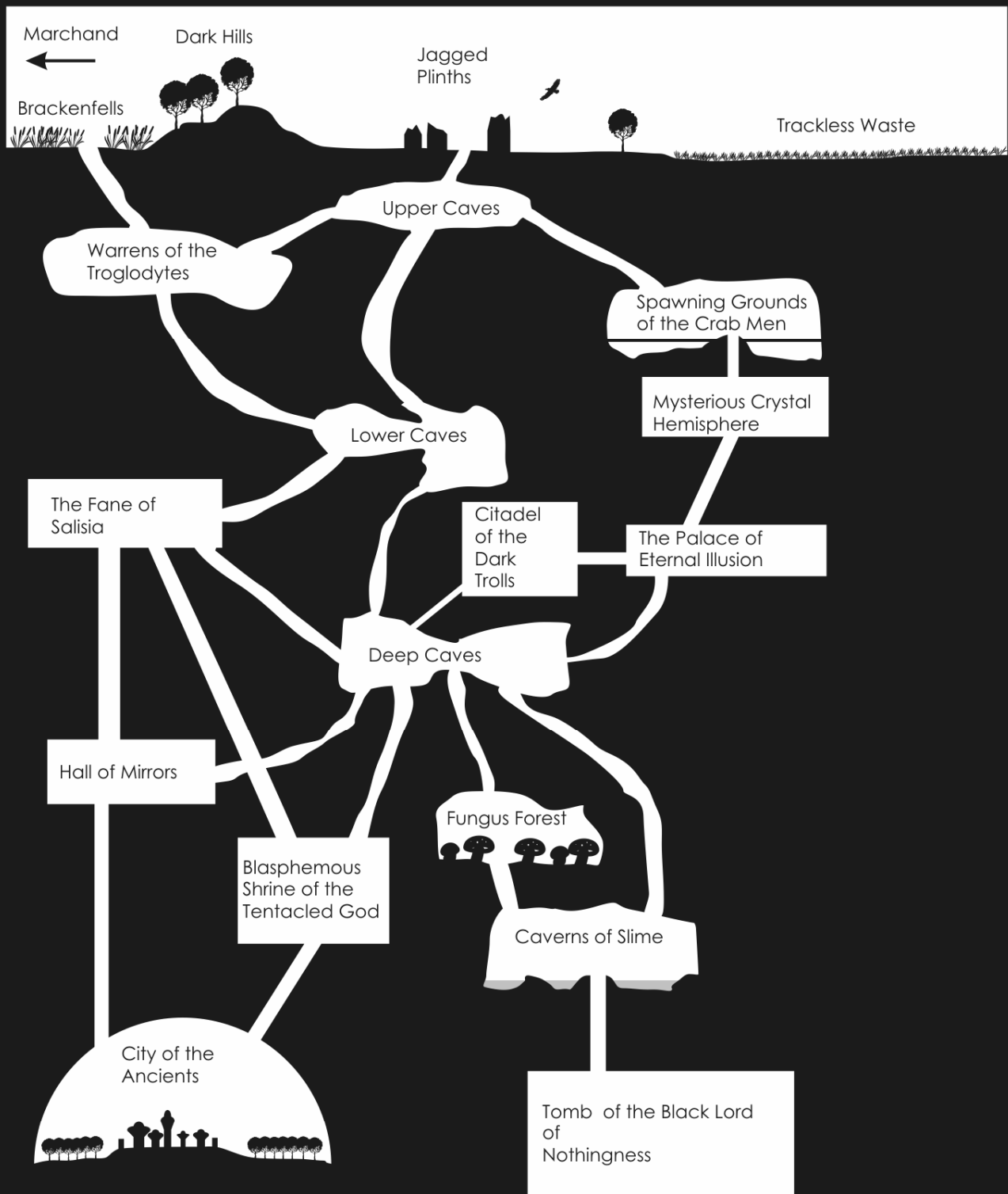
1. 2 Crabmen (LVL 2, DC 5, AT 2, SPD 6/12 sideways)
2. 1d3+1 Troglodytes (LVL 1+1, DC 7, SPD 9)
3. 1d4+2 Halfling Minions. Scouting carefully and hiding – roll to spot, double chances of surprise and they won't attack an obviously superior force. In general they will lure parties towards areas 7-8. (LVL 1, DC 6, SPD 12)
4. 1d4 boys here on a dare, either false-brash or terrified.
5. Wandering Humanoids, roll d6: 1 = Ogre, 2-4 = d6+6 Orcs, 5-6 = 2d4 Kobolds. Wary, exploring.
6. Tagon Claymore, Dwarf Warrior, and Valenar, Elf Warrior-Mage, both neutral LVL 2 exploring the upper caves.
7. Nuisance: Swarm of Bats (noisy, may alert nearby foes)
8. Nuisance: Pack of Eight Legged Possums (same. These are a unique marsupial that lives around the dungeon.)
9. Creeping Mold (LVL 3, immune to weapons but slain by fire and damaged by acid, water, etc., 1d10 damage, Spd 6)
10. 1d2+1 Ghouls (LVL 2, attack paralyzes, DC6, Speed 9)

#### Cave/Passage Trappings (d12)

1. Small Pool
2. Dripping Water
3. Glowing Blue Lichen
4. Gust of Hot Air
5. Gust of Cold Air
6. Sound of Clanging Metal
7. Steam/Fog
8. Momentary Vertigo
9. Edible Non-Glowing Yellow Lichen
10. Mud Slide (roll for direction)
11. 1d3 Heads on Stakes (roll d4: 1 – Crab-man; 2 – Troglodyte; 3 – Human/Caveman; 4 – random other)
12. Vein of Glittering Stone: if character studies it, save vs. wands to avoid hypnosis.

#### Corpses (d8)

1. Naught but moldy rags
2. Elvish skeleton clutching a ruby (worth 300 gold coins)
3. Large Pile of Bones: 2 Dwarves, 5 Humans, 1 Halfling
4. Four decomposing Orc corpses, 200 silver & 58 gold.
5. Tattered cloak and boots (human sized).
6. Broken spear and pole-arm with shredded leather armor.
7. Two decomposing Human corpses, wearing damaged armor (plate and chain respectively).
8. Human skeleton with robe and broken staff. An ivory tube at its waist contains a scroll with 3 spells (random).



# THE DARKNESS BENEATH



### Room Descriptions:

1. The entrance cave from the surface above. Stalwart, attentive adventurers hear scampering from the Northwest area immediately. Two dozen eight-legged possums are here eating green lichen. They are harmless but will hiss when initially approached. There is a huge but empty burlap giant's bag resting against the Southeast wall.

2. In the middle of this cave is a small natural fountain of black brackish water that quickly drains off into a basin. There are several 8-legged possums about, two slurping water from the fountain. Though the water looks, smells, and tastes nasty, it will quench thirst and will actually cure 1d6 points of damage once per day for any imbibing. The Leprechaun and his Halfling minions are well aware of this and might attempt to retreat to this cave if hurt.

3. An enchanted ball of flame rolls randomly about the ceiling here, illuminating the chamber. It occasionally emits a streak of fire that has a 5% chance of striking anyone on the floor below for 1d10 damage. Player conjectures about why it is here might provide seeds for future adventures...

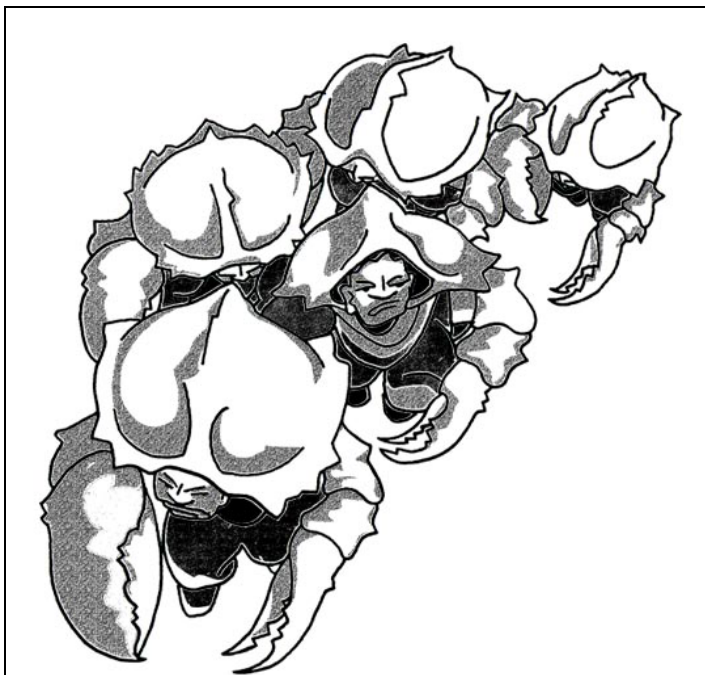
4. There's a small lake in this cavern with a waterfall going in reverse! The waterfall creates an anti-gravity effect in the lake which grows stronger the nearer one is to it. Anyone foolish enough to be sucked up into the waterfall will be transported to another dungeon level, an alien realm of one's own imagining, or perhaps just to a pool on the surface half a mile from the dungeon entrance. The shore drops off quickly and the lake is about 50 feet deep. A mutated Giant Frog lives here. It has a breath weapon emitting paralytic gas in a cloud right in front of it, and when it hits foes with a bite it will pull them into its mouth with its tongue unless a save v. breath weapons is made (automatic bite damage each round for characters trapped in its mouth, and their fighting options are limited). A gooey, vomit-like resin wells up from pores on the frog's back. At the bottom of the lake is a small locked coffer, containing a gold and ruby necklace worth 5,000gp. The necklace is an heirloom of a powerful lord in the area and would draw attention if pawned. It will require some ingenuity to dive for the chest without going up the falls.  
**Giant Mutated Frog:** LVL 2+2, HTK 13, DC 6.

5. These two passages are for GMs who wish to connect this dungeon to their own or create additional areas. If this is not desired, treat them as dead-end passages. If playing with the schematic on pg. 20, they go to the *Lower Caves*.

6. Several passages intersect here. If not already encountered randomly, a group of 5 Halfling minions of the Leprechaun are here. They will attempt to lead the party to 7 for an ambush by acting like friendly little guys.  
**Halflings:** LVL 1, HTK 6, 4, 3, 1, 1, DC 6, armed with slings and short swords. They are almost undetectable when hiding in cavern shadows and crevasses.

7-8. These two caves serve as the home of the Leprechaun Hamly and his Halfling minions. Both of these caves have a profusion of stalactites and stalagmites. If the Leprechaun is aware that a group is approaching, he will use his illusion ability to make the stalactites appear to be large black mushrooms. The Halflings will hide throughout the cavern and attempt to use their slings as long as possible. Meanwhile, Hamly will become invisible and transform any weapons he sees wielded. Alternatively, Hamly might just use invisibility and ventriloquism to make fun of the group while he and/or the silent, sneaky Halflings pick their pockets. Hamly can levitate as well, so he could steal something and levitate up. If defeated Hamly and the others will surrender, offer to scout and find the party gold, and so on, but will betray them at first opportunity. The northeast corner of 8 contains 10 cots and small trunks used by the Halflings for storage. Each Halfling trunk contains clothing, foodstuffs, 2d100 silver coins, and 1d8 platinum coins; one has a treasure map secreted away as well. There is a fountain of spring water in the area. There is a fire pit as well and if a group digs under this pit they will find a large iron trunk a few feet down containing Hamly's treasure hoard. The trunk is locked and trapped with a poison needle in the lock (save or die within 1 hour). The chest contains 1000 gold coins, 2000 silver coins, 25 platinum coins, 3 silver armbands worth 75 gold each, a potion of Flying, a potion of Heroic Fighting that lets any character drinking it fight as three levels higher for ten minutes or so (get extra hp, better attacks and saves, etc.), and *Illuminator*, a +1 sword. *Illuminator* is a lawful blade with Intelligence and Egotism 8 and communicates empathically. It can detect evil and gems and any chaotic foe hit by it must save vs. paralysis. The blade's mission is to expose corruption among nobility, and will withhold its help from players who don't work to do so after a while.  
**Halflings:** LVL 1, DC 6, slings and swords and leather, excellent stealth/ambush/thievery abilities. **Hamly:** LVL 1, DC 8, HTK 5. Spells cast on Hamly fail 80% of the time. As desired, he can make himself invisible, transform any weapon-sized or smaller, non-living, non-magical item into any other, create illusions, or use ventriloquism. He also knows magic and can cast spells as a 3rd level Mage: Slumber, Charm, Light, and Levitate. These spells plus See Invisible are all in his spellbooks, also in the trunk.

9. When approaching this area from either direction, explorers will see crab shells, exoskeletons, claws and even some crude spears spread about. A tribe of Troglodytes and a group of Demon Crab-worshipping cavemen fight occasionally in these passages. When explorers reach the point marked as area 3 on the map they will be attacked by a howling neanderthal and his 2 crabman companions.  
**Neanderthal:** LVL 2, HTK 11, DC 8, SPD 12. **Crabmen:** LVL 2, HTK 8, 6, DC 5, SPD 6/12 sideways. The passage heading east from here leads to *The Spanning Grounds of the Crabmen* if playing with the whole dungeon schematic, otherwise it can go where you like or dead-end.



The Neanderthal Tribe of the Claw worship the Crab Demon Garaskis. They wield crabshell-crafted weapons (pincer-spears, claw-clubs, etc.) and shell shields. Crabmen are chosen ones of the tribe who have undergone a ritual transformation as part of a years-long metamorphosis into Giant Crabs, essentially part crab, part man, with the earliest 'mutations' being a single giant pincer (ala fiddler crabs) and an exoskeleton carapace. They are true abominations of nature and should be described as vile, foul, unholy, half-caveman half-crustacean...things.

**10.** When approaching this area the sound of battle can be heard about 90 feet off. A group of 6 Troglodytes are finishing off two Lizardmen who swam into this cavern through the pool. Explorers arrive as the last of the Lizardmen are being slain. Explorers will have the jump on the Trog. The Trog have armor made of a leathery hide and three have small stone maces that can be thrown as missile weapons. All six have curvy swords made of some type of yellowish bone. **Troglodytes:** LVL 1+1, DC 7, SPD 9, Screech. At the beginning of each encounter, Troglodytes emit an ear piercing screech which is known to send brave men into panic. No effect on PCs, but all henchmen are required to make a morale check or flee. Each Trog is wearing a silver medallion worth 50 gold.

**11.** Another batttlezone, this one just having started. 8 screaming cavemen led by a Crab-Priest are doing battle with a group of 10 Troglodytes here. They will keep fighting each other as well as the PCs if attacked, but a wise group will let them finish each other first. **Neanderthals:** LVL 2, HTK 13, 11, 8, 7, 6, 6, 4, 3, DC 8, SPD 12. **Crab-Priest:** LVL 3, HTK 9, DC 4, SPD 6/12 sideways, attacks with pincers, can cast *Cloud of Fog* or *Puncturing Strike* (successful attacks by those under this blessing do

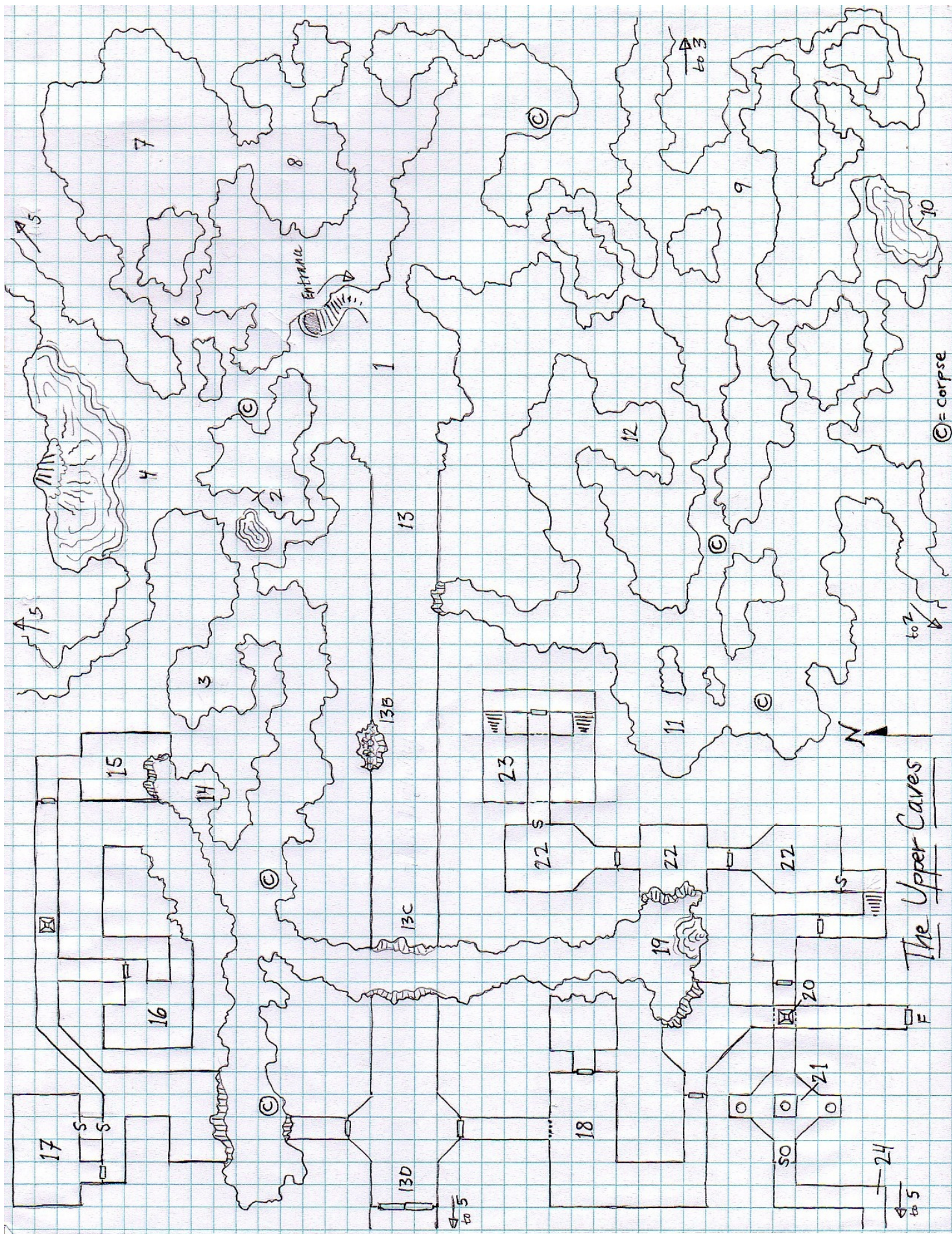
double damage). **Troglodytes:** LVL 1+1, HTK 8, 7, 7, 7, 6, 5, 4, 4, 3, 2, DC 7, SPD 9, Screech, axes. South and east of this battle is a tunnel sloping downward, which leads to the *Warrens of the Troglodytes* in the full dungeon, otherwise to a dead end or location of your choosing.

**12.** Gulag the Ogre dwells here: LVL 4+1, HTK 19, DC 5, SPD 9, +2 damage on all hits. Gulag will not parley unless faced by more than 8 opponents. If reduced to 50% of HTK, he will flee to a nook in the south part of the cave where he keeps his treasure in a series of niches. Gulag will attempt to fit into this niche to avoid being surrounded, but he has a 3 in 6 chance of becoming stuck getting in, leaving his big ass an easy target. His treasure hoard consists of 1,000 gold coins (it could take a bit to collect the coins since they are spread out in various niches), an artful bronze necklace worth 30 gold, and a potion of transform.

**13.** This vast hall, which slopes noticeably downward going West, is called the Troll Highway. Deeper down, an enclave of dinosaur-riding Dark Trolls rides to the surface along this hall to **1**. The giant reptilian tracks are clearly visible in the pounded ancient stones here. The Dark Trolls will not normally be encountered unless a party waits for them for days; any party of appropriate power for this dungeon will be slaughtered or captured by such foes if they try to engage them. The hall is always misty due to the bubbling pool at **13B**; the Creeping Molds on the random encounter chart enter the upper caves through here (and if someone sticks something into or falls into **13B** there is a 50% chance of being attacked by one). **13C** marks a passage in the upper caves which passes over the Troll Highway – the two are not connected in any way. GMs who don't like the Troll idea are free to simply treat this as a large ancient hall, possibly also eliminating the brass-bound double doors at **13D**. Otherwise, these doors follow the Troll Highway all the way down to the *Lower* and *Deep Caves*, or to a location of your own choosing.

**14.** Piles of rags are strewn about this cave. If searched, a stone tablet will be found with a picture and lettering inscribed upon it. The picture is one of tentacles stroking a humanoid figure. The language requires magic or a sage to read (and a sage will be reluctant, recognizing the script as untrustworthy). The tablet describes a complex ritual to call forth unholy, otherworldly monstrosities. Any character with the ability to use magic can conduct such a ritual, though it will take hours and require some sort of sacrifice. Such demons will be powerful, ignore normal pentagrams and protection spells below 4<sup>th</sup> level, and will immediately attack anything nearby (including the summoner, though there is some control over where the entity appears). They cannot usually be bargained with and those summoning them must save vs. transformation or go insane. This tablet came from a much deeper level of the dungeon (*The Blasphemous Shrine of the Tentacled God*, if playing the connected levels) and could be sold to unscrupulous demon-







-ologists, though doing so is an evil act. The floor in the northern part of the cave is very rough and uneven, and a determined party with shovels (or a Dwarf and a pick) might tunnel through down to **15** if they thought of it.

**15.** The 20' pit in the hall outside this room opens on 3 in 6. There is a small hole just west of the pit and if any sort of pole or rod is stuck into it, the pit seals shut for an hour. The room itself has a pile of 2 Bugbear and 5 Goblin bodies decomposing in the entry passage. They were all killed attempting to pass by a blade trap protecting a suit of human sized plate armor and a two-handed sword in the middle of the room. There are 3 sets of 2 blades that swing down from the ceiling. The 1<sup>st</sup> set is where the entry passage connects with the room, the second and third one and two feet from the north wall of the room respectively. The blades in each set are millimeters apart and come down together, automatically resetting after their swing. They do 4d4 damage to characters struck by them (2d4 if somehow struck by one blade only). The blades are set off via motion into the alcove. Examining the bodies will give clues as to how they died, possibly indicating the traps to attentive players. The armor and sword are cursed. The sword is -1 but seems +3; the armor yells "Here I am!" loudly whenever undetected enemies are within sixty feet.

**16.** A group of 20 Goblins dwells in this area. They are "allied" with the Bugbears in **17**, though due to losses incurred attempting to obtain the armor and sword in room 15 they are not so loyal. The room is filthy, and stinks as the Goblins use the unfinished room to the east as their laboratory. Sometimes they go on patrol, but much of their day is spent cooking over the fire pit in the middle of the room and playing "fun cut each other games" with one another. There are several bundles of rags in the room as well as two large tables, 5 barrels of Orcsmead (see *Max Davenport's article in this issue – Ig*), and 3 wooden chairs. The Goblins have a total of 250 silver coins and a healing potion in the rag piles. **Goblins:** LVL 1-1, DC 6, SPD 6, all armed with spears and three have crossbows as well.

**17.** 3 Bugbears dwell in this room, allied with the goblins above. They are here for the treasure in **15**, but have yet to get past the blade trap. There is a trip wire in the hallway leading to this room which alerts them to intruders. When the party approaches the room, the standard doors will be open and a small basin fountain on the north wall is visible. The Bugbears have trained two small white rats to dip into the water and squeak, so the first thing delvers see is two rats romping in the fountain. The eastern portion of the room has two sets of large bunk beds, a table with mutton and flagons, and two barrels of Sprucebeard Ale. The Bugbears have a net trap above the fountain. One Bugbear is in the room hiding and will pull the cord causing the net to fall and entrap those in front of the fountain. The other two Bugbears will have slipped out via the secret door on the south wall, passing through the

second secret door leading to the hallway, and will ambush the party from behind as they struggle with the net. Of course cautious delvers might detect the secret doors, the strings, net etc. Each Bugbear carries 50 silver and 25 gold. They've also split up a cache of ten small gems worth 25 gold apiece. One of them also has a metal rod they use to disable the pit trap in the hallway leading to **15**. **Bugbears:** LVL 3, HTK 16, 14, 9, DC 6, SPD 12, very quiet and sneaky, armed with double-bladed axes.

**18.** The portcullis at the end of the hallway is closed. The lever to open it is inside the room, on the north wall 10' west of the bars. Extreme strength can bend the bars or lift the gates. The room is covered with bas-reliefs of frolicking Lizardmen and dinosaurs. Careful inspection of the west wall reveals a small handle concealed among the images. Pulling the handle reveals an ancient stone box, lizard-wrought, containing six emeralds worth 150 gold each and a magical +1 dagger that does not glow.

**19.** Towards the back of this cave there is a small fresh-water spring with a cluster of edible mushroom patches. **19** is above but does not connect to **20** and **22** below. A solitary Hobgoblin named Furby has taken shelter here. He escaped from a temple much deeper below where the dungeon-mistresses enslaved him for their lascivious rites. Furby has whip-scars and cuts all over his body as well as bruises in more sensitive areas. He's haunted and can be killed without effort. However, he has some knowledge of this level as well as of lower levels (particularly the *Warrens of the Trogldytes*, the *Lower Caves*, and the *Fane of Salicia* if playing with the full dungeon – otherwise wherever you want to put the priestesses in your world). He is not even all that evil for a Hobgoblin, so could serve as a guide.

**20.** There is a pit here, 3 in 6 chance of opening. The drop is 10 feet, depositing fallers in an east-west hallway. This is the only way besides magic and excavation to access **21-24**.

**21.** This room contains four statues. Three are of an unknown race, reptilian like Lizardmen but strangely resembling elves in other ways. The statue in the middle of the room is a slender, yellow-eyed alligator in a basin surrounded by rocks. If PCs bring gems into the room, the alligator's mouth wags up and down, faster when one is held up to it. A gem placed in its mouth is consumed loudly, and the one placing it is blessed for 1 turn for each 10 gold the gem is worth. Forcing anything else into the mouth will cause that thing to be eaten as well: jewelry has no effect and anything else curses the giver for an hour. Blesses and curses will normally be of the 'stock' variety (+1/-1 to attack rolls and saves) but at GM option something more impressive might be bestowed for large offerings. The secret door behind the statue in the West alcove is activated by moving the left arm of the statue to an upward position; it will slowly lower back down as the secret door closes with it over 1 minute.



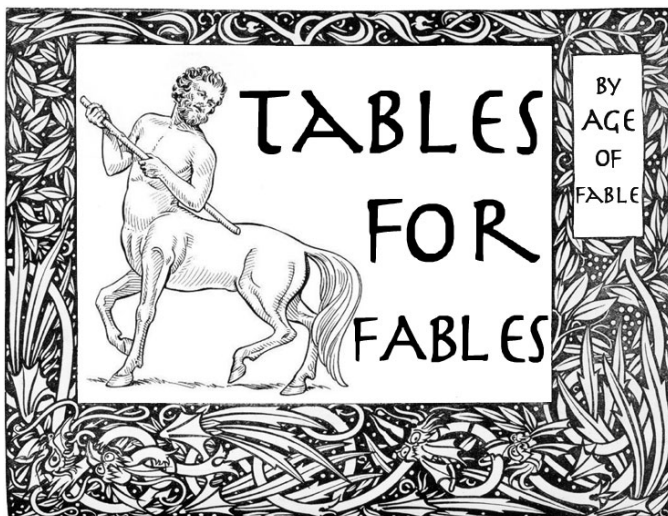
**22.** These three rooms have bas-reliefs similar to those in **18**, though the creatures portrayed seem to blend elements of Lizardman and dinosaur more readily and to use magic in certain of their frolics as well. On the ground in the middle of the three rooms is an amber gem; a mage who figures out how it works (save vs. magic) can use it to fire rays of scorching flame (6d6 damage, save for half) at any foe within 100 feet. If the mage ever rolls 12 or less total on the six damage dice, it burns out instead, doing the mage the amount of fire damage rolled as it melts in his hand (save for half, representing throwing it away in time).

**23.** The hallway behind the secret door from **22** is filled with a green mist that reduces visibility to 5'. If a group travels all 50 feet to the eastern door, they must save vs. magic or fall asleep. A Boondawoogle lives in the room beyond the regular door. What is a Boondawoogle, you ask? No one is really sure other than that they are not native to this planet. This particular Boondawoogle is androgynous and looks like a 6 foot tall humanoid with emerald colored skin. Its eyes are light blue and its head bald. The Boondawoogle is able to leap 30 feet vertically or horizontally. With its eyes it can charm individuals or shoot flames doing 2d8 and destroying flammable possessions. Boondawoogles can also create a green mist like the one in the entry passage, though it takes time. This particular specimen likes leaving parties naked somewhere

in the dungeon after taking their choicest items. If a group makes it into the room, the Boondawoogle will be waiting in the lower area. It likes to use its gaze-charm and "speak" to the feelings of those it encounters. There is a plain circle carved into the floor in the north portion of the room and a circle with strange runes carved into the floor of the southern portion. Between the two circles is a pile of around 20 explorers' gear, mostly backpacks, torches, non-magical weapons etc. Special gear includes 2 silken cloaks worth 50 gold each, 100 platinum coins, 1,500 silver, 330 gold, a priestly scroll with Dispel Curse and Find Object, and a Wand of Doors with 28 charges (detailed in *Fight On!* #1, creates a locked (for all save the wandsmen) heavy door in an open cross-section). When reduced to 0 HTK the Boondawoogle vanishes and reappears in the plain circle with pink light flickering around it. It shoots one last flame attack. Next round it appears in the circle with runes surrounded by green light and disappears. It cannot be harmed once in the circles. If the Boondawoogle takes a totally brutal hit it should still get a save vs. death to bring about this effect. **Boondawoogle:** LVL 4, HTK 18, DC 4, SPD 15 (jumps 30, charm ability, attacks via flame eyes).

**24.** This secret door goes to the *Lower Caves* (Level 5) in the full dungeon, but it might lead to a simple treasure room or the hidden city of the Reptile-Elves in your world instead. Happy adventuring! Ω





## What are the Monsters Doing? (3d3)

Roll	Result
111	sleeping.
112	having sex.
113	arguing (roll again: 1 over their relationship 2 politics 3 religion 4 money 5 their status in the group 6 a possession other than money).
121	gambling with dice.
122	gambling on a (roll again: 1-3 race 4-6 fight) between small animals (e.g. snails, rats).
123	re-setting the dungeon: winding up traps that've been sprung, removing adventurers' bodies, putting in new treasure and so on.
131	two monsters are fighting (not to the death), a crowd is cheering them on (optionally roll again 1-3 they're also gambling on the results).
132	two monsters are fighting to the death, a crowd is cheering them on.
133	two monsters are fighting to the death, a crowd is trying to separate them.
211	they're meant to be on guard (roll again: 1-3 they're alert and guarding, 4 they're asleep 5-6 they're doing something else: roll again on this table). They may be guarding a 'Major Dungeon Location' (below).
212	trading.
213	they're lost.
221	running away from another monster.

222	roll again: 1-2 exercising 3-4 training for combat 5-6 sharpening weapons, polishing armour etc.
223	performing a religious ceremony (roll again: 1 silent meditation 2 animal sacrifice 3 sacrifice of one of their own species 4 sacrifice of an intelligent member of another species 5 a solemn ritual 6 a boisterous and ecstatic ritual).
231	nothing - strangely, they appear to have simply been waiting for the adventurers to come along.
232	the monsters are being punished, e.g. peeling potatoes, scrubbing the floor with their bare hands.
233	going to the toilet.
311	washing.
312	one monster is telling a story to a group.
313	one monster is lecturing a group. The group is (roll again: 1-2 openly bored and resentful 3-4 silent for fear of the larger monsters watching them 5 respectfully silent, alert and attentive 6 loudly enthusiastic).
321	plotting against their rulers.
322	playing sport.
323	torturing (roll again: 1-2 a member of their own species 3-4 an intelligent member of another dungeon species 5 an intelligent member of a non-dungeon species 6 an animal).
331	they appear to be dead, but spring to life when the adventurers enter the room.
332	roll again: 1-2 eating 3 eating and getting drunk 4 getting drunk 5-6 getting drunk and fighting.
333	waiting in ambush for whoever might come along.

## Major Dungeon Locations (2d3)

Roll	Result
11	The (roll again: 1-2 throne room 3-4 underground palace 5-6 underground gardens) of (roll again: 1-3 a human sorcerer 4-6 a powerful monster).
12	Treasure room (roll again: 1 treasury of an underground civilisation 2 storehouse of a band of robbers 3-4 temple; see below 5-6 tomb).

13	A temple where (roll again: 1 a forgotten god still waits for its worshippers 2-3 an evil cult from the surface secretly worships 4 an alien has convinced the primitive dungeon inhabitants that it is a god 5 an imprisoned lunatic is worshipped as a god 6 a fierce beast is worshipped as a god).
21	An underground river, which leads (roll again: 1-2 out of the dungeon, 3 to an underground lake; see below 4 a secret cove; see below 5-6 to another major location - roll again on this table, ignoring another result of 'an underground river').
22	An underground lake, with (roll again: 1 an ancient and powerful sea beast 2-3 a city of intelligent sea creatures beneath its surface 4 the ruins of a city beneath its surface - see 'the ruins of a lost city' below 5-6 an island in the middle, where adventurers may find...roll again on this table, ignoring the results of 'an underground lake', 'an underground river', or 'a secret cove').
23	A (roll again: 1 demon 2 evil god/dess 3 evil sorcerer 4 as for (3) but the sorcerer is also a former ruler 5 fierce ancient beast 6 mechanical creature created by a lost civilisation) is (roll again: 1-2 trapped in ice 3-4 held alive and captive by magic 5-6 sleeping, preserved by their own arts - roll again if the creature is an ancient beast).
31	The ruins of a lost city, whose former inhabitants (roll again: 1-2 are now angry and vicious spirits 3-4 are trapped in eternal living death and crave release 5-6 are gone, but whose mechanical creations still wait for their return).
32	A secret cove, leading to the open sea, where (roll again: 1-2 pirates have a hidden city 3-4 a cult from the surface comes to worship demons of the sea 5-6 refugees have built a place of safety).
33	The ruined craft of advanced aliens (roll again: 1 the aliens are alive 2 only one alien is still alive 3 the aliens are dead, but their robots are still operating 4 the aliens are dead, but creatures they were transporting are still alive 5-6 the aliens are dead, but the craft itself is alive). Whoever is still alive (roll again: 1-2 is at war with the inhabitants of the dungeon 3 have/has enslaved many inhabitants of the dungeon 4 have/has recruited many inhabitants of the dungeon as an army of conquest 5-6 have/has convinced some of the inhabitants of the dungeon to worship them).



## The Seven Swords

by Jacob "Badelaire" Boucher

I've always had issues with the idea prevalent in some games that magical items should look just like any other "normal" item. This is, I suppose, to get PCs to waste time, money, and spells on detecting, testing, and identifying magic items, instead of just saying "Holy crap, that insanely cool-looking sword has to be magical!" Instead of the "hiding in plain sight" mentality, I think magical weapons and the like need to be handled in exactly the opposite fashion - they should be stunningly gorgeous examples of whatever sort of item they might be, and anyone who even glances at one will immediately know what a rare and valuable (and powerful) item it is. On the other hand, such magical booty should not just be lying around in random treasure troves. It should be in the hands of powerful NPCs, or guarded by powerful monsters and deadly traps, the end result of an extraordinarily perilous quest. I've never really liked the idea of "run of the mill magic items" like the ubiquitous Sword +1, although I understand that a curve in magical item power can sometimes be really nice.

I typically prefer fewer, more powerful items - I like the idea that instead of there being 100 Sword +1s out there, there are just the Seven Swords of Power, and that's that. Perhaps there are non-magical weapons that are effectively "+1" weapons, but without the ability to hurt certain magical creatures that require enchanted weapons to slay. This way, players can have "special weapons" without the fantasy world seemingly possessing a magical sword factory churning out ensorcelled blades by the dozens.

### The Seven Swords of Power

Here's an example. Each of these weapons is a powerful magic item, but they probably aren't game-breakers, and



acquiring just one of these swords would be a quest in itself. Also, if the players are going to get the full effect of a given weapon's power, they'll have to be facing the sorts of foes the weapon is designed to combat, and while the bearers of the swords have special abilities and protections, the rest of the party may not be so lucky.

**The Seven Swords of Power** were forged and issued to the Seven Champions, a band of masterful knights who wielded them to great effect during the last great war against the Forces of Evil. Six of the Seven Champions were killed during the fighting, and their swords were lost by the end of the war. In the six centuries since, the Swords have appeared sporadically throughout history, but they never remain in the public eye for long before disappearing again for a generation or two.

Each of the Swords is a silver-hilted longsword with a rune-etched blade and a bejeweled pommel. The seven swords look similar to one another, although a keen eye will discern that the runes vary from blade to blade. Each of the Swords has a different gem in the pommel, and each has its own distinct type of foe it was forged to combat. Each of the Seven Swords functions as a Long Sword +2 except against its favored target type, when the enchantment increases to +4. The gem of each Sword will emit a pulsating glow when within 100' of a target creature - the glow will pulse faster the closer the target gets, and the glow will become brighter the more foes there are.

**Wizard-Bane** (purple gem) was created to slay evil mages and mage-like monsters (GM discretion as to whether a creature falls into this category). The bearer of the Sword gains a +3 bonus to all saves vs. spells (or spell like effects if allowed). The Sword can cast Detect Magic and Dispel Magic three times a day at the bearer's level of experience.

**Wraith-Bane** (white gem) was created to slay undead. The bearer of the Sword is immune to all special undead attacks (level drain, aging, paralysis, strength drain, etc.) but not the basic damage from the attack. The bearer of the Sword can also turn undead like a priest of two experience levels lower, or at full level if a paladin.

**Troll-Bane** (green gem) was created to slay trolls and ogres. The bearer of this Sword can cast Charm Monster and Hold Monster each twice per day at the bearer's level of experience. In addition, the wounds delivered by the Sword cannot be regenerated by trolls of any kind.

**Dragon-Bane** (red gem) was created to slay dragons. The bearer of this Sword is immune to the fear effect of dragons and gains a +3 bonus to save vs. dragon's breath. In addition, if the save fails, the bearer only takes half damage, and if the save is made, no damage is suffered.

**Goblin-Bane** (blue gem) was created to slay goblins and orcs. The bearer of this Sword gains 1d4 additional attacks a round when fighting goblins and orcs. In addition, the Sword grants the bearer the ability to cast Confusion and Fear each once a day at the bearer's level of experience.

**Beast-Bane** (orange gem) was created to slay unnatural beasts and monsters (giant or aberrant versions of normal creatures, or pure "monsters" like an Umber Hulk, Purple Worm, Hydra - GM discretion as to whether a creature belongs to this category). Against such creatures the bearer of the Sword gains a +2 bonus to saves and armor class, and the Sword always doubles the result of the damage die (before magical bonuses or other modifiers are added in).

**Horror-Bane** (yellow gem) was created to slay extraplanar creatures (mostly demons, devils, and elementals - GM discretion on what qualifies). The bearer of the Sword has a +3 save against any special attacks from these creatures that allow saving throws. In addition, any time the Sword delivers its maximum damage to the target creature, the creature must make a save vs. Death Magic or be immediately banished back to its home plane. This sword is the only one that has remained in the hands of a Champion since the end of the war, passed down from generation to generation. It is currently in the possession of a Paladin of the High God. Ω

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## Shields Shall Be Splintered

by J. Brian Murphy

Pity the poor shield. There's a reason it was a staple of the infantryman's gear from the dawn of history all the way into the 17th century. Shields work. They stop blows from sword, spear, and arrow, they can be moved to intercept attacks coming from almost any direction, and they can be bashed into your foes. If you've ever gotten the chance to don armour and swing a rattan "sword" with the Society for Creative Anachronism, or even just played knights in the backyard using sticks for swords and trashcan lids for shields, you know the value of a solid, moveable barrier between you and all that hurty your foe is swinging at you.

But in most RPGs, the shield gets little love. In exchange for the additional encumbrance and having one hand too full of shield to do anything else, your armour score gets a little nudge, usually a mere point. Worse, you're usually giving up better options, like the extra damage of a massive two-handed weapon or the extra attack roll from a weapon in each hand. So what can be done to rehabilitate the shield and make it a worthwhile choice mechanically? In my game, I'm allowing the shield to act as ablative armour. One thing historical shields frequently did was shatter. A strong blow with an axe or a sword could cleave a shield, splintering the boards. Viking duels often had a

three-shield rule, allowing each combatant to enter the contest with a shield on his arm and two spares in reserve.

With my houserule, you get the usual benefit to your armour score with a shield. However, any time you take damage, you can opt instead to say your shield bore the brunt of the blow. The shield is shattered and must be discarded, but you don't take any damage. It's quick, it's easy, and it's valuable.

What about magic? Should a shield ward you against a wizard's magic flame or bolts of lightning? Why not! Any time you fail a save vs. magic, you can say your character shelters against the power of the spell behind their shield. Again, the shield is shattered, but the character only takes half damage, just as if the saving throw had been successful. (Especially lenient or deadly GMs might allow you to use your shield even if you do successfully save, allowing you to cut the damage in half a second time.) Note that this only works against spells which cause damage through a physical attack. Spells which put you to sleep or surround you with a poison gas cannot, obviously, be deflected by a mere mundane shield.

Finally, let's consider magic shields. It seems a bit silly to allow a mundane weapon to rend a magical shield to a pile of splinters. On the other hand, we don't want a warrior carrying a magical shield to just say the shield absorbs every hit. As a compromise, every time you use your enchanted shield to absorb damage, it loses one of its plusses. Thus, a +2 shield becomes a +1 shield, and a +1 shield would become a +0 shield. After a shield has been reduced to +0, it shatters the next time it's used to absorb damage. Whether or not a shield used in this way, but not yet destroyed, can have its pluses restored is up to your GM, but it certainly won't be cheap! And if your magic shield has additional powers, like a glow that blinds or confuses enemies, you ought to think twice before letting it be destroyed this way. Here are two magical shields to add to your campaign that take advantage of this rule:

**Shield of Terrifying Countenance:** The black iron boss of this rectangular +2 shield is shaped like a roaring demon. Once per day, the wielder can speak the command word, causing the boss to scowl as if with life and let out a terrifying scream. The nearest foe facing the shield is affected as if by a cause fear spell. However, should this shield be shattered, the demon trapped within is released. The GM should roll a d6; on a 1 or 2, the demon attacks the nearest foe (probably the one who shattered the shield). On a 3, 4, 5, or 6, the demon attacks the wearer of the shield! As soon as either the demon or its intended victim die, the demon and all the shattered bits of the shield vanish back to the demon's home plane.

**Rowan Shield:** The wood of the rowan tree is especially proof against enchantments. Certain shieldwrights, especi-

ally dwarven ones, can manufacture a shield from rowan wood that retains its magic-resistant properties. Whenever the bearer of such a shield is the target of magic, or within the area of a spell's effect, the shield will vibrate. If the bearer is wearing the shield on the arm or carrying it in hand, this vibration is impossible to miss. If the shield, however, is buried in a pack or slung over a heavy cloak, it's possible that the shivering will not be noticed. If a person carrying a rowan shield fails a save against any spell or magical effect, they can elect to have the shield absorb some of the power of the spell. The shield shatters, but this counts as an automatically successful save against the spell. Yes, this means that spells that are negated by a successful save are negated by the sacrifice of the shield.

Rowan shields are commonly painted the same shade of crimson as the rowan tree's berries and are fitted with bronze hardware. The cost of a rowan shield is usually five to ten times the price of a normal shield, depending on the availability of rowan wood and the frequency of magic in the area. Shields manufactured by reputable shieldwrights are always proof against magic, but 10% of all rowan shields found on an adventure were not manufactured properly. While these shields perform adequately as a normal shield should, they offer no warning or special protection against magic. Ω



# Panicked Mounts and Falls

Geoffrey O. Dale

A mount may become panicked following a non-lethal attack by infantry (e.g. noise, lights, smoke, etc.), as a result of wounds suffered in combat, as a result of its rider becoming incapacitated, or just because of the stresses of combat. A panicked mount remains in that state for 1d4 turns. A rider must exert positive control over a panicked mount to prevent the mount from immediately retreating away from combat in the most convenient direction (for the mount). A rider who does not exert such control, or who tries to exert control and fails, is immediately carried off at very fast speed in a randomly determined direction. The panicked mount continues in this direction for 1d20 +8 rounds before slowing or stopping. A panicked mount which retreats from the battlefield cannot reenter combat for 1d12 rounds following the time at which they stop, and only after the rider successfully reasserts positive control over the mount. A rider who attempts to exert positive control over a mount and fails has a [50-Dexterity]% of being thrown by the mount before it retreats from the battlefield. To control a mount, the rider must roll greater than or equal to the value shown on the table below. If control is established (takes one round to attempt) then the rider may continue to fight and the mount will obey new commands to move or attack.

## Controlling Mounts Table (1d20):

Character Level	Degree of Panic		
	Skittish	Somewhat Panicked	Completely Panicked
Warrior 1-3 Priest 1-4 Mage 1-5	14	16	18
Warrior 4-6 Priest 5-8 Mage 6-10	11	13	15
Warrior 7-9 Priest 9-12 Mage 11-15	8	10	12
Warrior 10-12 Priest 13-16 Mage 16+	6	8	10
Warrior 13-15 Priest 17+	4	6	8
Warrior 16+	2	4	6

**Falls from Mounts:** A rider who cannot maintain control over his/her mount or who becomes severely wounded or fatigued may not be able to stay on their mount. A rider who is at half or fewer HTK or is severely fatigued has a 10% chance/minute of falling out of the saddle. A rider who is at ¼ or fewer HTK or exhausted has a 30% chance/minute of falling. If a rider falls he/she may take



damage because of the height of the mount. Fallen riders may also become stunned (unable to move, focus or act coherently) due to the fall.

Riders who fall from saddles which are 3 or fewer feet off the ground generally do not take damage or become stunned unless the mount is moving quickly. Riders falling from low mounts at medium or higher speed take 1d4 damage and are stunned for 1d4 rounds.

Riders who fall from saddles which are between 3 and 10 feet off the ground:

- When stopped or at slow speed take 1d4 damage and are stunned for 1d4 rounds;
- When at medium speed take 1d6 damage and are stunned for 1d6 rounds;
- When at fast speed take 1d8 damage and are stunned for 1d8+1 rounds;
- When at very fast speed take 2d6 damage and are stunned for 1d12+2 rounds.

Riders who fall from saddles which are more than 10 feet off the ground:

- When stopped or at slow speed take 1d6 damage and are stunned for 1d6 rounds;
- When at medium speed take 1d8 damage and are stunned for 1d8 rounds;
- When at fast speed takes 1d12 damage and are stunned for 1d12+1 rounds;
- When at very fast speed takes 1d20 damage and are stunned for 4d6 rounds.

Riders falling from aerial mounts should be treated as above, and in addition take falling damage and other effects as ordinarily treated in your game. For example, if falls in your game do 1d6 per 10 feet, a warrior falling off a fast-moving wyvern from 50 feet up would take 1d12+5d6 damage and be stunned for 1d12+1 rounds. Ω

# The Entourage Approach

by David Bowman

The Entourage Approach is a set of optional campaign rules in which each player is charged with developing an Entourage, or stable of characters. Each Entourage will consist of one Primary Character and one Loyal Follower; further members of the Entourage will be standard Henchmen. The Primary Character's Loyal Follower does not count towards the hiring total permitted by his Charisma. Furthermore, the hiring total will rise with experience for each Primary Character, reflecting his fame and influence as he gains notoriety throughout the land.

Upon the untimely death of a Primary Character, the Loyal Follower is able to claim all of the slain former leader's possessions, and is able to claim, after paying any taxes (10% in Solstice), that deceased individual's estate. He or she also inherits the Primary Character's former Entourage. At this point, short of a potential Raise Dead, the Loyal Follower becomes the Primary Character, and must then choose a new Loyal Follower from his Entourage.

At the beginning of each session, the player and GM decide who from each Entourage is going on this particular adventure. Typically either the Primary Character or the Loyal Follower will be present, though especially later on the players might decide to attempt an adventure which is beneath their Primary Character's or Loyal Follower's level of expertise. In such a case, the player can opt to play an adventure using Henchmen alone. Experience is affected by the number of characters, so it is not always the best idea to tackle an adventure with three dozen members, but it IS possible. The most senior character on the adventure (Primary Character if present, Loyal Follower if present and the Primary Character is not, Henchman of highest level otherwise) receives one full share of experience, while all others present divide a full share equally amongst themselves. For example, if a player brings a Loyal Follower and four Henchmen on a given adventure, the Loyal Follower would receive full experience and the four Henchmen would receive  $\frac{1}{4}$  share each.

A Primary Character gains an additional Loyal Follower at 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> level. As with the first Loyal Follower, these members of the Entourage do not count toward the Primary Character's maximum allowable number of hirelings based on Charisma. The player should designate a pecking order amongst his Loyal Followers, so inheritance is clearly defined. The referee might want to add further rules for the Entourage if a particular Primary Character builds a stronghold upon reaching an appropriate level.

If a Loyal Follower or any other member of an Entourage rises to a higher level than the Primary Character, he or she will leave the Entourage (and possibly establish his own).

Morale is an important game feature when using the Entourage Approach. When hiring Henchmen, make an initial offer of gold (normally 100/level, plus a partial share of treasure - +1 for each additional 100/level offered) and roll 2d6 on the following table:

- 2: Will never join that player's Entourage
- 3-5: Refuses to join at this time, maybe next adventure
- 6-8: Uncertain, roll again if double (3x, etc.) offer made
- 9-11: Accepts offer
- 12: Enthusiastically accepts, +3 Loyalty

This table plus the character's Charisma score and possibly additional gold above the hiring fee will determine each henchman's Loyalty score, determined by your gamebook and referee. Loyalty scores modify morale checks. Make morale checks in crisis situations, as determined by the referee. Morale should also be checked at the conclusion of each adventure to see if the Henchmen remain in the Entourage. Fair treatment and fair pay will normally mean that no final check is required, but Henchmen who have witnessed their mates perish or come within a breath of their own demise may check even under the best conditions. Gold and gems can normally help convince even the most reluctant Henchmen, though. To make a Morale Check, the referee rolls 2d6, makes the Loyalty adjustment, and refers to this table:

- 2: Hostile, will attack or endanger Primary Character.
- 3-5: Deserts immediately, will attack if prevented from flight.
- 6-8: Hesitates; if situation does not improve, roll again at -1 in one turn.
- 9-11: No effect. If situation does not improve, roll again in one turn.
- 12: No effect, no more rolls required for this situation.





Players will maintain an index card for each member of their Entourage and the referee will keep track of the Henchman's Loyalty base. Loyalty scores for members of the Entourage are never seen by the players, but might become evident over the course of the campaign. Under certain circumstances, a player with available space within his entourage can actually add intelligent Monsters to his Entourage on a temporary or even permanent basis, given that said Monster can be accepted by his Henchmen mates. (Depending upon the type of Monster, such additions to the Entourage might have a negative effect upon Morale.) How monsters interact with society in more normal situations may also be worth considering here.

The process of actually attracting and maintaining a successful Entourage will be a large part of campaign play when using this approach. This Entourage Approach should open up game play opportunities for all involved. A player with a cohesive Entourage could even elect to play solo, or have successful adventures with only one other player, should the need arise. A player is never required to bring members of his Entourage on adventures, however.

The standard Henchmen Fee is as follows: 100 GP hiring fee per level of Henchmen and 1/4 share of all gold plundered on adventures. Thus, four members of an Entourage would be able to claim one full share of the treasure. When there are more than four members of an Entourage on an adventure, they will not receive more than a full share of the treasure and must divide that full share equally amongst themselves, much as experience is divided. Magic items are not included in such handshake contracts, though. Bonuses to Loyalty base are normally afforded by exceeding this standard amount, while penalties are incurred when awarding less than this amount. Players may choose to name their Entourage (e.g. House Hallowed, Clan of the Claw). Some sort of identity is important, because during the course of play, an Entourage will grow in reputation and esteem.

### **Optional Entourage Approach Rules:**

Charisma Option: The Primary Character's CHA score can allow members of his Entourage to gain extra experience due to his leadership skills. CHA 13 or 14 yields a 10% bonus to earned experience, while a CHA score of 15+ grants a 20% bonus to earned experience for all hirelings. These bonuses are applied to the smaller divided amounts of experience as described above.

Style Point Option: Style Points are awarded by the referee under certain, special circumstances during play. A particularly heroic act, a fantastic piece of role-playing, a completely novel form of death, an act of comedic value that even makes the Monsters giggle, or having a particularly underwhelming Primary Character (Kobolds are an example from my own campaign).

How exactly an Entourage cashes in Style Points is up to the player. If used during character creation, the player will be allowed to spend a point and swap the position of two abilities or add +1 to a single ability. If used when rolling hit points, a player can spend a point and roll over, taking the higher result. If used during play, a player can re-roll a saving throw, or a roll to hit, or pretty much any single die roll, taking the best result. If at any time an Entourage manages to accumulate 10 Style Points without spending any, it can claim Lordship over the group for one session. What this entails is not entirely defined at this point, but will probably include such things as deciding what toppings are on the pizza for that evening. Have fun with this option, as it is meant to encourage role-play and creativity, as well as a certain feeling of accomplishment, even when one's characters might be dropping like flies early on.

**Henchmen:** I have included some simple rules here for determining basic gear for Henchmen when using the Entourage Approach. It is left to the referee to fill in the blanks as far as personality, alignment, temperament, and flavor details are concerned. Henchmen are typically 1st Level when hired. The characters may encounter higher level NPC adventurers during the course of an adventure. It is possible to recruit these more experienced NPCs into service, provided that the situation is conducive to such an offer and such potential Henchmen are satisfied with the terms of service. All 1st Level Henchmen begin with random weapons and armor, 1d6x10 gold, and an Adventurer's Pack. Mages begin without armor, while Priests and Warriors roll 2d6: 2-10 Leather, 11-12 Chain. For weapons, Priests receive a mace, Mages receive dagger and staff, and Fighters take a dagger as well as rolling 2d6 for an additional weapon: 2-5 Sword, 6-7 Axe, 8-9 Mace, 10-12 Spear. Elf characters ignore these rolls and start with sword, bow, and shield. Halflings and Dwarves roll as Warriors, but Halflings add a sling while Dwarves add a hammer. The Adventurer's Pack, which can be purchased for 35 gold and weighs 40, contains 6 torches, a tinderbox, a knife, a hatchet, 1 week of rations, a full wineskin, 50' of rope a grappling hook, and 12 iron spikes.

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## **Ye Olde Magic Shoppe**

by Jeff Rients

The Midrealm of Cinder is a land of many magic-users, ranging from the humble hedge wizards of the peasant villages to the court necromancers employed by wicked nobles to the academic arcanists of H'kaag, City of Seven Sorcerers. Thanks to the invisible hand of that abstract god, Economics, it was inevitable that eventually a business enterprise should develop catering to the needs of these many wonder-workers. Thus the Magic Shop. Often, greenhorn adventurers enter the premises of such establishments in hopes of purchasing magic blades or



armor, or at very least a potion or two. Most such ruffians leave empty handed. Only the clever can make effective use of most of the wares for sale at the typical Magic Shop.

**Stogies of Stench Warding** - These cigars are grown and prepared by certain clans of garden gnomes. When smoked the user is immune to the effects of all offensive odors and all within 20' are +2 to save against such effects. Unfortunately, the odor tends to attract animals and monsters with sensitive noses. Roll double wandering monster checks, but the extra checks only result in additional encounters if creatures with exceptional olfactory senses are indicated. Each Stogie lasts 6 turns. Cost is 1 gold piece each or a box of 20 for 12gp.

**Shimmering Sand** - Sand gathered from pristine beaches frequented by nixies, sirens, and other aquatic fey. A pinch thrown in conjunction with a Slumber spell allows the casting to affect more targets. When only a single victim is normally affected, one or two will fall asleep. In other cases the die size is generally increased to the next higher type. For example 2-20 orcs can be affected when Shimmering Sand is used. Aquatic creatures are unaffected. Sold in tiny pouches containing 5 pinches for 25 gold.

**Black Sand** - According to rumor this magical adjunctive has somehow been smuggled from an island in the dread realm of the Necromaster of the North! A handful used in conjunction with a Slumber spell allows undead to be put to sleep. Black Sand and Shimmering Sand cannot be used

together: doing so negates the Slumber altogether. Additionally, after Black Sand has been used, all attempts to Turn Undead will fail for the remainder of the combat. A pouch containing 3 handfuls of Black Sand costs 250 gold.

**Pipeweed of Judicious Contemplation** - Said to be grown by expert hobblings under directions from a master alchemist, a Mage who spends 2-7 turns smoking a bowl of this fine tobacco may replace a memorized but uncast spell with another of the same level from his or her spell-book. A magic-user of lesser rank must roll their wisdom or less on 1d20 to achieve this same effect, with a roll of '20' indicating that the spell replacement occurs, but the substitute is randomly generated. The enchantment of this tobacco is so strong that smoking more than one bowl in the same day leaves the user feeblinded for 1-6 hours. A pouch of this stuff, enough for 6 smokes, costs 200 gold.

**Warlock's Wand** - A small tube of magnetic iron filled with quicksilver and capped at each end with amber. In the hands of a fully-trained Warlock this item is a powerful tool. By use of this wand a Fiery Sphere may be reshaped into the dimensions of a Jolt of Electricity, while a Jolt of Electricity may be so focused so as to affect a single target. The spell so modified may only originate from a scroll or be cast by the wand-wielder. Spheres and Jolts from other magical devices can not be altered by use of a Warlock's Wand. For lesser mages to successfully use a Warlock's Wand their level or less must be rolled on 1d8. Failure indicates the spell activates but in its original shape. If the non-Warlock is using a scroll, 1d12 must be rolled instead and a roll of '12' indicates the casting is fumbled and the spell effect centers on the wand's user. 275 gold.

**Third Eye Stone** - These round, coin-sized pieces of sky blue quartz allow the detection of magic auras on additional objects each time such a detection is cast. The total additional items that may be tested for magic equals the level of the casting mage. After each use there is a flat 1 in 6 chance of the stone cracking, losing all power and value. Some magic-users mount their Third Eye Stones on leather headbands or in the hatbands of their favorite pointy hat, or occasionally they affix them to the top of their staves. A standard Third Eye Stone costs 75 gp. Occasionally finer specimens can be found for sale. These cost 200gp but have only a 1 in 20 chance of burning out.

**Flash Powder Pellets** - Imported from alchemists living among the lands of the Southern Sultans, these brown clay spheres break when thrown against a solid surface such as a floor or wall. Upon cracking they emit a small thunder-clap, a brief flash of fire, and a 5' diameter cloud of smoke that lingers for one or two combat rounds. In situations of surprise or evasion any monsters of low or average intelligence must make a morale save or hesitate for one combat round. Any strong breeze will disperse the smoke and negate the effect. A trio of these devices costs 25 gc.

**Sorcerer's Staff** - An oaken staff with a small hooded lantern affixed to the top or hanging from the crook. A mage ranked Sorcerer or higher may open the hood with a simple command word (often "lux!" or "phosphario!") and it is similarly closed (typically with "nox!" or "tenebrax!"). Lesser spellcasters may operate the hood mechanism by means of a tiny lever. The lantern has no reservoir for oil, as it is designed to be used in conjunction with an Everburning Flame spell. Some owners have gemstones set in the center of the lantern, to add a colored brilliance to the light. 25 gold.

**Fine Glitter** - A fistful of this sparkly stuff thrown into the air aids all sorts of charming, holding, and confusing magics, resulting in a -2 to the saving throws allowed by such spells. Additionally, clever magic-users might be able to impress yokels and lackwits with a timely toss of glitter, especially in conjunction with a Flash Powder Pellet and/or a Sorcerer's Staff. Glitter only works when a light source is available. Strong or gusty winds will prevent effective use. A pouch of 6 handfuls of Fine Glitter generally runs 75 gold coins.



**Pickled Orc Eyeballs** - Holding a properly pickled orc eye in the right hand increases the duration of Evil Detection spells by 50%. The eye withers to uselessness at the end of the spell and only one may be used per casting. Additionally, Pickled Orc Eyeballs are said to be a surprisingly tasty snack. Gnolls and trolls consider them a delicacy. A jar containing a dozen eyes costs 35 pieces of gold. Individual eyes are only available for purchase at certain unsavory taverns, where they are often the object of dares.

**Black Lotus** - By imbibing a small amount of this deadly narcotic a magic-user may extend the ranges and durations of various sendings such as Self-Projection and the Eye of Arcane Sight. Durations of turns become hours and ranges of tens of feet become miles. But with each usage of Black Lotus the spellcaster must check a cumulative +1% chance of becoming addicted. The luckier Black Lotus addicts simply wither and die, while the most wretched cases are driven to catatonic madness by eldritch visions. A single dose of Black Lotus costs 50 gold.

**Monkey Paw Talisman** - The general public is terribly misinformed as to the function of these simian relics. They act as traps for malevolent wish spells or the accursed results of a poorly worded wish. A magic-user wearing a Monkey Paw Talisman is allowed a saving throw against any harmful effects of wish type magic. Each Monkey Paw will capture a single baleful wish and only one Talisman may be carried at a time. Caveat Emptor, as 1 in 20 of these devices are sold with a bad wish already trapped inside. It is not unknown for the evil magic captured by a Monkey Paw to escape to wreak havoc. A Monkey Paw Talisman costs 25 gold.

**Powdered Mummy Foot** - Sprinkling a pouch of this necro-dust upon the remains targeted by reincarnation magic allows two rolls to determine the new incarnation. The caster must pick the new form without any consultation with the target of the spell. This versatile substance can also be employed while animating skeletons or zombies, a pouchful insuring that 1-6 of the newly created undead will possess maximum wound points. One pouch of Powder Mummy Foot costs 50 gold.

**Bottled Phantasm** - These small flasks are invariably constructed of dark brown glass, preventing the contents from being plainly viewed. A Bottled Phantasm weighs no more than an empty bottle, but the bottle occasionally twitches and kicks as if it contains something alive. If the bottle is opened immediately after the casting of a Forces of Phantasy spell, the illusion will last 2-7 combat rounds without further concentration from the mage. Should the bottle become cracked or opened at any other time, the phantasm will be lost. A Bottled Phantasm costs 60 gold.

**Goblin Candle** - Lurid green tapers made from goblin fat. They sputter and spark when they burn and also issue a foul-smelling smoke that tends to spook horses and upset mules. Goblin Candles shed but dim, flickering light in a 10' radius and only last three turns. While holding a lit Goblin Candle a magic-user is 50% less likely to be surprised by enchanted creatures. Goblins are not amused by their brethren being rendered down to serve as magical illumination and tend to attack anyone holding a Goblin Candle. Twenty Goblin Candles can be purchased for only 5 gold coins.

## GENERAL NOTES

**Supply and Demand** - The prices listed above should only be used in cities where magic is legal or at least tolerated. Buying these goods on the black market will increase prices by four-fold or more. Towns and villages with magic shops sell magic shop wares for double the prices listed above. Furthermore, town-based shops have only a 75% chance of having any particular item in stock, while village magic shops are only 50% likely to have what the buyer is looking for.

**Encumbrance** - Some mages try to carry as many different magic gimmicks as possible. A belt festooned with pouches full of wizard's wares is cumbersome and under the hazards of dungeon combat finding just the right magical ingredient will be tricky. Even a short fall might result in cracked jars or spilled powders. It is not recommended that one smoke Pipeweed of Judicious Contemplation after it has been soaked in orc-eye pickle!

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## Unusual & Magical Spirits

by Max Davenport

**Leaf and Anvil Ale:** Though the dwarvish love of ale is well known, the challenges faced by dwarvish brewers go unremarked. Barley, wheat and hop vines do not, after all, grow without sun. Grain and hops are major commodities for merchants and traders in dwarvish lands, worth their weight in uncut gemstones.

But trade is not the only method the dwarves have for keeping their tankards full. In at least one case they have taken up plowshares. The penurious dwarves of the Round Rock Hills have begun growing their own grain, clear-cutting the trees of the Hills' southern slopes, hewing sweeping terraces in the hillsides and building sturdy walls with the stone they've moved. Unfortunately good fences have *not* made good neighbors of the free-roaming wild elves who hunt and camp in the Round Rocks.

There is much ill will, and skirmishes are not uncommon. Most observers, however, credit one unusual personage with keeping a grumbling sort of peace. It's a peace not forged with diplomacy, but brewed in the great copper vats of the Leaf and Anvil, Thuriel Nidalfir, proprietor. Thuriel, who built his wayhouse and brewery with the spoils of an adventurer's career, has a more cosmopolitan view than most Round Rocks folk. A wild elf with a peculiar fascination for dwarvish culture, who affects a wispy beard, stooped shoulders and a cloth-of-copper kilt, Thuriel is something of a figure of fun among dwarves and elves alike. Nonetheless, his easygoing charm, backed up by a staff of doughty henchmen, makes the wayhouse a place where all the people of the Hills can take leisure.

But it is for Thuriel's gift as a brewer that he is most celebrated, especially for the **Leaf and Anvil's** eponymous house blend, a smooth black and tan made with crisp Redleaf Ale and a dark stout called Loam. In addition to being eminently quaffable, this blend has the curious and apparently non-magical property of improving reaction rolls between elves and dwarves by +1 or +10%.

**Sprucebeard Ale:** Travelers in the Greencloak Mountains are sometimes puzzled to encounter mixed groups of humanoids – mostly goblins and orcs with a few kobolds, humans and gnomes – hard at work in the pine forests that blanket the steep slopes. Under the watchful eye of dwarvish guards, these press gangs gather the fresh pine and spruce needles used to brew the dwarves' most prized drink, **Sprucebeard Ale**.

Sprucebeard has a slightly astringent but rich wood-and-spice flavor. The dwarves drink it after every evening meal, not merely as a digestive but as a daily sacrament enhancing their natural hardiness. Blessed in the cask by dwarvish priests, each tankard confers a non-cumulative +2 to saves vs. poison. This bonus affects other races as well, but in non-dwarves Sprucebeard has the side effect of increasing beard growth tenfold! (Whether it causes beard growth in women as well as in men is a matter of longstanding debate, best left to the individual referee to decide.

Though the dwarves do not trade Sprucebeard Ale to outsiders it does occasionally make its way down from the mountains. In the the river village of Moggwort at the foot of the Greencloaks, initiates in the local snake cult buy Sprucebeard from a gnomish bootlegger. Undoubtedly it helps them survive their snake-handling rituals. However, the men of Moggwort go clean shaven, and the cultists' abuse of the ale leaves them in constant need of grooming. Seekers after the snake worshippers would be wise to heed the rumors connecting the cult to certain well-to-do dockside barbers...

**Orcsmead:** Adventurers in the upper vaults of the Welkin Underdeep are advised to carry an extra packet of sugar or a jar or two of honey, because the orcs there seem to have a sweet tooth. In fact the tale is told of one hard-pressed party of explorer's who bargained for their freedom with a bag of dried apples!

Though these resourceful dungeoneers may live to delve again, they return to a dungeon made more dangerous by their bargaining: The orcs of the Welkin use sugar, honey, dried fruit, and even ripe tomatoes or beets to brew **orcsmead**. Mixed with water and moldy bread these ingredients are triple-bagged in goat bladders and left to ferment for days, preferably in rooms far away from living quarters, as the smell is repellent even to orcs.



The resulting brew is an acrid, throat-burning swill, thinly flavored and potent, but the orcs don't drink it for sport. Orcsmead is served only to orcish berserkers before going into battle, decanted into the skulls of fallen foes by the tribal shaman. Its effect is fearsome, arousing a grimacing, sweating rage in the drinker, and adding +1 to hit and damage rolls and +1 to all saving throws.

An orcsmead berserker will typically have between 18-22 HTK and attack at 5th level, with a morale of 11. The berserker fights stark naked save for his or her sour vinegary reek, wielding a two-handed battle axe or sword or morning star and shield. He or she will be accompanied into battle by 5-8 elite warriors with 8 HTK and DC 4. These warriors need not check morale unless the berserker is killed or flees.

Orcsmead is vile to non-orcish palates. Those who imbibe must make a saving throw vs. poison; if they fail they are nauseated and make initiative and attack rolls at -1 for 1-6 turns. Note that it is powerfully alcoholic, so drinkers may be subject to the effects of intoxication as well. At the referee's option it may also cause Chaotic (or CG, CN and CE) characters who drink it to fly into a blind rage the next time they enter combat, attacking friend and foe alike until subdued or slain. Ω

## Random Inn Generator

By James Edward Raggi IV

The concept of "home base" is a common one in classic fantasy role-playing games. All too often, it's merely reduced to a place to heal up and sell off treasure; a mere speed bump on the way to going back into the dungeon. But it doesn't have to be that way. Take the common inn out in the middle of nowhere, for starters. It services people who travel on the edge of civilization (or else it wouldn't be the convenient home base for a dungeon expedition!). By its very nature it will have a revolving cast of interesting, and perhaps seedy, characters, and some of those might prove beneficial or troublesome for our party... and the rest will just actively be in the way.

This article is designed to help the referee develop just that aspect, giving details of an inn, including a day-to-day schedule of new arrivals and departures. Because PCs may be at the inn for quite some time, perhaps months of game time, it is recommended that the referee generate visitors ahead of time; perhaps a month's worth if the inn is "home base" for an expedition to a dungeon of impressive size. Not only will this provide a living environment within the game without needing to roll dice and check tables with players waiting, but additional plots and adventure hooks will start screaming out from the page as visitors are



filled in. These “guest stars” will be a perfect overlap to the existing adventure material, giving PCs additional factors to consider in their plans, and giving players a real sense that the world their characters inhabit goes on without them. Instances when the inn is overbooked or other resources are

**Table: Names for Inns**

d% Roll	Verb	Adjective	Noun
1	Arising	Amorous	Bandit
2	Begging	Bawdy	Basilisk
3	Betting	Beautiful	Bear
4	Biting	Black	Berserker
5	Bleeding	Blue	Boar
6	Breaking	Brazen	Brigand
7	Breeding	Carrion	Buccaneer
8	Burning	Cheap	Bugbear
9	Bursting	Cloudy	Caveman
10	Casting	Crazy	Centaur
11	Creeping	Dirty	Chimera
12	Crying	Dizzy	Cockatrice
13	Cutting	Drunken	Courtesan
14	Digging	Easy	Crawler
15	Dreaming	Fat	Cube
16	Drinking	Fierce	Cyclops
17	Dwelling	Fiery	Dervish
18	Dying	Fighting	Djinn
19	Eating	Final	Doppelganger
20	Ending	First	Doxy
21	Falling	Foul	Dragon
22	Fighting	Frost	Druid
23	First	Furious	Dryad
24	Fleeing	Gelatinous	Dwarf
25	Flying	Giant	Efreet
26	Forbidding	Golden	Elemental
27	Freezing	Great	Elf
28	Gambling	Green	Fighter
29	Grinding	Grey	Gargoyle
30	Grinning	Handsome	Ghost
31	Growing	Haughty	Ghoul
32	Hanging	Heavy	Giant
33	Hiding	Hellish	Gnoll
34	Hitting	Hill	Gnome
35	Kissing	Horrible	Goblin
36	Kneeling	Invisible	Golem
37	Last	Jolly	Gorgon
38	Leading	Large	Griffon
39	Living	Lewd	Harlot
40	Loving	Living	Harpy
41	Melting	Lizard	Hippogriff
42	Prancing	Lusty	Hobgoblin
43	Riding	Magnificent	Horse
44	Ringling	Mighty	Hound
45	Rising	Mischievous	Hydra
46	Running	Nasty	Insect

47	Seeking	Naughty	Jelly
48	Shaving	Ochre	Juggernaut
49	Shining	Orange	Kobold
50	Shooting	Precious	Lich
51	Shrinking	Purple	Madame
52	Shutting	Quaint	Man
53	Singing	Quiet	Manticora
54	Sleeping	Rabid	Medusa
55	Slinging	Random	Merman
56	Smiling	Randy	Minotaur
57	Spinning	Red	Mold
58	Spitting	Ribald	Monster
59	Splitting	Rich	Mule
60	Spreading	Robust	Mummy
61	Stabbing	Rust	Nomad
62	Standing	Saucy	Ogre
63	Stealing	Sea	Ooze
64	Stinging	Silver	Orc
65	Stinking	Slovenly	Paladin
66	Striking	Sly	Pegasus
67	Swallowing	Small	Pirate
68	Swearing	Spotted	Pixie
69	Sweating	Stone	Pony
70	Swimming	Storm	Priest
71	Swinging	Striped	Pudding
72	Talking	Tricky	Roc
73	Throwing	Ugly	Salamander
74	Thrusting	Vast	Skeleton
75	Waiting	Vicious	Slime
76	Waking	Wanton	Spectre
77	Weeping	Wayward	Stalker
78	Winding	Wealthy	Statue
79	Winning	Welcome	Stirge
80	(none)	Were-	Strumpet
81	(none)	White	Tart
82	(none)	Wicked	Thief
83	(none)	Wonderful	Tiger
84	(none)	Yellow	Titan
85	(none)	(none)	Treant
86	(none)	(none)	Triton
87	(none)	(none)	Troll
88	(none)	(none)	Trollop
89	(none)	(none)	Trull
90	(none)	(none)	Unicorn
91	(none)	(none)	Vampire
92	(none)	(none)	Wench
93	(none)	(none)	Wight
94	(none)	(none)	Wizard
95	(none)	(none)	Wolf
96	(none)	(none)	Woman
97	(none)	(none)	Worm
98	(none)	(none)	Wraith
99	(none)	(none)	Wyvern
100	(none)	(none)	Zombie

stretched can cause inconveniences. Adventuring isn't just risking death out in the field, it's dealing with the normal people just trying to live their lives in the regular world!

**The Inn's Name:** Roll percentile dice on the table on p. 37 for each category and put them together to come up with the inn's name. Assume the name begins with "The..." and ends with "...Inn." Feel free to ignore any result that seems too cheesy, vulgar, or unwieldy.

**The Inn:** The Inn itself will have a tavern/common room. It will also have a common sleeping room with  $8d4$  beds,  $2d10$  "single" rooms (which may have two beds in them), and  $1d4$  "master" rooms that can sleep four people comfortably. There will also be a stable for travelers' horses, and inns of the larger sizes (and especially inns far from villages) will have craftsmen (blacksmiths, etc) living there with their own workshops. If the area is dangerous, it may well have a wall around all the buildings. There will be a master bedroom for the owner (and possibly wife), another bedroom for children, and one more room for every 2 staff members. Prices for lodging and food will be at  $2d20 + 80\%$  of the campaign norm.

**The Inn Staff:** The inn will have a number of permanent staff. When the PCs first come into contact with any of the staff members, be sure to make reaction rolls for each of the staff members. The point of this entire exercise is to increase the amount of role-playing in a campaign, and to take the focus off of the dungeon or quest and put it on more mundane matters without losing interesting qualities.

In my games of the past, "I hit on the serving wench," or more explicit versions thereof, have been a common action. Usually I just hand-wave it, "Oh yeah, fine, she goes up to your room that night." I mean, who cares, right? But if the "home base" is going to be used as a role-playing focus, you might want to treat such interactions more seriously. Every NPC at the inn, including staff and visitors, needs wisdom and charisma scores generated. In general, members of the opposite sex that have lower wisdom scores than the charisma of another character will be very attracted to that character (influenced by reaction rolls of course!), and will react accordingly. Remember, the PCs are going to be seen as extremely interesting people who live on the edge. People working at an inn, or having other mundane lives, will want to be close to that and perhaps will want to "run away" from their life into a new and exciting one. Creating tension this way (especially when one NPC takes a liking to a PC, and then starts really taking a liking to random visitors to the inn afterwards) can result in some interesting situations that cause suspenseful play without the threat of bodily harm (unless someone gets challenged to a duel!), and an anchor to make all these characters seem more real.

**The Owner:** The owner will be a  $d20 - 10$  level fighter (minimum 0). He will be an older fellow, and has a 50% chance of being married, and 25% chance of being widowed. If the owner has a negative reaction to the party, prices at the inn will be increased  $d10 + 5\%$ . If the owner's wife has a negative reaction to the party, prices will increase  $d4 + 1\%$ , but if she reacts well to them, there will be a  $d10 + 10\%$  discount. Note it is possible to have both the owner's penalty and the wife's discount together! (Female owners are also possible; reverse the married and widowed percentages if such characters are used.) If the owner is married or widowed, he will have  $d6-1$  children, each age  $d20$  years.

**The Servers/Cleaners:** For every ten rooms, there will be one woman (age  $d20 + 15$  years) who serves as a serving girl during busy times in the tavern area and helps clean the empty rooms and keeps the area tidy.

**Other Staff:** The owners' children, if any, can serve in other capacities if they are at least 10 years of age, otherwise there will need to be a stable boy, perhaps a regular handyman if there are no other craftsmen about, and so on. Keep in mind that anyone that lives at the inn (and most will – room and board will be an important part of the wages, as in a remote location, where else is there to live, and in the city, housing is expensive!) will need living space within the allotted rooms.

**Regular Visitors:** There are a certain number of folks that reliably visit the inn on a regular, predictable basis. These are mainly the folk that keep the Inn stocked with standard supplies as well as some that are involved with the Inn's personnel. Farmers will arrive every  $2d4$  days with new foodstuffs, other craftsmen will arrive every  $2d10$  days to take care of any needs that inn employees can not.

**Temple Representative:** Once a week, temple representatives come to provide religious services for the employees and guests of the inn. They exchange news and views, and collect that week's donations for the shrine. There will be two representatives on horseback, and they will both stay in one private room for one night.

**Random Visitors:** To determine each day's visitors, make a percentile roll on the Random Visitor's Table. Keep rolling as long as the dice come up an even number. Your specific game system should have guidelines or charts for determining the alignment and general personalities of NPCs. The game world is filled with all sorts of people, and many of them will not see eye to eye with the PCs! Keep in mind that evil does not mean violent and good does not mean they will aid the heroes in matters unimportant to their own lives. Using these rolls to determine NPC personality lets the world breathe and lets the players know that even though the PCs are the center of the game, the game world does not revolve around them!

**Random Visitors Table**

Roll	Result
01 – 02	Bandits
03 – 12	Craftsman
13 – 22	Duelist
23	Dwarves
24	Elves
25 – 26	Entertainer
27	Gambler
28 – 29	Gentleman
30	Gnomes
31	Collaborators
32	Gypsy Train
33	Halflings
34 – 35	Hearse
36 – 45	Laborers
46	Magic-User
47 – 48	Mercenaries
49 – 58	Merchant Caravan
59 – 68	Messengers
69	Minstrel Show
70 – 81	No Visitor
82	Officials
83 – 84	Religious Troupe
85 – 90	Random Travelers
91 – 92	Spies of the Nobles
93 – 94	Thief
95 – 98	Wedding Party
99 – 100	Roll on Special Visitors Table

**Special Visitors Table**

Roll	Result
1 – 20	Adventuring Party
21 – 23	Doppelganger
24 – 40	Knight of Righteousness
41 – 75	Military Patrol
76 – 90	Noble
91 – 99	Vampire
100	Monster Raid

In many cases “he” is used when describing random travelers. While a referee can give his or her game world any social qualities he likes, these tables assume that the game world is not so progressive. “Important” figures are most likely men, while women are rarely in charge and never walk the wilderness alone. None of this applies to “special” visitors such as adventuring parties, elves, magic-users, etc. Still, these types will still skew predominantly male, with maybe only 1 in 4 or even 1 in 5 being female.

Also, the region is assumed to be fairly homogenous. The inn should seem as “real” and “logical” as possible as a contrast to the more fantastic elements that the PCs will encounter later. Almost everybody visiting the Inn should be a normal human, with a non-humans being present in visiting groups maybe one time in twenty.



**Adventuring Party:** Your game manuals should have rules for randomly generating adventuring parties. There will be  $d4+2$  adventurers with an average level of  $1d4$ , with appropriate henchmen, pack animals, and equipment. The inn will treat these folk the same as the PCs (unless the PCs have performed some great service, of course), so they may end up being competitors for the challenges of the area. Depending on the alignment of the parties involved and appropriate reaction checks, such adventurers may become allies or enemies of the PCs. They will want private rooms, perhaps a suite, and will stay as long as there is adventure and possibility of profit to be had.

**Bandits:** After raiding caravans and farmhouses and poor old women, bandits like to blow their money and live it up hard. These guys will not cause any real (violent) trouble if their excesses (unsocial and rude as they are) are tolerated. However, with so many different people around and all of the alcohol flowing, anything may happen. Note that they will be terribly obnoxious towards *any* females in the place, but of course the young and pretty ones most of all. For an interesting twist (especially if a PC has taken a shine on one of the inn’s staff), make appropriate reaction rolls for the women to see if any of them end up in a bandit’s bed that night. There will be  $3d4$  bandits plus their leader, they will stay in the common room, and they will stay here until they are all out of money ( $2d4$  days). Certain bandits may be willing to become hirelings or henchmen.

**Collaborators:** The monsters aren’t threats to road traffic on their own. While some keep quiet for various reasons, there are humans who actively aid them in their highway robbery. Collaborators spend time in cities finding out about merchant caravans that are preparing to head out and inform monsters about them ahead of time. When they move to inform their masters, their pattern is the



same. Go to the inn, stay a night in a suite (or two private rooms), ride out the next day, return, stay one more night, and leave. Only PCs who specifically follow these men, or who just happen to be along their path to witness their traveling to and contacting the monsters, would know something is up with these men. The most disturbing part is that in order to contact the monsters and prove their “peaceful” intentions there, they must sacrifice a member of their own race at the meeting. So they will have a “new member of the gang” with them whenever they appear, and he will be killed upon contact with the monsters. There are  $d4+2$  men in this gang and it will always be the same men that appear when this option comes up at any particular inn. If they are dealt with, then any further “Collaborators” results should be read as “no visitor.” The men will generally never socialize as a group to keep as few people as possible from noticing that, as a group, they always show up with a new guy but never leave with him. Whenever the collaborators show up, then a merchant caravan of the largest size will automatically be set to arrive fully laden with goods at the Inn in  $1d6+4$  days. Whether the monsters will hit it before it arrives at the Inn or after it departs is for the referee to decide.

**Craftsman:** Before one can settle down in one’s very own workshop, there is a period of wandering to gain experience in the field working for a variety of employers. A journeyman in the most literal sense! The referee will have to determine exactly what kind of work he does, ideally at random. The craftsman will stay in the common room and stay  $1d4$  days, unless he finds work locally, in which case he’ll stay as long as he has work.

**Doppelganger:** Creatures that depend on humanity for their sustenance will always find their way to out of the

way inns sooner or later. The introduction of a doppelganger to the environment may or may not cause a great deal of havoc, depending on who the creature chooses to duplicate. The day the doppelganger arrives, every single person at the Inn has an equal chance to be selected as the first victim. If the victim is just passing through, no one at the inn need ever know what happened. (Until a body is discovered, anyway.) A PC chosen as a victim will cause immediate conflict, of course, but an inn employee being killed and replaced by a doppelganger gives rise to a much more insidious, ongoing threat...

**Duelist:** Duelists travel the countryside earning their living by provoking fights, or better yet getting paid for just threatening to fight. They do this with the aid of an accomplice who will arrive at the inn the same day as the duelist but not appear to be associated with him. In fact, they will take great pains to act unfamiliar with each other. They will find a mark, usually a non-warrior looking type (no armor, battle scars, or large muscles) who looks at least fairly wealthy, and move in. The duelist will behave as a gentleman, being very proper, as bait for the trap. He will interact with his mark and then feign offense at some perceived slight and offer to resolve the matter with a duel to be scheduled the next day or two. In the meantime, the accomplice will approach the challenged and offer to broker a cash deal (where the duelist would be the one to get paid!) to prevent any embarrassment or untoward violence. Duels will be fought unarmored, with the weapon choice up to the challenged. Referees should detail which weapons a duelist is proficient in before executing the challenge to keep things fair. Duels will typically be to first blood only, although if a real offense causes the duel, and the duelist is of a cranky disposition (and someone has made a very bad reaction roll) and evil alignment, it can get nasty. After winning a duel, a duelist will pilfer a valuable from the defeated as compensation for his bother. Duelists will be a  $1d6+2$  level fighter, stay in a private room (as will their accomplice), and stay for  $1d4$  days.

**Dwarves:** “Dour and taciturn” is the cliché, and boy does it fit these fellows. Dwarves seldom have reason to wander in the realms of men, and when they do they just want to conclude their business and go home. The world of men has *too much sky*...  $3d4$  dwarves will stay one night at the Inn, in a private room if there are just a few of them, and in the common room if they are many. Each dwarf has a 25% chance to be a classed individual, and they will engage in heavy drinking at the tavern on the day they are there.

**Elves:** Literature paints a different picture of elves than the usual adventuring party. While elves out in the world of men often seem like fine and normal fellows, most elves prefer to stay with their own kind and they really do form an alien society. Occasionally they must leave their sanctuaries to conduct business in the world of men, and when they do they leave people perplexed and whispering



in their wake. Elven visitors to the Inn will be 2d6 in number, with any specific elf a classed individual 25% of the time. There will be roughly equal amounts of male and female elves, they will not mingle much with other visitors of the inn, and they will stay one night in a suite.

**Entertainer:** Bards make their living by playing taverns and festivals, so they will be passing through with some regularity. There will only be one or two of them, and they will play in the main tavern hoping for tips. They will sleep in whatever accommodations they can afford (usually the stables!). As usual with the “wandering lifestyle” types, they will be very rambunctious when let loose with the alcohol. They will stay at the Inn for 1d10 days.

**Gambler:** A professional gamesman travels the taverns of the realm and makes his living by winning games of chance. He will set up on a table at the Inn and try to coax people into playing cards (or dice, or whatever) with him. The gambler is going to be either very good or very good at cheating, and any character that doesn’t have gambling as a secondary skill should be at a severe disadvantage when facing this guy. He’ll stay as long as he can keep making money (although likely it will be simply against visitors and not the staff after a couple days), using a private room. If his cheating ways are uncovered, he just might be run out of the place!

**Gentleman:** Gentlemen are people of decidedly refined tastes, who comport themselves with utmost respectability and expect everyone around them to do the same in the name of a civilized society. Despite their delusions of being natural men of the world, they are so very unsuited to life around the frontier and so will spend most of their time here being quite offended. They regard the barmaids as tramps associating too much with men, so will not bother to practice proper etiquette towards them. They will be absolutely horrified at the prospect of violence (never mind violence against *them*). For added fun, sometimes (25% chance) they will bring their wives along, who is twice as refined and three times as sensitive. They might also (25% chance) bring along 1d4 children who will then have to be shielded from all sorts of bad influence. A gentleman may (25% chance) have a couple of retainers to do his “dirty work.” Gentlemen will want a private room if traveling alone or with wife, or a suite if with more people. They’ll plan to stay 2d6 days for exposure to the robust country air, but will often leave in a huff after 2d4 days.

**Gnomes:** Gnomes are perhaps the rarest (or least-seen, anyway) of the demi-human races, and therefore any encounter with them should seem special. They are simple folk, pragmatic as dwarves yet with a Halfling’s love of leisure. PCs should be surprised by such a demeanor! There is a 10% chance that a gnome is a classed individual. There will be 2d4 of them, they will stay in private rooms, and they will stay for 1d4 days.

**Gypsy Train:** An extended gypsy family traveling through the area is always sure to stop at the Inn. There will be 4d4 gypsies, ¼ of them women and ¼ children, with one wagon for every three gypsies. They will typically all be one big extended family. They will camp within a short distance of the inn and not stay in the rooms, but they will use all of the facilities available at the inn and generally be very visible. They will provide all sorts of entertainment, anything from dancing to juggling to fire-breathing and sword swallowing. Generally they would only bring in money on audience donations and will not be seen as a big deal by the locals. Depending on how stereotypical (some would say racist) you want to get with the gypsies, more possibilities open up. There could be some sort of theft subplot happening at the inn complex, or one of the old women of the gypsies could be a genuine seer and able to tell the PCs’ future. The gypsies will stay for 1d8 days.

**Halflings:** Halflings traveling away from their homelands are rare, but the affable folk are always welcome in civilized lands. Halflings tend to want to keep out of trouble, and while they will be social, they will typically be tight-lipped about what exactly their business might be. They will be 2d4 in number, always wanting private rooms (they’ll sleep four to a room though) and staying 1d4 days. There is only a 10% chance that they are classed.

**Hearse:** People of means usually want to be buried where their families are, or at least close to where they were born. There is a fair trade in transporting bodies between larger communities. This will usually just be one or two laborers with a horse, cart or wagon, and their cargo in a coffin. The body will often have a minor amount of jewelry on it which will make it of interest to petty thieves, but 1% of these will have an impressive piece of jewelry worthy of any sick enough to disturb the dead. The laborers will prefer to sleep in the common room, and the coffin will stay in the stables (making it quite unpleasant for anyone there that night as the smell of the corpse will not be so pleasant!) They will only stay for one night.

**Knight of Righteousness:** A Knight (roll 1d6+4 to determine level) and his entourage (priest, scribe, and 1d6 men-at-arms) arrive at the Inn. The Knight will demand a use of a suite for himself, and private rooms for everyone in his group. He will demand all of these for free, and he will demand that the rooms all be adjacent and anyone in rooms that he needs be tossed out immediately. The Knight will demand that no alcohol be served while he is in the area, that the barmaids cover up any exposed flesh, shut down any entertainment, and generally be a complete nuisance. He won’t even do anything about the dungeon or current adventure plot if informed about them because he is on his way to a “much more important quest.” The inn staff will suffer the Knight’s shenanigans because they don’t want the trouble of resisting him, and they’ll encourage anyone else to keep their mouths shut too. In

fact, the only way the Knight will show himself to be anything other than a completely self-righteous snob is if blatant criminal activity or a monster attack happens while he is here. The Knight will stay at the inn for 1d3 days.

**Laborers:** Work is hard to come by for many, and when freemen can not find gainful employment where they are, they will travel looking for work. There will be 2d6 of them and they will be staying in the stables. They will stay 1d4 days, generally harassing travelers to hire them for just about any sort of work. (Including the PCs...)



**Mage:** Who knows what motivates the men who manipulate magic? They travel from place to place, sometimes on mundane business, and sometimes in search of things far more esoteric. Use 1d4+2 to determine what level the mage is. He will likely have a familiar, a 0 level companion or hireling, and a 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> level mage might have a 1<sup>st</sup> level apprentice. The mage will stay in a private room, although the others might stay in the common room. They will stay 1d4 days. The mage is not very likely to go adventuring with the PCs, but might agree for a suitable portion of treasure if he has an enthusiastically friendly reaction to them. Note that if he is of a greater level than any of the PCs, a “suitable portion” might be 50% or more just for himself, and he may think of himself as the party leader and the PCs as his mere henchmen!

**Mercenaries:** Standing armies in the middle ages were uncommon, and it could be assumed that RPG kingdoms loosely based on that time period might have the same situation. This results in a professional soldier class that has no loyalty to a specific kingdom which travels the land searching for nobles in need of warriors. Because their livelihood is based on killing and dying, they take their off-time *very* seriously and will be the most enthusiastic revelers to be found at the tavern when they show up.

They aren’t the most popular customers the inn has, as they tend to be pretty rude, grabby, and they are poor tippers! The exact type of mercenary is subject to referee decision (and some games give options for such expert hirelings). There will be 3d8 of them, and they will likely as not decide on making camp nearby. If they do stay at the inn, they would stay in the common room, with maybe their commander having a private room. They will stay 1d4 days. Mercenaries, of course, make wonderful henchmen and general combat support hirelings as long as alignments and reaction rolls allow.

**Merchant Caravan:** Business is business, and business through risky areas offers a high return for the investment. There is no shortage of people making shrewd (or completely foolish) decisions to bring caravans out this way. A typical merchant caravan will consist of a head merchant, 1d4 assistants, 2d4 guards, and 2d6 support laborers. There will be one wagon for every four individuals. Sometimes a merchant will have his family with him, which adds a spouse and d6 – 1 children. The referee should determine exactly what goods the merchant deals in. Any merchant has a flat 20% chance to be interested in any valuable or odd goods the PCs want to sell, although the amount the merchant gives them for the goods will depend on reaction rolls, anywhere from 25% for a hostile reaction to 75% for an extremely favorable reaction. The merchant will want a suite for himself and his family, the common room for his guards and assistants, and the stables for his laborers. They will just stay one night.

**Military Patrol:** This is a large group from a neighboring area, on patrol along the road. They will not leave the road to engage under any circumstances (their orders are to be seen, defend anyone traveling on the road, but do not go out of the way to engage). The Inn is a good stop off for them, and the soldiers will party *hard*. There will be 10d4 0 level men-at-arms, and for every ten men there will be a 1<sup>st</sup> level warrior squad leader, and if there are thirty or more men there will be a 2<sup>nd</sup> level warrior sergeant. They will make their own camp a short distance away from the inn so they will take up no rooms, but they will be all over the tavern and many of the other buildings of the inn compound continuously. They’ll pretty much act like the bandits when all is said and done. They will only stay one night unless they arrive for a weekend, in which case they will leave on Monday.

**Minstrel Show:** If the inn is remotely located, the owner knows that the employees often get bored or longing for a larger community, so he brings in entertainment shows every so often. There will be 3d4 musicians, actors, and miscellaneous entertainers (acting as their own crew!) who will take over an area close to the inn and set up a makeshift stage. They generally have a few wagons which also serve as their sleeping areas, although they will also have a private room in the inn just in case someone needs

a bit more privacy. When the minstrel troupe is in the area, service tends to suffer as the staff is focused on the entertainment. Of course if the minstrels are only performing for the employees, they will not stay so long. Figure about 1d4+1 days average, or as long as they have a paying audience. Lock up the women and children when these guys are around! Make an extra roll on the Random Visitors table for every day the minstrels are here, as people time their trips to be able to see this sort of thing.

**Monster Raid!** This result means there will be a monster raid happening on this day, in addition to whatever else is happening around the Inn. Usually it will be a rather unintelligent monster, as most intelligent creatures know to stay away from the inn and all its various denizens. This could be a good opportunity for PCs to see exactly who their hosts are as they will defend their loved ones and the property (in that order!) to the best of their ability. Depending on the menace, it might also be a good test to see if the PCs know when to put their heads down and stay out of the way. Roll on the following table to determine what attacks (a bandit raid will not be with a same crew of bandits that would stay here):

Roll	Result
1	Acid-Spitting Giant Bug
2	Land-Shark
3	Ettins (1d6)
4	Hill Giants (1d4)
5 – 11	Human Bandit Raid!
12 – 16	Humanoid Raid!
17	Hydra
18	Manticore
19	Trolls (2d4)
20	Wyvern

**Noble:** A noble and his entourage is an impressive thing. The noble himself will always have 2d4 bodyguards, 3d4 assistants of various types, plus enough carriages (and drivers and horses) to transport them all and their luggage. Referees may decide the noble is bringing his family along, in which case add a spouse and 1d6 children, plus another 2d4 bodyguards and 2d4 assistants. Nobles will demand the run of the place, earning a bit of enmity from the locals (even though the generous amount of money a noble's entourage brings in will soften that blow a bit), and probably even more from the PCs. They should never be allowed to forget that they are in the presence of power in the realm, and their behavior while the noble is here can have far-reaching implications for the campaign. Nobles will stay in a suite, and if there is not a suite available then somebody is going to have to get kicked out so the noble can stay. The entourage will all stay in private rooms (the "important" ones) or the common room (the "unimportant" ones). They will stay for 1d6 days and be the center of attention the entire time.

**Officials:** Bureaucrats are a constant menace in any society. They also tend to be very non-threatening, unless they see something they don't like, in which case they will do nothing about it themselves and just report the problem to the next link in the chain. These officials (government, religious, mercantile) have no actual function that PCs can determine, but they conduct themselves as very important people and demand respect as a matter of course. There will be 2d6 of these leeches traveling, likely by carriage (you think they'd walk all this way or learn to ride a horse themselves), with one assistant for every four of them present. The officials will stay in suites or private rooms, while their assistants get the common room or stable.

**Religious Troupe:** A traveling religious troupe is either a group of pilgrims traveling to a holy site, or a low-ranking group of monks or priests doing the same. Very rarely should this mean a priestly character. The referee should determine what god the troupe worships, and what the relationship of that god is to the prevalent god at the inn compound. In all, the troupe will be 3d4 individuals staying in the stables or the common room for 1d2 days. Priests (of the same god!) should be able to find hirelings or henchmen in such a group.

**Random Travelers:** Sometimes, people don't have any sort of reason for being anywhere in particular. Such encounters could be with independently wealthy wanderers, landless vagabonds, fugitives from far-off authorities, or people merely on the way from one place to another. This will be one person with equal chances of staying in the stables, common room, private room, or suite, for 1d6 days. Random travelers staying in the common room or stables are ripe for work as henchmen.

**Spies of the Nobles:** These people are on the lookout for evidence that the innkeeper is openly defying the law of the land (the referee can determine details) as well as tax-evading treasure collectors! These spies will always be here under other auspices (roll again on the table to see who they are pretending to be), and they will be quite nosy and obtrusive into people's business. Mistreating these men is a bad idea as that will bring noble troops to teach the offenders how to properly treat their "betters"; and if the men go missing it will certainly bring troops to investigate and intimidate... PCs getting involved in the political intrigue around the inn may be in for more than they bargained. Keep in mind that Lawful characters would tend to favor the side of the nobles...

**Thief:** The temporary nature of inn residents makes them frequent targets of thieves. 1d4 thieves of 1d6 level each will stay at the inn for 1d6 days in a common or private room. They will spend their time around the common areas of the compound casing out guests (never anyone that lives there unless they can find an easily accessible and excessive treasure!) to determine who has something worth





stealing. Then they will strike, grabbing all they can as stealthily as possible and immediately leaving.



**Vampire:** Vampires like lodging too! This will consist of a couple or three strongmen on a carriage (with one or two horses) carrying a rather large crate. They will want either a private room or a suite and will carry their tremendously heavy (700+ pound) cargo to the room. They will accept no assistance, and will be very obvious in their wish to be left alone. Of course their cargo is a vampire resting in its coffin, and at night the vampire may awaken and disguise itself as one of its followers and enjoy a night in the tavern. Someone examining all of this closely will find many suspicious things about the group. It is recommended that the vampire and his follower(s) not deliberately cause trouble for their hosts, but anyone getting too curious about this mysterious band of travelers is in for a *nasty* surprise. They will stay just the one night.

**Wedding Party:** For some reason, the inn the PCs are staying at has become a popular wedding site. So a couple of times a year, a wedding party will descend on the inn, spreading merriment and warm feelings to everyone! Weddings make everyone feel more romantic so any passes made at the barmaids will all have a +10% bonus to reaction rolls, +20% if the effort really does seem romantic and there have been no previous crude attempts made by the character on one of the staff. There will be the bride and groom and 10d6 family and friends. The bride and

groom will each have a private room until the wedding, after which they will have a suite together. The family and friends will have as many private rooms as are available, the rest will stay in the common room. They will arrive by private coaches (one coach per six people), and those coach drivers will stay in the common room. The entire party will be there for 1d6 days before the wedding; the day after everyone will leave except the married couple who will remain for d10+6 days. Ω

## Education of a Magic-User:

Part the First: Spell Selection

by Dug



# The Outdoor Map

by James Maliszewski  
map by Robert Conley

Among the recommended equipment for playing *Dungeons & Dragons* in its original printing was the Avalon Hill game *Outdoor Survival*. The game itself was unimportant, but the hex map it contained, depicting a generic wilderness, was useful to a referee looking to run on-the-fly wilderness encounters. *Outdoor Survival* is long out of print, but the idea of a general wilderness map available for fantasy adventuring remains a good one.

This article serves several purposes. First, it includes a map of a generic wilderness that fills much the same function as the old: providing the beleaguered referee with a ready-made environment for extemporaneous wilderness adventures. Second, the map includes a number of symbols indicating the location of settlements, lairs, and “features,” the latter being noteworthy locales of one sort or another. The referee is free to use or ignore these symbols on the map as he sees fit, for there is no necessity that where a feature is indicated, for example, one must exist in his own campaign. Thirdly, the bulk of the article itself is a collection of sample settlements, lairs, and features tied to the map. All the samples are short and fairly generic, with a bare minimum of information to serve as inspirations to the referee’s own imagination. Once again, the referee should use as much or as little presented here as he wishes and never fear substituting his own ideas for those presented. Indeed, the entire purpose of this article is to serve as a springboard for creating wilderness encounters rather than as the last word on the subject. The Outdoor Map is dedicated to the memory of Robert E. “Bob” Bledsaw. (*Issue #3 will be dedicated to Bob as well – Ignatius.*)

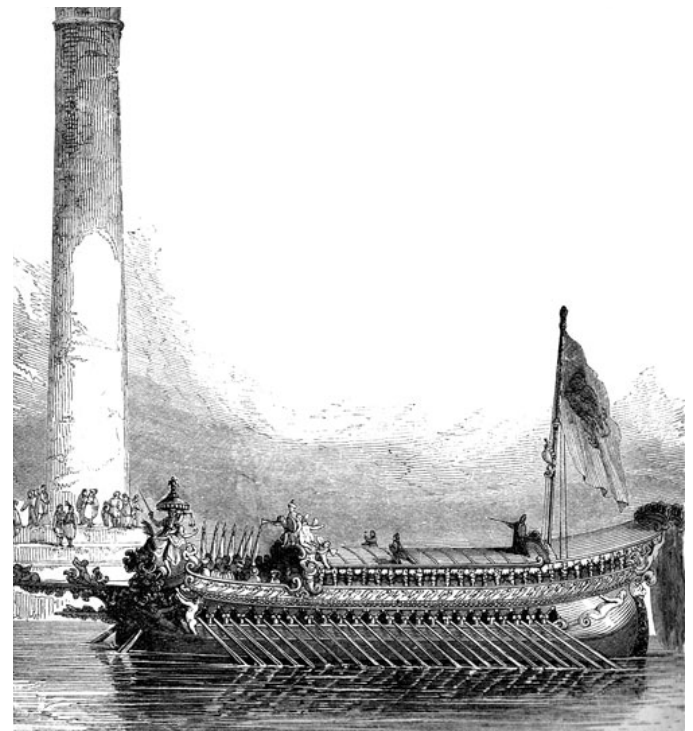
## Settlements:

**0208 Gloris** - a small, relatively isolated community whose inhabitants make their living by fishing. Until recently, the men of Gloris fished only enough to support themselves, but recently the people of Augstan to the north (hex 0404) developed a taste for the fish of Lake Gloris, resulting in increased demand. This has disturbed the nixies that live in a colony beneath the surface of the lake and led to a “war” between the two communities. The men of Gloris are not yet certain what is causing fishermen to disappear and never return, and they would handsomely reward anyone who can discover the reason.

**0404 Augstan** - a mining community inhabited primarily by humans, but there is a sizable minority of dwarves here as well, some of whom originate in Ghaz Droonan (hex 0603). For the most part, the people of Augstan are quiet and reserved, dedicated to their primary industry, extracting gems and ores from the northern mountains. This business is quite lucrative, creating a boom in the city (pri-

ces have skyrocketed in recent months) and an increased demand for luxuries from other locations (such as fish from Gloris). The situation has also drawn the attention of several enterprising thieves, some of whom are attempting to establish a guild in the town so as to grow rich by theft and by catering to Augstan’s less savory needs.

**0607 Somtha** - This town grew up in the shadow of the Monastery of Saint Gaxyg the Grey (see The Ruined Monastery in *Fight On!* Issue 1 for more details), a Lawful religious center built atop the nearby plateau. Somtha became a pilgrimage center, providing provisions and lodging for travelers who’d come to visit the Monastery and learn from its monks. Somtha grew wealthy from this trade and over time its inhabitants were motivated primarily by greed rather than charity. The destruction of the Monastery by an even greedier lord from the southern lands ended Somtha’s idyll and threw the town into chaos. Now it is almost a ghost town, with only a few diehard inhabitants left, eking out a meager existence catering the few travelers who still venture here, including adventurers seeking to explore the Monastery and the caves beneath it.



**0711 Yarm** - a lively port built on an island at the mouth of a river that flows into the sea. Many bridges cross the river, connecting the sprawling districts of Yarm to one another. In addition, boats and other waterborne craft are used to travel from one part of the city to another. The settlement is a center of trade and commerce on the southern sea and attracts merchants from all over the region. By and large, the city is run efficiently and without a great deal of corruption, owing no doubt to the influence of several Lawful temples who exert great influence here. That’s not to say Yarm is without a dark side, but its

Thieves' Guild stays quietly in the shadows rather than playing a prominent role in the city. Still, the people of Yarm are renowned as hagglers and traders without peer; they buy and sell almost anything and the scope of their wares draws visitors in large numbers.

1004 **Vidda** - a mining town, dedicated to the extraction of a strange metal from the ground, which the locals have dubbed "star metal." According to local legend, an entire mountain of metal fell from the stars and landed on the future site of Vidda. The metal gives off a strange bluish glow and is rumored to cause sickness in mortal beings and to warp the bodies and minds of animals too long exposed. Properly treated with an alchemical elixir, though, the metal becomes harder than steel and a fine vessel for enchantments. Several large companies have grown up to handle the extraction of star metal from the mountain, as it is an expensive and some-times dangerous process, owing to the strange monsters that seem inexplicably drawn to – or is it created by? – its radiation.

1208 **Tapricia** - a mid-sized town that supports the mining operations in Vidda (hex 1004) to the north, sending goods Vidda needs and shipping star metal farther south to Retep City (hex 1215). Consequently, the merchant concerns that control Vidda have a strong presence here as well and try to exert as much influence over the local government as possible. The current mayor and city council of Tapricia resent such interference in local matters and have done their best to maintain independence from the merchants. Of course, they also realize that the town's lifeblood depends on good relations with the merchants and so walk a fine line, one that could explode at any minute if either side believes it can gain a decisive advantage over the other.

1215 **Retep City** - a large city-state whose economic and political influence extends far beyond its immediate domain, much to the chagrin of cities like Yarm (hex 0711) and Loraec (hex 1914), both of which have attempted to seize some of Retep City's prominence for themselves. By the standards of the region, Retep is a metropolis, boasting tens of thousands of inhabitants. It is surrounded by miles of farmland to support its population and has a sizable militia with which to defend itself from rivals and the monsters that live in the nearby wilderness. A council of merchants, aristocrats, temple leaders, and guild representatives, headed by an elected mayor, rules Retep City. The mayor is largely a figurehead, but he has some influence of his own. Infighting between factions sometimes grips the city, leading to outright violence, but that has not occurred in recent months. If anything, Retep is unusually calm of late. How long that will last remains to be seen.

1810 **Wabton** - a smallish town whose inhabitants are mostly farmers and woodsmen. They largely keep to themselves, although they are not unwelcoming to travelers, particularly those who might aid them against the spiders of the nearby Cobwood (hex 1910). At the same time, the men of Wabton are not adventurous and would prefer to be left alone, lest anyone take note of this sleepy hamlet.

1914 **Loraec** - After Retep City (hex 1215), Loraec is the second largest settlement in the region. Centuries ago, it was an important provincial capital of a long-collapsed empire, but it has since fallen on hard times. While it still gives off flashes of its former glory, Loraec is for the most part a dilapidated wreck, with ruined and abandoned buildings found both inside and outside its current fortifications. The current city was built upon an even earlier settlement and there are extensive tunnels and labyrinths beneath its streets that stretch back hundreds, if not thousands of years. The Prefect of Loraec (its current ruler) believes that there may be enough riches and magical artifacts hidden beneath the city to help rejuvenate its fortunes. For that reason, he has encouraged exploration of the tunnels and has offered bounties on the discovery of choice relics (which must be turned over to him, of course), creating a small boom, as adventurers flock to Loraec to take advantage of the situation.

2108 **Ainad** - a bustling mercantile center whose fortunes have been on the rise for the last few years, owing to its sea trade with the wider world. Ships of all shapes and sizes can be found in its large harbor, making it an ideal place to hire vessels for travel or exploration. A council of rich merchants rules Ainad, concerned only with profits for them and their allies. Consequently, the city is a place where money is the main means of getting anything done, even (or perhaps especially) when dealing with public officials. There is rising discontent in some quarters of the city, but so far it has not erupted into full-scale unrest. Previous attempts to overthrow the merchant oligarchs met with failure, which has done little to encourage others from attempting to do the same.

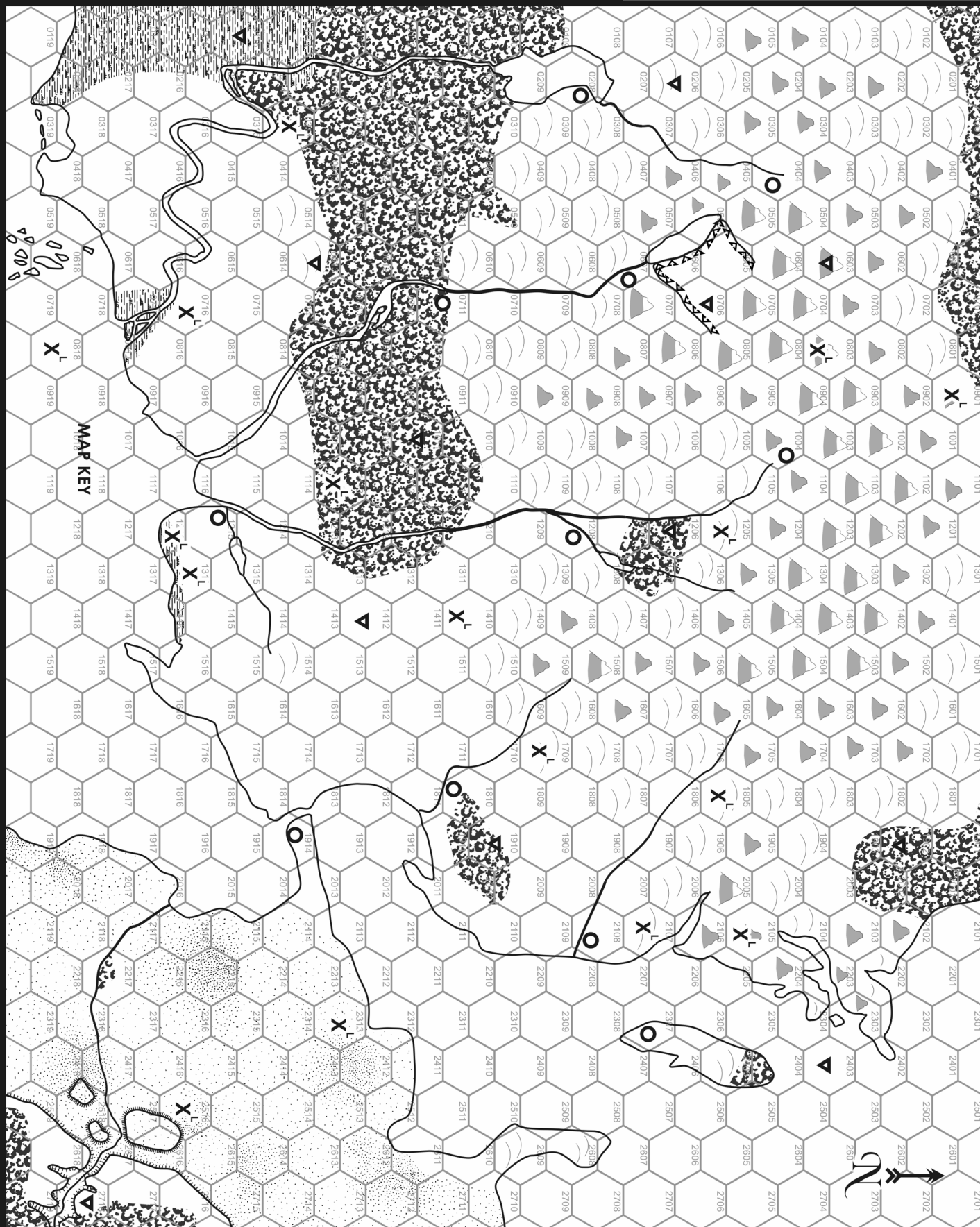
2307 **Bilrom** - The isolated settlement of Bilrom is barely a settlement at all. Instead, it's more of meeting place for the various barbaric tribes who inhabit this island, where they come to trade, exchange stories, and arrange marriages and other important matters. In the winter months, Bilrom is almost entirely depopulated, but in the spring and summer its population swells and even visitors from other lands come to trade with the assembled tribes. Needless to say, Bilrom is a rowdy, boisterous place, with very little in the way of law or order, except of the most rough and ready sort.



# THE OUTDOOR MAP

1 Hex = 5 miles

○ = Settlement    X<sup>L</sup> = Lair    ▼ = Special Feature

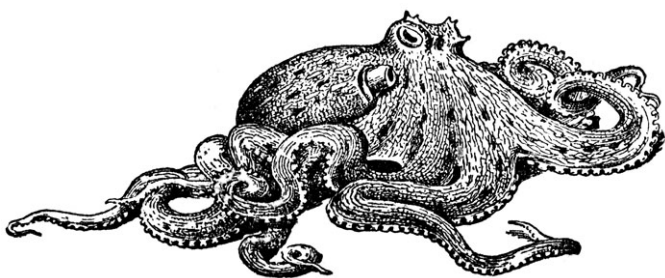


### Lairs:

0314 **Werewolves** - a pack of four werewolves under the leadership of an individual called One-Eye (after his most notable physical characteristic) hunt at the forest's edge. The werewolves once roamed farther south toward human settlements but were driven back after losing half their numbers to adventurers. Now One-Eye bides his time, hoping to infect any who venture into his domain with lycanthropy in order to bolster the pack's numbers.

0716 **Boars** - a small herd of 6 boars (LVL 3) roams this area. The boars are generally hostile to any creature that disturbs them and will attack on sight. These wild beasts subsist on a number of local plants, but take particular pleasure in consuming a mushroom that grows along the edge of the nearby river. Besides being tasty, when ingested, the mushrooms create an effect similar to that of a potion of heroism. When encountered, there is a chance (1-2 on 1D6) that the boars will have recently consumed these mushrooms and thus will be under their effects; referees should adjust the combat capabilities of the boars accordingly. If the characters can find where these mushrooms grow (referee's discretion), they may harvest them for their own use. The effect noted above fades if the mushroom is not consumed within six hours of its having been harvested, however.

0803 **Goblins** - a small tribe of 48 goblins has established a stronghold within a natural cave complex here. The goblins, who call themselves the Bloody Bones, have long dreamed of a brighter - and wealthier - future for themselves, but, being cowardly by nature and comparatively few in number, they have never made any attempt to achieve this goal. The rise of a new king among the Bloody Bones, though, might change all that. King Yargiz is a charismatic goblin with delusions of grandeur and a sword +1. He sees the abandoned Dwarfhold of Ghaz Droonan (see hex 0603) as a potential new home for his people and has begun to mobilize them to investigate that locale with an eye toward one day occupying it.



0818 **Giant Octopus** - a single giant octopus (DC 7, LVL 8, HTK 40, Damage 1-3 x 8 and 1-6) dwells in this stretch of sea, preying on large fish and other marine life. From time to time the octopus has been known to attack seagoing vessels. Its most recent attack was less than a month ago, leading many superstitious sailors to believe

that the spirits of the sea are angry about their activities. Consequently, attempts to hire seamen in nearby ports will be more likely to be rebuffed (1-3 on 1D6) outright unless offered at least twice their normal monthly wage.

0901 **Hobgoblins** - A large tribe of 284 hobgoblins united under a king (LVL 4+1) has established an aboveground fortress at the edge of the forest to the northwest. They are engaged in a large-scale effort to cut down enough trees to fortify their position further. Their king, Rivvlethrip, sees a power vacuum to the south, with many rich settlements ripe for raiding and plunder. As such, he is making preparations for war in the long term. In the short term, he is employing spies to gain intelligence about nearby communities and urban centers, as he prefers not to commit his tribe to a war it cannot win. Nevertheless, his advisors and warriors are eager to quench their blades in blood; it is only a matter of time before the king will have no choice but to give them their wish.

1013 **Ogres** - 15 ogres have established a camp at the forest's edge. They have stopped on their long journey from the mountains to Retep City (hex 1215), where they hope to purchase weapons and armor and hire themselves out as mercenaries. If they encounter individuals weaker than themselves along the way, they will not hesitate to attack, in hopes of stealing whatever wealth they might possess. They already possess 500 gold between them, but hope to acquire more in order to buy the equipment they seek in Retep. They will attempt to sell their services to more powerful individuals. If successful, they will serve loyally for appropriate pay (as determined by the referee), but will look for every opportunity to betray their employers where this does not bring danger to themselves.

1205 **Gnomes** - Deep within the hills of this area lies the warren-like home of a clan of 280 Gnomes. Though normally quite reclusive, these Gnomes have grown more militant since the influx of Dwarvish refugees from Ghaz Droonan (hex 0603), whom they have sheltered but whose presence has slowly but inexorably altered the demeanor of their hosts, who now see dangers everywhere and protect their borders by force of arms. This has caused a rift with the nearby human settlement of Ainad (hex 1004), to which the Gnomes had once been friendly but now treat with suspicion. Unsurprisingly, many Gnomes are displeased with the change effected by the Dwarves and seek a return to the old ways, even if it brings them into conflict with their own elders, most of whom are sympathetic to the exaggerated concerns of the displaced Dwarves.

1216 **Ghouls** - A pack of 19 ghouls dwells within these fens. Unlike normal ghouls, these foul creatures are the result of a powerful curse placed upon a pirate crew whose ship ran aground along the nearby coast after a powerful storm. Those slain in the shipwreck rose as ghouls and now act as guardians for an immense diamond stolen from

a prince in a faraway land and whose theft brought the curse upon them. Until the diamond is either destroyed or returned to its rightful owner, the ghouls cannot be permanently slain but will return to unlife 1D6 turns after being "slain," when they will unerringly pursue anyone absconds with the diamond. Likewise, anyone who possesses the diamond will suffer the same fate as the pirates should they ever been killed. Remove curse can be cast upon the diamond to rid it of its evil, but doing so will also turn the diamond into worthless quartz.

**1316 Giant Snakes** - Four giant snakes (LVL 4) can be found in this area of the swamp. They have no treasure of their own, but the area they inhabit contains a partially sunken (and locked) strongbox of unusual design, inside of which is 100 square "coins" made of some form of steel-like metal. The coins are covered with what appears to be writing of some sort, but it matches no known alphabet, human or otherwise. Also within the strongbox is a canister that holds 10 greenish tablets. If consumed, each of these tablets functions as a potion of healing, but there is a 10% chance that, owing to their strange origin, any tablet consumed may instead produce a different, random potion effect other than healing.

**1410 Elves** - 224 Elves have established a settlement in the foothills here, calling it Arielem. Their leader is Linwa Nirmalan, skilled in both magic and fighting, and he is deeply suspicious of outsiders. Arielem was once a much larger community, but its numbers have dwindled because of the vile actions of the necromancer to the northeast (hex 1709), whom the elves felt honor-bound to oppose. Now, the will to fight him is gone, but the hatred of him remains, generalized into a dislike of non-elves who do not prove themselves to be friends and allies by their words and actions. Anyone who enters Nirmalan's domain will be treated roughly by his underlings and interrogated for evidence of evil intent. The elves are not evil, of course, and so will not harm innocents or anyone who does not pose an immediate threat to them or their settlement.

**1709 Necromancer** - A necromancer named Birinus dwells here, having taken up residence in a formerly abandoned tower. Birinus has raised a large army of skeletons and zombies (30 of each) over time and uses them both as guards and to terrorize the elves of nearby Arielem (hex 1410). Birinus is obsessed with finding the secret of eternal life. He believes, perhaps mistakenly, that because elves are extremely long-lived, they may either possess magic that will aid him in his own quest or that their bodies hold some quality or chemical that will do so. Consequently, he has slain and dissected numerous elves over the last few months, earning him their eternal enmity. His vile experiments have not given Birinus the knowledge he seeks, but he is unperturbed and continues to prey upon the elves in hopes of one day wresting the secrets of immortality from their minds or bodies.



**1803 Dragon** - A sub-adult blue dragon of normal size (LVL 9, HTK 27) named Liedgzlaed has taken up residence inside a large hillside cave in this area. The dragon can speak but cannot use spells. He originally hailed from the more arid regions to the southeast but decided to move to more northerly climes in order to avoid discovery by the dragon-hunting dervishes of his former homeland (see 2516 for details). Liedgzlaed is slowly amassing a trove in order to attract a mate. Because he wishes to avoid drawing attention to his presence, however, he preys primarily on monsters and Chaotic humanoids, which has not endeared him to them, particularly the Severed Tongue tribe of orcs (hex 1805).

**1805 Orcs** - The Severed Tongue orc tribe lives in a large cave complex in the hills here. Consisting of 240 orcs and 3 trolls employed as sentries, the tribe is growing restless. The depredations of the dragon Liedgzlaed (hex 1803) have emboldened the orcs and their chieftain, Grommash, has declared that slaying the wyrm is a priority. He has gone so far as to make it known far and wide that he will pay anyone – including non-orcs – the princely sum of 100 gold pieces if they can bring proof of the dragon's death to him. He has also offered the hand of his loathsome eldest daughter, a reward of far more interest to some, as such a pairing would result in leadership of the Severed Tongue tribe in the event of Grommash's death, as he has no sons. Needless to say, the chieftain's offer has created competition among many would-be orc champions, some of which have journeyed to civilized lands to recruit mercenaries to slay the dragon for them. In addition, several evil adventurers see Grommash's offer as an opportunity to seize control of the tribe for their own foul designs.

**2105 Wyvern** - A mated pair of wyverns and their single offspring (HTK 29, 24, and 15 respectively) dwell here atop a low mountain peak. Despite their Chaotic natures, the wyverns largely keep to themselves and do not prey upon anything but local fauna. The successful capture of any wyvern would bring 500 gold pieces or more to naturalists and other sages, while their skinned hides would sell for at least 100 gold pieces in larger towns or cities.

2107 **Brigand Camp** - A band of 60 bandits under the leadership of the self-proclaimed bandit “king” Tolenka Dorpat have established a large camp here. Dorpat was once a gentleman of the city of Ainad (hex 2108) and his involvement in a failed coup to topple the city’s corrupt oligarchy resulted in his having to flee into the wilderness. He fell in with some bandits to survive and quickly assumed leadership of them, owing to his natural charisma and force of will. Dorpat has long since given up any dreams of virtuously overthrowing the venal merchants who rule Ainad, instead preferring to raid its caravans and exact revenge in various petty ways. He has lived with the bandits long enough to have become as thoroughly criminal as they. He is not necessarily irredeemable but neither is Dorpat a “rogue with a heart of gold.”

2313 **Hippogriffs** - A herd of 8 hippogriffs makes their home in this area. They are not much liked by the dervishes to the south (hex 2516), because the hippogriffs occasionally prey on their horses for food and sport. Otherwise, though, the hippogriffs largely keep to themselves, so to avoid being captured or killed.

2516 **Dervishes** - A tribe of 140 dervishes has set up camp in this area. The dervishes are horse nomads who travel throughout the region, setting up camps in several places throughout the year, following their flocks of sheep and goats. A prophetess named Romachka (9th level Lawful priestess) leads the tribe, keeping them true to their esoteric religious doctrines and taboos, which include the protection of the ruins at hex 2718, which she has deemed off-limits to everyone, lest its curse spread across the land. The dervishes are otherwise friendly and hospitable to outsiders who respect their ways and show no interest in the ruins. Romachka herself is a wizened old woman, nearly blind, who speaks in cryptic phrases and frequently prophesies of future events. She is thus an excellent tool for the referee who wishes to use foreshadowing in his adventures or campaign.

### Features:

0115 **The Great Swamp** - This vast marsh extends for miles in every direction, stretching from the southern sea to the northern woods. Stinking and fetid, the swamp is reputed to be unnatural in origin, although no one, least of all learned sages, can offer a definitive explanation for its size and extent. What is not disputed is that there exist the ruins of several ancient settlements within the swamp, now overgrown with moss, weeds, and swamp plants and filled with water. Likewise, numerous bands of trolls patrol the swamp, attacking anyone who dares to enter their domain.

0208 **Nixie Colony** - A group of 50 nixies lives beneath the surface of this freshwater lake, protected by schools of fierce pike. The nixies consider the human fishermen from nearby Gloris to be nuisances and have begun a campaign

of luring them to their deaths in the water. Unsurprisingly, this has led to retaliation by the men of Gloris, who have begun to scour the waters for the location of their hidden colony. Despite this, the nixies are undeterred and are looking for ways to escalate their war with the fishermen.

0603 **Ghaz Droonan** - Built into the side of a mountain, the mighty Dwarfhold of Ghaz Droonan stood strong for generations, a shining example of all that is best among the sturdy Children of the Earth. All that changed when a plague of unknown origin swept through its mammoth halls and all but exterminated its population. The source of the plague has never been determined, but a foul miasma lingers still in Ghaz Droonan and no Dwarf, not even those who sought refuge among their Gnomish cousins to the southeast (hex 1205), has dared to return. Of course, the riches and magic that also remain in the hold are undoubtedly a temptation to both the brave and the greedy, despite whatever dangers might be found within its walls.

0613 **Menhir Isles** - This collection of islands is so called after the large collection of rune-covered standing stones found on them. The runes bear some similarity to those of the Dwarves, but no Dwarf settlement is known to have existed this far south. Moreover, the standing stones are exceedingly large – 10 to 12 feet in most cases – and are neither carved nor arranged in a Dwarvish fashion, leading to all manner of speculation about their true origins and purpose. The isles are utterly devoid of all animal life. Only plants exist here and none, not even hardy weeds, grow within a few feet of any of the standing stones.

0706 **The Ruined Monastery** - Once dedicated to Saint Gaxyg the Gray, the Monastery was a beacon of learning and spiritual edification built upon an escarpment under which lay the chaos-tainted Caves of Mourning. The monks who dwelled here strove to contain the undead and other foul creatures that teemed in the Caves and succeeded – for a time. Over many generations, the Monastery grew lax and basked in the riches and magic its monks uncovered in the Caves, making it a tempting target for greedy lords, one of whom razed it to the ground and stole much of its wealth. Part of the monastery remains, still holding back the creatures of the Caves of Mourning, but it is unlikely they shall remain contained for much longer. Additional information on the Ruined Monastery can be found in Issue #1 of *Fight On!*

1011 **The Evensong Woods** - The Evensong Woods are a dense expanse of trees noted for a mysterious “singing” that occurs within its confines every night after sunset. The singing sounds like the voices of human children, although they sing no known song nor are their words, if such they be, intelligible in any local human language. The source of the singing is unknown and seems to emanate from everywhere and nowhere at once. Some claim that the singing is ghostly in origin, while others say it is a trick of



fairy creatures (or demons), hoping to lure the unwary into the woods. The truth remains unknown after all this time and most believe that it will never be resolved.

**1206 The Ruined Chateau** - Hidden within a small forest is the ruined remains of an aristocratic chateau that has fallen into disrepair after decades – or more! – of abandon. The chateau consists of three surface levels and at least two basement levels, although there may be even deeper levels of which no one knows. Originally the home of a dissolute nobleman who committed suicide in an effort to alleviate his ennui, the chateau has often served as the residence of humanoid creatures such as goblins and orcs and more than one Chaotic magic-user or cleric has claimed it as his own. Of late, it appears to be thoroughly abandoned, but no one can say for certain until they explore its grounds.



**1402 Dwimmermount** - The loftiest mountain in the area, Dwimmermount is also reputed to be a fountainhead of raw magic. Deep within its snow-covered recesses, tales say there exists a forge once employed by a now-forgotten race to craft weapons, armor, and other implements of power. Whether such tales are true, none can say, as evidence of the forge or of the magic said to flow from the mount have never been obtained. Yet there is no denying that the mountain's slopes are populated by all manner of strange beings, both malevolent and benign, or that the weather in its vicinity seems oddly different than elsewhere in the mountain range.

**1910 Cobwood** - This forest has a well-deserved reputation for evil, as it is home to an unusually large colony of giant spiders (16 in total). These arachnids have united under the suzerainty of one particularly ancient and despicable example of their species, known as Gloomfang (LVL 4, HTK 21). Under Gloomfang, these spiders have begun a concerted campaign against the inhabitants of nearby Wabton (hex 1810), attacking the edges of the town under cloak of night, as well as any travelers or caravans foolish enough to enter Cobwood.

**2403 Tulgeywood** - This small forest is reputedly home to a vicious creature of indeterminate size and countenance. Legend has it that a young paladin wielding a magic sword ventured into the wood in hopes of slaying the monster,

but he never returned from his ill-considered quest, prompting many cautionary tales and poems about the dangers of venturing into the Tulgeywood. Sightings of the “Tulgey Beastie” and its eyes of flame are recorded from time to time, but none can say for certain whether there is any truth to them – or if the magical blade once wielded by the doomed barbarian warrior might lie somewhere within the forest waiting for another hero to claim it as their own.

**2718 Mysterious Ruins** - Located in a natural canyon, this ruined city is built into its walls. Judging from their extent, which extends deep beneath the surrounding plateau, this city once held thousands of people, although exactly who these people were or where they went remains a mystery. The ruins are decorated with a variety of strange symbols and sigils, none of bear any resemblance to local languages living or extinct. The ruins consist of innumerable rooms, chambers, and corridors, in many of which are valuable items of precious metals and jewels. During the day, there are no inhabitants in the ruins and adventurers may freely explore them without fear. During the night, the ruins are overrun with all manner of undead, from skeletons and zombies to specters and vampires. These are the cursed former inhabitants of the city and they will relentlessly pursue any who steal from their home – even if they leave the ruins. Only the death of the thieves or the return of the stolen items will stop the undead from seeking them out, in ever-increasing numbers if need be. This curse the dervish prophetess knows and fears (hex 2516).

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## The Wilderness Architect, Parts I-II

by Victor Raymond

### Part One: The Interesting Wilderness

This is the first of a series of articles about constructing a wilderness setting to complement your dungeon. It was inspired by discussions on the “Original D&D Discussion” and “Knights and Knaves Alehouse” websites, as well as by a series of excellent articles on dungeon design by Roger Musson in *White Dwarf* #25-27 entitled “The Dungeon Architect, Parts 1, 2, and 3.” What is presented here is intended as speculative rather than authoritative in character. In particular, the objective of these articles is to provide the means for creating worthwhile settings for wilderness adventure within the framework of older fantasy roleplaying systems.

The so-called Wilderness really consists of unexplored land, cities and castles, not to mention the area immediately surrounding the castle (ruined or otherwise) which housed the dungeons. The referee must do several things in order to conduct wilderness adventure games. First he must have a ground level map of the dungeons, a map of the terrain immediately surrounding this, and a map of the

town or village closest to the dungeons (where the adventurers will be most likely to base themselves)....The terrain beyond the immediate surroundings of the dungeon area should be unknown to all but the referee. Offhand adventures in the wilderness are made on the *Outdoor Survival* playing board (explained below). *Exploratory journeys, such as expeditions to find land suitable for a castle or in search of some legendary treasure are handled in an entirely different manner.*

– Gary Gygax, *The Underworld & Wilderness Adventures*, pgs. 14-5; emphasis added.

While the players are not expected to know about the area surrounding the dungeon, the **opposite** is true for the referee. A referee needs to know the “lay of the land” surrounding the dungeon, whether they use the *Outdoor Survival* map, James Maliszewski’s Outdoor Map, or a wilderness constructed from their own imagination. Regardless of the referee’s choice, the map needs to be designed and detailed for adventures outside the dungeon. The reference to the “*so-called* Wilderness” – given other references to settled areas, towns and cities, etc. suggests that ‘wilderness’ as a general term– not unlike ‘level’ – has multiple meanings. In this case, it can be broken into two distinct definitions: first, the *entire* area outside of the dungeon, but also second, the *uncivilized* areas beyond the settled areas (I’ll come back to this further below).

REFeree’s MAP is a wilderness map unknown to the players. It should be for the territory around the dungeon location. When players venture into this area they should have a blank hexagon map, and as they move over each hex the referee will inform them as to what kind of terrain is in that hex. This form of exploring will eventually enable players to know the lay of the land in their immediate area and thus be able to select a site upon which to build their castles (Castle building and its attendant requirements will be covered hereafter). *Exploratory adventures are likely to be the most exciting, and their incorporation into the campaign is most desirable.*

– Gary Gygax, *The Underworld & Wilderness Adventures*, pg. 16; emphasis added.

**Castle Encounters:** Potential adventures in the wilderness when dealing with castle inhabitants include: jousting with lords, being sent on treasure finding expeditions by wizards, or being sent on a quest of some sort by a powerful priest. There are also possibilities of rumors, legends, and other information. There is also the chance of encountering wandering monsters in the wilderness near the castles, and generally speaking these encounters are dangerous. Sometimes the inhabitants of hostile or neutral castles as well as monsters will pursue escaping parties as well.

I went looking through publications from the early days that might illustrate these ideas a bit further. I was surprised to discover an interesting example in an unlikely

place: “Sturmgeschutz and Sorcery –or– How Effective is a Panzerfaust Against a Troll, Heinz?” in *The Strategic Review*, Vol. 1, No. 5, from December 1975. The date of publication is rather important, because it means that the battle was fought probably no later than the summer of 1975, shortly after the publication of *Greyhawk* and concurrent with the publication of *Blackmoor*, making it highly representative of early styles of fantasy gaming.

So what did I find, besides a gripping after-battle report detailing the defeat of an SS reconnaissance unit on the Eastern Front? The order of battle for the *defending* forces:

#### THE SERVANTS OF THE GATHERER

12th Level EHP with +2 Armor & Shield, Snake Staff

1 Hero, +1 A & Sh, + 3 Swd

1 Hero, +1 A & Sh, +1 Spear

1 Magician

2 Mummies

3 Ogres

3 Ghouls

4 Trolls

19 Orcs

- 4 with axes

- 6 with swords

- 6 with spears

- 3 with bows (51 regular & 9 magic arrows)

1 Insectoid pet of the EHP (equal to Giant Scorpion)

#### SITUATION

Your able lieutenants Grustiven the Warlock (*8th level*) and the Lama Goocz (*7th level*) have failed to return from an exploration of an area of unusual nature — just west of your castle a thick fog sprang up and has been obscuring vision since then. Dispell Magic failed to affect the area, and your henchmen were ordered to investigate, for it is possible that some Lawful enemy is at work, using the mist to screen gathering troops. Unfortunately, *your strongest fighters and 200 orcs are elsewhere warring with a Neutral Lord who insulted you* (emphasis added), so you will have to make do with the forces on hand. An orc detailed to patrol the edge of the fog area has just reported that unusual sounds have been issuing from the area — he described them as: “low growls, the clanking of chains, and a deep humming,” but who can trust a stupid orc?

#### OBJECTIVE

Considering the state your forces are currently in, it is up to you what the best course to follow is. You can attempt to ambush the enemy before they reach your stronghold, or you can hole up in your castle and prepare to withstand a siege, but if the attackers are strong and not molested until they reach the castle walls, your forces might not be able to prevent an escalade, and you cannot lose your castle!

– Gary Gygax, “Sturmgeschutz & Sorcery”, *Strategic Review*, Vol. 1 No. 5, pg. 3



What's interesting about this is that the description given here parallels that provided in *The Underworld & Wilderness Adventures* for castle encounters and baronies. The Gatherer is a powerful baron, as a 12th level Evil High Priest should be, and his forces reflect that: they are somewhat more powerful than what might be generated as part of a random castle encounter. But they are not *that* different:

- The Gatherer is a 12th level priest – a random EHP would be 9th level at a minimum; that indicates possibly more time and experience spent on building up his stronghold.
- Additional powerful non-player-characters include: at least two 8th or 9th level warriors (the ones off fighting the Neutral Lord), two 4th level warriors, an 8th level mage, a 6th level mage, and a 7th level priest. A random encounter would have a 50% chance of 1-6 assistant clerics, all between 4th and 7th level. The Gatherer has apparently attracted an Entourage.
- The Gatherer has 3 Ogres, 3 Ghouls, 4 Trolls and 1 Insectoid pet (equal to Giant Scorpion). In a random castle encounter there would be one of the following possible outcomes: 1-10 trolls, 1-6 vampires (!), 1-20 white apes, or 1-10 spectres. So the relative power level of attendant monsters is roughly comparable.
- Lastly, our Evil High Priest has 220 orc soldiers, which is a bit higher than the 180 maximum “guards

manning the walls” of a random castle encounter, but that doesn't necessarily take into account any outside forces. Again, somewhat more powerful than a typical castle encounter, but not transcendently so.

- The distribution of magic items, while fairly complete, is not significantly different than what might be generated for companion characters for either random encounters or castle encounters.

It isn't clear if Gary intended for the defender's forces to specifically model what was written in *The Underworld & Wilderness Adventures* for castle encounters and baronies – but the order of battle as given would seem to indicate at least similar thinking. What's also worthwhile noting is the relationship between holdings. The Gatherer is at war with a nearby Neutral Lord and is concerned about Lawful enemies close enough to make his life difficult. This may reflect the idea that fantasy roleplaying campaigns could evolve into more strategic wargames, with conflicts between local lords, wizards, and priests.

What this revealed to me was that this was the stronghold of a powerful “baron,” using the terminology of *The Underworld & Wilderness Adventures*. Gary's phrasing of the “game objective” for this scenario is consistent with ideas presented for construction and development of baronies. In a rather indirect way, it provides an example from Gary's own thinking about how these things might work.

**Stronghold Construction:** There is an expectation that eventually players will adventure outside of the dungeon and its environs and set up strongholds. Warriors may be considered Barons (or some such position within an appropriate hierarchy) and have some ability to tax the inhabitants of their baronies. Priests may get additional assistance in stronghold construction as well as troops made up of the “faithful” who serve loyally and at no cost (!). Mages also may have the option of building strongholds as well as constructing magical items. There's a clear distinction made between general wilderness adventures and stronghold construction, but also a clear *connection*, as well. Let me illustrate this with another quotation:

At any time a player/character wishes he may select a portion of land (*or a city lot*) (emphasis added) upon which to build his castle, tower, or whatever....Another advantage accruing to those who build their strongholds in the wilderness is that they will gain control over the surrounding countryside. *Clearing the countryside of monsters is the first requirement.* Territories up to 20 miles distant from a stronghold may be kept clear of monsters once cleared – the inhabitation of the stronghold being considered as sufficient to maintain the monster-free status.

- Gary Gygax, *The Underworld & Wilderness Adventures*, pgs. 20 & 24; emphasis added.

There are rules for stronghold construction costs, taxation and hiring of specialists and troops as assistants to the player/characters. This runs conceptually parallel to the rules for determining the inhabitants of castles and *their* followers and assistants.

**Some Implications:** There are some fascinating implications of these rules, once examined more closely. Reading the usage of ‘wilderness’ as being entirely wild is, I would suggest, a misunderstanding. How do we resolve this? I would suggest that some hints *do* exist. The phrase “so-called Wilderness” and the description that followed suggests that there is a distinction made between civilized and true “wilderness” areas; the entire “Wilderness” is better read as a “blanket term,” including truly wild areas, as well as settled areas, including cities and towns.

This is one of the particular lacunae in the rules that have resulted in lasting confusion – so when and where are the wilderness encounter tables supposed to be used? An indiscriminate read would suggest “everywhere” but the suggestion that strongholds control areas that are monster-free suggest otherwise. Viewed in this light, “castle encounters” are encounters with high-level characters that have constructed their own strongholds; the area surrounding a stronghold should no longer be considered truly “wilderness.” By this token, a party of player-characters is a kind of ‘wandering monster’ as far as the local Baron might be concerned – no wonder castle inhabitants are initially either neutral or hostile. Pursuit of player-characters by castle inhabitants is part of keeping the area “monster-free.” As a consequence, the wilderness encounter tables should *not* be used – what encounters that take place are up to the referee to determine.

The dungeon as a site of adventure needs to be located either in the true wilderness (but not too far away!) or within the boundaries of civilized lands. By recognizing the connection between existing strongholds and the preconditions for players to establish their own castles, it is possible to discern what can be considered ‘civilized’ areas – the existence of which would make it much easier for low-level characters to survive. One could even construct a rationale for dungeon expeditions as a kind of deeper clearing of monsters to keep a stronghold safe and secure.

All of this builds a better rationale for how the ‘wilderness’ works in old-school fantasy campaigns. From a mythic perspective, there is the distinction between lands inhabited by ordinary creatures and the realm of Faerie, which is marked in Gary’s prose by a distinction between civilized areas and true wilderness. It also provides a very real sense of marking maps with phrases such as “here there be dragons,” because it would be **true** in the ‘wilderness’ away from settled areas. This also runs parallel to fantasy literature’s distinction between settled lands and the Wild:

At first they had passed through hobbit-lands, a wide respectable country inhabited by decent folk, with good roads, an inn or two, and now and then a dwarf or farmer ambling by on business. Then they came to lands where people spoke strangely, and sang songs Bilbo had never heard before. Now they had gone on far into the Lone-lands, where there were no people left, no inns, and the roads grew steadily worse. Not far ahead were dreary hills, rising higher and higher, dark with trees. On some of them were old castles with an evil look, as if they had been built by wicked people.

- J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit*

Other examples include the alternate Europe of *Three Hearts and Three Lions*, and the general distinction in Robert E. Howard’s Conan stories between the “soft” civilized lands and the more dangerous wilderness areas.



**What About Cities and Towns?** Besides castles, strongholds, wilderness, and dungeons, there is also mention made of cities and towns. Cities and towns may also figure as the setting for adventures:

‘Blackmoor’ is a village of small size (a one-horse town), while ‘Greyhawk’ is a large city. Both have maps with streets and buildings indicated, and players can have town adventures roaming around the bazaars, inns, taverns, shops, temples, and so on. (Venture into the Thieves Quarter at your own risk!). - Gary Gygax, *The Underworld & Wilderness Adventures*, pg. 15.

So the construction of the ‘Wilderness’ might encompass urban areas as well. Given the encounter table mentioned above, and the conceptual distinction between truly wild and ‘monster-free’ areas, such ‘wilderness’ encounters in cities and town should be limited to abandoned buildings, graveyards, and other local places of mystery. Such things are hinted at in the stories of Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser:



But southward, linked to the desert only by the Sinking Land and the Mountains of Hunger, are the rich grainfields and walled cities of Lankhmar, eldest and chiefest of Nehwon's lands. Dominating the Land of Lankhmar and crouching at the silty mouth of the River Hlal in a secure corner between the grainfields, the Great Salt Marsh, and the Inner Sea is the massive-walled and mazy-alleyed metropolis of Lankhmar, thick with thieves and shaven priests, lean-framed magicians and fat-bellied merchants – Lankhmar the Imperishable, the City of the Black Toga.

- Fritz Leiber, *Swords and Deviltry*.

## Part Two: The Constructed Wilderness

The intent of Part Two is to provide a set of mechanics for constructing wilderness settings for fantasy games. As was previously discussed, the “wilderness” is the entire area outside of the dungeon, including both settled and wild areas. Settled areas include strongholds, cities, towns, and villages, as well as areas regularly patrolled and cleared of monsters. Given the similarities between “castle encounters” and the establishment of strongholds by player-characters, it is fairly straightforward to use both sections from *The Underworld & Wilderness Adventures* and other games to design your own original wilderness. However, before proceeding to this stage, we need a system for creating the actual wilderness terrain.

**Constructing the Wilderness Terrain:** A starting assumption is that referees will want to create their own wilderness settings for adventure. I assume nine kinds of terrain: *clear*, *woods*, *river*, *swamp*, *mountains*, *desert*, *city*, *water*, and *steppe*. Leaving cities aside for the moment, the remaining terrain types may be utilized in generating the wilderness setting for a campaign. A fairly simple system for doing this is presented immediately below; to make use of this, it is suggested you use the following:

- Hexagon-ruled paper (hard to find in stores these days, but easily available online – I used <http://incompetech.com/graphpaper/hexagonal>.)
- Colored pencils
- Fine-point Sharpie or other permanent black marker
- Dice; six-siders will do.

Take a sheet of hex paper and mark off an area that is approximately 10 hexes by 10 hexes. Treat each hex as five miles across. For the purposes of mapping, assume your stronghold or town will be in the center of the map; placement of your dungeon comes later. At all stages of this process, you may decide on your own the character of the terrain, its inhabitants, etc., rather than rolling randomly.

*Generate terrain type.* You may do this starting either with the hex your town or stronghold is located in or with the upper left corner of your map. Use one of the following charts (or construct your own), rolling a six-sider to begin:

*“European” Terrain:* (this is to provide northern European-like terrain possibilities)

1:	Mountains or Hills; re-roll immediately – 1-3, mountains, 4-6, hills
2:	Desert or Steppe; re-roll immediately – 1-2, desert, 3-6, steppe (“arid plains”)
3:	Clear
4:	Woods
5:	Woods
6:	Water or Swamp; re-roll immediately – 1-2, swamp, 3-6, open water

*“Arid” Terrain:* (this is to provide either Middle Eastern or North African-like terrain possibilities)

1:	Mountains or Hills; re-roll immediately – 1-3, mountains, 4-6, hills
2:	Water or Swamp; re-roll immediately – 1-2, water, 3-6, swamp
3:	Woods
4:	Clear
5:	Steppe
6:	Desert

Once you have generated the terrain type, proceed to the next hex. Consult the following table, again rolling d6:

*Terrain Change:*

1:	Re-roll terrain type, using the original table.
2:	Terrain stays the same as the previous hex
3:	Terrain stays the same as the previous hex
4:	Even chance of adjacent terrain types, e.g. if a woods hex and a clear hex are adjacent to the hex in question, there is a 50/50 chance of it being either.
5:	Terrain is one step lower than previous hex, e.g. if the previous hex was woods (4), using the <i>European Terrain</i> table, the hex in question will be clear (3).
6:	Terrain is one step higher than previous hex e.g. if the previous hex was desert (2), using the <i>European Terrain</i> table, the hex in question will be clear (3).

Roll for each hex until you have determined terrain types for all hexes in question. There are, however, two exceptions to this, *open water* and *desert*. Both of these terrain types may represent relatively large areas, and so when you encounter them, you may wish to apply the following exceptions. In the case of open water, three or more adjacent water hexes (including swamp) may constitute a *shore line*. Roll for adjacent hexes: 1-2, no water (roll for land terrain type; desert not possible); 3-6, water continues. Roll for succeeding hexes until the map edge is reached, or there are no more water hexes. In the case of desert, three or more adjacent desert hexes may constitute a *desert edge*. Roll for adjacent hexes as for shoreline, except that the result will be: 1-2, no desert (roll for land terrain type; open water not possible), 3-6 desert continues. Roll

for succeeding hexes until the map edge is reached, or there are no more desert hexes.

No particular claim is made for verisimilitude; indeed, you may come up with what seem like impossible kinds of terrain next to one another. Keep in mind this is intended to generate fantasy terrain, so consider carefully why things have been seemingly thrown together – you may find interesting adventure possibilities! But if none of it makes sense, simply re-roll or decide for yourself what kind of terrain should be present.



**Constructing a Town or Stronghold:** Once you have your wilderness terrain generated, you may proceed to generate the town or stronghold in the center of your map. Use the following chart, rolling a six-sided die:

*Town/Stronghold Type:*

<b>1-4:</b>	<b>Castle/Stronghold:</b> roll to determine inhabitants as per your chosen gamebook
<b>5:</b>	<b>Town:</b> 1-4 small, 5-6 large
<b>6:</b>	<b>Town or City:</b> 1-2 small town, 3-5 large town, 6 city

The population of towns varies: small towns have between 200-500 people (roll 1D4+1), making them slightly larger than villages. Large towns have 300-1,800 people (roll 3D6), and cities have 2,000 to 24,000 inhabitants (roll 2D12). (Feel free to adjust these numbers to fit your campaign; these are merely intended as suggestions.)

For important residents of towns, roll as per castles, noting whether these residents are of the type found with warri-

ors, mages, priests, or something else. (NB: this roll is only to inform your next roll; no actual characters are indicated by this initial dice roll. The character of town and city life is relatively more egalitarian than strongholds and castles, or so it seems to me. Therefore, I wanted a system that generated a greater number of mid-level characters. If you feel it important to have a high level character as a town or city resident (or more than one!), simply treat the initial roll for castle resident as an actual result.) *Then* roll to see if there are others in the ‘castle’s’ party: once for a small town, twice for a large town, and six times for a city; the results indicate who the important residents are. You may also wish to see if there are thieves present: 10% in a small town, 25% in a large town, and 50% in a city.

Once you have generated the stronghold, making sure to include the occupant(s), guards/retainers, others in the party, and total number of ordinary guards, proceed to generate the number of villages included in the area, much as you might for a barony. There will be 2-8 villages, each with 100-400 people. The location of villages is determined using the following charts, rolling a six-sided die first for direction, then for distance:

*Village direction:*

<b>1:</b>	North
<b>2:</b>	Northeast
<b>3:</b>	Southeast
<b>4:</b>	South
<b>5:</b>	Southwest
<b>6:</b>	Northwest

*Village distance:*

<b>1:</b>	same hex as stronghold/town
<b>2:</b>	5 miles away (1 hex)
<b>3:</b>	10 miles away (2 hexes)
<b>4:</b>	15 miles away (3 hexes)
<b>5:</b>	20 miles away (4 hexes)
<b>6:</b>	25 miles away (5 hexes)

You may find it worthwhile to roll for “drift” to one side or the other of the general direction given on the first table; this will avoid “straight-line” connections between strongholds and villages (the exact method is left to the discretion of the referee). Should a village be indicated in the same hex as a previous village, treat the result as a small town with the combined population of both villages.

**Dungeon Location:** The last step is to determine where your dungeon is located. As a place of adventure, it is assumed to be somewhere within the boundaries of the local holding (whether it is a town or stronghold). To determine the location of the dungeon, roll on the same tables as for determining village location, applying a –2 die modifier to the distance roll, e.g. any roll of 1-3 would put the dungeon in the same hex as the stronghold/town.

By the time you have finished your general wilderness map, you may wish to keep the exact location of the dungeon hidden initially from the players – or it may be an item of local knowledge, clearly marked on the players' map. Whatever your choice is, you may wish to use tracing paper overlays to keep track of the dungeon location, as well as the location of other places of mystery as well as powerful monster lairs. Another suggestion would be to make a copy of your map for the players *before* you've added in all of the detail about Things Players Were Not Meant To Know (Quite Yet).

In the next issue, I'll provide an example of a wilderness generated using this method with colored maps, as well as parts three and four of the essay, detailing taxation, fortification, methods for incorporating dwarves and elves, refereeing the wilderness, encounters, hazards, weather, special terrain features, fantastical elements, and much else. Until then, enjoy!

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## Barbarian Magic Items

by Baz Blatt

**The Cloth of the Wind Horse:** This pale blue silken cloth is embroidered with gold and silver thread in a grandly barbaric pattern of runes and spirals. If held fluttering in a stiff breeze and the activation word uttered, a Wind Horse appears, a small Air Elemental which can only act as a steed, of the same colour as the cloth with silver hooves and a golden bridle. It can carry the summoner, his personal gear and one passenger and will remain as long as the sun is in the sky, if summoned by day, or until sunrise, if summoned at night. It can only be used three times, and should then be given to the temple of a suitable air/storm/horse related deity as an altar cloth. It can only be used where a wind is already blowing; it cannot be used underground, nor can it be used in outdoor areas where the air is still, such as jungles and deep forest, though a magically created wind can be used as a substitute.

These cloths are woven by shamen on the wild steppes of the Howling Wastes, and given as gifts to nomad chieftains. Shamen can gain access to the Wind Horse summoning spell if they defeat a Wind Devil in single combat. More powerful shamen can bind a Wind Horse to come to their aid when asked, but only the most powerful can create these cloths and bind one to the service of another.

**Thunder Drums:** These war drums are about three feet wide and can be made from the skin of a beast or human warrior of level 7+. Beating on this drum causes all enemies within 10 yards to lose confidence and panic, reducing their chance to hit by -2 and damage by -1, while allies of the drummer gain +2 to hit and +1 damage. This effect only lasts as long as the drum is being beaten and can only

be used once per day. The drummer must have at least 15 Strength, and can only beat the drum loudly enough to cause its magical effect for one turn per point of Constitution. This can be enhanced by other magics, potions etc.

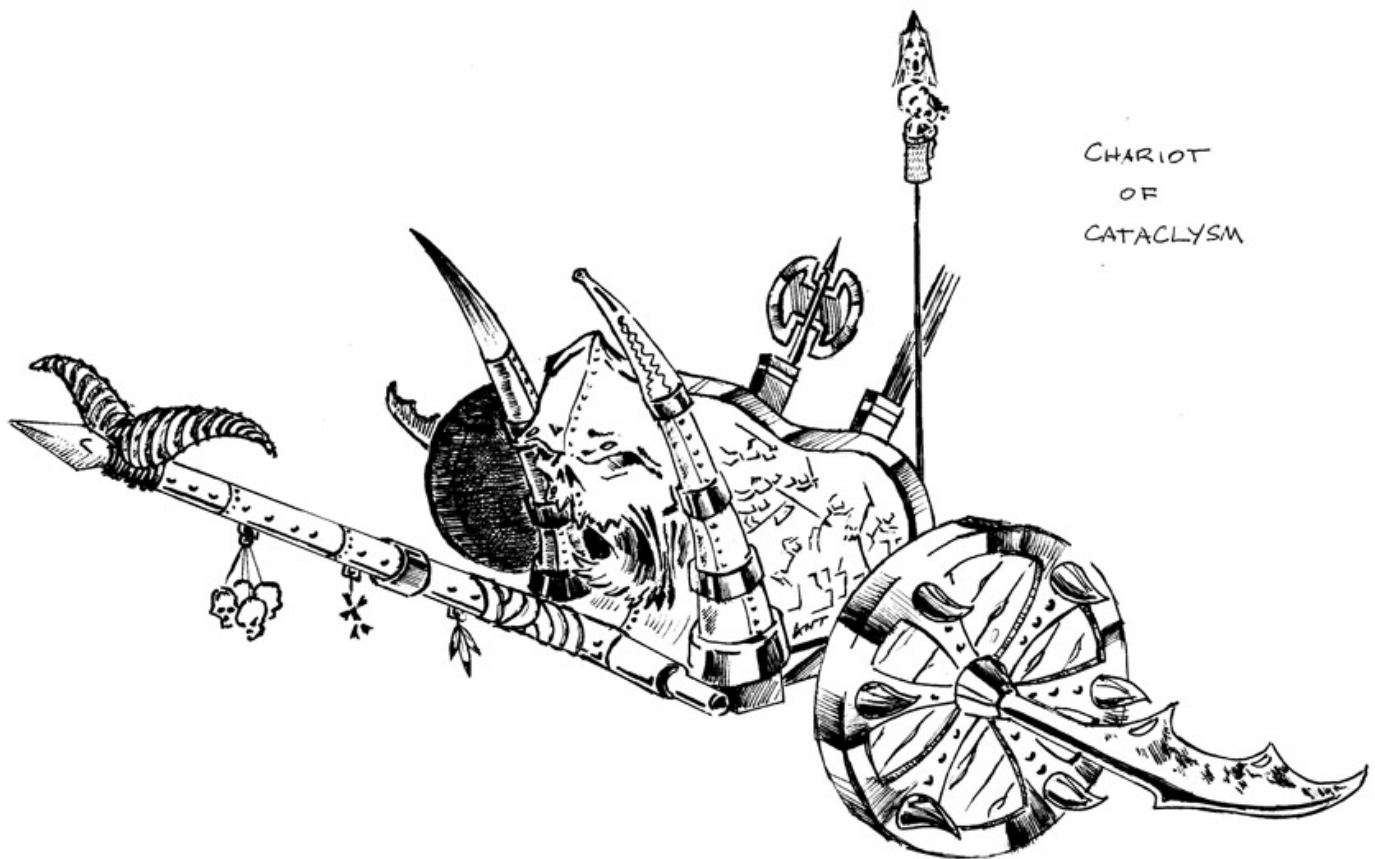
If used outdoors the drum causes the sky to cloud over and a strong wind to blow out of the north. As long as the drummer keeps playing the weather gets worse, and it will eventually rain. This effect is much reduced in desert conditions. The size of the drum makes it rather unwieldy for use by small adventuring parties, but can be carried on the back of a horse or chariot, or by a dedicated drum bearer as part of a larger warband.

There are larger versions of this drum made from the skins of progressively larger monsters or more powerful sacrificed warriors and requiring even more strength to play. The largest known was the Great Drum of the Warlord Tسانhannath, a huge thing fifteen feet wide made from the hide of a storm giant, hauled by six oxen and played by an enslaved mountain troll. It made the ground shake within 100 yards and summoned wild lightning storms out of the cold north that struck enemies and friends alike down with thunderbolts. All who heard it went berserk with fear or fury, and many a warriors' heart burst in the midst of a battle where it was being used. It is believed to be hidden in Tسانhannath's Barrow, somewhere on the Red Wolf plateau in the middle of the Howling Wastes.

**The Chariot of Cataclysm:** This great two wheeled war chariot is made of heavy bronze and iron, with gilded panels on its sides depicting the many victories of the war gods of the Howling Wastes over the feeble deities of the city-building and farming civilisations that once dominated the plains. It is far too heavy for ordinary horses to pull and must be manhandled from place to place by teams of slaves and bullocks, and is usually kept hidden in a secret temple somewhere among the Angry Mountains.

When it is to be used two mighty warhorses are sacrificed, along with a charioteer of at least 4<sup>th</sup> level and Strength 15. This summons the great war beasts that pull the thing into battle, monstrous lions the size of elephants with the heads of vultures and the claws of dragons, and the charioteer, a huge four armed Cyclops. The vulture lions are DC 4 and LVL 10, while the charioteer is DC 2 and LVL 8.

As it careers into battle all enemies witnessing its charge must make a morale check or break and run immediately. Those foolish enough to stand their ground are torn apart by the war beasts or chopped into bits by the scythes on the axle hubs. The Chariot will stop at nothing; it has destroyed hundreds of phalanxes of hoplites, mangled many a squadron of knights and cataphracts and even battered down the iron gate of the city of Haskedroone prior to its sack by the horde of Tسانhannath.



The chariot has enough room to carry two warriors besides the charioteer, and the insane momentum of the charge enables them to throw javelins at +4 to hit and double damage as they career along. Each must however save against Wands or become permanently deafened by the noise, and must save against Paralysis or fall out of the Chariot at some point to suffer 6d6 damage. The charioteer can blow his horn to create a conical shockwave up to 100 yards long, within which all targets must save vs Breath Weapons or be knocked off their feet and deafened and dazed for 1d6 rounds. If by some freak chance an enemy manages to board the Chariot the charioteer will wield a great battleaxe that does 2d6 damage against them. The Chariot can only be used once per year and the charioteer and his beasts leave after 12 hours of bloody mayhem, leaving the chariot wherever it happens to rest.

(Rumour has it that the nameless charioteer carries two magical medicines, the Elixir against Migraines and the Tablets of Prevention of Motion Sickness, but no afflicted passenger has managed to ask for such over the titanic noise created by the Chariot's cataclysmic passage.)

## Handgonnes & Cannons

by L. William "Oltikos" Schneider

**Handgonne:** The Handgonne is a primitive firearm, little more than a hollow iron tube with a small priming hole

drilled through the top of the barrel. Handgonnes have a crude metal rod formed as an extension to the rear of the barrel, to act as a handle or primitive stock.

Despite its relatively crude appearance, the Handgonne can easily kill even heavily armored opponents at short range - if the gunman can hit them. Although not highly effective in wet or windy conditions, the Handgonne proves surprisingly successful in ambushes. The Handgonne weighs 3.5 lbs. and measures close to 3ft. in length. To prime the weapon for firing, gunpowder is poured into the barrel, followed by the "shot" (a lead ball, nails, shrapnel, etc.), then rammed tight. 1 ounce of gunpowder is needed to propel the shot. A small amount of powder is then added to the touch hole. To fire the weapon, the touch hole is ignited by either a glowing punk or a slow burning match cord (approx. 1ft. of cord burns per hour), which propels the shot out of the barrel towards the target. The gunman can hold the stock of the weapon in the armpit, over the shoulder (like a modern bazooka), or even on forked rests hammered into the ground. Hooks are often found attached to the bottom of the barrel to support the Handgonne against stationary objects, or to reduce recoil.

The Handgonne can be even more dangerous to the gunman than to the intended target: if the character rolls a natural 1 or 2 on their to-hit roll, the weapon backfires, dealing 2 dice of damage to the user. The Handgonne is then destroyed.



Range: 180' (As per Arquebus)

Damage: 1 die

Range Specials: When firing at Medium Range, the Handgonne receives -2 to hit; at Long Range it fires at -4.

Rate of Fire: As Heavy Crossbow

Special: A Handgonne treats any well armored opponent at Short Range as being unarmored (i.e., DC9--regardless of the actual armor worn), for the purposes of the "to-hit" roll. At Medium Range, treat the defender as clad in Chain Armor (DC5). Use actual target DC at Long Range.

Cost: 100 gold for the Handgonne itself, plus 20 gold for a 32 oz. horn of gunpowder and shot cost by material type.

**Cannon:** The Cannon, also called a "Ribaldi", is a primitive form of artillery weapon, relying on gunpowder to act as catalyst. One 32 oz. charge of gunpowder is needed to propel the ball. Measuring over 6 feet in length (1.8 meters), & weighing in easily over 2000 gold, this bronze-cast monstrosity is loaded onto a wagon, driven by oxen or horse, then unloaded by hand at the chosen spot. Before priming, the cannon should be cleaned & wiped down with a wet cloth, so as to not only keep the piece cool, but also to extinguish any smoldering material from the last shot (fresh powder can be set off by lingering ignition sources!). Gunpowder is then added, followed by a wadding of hay or straw, then the ball (or arrows, glass, stones, nails, severed heads, etc.) is placed in & rammed down. After ramming, the cannon is lifted again, & set on pre-measured (for thickness) pieces of lumber, which act as elevation for determining range. Finally, a heated wire is inserted into the touch-hole to ignite the charge.

Even though the cannon is excellent as an anti-personnel or anti-fortification weapon it is highly dangerous to operate and prone to "accidents": if the operator rolls a natural 1 or 2 on his or her attack roll, the cannon explodes, causing 3 dice of damage to the user and anyone within a 10' radius. The cannon is then destroyed.

Range: 360' (As per Heavy Field Gun)

Damage: 5 dice (3 dice within 10' radius).

Range Specials: Due to the rudimentary methods of determining aim, when firing at Medium Range, the Cannon receives -6 to hit; at Long Range it fires at -8. If the Cannon is fired at Short Range, the penalty is only -4, but the cannon blows up on a natural 1-4 instead.

Rate of Fire: Once each three rounds with a crew of 4 or more. Rate decreases to 1/4 rounds with a crew of 3, 1/5 with a crew of 2, and 1/6 with a single operator.

Special: A Cannon treats any target at Short or Medium Range as unarmored (DC9) regardless of armor worn. At Long Range, treat the defender as DC 5. In addition to the sheer destructive & stopping power of the cannon, the psychological effects are powerful as well. Fear, Paralysis etc. are all by-products of this very loud weapon. As the DM, it's up to you what to do with it. Load it up & fire!!!

Cost: 1000 gold for the cannon, plus 20 gold for each 32 oz. charge. Shot cost by material used. Ω

*Celebrating Dave Arneson: Then...*

## The First Dungeon Adventure

by Greg "The Great Svenny" Svenson

I have the unique experience of being the sole survivor of the first dungeon adventure in the history of Dungeons & Dragons, indeed in the history of role-playing in general. This is the story of that first dungeon adventure.

During the Christmas break of 1970-71, our gaming group was meeting in Dave Arneson's basement in St. Paul, Minnesota. We had been playing a big Napoleonic miniatures campaign, which was getting bogged down in long drawn out miniatures battles. So, as a diversion for the group, one weekend Dave set up Blackmoor instead of Napoleonic on his ping pong table. The rules we used were based on Chainmail, a set of medieval miniature rules with a fantasy supplement allowing for magic and various beings found in Lord of the Rings. I had never played any games like it before, although I had read Tolkien. Other members of the group had played the game before, but always doing adventures around the town of Blackmoor. By the end of the weekend I had fallen in love with the game.

On this particular weekend, Dave tried a new wrinkle for the game. He had been working all week to prepare a map of tunnels and catacombs under the town and especially under the castle. To begin the adventure an evil wizard, played by Jim Abler, and his pet balrog, played by John Soukup, did something to Baron Fant (Dave Fant), the Lord of Blackmoor at the time. I don't know exactly what they did, as I was playing one of the castle's guards, simply a man-at-arms in chainmail with sword and shield. After doing his evil deed, the wizard fled into the dungeon under the castle, which had been abandoned for many years by the normal denizens of the castle. So, the Baron picked 30 of his men-at-arms and sent us to hunt down the wizard. Among the 30 men-at-arms there were six players, myself, Bill Heaton, Mel Johnson, Kurt Krey and two more whom I can't remember as I write this more than 30 years later. If you are one of those two please accept my apologies for forgetting. All of us were level 1 warriors in modern terms, although at the time you were either a flunky (like all of us at the start of the adventure), a hero, or a superhero.

We started by marching down a huge staircase from the main hall into the castle's basement, a vast irregularly shaped room with seven pillars supporting the ceiling and a large number of doors leading into the dungeon. This was the only area of the dungeon that was secure for us "good" guys. We had no idea which way the wizard went, so we picked a door leading northwest, later dubbed the "Northwest Passage". We were carrying torches for light. We meandered about for a while until we found a staircase going down, which we took...

At this point Dave took us into the laundry area of the basement, telling us he wanted to see what we would do. He had us line up in marching order. Then he turned off the lights saying a sudden wind had blown out our torches. Then we heard some screaming. We generally scattered as best we could. He turned on the lights looked at what we had done and then went back to the other room, telling us that a black blob (like the thing in the classic Japanese horror movie *The Blob* from the 1950's) had killed one of the NPCs who ran into it. We soon found our weapons dissolving when we struck it. Then we got some torches relit and found that we could fight it with fire. Eventually we killed it, losing two more men in the process.

After wandering more corridors we entered a room where we were attacked by giant spiders. Another fierce battle ensued and we overcame them, losing a couple of men in the process. We found some copper coins and broken weapons in the room along with a bunch of bones – some human! Then we found another stair going down, so down we went. We wandered a while before coming to a room with a fallen statue of Poseidon with trident in hand. From this room there was yet another staircase going down. At the bottom of the stairs we entered a triangular room with a smoking pot in the center of it. It shot balls of fire at us. It took us a while to figure out how to get safely past it.

We found a magic sword on the ground, near either the statue or the smoking pot. Anyway, one of the players tried to pick it up. He received a shock and was thrown across the room. The same thing happened to the second player to try. When Bill tried to pick it up he was successful. We were all impressed, and Dave declared Bill our leader and elevated him to "hero" status.



We found another downward staircase, now to the 4th level. Here we found a fountain with a small statue of a devil in it and an ominous red glow. We realized that we had no time reference, but that we were all getting tired, so we stopped and set up camp in a large room and bedded down for the "night", carefully placing guards at the doors.

During the night a beautiful woman came to our camp. She successfully seduced Bill. While they were embracing she turned into a serpent and killed him. We fought and eventually killed it, but Bill's loss was a major setback for the party. Several of us were injured trying to pick up the magic sword before one of the guys was eventually successful. We collectively decided that we were in way over our heads and to return to the castle. Soon we realized that we had made some errors in making our maps, too, as we were quite lost. We eventually got back to the second level and decided to make camp again.

While we were resting, the evil wizard and the balrog decided that we were getting too close to escaping, so they came to finish us off. The balrog turned invisible and entered the room where we had our camp to attack the man with the magic sword. After he killed him we were all awakened and set upon him. The balrog's body became a flaming torch as he tore into us. But 20 men-at-arms were no match for the balrog without our hero. We fought valiantly; after all, there was no safe place for us to run. After a while I realized that I was the last man standing. The balrog realized it, too. He stopped attacking, turned off his flames, and said: "Go in fear and tell the Baron what we have done to his men!" Then he disappeared.

As I looked about one of the corridors became illuminated. A voice spoke (the evil wizard) telling me that the illuminated corridor would lead me back to the castle. After determining that everyone else was dead, I picked up some leather and carefully wrapped the magic sword with it and walked down the illuminated corridor. This corridor led me to a staircase going up. At the top another corridor was illuminated leading me to a door. On the other side was the large room where we had started.

I reported to the Baron what had happened. He looked at the sword and offered me the unimaginable sum of 100 gold pieces for it. I realized that it must be very valuable and bargained hard with him, eventually agreeing on 150 gold pieces for it. That was more money than I, a mere farmer's son, drafted into the Baron's guard, could imagine (of course, eventually I figured out that such swords were vastly more valuable than that, but by then it was far too late to do anything about it...)

Over time I went on to be one of the heroes of the "First Fantasy Campaign", picking up the nickname "the Great Svenny" from my comrades. The Great Svenny is still alive, 37 years later. We still go on adventures. Ω

...and now...

## Dave Arneson, Blackmoor and Me!

by Robert Lionheart

In 2006, I had the good luck of attending a California convention where Dave Arneson was the Guest of Honor. They held a charity auction for the chance to play *D&D* with Dave on Saturday night and I won the last chair at the table. All proceeds went to the Paralyzed Veterans of America so it was a good cause.

Here is a hint if you ever play with Dave. He lets the players pick a mission for their adventure. When you complete the mission by returning back to town, the adventure is over. If you want to keep playing, all you have to do is delay going back to town! (I must emphasize that evening is the only game I ever played with Dave. I can not claim anything that happened in that game is "how Dave plays *D&D*" other than this is how Dave ran *D&D* for us.) When I got home, I shot off an email to my buddies with details and later posted them on a popular gaming forum:

"I just got home after playing Blackmoor *D&D* with Dave Arneson for five hours! It was incredibly fun and extremely educational. My inner gamer archeologist is about to explode. I picked his brain both in and out of game. Fascinating! It also cost me 80 bucks and it was worth every cent. Best money I have spent in years."

We started the session with Dave's thoughts on the art of game mastering: 'If the players don't amuse the GM, then the GM will amuse himself at their expense.' Dave runs Blackmoor...not just the setting, but his pre-1974 FRP system. It was proto-*D&D* but quite different:

- THAC0 is about rolling UNDER not equal or over. So if you had a THAC0 13, you needed to roll 12 or less to hit. 1s are crits and 20s are fumbles. This method of attacking also corresponded to your other ability and skill rolls.
- Saving Throws did not exist. Instead of rolling the D20, you had to defend to the other players via a short story why your character would survive what was coming at him. It was reminiscent of Baron Munchausen's wild tales of dodging the impossible. Then the players voted and the DM was the tie-breaker.
- Science Fiction/Fantasy blending was the genre. As one player put it, it was *D&D* meets *Naked Lunch*. It was not Tolkien and not the pseudo-medieval Greyhawk. Magic was used to emulate technology in many aspects, but unlike the "logic" of steampunk science, this was a world where nobody completely understood the magic they wielded.
- Alignments changed during play based on actions. It was Lawful, Chaotic, or Selfish.

- The +X on a magic sword represents the amount of positive magical energy in that weapon. When you meet a AC -3 creature, you need to make your THAC0 roll and you must have a +3 weapon because you need that much "positive" magic to counter the "negative" magic that protects that creature - thereby allowing your physical weapon to hurt things like ghosts and demons. Part of going into dungeons was to retrieve these wondrous items and most monsters would not wield magic items because they were positive magic.
- If you survive an adventure, you gain a level. Bam! The world is strange, random and dangerous so power was there for those who dared, but so was death.
- Role-playing was just that. You were judged on how well you played your role of elf, dwarf, cleric, mage, fighter or thief. It was like, we all know about Hamlet, so show us your own Hamlet interpretation. The goal was to work within the cliché. Dave gave out "role-playing points" in game that we traded for re-rolls.
- Everyone has the Cleave feat. If you kill a monster, you get a free attack. And this was could be melee or ranged as long as you had the ammo.
- We had a Caller/Leader. The Leader made the large scale party decisions and sometimes allowed us to vote. It was odd, but Dave says this is our character's leader regardless of our player thoughts. The role of Leader was given to the character with highest Charisma...so we followed a Wisdom 8, Intelligence 10, Charisma 14 Thief. Talk about not a dump stat!

I have played *D&D* since October 1979, so this was an awesome experience to game with one of the authors who created the hobby. It was doubly awesome because this was not like any *D&D* I had played before. As for our adventure, we went to investigate a town abandoned 30 years ago due to goblin raids where there were rumors of gigantic bugs. Fun stuff and I was the only character who died. But I died by breaking a Staff of Power while surrounded by 200 orcs, vampires and a giant so I was thrilled! We encountered goblins wielding mind-control wands using a purple worm as a digging machine to create tunnels for a monstrous mass transit system. The scifi/fantasy blending was very much in the mood and feel - I don't mean clockwork devices or obvious spaceships, but traveling was more going to an alien place with alien creatures than going into a fantasy forest full of goblins.

We were all veteran *D&D* players and the dungeon felt wrong. You know that crazy architectural weirdness of the old modules? Dave said that weirdness was intentional to make the characters scratch their heads and enhance the "this isn't Kansas" atmosphere. You get the message that dungeons are not treasure troves, they are murder holes, and we are fools for coming here.

The further we got from town and the deeper we went; the

vestiges of civilization became fewer and fewer and the oddness increased. We were not just adventurers; we were explorers and invaders to a different world. I felt much more like the crew of the *Nostromo* than the Fellowship. I see Tolkien's world as more than elves, dwarves and orcs, but a feel and a texture of a flowing high fantasy where good vs. evil is the dominant paradigm. The pseudo-medieval feel of *Greyhawk* is the sense that there is a class structure and technology transposed from the Dark Ages of Europe. This was not the case in Dave's *Blackmoor*.

Magic was a tool, but our magic items were presented the way artifacts show up in *Gamma World*. You learn by trying and sometimes it doesn't work the way you hoped. Toss aside your stat blocks and book knowledge. My Staff of Power could do more and it could do less, as could potions. We could not put 100% trust in our magical items and they had a very mystical appeal to them.

Dave told us more about this concept regarding his home campaign. Know the coolness of *Earthdawn*'s magic items where you gain more powers as you learn about more about the item's history? Dave explained that every magic item should have a story behind its creation and creator. So I asked him point blank why the hell wasn't all this cool stuff in my freaking books? He smiled and said that back then they figured all people needed was the basic framework and they would add in and discover the rest as they played. Dave said the rules were never meant as the end point...only the beginning. I was lightning struck and dumbfounded. Here were ways of playing *D&D* I never imagined from reading the dozens of books, adventures and settings through the various editions. All I could say was "Dave, you must write this stuff down!!" Ω

*...and from the man himself:*

## Interview with Dave Arneson

*Fight On!* caught up with Dave Arneson this summer to get his thoughts on gaming's past, present, and future. Dave comes off as a gamer's gamer, friendly and generous but sometimes given to cutely terse responses. He is still running games in *Blackmoor* and working on new material with Zeitgeist Games, and until recently was teaching game design at Full Sail University in Orlando, Florida. Dave has recently taken a leave due to illness; our thoughts and hopes are with him here at *Fight On!* Without further ado:

**FO!** How do you prepare for adventures? Any tips on making things up on the fly once things are underway?

**DA** Hang loose and get the player to do as much as possible. They never do what you expect them to anyway. Just give them a good general situation/story and let them take it from there. Always keep 'em guessing.



*Dave in his younger days.*

**FO!** What's your favorite adventure that you've run?

**DA** *Temple of the Frog*, actually. It was new for everyone - our group's first real excursion beyond the dungeons of Castle Blackmoor.

**FO!** Why do you think the *Blackmoor* campaign has kept going so strong after more than 35 years?

**DA** Less fighting, more problem solving, and a better story than most campaigns out there.

**FO!** Who stands out as your favorite GM to play under? What about your favorite RPG?

**DA** Phil Barker and the world of *Tekumel*. The society he created is intricately detailed and fascinating to boot. He is also a good story teller. It is not just hack and slash. Same answer for both questions.

**FO!** What was the focus of your early D&D games like? After you finished with the dungeons, what came next? How quickly did players in the early games start to shift from the tactical/imaginative exercises to things like building their own kingdoms, becoming knights, building towers, etc.? Any romance in those early games?

**DA** Dungeons to start with, the great outdoors next. No romance. Greg Svenson and Richard Snyder were first to branch out; it took several months to start their kingdoms.



**FO!** Many characters seemed to move pretty freely between campaigns in the early days. Do you have any interesting tales of characters coming into Blackmoor from other GMs' worlds, or similarly of Blackmoor personae going off to adventure in other worlds and coming back? How common was it to 'cross over' like this?

**DA** We didn't do too much of that. I went to Tekumel, and they returned the favor. And Mike Mornard came from Greyhawk, but the move was permanent.

**FO!** Greg Svenson mentions in his account of the first dungeon adventure (*just above – Ig*) that you had been running games in and around the town of Blackmoor before that historic game. Do you have any recollection of those early wargame-like dungeon scenarios?

**DA** Pretty straightforward in those days. Kill the monsters, steal the gold. And some convoluted, impossible story line. Hey, we were all learning.

**FO!** Some readers have expressed interest in your wargaming history. What games were you playing with your group before and after D&D?

**DA** Several, but it's hard to recall which offhand. Dave Wesley had a pretty good set of battling knights rules.

**FO!** Did you ever try early role-playing experiments in other kinds of settings, or was it pretty much all *Blackmoor*?

**DA** We tried many settings for roleplaying, including Modern, Horse and Musket, Wild West, and some Sci-fi. Some of the material from the latter game slipped into *City Of The Gods*.

**FO!** Are there any plans to release *Blackmoor* material for the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the World's Most Popular Roleplaying Game, or for some other new fantasy system?

**DA** We have no plans to do a 4th ed. version of *Blackmoor*.

**FO!** It seems that many gamers are currently returning to the older games and styles of play. Any thoughts on why this might be?

**DA** They are simpler and more flexible at the same time.

**FO!** Who are your favorite authors and RPG designers?

**DA** Fritz Leiber, Mike Stackpole, Gordon Dickson, and Phil Barker, for starters.

**FO!** What's your favorite non-RPG game, and why? Do you still play any wargames? What about computer games?

**DA** *Memoir '44* by Days of Wonder. I like wargames. I've been playing Richard Borg's whole *Commands and Colors* series. My favorite computer games are the world strategy games, like *Age of Empires* and *Civilization*. Ensemble Studios in general I guess. Ω

*Fight On!* thanks Dave Arneson very much for his time and answers to our questions. Dave thinks that a 'holodeck'-like on-line environment is probably the future of gaming. His classes at Full Sail University have been full of other ideas about gaming which are recorded and which he would like to make available to the public at some future date. Thanks for everything, Dave, and keep fighting on!

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## The Red Gem of High Cartography

non-canonical *Empire of the Petal Throne* adventure by Edsan playtested by Andy Cook, Sarah Gordon, and Ollie Stewart

This quest, suitable for 2-6 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> level characters, takes place in the City of Jakállá on the first quarter of 2,354 A.S. It could easily be moved to any Tsolyani city with a sizeable necropolis and to any time when the Empire is stable, however. The characters will join one of three parties put together by the infamous Clan of the Nighted Tower on a mission to steal an ancient artifact kept in one of the underground complexes of the Temple of Thumis.

The adventure is divided into five parts. The first involves a ceremony where the characters are initiated into the Edifice of Nacreous Larceny. From there they will make their way into the necropolis of Jakállá with a long underground journey following the directions on their map. Third, the group will explore the Halls of Thumis, where they will attempt to acquire the Red Gem of High Cartography. Then they will escape via the Lost Halls of Emerald Joy before finally arriving at the Temple of Dlamelish, where the adventure will reach its conclusion.

The adventuring party, for reasons explained below, must initially be composed of exactly 7 characters, PCs included but slaves not. One of the NPCs accompanying the party will be Mizothlu of Nighted Tower; any others will be NPCs of level 2-6. These can be given to players to run as "henchmen" during combat, though the GM should roleplay them in quieter moments. It is important to note that NPCs accompanying the characters on this adventure, including Mizothlu, are "named" characters and thus not subject to the Morale rules. Like the PCs they may choose to stand against 1000:1 odds without flinching. All slaves, however, will use the morale rules and might well run away in fear if they see their masters fall while battling enemies.

**Introduction:** A new brothel, the House of Saturnine Celebration of Life owned by Mistress Ma-Shan of Yan Kor, has recently opened its doors at the Street of Bounti-

ful Nourishment in the Foreigner's Quarter. Rumours avow that important foreign personages and even Tsolyani citizens are found amongst the clientele. Desperate for work, you made your way there in hopes that some such person is in need of the services of an "adventurer". There, among the patrons being entertained by chattering courtesans and games of chance, a mysterious black-clad individual hailed you from a shadowy corner.

He inquired about your past experience and abilities, and at length revealed himself to be a representative of the Edifice of Nacreous Larceny, a band of thieves, cutthroats and misfits from the lower layers of society, sponsored by a Clan that undertakes missions no others dare. They had acquired a very lucrative new contract and were in need of men and women of strong arm and brave heart. When you pressured him for a more precise figure he indicated your share would amount to at least hundreds, if not thousands, of kaitars. Your interest piqued, you made certain assurances, and the man gave you the address of a warehouse in the Foreign Quarter, along with a password and a date. That date is tonight...

**The Red Gem:** The final goal of this adventure is in some respects a grand McGuffin. While it is precious beyond belief to certain factions, it will in all likelihood be useless to the player characters as they lack the means to access the information it contains. The gem is an artifact from a bygone era, one of the last fabulous maps made using both sorcery and technological principles which are now lost. The precise nature of the cartographic information contained within the Gem, to where and what the map it contains leads to, are left to the referee's whim. In the future the mysterious employers of the Edifice might wish to contract anew those that brought them the Gem to participate in an expedition there. Physically, the Gem is rather hard to miss. It takes the form of a ruby of perfect cut about the size of a child's closed fist. However, anyone with some knowledge about gems (Skill: *jeweller-goldsmith* or *geologist*) will be able to determine it is not actually a ruby but some form of unknown precious stone.

**Part I - The Hall Hidden from the Gods:** The characters and any NPCs needed to bring their number to seven come together with others to make 21 adventuring sorts in a hidden room within the warehouse. If the characters don't know each other this is a good opportunity for roleplaying. The referee may also introduce selected NPCs. No one here knows much about the mission or has had dealings with the Edifice of Nacreous Larceny before. At length, a tall bearded man, dressed in the dark "uniform" of the members of the Edifice takes to the top of the wooden platform and addresses those below. He has a deep voice and it's obvious from his manner that he is used to addressing crowds:



"Greetings to you all! I am Mizothlu hiMirien of the Clan of the Nighted Tower. You stand in The Hall Hidden from the Gods, one of our secret meeting places in Jakálla. Tonight, you shall be as nothing for a time as you will become temporary members of the Edifice of Nacreous Larceny. We will undertake a quest for a priceless item kept in the underground halls of Thumis, in exchange for which, certain persons will shower us with riches. We are finishing the preparations for your initiation rite. Should you have any questions I will take time to answer them."

#### Some Possible Questions and Answers:

- *What is this "item" we are looking for?* Mizothlu only knows the name of the Gem and that is it an old and quite valuable artifact. He is unaware of its true nature.
- *What dangers can we expect?* "There are always dangers in the Tsuru'um. The area you will head to is unexplored. There may be guardians in the old tombs we must pass to get there, and surely the halls of Thumis will have temple-guards."
- *Who are we really working for?* Mizothlu will not disclose the nature of their employer (he does not know it himself) and will chastise any character impertinent enough to ask this.
- *How long will this quest take?* Several days probably. Bearer-slaves will take along sufficient provisions.
- *How do we get there? / How do we get out?* "We will access the temple via a route through the Necropolis. After we acquire the Gem we shall retrace our steps. We know multiple ways to return to the surface once we are once again underneath the necropolis."

- *How much are we getting paid for this?* Everyone receives standard pay for Initiates: half the total profits, after deducting expenses, shall be evenly divided.
- *That is quite generous! What's the catch?* Mizothlu will make a half-hearted comment about "The price of grain rising in times of famine." The truth is the Nighted Tower clan has lost quite a few members in recent weeks and cannot muster the manpower required for this quest without hiring outside its ranks.
- *There are many people here. Are we all going together?* Mizothlu explains that the Edifice knows of 3 different paths to get to where the Gem is kept. Three teams of precisely seven members each (not counting slaves) will be formed and each take a different route.
- *Why precisely 7 in each group?* "Because tradition wills it so! It is the sacred number of Lord Hru'u, whose blessings will be asked for the mission tonight."

**Mizothlu hiMirien**, 6th Level Warrior

AC 5, HD 6+2, HP 24, M 12"

Skills: Scholar 80%

Languages (literate): Tsolyani and Classical Tsolyani (literate in both), can recognise Engsvanyali writing.

Equipment: Map (in the secret cipher of his clan), portable clepsydra (water clock), leather armour, buckler, helmet +1, Fang of Purple Ichor (steel scimitar +4 to hit, +3 to Dmg, aligned with change, low INT, Ego 89, +2 Dmg vs. flying creatures), 2 steel daggers.

Special: +1 extra damage dice when using a weapon.

Appearance: A stern-faced bearded man just entering his autumn years, never seen without his black turban.

Personality: A gruff leader and man of action with a keen survivalist's intellect that have kept him alive during all these years of tomb-robbing; Mizothlu many dealings years dealing with the dregs of Tsolyanu's under-society have grudgingly taught him that one cannot judge others by provenience alone. Even a barbarian may adapt, learn the ways of the Empire of the Petal Throne and prosper. While a criminal at hearth, he is surprisingly tolerant of foreigners compared to most of his countrymen. He is not cowardly but has a knack to feel when the party is facing impossible odds and will not hesitate to flee and tell others to do the same. He feels this mission is his big, once-in-a-lifetime chance to retire in riches.

Quote: "Flee you fools! Flee for your lives!"

**The Initiation Ceremony**: This ceremony is comprised of three rituals. First comes a very short theatre play, followed by the Rite of Opening the Casket and ending with the Litany of the Cloak of Shadows where three human sacrifices are performed. The GM may describe these in whatever detail seems appropriate, or groups which greatly enjoy roleplaying may act out the scenes, with players who are particularly effusive in their roles being rewarded with additional experience. One of the PCs should be selected to perform the last human sacrifice;

refusal to comply will assuredly result in death (though the player should be clearly informed of this). First comes...

**The Journey of Daghan the Fearless – Act IV, Scene 5**  
(Old Purdanim, Bednalljan Era – author unknown)

(...Torches in sconces are lit, providing just enough illumination to see the altar and the stairs leading to it. A large black wood coffin of strange design stands atop the altar. Steps are heard from the left and a man completely covered in decorative golden chlen-hide armour trots into view. He stops and looks at the coffin on the altar...)

**Daghan** – "Lo! What is this I come across deep in the bowels of the Underworld? A coffin sealed an unopened. Who knows what riches may be found inside? Certainly the departed dead have no need for material goods in the afterlife...Better they be spent to feed me and my own. Let us see what hides inside..."

(...a glowing skeletal arm rises from behind the altar, menacingly...)

**Dokh-Omer** – "Halt!"

**Daghan** – "Ohe! What is this?! A skeletal hand that floats bodiless? What devilry...?"

**Dokh-Omer** – "Mortal! I am Dokh-Omer, 7<sup>th</sup> Aspect of Durritlemish, He of the Rooted Face. Throtter of Intruders and Violators of Catacombs. Begone from these tunnels, leave the dead to their unending rest. Lest you face the wrath my bony touch"

**Daghan** – "La! Begone apparition! You cannot harm me! You are as smoke from the burning of incense. Weak as the blind worm. I am Daghan, called "The Fearless" by the Brothers of the Nighted Tower. I accept your challenge. Face my blade if you will, demon!"

(...stylised combat ensues between Daghan and the skeletal arm...)

**Dokh-Omer** – "Curse you mortal! Why do my blows pierce not your skin? How can you withstand the touch of the Bone Claw?"

**Daghan** – "Cha! Daghan of the Golden Armour I be! Upon my shoulders is the Cloak of Shadows of Lord Hru'u. The Dark holds no secrets for me. The master of non-being negates your blows! You may not harm me!"

**Dokh-Omer** – "Curse...you...mortaal..."

(...the skeletal hand disappears from view...)

**Daghan** – “Ah! Victory is indeed sweet. Now...to see what wealth lies with the dead, sleeping within the casket.”

(...Daghan kicks the coffin on the altar, it tumbles down and opens to reveal glittering gold, silver and jewels...)

**Daghan** – “Oh glory! Riches! Steel! Artifacts of Bygone Eras! Truly, I have found the wealth of Princes! There shall be dancing and feasting in the clan-house tonight.”

(...Daghan slowly turns around to face the spectators...)

**Daghan** – “Lo! But wait...what is this? I see many. Many are waiting all around me. Ones of courage and daring like myself. Those that are unafraid to dwell into the passages of the Tsuru’um, the underworlds beneath the most ancient of cities. Ngangmuru brave ones! You seek to join me? To take the Path of the Nighted Dark? What say you? What say you?!

(...half-hearted cheers rise from the crowd...)

**Daghan** – “Then let us embrace the Night and the way of the Tsuru’dali. Look around you. Many dead are interred in this tomb. Choose one coffin and crack it open. Reveal the riches inside and spend them as you will. And may your first Opening of the Casket be a fruitful one, my new companions!”

(...as Daghan speaks several slaves carrying coffins of all shapes, design and sizes come into the hall. The coffins look remarkably real...)

**The Rite of Opening the Casket:** After the play has finished, each initiate present will be asked to open a casket of their choosing. A few NPCs will be chosen before the characters. Most find nothing of relevant worth in their selected coffins but one or two may find a golden ring or jeweled necklace. Mizothlu congratulates the fortunate ones and slowly shakes his head at the others. A particularly unlucky fellow, a short and pot-bellied Salarvyani with a rather elongated beard even for his people finds doom with his selection. The coffin opens to reveal a tied and gagged human male, very much alive. Mizothlu reacts with shock: “La! The casket of the living one! The worst omen of them all!”

He immediately gestures to the guards and the unfortunate Salarvyani is slain in a particularly messy manner. “We will have to send a clansman in his stead...” When the time comes for the characters to choose their coffin they should roll 1d6; each result may only be obtained once.

**1** – Empty and unused coffin Mizothlu shakes his head while stroking his beard but says nothing.

**2** - Dusty coffin devoid of a body, but containing a golden ring with the symbol of Hru’u. Mizothlu states “Wear it - it is a sign of favor from the Lord of Shadows.”

**3** – Coffin with recently slain corpse, but nothing of value.

**4** – Coffin has a withered skeleton with a jade pectoral. Mizothlu nods his approval.

**5** – Coffin with very fresh cadaver. There is a silver coin in the mouth of the corpse but it will only be found if the player states that he is opening it. If found, Mizothlu says “Good! Your perspicacity will serve you well in the mission to come.”

**6** – Coffin contains the mummified body of a high-class female with jewelry of gold, silver and gems. Mizothlu is very pleased: “May your good luck extend to all of us.”

**Litany of the Cloak of Shadows:** After the coffins are opened, the final blessing will begin. The service is a corruption of a First Imperium ritual to the Cloud-Maker Aspect of Hru’u. The Litany must be led by a Priest of Hru’u of no less than 5<sup>th</sup> Circle. He should have a death-mask painted upon his face, like those popular among the adepts of Sarku, with black and white reversed. The litany can only be undertaken inside a windowless room at night, facing an altar to Hru’u that has been consecrated with the Pandects of Amorpheusness; otherwise the Purple Lord will not deign to bless the supplicants. These lines are uttered by the priest and repeated by the congregation:

*Let the dead remain dead and living remain alive*

*Let the Worm stay asleep in its lair*

*Let the Eyes of the Many-Eyed be shut*

*Let the Flame sputter out and cast no light*

*Let the Portals to the Land Beyond Life stay unopened*

*Let the Inchoate Darkness cover our paths*

*Hru’u! Hru’u! Hru’u!*

Then all are silent as the priest intones: “Oh! Great Purple Lord of Confusion! Oh! Great Master of Negation! Oh! Great Dispenser of calamities! Accept now the sacrifices we offer in your honour, and bless your servants with thy holy darkness. May our enemies be blind and deaf and mute! May their limbs falter and their organs fail. Lord...your slaves beseech your guidance!” The priest raises his hands to the ceiling and cries out, with the crowd repeating after him: “FOR THE VICTORY OF THE DARK! – Bring forth the sacrifices!”

Then the final part of the rite begins. The 3 sacrifices are brought into the ritual chamber and bound hand and foot to the altars. While this is done the priest recites the *Three Stanzas of Laws & Numbers* without interruption:

**First Stanza:** “The Laws & Numbers are clear and without error. As his colour is deep purple, as his planet is Ziruna so too is his number known to us. And it is 7 which is dark, malignant, cold and turgid but ever-moving.”

**Second Stanza:** “The Laws & Numbers are clear and without error. Always 7 and no more or less, except if divisible by 7 as everything else is detestable to him.”



**Third Stanza:** “The Laws & Numbers are clear and without error. 1 soul for every 7, and 7 for every soul. That is the price the Comforting Dark exacts for safe journeying and safe return.”

The sacrificial victims now bound, the deliverers of the 3 fatal blows are chosen from the crowd. The priest takes out the Kri'ingur gong from his vests and after ringing it once and performing a full circle with his body points it at the lucky chosen who will in turn approach him, receive the ritual Gshata silver knife and imbed it swiftly into the hearths of the bound sacrifices while crying “For the Victory of the Dark!” Once all the sacrifices have expired the rite is over and all may return to their daily business after the priest cries out the Engsvanyali celebratory words: “Otulengba! Otulengba Hru'umitlandalidalisa!”

After the ritual is concluded, a pair of slaves bring in an oddly shaped bottle, half as tall as a man and filled with a very dark wine. Mizothlu explains: “This is the sweet wine of the Purdu-grape, which grows only in the dark places of the earth. Now that you are all as one with us, it is your right to drink of it. Drink deeply and enjoy, for this may be the last draught you take before the Rendering of your Skein.” The wine is, of course, laced with a potent narcotic. Refusal to drink will be met with warnings and then force from Mizothlu's guards. The referee must ask for a Save vs. Poison from everyone. Those that fail soon fall into a dreamless slumber. If anyone succeeds they will suffer an unavoidable lassitude and deep drowsiness but still remain conscious and vaguely aware of their surroundings but unable to act. They will perceive being carried outside into the streets for some distance before going down a stairway. As their nostrils are assaulted by an awful stench all goes black.

**Part Two: The Journey.** This part of the adventure takes the party to the Halls of Thumis where the Red Gem of High Cartography is kept. Long after the wine is drunk, everyone awakens in a tunnel lit by the bearer slaves' torches. They are in a long disused section of the Jakállan sewers. The air is somewhat heavy but it does not smell anywhere as foul as one would expect. Mizothlu orders everyone up and begins the march down the tunnel. After about 10 minutes the group will emerge about 100 meters from the eastern city walls, just north of the road leading from the gate to the necropolis. The old and rusted exit from the sewer looks remarkably like the large drainage pipes that carry refuse down to the river, but this location is nowhere near any waterway.

As silently as possible and with all lights doused the group marches towards the looming structures of the City of the Dead to the east. When its ancient and ill-repaired walls are reached Mizothlu and his clan-cousins find an aperture large enough for a man to pass and send the PCs on a scouting mission with one of their own.

**Tomb Police and the Call of Nature:** Mizothlu sends a Nighted Tower clansman with the PCs (3rd level Warrior, AC 7, Sword). They will be searching for “A gaping ancient stairway going down into the blackness, found somewhere between the Pyramid Tombs of Ssirandar I “the Ever-Victorious” and his descendent Bashdis Mssa.”

This will mean little to the characters but their Nighted Tower companion knows where they are headed. Rather than marching off as a group he tells everyone to spread out. Finding hiding spots in the nighted necropolis is not hard as fallen walls and overgrowths of vegetation abound. The stairway is soon found in the Northwest corner of an open area. But, just before the group can return to report its location, two tomb policemen come walking in from the south, chatting amicably among themselves. After a minute or so, one points to the way they came indicating his desire to go back, but his companion tells him to wait awhile. He moves near to the most isolated PC while fondling his nether regions. What does the PC do?

As long as the PCs keep their cool and stay in hiding, the guards will eventually leave after the one who separated off relieves himself in the ruins. If they attack, there is a larger patrol of 1d6+6 members nearby who will respond instantly to a call from these two. The unsuspecting fellow relieving himself may be easily assassinated, but if the other is not taken care of almost at the same instant he will alert the aforementioned patrol. Tomb Police (2nd level Warriors): AC 6, MV 12”, HD 2, Dmg 2d6 (weapon).

**Down into the Depths Beneath Old Jakáll:** At length the band will come to the wide stairway. Down the party goes, into an ever-twisting path that crosses tunnels, hallways, tombs and stairs. The slaves' torchlight falls upon ancient frescoes and tomb-entrances as they go. Everywhere are depictions of Gods, heroes and mythological scenes and carvings in a multitude of different scripts and styles, honouring the deities or proclaiming the glory of this or that honoured personage sleeping his final rest in these hallowed passages.

Less than a third of an hour passes and you begin to doubt your ability to trace your path back to the surface without the guidance of the Nighted Tower tomb-robbers. After a long trek through a wide tunnel that seems to extend to eternity, with side passages going left and right at regular intervals; the group stops momentarily as Mizothlu pauses to consult a map.

**Poisoned Gifts of the God of Humour:** Bringing up the rear one of the initiates, a small head-shaved tattooed tribal man from some faraway isle, notices something interesting in a side passage and exclaims to a PC: “Tra?! Look at that!” Indeed, looking down the passage a small room with a large idol or statue can be seen with many specks of brilliance reflecting in the torchlight. The man promptly

goes to explore and, if not followed, returns after a couple of minutes carrying a 'diamond'. He gleefully announces his discovery before his face contorts into a spasm of pain and he falls to the ground convulsing and dead.

Anyone following him to the room will get a better look at the statue, which depicts a nearly 10 foot tall human-like creature with a few too many extra pounds. It is covered with thousands of small to medium gems of all colours, imbedded into its structure without any apparent order.

Priests or characters with the Scholar skill might determine this is Hes, the God of Humour, but this small demon-deity is hardly ever represented in such massive scale. Equally uncommon is the large number of gems that cover its surface. Anyone with the Jeweller or Geologist skills recognizes them for what there are: near-valueless semi-precious stones. They do not come off easily but with the help of a dagger can be pried off without much effort (this is what the tribal man will do this unless stopped by a PC). In a cruel jest, the builders of the statue have poisoned half of the gems with a powerful and long-lasting contact poison. There is a 50% chance any gem handled by a character requires a Save vs. Poison to avoid death after about a minute as the poison affects the nervous system.

If Mizothlu is informed of the statue he warns everyone to leave it well alone. Such a "fortune" would not be found untouched in the upper levels of the Underworld if there was nothing wrong about it. Should someone die as a consequence of their greed he will be quite enraged at the deceased's stupidity but express roughly the same message, although in a more exasperated tone.



**Splitting up the party:** The long corridor eventually reaches an intersection. The group comes together to plan. Each of the new passages supposedly leads to a room with a large arched doorway via different unexplored routes. Three groups will be formed and each will take one of the tunnels. The first party to arrive at the arched doorway should wait for two days for any others. After the second group gets there, another day of wait is granted for the third party, then all will move onwards. With handclaps and wishes of good luck, each party heads its own way.

Mizothlu, of course, will select all the PCs for his group plus as many NPCs as needed to make the total number seven. Accompanying them are 5 slaves. A torchbearer boy (HD 1-1), two stout bearer-slaves (HD 1+1), a female slave cook (HD 1) and Urukai, Mizothlu's personal slave.

**Urukai**, 6th Level Physician and Scholar (Ketengku)  
AC 11, HD 4, HP 12, M 12"  
Skills: Physician, Scholar  
Spells: Perception of the Energies (detects enchantments, magical items and ambient or residual extra-planar energies from recent spellcasting).  
Languages (literate): Tsolyani, Classical Tsolyani.  
Equipment: Physician's bag, dagger (+1d4 Dmg)  
Special: As long as he is with the party all gain +2 to any sorcerous and natural healing. Urukai fights with the proficiency of a 1st Level Magic-User and will avoid combat whenever possible. He uses the Saving Throws of a 6th Level Magic User.  
Appearance: A middle-aged, bearded man in slave's garb.  
Personality: A devout servant of Mizothlu and little else. He just wants to get out of this alive.  
Quote: "Curses! Stand still, will you!? Just a few more stitches and it will be done..."

**Biridlu Attack:** After about an hour of travelling through the Underworld the group arrives in a medium-sized hall with a pair of stout double doors locked by an equally stout copper lock of great size. Mizothlu begins earnestly using his tools on the lock by torchlight. Then an awful female cry is heard! The slave-woman accompanying the party shrieks as she is enveloped by a black mantle-like creature that begins crushing the life out of her.

The Biridlu dropped from the ceiling onto its victim and there are two more about to do the same. The referee should randomly determine their targets and determine surprise. The Biridlu get a free attack at surprised victims and automatically envelop them on a successful hit. Mizothlu has faced Biridlu before and knows their strengths and weaknesses. On the first round of battle he will shout "Chlen-hide is useless against Biridlu! Use this!" and toss a steel dagger to the nearest person that can handle it (requiring a d100 roll under DEX to catch in mid-flight). On the second round he will cry out "Fire!

Use Fire! They fear it!” and hands out his second steel dagger to whoever ask for it. PCs can take a torch from a slave’s hand or try to light one, assuming they have it and flint and steel are at hand. 3 Biridlu: AC 3, HD 4+1, M 6/13”, Dmg (special), Morale 5+, Special: Regenerates, can only be cut by steel weapons or harmed by fire. A torch will cause only 1d6 damage but once burned the creature must make a Morale check or retreat. (Both Mizothlu and Urukai know the bodies should be burned to prevent them from regenerating in 20 minutes.)

**Art Suffers for our Greed:** After Mizothlu manages to open the copper lock the doors are opened and the party follows the passage. It soon comes to an end in a rather small room just barely able to contain the party. There are no other exits. The walls here have been fantastically painted to depict a 360-degree vision of a large, mythical battle. The signs of all 20 gods are present and any character that has heard about it will recognise this as representation of the Battle of Dormoron Plain during the war of the Gods against Ksarul. Mizothlu and Urukai begin scanning the images a specific scene and settle in the centre of the wall left of the entrance. There, the God Gruganu, cohort of Ksarul, in his aspect of Akhunom “the True Servitor Who Seeks the Countenance of His Lord”, is seen pointing in despair at a sky overcast with white clouds. A rain of white blades sent by Lord Hnalla falls upon the field and his allies desert him. The Dwellers in Shadows, the Ones of the Heads of Beasts, the Stunted Gnomes of the 77th Plane and even Mankind itself are withdrawing from the field leaving Gruganu to his fate.

This panel is actually a fake plaster wall. Give the PCs a chance to figure this out first, but Mizothlu and Urukai will probably discover it eventually if they do not. Once discovered Mizothlu will order the bearer slaves to take out mallets and pulverise it with heavy blows, opening a passage to a new chamber. PCs that cringe or express their distaste that such art must be destroyed for the sake of their mission might be rewarded with an experience bonus.

**The Deadly Treasure Chamber:** The plaster wall is soon broken down and the party peers into a scene more awesome by several degrees of magnitude. Everywhere visible are gold, winking gems, tall statues of Gods and demons unknown to you, collars, pendants, tall standards, carved furniture, enigmatic chests and caskets. There are leather bags that have rotted, burst and spewed dozens of gold coins upon the mosaic floor. The whole group stands rooted to the spot with awe. Then at the far end of the long, barrel-vaulted chamber there is movement...the creature that comes out of the darkness is a thing of nightmare: squat, mottled grey, covered with pendulous excrescences, vaguely two-legged and two-armed with round, mad eyes that peer at you from a face set in the middle of its chest! It utters a crooning, gulping sound.

Mizothlu moans: “Hra! This tomb is guarded by Hra!” It lifts its strange, many-jointed arms and stumps forward. The smell of something long dead hits you like a wave. On the second round another Hra appears, rising from a huge mound of gold and silver coins near the room’s centre. It is taller than the first but of smaller frame and unlike its companion isports an actual misshapen head atop a crooked neck and lacks a chest-maw. It takes one round to rise and then joins battle. 2 Hra (large undead constructs): AC 4, MV 12”, HD 7, HP 26, 44, Morale 4+, Skills: Track 90%, Special: the bodies of the Hra will re-animate after 20 minutes unless burned (Mizothlu and Urukai know this).

All the riches in this chamber have been cursed with a delayed form of the Grey Hand curse. Anyone carrying treasure, even a single coin, outside the chamber must roll a Saving Throw vs. Spells or die instantly, disintegrating into a pile of ash. Should Mizothlu witness this he will immediately order everyone to leave the riches alone. The monetary value of the full horde is beyond calculation, many thousands of kaitars per person.

**Family Meeting:** After the encounter with the Hra the party takes the only exit from the chamber (besides the one recently opened with the party’s mallets), a wide tunnel with sufficient space for 3 people to march and fight abreast. Once at a considerable distance from the cursed chamber Mizothlu will order everyone to stop and make camp for rest and recuperation. The referee should select one of the characters randomly and state that while on watch he thinks he hears the sound of footsteps coming from further down the corridor. Soon very faint lantern light shines and two human-sized silhouettes can be seen. Someone is coming. What does he do?

The newcomers are Charikasa and Tontiken, clan-members of the Nighted Tower who went off with a different group. The appropriate protocol is to shout “For the Victory!...” and wait for the reply “...of the Dark” thus recognising fellow mission members. The men will do this when they notice the sentinel. In conversation with Mizothlu both will explain the arranged gathering point is not safe as there are recent tracks on the dust all about. Their party is camped, much like the PCs, in one of the three tunnels leading to it over an hour’s walk away. They confirm that an arched doorway of copper is present.

**The Body Snatchers:** Unfortunately for everyone, Charikasa and Tontiken are not truly what they seem. Both men are quite dead by this point and the beings taking their forms are actually the Tsu’uru who killed them, stole their memories and went in search of further prey. If their true nature is not found out (highly unlikely given their proficiency in pretending to be human) they will wait until everyone has gone to sleep again, silently kill whoever is on watch and then eliminate everyone else silently.



The referee must determine who is on watch when the Tsu'uru spring their trap. One will engage the watchman in conversation, complaining about not being able to sleep while the other attacks him from behind. If they are successful their choice of first sleeping victim will be the most obviously powerful character other than Mizothlu. Any character might wake up if enough noise is made (the watcher sounds the alarm, is slain noisily by the Tsu'uru, their first sleeping victim cries a death rattle, etc.). 2 Tsu'uru (artificial underworld guardians): AC 3, HD 5+3, M 12", Dmg 1d6, Special: totally immune to spells.) Anyone fighting and wounding Charikasa or Tontiken will notice they do not bleed and the flesh beneath their skin is jet-black. When they die their features will shift and roll as they fall and their true form will be revealed: a bundle of black ropy, lumpy tentacles connected to a central brain ganglion. The first time this happens the referee should ask for a Save vs. Paralysis to avoid being overcome by shock and awe and unable to act for a round. No one in the party knows anything about these creatures.

**Underworld Scavenger Beasts:** After the fight with the Tsu'uru Mizothlu will immediately lead the party onward, eager to arrive at the hall of the arched door and find what

happened to his clan-cousins. After several minutes the party hears noise coming from further ahead - many rending, chomping and crunching little mouths messily consuming a meal. This is soon followed by a horrible rotting stench. Soon the corridor opens into a large square room with two more tunnel exits and a massive arched double doorway on the opposite wall. Here, you see the dead bodies of fellow initiates of the Edifice of Nacreous Larceny. Shuffling and scuttling among the mangled bodies are over a dozen six-limbed furry beasts with sharp, horny beaks and three glowing eyes. The largest are four feet long and three feet tall. They notice you and, crying and hooting, prepare to defend their meal. 15 Kurgha (animals): AC 6, HD 1, M 12", Dmg 1d6 (bite). Kurgha are cowardly and do not normally attack living creatures, they will fight to protect their feast. The referee should make sure to use the Morale rules for this battle.

**Who Goes There?** With the kurgha killed or driven off all that remains is to investigate the scene of carnage. There are 10 bodies on the room, four slaves and 6 party members (including Charikasa and Tontiken). The exact causes of death are difficult to determine because every cadaver has been masticated by the kurgha almost to the



point of being unrecognisable without its clothes and items. There is little of value among the bodies apart from chlen-hide weapons and a few kaitars. The rations have been fouled by the kurgha and are inedible.

The copper doors on the north are open, just wide enough for an adult unencumbered man to squeeze through. The first person to investigate them will hear someone or something cough on the other side. This is an excellent opportunity for the referee to play up the party's paranoia. The maker of the sound is Chra'akish from Pijena, the sole survivor from the 2nd party, who is hiding just behind the doors. It is obvious to expect party members to doubt whether Chra'akish is in fact who he claims to be an not another doppelganger. Anyone coming up with an appropriate method to prove his identity (for example: to check if he bleeds) should be rewarded with XP.



If they don't mistakenly eliminate him he will gladly tell his tale of the events: "We were the first and only to arrive. The leaders told us to make camp and wait for others. It was after a few hours they came. A pair of young, attractive girls appeared from the west passage claiming to be slaves fleeing from another band of tomb looters. The men were taken by them and I think Tontiken and his cousin bedded them on their sleeping mats. I had decided to check the corridor beyond the doors on my own. This must have been when the things chose to strike, for when I returned all the men were dead. I could see Charikasa and Tontiken's bodies but two looking exactly alike were standing conversing with each other in some inhuman language. They took to the south passage and I skulked in the darkness, wondering whether I should follow them or remain here. But then the corpse-eating beasts came..."

Should the party have been depopulated to the extent that one player is lacking a character Chra'akish will make an excellent replacement for the remainder of the adventure.

**Chra'akish** of Pijena, Level 4 Adventurer (Ksarul)

AC 4, HD 3+3, HP 16, MV 12"

Skills: Orator, High Etiquette

Spells: Control of Self, Clairaudience, Produce Light.

Equipment: Sword, Chain shirt +2, Buckler +2.

Appearance: A bow-legged country bumpkin of Pijena.

Personality: Chra'akish may look like a peasant but he certainly does not speak or act as one. In truth he is an exiled Pijenani minor noble forced to flee when Baron Ald of Yan Kor caused a shift in power on his nation. For a man that has lost everything he is surprisingly optimistic about life, and determine to make the most of it while behaving as an honoured gentleman at all times.

Special: His priceless enchanted metal chainshirt is hidden beneath common robes and his steel buckler has been painted to resemble normal chlen-hide. Thanks to it Chra'akish's AC is 1 against the first attack he is victim of every round. He attacks and saves as a Priest of 4th Level.

Quote: (...heartly laugh...) "Otulengba! The day is ours, my gallant companions!"

As was pre-arranged, being the second group to arrive, Mizothlu's party will wait a full day for members of the third group. Sadly no one will arrive. The referee should allow for daily healing and regeneration of spells. Two watches will be maintained at all times in the main hall. This is a dreadful task, involving spending hours of inactivity in a grossly odorous chamber filled with gnawed human bodies and the carcasses of slain creatures.

**Fantastical Frescoes**: Once more the party resumes travel, taking the northern tunnel beyond the doors. According to the leader's map they should be nearing an access stairway to the halls where the Red Gem is kept. Indeed, the tunnel soon displays wall paintings with representations of the Hells of Thumis and their curious forms of exquisite suffering. All the sufferers are long-bearded half-naked sages. Some wander aimlessly and eyeless among libraries filled with books that hold the secrets of the universe. Others lack ears and squat in despair near demonic musicians playing crystalline instruments. A third group is composed of sages that have no arms and gaze pitifully upon elaborate artifacts they are unable to touch. The frescoes are done in an uncommonly realistic and detailed style, rarely found in Tsolyanu. They are also highly magical and designed to ward off intruders. As they pass everyone must make two Saves vs. Spells. Failing one strikes the character with Amnesia for 2d6 hours; missing both turns the character into a vegetable for 2d6 hours.

After passing the cursed frescoes the party comes upon a staircase spiralling downward on the right wall. On its first half are more frescoes. A procession of Thumis priests is seen having an audience in the temple with a superior. One of their number presents a large red gem while the others hold wrapped bundles. The next section shows the same



priests being led into the tunnels underneath the temple by the gem-holder, still carrying their bundles. The last panel depicts the priests unwrapping them, revealing what appear to be silvery human body parts which they use to assemble a statue. After the last wall panel, the stairs become a ramp made of what appears to be black glass. This substance is 100% frictionless and it is impossible to stand on its leaning surface without sliding down. The first person to attempt to walk on it will slip and slide in a quite distressful manner, perhaps suffering 1-2 damage when the descent finally ends and he collides with the opposite wall. The black glass ramp cannot be climbed upwards.

**Part III: The Halls of Thumis.** While this part of the underworld belongs to the Temple of Thumis, it is not located anywhere near the building geographically. In fact, the only way the priests have of reaching it is through the use of sorcery within the temple to create an access nexus point. Naturally, being assigned to work in these halls is not something any within the ranks of the Thumis cult aspire to, as it means being trapped underground for days at a time until the nexus is reopened from the other side.

The Halls of Thumis have long been inhabited so no danger of random encounters with denizens of the Underworlds exists. There is a chance of running into a rare patrol doing the rounds, but only once over the course of the adventure. The patrol will number 2d4+1 3rd level warriors with chlen-hide chainmail, shields, swords, and spears. The guards only patrol tunnels, not rooms, so a party that detects them before being detected might hide safely in a room until they pass. **But**, it is paramount that the party be as stealthy as possible within these walls. Anyone surviving an encounter with the party will run to their fellows and bring news that intruders have penetrated. In that case every remaining guard in the complex, plus the high priest and commander from **24** will band together and thoroughly check every room and corridor until they find the intruders. All the tunnels and rooms are constructed of polished brick and stone unless otherwise indicated. Rooms are as follows:

**1. Spiral Room:** No door. A timeworn grey mosaic floor depicts a spiral. Anyone exploring the room has a 35% chance to cross one of the five 7-foot-deep pit traps on the floor. 2d6 fall damage, ½ on a successful d100 DEX roll.

**2. Laboratory & Dissection Chamber:** Locked wooden door. No treasure. This room is obviously a laboratory of sorts. Two wood shelves contain several bottles and containers with chemicals used for the preservation of bodies. In a corner is a stand with several medical instruments (none made of metal, alas) and on the centre table is the cut-up body of some humanoid reptilian thing. Characters who have seen a Shen will notice a similarity but are unsure whether this was a member of that species as there are several differences in morphology and

coloration. Also it appears too small to be a Shen. (This is in fact the half-dissected body of a juvenile specimen of the “egg-fertiliser” sex very rarely seen outside of Shenyu.)

**3. Figurine Room.** Unlocked wood door. Empty except for stone dais with 4 semiprecious stone figurines of several Thumis aspects, worth d100k each. There is a shooting poison needle trap under one of the figurines – d100 DEX roll to avoid or suffer 3d6 (½ w/Poison save).

**4. Quarters of temple guards.** Unlocked door, no treasure. Three level 4 warriors are relaxing inside (AC 7 as they are wearing only parts of their armour, but they have swords). They can easily be heard through the door.

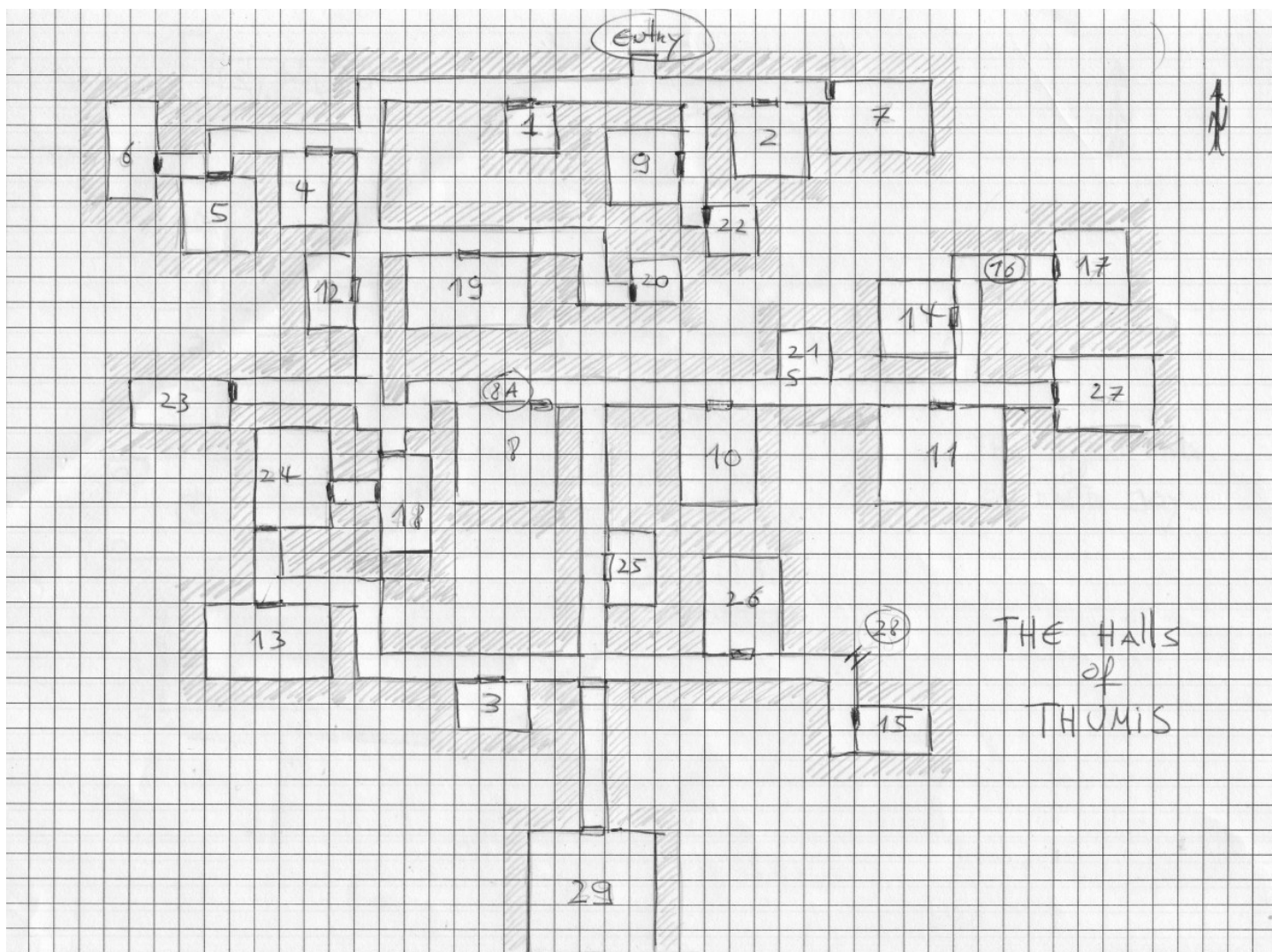
**5. Room of Armesh.** Unlocked wood door with symbol of Thumis, no treasure. This room has a large statue of a coiling serpent with iridescent, many-hued scales. It is Armesh, an aspect of Thumis that protects against demons. The “statue” is actually an insubstantial image projected from concealed machinery within the walls and will “phase out” momentarily when someone touches it.

**6. Empty Room.** No door. Empty room with rotted remains of wooden tables.

**7. Storeroom.** Unlocked wood door. This stores some water-barrels and food rations. There is one temple guard rummaging inside (Lvl 5 Warrior, AC 5) who must roll for surprise as the party enters. He has a pouch with a pair of (loaded) kevuk dice and 55 kaitars.

**8. Priest Quarters.** Unlocked wood doors. There are 2-7 priests of Thumis inside going about their business. All are low-circle scholar-priests (Level 0 humans, 1d6 Hit Points, no weapons or magic and the fighting abilities of a 1st level mage). There is nothing of value within the room except for a few coin purses, containing 2d20 kaitars in total. The priests will be scared out of their wits if confronted by a well-armed party and readily provide information in exchange for promises of sparing their lives. They can provide a layout of the halls but have never been to the high priest quarters (**24**) or the room with the Silver Man (**29**) and know nothing about the room with the Nshe (**14**).

**8a. Passage with Wall Paintings.** This tunnel’s walls have more paintings that seem to continue the story shown on the slippery spiral staircase outside the entrance. The Thumis priests have finally reached their goal, a white chamber somewhere in the underworld, and busy themselves unwrapping their bundles to reveal human body parts(!) oddly painted in silver. Next they proceed to mount the different parts, beginning with the legs and working upwards until a tall humanoid bald-headed being is complete. The Gem-holder then gives the red gem to the tall silver humanoid.



**9 Blackened Room.** Stuck doors. This empty room's walls, floor and ceiling are covered with blackened burnt marks and small craters. This is where the adepts of Thumis have experimented with fulminating and explosive sorcery. Characters capable of using magic will feel an odd warm, burning sensation on their temples as they enter the room. Any magic used here as its effect doubled. A spell that detects magic or extra-planar power might well overwhelm the senses of the caster for a few minutes.

**10. Storeroom.** Locked wood doors. This holds robes and other random useless religious paraphernalia for Thumis cult rituals on several wardrobes.

**11. Ancient Disused Shrine.** Unlocked doors, no treasure. This ancient shrine in very bad condition and stinks of mildew. The frescos on the walls have been so heavily damaged by water infiltration and time that they are unrecognisable. A statue or altar once stood in the centre but is now just a featureless lump of grey stone.

**12. Mostly Empty Room.** Stuck wood door. The only contents of this dusty room are 7 small rods of pure silver placed neatly in the centre, worth 5 kaitars each.

**13. Shrine of the Scholar.** Locked wood door with symbol of Thumis. This is a small shrine to the God Thumis in his main aspect as a scholar: a middle-aged sage holding a crystal orb on his cupped hands. The eyes of the statue are actually diamonds. If anyone touches the statue the hands will turn down on hidden wrist hinges and cause the globe to drop and shatter, releasing white poisonous gas. Everyone fully within the room (those by the exit can cover up in time) must Save vs. Poison or suffer 2d6 damage. The gas takes 1 full turn to dissipate.

**14. Room of the Nshe.** Locked door with bas-relief of a grey, featureless humanoid. This image might be mistaken for an abstract depiction of the Silver Man seen of the wall paintings on the spiral staircase that led the party to the halls and on the corridor of area #8a, though this is dubious. The floor of the room has cracks through which a Nshe will flow as the party investigates. The Nshe is relentless in its attempts to eliminate anyone inside the room but will not pursue those that leave as it is bound here. If Mizothlu is still with the party he will recognise the creature for what it is and flee after the first round, exhorting other to do the same: "By the Gods! A Nshe! Flee you fools!" Nshe (ancient artificial creature): AC 2,

HD 10, M 15", Dmg varies, Special: check EPT rulebook for possible actions of the Nshe and combat strategy. In case of a battle there is a 35% chance that the sentinel from the door of **17** will come to investigate.

**15. Empty Room.** Stuck rotting wooden door.

**16. Torch-lit Corridor.** It is clear from a distance this tunnel is illuminated. Caution is advised for there is one sentinel guarding the door to **17** (3rd Lvl Warrior, AC 4, chain+shield, sword).

**17. Barracks.** Unlocked wood door. These are the quarters of the temple guards that patrol the halls. Presently they are having an animated discussion and might not notice the sentinel on the corridor being taken out silently. In this case they might be surprised when the party enters the room and only have time to grab their shields (AC 8) and weapons. If they hear trouble outside, however, two of their number will immediately investigate while the rest struggle to get their armor on. Every round their AC of 8 will decrease by one until it reaches 4. Then they will exit and attack. If there is a hue-and-cry going on the room will be found empty as they seek the intruders. After the party defeats these soldiers there is no need for further for random patrol encounters. Guards (3rd level warriors): HD 3, AC 8-4, Dmg 2d6. Treasure: 163 kaitars in assorted coins and some food supplies.

**18. Kitchens.** Unlocked wood door. The sound of clattering cutlery and the scent of cooking can be perceived outside this door. 3 female and 6 male servants work here. They are busy preparing meals when the characters arrive. They react even more fearfully than the priests in **8** but are unable to provide much information about the halls. They know, of course, that they are brought here via a "door in the air" and that it manifests in a different part of the complex every time. They can also reveal that the Western door leads to the high priest's personal quarters (**24**).

**19. Unused Quarters.** No door. This dusty room, judging from marks on the floor and remains of bed-mats appears be unused priestly quarters.

**20. Well Room.** Half-open door with flickering light streaming from inside. This small room contains the well and only water source of the complex. By tradition there is one guard here at all times. There is a 50% chance the guard (3rd Lvl Warrior, AC 5) is sleeping when found.

**21. Secret Room of the Gems.** Secret door. A small room of white walls untouched by time. Contains 5 plinths of different heights made of white marble. Each holds a clear, crystalline gem. If any gem is touched it summons the Mighty One of Pearly Mists, a demon of Thumis charged with guarding this room.. Mighty One of Pearly Mists (stability demon): AC 3, HD 9, HP 35, MV 12", Dmg:

check EPT damage dice table + 1d6 (white metal alloy sword), Special: suffers only ½ damage from non-metal or nonmagical weapons; 40% chance of being dismissed by any magic that creates darkness (roll every round). Treasure: 5 Gems (1 x 10k, 2 x 500k, 2 x 100k), White metal alloy sword +1/+1 sword, unaligned, no INT. The sword is a very straight, one-piece artefact entirely made of some alloy which resembles platinum, it weight roughly the same as a chlen-hide equivalent.

**22. Forgotten Treasure Room.** Locked wooden door. Contains only a small old unlocked chest with 40 silver hlash and an iron spear tip wrapped in linoleum. While not magical, any spear fashioned with this tip will be at +1 to hit and damage.

**23. Slave Cells.** Locked copper jail bars. This is where 4 male bearer-slaves who do any required heavy work are kept. They will agree to work for the party on a successful reaction roll. All have been here for years. While not mistreated, they miss the open air and sunlight terribly. One of their number says he "...would rather die tomorrow with the sun on his face than live out the remainder of his life here." They are familiar with the general layout of the complex but don't know what lies inside any locked room. None have been to **29** but they know of the secret door leading to **21** and that a "smoke demon of sorts" guards jewels inside. They also know everyone avoids the corridor **28** like the plague but have no idea where it might lead. 4 bearer-slaves (Lvl 0 humans): AC 9, HD 1+1, MV 12".

**24. High Priest's Quarters.** Closed but unlocked door. The High Priest that administers these halls and the guard captain are inside talking about an ancient book Saku'u has recently acquired. Both stout wooden doors on these quarters are fashioned with an unpickable metal lock. The door to the kitchens is locked.

Kusijaktodali (Prelate) Saku'u hiRusaya (White Crystal clan), Priest of the 12th Circle (7th Level Priest): AC 11, HD 6, HP 16, M 12", Dmg 1d4 (unarmed), M12", Sorcery Skill 70%, Spells: All Priest skills up to Protection from Evil/Good, Heal I, Heal II Creatures I, Plague, Creatures II, Shield of Defence.

Molkar (Commander) Takaru hiTanikrim (Golden Dawn clan) (5th Level Warrior): AC 16, HD 5+1, HP 20, MV 9", Dmg as per EPT damage dice table (sword)

It is possible to surprise both occupants if the party barges in violently. The battle might be considerably more difficult if they are aware of the party beforehand. Saku'u's strategy will be to use his Shield of Defence to make himself and Takaru partially invulnerable and then to summon as many creatures as possible. The referee should read the description of this spell to determine which attacks bypass this enchantment. Note that even someone

unable to cause damage to a beneficiary of this spell might try to wrestle him into the ground, etc. Treasure: Magical book Li'ob Miffansa Missrabchi'I MikKsarulkchi ("The Book of Sending Forth the Servant of Great Ksarul", written in Livyani). The high priest also carries the keys to all locked doors in the halls and a curious golden-green triangular amulet on a chain around the neck (the key to the Chamber where the Red Gem is kept (29).

#### **25. Room of the Malfunctioning Globe of Far-seeing.**

Locked wooden door. This room contains only a small crystal globe in the centre of the floor. In its interior strange patterns of blue-white extra-planar energy shift and roil. If touched, it explodes loudly for 3d6 damage, Save vs. Eyes for ½.

**26. Android Garage.** Wood door locked with a bronze lock. This is a storehouse for a group of identical grey-white skinned androids, dressed in the full paraphernalia of Thumis warriors and standing to attention. At first the party might think they have come upon a group of mannequins attired with real chlen-hide weapons and armour in the livery of Thumis. A long-ago triumph of technology retro-engineered from the Great Ancients, the machines have proven to be too ineffective and fragile in battle, so they were stored here and have since been forgotten. They become active one round after someone goes in and proceed to attack anyone they see not dressed as a follower or priest of Thumis. These robots are incapable of speech. 11 Androids (mechanisms): AC 3, HD 2, MV 12", Dmg 2d6, Special: Never check morale, immune to illusions and mind-affecting magic, unliving, can see in the infrared and ultraviolet spectra.

**27. Old Warehouse.** Stuck heavy wood door. Contains rotted barrels, sacks and a few chests. A thorough sweep of the room will find 35 kaitars in assorted coinage and one Eye of Retaining All Things with 32 charges and an inscription in Mihalli.

**28. Corner Passage.** This is the way out for any characters that might have escaped the trap in 29. A cramped corridor extends from this corner as far as the eye can see. On the wall a graffiti in Tsolyani reads: "DANGER – TO THE HALLS OF THE GREEN LADY". Anyone walking down this corridor (which only permits a single-file marching order) will soon be enveloped in a flash of bright white light and find himself in room #10 of the Lost Halls of Emerald Joy. Warning: As there is no way of returning here from the Lost Halls, a party that follows this corridor before acquiring the gem has ultimately failed to accomplish its mission. If Mizothlu is still with the party when this passage is found he will dissuade others from taking paths leading to unknown areas until the gem is in their possession.

**29. Chamber of the Silver Man and the Red Gem of High Cartography.** Massive polished granite doors adorned with a beautiful and unmistakable depiction of the Silver Man, holding the Red Gem above his head with his hands. This stone door can only be forced open with time and tools unavailable to the party. There is a triangular indentation on wall left of the door that Mizothlu will recognise as the lock. Sadly the opening mechanism is of magical nature (a spell that detects extra-planar energy will discern residual amounts around it) and will only work if the key-amulet that the high priest in 24 carries round his neck is placed on it. (The referee is free to allow highly ingenious players to find other ways in, but no standard method will work at least.) If this is done, the door will open slowly as both the top and bottom halves recede into the ceiling and ground, revealing a 60' long, 10' wide corridor ending in a door much like the first except the Silver Man picture as been replaced by Engsvanyali script that reads: "Girai! (indeed) Here rests that most fabulous of treasures, kept by that most valiant of keepers. These be the Chambers of the Silver Man and the Red Gem."

Halfway down the corridor on the right wall is a lever in the "up" position. If it is brought down, the halves of the first stone door will slowly close (3 rounds if players ask) and then the second shall open in the same manner, allowing access to the chamber where the Gem is kept. This 50' x 50' chamber is constructed entirely of clear white marble polished to such an extent one can see his shadowy reflection on the floor and walls. And wonder of wonders, they seem to emanate their own light making torches and lanterns unnecessary! Spellcasters can almost smell the extra-planar energies radiating in this room.

In the centre stands the Silver Man, a 6-foot tall, incredibly life-like statue apparently wrought from that precious metal. The Silver Man has archetypal Tsolyani features: a muscular and wiry build, aquiline nose, square jaw, hawk face, and bald head. His arms are extended upward with hands clasped, holding a deep red jewel the size of a child's fist. It is a huge ruby, but anyone with Geology or Jewellery cannot identify the variant (this because the gem is of artificial origin). Such characters will know that its material value is enough to buy a small palace...assuming a buyer for it could be found.

The Silver Man is of course more than it appears. It is an artificial android, dating back from that faraway mad age when the Lords of the Latter Times played at Godhood within their domains. The robot has no visible gears or seams. Its joints of silver alloy bend naturally as if made of natural flesh and bone(!) while it moves and attacks with the grace and precision of a trained, living human being. And move and attack it does!...as soon as someone dares remove the magnificent red treasure from its hands. And rest again it shall not until the chamber is drenched with the trespassers' blood and their unmoving bodies, broken

by its mace-like fists, lie on the floor. Then it shall take back the Gem and assume the position it has held since it was brought here, and renew its vigil...forevermore, or until the next cycle of the world comes. Let us hope that the curtains of this adventure not close upon such a dreadful scene...

Silver Man (Latter Times metallic android): AC 1, HD 10, M 12", Dmg (as per EPT damage dice table + 1d6+1). Special: never checks morale, immune to illusions and mind-affecting magic, unliving, can see in the infrared and ultraviolet spectra, extra damage, self-repairing (regenerates 1d6 HP/round unless disabled at 0 HP), immune to normal missiles and small piercing weapons. Defeating him is worth 1300 XP, divided equally among the whole party; escaping with the gem gives normal XP.

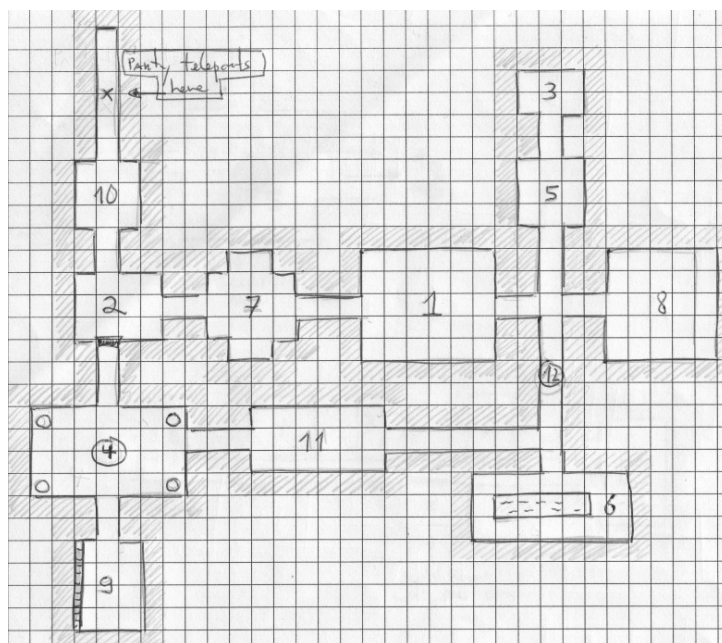
When confronted with such a fearsome opponent it is natural that any party with a strong self-preservation instinct will hightail it and run for their lives with the gem. The obvious problem is that a thick granite door blocks the only way out. The Silver Man will follow the party into the corridor and beyond, but if any brave souls remain in the chamber to hold it off it will not pursue until these are vanquished. From the moment the lever is re-set it takes 3 rounds for the inner door to close and the outer to open. During the first round anyone can move from the chamber into the corridor. On the second round it costs a character half his or her movement rate to "climb" the closing door. On the third round only an acrobatic jump manoeuvre will allow anyone to leave the chamber through the small space left on the ever-closing door and there is only time left for a single attempt by one person. Such an Errol Flynnesque feat can only be performed on a d100 DEX roll, and the character must drop any shield or weapon bigger than a shortsword if he hopes to have any chance of succeeding! Further, chainmail will modify the roll by +10 and plate armour by +20. A failed roll means banging one's head against the stone slab and being trapped in the chamber with a murderous robot, bad failures (95+) mean a gruesome demise being crushed between the stone slabs. Alas, poor hero... Whether cutting someone in half or not, the door slabs close with a resounding thud, and then a silent white flash will blind everyone as they are transported elsewhere. (If the Silver Man is in the corridor with the party when this happens, he will be transported too. A softhearted referee might have his android circuits scrambled for a round or two on arrival, though if this choice is made only normal experience should be awarded for defeating him.)

**Exiting the Temple of Thumis:** When the outer doors are fully open, the Red Gem, Silver Man, and nexus point in 28 interact to send the party to the Lost Halls of Emerald Joy. If the scholar-slave Urukai is still with the party he can explain what took place; if not any Priest or Sorcerer making a d100 INT roll can: the group as gone

through an invisible Nexus Point and come out elsewhere. Given the nature of these they could be anywhere, perhaps not even on the same plane or timeline! They come out in a 10' corridor with walls of greenstone rather than grey granite, where travelers from 28 also arrive...

**Part IV: The Lost Halls of Emerald Joy.** This section of Jakáll's Tsuru'um was built by the cult of Dlamelish during the early Engsvanyali Era to serve as a place of worship and ritual sacrifice and to house certain artifacts of religious importance to the temple. The hall has been sealed for centuries. The church of the Emerald Goddess lost the technological key that granted access to it somewhere during the reign of Emperor Hejekka V "the Open-handed" (1,574 - 1,623 A.S.). At present, the iris-door made out of the imperishable metal of the Ancients can only be opened from the inside if the correct colour-code is introduced on a door panel.

This is the only exit. The hall contains clues as to the correct color sequence to use on the panel that opens the iris-door. Rooms marked with (\*) have inscriptions in both Classical Tsolyani and Engsvanyali above the entry-way with their titles. Characters literate in modern Tsolyani might attempt to read Classical Tsolyani; a d100 INT roll will allow the character to get the gist of a sentence. There are no random encounters in this area of the Tsuru'um; the party is the first group of beings to come upon it for centuries. In fact, except for the rooms that have guardians the area is safe to rest and heal. The floors are all made of massive grey stone slabs, the walls and ceilings of greenstone bricks. There are no torch sconces anywhere and no sources of light except in 1.



**1. Room of the Plaques of the Goddess.** This room is bathed in soft green light radiating from a beachball-sized globe floating just below the ceiling with no obvious



support (the globe is not physical, but an Illumination spell that was designed into the layout of the room). Black stone tables fill the hall, atop which rest slabs of light green jade. Most have inscriptions in Bednalljan but a few are in Engsvanyali. All the writings are from the liturgy of Dlamelish. Each plaque could be worth up to a few hundred kaitars to an interested collector.

As the party enters they will see and hear a beautiful young woman with paper-white skin singing. She is naked except for a loincloth. This is a Yeletthalissa, an upgraded and more potent version of the androids known as Yeleths. She speaks only in Engsvanyali to newcomers, asking them if they have come to worship the goddess. Regardless of their answer (if any) she will attack the intruders after one round, beginning by unleashing her hypnotic power on the closest foes. Any hypnotized victims are ordered to protect her but unless they speak Engsvanyali there is only a 5% chance they will understand the command and should they fail to do so will remain listless and dazed until the effect passes or the order is repeated and understood. If the Yeletthalissa is reduced to half Hit Points she will try to run away. Hypnotized victims return to normal after the android is destroyed or flees. Yeletthalissa: AC 4, HD 6, M 9", Morale 4+, Dmg +1d6+1, Special: Hypnosis (1-6 victims per turn to a maximum of 6), +2 To Hit. Treasure: Jade plaques and the Yeletthalissa silvery alloy shortsword (+2 to Hit, +1 to Dmg, aligned with Change).

**2. Room of Orgiastic Frescos.** The walls have been painted with representations of a huge temple orgy where priests and priestesses of Dlamelish are performing lurid sexual acts. Some of the celebrants are warrior-priests, and still wear parts of their armour as they engage in intercourse. If the south door is opened a number of the warrior-priest frescos equal to the party size -1 will "jump out" of the walls, leaving black silhouettes behind, and attack. They all carry green wickedly barbed blades or phallus-shaped maces. When "killed" they disintegrate into a cloud of colored dust. The first time this happens in melee the referee should ask a d100 DEX roll to avoid losing one's balance and falling to the ground. Animated frescoes: AC 2, MV 6", HD 4, Dmg 2d6 (weapon).

**3. Looted Treasure Chamber.** The door to this chamber has been smashed open and the contents ransacked. Old ruined and opened chests are lying all about. Oddly, there is an untouched circular white marble table at the centre with a huge green emerald shaped like a tear (worth 5000k) and an Eye of the Ancients (Eye of Frigid Breath, inscription in Bednalljan, 21 charges).

**4. Altar to the Goddess Dlamelish.** The walls of this room are of a deeper shade of green than the rest of the complex and are bare of images or inscriptions. There is a human-sized statue in each corner and a larger one at the centre. Statues: NW – A tall, muscular female warrior in

medium armour with demonic motifs, standing at attention; NE – A fat featureless man with an apron (Goriku the Gourmet, aspect of cooking); SW – A genderless humanoid figure with an orb-like eye for a head (aspect of voyeurism); SE – A naked, barely post-pubescent young woman kneeling down with hands cupped before a mouth open in an expression of lust; Centre – A black stone statue of a beautiful naked woman with arms extended upward in a pose of celebration or victory. It stands on a square platform whose supports have been fashioned into the likeness of 4 imp-like demons (this is a representation of Dlamelish as the Ebon Princess of the Dark). The floor surrounding the statue is engraved with a spiral 2 inches deep and 4 inches wide. It is stained with a shade of red so deep it almost looks black, ancient dried blood from millenia-old sacrifices.

**5. Antechamber of the Treasure Room.** Anyone entering this room will immediately notice evidence of fighting. The walls bear the marks of blows and cuts. Several human skeletons and the desiccated husk of a Pe Choi lie on the floor. All show signs of violence. The only object in the room is a reddish, oversized polearm lying near the centre. The polearm is made of some unknown plastic-like substance that is both harder and lighter than cheln-hide. It can be used by anyone in battle regardless of their STR but will cause a -2 penalty on the "to hit" roll of the user due to its awkward size. There is a Qumqum bound to the room. It lies waiting in extra-planar space and won't reveal itself unless anyone enters the northern corridor. Then it manifests, seizes the polearm, and assaults the nearest creature. If a character has the polearm he or she must roll 3d100 under STR to hold on to it; failure requires a d100 DEX roll to avoid falling down. Everyone in the party should roll for surprise when it appears. Qumqum (extraplanar entity): AC 6(3), M 12", HD 9, Dmg: as per EPT damage dice table + 1d6+2, it will not check for morale and fights until death.

**6. Halls of Aqueous Purification.** The walls of this room are adorned with colourful pictures depicting naked people frolicking in water, either at rivers and lakes or in indoor pools and baths. A 10' by 40' empty pool lies at the centre. There are several stone benches along the north and south walls. This is where the priests of Dlamelish took their ceremonial baths before engaging in certain rituals.

**7. The Room of Learning Globes.** This room contains 8 low black tables made of vres-wood that have resisted the ravages of time. On each table is a large white globe made of a grainy, extremely hard, and surprisingly light substance with 10 coin-sized circular marks on each hemisphere. A female voice singing a love ballad in Engsvanyali can be heard here (the Yeletthalissa in 1). If someone takes the time to examine all the globes he or she discerns that 3 emit a soft pulsating red light from the indentations. The positioning of these marks roughly fit the fingertips of an

average sized human hand. Anyone touching or picking up an active globe by the marks must roll a Save vs. Eyes. The consequences of success or failure are detailed below. As all 3 active globes look the same it is suggested the referee determine which the character picked randomly.

The Globes: These are variations of the fabled “Globes of Instruction” of the Great Ancients, adapted to the needs of the cult of Dlamelish. Each of the active ones will assail the minds of those who hold them by the markings with a flood of experiences. Each globe will only work once and then become inactive.

*Globe A – War.* Visions: The character finds himself in the middle of a raging, fantastical battle on an ever-changing field where all manner of human, nonhuman and demonic armies fight unceasingly. Battle magic and artifacts of the Ancients are used in abundance. The character will slay enemies by the score in a variety of methods and is himself killed several times over in equally creative ways, only to be reborn again and again to join the fray anew. Saving throw: Success – Character learns new fighting techniques and gains a permanent +1 to hit with his preferred weapon. Failure – Character is afflicted with fear of battle for 1d3 months and suffers –2 to hit and –1 damage.

*Globe B – Strange Vistas.* Visions: This globe contains memories of a score of expeditions into the infinite planes of the Multiverse. The torrent of images ranges from placid summer afternoons in Jakálla to Lovecraftian, sanity-crushing alien worlds and even a glimpse at the homes of the Deities themselves. Saving throw: Success – Character remembers a portion of what he has seen and gains the Scholar (Planes of Existence) skill. Failure – Character suffers from fear of learning for 1d3 months. The character cannot gain any new skills or learn new spells until cured.

*Globe C – Orgiastic Sex.* Visions: The character finds himself in an immense orgy where he partakes of a dazzling variety of inventively debauched sexual acts. Saving throw: Success – The character learns new methods of seducing and pleasuring others. Gain the Courtesan/Don Juan skill. If the character already has this skill he gets two tries on future attempts. Failure – Character is scarred by the experience and will be affected by fear of sex for 1d3 months. He or she will steadfastly refuse to partake on sexual intercourse and shy away from any intimate propositions.

**8. Ancient Prison.** This large dusty room has rather dirty walls and contains piles of bones (human and otherwise). There are no full skeletons. Chlen-hide chains ruined by time hang from the walls at several intervals. This is where future sacrifices to the goddess were kept before the ceremonies. A search of the prison walls reveals graffiti in Classical Tsolyani near holds for missing chains: “Blue, blue, red, green, blue, yellow, white.” This is the sequence necessary to unlock the portal in **12**.



**9. Room of Summoning Maraggu.** Along the west wall of this room is a black, low stone shelf with dozens of severed skeletal hands and forearms (human and nonhuman alike) neatly placed in a row. Placed in front of this shelf is a statue of the demoness Maraggu, made of the unperishable plastic of the Ancients, looking like a naked lissome human woman with the head of a hook-beaked beast. The creature has 4 arms and holds an object in each. The severed human head is part of the statue, but all the other objects are real and can be removed effortlessly. The statue is oddly warm to the touch and so realistically sculpted it looks almost alive. An inscription at the base, in Classical Tsolyani, says “Maraggu”. The chalice is a Cup of Subadim the Sorcerer with 77 charges; the blade is an excellent steel shortsword with +2 to hit and +1 damage, aligned with Change (inflicts 2d6 damage on Stability aligned characters that pick it up); the baton is a Wand of Exquisite Power over Maidens, 73 charges, inscription in

Bednalljan and no dial (works exactly as the Eye of the same name). This is a very rare item, a techno-magical device from the high Engsvanyali Era. The wand is made of a golden metallic alloy of some kind and like an eye it has a stud that can be depressed and a small lens on the tip. This item is priceless to any historian, scholar of Engsvanyali, or priestess of the pleasure goddesses.

**10. Entry Hall.** This room is dusty and bare of anything of interest. This is where characters arrive.

**11. Hall of the Those Departed in Ecstasy.** Mummified female and male corpses with smiling wooden masks have been placed in various sexual positions around the chamber, atop raised stone slabs. Some of the mummies have fallen from their slab, other are missing heads or limbs, etc, but most are intact. These walls are adorned with paintings of the summoning of the demon Ru'utlanesh, who is depicted as a coiling, rolling mass of smoke and tentacles covered with mouths. A procession of celebrants walks towards the thing, each carrying a leaf or plaque of some sort. All are of different colours (blue, blue, red, green, blue, yellow and white) which seem to contrast oddly with the pictorial motif of the whole scene.

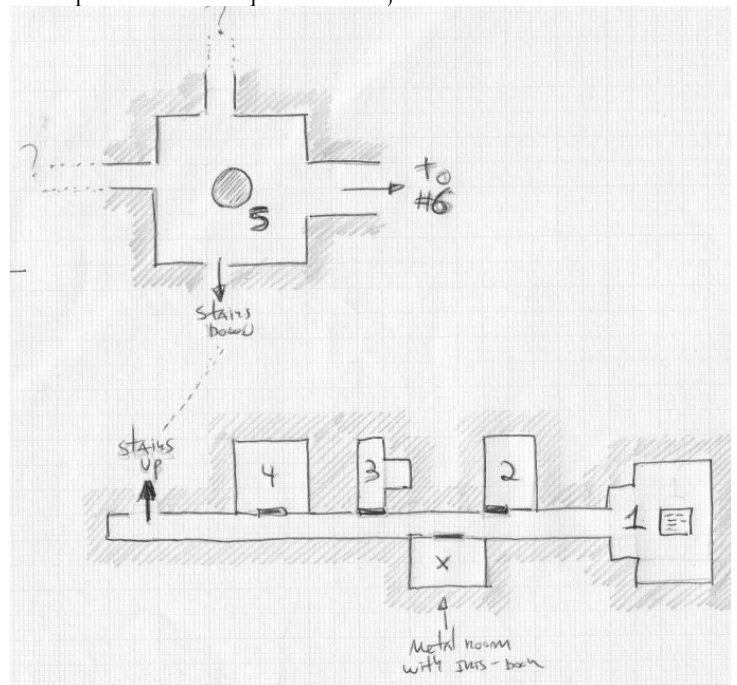
**12. Circular Shaft Going Up.** Rungs on the west wall lead up a circular well-like vertical tunnel on the ceiling. The passage becomes a long upward chimney, going as far up as the eye can see. Those climbing will eventually lose sight of the ground. The climb is not difficult due to the rungs and requires no dice rolls, but any character falling the full length of the shaft will most assuredly meet his doom. The walls of the shaft are in a bad state: what one assumes are green bricks is actually plaster that is coming off to reveal a circular wall of metal(!) As one ascends, the rungs become metal as well after a minute or so of climbing.

After a long trip upward a 20'x30' room made entirely of metal is finally reached. There is a perfectly circular man-sized, iris-shaped indentation on the eastern wall with a symbol of Dlamelish painted on it, discoloured by time. To the right of the door is a rectangular panel composed of 8 coloured squares (red, blue, green, yellow, white, black, orange and purple). These panels light up momentarily if touched by bare human skin. After 7 of them have been depressed the iris-door will either open with the silent gracefulness of a flower (assuming the correct sequence blue, blue, red, green, blue, yellow, and white as been introduced) or the person touching the last panel is zapped for 2d6 damage without any Saving Throw. Once the iris-door is open the party can enter the Temple of Dlamelish proper and the last part of the adventure.

**Part V: The Temple of Dlamelish.** In this small final part of the adventure the party stands within reach of freedom, but a single mistake can cause a horde of temple guards to pursue them. They are in the basement of a

Temple of Dlamelish while a grandiose party-orgy takes place above to celebrate the coming of the rainy season. Indeed, while the group explored the Tsuru'um the skies brought their bounty and the first monsoon of the season rains torrentially outside. The corridors here are of grey-greenish stone (not bricks), and the complex is well-lit.

To exit the temple safely the characters have two main options, their own clever plans not included. They can attempt to disguise themselves as revellers and make their way to the main exit. This will not be hard as long as one is willing to strip and leave almost all gear behind. This means forsaking any armour, weapons larger than a dagger and all gear and loot save what half-naked people might conceal in a closed fist or loincloth. Once outside the main entry and into the outpouring rain, unless there is a contingent of guards hot on their heels the group is safe. The other solution is revealed by observation. The characters may notice that the serving-slaves tiptoeing about the crowd seem to come from an area in the southern wall where no visible passage is seen. Here the kitchens are accessed via a concealed wall panel. It is just a question of sneaking 40 feet clinging to the south wall until one sees the panel door opening for a slave. Anyone following this passage soon comes into a massive and confusing kitchen, filled with vapours and milling slaves. One of the many passages there will lead to a secondary service door, unlocked and unguarded. The question is which one? Perhaps the slaves might know? Other methods of escape are possible but require GM adjudication.



**1. Pool of the Eels.** This chamber contains a 10'x10' pool with live blind eels, considered sacred to the cult of Dlamelish. They are 7' long, tentacle-like and jet-black. A priest of mid-circle is occupied tossing food morsels into the waters as he recites a ritual mantra. He is guarded by four temple guards and served by two male slaves who

hold trays with the eel food. The group in this room must roll for surprise when they first see the party. The priest will immediately cry out for the intruders' blood. As everyone is concentrated on the eels' feeding frenzy it is possible to spy on them undetected from the corridor. If combat ensues and someone falls into the pool during combat they will certainly be bitten by the eels (1d4 dmg/round) who regard any person as a massive morsel of food. It requires a d100 STR roll to pull out of the pool. Ritual Priest of Dlamelish (3rd Level Priest): AC 8, HD 2+1, HP 9, M 12", Dmg 1d6+1d4 (dagger), no spells. 4 Temple Guards (2nd Level Warriors): AC 5 (light chain + shield), HD 2, M 9", Dmg 2d6 (sword).

**2. Storeroom.** Unlocked wooden door. This room smells heavily of salt and fish food. This is where the barrels with the ritual eel food are kept.

**3. Slave Quarters.** The slaves that work in this section of the temple live in these cramped quarters, with every square inch of floor covered by bedmats. At any given time there are 2d4 slaves present here eating meals or resting from their daily chores. These wretches will at first almost die of fright if confronted with a party of well-armed strangers, and will readily tell them everything they know. They are familiar with the layout of the temple and can tell the group about the ceremony taking place in the main hall above. Should the party decide to exterminate these potential witnesses they might be in for a surprise, for the slaves are surprisingly fit and fight as cornered. Even if naked and weaponless they try to use pilling tactics to bring the PCs down and the first one to escape will run like mad, crying bloody horror and attracting the attention of 1d6+6 temple guards in 1d4+2 rounds. Slaves (2nd Level Warriors): AC 9, HD 2, MV 12", Dmg 1d6 (unarmed), Wrestling 55%.

**4. Temple Guard Barracks.** Unlocked wood door. Anyone taking the time to listen will hear the sound of merry revelry coming from the inside. The guards in these barracks are all off-duty and either very drunk or drugged. If the party enters some will greet the strangers warmly while others look on quizzically. Good roleplaying might actually bluff the guards into an amicable chat. They know about as much as the slaves in **2** and some plan to join the festivities above latter. 8 Temple Guards: (as in **1** but with AC 7, -1 to hit and +2 morale due to intoxication).

**5. Huge Idol.** The stairway leads up to a large 60'x60' square hall where a massive 40' tall statue of a 4-legged, 4-armed and 4-headed demonic Aspect of Dlamelish squats. Three sober and fully-equipped temple guards are enjoying a game of kevuk at the south of the statue. They will be surprised on a roll of 1-4. From the passage to the east comes loud dissonant music and the sounds of a huge orgy. Such is the level of noise that a small army could fight a battle here without the revellers noticing. On the

downside, once blades are drawn and they attack the PCs will be unable to communicate with each other except by shouting in each other's ears. Any worshipper of Dlamelish knows exactly where she is. The tunnels to the west and north lead to areas forbidden to non-priests (and scores of temple guards) while the wide and noisy passage east opens to the Grand Chamber and hence to the exit.

**6. Grand Chamber of Festivities.** The Ritual of the Coming Forth of the Blessed Humidity is in full swing here. The massive chamber's atmosphere is thick with the smell of redolent perfumes, drugs, incense, human sweat and the all the scents associated with sexual intercourse. A multitude of half naked celebrants fills the dimly lit hall from one end to the next, barely discernible in the half-light the few green paper lanterns provide except as a rolling, trysting, rhythmic mass of lust. Every conceivable perversion is being catered to here. No further description of these festivities will be provided as the referee should (if he wishes so) elaborate the catalogue of sins according to the good (or bad) taste of his gaming group. No map is provided for this chamber as it is unlikely tactical battle is what will lead the party to safety here.

**Conclusion:** When the group exits the Temple it is late afternoon and the city is drenched with torrential rains. If Mizothlu is still alive they may return to the Edifice and refresh themselves in the slave's quarters; otherwise they must look to themselves. Either way, a few days later everyone receives a message to meet with a representative of Nighted Tower in one of the Imperial resthouses in the Foreign Quarter. Mizothlu (or his replacement) is in a particularly foul mood that day. The payment for acquiring the gem is but 2000 kaitars each. Two full teams were lost together with all their equipment (including several steel weapons) and the costs of these plus the Shamtla paid to the immediate families of the vanished clan members have eaten away the mission's profits. Alas, Mizothlu will not be able to retire just yet, nor will the PCs. The characters will get to split 50% of any coin and jewels found by the party among all the surviving PCs and NPCs. As for any artifacts brought back from the Tsuru'um, they will be given a choice of half their number, rounded down, to divide among them. If the party returned without the gem, the mood is even more downcast, the 2000 kaitars will not be paid, and only treasure-shares will be received.

If Mizothlu is dead when the group escapes, some parties may consider forgoing the payment and just running away with all the loot. At a minimum, such groups had better leave Jakáll: the Clan of Nighted Tower and the Temples of Dlamelish and Thumis (informed by Nighted Tower after the betrayal) will all be on the lookout for such ignoble, unlicensed, and possibly clanless tomb-robbers. Characters caught will be subjected to mind-bending torture for some time, though kind GMs might eventually release them stripped of all equipment and wealth. Ω

# The Magic of Mistworld: Spells and Counterspells

by Steve Marsh

Mistworld resembles a ball of steel wool, formed as a side effect of shunting a supernova so that another world would not be destroyed. The filaments range from hundreds of miles across to so fine that they cannot be seen by the human eye, crossing and interconnecting like an Escheresque, three-dimensional spider's web. Upon this web are rocks, trees, rivers, life; all around it are a rust-like cosmic debris and haunting clouds of mist. In this fantastical setting, magic, monsters, technology, and much else have their own special character. In this article we will examine some of the spells and counterspells that the mages of Mistworld use in their magical duels.

If you use these spells along with an initiative system, it is recommended that you allow counterspelling wizards to cast their counterspells out of turn, using up their action for that round when they do so. This is especially true if you play with Vancian magic: it's hard enough to use a memorized counterspell effectively even with this rule in play. Describe the offensive magics that others use and then let players abort their action for an instant counterspell if desired. If enemy mages have counterspells, you may wish to have them make intelligence rolls or the like to figure out what is being thrown at them, so as not to make things too tough on PC mages. Magic items with embedded counterspells can make especially choice treasures.

## Offensive Magic:

**Aether Flurry** (Level 2): The caster creates a crinkle in space and 'throws' it at a 10' area within 40'. All in that area are displaced 3d6 feet in a random direction (no save).

*Dispel Flurry:* Hail Storm, Hellas Flame

*Protect Single Person:* Seraphim Shield

**Blinding Bolt** (Level 2): This spell causes a bolt of violet-white and blue fire to streak towards the target from the caster's forehead. If a save is missed the target is blinded for 1-6 rounds and then at -2 to hit etc. for 1-6 more.

*Negated By:* Gea's Barding, Flaming Wheel

*Half Duration:* Seraphim Shield

*50% to stop each effect:* Hail Storm, Hellas Flame

**Dancing Daggers** (Level 2): 1d6 black daggers wreathed in red flames appear behind the caster's head. They fly towards any targets chosen within 80', doing 1d6 each.

*All Deflected By:* Seraphim Shield, Alia's Cloak

*Up to 2 Deflected By:* Whirlwind, Agni's Breath

*Half Damage:* Sparking Ice, Sun's Eye

**Freezing Lance** (Level 2): The caster creates a brown-green shaft of paralytic, shocking cold that fires out to 80'. It does 2d6+2 damage and the target must make a save or be completely paralyzed for a full round.

*Fully Deflected By:* Sparkling Ice, Sun's Eye

*Half Damage and +3 Save:* Alia's Cloak, Flaming Wheel

*-2 Damage and +1 Save:* Shattered Ice, Airy Eruption





**Still Earth** (Level 2): This spell creates 3d6 brown hands with green claws that boil along the plane of the caster's feet towards the target to 80'. The target's feet and legs are firmly grasped for 2d6 rounds, so that not even a giant can break free. The target can however fight, cast spells, etc.

*Hands Destroyed By:* Sparkling Ice, Sun's Eye

*Half Duration:* Shattered Ice, Airy Eruption

*Extra Save Each Round:* Alia's Cloak, Flaming Wheel

**Confusion Cloud** (Level 3): The caster's breath spews forth in a violet-white cloud over a single target within 80', acting as confusion magic for 1d6+1 rounds on failed save.

*Dispelled By:* Gea's Barding

*Duration Reduced to 1 Round By:* Seraphim Shield

*Target Picks Better of 2 Confusion Rolls:* Hellas Flame

**Deafening Chimes** (Level 3): Black chimes appear over the caster and float to a location within 40'. They play loudly and drown out all sound (no verbal spells) within 10', as well as deafening targets for 1d6 rounds (save negs).

*Dispelled By:* Hail Storm, Agni's Breath

*One Target Protected By:* Sun's Eye

**Fireblast** (Level 3): This spell functions familiarly.

*Dissipates:* Dusty Whirlwind

*Protects 1 Target and Halves Damage for All:* Sparkling Ice

**Poseidon's Trident** (Level 4): The caster spits a blurry glob out to 40', where it explodes in a 20' blast of blue-green prongs. Everything within the blast radius takes 5d4 physical damage, with no save allowed.

*Destroy All Prongs:* Airy Eruption, Hail Storm

*Protect 1 Target:* Flaming Wheel

**Wind of Rust** (Level 4): A blue wind flecked with red rises like a cloak from the caster, sweeping out a 10' path 40' in front of the caster. All non-magical metal armor and weapons in its path are disintegrated (no save).

*Wind Dispersed By:* Hail Storm, Dusty Whirlwind

*Target Protected By:* Gea's Barding

**Blacklung** (Level 5): The caster exhales a blue-black stream of smoke to 20' that pours into the target's lungs. The target must make a save immediately to avoid passing out and a second in 1d6+1 melee rounds to avoid dying. No effect on demons and creatures which don't breathe.

*Blocked By:* Alia's Cloak, Flaming Wheel

*50% Chance to Block:* Airy Eruption, Hellas Flame, Dusty Whirlwind, Agni's Breath

**Enchamberment** (Level 6): A black-brown ray stabs from the caster's fingers towards a target within 20'. On a failed save the target is entombed inside the nearest body of metal, up to 2000' below the caster's feet.

*Deflected By:* Sparkling Ice, Alia's Cloak

*50% Dissipation:* Airy Eruption, Hellas Flame, Dusty Whirlwind, Agni's Breath

**Medusa's Gaze** (Level 6): The caster's head shimmers, and her eyes form violet-white rays that shoot into those of a target within 20', petrifying it unless a save is made.

*Blocked By:* Gea's Barding, Sparkling Ice

*Petrify Reduced to 3d6 Rounds By:* Airy Eruption, Hellas Flame, Dusty Whirlwind, Agni's Breath

Defensive Magic: These spells come in two types. *Shields* protect the caster (sometimes one other) and last the caster's level in rounds. *Whirlwinds* last but one round but can protect a whole party (10' radius).

Whirlwinds are all level 1 and include **Hail Storm** (a black and white explosion of hail), **Airy Eruption** (blue streamers), **Hellas Flame** (green pinpoints bursting into red-yellow flames), **Dusty Whirlwind** (blue stars fading to brown dust), **Agni's Breath** (red flames come from caster's body and condense into green dewdrops), and **Shattered Ice** (black crystals bursting into shattered snowflakes). During the round the whirlwind is up, missile attacks against anyone within are at -4.

Shields work as follows:

**Seraphim Shield** (Level 1): In addition to its magical defense, this black floating shield with fluid green device acts as a +1 shield that does not require a hand. It can be directed to protect any one person near the caster.

**Sparkling Ice** (Level 2): Green and black ice crystals form around and coat the caster's body. In addition to their magical protection, these create a substantial glare, making it -3 to hit the caster and giving the caster a +3 bonus on saves against all targeted effects.

**Gea's Barding** (Level 3): Brown bands solidify in circles around either the caster's body or the body of a single chosen target. In addition to magical protection, these act as weightless plate mail for the person wearing them.

**Flaming Wheel** (Level 4): A blazing red wheel with a black hub forms around the caster's head. Along with spell protection, it will completely vaporize all normal missiles fired at the caster in flame.

**Sun's Eye** (Level 4): A third eye of violet-red opens in the caster's forehead (or in that of a designated target within 5'). In addition to magical protection, anyone facing the the third eye automatically acts after its host in battle (loses initiative to it) each subsequent round.

**Alia's Cloak** (Level 5): A green cloak with blue patterns weaves around the caster. Aside from its magical defense, it can be used to completely shield the caster or a person held in his or her arms from one attack each round. Ω

# Oceanian Legends: The Scouring of Echro

by Del Lawrence Beaudry

Even from across Cellex Bay, Echro's monstrous peaks wrack the horizon: the fractured spearheads of some submarine titan grown angry at the sky. As your ferry draws closer, details emerge. Rank over rank of enormous stone landings march up and away toward the central plateau, webbed in intricate stonework. Vaulted causeways and arched aqueducts, tall houses and watchtowers, all linked by the diagonal network of Korali roads. The high desert beyond is indiscernible, cloaked in dirty haze. (*A map of Echro is visible on the back cover – Ignatius.*)

Today, the Echronean interior is a sterile wasteland of stone and clay and yellow dust. It has no natural watercourses and no native flora beyond lichen and moss. But eight millennia ago, when the Eldren first pulled their canoes and long ships onto the narrow beaches of Strangle Strand, they found a garden. Mango and cassava trees crowded the steep canyons, perched amid a jumble of ferns and lichen. Peccary squash and rhubarb grew wild. Game was plentiful. The new land was beautiful and rich, just as their goddess, Queen Eve<sup>1</sup>, had promised.

Casual visitors rarely grasp the extent of Echro's devastation. The precincts that ring Cellezine coast are enlivened by roof-gardens and public orchards. With the aid of imported soil, plant-life flourishes in ten-thousand nooks and stony hollows. The Kydragae provide ample water. And in any event it is Echro's civilized pursuits which attract tourists. Who wants to suffer the dust and enervating heat of the Yellow Lands when the game-halls, race courses and slave-pens of Scydrinth are so close at hand?

Take the Korali Road north from Iperia, past the tessellated gardens of the Tablelands, past even high-walled Tûr, and you will see Echro as it truly is. To the left, the bare bones of mountains piled one upon the other. To the right, a poisoned steppe caked in yellow dust. Beyond that, the sea. To look upon such utter desolation is inevitably to wonder that it could ever harbor life. What happened to the land? Or rather, how was the land laid waste, and why? For answers we have little choice but to lean heavily on traditional accounts. Only a handful of written records survive from pre-Selidarkan times, and these suffer greatly from mistranslation and corruption.

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<sup>1</sup> This is a colloquial rendering of the Eldren word "Eventella," which is both a proper name and an honorific. The Eld consider its use impolite in casual conversation and substitute one of a seemingly endless string of euphemisms and cognomens depending upon the occasion.

The fragments do offer hints. The Khuzell "Encomium to Nardross," for instance, refers to a "poison rain" that was colorless yet "sang like serpents" while Gracco's "Eleven Perfidies" avers that the Eldren kingdom was undone by blasphemy against the Outer Dark. Its lords and ladies were punished for "laughing at the Void," a phrase that has vexed generations of scholars.<sup>2</sup>

Intriguing, certainly, but far from definitive. Somewhat surprisingly, perhaps, Selidarkan sources are no more definitive. Much was destroyed during the "Reign of the Heretics" (620-685 SE), and more lost with The Sundering of the Colleges (1911 SE), which dispersed Iltheon's ancient scrolls to Oceania's farthest corners.

## About Oceania

Oceania is an imaginary world originally established by Del Beaudry and Sean Stidd in 1981. From its inception, Oceania has served as a setting for fantasy role-play using a variety of rules systems, including *AD&D*. More recently, it has provided background and characters for Del and Sean's sword and sorcery fiction, which they hope to publish. Del still runs in Oceania when time allows.

What accounts remain do little more than repeat popular myth: After a siege lasting decades, the Selidarkan invaders breached the crystalline towers of Lucentyre and scattered the Eld to the wind and waves, slaughtering untold thousands as they fled. Then, for sheer contempt, they called down the power of the stars and blasted every living thing to cinder, scouring the land, leaving only bare stone.<sup>3</sup> For a fuller treatment, we must – with serious reservation – look to The Georgics of Selvin the Younger<sup>4</sup>, (composed between 900 and 1100 SE), specifically to that section popularly known as "The Fall of Lucentyre," which knits

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<sup>2</sup> Gracco was an avowed diabolist, and this bias renders interpretation difficult. Current scholarship is split between those who argue for a positive reading (that is, the Faerie Kings did in fact do something which provoked the Outsiders' wrath) and the opposing camp which views the phrase as an ex-post facto rhetorical flourish (i.e. Gracco is heaping scorn on an ideological enemy already vanquished).

<sup>3</sup> For this account, it is traditional to cite Alby of Traskus. Recent scholarship suggests he may have simply copied from The Hielic Commonplace (no longer extant), though this remains disputed. The Eldren Bequeathers tell a similar (though much longer) tale.

<sup>4</sup> The Georgics' shortcomings as a source are many; space allows mention of only the most serious. 1) Selvin championed the Fey and loathed the Faerie. Thus, he uses every opportunity to portray the Eldren Fall as a product of the aristocracy's moral failings. 2) Selvin's sources, while certainly Eldren, may not have directly witnessed the events they recount. (Some scholars argue that given it was only lower-status and therefore younger Eld who deigned to speak with Selvin, two or even three generations must separate these respondents from the original events. That is, a period of between six hundred and fifteen hundred years.)

numerous Eldren folk accounts into a sprawling and somewhat lurid epic of heroism and woe.

Though rarely read nowadays, much of “The Fall” will be nonetheless familiar to the modern ear by way of schoolbook summary or fairytale. Here is the tale of Gellex and Callestro, those incestuous lovers whose exile provides pretext for the Selidarkan invasion, as well as the tragico-comic story of Clorest the Unfair, whose warnings to the Lords of Lucentyre go unheeded on account of her homeliness.

Most contemporary editions include related material from “The Khatrubian Codex,” compiled by his pupil, Keskis. The most salient of these are “The Journeys of Herald Iven,” which elaborates the half-blood’s hero’s daring but ultimately unsuccessful effort to rally the Eld of Fabled Xeron to their kinfolk’s aid; and the “Duel of Starell and Arctus,” a fascinating but almost certainly spurious account of a personal combat between the Selidarkan commander and the King of the Eld.

Despite their operatic excesses, The Georgics are indispensable to scholars of prehistoric Echro. Consider Canto 231. Here the troubadour Pellerine adumbrates the woes of the country folk before the Lords of Lucentyre, declaiming:

Through petrified forests, across scorched  
Promenades, by crook and rock and bare-handed,  
Eld stalks Eld; all against all—for meat.

Commentators have traditionally taken this to mean simply that famine was afoot and therefore the populace fought over dwindling provisions. Whespenn is one of the few to argue otherwise. His contention, resoundingly ignored until recently, is that Pellerine’s declamation actually describes cannibalism. If he is right – and the philological evidence does appear to support him – then we must revise our traditional notions of how Echro’s devastation came about.

In the traditional tale the Scouring of Echro comes after Lucentyre has already fallen. It serves no military purpose. Instead, it is an act of supernatural castigation designed to sow awe and despair amongst any who might think to resist Selidarkan dominion. The Scouring serves to ‘send a message,’ as it were.

Other issues aside, a moment’s reflection reveals this account to be highly suspect. If the purpose of the Scouring was primarily rhetorical, to whom was this dire demonstration in fact directed? The Eldren? Their nation was broken, their populace decimated. The Mu? Possible, though most scholars place the Mu-ish civilization in an era that predates the advent of Selidark. Moreover, extant document testifies to any conflict with that people. The barbarous Kormand and Valenite tribes who built their

huts of mud and wattle in the highlands of Norvar and Kendor? Surely sharpened sticks were no match for the sky-sleds and fire-breathing efreet of Selidark!

A quick slice with Occam’s Razor reveals a better explanation. Suppose the Scouring was not the sudden, cataclysmic event we have been given to believe. Rather, it was a stratagem employed by Starell’s forces to starve out Lucentyre’s citizenry. To prevent any resupply of the city, the entire island was systematically scorched. What countryfolk survive are reduced to anthropagy.

If this is correct, one must posit a more exact means than Alby’s “power of the stars.” The anchorite Kaylith presents a possibility in her quasi-ecclesiastical tract “Against the Neologins.” Citing such disparate sources as Kalentine xenomantic tractates and Valenskender chronicles, she argues that the Selidarkans of the fifth and sixth century lacked the sorcerous wherewithal to affect such immediate and absolute devastation.<sup>5</sup> Rather, she claims, they relied on the technical prowess of their Newtling thralls, who produced an armada of ominous and fantastical machines for use in travel and warfare.

Which brings us back to the Khuzell Encomium and its “colorless rain.” Might not such a thing be released through nozzles from high above, a poison or taint drizzled upon the Echroneon foliage by airborne men-of-war? Lest this sound too far-fetched, recall that the existence of such vessels is well-attested. Although none have survived the millennia intact, many artifacts remain. These, along with explanatory texts and diagrams, may be examined at the Imperial Ostenda at Iltheon, and also at the People’s Circus, in Zarabor.

An obscure Khatrubian text, “Azael’s Folly,” makes brief reference to the Echroneon conflagration in the following fashion: “Let the Eldren still their tongues and make no complaint/for their land is void/cut down piecemeal/by deadly panes.”<sup>6</sup>

Its anonymous author was, like all Khatrubians, a fatalist. His writes to affirm Fate’s absolute sovereignty. In the songs and laments of the Eldren Bequeathers he hears not only grief, as is proper, but also resentment, which is blasphemy. His rebuke, while perhaps cruel, serves to remind the Eldren that their downfall was not an injustice but rather another instance of fate’s blind and infallible agency. Ω

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<sup>5</sup> The apogee of Selidarkan sorcery dates to the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Centuries, when the black magicians of Iltheon began their unnatural congress with the wholly alien things that dwell in the Deep Void, beyond the Sea of Stars.

<sup>6</sup> Pane, in the sense used here, suggests something that flutters, like cloth, but which also allows light to pass (i.e. is transparent).





## Creepies & Crawlies

a pentad of punishing pests by Jeff Rients

### ELECTRIC DEATH

Number Appearing: 1-4

Intelligence: average

Alignment: chaos

Type: undead

Speed: 9

Defense Class: 6

Level: 3+3

Special Characteristics: zap, vulnerable to water

Damage: 2-12

Size: medium

Electric Deaths are cackling, crackling skeletons, clad in black robes and supercharged with electricity. A pale blue aurora surrounds them at all times, making them easy (+2) bow targets in dark dungeons. These creatures damage by touch, delivering an electric jolt for 2-12 points or firing a bolt of electricity up to 120' away for 1-6 points. Anyone striking an Electric Death with a metal melee weapon suffers 1-6 points of zapping. Electric Deaths take double damage from Holy Water and being splashed with any other form of water inflicts 1-6 damage. Anyone killed by an Electric Death is reduced to a pile of smoldering ash.

### HUNGRY PYRAMID

Number Appearing: 1

Intelligence: average to high

Alignment: neutral

Type: cephalopod

Speed: 1

Defense Class: 2

Level: 15

Special Characteristics: concealment

Damage: 1d6 plus grab

Size: large

This strange relative of the kraken makes its home in deserts. Normally only the upper portion of its shell, which bears an uncanny resemblance to a stone pyramid, rises above the dunes. As treasure-hunters and curiosity-seekers approach within 50 feet of this faux pharoanic construction the tentacles of the Hungry Pyramid snake up through the sands. Anyone struck by a tentacle is grabbed, then pulled under 1-4 rounds later. Giant strength is needed to escape, else damage to the tentacle may cause it to let go (points inflicted equals the percentage chance of release). Anyone dragged under the sands will automatically be slain the following combat round, crushed by the titanic beak hidden on the underside of the pyramidal shell. A particularly clever Hungry Pyramid will set up shop near actual pyramids and pick off lone quarry by surprise.

### KLECTARR

Number Appearing: 1

Intelligence: high intelligence but low wisdom

Alignment: neutral

Type: giantkin

Speed: 9

Defense Class: 7

Level: 3+1

Special Characteristics: obsession, hurl boulder

Damage: 2-7 (big club)

Size: large

Klectarrs resemble pudgy ogres with 1-12 eyes. These eyes are set deeper into the skull than most humanoids, giving these creatures terrible peripheral vision and making them more susceptible to sneak attacks (+3 damage). Every Klectarr has a single obsession. Usually this obsession takes the form of a need to collect a specific type of physical object (swords, gems, turnips, etc.) but sometimes the obsession focuses on a person or place or a type of knowledge (songs, the history of warfare, riddles, etc.). Within the scope of its obsession a klectarr ranks as a supreme authority and can answer questions much like a sage. A klectarr might join a company of adventurers when his obsession and their own interests overlap, but these creatures cannot be trusted once they have found the object of their desires. Klectarrs can hurl small boulders much like giants, but for only 2-7 points to a range of 9". A Klectarr can hurl but one or two boulders before becoming too winded to continue such exertions.

### STUN SPIDER

Number Appearing: 1-6

Intelligence: semi-intelligent

Alignment: chaos

Type: mutant arachnid

Speed: 6

Defense Class: 3

Level: 6

Special Characteristics: energy powers

Damage: 1-6 plus poison

Size: large

Like most such critters the giant Stun Spider has a poison bite, but it is a weak venom with +2 to save and only doing an additional 1-6 points on a failed roll. Stun Spiders have an hyperactive pineal gland which allows them to fire a stun ray every other round. The target of the ray must save versus paralyzation or be stunned 2-12 rounds. The Stun Spider can fire a disintegration ray as an alternative, but it instinctively only targets physical barriers or nonliving foes such as undead or robots. Monsters get a saving throw versus death ray to avoid total obliteration, success indicates the target merely sustains 2-12 points of damage. Objects the size of the Stun Spider or smaller are completely disintegrated while larger objects generally end up with a spider-sized hole blasted through them. The



shock of being reduced to 5 HTK or less causes the Stun Spider's pineal gland to overload, exploding in 1-6 combat rounds for 6-36 damage to everyone within 30'. If the creature is killed before time is up the overload is canceled.

#### WERE-GATE

Number Appearing: 1

Intelligence: unknown

Alignment: chaos

Type: transdimensional

Speed: 12

Defense Class: 9

Level: 5

Special Characteristics: semi-corporeal

Damage: 3-18 plus dimensional shift

Size: M

One percent of all misfired teleportations leave a man-sized hole punched through the fabric of spacetime. These holes are angry. Called Were-Gates by some sages, these strange creatures resemble humanoid-shaped portals to different places in this or another universe. Because of the universal distribution of matter, most Were-Gates show the vasty deeps of space. A Were-Gate attacks by reaching out to touch the target, who takes 3-18 points of withering damage from the utter cold or strange radiations of space. Furthermore, anyone struck by these hyperspatial fiends must save versus death ray or be instantaneously teleported. Where the victim ends up is up to the referee, but no two victims will be sent to the same place unless they are favored by some great deity. Only spells and enchanted weapons can effect Were-Gates.

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## Artifacts, Adjuncts, and Oddments

by Gabor Lux

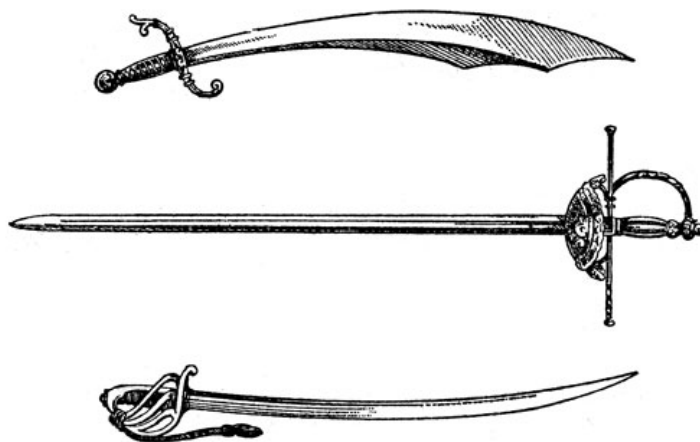
**The Dust of Khalil Azim:** A mixture ground from rare spices and the innards of unearthed mummies. It functions as an airborne poison. Beings slain by the dust return as zombies in 1d4 rounds, and may be given verbal commands as usual. 2d4 pinches are usually found.

**Goatfoot Boots:** These thick leather boots enable the wearer to take unusually great leaps, like a goat. They also turn the wearer's legs into goat feet. While beneficial in some respects, this is considered a cursed item.

**The Head of Agosten:** This mummified head belonged to the long dead sage Agosten. The head speaks and provides sage advice or answers certain questions. In exchange, it desires the burning of rare incense and scented oils, and demands respectful, even extraordinary treatment (such as a well-cushioned container made of noble woods, gold and mother of pearl, etc.). It must be added that Agosten is not philanthropic, and is uncon-

cerned with his owner's ultimate fate beyond his own interests. He is not under compulsion to provide warning, answer a question, or even tell the truth.

**The Ring of Spirits:** This ring may be used to call forth potent spirits of the Underworld, and only functions deep underground. The spirits can provide valuable advice, help recover lost treasures, transport the caller and his companions to other Underworld realms, etc. The use of the ring becomes hazardous if it is called upon too often, as too regular harassment enrages the slumbering spirits, who may consign the importunate annoyance to eternal imprisonment or similarly unpleasant fate.



**The Sword of Vilet Kanebe:** Vilet Kanebe's accursed blade is -2 to hit. Opponents struck by the blade must roll a save vs. death magic or be cursed themselves (-2 to all rolls until removed, non-cumulative). If the wielder is slain, his body immediately crumbles into dust and may never more be brought back.

**Sword of Owls:** An ornate longsword with an onyx hilt in the shape of an owl. The sword is +2 at night but nonmagical by day.

**Frogbringer:** A seemingly ordinary +1 sword. However, the bearer is constantly harrassed by giant frogs, killer frogs and assorted other batrachians, even in his most pleasant moments. This can become decidedly unpleasant.

**Sword of the Thief** (Santiago L. "Zulgyan" Oría): This Chaotic +1 sword has Intelligence 7, Egoism 8. It posses the following powers: Locate Secret Doors, Detect Traps and Detect Gold. It communicates by empathy with him who wields it, and understands all common human tongues as well as the secret language of thieves. The sword will lead the user into great danger in order to steal the most guarded of treasures. Full of vanity, it will demand to be sheathed in gold- and gem-encrusted scabbards if it is to be shown off in public. Ω



