

TROLLSZINE!

#5

SUMMER 2012

THE HORNED HOLD
GM ADVENTURE
BY STEPHEN DOVE

BENEATH THE ARENA
SOLO ADVENTURE
BY W. SCOTT GRANT

TALL TALES FROM THE
TROLLSTONE CAVERNS
BY LEE REYNOLDS

THE CHILDREN OF ENTROPY
BY DAN PRENTICE

AND MUCH MORE!



THE FREE TUNNELS & TROLLS™ FANZINE

TROLLSZINE!

Issue 5

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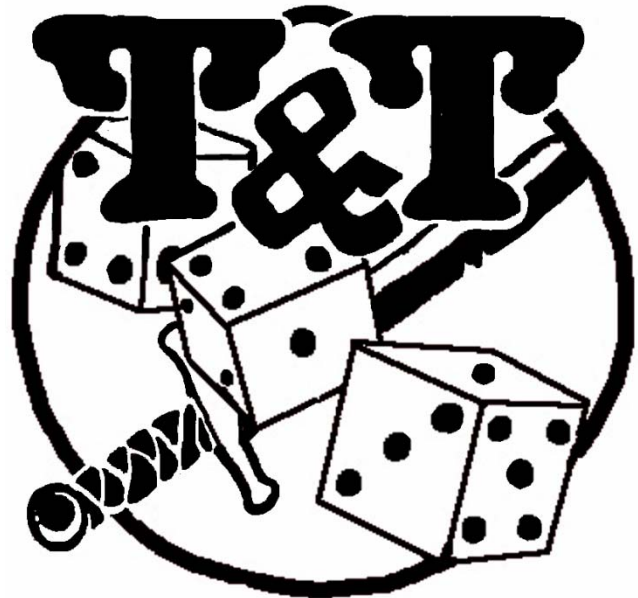
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Trolls Contribute

TrollsZine! #5 is my first issue as sole editor. I took this issue from beginning to end and I must say that I am very happy with and proud of the final result. That being said, there would be no *TrollsZine!* without contributions from the talented writers and artists within the *Tunnels & Trolls* community. The level of imagination, care, and dedication that went into these submissions matches that seen in any commercial publication. In addition to these creative contributions, there is the time and effort donated by the many copy editors and the graphic artists of Simari Design who assisted with editing the articles and putting together the excellent cover that adorns this issue. The overall level of contribution from those involved is astounding, and I cannot thank everyone enough.

TrollsZine! #5 also marks the beginning of a more 'regular' format for the 'Zine! What I would like to see in each issue is a solo adventure; a game master adventure; a short story; a monster or NPC article; about four articles on house rules, rules expansions, variant or alternate worlds; and one or two short features. In my opinion, adventures should form the

core of each issue. I envision each issue being between 60-70 pages in length, with some longer depending on the size of the contributions. As you can see, *TrollsZine!* #5 is already an exception to this rule due to the tireless work of Scott Grant, Stephen Dove, and Lee Reynoldson. Of course, these written submissions will need art to bring them fully to life. Original art created for a specific written piece can make all the difference, and I want to include as much as I can. Finally, I would like to see a more regularly released *TrollsZine!* with four issues per year.

So what does this mean? *TrollsZine!* needs your contributions! The release of *TrollsZine!* #6 is currently set for September/October 2012. If you would like to contribute to the next issue, send me your adventures, articles, stories, or art. Help the *TrollsZine!* flourish, and make your name and talent known to *T&T* fans everywhere.

Now, let's play some *T&T!*

Dan Hembree



Initiates of the Tower of Song

The Bards of Cala

By Mike Tremaine

Legends say that the Elven Rogue Beinlor (Bane-Lore) founded the Tower of Song when he first came to Cala. The story goes that he and his companions had plundered the tomb of a wizard god somewhere in the North and evaded capture by the Empire's forces. Beinlor settled in Cala and opened his rogue school of wizardry with the blessing of Tra-Zakath. Hundreds of years have passed since then. Beinlor died long ago, but his Tower of Song lives on.

Just what goes on in this rogue school is a mystery, but what is well known is that students and full members of the Tower of Song wield interesting Magick: many of their spells are powered by songs or musical instruments. These folk are well regarded in Cala as both learned scholars and powerful spell casters. Initiates of the Tower of Song are often asked to settle disputes or deliver council on serious matters; other times they are called upon to recite ancient tales or perform heart-rending musical performances.

Summary:

Allowed Types: Rogue or Wizard
Min. Attributes: 11 INT and CHR
Weapons: any one-handed weapon (swords preferred)
Armor: light armor preferred
Shield: none
Abilities: spells use a musical instrument as focus tool

Overview

Only Rogue and Wizard characters are allowed to join the Tower of Song, and they generally must be less than 3rd level to allow for the intense training they will undergo—higher-level characters would have too many preconceived ideas to overcome. Additionally, they must have a minimum INT and CHR of 11 to be considered for acceptance.



Even then, they must pass a series of tests, which should boil down to 2 out of 3 successful saving rolls versus INT, LK, and CHR. Failure to fulfill any of these requirements means failing the interview process and being rejected.

Once accepted, the character is functionally a Rogue—the Wizards Guild will never allow a Wizard to rejoin the guild after becoming an initiate of the Tower. So for Wizard characters, this means working within the

limitations of the spell list taught by the masters of the Tower of Song once initiated—except that as true Wizards they are still able to invent new spells. True Wizard initiates of the Tower of Song are rare, but they do exist and often help increase the Tower’s power. Both Rogues and Wizards can still be taught spells outside of the Tower's spell list and use weapons outside of the preferred list, but the GM should encourage them to stay as true as possible to the tenets of this school.

New initiates start with all 1st level spells from the list below and just as a Wizard pays the Guild, initiates must pay the school for additional spells that they want to learn—same costs, same requirements. In fact, part of the fee for the spells gets paid off to the Wizards Guild in Cala just to soothe tensions.

Initiates may all use a musical instrument as a focus tool starting at 3rd level. Like a Wizards Staff, this instrument is an important tool for the initiates in their spell casting. Each instrument must first be enchanted, which is done with a special 7th-level spell (see below). Once properly enchanted and tested, the instrument allows a Rogue initiate to reduce the cost of spell casting by a third of the caster’s level and gives a Wizard initiate the full benefits of a Wizards Staff. The costs range from 100 gp for simple instruments to 1,000 gp for more complex items. Of course, magical versions exist that are even more expensive. Here is a short list of instruments; feel free to expand on it or add details.

Instruments	
Flute	100 gp
Harp (small)	500 gp
Lute	1,000 gp
Violin	1,000 gp

Restrictions

Weapons—Initiates are trained to use one-handed weapons, and they tend to favor swords and daggers—weapons that can be easily sheathed to allow

for the casting of spells and the playing of music. (Note: Wizards must still abide by their type limitation.)

Armor—Initiates favor light armor such as ring mail, leather, quilted, or magical armor that is light and allows for the required freedom of movement. Shields are not used as they hinder the ability to work magic.

If a player insists on his or her character wearing heavier armor or using a two-handed weapon, the GM should consider requiring saving rolls versus DEX when switching from having a weapon in hand to casting spells that use a musical instrument. In the case of heavier armor, a saving roll versus DEX might be required to cast the spell due to the weight and restrictive nature of the armor, which might affect the ability to play. The same concept could be used to discourage the use of a shield—just try playing a guitar with a shield strapped to your arm!

Spell List

<p>1st Level Detect Magic Lock Tight Will-o-Wisp Knock-Knock Oh-There-It-Is Oh-Go-Away</p>	<p>4th Level Too-Bad Toxin Dum-Dum Inspired Ravings* Lullaby*</p>
<p>2nd Level Omnipotent Eye Yassa-Massa Mirage Curse You Poor Baby Subliminal Signals*</p>	<p>5th Level Aria Armor* Mind Pox Dear Lord ESP Second Sight</p>
<p>3rd Level Curses Foiled Rock-a-Bye Dis-Spell Healing Feeling Awe-some-one* Band Aid* Discordia* Harmonia*</p>	<p>6th Level Porta-Vision Charm of Aware Air</p>
	<p>7th Level A-Tune* Wind Whistle</p>
	<p>*New Spells</p>

New Spells

Level 2 Spells

Subliminal Signals

Cost: 6

Range: 50 ft

Power-Up: No

Duration: 2 combat turns

Description: By means of this spell, the Bard is able to implant a subliminal suggestion into the mind of a single target within range. The target must not be hostile to the Bard or else there is no chance of the suggestion taking hold. The suggestion itself must be reasonable and not completely contrary to the nature of the target. An example of this spell would be a Bard using it to suggest to an Ogre who guards a passage and insists on payment to grant access to it for less than asked; for example to accept a piece of fried chicken instead of the 100 gp he had asked for—the more reasonable the suggestion, the more likely it is to succeed.

Level 3 Spells

Awe-some-one

Cost: 15

Range: 30 ft

Power-Up: Double range

Duration: 3 combat turns

Description: With this spell, the Bard is able to fascinate and possibly subdue all targets within range. Targets must make a successful saving roll versus CHR at the Bard's level or be subdued into a rapturous state—possibly desiring to hold up a lit match or lighter.

Band Aid

Cost: 7

Range: 10 ft

Power-Up: Double range

Duration: See below

Description: By playing the soothing notes of this melody, the Bard is able to restore lost CON points to all listeners within range. The CON points restored are equal to the Bard's level at the rate of 1 CON point per combat turn, so the duration of the spell is tied to the caster's level.

Discordia

Cost: 12

Range: 30 ft

Power-Up: Double range

Duration: 1 combat turn per level

Description: By means of this spell, the Bard plays dissonant notes that will adversely affect all listeners within range. The effect is a temporary loss of Attribute Points equal to the caster's level—creatures with MR ratings lose 3x caster's level in points. The effect lasts 1 combat turn per caster's level.

Harmonia

Cost: 12

Range: 30 ft

Power-Up: Double range

Duration: 1 combat turn per level

Description: With this spell, the Bard sends forth beautiful tones which inspire and invigorate all who hear it. The effect is a temporary increase of all Attribute Points equal to the caster's level—creatures with MR ratings gain 3x caster's level in points. The effect lasts 1 combat turn per caster's level.

Level 4 Spells

Inspired Ravings

Cost: 15

Range: Self

Power-Up: No

Duration: 1 or 2 combat turns

Description: This spell is an improved but somewhat strange Omnipotent Eye. Once cast, the Bard will be overcome with an inspired poem, story, or song that will reveal the secrets or legends pertaining to a specific person, place, or thing.

Lullaby

Cost: 15

Range: 50 ft

Power-Up: No

Duration: 2d6 turns

Description: This spell is an improved Rock-a-Bye spell that affects all targets within range. They must successfully make a saving roll versus CON at the Bard's level or fall into a peaceful slumber for 2d6 turns.

Level 5 Spells

Aria Armor

Cost: 18

Range: 10 ft

Power-Up: Double range, double armor value

Duration: 1 combat turn per level

Description: This spell allows the Bard to create a force field-like effect within a 10-foot radius. Its powerful nature deflects any damage, be it physical or magical in nature, up to the caster's CHR level. Higher-level versions increase both range and armor value—so at 5th level, the spell absorbs up to the bard's CHR score in hits until dis-spelled; at 6th level, it can absorb 2x CHR; at 7th level, 3x CHR, and so on.

Level 7 Spells

A-Tune

Cost: 25

Range: Touch

Power-Up: No

Duration: Permanent

Description: This spell is the height of initiates' power. It allows the crafting and refining of the special instruments of focus that the initiates of the Tower of Song use in the casting of their spells. To non-initiated Rogues and Wizards these musical instruments are useless as a focusing tool, but still command a high resale value due to their extraordinary craftsmanship.



Building a Better Zombie

Giving Zombies More Bite

By Jerry Teleha

I have recently been trying to build a better zombie. Many members of the T&T community including Ken St. Andre have provided feedback and thoughts through the posts on my blog and playing in one of my games at a recent convention. Everyone that has responded with such comments has contributed in some way to the development of the following ideas.

The following are some interpretations of different types of zombies that can be used in your Tunnels & Trolls game. While the Monster Rating system is beautiful in its simplicity, I love exploring different ways to use Spite damage and other special abilities to make a monster more than just a number of dice to roll with some Combat Adds. As with anything in regards to T&T, changing and adapting ideas to meet your own needs is always encouraged.

General Zombie Characteristics

Movement of zombies should vary depending on the amount of decomposition or damage. For example, a zombie that has recently been 'zombified' or animated could have a bit more spring in its step because its muscles are in better state than one days or weeks older. A zombie without its legs could only crawl and thus would move even slower. A zombie that may not be technically 'dead' could have the speed and coordination based on its kindred.

Zombies generally attack by grabbing, clawing and biting. When dealing with large groups of zombies in combat, the total dice rolled should be considered for all Spite-based special attacks. This represents the chaotic and potentially dangerous event of being outnumbered by a mass of zombies. A single zombie should be relatively easy to take down. Large numbers of zombies could pose a serious threat to almost any group of delvers.

Zombies are either dead or in such a diseased state that self-preservation is not at all something that is a concern.

Because of this, they are unnaturally strong and unrelenting. Teeth may be broken when trying to bite and bones may break when trying to claw or grab, but the zombie will keep coming until it is destroyed. To reflect this, *Combat Adds for these zombies should never decline as damage is taken.*

The Basic Zombie (Necromantic)

MR: 30

Combat Dice + Adds: 4D6+15

Special Abilities: Zombiprogramming, Zombibattery*, Spellcasting*

Special Damage: 2/Zombiegrip

Special Defense: Regeneration

Appearing: Any

WIZ: 30

In its most basic form, a zombie is simply an animated corpse. It has been magically created by a Necromancer, Witch Doctor, Voodoo Priest, or even some hapless fool reading the wrong book. Being created by magic, they are powered by the Kremm that animated them. Damage that is taken reduces this Kremm. The zombie is destroyed when the Kremm is depleted. Being something that is already dead, its CON should be considered as a zero.

Items in the description with an asterisk (*) are some optional abilities that can be utilized to make the zombie a bit more diverse. It is always a good thing to throw something unexpected at your players. A more powerful wizard may decide to pump more power into its creation. A more powerful zombie can also be created by pumping more Kremm into it. Increase the MR and at the same time increase the WIZ. Increase the combat dice along with any MR increase, but the

Combat Adds should stay at (+15) to reflect the fact that it is still a dead body that has been reanimated.

Zombiprogramming

When a zombie is created, it will usually be for a purpose. Implanting basic orders into the zombie should be the main reason for its creation. The programming could be to guard a hallway or to not let any creature past a certain point or location.

Zombibattery*

Maybe the zombie has been enchanted to absorb Kremm that is cast at it. Any spell that is cast directly on the zombie would not have any effect. Instead, the WIZ that was spent by the caster would be absorbed and added to the zombie's current WIZ total. It would be up to the GM to decide if this would also make the zombie stronger. Kremm Resistance should be in affect based on the current WIZ of the zombie. For 'Bad Feeling,' I think it should be ignored initially. If it does occur, maybe offer a Level 2 SR (INT) for the character to realize what has happened if it is not clear at the time.

Spellcasting*

If the zombie can be programmed, why not also implant some low level offensive spells like 'Take That You Fiend' or 'Call Flame'. The catch would be that the zombie would be using its own life force; not that it would really care.

Zombigrip

When this occurs, one of the zombie's opponents has been held by its cold and hard grip. The character will lose the DEX contribution to his Combat Adds until able to break away or enough damage is done to the zombie to destroy it. Either a Level 2 SR (STR) or a Level 3 SR (SPD) is required to break away. The attempt to break away should further reduce the character's Combat Adds by half.

Regeneration

WIZ points regenerate at the rate of 1 point every combat turn. If the zombie is reduced to zero WIZ, then it should be considered to be destroyed.

The Diseased Zombie

MR: 60

Combat Dice: 3d6 + 15

Special Abilities: Zombification, Zombimemory, Zombisenses

Special Damage: 2/Bite - Level 2 ST (LK) to avoid

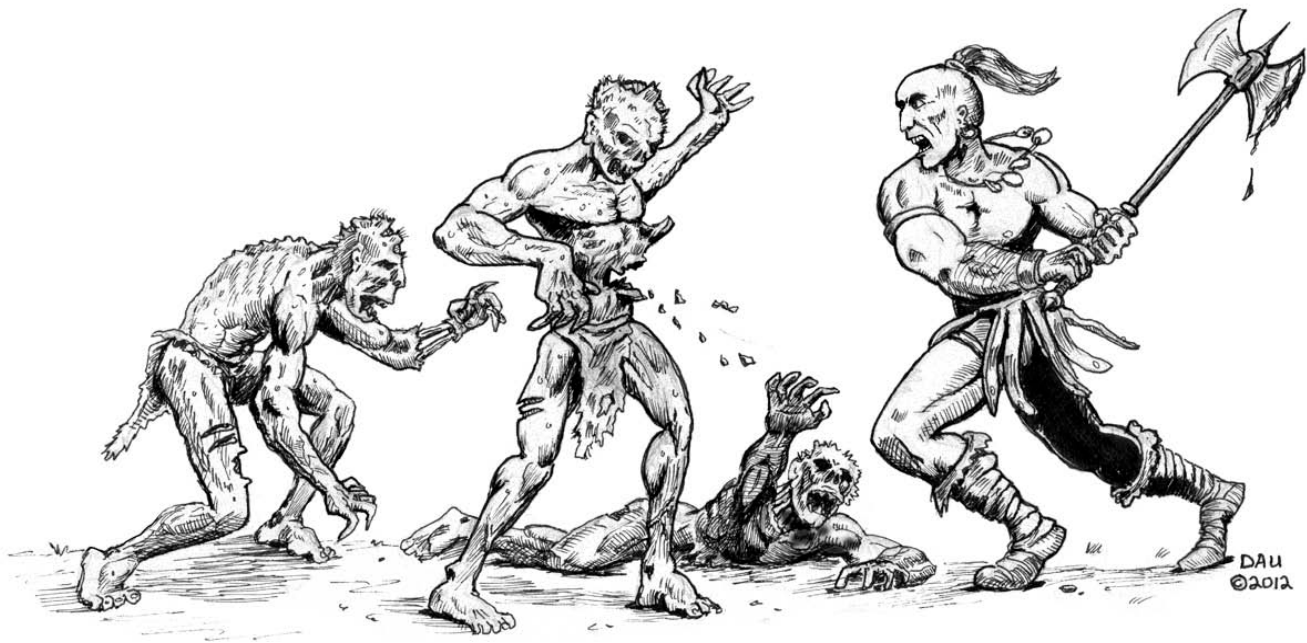
Special Hindrance: 2/Headshot

Special Defense: Down But Not Out

Appearing: 1-100+

CON: 30

The infected or diseased zombie has been created as a result of some form of pestilence, plague, or other such cataclysm. Whatever the story or basis may be,



beings that were once alive have been infected, died, and have been reanimated by the disease. These zombies are also carriers of the same disease; any successful bite from a Diseased Zombie could result in infection.

A Diseased Zombie has no care about pain or fear. It has only a singular desire to eat/destroy the living. No matter how much damage a diseased zombie has taken, its Combat Adds will always remain at 15. This is a reflection of the dulled reflexes and muscle coordination, but at the same time, the zombie's unnatural strength due to it not caring about breaking its own limbs or pulling muscles.

Zombification

For each potential bite, a character will need a SR (LK) with a level equal to the number bites taken +1. (Example: a single bite, which is 2 Spite, would require a Level 2 SR (LK) to avoid being bitten.) If successful, the damage is still taken, but the character was able to avoid being bitten. If the SR fails, there is now a chance that the character has been infected.

The GM will secretly determine if the character is infected or not by rolling a Level 1 SR (CON) for the character. Whether infected or not, the character should start to feel ill. It could amount to some good role playing and paranoia by the character not immediately knowing the result of the roll.

If infected, the character will feel ill and develop a fever. Over a few hours, the symptoms will get worse and the character will eventually die and reanimate as a zombie. If the GM wishes, another SR (LK) can also be utilized to stave off the infection and avoid being turned into a zombie. Also, magical means can be utilized to cure the disease if desired by the GM, depending on the setting and the game. The character could also begin a career as a zombie; the other characters would look like a good meal.

Zombimemory

Some zombies will retain some memories from their former lives. An example would be if confronted with a closed door, 'Zombimemory' may kick in and the zombie may try to open the door instead of trying to pound it down or try to walk into it.

Zombisenses

Even a low level character should have little trouble taking out a single zombie. But, if other zombies are around, loud noises or bright lights could alert other zombies to gather and move towards this location. This is called 'Zombisenses'. Saving Rolls reflecting the situation should be utilized to sneak around or through groups of zombies, or to determine if a given noise alerts a nearby zombie to the character's location. Some examples could be:

- Sneaking past a zombie facing the other direction - L1 SR (DEX)
- Sneaking past a larger group of zombies - L2 SR (LK)

Headshot

A zombie's weakness is a blow to its head. Every 2 Spite damage dealt will automatically kill a zombie, despite any damage previously taken or which side ultimately wins the combat turn. Normal damage should still be calculated and applied for the combat turn based on standard T&T combat.

Down But Not Out

Once a zombie takes 30 damage to its CON, it will fall down, but it will not be finished. The zombie will remain on the ground for one combat turn, but the next turn it will be back up again and at normal zombie strength. Since a zombie cannot be knocked out, a downed zombie is not a defenseless zombie. While it will not contribute any Combat Dice for one turn, it will still need a Headshot to finish it off.



Chariots & Barding in T&T

Riding into Battle in Style

By Justin T. Williams

Chariots were the first use of equines in combat and even to this day images of chariots thundering across battlefields or racing through great coliseums haunt the imagination.

Barding was born of the desire to protect one's steed in battle and ensure that the mounted warrior's superiority would remain unchallenged in the press of melee or from some cunning archer's arrow.

These two great examples of man's mechanical ingenuity are often forgotten pieces of the history of horses and men at war and I proudly present these rules to allow them to take their place in your *T&T* campaign.

Author's Note: I go into detail for those who like such things, but feel free to strip out any unwanted complexities. This is T&T folks, it's all about having a good time!

Chariot Saving Rolls

Like all actions in T&T, piloting a chariot is simulated through the use of Saving Rolls (SRs). Below are a few examples of the kinds of SR's that piloting a chariot may call for under combat conditions or other dangerous situations.

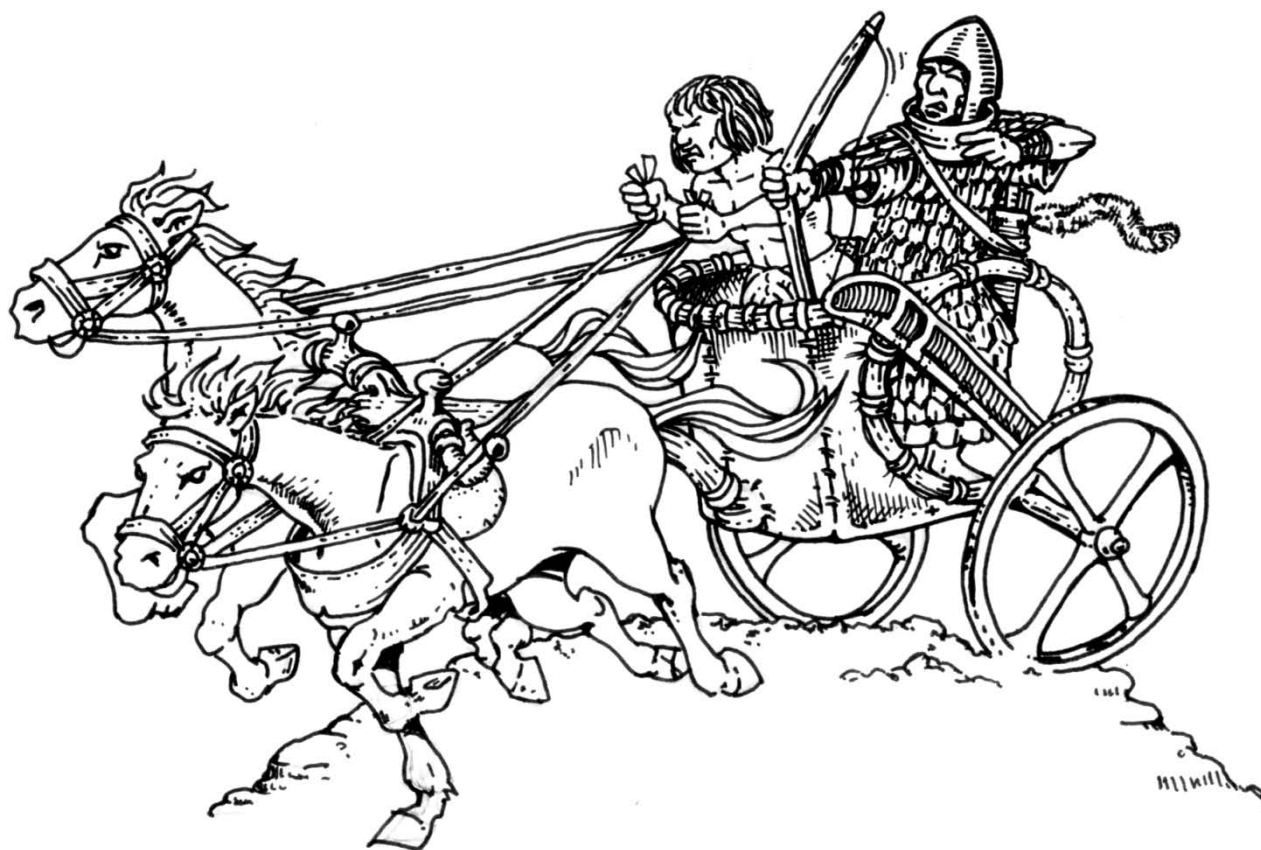
Chariot Saving Rolls

Action	SR Level	Notes
Driving at full speed over rough terrain	1-2	Moving at full speed over uncertain terrain which may cause the chariot to crash or tilt over.
Driving at full speed over broken or littered terrain	3-4	Moving at full speed over terrain littered with holes or obstacles may cause the chariot to flip over or throw the driver or passengers from the vehicle.
Making a sharp turn while moving at half speed	1-2	Chariots lack a tilting axle; turning at high speed is similar to modern "drift racing" and can cause the chariot to roll or the wheels to snap from the axle.
Making a sharp turn while moving at full speed	2-4	Similar to the SR above, but the action is far more likely to cause an accident at full speed.
Leaping into or from the chariot while moving at full speed	1-2	Vaulting into the chariot's cab while it is in motion at full speed.
Obstacle evasion	1-3	Weaving around or evading obstacles or opponents while the chariot is moving at half or full speed.
Charging with a scythe chariot	1	Bringing the chariot's scythes into play by running alongside a target.
Goading the chariot team to trample	2	Driving the chariot over a man-sized or smaller target. If successful and the target does not dodge, another 2nd level SR is called for to keep the chariot from flipping over or wrecking.
Fighting from the yoke of the chariot	3	Included for all the aspiring Celtic warriors, it provides no combat bonus but is impressive. Failure leads to automatically being run over by your own chariot
Calming a frightened team of chariot horses	1-2	Calming a startled, panicked, or wounded team of chariot horses.

Optional Chariot SR modifiers

Situation	Modifier
Driving while wielding a weapon	-2 to the Chariot SR dice total
Using a shield while driving	-1 to the Chariot SR dice total
Using both a weapon and a shield while driving	-3 to the Chariot SR dice total
Dropping or losing the chariot's reins	+2 Levels of difficulty to the base Chariot SR
Firing a missile weapon while moving at full speed	-2 to the Missile Combat SR dice total

Note: Non-Level SR Modifiers add or subtract their number to the dice total before success or failure is determined. All Modifiers are cumulative.








More to come!

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TUNNELS & TROLLS 8, THE FRENCH EDITION, LA CRÈME DE LA CRÈME

Chariot Combat

From the very beginning, the main function of the chariot was to serve as a fast, mobile missile platform. The chariot was used to dominate the battlefield through concentration of forces, harrying the enemy and disrupting their formations.

Bows, Missile Weapons and Chariot Combat:

The chariot driver may use but not reload any crossbow. The demands of controlling the chariot and its team preclude the use of any other type of bow.

The driver may use any one-handed throwing weapon, such as a spear, javelin or bola. The driver may not use a sling, blowpipe or atl-atl.

A chariot passenger may use any type of self bow or crossbow, but not any longbow, due to its great length and the confines of the chariot. Only hand-drawn, goats-foot (or gaffle), belt & claw, and cranequin spanned crossbows may be reloaded in a moving chariot. Using a windless is impractically complicated in such a confined and jostling space. A passenger may use any one-handed throwing weapon or an atl-atl, but not a sling, due to the crowded nature of the chariot and the danger of striking the driver while slinging.

Melee from Chariot:

While the chariot is moving, any one-handed weapon over three feet in length may be used at a bonus of +1D. When not in motion this bonus does not apply

Shield-Men & Chariots:

The shield-man or shield bearer in a chariot actively protects both the driver (charioteer) and any other passengers. In game terms the shield-man can extend the use of his shield to one additional rider of the chariot, giving that rider the full armor point value protection of the shield.

The shield-man can use any one-handed melee or throwing weapon, but while serving as a shield-man he may not drive the chariot or use any type of bow, sling or an atl-atl.

Trampling with a Chariot

While often shown in movies or described in novels, to actually use the chariot in a trample attack is very dangerous to both the chariot and its passengers. If a trample attack is engaged in, the damage done equals half the collective adds of the team pulling the chariot plus 4D6 damage from the chariot itself.

The Chariot as Battlefield Taxis:

The Greeks, Celts, Franks and Irish used chariots to move their most valuable warriors and champions to where they would be of most value in a battle and to relieve them if they should tire or be threatened with being overwhelmed by the enemy.

Chariots & Protection:

Even the lightest chariot provides some protection to the driver and passengers. Each chariot type lists the amount of protection it provides in its description under "Armor Value". In addition, for purposes of missile combat the driver and passengers are considered to be under partial cover in the chariot. Opponents attempting to hit them with a missile weapon suffer a -2 to their Missile Combat SR dice total.

Scythed Chariots:

Scythed chariots have large blades attached to the axle extending out from the sides to strike opponents. Scythed chariots were used to break up formations and harry and demoralize the enemy. Many modern sources try to draw a link between the sorts of tactics used by scythed chariots and modern tanks, but eyewitness accounts by scythed chariot contemporaries such as Xenophon disagree.

When the scythes are brought into play by passing the chariot close to an enemy or group of enemies, they do 3D6 damage plus the adds from the chariot's team of horses. Characters or opponents not packed into tight formations or otherwise constrained in their movements may make a 1st to 2nd Level SR on DEX or LK to avoid damage, depending on the difficulty in dodging the chariot's scythes. Scythes may be added to any chariot for an extra 50 gp.

Chariot Types

Name: One-Man Racing Chariot

Description: A light-frame design made for speed and agility, this chariot is ideal both for racing and personal transport.

Armor Value: 1

Team Size: 1-10

Piloting Modifiers: +3 bonus to the Chariot SR dice total

Speed: Team's lowest SPD score

Cost: 170 (220) gp



Name: Two-Man Light Chariot

Description: A design used both for hunting and as a swift missile caddy on the battlefield. This type would be commonly found throughout Egypt and the Near East and China.

Armor Value: 2

Team Size: 2-4

Piloting Modifiers: +1 bonus to the Chariot SR dice total

Speed: Team's lowest SPD score

Cost: 150 (200) gp

Name: Three-Man Heavy Chariot

Description: This design was most popular with the Hittites and was used to conquer Egypt and most of the Near East. This type sacrificed maneuverability for greater protection and the addition of a second archer or a shield-man to fend off infantry and incoming missiles.

Armor Value: 3

Team Size: 2-4

Piloting Modifiers: None

Speed: Team's lowest SPD score minus 2

Cost: 200 (250) gp

Name: Two-Man Medium Chariot

Description: A reinforced and updated design based on the Two-Man Light Chariot developed to defeat the Hittite Three-Man Heavy Chariot. It led to the liberation of Egypt from Hittite rule and this type has counterparts in many cultures. In Western Europe, the archer of the Near East is replaced by a shield-man who fights and protects the driver. Both configurations can be found in China.

Armor Value: 3

Team Size: 2-4

Piloting Modifiers: None

Speed: Team's lowest SPD score minus 1

Cost: 175 (225) gp

Name: Four-Man Assault Chariot

Description: The heaviest of the combat chariots of antiquity, the Assyrian Four-Man Assault Chariot featured an archer, a driver and two shield-men who both acted as protection for the chariot and plied their spears and swords with deadly effect on the enemy.

Armor Value: 4

Team Size: 3-4

Piloting Modifiers: -2 penalty to the chariot SR dice total.

Speed: Team's lowest SPD score minus 4

Cost: 250 (300) gp



New Weapons

Name: Bridle Cutter

Type: Weird Weapons & Accessories

Size: Hand Weapon

Dice + Adds: 2D+1

STR Req: 8

DEX Req: 10

Weight: 40

Cost: 25 gp

Description: The bridle cutter is an infantry weapon used to slice through the bridle and reins of mounted opponents. Resembling an ankus in construction though much slimmer, the bridle cutter is a short spike on a two-foot haft with a deeply hooked blade mounted on the side to catch and slice the enemy's riding harness.

Notes: The bridle cutter's function of catching and cutting the enemy's harness calls for a 2nd level SR on DEX. Once the bridle is cut, all riding SR's by the opponent are increased by +1 level to each SR until the harness can be repaired or replaced. If the mount the bridle cutter is being used on has reinforced cloth or heavier barding, the harness is considered too tough to cut through with the bridle cutter

Name: Plumbata

Type: Other Projectile Weapons

Size: Large Throwing Dart

Dice + Adds: 2D

STR Req: 4

DEX Req: 7

Range: 60 yards

Weight: 5

Cost: 30 gp a dozen

Description: A barbed throwing dart about 22 inches in total length used by the late Roman Empire. It is easily identifiable by the round lead weight mounted on the end of the throwing shaft leading to the barbed arrow-like head. It has four flights to stabilize it when thrown and can be thrown over or underhanded.

Notes: When used en masse the plumbata can stick in the opponent's shield and make it awkward and unwieldy. If 3 or more plumbata are stuck in an opponent's shield (i.e. a shield has been used to alleviate the damage caused by 3 or more thrown plumbata), the shield loses 2 points of armor protection

Name: Iron Chariot Goad

Type: Hafted Weapons: Class III

Size: Three to four feet in length

Dice + Adds: 3D

STR Req: 10

DEX Req: 6

Weight: 60

Cost: 18 gp

Description: A long iron prod or goad with a crook on the end and a leather thong that can be attached to the wielder's wrist to prevent it from being lost, while using it to control the chariot team or strike foes.

Notes: The crook on the end of the iron chariot goad can be used to retrieve dropped reins that have fallen beneath the chariot or across the yoke of the chariot's harness. This requires a 1st level SR on DEX

Name: Bull Whip

Type: Weird Weapons & Accessories

Size: 15' to 25' feet long

Dice + Adds: 2D

STR Req: 8

DEX Req: 15

Range: 5 yards

Weight: 45

Cost: 30 gp

Description: This whip is based on a Roman Bestiarius whip that features a two-foot weighted handle with a lead weight on the end opposite to the whip, so that it could be used as a bludgeon in close quarters, and two or three small iron or bronze weights at the lash end. The weights could be replaced with small spikes or blades.

Notes: The whip can be used to grab objects from individuals provided the whip wielder has at least 1/4 of the STR of the object holder and passes a 2nd level SR on DEX. The whip can also be used to immobilize a leg or arm and reduce the entangled opponent's adds by half if the wielder makes a STR versus STR (or 1/3 MR) SR against the entangled opponent. The entangled opponent can make an additional STR versus STR (or 1/3 MR) SR against the Whip wielder each combat turn. Or if they have a sharp weapon, a 2nd Level SR on STR or DEX will sever the whip, destroying it and freeing them as of that turn. The whip can also be used to fend off some wild animals. If attempting to do so, use the whip wielder's CHR + the Whip's dice total versus the animal's MR to hold them back for a turn.



Barding

The term *barding* is derived from the Old French *Barde* and from the Arabic *Barda* and refers to armor or decoration designed specifically for horses. Although over the years the term has come to be used for any armor designed for use by animals.

Types of Barding:

Name: Quilted Silk

HITS 3

Weight: 200

Cost: 125 gp

Description: A padded silk caparison that covers the horse from head to tail and provides protection to the legs as well.

Name: Quilted Cloth

HITS 3

Weight: 250

Cost: 50 gp

Description: A thick, padded caparison of cloth that protects the horse's body and legs.

Name: Reinforced Cloth

HITS 4

Weight: 215

Cost: 85 gp

Description: A caparison of "bezainted" or "ring-enhanced cloth". A thick quilted cloth with metal bevels, squares, discs or rings sewn onto it to provide more protection against slashing attacks.

Name: Reinforced Leather

HITS 5

Weight: 230

Cost: 100 gp

Description: A caparison of "bezainted" or "ring-enhanced leather". Reinforced leather is thick leather with metal bevels, squares, discs or rings sewn onto it to provide more protection against slashing attacks.

Name: Cuirboilli Leather

HITS: 6

Weight: 250

Cost: 125 gp

Description: A full set of barding made of cuirboilli leather. Cuirboilli leather is leather hardened in boiling water and sealed with wax or oil.

Name: Scale Barding

HITS: 8

Weight: 950

Cost: 200 gp

Description: A caparison of scale barding with a metal champron and criniere. Scale barding is comprised of rows of overlapping scales of metal sewn onto a cloth or leather backing.

Name: Chain Barding

HITS: 10

Weight: 1500

Cost: 425 gp

Description: A caparison of chain, double mail, and bar mail barding with a plate metal champron and criniere. Chain barding is a flexible garment of interlocking rings over a leather or padded cloth backing.

Name: Plate Barding

HITS: 12

Weight: 1100

Cost: 600 gp

Description: A complete set of barding constructed of interlocking plates with chain mail covering the gaps and an optional caparison over the barding to add heraldic value and to further protect the legs.

A Short Barding Glossary:

Armored Reins: Reins covered with chain armor, embedded with metal segments or covered with flexible metal sheaths to prevent cutting.

Champron: The face or head guard of a set of barding; in effect, the helmet.

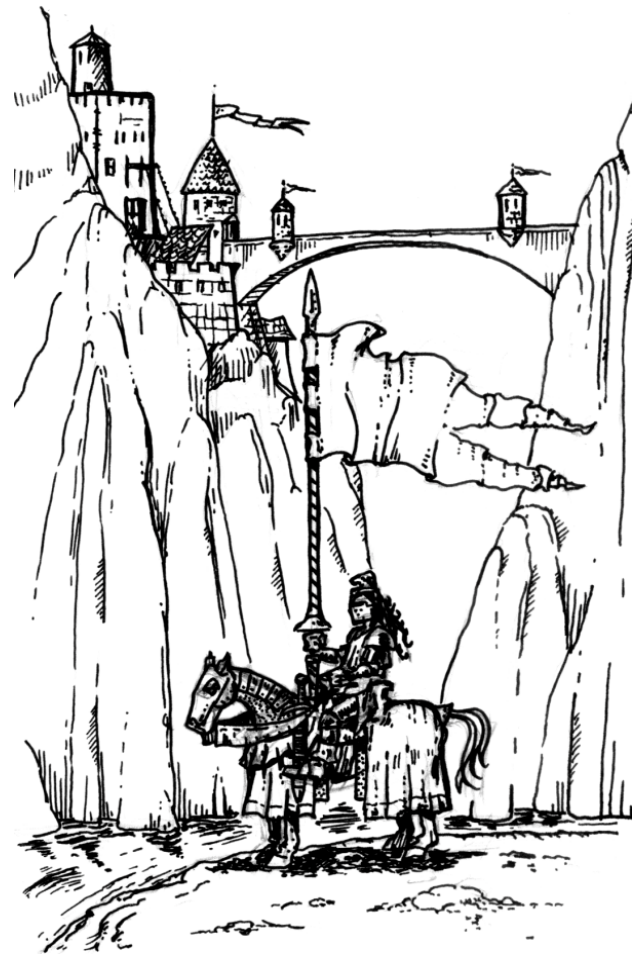
Criniere: The neck protection of the barding, usually made of segmented strips of metal or leather.

Croupiere: The barding protecting the horse's flanks, usually of leather, chain, metal plates or a combination of all of the above.

Flanchard: The barding protecting the back and sides of the horse's body, usually attached to the saddle to prevent slippage.

Peytral: The chest protection of a set of barding, usually attached to either the saddle or Criniere.

Caparison: A cloth covering used in the heavier sets of barding, stretching to just above the horse's hooves. It not only serves as an indication of the rider's heraldry, but protects the horse's legs and helps keep the animal cool.



The Children of Entropy

An Apocalyptic Setting for T&T

By Dan Prentice

Nexus

The world of Nexus spun through the Universe, or perhaps more accurately, the Universe spun around Nexus. For Nexus was a verdant world, rich in magic, at the perfect intersection of the planes. The Wizards walked in pomp and power, accessing riches and wonders from the planes beyond. Some populated underground complexes with creatures from across the multiverse, just because they were able to. Races of all kinds congregated on this planet, bickering and disputing for land, but all were in fear lest the Wizards turn on them.

A Wizards Guild, *The* Wizards Guild in fact, determined who should receive learning and who should not. But those with psi powers yet denied membership still sought after knowledge, and reached for power from beyond Nexus.

Demon Princes listened to those beseeching their aid, and oft gave it, knowing it served their long term goals. Each such interaction cut an opening in the walls between Nexus and the planes around it. Rarely were such cuts remedied, and Nexus began to bleed into other realities.

The Cataclysm

The air changed color and shimmered. Not all of it, but patches here and there. They started out the size of a dinner plate and very slowly started to grow. They were pretty, radiating different colors, changing through all the colors of the spectrum. Noises, from music to high pitched howls, could be heard from them. Some foolhardy souls reached into the patches - their limbs disappeared from view. Most times they just reported that it felt different - warmer perhaps, but sometimes their limbs were removed, and even more rarely, replaced by the limb of another creature.

The Wizards and Sages were baffled; though some believed that this was the prophesied Constellation of

the Spheres, when all the planes would merge as one, with this one small world the eye of the planar storm.

And lo it came to pass that these areas grew, changing in shape and color until all the world was covered with them. There was no escape, nowhere to hide, save within the strongest of Protective Pentagrams.

Wherever the portals touched they brought death, change, mutation, and transformation. Most were killed by the touch of other worlds. Some became creatures of ethereal beauty, others were transformed to demons most foul - the end result depending more on the portal touching them than on the nature of the person they were.

In the space of one week, all was thrown in flux. Civilization fell under the impact of mass annihilation and transformation. And then the demons came...

Transformation

As the people of Nexus became transformed, so did the world itself. Oceans boiled, mountain ranges were thrown down, deserts bloomed, and forests burned. The touch of chaos, the energy of entropy, rendered all unpredictable. Wizards with sufficient foresight threw up mighty Pentagrams to preserve a small part of Nexus from the chaos. They labored without sleep to protect those they held dear. All around them the forces of destruction raged and those inside prayed for survival. Those outside were not so lucky, losing parts of themselves, and most often their lives to the cataclysm.

Survival Test

When an unprotected being is engulfed in the planar collision they must make a L3 LK Saving Roll. If they fail this roll they take 2D6 hits to their CON, plus one additional hit for every point they were short on the roll. If they survive this damage, healing occurs in the normal way.

Post Cataclysmic Trauma

The transformation process is a phenomenally painful and mentally disorientating one. All those affected will lose a D6 CHR and INT from their starting attributes. This is a permanent loss, reflecting their loss of self-identity. They have been touched by entropy and they cannot even be fully sure of who they once were. They may increase their attributes in future, either through beneficial mutations, or by expending adventure points.

Mutation Extent

The extent of the characters transformation is determined by a series of rolls on the following tables. The psyche of the character is otherwise un-affected by the transformation - an angelic being is not inevitably good, a demonic one not inevitably evil. They will be adapting to the change, but are still, at least in part, who they were before.

Invasion

The Demon Princes of the 666 layers of the Abyss long cast covetous eyes upon the rich world and many souls of Nexus. They battled amongst themselves constantly for souls and supremacy, but longed for the freedom to extend their domain to the world. With the Constellation of the Spheres, brought about by the rashness of unwise Wizards, their chance has come; the Demon Princes and their armies have invaded.

The Demon Armies

The Condemned

These are tortured souls that have survived their time in the abyss, and agreed to serve the demons. Their skin has the look of a mass of scar tissue due to the repeated burning and flaying they have been subjected to. Memory of their past life (recently transformed excepted) is hazy at best. Filled with rage, they fight without fear, as death would be a release for them.

MR Range: 25–75 (fight with normal weapons)

Special Abilities: Regenerate 1 point MR/turn. Immune to fire damage. Decapitation ends their existence.

Minos Demons

These are the loyal shock troops of the Demon armies. Revelling in violence and subservient to the

Princes, they are the most easily bamboozled of the Demons, if you can stop them hacking your head off long enough to talk. Their pecking order is determined by violence. They look like giant bears with long horns emerging from their head, but with hands to grip their powerful weapons. They favour axes and mauls.

MR Range: 75–200.

Special Abilities: 6 Armor Points. Take half damage from cold attacks.

Special Attacks: *3/Gored and thrown*—a target is picked up on one of the horns and hurled through the air taking 2D6 damage and halving damage output the next turn.

Winged Death

Looking like a long necked humanoid with moulting feathered wings, fangs, and a row of eyes around their head these are the shape taken by fallen Seraphs. They are cowardly and dislike a fair fight. They are the most treacherous of the Demon armies, condemned to never stay true to any loyalty, constantly shifting their allegiance between princes. Despised by all, they are nevertheless useful.

MR Range: 40–120.

Special Abilities: Flying.

Special Attacks: *3/Blood Drain*—target loses D6 STR (recoverable with rest), Demon recovers D6 MR. *Drop Rocks from Height*—L2 SR on LK or DEX to avoid; 3D6 damage if failed; only helm armor protects.

Seducers

Appearing as an exceptionally attractive member of their race, these are the favoured of the Princes, elevated due to their special qualities. They specialise in infiltrating enemy forces or occasionally a position of command. They also make good assassins. Their fangs are only evident when they go to bite.

MR Range: 30–90

Special Attacks: *3/Poison Fangs*—the Seducer has injected their venom; L2 SR on CON or the victim paralysed for 3 turns. *Bemuse*—the target must make a L2 INT SR to see that the Seducer is a threat. In a non-combat environment they are very likely to be seduced if the Seducer is of a gender that they would be interested in. In a combat environment, they will not attack the seducer unless attacked by them.

Monstrosities

The playthings of the Princes, these are souls that have been condemned to experimentation to create the perfect weapon. The outcome is far from such. These have a very misshapen appearance apart from any

specific mutations - skull heads or transparent skin, out of proportion limbs, additional limbs, and a putrescent stench are all possible features of a monstrosity. Consumed by hatred of all, these are unleashed upon the enemy and kept on shock chains to control them the rest of the time.

MR Range: 75–300

Special abilities and attacks: Varies greatly - choose or roll on the mutation table to determine.

Princes

The aristocracy of the Demon world, their telepathy and knowledge of the true names of their subjects keeps them on top of the pile. They look like classic demons from the inferno - usually 7' tall, but they can be taller or shorter than that. One demon in a 100 may be a prince, and they band together in clans that they call kingdoms. Red of skin, they are muscular with cloven feet and long barbed tails, with short decorative horns.

MR Range: 50–1000.

Special Abilities: 6 Points of Armour + 1/100 MR

Special Attacks: *3/Tail Lash*—the barbed tail of the Prince impales the target, doing 2D6 damage, and leaving them bleeding at 1 point/turn until the wound is staunch. *1 Command You*—only effective if the Prince knows the targets true name. The target must make a L3 SR on INT or do exactly what the Prince has said to do, even if that be attack a loved one or commit suicide.

Is there still Hope?

Seraphs

The guardians of law and purity, they wage an unceasing battle against the demons. They are severe in their judgement and will rarely spare a mutant, as they are touched by chaos. However they are overwhelmed by the extent of the devastation and may have to prioritise their targets if potential allies include mutants. They will try to induct newly transformed seraphs into their way of thinking as well as providing them with protection. The planes of pure law are far rarer than those of chaos but Seraphs are exemplars of physical and spiritual prowess. They appear as tall (6'-8'), muscled, and perfectly proportioned human men or women, with large feathered wings extending from their shoulder blades.

MR Range: 100–1000

Special Abilities: Flight – possess large feathered wings. Pure Voice - the voice of a seraph is beautiful

to behold and can be understood by any creature with a language.

Special attacks: *1/Sword of Light*—the blades wielded by Seraphs do triple spite damage to any mutant or demon. *Voice of Pure Reason*—the seraph can present a formidable argument. L2 SR on INT or CHR required or the target will stop and consider their words to the exclusion of all other matters until the paradox is resolved. It is broken if the target is attacked.

Note: transformed player characters do not have the special attacks of demons and seraphs, but do have the special abilities.

Some Campaign Outlines

1) Have the Cataclysm affect an existing campaign.

The portals start to appear. Require a L4 SR on INT or history/arcane lore Talent to have inkling into what is going on. Anyone who puts their arm into a portal must make a L1 SR on LK or take the difference in damage. If they fumble (roll 3) they lose their arm and take 3D6 damage. If they roll a L5 or higher SR, their arm is replaced with a functionally improved one (bonus strength or claws or similar). People talk about the end of days and powerful wizards start selecting those they will protect with Pentagrams. PC's have a choice - endure the transformation, or seek protection, then face the invading hordes.

2) A new campaign - The Transformed.

The PC's are all mutants who survived the transformation. Maybe they knew each other first, maybe they did not. They are all disoriented, suffering loss of loved ones, and shunned by the fragments of civilisation (at first at least). Then demons start arriving, trying to enslave them, recruit them, or kill them.

3) A new campaign - The Guild of Light.

A powerful wizard managed to protect his/her friends, family and household - the adventurers are amongst those that were saved. They must then venture into the demon blasted wilds, to see what can be salvaged, to make new alliances, and to prevent the invasion.

Table 1 ~ Mutation type

Roll 2D6.

2 = Total - Angelic - Takes on the appearance of a Seraph, a creature of Purity and Law, 7' tall, with working feathered wings, a beatific appearance and a mellifluous voice - double the characters CHR, they also gain a bonus D6 to all other attributes (roll for each attribute).

3 = Total - Humanoid - Roll on the random humanoid kindred table below (Table 3) and apply the kindred modifiers listed to any physical attributes. The character takes the form of that kin.

4 = Partial - Roll 4 times on the d66 mutation table below

5 = Partial - Roll 3 times on the d66 mutation table below

6 = Partial - Roll 2 times on the d66 mutation table below

7 = Partial - Roll 2 times on the d66 mutation table below

8 = Partial - Roll 2 times on the d66 mutation table below

9 = Partial - Roll 3 times on the d66 mutation table below

10 = Partial - Roll 4 times on the d66 mutation table below

11 = Total - Monstrous - Roll on the random Monster kindred table below (Table 4) and apply their kindred modifiers to all attributes instead of your own. The character takes the form of that kin.

12 = Total - Demonic - The character has taken the form of a demon. Roll on the Demon table below (Table 5) to determine which type and the mutations that are entailed.

Table 2 ~ Mutations

Roll 2D6, but choose two different colored dice; the first one is the 'tens' the second the 'units'. If the same number is rolled, double any effect if that is possible, otherwise go to the next mutation on the list.

Players should consider how mutations will visibly affect their characters appearance, with the expectation that it will. For example, different types of blood may transform the characters skin color, a Bulb brain may result in a melon like head, and extra limbs need not resemble existing ones. The descriptions in italics are for illustration purposes only; your mutation may vary.

11 = **Grotesque Muscles** - Roll 2D6 and apply DARO. Add this to your strength score. *The mutant's muscles are bulged and warped, the veins standing proud from their skin.*

12 = **Dense Physique** - Roll 2D6 and apply DARO. Add this to your CON score. *The mutant's skin is coarse and rough, reluctant to let go of their blood.*

13 = **Quickened Blood** - Roll 2D6 and apply DARO. Add this to your DEX score. *The mutant exhibits perfect poise and grace, and is always exactly where they need to be.*

14 = **Rapid Synapses** - Roll 2D6 and apply DARO. Add this to your SPD score. *Jittery and edgy, the warped one reacts quickly to the overload of information they are assimilating.*



15 = **Bulb Brained** - Roll 2D6 and apply DARO. Add this to your INT score. *The pronounced domed forehead indicates enormous power for cogitation.*

16 = **Luck Genes** - Roll 2D6 and apply DARO. Add this to your LK score. *The near permanent smile is an indication of someone who knows they are lucky to be alive.*

21 = **Honey Voiced** - Roll 2D6 and apply DARO. Add this to your CHA score. *The beautiful tone of the mutants voice belies their otherwise warped appearance.*

22 = **Mana Battery** - Roll 2D6 and apply DARO. Add this to your WIZ score. *Energy of the planes crackles in the air as this one moves, radiating from them.*

23 = **Extra Arm** - An extra limb growing from another part of the body. Fully functional, may hold an extra weapon or shield. *The powerful tough knuckled arm emerged from the back of his head, swinging a blade to and fro.*

24 = **Tentacles** - A D6 number of tentacles growing over the body. These may grasp and grapple but do not have the digits for fine manipulation. Each tentacle is worth a bonus melee combat die. *A man? With 4 tentacles boiling from his chest? The onlookers shrank in fear.*

25 = **Centaur** - The lower body of a many limbed animal. Double the characters Speed. *A dwarf's body conjoined with the 8 dark limbs of a spider. Surely against nature?*

26 = **Claws** - Extendable claws make each hand worth 2 dice in combat. *The blades at the end of his fingertips were sharp as a razor, and twice as deadly.*

31 = **Extra Eyes** - A D6 number of extra eyes means that it is very difficult to surprise this person. Double the relevant attribute or talent for any perception Saving Rolls made. *The mutant's baleful stare disconcerted her, especially the eye on the back of his hand.*

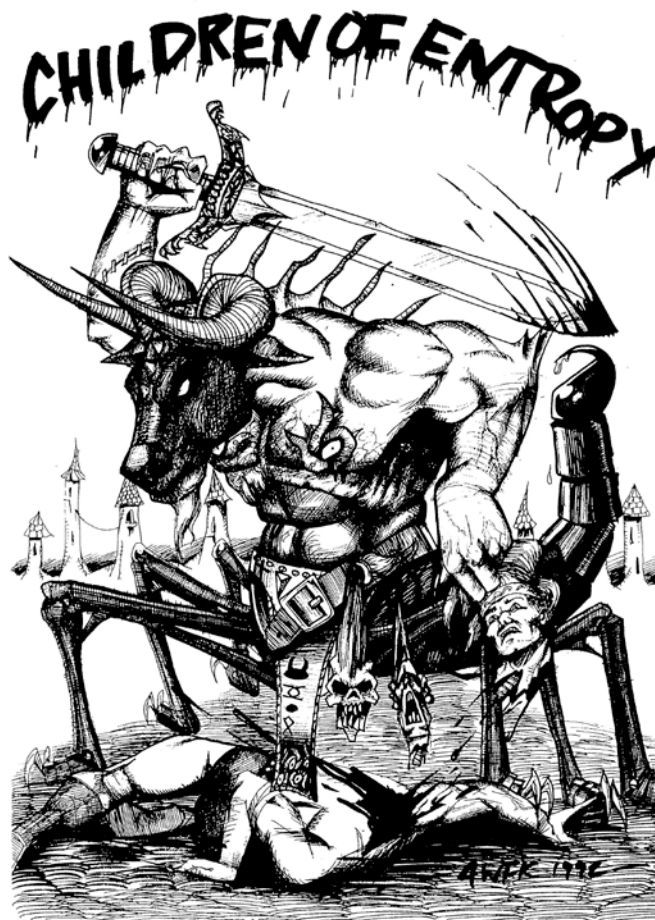
32 = **Blood Drinking Fangs** - The mutant has fangs that can drain the targets blood. The character gains a bonus combat die and may cure 1D6 CON damage or restore 1d6 WIZ to him or herself when the blood of an enemy is drained dry, once per day. *The pronounced hollow fangs protruded from his mouth, dripping with the blood recently drained from his enemy.*

33 = **Protective Hide** - This may be scales, bone, or rocky accretions. The mutant has 2D6 (DARO Applies) bonus Armor Points. *Armored Hobbs: faster than a man eating lizard, and twice as deadly.*

34 = **Wings** - Feathered or leathery, these allow the mutant to fly. *Gliding on the thermals, eagle woman waited for her prey to be distracted, then swooped.*

35 = **Fire Breathing** - The mutant can breathe fire as though casting Blasting Power. It is a natural ability that they may use D6 times a day (roll for number when mutation acquired). No expenditure of WIZ is required. *His breath stank of sulfur, and his armor was pitted and blackened by flame.*

36 = **Poison Fangs or Tail** - The mutant has fangs or a scorpion style tail which inject a virulent venom into the target. The feature is worth a bonus 2D6 in combat. If the mutant manages to inject the target with the poison (a DEX SR stunt), the target is paralyzed for three rounds if vulnerable to toxins. *The tail curled long and dangerously over her back, swaying like a cobra, waiting to strike.*



41 = **Gecko Hands** - The mutant can issue a glue to their hands and feet, enabling them to climb with extraordinary agility. Double the relevant attribute for any climbing rolls, and they can climb as fast as they can walk. *He scuttled up the wall, his splayed hands and feet adhering easily to the surface.*

42 = **Super Adrenaline** - The mutant can send their body into overdrive; doubling their STR and DEX at the cost of 1 CON damage per turn this is maintained. *Falling into a titanic rage, she doubled in height. Black fluid issued from her head like a geyser as she pounced on her prey.*

43 = **Hypnotic Eye** - The mutant has a third eye in the centre of their forehead. They may cast Hold that Pose freely a D6 times/day (roll number when mutation acquired). *'Trust in me' he said as the eye in his forehead glowed with a demonic light.*

TOP



44 = **Huge** - The mutant is double the normal size for their race but clumsy - double the characters STR, Height and Weight, halve their DEX. *Tall for an elf, exceedingly so, but where was the agility and grace one expected from their kind?*

45 = **Horns** - Goat-like or bull-like, these horns extend from the mutants head, giving them 3 armor points and 2D6 bonus combat dice. *Roaring in defiance, she tore forward, lowering the long antelope like horns to strike her tormentor.*

46 = **Quills** - Quills protrude from the mutants body. Anyone grappling with the mutant takes 2D6 damage every turn. They provide 6 armor points but make normal armor unusable. They may be projected like arrows out to 30', doing 3 dice damage (the ammo supply is unlimited). *He made every move carefully, so easy was it to harm those he cared for.*

51 = **Telepathy** - The mutant can project their thoughts without verbalizing them out to 100' to one person. If they concentrate, they can try to read minds - treat it as an INT contest, the more it is won by the deeper the mutant can probe. If they lose, the target is aware something is being tried on them. *As he concentrated, the veins in his forehead throbbed visibly.*

52 = **Acid Blood** - When the mutants blood is spilled it is acidic, doing 1D damage to those nearby. It can also be used as a solvent. The mutant is immune to harm from their acid - but their armor is not. *A rank smell of rotten eggs rolled from her body and her clothes were rent with the blood she had spilled.*

53 = **Regenerative Flesh** - The mutants flesh reseals from wounds amazingly quickly, recovering 1 point of CON damage each turn. *The skin knitted and the blood drew back into the wound, leaving new scars, but no injury.*

54 = **Furry** - The mutant has a thick furry hide, providing them with 6 armor points and they take half damage from any cold source. *His coarse hair stood out 6" from his body, completely obscuring his former identity.*

55 = **Iron digestion** - The mutant has a super resilient stomach. They ignore any poisons ingested (not injected), and can derive nutrition from any organic matter. *His stomach rumbled noisily as he digested his latest meal, the skin and horns of a Minos Demon.*

56 = **Luminous** - The mutant glows as if they have a Will-o-Wisp spell upon them at all times, also making them strangely attractive and receiving a D6 bonus to CHR. *She moved like an angel, the soft glow from her body suffusing the air, entrancing those around her.*

61 = **Chameleon Skin** - The mutant may merge with their surroundings (this does not affect any clothes they may be wearing) doubling their attributes for any tests of hiding or camouflage. *Blending with the rock face, he waited until the demon grew level with him before swinging round the stony club into its face.*

62 = **Barbed Tail** - The mutant has a barbed tail that may be used as a weapon in addition to any they are using granting the character 3 bonus combat dice. *The long tail whipped round, its needle sharp tip slicing into the orc's skin.*

63 = **Fireproof** - The mutant has skin that can resist the fires of Hell. They take no damage from fire. *Charred and blackened from the inferno, the mutant's skin gave flame no purchase.*

64 = **Next Generation** - The mutant has a +1 bonus to all attributes, and appears normal for their race, despite any other mutations. This is a permanent illusion. *Her normal appearance belied just how deadly she was.*

65 = **Long Limbed** - The mutant has very long arms and legs; bonus D6 to SPD and bonus D6 to DEX. Long reach. Double height. *He bounded forward on his giraffe-like legs, his arms reaching forward right across the room.*

66 = **Super Mutant** - +1 to all attributes, roll again on this table. *The cataclysm had made her stronger, greater, and more powerful than ever. It had taken, but it had given so much more.*

Table 3 ~ Humanoid Kindred Table

Roll 1D6. If the character's kin is the same as the kin rolled, roll once on the mutation table, and roll again on this table. Keep rolling on this table until a different kin is rolled, adding one roll on the mutation table for each time their kin is duplicated. Generate a new height and weight according to the rules for the kin.

1 = Human - Adjust any physical attributes to reflect a x1 racial modifier (STR, CON, DEX, SPD).

2 = Dwarf - Double STR and CON

3 = Elf - Increase DEX by 50%, reduce CON by 33%

4 = Hobb - Halve STR, Increase DEX by 50%, Double CON

5 = Leprechaun - Increase DEX by 50%, Halve STR, Gain Wink Wing ability.

6 = Fairy - Increase DEX by 50%, Reduce STR and CON by 75%. Gain Flight.



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Table 4 ~ Monstrous Kindred Table

Roll 1D6. Height and weight should be rerolled according to the rules for the kin.

- 1 = Gain a Mutation, and roll again on this table.
- 2 = Troll - Double STR and CON, Gain Claws (26) and Protective Hide (33)
- 3 = Ogre - Double STR and CON
- 4 = Urook - Increase STR and CON by 50%
- 5 = Goblin - Increase DEX by 50%, reduce STR and CON by 25%
- 6 = Minotaur - Double STR and CON, reduce DEX by 25%, Gain Horns (45)



Table 5 ~ Demon Kindred Table

Roll 1D6. The person has been transformed into the guise of a demon, and can pass as one; possibly useful now that the demonic hordes are invading from other planes.

- 1 = **The Condemned** - Apparently human, these are used as expendable shock troops by the demon princes. Very resilient, they have Dense Physique (12), Regenerative Flesh (53) and are Fireproof (63).
- 2 = **Minos Demons** - Lumbering vicious brutes, these are Huge (44), Furry (54) with massive Horns (45) and Grotesque Muscles (11).
- 3 = **Winged Death** - These vulture like demons are the sentinels of the demon armies, with Wings (34), Extra Eyes (31) and Blood Drinking Fangs (32).
- 4 = **Seducers** - The demon forces infiltrators are Next Generation (64), Honey Voiced (21) with Poison Fangs (36). They appear as one of the humanoid races.
- 5 = **Monstrosities** - These shambling demon horrors are each different, save that they always have misshapen and twisted limbs and faces. Roll 5 times on the mutation table. Halve the CHR value of the Monstrosity.
- 6 = **Princes** - The officers of the demon forces, they have Telepathy (51), with a long Barbed Tail (62), a leathery Protective Hide (33) and are Super Mutants (66). They often have decorative horns, but these are usually for show only.



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Kung Suey

Yet Another Take on Martial Arts for T&T

By Tom K. Loney

Wizard! In a fight with a hyena-kin pirate off the reef-laden coasts of Insel Gefahr, and you've used your second to last WIZ point? And then you dropped your dagger when the Yyena used his "Disarm Opponent Talent?" Don't give up the ghost just yet, intrepid Delver. You too can disarm that gnoll, and show him that you didn't just study books back in your apprentice days. From deep in the heart of Pel, the steamy tropical jungle-filled homelands of the Ugoran ork nations, comes Hand-to-Hand fighting methods that can be applied to all character Types.

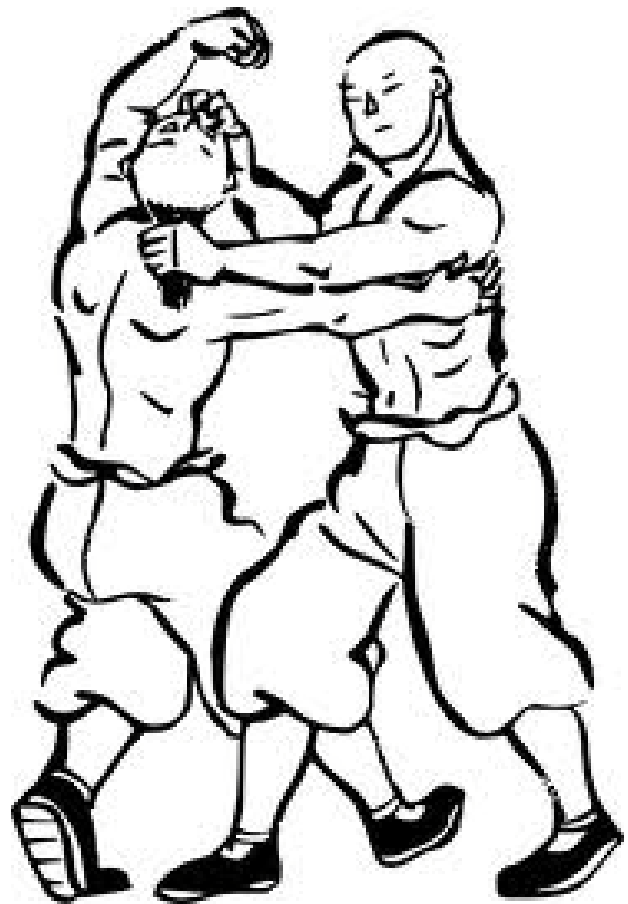
I have always been of the school of thought that barehanded combat in Our Game has been a single six-sided die with Personal Adds worked in and then I worked from there. I later decided to incorporate the D2 and D3 (the two-sided and three-sided die respectively) and then I added in the more theatrical elements of martial arts as seen on TV for complete customer satisfaction; required cries made by the PC during the combat.

The martial artist uses a combination of physical attributes (STR, DEX, or SPD) and LK for different Moves. The Moves can be used singly or intertwined. They take place after regular combat rolls occur in the Combat Turn Sequence (Magic, Missile, and the Melee), although Dodge and Catch can occur between the Missile and the Melee phases of the Turn.

If a single Move is used, the PC adds 2D (two D6) to the attributes he is using versus his opponents attributes. If two Moves are intertwined, the PC adds 2D3 and if the player comes up with a way he/she gets to roll 2D2 to add to the maneuver. As always the player and GM have to factor in the DARO rule to these Saves.

Dodge—(SPD and LK) Also called the *Dancing Crane Amazing Dodge* by true martial artists, this Move requires the delver to cry "Hauh" while attempting to avoid making contact with strikes, either from a weapon or another fisticuffs brawler. By using the

character's speed and agility, the user can fling his body, using either hands or legs, out of harm's way, if he rolls above his opponents SPD. This Move can also be used to avoid missile weapons headed the PC's direction, but each shot must be Dodged and the target must roll against the shooter's DEX. With a successful Dodge, even with a separate Dodge for Missiles and one for Melee, the Delver only has to absorb Spite damage incurred from the violence going on around him.

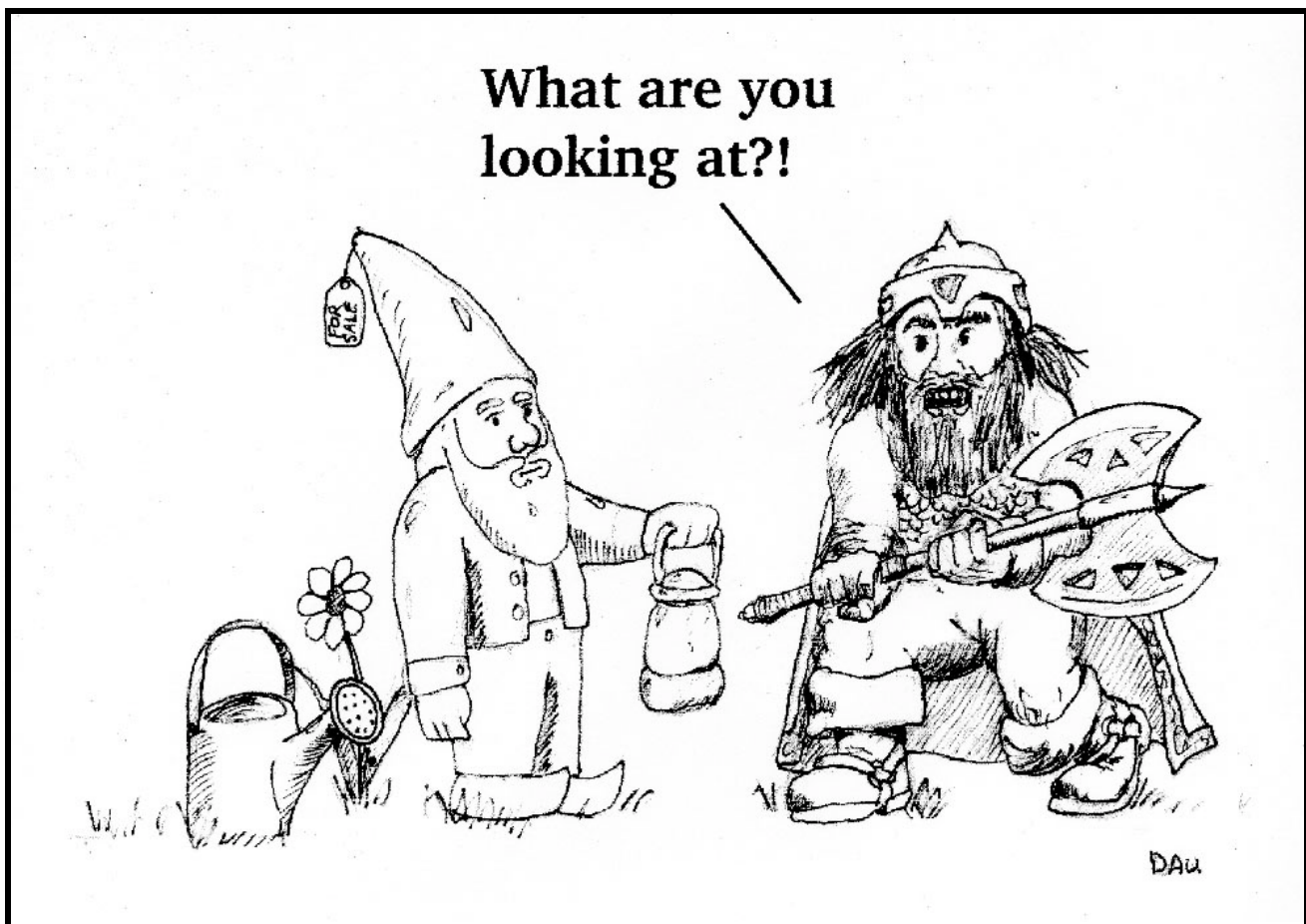


Catch—(DEX and LK) This Move is also called the *Merry Monkey Clapping Catch* by an enlightened few. With a throaty hum of "Yahuawww" for each Catch performed, the delver is able to intercept missiles and melee weapons, including others hands. This negates the targets combat roll for that round. With a following successful SR based on the catcher's STR and Combat Adds versus the weapon-holder's STR and Combat Adds, the PC is able to disarm that close-up opponent, even multiple opponents.

Strike—(STR and LK) This Move is also known as the *Tremendous Tiger Striking Claw* by those who are highly trained in the ways of Kung Suey. The cry of "HI-YAWWWWW" enables the martial artist to direct all of his damage on a single target within arm's reach. This is regardless of the success or failure of the party that he is fighting with. The strike ignores any sort of defense, even any Moves used in combination with it. The target of this blow takes the damage, and must make a LK SR versus the striker's STR and LK to allow his armor to absorb any of it.

During the combat, the PC may still be holding his or her regular weapon of choice, but not deigning to use it that turn. The delver is instead using the bare hand single die as his/her weapon. For as awesome as these Moves may seem, on the tabletop, the loss of the extra damage points in a Combat Turn as well as the potential exemption of sharing any damage may be a fatal stratagem for the other characters. The following combat turn the martial artist can resume regular combat if he/she so chooses.

The path of a true martial artist is not an easy one. Cinematic feats of acrobatics and skillful climbing can be covered by Talents within those specific areas, as they are not actually fighting skills in the strictest sense. Weapon skills are still very much based on regular Combat Adds. Still by learning the Talent of Kung Suey as well as many other others, the delver may one day be worthy a Shaolin Monk in the player's mind.



Beneath the Arena

AT&T 7.5 Solo Adventure

By W. Scott Grant

Set up for Play

To play *Beneath the Arena*, you must have the solitaire adventure, *Arena of Khazan*. If you don't have it, buy it or borrow it, but please don't steal it. You may also need *Naked Doom* or *Trollgod's Exciting Random Rooms of Ruination (TERRoR)*, both exquisitely written by the justifiably infamous Ken St. Andre. *Deathtrap Equalizer Dungeon* may be used instead of *TERRoR*.

For this adventure, you will be creating several new characters and choosing one of them to be your "primary focus" character. Once the primary focus character has been selected, you will play that character in his or her first battle in the *Arena of Khazan* as a convict. If you win the battle you will go to Paragraph 1 of this adventure instead of **34A** in *Arena of Khazan*.

First, let's roll up the new characters. To determine how many characters to create, roll 2D6+2. It is not important to give them names right now; they are all convicts and probably have a number or a bar-code imprinted on their loin cloth. Follow standard T&T 7.5e (or 5e) rules to generate attributes for the characters, except that you will roll 5D6 and take the best 3 for each attribute. If three dice are the same (even if the other dice are higher), add and re-roll just the three dice. Do them in order of the stats on the character sheet. Determine the kindred of the characters by rolling 2D6 and consulting the table below.

- 2-3 – Hobb
- 4-5 – Elf
- 6-9 – Human
- 10-11 – Dwarf
- 12 – Monster kin – roll 1D6 below
 - 1 – Urook
 - 2 – Dark Elf
 - 3 – Ratling
 - 4 – Goblin
 - 5 – Urookin
 - 6 – Hobgoblin

After you apply the kindred attribute modifiers, go through and determine the best type for each of these characters, except none can be Wizards, Paragons, or Specialists. Citizens are permitted since they commit the occasional crime too. In other words, if the character isn't obviously a Warrior or a Rogue, he's a Citizen.

For each character, roll one die; if you roll a 6, the character is female. Otherwise, the character is male. Generally, females aren't sent to the Arena, but typically serve their sentences in other ways. However, there are exceptions. This doesn't actually affect anything in this adventure, but it's nice to know.

Hopefully, at least one of the characters you've rolled up is a Rogue. If not, continue creating additional characters following these guidelines until you get one. The primary focus character is the Rogue. If there's more than one Rogue in the group, select the one with the highest CHR to be the primary focus character. Give this character a name and it will hereafter be referred to as "YOU".

As a rogue, you are allowed one spell. Since I'm the GM, I've decided for you: Knock-Knock. I hope you have the necessary INT, DEX, and WIZ (or STR) to cast it a time or two; you'll need it. You will be told when there are opportunities for your character to recover used WIZ (or STR).



In addition to Roguery, give yourself the Talent of “Thievery.” Your Thievery score is based on the average of your LK and your DEX (rounded up) plus 1D6. You will be called upon to make saving rolls against this talent several times. As your final step, give yourself 1000 Adventure Points and use them to raise your attributes according to the 7.5e rules.

Normal solitaire adventure rules apply in *Beneath the Arena*. All Saving Rolls will use the following notation: (L#SR-AAA); where “#” is the level of the test, and “AAA” is the attribute being tested. When called upon to use your Thievery Talent, the designation is “TT.” As a Rogue with the Roguery talent you are permitted to substitute the best of your LK, INT, or CHR scores for any Saving Roll that tests one of these three attributes. For example, if you see (L2SR-DEX) you can use LK or INT instead of DEX. If you are using the 5e rules without talents or the Speed Attribute, substitute DEX for any for any SPD based Saving Rolls and the highest of LK or DEX for any Thievery Saving Rolls.

Throughout this adventure, you will be asked to make saving rolls for others, including your enemies. Remember that you do not receive Adventure Points for these rolls, but all normal rules apply, such as DARO and automatic fails.

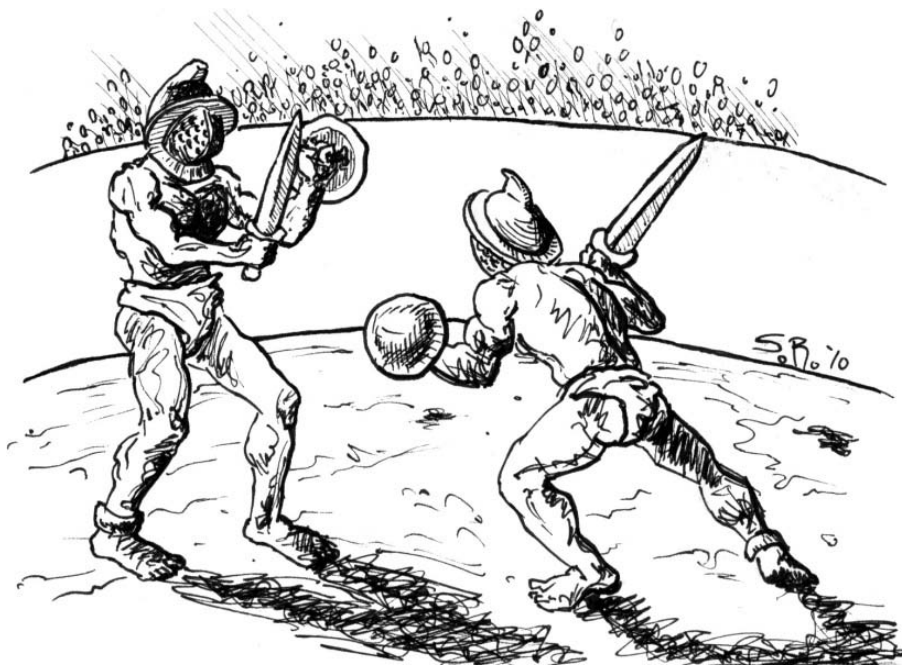
Combat in this adventure will be handled as normal. Unless the paragraph says otherwise, you and your allies will fight as a group. Add your combat totals

together and compare it against the combat total of whoever it is you’re fighting. All spite damage will apply, regardless of armor. As the leader of your team, you distribute the damage your group deals as you see fit.

Introduction

We already know you’re a thief. Suffice it to say, you’ve been caught. In the Great City of Khazan, the Death Goddess has little use for common thieves, and usually just has their hands cut off and puts them on probation for a few years. However, the Arena has been running low on slaves and more prominent criminals, considering that nearly all of them wind up in the belly of a monster. So instead of chopping off your hands, the Powers That Be have determined that you should have your fifteen minutes of fame and the opportunity to impress the assembled masses on the sandy grounds of the Arena.

Your day has arrived. They give you the best one-handed sword you can use (no better than a broadsword) and a buckler. You’re wearing a steel cap, a loin cloth, and an iron shackle around your right ankle. Now open the *Arena of Khazan* and fight your first battle. However, if you roll greater than a 9 or less than a 5 for your first battle, re-roll until you get within this range. If you win the fight (which we certainly hope you do), go to 1.



1. You stand victorious over your enemy. Perhaps you are wounded – perhaps you are not. As you stand there, make a first level saving roll on your thieving talent (L1SR-TT). If you make the roll, go to **44**. If you fail, go to **21**.

2. You have encountered one or more guards who patrol the tunnels and corridors beneath the Arena specifically tasked to deal with people like you. The paragraph that sent you here tells you how many guards of what type you must fight. It's possible that they may have two Wargs with them as well.

Guards: All guards serving in the Arena are warriors with a Monster Rating of 30 (4D+15) and are wearing leather armor which provides 10 of hits protection. If you kill a guard, you can take his scimitar, which is worth 4 dice in combat. If you have time, you can strip him of his leather armor (worth 5 hits) and his uniform, but you can only use these if your height is between 5'0" and 6'6".

Archers: Some paragraphs will state there are archers with the guards. These men are also warriors with a MR of 30 and wear leather armor. Their weapon is a medium self bow which is worth 4 dice in combat. Their quivers hold 24 arrows. In combat, the archers must make a saving roll to hit their target which is usually a L4SR on MR. Archers stay far enough away from the battle so they never take spite damage. Also, their arrows never do spite damage. Each archer may only hit one target per combat round; so if the target dies, the overflow damage is not applied to another target. Most archers don't carry swords, so when faced with melee they will retreat with haste. If the melee guards they are with are all killed, the archers will drop their bows and run – but they take their unused arrows with them. You may collect half of any arrows that were fired in combat.

Wargs: Wargs are large wolves with thick, matted black fur and glowing red eyes. Their Monster Rating is 60 (7D+30), and their thick fur gives them 4 points of armor protection. Because Wargs are vicious fighters, all spite damage they do is doubled.

In combat, the damage the guards do to your party is distributed using the following procedure:

1. One Archer will shoot at you, since they recognize you as the leader, and the other archer will shoot at the fugitive in your group with the lowest current CON. Since you are a

rogue, and the main character, you have the ability to try to dodge the one coming at you if it hits. Normally, this is a (L3SR-SPD), but if you are using a shield, this becomes a (L2SR-SPD). If you make the roll, the arrow misses. Your allies do not get this advantage.

2. If the guards do damage to you, be it normal combat damage or spite damage, 50% (round down) will always go to you first. The remaining damage will go against the one in your party with the lowest current CON. If he is killed, go to the next. If two have the same CON, go with the one with the least armor, the best weapon, or randomly.

If you are able to surprise a guard, not only does he not get to roll his combat dice, he does not get to double his armor protection during the surprise combat turn.

Now return to the paragraph that sent you here to conduct the actual battle.

3. Congratulations! You have found your way out of the clutches of the law, and escaped the city. You get 3,000 adventure points for surviving, and 500 adventure points for each fugitive who escaped with you. However, you are still a criminal. You cannot return to the Khazan for at least two years, or else face the consequences.

4. You and your fellow escapees walk out onto the arena floor and into the sunlight. You're splattered by the blood of several guards, and if you're wearing anything at all, it's a loin cloth, a steel cap, and a buckler. The crowd sees you and is quickly silenced. "What do we have here?" echo's the voice of the herald. "It seems we have a jailbreak!" Some in the crowd recognize you from your earlier battle and cheer, while most whistle and boo. The troubadours quickly find their exit at one side of the sandy grounds. The Death Goddess stands up, silencing the crowd. Speaking in a normal voice, but projecting so clearly that everyone can hear, she says, "You are certainly bold. I do not suffer criminals in my city, but if you are willing to prove yourself, you may earn your freedom. Will you accept my challenge?" At this point, you see several dozen guards entering the arena floor from their various posts, along with numerous archers bending their bows and taking aim. If you accept her challenge, go to **30**. If you defy the goddess, go to **39**.

5. You know there are more guards nearby, but now you have a scimitar and a few moments to weigh your options. Behind you, the other convicts are freeing themselves from the chain. Unfortunately, the clattering chain will draw the attention of the guards. You take in your surroundings. The area is lit by flickering torches bolted to the stone walls in this chamber, which is approximately 20' by 20'. There's a locked door to the right, where you know the gladiator supplies are kept. The opening on the far end of the room leads to a crossing hallway. One way leads toward the arena floor and, most likely, more guards. The other way leads eventually to the prison areas, but when you passed through the area earlier, you know that there are a number of side passages. Your immediate concern is the two guards standing in the hallway outside of this chamber. It is only a matter of time before one of them looks in to see the prisoners escaping and their dead comrade lying on the floor. What do you do now? If you want to open the storage room door, you will need to use your Knock-Knock spell, since you don't have time to search the guard's body for keys; go to **24**. If you want to sneak through the room, using shadows and moving quietly, hoping to surprise the two guards, go to **93**. If you want to call out to the guards and draw them in, go to **70**.

6. You get to a corner in the hopes that you can at least try to surprise the search party behind you. Make your (L3SR-TT). If you make it, you and your rag-tag group of fugitives get one surprise combat turn. If you fail, it's combat as normal. This search party consists of eight guards, including two archers. In addition, there are two wargs with the guards. Go to paragraph **2** to understand how they will fight. If you die, or if you had to cheat to win, close the book, you noob! If not, read on. Battered and bloodied, you somehow managed to survive. You find the two self bows where the archers dropped them. Searching

around, you find half of the arrows they fired that are still unbroken and re-usable. It's a pretty safe bet that going back to the Arena will be met with even more force. However, you now have a bow and at least one arrow. It's time to give the guard at the castle a taste of their own broth. Go to **27**.

7. Carefully, you slip the sliver of metal out of your loin cloth. You insert the shard into the lock and twist it around. One of the other convicts notices what you're doing, but a quick finger to your lips and "Shhh!" keeps him quiet. Make a (L1SR-TT). If you make the roll, go to **47**. If you fail, go to **31**.

8. You realize that making noise right now may not be such a good idea. Fortunately, the cheering crowd in the Arena makes a good cover. You also know that waiting until later won't be so good because you'll be taken back to the dungeon where the guard presence is much greater. Now is your opportunity. Waiting patiently, you hear the crowd erupt in a deafening cheer. Before it dies down, you quickly slip the chain from your shackle. Telling the convict behind you to keep it quiet, you sneak up behind the guard. You have a few options. Do you strike the guard from behind with your fist (go to **74**)? Do you try to steal his scimitar and use it instead (go to **52**)? Do you just try to sneak past him into the hallways (go to **33**)?

9. The guards actually allow you to run down that tunnel. The two archers each take a shot at you as you run (L4SR on MR30). You are by yourself – any surviving comrades know better than to go this way. You're done here – you are now entering *Naked Doom*; go paragraph **2A** in that book. Good luck! If you survive *Naked Doom*, return here and go to paragraph **3**.

10. There's quite a bit of pandemonium going on, so getting to the sewer grate should be pretty easy. Make



a (L1SR-SPD) and a (L1SR-TT). If you miss either or both, you were seen – go to **50**. If you make both, now you have to figure out how to open the grate. Make a (L1SR-INT) to see if you figure it out. If you fail, you find that pulling and tugging the iron bars won't work. Strength isn't the issue – its leverage. Someone inevitably sees you struggling with the grate - go to **50**. If you make it, you use the sword in your hand (if you don't have one, you pick one up lying on the ground nearby) as a lever. This is just enough to lift the grate from its moorings, allowing you to slip through. Go to **69**.

11. There's no reason to actually play this out, so I'll just describe what happens. There are four guards closing in on your position, who will engage you the first combat turn. Each turn, four more guards will join the fight until a total of 20 have joined. Of course, from a logistical perspective, they cannot outnumber your party by more than 4 to 1 during the combat itself (i.e. if there are 3 of you, only 12 guards are able to fight). This will last for about four or five turns. If you're still alive at this point, the wizard in blue sets aside whatever it was he was doing and blasts you with a Take That You Fiend spell, dealing in the neighborhood of 400 points of damage. If, for whatever reason, this doesn't outright kill you, he has plenty more spells at his disposal. Suffice it to say, your remains will be used to feed some of the monsters in the cages, who will be most grateful for your contribution.



12. Heading back to the Arena probably isn't a good idea, since there are likely more guards, and they just might start bringing in wizards to take you down. You're best option is to head in the direction you were going and hope for the best. It only takes a few minutes, but you get to the room blocked by the iron gate. Fortunately, the guards who came through earlier left the gate open, so you, and whoever is still with you, get in easily enough. Do you want to search through the crates to see if there is anything useful? (Go to **65**). Or do you want to just climb the ladder and try to find your escape? (Go to **22**)

13. You've managed to kill a few guards without drawing too much attention. Quickly, you drag their bodies into the prison cell and grab their scimitars. You are currently in a 20' x 20' room lit by flickering torches mounted on the walls, which cannot be removed. There is a locked door to a storage room that contains the gladiator weapons near the prison cell. On the far side the chamber opens to a hallway, which leads in one direction to the Arena floor, and the other direction to the dungeons. However, the tunnel to the dungeon has a number of side passages as well – presumably, one or more might lead you and the others to safety. You have enough time to open the storage room with a Knock-Knock spell if you make your caster check (L1SR-INT), but you only get one try. If you get the door open you can equip yourself and the other convicts with swords, daggers, bucklers, and steel caps. Choose the best sword or dagger possible that is no better than a broadsword (3+4) for you and the rest of the freed prisoners. If you prefer, you can keep the guards' scimitars, worth 4 dice each. Go to **87**.

14. You stand over the carnage and catch your breath. If you have allies with you, they quickly pick through the bodies and collect their scimitars. They see you as their leader and look to you for direction. Do you keep going this direction straight into the Arena (Go to **34**)? Or do you turn and go the other direction (Go to **87** and select one of the options listed)?

15. You think about the guards' bodies lying on the ground and realize that if you don their armor and uniform, you might be able to fool enough people to make your escape. Of course, you must be human-sized (no less than 5' and no greater than 6'6"), and must not be a monster. If you're able to wear a guard's uniform, go to **45**. If not, you must go back to paragraph **34** and try another choice.

16. The long, narrow corridor continues for about 250', which you estimate is the approximate length of the arena floor. You come to an intersection where you can turn right or continue straight. Before you decide, make your (L1SR-TT). If you make it, go to **35**. If you fail, go to **51**.

17. Once again, you've been captured. They take from you whatever weapons and armor you've managed to salvage and drag you to the Arena floor to face the wrath of the Death Goddess. The spectators quiet down when she stands and looks down on you. Her icy gaze chills you to the bone. Speaking in a normal voice, but projecting so clearly that everyone can hear, she says, "You are certainly bold. I do not suffer criminals in my city, but if you are willing to prove yourself, you may earn your freedom. Will you accept my challenge?" Do you accept her challenge? Go to **30**. If you defy the goddess, go to **39**.

18. With or without the troll at your side, you have three options right now. You can take the ramp up into the Arena (go to **4**), you can run back into the hallway and head toward the castle dungeon (go to **58**), or you can take the ramp downward that leads underneath the Arena floor (go to **23**).

19. Going back the other way you will only be met with more guards who are looking for you. However, coming in to this room you'll at least have the element of surprise. If there are any monsters in your party, besides yourself, attempt a (L2SR-CHR). If you fail, go to **40**. If you make it, or if there are no monsters in your party, go to **26**.

20. Since the gate is locked, you'll need to use your Knock-Knock spell. Make your caster check (L1SR-INT) and spend the WIZ. If you fail the caster check, or you don't have the necessary WIZ to cast it, go to **78**. If you succeed, go to **38**.

21. Nothing unusual happens. You are returned to the chamber where they keep the convicts and you must wait for your next battle. Now go to **34A** in *Arena of Khazan* and continue as normal. However, the opponent restriction no longer applies from this point forward. If you manage to succeed ten battles in the arena and survive, but never make the (L1SR-TT) roll, then you are set free and all is right with the world. How boring. But remember, at the conclusion of each fight, before going to **34A**, go to paragraph **1** here. (Note: If you battle the wizard who casts the Dum-

Dum spell on you, do not go to paragraph **1**. Instead, just go straight to **34A**.)

22. You get to the top of the ladder only to find the hatch is locked. Use your spell – spend the WIZ and make your caster check (L1SR-INT). If you fail, you get one more try before something arrives from below. If you make it, the gate opens and you and those with you quickly climb up into the room above. Go to **88**. If you are too incompetent to cast your spell, go to **43**.

23. The ramp leads downward about 20' before it opens into a vast underground chamber. Gigantic stone archways rise to the ceiling in order to support the arena floor directly above. There are a couple of mechanical lifts that lead to panels that open up in the Arena floor. The total size of the cavern is about the same dimension as the Arena floor itself, but along the walls are numerous cages of different sizes, each housing different monsters. There is an open gate on either end of the chamber – the one you're in now, and another at the far end. You stand in awe as there are easily forty or fifty guards, handlers, workers, and other personnel in the room. The lighting is dim, providing you shadowy cover. Though the noise from the crowds above is muffled, the growls, barks, shouts, and other noises from the monsters and humans watching them creates a cacophony that masks any sounds you might make. Your attention, however, is drawn to a man wearing a bright blue robe, standing near the center of the room talking to some guards. You recognize him – his twin brother sits with the Death Goddess in her box suite upstairs, and you know them both to be very powerful wizards. You know that you don't have much time before your absence will be noticed. From this perspective, you can't see any other ways out of this room, but if you make a (L2SR-INT), an idea might occur to you. If you make the roll, go to **42**. If you don't, go to **19**.

24. Make your caster check (L1SR-INT) to see if your spells works. If it does, the lock clicks and the door opens slightly. Go to **48**. If you fail the caster check, you can try again, but only once. But before doing so, make a (L2SR-LK) to see if one of the guards happens to look in and raise the alarm. If you fail, or if you fail the caster check on your second try, one of the guards sees you and raises the alarm. Go to **70**.

25. One of the guards in the room notices that you're wearing an iron shackle around your ankle and shouts, "These are the fugitives!" There are four normal guards in this room (see paragraph 2 for details) and one guard captain who's MR is 50 (6D+25 and 10 points of armor). If the battle lasts for more than three turns, go to 41. If you are killed, the adventure is over. If you manage to vanquish these guys, which would be pretty amazing, go to 28.

26. You manage to remain out of sight long enough to recover one point of WIZ, if necessary. There's no way you can actually blend in with the activity going on in this large chamber, but sticking to the shadows may serve to prolong your miserable life for at least a few more minutes. As you descend, you can see that each cage was specifically designed to hold whatever creature it contains. The cage with the giants and the cage with the trolls have bars that are widely spaced, large enough for a man like you to slip through, while the cage with the Urooks and the cage with the gremlins have narrowly spaced bars. The cell housing the giant eagles is actually suspended over the cages below, but is secured by thick, cross-threaded cables, kind of like chicken-wire or chain-link fencing. The cage with the giant scorpions has an inner and outer set of bars, so that their vicious tails cannot reach into the open area. You can get to any of the cages, except the eagles, and use your magic to unlock the gate to cause a diversion (go to 62). Or you can slip into the cage of one of the giant monsters and hope an opportunity arises – provided the monsters in the cage don't you and kill you first (go to 60). Of course, you can just let out a battle cry, attack and hope the gods are favoring you today (go to 11).

27. You get to the last corner before the 30' hallway and the iron gate. Carefully, you notch an arrow and bend the bow. Kneeling to get a steady shot, you edge around the corner. Even if the guards can see you, they hold off, waiting for a good shot. Selecting one of the archers as your target, you let one fly. Make a (L3SR-DEX) to see if you hit your target. If you do, deal 4 dice plus your personal adds. Since this is a sneak attack, subtract 12 from your thievery talent and add the result to the damage you do. The guard you hit is wearing leather armor, which is only worth 5 hits in this particular instance. See paragraph 2 for the guards' stats. Whether you hit (and kill) or not, the guards all take cover in the darkness. They will not open the gate and attack you. If you have any more arrows, you can take more shots, but this time, make the to-hit saving

roll at 4th level, you do not get the sneak attack bonus, and the guards get the full benefit of their armor (10 hits). You may do this until you run out of arrows. There are a total of eight guards. Unless you've hit all eight of them (do you actually have that many arrows?), you will never hit any more than once. When you run out of arrows, keep note of which guards are wounded and which ones are uninjured, and take the next step by attacking. Now go to 72.

28. Quickly, you and anyone that is still with you, find your way out of the building, which is in the middle of the military outpost and guard-training center in the city. Without delay, you hurry out of the compound and out of the city itself. Go to 3.

29. Standing victorious over the carnage, you take in the scene. Behind you is the gate leading back to the Arena. To the right is a tunnel that ramps down, then levels off to a shallow pool of muddy water, over which is the sign "Naked Doom." Going forward leads to the network of tunnels that comprise the lowest dungeon level underneath the castle. Fortunately for you, the dungeons are dark, and since you're on the right side of the doors, you pretty much have the run of the place. Your thieving skill will keep you, and any surviving fugitives, out of sight from the guards. After a couple hours, you're able to find your



way to a sewer grate. Using your sword, you wedge the grate loose and drop down into the darkness below. Hungry and tired (and undoubtedly a few dead rats and other vermin later), you see moonlight shining in through the end of a long tunnel. You make your way there, push the loose grate aside, and step out of the sewer and into fresh air over the great river that flows through the city. Following the bank upstream, you make your way out of the city near an orchard where you quietly pilfer some fruit. Go to **3**.

30. “So be it,” she says. You are instantly teleported to the first room of *TERRoR*, wearing the troll ring, and carrying only those items you have now. If you survive, you have earned your freedom. Gain an additional 3,000 AP for escaping the Arena.

31. You twist the shard and suddenly it breaks in your hand, causing 1 point of CON damage. (I hope this doesn't kill you, but if it does, oh well...) Unfortunately, your lock pick is broken and useless. You have no choice but to wait until your next battle and hope that you find another. Go to **21** and continue on from there.

32. Regardless how long the battle took, you've managed to attract the attention of everyone else. More guards are on their way, closing in from multiple directions. You, and whoever is still with you, need to decide quickly. If you run back through the corridor and toward the castle dungeon, go to **58**. If you follow this tunnel around past the ramp up onto the Arena floor, where it turns right and slopes downward under the arena floor, go to **23**. If you'd rather charge into the Arena, go to **4**.

33. Leaving the others behind may or may not be a good idea for you, but it's your choice. First make a (L2SR-TT) to see if the guard notices you as you leave the cell. If you make it, go to **36**. If you fail, the guard sees you - go to **64**.

34. The sun cuts a sharp edge between light and shadow on the ramp leading up to the Arena floor. The gate to the grounds is still open, but at the moment, there are no guards – considering that you just killed them all in the hallway. On either side of the ramp are short stairwells leading up into the stands; these are blocked by thick iron gates secured by heavy-duty locks. All around, you can see the cheering crowds as they applaud the performance of a troop of jugglers and acrobats wearing bright, gaudy colors. Still

in the shadows, you have a moment to decide what to do. If you boldly march out into the Arena, go to **4**. If you try to unlock one of the gates and sneak up into the stands with the hope of losing yourself in the crowd, go to **20**. If you turn back and go the other way, go to **87** and choose one of the other options (but you cannot return this way by way of **91**). If you try something clever, go to **59**

35. You remember your wits and your skills. Before blundering into the intersection, you stop at the corner and peer around. The hallway runs about 20', and has an open iron gate at the far end. You see several guards trying to coax a stubborn forest troll through the wide passage on the other side – evidently, this troll is the next monster slated to fight in the Arena! You can continue straight along this corridor, which you know will eventually lead to the dungeons below the castle (go to **58**), or you can charge down the hallway, through the gate, and attack the guards in the hopes the troll will fight on your side (go to **80**).



36. The room the guard is in is about 20' x 20'. The guard is leaning against the wall between the cell where you and the others were chained and the door to the closet where the gladiator weapons, shields, and helmets are kept. The room is lit by several torches bolted to the walls. Across the room is an opening to a hallway. You know that hallway leads to the Arena floor one way, and the to the castle dungeon the other

way. The path to the castle dungeon also has a number of side passages which might lead to your freedom. Unfortunately, there's a guard behind you and you can see two guards immediately outside the area, who are also standing watch. Now that you have a better assessment of the layout, you can safely get back to the cell with the other convicts, by going to **8**, or you can continue trying to sneak past the guards into the hallway by going to **54**.

37. The guard that broke off the fight went to summon the wizard in the blue robe. This is not good for you, since at the beginning of the 5th turn, when he shows up, he conjures a violet bolt of energy, also known as the Take That You Fiend spell, and reduces your CON by about 400 points. If this doesn't kill you, his next spell will. Too bad. So sad.

38. The lock clicks and you swing the gate aside. The steps are steep, but quickly, you and the others work your way into the crowds. Unfortunately, you aren't wearing much in the way of clothes, and you were just recently on the Arena floor fighting. Someone might recognize you for what you are! First, you must make a (L2SR-TT). If you fail the roll, go to **17**. If you succeed, now make a (L1SR-LK) for each of the other convicts with you. If there are no other convicts at this point, or they all make the roll, go to **94**. If any one of them fails their roll, go to **57**.

39. You call out something stupid, like "I don't accept your authority!" or perhaps something more profane. She smiles momentarily and moves her hands, indicating to the guards around you that it would be in their best interest to stand back a few paces. They do, leaving you alone. She turns her hand and forms a fist. As she does this, you feel tightness in your chest. You gasp and watch as she opens her hand. You feel nothing more as the Hellbomb Burst spell she cast, centered inside your chest, explodes. In your death, you can take with you to the underworld the knowledge that you defied the Death Goddess. Because of this, you cannot take this character through any "after-death" adventure, since your soul is now eternally enslaved by the goddess herself.

40. The monster in your group recognizes others of his kindred in a cage nearby. Seeing them, he ignores your signal to remain quiet and goes running toward them, shouting out something in his native tongue. This, of course, draws the attention of the nearest guards and handlers, who immediately converge on

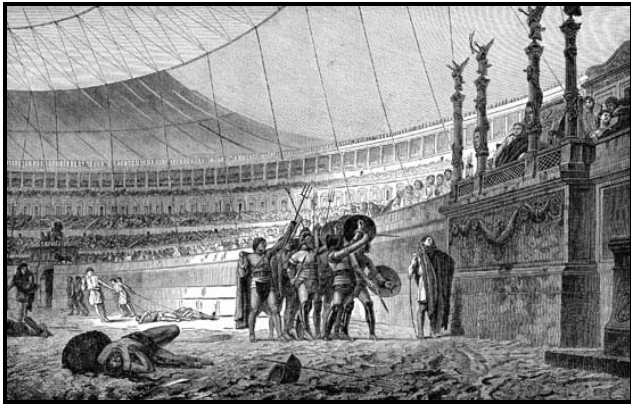
him. You do your best to hide, but it may not be enough – make a (L1SR-TT). If you make it, go to **26**. If you fail, go to **71**.

41. On the fourth turn of combat, a wizard wearing a blue robe climbs up the ladder from below, followed by three more guards. Recognizing you as the fugitive, he quickly blasts you with a Take That You Fiend spell, doing about 800 points of damage directly to your CON. I'm just going to assume that this kills you, since there's no rational possibility that you would ever be able to survive.

42. It occurs to you that something must be done with the immense refuse the occupants of this room generate, and it has to go somewhere – probably straight into the sewer system of the city itself. Having spent time in the sewers, you know that following them "down stream" will always lead to the great river that runs through the city and ultimately to the ocean. If you can find a way to get through a sewer grate, you'd be able to attain your freedom. Now go to **19** and decide what to do.

43. Three guards and a man wearing a blue robe enter the chamber from below. Unfortunately, you're a sitting duck. The wizard blasts you with a Take That You Field spell, dealing a little over 400 points of damage directly to your CON. If this doesn't kill you, he does it again, maximizing the power (he was sandbagging the first time), and hits you for over 2000 points of damage. If somehow you're immune to the spell, or you survive the damage, which could only happen through cheating, considering nothing in the introduction granted you such abilities, I kindly ask that you put down your pencil, put away your T&T rules and your dice, and go play a computer game where you can activate God Mode.





44. As you are basking in the cheers and jeers from the crowds, but before the guards make it out to take you back to your cage, you notice something glinting in the sand near your feet. As you bow to the audience, you deftly reach down and pick it up. It isn't much. It's just a small sliver of steel about the length of your middle finger. You tuck it into your loin cloth just as the guards arrive. The heavy chain is slipped through the loop on your ankle, your weapon, shield, and steel cap are taken, and you are led back to the bowels of the Arena. If you have been wounded, a wizard in a blue robe heals your wounds and tracks the cost of the spell on his ledger for reimbursement later. In the prison cell under the Arena, you are chained with the other convicts. While they slip you onto one end of the chain, the guards release the poor slob on the other end of the chain and drag him off to his battle. The heavy padlocks are quickly latched. You and the others have limited movement, but are confined to this dark, smelly room that is only about fifteen feet square. You hear the crowd's cheers echoing through the halls, but you notice that there are no guards actually watching the prisoners at the moment. The other convicts are silent and brooding over the crimes that landed them here. Earlier, one was trying to convince the guards he was innocent, but the guards didn't care. They never do. You could just wait here for your next battle in the Arena; but then tomorrow you may not be so lucky. If you do, go to **67**. If you cast your Knock-Knock spell on the lock, go to **83**. If you try to pick the lock with the sliver of metal you found, go to **7**.

45. The fugitives still with you do the same – there should be enough guard bodies to choose from. Those that cannot wear the guards' armor take their leave of you and head off in the other direction. You bid them "Good luck," as they disappear into the darkness. Make sure you set those character sheets aside. For

those who are staying, all must make a (L1SR-SPD). If any characters fail this roll, it means that you and your party were not quick enough and some guards show up. Go to **61**. If you all make the saving roll, go to **84**.

46. A hand reaches down and helps you and the others up. "Did you get them?" the guard captain asks. Make a (L1SR-INT) to see how quick-witted you are. If you make it, go to **73**. If you fail, you're unable to answer the question quickly enough, and the captain becomes very suspicious. Go to **25**.

47. You feel the mechanism click as the padlock pops open. You smile at the other convicts. Gently, you slip the chain from the lock, but you know that it will make noise as you thread the chain from your shackle and that of the others. Before going on, it's time to finish the other characters you rolled up. These are the other convicts in the room with you. Some have seen battles and some have not. For each, roll two dice and subtract 8 from the roll. If the result is positive give that character that much damage. If this is enough to kill the character, adjust the damage so that they have one point of CON remaining. Now stack the character cards in random order and then put yours on top. This represents the order in which they are chained, which may be important depending upon what happens next. Now make a (L1SR-INT). If you make the roll, go to **8**. If you fail the guard hears the chain rattling as you pull it through the loop and comes in to investigate; go to **64**.

48. You point the other convicts toward the open door. Unfortunately, they aren't as good as you when it comes to being quiet. Roll 1 die. This is the number of convicts who make it into the supply room before a guard sees you. At the beginning of the 2nd combat turn, they will have weapons and shields only (no other armor), and will be able to join the battle. Those that didn't get there can either fight (1 die plus their adds) or stay out of the fight long enough to retrieve a weapon and join the fight on the following turn. However, due to the confusion of the battle, no more than 2 will be able to get their weapons during a combat turn. Now go to **70** to deal with the guards.

49. The tunnel makes a couple turns as it slopes slightly downward before it stops at an iron gate that opens to a room that is about 20' x 20'. In the center of the room is a ladder going up to a circular door in the ceiling. There are several crates stacked around the room as well. You check the gate, and it is locked, of

course. During the trek through the corridor, you recover up to 3 points of spent WIZ. Make your caster check (L1SR-INT) to see if you're able to unlock the gate – remember to spend the WIZ with your attempt. You may try up to three times before something happens. If you aren't able to get the gate open, go to **66**. If you are, go to **53**.

50. It doesn't take long for the guards and handlers to realize that you were the one who opened the cage. While a number of guards and handlers are busy trying to subdue those monsters, a few are dispatched to kill you. Start with 2 guards – see paragraph **2** for details. Each combat turn add one more. During the combat, you have the option of trying to run for it, but the only place you'll be able to run to is into the cage of one of the giant monsters. If you try this, make a (L1SR-SPD). If you make the roll, you get to the giant's cage – and the guards don't follow you (go to **60**). If you fail the roll, fight another turn. If you survive 4 combat turns but don't get away, the wizard in the blue robe blasts you with a Take That You Fiend dealing about 400 points of damage which should be enough to kill you outright ending your adventure.

51. Either you or one of the convicts with you walks into the intersection without paying attention. One of the guards at the other end of the hallway to the right sees you, realizes that you don't belong, and raises the alarm. There are eight guards, but at the point the alarm is raised, they are dealing with a rather stubborn and angry forest troll. Two of the guards immediately run toward you and attack, while the others strive to secure the troll's chains. You can either meet the guards in combat (go to **80**), or you can run ahead toward the castle dungeon (go to **58**).

52. This is extremely risky! First, make a (L1SR-TT) to see if you sneak up successfully. If you fail, the guard hears you – go to **64**. If you make it, now make a (L1SR-SPD). If you fail this one, you aren't quick enough to pull the scimitar loose. Go to **64**. If you make it, you succeed. Go to **97**, but you now get 4 dice instead of just 1.

53. Do you immediately climb up the ladder (go to **22**), or do you search through the crates first (go to **65**)?

54. As a thief, you are accustomed to sneaking around, moving silently, and using shadows when and where

possible. However, your size becomes a major factor in trying to sneak through a room that has nothing to hide behind. Your size will affect the level of the saving roll you need to make. If you are less than 5' tall make a (L2SR-TT). If you are between 5' and 6', make a (L3SR-TT). If you are taller than 6', it's a (L4SR-TT). If you make the roll, go to **75**. If you fail, one of the guards sees you. Go to paragraph **64** and deal with the battle from there – except that it is turn 2 for the guards, where you must deal with three guards instead of just one.

55. Since you are dressed like a guard, the crowd doesn't seem to mind that you are working your way through, and they give you room. Unfortunately, the guards stationed at the various gates around the Arena might realize that you aren't one of them. Intelligently, you separate from the other fugitives, leaving them to fend for themselves. Make a (L2SR-TT) to see if you are able to get past the guards unnoticed. If you fail, someone recognizes you and sounds the alarm; go to **17**. If you make it, go to **94**.

56. You and the others step out onto the Arena floor and take up positions around the gate. You and all of your escaped companions must each make a (L2SR-LK) to see if you are recognized. If any of you fail the roll, go to **17**. If you make the roll, go to **77**.

57. Those that failed are recognized and identified by the spectators. Guards quickly converge. In the confusion, you have one chance to escape, but this depends upon two factors. First, do the convicts who are captured point you out? And second, are you quick enough to find an escape route? Make two saving rolls: (L2SR-CHR) and (L2SR-SPD). If you fail either or both, go to **17**. If you make both, go to **94**.

58. If you're being pursued, we'll assume that you're able to outrun the guards. Besides, they know where this tunnel leads, so they figure the men at the other end can take care of business. That's not to say they won't organize and send a team after you, but you do have a little time to rest. Having been this route before, you know that this tunnel is long and takes several turns – enough that you lose your sense of direction. You and your fellow convicts stop to rest a few times before continuing, knowing that going back to the Arena is not an option – by now, they know you've escaped and where you've run to. The only question is whether or not word has been sent to the guards in the castle, and if the notification gets there

before you do. It takes about an hour (6 turns) to walk this tunnel, which allows you to restore up to 6 points of WIZ. When you get to the last turn before the gate that opens into the subterranean dungeon corridors, you hold up and wait a few moments. Carefully, you peer around the corner. As expected, the gate is closed. Beyond the gate you see about a half a dozen guards. Two are holding swords and the others are holding self-bows with arrows notched. On either side of the passage, on their side of the gate, are two hooded lanterns turned so the light is shining in your direction. The gate itself is about 30' away. Basically, you've walked into a trap. You can move forward by going to **72**. Or you can try to head back the way you came by going to **85**.

59. Let's see if you're thinking what I'm thinking; make a (L1SR-INT). If you fail, go back to **34** and do something else. If you make it, go to **15**.

60. It doesn't matter which monster you chose, be it giant, troll, or ogre. It doesn't take kindly to small creatures like you entering its cage. Considering they have a disposition against humanity already, your chances are pretty slim. There is, however, a sewer grate in the floor within each cage – one where the opening is large enough for you to jump through. If you want to try to battle the monsters, go to **96**. If you head to the sewer, go to **90**.

61. For each fugitive that missed their saving throw, two guards show up. Go to paragraph **2** for information about these guards, but note that all of these guards are melee fighters. Those that failed their roll cannot fight the first turn, and must attempt to make a (L2SR-SPD) to finish putting on their armor – they cannot contribute to the fight, but they can take damage (unarmored). If you succeed in killing more guards, you and your companions are able to finish putting on your equipment; go to **84**. If you die in this fight, well, it sucks to be you, doesn't it?

62. Make your (L3SR-TT) to see if you get to the cage you have chosen. We'll assume the others in your party obey your signal and stay hidden. Once you get there, make your caster check to see if you can unlock the gate (L1SR-INT). You only get one attempt, because the wizard in the blue robe will detect the spell being cast and react. If you miss either roll, you've been detected – go to **11**. If you make both, you must now decide what to do – if you want to join the fight with the monsters you just freed, go to **50**. If you prefer to

sneak into their cage in the hopes of finding something useful, go to **76**. If you'd rather look around for another escape route, go to **82**.

63. The troll is not likely going to stop its rampage; however, it might be smart enough to realize that you are an ally. Make a (L4SR-LK). For each monster-class character in your party that is still alive (including you, if you happen to be one), add two to your saving roll. If you make the roll, the troll does not attack you – go to **18**. If you fail, you now have to fight the troll! Go to **86**.

64. "What are you doing?" he yells, and before you can stop him, he yells, "Prisoner escape!!!!" He pulls his scimitar and attacks immediately. You have a few things going for you, and a few things going against you. In your favor, you are freed from the chains, allowing you to fight and defend yourself. Each combat turn, one additional convict is also freed and able to join the fight. Next, you are in an isolated section of the dungeon so there are not a lot of guards. Going against you, however, is the fact that the guards are armed and armored. See paragraph **2** for details about the guards. During the first turn, there is only 1 guard. The second turn, two more guards join the fight. The third turn, two more guards join the fight. No guards join the fight on turns four, five, and six. If the battle is still raging, four more guards join the fight on turn seven. All these guards are normal melee fighters. If a guard is killed, you may pick up his scimitar (worth 4 dice in combat). Any freed convicts can also pick up dropped swords during the battle, if they are able to use them. If you defeat all 5 guards before turn 7, or if you kill all 9 guards, you and the surviving convicts can move on; go to **81**.



65. Most of the stuff in the crates is useless. However, there are some swords, some suits of leather armor, and some uniforms. Those in your group that are human-sized can put on the armor and uniforms, any that are monsters would still be recognized for what they are despite the uniform. The leather armor is worth 5 points of armor. The swords are no better than scimitars (worth 4 dice in combat), but if anyone in your group is unable to use a scimitar, you will be able to find something that they can use. If you've spent any WIZ, you are able to recover 2 points during this time. Now you need to go up the ladder, since you hear noises coming toward you through the tunnel; go to **22**.

66. It seems that the guards have been able to get the signal out that prisoners have escaped the Arena. In the room beyond the gate, the hatch in the ceiling opens, and several guards climb down the ladder. They see you immediately and call out. Since you can't seem to get the gate open, you've no choice but to run the other way. You, and each member of your party, make a (L1SR-SPD). Any that fail will find an arrow in their back and take 4D+15 points of damage! If this spells the end of your character, you might try one of the classic solitaire adventures Flying Buffalo offers. If you survive, you and those with you that are still alive have another battle to face. Go to **92**.

67. The point of this adventure is not to fight in the Arena, but to secure your freedom another way. In the evening, after all the fights are done, you and the surviving convicts are roused and led to the prison. You are all stripped naked, cleaned, and thrown into your separate cells. You already know that your Knock-Knock spell won't work on the prison locks – they are made from the same meteoric iron as Kris daggers, and are immune to low-level magic like yours. The sliver you found is lost. Perhaps you will find another one tomorrow; however, instead of a L1SR on TT you must now make a L3SR. Go back to the *Arena of Khaqan* and continue on from there, but as before return here and go to paragraph **1** if you are victorious.

68. You run past the ramp leading up to the Arena floor. You know better than to go that way, so you keep going until you get to an intersection. Coming from the long hall, you see a group of six guards heading your way. They let two wargs loose, who charge at you, and the two archers let their arrows fly. Go to paragraph **2** for details about the guards. Deal



with the first volley of arrows on the first turn. The wargs arrive on the second combat turn. On the third turn the four melee guards join the fight. If you manage to win this battle, you turn around to see the blue-robed wizard, flanked by two guards. "It's a shame," he says. "Such a waste of a good fighter; however, I have my orders." He lifts his finger and the last thing you see is a bolt of purple light.

69. Right away, you fall 20' feet down into the darkness. Strangely enough, the landing is kind of soft, but you still take 1 die damage directly off your CON (armor doesn't help.) I hope this doesn't kill you! You hear shouting from above, as the guards realize your method of escape, but none of them are getting paid enough to come after you down here. Once in the stinky, smelly sewer, you determine the direction the water is moving, and you follow it downstream. Hungry and tired (and undoubtedly a few dead rats and other vermin later), you see moonlight shining in through the end of a long tunnel. You make your way there, push the loose grate aside, and step out of the sewer and into fresh air over the great river that flows through the city. Following the bank upstream, you make your way out of the city near an orchard where you quietly pilfer some fruit. You have succeeded in escaping the clutches of the law! Go to **3**.

70. The guards have seen you and attack! For the first combat turn, there are two guards to fight. On the second turn, two more guards will join in. On the fourth turn, four more guards will arrive. Consult paragraph **2** for details about the guards. Any convicts using weapons retrieved from the storage room will use whatever sword or dagger they can best use, but no better than a broadsword (3D+4) and a buckler

(worth 3 hits, doubled if they are a warrior). If they have not been able to retrieve any weapons, they fight only with 1 die and their personal adds. If you and the others kill all the guards, leave the dead and quickly go to **13**. If you are killed, then what's the point in continuing anyway?

71. Unfortunately, you and those in your group are spotted. Set aside the character sheets for the monsters in your group, and consider them dead. On the first combat turn, four guards rush to attack you. If you try to run, go to **89**. If you meet them in battle, go to **11**.

72. If you've gotten this far and you're by yourself, you're pretty much screwed. However, if you have at least one comrade with you, make a saving roll on CHR at the lowest level of a surviving fugitive. If you succeed, this convict volunteers to be your meat-shield in the hopes that you can get the gate open before the archers can turn you into a pin cushion. You (and the others) turn the corner and run toward the gate. On the way, you are preparing to cast the Knock-Knock spell as soon as you're in range. Meanwhile, there are as many as six archers who will get one shot at you before you get there. If you have a "meat shield," he will take the first four shots in your place which will probably kill him, the poor slob. Go to **2** for details of the archers and missile fire. The archers are pretty good and only need to roll a minimum SR (>4 on 2D6) in order to hit. You, and only you, may try to dodge if they hit (see paragraph 2). If they hit and you miss your dodge Saving Roll, you take full damage (4D+15) minus your armor (if the archer is already wounded, adjust their adds appropriately). If you reach the gate, you must now make your caster check (L1SR-INT). If you make it this far, you've managed to open the gate; go to **95**. Otherwise, you should check out some of the other fine articles in this issue of *TrollsZine!*

73. You smile at the captain and say, "Yeah – we got them. They put up a hell of a fight, though, and we lost several of our men." The captain says, "Good job, soldier." You say, "You mind if I (we) get some air? It's pretty stuffy down in those tunnels." "Sure," he says. You and the others quickly find the way out of the building, which is in the middle of the military outpost and guard-training center in the city. Without delay, you hurry out of the compound and out of the city itself. Go to **3**.

74. All you have is the element of surprise. Make a (L1SR-TT) to see if the guard sees you. If you fail, the guard turns just in time and raises the alarm – go to **64**. If you make it, go to **97**.

75. Amazingly enough, you've managed to sneak out into the hallway without attracting the attention of the guards. I suppose it helps that the guard in the room has just noticed that the other prisoners are escaping, and is raising the alarm. You cower in the dark hallway as several guards respond to the call and rush past you. You count a total of nine guards, including the one that was in the room to start with. Glancing into the room, you quickly realize the prisoners are no match for the trained guards. You decide it's time to move on, and do so quickly, because the prisoners are falling fast. Go to **87**. (Note: none of the other convicts are with you – you're on your own!)

76. Don't you think that if this cage was holding intelligent monsters that they would ensure there's nothing in the cage that would allow them a means to escape? You and your group slip into the cage easily enough. Finding nothing other than food scraps, bones, and litter, you turn to leave – only to find the cage door has been closed. The wizard used his magic to subdue the monsters (a Rock-A-Bye spell, most likely), and is now standing outside the cage looking at you. "Such a shame," he says as he points his finger. The last thing you see is a flash of violet. The impact of the Take That You Fiend spell slams you to the back of the cage, but by that time, you're too dead to notice.

77. The performing troubadours finish their act and leave the arena floor through a side gate. The herald announces that it is time for the next battle, and begins the introduction. You quickly realize that the guard(s) at the gate – you – are responsible for retrieving the next convict! Unfortunately, there are none to retrieve. It is only a matter of time before someone figures out the truth. You have two options – if you retreat back into the tunnel, go to paragraph **87**, but don't return via **91**. Or, you can open the nearby gate into the stands and try to make your escape through the crowds – go to **55**.

78. Now is not the time for your magic to fail! At this point, you have no choice but to turn and run back down the tunnel and hope there's another way out. Go to paragraph **87**, but do not return via **91**.

79. The moment the monsters were released, the guards immediately closed the gates leading up to the arena floor. The locks automatically clicked. Make a (L1SR-INT). If you make the roll, you realize that you're confined before stepping out into the open. Go back to **82** and make a different choice. If you failed the roll, you were seen. Go to **50**.

80. There are eight guards (no archers). Only two are able to fight the first turn, as the others work to secure the troll's chains. Consult paragraph **2** for details about the guards. Each combat turn, make a (L4SR-MR) for the six guards that are securing the troll – use their MR of 30 as their stat, and they must roll a 5 or better. If they all make the roll, the troll is secured and they can join the fight. If any of them fail the troll is not secured. If they all fail, the troll breaks free and joins the fight. It has an MR of 80 (9D+40), and will fight the guards as long as they are still alive. In addition, each combat turn the troll will regenerate, healing 2 dice worth of damage. During the fight, if the first two guards are killed, you will be able to attack the guards securing the troll. Two guards will drop the chains and defend the others. This has the effect of raising their SR target by one level. If you bite the big one during the battle, get out of here! If you manage to survive, and all the guards are dead, we need to know the status of the troll. If the guard succeeded in securing the troll, go to **32**. If the troll is loose and rampaging, go to **63**.

81. You don't have time to pick through the guards' bodies, other than to grab their scimitars. Equip yourself and up to nine of the convicts with these scimitars (depending upon how many guards you actually killed). Note that some of the convicts won't be able to use the scimitars – either they are too weak or untrained (Citizens, like Wizards, are limited to 2D weapons). Do the best you can and move on to **13**.

82. This place was designed this place pretty well in terms of security. The only exits you can see are the ramps that lead up to the Arena grounds. However, in the floor are several sewer grates. Perhaps you'd be able to get one of them open and make your escape that way. If you want to try this, go to **10**. If you want to join the raging battle with the monsters you just freed, go to **50**. If you want to try to escape through one of the ramps, go to **79**.

83. Just like the locks in the dungeon where you've been staying the last several weeks, this lock is made from the same meteoric iron as a Kris dagger. Your spell is useless. Do you want to wait around for your next battle in the arena? If so, go to **67**. If you want to try to pick the lock with the sliver of metal you found, go to **7**.

84. You and the others are now dressed as guards and ready to try your plan. You can still go back the other



way if you want and go to **87**, but you cannot come back by way of paragraph **91**. If you want to march out onto the Arena floor like you know what you're doing, go to **56**. If you want to try to open one of the gates and make your way out through the crowds, go to **55**.

85. You don't get very far when you hear noises coming from ahead. Not just the sound of marching guards, but growling from two large animals. There are no other routes. Either head back toward the Arena and face the guards and whatever is with them (go to **6**), or forward into a trap set with archers and bright lights (go to **72**). Make your choice quickly!

86. The troll's MR is 80 (9D+40), and it regenerates, healing 2 dice worth of damage each combat turn. Killing the troll is only temporary, because you don't have the means to kill it properly. However, if you bring its MR to 0 or less, you knock it out long enough to deal with whatever happens next. Go to **18**. Of course, if it kills you, then right now would be a good time to go get a snack and a soda before starting over.

87. You hear the crowds outside cheering again, followed by the muffled voice of the herald announcing the winner of the fight. Guards are on their way, either with a victorious gladiator or a dead body – you don't know which. You only have a few moments to decide where to go. Make your decision and the others who are still alive will follow you. If you go left, the hallway runs about 20', then turns left and goes about 40' as it ramps up toward the arena floor (go to **91**). If you go right, the tunnel goes 20', turns right again, and goes another 40' where there is a four-way intersection. From here, you can go straight (go to **16**), turn left (go to **49**), or turn right which leads underneath the Arena grounds (go to **23**).

88. You pull yourself up through the gate. If you are wearing the uniform of the guards, and there are no monsters in your party, go to **46**. If this isn't the case, go to **25**.

89. Running the other way seems to work until you turn the first corner, where you are met face-to-face with a group of four guards (see paragraph **2**.) On the second combat turn, the four guards chasing you join the fight. Do battle – you really have no choice. If you manage to kill a guard, another guard will flee the battle. If you're able to kill the remaining 6 guards in 4

turns or less, go to **98**. If you're still fighting on the 5th turn, go to **37**.

90. Make your (L1SR-SPD). If you made your saving roll, go to **69**. If you fail the roll, you now know how a golf ball feels. The next question is if you hit one of the bars on your way out. However, the answer doesn't really matter. If you hit the bar the monster grabs you and while holding you in one hand it rips you in half with its teeth. If you miss the bars, you land outside the cage amidst the guards and handlers, who quickly converge on you and kill you before you can even stand up. Either way you're dead.

91. You may be a good thief, but you aren't particularly bright. You get about 20 feet when you see four guards ahead of you. Roll one die – if you rolled a 1 thru 4, they are dragging a body. If you rolled a 5 or 6, they are leading a convict. The guards see you and attack. If they are dragging a body, they drop the body and all of them attack. If the gladiator is still alive, it will take two guards to keep him restrained while the others fight. The guards' stats are explained in paragraph **2**. Each combat turn after the first, roll two dice, doubles add and roll again. If you roll a 9 or better, the gladiator has broken the hold of the guards and joins the fight on your side. For his stats, go through the stack of convicts you rolled up earlier and select the warrior with the highest personal adds. Make a new character sheet for him and add one point to his STR, CON, DEX, SPD, and LK. He is still wearing his steel cap, and is able to get his sword and buckler from the where the guards dropped them. Find the best sword he can use, but no better than a broadsword (3D+4). Since he's a warrior, he gets double the benefit of the buckler and steel cap (8 hits total). Now roll 6 dice. For each six that you roll, give him that many points of damage to his CON, which represents the damage he suffered during the fight he just won. Now fight the guards. If the fight takes more than 3 combat turns, four more guards will respond to the alarm and join the fight. If you defeat the guards, go to **14**. If you die, well, what do you care about what happens next?

92. You don't get very far before you encounter a search party – looking for you! This search party consists of four guards, two archers, and two wargs. Paragraph **2** contains the details. After two combat turns, four more melee guards arrive and join the battle from the other direction. If you somehow win

this battle without cheating, go to **12**. Otherwise, you should start rolling up some new characters.

93. The guards are pretty vigilant, considering it's their job to make sure the likes of you don't escape. If you are successful in your (L3SR-TT), you've surprised them. Go to paragraph **2** for information about the guards. If you kill both guards in one combat turn, go to **13**. Otherwise, go to **70** as they call for help. Since you haven't opened the storage room, none of the convicts have weapons, unless they pick up scimitars (4D) from dead guards.

94. You find a tunnel that leads to the outside of the Arena. There are numerous guards watching the crowds, but since they are unaware of any prisoners escaping, they aren't watching for you specifically. You thread your way between the large masonry support columns that form the structure of the Arena walls, avoiding the guards and anyone who might recognize you as a fugitive. You know that within a few minutes, someone will discover that you and the others have escaped, and will come looking. Quickly, you jump into the bed of a passing wagon and cloak yourself in a pile of woolen blankets. When it stops, you jump to another until you make it out of the city. Go to **3**.

95. How you've made it this far without getting killed is beyond comprehension. But you've somehow done it. Unfortunately, the battle isn't over yet. Four of the six archers drop their bows and pick up swords. They, and the other two guards, attack with a vengeance. Paragraph **2** contains the details on how the guards fight. Fight for one turn. If you survive, you can continue to fight, or you can run down the tunnel to the right – the one that slopes downward a few feet then levels off where there is a layer of thick, muddy water. If you do, go to **9**. If you want to keep on

fighting, let the battle rage on! If you win, go to **29**. If you die, you're free to roll up some new characters and try this adventure again.

96. It doesn't matter if you can win the battle or not, because if you do, the wizard in the blue robe is just going to blast you to smithereens anyway. Nobody ever said escaping the Arena would be easy.

97. You get your full damage against the guard. If you're unarmed, you only get 1D plus your personal adds. For this attack and this attack only, subtract 12 from your Thievery Talent score and add the result to your combat total which represents your sneak-attack damage. Also for this attack only, spite damage is not counted. If your total damage is 30 or more, you've succeeded in killing the guard outright – go to **5**. If he survives, he shouts and gets the attention of the other guards – go to **64** (note – if he doesn't have his scimitar, he still attacks, but only gets 1 die instead of 4).

98. I don't know what kind of powerful fighter you are, considering you just rolled up this character at the beginning of this adventure, but I'll have to say I'm amazed. You look back over the dead bodies and see the one guard who left returning with the wizard in the blue robes. Quickly you dart around the corner – make a (L2SR-SPD) for yourself and anyone who still stands with you. Any who fail are caught in a Rock-A-Bye spell. If you are one of them, when they get to your sleeping form they kill you outright. At least you died in your sleep. If you made the roll, go to **68** with those in your party that also succeeded. (Note – it is possible that there is a member in your party that does not have a SPD rating. If this is the case, consider that party member's SPD to be 16.)



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Tall Tales from the Trollstone Caverns

By Lee Reynoldson

It was just another ale-drowned afternoon at the Blue Frog Tavern. The current owner, a Rock Demon by the name of Half-cut, had drank himself into a pretty stupor and collapsed under a table in a fog of hops and hiccups. That left the bar under the watchful eye of his bouncer Horrid Harrid Hardhead, a nasty little Hobb with a bad attitude and a set of malignant magic runes tattooed across his forehead. You know the type; the sort of runes that left a bloody mess when he head-butted anyone. Knowing how tall a Hobb stands you really didn't want him to head-butt you there.

The usual crowd of young yahoos, bawdy bravos, and dashing delvers were crowded round the bar, drinking as if they had a real thirst to quench. Laughing, shouting, all good natured stuff, with only the odd black look from Harrid behind the bar. Apart from them it was empty, but for one

grizzled greybeard hunched and snoring by the fire. Me, well you know me, Toadflax the Indigestible is no fool. I sat in the shadows, back to the wall, hood raised, nursing a passable mug of ale, and wisely minding my own sweet business. As is often the way of things, when youth and ale are in plentiful supply and well blended, those at the bar soon came to boasting of their adventurous exploits, past and future.

One foppish rake of an Elf; dressed in fine green silks and carrying a grand shamsheer almost his equal in height, boasted how he had bested *Khara Khangs Random Rainbow Maze*. Not to be outdone a red-faced, blond-haired dwarf with a braided beard, a fine sparkling coat of chain armour, and two broad axes (both bigger than he was), puffed out his chest and boasted how he'd survived a solo sojourn into the *Temple of Issoth*. He was soon outdone by a roguish looking young man dressed



head to toe in sword-scarred, stiff-boiled leather armour, a sabre at his hip, a razor sharp chakram swirling nonchalantly around one finger. He claimed to have grandly looted *The Crypt of the Wolf Prince* without suffering the least of scratches.

“Ha!” it was the old man by the fireside. “Ha!” he shouted again. “You speak of these childish achievements as if you’d faced true adventure! Babes in arms you are, babes in arms and nothing more.”

The silk clad elf grimaced and put both hands on the hilt of his shamsheer, but the Dwarf had cooler head; that or sensible fear of Harrid and his Runic head-butt, for he laid a placating hand on the arm of his Elven friend and shook his head. The Elf bristled, but soon calmed himself. The young rogue twirled his chakram a time or two more and smiled.

“I suppose you’ve faced down the Trollgod himself a time or two old man.”

“Suppose I have,” said the greybeard. There was something about the glint in that grizzled gaze that made my blood run colder than a Snow Troll’s piss. The youths missed it. Instead they had fallen to laughing at the idea of one so old armed and doddering his way through adventure.

“In my time,” said the old man ignoring their jests, “I have gone beyond the *Silvered Pane*, bested the *Death Trap Equaliser*, strolled happily through the *City of Terrors*, crawled through the *Sewers of Oblivion*, faced the *Overkill* of Marionarsis, and emerged undoomed from *Uncle Ugly’s Underground of Doom*. With nought but my bare wit I have bested the *Dungeon of the Bear* and stood victorious on the bloody sands of the *Arena of Khazan* ten full times and won a kiss from Lerotra’hh herself.”

The young men had fallen silent. No longer brash and boastful now they were under his spell; hanging on his every word, mesmerized.

“None of these storied exploits though are as memorable, or as dear to me, as the tale of my very first adventure, a delve into the terrible tunnels of the *Trollstone Caverns*.”

“The *Trollstone Caverns*,” said the Elf. “I thought they were mere legends.”

“Not legend, but legendary,” said the old man a wistful look upon his grizzled features. “Come, gather round, put arse to stool, and I shall tell you the tale.”

He beckoned them to him and they came. Bringing ale and stools they gathered around him eager, as all those who adventure are, to hear a tale.

The old man coughed. Twice. A dry crackly cough. A full and foamy mug of ale was pressed into his hands. He took a sip, smiled, and sighed.

“We were on the Great North-South road between Khost and Khazan. There were six of us,” he said and sighed again, but there was mischief mixed with melancholy in his gaze as he turned it towards the flames of the fire.

“I remember it as if it were yesterday . . .”



. . . There was me in my brand new shiny, unscratched leather armour excitedly clutching the only weapon I could afford: a spear. Along with my good friend the warlike Dwarf Thorin Ravenscrag, there was a roguish, always hungry Hobb by the name of Pudge Gutbucket, his best friend the agile-winged ‘Big’ Tiny Tink, and a standoffish Elfin Wizard by the name of Sylvus Superious. We’d met him on the road and he was, so he said, doing us a ‘great favour’ by joining what he called our tawdry party of ‘Lesserlings’. Last, but not least, the lucky little Leprechaun Leppy O’Lep MacIorish.

We thought we were heroes born, but we were soon to learn that there’s no place for heroism when you delve in the tunnels of the *Trollstone Caverns*.

It was Pudge who found the tunnel. He ran off the road and into the bushes for what must have been the third time that morning. He blamed it on a bad Snottinghamshire Pie. Given the number

and variety of pies he'd eaten I wasn't sure how he could narrow the problem down to any particular pie, and I didn't want to know. The less you knew about Pudge's 'business' the better.

He shuffled out of the underbrush, still buttoning up his breeches, his face flushed and red, eyes wide with excitement.

"Quick," he said. "You've got to come and see this!" He pointed back towards the bushes he'd emerged from.

"Pudge," I said. "How many times have I got to tell you, I do not want to look at your 'business' no matter how fresh or weird it is."

"Dirty fecker," Leppy said and wrinkled his nose so violently that his fine ginger beard seemed to lurch up and down.

Thorin ducked behind his dwarven spiked shield, Sylvus looked down his fine and slender nose at Pudge and flicked his silky blonde hair away from his perfect cheekbones and sighed. 'Big' Tiny Tink giggled at his friend's antics.

"No," Pudge said shaking his head. "It's not that, though it is a good 'un, no I've found something."

"Something in your . . . business," Thorin said and ducked further behind his shield.

"Dirty feekin' fecker!" Leppy said.

"No, a tunnel, I've found a tunnel leading into the hill."

He didn't need to say anything else. We thrashed our way through the bushes and trees until we came to the hill and there it was: a gaping tunnel in the hillside.

"It's big," said Thorin from behind his shield.

"Feekin' big," Leppy said.

"Big and square," I said. "It must be at least ten foot by ten foot."

"Yeah," Pudge said nervously fingering one of the katars sheathed at his hip. "What kind of beast needs a tunnel that big?"

'Big' Tiny Tink squeaked and zipped through the air to hide behind Pudge.

Sylvus laughed. It was a light, musical, and very, very condescending laugh.

"Ohh, thou art such noobs," he said. "Everyone knows tunnels are all ten-foot by ten-foot."

"Like feck," said Leppy.

"Yeah, doesn't sound very likely," Pudge said in between bites of what looked like a pie with crows wings and feet sticking out of it.

"Why?" I asked.

"We need light," Sylvus said adroitly changing the subject.

I whipped off my backpack and rifled through it with trembling hands. I'd been waiting for this moment all my life. The day had come when I would light my first torch and venture forth, sword (well spear, I couldn't afford a sword) in hand into my first tunnel. I looked at Thorin Ravenscrag; he was grinning like an idiot. As children we'd nearly burnt the entire village down making our own *play* torches.

I held the torch in one hand, my spear in the other. "Oh, I won't be able to carry the torch and fight with a spear," I said.



“No feckin’ way,” Leppy said attaching the sling to his sling staff.

Tink hovered from side to side and shrugged his tiny winged shoulders. Sylvus grasped his quarter staff in both hands, Thorin banged axe on shield, while Pudge held up a half-eaten pie in one hand and a katar in the other.

“Oh come on,” I said.

Pudge stuffed his pie in his mouth, and drew his other katar.

“Great,” I said. “Well give me a light then, Pudge.”

“With what,” he said with a gob full of pie.

“Matches, you said you were getting matches!”

“Didn’t have enough money,” he said. Pudge sheathed a katar, whipped off his pack, and retrieved a large pie decorated with edible gold and silver leaf.

“I wonder why,” I said and rammed my useless unlit torch back into my pack while Tink hovered reproachfully at Pudge’s shoulder

“Lesserlings,” Sylvus said and rolled his eyes. “It’s a good job one of us is an elf.” He pointed a finger at the tip of his staff, made a strange cocking gesture with his thumb, and a small light leapt from his finger to the tip of his staff.

Thorin and I went first; Thorin with axe and shield raised, me gripping my spear so tight I feared it would snap. Behind us followed Sylvus, then Pudge, with Tink hovering at his shoulder, while Leppy bravely brought up the rear.

Sylvus’ *Will-O-Wisp* lent a sinister lean to our shadows as they danced along the tunnel wall after us. Silently we edged along until that silence was shattered by the unexpected, but unfortunately familiar, sound of Pudge’s foul flatulence.

“Nervous bowel,” he said by way of apology. But even in the candle like light of our *Will-O-Wisp*, I could see him grinning as he wafted the stench towards ‘Big’ Tiny Tink who *squeed* desperately and nearly fell out of the air.

“Eggy fecker,” Leppy said.

“Rotten bastard,” Thorin said holding his shield over his nose.

“What have you eaten,” I asked. Tears flooded my eyes, and I fought the urge to retch.

“Silence fools!” Sylvus commanded in a low growl of a whisper.

We all turned to tell him exactly what we thought of that and stopped short. Sylvus pointed the light on his staff toward the most wondrous door I had ever beheld.

Ten-foot by ten-foot it was set snug into the tunnel. Made all of iron it was a mighty door; but those were the least of its attributes. Sticking out from the door was a muscular flesh and blood arm; the hand held open as if ready to grasp something, or someone I thought as a shiver danced down my spine. Above the arm was a painted eye; a painted eye that watched us and blinked twice. Under the arm there was a slot of a mouth, open and waiting to be fed the Trollgod knows what. Between the eye and the arm there was a line of runes that glowed with an eerie fluorescent purple in the dark of the tunnel.

“I do not know these Runes,” Sylvus said. “They must be the archaic Runes of some long forgotten race of sorcerer Kings. I mean obviously, otherwise I’d totally read the shit out of them, yeah.”

“They’re Dwarf Runes,” Thorin said. He pushed past a very indignant looking Sylvus.

“What do they say?” I asked.

“Who cares,” said Thorin and hooked his axe into his belt. “The door’s Dwarf made and I’m a Dwarf!” Thorin stepped toward the door, lowered his shield and offered his hand to it to shake.

“Hail and well met, friend,” he said.

The door slapped Thorin so hard that the clap boomed up the tunnel. The blow spun Thorin around and left him with a huge red, hand-shaped, welt.

“Fecking hilarious!” Leppy said.

“Eek,” said ‘Big’ Tiny Tink in shock and flew away from the door to hide behind Pudge.

“I’ll kill it, I’ll kill it!” Thorin shouted un-looped his axe and charged the door.

Sylvus and I looked at each other, the same thought in mind, then leapt on Thorin and wrestled him to the ground. If he attacked the door we might never gain access to the treasures that surely waited within. In the brief, but bitter, melee that ensued Sylvus had to drop his staff and was no longer able to maintain his magic. We were plunged into darkness, and I took the opportunity to punch the pointy eared know-it-all in the back of the head a couple of times before I set myself to the task of calming Thorin.

“Leave it Thorin it’s not worth it,” I shouted and wrestled his axe out of his hand.

“All right, all right,” he said. “Get off.”

We untangled ourselves, found our feet, and Sylvus once more summoned forth his sorcerous *Will-O-Wisp*. I tried not to smile as he rubbed the back of his neck.

“Look stumpy McBeardy,” Sylvus said. “I know dwarves are basically one brain cell short of being Trolls, but get a clue you half-sized, half-wit. We need to open the door to get in the dungeon so . . . unggggghh!” he said screwing up his face at Thorin.

We were plunged into darkness once more as Thorin tackled Sylvus to the floor. I’m not ashamed to admit I wasn’t particularly quick about dragging Thorin off him. When Thorin had been calmed once more, and Sylvus had stopped groaning in the dark, the now considerably less haughty Elf relit his *Will-O-Wisp* for a third time.

“What’s up with yer eyes?” Pudge asked Sylvus.

“Nothing,” Sylvus said dabbing at his eyes.

“They’re all red and watery, have you been crying?”

“No I have not,” Sylvus said, wiping the snotty trail from his upper lip with the sleeve of his robe. He pointed at Thorin. “He pushed my face on the flagstones and I’ve got dust in my eyes.”

“Dust my feckin’ arse,” Leppy said.

“Look,” I said. “Let’s all just keep calm. Thorin what do the Runes say?”

Careful to stay out of reach of the door’s arm, Thorin squinted as he tried to read the runes by Sylvus’ Witchlight.

“Oh,” he said. “They’re Dwarf Runes, but the language is Orcish I think.”

“Let me guess you don’t read Orcish,” I said. Thorn shrugged in response.

“I can read Orcish,” Pudge said nibbling on a dainty cucumber sandwich.

“Where did you learn to read Orcish?”

“Me step-mum was a Half-Orc,” he said and stuffed the whole sandwich in his mouth and swallowed it. “Nice lass, but rough as fu—”

“For fecks sake, get on with it!” Leppy said. Tink squeaked in agreement and tried to push Pudge forward.

“Just fer you, me little mate,” Pudge said to Tink and fished a pair of spectacles out of his food-stained waistcoat. “It says . . . *‘This door yields to gold or force. Nothing else!’* pretty obvious really,” Pudge said and took off his spectacles. Putting them back in his waistcoat he found a half eaten chicken leg. “Ohh,” he said, “forgot about that.”

Pudge started gnawing on the drumstick, covered with as much pocket fluff as breadcrumbs, that I’m sure was at least three years old.

“Right,” Thorin said, put down his axe and shield, and rolled up the sleeves of his mail coat. “I’ll show you strength, Door.” He strode towards the door hand open ready to arm wrestle it.

The door balled its hand into a fist then its middle finger popped up out of the fist to stand proud.

“Son of a Troll,” Thorin shouted and snatched up his axe. “I’ll kill it!”

While the others held Thorin back; Pudge holding one arm, Leppy the other, and Tink holding his beard, Sylvus and I studied the door closely. I looked at the corded knot of muscles of the arm as it waved provocatively at Thorin; who was now being slapped round the face by Tink, while Pudge and Leppy wrestled the axe out of his grip.

“I think we can rule strength out,” I said.

“Not necessarily,” Sylvus said. He rolled up the sleeve of his robes to reveal a pale skinny arm. He noticed my raised eyebrow.

“I’m stronger than I look,” he said. “Magic requires much more strength than you’d imagine.”

“He’s not wrong,” said Pudge who was now sitting on Thorin, much to Thorin’s dismay and discomfort. “Every time I cast a spell I have to sit down and have a bite to eat.” He delved into his pack and came out with a hunk of hard cheese that he started to nibble on.

“Let’s just try gold,” I said with a pointed look at Leppy who had started to creep back towards the tunnel entrance.

“Fecker,” Leppy said, but came to stand in the front of the door purse in hand.

He took a gold coin and popped it in the doors mouth. The door swallowed it down and opened its mouth wider.

“Feck,” Leppy said and placed another coin in. Nothing happened.

“Feck,” he said and fed it a third coin. Still nothing happened. “Feck, feckin’, greedy MacFeck!” he shouted and stuffed a handful of coins into the doors open mouth. The mouth snapped shut. There was a sound of metal grating on stone and inch by inch the door opened.

Pudge stopped eating and got off Thorin who, the insults of the door forgotten, excitedly grabbed up axe and shield and adjusted his helm. Leppy put away his purse and reached for his pouch of

sling stones instead. ‘Big’ Tiny Tink’s wings fluttered, flicked, and flapped so fast he was in danger of creating a tiny tornado at Pudge’s shoulder.

Someone made a gulping sound, and I realised it was me. Sylvus held his staff towards the open doorway. In awed silence we saw, by the flickering light of Sylvus’ *Will-O-Wisp*, another darker tunnel. The air within was stale and fetid. The dust that covered the rough hewn rock floor was the undisturbed dust of centuries.

“Feck,” said Leppy. The rest of us just nodded.

Weapons ready, mouths open, but silent, we shuffled through the doorway neither knowing nor caring if we shuffled towards doom or destiny, as long as there was adventure along the way and riches at the end.



I led the way, Thorin at my side, Leppy and Sylvus behind us, Big Tiny Tink hovered near Pudge who followed behind munching on something as usual. The sound of his lips smacking echoed down the tunnel as we made our way.

“Feck’s sake,” Leppy said in a low hush with a hint of strain in his otherwise cynical tone.

“Shh,” squeaked Tink almost inaudibly.

“Quell thy noise portly one,” Sylvus whispered desperately.

“What you on about? Do all Elves talk that kind of shite or is it just you?” Pudge asked in the same sort of voice he used to order ale in crowded taverns. The single word ‘shite’ echoed along the tunnel.

“Thou art a loser-noob-moron, I mean seriously,” Sylvus whispered through gritted teeth.

Thorin marched up to Pudge and put the spike of his Dwarf spiked shield up Pudge’s left nostril.

“Shut up and stop chewing so loudly,” Thorin said in a low gravelly whisper that threatened much violence.

Pudge pushed Thorin’s shield and spike away and playfully tapped Thorin’s iron codpiece with the tip of his Katar.

“All right keep yer beard on, I’m just hungry is all,” Pudge said in more of a belligerent bellow than a whisper.

Thorin raised his axe, but stopped dead when another voice came down the dark distance of the tunnel. It was a strangely twisted and guttural voice.

“I is hungersome,” it said.

“Feast soon,” said another more malignant sounding voice. “These be easy meat.”

Leppy’s sling stone plopped out of his sling and skittered along the floor. “Feeeeeeeeck!” he whispered as he searched his pouch for another with visibly shaking hands. Meanwhile ‘Big Tiny Tink’s wings were in overdrive as he ziggled and zagged through the musty air, his tiny rapier glinting in the Witchlight at the same time as giving Pudge his best ‘look what you’ve done now’ look.

Thorin was at my side, shield and axe ready. I held my spear so tight it felt as if my wrists might shatter.

“Light,” I said to Sylvus not daring to say more lest my voice betrayed me and let the others hear the fear that welled within in me.

We could hear mean and mischievous sniggers, and the sound of clawed feet scraping stone. Both were drawing nearer at an alarming pace.

Sylvus thrust his staff forward and in the dim light of his *Will-O-Wisp* we saw them.

“Monsters! Monsters!” Thorin shouted.

“You don’t feekin’ say!” Leppy said as his second stone fell from his staff sling and bounced along the cold rock floor.

There were six of them, one for each of us; small, not much larger than a Hobb, but vile. Their skin was pallid, rough, and grey. They had pot bellies, spindly arms, and over-sized hands with long black claws, and were bow-legged with flat clawed feet. Their hair was scraggy and crow black as were their eyes and the crooked needle like teeth that filled their mouths.

Leppy whirled his sling staff like a devil and a stone zipped through the air and struck the lead creature smack between its mean little eyes. It made a strangled yelping sound. Its legs buckled under it. It pitched forward and smashed face first into the rocky floor, jerked, and then was dead.

“Feck yeah!” Leppy shouted and I found myself bellowing an inarticulate war cry along with the rest of my companions. Except Sylvus; he was chanting in elfish and much as I hate to admit, much as he annoyed the ever-living troll droppings out of me, it sounded very cool. His robes billowed around him, his outline shimmered with a dread light, his eyes were dark, ominous, piercing, and as his chants grew to a crescendo terrible to behold. He pointed his staff at one of the creatures and eldritch light snaked slowly forward and enveloped it.

The creature, the smallest, most spindly armed and pathetic of them, screamed a high-pitched, strangled, and inhuman noise, voided its bowels, and fled as if the Trollgod himself chased after.

The rest of them howled in anger and launched themselves at us.

Pudge ran past me shouting “Who’s havin’ it!” with both his katars, the deadly punch daggers, held high. With a slash of his left he opened the throat of the first startled beastie, and then rammed his right down its open mouth forcing his blade and its own black-needle teeth out of the back of its skull.

The next and largest was swifter and nimbler than we could imagine. He dodged effortlessly past Pudge as he struggled to free his katar from his foe’s corpse, easily slipped my first panicked lunge, ducked under Thorin’s wild axe hack, put one foot on the spike of Thorin’s shield and leapt over us and onto Leppy. I saw him go down under its

weight then saw 'Big' Tiny Tink dive at it, rapier extended. That's all I saw: the others were soon on us. This time I made sure of my thrust. With a yell that owed as much to fear as fierceness I speared one of the little horrors right under the chin. The force of my strike lifted it off the ground. Its legs kicked out and it made angry blood-choked gurgling noises as its foul black blood gushed from mouth and throat. In disgust I shook it from my spear tip and screamed at it as it died. I don't know why I did, and can't remember what I screamed, but the horror of it all screamed out of me. Next to me Thorin cried out too, but he cried out in pain and rage. Another of the creatures clung to his shield and had bitten him on his unarmoured neck. Roaring incoherently he charged and crushed the foul thing between his shield and the tunnel wall. It wailed and squirmed as its black blood dripped from the rim of Thorin's shield. He silenced it with a blow of axe to skull. I turned to find Leppy and Sylvus beating the last one to death with their wizardly staffs. It was on all fours trying to cover its head as they rained blow after blow on it, shouting angrily. There was a loud crack as one blow split its skull. Black blood and blue brains spilled out onto the floor, but still they kept on shouting and beating its corpse.

Then I saw why they were so berserk. Lying on the cold stone of the dungeon floor was 'Big' Tiny Tink's broken body. His neck and spine had been snapped, his wings torn, one of his arms gone, bitten off, and his legs were crushed.

I dropped my spear. I didn't care if a hundred or more of the murderous beasts lurked around the corner. I was done. I put my back against the tunnel wall and slid down onto my haunches knowing my legs would no longer hold me. Leppy and Sylvus finally wore themselves out and stopped beating the corpse of Tink's killer. Thorin covered in blood and gore, some of it his own, sunk to his knees. Sylvus looked away, his face pale, lips trembling.

"Saved me feckin' life," Leppy said looking at Tink's rapier still sticking out of the eye of his slayer. "Brave little fecker."

"No," said Pudge. "No!" He dropped both katars to the floor with a clank-clank and pushed past Leppy and Sylvus. "Not 'Big' Tiny Tink," he said

and dropped to his knees. Fat tears rolled over chubby cheeks, and he wiped them away with a grubby sleeve. "Poor little bugger," he said and gently scooped Tink's broken body off the cold floor and into his warm hand. In all the years I've known Pudge he has never thrown food away, but he reached into a waistcoat pocket, produced a pie, and flung it away without a second thought.

He held open his waistcoat and gently, ever so gently, tipped Tink into his pocket. "Rest well big fella," he said. "Rest well."

We had talked many times, sat in the safety of a tavern, dreaming of our first adventure, of all the treasure we would gather, of all our victories. Well here was our first victory, and it was cold and hollow. One of our own had fallen.

"What were they?" Thorin asked.

"Feckers," Leppy said.

"Goblins," Sylvus said.

"Goblin Feckers."

There was nothing left to do or say. Thorin found a rock and with that and his axe was able to make a spark and light the scrap of papyrus that Sylvus tore from his spell book. With that flame we lit one of my torches. Sylvus took it without complaint, and we pressed on in gloomy silence.

The torch, though it smoked foully, provided more light than Sylvus' Witchlight and we could see further ahead of us. The tunnel branched north and south from the entrance tunnel.

"Which way?" I asked.

Thorin looked north and south, shrugged, then pointed south with his axe. We went south.

The southern tunnel curved gradually eastwards then descended into a cavern. Sylvus held the torch up. It was a small cavern; we could see the roof and walls, and thirty-feet across the cavern on the eastern side there was another tunnel. The only problem was the pool of black water between us and it.

“Perhaps it’s an enchanted pool,” Thorin said. “If we drink it, it might give us god-like powers.”

“Yes, drink deeply my Dwarf friend,” Sylvus said with a sneer.

“Well,” Thorin said. “It might be magic.”

“Perhaps,” I said. “But you might want to do a test or two before you glug it down. Besides it looks vile and smells worse than Pudge’s wind.”

I smiled and turned to Pudge expecting him to be ready with an indignant retort, but if he’d heard me he showed no sign. He had his head bent to his chest and whispered into the waistcoat pocket where he’d placed Tink.

“Test? Test? Right!” Thorin said and dipped his axe into the pool. When he lifted it up to examine in the light of the torch, what had once been an axe head of gleaming dwarf-forged steel was covered in rust.

“Oh,” Thorin said.

“See,” said Sylvus smugly.

“Feckin’ ejeet,” Leppy said.

“Maybe we should go back and try the other way,” I suggested.

“Are all you lesserling races such . . . such losers,” Sylvus said and moved to the edge of the pool. He poked into it with his staff.

“Aren’t you worried about that,” Thorin asked with a sorrowful glance at his rusted axe head.

“This is no ordinary staff,” Sylvus said and poked around a bit more. “Ha!” He said. “Look it’s only a few feet deep here at the cave’s edge.”

Leppy looked at his own very short legs then at Sylvus’ long elfin legs. “Feck that fer a game of Khazanian soldiers!”

“I’m not sure I want to wade through that,” I said with a glance at Thorin’s axe.

Sylvus shook his head and sighed in that loud affected manner of his and waded in feeling his way ahead of him with his staff.

“Look there’s nothing to worry about,” he said. He took another confident step, slipped, screamed, and splashed into the pool. With a hiss the torch was extinguished and we were plunged into darkness. I could hear thrashing in the water and then saw a very bedraggled Sylvus splashing about in the pool by the light of another *Will-O-Wisp*.

“I’m all right!” Sylvus said and slipped under the water again. I watched open mouthed as the light on his staff slowly sank into the murky depths and we were plunged into darkness once more. More thrashing and splashing from the pool and then Sylvus stood at the pool’s edge with a *Will-O-Wisp* flickering on the tip of his finger.

“My staff,” he said and went to dive in.

“Don’t be stupid,” I said and grabbed him.

“There’s a reason all I have is a staff, robes, and sandals!” he said. He rubbed his eyes which looked red and rheumy from the pool, then coughed and I noticed blueness around his lips. The tiny veins on his neck and cheeks were black. “That staff cost a fortune!” He broke free of my grip and dived into the pool.

We followed his *Will-O-Wisp* darting around under the water, then that too slowly sank to the bottom of the pool and for the third time we were in darkness. We fumbled about in the dark with rock, axe, and torch and when it was lit again I held it over the pool, but there was no sign of Sylvus.

Silent, but for Pudge whispering to Tink’s corpse, we headed back the way we came.



When we got back to the intersection the corpses of the Goblins were gone. The smears of their black blood on the floor were the only evidence of our fight. Thorin and I exchanged glances.

Thorin shrugged and flung axe, then shield across, took a run up, mumbled a prayer to the Trollgod and threw himself over the gap. He landed heavily, fell, and smashed his knee on the rock. He let rip with a stream of dwarven curses that would have had a sailor blushing. Then it was my turn. I sent my spear over first then the torch, took my own run up, but couldn't jump. I felt my stomach churn up as if it wanted to jump out of my mouth and across the chasm, but I couldn't jump.

"Come on!" Thorin shouted. "If my stumpy legs can make it a longshanks like you should have no problems."

He was right; annoyingly so. I took another, longer, run up and this time with eyes closed I jumped. The 'eyes closed' idea was not one of my best. I hit the ledge of the other side of the chasm hard. It knocked the breath out of me. My fingers scrambled to find a grip where there was none; I was about to slide down the ledge and share the fate of Leppy and the Lizard, when I felt one of Thorin's blessedly strong mailed hands grab hold of my wrist and yank me clear of the ledge onto the blessed flat stone of the tunnel floor where I lay panting.

"Thank you," I said and sat up.

"Well I thought about letting you drop," he said with a grin. "Then I thought no, all that treasure would be no fun without anyone to help me drink it dry."

"Maybe the treasure of the Trollstone Caverns will even cheer Pudge up." I said and turned to smile at Pudge. "Err . . . where's Pudge?"

"Bugger! He was here a minute ago," Thorin said and snatched up his axe and shield. I grabbed the torch and my spear, and that's when we heard the screeching.

"Hold on, Pudge!" Thorin shouted into the darkness ahead of us. "We're coming, mate!" He raced off, rusty axe raised, and I followed.



We ran north-east along the tunnel, the sound of screeching getting louder. Then we heard Pudge, raving and shouting at the screeching foe. The stench of guano, sour and acidic, filled our nostrils, and the tunnel opened up into a huge domed cavern swarming with angry bats; huge, fanged, leather-winged, carnivorous, blood-drinking bats swarming around Pudge. He didn't seem to care; he just flailed at them with his twin katars. At his feet were the debris of many slashed and sliced bats; sliced wings, hacked heads, broken bodies. And all over him blood and bite marks.

"Pudge!" Thorin shouted and charged into the cavern shield raised.

We fought our way to the centre of the cavern. Thorin's rusty axe proving ineffectual as he slashed and hacked at the nimble flyers, only his shield saved him from being drained. For the first time I was glad I held the torch. I waved it before me and the bats screeched and flew from its flame. I shuddered to imagine trying to defend myself against them with a spear.

Perhaps the height of twenty men standing on each other's shoulders, in the cave roof, I saw a shaft of light. Then it was blackened by more bats swooping into the cavern in search of sustenance; in search of us and our blood. North of us another tunnel lead out of the bat filled cavern.

"Pudge," Thorin said and tugged at Pudge's waistcoat. "There's too many of them come on, we have to go."

"No!" Pudge shouted. "No, they don't get to fly if Tink can't!" His eyes were glazed, and spittle sprayed from his lips as he swore and cursed at the bats.

"Leave him, Thorin," I shouted. "He's gone, we've lost him!"

Thorin and I ran for the tunnel fighting off the bats as best we could as they screeched, and swooped, nipped and bit at us. When we made it to tunnel the bats didn't pursue us. We stood there and watched Pudge for a moment. He was surrounded by the blood-lusty bats, and for every one he hacked out of the air ten more swooped down. But Pudge didn't care; he just kept on

slashing, and whispering to the body of 'Big' Tiny Tink. Finally all we could see where Pudge stood was a dense cloud of bats swarming around him, screeching, and feeding; their fangs red with Hobbit blood. We turned and walked on in silence. There was nothing else to do.



We followed the tunnel north-east for a span or two until the echoing sound of screeching bats stopped suddenly and eerily. Just as suddenly the tunnel turned so sharply that we found ourselves facing what stone-wise Thorin swore was due south. The tunnel before us sloped upwards slightly, and its walls, unlike the rest of the tunnels, looked to have been carved rather than natural. Or at least that was what Thorin claimed.

“This doesn’t look good,” I said.

“Nonsense,” Thorin said. “This is perfectly fine stone work.”

“No, I mean doesn’t it strike you odd that the rest of the tunnels are natural and this one has been dug out?”

“Nah, it looks fine to me,” Thorin said and took a confident step forward into the tunnel.

There was an almost imperceptible click followed by ‘shhhsh-thunk’ as a spear flew out of the wall and buried itself in Thorin’s Dwarf-spiked shield.

“It’s probably mostly safe . . . kind of . . . a bit . . . I imagine,” he said and pulled the spear from his shield.

“Well if you’re that confident, after you,” I said and gestured toward the tunnel with the torch.

“I fear no such devices,” Thorin said looking fearfully at the gap in the wall where the spear launched from.

“I spoke only in jest, perhaps we should go back.”

“We Dwarves of the Iron Hills have a saying: no guts, no gold; no gold, no ale.” He looped his rusty axe in his belt and took the torch. “Death before sobriety!” Thorin shouted and ran up the tunnel.

By the light of the torch I watched as Thorin made his run. He was not fast, he was not agile, but he was lucky. Spears flew out of the walls every few feet with a click-shsssh-clatter as they missed Thorin and skittered along the floor or into the opposite wall. Many flew over his head and I thanked the Trollgod for his stumpy legs. One glanced his shoulder, made him yelp, but didn’t pierce the doughty chains of his Dwarf-forged mail coat. Then he tripped, and the trip saved his life. A spear flew directly over him as he sprawled prone. He snatched up the torch, staggered to his feet, and ran on. Another spear thunked into his shield and then he was at the other end of the tunnel. He turned to face me, arms and head raised in exultation, shield in one hand torch in the other and roared his war cry to the ceiling.

“No guts, no gold!”

A spear flew from the roof of the tunnel, went in through Thorin’s mouth, exploded out the back of his neck.

Helpless I stood at the other end of the tunnel and watched in the distant light of the torch. Thorin’s feet and legs kicked and hammered into the floor as his life’s blood gushed from him and sprayed the walls. He gurgled, and then was still.

Heart heavy I trudged up the tunnel not caring if I were speared or not; but I had no need to fear. All the spears were spent; triggered by Thorin in his mad dash. When I reached him I leant over him to close his staring eyes. I couldn’t take the torch from him, for he held it in a death grip. I took another from my pack and lit it from Thorin’s.

“May it light you across the Bridge of Swords to Trollhala, brother,” I said and marched on alone.



The tunnel curved south-east and soon I found myself standing with three branches of tunnel to choose from. I could go back the way I came, but did not relish the idea of traipsing, empty handed, past the corpses of my fallen comrades. I could go north, or I could go south. To the south I sensed a slight coldness to the air. No draft, but the air that way definitely felt cooler. Perhaps it led to a way out? I was just about to head that way, when from the north I heard whistling. Tuneless and alien sounding, but it was unmistakably whistling. Someone, or more worryingly some *thing*, was trying to whistle a tune. Holding my breath and on tip-toes, I crept north.

“I don’t know why you’re trying to sneak up on me,” came a warm feminine voice from around a bend in the tunnel. “I can see the flicker of your torch flame on the cave walls.”

I cursed loudly and there was a kittenish chuckle in answer.

“Come,” she said. “Show yourself, I will not harm you.”

I found that hard to believe.

“If you seek the famed treasure of the Trollstone Caverns, it is I who can help you to it,” she said. That, I’m ashamed to say, my cold and greedy heart found very easy to believe. I took a deep breath and walked around the bend in the tunnel.

There before me was a huge marble pillar, ornately carved, and garishly decorated. My eyes barely took in the details drawn as they were to the magnificent beast that sat atop the plinth. A giant winged cat sat there. Amber eyes blinked at me, dazzling in the torchlight. One perfect paw rested atop a small stone statue of a troll, the claws flexed and sprung.

“Who . . . what are you?” I asked. I let my spear drop to my side. It seemed suddenly useless.

The cat smiled and tilted her head, flexed her wings, and studied me with those beguiling eyes. Suddenly I knew how a mouse might feel.

“I am the sphinx, mistress of riddles, guardian of the Trollstone,” she said her voice a silken purr. I thought about all I had seen and faced. “You seem out of place somewhat.”

She shrugged, a strange motion for a winged cat, but it seemed perfectly natural for her.

“The Trollgod works in mysterious ways,” she said as if that explained everything, which actually it did. “Do you seek the Treasure of the Trollstone Caverns,” she asked.

“I do,” I said aware that my voice was but a whisper.

“Then you will need the Trollstone,” she said. She flexed her claws over the Trollish statuette once more and with her gaze directed me to a small niche in the wall. A niche that seemed a perfect fit for the Trollstone.

“If you answer my riddle correctly I will give you the Trollstone,” she said. “Then you may enter the Trollstone Cavern and contest the Troll for his treasure.”

“If I answer incorrectly?” I asked.

She smiled enigmatically, but her tail swished behind her and for the first time I realised it was no normal cat’s tail, but a scorpion’s sting!

“Ask your riddle Sphinx,” I said sounding braver than I felt.

She sat up on her hind legs. “Think hard before you answer young adventurer,” she said then in a sing song voice began to chant her riddle . . .

“I am all on my own, wounded by Iron, scarred by swords, often I see battle, never a healer. I am knocked about and bitten again and again, hard-edged, smith-forged things attack me, what am I?”

“Easy,” I said. “I know the answer to this you are a . . .”



. . . The old adventurer's snores ripped through the lounge of the Blue Frog Tavern like a Troll's axe hacking through a shield.

"Ho," said the foppish Elf gently poking the old man with the tip of his grand shamsheer. "Wake man, wake and finish your tale!"

"Wha?" The old man said opening his rheumy sleep filled eyes.

"Yeah," said the roguish young man with a twizzle of his chakram. "What happened next? Did you get the treasure? What's the answer to the riddle?"

"Ohh, the riddle," the old adventurer said his gaze distant and his mien rueful. "I do not remember the answer to the riddle; such a long, long time ago. But answer it I did otherwise I would not now sit here before you."

The dwarf in the shinning mail coat banged one of his huge broad axes on the tavern floor.

"Damn the riddle," he said. "What of the Troll? What of the Treasure!"

"Ahh, the Troll I remember; him I defeated easily," the old man said and there was a twinkle in his eyes that sent a cold, cold shiver running the length of my spine. The young yahoos didn't seem to mark it.

"And the treasure, the treasure?" the dwarf asked, a manic gleam of his own in his eyes.

"It was gold, gold rings, and I took as much as I could carry, but left ten times as much behind."

The young delvers exchanged pointed glances.

"I don't know why I didn't go back for the rest," the old man said. "After all it's an unguarded hoard."

"Unguarded horde," the elf said and nearly dropped his shamsheer.

"Aye, I killed the Troll, but couldn't carry out all those gold rings. I was going to go back for the rest, but this is the first time I've been back this way."

"Back this way?" the roguish chap said as his chakram slowly wound around his wrist and stopped.

"Oh, yes," The old man said. "The Trollstone caverns are not far from here, just a few miles along the Great North-South road from Khazan to Khost."

The three young adventurers exchanged one more glance, and then were grabbing up their packs, downing their drinks, and making their excuses each leaving a shiny gold coin for the old man in thanks for his 'tale', or so they said.

After the youths left I watched the old man. He didn't pick up his coins, he didn't drink his ale, he just looked into the fire and smiled to himself.

I was about to turn back to the bar when I was rudely barged from behind. I turned round and found myself looking into the arrogant violet eyes of a tall and aged elf leaning on a very expensive looking wizard's staff.

"Out of the way, Lesserling," said the elderly elf.

"Rude Fecker," said a wrinkled little Leprechaun to the Elf and shook his head at me apologetically.

"Yeah and will you please stop with that 'lesserling' *kinist* rubbish," said a white haired dwarf. I couldn't help but notice that although he had a mithril axe looped into his belt next to it was an ancient and rusty axe.

A Hobb, so fat I was amazed he could walk, barged past us all. In his top waistcoat pocket there was a grey haired fairy, miniscule spectacles that had slipped down his little nose, reading a tiny book. The Hobb waved at Harrid behind the bar.

"Twenty-five Debbyshire Pies and twelve pints of Old Grogglesthwaite over here, young 'un," he

said gesturing to the table where the old tale-teller sat. "Oh, and whatever they want," he added with a wave that encompassed the others.

They sat at the table with the old tale teller, a party of elderly and grizzled delvers if ever I saw one.

"What have you been up to then?" the dwarf asked the tale teller.

"Oh you know," he said with a mischievous grin.

"Just sharing the benefit of my experience with a few young delvers,"

"Tall tales from the Trollstone Caverns!" chorused his companions in unison and then fell about laughing.

I suppose I could have hurried after the young delvers, saved them from their inevitable doom in the Trollstone Caverns, but well, you know me. Toadflax the Indigestible is no fool. I sat in the shadows, back to the wall, hood raised, nursing a passable mug of ale, and wisely minded my own sweet business.

THE END



Reflections on the Tunnels and Trolls

7th Edition Rules

By Patrice Geille

While translating the 7th Edition T&T rulebook into French, I noticed a few inconsistencies and ambiguities which led me to ask Ken St. Andre for clarifications.

Kindred

Leprechauns – Page 28 (7E and 7.5E)

“Leprechauns are all Wizards. They also have a natural Wink-Wing spell they can do without any magical training.”

This spell is nowhere to be seen in the new rulebook. However, page 83 reads “Leprechauns can teleport themselves short distances” which is much more correct. The indication about Leprechauns on page 28 could therefore be changed to: “Leprechauns are all Wizards. They also have a natural magical ability to teleport themselves up to 50’ in any direction for a WIZ cost of only 5 points.” The 5 points cost rule is taken from the 5th edition Wink-Wing spell.

Character Types

Rogues and Spells – Page 11 (7E and 7.5E)

“Each Rogue may start play knowing any one 1st-level Wizard spell; he must have a sufficiently high Intelligence score to cast any spell, just as a Wizard.”

- 1) Maybe one should add that the same goes for the DEX requirement?
- 2) How does the Rogue learn that one spell?

KEN’S ANSWER: Yes, that’s exactly right. The Rogue can learn and use any spell for which he has the necessary INT, WIZ, and DEX. This is

also true for Wizards, but since they learn magic a bit differently, they are more hung up on the concept of levels than rogues are. When Wizards cast spells above their level, it costs them extra Kremm (i.e. WIZ) (was STR in 5th edition). They pay a little extra for the ability to exceed the boundaries. Rogues don’t even see or understand the boundaries—they just know that X effect requires Y effort.”

As was put more clearly in Andreas Davour’s list: “The rogue only learns a spell at the level he is taught. Teach him a first level TTYF, and that’s what he knows. You’d have to teach him a separate 2nd level TTYF for him to cast at a higher level”.



Wizards and Weapons– Page 15 (7E and 7.5E)

“Wizards receive little weapon training as children. They are limited to only weapons that deal a base 2D6 damage or less (plus weapon adds) in combat; *if they wield any other weapon, they lose their combat adds and become so distracted that they cannot cast any spells while using the wrong type of weapon.*”

- 1) Does it mean that a wizard *can* cast a spell while using the *right* type of weapon (like a sax)? My wizard could cast a TTYF spell while using his sax during the same round?
- 2) In addition, maybe one could add here that the deluxe staff is the exception to that rule (however you interpret it). Remember that “because of its indestructibility and extreme hardness, a deluxe staff gets 4D6 in combat” (Monsters & Magic Book, page 17).

KEN’S ANSWER: “Yes, a wizard could wield a sax and cast a spell at the same time (...) – not literally simultaneously, but within the same 2 minute combat round.” I then asked him: “Mm. And if my wizard (who has used up almost all his WIZ points) picks up a bullova from a corpse, he could fight with it but would then lose his personal adds, right?” **Ken:** “Right”.

Specialist Mage – Page 16 (7E and 7.5E)

“A Specialist Mage, who casts a certain kind of spells, doesn’t have to be taught by the Wizards’ Guild. When her abilities reach the point where she could learn a spell, it unfolds in her mind like a flower.”

KEN’S CLARIFICATION: “When a 2nd-level combat mage specialist attains sufficient INT and DEX to cast *Blasting Power* (a 4th-level spell) and he thinks about casting it, then the ability to do so will blossom within him. If he does it once, he has it forever more – that is, as long as his INT and DEX support it.

I asked Ken if a Specialist Mage should also be able to master combat spells listed in other supplements (as long as his INT and DEX are sufficient to cast them).

KEN’S ANSWER: “No such thing as too powerful in T&T. Get over this concept of play balance – it’s holding you back.”



Rangers – Page 18 (7E and 7.5E)

“Rangers and Leaders have magical abilities (...). They should be played as Rogues or Citizens more than Wizards (unlike Specialist Mages, who are thought of as Wizards, and Warrior-Rangers, who are treated as gifted warriors).

Logically, either the part “, and Warrior-Rangers, who are treated as gifted warriors” should be deleted or the part “Rangers and” should be deleted. You could also consider that you have the option of regarding the Ranger either as a sort of Rogue or as a sort of warrior.

This has implications for the Ranger’s level attribute. According to the table on page 37, the Ranger’s level attributes are those of a Specialist, i.e. CON, INT, WIZ, and CHR.

Rangers’ abilities – Page 120 (7E) or 173 (7.5E)

The description of Rangers on p. 17 states: “A Ranger has to make only Level One Saving Rolls to hit any target within range, and he always rolls on DEX for ranged attacks. (He cannot take an Archery Talent to improve on his natural ability.) He only misses if he fails the SR.”

On page 120 (173), however, it is specified that “starting characters get one Talent only - in the case of Rogues (Roguary), Leaders (Leadership),



and Rangers (Missile Mastery) - these talents are pre-determined. These characters can select a second Talent when they advance to their next level”.

While I find that this rule is fair as far as Rogues are concerned (the Roguary talent is very useful and Rogues get other advantages as well, like the ability to use any weapon and one free Level 1 spell), in the case of the Ranger I find that their ability to hit any target within range whenever they make a L1SR on DEX is not enough. Can the Ranger also use a sword or a morningstar? Does he have an armor bonus (twice the normal protection)? Does he get one ADD per level like the warrior? In other words, is the Ranger a “Warrior Plus”, with all the normal warrior’s abilities *plus* the Missile Mastery Talent? Or, can the Ranger be a Rogue instead, at the player’s option? [see also the discussion above on page 18].

One may think that the Ranger should simply be treated as a “Specialist Warrior” who enjoys the same benefits that Warriors have, *plus* an extraordinary ability to hit any target within range. If this is the case, it would not be fair to let them have a talent in addition to their archery ability.

However, should the rangers *not* be treated as warriors, this ability would be the sole benefit they enjoy, at the exclusion of any combat or armor bonus; in that case, I feel that they should start at least with one talent in addition to their archery ability.

The same argument also applies to the Leader.

Therefore, either one has to assume that Rangers are a subdivision of Warriors (and Leaders would be a subdivision of Rogues) and get their marksmanship (or persuasion for leaders) ability *instead of* their starting talent, or one considers that they are a subdivision of the Specialist class, in which case they should at least get one starting talent in addition to their specialist ability. Also, in the latter case, are they allowed to use any weapon?

KEN’S ANSWER: The Ranger is a specialist, great with missile weapons, but he doesn’t get the warrior’s extra armor protection.

Talents

Acquiring Talents – Page 7 (7E and 7.5E)

“When you first create a character, limit it to a single Talent. As the character grows in experience, it may develop other Talents.”

Yes, except that it has now become possible to create a character that begins at Level 3 since levels depend on attributes which are determined subject to the TARO (“triples add and roll over”) rule.

Example: when rolling the attributes of Garmanax the Mad, you roll 3, 3 and 3 for his DEX. Because of the TARO rule, you roll again and get 2, 2 and 2. You roll again and obtain 1, 5 and 2. Garmanax has therefore a DEX of $9+6+8=23$. You choose to make him a Hobb. Hobbs get an attribute modifier of 1.5 for DEX. The rules state that “Fractions are expressed as decimals and round up to the next integer when figuring an attribute value” (page 28). Garmanax has now a DEX of $23 \times 1.5 = 35$. You decide that Garmanax will be a Rogue. Since DEX is a level attribute for Rogues, Garmanax is a 3rd level Rogue from the outset because his DEX is between 30 and 39 (see page 37 of the rulebook).

One should keep in mind that characters get one talent per level. If a new character starts at level 3, he can choose up to 3 talents. Of course, you can choose to save 2 talents for later, when the need arises.

The statement on page 32 (“*New characters may choose a single Talent. When they go up a level, they may add another Talent.*”) should be changed in order to make it clear that you get one talent per level.

KEN’S ANSWER: It is agreed that each T&T character, player or NPC alike, is entitled to have one Talent per level. Remember: there is a part in the written rules that suggest that new players start with one, and save the others for situations when they might need an unusual talent. Thus: the character is faced with a sheer rock cliff between him and his escape from an approaching hoard of wild pigs. His Talent of Persuasion isn’t going to help much with the wild pigs, and there is no other way out, but the character is 3rd level and

hasn’t taken his second and third talent yet. At which point, he turns to the GM, and says, did I ever tell you about my Talent for Rock-Climbing, which is based on my Dexterity? And the GM says, hmmm, DEX of 24, roll 1D6, you got a 4, Rock Climbing Talent of 28. It’s going to take at least a Level 4 Saving Roll to climb this cliff. Make a L4SR on Rock Climbing if you’re thinking what I’m thinking. Player rolls 2D6 on Rock Climbing—needs a 7, rolls a 3, 2. “Ack! I missed it”, he cries. “But wait”, says the G.M. “It looks like you missed it, but did you add your 3 levels of experience to the roll? That makes an 8. You nearly fall off several times, but you do manage to scramble at the top, leaving the horde of wild pigs milling angrily below you”.

Rogues’ Talents – Page 32 (7E and 7.5E)

“Let’s say I’ve just made a new character, Zam the Bony, a Rogue, and I want him to be a thievish sort. Thus I choose Thievery his main Talent. Whenever Zam the Bony is in a situation where he must steal something, or know something about how to steal things, he will use this Thievery Talent to determine success or failure.”

Normally, all rogues start with a Roguery Talent (page 11) so Zam is an exception since he starts with a Thievery Talent instead.

In addition, Ken wrote on page 120:

“**Q.** Do Rogues, Leaders and Rangers get a Talent in addition to the Type Talent that they start out with?”

A. No. Starting characters get one Talent only - in the case of Rogues (“Roguery”), Leaders (“Leadership”) and Rangers (“Missile Mastery”) - these talents are pre-determined. These characters can select a second Talent when they advance to their next level.”

That implies that it is allowed to replace the Roguery Talent by another Talent when creating a Rogue. Personally, I tend to think that the special Roguery Talent is broad (and *undefined*) enough to encompass Thievery.

Ken said that “Roguary is a broader talent than Thievery (...) and the two are not synonymous. (...) rogues can have 2 talents to begin if they wish. Call it a class bonus”.

I found this answer very puzzling since it contradicts the previously mentioned statement you can find in the FAQ on page 120, according to which Rogues start with only *one* talent (Roguary), but is compatible with the example of Zam the Bony (page 32), who has Thievery as his “main Talent” (maybe that example should be slightly altered to make things clearer?).

I asked Ken to indicate his final choice on this point.

KEN’S ANSWER: “You’re right. There is some contradiction, but there can be rogues who aren’t thieves. Perhaps it’s not a good example. We could make Zam the Bony a thieving Warrior.”

Talent increases – Page 39 (7E)

“Talent increases: There is another bonus for character levels, and this one applies to Talents. Every time a character raises an attribute by 1 point, and that attribute is the base attribute of that character’s talent, then the talent also increases by an amount equal to the character’s level. For example, Gimor has Dexterity 14 and it’s the base attribute for his Acrobatic Talent of 16. Gimor is 3rd level, having gradually increased his STR to 31. In time, he accumulates another 1400 AP and decides to raise his DEX by 1 point, increasing it to 15. When he does that, he also automatically raises his Acrobatics Talent to 16 + 3 (he’s 3rd level) = 19.”

Ken wrote: “The rule for talent advancement is messed up. Talents = base level plus the 1D6 rule. Bring up your base attribute, and you bring up your talent”.

Thus, in the example on page 39, Gimor’s Acrobatic Talent of 16 (which is based on his DEX) should be raised by 1 point when his DEX is raised by 1 point, *no matter what his level is*. Under the new rule, talent increases with the base attribute, not with the level of the character. I

wrote the French version of the T&T rulebook with that in mind.

KEN’S CLARIFICATION: “That 7th edition rule is too complicated. That is why I changed it in 7.5. Your second paragraph is what should be in there. [“If I understand you right, in your example on page 39, Gimor’s Acrobatic Talent of 16 (which is based on his DEX) should be raised by 1 point when his DEX is raised by 1 point, no matter what his level is. Under your new rule, talent increases with the base attribute, not with the level of the character”]. The rule should be deleted entirely. Talent goes up or down with the attribute it’s based on. That’s all. Neth McCrom has Persuasion at INT. If INT goes up, so does his Persuasion. If it goes down, so does his Persuasion.”

Weapons and Armor

Armor and DEX – Page 29 (7E and 7.5E)

“Shields count as armor although they require minimal Strength and Dexterity to wield.” However, this minimum DEX requirement is nowhere to be seen in the “ARMOR AND SHIELDS” table (pages 61 et seq.).

Weapons and tools – Pages 44 & 55 (7E and 7.5E)

The sledgehammer is listed both under Tools and Hafted Weapons. Under Tools, it is listed as costing 90 SP while under Hafted Weapons, it is listed as costing 90 GP (Noted by Mike Eidson aka Khaydhaik). In the French version, it costs 9 GP under both lists. Not a very elegant weapon, but good value. The woodman’s axe is also listed both under Tools and Hafted Weapons. Under both lists it cost 70 SP (or 7 GP) and weighs 100 w.u. (see pp. 44&54 in 7E and 7.5E).

Swordbreaker – Page 48 (7E and 7.5E)

The footnote about the swordbreaker, which you could see in the previous version, has disappeared

from version 7 and was replaced in the French version.

Ranged weapons – Page 51 (7E and 7.5E)

In “bows and other ranged weapons”, one should add the note found in the previous edition that states in particular that “all arbalests and similar crossbows require 1 combat turn to reload with the exception of the dokyu or repeating crossbow. The dokyu [over-and-under in v. 7] will only fire 1 round [sic: quarrel?] per combat turn, but does not need a turn to reload until all 5 rounds [quarrels?] are fired”.

Since the dokyu has been replaced by the over-and-under, clarification is needed on the following point. The over-and-under is defined as “essentially two crossbows stacked on top of each other” that allow “two shots before reloading is required” (though “it takes twice as long to reload as well”). Logically, those 2 shots could happen in the same combat round. The player has also the possibility to fire once on the first round and then once again on the second round.

Bolas – Page 52 (7E and 7.5E)

The Hunting Bola has no explanation for its use in 7th edition, unlike in 5.x. In 5th edition, the bolas entangle if the thrower’s DEX is greater than 15, or 50% of the time if the thrower’s DEX is 8-15. They entangle a foe for one combat turn. The War Bola does no damage if it does not entangle.

Throwing stars – Pages 53 & 60 (7E and 7.5E)

There seems to be 2 kinds of throwing stars:

- page 53: Throwing stars (3) 4D STR2 DEX10 30gp 10u 10y
- page 60: Throwing stars (10) 1D+3 STR10 DEX15 50gp 5u 15y

The combat dice and adds seem to apply to every single throwing star, which would mean that you have either 3 big throwing stars with 4 dice each and 10 little throwing stars with 1+3.

KEN’S ANSWER: “The kind listed on page 53 are heavier and do more damage (...) At the very least they need distinguishing names. Page 53 should be razor rings (...) Page 60 should be small 5-pointed stars of bronze.

I asked Ken if you could throw several shurikens at the same time and if so how many.

KEN’S ANSWER: “This might be a good place to require saving rolls on DEX before allowing it. Trying to throw 2 at a time would require a L2SR on DEX –throwing 4 would require a L4SR on DEX and so forth. If you miss the saving roll, you missed with everything”.

Throwing axe – Page 54 (7E and 7.5E)

The throwing axe should have a range of 10 yards.

Long Spears – Page 57 (7E and 7.5E)

There is an inconsistency between the weapons’ glossary, according to which a **long spear** *cannot* be thrown, and the weapons’ table, where you find that the long spear *can* be thrown (range: 10 yards).

Gunnes – Page 61 (7.5E)

Rifling is in the Gunnes table, but has no explanation. From the 5th edition, “Rifling for muskets...increases the price of the weapon by a factor of 3. Rifling will improve the performance of the weapon at medium and far range by 1 and 2 saving rolls respectively on marksmanship to hit.”

Saving Rolls

Level bonus for SRs – Page 38 (7E and 7.5)

“But wait – Luck is a level attribute for Warriors! Gimor is therefore entitled to add 1 to that failed roll to see if he can pull off a success.” (7E)

“But wait! Luck is a level attribute for Warriors: Gimor is a first level character and therefore

entitled to add 1 to every saving roll attempted” (7.5)

The statement that “Luck is a level attribute for Warriors” should be erased, because according to page 74 (or page 100 in 7.5), “you can *always* add your character level to a Saving Roll you’ve failed in order to change that failure to a success”.

KEN’S ANSWER: “The first statement [i.e. that “luck is a level attribute for Warriors”] has nothing to do with the situation. Characters are always permitted to add their character level to saving roll attempts—both on attributes and on talents”.

Experience for missile SRs – Page 80 (7E) or 105 (7.5E)

Under the previous version of the rules (section 2.33.2) “no experience points should be awarded for saving rolls made to determine hit-or-miss”, which is the exact contrary of the example given on page 80 of the 7th edition, where Taran SniperOrc gets AP because he tried to shoot a charging elf (and missed). This may make it somewhat easier to get the AP you now so badly need to increase your attributes.

Combat

Missile and magic combat – Page 72 (7E) or 97 (7.5E)

On page 68 of 7E (p. 93 of 7.5E), the rules state that “there have been some slight modifications, especially in missile and magic combat” (which is perhaps why Ken suppressed the “magic in combat section”).

On page 72 of 7E (p. 97 of 7.5E), the rules state that “magic that does damage always counts as part of his side’s HPT”, which is a departure from the previous rules. In v. 5, TTYF was “almost alone among the available spells in having what is termed a shock effect” (see section 2.32.1) and “the only two other spells which have any ‘shock value’ and are counted in with the party’s attack are the *Blasting Power* and *Freeze Pleasee*. (see section 2.32.2).

The new rules also state under “3. Missile combat” that “If you miss the SR, you get no points toward the melee total. If you make it, your points count no matter what.” This wording is ambiguous.

Does it mean that all successful missile shots always count as part of the HPT (like all combat spells)? That would imply that combat spells *and missiles* all have a “shock effect”. If that is not the case, maybe one could rephrase the above sentence like this: “If you miss the SR, you have dealt no damage and are normally not able to take part to the melee fight (unless you shot from a long distance). On the other hand, if you make the SR, your points directly damage your target (only his armor can protect him, if he’s got any)”.

Examples would be welcome to illustrate how missile and magic function in combat, particularly during the melee.

Also, the wording of page 72 of v. 7 (“Except in unusual circumstances, you only get one missile per combat turn”) seems to imply that one can continuously fire missiles (although only once per round) during melee combat. Is that so?

KEN’S ANSWER: “I’m not sure where the confusion comes on this. In hand-to-hand combat, blows miss, armor absorbs damage,



weapons are parried – all part of the combat total, but not actually doing any damage. On the other hand, if a combat spell like Blasting Power manages to actually hit the foe, then clearly it has effectiveness on the target and shock effect on the party.

Simplest case: 1 wizard vs. 1 swordsman. Wizard does 3D6 Blasting Power and gets 10 hits on the swordsman. It's flame so armor doesn't really help the swordsman who takes 10 points of magic damage. That hurts. The swordsman rolls 3D6 for his own weapon and gets a 12. He has just taken a 10 point shock; that could throw him off a bit (12 - 10 = 2). The wizard takes 2 points of damage. The spell was his defense and offense too.

Likewise with an arrow; when an arrow hits, a certain amount of kinetic energy is transferred. Armor may or may not protect the target, but still x amount of damage has to be accounted for. Of course that has shock effect; as it hampers the other side in combat it has to count as part of the combat total.

Except when performing a specific feat, archery should be regarded as a process the same way that swordsmanship is a process. It doesn't take 2 minutes to launch an arrow. It is easily possible to imagine someone using a missile weapon, even at close quarters, as fast and as often as he could in combat. In such a case, the missile weapon contributes its dice value plus combat adds to the general total, and one doesn't even have to roll to hit. Or, if you want to be technical, the missiles have to hit something to do any damage – thus the shooter makes a generalized saving roll to see if he's hitting or not. If he's hitting, whether the missiles penetrate or not, then the total is part of the combat roll; if he misses then they aren't. (...) The GM may just have to cope with combat on an individual case by case occurrence and use common sense to come to a conclusion”.

ME: “If I understood you well:

- All combat spells have a “shock effect” (not only TTYF or Blasting Power) provided that the spell works (kremm resistance rule + SR on INT), and
- Missile weapons can be used during the melee phase of the combat; in that case, they have the same “shock effect” as a

combat spell (provided the target was actually hit).

KEN'S ANSWER: That is the way I see it. Just go with common sense. If a spell has an energy effect on the combat, it has to be part of the combat total. Same with an arrow; I shoot the arrow into the air and it goes out the window, no effect. I shoot an arrow into a horde of orcs, they see it coming so it has an effect even if it glances off a shield or something. The arrow hits target A who can't deny that he was hit – he takes x damage. If the arrow has to go through his armor, he gets his armor defense.”

Combat adds and missile weapons – Page 68 (7E) or 93 (7.5E)

Whereas strength increases the damage potential when firing an arrow with a bow or when throwing a knife or a chakram, strength should obviously not count towards calculating combat adds when using a firearm or a crossbow.

KEN'S ANSWER: “Strength has little to do with how much damage a firearm does in combat. (...) Neither STR nor SPD should give firearms adds. What you might do, however, is give double LUCK and double DEX adds to those using a firearm.”

I also asked him if missile adds still exist under 7E.

KEN'S ANSWER: “No, missile adds have gone away. It no longer seems logical to have them.”

Therefore, when firing an arrow with a bow, you should apply normal adds (which depend on your STR, DEX, LK and SPD).

Unarmed combat

Following the 5th edition rules, in the French rulebook I wrote a sentence under section 1.6.2 saying: “You can always fight with your bare hands. In this case, roll 1 die and then add your Personal Adds.” Remember that all weapons will get you at least 2 dice.

Fighting with two weapons

I included Ken's rule about using 2 weapons simultaneously: you can use 2 single-handed weapons, provided your STR and DEX are above the combined STR and DEX requirements for both. That rule was explained quite clearly in 4th edition rules and the short version of the T&T rules found for example in *Take The Money* (a GM adventure written by Ken St. Andre in 2007): "An asterisk (*) indicated a weapon that requires two hands for proper use. [When wielding such a weapon,] You can't use a second weapon or shield unless you have more than two hands. Two weapons without asterisks may be used simultaneously IF the user has the ST and DEX requirements for BOTH weapons (e.g. to fight with a dirk in each hand requires a minimum ST of 2 [1+1] and a DEX of 8 [4+4])."

Too-heavy weapons

I added the rules from 5th edition concerning wielding too-heavy weapons: "Each combat turn in which a too-heavy weapon is used, a character weakens at a rate equal to the required strength minus his current strength. This number is taken directly off strength...If a character's ST drops to exactly 1, he or she will fall unconscious."



However, I changed the minimal STR value since according to the 7th edition rulebook exhaustion happens with a STR of 0 instead of 1 (p. 21).

Magic

Dis-Spell – Page 101 (7E) or page 144 (7.5E)

By its very nature, Dis-Spell should read: "Power Up? Yes." (see the spell description and 5th edition).

Rock-a-Bye – Page 103 (7E) or page 146 (7.5E)

The Rock-a-Bye spell lists its duration as 1 combat turn, whereas the description of the spell says it lasts for 1D6x10 minutes. According to 5th edition, it should be 1D6x10 minutes, thus 1-6 normal turns. (Noted by Mike Eidson aka Khaydhaik)

Other

Turns and Time – Page 68 (7E) or 93 (7.5E)

It is explained that a combat turn or round lasts "officially" 2 minutes, but the duration of a normal turn (given as 10 minutes under the 5th edition rules) is not specified. This information is useful to have particularly as far as concerns spells lasting 10 minutes.

Trollworld and Kaball – Page 162 (7.5E)

As I first wrongly assumed, Kaball and Trollworld are not synonyms. Trollworld is the setting used by Ken St. Andre and his friends as it is described in the various T&T products published by Flying Buffalo and in the Crusaders of Khazan computer game (which includes a color map). Both the computer game and the map were included in the T&T 7th edition box sold by Fiery Dragon. There is also another map by Liz Danforth (April/May 1980, B&W). It describes the "Lands Explored" of Trollworld (western part of the Dragon Continent of Rhalph, just like the Crusaders of

Khazan map). The Danforth map is based on maps by Bear Peters, Ken St. Andre, and Mike Stackpole. It was published in Different Worlds #7 (see "Ten Days in the Arena of Khazan").

KEN'S ANSWER: Kaball is an alternate version of Trollworld developed by Jim Shipman back in the days when we were friends. As it is a more complete rendition of Trollworld than my maps, which only cover the Dragon's head, chest, and forelegs, it came to be published as part of the 7.5E package. Let it be noted that I do not like

Kaball very much. It places the city of Khazan on the dragon's stomach instead of in its mouth, and otherwise re-arranges my geography to suit Shipman's ideas. While Kaball may be a version of Trollworld, it's not my version, and I never use that name for my world.



The Horned Hold: Dungeon of the Dreamstones

AT&T 7.5 GM Adventure

By Stephen Dove

The Dungeon of the Dreamstones is a T&T v7.5 adventure for 4 PCs of 5th level (or characters with a combined attack total of 25-30 dice plus 170-220 adds).

The following adventure is set in a very different world from that of Trollworld or others usually associated with T&T. Yet the Dreamstones can cast a long shadow; one that falls across all the worlds. So to port this adventure across the many planes of infinity, you need only find a desolate region of uplands in your worlds, far from the centers of civilization. Then shall the Horned One and his dread minions walk again.

The Lakeland Realms and Yurland

The Lakelands are the last tattered remnants of a proud ancient kingdom that once ruled from shore to shore. Now all that remains are a dozen or so petty-domains, each no more than a day's ride in span, huddled on the shores of a series of vast interconnected lakes that provide the only means of safe travel between these fading kingdoms; for the wastelands between them are now a monster-haunted desolation, filled with the ruins of the past age. Yurland was once the most northerly of these petty-kingdoms and was rich and prosperous. Yet it fell into ruin for reasons that are now barely a rumour. The tale of this fall is given on the parchment **players' handouts** in the words of one who witnessed it.

Yurland and the Coming Danger

The musings of the wizard Aadulf are not mere fancies because Yurland did indeed succumb to the power of the Dreamstones. These ancient banes were created by a forgotten race that

vanished in ages past, perhaps consumed by their own creations. The stones, buried for eons, were only unearthed about a century ago in the mines beneath Blencara in Yurland. Other stones almost certainly lie underground in many other parts of the world, so perhaps a Horned King will walk in lands far from this one. The three stones unearthed in Yurland now lie dormant because they require far more than the handful of men who currently walk the paths of the vale before their power is awakened again; about a hundred humans must be dreaming at the same time before the stones will create new walking nightmares. One stone is in the ruins of Urtgarth, whilst the Horned King carried a second into his dark lair, and the third is at the bottom of the Yurland lake; lost in a ship that might have carried it south if lake-pirates had not sunk it.

Unfortunately for Aadulf, the Horned King and his minions are not dead; they just lie dormant and some have already awakened. Aadulf's letter was intercepted by servants of the Horned One. So now the letter is in the Horned King's lair and the Lord of Karnsford is unaware of the growing danger on his northern border as more shepherds and freebooters return to the Yurland vale every day.

Lanoc

The earthworks at Lanoc date from the last days of the Old Kingdom, two centuries past. The old field-stone sheds and the fortified manor have been rebuilt by Lord Torgan in the last ten years. Torgan is a Knight from Karnsford whose old family history told of a lost ancestral land in the north. He journeyed here to reclaim Lanoc after his brother inherited their lands in Karnsford. He

has carved out a little piece of the downlands for himself and hopes to live in peace.

This fortified farmstead is typical of many that dot the downlands north of the great lakes, though most are ruder and far more recent. The folk of Lanoc are dour and even unfriendly, for they fear strangers, but are simple people for all of their reticence.

Locations in Lanoc

A: A stout gate bars the way across the steep turf covered earthworks. Night or day, there will be a watchman here (MR 40) whose job it is to let in those who have business with Lord Torgan. Few strangers will be admitted, however (Lvl 3 SR vs CHR), because the locals are wary of the dark things that stalk these hills which can take the shape of men. No-one is admitted after dark.

B: A wooden tower overlooks the channel between the earthen walls. At least one archer (MR 60) is constantly stationed here to watch out for cattle raiders and other, darker menaces. In times of trouble, he will not hesitate to shoot.

1: Bothy. This vast slate-roofed shed is the communal area where the shepherds and farmers who live within the walls sleep, cook, and pass those days when heavy rain drums on the windows. The central area has a number of fire pits where the women cook and around which all gather after the day's work for some song, a few stories, as well as a round or two of dice played with sheep's knuckles. Around the edges of the hall are raised areas where folk sleep. Each man and woman has his own area, with hidey-holes underneath for their meagre possessions.

This hall often hosts visitors from the surrounding hills, as it is the only "tavern" of note for many miles. Groups of red-faced shepherds, weary after a day in the fells, will often be seen heading for Lanoc come dusk. They are known of course, and so are admitted. Surly groups of armed adventurers may be treated to shorter shrift if they fail to mind their manners'.

2: Lord's Hall. The lord's manor is situated at the top of a low hill that dominates the enclosure. It

boasts a stout tower at one end and a fine feasting hall at the other. Lord Torgan is not a rich man, but if any travellers of worth approach his hold then he might invite them to spend the evening with him. He is a verbose young man, full of pride and ambition (MR 180; his armour deflects 10 hits). He loves hunting, boasting, and wagers and is a little impulsive. Torgan wants the threats to his lands removed and might be willing to pay well to see the back of the Horned King and the return of his missing shepherds (see **Hooks**). He offers 500 gp but can be bargained up to 700 gp.

3: Granary and Shop. This building is a two story affair. The upper level houses Lord Torgan's grain reserves; the loose sacks are spread out across a huge drying floor to prevent it getting spoilt by damp. In the lower level is a forge as well as a place where other farmers and shepherds come to buy provisions. Lord Torgan has had the foresight to open up such a shop, there being no other for more than a day's ride. Here even weapons and some armor can be purchased as the farrier and blacksmith, Darlard, is well versed in metal-craft.

4: Stables. Lord Torgan is rightly proud of his horses, for he is raising some fine animals here. Every year there is a local horse race and the rivalries run deep. Torgan has won for the last two years, to the ire of others like Lord Brica, who lives in the next valley.

5: Weapons and Armour. The downlands are no safe place and ruins dot the landscape as a reminder of the fate of those who relax their guard. All the holds hereabouts therefore keep a store of weapons and armor for when the Horned King rides forth or for those days when starvation drives one Lord to order a raid on his neighbours' flocks. This locked store is guarded at all times and contains many spears, bows, arrows, shields and suits of boiled leather. There is enough in this store for almost every man in the hold.

Plot Hooks

If plunder and the promise of agonising death are not enough to encourage your players to seek out the Horned King's hold, then the PCs could be asked to seek the return of some shepherds who have recently begun living in the Yurland vale and

have now vanished from the settlement of Lanoc. Witnesses will swear that they saw dark knights on horses abduct them at dusk a few nights ago. It has rained since then, but a L2SR vs INT or LK will allow the PCs to follow the trail from “High Rigg” where the shepherds were last seen, up the valley to the mountain of Blencara. The tracks lead into a narrow ravine at one side of the mountain where the PCs see a pair of black iron doors. Proceed to A.

The Horned Hold

This work describes the upper level of the Horned King’s Hold, though he himself is absent from this adventure. Future articles may detail the higher levels and the other dangers in the Yurland vale that have been created by the power of the Dreamstones.

The Horned King’s Realm lies behind his black iron gates. The GM should remember that, having been conjured by nightmares, this dungeon follows the same kind of ‘logic’ found in dreams. Doors will close by themselves unless forcibly kept open and will jam 1 in 6 times when a party passes through requiring a L3SR vs STR to open. They will, however, open soundlessly for wandering monsters (check for these by rolling 1D6 every time the PCs make a lot of noise or stop to talk or rest; on a roll of 1 a monster appears and attacks).

Roll 1D6 to see what appears:

1: 1D6 Horned Knights (MR 70; 12 points of armor, normal spite damage) appear and attacks immediately.

2: 1D6 skeletons (MR 50) armed with swords approach and attempt to take the PCs prisoner. If the PCs surrender they will be disarmed and placed in the cell in Location C.

3: 1D6 Ogres (MR 80) bustle along the corridor dragging a prisoner with them. If they see the PCs they attack in a frenzied manner until all the PCs are dead. The prisoner is one of the missing shepherds who has not yet been eaten.

4: 1D6 ethereal women walk down the corridor singing an eerie tune; the PCs can see right through them. They are spectres (MR 70) and can only be harmed by magic or magical weapons. Their attacks ignore all armour and shields.

5: A bat hanging from the roof suddenly drops to the floor and morphs into a vampire. The vampire attacks (MR 200) accusing the PCs of violating his master’s domain.

6: A section of the corridor wall suddenly animates and carves itself into a living statue and attacks; the statue is made of limestone and looks like a horned warrior (MR 150; armor absorbs 20 points of damage, immune to magic).

The monsters in this dungeon will be unable to account for how they came here or what their master intends; they truly have no idea and remember very little of their so-called ‘pasts.’

The dungeon is also “morphic” so that its form is not static and can change. GMs are encouraged to play with this to give their players a fright and make them wonder what is going on. For example, several of the doors in this adventure could open to reveal a blank wall and then later an NPC or monster could step out of it.

The torches in the dungeon are magical, everlasting, and glow with an odd yellowish light. They will go out immediately if taken down from their wall sconces and may also explode doing 2D6 damage to everyone in a 20-foot radius. Anyone caught in the blast can make a L3SR vs LK or DEX to avoid harm. A 3rd level Dispel Magic spell will suppress the torch-glow for 2D6 minutes but they will then relight. A 5th level Dispel is required to permanently knock one out.

Location A: The Black Gates

A well-worn path, studded with horse tracks, follows the course of a tiny brook upstream and into a deep ravine. This ragged gash, carved in the side of the brooding mountain by the little stream, is softened by a profusion of ferns growing from the rocky walls. As you trudge into the defile, and fall under the shadow of the ravine walls, you see ahead that the gorge comes to an abrupt end as a wall of solid rock rears up in front of you. It is pierced by a pair of

iron gates set deep into a shallow tunnel, and also by a rusty culvert out of which spills the mountain rill. This murmuring brook flows swiftly past the swinging forms of two corpses hanging from a pair of cruel gibbets, as a line of ravens looks down balefully at you from the safety of the crags above. Suddenly the hairs on the back of your neck give you warning of an ambush. You hear a shrill shriek and a dark shadow covers the valley as something descends, borne on leathery wings. The fell monster fixes you with its dead-man's eyes before launching itself at you in a flurry of wings and talons.

The leather-winged creature is a Drak; a draconic monster out of local tall-tales. There are pictures on a cave wall, at the south end of the lake, of a creature that existed here thousands of years ago when men first came to this land. These pictures inspired children's nightmares a hundred years ago, and so the Draks took to the air again through the power of the Dreamstones.

Drak: MR 230. If reduced to less than 30 hits, the Drak attempts to seize one of the PCs and fly off with them. If the unlucky adventurer fails a L3SR vs DEX then they are taken up into the air and will be devoured. Luckily, the creature's nest is in the crags above the Longbarrow Marshes and so a clever PC can wait until he or she is out over the water and then deal the final death blow to the creature, causing the Drak to plummet into the icy depths or to drop the annoying PC safely into the water. Note that in this case, the PC will get one free round of strikes unopposed as the Drak is intent on flying. Of course if the PC is still wearing armor, then this could still go badly if they fall into the tiny lake. Kind GMs will allow the PC a L4SR vs INT to work out they need to take their armor off before the creature reaches the edge of the mountain lake. The alternative is to wait until the Drak reaches its nest, but then the PC will be pitted against the vast creature without their companions. If the PC is victorious, he/she finds 400 gp in a large, chewed sack and several huge eggs. It is about a twenty-minute walk from the nest back to the ravine.

Meanwhile back in the gorge, the two 'corpses' on gibbets are in fact both alive, but barely so. They are two of the missing shepherds and there is only time to talk to one of them before they expire from their terrible wounds. Both beg for death anyway and will ask the PCs to slay them.

- 1- The first shepherd is delirious and mutters, 'Must wait 'til blue... blue!' He then heaves his last and dies. He is referring to the corridor of testing and is trying to warn the PCs how to get through.
- 2- The second shepherd rambles, 'Water... go under water...' Before he also succumbs to his wounds. He is trying to tell the PCs to use the culvert.

Gates: the two iron gates are set into solid rock. They are locked and there is a bell which can be rung to call someone to come to the gates. The gates could be broken down with a L8SR vs STR or picked open with a L6SR vs Thievery or DEX. If the bell is rung, the Gark from **Location B** will open the door and attack.

Culvert: The rusty culvert can be forced open using a L4SR vs STR. The icy waters flow quickly but someone without armor could swim down the passage and emerge from the pool in **Location E**.



Location B: The Guard Room

The tiny room, awash with ruddy light spilling out from a roaring fire in the hearth, seems filled by the bulk of a sleeping guard; a creature with scaly green skin, bulging muscles and an ugly pock-marked face surmounted by a scraggy top-knot of greasy greenish hair.

This is a guard room and if the PCs entered quietly then the Gark (4) will be asleep, much as he has spent most of the last ninety years or so. He sits with his back to a huge roaring fire that has been burning for at least a hundred years, his feet up on a table. If the PCs made any noise then the enormous creature will awaken and charge into the corridor with his spiked club, ready to smash any interlopers. The Gark is not very bright and so a good story might confuse or even get him to allow the PCs past, if they are inventive enough.

Gark: MR 270. On any turn in which he deals 6 or more spite damage, the Gark will pound the floor with his giant club and the resulting vibration may knock anyone in combat with him off their feet and cause them to lose 2D6 dice from their combat total (L3SR vs DEX to avoid falling prone).

On the table is a ball of solid crystal; this is a means of communicating with the Horned King. Images swim in the ball of a dining hall filled with ghostly diners, a chamber in which a demon stands next to a mirror within a magic circle, and a ragged kitchen where huge Ogres cook up disgusting fare.

There is also a small chest containing baubles that the Gark has collected from prisoners. There are several rings, including 2 gold (100 gp each) and 1 silver (50 gp) as well as a jewelled amulet (250 gp). None are magical.

Location C: The Prison Cell

By the flickering light of your torches, you see the room ahead of you has a yawning 20-foot wide chasm cut across the center. On the far side, a forlorn looking prisoner huddles dejectedly on the other side of the black gulf. As you move closer, you nearly trip over a huge plank of wood that presumably serves as a bridge.

This room hides a dangerous secret; anyone attempting to cross the abyss without speaking the password 'goliath' is attacked by a tentacled Lurker who lives in the water at the bottom of the chasm.

Lurker: 5 tentacles each with a MR of 60. On any turn in which a tentacle deals 2 spite damage, it can try to latch onto an opponent. PCs affected must make a L4SR vs STR or DEX to escape the grapple. If the PC fails he/she can take no further part in the combat until they break free of the tentacle (one further SR attempt each turn).

The prisoner (5) is a messenger, Cadoc, from the Lone Isles to the Lord of Karnsford. He was carrying Aadul's letter shown above but was captured and brought here. He does not know what was in the letter but is desperate to regain it.



Location D: The Horned Knights

As the door swings open, you find yourself in a room whose walls are carved to form a series of ten niches, evenly spaced around the three far walls. In each niche stands a motionless Horned Knight, head bowed as if asleep. In front of each Knight stands a large ornate chest.

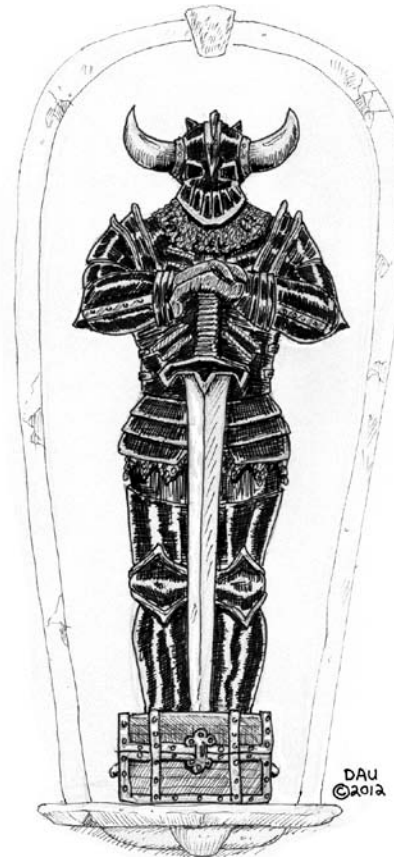
These Knights are part of the Horned Horde; some are possessed humans who have been recently captured. The chests are not locked. If a

PCs attempts to open a chest, roll 2D6 and consult the table below. As soon as the chest is open, the Knight behind the chest awakens and he strides out to confront the challenger. Each time a PC opens a chest, they must also make a L3SR vs LK. A failure means that the door suddenly slams and locks shut (L6SR vs STR, DEX, or Thievery to open) and 2D6 Knights awaken and attempt to slay the party. Each Knight has a MR of 50 and all wear armor that absorbs 10 points of damage. If the party flees the room, then the Knights do not currently have enough power to pursue and so return to their alcoves. If this occurs, then the door to this chamber ceases to exist as the dungeon morphs to prevent any further intrusion.

Chest contents (roll 2D6)

- 2 A severed human head. If this is removed from the chest then the spell on the Knight is broken and he takes off his helm to reveal that he is a local trapper recently captured. He has no memory of the last few weeks save for blood- filled dreams. Anyone putting his helm on must make a L7SR vs WIZ or become possessed and turn into a Horned Knight with identical stats who immediately attacks the party.
- 3 A pair of magical throwing axes (3 dice each). If they both hit the same target, they immediately deal an extra 4 dice of electricity damage.
- 4 A painting of a young man dressed in fine clothes. If the picture is destroyed or damaged, the Knight whose chest it came from crumbles into dust.
- 5 A bronze hand mirror. If anyone touches the surface, it gives way as if it were a liquid. Reaching inside reveals that there is a space 'behind the mirror' to hide objects. Up to 400 kg (approximately 880 pounds) can be hidden in the mirror, but it must fit through the 10 x 10 cm frame to be placed within.
- 6 A small necklace with an ivory bird pendant. If the word inscribed on the back (Namarie) is spoken, then the bird animates and can take a message of up to 20 words to anyone whose name is known. The bird can also carry replies.
- 7 500 gp in cloth bags.

- 8 4 "dousing arrows" which immediately extinguish any source of fire they hit.
- 9 Severed head (see result #2 for details)
- 10 The Sword of Rust; once per day the wielder can call on the blade to manifest its power and instantly rust any one metal object of up to 10 foot square it touches. The metal becomes corroded and easily breakable. If this is done to a weapon or suit of armor then it is instantly destroyed. The spell does not work against magical objects. Otherwise the sword is a 5D+5 weapon that weighs 3lbs.
- 11 Cursed Longbow; this bow makes shooting easy (the user just needs to make a L1SR vs DEX) but if/when the player should roll a "3", the arrow shoots off towards the target before reversing in mid-flight to attack the character. The longbow gets 6D+3 in combat, has a range of 160 yard, requires a 25 STR and 17 DEX, and weighs 8 lbs.
- 12 4 healing potions (each restores 4D6 CON) and 2 potions that allow complete resistance to fire for 1 minute.



Location E: The Stables

This long room is lit by a guttering torch and is dominated by a series of high-sided animal stalls. The floor is covered in rotting hay and straw and the musty smell of large creatures pervades the air. Occasionally something kicks the walls of these magnificent stalls.

Anyone entering the dungeon via the culvert will end up in this room, since the stream emerges into a shallow pool in the southwest corner. This room is the stables for the otherworldly horses of the Horned Horde. These fire breathing stallions (3) will kick open their stalls as soon as they perceive the presence of an intruder. Roll a L4SR vs DEX, Thievery, or LK every turn that **any** PC is in this room. If anyone fails, then the demonic horses realize something is amiss and kick open their stalls and attack. There are magical saddles in the room and if the PCs can get them onto the stallions (L6SR vs DEX), then the creatures become docile.

Demon Steeds (3): MR 90. On any turn in which a steed deals 2 or more spite, the demon horse can unleash its deadly breath on the next turn for 5 dice of fire damage in addition to their normal attack.

Location F: The Globe Room

As you round a corner you catch a glimpse of a large silver sphere, mirror-smooth and suddenly feel very strange.

The entrance to this room is hidden behind a tapestry. This area is a magical preparation room; anyone who wants to use the mirrors found later in the adventure must enter the globe and then emerge from the large flat mirror that is currently under a drape against the south wall of the chamber. Any PC looking at the magical globe from the corridor instantly vanishes (L7SR vs WIZ to resist). They then become stuck as an image on the surface of the globe. To get them out, they must be reflected in the other large mirror in the room, whereupon their image is transferred to it and they can step out, apparently unchanged. The significance of this translocation will not be apparent until they enter the mirrorverse in **Location L**. Obviously someone must uncover the large mirror for any PCs to escape, so

if all look at the mirror sphere and fail the SR, then they may be trapped here forever. Kind GMs will allow the Goblin aide from **Location H** to let them out, should this occur.

Location G: The Kennel

As the door swings wide you look upon a scene of chaos. A barrel of grain has been overturned and a huge warhound, its coat a mass of stiff bristles, its toothy maw a cavern filled with razor sharp teeth, is being chased by a gimlet eyed goblin half its size. As soon as you enter the comical scene ends and the greenskin shrieks, "Kill!" at the hound and then, with a flourish of his hand, begins rolling back a rock to reveal another of the hideous beasts hidden in a rough hewn 'kennel' cut into the wall. The dogs barrel towards you, their jaws slavering for your flesh.

These are the Hunts Master's hounds and they are deadly beasts. When the PCs enter, only one is free, but the goblin servitor uses his magical ring to push aside a rock each turn until a total of five of the creatures are able to attack.

Warhounds: MR 70 (5). If a warhound deals 2 spite damage in any turn, then one PC must make a L4SR vs STR or LK to avoid being pulled to the floor. Once prone, the protective effect of armor and shields is halved for the next combat turn, after which the PC is assumed to have stood up.

If all of the warhounds are slain, the Goblin servitor draws a dagger and slays himself rather than be captured; after all, he knows he will live again once the Dreamstones return to life. His magical ring is a *Ring of Stone Calling*. The wearer can move huge blocks of freestanding earth and stone slowly (too slowly to be used to attack). The ring would be very useful to a mason and is worth about 800 gp to such a person. Unfortunately, its magic fades a week or two after leaving the valley of Yurland or after the Dreamstones are destroyed.

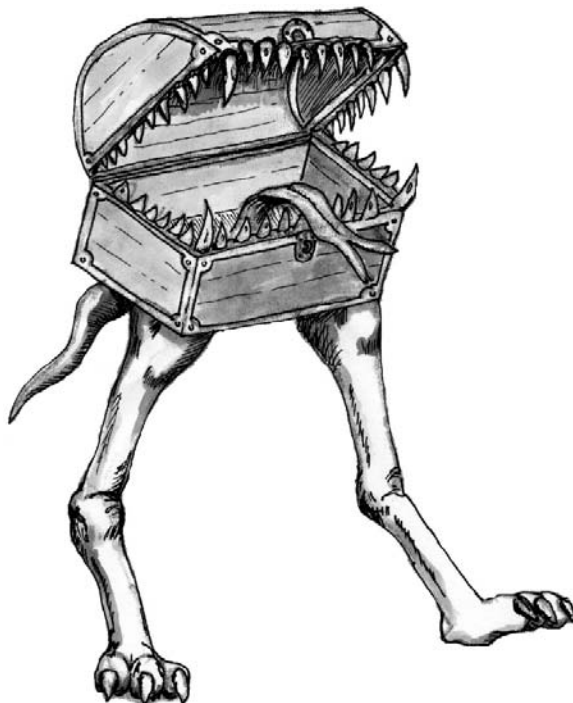
Location H: The Antechamber

You enter what appears to be an opulent ante-chamber with a beautiful and expensive carpet on the floor. A well-dressed goblin sits behind a desk, writing on a parchment roll with a quill pen. Beside him are four large chests. On

the other side of the room is an enormous suit of armor overlooking a seating area and a row of bookcases crammed with papers and scrolls. The goblin looks up and says "Ah; the Master's guests. He has been expecting you. I will just see if he is ready to greet you; please take a seat." The goblin then disappears in a puff of smoke.

On the goblin-clerk's table is a copy of the letter that Aadulf wrote to Lord Karnsford. At the top, the aide has been doodling and the words "Awakenings" and "Dagon" appear in red. Dagon is a password required to pass the demon in **Location L**. The other is irrelevant. The dangers of this room are not obvious. The PCs might be nervous about the suit of armour, but it is totally inanimate. The same cannot be said of the four chests. One is a mimic; a dreadful creature that impersonates inanimate objects but then kills those who attempt to steal from it. The mimic resembles a chest with ostrich legs; the lid is in fact a cavernous tooth-filled maw. As soon as one of the PCs opens any of the chests, the foul creature attacks and battle is joined.

Mimic: MR 300. On any turn in which the mimic inflicts 7 or more spite damage, all PCs in combat with the mimic must make a L3SR vs DEX or LK or become stuck to the mimic's sticky body and dragged around with this terrible creature. PCs cannot contribute to the combat total for any turn



in which they are stuck, (although the creature cannot attack them either), and they take 25% of all damage (including spite damage) directed at the creature. At the beginning of each new combat turn they may attempt to escape (L3SR vs STR or LK) but note that this attempt allows them no time to do anything else. Wizards/Rogues stuck to the mimic can still cast spells normally if they make a L2SR vs DEX.

The other chests contain illusions of overflowing treasure but these disappear as soon as the PCs attempt to take it; the PCs then hear a mocking laughter ringing through the stone walls.

The bookcases are crammed with books of folktales and legends; there is not a single work of fact in the whole library.

The goblin clerk will suddenly reappear once the battle is over or the PCs have finished examining the room. He asks the PCs to go through the north set of double doors (leading to the **Corridor of Testing**) seeming polite and unruffled despite any chaos left behind after the possible battle that has occurred. If he is attacked, he simply vanishes.

Corridor of Testing

You leave behind the plush ante chamber and can see ahead the doors to the Horned King's throne room. But between you and the doors is a thin ribbon of bright energy stretched across the corridor, throwing out tendrils in all directions. The energy ribbon, obviously magical, pulses through a cycle of vivid colors, pausing on each hue for a few seconds before moving to the next in the cycle. A voice behind you says, "Choose your color wisely." There is no sign of who has spoken these words.

The light cycles from blue to red to white to yellow and back to blue. Anyone passing through the barrier is subject to the following effects;

Blue: as the dying shepherd at the gates tried to tell them, this is the 'safe' color and someone passing through suffers no ill effects.

Red: there is a bright flash and the person catches fire. They take 3D6 CON damage whilst trying to extinguish the blaze.

Yellow: The wizardry score of anyone passing through is reduced to 0 as if they had cast all their

spells. This even happens to warriors and other characters normally unable to cast spells. The characteristic regenerates as normal.

White: Anyone passing through becomes completely insubstantial for 1D6 minutes. They cannot interact with matter at all but can see and hear normally. They can even go through walls. All of their equipment is similarly affected.

Location I: The Stairwell.

The stairway leads up and some creatures may emerge from this location. Yet no matter how hard they try, the PCs cannot pass the impenetrable barrier that wards the entrance to the stairs. Any that attempt violence or magical attack on the barrier are hurled backwards. Future issues of *TrollsZine!* may detail the upper levels of this dungeon or enterprising GMs may craft the new section themselves.

Location J: Hall of the Horned King

After passing through the magical barrier, you push open a pair of ornately carved double doors to reveal a throne room with columns marching down the sides of the room to a dais at the far end of the shadowy chamber. Sitting on a huge throne is an inhumanly tall, black knight, who sports 4 arms and a horned helm. For a moment you feel sure you have finally come face to face with the master of this hold but then the knight bellows "Who are you that dares enter my lord's hall without his leave? Are you foolish mortals so eager for death that you come to seek it out?"

This ornate hall is the 'throne room' of the Horned King, but he presently cannot manifest with the Dreamstones so weak in power so his underling, a cruel four-armed knight sits in attendance instead. He can be convinced to talk, but is only interested in learning the PCs mission. Once he is sure of their motives, he will launch his attack.

When the party enters, he demands to know who they are. Once it is clear that they have come for mayhem, the knight launches into the attack using 4 vicious looking long swords as his weapons.

Black Knight: MR 320. On any turn that the Knight deals 7 or more points of spite damage, he

can attempt to disarm anyone in combat with him. One PC in melee with the Knight must make a L4SR vs DEX or lose their weapon for one turn; they then contribute nothing to the next turn's combat total.

After the Knight is defeated, the PCs can prise the jet-stones from the pommels of his four black iron swords; each stone is worth 200 gp. They can then investigate the chamber. Note that the door in the south-west corner exists but opening it reveals a blank wall and no passageway; the corridor only exists in the 'mirror-verse' version of this dungeon that can be entered by going into the mirror in **Location L**.

Location K: The Well of Souls

As you enter this circular chamber you suddenly feel terribly cold, as if something has stolen the very warmth from your blood. Before you stands a raised well of pitted stone, surrounded by an eldritch circle of arcane power. Baleful colours wash the roof of the chamber as if something down the well is giving off a kaleidoscope of light.

This chamber is a well where the Horned King keeps safe the souls of those wizards and other wise-ones he has slain. Here he can ask them questions once they are summoned. Their names are inscribed on the walls of the chamber and to summon up a shade, one has only to utter the spirit's name. All the spirits in the well have become twisted and have fallen into darkness. Most of them lust to slay the living. However, they can be bargained into aiding the PCs if they are asked the right questions; for example they know about the mirror in **Location L**, but are bound by a spell to only answer questions that might lead to the Horned King's harm via cryptic replies.

These are the spirits who can be summoned.

Tormaline: This former wizard desires to live again and will lie and make cryptic hints about what he knows in order to entice the party into doing what he desires. Tormaline has a plan: if his shade can pass into the Corridor of Testing when the light is white, then he will be restored to corporality. However, Tormaline will then be a Lich and will attack the party immediately. He will

know all spells up to 5th level and will have a WIZ attribute of 50 and a MR of 150. In order to get to the corridor, he will have to possess a PC.

Aedela: This woman was once a witch whom the Horned King sacrificed. She is the only spirit the PCs can trust and will give them cryptic information as indicated above. Each question the PCs ask of her requires them to drop a gem worth at least 100 gp into the well for shiny things amuse her now that she is dead. She knows about the mirror world and also about the sphere, but can only provide hints.

For example, if asked about the southwest door she will say: *“You need to reflect on what you know before you can proceed”*.

If none of the PCs have yet been in the spherical mirror, she will say: *“To pass that door you first need to understand a different sphere of knowledge”*.

She does not know where the shepherds are being held. She can tell the PCs about the flexible nature of the dungeon. She can also hint that she is bound to the well. She will outright tell the PCs that they cannot trust Tormaline.

Varquist: This man was fey-touched long before the coming of the Horned King. He was a miner and encountered another manifestation of the Dreamstones long ago before they were brought to the surface. As a result people think he went mad, but in fact his mind is off travelling in the future. He can glimpse what might be and will tell the PCs, but only if they promise to bring the mirror in **Location L** into this chamber (he will bind them with a spell that will kill them if they fail to do as he has asked within a year; the spell cannot be dispelled as it is bound in blood).

He will babble the following: *“Across the wide water and the gulf of dark can the sheep-folk be found; but beware that which waits in the water”*.

He will also add that: *“The queen of ice cannot be trusted; to release her is folly”*.

Once the mirror is here in this chamber, he will enter it and will manifest as a shadow and will dominate the Throne room where he was tortured to death by the Horned King. He will allow none

to pass once he is there and can even attack insubstantial PCs or those travelling in the mirror-verse.

Shadow: MR 150. The Shadow can only be affected by magical weapons. Non-magical weapons do not count towards the combat total when confronting him.

Location L: The Demon and the Mirror.

You round the final corner to see a circular chamber lit by a single torch that gutters in a breeze whose source is not obvious. The chamber is dominated by a huge mirror of beaten bronze set in a magical binding circle. Next to the mirror a black miasma boils as if a thunder-cloud has somehow been captured within the circle. As you approach, this cloud becomes substantial and a demonic form, complete with wings and cloven feet emerges from the rapidly vanishing murk, accompanied by the stink of brimstone. The creature regards you predatorily before inviting you into the circle.

The mirror in this room is required for humans to be able to enter the corridor connecting the southwest corner of the Throne Room (**Location J**) with the dining hall (**Location M**). This corridor exists only in the mirror-verse version of the dungeon, not in this reality. A human need only step into the mirror to enter this mirror world and once they do, they can open the door in the southwest corner of the throne room, go into the corridor, enter the dining hall and step through the mirror there to return to the normal world.



If a PC who has not been into the mirror sphere (**Location F**) steps into any mirror then they will find their bodies are back to front (what is normally left is right and vice-versa) in the mirror-verse. As a result, they can cast spells only with an additional L4SR vs DEX and have only half their normal adds in combat,

The DM should take a note of which world the PCs are in; most of the dungeon is identical (though the PCs may suffer some penalties as indicated above). If the PCs leave the dungeon whilst still in the mirror-verse, they will find everything outside the dungeon is strangely altered; monsters of every description abound. The mirror-verse should be played as a kind of hellish otherworld where anything is possible and most things are a dark reflection of that which exists in the waking world.

The occupants of this dungeon have no such trouble with these two worlds because they are eldritch and exist both in the mirror-verse and in this one at the same time. The mirror-verse is another product of the Dreamstones.

Before entering the mirror, the PCs must confront the Demon. He is bound to allow no one into the mirror who does not know the password. Nor will he allow the mirror to be removed from the room. Only the Horned King and his aide in the ante-room know the password, but it was scrawled on one of the pages on the aides' table and is "Dagon". The demon will attack anyone entering the circle unless the password is spoken.

Demon: MR 300. Each combat turn that the demon achieves 7 spite damage, all wielders of non-magical weapons in melee with him must make a L3SR vs LK or their weapons shatter.

Location M: The Dining Hall.

As you approach this hall, a strange music fills the air. You feel compelled to join the dance but somehow keep your feet, as you emerge into the middle of a masked ball, where ghostly dancers in fine clothing flit about the room. Four odd-looking dwarf harpers sit at a long table on which a banquet is laid. They strum their harps to provide the eerie music. Each dwarf's face is contorted into a rictus of insane glee as they watch the dance. The dancers' faces give voice to

unspoken pain though all appear to be in thrall. It is then you notice the huge mirror on the north wall, a twin to the one in the Demon's chamber. The room and table are reflected in its surface, as are you, but the dancers and dwarves are not.

PCs can only enter this hall in the mirror-verse; the hallway to it does not exist in the waking world. As soon as the PCs enter they are subject to a magical attack (L3SR vs WIZ) or they succumb to the dancing and join the other souls who are entrapped forever. Note that anyone covering their ears becomes immune to the attack and can just step through the mirror into the normal world. In the waking world, the hall is empty and the faded table is covered in rotting food and mouse droppings.

The four 'dwarves' are in fact Bacchae (12); a race of insane fey that insist on never-ending revelry that ends with the deaths of all those in their thrall. Anyone trapped by their music can only be freed by battling the Bacchae or bargaining with these terrible creatures. They will only release a mortal if promised a service; the Bacchae will choose the jewelled dagger in the sunken boat at **Location Q**. The PCs must retrieve it or lose their companion(s) forever. The Bacchae do not need to keep those PCs bound by the dance in this room; they can summon their thralls at any time with their music so the only way the PCs can be free is to bring them the dagger or slay them. If anyone dies whilst trapped in the dance then their souls become forever the playthings of these monstrous creatures.

Bacchae (4): MR 70. Whenever they achieve 3 spite damage, the Bacchae can attempt to charm the person they are fighting to sleep (L4SR vs LK or WIZ). The sleep lasts for 1 hour unless those who are sleeping are slapped hard to awaken them (the PC awakening their companion loses 3 dice from their combat total whilst doing so if engaged in combat).

The candlesticks and silverware on the table are worth a total of 1000 gp.

Location N: The Kitchens.

Through a crack in the door you glimpse a huge table leg and see the lumbering bulk of a hairy ogre, hauling itself around the room, dressed in a bloodstained apron. The creature's lower teeth protrude above the foul beast's jaw as it mixes something in a huge mortar and pestle. The smell of brewing beer wafts to your nostrils as you spy on the brute and see that it has two companions sitting at the 8-foot tall table.

The “cooks” in this nightmarish kitchen are ogres (13) and there are three of the brutes. They attempt to pretend refinement in a comical sort of way but are in fact barbaric monsters. The kitchen is giant-sized so that clever PCs can run under the table and avoid combat for a turn. Food splashes are everywhere and blood stains all the furniture and cooking utensils. They talk in brutish tones about the ‘forthcoming dinner’ and hope that they will ‘please the master’. The smell of beer fills the room because of a mini-brewery at the eastern end of the room. The “meal” they are cooking appears to be mainly composed of human limbs.

As soon as the PCs appear, the ogres exclaim that, ‘Dinner has arrived,’ and gleefully grab carving knives and wade into battle. The ogres are fierce but very stupid and might be tricked (L6SR vs CHR) into believing a well-crafted lie, and letting the PCs go. They would far rather, however, smash the PCs ‘to mush’ and ‘make jelly out of ‘em.

Giant Ogres: MR 90. Spite damage is twice normal.

One of the over-sized barrels is filled with a golden powder that the ogres were ordered to put in all the Horned King’s food. This powder is worth 100 gp per pocketful, though the PCs will be unable to carry much of it.

Location O: The Waste Chute.

A solid wooden door bars the way south. On the wall besides the door is a strange looking arcane symbol and some odd writing.

This room is where all the bones and other kitchen waste is thrown making this room smells

terrible. The writing outside is a spell that must be spoken after the door is opened; the spell keeps the creatures that live down the chute from attacking. Anyone opening the door that does not say the words “Karvishio noth lamorr” is attacked by the cockroaches that climb up the waste chute to attack. Roll 1D6 to see how many giant cockroaches emerge. These dreadful creatures cannot leave the room and so PCs can escape simply by running away.

Giant cockroaches: MR 70. Their carapaces absorb 12 points of damage. Spite damage is normal.

Location P: The Cold Store.

You approach an ice-rimed door in the north wall of the corridor and find it is frozen shut. A stout tug frees the door and you feel an icy blast of air issue out into the passageway. The room is shadowy and full of joints of meat; some of which look human in origin. Boxes and barrels also line the walls. Standing in the center of a magical circle inscribed in the middle of this room is a haughty looking woman dressed all in white and wearing a crown of ice. As you stare in amazement she addresses you in a silky voice and asks you to help her gain her freedom.

The woman is the Ice Queen and she was once the consort of the Horned King. He banished her here, to serve him by keeping his food from rotting, as a punishment for her wilful pride. She hates the Horned King with a passion and whilst she is dangerous, she will help the party if she learns that they oppose him. The Ice Queen must honor any promise she is forced to make, though she may later attempt to twist the exact words of the bargain to her purpose. One thing she will gladly do is freezing the water in a pathway across the cistern in **Location Q** so that the Eels cannot attack the party. If she is released without being bound by any promise, she will attack the party mercilessly.

Ice Queen: MR 250. On every turn in which she does 5 or more spite damage, she can initiate one of her special attacks (roll 1D6):

- 1) She freezes the floor into a deadly sheen of ice. All combatants must make a L4SR vs DEX or fall over the next turn and lose 4 dice from their combat total. The

ice melts in 1D6 combat turns and the SR must be repeated every turn the ice is present (the Queen is of course immune).

- 2) She attempts to freeze one of the PCs solid with her gelid touch in addition to her normal attack next turn. This is an 8 dice attack of frigid air that hits unless the PC makes a L5SR vs DEX or LK. The ice storm does damage as a ranged attack.
- 3) The Ice Queen creates a thin wall of ice that cuts off some PCs from her. This wall can be broken through with a L5SR vs STR but anyone engaged in chopping through it contributes nothing to the combat total for that turn. The Queen, meanwhile, concentrates her attack against the one or two PCs she has cornered with her wall.
- 4) The Queen fashions an ice spear out of the mist in the air and hurls it at any wizard in the party; this is a 4 dice ranged attack that must be evaded with a L2SR vs DEX or LK.
- 5) She exhales a freezing mist that results in no-one being able to see further than 2 ft. Everyone in combat must make a L3SR vs LK or INT or lose 2D6 dice from their combat total as they waste time blundering around in the mist.
- 6) The Queen heals herself by freezing the blood from the PCs wounds and grafting it to herself (she regains 3D6 MR).



If the queen is slain, her crown falls to the ground; it is mostly ice but 4 sapphires can be found frozen into it and are worth 1,000 gp each.

If the Ice Queen is freed with conditions, she will honor any promise but then leave the dungeon to wreak havoc outside. The Yurlands will know an unnatural winter unlike any in living memory as she summons fell creatures and bad weather, even if it is summer. This could form the basis of another adventure if the GM so desires. Of course, wise players might bind her with a promise to harm no-one once freed and she will then glumly retreat to the high mountains and plot her revenge.

Location Q: The Dark Cistern.

The corridor opens out into a vast cavernous space. Cyclopean columns hold aloft the roof, their capitals lost in the gloomy shadows that cloak the ceiling. The floor of the room drops away to a vast subterranean lake; the dark waters reflecting the glow of your lanterns. A rickety looking rowing boat is tied up close by; the bottom of the boat is full of water.

This chamber is a vast cistern that collects rainwater from the mountainside. The Horned King plans to use it to flood the valley below his hold to keep ‘meddlers’ away. Like everything in the dungeon, this makes little sense and is part of the illogical nature of the dreams that created everything here.

The cistern is about 15 feet deep. Inhabiting the watery depths are 3 hideous giant eels (15). If the PCs row out into the cistern the eels will lie in wait and attack when the boat is out in the middle. Because they are in water, any attacks against the eels generate only half the normal combat total, though missile weapons, spears and magic function normally. The eels will ram and attempt to sink the boat, hoping that their heavy armour will carry the PCs to the bottom, where the dread aquatics can feast on their dead flesh. The boat has 100 CON points; the eels first attack the boat and do damage until it is sunk. At this point anyone in the water must swim to shore, requiring a swim roll as follows:

No armor - L1SR vs STR or DEX

Leather - L3SR vs STR or DEX
Chain/Scale - L5SR vs STR
Plate Armor - L7SR vs STR

Failure means the PC has sunk and must be rescued. Any PC submerged must make a L4SR vs CON each turn or suffer 3D6 damage. The eels will be attacking all the while and will get a free turn of attacks once the PCs are in the water. Swimming to shore will take one full combat turn.

PCs can row from the middle of the cistern to the other side in one combat turn but the person rowing contributes nothing to the combat total. Close to the walls of the cistern, the water is only 2-3 feet deep and the boat cannot be sunk.

Giant Eels (3): MR 70. Spite damage is normal.

There is another sunken boat close to the dead-end tunnel in the southwest corner of the cistern. It contains a chest with 500 gp inside and a magical jewelled dagger that can levitate and attack once commanded to do so (5D+3). Anyone possessing this dagger will be the focus of attacks by the Bacchae in **Location M**, since these creatures believe the dagger belongs to them.

Location R: The Prison Chamber.

The floor of this vast circular chamber comes to an abrupt end, as a yawning chasm opens out before you. On another shelf of rock across the gap from you huddle the three remaining shepherds you were sent to rescue. They call out and cheer at your approach, begging you for aid. Their voices echo round the chamber as you stare at the bottomless pit and wonder how to cross.

The PCs must find some way to get the shepherds over the gap. If the PCs have rope, they could rig up a pulley or else any wizards in the party might fly across. If they didn't release her before, the Ice Queen could have them throw buckets of water from the cistern across the gap then freeze them into a bridge of ice; as long as they promise to free her.

Endgame

Once the shepherds are returned to Lanoc, Lord Torgan will pay the PCs any price he agreed. If all the shepherds are rescued, the PCs get 400 AP. Of course the Horned King is still at large and angry at the intrusion into his domain.



Aadulf's Letter

Awakenings

Dragon

I write this in the tenth year of the reign of Lord Cadarn of the Igne Isles, some two hundred and twelve years since the death of the last High King. Though I am old and withered now, I am a wizard and I have set my name upon this missive, that you might know the truth of my words.

I write to warn you of a deadly peril, that I fear you will dismiss as just a gleeman's tale. Yet I lived through the days in which my story is set, so heed me Lord of Karnsfjord or the evil of which I speak shall take shape again.

I was a boy when it began; a simple fool of a shepherd. In those far off days, the Yarland vale was a place of peace and prosperity. I lived high on the mountainside in the green of summer with my flock and then descended to the valley floor with my animals before winter seized the fells in its icy grasp.

I was lazy and so cock-sure that I blush to think of it now, but as you shall see, my folly plays no small part in this sad story. That time was an age of digging and even as I roamed the fells, miners toiled below my feet in great subterranean galleries, wresting copper, tin and silver from the roots of the brooding hills. Black-faced men then smelled these precious ores by the scarlet glow of hellish foundries, covering the valley in a pall of dark wood-smoke.

At first, the Lord of Yarland sent his ingots southwards to the other petty-kingsdoms, using the ancient Lakeland trading route, either by teams of pack-mules or else by sleek oared trading craft.

In time, craftsmen came to live in the vale and began fashioning beautiful heirlooms and treasures from these hard-won metals, enriching the Lord of Yarland. By the time I was old enough to roam the fells, our land had grown wealthy. Indeed, many a dragon-prowed ship plied the Lakeland route all the way to the distant sea, bringing salt, spices and wood to our land and bearing away great cargoes of metal ingots, cunningly wrought tools and blades or slate quarried from the hills.

My master seemed satisfied with this tale and we journeyed swiftly on, for he sought the ear of Lord Yarland. It was on the very day I entered the town of Urfgarh with my master that the first of the stones was unearthed, though none knew then what terrible banes these things might be; but I am getting ahead of myself, like the old greybeard I have become. Let me tell you of the scene when I first beheld those evil things: I was in Lord Yarland's chamber and scarce fifteen years old, head bowed whilst my master introduced himself. It was then that head of the miners guild brought in the first of those dread stones; its surface gleaming like polished metal. We later discovered that neither the hottest forge nor the heaviest hammer could blemish that sheen.

My master was troubled by these stones and spoke of something his master had once told him. He sent me on an errand to the gates of Morrendee, high in the fells, there to look for lore about these stones. For the Dwarf-folk, who lived in that city in those days, were mighty in the knowledge of all that lies buried in the earth. Yet my master should never have trusted me, for I was an idle fool and gave little of my attention to searching through dusty tomes when there was an underground Kingdom to see. I spent my days wandering those halls when I would have served all far better had I done as my master had bade me and done some reading, but I knew not the future then.

I fraded home after a week, practising the lies I would tell my master about my vain search. I was not the first to see the monstrous things on leafy wings, roosting in the high crags and preying on sheep or goats, for I heard a rumour amongst the shepherd folk as I travelled to Morrendee. In my youthful arrogance, I gave it little credence, for I had never seen such a thing and yet had spent most of my days up in those mountain meadows. It was only when a great shadow fell across me and took a yearling foal scarce a yard in front of me, that I believed. I fled as fast as my young legs could carry me and so word of these beasts came to Urfgarh and my mission to Morrendee was forgotten.

Ships would dock at the rocky lakeland Isle of Urfgarh where buildings of rain-washed slate nestled in the shadow of an ancient Broch or tower. There the Varland Lord held his court surrounded by lichen covered dry stone walls that grained narrow lanes and hedged in tiny market squares in the town below. Even mages from the hills came down to take counsel with my Lord of Varland, for they thought him likely to raise a new Kingdom that would unite all the lands of the north again, and so it should have been. More than one of these mages aided in the forging of things that were eldritch, some of which bore names that are still remembered today.

By the hand of a Wizard is how I enter this sorry tale, for one day such a mage was travelling across the fells, journeying to speak with Varlands master. He chanced upon me sleeping under a dry-stone wall when I should have been watching my flock. He bade me to travel with him without any explanation, taking me back to my parents. It was enough when they saw he had set his name upon me, declaring that I was to be his apprentice without any need for words. This was the first inkling I had of his power for his garb was ragged and I had mistaken him for some penniless vagabond, but such was the mantle of all mages in those days.

As my master and I journeyed to Urfgarh through the uplands, he asked me where I had learned to read. I was much amazed for I had told him nothing of my gift but answered him with the story of my Fathers father, who had been a Waysider, charged with keeping the Kings Roads safe, but was a greybeard by the time I was born. He had known many tongues, both spoken and written, and he had taught me much in the days when I was ill, for I had been a sickly child till I was nigh on ten years old. Indeed I even knew the tongue of the Dwarves for my grandfather had often trafficked with these mountain-folk, though I thought they were just a tale he invented for my amusement. He had schooled me in this speech as a secret language we used to fox my Mother, who also knew the craft of the written word, but only in the common language of the vale.

Within a year these winged horrors had grown bolder and began attacking men and slaying those brave warriors foolish enough to seek to bring them to battle. Even ships were not safe and the lakeland trade slackened as the winged monsters multiplied and brought rain to any out on the open water. My master fought and defeated a dozen of them but always there seemed more to take their place and he and the other mages were driven back. Many of these other wizards lost heart then and they began leaving, stealing rowing boats at dusk to leave the isle, then vanishing into the wooded hills whence they came.

Later, the rumour of a Horned King drifted out of the surrounding valleys. This creature it was said, claimed dominion over all the mountains, yet even the long-lived Dwarf-folk had never heard of him and their memories stretched back to before the great flood. At night this dark lord rode at the head of a savage horned horde that ravaged the Varland vale, burning farms and slaying all that they found within. Other tales whispered of a black Iron Gate that had appeared in the side of the ancient mountain of Blencara at the head of the vale; a gate where there was none just the day before. The horned horde would burst forth from these gates each night to wreak havoc in Varland, whilst the Lord of Urfgarh stood powerless to stop them. The winged horrors from the crags also seemed to answer the Horned Kings call for they guarded the approaches to his Iron Gates. Indeed those warriors brave enough to leave the safety of Urfgarh were torn to pieces ere they ever reached the fabled gates set high above the valley floor.

Within two years all the foundries and forges of Urfgarh were silent and the streets lay abandoned, as craftsmen and warriors fled the doomed realm for safer and more distant vales. The Lord of Varland then girded himself for war and determined to bring the Horned King to battle. He gathered the last remnant of his host about him and rode forth to the head of the vale to throw down his challenge to the guardians of the Black Gates. My master tried to dissuade him, but he was in no mood to listen. The fate of the Lord Varland and his men is not remembered for no word of them ever came back to us in Urfgarh.

So my master sent word into the hills and bade the last remaining shepherds and crofters, including my own family, to pack up their belongings and flee the valley. Even the dwarf-folk shut fast the gates of Morrendeep and withdrew deep into the earth. No human dared walk the silent vale of Varland for many a long year after that save only the Waysiders. The other Jukeland Realms readied themselves for war with this new danger, yet none ever came south.

A hundred years and more have passed since the days of Varlands glory and her fall. I have lived all those long years, sustained by the craft I learned from my master. I never discovered if those stones I saw on my first day in Urfgarth were truly the reason for Varlands end, but after my master died fighting the monsters of the vale, I journeyed to the great library of Karseford, in the days before the Blae-folk burned it to ashes. There in the dusty vaults of that once great monastery was a book of Dwarfish history that gave me pause; a tale of stones that could give form to the dreams of sleeping men. These fell Dreamstones caused the fall of many an ancient Kingdom and so why not Varland I wept as I read this, since I knew then how much all had paid for my youthful folly. Had we known the danger in the week when I was sent to Morrendeep then we might have sealed the stones back under the earth where they belong. I can only ask the shade of my master and of all those who died for forgiveness.

Now that the Horned King and his dread forces are just a memory, men have started again to enter the Varland vale. At first only the masters of pack mules, trying to find a swifter way south from mines deep in the hills, would hazard this ill-favored road. They would drive their animals through the vale of Varland as if the horned horde themselves were after them, yet no sign of evil did they see save only the ruins of Urfgarth and the blackened shells of old crofts. None dared tarry after dark but it seemed as if the shadow that had overtaken my old home had withdrawn. Soon word of this spread and freebooters began to enter the valley, drawn by tales of silver hoards hidden in the hills by those who fled so long ago.

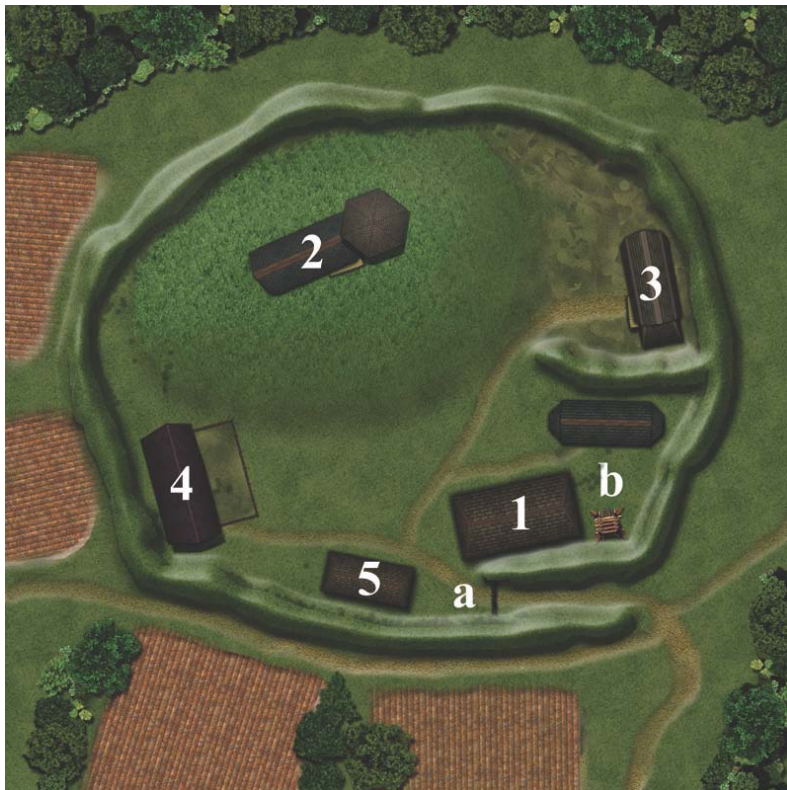
Yet if I am right and those stones I saw were the Dreamstones of old, then the peril of my old home is not passed. Even the span of a century cannot unmake the power of those dread things; to bring forth the horrors hidden in the minds of sleeping men and make of them real creatures that can walk under the sun. If my fear is real then the Horned King his winged servants were conjured out of nightmares and this is why they vanished when the last men left the valley; without a human mind, full of fear to give them life, the stones and all their creations fell into nothingness or else to slumber.

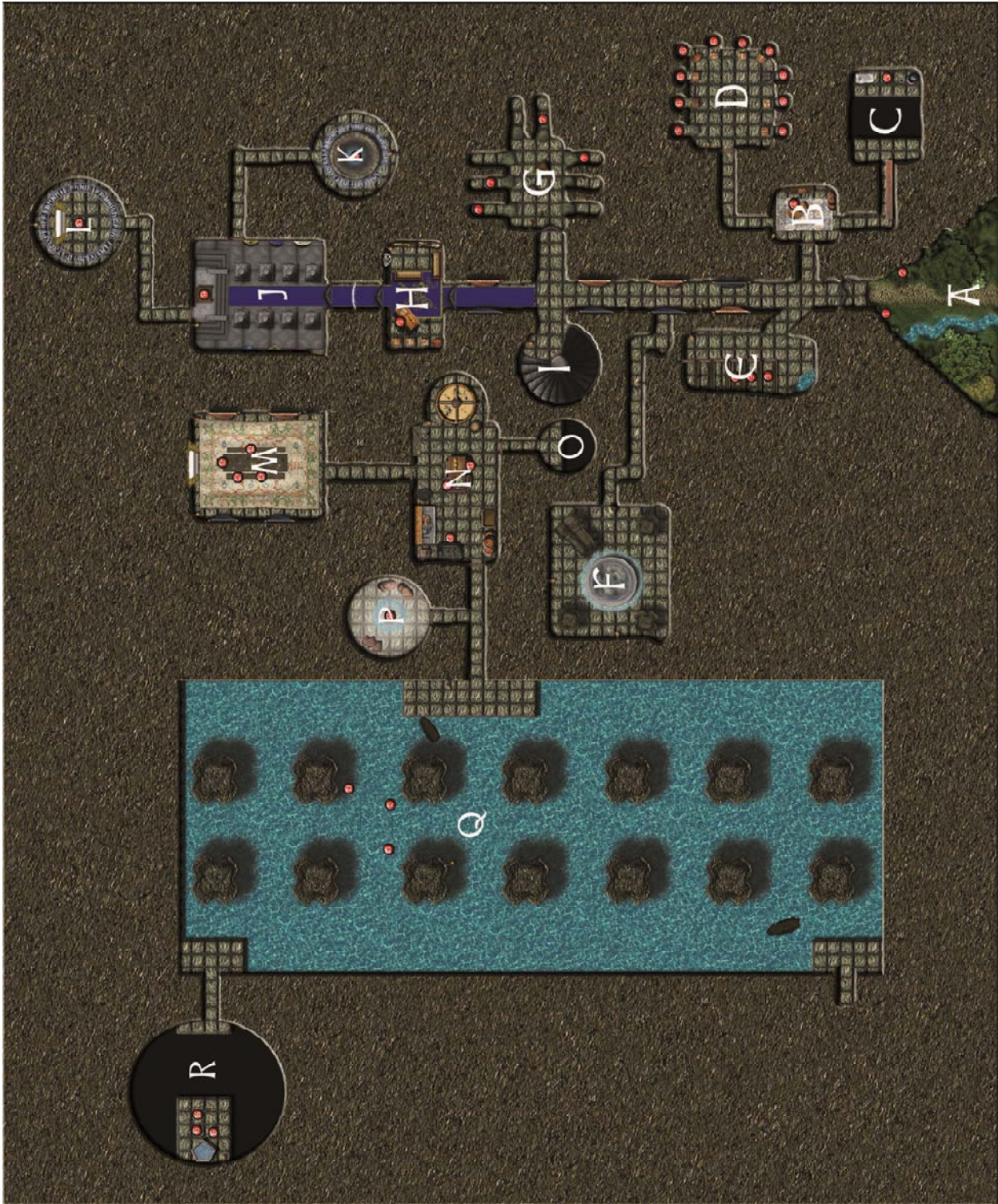
I fear that all they wait for are more foolish men to sleep within the shadow of Blencara and then shall the stones and their terrible power reawaken and the horned horde shall once more stalk the vales of the mountain realm. And if some fool should carry away one of the stones, then walking nightmares shall visit the other Jukeland realms, to the ruin of all. So I beseech you my lord Karnsford, please bar the way and let none enter the Varland vale. Your realm now stretches almost to the southern limits of the old lands of my people. You have the power to stop this before it begins anew. I beg you to end this before all the lands fall.

Yours

Adalt of Varland







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