

CASLES[®] & CRUSADES[®]

DWARVEN GLORY III THE WINDING STAIR



Peter Bradley 2006

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CAPE OF NEWHOPE

BARRIER ISLAND



AAGER BANKS

DWARVEN GLORY III – THE WINDING STAIR

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The author designed Winding Stair for use with the Castles & Crusades® Role Playing Game for 3-5 characters of 3rd level.



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DWARVEN GLORY III

THE WINDING STAIR

Dwarven Glory is a series of fast play adventure stories. Each of the adventures is playable as a one shot scenario. Dwarven Glory takes place in the world of Aihrde (Erde, Earth, etc), in the southern Rhodope Mountains, the Smoking Giants, specifically within the edge of the Darkenfold forest. These mountains lie on the far western edges of the world map as supplied by Troll Lord Games. Usage of Dwarven Glory in other settings or transplanted anywhere in Aihrde is as easy as finding an old mountain chain on your map.

The Winding Stair is a short dungeon adventure. The characters find themselves wandering along a narrow path in the mountains. It winds its way through treacherous country, with steep cliffs above and below. A sudden squall picks up, battering the characters with rain/snow; the storm drives them forward until they find a small alcove in the rock. While sheltering there, they discover a door. Opening it reveals a dungeon that offers warmth and shelter as well as adventure. Within are rooms to explore a trap, some monsters that linger still; but also the ghost of a fallen dwarven hero, Bael. Bael cannot directly aid the characters but attempts to “join” whosoever picks up his precious axe.

VOCABULARY

UTHLIN N: This dwarven word defies translation into the vulgate tongues. Uthlin is a type of metal woven into thin strands like cloth. It is very pliable, though not very strong. Wealthy dwarves use Uthlin to lace the pommels of their weapons, mark runes, woven as a fabric, etc.

INTRODUCTION

In the far west, upon the slopes of the Umhart Mountains lie the ancient remains of a once great dwarven civilization. In those far-flung days, the Kingdom of Grausumhart echoed the greatest of dwarven glories. Her people were strong and built many fair cities and towns upon the slopes of the mountains; they colonized much of the world’s mountains to their east and south, coming even to the edges of the lands of Ursal, where lie the Rhodope Mountains, the Smoking Giants. They worked with natural stone and woods imported from the lands of the Muen in their building and even their works mirrored the thoughts of the All Father as they sought to mimic his skills. So in time, their cities and towns were marvels; wondrous facades of stonework, walls, towers, and bastions standing as strong guardians for the sumptuous palaces, courtyards, temples and sprawling homes that rose from the mountains’ heights. Their buildings grew ever larger until the greatest dome was peaked with a high point as a finger made to reach for the heavens. They built beneath the ground as well, tunneling great caverns where they captured water and built underground worlds of atriums, huge galleries, grottos and the like. They prospered for two thousand years, ruled by the Uthkin Kings.

They were a prosperous and powerful folk, but the price of their glory in time became greater than they could bear. Grausumhart eventually succumbed to the weight of the world and fell into ruin. Her proud towers and walls fell to war or neglect. Her cities

and towns dwindled. Her underground grottos flooded, left foul and dank. The greater parts of her people were slain or scattered.

Those golden days, mired as they are in the depths of time, are but echoes heard now by few and remembered by only the oldest and most learned of the lore drakes. Grausumhart’s cities have all but vanished from the face of Aihrde; only ruins remain, and even these have become as much a part of those ancient mountains as the stone and are faded now, as is much of the Dwarven Glory.

FOR THE CASTLE KEEPER

The dwarves dwelt in the environs of the Rhodope Mountains for many long centuries. They built roads over and through them, bridged the gaps between wide cliffs with stone causeways, they built towers and bastions upon their slopes; they tunneled beneath them, building dungeons and holds to guard against both the weather and the wild monsters of those long ago days. The dwarves left their mark everywhere. But the Rhodope Mountains remained upon the edge of their world. There were no dwarven kingdoms here, only outposts. And these mountains proved dangerous for the smoke and ash that belched from them from time to time could devastate whole regions. So, though the mountains played host to the dwarves, those bearded folk never conquered them and the Smoking Giants became a wild place for dwarves of all calibers to live in peace and quiet if they so chose. For the Giants stretch to the heavens, possess many deep ravines and tall crags offering – those who seek them – plenty of room to hide.

So it was that long ago a dwarf lord by the name of Bael came to the Smoking Giants. He brought with him a small troop of dwarves, heavily armed and armored. He sought to escape the intrigues of the Uthkin court and build for himself a home, far removed from the babble squalor that are the halls of government. He carried into those mountains a great axe, an heirloom of sorts, given to him during one of his many adventures, by one of the Val-Eahrakun, long ago. Crafted in the depths of the Void the axe was possessed of an amazing power; when held by the righteous for the oppressed it could see into men’s souls and read their thoughts. Bael loved this axe and cherished it; but he feared it too, he feared that if it fell into the wrong hands that some would bend its power and use it for ill intent. Bael came to the mountains to build a fastness where he could live in peace and guard his axe from the prying eyes of those who did not deserve to wield it.

Upon the slopes of a tall mountain he found a narrow cave that wound down into the earth. He hollowed the tunnel and made a passageway and stairs. These led to the natural caverns beyond below. These he turned into his quarters; built a feast hall and barracks; a room for his hounds, storage chambers and the like. In time he built a door that led to a stone wall. This door he ensorcelled so that when it opened it opened into the Void. His magic was subtle and used the runes that later men would call the Winter Runes; these were not uncommon in Bael’s long ago day. The door he opened and beyond it he built a stair that led high into the Great Empty. Where the stair

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ended, he built a room and more chambers beside and in the final he built a platform. He sought to hide the Axe.

He built a pool of water and cast more spells of misdirection and protection upon the water. The axe, and his other treasures he laid beneath the water in the pool. Safe from prying eyes, he settled into his life's retirement.

But the Void is a hollow place and his sorcery brought his tragedy. It came to pass that a creature from the Void, one of the Ordag, found his treasury and sought to make it her own. When he discovered her, he called his men and they battled in the dark platform around the pool. He died there, as did all his folk, and the Ordag took possession of his halls. Her power, however, was limited for she could never match the sorcery of the inner door and she remained in the Void where the pool lay, dining on the eternity of her greed.

The halls fell into disuse and in time they were forgotten as was Bael and his axe. But Bael's soul lingered there in the world of the living tormented by the Ordag all these long years.

CK NOTE: The dungeon itself is cold, covered in thick layers of undisturbed dust. Anyone who passes through the upper rooms, 1-10, hears the occasional, if very distant, baying of a dog in misery. The baying comes from the shadow mastiff in room 5 (see below).

Each room is cut by a long trough that runs the length of the center of the room. It is about 8 inches wide and 4 inches deep. By placing hot coals from the kitchen's fire pit in the trough the dwarves were able to heat their rooms.

THE WINDING STAIR

The path leads up through the mountains. It is long and narrow. It winds around the mid section of a huge mountain. The southern edge of the path, overlooking the forest below, is a 100 foot cliff. At the base of the cliff are tumbled boulders, rocks, sand, gravel and other debris. A few shrubs and bushes cling to the mountain face here and there. The northern edge of the path is the mountain itself. The huge stone edifice juts out over the path at a height of about 5 feet and then climbs up an over for hundreds of feet to the peak. The path is narrow, only allowing one person abreast. Anyone walking along it must bend forward to avoid hitting their head, or lean out over the cliff just a little.

A southerly wind whips along the mountain, around it and howls down the path almost continuously.

The only break in the path lies about a mile or so from its beginning. Here the path opens into a ledge and small landing. The rocky wall flattens a bit, making a strange door shaped alcove in the otherwise rocky face. The area is open and a comfortable resting place out of the wind. About six people can crowd into the space comfortably if a bit close.

The door stood for centuries hidden from by prying eyes by various sorceries but those have long since faded and the power of them broken. A close observation of the wall reveals a number of dwarven runes on the wall/door and the faint signs of a door frame. There is a hidden latch next to the door (CL 3) that once triggered opens the door. Similarly any spell such as *knock* opens the door.

1 ENTRANCE

The door gives way to a 10 x 10 foot room. This ceiling here is low, only 5 feet tall. The stone work is old and shows signs of decay, mostly from moisture and mold. Another door across the way is made of iron and bound to the wall. It opens toward the stairs. It has runes written on it: "The House of Bael".

This door is not locked. The Ordag's attack on the dwarves came very suddenly and the guards posted here left their post to defend the inner keep.

There is nothing of value in the room.

2 STAIRWAY

Beyond the second door lies a narrow tunnel carved through the rock. Flagstones line the floor and blocks of stone serve as walls and cover the arched ceiling. There is a double archway every 20 feet made of solid granite.

This corridor served as an entry bar to the House of Bael, forcing any would be invader to fight in the narrow passage against the heavily armored dwarves. Now of course it is abandoned and empty.

There is a trap set upon the second archway however; anyone passing through under it triggers a guillotine-like blade to fall down on them. There is little chance to casually spot the blade as its designers hid it carefully between the double façade of stone. However, as the blade descends it makes a slight scraping noise alerting those below that something is coming. A successful dexterity check avoids the falling blade entirely and all damage. Failing the dexterity save the victim is struck. The Castle Keeper must make a "to hit" roll. The blade swings as a 4 HD monster. A successful hit and the victim suffer 1-20 points of damage. Characters may attempt to disarm the trap (CL 4).

The blade is tall and affectively blocks 50% of the tunnel, making passage over it difficult.

3 ENTRY HALL & WELL

This large chamber served as a greeting hall for visitors. A statue of the All Father dominates the room, set in a pool of cool water.

The door gives way with a groan and a light spills into the room, chasing away ancient shadows. The grim visage of an elderly man, bearded and naked, a long scepter in his hand greets your entry. It takes only a moment for you to realize that it is a statue, sitting upon a throne of stone.

The Entry Hall has several benches lining the walls. These are stone benches, made as part of the wall itself and cannot be removed or moved. Geometric patterns cover the walls. The remnants of some wooden furniture stand overturned in the middle of the room, so decayed that touching it turn is to splinters. The statue in the middle of the room is set upon a throne, sitting in a kingly fashion, looking at the door. He holds a scepter, also of stone, in his right hand; his left is on his knee. The throne itself sets in a pool of water several feet deep, fed from an underground spring.

There is nothing of value in the room. The water is cool and refreshing, very drinkable.

No obvious exit greets the entrants; however, there are two secret doors in the room. A detailed look along the walls may reveal a door frame cut into the south-west corner of the room (DC 3). Once they find the door the latch is easy to see. The other secret door is well concealed (DC 10), designed to open only from room 5. If by some lucky stroke someone discovers the secret door, it will not open for them. This door was designed by the dwarves to use when intruders came into the Entry Hall, so that they could attack them from both directions.

There are several small openings in the back wall, wide at the opening but that narrow to small points. Anyone vaguely experienced with siege works recognizes these as arrow slits. They were used by the dwarves to shoot at anyone in the Entry Hall from the hall way.

4 CLOAK ROOM

This room is empty, though stone pegs line the walls. A few old satchels and straps hang from them. They are covered in dust and webbing. A look within them reveals very old personal items such as combs, food stuffs, flask, etc. There is nothing of value here and the door to the hall way is open.

5 KENNELS

This simple room held the dogs that the dwarves used in battle and hunting. There are 12 cages, stacked on top of one another on the north wall. These cages have iron water and food bowls in them. The bones of dogs lie upon the floor of several of the cages. The animals starved to death when the dungeon fell to the Ordag. However, the evil of the creature has permeated the place and the dog's slow death turned into a vicious rage that the evil consumed, morphing into a shadow creature that lingered in the deeps, locked in the room.

As soon as the door opens the beast snarls, bays loudly and leaps at the characters. He knocks them down in a mad rush to break free from the room, running amok in the dungeon, barking, baying, and howling. Eventually, he comes back to the characters to kill them.

NOTE: the mastiff is a perfect wandering monster that the enterprising CK might use later in the adventure to spur the characters on or weaken them or even attack them after the final encounter with the Ordag.

SHADOW MASTIFF (*This neutral evil creature's vital stats are HD 4d8, HP 23, AC 14. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with a single bite for 2d4 points of damage. They are able to blend with darkness, have a bay attack that can cause fear for those who fail their save, as well as trip their opponents. They have darkvision 60 feet.*)

6 BARRACKS

The door to this room is closed but unlocked; the second door that leads deeper into the dungeon is open.

This large room served the inhabitants as an armory, barracks, and a practice yard. The walls here are slightly higher than

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the rest of the dungeon, ranging about 10 feet high. Upon the ceiling are 7 stone bed frames, evenly placed. Another 3 bed frames hang on chains from the ceiling; each with 4 chains that vanish into small holes above. These are the beds of the dwarves; they could raise or lower them as needed. A pulley system connects the chains to the bed frames through the ceiling and wall that allows the user to lower them to the floor or raise them up again. The turn wheel for each is located on the wall, even to where it lowers. The beds were raised when not in use, allowing the hall to serve as a practice yard.

Weapon racks line the walls of the room; many of them still holding the weapons of old. There are helms, shields, suits of armor; swords, axes, pole-arms, maces, crossbows, javelins and spears. There are many gaps in the racks however, and some are laying on the floor as if whoever lived here gathered their weapons in a hurry.

Each of the beds has a closed trunk built into the frame. This trunk, only 2' by 18" served the dwarves' personal storage needs. All of them are locked. If the characters open them they discover any number of personal items and some wealth. In each of them are the following items: comb, iron battle braids (for binding beards in battle), spoon, whetstone, flint & steel, various pieces of clothing, socks and the like. Five of them contain pouches with 2d12gp in them. The gold is ancient, worth 4 times the value to an antiques dealer in any metropolitan area. One of them has a *luckstone* in it and another has 2 *cure light wounds* potions in small flasks, and a *protection from evil* potion.

7 GUARD ROOM

This very simple room is a watch room for the Entry Hall. A door, clearly visible stands in the south-west corner of the room (this is the secret door that only opens in). A latch allows easy entry. The room has a thin wall that allows sound from the Entry Hall to carry through and 2 elaborate peep holes and one arrow slit.

There is nothing of value or interest in this room.

8 BAE'L'S CHAMBERS

These are Bael's personal chambers. The room is mostly empty but extremely cold, much more so than the rest of the dungeon.

A very austere man, Bael did not decorate his room with lavish accoutrements. At the far end of the room is a stone bench that served as his bed. Upon it are several thick blankets and a coarse pillow. These are wonderfully made, though not magical. Though they have withstood the test of time any extensive use of them destroys them. Along one wall stands a dwarf sized mannequin, obviously designed to hold armor and weapons.

Two stone stools sit next to a coal burning stove. A pipe and a chain mail tobacco pouch are lying on top of the stove.

He kept what few personal belongings he had in the Treasure Room (see 14 below).

The room, however, is occupied by the ghost of the Dwarf Lord himself. He lingers in half life, hanging on the edge of the world. He is mad, not knowing whether he is alive or dead and thirsts now only for the hope of reclaiming his axe. As soon as the party

enters the room he sees them and gravitates toward them. He is invisible and unless someone can magically see him they do not at first know he is there. However, the longer they stay in the room the greater chance of detecting him. After 5 rounds everyone in the room must make a wisdom save to see if they detect his form. If they do, it is only with their peripheral vision. As soon as he is noticed, he hurls himself at them. He picks whosoever he discerns might be worthy to pick up his axe. A dwarf is always his first choice, fighters come a quick second. The ghost enters the body of the "victim", merging himself with the victim and then is seen no more.

The Castle Keeper should determine which character is likely to get and use the axe and have Bael merge with that character.

The recipient of the ghost feels strangely renewed, powerful, and less fearful. They see the image of a magical axe and have a longer to hold it. The feelings are also warm and somehow comforting. They do not feel aggrieved in any way, more as if they are doing a service to someone.

The full affects of the ghost are revealed below in **room 14 the Treasure Room**, below.

9 FEAST HALL

The dwarves used this large hall for feasts, celebrations, to entertain guests, play games, etc. One large table dominates the center of the room. The table is stone, and crafted to the floor. The chairs are stone as well. A huge candelabra hangs from the ceiling directly over the table. And a large cupboard, filled with pewter utensils, plates, bowls, and mugs stands in the southwest corner.

A shimmering tapestry covers the whole of the north wall. Upon quick glance, it depicts a dwarf carrying a large axe, leading a troop of inspired dwarves. Before are other dwarves, though these seem somehow corrupted and evil. However, when the viewer moves, the view portrayed changes as well. As you walk down the length of the curtain a story unfolds, changing as if these were pictures on the edges of a paper and the viewer were flipping through them.

The story relates a battle between two factions of dwarves. Through the use of the axe the Dwarf Lord casts down the evil dwarves.

The curtain is made of uthlin steel, and serves to divide the feast hall from a more private area. It is 10 feet high and 50 feet long. It hangs on a bronze pole hanging from the ceiling. The metal itself is almost weightless, the whole curtain piled up weighing little more than 100 pounds. It completely blocks out sound and light once someone is on the other side. Each strand is threaded through the pole. Extracting them all requires hours and hours of work. Though if the curtain is retrieved its value is immense. Dwarves pay huge sums of money for a few square yards of the material, smiths use it to decorate armor and pommels of swords; artists use it to rend their masterpieces. But the material is almost impossible to find as the manners in which people fashioned it were lost long ago. Each square foot is worth about 100gp.

There is no great chair, or separate table, Bael always sat with his men at the table.

10 KITCHEN

The kitchen area is in shambles. The dwarves marshaled in a hurry and left food cooking in the room. The cabinets eventually caught fire and the whole place went up. The door did not burn through before the fire choked out, so the blaze remained within this one room. Everything is burnt or partially burnt.

The room is not unoccupied however, for the damage, wood, old food stuffs when combined with the water from the working well in the room created the perfect conditions for green slime to grow. Several of them have lingered in the room for years, feeding on the moisture that rises from the well. There are three of the patches, all clinging to the ceiling. As soon as anyone enters the room the slime becomes agitated, falling from the ceiling onto the unfortunates below.

GREEN SLIME x 3 (These neutral creature's vital stats are HD 8d8, HP12, 19, 31, AC 10. They have no primary attributes. They do not attack, but only react to being contacted. When touched it converts any organic material into green slime within 1-4 rounds or 10 turns for wood or metal; stone is unaffected. It can be killed by fire, cold, or a cure disease spell.)

There is an iron lock box in the room. It lays hidden under the giant iron stove where the fire originated. Badly burnt and corroded it proves difficult to open (CL 2). Velvet lines the interior of the trunk, giving the treasure within a comfortable bed. There are 10 platinum pieces laying in the box; next to them lies a small *horn of blasting*.

11 THE DOOR

The door here is an open space, without door at all. Looking out one can see an infinite expanse of nothingness, the Void. This realm has neither light nor darkness; it is nothingness, empty and void of all things.

Your light spills down the hallway, warming the flagstones of the floor, following the contours of the walls. The dungeon's shadows flee before you. But where they flee your light does not go. For suddenly your light ends, pooling at the end of the hallway. Just upon the edge of your torch light, there is a doorway. It appears open. Approaching the door an amazing sight greets you; before you, stretched out as far as you can see is a great patch of emptiness. This is the void. Through it, as if set upon nothing, floating in nothing, rises a set of narrow steps. They climb into the emptiness until they vanish from site.

The door overlooks the Void and the stairs are the Winding Stairs, leading up to the Dragon Hall.

12 THE WINDING STAIR

This steps rise for an undetermined distance until they end at the Dragon Hall. There is no time, no distance in the Void, no method of measurement. The stairs go on for a great while. The characters do not feel hunger or thirst, but are vaguely aware of a great gulf between them and the world beyond.

If someone falls off and is unsecured they plummet into nothingness. They do not gain speed but they fall away, drifting off into eternity until they rescued by some magical means.

13 DRAGON HALL

The stairs end abruptly, without warning or site for the characters. They suddenly find themselves standing upon a narrow ledge overlooking the emptiness, and before a door of bronze. The door is large, well worked with runes and glyphs and appears remarkably heavy. It is slightly ajar, opening freely with a simple shove from the interlopers. The runes read "Bael's Hall."

The door opens to a cold room where your breath hangs in the still air. Before your eyes unfolds a waste of such carnage that it numbs your senses. Some power, bending itself in malice has created a room of lavish luxury, of silks and divans, into a room of torture and death. A charnel house stands here now, with the bodies of dwarves strewn about the floor, piteously hacked to pieces, twisted, malformed, strung out all about the room. Here one hangs from the ceiling, there another is torn asunder and more besides. A blinding rage consumes you, an anger you cannot control.

The Ordag met the dwarves here and slaughtered them. All but two fell in this room and she decorated the chambers with the horror of their fall. Bael and one of his men broke through in a hopeless attempt to seize the axe and wield it against her, but they fell in the Treasure room beyond.

There is nothing of value in this room, for the Ordag gathered it all up and carted it into the Treasure Room, where she has made her den.

14 TREASURE ROOM

The door from room 13 opens up and into a large chamber with only a half ceiling. The door stands at the foot of a dais that rises some 15 feet, up at least 30 stairs. The stairs range the full length of the room. Moving up the steps the half ceiling is plain to see, beyond it, there is no vaulted cavern, but rather the Great Empty of the Void. Unlike the Winding Stair this room is cold.

At the top of the dais the floor levels out, and the party sees the pool of water, built upon the edge of the room, upon the very edge of the Void. It was here, so long ago, that Bael hid his axe. And it was here too that Bael died, and with him, his companion, both of whom lie upon the floor, dressed in their full battle armor, helms, and shields. The smaller of the two is impaled on a long spear. The larger, Bael, kneels upon the floor a trail of fresh blood upon the floor next to him. In his hand is a thick-bladed short sword. His helm's visor is down and his long beard protrudes from the helm. Next to him, lying on the flagstones is a large, single bladed axe.

As the characters mount the dais, the water of the pool begins to ripple and the Ordag, a succubus, rises from the water. This creature is very powerful, however, Bael wounded her tremendously, cleaving one of her wings almost in half, destroying her ability to entrance with it.

She will attempt to use her glamour and spells, convincing the characters to take her from the area and back into the world. She uses her glamour and charm abilities. She cannot cross into the void unless summoned or carried through the portal. As soon as the party brings her over, if they are so foolish, she attacks them.

Treasure: The succubus has nothing of her own other than the +3 glaive. But she kept Bael's treasure intact. Within the hold and upon the two dwarves are the following: +2 plate mail, +1 shield, +1 helm, +2 short sword (on Bael); +1 scale and +1 battle axe (on henchman); within the pool there is: 40gp, 120sp in a pouch, a chest of gems, 300 10gp gems, 1 1000gp gem; there is also a scroll of 1-8, 1st level spells and another of 4 2nd level spells, a remove curse potion, a +1 dagger, +1 mace, and the Blood Axe of Bael.

NEW MONSTERS & TREASURE

SUCCUBUS

NO. APPEARING: 1 (1d6)

SIZE: M

HD: 6(d8)

MOVE: 30 ft., 60 ft. (fly)

AC: 18

ATTACKS: 2 claw (1d4), tail (1d2), bite (1), by weapon (+3 to hit and damage)

SPECIAL: Charm, Glamour, Immunity to Elements, Insanity, Sleep, Spell-like Abilities

SAVES: M (in small form), P (in large form)

INT: High

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Evil

TYPE: Demon

TREASURE: 7

XP: 1600+8



6 CASTLES & CRUSADES

The succubus has two forms. In reality, she is a beastly creature, thin, malformed, and possessed of a horrible stench as of rotting fruit. Her face is drawn, narrow, barely containing her humanoid features. Her chest sags in, bones protruding through the thin gossamer of her skin. Beneath her ribs her stomach distends like a horrid pouch, filled with the souls of the unfortunates she has devoured. To most however, she does not seem so horrid, more like a beautiful woman, shapely and perfect. Her long hair covers her shoulders and her form is always caste in folds of silk that tantalize the viewer. In either form she has massive bat like wings, they unfold behind her, spreading out like two massive canopies, black and empty. Her wings are conduits to the outer planes, looking within their black depths are dangerous and many a man has gone mad doing so.

Two motives drive the succubus. She is continually hungry; desiring to eat the souls of humans more than anything else, though dwarves serve her in a pinch. Elves and the other fey hold little interest for her, other than, of course, slaying them. They are driven by a hate as well, for they know their race, spawned in the depths of the abyss, are failed and they long for what they are not, pure and whole. So they hate all things and the fact that they must disguise themselves to interact with other creatures, drives their hate even further.

They are almost always alone, though on occasion they gather in the covers, pressed into service by a more powerful demon or devil, or by one of their own. Wizards at time are able to bind them, but this as is always is a dangerous endeavor, for these creatures are unadulterated evil. Like all of their kind they are not able to forgive, they have no conscience, no feelings, are driven by no motives other than hunger and hate.

COMBAT: The succubus always attempts to charm its victim through its glamour. Casting herself as a beautiful maiden she calls the unfortunate for aid or succor. They travel with the victim if necessary, luring it into a sense of safety before they strike. They attempt to kiss the victim if they can, casting their sleep upon it. In any case they feed on it, slowly if they can, draining its life force. But if pushed into open combat, the succubus fights as a warrior. They always carry a pole-arm of some description, usually a glaive. The glaive is a +3 weapon. When pressed she reveals her true form, dropping the glamour, shifting into that horrible, stench riddled shape.

Glamour: Succubuses can assume the form of a beautiful woman and keep that form indefinitely. If horribly pressed the glamour falls away and the creature's true nature is revealed; spells such as *true seeing* remove the glamour as well. In death the glamour falls away. Succubuses are immune to other form-changing effects unless they wish to be affected.

Immune to Elements: The succubuses are extra-planar creatures that are possessed of natural immunities to the elements. As such all fire and cold based attacks do an automatic half damage.

Insanity: Whenever the succubus first opens her wings anyone viewing her from the front must make a successful wisdom save or the hypnotic patterns of darkness immobilize them. The wing's effects act in all manner as a *hold person* spell. The victim must make a saving throw each round. If they fail four consecutive saving throws they suffer a mental lapse and lose their minds, becoming insane, collapsing to the ground, wailing, and weeping.

Only a *remove curse* can bring them back. The succubus mostly keeps her wings spread, and the victim must maintain a clear line of site to the wings. Thrusting a shield, or any similar item, between the victim and the wings breaks the wing's effects.

Sleep: If a succubus is able to kiss its victim on the lips the victim must make a successful charisma save or fall into a deep sleep. They cannot be woken from this sleep by ordinary means; rather a *dispel magic*, *remove curse*, *heal* or other similar spell must be applied.

Spell-Like Abilities: *Charm person* (3/day), *emotion* (1/day), *hallucinatory terrain* (3/day), *hypnotic pattern* (1/day), and *tongue* (permanent). She casts as a 10th level caster.

IN AIHRDE

Created in the great empty in the All Father's youth these creatures proved displeasing to him for their minds were twisted and he cast them off into the void. There they dwelt in a vast ball of writhing wings and limbs, clinging to one another in hatred and spite, hungry and desperate. When the world came to be they lingered on the edge of the Great Empty, filled with envy. Some slipped through, others were summoned; others refused and fought the calling of the magi. When Unklar came to rule and built the Winter's Dark he called upon the succubus to join him in Aufstrag. Some attempted to lure him into their own evil and he cast them aside and through them all out, slaying them where he could find them. The rest fled from his wrath, some lingering in the Void, others entering the abyss of the Shadow Realms.

The succubuses are very intelligent and they share collective memories, each one experiences the triumphs and the failings of their sisters. So they all, as a group, long for life in the world, for there they see plenty of food and an almost infinite supply of victims to torture.

It is said that it was a succubus that seduced Kain the Godless in the Age of the Sorcerers; also it is known to the learned that the same creature seduced Luther the Dreaming Knight and that unholy union begat his son Morgeld the Black Prince.

The Blood Axe of Bael: This axe predates much of recorded history. Forged in the deeps of Glausumhart the axe came into the possession of the Dwarf Lord Bael. He carried it with him into the mountains where it was lost to history.

The axe is able, when wielded by a lawful or chaotic good creature, to give the wielder the detect surface thoughts ability, knowing the minds of men. It is most useful in battle, determining when an army is ready to flee or fight. Since the death of Bael, his spirit possessed the axe and when used by a good aligned creature it is able to resurrect that creature once a week. If the wielder is struck dead, any number below -10, the axe infuses them with a sense of life and they are come back to life. The wielder must roll a d20, adding the result to their present hit points, even if negative. For example: Stark has been knocked to -12 hit points by a massive blow to the chest. The axe takes control and he rolls a d20 with a result of 14. In the following round Stark lurches back to life with 2 hit points. If the result of the d20 does not bring them back to life, then they remain at their hit points, negative or dead.

