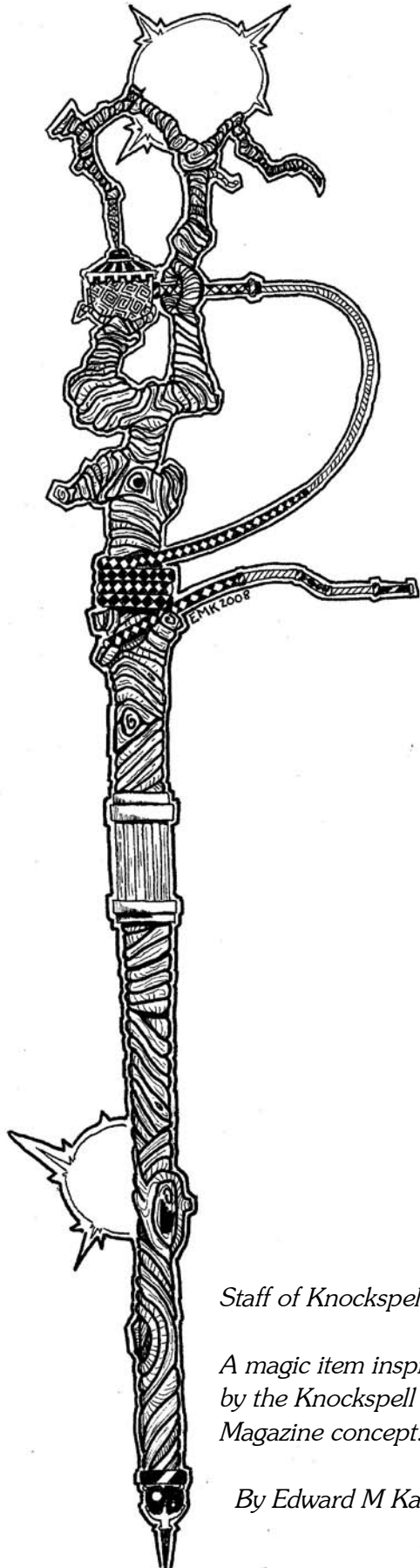


KNOCKSPELL™



KNOCKSPELL MAGAZINE

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Staff of Knockspell

*A magic item inspired
by the Knockspell
Magazine concept.*

By Edward M Kann

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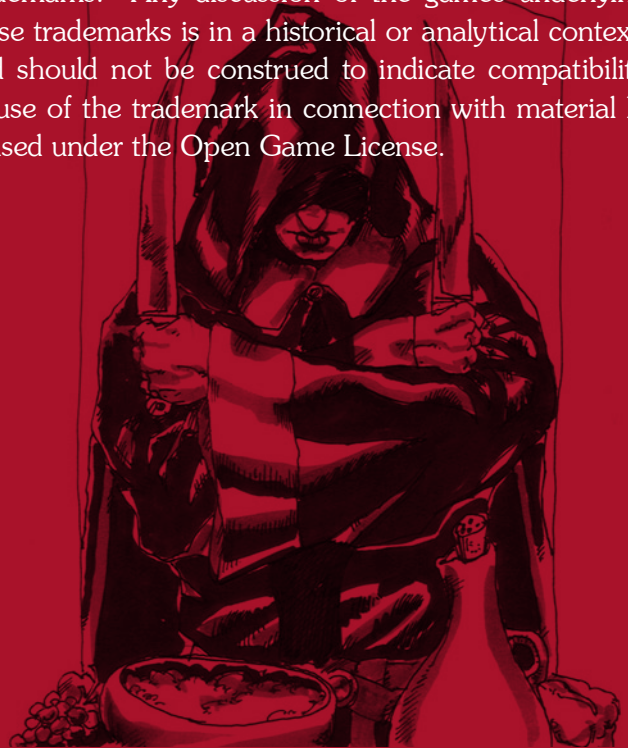
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Publisher/Editor-in-Chief:	Matt Finch
Art Director:	Hellbender
Layout:	Rob Ragas & Edward M Kann
Assistant Editor:	James Maliszewski
Interior Art:	Hellbender, Jeff Preston, Münch, Chad Thorson, Edward M Kann



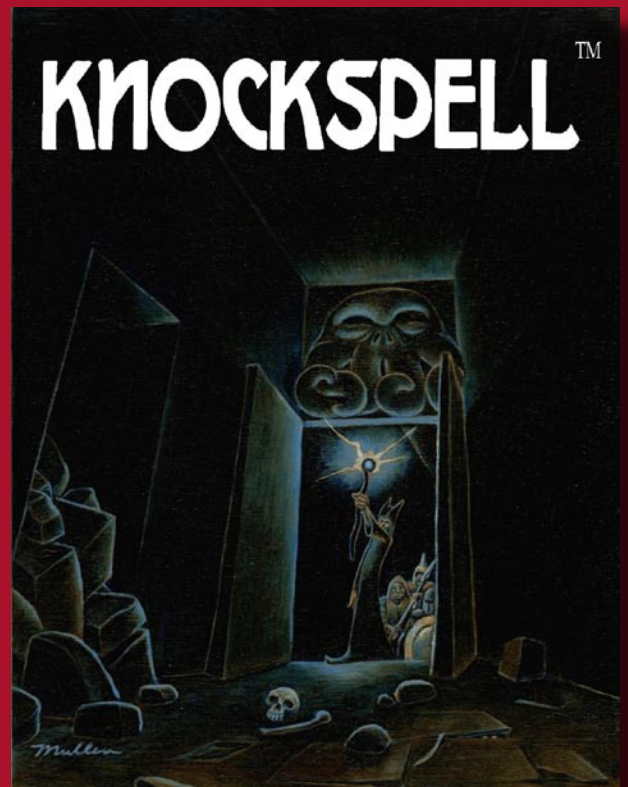
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COVER

This issue's cover is provided by Peter Mullen whose outstanding color covers have graced every edition of Swords and Wizardry to date. Thanks Peter!



Editor's Note

What's Knockspell Magazine? It's the official magazine of the Swords & Wizardry project, a fan-based group dedicated to reviving and supporting old-style, free-form fantasy gaming. Conventional wisdom out there in the gaming world holds that every situation needs a rule – without rules, there's no fairness, right? And games need fairness or they aren't games – or so the story goes. And this attitude has led to complex games with lots of rules, “elegantly” tied together so the rules can't be changed without tipping over the apple cart. Yet, there are those of us – and our numbers seem to be increasing daily – who have a different idea about fantasy gaming. Whether or not there's value to that rules-heavy approach – and I think for lots of gamers there is – there's also another model, our model, of how to play. In the “old style” of game, the referee uses rules that are either vague, or highly compartmentalized pieces, and only uses these rules as the basis for making on-the-spot rulings about what happens in the game as the players explore the fantasy world. To preach to the choir, for a moment, there are major benefits to this type of gaming: first, the referee and the players are more engaged with each other, with far more direct interaction, because the rules themselves come into play almost not at all. Rules don't “get in the way.” Second, if the referee has some little quirk of his campaign world that ought to be represented with a bizarre method of doing something, that innovation isn't likely to cause problems with anything anywhere else in the rules. Vague or highly compartmentalized rules are easy to house rule.

Despite any variations in the rules of our games: 0e, 1e, Moldvay Basic, and other games based on the 0e model first published in 1974 by Gary Gygax, it is this free-form approach to interpreting the rules that's used in all these systems. Granted, each of the editions has its own quirks and its own flavor – there's a legitimate reason to prefer one set of rules over another, based on how you and your group play. But in a broader sense, these systems all have a significant – I would actually say overwhelming – common ground in that they are played with the same philosophy, even if the rules differ. Again, I don't mean to de-emphasize the differences between the editions, only to point out where the common ground lies.

In response to decades of increasing control of the game rules by their publishers, the community has, over the last two years, developed a new method of sharing and publishing resources for our out of print game rules – the retro-clone game. Retro-clones mimic the original system's rules, but restate the explanation of those rules. I won't go into detail about it, but suffice to say that 0e is now supported by a game called “Swords & Wizardry,” 1e is supported by a game system called “OSRIC,” and Moldvay Basic is now supported

by a system called “Labyrinth Lord.” All these games share the playing method of their original versions: open-ended play where the referee makes rulings on the fly. These retro-clone games are a new and very powerful tool for the old-school renaissance that seems to be flourishing on the internet right now. So, this isn't a magazine about any one game – it's a general forum for all three of the major retro-clones: OSRIC, Labyrinth Lord, and of course Swords & Wizardry. All of them are basically fan publications – of extremely high quality, but fan publications nonetheless.

The magazine's goal, overall, is to re-invent a particular approach to gaming – where the gamer is respected as a hobbyist, not treated like a consumer. We're going to treat the whole batch of Gygax-type fantasy games as roughly compatible with all the rest, assuming that the reader has the intelligence to tinker and convert. And we're going to treat the rules as secondary to the fantasy. In other words, we're hoping to publish a magazine that harks back to the days in which people saw fantasy games as a wide-open horizon of possibilities instead of a particular product line with “official” rules. Because what's actually changed, folks? Nothing but attitudes, trained by an increasingly corporate approach by game publishers. The open horizon is still there, still ready to be explored, still infinite in possibilities.

Imagine the Hell out of it!

Editor in Chief
Matt Finch

Submissions

Submissions to Knockspell Magazine, and requests for advertising, may be addressed to mythmere@yahoo.com. Articles and artwork (other than color cover art) are not paid at this time.



Who sucked the fun out of RPGing?

By Tim Kask



"D&D was meant to be a free-wheeling game, only loosely bound by the parameters of the rules."

The line above was written by me in 1976 as part of the Foreword to *Eldritch Wizardry*. I meant it. TSR meant it. How did it go so wrong? How did the game morph into today's endless editions, each seemingly worse than the preceding, each more hidebound, restrictive and dogmatic?

In the beginning, at the dawn of the Role-Playing Age, it was all about fun, and group chemistry, and shared memories, and communal triumphs and tragedies. It was not about dogma and tabular data and b-t-b nonsense. Bitd, each group played in a world envisioned by their DM and fleshed out by their shared perceptions.

When I took D&D back to my college gaming club (the Southern Illinois University Strategic Gaming Society, still extant), my group played in my world (which didn't have a name) as described by me to them in weekly, then twice-weekly doses of 4 to 6 hours duration. I had the only rules set, but I did share the charts and tables with them as we went along to give them a degree of relevancy and relativity to help them better grasp the situation. It was easier to show them the To Hit charts than to explain that each class of armor was 5% or 10% different than the next, or how a short sword did this..., but a long sword did that..., well, you get the picture.

No one thought to argue about how they thought that "...saving throws vs. fireballs should be higher than those vs. lightning because fire is more destructive than electricity..." or that "... if you are wearing scale mail sewed onto leather, you should get a plus on your Save vs. Lightning because leather insulates better than wool..." For one thing, I wouldn't allow the setting of the campaign to have knowledge of electricity and conduction and such—sounds like magic to me. I made them Play the

Role.

It is not that we were intentionally keeping the players in the dark. Rather, the players trusted in their DM to be fair and just, which are not necessarily the same thing. I did not, always, take what someone blurted out without thinking as their first action. Not always; but, justice demands that if you say you are going to do something silly or inimical to yourself often enough, eventually it would happen. Lessons learned hard stick with you the best.

I always rolled the dice for the NPCs and happenings in the adventure, and always insisted that the PCs rolled their own for stuff that affected them like saving throws, initiative rolls, their own damage to themselves as well as what they may have hit. The trick was, they seldom knew, at least in the beginning, what they needed to roll. I would say, "Roll a d20. What did you roll? OK, (the result)".

DMs were encouraged to modify the rules however we saw fit. Just because ogres are in the tables, you don't have to have them in your campaign. It was not a law that you had to roll on an Encounter Table if you stumbled across a wandering monster; it was whatever the DM wanted it to be. Don't like the effects of a given spell? No problem, modify it to suit you.

To be perfectly frank, I think it seldom crossed the minds of players to argue a result in the Olden Days. We were having TOO MUCH FUN.

When we published the various supplements, they were just that: supplements. New ideas, new items, new other stuff to pick and choose from as the DM saw fit. Key phrase: "...as the DM saw fit.

It all starting going bad with the publishing of AD&D, *The Player's Handbook*. Here come the rules lawyers, the nitpickers and the homegrown experts. The fun started to leech away within months. Now there were dicta, dogma and regulations; gone were the days of guidelines. And who was to blame for this sorry, disreputable state of affairs. The players...

Tim Kask was the first editor of The Dragon Magazine, and of Supplement II, Blackmoor. He was one of the major figures in the early development of Dungeons & Dragons, and was in fact the first employee of TSR. Tim is a frequent poster at the Dragonsfoot message-board forums, where he calls 'em as he sees 'em.

From Kuroth's Quill #01

by Allan T. Grohe Jr. (grodog)

"From Kuroth's Quill" is my regular Knockspell design column covering all-things D&D: I'm likely to focus on the elements of adventure design (and more-specifically dungeon design, given my interest in that topic). I will also wander through the design of spells and magic items; monsters, traps, tricks, and treasures; PC and NPC classes; planes and pantheons; as well as the design of the D&D rules in general. In the articles, I hope to provide examples that will be useful in campaign play, to show theory in action.

One-Way Doors, Variable Stairs, and the Accessibility of Sub-Levels

At GenCon 2007 I received a refresher course on one-way doors while co-DMing the Bottle City level of Castle Greyhawk with Rob Kuntz. This was my first play experience using one-way doors in at least 15 years, and Rob's take on them was quite a bit different from how I had always pictured them in my head. In Rob's view, one-way doors acted as normal doors from the "door side" and once the PCs passed through them, the door closed (automatically if not spiked), and was gone. From the "wall side" the one-way door was detectable as a secret door, but even then could not be opened with a knock spell. I had always pictured one-way doors as doors visible from both sides, but only being openable from the one-way side--the other side appeared as a normal door that could not be opened (I may have unconsciously been following the lead of Roger Musson's "Dungeon Architect" comments on one-way doors here). I like Rob's version better, for reasons that'll become clear soon.

On the Bottle City map, Rob used the now-standard false door symbol to represent one-way doors. This shared symbol appears in the sample dungeon map in Underworld & Wilderness Adventures on page 4, and denotes a false door on that map (a standard symbol for one-way doors doesn't appear until 1981's Moldvay Basic rulebook). One-way doors are specifically mentioned in OD&D: "Doors which are openable from one side only" (U&WA, page 6) and "Doors which will open to allow traffic into an area but not out of it" (Greyhawk: Supplement I, page 61). Appendices G and H of the Dungeon Masters Guide also list "door, one way" and doors and stairwells as sample trap- and trick examples

and building blocks (pages 216-217).

I like Kuntz's definition of a one-way door--any door that appears like a normal door from one side, but is a wall from the wrong side, with no physical hint that a door exists on the other side. One-way doors reinforce the utility of iron spikes as standard equipment for PCs, and (if detectable) also provide DMs with leverage against players who constantly search for secret doors--PCs may discover the wrong side of a one-way door, with no way to open it from that side, which will waste time and generate more wandering monsters while they futilely roll d6s....

One-way doors can be placed as standard one-way doors or as one-way secret doors, and other dungeon features can easily be defined as one-way corridors, stairwells, chutes, covered pits, etc.

Variable Stairs*

One-way doors are the most-basic element of what I think of as a suite of related dungeon features which limit and/or channel PC movement. Variable stairs are a great example of "upping the ante" from one-way doors, but unlike one-way doors, variable stairs are only hinted at in OD&D. Page 6 of Underworld & Wilderness Adventures mentions:

Steps which lead to a slanting passage, so the player may actually stay on the same level, descend two levels, or ascend two levels

Trap steps which lead up a short distance, but then go downwards for at least two levels, with the return passage blocked by bars or a one-way door

Doors which are openable from one side only, which resist opening from one side, or which appear at random intervals

Variable features behave with more uncertainty than reliable, though tricky, dungeon features like one-way doors: the variable stair can lead up or down, and while it is still trustworthily predictable, the PCs don't know that, of course--to them the stairs appear very unpredictable, and their maps will be befuddled. While the change in the state of a variable stairwell from up to down is obvious, it has some subtle implications. How often does the stairwell change? What triggers the change?

Can the change be specifically invoked to shift the stair to the direction the PCs desire, and if so, how? What does the stair look like from the other/up side, when the stairwell is currently going down (and vice-versa, of course)? The answers to these questions lead to a variety of adventure possibilities for a DM, and potential headaches (and challenges, and perhaps rewards) for the players.

The key to take away from the U&WA suggestions above, and the idea of variable stairs in general, is uncertainty: after exploring a dungeon level for awhile, PCs shouldn't necessarily know with surety that they are still on the same level, and they shouldn't necessarily be able to rely on their return route being the same as they attempt to exit the dungeon, even if they've mapped correctly. Variable stairs help to drive that uncertainty, in two stages of features: predictable and unstable.

One of the key differentiators between one-way and variable dungeon features is their reliability. That is, a one-way door behaves the same way each time you encounter it: the door cannot be opened from the wrong side, but when it is opened, it always opens into the same hallway or room (although the PCs cannot return to their original location by simply reversing their direction of travel). Predictable variable stairs (or other variable features) may lead to different places when encountered at different times: when first found, variable stair A leads down; when passed on the way back out, stair A leads up instead of down. That is, stairwell A leads down to level 2 or up to sub-level 1a, but within the scope of those two constraints, stair A behaves otherwise itself. It is predictable, though variable. Now, if the DM changes the frequency of stair A's options, it becomes a bit more uncertain, and a bit more dangerous: if stair A leads down to level 2 5 times in 6, and up to sub-level 1a 1 time in 6, that's going to make level 1a much harder to access (and potentially to leave when the time is right). It's also going to make sub-level 1a a place that the PCs can be stranded within, that will require them to pack plenty of iron rations in case the stairwell gods are not with them when they're trying to leave (or enter) that sub-level....

The second stage of uncertainty for variable stairs is unstable, which is simply a push beyond predictable variation into unpredictable variation. Variable stairs are variable because they lead to different (though fixed and binary) destinations. By opening up the destination possibilities for variable stairs, trap doors, hallways, pits, etc., the DM starts to play in the realm of unstable vari-

able stairs (or other dungeon features): these lead to multiple potential destinations rather than the simple binary options that an up/down stair suggests. For example, variable stairway B on level 4 key #62 leads:

d12 roll	result
1	down to level 5 key #4
2-3	down to level 6 key #14
4-6	down to level 7 key #24
7-9	down to level 7 key #44
10-11	down to level 8 key #34
12	up to level 4c key #12

Clearly, stairway B is not nearly as predictable as stairwell A. And we're not done yet! What if stair B also disappears completely after it is traversed, and doesn't reappear for 1-6 turns, or hours, or even days!? If the feature is gone, is another area revealed in its absence--that is, with stairwell B not present at all in key #62, is a door (perhaps one-way?) into key #63 now visible that would otherwise be inaccessible while the stairs were present? Worse, what if stair B behaves differently upon ascent vs. descent: the PC will have fought their way through a level 8 encounter, and decided to beat a hasty retreat back to level 4, only to find that stair B now leads elsewhere upon ascent (and perhaps even "ascends" into a deeper level from below!). The possibilities and combinations are practically limitless!

The Accessibility of Dungeon Sub-Levels

Sub-levels are generally thought of as more-remote areas that are offset from the main dungeon's levels; classic examples include the three levels of WG5 Mordenkainen's Fantastic Adventure (sub-levels to the main Maure Castle/Castle El Raja Key complex), and the Interdicted Prison of Zuggtmoy and the Elemental Nodes sub-levels in T1-4 The Temple of Elemental Evil. However, using one-way and variable dungeon features, DMs can insert new levels into old, well-trodden paths, by changing an existing door or stair into a variable one.

This new sub-level is territory added to the known and explored regions of the level, but is accessible through a newly-changed dungeon feature (or the newly-discovered property of a rarely-varying feature, if the stair only leads up 1 time in 20, for example). PCs could learn of the new sub-level's existence by hearing rumors at the local alehouse, or through finding a map that disagrees

with their own, or observing the feature behave differently when employed by monsters or an NPC party, or from legends that “The Fox’s Hole” is only accessible from the SE stair when the moon is full. Regardless of the method, by employing one-way doors, variable stairs, and the other sundry dungeon feature combinations, DMs can easily insert new levels or sub-levels to expand existing territory beyond the map’s edge, or even to overlap new and existing territory within a level. That is, with a variable door, an entirely different map may exist beyond the door, a level with features that would conflict with the previously-known level map.

If the new sub-level is self-contained and only accessible from the variable feature, then living creatures will probably be less common on the level unless it has a food supply and/or its inhabitants can create food and water (or don’t require such, like golems, undead, etc.). Any sub-level isolated by a 1 in 8 or greater chance of not being found becomes a very appropriate challenge for higher-level adventurers, and presumably for placement in the lower dungeon levels. However, don’t discount the possibility of making such rare sub-levels accessible from one of the upper levels of the dungeon complex, too, since any group of explorers (lower-level or higher-level) are less-likely to find the Hideous Sub-Level of Doom in the first place. To introduce this concept of variable stairs providing access to sub-levels, a DM should insert some examples that will teach players the ropes of such features: perhaps some of the sub-levels have multiple means of ingress and egress, and perhaps the variable features are strictly binary, or if they disappear completely they’re only gone 1 time in 2 to 1 time in 4. Springing such features on players with no experience with this kind of trick can be very frustrating, so building up their confidence by setting expectations with background information in-character, as well as an initially-forgiving play experiences will allow a DM freer reign to turn the heat up on such challenges as the PCs and players grow more experienced.

In addition to their utility for managing access to sub-levels or to new levels added within a well-known and explored level, one-way doors and variable stairs provide an additional level of variety and challenge within the campaign dungeon environment. These trick features force players to stay on their toes and also reward careful player mapping--and mapping is perhaps the best way to defeat these devices (along with knock, dimension door, and passwall, of course!). A word of warning

though: one-way doors are easily susceptible to abuse as channeling devices if over used. The occasional series of one-way doors that herd PCs toward some special encounter or to a stairwell down four levels is OK, but if one-way doors always force players into yet-another Kobayashi Maru or Catch-22, the features will quickly lose their charm.

I tend to think of one-way doors primarily as trick encounters but they can also act as channeling traps too by forcing PCs into environments that they would not have otherwise explored, or by trapping them in an environment that would not otherwise have willingly chosen to enter, without a known path of return. Variable doors and stairs are potentially much more dangerous, since they force PCs to wait for the feature to return or reopen (which may take hours or days!), or to explore further in the hope of finding egress and a return to known paths. If the variable feature opens into a sub-level, however, it’s entirely possible that the feature itself may be the only means of entrance (and exit!) to that sub-level....

One-way doors and variable stairs can help hidden sub-levels to remain hard to find, and hard to return from, and keep your players on their toes as they wonder whether the stairwell that they used to access the Hidden Crypts of Boccob will still be there when they are ready to return to sunlight, fair maidens, and fine ale. I hope you’ll enjoy adding them to your campaign dungeons!

Happy Delving!

* I haven’t been able to track down the exact origin for variable stairs as I’ve described them; I’m pretty sure that I read about them somewhere, but it’s possible that I just combined the U&WA descriptions of the trick stairs and added my own twists. If you find a definitive source, please let me know!

Allan T. Grohe Jr. has been playing D&D and other rpgs since 1977. Allan’s first professional gaming publication (“More for the Shadow Master”) appeared in White Wolf Magazine #11 in 1987; he has also contributed to The Unspeakable Oath, Pyramid, Polyhedron, and Dragon Magazine, among others. Allan was a co-founder of Event Horizon Productions, and has worked extensively with Biohazard Games (Blue Planet), Pagan Publishing (Call of Cthulhu publisher of Delta Green), Different Worlds Publications (Tadashi Ehara), and Pied Piper Publishing (Robert J. Kuntz). More-recent projects

include editing OSRIC version 1.0 as well as Mythmere Games' Tomb of the Iron God. Allan's editorial and development work has contributed to winning one Origins Award, securing four Origins Award nominations, and two ENnie Award nominations.

Allan is known online as grodog, where he publishes a website featuring Greyhawk D&D content, as well as his non-gaming writing (poetry, personal essays, and literary scholarship), and the usual fan ephemera. He lives in Wichita, Kansas, with his lovely wife Heather, their two boys Ethan and Henry, and their two cats Percy and Jasper (truenames Percy Beeblebrox and Trapdoor Jasper).

Death Magic and Dark Dealings

The Necromancer

By Scot Hoover



The Necromancer

Minimum Scores: INT 12, CON 14, WIS <12

Experience Bonus: INT 16+

Armor/Shield Permitted: Any

Magic Items Permitted: Only those useable by any class

Penalty to-hit for non-proficiency: -3

Attack as: Cleric

Hit Die Type: d8 (max 9)

Alignment: Lawful Evil (LE) only

Weapons Permitted: Any

Weapon Proficiencies: 2, +1 every 3 levels

Saving Throws: as Cleric

Weapon Specialization: N/A

Powers by Level

Level	Base XP Required	Hit Dice (d8)	Notes	Undeath	1	2	3	4	5
1	0	1		Coffer Corpse	1	-	-	-	-
2	1,550	2	Infravision	Ghoul	2	-	-	-	-
3	2,900	3		Ghoul	3	1	-	-	-
4	6,000	4		Ghast	3	2	-	-	-
5	13,250	5		Wight	4	2	1	-	-
6	27,000	6		Wraith	4	2	2	-	-
7	55,000	7		Mummy	4	3	2	1	-
8	110,000	8		Mummy	5	3	2	2	-
9	220,000	9		Vampire	6	3	3	2	-
10	450,000	9+2	Ossuary	Vampire	6	4	3	2	1
11	675,000	9+4		Vampire	7	4	3	3	1
12	900,000	9+6		Vampire	7	4	4	3	2
13	1,125,000	9+8		Vampire	8	5	5	3	2
14	1,350,000	9+10		Vampire	8	6	5	4	2
15	1,575,000	9+12		Lich	9	6	5	4	3

15th is Maximum

The Necromancer (continued)

Necromancers are supremely evil (and foolhardy) NPC spellcasters who specialize in death magic and the study of the undead. Unlike normal magic-users who must continually memorize new spells, necromancers have traded their souls to an arch-devil for a truly permanent connection to their source of power.

Their evil practices and dealings with Hell take a considerable toll on the sanity and physical appearance of the necromancer. Necromancers increasingly become more and more corpse-like in appearance as they grow in experience – their skin progressively takes on an unhealthy pallor and their eyes develop a growing sensitivity to sunlight. Their personality becomes morbidly misanthropic and solitary, even as the stench of the graves in which they work surrounds them. For each higher level of experience they will lose 1 point of Charisma until reaching 0. At this point no living being, regardless of alignment, willingly tolerates the necromancer's presence. Townspeople will form mobs and try to hunt them down and paladins will undertake quests to slay them. Necromancers never attract henchmen, although they may enslave or pay humanoids or other monsters to serve as their agents. Once the necromancer's charisma reaches 0, however, even humanoids will seek to flee from this loathsome master.

Necromancers are required to make periodic sacrifices to their Arch-devil master, in addition to any other sacrifices they might perform. If they do not make an appropriate sacrifice in the allotted time, they suffer the loss of all their necromantic powers and other abilities until a sacrifice is performed.

Necromancers gain experience through ritual sacrifice, and by animating, controlling or constructing undead – the experience gained is equal to the creature's xp value. Necromancers do not receive experience from defeating foes or amassing treasure.

Class Abilities

Infravision (2nd-level): Starting at 2nd-level, necromancers gain infravision. They also become very sensitive to bright light or sunlight, and suffer a penalty of -2 on their to-hit rolls in direct sunlight.

Control Undead: Necromancers may communicate with and attempt to establish a rapport with undead in the same fashion as evil clerics. A 'D' result on the Turning Undead Table means they have established indefinite control over the undead. The necromancer can control a number of undead equal to ten times his level in Hit Dice. Vampires and other greater forms of undead cannot be controlled in this way. Controlled zombies and skeletons may be ordered to guard one place, following the necromancer's commands. Other undead can only be controlled within the necromancer's line of sight (maximum range: 20ft times the necromancer's level). Necromantic control can be broken if the undead are turned or controlled by another cleric or with a dispel evil spell. If the controlling necromancer is present, any attempts to wrest control are at -1 for every 3 levels of the necromancer. When determining the total number of undead a necromancer can dominate, each ability should be considered separately. Therefore, a 4th-lvl necromancer could bring under his control up to 40 skeletons (10x level) and, if they possess the ability, animate an additional 24 (6x level).

Immunity from Undead: Necromancers are immune to the special abilities of undead which have fewer hit dice than the necromancer. They are also immune to the effects of fear generated by any type of undead.

Sacrificial Healing: Necromancers cannot heal naturally, nor will magical cures or potions have beneficial effect on them. Through ritual sacrifice of intelligent creatures they can recover up to ½ of the victim's hit points. Note that this requires special utensils and must be performed between midnight and 1 AM. See also the necromantic power Vampiric Touch described below.

Ossuary (10th-level): Upon reaching 10th level, a necromancer may begin construction of a special temple called an Ossuary, made entirely of human or demi-human bones. Because of their sluggish and unintelligent nature, undead cannot be used to construct an Ossuary, so humanoid or other slaves must be used. Construction requires 10 hours, 10gp, the bones of at least 50 humans/demi-humans and the blood of 5 for each 10 square feet of area. Once completed, the bones knit together into a magically strong substance as strong as granite. When a necromancer is within his Ossuary, he receives +2 to all saving throws, while intruders suffer a -2 penalty. In addition, a necromancer may call forth skeletons from the walls of the temple. Up to 1 skeleton per 10 cubic feet of

wall per day may be called forth this way. These skeletons are automatically under the control of the necromancer, who may order them about telepathically at will. They will not leave the Ossuary under any circumstances and may be ordered to return to the Ossuary's walls at any time if the necromancer so desires. Additionally, any undead under the necromancer's control are turned as the next higher class of undead while inside the structure.

Undeath: Unless a necromancer is buried in specially consecrated ground or is utterly destroyed, he will return as undead, as noted on the Level Advancement table. They will not retain any of their necromantic powers unless they return as a vampire or lich. In any case they will not earn any more experience points as an undead.

Mortal Curse: The necromancer may pronounce a Mortal Curse on his killer at the moment of death (assuming the opportunity exists). The effect of a Mortal Curse is similar to the 3rd-level reversed Clerical spell Bestow Curse, cast at a level four times the necromancer's actual level. A necromancer dying inside his Ossuary may pronounce a Generational Mortal Curse, which will affect both the intended victim and his firstborn child as well. If the curse is not dispelled beforehand, each succeeding

generation's firstborn child will also be afflicted. At the GM's discretion, a quest or particularly difficult ritual may be needed to remove a generational curse. A Limited Wish will have no effect. A Wish will only stave off the effects during one person's lifetime. Two full Wishes are required to permanently dispel the curse.

Necromantic Powers: There are 5 'stages' of powers, which roughly correspond to spell levels for normal spell-casters. Necromancers acquire new powers each level (c.f. Level Advancement Table). These powers are not acquired as spells, but are granted to necromancers as a reward from their devilish masters. Once granted, the ability is never forgotten when used, and the necromancer does not need to spend any time meditating or memorizing to regain use of a power. Unless otherwise noted, a power may only be used once per day. Several of the powers have pre-requisites, which must be met before that power can be chosen. Necromancers may choose the same power multiple times, allowing them to use it more often. When choosing a new power, a power of a lesser stage may be substituted instead of a higher one. See the Necromantic Powers Table for a list of the powers available at each stage.

Necromantic Powers

Stage I	Stage II	Stage III	Stage IV	Stage V
Animate Dead	Control Shadows	Animate Dead Animals	Become Non-corporeal	Finger of Death
Animate Limb	Improved Animate Undead	Create Skull Guardian	Construct Servant	Drain Life
Cause Darkness	Manufacture Ghoul	Improved Control Shadows	Cast Necromantic Bell	Create Flesh Golem
Evil Eye	Manufacture Ghast	Manufacture Wight	Vampiric Touch	Aura of Fear
Feign Death	Sense Life	Manufacture Mummy	Incorporate Spirit	Summon Spectres
Cacophony of the Crypt	Summon Ghouls	Ghoul Touch	Summon Mummies	Create Lich
Speak with Dead	Summon Ghosts	Possession	Zombie Automaton	
Speak with Dead Animals	Wisdom of the Grave	Know the Past	Army of the Dead	
Summon Skeletons		Summon Wraiths	Diabolic Brew	
Summon Zombies		Superior Animate Dead		

Ritual Sacrifices

Level	Frequency	Sacrifice Required*
1	1 / month	Any Animal
2	1 / month	Animal - Mammal
3	1 / month	Animal - Mammal virgin
4	1 / month	Humanoid virgin
5	1 / fortnight	Demi-human/Humanoid
6	1 / fortnight	Demi-human/Humanoid Lvl 1+
7	1 / fortnight	Demi-human/Humanoid Lvl 3+
8	1 / fortnight	Human
9	1 / fortnight	Human Lvl 1+
10+	1 / week	Human Lvl 4+

*Higher forms of sacrifice may always be substituted for a lesser one, but not vice versa.

Description of Powers

Animate Dead: Similar to the 3rd-level Cleric spell of the same name. A necromancer may animate 1-6 zombies in this manner. If no flesh remains, the corpses are animated as skeletons instead. A necromancer may only control a number of these skeletons/zombies equal to 6 times their level at any one time. [Kellri – we need to clear up or describe better why there's x10 earlier in the article – is it the distinction between undead he controls versus the ones he animates?]

Animate Dead Animals: Similar to the necromantic power of Animate Dead, except only animals may be animated this way. Consider undead animals to have ½ the HD of a living specimen for purposes of Turning. Necromancers may only control a number of these animated animals equal to 6 times their level at any one time. Animate Dead is a prerequisite for this power.

Animate Limb: A necromancer may use this ability to re-animate up to 4 severed human limbs (but not a head). Limbs have limited movement – hands or arms could crawl (up to 5' round), but a leg or foot would simply flop around. A limb is not intelligent, but is under the control of the necromancer, who may order it about as a skeleton or zombie. A limb has ½ HD (1-4hp) and can be turned as a zombie. Necromancers may only control a number of these limbs equal to 6 times their level at any one time.

Army of the Dead: The necromancer can animate and subsequently control up to 100 human-type corpses, which must be dead less than one week. The animation lasts for 24 hours. Animate Dead is a prerequisite for this power. Typically this power is used near a fresh battlefield or plague-ridden village where plenty of fresh corpses are readily available.

Aura of Fear: With this power the necromancer is continuously surrounded by a 50' radius aura of fear. Intelligent creatures not immune to fear must Save vs. Spells or attempt to flee from the area for 1 turn. Creatures remaining within the aura's radius must make an additional Saving Throw every third turn. Although this power works continuously, a necromancer may choose to 'turn off/turn on' the aura at will.

Beckon (Undead): Calls up to 12 undead of the specified type within a radius of 30ft times the necromancer's level, up to a maximum of 250'. The beckoning lasts for 1 turn +1 turn/level of the necromancer. Once begun, the necromancer does not need to concentrate to maintain the beckoning. If able, a necromancer may attempt several beckonings simultaneously. Beckoned undead will move as quickly as possible toward the necromancer. The necromancer must attempt to establish control normally or the undead will be hostile. If undead of the type being beckoned are not present, or are not present in sufficient numbers, lesser undead types will answer the call in order of descending Hit Dice. A beckoning will only call undead which are already present in the area, and does not animate the dead or summon undead from

another plane. Note: Each beckoning power is a prerequisite to the next higher version.

Become Non-corporeal: Allows the necromancer's body (and his clothes & personal possessions) to become non-corporeal. His AC is lowered by 4 and he can only be struck by magic weapons or spells affecting non-corporeal beings such as Wraiths or Spectres. Direct sunlight or dispel magic will immediately end the effect.

Cacophony of the Crypt: Identical to the 2nd-level Magic-User spell Audible Glamer except the necromancer may only produce eerie or ghoulish noises such as the rattling of chains, weeping, mumbling, ghostly howls and so on. The cacophony may be set to raise an alarm if living intelligent beings approach within 10ft. This power only works between sunset and sunrise.

Cast Necromantic Bell: A necromancer may create a small bell which summons a particular dead spirit, and functions as the 3rd-level Cleric spell Speak with Dead. Only one bell may be constructed for a particular person, and is good for a single use only. Creating a necromantic bell requires one week's time and 1,000gp of materials per level of the deceased to be summoned. A piece of the corpse or an item intimately connected to the deceased is also required.

Cause Darkness: Identical to the 2nd-level Magic-User spell, Create Darkness 15' radius.

Construct Servant: The necromancer may create an undead servant using the body parts of dead humans. Two arms, two legs, a trunk and a head are sewn together from at least 4 different bodies to create the servant. The corpses must be fresh (dead less than a day) and not mutilated in any way. Because of their oddly deformed posture and dead stares, a Servant will never be mistaken for a living creature in normal light. Servants will have a number of Hit Dice equal to the combined level of the four victims divided by four. In all other respects, treat them as Ju-ju Zombies.

Control Shadows: This power allows a necromancer to summon a number of shadows equal to his level. Once the shadows are summoned the necromancer has a chance to control them equal to 10% + 10% for every level gained after this power was originally received. Once controlled, the shadow(s) may be ordered to venture out of sight and report back on what they have seen

or sensed. The maximum range they can roam is 20ft times the necromancer's level.

Create Flesh Golem: This power allows a necromancer to create a flesh golem from the parts of recently dead, unutilized corpses. Construct Servant is a prerequisite for this power. The flesh golem will require at 50 body parts. Roll 1d3 to determine the number of useable parts from one body (three meaning they are all unusable). Once completely assembled, the flesh golem can only be animated during a thunderstorm. Once animated, it will obey all verbal commands from its creator. Otherwise, it is a normal flesh golem in all respects, including a 1% chance per combat round the golem will go berserk. Necromancers however, have only a 5% chance per melee round of regaining control.

Create Lich: A necromancer may use this power to create a lich from a willing human victim. The victim must be at least a 14th level evil Cleric or Magic-User. The process culminates in the death of the victim and their resurrection as a lich. The process requires at least 2,000gp of materials per level of the victim and 2 weeks of preparation. The materials are consumed during the ceremony, which must be conducted at midnight on a grimly auspicious night (e.g. Halloween, Winter Solstice etc.) Upon completion of the rituals, the victim arises as a lich in all respects. This power is rarely used owing to the inherent distrust and enmity between evil spell-casters and necromancers.

Create Skull Guardian: A ritually sacrificed human or demi-human may be used to create a skull guardian. The process requires one week of work but no special materials. The result is a skull sporting a pair of membranous bony wings growing from its temples. A skull guardian is only semi-intelligent but follows the orders of the creating necromancer at all times. It may only move a maximum of 60' away from the place of its creation. Skull Guardian: AC 2; MV 30'; HD 1; hp 1-8; THAC0 19; #AT 1; D 1-3; SA Generates Fear 5' radius; SD normal undead immunities, turn as Spectre; MR Std; SZ S; Int Semi; AL N; XP 650+10/hp.

Diabolic Brew: With this power a necromancer may make a foul, evilly tainted potion from the blood of a sacrificial victim. The victim must be sacrificed exactly at Midnight, and must be human. The potion requires at least 1 day to brew and 1,000gp of ingredients per level of the victim. If the potion is imbibed, there is a chance the drinker will

gain a permanent +1 to one of his ability scores, determined randomly. The chance of this success is equal to the level of the sacrificial victim x 10%. Anyone drinking a diabolic brew is irrevocably damned to the service of an Arch-Devil and his alignment will be permanently changed to Lawful Evil. This will happen whether or not an ability score is increased by the Diabolic Brew.

Finger of Death: A necromancer may point at one creature within 30ft (victim must be seen) and attempt to slay him on the spot. The victim is allowed a Saving Throw vs. Death at a penalty of -2. If the Saving Throw is successful there is no effect.

Drain Life: For a period of 2 turns, the necromancer has the ability to drain 1 level of experience from any normal or smaller size human, demi-human, or humanoid he touches (Save vs. Spells is allowed). Life drain is permanent unless a restoration spell is cast to reverse it. A victim reduced to 0-level this way is dead (will not return as undead).

Evil Eye: The necromancer has a gaze ability similar to a vampire's, except that the effect is to hold rather than charm. The victim is allowed a Saving Throw vs. Spells if applicable.

Feign Death: Identical to the 3rd-level Magic-User spell of the same name. This ability may be used as many times per day as the necromancer wishes.

Ghoul Touch: For a period of 2 turns, the necromancer has the ability to paralyze any normal or smaller size human, demi-human or humanoid he touches (Save vs. Paralysis is allowed). Elves are immune to this effect.

Improved Control Shadows: Functions identically to the Control Shadows power (which is a prerequisite) except that the shadows are in telepathic contact with the necromancer and will report on their findings as they happen.

Improved Animate Dead: Similar to the prerequisite power Animate Dead, except that the necromancer may animate 1-6 ju-ju zombies. The corpses must be fresh (no more than a week dead) and relatively intact.

Incorporeal Spirit: The necromancer may summon a dead person whom he knew personally in life, once per day. The incorporeal spirit will arrive from the Outer

Planes with all normal abilities and equipment except for any magic items. It will be bound to serve the necromancer for one hour only before returning to its home on an Outer Plane. Spirits of opposing alignments or of a level higher than the necromancer may attack the necromancer instead: the base chance for this to happen is 0%, but it is modified by +10% for every level above the necromancer, +50% if Good, +25% if Neutral and -20% if the deceased was slain by the necromancer himself. Summoning the same spirit too frequently may attract the attention of the dead person's deity, who might intervene (at the GM's discretion, of course).

Know the Past: By concentrating and meditating for 5 rounds, a necromancer is able to know what has occurred in the past 24 hours in that same place (10' radius per level).

Manufacture (Undead Type): Creates an undead creature from a human corpse. This procedure takes one week of uninterrupted work, starting with sacrifice of the human victim. Once finished, the necromancer must attempt to establish control as normal; otherwise the creature will act independently. Note: Each manufacturing power is a prerequisite to the next higher version.

Possession: With this power a necromancer may attempt to possess a human or demi-human victim (must be vulnerable to charm person spells). The victim must be within 60ft and within the necromancer's line of sight. A Saving Throw vs. Spells is allowed. If the saving throw fails, the victim's body is possessed by the intellect of the necromancer as per the 5th-level Magic-User spell Magic Jar. Duration is similar to charm person. Detect charm or detect evil spells will reveal that something is amiss. Necromancers may use this power to insinuate themselves into groups of good-aligned parties for simple spying or for creating havoc.

Sense Life: Thrice per day, for one turn each time, the necromancer may sense all intelligent, living creatures within 150'. Only the direction will be sensed; distance and identity will not.

Speak with Dead Animals: Identical to the 3rd-level Cleric spell Speak with Dead, except that only animals (not monsters, humanoids or any other types) may be spoken with.

Speak with Dead: Identical to the 3rd-level Cleric spell of the same name.

Superior Animate Dead: This power allows a necromancer to animate the corpse of a recently dead (up to 1 week) human or demi-human. The corpse must be un-mutilated. The animated undead will possess the same level it had in life, and the same powers, including any non-clerical spellcasting abilities. The animation only lasts for 24 hours, after which the creature cannot be re-animated. Treat the creature as an undead of the same or fewer hit dice for the purposes of turning. After animation, a necromancer must attempt to establish control normally. If control is not established, the animated undead will attack the necromancer. Animate Dead is the prerequisite for this power.

Vampiric Touch: When a necromancer with this power touches a victim (a successful to-hit in melee) the touch drains 1d6 hit points from the victim and adds them to the necromancer's total. No Saving Throw is possible. Hit points drained this way may not be used to exceed the necromancer's maximum hit point score; all additional drained hit points are simply lost.

Wisdom of the Grave: Using this power a necromancer may question an intact human, demi-human or humanoid skull as to the whereabouts and general events at the site where the rest of the skull's bones are buried (50ft radius). The range between the skull and the bones cannot exceed 20 miles per level of the necromancer. If the bones are animated or pulverized this power cannot be used.

Zombie Automaton: With this power a necromancer may attempt to magically charm a human or demi-human with a range of 40'. If a Save vs. Spells is failed, the victim becomes an automaton under the control of the necromancer. The victim retains its level and other abilities including non-clerical spell-casting. They cannot however, gain experience in this state, nor can they use good-aligned magic items. They can be turned as an undead of comparable hit dice. If a 'D' result is obtained, the automaton spell is broken. The 4th-level Cleric spell Exorcism can also break the spell, as can Dispel Magic cast by a magic-user of the same or higher level than the controlling necromancer. If the automaton is killed and resurrected, the spell will also be broken.

Necromantic Magic Items

The Brain Pan: This item is made from the upper half of a polished human skull covered in twisted glyphs both inside and out, with a greenish-copper band encircling the edge. When a fresh (dead less than a week) human, demi-human or humanoid brain is placed inside, the necromancer may telepathically Speak with Dead as the 3rd-level Cleric spell of the same name. The duration is equal to 1 turn + 1 turn per level of the necromancer. The Brain Pan may be used up to 3 times per day.

Six-Flanged Knife: This wicked-looking dagger is made of silver and steel, with a bone handle. In the hands of a necromancer it functions as a +2 dagger (1d4+2 damage), but it functions as a cursed -2 dagger if wielded by any other class. When used in melee by a necromancer, it will act as a conduit for any other necromantic powers that normally operate by touch (e.g. Ghoul Touch, Vampiric Touch, etc.), inflicting 1d4+2 damage in addition to any other effects.

Obsidian Mirror of Khuush: These are highly polished obsidian plaques, roughly 1ft x 3ft, and framed in a thin band of inscribed silver. The Lich-lords of Khuush constructed several of these mirrors to enable their undead minions to move freely amongst the living. When the mirror is placed face down over the corpse of a freshly-killed and un-mutilated human or demi-human for at least one hour, an 'image' of the deceased will be stored in its glassy black depths. If an intelligent human-sized creature, living or undead, grasps the mirror to his face and utters the command word, he will be cloaked in a strong illusion that changes his appearance in all respects to appear as that of the deceased. While cloaked in the illusion, the user's charisma is two points less than that of the deceased. Dispel Illusion will not reveal or dispel the dweomer, but dispel magic cast at 10th-level or higher will dispel it immediately. The duration of the illusion is equal to 1d6 + the number of hours the mirror was placed over the corpse, up to a maximum of 24 turns. Only one image can be stored in a mirror at a time. If used more than once per day the mirror will fracture and be rendered useless.

The Executioner's Hymnal: This cursed folio is made of 13 sheets of cured human skin. Each page is covered in what appear to be stanzas of an epic poem or song written in dried blood and some unknown ichor. A necromancer can read the text automatically; For all others,



in the OSRIC rulebook for more information).

Skin Drum: A cast-iron kettle drum covered with a taut piece of ensorcelled and tanned human skin. A femur drumstick hangs from a leather thong wound about the neck of the drum. When a necromancer uses the drum as part of a beckoning ritual, the effective range will be doubled and the necromancer will gain a further +2 to attempts to control any undead creature(s) answering the beckoning. A necromancer may also use the drum to generate an aura of fear identical to the necromantic power of the same name. The necromancer must concentrate while using the drum for either purpose: no other actions are possible, or the drum's effect will end immediately. The drum is quite heavy, equivalent to 500gp encumbrance if carried. A skin drum may be used up to 3 times per day.

Note: All of these necromantic items radiate a strong magical aura of evil if detect magic, detect evil or identify is used to examine them.

Scot Hoover is a 40 year old American writer & educator. He's currently living in Vietnam with his wife and 2 children. Scot is best known on the internet as "Kellri". He has published several free notebooks which are absolutely state of the art. Knockspell Magazine highly recommends that every referee look at them.

both Read Magic and Comprehend Languages spells are necessary to understand the contents. A necromancer reading the book will immediately gain enough experience points to reach the next higher level. Non-necromancers who read the hymnal must Save vs. Death or be driven permanently and violently insane.

Brazier of Seeking Tendrils: When a specially prepared 'incense' made from a sample of a human/demi-human subject and a vile waxy mixture of fat and brain matter is burnt within the brazier, 1d4 semi-translucent tendrils will slither out of the smoke. A necromancer can order the tendrils to seek out the subject, who can be up to a maximum range of 1 mile away per level of the necromancer. The exact location does not need to be known: the tendrils will unerringly take the most direct route. The tendrils move at a rate of 1 mile/turn and are invisible to everyone save the necromancer and the victim. When the tendrils find the target, they attack as the 4th-level Illusionist spell Phantasmal Killer (see the spell description

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The Paladin

by James Maliszewski

If you're a player worrying about what nefarious tricks your referee might dream up for Scot Hoover's necromancer NPC, James Maliszewski offers here a counterbalancing champion of Law, a paladin class for Swords & Wizardry. Get out your holy symbol and polish that plate mail!

The Swords & Wizardry core rules present a fantasy roleplaying game strongly influenced by swords and sorcery literature. The protagonists of such stories are often men and women of "flexible" morality, not evil so much as self-interested and even venal.

Adherence to ideals beyond personal enrichment and perhaps a yen for adventure is rare among these protagonists and Swords & Wizardry reflects this same approach. Of course, not everyone wishes to emulate the ethos of swords-and-sorcery, preferring instead a bit more moral certitude. It is for these players that the paladin class described here might prove an interesting alternative.

As an optional rule for Swords & Wizardry, fighting men committed to the tenets of Law and Goodness may elect to become paladins, a new character class partly inspired by the righteous warriors in the service of the Frankish king and emperor, Charlemagne, from whom the name of the class is derived. Paladins gain a number of unique abilities compared to ordinary fighting men, but these abilities come at a price: adherence to a stringent code of conduct, deviation from which results in their immediate and irrevocable loss of those character abilities. Consequently, the life of a paladin is often a difficult one, particularly in settings where neither Law nor Goodness are commonly held ideals. Indeed, some referees may rule that the class is inappropriate for their campaigns and thus unavailable.

Paladin Class Abilities and Restrictions

Associates: A paladin will never knowingly associate with someone who consistently offends his or her code of conduct (see below). A paladin may accept only henchmen or hirelings who accept and live according to that same code of conduct.

Code of Conduct: A paladin must be of Lawful (Good)

alignment and loses all class abilities if he or she ever willingly commits a Chaotic (Evil) act. Additionally, a paladin's code requires that he or she respect legitimate authority, act with honor (not lying, not cheating, not using poison, and so forth), help those in need (provided they do not use the help for evil or chaotic ends), and punish those who harm or threaten innocents.

Detect Evil: At will, a paladin can detect evil, as per the 2nd-level clerical spell of the same name.

Dispel Evil (8th): At eighth level, a paladin may dispel evil once per day, as the 5th-level clerical spell of the same name.

Paladin Abilities	
Hit Die Type	1d6+2 After reaching 9HD the paladin gains only 3 hit points per level.
Armor/Shield	Any
Weapons	Any
Prime Attribute (5% XP bonus)	Strength 13+ Wisdom 13+
Alignment	Lawful (Good)
Race	Human



Divine Health: A paladin gains immunity to all diseases.

Establish Stronghold (9th): At ninth level, a paladin may establish a modest stronghold and attract a small body of loyal men-at-arms who will swear fealty to him. Preferably, this stronghold will be within the domain of a Lawful (Good) ruler, but this is not a requirement.

Ex-Paladins: A paladin who ceases to be Lawful (Good), who willfully commits a Chaotic (Evil) act, or who grossly violates the code of conduct loses all paladin class abilities (including the service of the special (mount), becoming forevermore a Fighting Man of a level equivalent to his or her current experience point total.

Lay on Hands: each day a paladin can heal a total number of hit points of damage equal to his or her paladin level x 2.R

Remove Disease: Each day a paladin can cure one disease for every five levels he or she possesses.

Special Mount: A paladin may choose to gain the service of an unusually intelligent, strong, and loyal steed to serve him or her. This mount is usually a warhorse. Should the paladin's mount die, he or she may not summon another mount for 10 years. Unlike normal warhorses, a paladin's special mount has AC 5 [14], 5 Hit Dice, and a higher than normal intelligence.

Wealth: A paladin may never possess more than five magical items, not counting a single suit of armor, a single shield, and up to five weapons. In addition, a paladin must donate all treasure he or she acquires, except what is needed for personal upkeep and upkeep of his or her henchmen, hirelings, men at arms, and stronghold (if any).

Paladin Experience Table

Level	Experience Points	Hit Dice (d6+2)	Saving Throw
1	0	1	14
2	2,500	2	13
3	5,000	3	12
4	10,000	4	11
5	20,000	5	10
6	35,000	6	9
7	70,000	7	8
8	140,000	8	7
9	275,000	9	6
10	500,000	9+3	5
11	600,000	+3 hps	4
12	700,000	+3 hps	4
13	800,000	+3 hps	4
14	900,000	+3 hps	4
15	1,000,000	+3 hps	4
16	1,100,000	+3 hps	4
17	1,200,000	+3 hps	4
18	1,300,000	+3 hps	4
19	1,400,000	+3 hps	4
20	1,500,000	+3 hps*	4*

* +3 hps per level beyond level 20. Saving throw remains at 4 after level 20.

The Monk

by James Maliszewski

Like the swords-and-sorcery literature that inspired it, the Swords & Wizardry core rules have a vaguely European flavor to them, with plate-wearing fighting-men, pointy-hatted magic-users, and crusading clerics. Still, the lure of more exotic locales and influences is powerful, and some referees may wish to borrow ideas from the history and mythologies of Asia. For such people was the monk class created.

The monk is an optional character class for Swords & Wizardry based on the legendary exploits of ascetic martial artists, particularly the Shaolin sect of Buddhism. Unlike other character classes, the monk's primary means of attack is his or her body – punches, kicks, throws – and primary means of defense is his or her innate speed and toughness. Because of its unusual

origins, the referee should feel free to restrict the creation of monk characters, including limiting them only to NPCs from “the mysterious East.” At the same time, they represent a unique challenge for experienced players and some campaigns may benefit greatly from their inclusion.

Monk Abilities	
Hit Die Type	1d6 After reaching 9HD the monk gains only 2 hit points per level.
Armor/Shield	None
Weapons	Any
Prime Attribute (5% XP bonus)	Dexterity 13+ Wisdom 13+
Race	Human

Monk Experience Table

Level	Experience Points	Hit Dice (d6)	Saving Throw	AC	Fast Movement
1	0	1	14	9(10)	
2	2,500	2	13	8(11)	
3	4,000	3	12	7(12)	13
4	8,000	4	11	7(12)	14
5	16,000	5	10	6(13)	15
6	32,000	6	9	6(13)	16
7	64,000	7	8	6(13)	17
8	128,000	8	7	5(14)	18
9	256,000	9	6	5(14)	19
10	350,000	9+2	5	5(14)	20
11	450,000	+2 hps	4	5(14)	21
12	550,000	+2 hps	4	4(15)	22
13	650,000	+2 hps	4	4(15)	23
14	750,000	+2 hps	4	4(15)	24
15	850,000	+2 hps	4	4(15)	25
16	950,000	+2 hps	4	4(15)	26
17	1,050,000	+2 hps	4	4(15)	27
18	1,150,000	+2 hps	4	4(15)	28
19	1,250,000	+2 hps	4	4(15)	29
20	1,350,000	+2 hps*	4*	4(15)	30

* +2 hps per level beyond level 20. Saving throw remains at 4 after level 20.

Monk Class Abilities and Restrictions

Armor Class: The monk gains an unarmored AC bonus that increases with experience, as indicated on the Monk Advancement Table below.

Deflect Missiles: The monk may deflect non-magical missile attacks with a successful saving throw.

Fast Movement: Beginning at 3rd level, the monk moves faster than normal when unencumbered.

Quivering Palm: At 12th level, the monk gains a fearsome attack, usable once per week. If the monk successfully deals damage with an unarmed attack against a creature with fewer hit dice than himself or herself, the monk may then choose to slay the creature automatically at any time thereafter, up to one day per level of the monk.

Slow Fall: At 4th level, the monk takes damage from a fall as if the fall were 20 feet shorter than it actually is. The monk must be within 10 feet of a vertical surface to use this ability. At 8th level, any fall is treated as if it were 40 feet shorter and the monk must be within 20 feet of a vertical surface. At 11th level, the monk may fall any distance if he or she is within 30 feet of a vertical surface.

Still Body: At 6th level, the monk can slow his or her bodily functions to appear dead for a number of turns equal to his or her level.

Still Mind: At 3rd level, the monk gains a +2 bonus to saving throws against spells that affect the mind.

Unarmed Attack: The monk specializes in unarmed, hand-to-hand combat. Such attacks deal 1D6 points of damage, but the monk may choose whether they inflict normal damage or subdual damage. At 6th level, the monk rolls 2D6 for unarmed attack damage and takes the higher result of the two dice. At 11th level, the monk rolls 3D6 and takes the highest result of the three dice for unarmed combat damage.

Wealth: A monk may never possess more than five magical items, including weapons. In addition, a monk must donate all treasure they acquire to their monastic order, except that needed for personal upkeep.

Wholeness of Body: Beginning at 7th level, the monk can heal a number of hit points of damage equal to his

or her level per day.

Born in the Netherlands, and growing up in Baltimore, James attended university in Annapolis, Washington, D.C., and Toronto. Originally he believed his calling was to teach the world about the wonders of medieval and early modern philosophy, but soon realized he could just as readily be ignored by pontificating about the history of roleplaying games—and have more fun in the process.

He currently lives in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, with his wife, two children, and a disturbingly large collection of gaming products. He spends much of his free time working on various gaming projects, particularly his blog, Grognardia (<http://grognardia.blogspot.com>).

The Society of Torch, Pole and Rope

Stop worrying
and love the
Dungeon.



<http://poleandrop.blogspot.com>

Three Principles of Adventuring Success

by James Carl Boney

Having spent the last 26 years hip-deep in the RPG hobby, I've managed to play way more PCs than I can remember. The majority of them have faded from my memory because they either died before their time or accomplished nothing particularly noteworthy; an elite few I remember fondly due to the great joy I took in cultivating them from fledgling adventurers to full-blown heroes of the Realm.

What makes 1 character in 20 successful while the other 19 get consigned to the trash can or become the butt of "sonny...learn from my mistakes" stories? Very often, fate works against the character through many avenues... the luck of the dice, being in the wrong place at the wrong time, not finding the resources (treasure) found by other PCs; however, the single biggest factor which can consign an otherwise good PC to the scrap is often the player himself.

Follow three simple concepts of game play, and the chances of your PC growing past the typical red shirt and becoming an adventurer of renown will increase. Set your goals and stick to them. You and your fellow party members must have a general game plan for the adventure. Gary emphasized this, and was wise to do so. What do you want to do tonight?

Find the stairs to the next level? Solve the mystery of the evasive purple lights? Raid a higher level monster for his treasure? Fix on that goal and don't deviate from it if at all possible. Once the goal has been attained, get out. Go home and recuperate for the next expedition. Many a good character has been lost because he pushed past his resources and got caught with low hit points, out of spells, potions gone, etc. Know when enough is enough.

Look past the rules. The good player understands the rules and knows what can be done. The innovative player, on the other hand, looks at the rules and sees possibilities not printed in black and white. Keep in mind

that, with the older and more established RPGs, probably 75% of the rules were written in reaction to player activity. Look for new applications of spells, magic items, tactics, and game rules and exploit them to the very limit. Don't abuse the rules or try to get around them lest you feel the wrath of the GM, but always seek to manipulate the rules to your PC's advantage.

Avoid the dice roll as much as possible. The randomness of the die is the most impartial aspect of any RPG. It can help you or it can kill you, so avoid it when it's to your benefit to do so. Don't hesitate to pester the GM for every little detail you can squeeze out of him; such details can save your PCs hide! The more you know, the better decisions you can make.



The use of cheap resources can take the place of trap checks, ability checks, or whatnot. Throwing a metal bar into an area can often trigger magical effects. Studying crucial doors in minute detail might give hints of a trap. The scent of food left in an open chamber will draw the dumber wandering monsters to the slaughter... preferable to encountering

them at an awkward moment. I used to wonder why livestock was listed on certain equipment guides until one day I got the bright idea of releasing dogs down that dungeon hallway and saving myself the threat of that 1 in 6 chance with the pit traps.

So now you're successful...

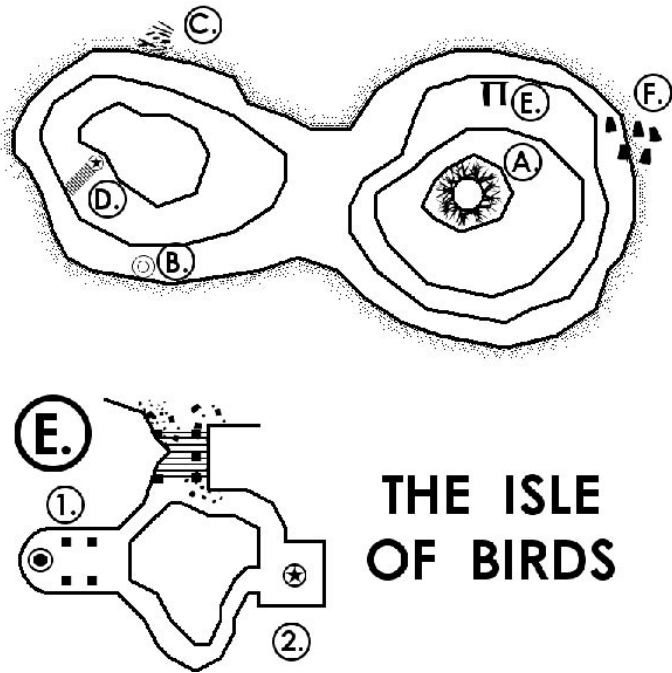
Know when to lay it down. Ok, your 18th level fighter just defeated Tiamat. Now what? Well, first off, your GM was probably fudging for you... but more importantly, it just could be time to retire the character and start anew. Don't worry... starting again at first level may seem boring or tough at first, but you'll have the benefit of these basic principles to help you through the rough patches!

James Carl Boney is a three-decade veteran of many RPGs. He is the author of three OSRIC modules for Expeditionary Retreat Press with a fourth in the works. He resides in the spooky little town of New Edinburg, Arkansas.

Isles on an Emerald Sea

An Adventure by Gabor Lux

Playtesters: Gabor Acs, Kalman Farago, Laszlo Feher and Gabor Izapy



THE ISLE OF BIRDS

The Isle of Birds

A bare realm of two great rock piles and surrounding shallows on the Sea of Emerald Idols: this is the Isle of Birds, where castaways have died in lament and curse. Some ran ashore on the reefs, which are treacherous and swarming with giant crabs; others were sent here by malefices or curses to perish so far from human help. Yet those who are courageous and cunning may win free – and even gain treasure and knowledge in the bargain.

The Isle of Birds is so named for a multitude of chattering seagulls who nest in the rocks and hunt in the sea; but also the great roc that makes its lair on top of the taller outcropping. There is a 1 in 3 chance each day that the roc returns from its distant hunt with a mewling lion, the limp body of some large sea creature, or in a very unlikely event, a small boat. Characters on the island must be constantly on the lookout for the roc's return, and when it is about, find a hiding place or move with extreme caution. On the other hand, the sandy shores are crawling with giant crabs; for every stretch travelled, there is a 1 in 3 chance of an encounter with 2d6 of them. Only an appropriate deterrence or a great slaughter will prevent this onslaught. The crabs are afraid of large creatures or their images. There is no potable water

whatsoever on the island.

Roc: HD 15; HP 64; AC 2[17]; Atk beak (3d8) or 2 talons (2d8).

Giant Crabs (2d6): HD 3; AC 1[18]; Atk 2 claws (1d6).

A. In a depression on top of the greater outcropping is the roc's nest of large branches and saplings, with a quantity of down and discarded feathers. Ascending to this place or getting down to the island requires careful climbing, for while there are rests, the cliffsides are steep and the stones crumble easily.

B. An impressive but badly bent domed brass cage, large enough for three or four men, lies half buried in the sand. A large hole has been bent in the bars, enough for a man-sized creature to crawl in or out. The cage was an expensive one, as the various decorative trims and copper ornaments suggest.

C. Driftwood – three long, straight logs and some miscellaneous debris have been caught among the rocks some way from the shore (beware the crabs!). On close examination, one will also see the corner of a sea chest, which, if retrieved, yields 700 gp worth of amber.

D. Steep ledges cut into the rock (these are in fact very narrow and steep stairs) lead up to a niche in the shadow of the lesser peak, where stoops an idol with grinning skull-face and insane eyes; human-shaped but alien. There are primordial inscriptions and an altar. The ideograms, if deciphered, read: "THE MULTIPLICATION OF THE SIGHT". A sacrifice and meditation performed before the altar bring the boon: the character must save vs. polymorphisation or gain 1d8 new eye-sockets in the skull at random points; each eye has a 75% chance to be dead and useless.

E. A massive ancient ruin broods here, halfway up the cliff, almost invisible under rock-slides and beyond crags. The ruins start with ramparts of knotted relief, one over the other... beyond, there are tall domed halls supported by spindly and improbable columns. This is old construction, evil in years. [very nice!]

E1. Hall of columns terminating in a well, filled almost to the brim with clean water. Nearby, in a corner, are discarded heavy and thick bones and an inhuman skull: these are the remains of a great ape still wearing iron cuff and the links of a chain on one hand. The ideogrammatic inscription on the well's rim reads, "FARNESSE".

Imprisoned by the well's magic is the spirit of Osori the Creeping One (the nearby bones were once his), half-human sorcerer. Osori can speak, and he lies, hoping to bargain or plead with the characters to release him from the curse by dispelling the well's magic. Oaths are nothing to Osori, his promises are void and the story of having been the victim of the clerics of Argon is made up. If freed, he attacks as a spectre and may not be turned. If he slays an opponent, he is freed and a new prisoner takes his place. In addition to holding Osori, the well can send items to a desired time in the past or the future if commanded (a fact known to the cursed spirit), but only here in his room.

Osori the Creeping One, Spectre: HD 7; HP 40; AC 1[18]; Atk (1d8+ level drain); Special: magic weapon required to hit.

E2. A rectangular, damp chamber whose only content is the crude statue of a goddess standing on a rectangular pedestal. The inscription, unlike the others, is modern: "THE SERVANT FEEDS THE GODDESS, THE GODDESS FEEDS THE SERVANTS". The statue is a lithonnite-mimic, a stone monster unfolding into a slimy-sticky monstrosity if it senses movement close by. The rubber-like gloop has servants, giant centipedes nesting in the walls and crevices.

If the lithonnite-mimic is slain, it becomes apparent that under the "statue", the pedestal has a small cavity with two gemstones (50 and 600 gp). Reaching into or manipulating the pedestal, one discovers that it is another stony horror, this time with a mean bite.

Lithonnite-Mimic #1: HD 7; HP 31; AC 1[18]; Atk 2 tentacles (2d8); Special: concealment, adhesives, body immune to blunt weapons but arms may be hacked away as 2 HD (16-16 Hp, AC 14), rendering the

creature defenceless. [Melan – there's not a description of the adhesives or the grappling tongue]

Giant Centipedes (16): HD 1; HP 8,6,4,2,2,6,7,2,1,3,4,7,6,6,7,7; AC 8[11]; Atk bite (1d4+poison); Special: +4 save vs. lethal poison

Lithonnite-Mimic #2: as above with HP 28, but also with bite attack for 3d4 plus grappling tongue.

F. Obelisks in the coastal sands are all inscribed with the old prayer, "O Arsinoi, defend us from the sea; from the sea's might, from the sea's cold, from the sea's breath, from the sea's retribution". Upon a sacrifice and prayer before the obelisks, there is a 10 to 40% probability depending on the elaborateness of pomp, ritual and oratory that Arsinoi will send a bubble of force from the waters. The bubble may be entered, is impervious to all attacks, and it will transport all within to the Isle of Arsinoi. However, there is also a 1 in 6 chance that the roc will return and attack the bubble – which is an absolute certainty if it is currently on the island.

The Isle of Arsinoi

The domain of the goddess is now quietly gone, the villas faded pink ruins, the halcyon glades possessed of gentle melancholy. In ponderous decay, parklands have turned into a wilderness, where the only common inhabitants are quail and packs of feral dogs (Reaction: 1d6: 1-2 hostile, 3-4 neutral, 5 frightened, 6 docile). Here and



there are old remains of human habitation, from decorative busts to bucolic retreats.

Feral Dogs (4d6): HD 1; AC 7[12]; Atk bite 1d6.

A. The green glint of a tall, seven-level glass tower makes the location of a cluster of villas most conspicuous. The buildings have been reduced to rubble and a few walls, overgrown with vivid flowers. The first three levels of the tower have collapsed on top of each other; ledges and rests provide the only means of ascension. On the 4th level is a rotunda overlooking the entire island and beyond. Above, on the 5th level, glimmering brass bubbles float, bursting into sensuous laughter if prodded. The 6th level holds the statue of Arsinoi; in her hands she holds a brass tablet engraved with a portent: "Beyond me to reach, and in hard prison seen, is Arsinoi's prize freed". The only way up is to climb out through the arched windows and up the tower's side. The 7th level is occupied only by a small pedestal. Resting on the flat surface are two round disks of green glass that still smell of a faint musk and show the faint imprint of a flower in between – but there is a minute crack in the glass, and what the disks may once have held is gone.

B. 18 wild dogs rest in the shades of a terraced garden ornamented with ceramics, and decorated with fat bowls of terracotta. This group of dogs is neutral, and one will lead the group to a small mausoleum if treated well.

The mausoleum of Dumteh Baggamr is in a pleasant grove with flowers, earth-filled vases and creeping plants. The polished brass portal is locked. Within the mausoleum lies a marble burial sarcophagus. Treasures include the gold death-mask of Dumteh Baggamr (500 gp), his bracers (2*100 gp), and his harp with golden strings (200 gp). If these riches are taken, the corpse pronounces a curse: "As you have robbed that which is dear to me, so I will rob that which is dear to you." The characters will thereafter find that their next attempt to depart the island fails at the last moment – boats are rendered useless or swept off from the shore, a raft loaded with equipment will sink, etc.

Wild Dogs (18): HD 1; HP 2,5,6,6,1,7,1,7,7,3,1,3,8,2,3,8,7,7; AC 7[12]; Atk bite (1d6).

C. 14 wild dogs. Terraces are cut into the gentle slope of a hill, forming an interconnected network of small gardens. The trees carry an especially alluring scent, which

is a sort of balm: in the central garden lie several perfectly preserved bodies in all their finery. There is at least 4000 gp in value here, but they are cursed to be an unbearable weight for the one who carries them. At sunrise or dusk, the spirits of the dead drift through the glade.

Wild Dogs (14): HD 1; HP 3,8,8,6,5,1,1,2,2,2,3,5,4,8; AC 7[12]; Atk bite (1d6).

D. The ruins of a small port city have been overgrown with vines and green vegetation. It is often hard to determine where the hill ends and where the rubble piles begin. Cupolas of sky blue and sumptuous gold have fallen or collapsed, and are now hollow shells. While walking the streets, there is a 1 in 3 chance of an attack by 1d4 killer vines. These vegetable horrors are ambulatory, and bear delicate flowers or 1d3 small fruits. 1 in 3 flowers emit a soporific vapour (save vs. poison or become drowsy and fall asleep in 1d3 rounds); 1 in 3 fruits are curative, healing 1d4 points of damage.

Killer Vines (1d4): HD 4; AC 4[15]; Atk 1 vine (1d6+entanglement; strangle 2d6 per round).

D1. Intact low building bears the plaque, "The store-rooms of Batrakheias"; chains bind the portal and faint shuffling noises are heard. Large wooden vats hold salty pickle and the flabby corpses of giant frogs. Batrakheias, his grotesque girth putrefying, shambles around, dragging heavy chains. Slain, the corpse liquescs, turning into a tide of 5d8 killer frogs. In an octagonal room, a soapstone crucible before the altar of Tsathoggus holds a healing balm (this may be rationed into doses of 1d8 healing each, 1d4+4 doses, but with a 20% chance on each application that the skin beneath will become a greenish color).

Batrakheias: HD 6; HP 33; AC 2[17] (chains!); Atk slam (1d10); Special: half damage from piercing weapons, slow moving.

Killer Frogs (5d8): HD 1; HP 8, 6, 4, 2, 7, 3, 1, 2, 8, 1,2, 7, 6, 3, 6, 1, 2, 6, 5, 6, 7, 6, 3, 4, 7, 6, 3, 2, 7, 2, 6, 3, 6, 1, 8, 7, 8, 6, 1, 3; AC 7[12]; Atk bite (1d6); Special: leap attack (+2).

D2. One of the market squares. Open door leads to steps down and an ancient wine cellar, with a passage eventually leading back up to a trapdoor – weighed down by

heavy stone block. Bare interior of a hexagonal tower with no other exit save arrow slits, and a half-broken mirror. In the mirror, the room is splendid and intact: a golden chest is visible on a small table behind the character, crossed scimitars on the wall, and a delicate beaker of wine by a carved wooden chair. These objects may be grasped and retrieved when the character sees them in the mirror. A casual approach works perfectly; a more nuanced one may end up with the experimenter on the other side of the mirror! The chest holds 1100 electrum and is itself worth 1000; one of the scimitars is +1, the other -1 (however, a character may only take one with the other, and it is randomly determined before each battle which one he draws). The wine is a potion of super-heroics.

D3. An open-air amphitheatre sees evening performances of a serpent demon and an ensemble of 45 skeletons and 4 shadows. The demon is seeking guest players for the lead roles of Daskurene and Memphidor, as well as extras for an experimental and highly improvisative play of its own creation, since “those dumb sacks of bones are useless in high artistry”. The play is unusual and would be highly controversial with the literati, but no harm is done to the participants. Depending on performance, the reward may be a lavish gift from the serpent demon’s hidden hoard, or an order to get off the stage! If the characters make an especially unpleasant faux-pas, they might even get attacked and killed. If they lack a boat, the demon may point them to one hidden in the harbour, a bronze construction with self-propelling oars that operates with a command word.

The treasure, hidden under the amphitheatre in one of the deus ex machina rooms (connected by a trapdoor to the stage), consists of 1500 electrum, 20 arrows +2, 22 arrows +1, a dagger of venom and a +3 longbow (with a golden string).

Serpent Demon: HD 8+3; HP 45; AC -3[22]; Atk bite (3d4+deadly poison, -3 saving throw); Special: immune to electricity and mind-affecting attacks, half damage from fire and acid, Magic resistance 65%, +1 to hit, charm person gaze, gate in type V demon (1/day, 25% probability). Spells: level 1 – lesser illusion x2, change self x2; level 2 – illusion, ventriloquism, invisibility, mirror image; level 3 – greater illusion, hallucinatory terrain, suggestion.

Skeletons (45): HD 1; HP 2, 1, 2, 8, 8, 4, 3, 2, 8, 7, 1, 2, 5, 5, 8, 8, 8, 3, 7, 6, 3, 8, 4, 5, 8, 7, 2, 7, 3, 8, 6, 4, 4, 8, 3, 5, 2, 3, 2, 4, 2, 1, 6, 4; AC 6[13]; Atk scimitar (1d6) or claw (1d6).

Shadows (4): HD 3+3; HP 14,14,21,14; AC 7[13]; Atk touch (1d6 Strength points); Special: +1 to hit.

D4. A stele in a forgotten courtyard – glimpsed from the street – bears the image of an ominous cowed figure, and an inscription: “There it is come, alone and wan, to the Isle of Green Reality, and stands forevermore, no more for men, nor indeed for fair Arsinoi”. Around the stele, the walls are burned a sooty black. Prints of human forms are also there, in white contrast. Nothing else remains.



Ruins & Ronin:

Swords & Wizardry for Samurai Chanbara-Movie Gaming
By Mike Davison

Yoshi walked cautiously towards the black pool, his torch casting dancing shadows on the dungeon walls. He held his katana tightly in his other hand. "Careful Yoshi," hissed Hiro, approaching from behind with his yari held in both hands, his shaved head glistening in sweat. "Remember what the monk told us about the pool."

Yoshi ignored him and continued on; great rewards awaited beyond the black waters of the pool. The legends spoke of vast treasures buried in the forgotten halls of the mad shugenja Katsushiro. Suddenly, ripples began to spread from the center of the pool, and Yoshi stopped cold. "Did you see..." His voice was cut off as a strand of web-like silk shot out from the pool and wrapped around his ankle. In an instant he was on his back and being dragged towards the water. His screams cut short, with a loud splash.

Suddenly Hiro was alone and in complete darkness as Yoshi's torch was sucked beneath the surface with the unlucky samurai. He could hear the water thrashing from the pool ahead and then all was silent, except for his breathing..

The samurai films of Japan (sometimes called "chanbara" or "chambara," literally meaning, "sword fighting") are similar to the classic "western" movies of the U.S. Both tell stories set in a fabled and often romanticized past, and neither tries to display history with much accuracy. The historical era is merely a backdrop for the action depicted in the film. It gives the viewer a reference point, and is usually instantly recognizable for what it is. If the opening shot shows a man riding a horse with a pistol on his hip, we know instantly we are watching a western and can identify with it. If the opening shot shows a man walking down a dusty road with a katana on his hip, you know you are about to watch a Chanbara film.

The chanbara were usually set in the last part of the Tokugawa era of Japanese history (1600-1868), the last days of the samurai way of life. As such, they are often tales of social change, and involve samurai adrift on the sea of a changing world.

These movies are an ideal source for swords & sorcery games, as they deal only loosely with the social classes of the era. They provide a more relaxed feel to the traditional Japanese setting. Since historical accuracy isn't key, you can do things like mixing samurai with common "bushi" (peasant warriors), and even adding in magic using new or old character classes. In other words, once you adopt the "movie" version of Japanese society, your game opens up to a whole new horizon for Swords & Sorcery gaming; a horizon with a rising sun. Now all you need to do is add in a lost civilization that has dotted the lands with unexplored ruins, dangerous beasts and magical monsters, and you have a samurai setting to host your Swords & Wizardry game.

For a good list of inspirational movies, check out the following web sites (and put some of these great flicks in your netflix queue).

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chanbara>
<http://www.ninjadojo.com/ninjadojo.htm>

Ruins & Ronin is an upcoming release for Swords & Wizardry, the first project developed on the Swords & Wizardry forums by players.

We started wondering why only Western European archetypes are allowed to experience the thrilling adventures of dungeon crawling. Why not the noble samurai, the mysterious sorcerers – Shugenja, or the devout ascetic Yamabushi? Shouldn't they be allowed to explore mysterious ruins, or fight off bands of goblins? So several of us who enjoy Chanbara movies got together and started trading ideas. The result, I'm proud to say, is Ruins & Ronin. This supplement for the Swords & Wizardry game allows you to play either Chanbara-style scenarios or more traditional dungeoneering in the Swords & Sorcery tradition, but in a Japan-like setting. Now this is not your typical Japanese setting. There are no rules here for Honor or Social Status, and traditional social classes mix in a way they never did in historical Japan. It's based on the movies, not the history books. This is pure swords & sorcery in the land of the rising sun. Ruins & Ronin adds new classes, weapons, and armor for your Swords & Wizardry game.

We have developed all new character classes for the Ruins & Ronin supplement. We have added the traditional Samurai as well as a Bushi warrior class. The Samurai represents the warrior of higher birth, while the

Bushi represents those of lower birth that have forsaken their former life to follow the martial path and make a name for themselves in the wider world. We have added the mystical monk-like Yamabushi, the divine spell caster of the Ruins & Ronin setting. Next we have the Shugenja, the wizardly hermit living on the fringe of society, able to cast powerful spells. Last, we included the Monk, capable of uncanny martial arts abilities.

At the time I'm writing, Ruins & Ronin isn't a finished project, but it might be by the time the magazine hits the virtual bookshelves of the internet. If it isn't published yet, you can take a look at a new monster in this issue of Knockspell, the Jorogumo, to get an idea of what Ruins & Ronin will look like.

Mike Davison lives in Villa Rica, Georgia. He started his role-playing addiction sometime around Christmas of 1982 when (at the age of 12) he received his Moldvay boxed set from Santa Claus (aka: his mom). He is a contributing author on the newly revised OSRIC system (1e retro clone game).

Fighters with Flair!

By Akrasia

One of the great virtues of Swords & Wizardry, Labyrinth Lord, and similar 'old school' games, is that elaborate rules are not relied upon in order to distinguish different fighters from one another. Whether a player's fighter character is like Aragorn, Conan, Robin Hood, or Sinbad the Sailor is determined primarily through role-playing. Nonetheless, some groups may wish for some way to distinguish their fighter characters in game terms. This optional system of 'fighting styles' for fighters is intended to satisfy this desire, while remaining easy and fast. Using this system, not only will a Conan-like character differ from a Robin Hood-like character by means of role-playing, but also, as a tactical matter, through those characters' somewhat different combat abilities.

If you use these rules, a first level a fighter can choose two different fighting styles. The 'berserker,' 'shield master,' and 'swashbuckler' styles can be chosen only once each. The 'unarmed combat' style can be chosen only twice. The 'weapon mastery' option can be chosen multiple times, but only once per weapon type (so a fighter could not choose weapon mastery in spears twice in order to gain a +2 bonus to hit with spears).

An additional fighting style can be chosen by a fighter character once he/she reaches level 4, level 8, and level 12 (so a 12th level fighter will have five fighting styles in total).

Five fighting styles are available (although, of course, the Game Master is free to design others for players to select):

1. Berserker. The fighter gains a +2 bonus to hit and damage for the duration of one combat (melee weapon only), but suffers a +2 [-2] penalty to his/her AC while berserk. Afterwards, the character is exhausted, taking a -2 penalty to all actions. One hour of complete rest (no walking) eliminates the exhaustion.

2. Shield Master. The fighter gains an extra -1 [+1] bonus to his/her AC when using a shield.

3. Swashbuckler. So long as the fighter is wearing 'light' armour (no heavier than leather), is not using a shield, and is not using a large weapon, he/she gains a -2 [+2] bonus to his/her AC. Also, when using two weapons the fighter gains a +2 to hit (instead of +1).

4. Unarmed Combat. The fighter can do 1d6 of normal damage with only his/her fists and feet. If he/she takes this fighting style a second time, this damage increases to 1d8.

5. Weapon Mastery. The fighter gains a +1 to hit with any one type of weapon (axes, bows, broad & long swords, clubs, crossbows, daggers, darts, flails, great swords, halberds, hammers, javelins & spears, maces, quarterstaves, short swords, slings, etc.). Each type of weapon may be chosen only once by a character.

About the Author

Akrasia has been playing fantasy role-playing games sporadically ever since first discovering them as a wee lad in 1980. Born and raised in Canada, in recent decades he has lived in such mythical realms as California, England, and Ireland. Recently chased out of green Hibernia for excessive philosophizing, he is rumoured to now reside somewhere in the melancholy land of Wisconsin, where he professes his dubious ideas to unsuspecting university students.

Class-Based Weapon Damage

By Akrasia

It always has seemed strange to me that in most 'old school' fantasy role-playing games (including, of course, *Swords & Wizardry* and *Labyrinth Lord*) magic-users cannot wield a sword, even to defend themselves. Stranger still, in my opinion, is the prohibition on edged weapons for clerics. This restriction, while perhaps appropriate for priests whose religion resembles that of Medieval Christianity, makes absolutely no sense for the followers of deities such as Athena, Crom, Odin, or Ra.

With this optional system, characters of any class can use any weapon. However, because of different levels of training, the amount of damage a character can do with a given weapon varies depending on his/her class. Moreover, magic-users suffer a -1 penalty to hit when using large weapons.

Weapon Damage Chart*			
Character Class	Small Weapons	Medium Weapons	Large Weapons
Fighters	1d6	1d8	1d10
Clerics	1d4	1d6	1d8
Magic-Users	1d4	1d4**	1d6***

Small Weapons: clubs, daggers, darts, light maces, short swords, slings

Medium Weapons: bows, broadswords, crossbows, flails, hand axes, javelins, heavy maces, spears, war hammers, quarterstaves (two-handed), long swords

Large Weapons: battleaxes (two-handed), great swords (two-handed), halberds (two-handed), lances (mounted only)

* This weapon damage chart is meant to replace the weapon damage chart included in the *Swords & Wizardry* Core Rules.

** Magic-users do 1d6 when wielding quarterstaves with two hands (so the quarterstaff remains the best melee weapon for pointy-headed spell-slingers).

*** Magic-users have a -1 penalty to hit when using large weapons.

Note on Magical Weapons

One implication of this optional system is that non-fighters will now be able to wield magical weapons

(swords, bows, and so forth) previously restricted to fighters. This optional system therefore takes away one of the main advantages of fighters vis-à-vis non-fighters. There are at least three ways for Game Masters to deal with this potential problem. First, Game Masters may simply restrict certain magical weapons to fighters (such a restriction would presumably be part of the enchantment). Second, the Game Master may weaken the benefits conferred by magical weapons on non-fighters. For instance, the Game Master may decree that non-fighters wielding certain weapons (namely, those previously restricted to fighters) receive only half the normal attack and damage bonuses (rounded up) from such weapons. So, for example, a cleric or magic-user wielding a +3 broadsword would receive a bonus of only +2. Finally, if the Game Master is also using the optional system of 'fighting styles' for fighters included in this issue of *Knockspell*, then he or she may decide that fighters have an adequate number of new advantages – namely, the advantages gained by the fighting styles as well as the greater damage inflicted by fighter characters with all weapons, magical or not – that the ability of non-fighters to use any magical weapon is not a serious concern.



RANDOM HIRELING GENERATOR

By Robert Lionheart

Most hirelings are the dregs of human society. These fools are so desperate for a few coins they risk life and limb following even greater fools into the depths of dungeon pits. If they had any sense, job skills or better options, no hireling would ever talk to your characters.

Most hirelings work for one gold coin per day for dangerous work. Light guard duty and manual labor pays one gold coin per week. Meals and place to sleep are expected if the hirelings are away from their home or favorite alleyway. Most expect half payment up front.

Hirelings will bring their own knives or cudgels, which are most likely the only weapons they have any proficiency with using. Most can only wear leather armor properly and few know how to use a shield. In *Swords & Wizardry*, a hireling's attack roll bonus would be +0 (needs a 20 to hit AC 0[19]), his saving throw is 17 and they generally have 1d6-1 Hit Points (minimum 1). They are the classic "less than 1HD" or "level zero" normal humans. They are usually Neutral alignment, but the Traitors tend toward Chaos and the Fanatics toward Law.

HOW TO ROLL A HIRELING

Pick three d6s of different colors and assign one for Disposition, one for Talent and one for a Notable Feature. Roll in secret so you can surprise the players.

TALENT

- 1 Useless: no skills of any use, -1 to any die roll.
- 2 Laborer: basic hireling skills and can lift heavy stuff.
- 3 Street Thug: can use swords, axes or a mace.
- 4 Militia Man: can use a shield and spear.
- 5 Mercenary: can wear any armor and use any weapon or shield.
- 6 Unusual Skill*: basic hireling combat skills and roll 1d6 on Unusual Skills.

NOTABLE FEATURE

- 1 Odd Look: unusual appearance such as face paint, hairstyle, or no teeth.
- 2 Quirky Persona: something strange about the way they walk or talk.



- 3 Nasty Scars: obviously lucky to be alive.
- 4 Joe Average: nothing notable at all.
- 5 Danger Magnet: seems like Joe Average, but the gods hate him.
- 6 Dark Secret*: seems like Joe Average, but roll 1d6 on Dark Secrets

DISPOSITION

- 1 Traitor: always looking to benefit himself first and foremost.
- 2 Greedy: becomes a Traitor if he feels underpaid
- 3 Lazy: makes no effort without supervision
- 4 Drunk: gets deeply intoxicated at every opportunity to do so.
- 5 Loyal: takes pride in doing a good job.
- 6 Fanatic: loyal, but kinda scary.

UNUSUAL SKILL (roll 1d6 if directed from Talent chart) In addition to basic skills, this hireling may be useful in other ways!

- 1 Failed Acolyte of a Temple or Wizard's Tower
- 2 Failed Apprentice of a Wizard
- 3 Failed Tradesman
- 4 Speaks a second language

- 5 Knows local gossip
- 6 Inhuman (the hireling is a dwarf, elf, goblin, kobold or other race than human)

DARK SECRET (roll 1d6 if directed from the Disposition chart) on the surface, the hireling is just another Joe Average, but...

- 1 Insane Maniac possessed by vile spirits, likely to berserk in combat.
- 2 Tagalong someone cannot bear to ever be away from this hireling, such as wayward children, crazy girlfriends or a pet goblin.
- 3 Craven Coward panics and runs at the first sign of danger.
- 4 Martyr for the Cause has a twisted personal reason for taking this job.
- 5 On the Run wanted by the law, bounty hunters or former employers.
- 6 Deep Trouble somehow tied to an enemy of the characters.

MERCENARIES

If the characters seek out only trained mercenaries, just roll for Disposition and Notable Features. Mercenaries are more worldly and jaded than most hirelings so re-roll 1s and 6s on the Disposition chart, but keep the second result. Mercenaries expect at least double the pay of a common hireling and at least triple if they are expected to bring their own weapons and armor (usually leather, shield and a spear).

ROGUE'S GALLERY OF HIRELINGS

Here are a dozen bums loitering around the local tavern!

- 1 Abrog the Laborer/Deep Trouble/ Drunk with 5 HP
- 2 Bungle the Street Thug/On the Run / Greedy with 1 HP
- 3 Chalk the Mercenary/Joe Average/Greedy with 2 HP
- 4 Drox the Militia Man/ Danger Magnet/Lazy with 1 HP
- 5 Evoldo the Useless/ Quirky Persona/ Loyal with 2 HP
- 6 Gig the Useless/Joe Average/Lazy with 2 HP
- 7 Pon the Laborer/Danger Magnet/Fanatic with 4 HP
- 8 Raz Cal the Failed Tradesman/ Nasty Scars/ Drunk with 1 HP

- 9 Tatters the Useless/ Odd Look /Traitor with 2 HP
- 10 Ugu Unk the Mercenary/Joe Average/Loyal with 3 HP
- 11 Valynn the Militia Man/Joe Average/ Traitor with 4 HP
- 12 Wooglet the Failed Wizard's Apprentice/Craven Coward/Drunk with 4 HP

Robert Lionheart can be found haunting various forums as the ever troublesome Spinachcat. He won the 2008 PolyCon Game Design Award for his upcoming Goreblade: Heavy Metal Roleplaying and he has been published in several fanzines and journals. Robert has been a dedicated Old School gamer since 1978.



Editor's Note: Jeff Talanian and Matthew Stanham are producing a new FRPG with the most courageous acronym in the history of fantasy gaming, called Astonishing Swordsmen & Sorcerers. It's not released yet, but this adventure – which is compatible with Swords & Wizardry, OSRIC, and other systems, gives a taste of what's in the works.

CHARNEL CRYPT of the SIGHTLESS SERPENT

an Astonishing Swordsmen & Sorcerers adventure for 4 to 6 or more characters of levels 4 to 7.

by Jeffrey P. Talanian

with special thanks to Matthew J. Stanham for his valuable input.

Jeffrey P. Talanian

Players' Background: The following read-aloud text may be read or paraphrased to the players:

"Plenteous run the gems from the eyeless sockets of the Xavadar Crypt Serpent." Thus the legends speak. For countless generations, treasure seekers have sought the lost barrow of the Xavadars, a noble family of some sixty persons that had builded a vast vault remote from their now ruined dwellings. Therein they entombed themselves before the Green Death claimed them, for this sweeping plague spared neither servant nor lord, leper nor priest in that bygone age. They lay in their gilded sarcophagi, their arms folded, whilst their grand necromancer decanted a fulvous sleeping mist from which no man awakens. And by that one's baleful sorceries was the sightless serpent conjured to protect the crypts, sealed in with its lifeless charges, ever to protect the vault from thieves and robbers. Once per quarter century does the sightless serpent emerge to engorge itself on the men and beasts of Hyperborea before returning to the vault to resume its vigil. And so it has been for nigh a millennium.

The night before the players characters learn of the adventure, a knave in the brothels of Khromarium drunkenly flaunted one of several gems he found whilst hunting heron with his brothers, some ten miles out in the mud flats of the Lug Wastelands. According to the knave, he and his brothers three trailed "... a lumbering reptile, its prints indicating an awkward gait with heavy, oscillating tail." From the mud they plucked gems enough to purchase a sailing galley, but the knave could not resist

temptation; he succumbed to wine, revelry, and an overly loose tongue at the brothel. In consequence, he was robbed and abused by agents of the Harlots' Guild, and due to his loquacity, so too were his brothers served.

The knave, Pietair, a bruised and bloodied man, has today arrested the attention of your adventuring party at a Khromarium tavern. He would lead your group to the serpent's trail before it is lost to the weather. Indeed, to slay the vile Xavadar Crypt Serpent would make heroes of any adventuring band, and likely rich ones at that. Pietair will guide your party across the fly-infested flats directly to the serpent's trail. All he requests is for but one gem so that he may repair the ill-will his brothers now reserve for him.

Referee's Background: Players of Charnel Crypt of the Sightless Serpent are advised to read no further, for here forth is the background and encounter information intended for the eyes of the referee alone. There are some notable omissions from the above account, omissions which the players of this adventure might piece together as they progress, depending on their actions.

THE NECROMANCER: Ivgah the Necromancer is a terrible sorcerer who yet survives in the Xavadar family vault. It is he who performed those gruesome rites almost a millennium ago when he orchestrated the mass suicide of the noble Xavadar family. Empowered by the ritual, from the Black Gulf of negative dimensions he summoned and bound to service the Sightless Serpent, a quasi-deital basilisk that cyclically weeps rills of gems. The gems are small, but precious, black and violet sapphires valued at some 100 gp each; but Ivgah cares not a shred for monetary riches. What he seeks (or, rather, sought) is the rare ebbed-white sapphire, a spell component integral to the baleful necromancy that would raise the noble family to an obsequious form of lichdom in his service.

Unfortunately for Ivgah the Necromancer, a thousand years of quaffing longevity elixirs and conducting rituals of unspeakable perversity has compromised his once brilliant mind. Madness now grips him, and all the lofty ambitions he once pursued with subtle meticulousness are now obfuscated by his insanity. In the charnel crypt the sorcerer dwells, living amongst the noble family who entrusted to him their most precious commodity: their very souls.

Presently Ivghah commands scores of walking dead, the erstwhile serving staff of Xavadar family. They lavish whatsoever attentions upon him as he chooses to command, performing services akin to those they performed in life. Sequestered in the deep vaults lie the sarcophagi that contain the mummified remains of the noble family, awaiting the final incantations of a spell perhaps forgotten by its mad magician. In the meantime, the Sightless Serpent endures, emerging every 25 years to feed. Despite its quasi-deital status, the beast is scant of intelligence; notwithstanding, it is possessed of a palpable hatred for Ivghah the Necromancer.

LAND of HYPERBOREA: The Land of Hyperborea is centered upon a flat earth micro-campaign setting, a polar continent at the End of Time that might be reached via arctic travel, planar travel, or even time travel. Hyperborea is a bleak world that survives under a bloated, scarlet, dying sun. At the rim of this flat earth, the seas spill perpetually into abysmal infinity.

Mankind yet endures in the LAND of HYPERBOREA, but its many epochs are either lost or forgotten, and surviving fragments and artifacts are exceptional. Since risen from its lowly beginnings, mankind has shewn a penchant for survival, and in Hyperborea he perseveres. In the meantime, that which has lain dormant, cataloged in the deepest cells of mankind's subconscious, has now risen to the surface like unbidden flotsam washing to the shores of placid isles of ignorance. Disturbing is the realization of this terrible knowledge, for beneath the awesome mountains of Hyperborea's interior, the Elder Ones sleep. The sleepers yet awaken . . .

Charnel Crypt of the Sightless Serpent is an adventure that takes place in the LAND of HYPERBOREA, sometimes known as The Last Continent. The setting is not required to use this adventure. The port city of Khromarium is easily replaced by one of the referee's design and make, or by some other published setting.

ASTONISHING SWORDSMEN & SORCERERS (AS&S): This adventure is designed for Astonishing Swordsmen & Sorcerers. The AS&S system is inspired by the original medieval and fantasy role-playing game created by Gygax and Arneson, but its pages are full of new innovations and inspirations. The game has a "retro" tone and spirit, as seen in this adventure. The AS&S rules set is not required to run Charnel Crypt of the Sightless Serpent: rules and statistics are presented in minimalistic

fashion, ensuring compatibility most other systems that simulate or draw from the original designs of Gygax and Arneson.

Khromarium: Khromarium is a major port city of Hyperborea, its harbor being the largest known throughout the Last Continent. The city has a Lord Mayor, selected by a ruling oligarchy of men comprising its most powerful knights, nobles, and guild masters. Presently, Lord Mayor Gill Sampatose, Master of the Mariners' Guild, serves as Lord Mayor.

Khromarium's populace is largely Neutral in alignment, though leaning toward Chaos. Although the city is not without the influence of Law, justice is seldom served with any semblance of equality. The city is a dismal, seedy place, choked by the smoke of its factories; poverty and homelessness account for the largest segment of the Khromarium's population. Many of the destitute take sanctuary in Old Khromarium, where once dwelled the most affluent of families, such as the Xavadar Family; that is, before the Green Death swept through this once prosperous part of the city and decimated its population.

If the PCs investigate Khromarium for clues: In Old Khromarium the adventurers will find no clues, for a millennium of death and destruction, plague and misfortune have left no indications of what became of the Xavadar Family. However, should a magician in the party gain access to the Magicians' Guild archives (10 gp for a non-member, free for members), something of the Xavadar Family's magician might be learned, the knowledge preserved in crumbling scrolls of vellum. Ivghah was once a lowly magician of the guild who was expelled for treachery. The records assume that he gained passage to the fabled Isle of Ix, where baleful necromancers learned their foul arts. It noted with surprise in the records that some 20 years later, this lowly apprentice found employment with the Xavadar Family, and that before the noble family could be warned as to Ivghah's treacherous nature and dubious background, the Green Death had already begun to take its toll.

If the PCs investigate myths or legends regarding the Sightless Serpent: Throughout the various corners of Khromarium, the Sightless Serpent might be regarded as an old wives' tale, sometimes used by mothers to warn their children not to venture off to the mud flats beyond the city walls, particularly in summer when the ice melts,

“... lest the Sightless Serpent find you and gobble you up.”

Further investigation might lead the PCs to an old huntsman who frequents the seedier taverns of Khromarium. Rhaimar the Red (ranger, 5) is some 60 years of age now, missing a hand, toothless, and blind in one eye. He wears a soiled red sash around his neck. He reveals what he knows if someone pays his outstanding tab of 12 sp and also buys him at least two gills of wine. Rhaimar claims to have bitten the 30-foot long, 8-legged monster with three arrows before it escaped him some 25 years ago. He also claims to have observed the beast devouring a giant deer that stood 10 feet at the shoulder. Satiated, it ignored his pinpricks and burrowed itself into the mud. Following its trail, Rhaimar procured no less than 205 black and violet sapphires, which he used to purchase a manor and two concubines. He lost it all when his wife poisoned his concubines and burned down his home. Note: Much of this is exaggeration. The Sightless Serpent is about 14 feet long, and Rhaimar recovered no more than 55 gems.

Pietair the Thief and his Sinister Plot: Pietair (thief, 4; see appendix), the man who originally beguiled the PC party with his tale of riches and glory, is a slight man with a narrow face and long black hair, walking with a slight limp. Come morning, he agrees to lead the party to the site 10 miles across the Lug Wastelands, the treacherous mud flats outside Khromarium. Pietair carries a short bow and a pair of daggers, but claims his bad knee and poor health prevent him from fighting, which is the reason he requested the party's protection. Pietair also mentions that he intends to remain at a rocky outcropping, within eyesight of the sinkhole where he and his brothers spied the creature descending. He will not willingly enter the sinkhole under any circumstances. Pietair is a member in decent standing with the Khromarium Thieves' Guild, though he is generally regarded as a fool.

THE ADVENTURE BEGINS: The adventure begins in the Lug Wasteland, with the party and their guide en route to the sinkhole where Pietair and his brothers saw the beast descend.

Across the Lug Wasteland: The Lug Wasteland is a frozen tundra during the sunless winter, but come high summer the tundra softens into treacherous mud flats, where unforgiving tar pits swallow men and beasts. During this

time the Lug Wasteland is alive with giant insects and amphibians. Small red deer run in large herds, and herons of many species pluck about the wetlands.

Experienced travelers of the Lug Wasteland know that wagons and other transports cannot be driven here: most simply walk. Pietair and his brothers link themselves by the waist with rope when they come out to hunt deer and heron here, and Pietair will suggest the party do the same.

As the group crosses the mud flats, they are assaulted swarms of bothersome black flies. Travel is treacherous, and dry land is not a given; wading through much of up to 3 or 4 feet in depth occurs at least three times during the 10-mile journey.

Random Encounters: There is a 1-in-6 chance per mile traveled of a random encounter occurring; a minimum of 10 checks must be made en route to the adventure site. If a random encounter occurs, roll a d8.

d6 / Encounter / # Encountered / General Behavior

- 1 / Giant Frogs / 3-18 / will attack
- 2 / Giant Snake (Constrictor) / 1 / will attack one opponent
- 3 / Giant Ticks / 3-12 / will swarm from the muck
- 4 / Irish Elk (Giant Deer) / 1-8 / will flee unless threatened
- 5 / Mammoths / 1-12 / will walk away unless threatened
- 6 / Stirges / 3-30 / will swarm down to attack
- 7 / Saber-Tooth Tiger (Smilodon) / 1-2 / will sneak and pounce
- 8 / Hazard: Tar Pit

Giant Frog: AC 7; MV 3"(crawl)/24"(leap); HD 3 (hp 14); DMG 1-10 (bite). Violent, man-eating frogs, 4 feet long, 200 pounds. Flee when injured or if half their number eliminated.

Giant Snake (Constrictor): AC 5; MV 9"; HD 6 (hp 27); DMG 1-4 (bite), 2-8 (constrict). Man-eating snake, 40 feet long. If it makes a successful bite, the victim must save vs. paralyzation or constriction damage begins on the next round. Once constriction begins, characters with a total of 60 strength can pull the snake off the victim, if working in concert.

Giant Tick: AC 4; MV 3"; HD 3 (hp 14); DMG 1-4 (bite). After biting, this 3-foot long insect drains blood at 4 hp per round until victim is dead. They do not stop unless killed or driven off by fire. 50% are disease carriers. Disease victims die in 2-8 days unless cure disease is cast.

Irish Elk (Giant Deer): AC 7; MV 18"; HD 4 (hp 18); DMG 2-12/(2-12)(gore). These massive, 1,500 lbs. deer stand 7 feet at the shoulder and have an antler spread of 12 feet. They attack only if threatened, and if two opponents are within 10 feet of one another, they will attempt to gore both.

Mammoth: AC 5; MV 12"; HD 13 (hp 59); DMG 3-18/3-18/2-12/2-12 (tusk/tusk/trample/trample). These massive herbivores stand 14 feet at the shoulder and have tusks of about 12-foot length. They attack only when cornered and threatened.

Saber-Tooth Tiger (Smilodon): AC 6; MV 12"; HD 7+2 (hp 29); DMG 2-5/2-5/2-12 (claw/claw/bite*). When these massive carnivores strike with both claw attacks, they gain 2 additional rear claw attacks that deal 2-8 damage each. *The bite attack of the smilodon is at an additional +2 "to hit".

Stirge: AC 7; MV 18" (fly); HD 1 (hp 5); DMG 1-3 (bite). When these feathered blood-suckers sting a victim with their proboscis, they next begin to drain the victim for 1d4 damage per round. They attack as HD 4 monsters, despite having HD 1.

Hazard, Tar Pit: The party has approached the brink of a semi-concealed tar pit. There is a 1-in-6 chance that a random PC slips in. If there is a ranger leading the party, this chance is reduced to 1-in-10. Unless the PCs are linked by rope, or unless some other safety measure has been taken, a PC who slips into the tar pit has 5 rounds to live, unless a character of 13 strength or greater is available to pull him out. The one who attempts the rescue also has a 1-in-6 chance of slipping in, if no safety measures are taken.

Approaching the Sinkhole of the Sightless Serpent: Refer to MAP #1. There are several outcroppings that surround the site of the sinkhole where Pietair leads the party. These are composed of limestone, as is the sinkhole itself. There are animal trails connecting some of the outcroppings; these are somewhat obvious, as the earth is tamped firm with the hooves of the red deer

herds and Irish elk that frequent the area.

If the PCs leave the beaten trails of Map #1: The mud and muck of this area ranges from 6-inch to 3-foot depth. There are no tar pits here, but the deer herds have attracted a goodly amount of giant leeches. Movement is reduced to one-third of normal. It thus takes a normal, unencumbered man (moving at 12") 10 minutes (1 turn) to move 120 feet. For every turn of movement, the referee should roll a d6. If a 1 is rolled, a random party member is attacked by a giant leech.

Giant Leech: AC 8; MV 6" (swim); HD 2 (hp 9); DMG 2-12 (bite). The leech has an anesthetizing bite. Unless the damage from the bite reduces the character's hit points to 50%, or unless the consequential blood drain does so, there is an 11-in-12 chance that the character will be unaware of the attack. The affixed leech drains a hit point amount equal to its HD per round.

Area #A, Pietair's Point: This is the outcropping where Pietair (see appendix) leads the party, and points out the sinkhole. If the PCs insist on poking around the area before entering the sinkhole, Pietair complains of his bad knee and says he must now rest and recover himself.

Area #B, Hawk Nest: Here 2 marsh hawks, a mating pair, are building a nest at this 25-foot high outcrop. They fly off if approached. Soon, when the female lays her clutch, they will be more aggressive if intruded upon.

Area #C, Stirge Nest: There are 12 stirges roosting at this remote outcropping, which is surrounded by mud of 4-foot depth. There is a 3-in-6 chance that the stirges will attack a party that approaches within 80 feet. If they have not already, they will attack once the party achieves the outcropping.

Stirges, 12: AC 7; MV 18" (fly); HD 1 (hp 5); DMG 1-3 (bite). Bite followed by blood drain at 1-4 damage per round. They attack as HD 4 monsters.

Area #D, Gate to Xavadar Family Vault: An illusion of rock and debris covers the main gate to the Xavadar Family Vault. Otherwise, this outcropping is among the most extensive in the area, rising to 30-foot height. A natural salt lick attracts red deer and Irish elk (giant deer) to this location. If the illusion is discovered, a massive double door of bronze is revealed, of 12-foot width and 18-foot height. The door is barred from the interior (locked).

Area #E, The Sinkhole: The sinkhole is about 15 feet in diameter, its walls of moldy limestone. It drops some 50 feet down to a floor pooled to a depth of 1 foot with wet clay. A tunnel stretches northeast, it being of 10 to 20-foot width and 12-foot height.

There is a gelatinous cube hidden in a nook some 15-feet above the floor of the sinkhole bottom. Shortly after the PCs arrive (perhaps 2-5 minutes), it will squeeze down to the floor. If the PCs remain, and it is daylight, they likely will see the light blurred by the descending cube; otherwise, the monster will begin to trail them.

Gelatinous Cube: AC 8; MV 6"; HD 4 (hp 18); DMG 2-8 (touch). If flesh is touched it is anesthetized unless save vs. paralyzation succeeds. Monster unaffected by cold, fear, lightning, paralyzation, and polymorph spells and magic.

Entering the Charnel Crypt: There are two means by which the PC party might enter the Charnel Crypt. The first, and most obvious, is the sinkhole through which the Sightless Serpent passes. The second is the secret door of Area #D. Once a means of entry is established, refer to MAP #2.

#1. Sinkhole Tunnel: Note the gelatinous cube as mentioned at Area #E. Shortly after the PC party begins to traverse this tunnel, it will begin to follow them. It should catch up to them at a time as logically determined by the referee.

The tunnel at the bottom of the sinkhole runs from 10 to 20-foot in width and about 12 feet in height. It grades downward at a slight angle. The tunnel is largely composed of limestone, and its walls and ceiling are slick with algae and mold. A three-foot deep stream runs along the right side of the tunnel. The water is the result of seepage, and is thus well-filtered and drinkable.

A few animal bones are littered about. A ranger (or other huntsman-type) will easily identify these as deer bones, clean and parched. The bones are not the victims of the Sightless Serpent; rather, they belong to those unfortunate animals which ventured too close to the rim of the sinkhole.

#2. C-Shaped Cavern, North End: About 500 bats roost here. Stalactites bristle from the 30-foot ceiling of this large, C-shaped, limestone cavern. A large pool of water

is fed by the stream of the tunnel southwest.

The cavern is quite rancid, smelling of bat guano. The pool water hosts no life and is poisonous to drink. If a small quantity is sipped, save vs. poison or suffer a 3-day stomach illness (-1 "to hit"; -1 damage). If a large amount is consumed, save vs. poison or die.

The 500 bats are not easily disturbed, unless foolhardy adventurers directly seek to provoke them. They are insectivorous and swarm off to feed for about 8 hours per night, leaving at dusk and returning at dawn. Incidental conflict is a possibility during these hours, if the referee so desires.

Bats, 500: AC 8; MV 24" (fly); HD (hp 2); DMG 1. If incited, 11-20 bats will swarm past each opponent, clawing and biting.

#3. C-Shaped Cavern, South End: Here lies a ledge overlooking the underground pond as noted at #2. Hundreds of years ago, when Ivgah the Necromancer still possessed his sanity, he had his undead servants carve a path from #10 to this location, so that he might fish the pond. Back then, there was an abundance of blind albino fish to be snagged, but as the sinkhole widened (see Area #E) bats found this place; as they proliferated, their guano and urine poisoned the water. The iron-bound door here is not locked, but it is swollen and stuck (force door check required).

#4. Hub Cavern: This high-ceilinged cavern bristles with stalactites and stalagmites, some of which connect to form great limestone pillars. A violet glow emanates in intermittent patches from the walls and ceiling here. This is violet glowmoss, which, if harvested in 12-inch patches or greater, can provide a 15-foot radius of violet light for 11-20 turns.

#5. Shallow Cavern: There are 2 rust monsters dwelling here. This wide but shallow-ceilinged cavern is dark and dry. Its lumpy ceiling is of 5-foot height, and despite the otherwise wet conditions in the surrounding areas, here it is dry and somewhat dusty. A film of red and green dust coats the floor and walls. Lying about the floor there are 3 black and violet sapphires (100 gp each).

Deeper within the cavern can be found the skeletons of two men, each garbed in rusted chain mail, rusted blades by their sides. They each have leather pouches

stiff and rotted with age. One pouch contains 12 gp and one black sapphire (100 gp), and the other one holds 15 gp and one violet sapphire (100 gp). In the rotted satchel of one man there is a potion of heroism and a rope of climbing. A bone scroll case can be found in a similarly rotted satchel by the hip of the other man. It contains a note scribed on vellum that reads:

Entry 1: Our journey across the Lug Wasteland was met with success. We encountered a monster along the way, and after pricking it with our arrows, we fled. We have now discovered the sinkhole where the Sightless Serpent has been witnessed.

Entry 2: Shortly after descending, we discovered a tunnel. The tunnel has opened to a few larger caverns that present no sign of our ancestral family vaults. There is little doubt that had we not just discovered a pair of sapphires to corroborate the legend of the Sightless Serpent, we surely would have been discouraged. Alas, hope is rekindled, and we will press on. We must find and destroy the treacherous and abominable necromancer, Ivgah, lest he complete his incantations and forever mar the souls of our good and noble ancestors. Ivgah must die. –Uvlah Xavadar

Inspection of the bodies soon incites the 2 rust monsters. Note the 5-foot ceiling, and how it might affect those who are hunched over, particularly if they employ large weapons.

Rust Monsters, 2: AC 2; MV 12"; HD 5 (hp 23); DMG --. The rust monster attacks metal, targeting weapons and armor. If the monster strikes, or if a weapon strikes it, that item immediately turns to rust, even if magical.

#6. Large Empty Cavern: This large cavern has an 18-foot ceiling from which stalactites hang. Violet glowmoss is profuse here (see #4).

#7. Tunnel to Xavadar Family Crypt: This tunnel is in part natural, in part gouged out by the Sightless Serpent. The beast smashed through the entry chamber (see #9) when it sensed the presence of this tunnel, and has since used it as a point of egress from the vault to feed every quarter century. Although the necromancer Ivgah bound the beast from touching the main entry (see #8) of the vault, it has proven resourceful, and found other means to enter and depart.

#8. Descending into the Vault: Long, broad stairs descend to another double door of bronze set in a Gothic arch. Graven upon the door in bold letters is the word XAVADAR. Once magically sealed, the door's magic has since faded – and the Ivgah the Necromancer realizes it not. Now the doors are simply locked.

#9. Entry Chamber, 60' x 60'. Here lies the Sightless Serpent. Murals (albeit faded and chipped) of noblemen garbed in silks and tall conical caps, and seated on thrones, are painted along the walls of this large entry chamber. The walls are of 18-foot height, with a ceiling that arches to 26 feet. Depending from the center of the ceiling there is a brass chandelier that holds 24 tapers that burn, yet do not melt (if removed, however, they indeed begin to burn down, taking 4 hours to do so, each taper providing about a 10-foot radius of light).

There are four doors in this chamber: a double door to the north, a double door to the south, and two normal doors, east and west. All are unlocked, save the door to the east, which is stuck (force door check required).

The northwest corner of the chamber has been demolished, now opening to a lengthy tunnel (see #7). The southeast corner holds a massive pile of mud-stained debris. The pile has a semi-circular shape and rises to a height of 12 feet. This is the nest of the Sightless Serpent. Astute characters will note that the mud stains are relatively fresh. Further scouring of the debris (1d6 turns) results in the discovery of 2d4 black and violet sapphires (worth 100 gp each). The Sightless Serpent is disturbed only if a PC climbs and looks into the nest, or if the adventurers begin pulling apart or otherwise attempting to destroy the nest. Silent parties, however, might surprise the slumbering monster.

If disturbed, the creature emerges: an eight-legged, 14-foot tall basilisk, pale and bloated, with no eyes—just hollow sockets. When enraged, it roars (1-2 times during the battle), and gems stream from its empty eye sockets like tears (3d4 black and violet sapphires, 100 gp each). To kill the monster is significant in that it forever prevents Ivgah from completing the necromancies that would raise the entire Xavadar family. Presently he has but 4 of the requisite white sapphires. Sightless Serpent: AC 2; MV 6"; HD 10 (hp 60); DMG 1-6/1-6/2-16 (claw/claw/bite). Each claw and bite is paralyzing (save vs. paralysis). If a character's flesh touch-

es the scaly hide, the character is turned to stone (save vs. petrification). If remove curse is cast on the monster, it will immediately seek vengeance on the necromancer, Ivgah.

#10. Preparation Room, 30' x 40': There is a large stone-carved desk in this chamber before which is a large chair of oak. A large bookshelf spans the south wall. There is a secret door here, a revolving bookcase (3' x 8'). Brittle sheets of papyrus and debris are littered about, the largest accumulation upon the desk itself.

Bookshelf: Contains many historical volumes pertaining to what is now termed "Old Khromarium". All the information is pre-Green Death, and in total there are 18 volumes that will be of great interest to the sages at the Khromarium Library. A total price of 250 gp might be earned, or a tenth of that if the first offer is taken.

Ivgah's Papyrus Scrolls: These sheets largely hold the fragmented and incomplete ravings of a madman. Only a magician can understand all that is written; Ivgah uses many esoteric terms and antiquated spelling and sentence structure, language as spoken and written a thousand years ago. But it is close enough to "common" as to be understood by any literate person. What becomes clear after 2 hours of organizing and perusing is this:

Ivgah lied to and betrayed the Xavadar Family into believing his ritual would deliver their souls to a higher place. Indeed, the ritual and mummification process was all part of his evil scheme.

He has a deep hatred for the men of Khromarium, and aspires to unleash the 12 liches upon that "despicable shantytown" and bring ruin to it, leaving the Magicians' Guild for last.

He used a poison gas, to which he had inured himself, to euthanize the 12 noble family members and their 48 servants. He indeed learned his dark arts at Ix, the dread Isle of the Necromancers.

He ensorcelled the Sightless Serpent both to guard the crypts, and to gain its rarely produced white sapphire, which must be set in the skull of the prospective lich to animate it. His writings reveal that he was waiting for the serpent to produce 12 such gems before conducting his wicked ceremony. Later writings (of the last century, at least) suggest he may have forgotten or

lost comprehension of this task, his mind compromised by madness.

His elixirs of youth, he believes, were doing something to his mind that he was warned of whilst apprenticing at the Isle of Ix.

Scattered amongst the various papyrus scrolls there can be found a misplaced scroll of animate dead. Up to 200 sheets of blank papyrus can be recovered, as well as quills of various sizes and several pots of squid ink.

#11. Servants' Vault, 60' x 120': The stench of death hangs heavy in the air of this massive and musty chamber. The open archway leads to a massive crypt lined with 48 sarcophagi. This is where the 48 family servants were entombed, but Ivgah animated them each and all to serve his vile purposes. He selected his favorites to remain with him, and for centuries charged the rest to positions of guardianship. At some point, however, these 30 skeletons returned to their coffins. If one coffin lid is lifted or otherwise disturbed, they all emerge to attack.

Skeletons, 30: AC 7; MV 6"; HD 1/2 (hp 4); DMG 1-6 (claw). These undead take 1/2 damage from edged weapons.

The coffins are not very elaborate, built of pine and with loose lids. Searching through them, the following treasure might be discovered: 5 silver chains (3 gp each), 15 engraved silver rings (5 gp each), 1 pearl (25 gp), 15 gp, 30 sp.

#12. Hall of Tapestries, 20' x 130': A dim violet glow emanates throughout the length of this long hall. Massive tapestries rotten and thick with mold depend from rusted iron rods mounted upon the 12-foot height walls, which meet an arched ceiling of 16-foot height. So ancient are the tapestries, so long exposed to mildew and moisture, that their design is lost to the ages. Violet glowmoss is sporadic throughout, intermingled with normal moss and mold. At the end of the hall there is a locked iron door mottled with rust.

Trap: Ten feet before the iron door, there is a trap. It is a 16-foot wide by 2-foot deep pressure plate that, if depressed, triggers the walls left and right to slam shut, iron spikes emerging. If a character is in the area of effect of the sprung trap, an avoidance/breath weapon save must

be made. Failure results in 5d6 damage, and success indicates half damage. The referee might give a +2 bonus on the save to anyone at the edge of the trap's range. One turn after closing, the walls slide back into place and the pressure plate lifts.

#13. Statuary of the Ancients, 50' deep, 60' point-to-point: This large hexagonal chamber has a statue in each corner (6 in total). The floor is composed of large square flagstones, and the walls are 18 feet high, with a ceiling that vaults to 26 feet in height. The angled walls northeast, southeast, northwest, and southwest each have a shallow alcove holding a large bronze scone sculpted to portray a leering, demonic visage. Each holds a green flame (continual light) that washes the entire chamber in a lime-green glow. An iron-bound oaken double door (unlocked) is set in the north wall. The double door is 10 feet wide and rises to a Gothic arch of 16 feet. The archway is of solid granite and engraved with the following: XAVADAR FAMILY VAULT

Xavadar Ancestral Statues: These were transported here from the Xavadar mansion when the family fled the city to escape the Green Death and commit group suicide. The statues, each sculpted of white marble, take on a green hue from the wall sconces. Each statue is of 6-foot height and is placed upon a 3' x 3' x 3' marble plinth. The statues portray 4 men and 2 women.

The men are large and bearded, each garbed in a breastplate and wearing a horned helm. Each holds a boar spear in a "shoulder arms" position, the butt of the weapon touching the plinth whilst the shaft rests in the crook of the shoulder. Each man is slightly different from the next, but they share similar, brooding features.

The two women are voluptuous of hip and breast. They are garbed in light gowns, and each bears a severe, unforgiving countenance. Their hair is tightly bound and wreathed in flowers. One woman is portrayed with her arms thrust forward and bent at the elbows so that her open-fingered hands are lifted to chin level; the other woman's arms are similarly portrayed, thrust and bent at the elbow, except her forearms and hands are unnaturally downward bent.

The plinth of each statue is mounted with an engraved brass plate. Each plate is engraved with a name. The men: Hrith Xavadar, Vledemar Xavadar, Yuugmir Xavadar, and Grishmek Xavadar. The women: Grel

Xavadar (upturned arms) and Eringa Xavadar (downturned arms). Grooves along the elbows of the two female statues might be observed by an astute searcher.

Trap: If the forearms of Eringa are upturned, a poison gas trap releases, burning the eyes, nose, and throat for 3-30 damage (save vs. poison for half).

Secret Trap Door: If the forearms of Grel

#14. False Xavadar Family Vault, 60' x 60': A dozen stone sarcophagi line this large, dusty chamber, six on each side. In the center of the sarcophagi there is a massive, 10-foot stone statue of a warrior girded in plate mail and bearing arms.

Thaumagorga Statue: This statue depicts a Duke of Hell with whom Ivgah has made dark pacts. The statue is posed in an attitude of attack. It wears a great horned helm that conceals its features. The hands of the faceless warrior grip the stout shaft of a halberd. On its back is strapped a two-handed scimitar, and by its side there is a broad sword. The statue radiates magic and Chaotic Evil. The figure is recognizable to any cleric or magician, and most other Hyperboreans as well. Only a fool would desecrate it. The punishment for doing so is left to the diabolical imagination of the referee.

If the Thaumagorga Statue is approached within ten feet, a pair of bluestone slabs recessed in the walls of the entryway slam shut. If anyone is standing where the slabs close, he must attempt to avoid being crushed to death (Save vs. avoidance/breath weapon or die). After the walls close, 6 of the stone sarcophagi burst open: 2 ghouls emerge, screeching and gnashing their broken teeth, and 7 skeletons follow.

Ghouls, 2: AC 6; MV 9"; HD 2 (hp 9); DMG 1-3/1-3/1-4 (claw/claw/bite). If these undead strike an opponent, that one must save vs. paralysis or be paralyzed. If a man is killed by a ghoul, he later becomes one.

Skeletons, 7: AC 7; MV 6"; HD 1/2 (hp 4); DMG 1-6 (claw). These undead take 1/2 damage from edged weapons.

This room is a ruse and a trap intended to foil would-be robbers. Once the stone slabs slam shut they must be pulled at the seam in order to be parted. Ivgah has bidden his undead servants do this in times past. To pull the slabs open requires an extraordinary feat of strength, similar to how one might lift a portcullis or bend the iron bars of a jail cell. Up to four characters can work together to part the slabs (thus combining their probability of success).

There is no treasure in this room. The stone sarcophagi that did not burst open simply hold the chewed bones of victims past.

#15. Pit and Idol: There is a covered pit trap in the hall here, 20 feet deep. If the trap is not discovered, it triggers when 100+ pounds of weight tread upon it. West of the pit, set in an alcove, there is a 2.5-foot malachite idol of a fat, warty toad, with horns upon its head. From its mouth lolls a thick, wart-covered tongue.

#16. Iron Door at End of Tunnel: At the bottom of the three sets of stone stairs, there is a rusty iron door. The door is not locked, but it is stuck. If a player character attempts to burst open the door, the referee should ask the player to explain how he or she goes about it, for on the other side of the door there is a 20 foot open pit.

To the right of the iron door there is a secret door, which is 6' x 6' and pivots on a greased central axis if pressed.

#17. Xavadar Family Vault: Here lies the true charnel house of the Xavadar Family. There is another Thaumagorga Statue here, identical to that which is found in the false family vault (see #14) except that it is bronze sculpted. It radiates an intense aura of Evil. In a secret compartment at its base, there lie 4 white sapphires (worth 1000 gp each). At the east side of the room there is an iron door (locked).

There are two wings in this chamber, north and south. Each holds 6 tombs. Within each tomb there is a gilded bronze sarcophagus, graven with necromantic symbols of a portentous species. Each sarcophagus can slide out on a greased slab, if a total of 25 strength or greater is pulling. Within each sarcophagus there is a mummy, tightly wrapped in hardened, yellow cloth. These are the 12 noble Xavadars that Ivgah, the treacherous necromancer, would have raised if he had he not

lost his mind. The potential of four liches being raised by Ivgah is a future possibility, for he possesses the required material components (as noted above).

Note: At one time the Xavadar family had thousands of gold in valuables here, but the necromancer expended them as material components for his various dark arts. Exceptionally excessive noise at this location might stir the necromancer from his deep slumbers at #18.

#18. The Conjuration Room: This hexagonal chamber is where Ivgah the Necromancer dwells with his 9 zombies (females all), preserved to the necromancer's warped tastes and scantily clad in rotting green and yellow silks. The zombies stir when the iron door at the end of the hall is opened, and soon afterward Ivgah awakens.

It has been centuries since Ivgah has dealt with intrusion, but he is always prepared with his full allotment of spells. He sits upon his throne of bone in the center of the chamber, where he is surrounded by a magic circle of protection from good. The circle is set within a pentagram etched in the flagstone floor.

Ivgah bids his "guests" to enter. He presents as a tall, bald necromancer, pale of skin, and garbed in tattered robes. His 9 zombies surround him. Ever seeking to preserve his own abominable life, the necromancer attempts to frighten the PCs away, by promising them a most wretched plague if they do not at once flee. The plague, he promises, will spread quickly, ushering in a new Green Death. He claims that they will be responsible for it, unless they run for their very lives, so he states. He laughs and mocks his intruders, cackling somewhat incoherently, and twitching. If fear and intimidation fail, he and his zombies attack.

Zombies, 9: AC 8; MV 6"; HD 1 (hp 5); DMG 1-8 (punch). Always lose initiative. Immune to cold spells, as well as charm, hold, and sleep. Holy water does 2-8 damage.

Ivgah the Necromancer: ALGN CE; AC 8; MV 12"; HD 8 (hp 20); DMG (by weapon). He stands within a permanent protection from good, 10' radius (good characters attack at -1 "to hit" and Ivgah makes saves at +1 vs. good character spells). He has a +2 dagger. He has the following spells* at his command: cause light wounds x2, protection from good x2, curse x2, darkness 5' radius, fireball, speak with dead x2, cause serious wounds x2, and raise dead. (*Note that Ivgah represents an Aston-

CHARNEL CRYPT OF THE SIGHTLESS SERPENT

by Jeffrey P. Salanian

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Map #1



ishing Swordsmen & Sorcerers necromancer, combining clerical and magician spell lists.)

Throne of Bone: Under the throne the necromancer hides what remains of his tools and components: his gargoyle-skin spell book (containing the same spells he has memorized), 5 black and violet sapphires (100 gp each), and 4 elixirs of longevity. There is also an iron box that holds some of his necromantic components: a steel vial containing some gelatinous cube matter, a vial of powdered mammoth bone, and some mummified bat wings.

Appendices:

Concluding the Adventure: When the PCs have done all they intend to or are capable of, they will likely exit via the main gate (Area #D) or up the sinkhole (Area #E). Pietair awaits (or will have fled after 3 nights). He begs for his sapphire and then three more (one for each brother, so he claims). As the party enters the gates of Khromarium, he says his goodbyes, whilst attempting a hurried pick-pocket on a random character. He then runs off (his bad knee seemingly cured by his rest on the outcropping).

Pietair (Thief, 4): ALGN CE; AC 8 (leather); MV 12"; HD 4 (hp 14), DMG (by weapon). He carries 2 daggers, 1 short bow, 12 arrows, 1 leather backpack, 1 thieves' tools set, 25' rope, bedroll, 12 gp, 10 sp.

About the Author: Jeffrey Talanian lives with his wife and three children in the fine state of New Hampshire. His recent credits include Castle Zagyg: The Upper Works (co-authored with Gary Gygax), Yggsburgh: The Store-

house District, and Yggsburgh: The Town Halls District, all published by Troll Lord Games. He has also served as a regular contributor to The Crusader magazine. With his co-author Matthew J. Stanham, Jeffrey is presently at work on a bold new RPG, called Astonishing Swordsmen & Sorcerers. For more information, be sure to check out swordsmen-and-sorcerers.com.

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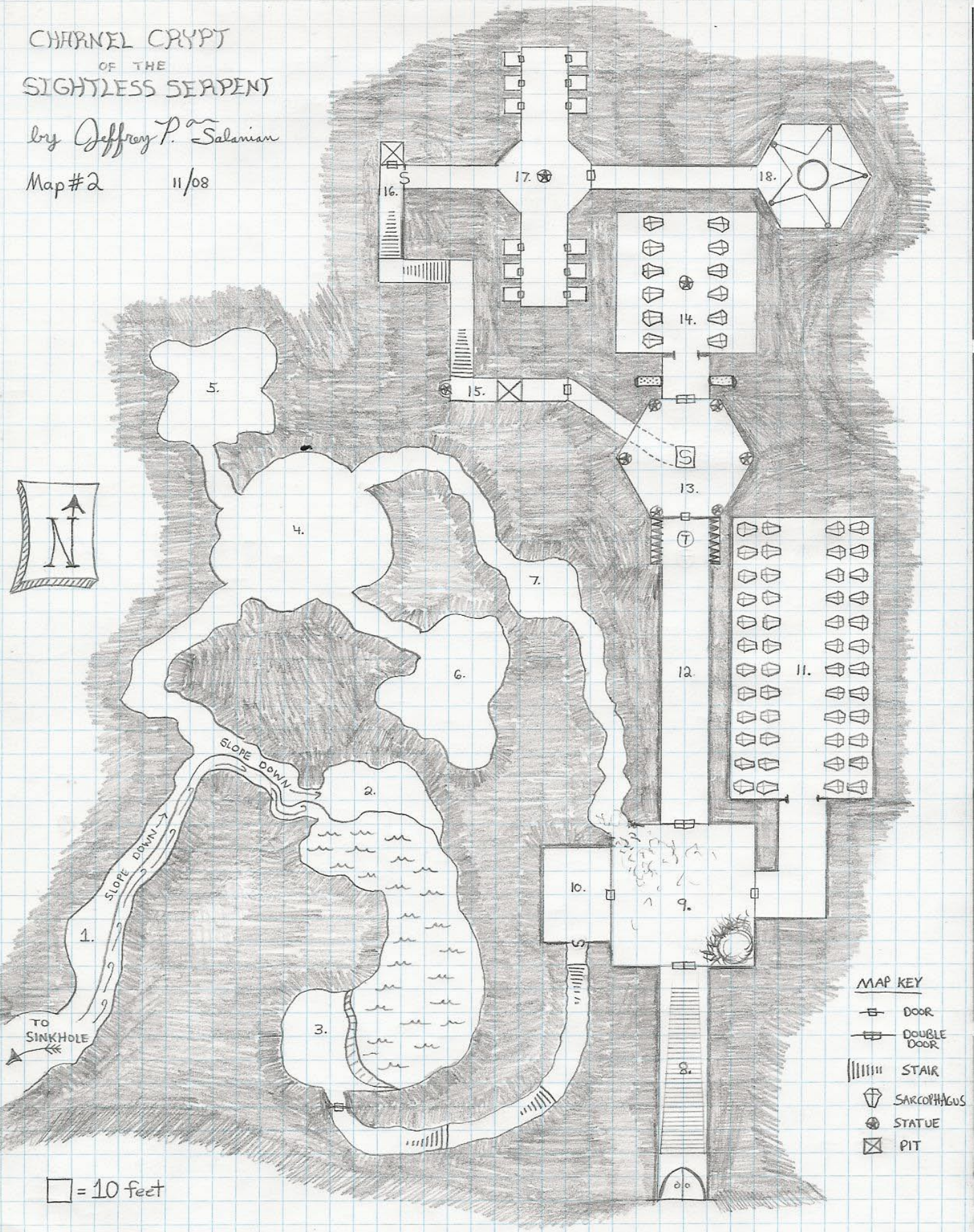
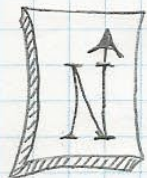
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CHARNEL CRYPT OF THE SIGHTLESS SERPENT

by Jeffrey P. Salanian

Map #2

11/08



The Dungeon Alphabet

by Michael Curtis



*With apologies to
Kenneth Hite*

Over the course of the almost thirty-five years that have passed since *Dungeons & Dragons* was first published, it is safe to say that quite a few dungeons have been dreamt up by those of us who participate in this hobby. Those dungeons have run

the gamut from professionally published gaming accessories to the scratchpad constructions of semi-crazed home brewing DMs. Despite these diverse origins, the dungeon as an adventure setting has accumulated quite a collection of tropes and clichés - well-trod territory that has seen the passing of uncountable players and their characters. And while times change and editions come and go, some of these tropes remain consistent in dungeon depths.

When I returned to the hobby after an extended absence, I set out on a journey to re-acquaint myself with my gaming roots. The best way to do so, I concluded at the time, was to return to the birthplace of the game - the dungeon. Thus I began work on my own megadungeon, affectionately known as *The Dungeon Not Yet Named™*. To help recapture and maintain the classic dungeon setting I was searching for, I began sifting through my years of adventures on both sides of the DM screen, trying to nail down the tropes of the dungeon that I thought best encapsulated that old school feeling. In the end, I had quite a list.

To better organize these classic dungeon elements and to remind myself of what I was looking to capture during the design process, I arranged them into a convenient *Dungeon Alphabet* for easy reference and inspiration. Of course in doing so, I had to whittle down the list to just twenty-six entries. These twenty-six might not match another person's list, but I think they get within shouting distance of a universal dungeon-crawl collective unconscious, if such a thing exists. Plus, it's a

bit more interesting than "A is for Apple" and "B is for Ball."

A is for Altars

Blood-stained or radiantly holy, altars are the thresholds separating the mortal from the divine. The site of ghastly rites or benign entreaties, altars lie in grand chambers decorated with religious artifacts and symbols, or in secret places far from the prying eyes of righteous inquisitors. To tread upon the steps of an altar is to walk on ground sacred to a power greater than oneself, a risk that should not be undertaken lightly by adventurers. Like Statues, some altars possess strange powers that can reward the devout or smite the heretical. If the party seeks to thwart the plans of an evil sect, they can be sure that the final conflict will occur at the site of an altar; one surrounded by the suicidal minions and the fell servants of the cult.

B is for Books

Containing lost magics, cryptic clues, and Things Best Left Unknown by Man, books are treasures unto themselves. Books are massive tomes, often protected with locks, glyphs or contact poisons. They may be Yellowed with age or be suspiciously pristine, protected by arcane means. Bound in strange materials - such as dragon hide, demon skin, or human flesh - and decorated with gems, precious metals, and other rare materials, to wrest a book from the hands of its owner is to recover a valuable prize. That is, if the book is not a threat in and of itself.

When included as set-dressing, books always crumble to the touch, are spoiled by moisture, or are treatises on mundane topics and not worth the encumbrance of returning to the surface with. When intended as treasure, they are placed atop lecterns, on desks covered with arcane tools, or within shafts of glowing light. Mostly intended to pacify the magic-user who never gets any good magical items, they are sometimes useful to other classes, raising the ability scores or even experience levels of fighters, priests and thieves.

C is for Caves

Deep beneath the earth lie pockets of darkness not formed by the hands of intelligent builders. Often found in the lower levels of proper dungeons, caves

are places where Nature, in all her strangeness, still reigns supreme. They are the token nod to ecology by the DM, often being home to Fungi that serve as the bottom of the dungeon's food chain. That is, when the Fungus itself is not feasting upon the other denizens of the dungeon.

It is in caves that strange Pools form, and whose ceilings serve as homes for bats, cave fishers, and the ubiquitous piercer. Amongst the stalagmites on the cave floor, the races of subterranean evil gather, plot, and prepare for war. The walls drip with moisture and are patterned with veins of iron, gold, and mithral. Their vast spaces Echo with the slightest sound. To venture into the caves is to leave the ordered realm of rooms and Hallways behind. One hopes the adventurers' mapping skills are up to the task...

D is for Doors

Barriers between the ordered lands of light above and the shrouded halls of evil below, doors are often as dangerous as what lies behind them. Home of Traps and ear seekers alike, doors are never to be trusted. They are stubborn to open and quick to close once the party has passed through. The door's thickness obscures the sounds of those who lurk behind them, clouding their numbers even when their gibbering tongues can be perceived.

Doors come in many forms, but iron bound wood are the most common, usually swollen with the moisture of many years. A door that opens easily is a sign of danger. Either it is used regularly by the creatures within, indicating that many monsters lie just ahead, or it is an invitation to visit the hungry denizens or traps that lay behind it.

E is for Echoes

The stone walls, floors, and ceilings of the dungeon play tricks with noise and sound. The voices of the party ring all too loud in vast chambers, and the tread of their booted feet carries much too far down the Hallways, alerting those who live within. Echoes muddy the sounds of monsters, causing their numbers to sound greater or lesser than are actually present. They amplify the sounds of a driven iron spike or the tapping of a 10' pole, summoning wandering monsters to dinner. An astute dwarf might be able to judge the size of a cave by

the echoes reverberating within, but certain creatures use those same echoes to track down their prey.

F is for Fungi

Loathsome growths birthed in the fetid environment of the dungeon, fungi are both malevolent and benign, but always unsettling. From gigantic toadstools to patches of tiny mushrooms, fungi in the dungeon are more treacherous than their upper world counterparts. Sometimes they are edible, if the party has run out of rations; but more commonly it is the fungi that do the eating, infecting the unwary with fatal, alien growths. Not even keeping one's distance is protection against this unnatural life, as some fungi can uproot themselves to walk freely within the dank confines of the dungeon. Mostly unintelligent, driven only by the need to reproduce themselves in the flesh of the adventurer, they cannot be parleyed with, bribed, or distracted by food or treasure. Even when intelligent, the drives and motivations of fungi are too alien to be easily comprehended.

G is for Gold

It is for gold that the brave or foolish venture into these unwelcoming subterranean locales. Without the prospect of gold, the party would pursue less fatal vocations. Gold is plentiful underground, either in the form of coins, ornamentation, or naturally occurring veins. It can never be accurately predicted where it may lie, however. Caches of forgotten gold are concealed in the most unlikely of places, thus encouraging the party to leave No Stone Unturned, no Room unsearched, and no Door left unopened. Without gold, there would be no adventure; so it should be in an abundant, perhaps never-ending, supply. Acquiring this plentiful substance, however, should never be easy. Unguarded gold, gleaming in the light of a torch, is always a prelude to danger.

H is for Hallways

Like Doors, hallways are never to be trusted. Seemingly constructed of uniform stone blocks and of regular appearance, the hallway is never what is truly seems. Some slope almost undetected, guiding the party to deeper levels than they intended to venture into. Others hide Traps, concealed within, beneath, or above the unassuming stonework of the corridor. Others Echo unsettlingly, announcing the presence of those who pass through them.

Even when of plain construction, hallways are very rarely clean and unadorned. When they are, it is a sure sign that a gelatinous cube dwells on this level and may soon pass this way again. More commonly, the hallways are strewn with reminders that the party is not the first to tread these corridors. Bloodstains, bones, burnt out torches, broken weapons, and pieces of shattered armor all lie scattered about the floor: tokens of the unlucky predecessors who came before. Likewise the walls of hallways often sport adornments. Frescoes, mosaics, paintings, and bas-reliefs decorate the corridors and each may hide a sinister secret that awaits those who incautiously examine them.

I is for Inscriptions

Those who have come before you have left writings to mark their passage. Cryptic clues, warnings written in blood, ancient riddles, strange sigils, and curious runes are found inscribed on surfaces deep beneath the earth. Some provide hints as to where treasures may be found, while others seek to keep the party from venturing further into the dungeon. Some inscriptions are easily deciphered, having been written in the language of the surface races. Others are more arcane, requiring useful spells, cipher wheels, or the knowledge of dead languages to decode.

Inscriptions can be deadly to read or to speak aloud. One never knows if some strange writing is actually a symbol, a glyph of warding, or explosive runes. Or perhaps those writings are words of power that, if spoken, let slip the chains imprisoning an ancient and eldritch evil, turning it loose once again on the world. As with most things in the dungeon, even the writing on the walls may conceal hidden dangers.

J is for Jewels

Like Gold, jewels are what drive expeditions into the dangerous places beneath the earth. Less common than gold, but more valuable and more easily transportable, jewels are desired by most races, but some value them higher than most. A gnome casts his eye upon a well-cut gem the way a dwarf covets his gold.

Jewels take many forms in the dungeon. They are found loose amongst hoards, adorning weapons, crafted into the covers of Books, or embedded in curious Statues. They come in a rainbow of colors; a

seasoned adventurer will soon learn to discern the most valuable ones amongst the dross, but even experience may fail a hearty dungeon-delving soul. Many jewels are more valuable than they first appear, being either cut by a skilled jeweler or possessing mystic powers not visible to the naked eye. Some jewels have been known to explode, are protected by things not of this world, trap the very souls of those who handle them, or exact a horrible price on those guilty of their theft.

K is for Kobolds

Despite the inclusion of “Dragons” in the title of the game, there is perhaps no monster more often encountered by adventuring parties than the lowly kobold. Short, scaly, dog-like creatures, kobolds are not related to dragons in any way. To think as much would be absurd. The sounds of their yipping voices indicate that the party’s first test by combat is at hand. Whether the kobolds are mere annoyances or “Tuckerized,” kobold blood has wetted the swords of more 1st level adventurers than any other monster, earning their place amongst the tropes of Dungeons & Dragons.

L is for Levers

Protruding from floor and walls, these mechanical devices are often the cause of many arguments amongst adventurers. Pull it or don’t pull it? These debates usually last until a monster is drawn to their location by the intense bickering, or a brave or foolish soul throws the lever to the dismay of the others. In either case, the results are rarely uninteresting.

Levers are the litmus test to determine how courageous or brash a party is, especially if there are no hints to the possible consequences of throwing that lever. Once thrown, an array of results may confront the party. Hidden passages are revealed, monsters are unleashed, traps are sprung, ability scores rise or fall, electricity arcs across the chamber, whole Rooms descend, Statues come to life, or simply that nothing observable occurs are all common results of a thrown lever. When stuck for ideas, a referee need do nothing more than place a lever in the center of a barren room and wait for the party to work themselves into a frenzy.

M is for Magic

Like Gold and Jewels, magic draws the adventurers to plumb the unknown depth of the dungeon. Risking life and limb to lay their hands on everything from the legendary sword of a past ruler to a cool blue bottle that holds a potion of healing, magical items are a potent lure for greedy adventurers. And, like an addiction, magical items only encourage the cycle of dungeon delving. With access to more potent magical devices, the adventurers push deeper into the shadowy halls in search of even more powerful magical rewards.

But not all magic in the dungeon comes in easily transportable forms. Weird spells and arcane effects linger in the dark, subjecting adventuring parties to perils unseen at the hands of living wizards. The days of yore contain many secrets, some of which linger long after their creators have passed on. An Altar or Statue may impose strange effects upon those unwary to touch them: swapping identities or alignments, laying down curses, or causing the very magic the party normally relies upon to act randomly and dangerously. Golems, enchanted statues, animated furniture, and fearsome Things created in arcane laboratories wander the dusty corridors that wind under the feet of more sensible folks, awaiting the coming of visitors from above. Shimmering portals hang in the air, providing egress to places unknown, providing a handy escape route for an endangered band of adventurers willing to take the plunge.

N is for No Stone Left Unturned

Despite the limitless supply of Gold, Jewels, and Magic in the dungeon, the party knows that if this bounty was easily found, someone would have carried it away long ago. As such, whatever treasure remains must be well-secreted in some unassuming place. To uncover this theoretical horde, no square inch of the dungeon must be left undisturbed. Walls must be searched for secret doors, furniture dismantled to uncover hidden compartments, chests upturned and painstakingly measured to reveal false bottoms, Levers must be thrown, Statues moved, teeth examined for fillings of precious metal, and prisoners interrogated to reveal what they know.

These determined efforts may be rewarded, but the risk often outweighs the gain. The time required to unearth every secret the dungeon conceals only provides more opportunities for wandering denizens to

chance upon the preoccupied adventurers. Encouraging the party to be thorough must be tempered by the tendency for overzealous searches to turn a dungeon crawl into an archeological survey of the site. It is perfectly acceptable for a party to miss a secret cache of wealth, especially if the dungeon is a reoccurring location in the campaign. What the party misses the first time may be discovered on the second, third, or thirtieth trip into its depths.

O is for Oozes

Like Fungi, oozes and jellies spawn endlessly in the realms beneath the sunlit lands. Devouring, growing, then dividing, these mindless slimes know naught but hunger, and woe unto those who stumble upon them unawares. Coming in an array of colors, none are the welcoming hues of surface life. Somber blacks, noisome greens, unnatural orange-Yellows, lifeless grays, or nigh invisible to the eye, none are a pleasant sight to behold. The weapons and armor that adventurers take solace in possessing will only crumble, pit, and decay when employed against these amorphous things. Spells that blast other foes into tatters have no effect, or more commonly, an unforeseen effect upon oozes. The party flees from these perils, only to find themselves trapped in a dead-end Hallway, with the ooze inching closer...

P is for Pools

Deep under the earth, pools of liquids both unusual and mundane form slowly in the darkness. Some are the result of intelligent hands, contained within low masonry walls of worked brick and stone. Others form in more natural circumstances, seeping out from the rocky walls and floors of Caves. Often strange of hue or form, these pools are natural watering holes for the denizens of the dungeon depths, serving as hunting grounds for predators or neutral ground for intelligent humanoid tribes. When filled with potable water, these pools can be clear and clean; a welcomed sight for lost adventurers and a reminder of the sunlit lands above. Sometimes these waters are tainted by minerals, causing ordinary water to appear in a rainbow of hues and possess odd odors or tastes. Other times, the weird coloration indicates a poisonous brew. A party without a druid in their ranks may be forced to risk it all by just going ahead and sampling the pool's contents.

More often than not, however, these placid pools contain mysteries of a much deeper depth. Many possess strange powers, altering those who dare to taste of their waters. Some are benevolent, healing the wounds incurred during the adventure. Others are more sinister, causing ability scores to change radically, saving throws against poison to be made, or damage to be suffered. More than one unlucky adventurer has found that what appears to be a refreshing pool of water is in truth a caustic acid.

Even when the contents of these pools are harmless, the pools themselves may host threats to life and limb. Cavernous pools are where the giant crayfish live; albino, blind and hungry. The waters of a plain-looking well surge to life as a water weird rises from its depths. The rotting vegetable matter in a natural spring is actually a colony of throat leeches. The party must judge, on its own, whether the possible boons of these pools outweigh their threats.

Q is for Questions

The dungeon is the home of mysteries. Despite whatever rumors and legends that may have been acquired in the safety of inns, taverns and the marketplace, once the doors have been breached, the party has entered the undiscovered country. The questions they discover, once within the dank confines of the dungeon, may run the gamut from the simple to the unknowable, but each begs an answer.

At the very least, questions such as “what’s behind those doors?” or “what may we find down those stairs?” play through the minds of the adventurers. However, as they probe the depths, more complex queries begin to arise. “Who built this place and is he/she/it still lurking in its depths?” “What happens if we place this rod into that slot we discovered?” “What is making that horrible scream?” “Are you really who you say you are?” A good dungeon should always pose more questions than it answers. The attempts to unlock all a dungeon’s secrets will insure that the adventurers continue to risk their lives in search of answers.

R is for Rooms

Without rooms, there are only Hallways – and those do not a dungeon make. From bare chambers to cluttered libraries, rooms come in all shapes and sizes.

Some sport high, vaulted, arched ceilings, their tops lost in the gloom beyond the torch light. Others are tiny spaces, restricting movement and lines of retreat. Many still bear clues as to what their original purpose may have been, holding rotted furniture and decayed objects d’art. But in some, time and the actions of the dungeon’s inhabitants have erased all traces of the room’s original intent, leaving only plain stone and the traces of the creatures’ presence. Either purposely placed or randomly created, the room is where the dungeon truly comes to life, often to the chagrin of the explorers.

As with most other features of the dungeon, rooms often contain mysteries or unseen dangers. Some rise or fall, depositing the party on a level they wished not to explore. Some are the homes of creatures that blend into the stones of the room, seeming to be a harmless part of the construction. The widow of the adventurer lost to a trapper, or the orphan of one brought low by a lurker above will tell you to fear those harmless looking floors and ceilings. Even the walls have been known to spring into action, grinding closer and closer together as the party struggles to halt their advance. On rare occasions, some rooms serve as impenetrable redoubts of safety and respite for the weary party. Strange magics secure the doors from outside interruption, or even accelerate the cycle of time within its walls, allowing for rest and re-memorization of spells at a fraction of the normal required time. These rooms are the exception rather than the rule, however, and should be coveted whenever found.

S is for Statues

In the shadowy chambers and corridors of the dungeon, odd constructions stand as mute witnesses to the events that unfold before their lifeless eyes. Some have been erected to honor or pacify strange gods, while others are tributes to the vanity of Men. Whatever the case, these silent statues can be found through the dungeon depths. Most are carved from common forms of stone, their value lying only in the skill of their makers. Rarer statues are carved or cast from more valuable materials: gold, silver, platinum, onyx, obscure forms of marble, even mithral. Legends speak of one statue depicting the Scarlet King, crafted from a single ruby, yet standing the height of a man. Even those of common construction are sometimes adorned with giant Jewels to add to their luster and beauty. More than one party has come across a statue of tremendous

value, only to find that they lack the tools, skills, or manpower to rescue it from the dungeon deep.

Some statues possess valuable traits that far outstrip the mere worth of their construction. Some have been known to grant boons of fortune upon those who place offerings at their feet. Others turn dross metals into more valuable forms. Some grant wishes to those who touch them with bare hands when the stars are in the proper alignment.

Unfortunately, these beneficial statues have their diametrically opposed twins. Some of these harmful statues strip ability scores or even experience levels from those who touch them. Others lay potent curses upon would-be defilers of the sacred tombs the statues hold watch over. Another type springs to unholy life, spouting gouts of magma from their stony mouths, or rays of intense heat from their sightless eyes.

Despite these horrors, not all statues that move are things to be feared. Some have been placed to allow entrance through gigantic doors. When the password is spoken aloud, these stone juggernauts grind slowly into action, opening the Cyclopean portals to grant access to the rooms beyond. Other statues sit quietly with palms outstretched on the floor of a high vaulted chamber. When commanded, they stand erect, lifting the waiting party aloft in the palms of their hands and depositing them safely on a ledge high above.

T is for Traps

For more than one adventurer, the last thing they've heard on this side of the shroud is the soft "click" of a depressed flagstone or the sharp "snick" of a spring-loaded needle sliding home. They have run afoul of one of the myriad traps that guard the secrets of the dungeon. In order to protect the Gold, Jewels, and Magic secreted in the dungeon, many contraptions, both magic and mundane, have been placed to guard them. A dungeon without traps is like a house without Books: it lacks its very soul.

Traps come in countless forms, being limited only by the creativity and wealth of their creators. Some are minute and easy to overlook, only discovered when the attempt to open a locked chest goes awry. Others are of massive construction, bringing down the entire ceiling of a Room onto a hapless party that didn't

follow the correct pattern on the checkered tile floor below. In between these extremes lies a plethora of perils: volleys of darts, spears rocketing from walls, gas- or water-filled Rooms, walls that suddenly clap together or grind slowly to seal one's doom, covered pits - with or without spikes - inward falling Doors, rolling rocks, showers of serpents, scything blades, clay jars filled with green slime that fall from above, harmful Incriptions, poison-coated Gold, exploding Jewels, and even traps that look like traps, but actually do no harm. The party must thread their way through these dangers if they wish to lay their hands upon the treasures that wait beyond.

U is for Undead

When all that is true and good has fled the mortal shell of what once was a man, sometimes something lingers behind. Born of hatred, fear and hunger, this grim spark of sentience animates what should be moldering quietly beneath the earth. Having crawled from dusty sarcophagi, hoary barrows, and the too-loosely sealed niches of sepulchers, these undead things walk in the darkness below.

The undead are stark reminders of the fate that may await the incautious adventurer. Once they too lived, breathed, and loved, only to succumb to this unholy state. Many of the undead the party encounters have the ability to pass their doomed condition on to those who fall beneath their attacks. And it is when the foes that the party confronts were once cherished loved ones, or stalwart boon companions, that the true horrors of the undead bloom to fruition.

Undead enemies are free from even the token constraints of ecology or reason. Needing neither air nor food, and possessing the patience of the dead, the undead can lurk still and silent within the dungeon, awaiting their next victim. They can rise from long-dead bones, burst from walled-up cavities, or materialize from the stones surrounding the adventurers. They remind the party that the cleric in their ranks is not merely a convenient walking first-aid kit, but a holy warrior who wields the power of the divine. Lastly, powerful undead, such as vampires, liches, death knights, and magic-wielding mummy pharaohs make perfect nemeses for the party; patient beyond death, and uncaring of human suffering or peril.

V is for Vermin

Scuttling, wriggling and crawling through the unlit depths, vermin thrive in the damp confines of the dungeon. Some are merely slightly larger specimens of their surface-dwelling kin, while others are true monsters in both size and temperament. The dungeon is a nasty place, and its vermin inhabitants even nastier.

When not encountering Kobolds, beginning parties of adventurers commonly earn their early experience points through the extermination of vermin. Giant rats, centipedes, spiders and beetles are often encountered on the upper levels of the dungeon. This trope is so ingrained into the genre of fantasy role-playing that it has escaped into the MMORPG, earning the nomenclature “yard trash.” As the party delves deeper, the bugs and vermin get bigger and more vicious. Spider of Shelob-sized caliber await the explorers, centipedes become megalopedes, and beetles possess strange properties such as squirting oil or exploding and popping abdomens that unleash caustic chemicals onto those who wish to eradicate them.

Vermin are despised by adventurers. Many are put off by their large size or an ingrained phobia of things with too many legs. Most adventurers learn to hate these squirmy things for the same reason that some referees gleefully include them: they can range from mere annoyance to outright fatal opponents, yet they never have any treasure.

W is for Weird

In addition to the strange powers and perils of Altars, Statues, Rooms and Pools, other forms of the weird and the strange await the adventurers as they explore the deep dungeon. These weird events and items color the atmosphere of the depths, reminding the party that they are no longer in the realm of reason and common sense. They have entered the Underworld, and should not expect things to behave in a rational manner.

The weird of the dungeon are usually quiet and unsettling things. They are not events like the sudden alteration of the laws of gravity, or the discovery that the Hallways are actually the digestive tract of some gigantic beast. These things have their place in the dungeon, but are more Zowie! than weird.

No – the weird in the dungeon is a small patch of moss that seems to sob like a frighten child. It is a pool of congealed blood on the ceiling of a corridor. It is the sound the strange flutes piping up from the depths below, accompanied by the laughter of ladies. It is the smell of lilac perfume in the air, when all around is dust and decay. Weird is not overtly dangerous or threatening; it is unnerving and spine-tingling. It is the reminder that the dungeon asks many Questions and it is up to the adventurers to try and unravel those mysteries. When done right, a weird event or encounter may be more memorable than the greatest fight the adventurers survive, and may lay the seeds for future adventurers or attempts into the dungeon.

X is for Xenophobia

Trust and acceptance is hard to find in the dungeon. The races of light have achieved a fair simulacrum of tolerance in the lands above, but even there, the levels of tolerance are often pressed to the limit when dwarves and elves meet, or when humans and half-orcs are forced to rub shoulders for too long. It is thus not surprising to discover that meetings between the races above and below seldom end in vows of friendship and support.

All too often even the intelligent races of the dungeon are treated as threats to home and hearth by the explorers who venture into the dim depths. Encounters begin more often than not with ready blades and spells on the lips. It is only when the numbers of one party grossly outnumber the members of the second that empty hands are held aloft, and there are quietly whispered inquiries as to who in the party speaks Goblin. This is a rational response, at least to the minds of those involved. After all, if the denizens of the dungeon had nothing to hide, why would they be skulking in these dark catacombs? Even some virtuous paladins have been known to put infant Kobolds to the sword, convinced that they are merely stopping evil at the root.

As to those who dwell within the dungeon, one can hardly blame them for being suspicious of people who blunder wantonly into their homes, upturning their possessions and slaying their loved ones in a quest for the valuables they’ve rightfully acquired in their own expeditions of their dungeon home. Perhaps if they kill this lot, others on the surface might take the hint and

leave them in peace.

This is of course not to say that all encounters should be settled with hot words and spilled blood. Sometimes even brazen adventurers learn that it's better to have uneasy allies rather than dedicated enemies within these corridors of stone. Some of the denizens might even be predisposed to assist the party, be it through long-past racial kinship or a selfish desire to remove a more powerful competitor for resources from the dungeon. A smart party of adventurers learns early that the dedicated eradication of everything in the dungeon never ends well for the party themselves. Otherwise they'll only learn this lesson when it is much too late to benefit from it.

Y is for Yellow

In the lands above, the shade of yellow is one associated with happy circumstances and pleasant days. Yellow is the color of dazzling sunlight, of swaying daffodils in the breeze, or of the tint of a true love's hair. It conjures up images of children playing on bright spring days, and the taste of succulent fruits. In the realms below, however, the color yellow has grimmer associations.

In those dank catacombs, yellows come not in bright, cheerful hues, but in faded tinctures of age and rot. It is a sickly shade, calling to mind craven fear, shattering madness, and the unstoppable march to the grave. It is found in decaying texts and grimoires, the pages having yellowed with the passage of untold ages. It colors the rotted bones of the dead, turning them from bleached clean purity to the tone of an old man's teeth. Once-fine silk and lace clothes have faded to a dirty yellow tint in the dungeon's dank climate. Even the sheen of Gold is tarnished to an unsettling dim yellow, rather than one gleaming and pristine.

Hideous denizens of the dungeons are also of this hue. From the fatal yellow mold, to the yellow musk creeper and its zombie-like creations, to the orange-yellow coloration of the ochre jelly, there are no good and clean yellows beneath the earth. For referees and players well acquainted with the works of Chambers, Lovecraft and Derleth, the color yellow is an all too potent reminder of the King in Yellow, who wears the

Sign. Players acquainted with older classic horror works are sure to recall Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper," and the madness that accompanies that tale.

Yellow was once a more sinister hue than we consider it now. A clever referee will try to use this older association to – ahem – color his dungeon deep.

Z is for Zowie!

The Zowie! is related to the Weird, but where the weird is subtle and quiet, the zowie! is grandiose, memorable, and breathtaking. It is a feature or features that the adventurers will never fail to mention in the tales of their exploits. A memorable discovery that separates one particular dungeon from all the other subterranean complexes the party has explored.

Most dungeons possess at least one or two zowies!, but like any good thing, quantity does not always equal quality. Too many wondrous things quickly cause them to lose their impact, rendering them merely implausible and tiresome. To combat this, the DM should limit his zowies! to one or fewer per level. In a pinch, more things weird can be added to spice things up, but the zowie! should be kept to small doses.

Examples of possible zowies! are: a vast, barren stone bridge that arcs over a river of molten lava; an underground forest comprised of crystalline trees; a gigantic cavern that houses a town built upon a stone platform, which is suspended from the ceiling by titanic chains; or a humongous book the size of a house, in which the names of all the adventurers to have entered the dungeon have been written. The dungeon itself could even be the zowie! The old TSR module S3 - Expedition to the Barrier Peaks is a classic example of this, as would be a dungeon that actually is the body of a dead god lying sprawled across a barren wasteland.

Michael Curtis was introduced to D&D with the Holmes set in 1980. Inspired by that early taste for adventure, he's worked as a deckhand, a bartender, a horoscope writer, and the stunt double for a 600 lbs. black bear. He currently works as an archivist and special collections librarian – a career choice he blames on H.P. Lovecraft. He was told there'd be monsters. He lives on Long Island, NY with entirely too many books. His struggles to recapture his role-playing roots are chronicled at The Society of Torch, Pole and Rope (<http://poleandrope.blogspot.com>).

Editor's Note: This article, which might become a regular feature of the magazine, presents two mastermind-type monsters, together with the lesser forms or minions directly associated with the mastermind. The combination of "leader" and "follower" type monsters, we believe, is a real creativity booster for writing adventures – especially when there's not a whole lot of time. Who hasn't at some point paired up an ogre with some orcs (not that ogres are masterminds, but they can lead orcs whenever they feel like it). Ever write an adventure where there's an ogre mage lurking behind the protection of some normal ogres? What about a wraith with skeleton followers? That's the sort of combination we provide here, with two mastermind monsters and their minions. The first set of monsters is Salvatore Macri's shadow-kin, led by the mysterious shadow-lords. Second, we've got Matt Finch's eerie Artificers of Yothri and their thought-projected creations.

Masterminds and their Minions

by Salvatore Macri and Matt Finch

The Shadow-Kin

By Salvatore Macri

The shadow-kin are a mysterious race of intelligent beings, hailing from the dark planes of shadow (obviously, individual referees use different systems for their planes of existence, but these are definitely not creatures of the material plane, as you will see). Shadow-Kin packs are able to make forays into the Prime Material Plane when two shadows on the planes are momentarily identical. More rarely, they can be summoned by one of their Lords Shadow-Lord (see Shadow-Lord and the spell Summon Shadow-Lord, below). The shadow-gates being fickle in nature, since they rely on the simultaneous presence of identical shadows on two planes of existence, many Shadow-Kin packs find themselves trapped upon the Prime Material Plane. In these cases, the stranded shadow-kin pack generally seeks out areas, such as dungeons or dark forests, where constant interplay of light and darkness might give them a chance to escape back to their darkness-shrouded home plane of existence.

Shadow-Kin found upon the Prime Material Plane fall into one of three types; Shadow-walkers are the weakest of the race, and make up the majority of any Shadow-Kin pack, Shadow-lurkers are a stronger type of Shadow-Kin, and Shadow-Lords are nobles of

the race, often leaders of more than one pack. It is the Shadow-Lords who are the mastermind villains featured in this article. These leader-types are intelligent and sinister, often having dealings on the material plane with necromancers, or wizards who (perhaps rashly) employ ancient spells reaching into the shadows and darknesses between realities. Such humans might be found as the slaves of a Shadow-Lord they summoned without the proper magical precautions to bind the creature. In any event, the motives of a Shadow Lord upon the material planes are seldom clear, for these are not human creatures, and do not share human motivations. They do seek to increase their own magical powers – one assumes this is the explanation for their presence in certain ancient ruins, and forgotten places where unspeakable primordial events may once have taken place.

Shadow-Kin Packs ("Gloomings")*

Packs of Shadow-Kin fall into four categories: the Lord's Gloomings, the Lurker's Gloomings, the Lesser Gloomings, and the "Lost" Gloomings. When a Shadow-Lord moves with his full retinue of guards and advisors, the gathering is known as a Lord's Gloomings. A Lord's Gloomings, terrifying to behold, is rare on the Prime Material Plane unless a foolish sorcerer bungles a Conjure Shadow-Lord spell (see below). Lurker's Gloomings are much more commonly encountered, and usually consist of 2 to 12 Shadow-walkers led by a Shadow-lurker. Although a Lurker's Gloomings is more common upon the Prime Material Plane than a full Lord's Gloomings, it is still rarer than a Lesser Gloomings. A Lesser Gloomings consists of 2 to 12 Shadow-walkers beholden to the same Shadow-lurker and Shadow-Lord (who are not present with the pack). A "Lost" Gloomings is only found upon the Prime Material Plane. Trapped upon an unfamiliar plane, a small number of unrelated Shadow-Kin have begun to band together regardless of their affiliation to the Lords and Lurkers of the race. The incessant wars between various packs are put aside, and these "Lost" Gloomings are formed to hunt for a suitable pathway back to the Shadow-Plane.

***Types of Shadow-Kin Packs**

Lost Gloomings: consists of individual or independent shadow-folk.

Lesser Gloomings: consists of 2d6 Shadow-Walkers

Lurker's Gloomings: consists of a Lesser Gloomings led by a Shadow-Lurker

Lord's Gloomings: consists of a Lurker's Gloomings led by a Shadow-Lord

SHADOW-WALKERS

Shadow-walkers are black, otherworldly creatures with the uncanny ability to teleport from shadow to shadow. Tall, thin humanoids of midnight black, Shadow-walkers have learned to take advantage of their coloring in combat. When Shadow walkers are encountered in dim lighting, fighting them incurs a penalty of -2 to hit; in near total darkness this penalty raises to -4. Light sources such as torches or lanterns negate these penalties but run the risk of producing a favorable environment for the shadow-walker's teleporting ability. Shadow-walkers get their name from their innate ability to teleport by entering one shadow and exiting from another. This ability is identical to the 4th level magic-user spell Dimension Door, but with the added requirement that the Shadow-walker must both enter and exit via a shadow of some kind. Shadow-Walkers: HD 3; AC 6[13]; Atk weapon; Save 14; Move 12; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Teleportation.

SHADOW-LURKERS

Physically, Shadow-Lurkers are indistinguishable from their lesser kin, the Shadow-walkers. Tall, thin, and humanoid in appearance, their midnight-black coloring affords them an advantage when engaged in combat under dimly lit or near dark conditions. Attacking a Shadow-lurker in dim lighting incurs a -2 penalty to hit. Doing so in near total darkness increases the penalty to -4. Although similar in appearance to Shadow-walkers, none can mistake the presence of a Shadow-lurker within a Lurker's Gloom. Their very presence exudes an aura of despair, which may be concentrated and focused to manifest itself as a dreaded silent scream twice per day. Those within ear-shot of the voiceless wail must make a saving throw to mitigate the effects of the silent scream or succumb to total despair, rendering him completely inert. A successful saving throw reduces the effect to a -2 penalty to hit, while the victim struggles with an overwhelming sense of despair. The effects (of both a successful and failed save) last 1d6+3 rounds. The referee might optionally allow victims of a silent scream to attempt saving throws each subsequent round to overcome the effects. Like their lesser kin, Shadow-lurkers possess an innate ability to teleport by entering one shadow and exiting from another. This ability is identical to the 4th level magic-user spell Dimension Door with the added requirement that the Shadow-walker must both enter and exit within shadows.

Shadow-Lurker: HD 5; AC 4[15]; Atk weapon; Save 12; Move 12; CL/XP 8/800; Special: Teleportation, Silent Scream

SHADOW-LORDS

Shadow-Lords lead a Lord's Gloom and are among the nobility of the Shadow Plane. Shadow-Lords possess all the abilities possessed by their lesser kin (teleportation, silent scream). In addition, a Shadow-Lord possesses the ability to summon his Lord's Gloom, which will appear within 1d6 rounds of the summons. Shadow-Lords are similar in appearance to both shadow-walkers and shadow-lurkers, if somewhat taller and thinner. Shadow-Lord: HD 12; AC 2[17]; Atk 1 strike (2d6); Save 3; Move 12; CL/XP 16/3200; Special: Teleportation, Silent Scream, Summon Lord's Gloom.

Like elementals, a Shadow-Lord may be conjured with the appropriate arcane spell (Conjure Shadow-Lord).

Conjure Shadow-Lord (Arcane)

Level 5

Range: 240ft

Duration: Until dispelled.

The caster summons a Shadow-Lord from the shadow plane, and binds it to his command. The Shadow-Lord obeys the caster only for as long as the caster concentrates on it; and when the caster ceases to concentrate, even for a moment, the Shadow-Lord is released and will summon its Lord's Gloom before engaging the spell-caster in combat. Although a Shadow-Lord under the command of a magic-user may be ordered to summon its Lord's Gloom, the Shadow-walkers and Shadow-lurkers of the gloom will attempt to free the Shadow-Lord by attacking the controlling magic-user, rather than obeying the summoner's commands.

The Artificers of Yothri

By Matt Finch

The blasted wasteland of Yothri, where the black skin of a dead world suppurates; home of the eerie Artificers of Yothri in their baroque domes of bronze and greenish glass. The artificers are practitioners of strange, unspeakable magics; which they couple with complex alchemy and intricate, alien metallurgy to create bizarre quasi-mechanical servitors – these living mechanisms are

vaguely similar in principal, perhaps, to the iron cobra – but they are infinitely more advanced in complexity and in terms of the magic and craft involved in their creation.

Yothri itself is perhaps located across the void of space, or might be found in some other almost-dead plane of existence. It might be an inter-dimensional reality (hopefully not one that a curious wizard stumbles upon by mistake!), or it might even be a microscopic reality, like a cancer in the living cells of some organism. Wherever Yothri exists, its distance from the material realms is, as a practical matter, vast – it is an almost inaccessible reality. The artificers are all that remains living in this bleak wasteland far from younger, healthier realities. It is place ancient beyond reckoning, and so are the artificers themselves – just as lichs have extended their lives beyond death and into Undeath, so have the artificers of Yothri extended their lives, but in a different manner. Using the unnatural physical laws of their realm, their eons of magical knowledge, and their mastery of alchemical sciences, the artificers have, over time, completely replaced their original bodies with living metal, intricately fashioned mechanisms, and sections of vat-grown flesh. Most appear to be skeletal beings ten feet tall or more, writhing with organic-looking tubes and organs. The effect is somewhat like one of the creations of H.R. Giger's art (Giger was the designer of the monster and sets in the movie *Alien*).

Much of the magic-science of Yothri is designed around the combination of specially designed vat-grown oozes and flesh, coupled with intricate but otherwise ordinary machinery. As it will be encountered by the players and their characters, the Science of Yothri is embodied in the form of the amphorons, living mechanisms whose existence is projected into the material universe by lens apparatuses in Yothri. Various types of amphorons are described below, but the referee is free to invent new ones to suit his purposes in an adventure involving the interference of an artificer in the material universe.

ARTIFICERS OF YOTHRI

The artificers of Yothri are tall and skeletal, a construction of dark-hued metalloid bones acting as the framework for artificial tubes and organs. They wear hoods and long, black robes – perhaps a necessity of the dead world they inhabit in a distant and eroding reality. Their palaces are of baroque green glass and alien met-

als, twisting in unnatural shapes, domes, and bubbles. The artificers are mutually hostile, each coveting the others' resources and knowledge. It is remotely possible that player characters might be kidnapped to serve an artificer by attacking the citadel of one of the others in the barren, suppurating wastelands of Yothri itself. An artificer employs the Science of Yothri, which is a mix of psychic powers, magic, and technology impossible to achieve outside the physical realities of Yothri itself. Rather than manifesting in spells, the Science of Yothri allows the Artificer to use certain powers, some mental, some magical, as follows:

Psychic powers: at will, (in conjunction with a physical attack if desired), the artificer can use telekinesis to lift up to 300 pounds of weight, create or maintain a "double vision" effect similar to a single mirror image per the spell, increase magic resistance to 80%, maintain a mental connection with an amphoron in another plane, or work to establish a connection with an amphoron in another plane (the mental connection with amphorons is described below).

Magical powers: in conjunction with a psychic power (but not with physical attacks), the Artificer may create one of the following effects using the Science of Yothri: (1) once per day, the Artificer can cast charm person in a cone shape 60ft long and reaching 60ft wide at extreme range, (2) three times per day, the Artificer can cast a spell to cause metal poisoning in the target's bloodstream (a saving throw applies), rendering the victim helpless with pain and causing death within 2d6 rounds unless the poison is counteracted.

Artificer of Yothri: HD 10; AC 2[17]; Atk claw (1d10+1); Save 5; Move 15; CL/XP 14/2600; Special: Magic Resistance 50% (80%), psychic powers, magic powers.

AMPHORONS OF YOTHRI

Amphorons of Yothri are mechanisms created by the Artificers of that plane using their strange magic-science. Amphorons on the material plane are physical projections of a model that remains on Yothri – the Artificer's mind, possibly using a lens apparatus of some kind, projects the device into the material plane, where it has a physical reality. However, the projection can fail, and the Artificer's control of more than one Amphoron at a time depends on his connection to a single, controlling Amphoron. If the Artificer attempts to switch his mental

connection from one Amphoron to another, the process takes 1d6 rounds to complete. In any given round, any Amphoron has a 1 in 6 chance to “flicker,” due to a momentary interruption of the connection across time and space. While flickering, the Amphoron cannot be attacked, and cannot inflict damage. However, it regains 1 hit point when it rematerializes. A flickering Amphoron is visible as a faint, static-shrouded shape. In the following round, the Amphoron reappears (unless it fails a second roll of the d6). The controlling Amphoron has only a 1 in 20 chance of flickering, but if it does so, all of the Amphorons under its control will flicker. Any Amphoron can be used as the controller, but a single controller cannot control more than six other Amphorons, and an Artificer can only project his mind to one controller at a time. Thus, unless the Artificer has projected some apparatus (the possibilities are many, and left to the referee’s creativity) to allow remote controllers or auto-controls, the maximum number of Amphorons encountered at time is seven (six controlled and one controller). When the Artificer’s nefarious schemes on the material plane are complete, he will likely not bother to disintegrate his Amphorons, so their material substance will remain on the material plane, operating randomly, remaining completely inert, or proceeding independently with their rudimentary intelligence. All Amphorons have a metallic, jointed shell; their insides are filled with wires and a gel-like flesh which allows the mental connection with the distant reality of Yothri, and also gives the creature its basic intelligence. There are three varieties of Amphoron, although the referee could design others with little effort.

Worker Amphoron

Worker Amphorons are just smaller than a human, and move with crab-like legs (although they can levitate for up to 3 rounds once per day, if need be). As with other Amphorons, they have a 1in6 chance of flickering unless used as a controller by the Artificer. In addition to the chance of flickering, a worker Amphoron may randomly belch out arcs of electricity, inflicting 1hp damage to anyone within 10ft (in addition to its other actions).

Worker Amphoron: HD2; AC 2[17]; Atk 2 pincer-arms (1d6); Save 16; Move 9; CL/XP 4/120; Special: magic resistance 25%, immune to piercing weapons, chance of flickering, chance of electrical belch.

Warrior Amphoron

Warrior Amphorons are usually used to protect Worker Amphorons, or in situations where the Artificer’s schemes involve violence. They have a flamethrower which is in constant operation, allowing the Amphoron to shoot a line of flame at a single target up to 100ft away in addition to its other attacks. The flame inflicts 1d6 damage (saving throw for half damage).

Warrior Amphoron: HD 5; AC 2[17]; Atk 2 pincer arms (1d6+2); Save 12; Move 9; CL/XP 8/800; Special: magic resistance 25%, immune to piercing weapons, chance of flickering, flamethrower.

Juggernaut Amphoron

The Juggernaut Amphoron is a harvester/processor the size of a semi-attached trailer truck, with a moving crane mounted on its back and two huge circular saws mounted on its articulated arms. If the Juggernaut’s crane hits an opponent, the victim is lifted up into the air over the Juggernaut’s processing hatch, and dropped automatically in the following round. If the crane hits, a saving throw is permitted to escape the its grasp unless the target is wearing metal armor, in which case no saving throw is allowed (the crane contains a backup magnet). Anyone dropped into the processing hatch is processed within 1d4 rounds into a small brick.

Juggernaut Amphoron: HD 10; AC 2[17]; Atk 2 whirling blades (2d6+2) or crane; Save 5; Move 9; CL/XP 13/2300; Special: magic resistance 25%, crane, chance of flickering.

How in the Hell Do You Open this Thing?!

By Matt Finch

It's always fun to confront the players with a door, or perhaps the latch on a treasure chest, which makes them stop and say, "Oh, crap." Without further ado, then, here's a table to generate doors and latches of exactly this type. Roll once on each column, put the results together, and you will (most likely) have the basics of how to open a very interesting aperture.

Open Door / Portal Table

Use these numbers to:	Roll on this column (d100)	And then this column (d100)	And then roll on this column (d100)
01-02	Rotate clockwise	The Falcon head	Three times
03-04	Rotate Counterclockwise	The King's crown	Forcefully
05-06	Lift up	The Second button	Hard
07-08	Push in	Each knob	Slowly
09-10	Push up	The shortest lever	Quickly
11-12	Push down	The entire keyhole	Carefully
13-14	Push left	The large flagstone	Until it clicks
15-16	Push right	The handle	Until the keyhole appears
17-18	Slide up	The serpent's tongue	Until the latch appears
19-20	Slide down	The curtain rod	Until the latch opens
21-22	Slide	The disk under the latch	Until the button pops up
23-24	Pull	The hidden lever	While the other door is closed
25-26	Pull down on	The doorknob	At the indicated time
27-28	Pull up on	The glass pane	While saying the word "Ni."
29-30	Turn	The carving on the bottom	Just after the chime sounds
31-32	Turn around	The gargoyle's buttocks	Until the real door opens
33-34	Remove	The middle face	Then jump back
35-36	Use water on	The rope	Then run like hell
37-38	Apply heat to	The torch sconce	But pull your hand back uickly
39-40	Squeeze	The skull	Until the floor opens
41-42	Close	The statue	As hard as you can
43-44	Open	The eye of the idol	Until it aligns with the other side
45-46	Replace	The blue stone	Until it lines up with the yellow marker – NOT the red marker
47-48	Take weight off	The spiral thingy	To get it into the other socket
49-50	Put weight on	The knob	To make it match the other side
51-52	Shake	The numbered dial	While the eye of the statue is closed
53-54	Twist	The red pin	In complete darkness
55-56	Lower	The water valve	From a distance
57-58	Cover up	The large gear	Using a mental command
59-60	Shine bright light on	The twisted wire	Which is in the other room
61-62	Pry out	The other door	Out in the hallway
63-64	Use a wrench on	The floorboard	Until the water-tubes connect
65-66	Use electric shock on	The tripwire-looking thing	Until the electrical arcs have started
67-68	Press on	The hook	Then back away
69-70	Apply pressure to	The eyeball	Then cover your eyes
71-72	Move	The bell-pull	Until blood flows
73-74	Unfasten	The chain	Until you have heard two clicks
75-76	Lift and turn	The triangular piece	When it glows
77-78	Press and then turn	The faucet	While standing on the pressure plate
79-80	Disconnect	The carved hand	Until the other one makes a clicking noise
81-82	Reconnect	The eye of the tiger	Until the ticking noise stops
83-84	Hit	The gem	To start the process
85-86	Crank	The loop	Until the tubes fill with liquid
87-88	Don't touch	The talking part	In complete silence
89-90	Touch	The fig leaf	Very gently
91-92	Take pressure off	The wheel	Until the illusion disappears
93-94	Strike	The bolt	And wait for three hours
95-96	Uncover	The bladed apparatus	To remove the magnetic force
97-98	Rotate	The coupling	To make the stone rise
99-00	Spin	The decorative wing-nut	To keep that obviously very bad contingency from occurring

Editor's Note: David Bowman presents a new twist on the concept of playing a 0-level character in this article. It's a departure from the normal way of playing a character, but I think it's pretty ingenious.

Character Class: Thrall

By David Bowman

In my campaign, Solstice, there is a gloomy expanse of bleak hills and stark dells along the windy outskirts of The Vast Kraz-Dur, known to outsiders as The Darkening Hollows. It a place of hopelessness and despair, once ruled by proud, ancient war tribes of brave clans, the Darkening Hollows is now a haunting reminder of man's own ruthlessness. The natives of these lands have for centuries been enslaved by the conquering nation of Ayr-Avad, and are now little more than a race of bondsmen in that vast, brutal kingdom.

In historical terms, "thrall" comes from Old Norse, meaning a "bondsmen." This article describes how to use freed thralls as a 0-level character (or, alternatively, a way of creating some interesting hirelings for the party).

In game terms, thralls are treated as a specific race, although they are actually human. This is just a shortcut for handling the fact that a thrall's servile background gives him certain abilities and weaknesses – just as character races work for non-human characters. Also, if thralls are used as a player character, the player actually gets three of them to work with – at least until one of them reaches first level. The player's goal is to keep at least one of his weak but willing band of hirelings alive.

Thralls are desperate and destitute men (humans), descended from slaves, but now considered freemen. They are willing to take on virtually any undertaking in order to pull themselves up and out their impoverished state. The memories of slavery are fading, but the Thrall men still willingly enter into indentured service for pay, for their opportunities are non-existent in a harsh world. Thralls have made a name for themselves as guides, escorts, companions and attendants for adventurers setting out on expeditions into that treacherous, unknown world below our own.

The name "thrall" is a holdover from bygone eras of slavery, but it has become a term of scorn that has followed the descendants of some conquered society for many decades. Thralls have no training when they enter the campaign as a playable class, and this fact is reflected in the way these characters are created (see below). Thrall characters are simply desperate men who, while untrained, are either braver or more foolhardy than the rest of the downtrodden folk of the world.

The concept of the Thrall class is different from a normal character class – the player, when choosing a Thrall as his or her initial character, gets a whole trio of them. If this concept doesn't sit well with the Game Master, then the optional Thrall class might still be useful as a guide for a unique type of henchmen. When enlisted as henchmen and not as a character, Thralls will either agree to terms for a pittance, or work for no charge – with the caveat that if they emerge from the dismal depths alive, they will be allowed to claim a certain small sum of the haul (in game terms, Thralls are cheaper and easier to hire than standard men-at-arms, and will work for the

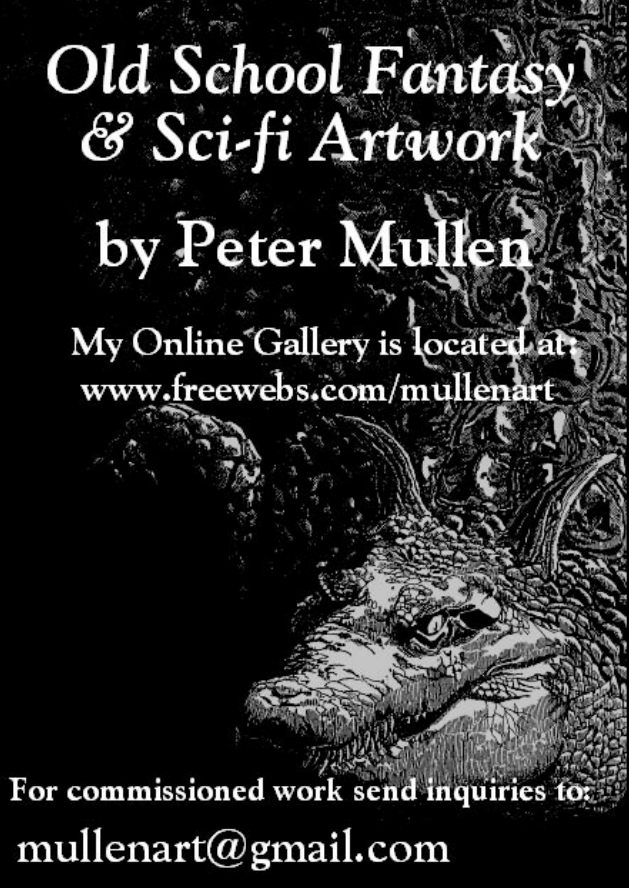
promise of pay rather than upfront coin).

Alone, Thralls are practically helpless, but with a respectable band of fellow delvers they can bring a small measure of aid and might even shine under certain circumstances. But why would a player choose play a Thrall at all? For the challenge of seeing what transpires when you begin at a level beneath those who normally brave the underworld and its deadly threats; and to enjoy actually witnessing which of your three Thralls lives the longest. It is not a choice for the faint of heart. If "thrall" is allowed as a class, the player rolls 1d6 three times to determine which types of Thralls will constitute his initial 'character' trio; these Thralls need not be defined in regard to abilities at this point.

Thrall d6 roll (3 rolls):

1: Pack-Bearer, 2: Torch-Bearer, 3: Map-Drawer, 4: Shield-Bearer, 5: Pole-Prodger, 6: Guide.

Thralls begin with no armor, and are only equipped as listed below. At this point in their career they may use or wear any weapons or armor donated by other party members. All donations should be considered gifts, and ought not be returned to the other party members, as Thralls do not accept charitable loans whatsoever (or find some other reason to keep rich characters from simply loading up the thralls with good equipment). The goal of a Thrall character is to gain enough experience to transition into a standard 1st level character class (how this functions is left to the GM; but using the White Box rules the suggested experience amount is 1,000). Thralls use Fighter tables for attacks and saving throws, all at a penalty of 1 before they have attained 1st level.



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Pack-Bearer: Strength. Club. Large Sack. 2 hit points. Skill: +1 attack. Role: Carry the loot and protect the rear flank.
 Torch-Bearer: Intelligence. No Weapon. 3 Torches and Tinder. 1 hit point. Skill: Not surprised as often. Role: Light the way.
 Map-Drawer: Wisdom. No Weapon. Papyrus and Quill. 1 hit point. Skill: Uncanny sense of direction (N-S-E-W). Role: Maintain direction/bearing.
 Shield-Bearer: Constitution. Club. Shield. 2 hit points. Skill: May provide +1 AC to an adjacent ally while equipped with a shield. Role: Protect an ally.
 Pole-Prodger: Dexterity. Spear. 2 hit points. Skill: Bonus to note/detect traps. Role: Lead the way.
 Guide: Charisma. No Weapon. Rudimentary Map. 1 hit point. Skill: Gains extra information/rumors. Role: Provide some level of insight.

Thralls divide experience equally between their living numbers; by 3, 2 or 1. When a fellow Thrall dies, the surviving Thralls gain 1 hit point reflective of their determination and resolve. All Thralls that survive the initial expedition into the depths are allowed to choose a profession, provided they have gained enough experience to attain 1st level. When and if a Thrall has attained 1st level, the player must decide which Thrall (if more than one survives) from amongst his trio will become his permanent character. The other (if any) Thralls slink off, rich by the standards of their social status, into the slums and farmlands whence they emerged. The class pursued is determined as follows:

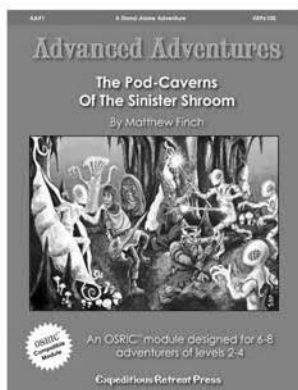
Pack-Bearers and Shield-Bearers: Fighter. Torch-Bearers: Magic-User. Map-Drawers: Cleric. Pole-Prodders: Thief if allowed (or Fighter if not). Guides: Random.

At this point the player (or GM) rolls the character's abilities. The highest result is placed in the Thralls defining ability by simply swapping two of the ability rolls. The Thrall is now given a name and becomes a 1st level character of the prescribed class. Thralls will always retain their unique skill, throughout the campaign, which is denoted by simply indicating Thrall as the character's race.

Three decades of fantasy gaming that began at age 12 with Holmes Basic, and David Bowman is as enthusiastic about his favorite hobby as ever. A resident of Darnestown, Maryland, the author enjoys dreaming up new ideas for his probably never to be finished megadungeon, Ulin-Uthor; rambling incessantly under his blogging moniker Sham; and spending time with his Wife and two Boys.

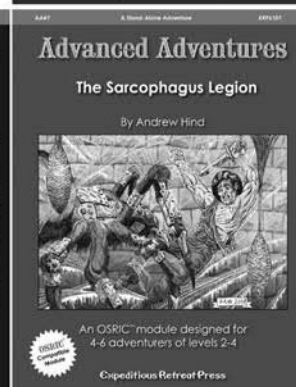
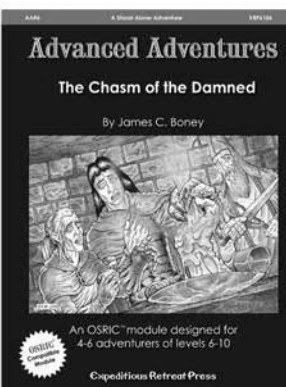
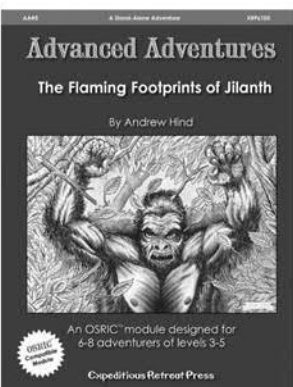
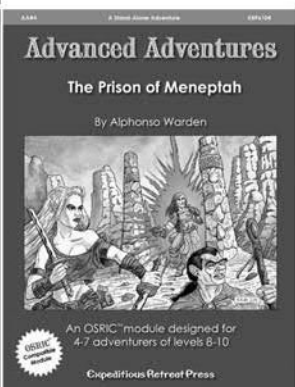
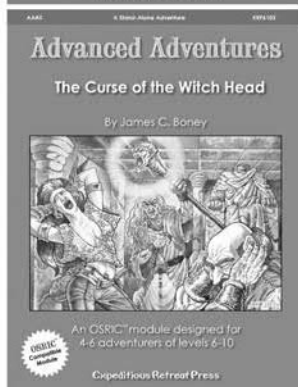
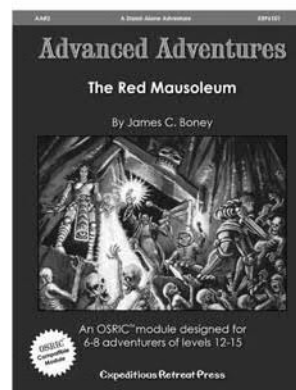
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Grodog's Greyhawk -

<http://www.greyhawkonline.com/grodog/greyhawk>.

html - Greyhawk setting research spanning many topics, including GH tournament adventures and other rarities, Greyhawk Castle, anagrams and puns from the Lake Geneva campaign, GH gods and artifacts and relics, and much more. Look for grodog's Castle Zagyg: the Upper Works review by the time you're reading this.

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plete world setting based upon a reading of the famous B-modules. This Borderlands world is provided without any stats or game reference, so may be used with any classical role playing game.

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