

The Domesday Book

**The Official
C&C Society Rolls!**
Stand Up and Be Recognized!

Under the Looking Glass

Game Reviews:
Iron Crown's Rolemaster Express!
TLG's After Winter's Dark Folio
TLG's Engineering Dungeons

The Secret of Red Rock Hill

A Labyrinth Lord
One Shot Adventure

Dealing With Dragons

The Cheat
Slaying the Green Dragon

The Muse's Market!

The Garden of Edronne
Lost Valley: Ruins of Karramere
New Monsters for C&C!

Bard Murmurs

The campaign log continues for
DCC#17!

The Shaman!

A New C&C Class

Much More Inside!



Domesday Book

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Welcome to the Castles & Crusades Society!

What exactly is the Society, you ask? First off, the C&C Society is NOT exclusively dedicated to the RPG known as Castles & Crusades (c), rather that game was created and produced out of respect and honor for the traditions and name of the original Castles & Crusades Society as it existed several decades ago.

The original C&C Society was founded as a chapter of the International Federation of Wargamers in 1968 by E. Gary Gygax, and it was the society which began publishing a newsletter known as *The Domesday Book*, with a very small circulation but with enormous impact. It was this society that first published the miniatures rules that would become "Chainmail," and the first map of the legendary Blackmoor. From these, the genre of RPGs and "Dungeons & Dragons" in particular would emerge.

The Castles & Crusades Society today was given rebirth as Gary Gygax began to work with Troll Lord Games, and the Society was reestablished, first being used to help support the development of the game system that also honors the name "Castles & Crusades." But the intentions of the Society are much greater!

For we exist to bring together gamers from all corners, who are dedicated to RPG and non-RPG gaming. We welcome all who view this hobby with the love that Gary brought to the table so many thousands of times over the course of his life, and we humbly dedicate this endeavor to his memory!

So what will you find here and as a member of the C&C Society? A community of gamers who wish to share their passions both as fans and as creators themselves of art, adventures and all manner of gaming exploits. You will find those who are already published, those who seek to contribute, and those who merely play and wish to share their experiences. All are called to this Crusade, in the poetry of Medieval fashion!

While principally focused on Fantasy and classic Medieval RPGs and wargaming, the Society is open to all who enjoy every genre, every system. Our forums do not forbid discussion of any differing views on games and gaming philosophy, only that people be respectful of difference. All you have to do is click on the forum links on this page to go there!

The Society is also dedicated to presenting, once again, *The Domesday Book*, a fan-produced newsletter with reviews, articles, art and material to supplement our gaming community. We are also gaining more and more permissions to publish fan work from a variety of companies, and invite fans of a wide variety of systems and rules to submit. *The Domesday Book* is a Quarterly production of the Society, in pdf form from this site. Past issues are already posted on the site navigation bar above.

The Society will also offer members benefits, a few of which are already in place, with more to come. The Society will sponsor contests, and, with hope and a little work, some regional events and gatherings in the future.

The Horn Blasts



Society Proclamation

Greetings to the lords, ladies, and knights of the Society.

Dark clouds have been gathering over the horizon and emotions are turning towards despair at an uncertain future. The high council of the society makes the following declaration:

With great concern, we would like to remind all members that the society was built upon the ideals of unity for all who enjoy our hobby. The preservation of this ideal is our primary goal. When this is securely in place, we are given a strong, resounding voice as well as recognition throughout these realms. Together we stand as one.

Recently, cracks have appeared in our facade. Tensions have begun to run high with strife starting to rear it's ugly head. These things threaten to crush the founding principle of the society. In order to best weather the storm ahead, we urge you to let reason be your guide. May respect and courtesy be evident in all your dialogs and allow us all to remain true to the ambitions of our founders. May polite discussion and debate overrule speculation and the feeling of hopelessness that, so far has resulted in mudslinging and name-calling.

Only time will tell what is coming but thoughtfulness and calm action is what will see us through.

Sincerely,

Robert "Serleran" Doyel
John "Sir Seskis" Wright
Kevin "Cuchulain" Morton
Josh "Julian Grimm" Sherrer
Les "Lurker" Rouell
Derrick "Omote" Landwehr
Eric "Piperdog" Piper
Pat "Moriarty777" Bellevance
Chris "Dachda" Dawson



The Chivalry of the Castles & Crusades Society

As maintained by the Sovereign of Arms, here is subscribed the inquisition of lands of the Kingdoms of Ethrum and Aenoch as the Lords of the Tower in service of the King have made inquiry into them; that is to say by the oath the Lords and Tenants, Priests, Priestesses, Sages, Knights and Dames; then what the manor is called, the number of castles held in fief, who holds them and in those instances wherein armorial devices exist are supplied, and whether more can be had than is had; in the time of King Edward the Golden.

The Heraldry of the Castle and Crusade Society

As maintained by the Sovereign of Arms, and recorded in the Domesday book, what follows are the Lords and Ladies of the Kingdoms of Aenoch and Ethrum (or, for the laymen among us, the Membership and Ranks of the Members of the Castles & Crusades Society!)

The Official Castles and Crusades Society Rolls

The Domesday Book

- King Edward the Golden, Duke of Sac
- Coburg the Undying, Lord of the Red Tower (*troll lord*)
- Serleran, Seneschal of the Society (*serleran*)
- The Archbishop Zagyg™ (May his presence continue to enrich us from beyond)
- Lord's Paladins Peter (*gideon thorne*), Madrigar Korde (*breakdaddy*), Jason & Mark
- Marshalls of the Society, Siegfred, Fiffergrund, Finarvyn & Josh
- Lord Ghul, Sage of Yggsburgh, Squire to the Master (*ghul*)
- The Archmagus James (*jamesmward*)
- Balarnega, Grand Vizier of the Invincible Overlord, Marshall of the Wilderlands (*jamesmishler*)

Princes Palatine, who command 17 or greater Knights or Dames

- Duke Omote Landwehr, Prince Palatine of the Holy Order of the FPQ (*Omote*)
- Prince Palatine Gorec, Wizard of the Realm (*Dragonaddy*, *gamedaddy*, *DragonFlame*)

The Dukes, those who command 13-16 Knights or Dames

- Duke Stinger, Lord of the Battlemasters of Nighthammer Keep (*Lord Stinger*)
- Duke Tom Cornelieus (*Expatriorc*)
- Duke Edward Shadoe (*shadoes*)
- The Archbishop Rodney of St. Luther's Basilica (*thegamemaster*)
- Duke Kalimdor of Cresse (*cinderblock*)
- Duke Harold the Mad (*haroldthemad*)

The Margraves, who command 10-12 Knights or Dames

- Margrave Fiffergrund of Shotwick Manor, Marshall of the Society (*Fiffergrund*)
- Sir Dachda McKinty, Margrave and Knight of Portlandia, Leader of the Six (*dachda*)
- Margrave Hedrick Marchborn (*alleynbard*)
- Sir Markus, Margrave of the Frozen Tundra (*yaya*)
- Skathros of the One Horn (*Skathros*)
- Margrave Adaen of Bridgewater (*adaen*)

The Earls, who command 7-9 Knights or Dames

- Earl Siegfred, Marshall of the Society (*Sieg*)
- The Ruby Lord, Earl of the Society (*Treebore*)
- Earl Seskis, Lord of Manitowoc, Leader of the Brotherhood of Botkinburg, Faithful Squire of the Society (*seskis281*)
- Earl Andre (*Spakman*)
- Countess Belinda, the Storm Queen (*Storm Queen*)
- Earl Ruch, Minion of Arioeh (*arioch*)
- Count Rhuveinus, Lord of Castle Frankfort (*Rhuvein*)
- Earl Jarrod, High Paladin of the Order (*AGNKim*, *AGuyNamed(Kim)*)
- Deakin Thunderstruck, Earl, Lord of the White Heron (*deakin*, *thoom*)
- Sir Derriere, Earl of Simians (*buttmonkey*)
- Earl GrayLord (*Imaro*, *Pacalypse*)
- The Wolf Lord, Earl of Fang (*piperdog*)
- Marshall Finarvyn, Earl of Stone Creek (*Finarvyn*)
- Earl Taranthyll (*Taranthyll*)
- Earl Deogolf & The Russet Rangers (*Deogolf*)
- Earl Nahuris (*Nahuris*)
- Earl Alaric Starfire (*K2h2m3*)
- Earl Hywel Peredur (*peredur*)
- Earl Todd of the Knights Festivus (*Mead*)
- The Ambassador of Yott (*Foo*)

The Barons, those who command 4-6 Knights or Dames

- Baron Cuchulain of Temerion (*cuchulainkevin*)
- The 17th Lord (*ssfsx17*)
- Baron Grignak Hammerhand (*Go0gleplex*)
- Baron Joshua Sherrer (*Julian Grimm*)
- Baron Thrain Sturlisson (*csperkins1970*)
- Baron Errolan of the Bickering Cretins (*Galadrin*)
- Baron Dagger Beornhelm (*dagger*)
- Rigon, Baron 'o the Lakelands (*rigon*)
- Baron Jackal, Baron of Greymoor (*jackal*)
- Lord Lamorek Steelguard, Baron of Calx Mons Montis (*keolander*)
- Baron Saemus the Ranger (*gnarley_woodsman*, *Sentinel_Marshall*)
- Baron Moriarty the Red (*moriarty777*)
- Lord Dynel, Baron (*LordDynel*)
- Lord Snaebjorn, Baron of Skogsgardr Keep (*snaebjorn*)
- The Warlock of Id (*Mike Frank*)

- Baron Charles, Captain-General of the Company of the Claymore (*Knight of Gondor*)
- Sheikh Aladar, Baron of the Lost Cause Gaming Fellowship (*aladar*)
- The Grey Lord (*grey lord*)
- Baron Kamadeus the Nightwalker (*daNiceGuy*)
- Aneoth, Baron of Ironwood (*Aneoth*)
- Baron Partial Zudity (*Zudrak*)
- Baron Morbius the Wanderer (*Craig_in_ACT*)
- Baron Lord Phenster, Magi of Duskdale (*Ekimus*)
- Baron Dungeonfish (*dungeonfish*)
- Baron Kristoff Stormdragon, Sword of the West, Captain of the Company of Chaos (*goatface*)
- Baron Ogden Twohorn (*Ogden*)
- Lord Frost, Baron of the Pitt (*Frost, TheBitterFrost*)
- Baron Golden, Knights of the Tin Palace (*GameOgre*)
- Sir Osis of Liver, Baron (*Sir Osis of Liver*)
- Baron Morgrus, The Black Feather (*Morgrus*)
- Baron Hassenpfeffer de Carrot (Jared Piper)
- Katrina, Mistress of Caerwick (Katrina)
- Sir Timothy, Master of the Tuesday Knights (*Acrobatic Flea*)
- Sir Torgaddon (*calico_jack73*)
- Baron Tronikus the Abated Knight (*Tron*)
- Baron Sythorn (*Sythorn*)

Lords, Ladies and Baronets, *who command 2-3 Knights or Dames*

- Sir Geleg (*geleg*)
- Sir Banagon (*HLHartman*)
- Lord Branstad (*drew*)
- Sir Eric the Red (*Eric the Red, Pantzerblitzer, Irk da Red*)
- Lord Deuce Traveler (*Deuce Traveler*)
- Lord Ganymede of the Wood (Brian Sirnack)
- Lord Balog's son Balog, of the Eastern Horseplains (*Premier, Arrowgrab*)
- Lord Keldar the Outcast (*optimizer*)
- Lord Gladimir (*Barrataria*)
- Lord JediOre (*JediOre*)
- Lord Brandon of the Knights of Nebonia (*AdderMcOne*)
- Lord Araleen (*Farmer*)

Knights or Dames of the Realm, *who are unattached or hold a single fief of the realm to themselves*

- Josh of Chewning, Marshall of the Society (*cheepives*)
- Mitherkinseric the Mage (*junger*)
- Sir Niddle the Pious (*SaintNiddle*)
- Sir Lurker (*lurker*)
- Sir Traveller, Lord of the Scarlet Lettered Simians (*Traveller*)
- Sir Coleston the Cavalier, (*Coleston the Cavalier*)
- Priestess Bah-Rah, Cleric of Daladon, Brotherhood of the Blacktooth (*flippy hammerhand*)
- Sir Wodwo of the Green, Lord of the Wilds (*thegreenman*)
- Sir Hengest the Oathbreaker, Warden of the Western Marches (*DangerDwarf*)
- Sir Kyle of Combat, (*Combat_Kyle*)
- Egg of Coot, Lord of the PrimEvil Wastes (*egg of coot*)
- Sir Golden the Butter King, Knights of the Tin Palace (*butterking*)
- Sir Druvas (*druvas*)

- Sir Arborius (*Arborius*)
- Sir Charles the Barbarian (*atlantean wizard*)
- Sir Vladimir the Undying (*DeadReborn*)
- Lady N, Duchess of Urnst (*Lady N*)
- Sir Findor, The Slightly Unimpressive (*Thorrek*)
- Warden Guide of Maljnpass (*OneHundred Handed One*)
- Sir Markos the Wise (*marcopolo*)
- Sir Zavok the Easterner (*jasonzavoda*)
- Sir Torren (*torren*)

Knights and Dames, *In Service to the Heraldry Above*

- Sir Bryan Clark, Jackal's Knights (Bryan Clark)
- Sir Slade, Jackal's Knights (David Puhala)
- Lord Destro, Mage of the Brotherhood of the Blacktooth (Jeff Brandenburg)
- Raife, Assassin of the Brotherhood of the Blacktooth (Roz Diedrich)
- Lady Gehenna, Marksmen of the Brotherhood of the Blacktooth (Brooke Koenig)
- Sir Gerydn, Lore Warden of the Brotherhood of Blacktooth (Stetz Smith)
- Sir Bobo, Jackal's Knights (Emerson Doner)
- Sir Shag, Jackal's Knights (Jason Zeh)
- Sir Violentzeh, Jackal's Knights (Justin Zeh)
- Lady Banshee, Jackal's Knights (Krystyna Hepler)
- Knight Colton, The Ironwood Guard
- Knight Josh, The Ironwood Guard
- Knight Lauren, The Ironwood Guard
- Squire Brandon, The Ironwood Guard
- Lady Anna of Stone Creek (Anna Breig)
- Sir Alan of Stone Creek (Alan Bean)
- Lady Kaylina of Stone Creek (Kaylina Breig)
- Lady Dardrae of Stone Creek (Dardrae Breig)
- Sir Ryan of Stone Creek (Ryan Breig)
- Sir Paul of Stone Creek (Paul Luzbetak)
- Lady Kristina of Stone Creek (Kristina Kober)
- Sir Gaius the Charming, Bard of the Brotherhood of Botkinburg (Geoffrey Diedrich)
- Shepard the Chaotic One, Ranger of the Brotherhood of Botkinburg (Matt Lensmire)

The Castles and Crusades Society Announces the First in a Series of Forthcoming Net Books:

The Grimoire Crusadus

On this fateful day, the Faithful Squire carries forth this Proclamation of the Seneschal of the Castles & Crusades Society:

The Grimoire Crusadus has been found!

On this day, the 13th October, the Society has unearthed a find of immeasurable significance. Our scouts and adventurers delve deep and have returned with a tome our scholars and scribes are tentatively entitling Grimoire Crusadus. We have been careful to not disturb its fine pages, but curiosity has gotten the better of many of our wizards, who, under mesmeric thrall, opened this work and have found new, and wonderful, additions to the lore of dweomercraft. We are perusing, testing, and ensuring safe contents for all and shall send further notice.

The coming of the Net Books! Thats right! The C&C Society will be producing a series of free net books covering a wide range of rpg goodness.

The first up is the Grimoire Crusadus, a book of fan-submitted spells for the Castles and Crusades game. Feel free to send in your home-brewed spells, just make sure to follow the following format when doing so.

Spell Format

NAME Class Level (Type)

CT:

Range:

AoE:

Duration:

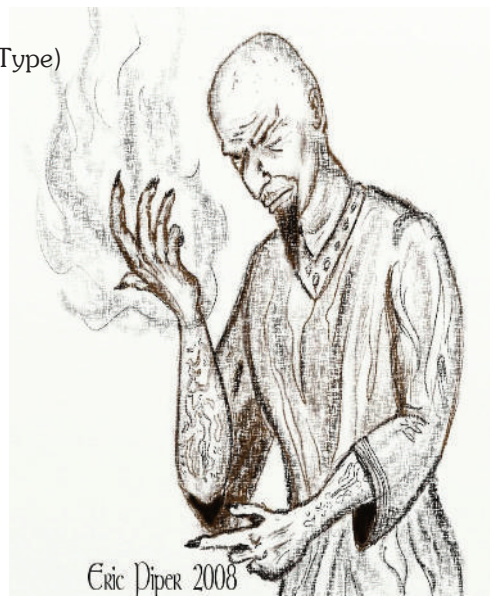
Save / SR:

Components:

Effect:

Lore:

Author:



Example:

Byrl's Backbite Druid 2 (Alteration)

CT: 1

Range: 30 feet

AoE: 1 weapon / 6 levels (10 arrows count as one weapon)

Duration: 1 round / 3 levels

Save / SR: None / None

Components: V, S, M (steel nail)

Effect: All weapons composed primarily of wood, whether arrows or wood-hafted weapons such as a spear or lance, within the area of effect become lethal instruments against those who wield them. When any attack with such a weapon is made, the Armor Class of the wielder is used to determine a successful strike, rather than that of the intended victim. If the attack is successful, the wielder of the weapon suffers damage as normal, with all appropriate modifiers added. Dropping the affected weapon does not save the wielder, as the weapon animates the following round, and attacks the original wielder of the weapon as though it were still being used (attacks and damage are calculated as though the original being were still holding and attacking the weapon.)

Lore: This spell is used in the construction of cursed wooden weapons (namely, backbiting spears, appropriately named) but was originally intended by its creator to function as warp wood (there is debate amongst dweomerists as to which spell was developed first.)

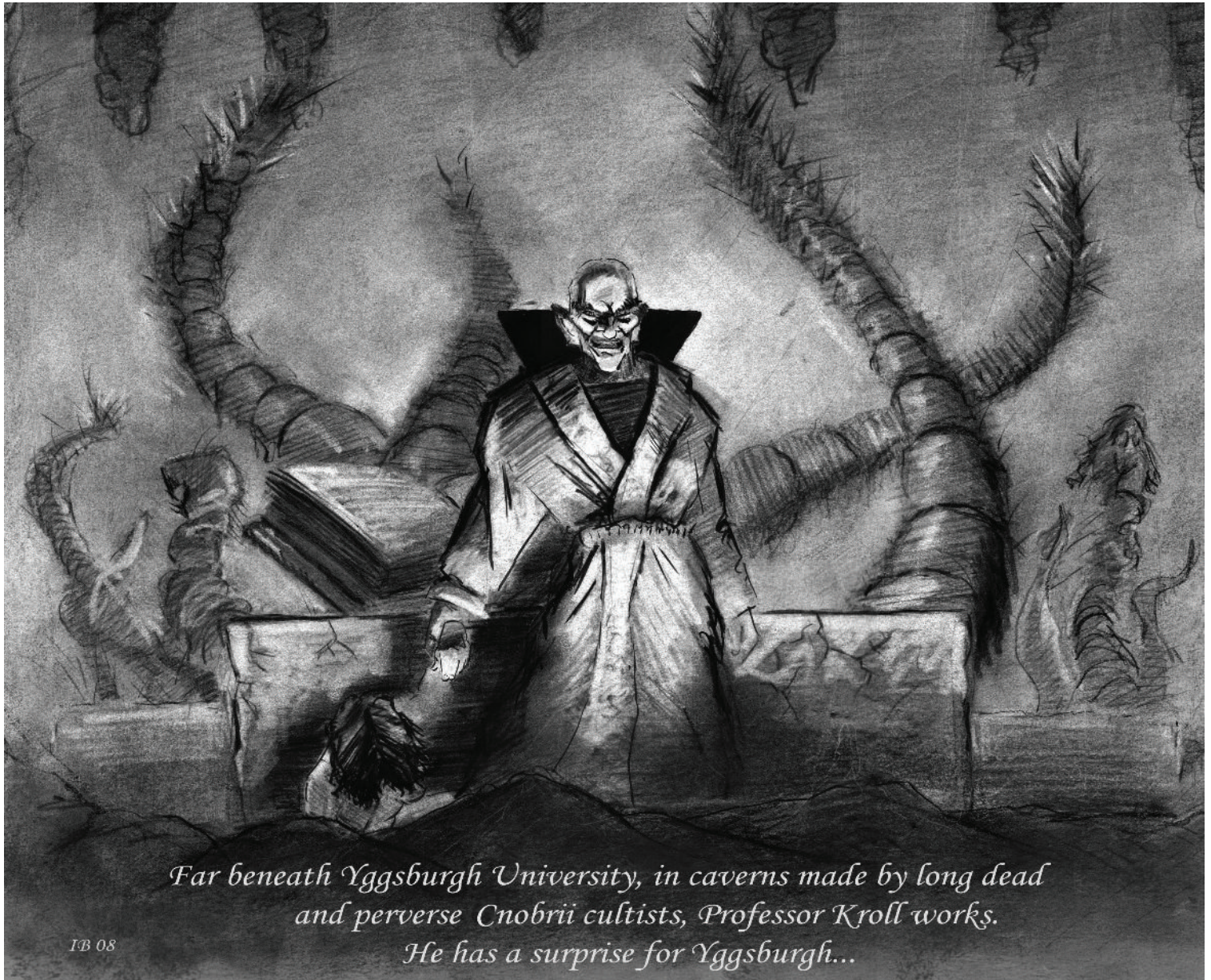
15. **Author:** Robert Doyel

Gestalt World Contest

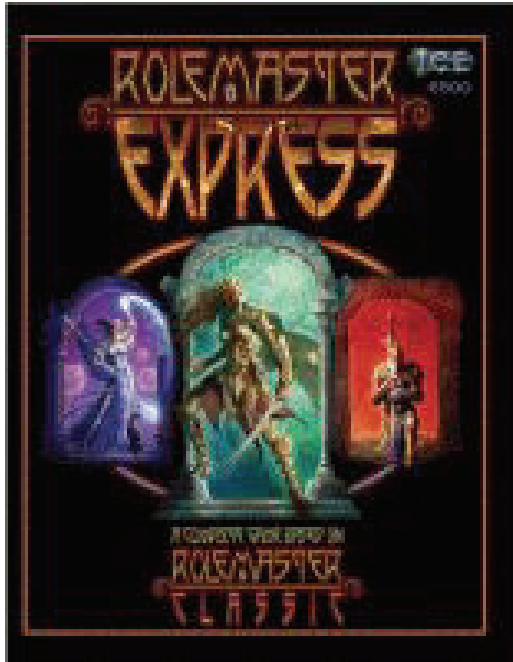
Come and join us for the Gestalt World Contest! Head over to the C & C Society Forums and check out this fun thread. Heres the deal: when you post, you are to write a description (and only a description -- please no game stats, but you can imply it such as "Cleve is a muscular dwarf, spending days secluded in the stench of his forge where the smoke makes even his deep beard seem lively...") for the item, person, monster, or thing which has been mentioned by the poster above you -- at the end, you provide something for the next poster to follow. Please provide some idea of what the thing is that is being described, in case it is easily confused or could be construed as something you did not intend -- ie, if "curse of Malado" is a disease, say so, so the next person does not think it is a spell.

Once there are 100 posts (that are actual replies), Staff will decide a winner, and the winner will receive something. The top 15 will be entered into whichever Domesday Book is released when we have enough entries to consider.

So, here's a chance to test your creative skills and have a little fun! See you there!



Under the Looking Glass



Rolemaster Express by Iron
Crown Enterprises
By Eric Piper

A Blast from the Past

Since the late 1980's, I have been a fan of Iron Crown Enterprise's Rolemaster role-playing game system. We played it extensively back in the day, thoroughly enjoying ourselves despite the seemingly endless charts, drawn out mathematical computations, and mind-numbing array of tables that made many sessions crawl along at a snails pace. The complexity of it all soon brought about pet names for the game, both derogatory and hilarious. Players and GM's alike began calling it "Chartmaster" or even "Rolebastard" (the latter always made me laugh); this was always said jokingly, of course, because we all had a soft spot in our hearts for the game, regardless of how much it irked us at times..

When ICE introduced Middle Earth Role-Playing (MERP) back in the 80's, we started playing that as well. Obviously, the impetus to purchase that particular system was because

we were all fans of Tolkien; but once I cracked it open, I was pleasantly surprised to discover that this rules light approach to the Rolemaster system made our game play much faster, easier, and was just as much fun. Of course, we tired of the Middle Earth setting shortly thereafter, and went on to other systems, but in the back of my mind, I always thought the rules system, stripped of it's Middle Earth setting and references, would be a great system to run your own home-brewed campaign. Years later, ICE stopped production of the MERP system, turning their attentions instead to newer, updated versions of Rolemaster (and just as complex!).

Recently, ICE has jumped back onto the rules light bandwagon with their newest product, Rolemaster Express, referred to as RMX. I was intrigued enough to purchase the book, and very pleased to find that it was very much the "generic MERP" I had envisioned years earlier. This was truly a Blast from the Past for me, and I have thoroughly enjoyed it. According to ICE, their marketing plan was to produce a quick, easy to use system that would serve as both a stand alone game and as a stepping stone to the more complex Rolemaster Classic system. I'm not sure if the game has lead new players to Rolemaster or not, but I will say RMX is definitely a great stand-alone game in its own right.

The Reincarnation of MERP

For those who are already familiar with the old MERP system, I can assure you that you know RMX. There are a few differences, but if I had to throw out a ball park average, I'd say that 90% of RMX is the same. From my point of view, that is a good thing. As a matter of fact, the critical tables and weapon charts are direct imports from the old MERP books. Again, something I am very happy about. For those who have never played Rolemaster or MERP, I will give you a brief summary on the ins and outs of this great game.

The Basics

Like Rolemaster, RMX is a skill based game, but has classes and levels similar to most D20 style systems. In this streamlined version, you pick from only four archtypical classes: Fighter, Thief, Animist, and Mage. By customizing skills during character creation, many specialized versions of each archetype can be created, so the class is more or less a template or guide in design. From there, you pick from the standard fantasy races: Human, Halfling, Wood Elves, and Dwarves.

Although a near clone of the old MERP system, RMX strays a bit from its predecessor by going a little heavier on the attributes. The attributes are divided into five Development scores and five Primary scores, ranging from 01-100, with averages being somewhere in the middle. The Development attributes are Constitution, Agility, Self-Discipline, Memory, and Reasoning. The reason these are called Development stats are because, with the optional rules, these affect how many Development Points you get per level. The better these scores are, the more Development Points you get per level to spend on skill advancement, thus your character gets better much faster. In the standard default rules though, everyone gets the same development points per level, so I don't think this complication was necessary. The Primary Stats are Strength, Quickness, Presence, Intuition, and Empathy. Again, these are more attributes than most people are used to, and I really think ICE would have been better off just to keep the handful of attributes that MERP had. At any rate, the basic RMX rules give you a standard array of stats to assign where you want, so you don't have to roll them or use a point buy system unless you want to. This makes character creation really fast, and also easy for folks who are new to RPG's and are walking themselves through the book.

What's Under the Hood: The Mechanics

First of all, this is not a D20 game! It is completely based off a percentile system, and you can play with a single pair of ten sided die. In a percentile system, you roll the dice to generate a random number between 01 and 00 (that's 100, folks). When you roll the dice to attempt a spell, combat maneuver, or particular skill, the higher you roll the better. Add any percentile modifiers you may have, both from high attribute bonuses as well as any skill ranks you have, and then look a corresponding chart for that weapon, spell, or skill.

For those who are familiar with Rolemaster, you remember that crazy tome called Arms Law, with pages upon pages of "To Hit" charts for a zillion weapons. That's right. It's true. Rolemaster has an entire book, page after page after page, that consists of various weapon "to hit" charts. Madness I say. But in RMX, all the charts fit on two pages! ICE condensed the combat charts into a mere handful: One-Handed Edged, One-Handed Concussion, Two-Handed Weapons, and Missile Weapons. In addition, there is one called Tooth & Claw reserved for monsters and animals, a table for attacking giant creatures, and a Grappling/Unbalancing table as well. For combative spells, there is the Bolt Table and Ball Table, which defines everything from fireballs, lightning, and so forth.

When you make your roll, bear in mind one of the cool things in this game is the Open Ended Roll. That means, if you roll at least a 96 or more on the dice without modifiers, you can roll again, and add that result as well. If that result is 96 or more, you can roll again, and so on. That's when super heroic things happen for all good little role-players! But, of course, this goes both ways. You can roll spectacularly poor as well. On a roll of 01-05, you get to roll again (while you cry) and *subtract* this number from your roll, giving you a very depressing negative number. If, as in my first example, you were fortunate enough to have a positive roll, you look at the corresponding

weapon or spell chart, and cross reference to the armor type. (In Rolemaster, Armor Type is broken down into twenty categories, but in RMX, there are only five, which makes things a lot faster) The chart then tells you how many hits of damage, and, if the roll was high enough, what level of critical you achieved. On the downside of things, if your roll was in the negative, you may have to roll on a critical fumble table.....and true to the Rolemaster legacy; these are never a good thing, even in RMX. You might get lucky and only drop your weapon and lose a turn, but you might (and probably will) get much worse. Results may be something like "Unbelievable mishandling of weapon. Any friend in range takes a B Crush Critical." Or "Worst move seen in ages. -60 to all actions due to a pulled groin. Foe is stunned 2 rounds laughing". Seems pretty funny until the GM applies the results to your character; it's worse yet when fellow players start yucking it up around the table when the GM reads the result out loud for all to hear.

At this point, you may be asking what drives us to Iron Crown games in the first place? Why, it's those incredible critical tables of course! If you roll high enough, you may score a critical hit graded from A, the lightest, up to E, the most deadly. It's further divided into Crush, Slashing, Puncture, and Unbalancing Criticals. Once you know the type of critical hit you scored, you then make a second roll, to see what the effects the critical had on your opponent. It may be as mundane as "Minor calf wound. 1 hit point per round" or as exciting as "Disemboweled, dies instantly. 25% chance your weapon is stuck in opponent for 2 rounds". Combat in RMX, as in Rolemaster, remains a scary thing. Yes, it's true that no matter how tough a creature is, no matter how many hit points it has, there will always be a slim chance that you can kill it outright with one epic blow; this is the drug that drives us back again and again, hoping against hope. Unfortunately,

the reverse is also true, and a 1st level brigand might take down your 25th level character with only one lucky arrow shot. We have seen this happen on more than one occasion, let me tell you. But heck, that's the beauty of the system. Combat remains tense, no matter what level you are, because you know that every encounter may be your last. With RMX, however, combat flows much faster than Rolemaster, and yet still manages to keep the essence of what makes Iron Crown role-playing games so much fun.

Skills work in a similar fashion. The GM must categorize the difficulty level of the skill you're attempting, from Routine all the way to Absurd. Once difficulty is determined, the player makes a roll off of the Maneuver Table. Displayed as percentage of success, the table shows how much of the task, if any, you completed. Of course, some skills are simple success or failure, but some may be affected by the varying percentage results. You may get an 80% result, for example. If you were trying to smith a weapon by the end of the week and got this result, it would mean you almost completed it but not quite. Not too big a deal. But say that you were jumping a chasm, and only made it 80% across..... Right... Not so good. Overall, the system is a decent one. My only gripe here is that, like any other game system that assigns difficulties to rolls, a whimsical and arbitrary GM can really put the thumbscrews to you by jacking up the difficulty on tasks that should be fairly easy. I believe a good GM would write out a list of skills and examples of difficulty ratings for each, and make it available to the players. This would have been a good addition to the basic RMX rulebook.

Magic Mayhem

Let me be the first to say that I have loved the Rolemaster magic system for years. I have always disliked the way magic is presented in D20 games, both in mechanics and organization. RMX, like Rolemaster, utilizes a Power Point system. Power Points are spent on casting spells; how many you have to spend on spell-casting is affected by cer-

tain attributes and goes up as the character goes up in level.

As far as categorizing spells into sane and logical progressions, few game systems can equal the Rolemaster line. Spell lists are divided into easy to understand groupings. Fire Law, for example, is a spell list that deals with heat and flame related spells. By expending 1 power point, a character can cast the 1st level spell Boil Liquid; expending 3 Power Points allows the character to cast the 3rd level spell Wood-fires. If he really needs to throw some heat around, he can spend 8 PP to shoot a Fireball. This approach just seems more logical to me than the jumbled way that D20 spells are presented.

There is also no memorization of spells before hand. You don't have to figure out what spells to memorize for the day, as in the standard "Vancian" style magic systems that are so typical in fantasy games. In RMX, you can cast any spell you know, and cast it repeatedly until you run out of power points if you so choose. Some spells require a mage to make a "to hit" roll, such as with a fireball or lightning bolt, and consult the appropriate table. Again, a good hit yields a critical result. Elemental spells each have their own column on the critical hits table. Heat, Cold, Electricity, and Impact Critical Tables really add a lot of flavor to spell effects in combat. There's nothing better than rolling an E critical with a fireball that reads "Head becomes a charred stump. Sadly, foe dies instantly due to this unacceptable condition." or a lightning bolt that lands with a "Chest strike cuts foe in half. Charge extends 10' giving an A critical to anyone in the way". RMX actually makes playing a Mage incredibly satisfying.

Adding Depth with Express Additions

I want to mention that ICE is publishing a newsletter called Express Additions, available as a pdf download at a reasonable rate. Express Additions add layers of depth and optional rules to customize RMX more to your liking. New classes, races, rules on combat styles, armor types, skills, and so on can be added to the game, bringing it ever closer to the Rolemaster Classic game if you dare. Just stop

whenever your head starts to hurt.

Good Times. Good Times.

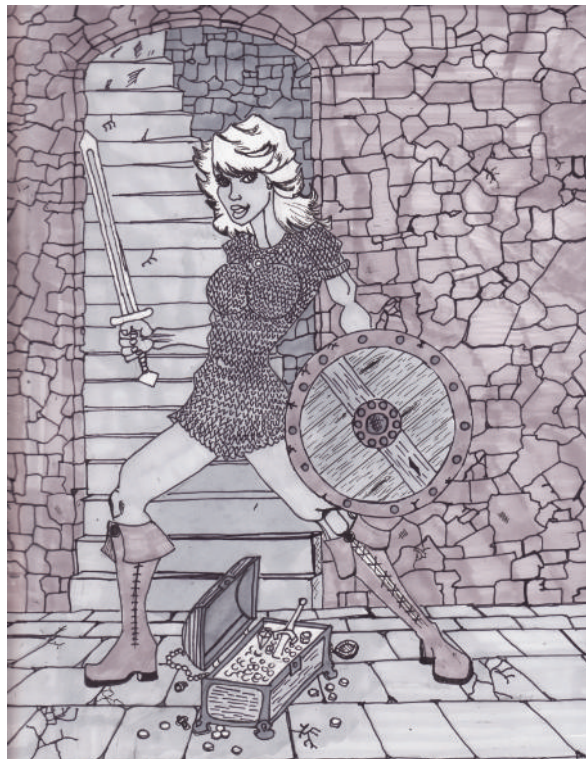
I would like to extend a challenge to anyone who ever played Rolemaster back in the day, but gave it up due to its overwhelming array of tables, charts, and incredible amount of bookkeeping. Try Rolemaster Express! RMX captures all the fun aspects of Rolemaster, but somehow manages to strip all the things away that made me want to hang myself with a sturdy length of piano wire. Weighing in at only 87 pages, RMX is a lean, rules light, sys-

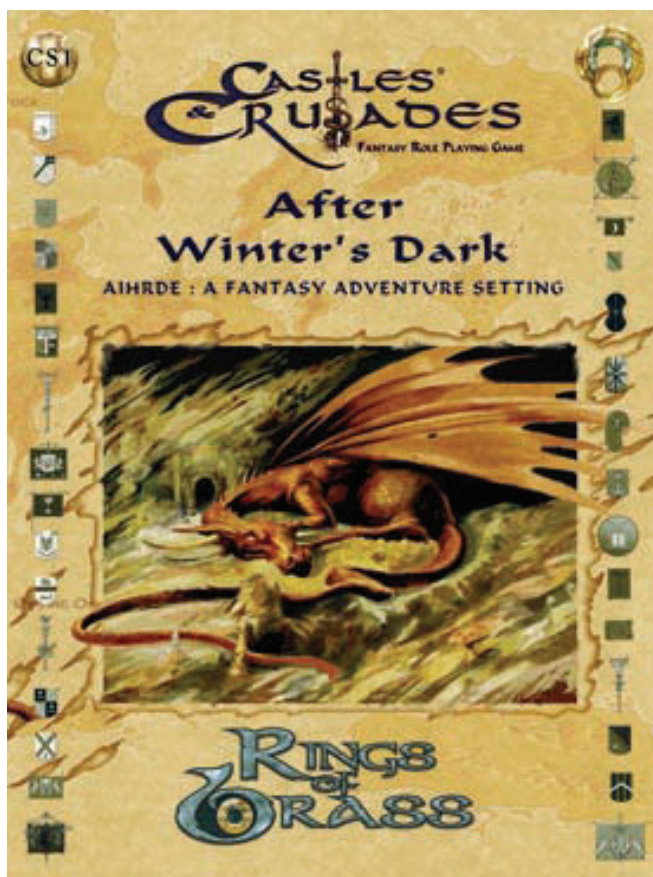
tem that is not only fast and playable on the table, but great fun as well.

For those who miss MERP, or for those who enjoyed the mechanics of MERP but didn't like the Middle Earth Setting, then RMX is pure gold.

If you have never tried a product by ICE, I invite you to download the RMX book from their online shop (it's only five bucks!) and try it.

You may just make it your main gaming system.





Review by John “Sir Seskis” Wright

“After Winter’s Dark”

Aihrde: A Fantasy Adventure Setting

Author: Steven Chenault

Contributions by: Mac Golden and Davis Chenault

Editor: Nicole Leigh Chenault McMurry

Cover Art and Cartography: Peter Bradley

Interior Art: Jason Walton, Mark Allen, Bryan Swartz & Peter Bradley

Layout and Design: Peter Bradley

Produced by: Troll Lord Games

Folio Edition: Two Booklets (1 Basic Setting Book, Saddle-Stitched, 56 pages; 1 Cosmology, Timeline, Guilds & Gods Book, Saddle-Stitched, 20 pages); 2 Card-Stock 11x17 Full Color maps of the Cradle of the World; 3 Sepia-toned Maps of Aihrde, migrations of peoples and political divisions of the world; and, 1 8 ½ x 11 Sheet of Heraldry and Coats of Arms.

Price: \$19.95

The world of Aihrde is the Fantasy World Setting of Troll Lord Games, and is intended to be part of an even larger setting called “The Rings of Brass,” which connects Steven Chenault’s Aihrde with Davis Chenault’s Inzae, a parallel world. The setting was basically the home-game of the brothers and their compatriots over the years, and when Troll Lord Games was formed as a commercial endeavor the setting was released, 1st as a short primer (the original blue-covered AWD setting book), then as their most ambitious project for d20, *The Codex of Erde*.

The current folio edition is designed to do two things: to offer the setting (now renamed back to the original “Aihrde” spelling rather than “Erde”) as the signature setting for TLG’s Castles & Crusades rules systems, and to evoke the “style” of the original Greyhawk folio, with the idea being to offer just the broadest strokes of information. Compared to most setting books these days (including TLG’s own fore-runner, the *Codex*), the amount of information is astoundingly brief and concise – the entirety of the 56-page setting booklet is organized essentially into four sections: Geography (7 pages), Cultural landscape (including short descriptions of Kingdoms not unlike the brief descriptors found in the Greyhawk folio, 10 pages), Cosmology (6 pages, repeated in the secondary booklet) and finally the History (7 Pages) of Aihrde.

There is NO “crunch” in this setting folio – again, heralding back to the style and format of Greyhawk. The conversion to C&C is primarily in removing d20 stats, not adding new ones. In this way, the setting could effectively be used across systems, which certainly may have been the intent. There are also stylistic changes as well – some of the names have been changed from the earlier work, including the god Demeter becoming Ore-Tsar, the Kingdom of Outremere changing to New Aenochia. The reasoning behind these seems to be to lessen the real-world influences that seeped from European nomenclature over the years into the game that Steve and Davis Chenault played and developed the setting out of, but it does seem curiously odd that “Outramere” needed changing while The Kingdom

of “Maine” remained, as does the religious center of “Avignon.” This inconsistency is one minor complaint – perhaps the Trolls would have been better served to do a more thorough review of all names of they were to change any.

The setting itself (and here we are concentrating on the Cradle of the World in Aihilde – the parallel Inzae is to be developed separately and later) follows an intriguing setup: the world was shrouded in a 1000-year Winter’s Dark of evil under a god-emperor, Unklar, and the world was only freed of this nightmare close to 100 years before the start date of the folio. This basic premise is solid, for it really allows a wide-opened, “wild and free” state of things wherein even powers are somewhat isolated and struggling to reassert civilization, while pockets of evil are scattered but nonetheless dangerous. The Chenaults infuse a very distinct northern European feel to the lands, utilizing cultural paradigms to lend new flavor to traditional demi-humans. Elves are “French” in their attitudes and behaviors, Dwarves are Germanic, the northern barbarians extremely Norse (including in this case the identical Norse pantheon). Some may find this off-putting, for it certainly makes the setting flavor very specific and unique – I personally enjoy it, and draw on historical parallels of the 100-years wars to influence my vision of the world in the home game I am playing in Aihilde.

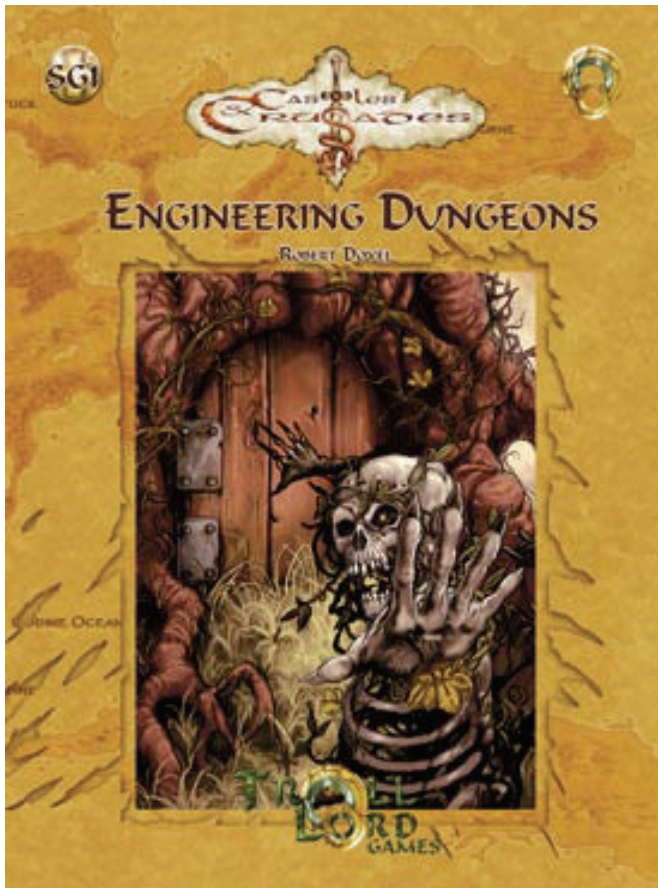
The best thing about the folio is that it offers *just* enough info for the CK to create their own adventures and interpretations from the very brief setups given. For CKs like myself, this is a wonderful thing, however those who want for great amounts of specific detail (i.e. the 3rd Edition Forgotten Realms tome, JG’s Wilderlands, etc.) will likely find this sort of setting wanting because it will require more thought and work on the game-master’s part. The writing itself is very well done, and reads in a clear and fairly narrative structure, as if the setting is telling the “story of Aihilde.” This is a good thing, for the major drawback to the larger *Codex of Erde* was that it had some awkwardness and bulkiness in this area (Steve Chenault in a recent Crusader

magazine bemoaned the lesson he learned in attempting to basically self-edit that tome).

The production qualities are quite nice – although I have one minor issue: the cardstock maps are beautiful, but they are a bit large for the folio pockets, and creases through the middle and the edges began to wear almost immediately. I did notice at LGGC IV that later versions had softer, glossy-paper versions of these maps, so that issue may be a problem based on time of printings. There are some frustrating typos and small errors (especially some names left off the political map), and the one way in which the folio does not try to replicate the feel of the old Greyhawk is in not offering large, poster-sized maps... which at first disappointed me, but as I have played I have come to appreciate as these maps are easier to use across a table with gamers at an actual game! The cartography and art on the maps are excellent, in a style that matches the European medieval flavor of the setting itself.

There are a few places that want for just a little more information, but overall the product is extremely well-done and succeeds at its two major intentions. Many will ask if, upon getting this folio, should they buy the *Codex*. I had been running an Aihilde campaign for several months before picking up the earlier work, and I highly recommend doing it that way – for the *Codex* works as a terrific resource *behind* the Folio setting, although I recommend spending some time to reconcile the various differences between the two.

So, in the end, is Aihilde a worthy world to adventure in? As always, this is the prime question to ask. I can only say this: I spent over a year developing my own homebrew setting, and my campaign is now firmly lodged in the 2nd year of our After Winter’s Dark campaign. For this player, the setting recaptured a spark that I had not felt from a published setting for some time, although what is attractive to me about the world may not be for all.



Review by Pat Bellavance (aka “moriarty777”)

Review: Engineering Dungeons (SG1)
Author: Robert Doyel
Editor: Cory Ca Serta
Cover Art: Peter Bradley
Interior Art: Peter Bradley, Jason Walton, Sarah Walker, and Mark Allen
Layout & Design: Peter Bradley
Production: Troll Lord Games, 2007

It is the weekend and you have the plot, characters, and the hook all ready. The first of the players will arrive in just a few hours but you still haven't had time to map out a dungeon with trappings and treasure. For those game masters who lack time or are running a bit short on creativity, TLG has released the first accessory of the Siege Gear line entitled “Engineering

Dungeons”. Some time prior to the release of this work, I had the pleasure to play test what could best be called an early draft. In short, Engineering Dungeons provides a step by step process to help an enterprising game master design a dungeon or other complex of sorts for their game. Though written to be used with the Castles & Crusades game in mind, it is also a relatively simple task to adapt this for use with one's fantasy roleplaying game of choice. What is even nicer about the accessory are some of the details and numerous little surprises packed within a mere 28 pages.

Dungeon Basics:

Too often, the simplest details are overlooked when planning out a devious dungeon for your players to delve into. The first section covers the basics for the dungeon. With a few simple tables, you can quickly determine why the complex was built, who the builders were, and where this is situated. Each of these has appropriate sub-tables to provide a bit more depth. The section also covers size, entrances, age. Overall, this section is very self-explanatory and covers all the necessities and the tables are laid out clearly enough. In my own uses of these tables, I've slightly modified the Intelligent Races subtable for the Builders to accommodate a few different entries more suited to my campaign... However, the tables as they stand right now are perfectly fine. In order to help impose a limit to the size of the dungeon, a simple chart is used. Naturally, like all other tables in this work, this one can be used in the manner that one chooses. The elegance is revealed in its simplicity as the chart functions by determining a result for each axis – the depth or height (as in the number of levels), the width, and the length. I have seen a more than a few dungeon generators but none that quite helps limit the scope of the dungeon as simply as this one does.

Drawing the Map:

The next section deals with drawing the actual map. I found a few things I didn't completely expect when I was first exploring this section of the work. It starts off by offering a couple suggestions with

regards to the placement of the main entrance and a brief explanation on how to progress in terms of the design of the dungeon-proper. Six templates are presented to use as a starting point. Each of these has openings where you determine if it opens up to a room, a hallway, or simply comes to a dead-end.

A table for the passageways is provided to help determine the style, direction, and if it sloped or not. A different table is given to determine sizes and shapes of the various rooms and other respective exits from the room. All of this is pretty much standard and what one would expect with perhaps the exception of the provided designs for the hallways themselves. This isn't a bad thing mind you... just a bit different from what I have seen before but just as effective. I'm more used to the idea of a table providing all necessary variables for a hallway such as the length, width, and length. Then again, this sort of thing could potentially be more time consuming than what is provided here. That said, there is nothing stopping the designer from altering aspects of a hallway pattern.

A Few Words on the Features:

By far, the strongest elements in this accessory are the tables detailing various features to dress up the chambers in the complex. You want the dungeon to come alive? Look no further than this book and you'll find charts detailing things that draw on the senses – whether it be sight, sound, or smell. Doors, locks, traps, and treasure? Not a problem, there are tables for everything. The inclusion of a difficulty generator when factoring in things such as the locks or traps is a nice and often overlooked addition.

But the real gem is the collection of monster tables set up for various encounter regions which fills a wonderful gap left open by the Monster & Treasure book. Suffice to say, there is a chart for most

things you might be looking for, including one for magical pools – a hallmark of classic dungeon crawls!

If that wasn't enough, as a bonus one will find a selection of maps ready to be populated and used for their own adventures. It would be a fair assessment to assume that these were designed using the system provided.

Final Thoughts:

Engineering Dungeons can easily inspire a game master to add more depth to other dungeons and adventures or be used to create some form of complex from scratch. The accessory does a great job to provide ample material which enterprising designers can use for years to come. It provides what is needed and functional and easy to use – plain and simple. Personal preferences aside, the only issue was a slight oversight when it came to the text and layout. This has to do with the header located on page 7 called 'Drawing the Map'. If this is meant to be viewed as a new section, and it should in my opinion, then this text needs to stand out more. The editing, art, and production values in the rest of the work are nicely done. This accessory is well worth the price and provides something for everyone – regardless of the game you play.

The Muse's Market

New Class for Castles & Crusades: The Shaman

By Todd A. Pote

The Shaman is a mixture of holistic priest, druid, and medium found in most remote regions. They cherish the solitude of these areas in which they can commune with the spirits of the world. It is through this communion and the spirits that the Shaman gains the power to guide and change the world around them. When the shaman is part of a community, they provide guidance to the people of their village to avoid angering the spirits and ensure peace and prosperity. The spirits do not provide their boons freely however. It is the shaman's responsibility to sometimes perform tasks to appease the spirits, administer the spirits justice, and to protect the world and spirits themselves. Shamans found as part of adventuring groups are most often there because they have been tasked by the spirits to destroy or prevent great evils.

How clearly the shaman can communicate with the spirits and how much of their power the shaman may channel is directly related to the Shaman's strength of will and body (Charisma). The Shaman spends time purifying and strengthening their body and mind for this reason. Shaman shun armor since it muffles the voice of the spirits. Instead they place their trust in the spirits to protect them. Shaman are skilled in few weapons. Those they are skilled in are typical of barbaric hunters. At an early point of their journey, the Shaman undertakes a spirit quest to discover their totem. The Shaman begins to take on aspects of their totem in both form,



dress, and ability. When the spirits wish to speak to the Shaman, the totem animal is the most likely form to be chosen. The killing of a totem animal is a thing not taken lightly by the Shaman, even when in self defense. Unlike other classes, the shaman may not dual or multi-class without losing the greater of their abilities.

Spirit Type:	Granted Boon (affects self)	Granted Boon (affects single target creature):
Earth	Skin of the Earth (+2 AC)	Weight of Stone (slow, speed reduced 1/2)
Sky	Whispered Secrets (+1 INT)	Slashing Gust (temporarily blinded)
Fire	Dancing Flame (+1 DEX)	Purity of Fire (heals 1 hit point each round)
Water	Still Reflection (+1 WIS)	Frozen Pond (paralysis, max HD equal to CHA mod +1)
Plant	Bending Reed (+1 CON)	Nature's Hunger (acid spit, 2 damage each round)
Animal	Heart of the Beast (+1 STR)	Heart of Prey (flees away in terror)

Abilities

Vitality- The Shaman's practice of strengthening and purifying their body and mind has given them a strong connection to the world and its spirits granting them a greater than normal vitality (d10 HD).

Lesser Boon- The Shaman starts their journey by listening to the spirits of the world and learning to listen and trust in them. Much time is spent communing with the spirits to better understand their ways and desires. A Shaman that is successful in this may seek the aid of the appropriate spirits for what is desired though care must be made not to ask for so much assistance that the spirits are angered.

The shaman may seek the aid of the spirits a number of times equal to one plus their charisma modifier (1+ CHA)+1 every other level per day. (ie. A 1st level shaman with a CHA of 16 may use Lesser Boon 4 times per day. A 8th level shaman with a CHA of 16 may use Lesser Boon 7 times per day).

Lesser boon may affect either the shaman or a single target. For boons affecting target creatures, they may make saving throws as might normally apply. The range of the boon is 10-feet + 10-feet per CHA bonus of the shaman. The duration of any aid is a number of rounds equal to (1+ CHA). Should the shaman not give the answering spirits proper appreciation, the spirits may become angered and their boon become a curse (reversed effect).



Totem Animal- At 3rd level, the connection to the spirit realm has become strong enough that the greater spirits have noticed the Shaman. The Shaman must go alone into the wilds upon a ritual journey. This journey usually lasts for up to a month. At some point during the journey, the greater spirits seek out the shaman and inspect his/her soul. Whichever of the greater spirits that finds the shaman worthy will appear in animal form either physically or as a dream vision. This animal form becomes the Totem Animal of the shaman. The Shaman begins to emulate the qualities and aspects of their totem animal. As long as the Shaman continues along the path of their totem animal and honors its spirit, the shaman will be granted the use of greater powers by the spirits. Should the shaman stray from the path or dishonor its spirit, then all of the benefits and gifts of the totem animal are lost along with all other shaman abilities gained after third level until the shaman either atones or is killed. A list of typical totem animals and granted abilities is provided below;

Totem Animal	Granted Abilities	Totem Path
Ant	+1 to CON and CHA attribute check rolls	Honor, sacrifice, perseverance, patience, teamwork, loyalty
Bear	+1 to STR and WIS attribute check rolls	Strength, Wisdom, remaining balanced amid challenge, and introspection
Buffalo	+1 to all saving throw rolls	Sacrifice, community, strength in adversity, gratitude, and treating all life as sacred
Coyote	+2 to search and spot checks	Loyalty in relationships, cunning, caution, patience, protection of family
Dragonfly	+2 to all saves vs illusion, confusion, fear, and emotionally based attacks	Compassion, seeing past appearances, able to change as life transforms around
Eagle	+1 to save vs Fear effects; to INT attribute check rolls; and listen check rolls	Courage, understanding, strength, and endurance
Fox	+1 to DEX attribute check rolls; surprise check rolls; and listen check rolls	Harmony with surroundings, alertness, nimble in mind and body, listening, keen sight
Horse	+1 to saves vs movement restricting effects and +2 to EV base	Independence, well grounded, power of freedom and movement, dignity, gentleness
Otter	+2 to search and identify checks	Self reliant, playful, curious, relaxed, nurturing, gregarious
Owl	+1 to INT and WIS attribute checks	Enigmatic, stealth, poise, guiding, seeker of meanings
Puma (Lynx)	+2 to Hide and Move Silently checks	Stealth, cunning, observation, decisive action, grace, serenity
Raven (Crow)	+1 bonus lesser boon use per day	Integrity, transformation, guardian of secrets and magic, healing, and teaching
Snake	+1 to all heal checks; +1 hp bonus to healing power effects	Balanced in nature, continuous growth of self, listen to the heart of all, guidance
Turtle	+2 to bonus to hit point total (one time only)	Wisdom, perception the relationships of time, survival, steadiness, adaptable to the world around
Weasel	+2 to DEX attribute check rolls	Intuitive, relentless, stealthy, reckless at times, wasteful, merciful
Wolf	+1 to STR and CHA attribute check rolls	Lawful, loyal, confident, strength, violence only as necessary, ritualistic, defensively territorial, cooperative

(Note: The choice of the Totem Animal should be a CK reward based on how the player has developed their character or it may be left up to the player with CK approval. This also presents an opportunity for a short solo adventure in which the shaman may be tested by the spirits to discover the shaman's true heart.)

Turn or Rebuke Undead- At 4th level, the Shaman's connection to the spirits of nature and life are so strong that they gain some power over the twisted spirits of the undead. The Shaman is able to turn or rebuke undead creatures in the same manner as a cleric of three levels lower than the shaman. (ie. A 4th level shaman turns as a 1st level cleric. An 8th level shaman would turn as a 5th level cleric. And so forth.) This ability is lost should the shaman break with their totem animal.

Vessel of the Spirits- At 5th level the shaman has gained sufficient insight and knowledge of the spirits that they have learned to channel the power of the spirits directly. This is very taxing to the shaman's mind and body however preventing the shaman from maintaining such a connection for very long or often without adequate rest. The shaman may endure such close contact with the spirits for a number of rounds equal to two times their CHA bonus (2x CHA mod. +1). The amount of the spirits power a shaman may channel is related to their vitality and willpower (benefit bonus of 1+ CHA mod.). A shaman may act as a vessel for the spirits a number of times per day equal to their level plus one plus their charisma modifier (Level +1 +CHA mod). Only one manifestation may be in effect at a time. This ability is lost should the shaman break with their totem animal.

The time the shaman must wait between uses is equal to four minus their CHA modifier (4 -CHA mod.) in rounds. Such power manifests in different ways depending upon which type of spirit the shaman is channelling.

<u>Spirit Type:</u>	<u>Manifestation:</u>
Earth	Strength of Stone ('bonus' to hit and damage)
Sky	Wings of the Wind (may fly at speed equal to 10 feet per 'bonus' point)
Fire	Flame of Rage (shaman's attackers suffer d4 fire damage per 'bonus' point)
Water	Unstoppable Current (shaman gains SR equal to 1+ 'bonus')
Plant	Spring Growth (shaman may regenerate 'bonus' of hit points in target touched each round)
Animal	Stalking Beast (shaman may track by scent and sight, 'bonus' to check rolls)
Great Spirit	Kindle the Soul (shaman may restore up to 'bonus' worth of level drain effects)

Summon Elemental Spirit- At 8th level, the Shaman may command a minor elemental spirit of earth, fire, water, or air to appear and aid the shaman in whatever task or tasks are asked of them if within their power. The element from which the spirit is to be summoned *must* be present in order for the shaman to make the summons. The shaman may only attempt to summon an elemental spirit a number of times per day equal to their CHA modifier (ie. A Shaman with a CHA of 14 would have a +1 modifier, thus being able to make a single summons per day, while a shaman with a CHA of 18 and a modifier of +3 would be able to make three such sommons per day). Summoned elemental spirits are able to be turned or rebuked by clerics and shaman the same as if they were undead.

After the task set by the shaman is completed or a number of rounds equal to the shaman's level pass, whichever comes first, the elemental spirit will return from whence it was summoned. Summoned elemental spirits have the same appearance, abilities, and stats as an elemental of their type, though their hit dice are equal to half of the summoning shaman's level. (ie. An 8th level shaman summoning an elemental spirit of earth would get a 4HD earth elemental for 8 rounds duration.) This ability is lost should the shaman break with their totem animal.

Totemic Form- At 10th level, the Shaman is able to assume the shape of their totem animal once per day. Changing shape takes a single round and magically heals the shaman of 10% of any physical damage suffered while in human form but does not heal any disease, energy drain, or such effects. While in animal form the shaman has all of the natural abilities of an animal of that type plus the use of their shamanistic abilities, speech, and hit points. When the shaman changes back to human form from animal, they only magically heal 10% of damage suffered while as an animal. The shaman in animal form should be considered a magical beast for purposes of type. This ability is lost should the shaman break with their totem spirit.



Level	HD	BtH	EPP
1	d10	+0	0
2	d10	+0	2,401
3	d10	+1	4,801
4	d10	+1	9,601
5	d10	+1	19,201
6	d10	+2	38,401
7	d10	+2	76,801
8	d10	+2	153,601
9	d10	+3	307,201
10	d10	+3	500,501
11	+3 HP	+3	700,501
12	+3 HP	+4	900,501
13	+200,000 per level		

There is no duration to how long a shaman may remain an animal, though at the end of each week the shaman remains in animal form, the shaman needs to make a WIS check to avoid losing a point of intelligence. Should the shaman's INT score drop to 2, then they are considered to have forgotten their life as human and all of their stats immediately revert to those of a normal animal of their totem type. Should the shaman change back to human form at any time before their INT score reaches 2, then they will gain back the lost attribute points at a rate of 1 per every two days they remain as human. This recovery stops immediately should the shaman revert to animal form and a INT check rolled to see if the points left to be recovered are lost permanently. Points permanently lost in this fashion may be recovered by magical means such as restoration, or wish.

Prime: Charisma

HD: d10

Alignment: Any

Weapons: Staff, sling, spear, dagger, club, hand axe, cestus, knife, dart, blow pipe, bolas

Armor: None

Abilities: Vitality, Lesser Boon, Totem Animal, Turn or Rebuke Undead, Vessel of the Spirits, Summon Elemental Spirit, Totemic Form

Starting Gold: 2d4x10 (20-80gp)

Lost Valley: Ruins of Karramere

By Todd A. Pote

The place now known as the Lost Valley was once a great city upon the plains, bordered to the south by gentle hills and by prosperous farmland. Many centuries ago; the city of Karramere was the capitol of an empire that ranged for nearly a thousand leagues in all directions and stood at the heart of a vast trade road network. Like every empire, the lust for power and greed of its rulers and citizens became its downfall. Overnight, the city, hills, and farms were destroyed in a violent cataclysm of evil as a crazed priest and his cult opened a portal beneath the city to the nether-realms. Tens of thousands perished that night and the landscape itself was altered forever as the raw power of destruction touched the mortal plane. Those that survived fled with what they could salvage. The empire of Karramere sundered and was no more, and in time, forgotten to living



memory. Factions of the empire waged war upon each other across the plains. Eventually, the number of dead forced the survivors to withdraw their borders, and in time, forget the valley altogether.

The cataclysmic destruction raised the south hills violently, almost a league into the sky for nearly 25 leagues east and west. What was left was a range

of jagged mountains along the top edge of a mile high escarpment. Where farmland on gentle rolling plains once lay, rugged hills rose to the east and west, running from the ends of the new mountains northwards. This trapped the Karra River within the valley, drowning the ruins and creating a huge lake. Over the centuries, forest sprung up through across the north end of the valley lake. Eventually, the waters of the lake over topped the mountainous dam to the south and cut a narrow channel through. The waters of the lake raged through, spewing over the great escarpment as a glorious waterfall creating caves and landslides alike.

A couple hundred years later, the valley was a vibrant fresh water swamp with the river slow and sluggish. Lizardfolk and kobolds came to settle. The lizardfolk claimed the marsh and have thrived, establishing four separate villages along its length. The kobolds settled in the hills to the northeast and are fiercely protective of their territory, yet they are unlike most of their kind being rust colored and almost gregariously friendly. When asked, they simply talk of doing as Estrigan, their god, wills. Locals have dubbed them the Rustscale clan as a result.

Humans came to the valley as refugees fleeing the carnage of war. These folk literally re-discovered the valley by accident. Negotia-

tions with the lizardfolk and kobolds allowed them to make themselves a place along the eastern shore. An uneasy peace exists between the three races, and yet they carry out trade between themselves to ensure their survival against the dangers beyond their lands, such as the rabid gnolls of the plains that occasionally conduct raids into the surrounding hills.

The mountains became known as the Stonehammer Range due to the sound of the boulders tossed against the canyon walls by the Karra River as it rages through the winding defile dubbed "The Choke". Rumors amongst the lizardfolk speak of a great dragon that lives beyond the falls that they call "The Stairs of Argorrat". Below the escarpment the river disappears into a great forest.

The forest at the north of the valley is split by the Karra River as it enters from the plains. The kobolds have named the western forest the "Spiderhaunt", due to the great spiders that live within its dark boughs. The lizardfolk avoid this area for the most part, yet their hunters spend much time ensuring that the monstrous vermin establish no lairs outside of its greenery. The eastern forest they have named the "Gossamer Wood" for it seems there are more webs than trees within it. While the kobolds hunt the spiders for food, they never enter the wood itself claiming that there is something within it other than the spiders. The kobold territory covers the north-

eastern hills just south of the Gossamer Wood. They are not fond of visitors.

The humans live in a small town centered upon an island where one of the wells of ancient Karamere still flows pure. A good portion of the town is built on wharfs over the lake which is bordered by cranberry bogs; hence the reasoning behind calling the town Red Shoal. Access is by a narrow wooden causeway with a drawbridge and raised wooden platforms for archers about midway between shore and town. Small plots of land on shore are cultivated as gardens for food along the remains of an ancient road leading east out of the valley. A pair of crumbled watch towers straddles the road as it heads out into the plains beyond where it disappears. The valley is on the fringes of civilization and receives few trade caravans and most of those discovered the people here quite by accident.

Red Shoal itself is ran by a council of sorts, mostly former criminals welcome nowhere else in civilized lands and those few who came seeking the treasures of fabled Karamere...and still seek them amidst the sunken ruins. The town guard is well armed and made of rugged individuals not afraid to dispense with a little bit of 'frontier justice' when needed, or turn a blind eye for the right

price. Only the most rustic of goods are available within the valley and most metals tend to rust quickly without constant care. As the town is slowly rediscovered by traders braving the dangers of the plains beyond, adventurers come to explore the many ruins within the swamp. As expected, not all return rich if they return at all.

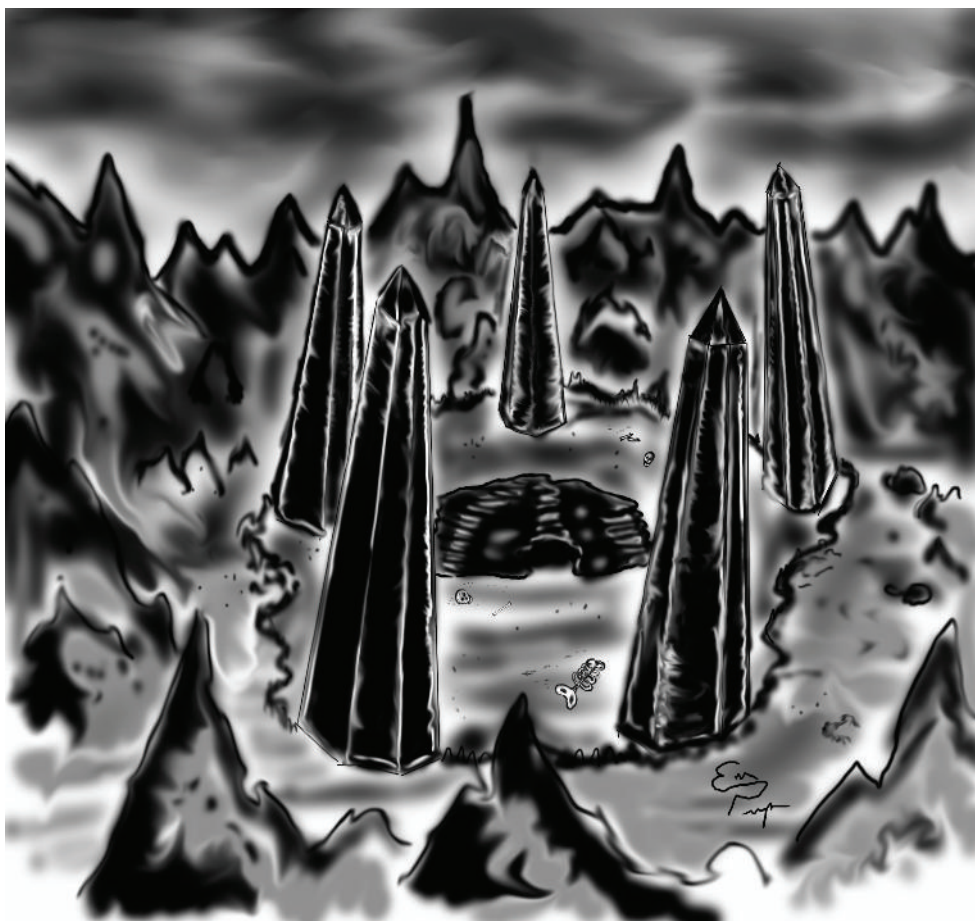


Garden of Edronne

By Todd “GoOgleplex” Pote

The Garden of Edronne exists in a secluded high mountain valley or within rugged frozen hills, whichever is more suited for your campaign or adventure. Certain details have been left out for the express purpose of giving the Castle Keeper latitude in molding this location to better fit within their world.

One might think, because of its name, that the garden is rows upon rows of flowering shrubbery and quaint arbors in secluded nooks. Nothing could be further from the fact. Chill mountain winds race through the valley; a cacophony of mournful wails and banshee howls with only the bare, ice-kissed stones of the mountain to hear them. Despite this barren desolation, the valley is breath-taking with a rugged beauty marred only by the blight that is the Garden.



The Garden of Edronne is bounded by five massive monoliths of black basalt, one at each point of its pentagonal shape. Each monolith is approximately three yards across at its base and as deep. Rising upwards nearly ten times an ogre's height, the matte black surface is smooth and bare with the exception of a single sigil at its apex that is visible only during a brief time in high summer when the icy sheath that usually girds the stone melts away. The monoliths are spaced five hundred paces apart along their perimeter with a large barrow at their center. Scattered throughout the area between the barrow and the monoliths are scores of skeletal remains, humanoid and animal, poking upwards from the earth like vegetables in a garden. While this macabre crop is eerie in its own right, an ominous similarity amongst them can be noted by the observant. Each skeletal form is frozen in death apparently fleeing away from the central barrow and is partially swallowed by the very ground itself.

The barrow is circular, approximately 20 paces in diameter and made of stacked slabs of the same black basalt as the monoliths. The crest of the barrow is about a third of the height of the surrounding monoliths. At the south end of the barrow is a narrow niche about chest height set back in a bit of a sheltered alcove of the barrow wall. Resting within this double hand-span niche is a human skull, the name Edronne carved deeply into the stone above it. While there is nothing visibly threatening or overtly out of the ordinary as it were, those viewing the skull are struck by a soul freezing feeling of menacing rage that grows the closer one gets to the skull itself.

Below the skull bearing niche is a 3-foot square slab of matte black basalt carved with the same sigil as found on the surrounding monoliths. A seal of perma-frost or glaciated ice makes removing the stone quite difficult and time consuming.

New Monsters for Castles and Crusades!

Deaths Head Goblin

By Josh Sherrer

No. Encountered: 1-6, 10-60

Size: Small

HD: 4 (d8)

Move: 20 ft.

AC: 15

Attacks: 2 Claw (1d6), Bite (1d8) or weapon

Speacial: Swarm, Ambush, Darkvision, Disease, Light Sensitivity

Saves: P

Int: Average

Align: Chaotic Evil

Type: Goblinoid

Treasure: 4

XP: 60+4 per HP

Deaths Head Goblins are a hideous creatures that inhabit caves, undergorund ruins and dark desolate places. They are 3'-4' in hieght and have skull like faces with burning green eyes long claws and muscular bodies. None know the origins of these creatures but many whispered legends tell of dark experiments by wraith like wizards that created these creatures for guards. It is unknown whether or not these creatures are releted to other goblinkin.

These creatures prefer to lair in dark dank places with no light. They scavage for their meals but will attack and eat anything invading their grounds. When a target appraches they will lie in wait to attack, kill and consume.

Swarm: When more than six of these creatures attack they tend to attack one target at a time. They will swarm this target this frenzy will give them a +2 bonus to all hits and damage.

Ambush: When no light is present or an adiquate hiding place is present the deaths head goblins gain a +2 bonus to initiative. This is an opportunity to attack and swarm intruders.

Darkvision: Deaths head goblins see perfectly in darkness.

Disease: The bite of the goblin passes a disease so powerful that the victim saves at -1. This disease incubates in a day and causes cramps, fever and sizeures it is almost always fatal in three weeks.

Light Sensitivity: The eyes of the goblins are sensitive to any light. Torchlight makes them attack at a -1 and anything that creates a daylight situation blinds and confuses them.



Hor Shaol

By Josh Sherrer

No. Encountered: 1

Size: Medium

HD: 16 (d10)

Move: 30 ft.

AC: 20

Attacks: By weapon

Special: Summon Undead, Aura of Fear, Magic Weapon, Create Undead, Soul Harvest,

Power Words, Hit only by Magical weapons of +4 or more, Magic reflection, Immune to Turning

Saves: P&M

Int: Superior

Alignment: Any Evil

Type: Undead

Treasure: 17

XP: 4200+16 per HP

Hor Shaol are the undead knights of a usually demonic power. The Hor Shaol appears as either a long withered and rotted human or in an all covering black robe. They are usually accompanied by undead, nightmares which they ride or demons of considerable power. The Hor Shaol is exceptionally loyal to it's master only three are known to have betrayed their masters at any time. Hor Shaol tend to lair in castles or deep dungeons protected by their minions only venturing out to visit their master or to undertake a mission of importance.

Combat: If it has to the Hor Shaol will attack with it's magic blade or special abilities. It will however usually use it's armies to weaken foes.

Special:

Summon Undead: Once every third turn the Hor Shaol may summon in 2d6 undead of any type. Usually these are no more than ghouls, skeletons or zombies. However there is a 20% chance it will bring in 1d4 wights, wraiths or vampires.

Aura of Fear: The Hor Shaol radiates a 30' aura of pure fear. All saves against this are at -3 and any failing their save will run in fear and all saves and attacks are at a -5.

Magic Weapon: The master of the Hor Shaol crafted special blades for them. They act as nine lives stealers but are +4 to hit and damage and are unlimited in soul thefts.

Create Undead: The Hor Shaol can create any type of undead except other Hor Shoal. They use this ability to fill their armies ranks.

Soul Harvest: When a victim is dying the Hor Shaol may steal it's soul and use it to create a special type of Wraith that serves only it's creator they may only have 3 wraiths of this type at any time.

Power Words: The Hor Shaol can use any Power Word spell as a 20th level caster this is only useable once per week.

Magic Reflection: There is a 75% chance any spell cast at a Hor Shaol will be reflected on the caster or their allies.



ERIC PIPER
2008

Plague Bearer

By Josh Sherrer

Enc.: 1

Size: Medium

HD: 6 (d8)

Move: 30 ft.

AC: 14

Attacks: 2 claw (1d4) or weapon

Special: Disease, Create Spawn, Spell Resistance 12

Saves: Physical and Mental

Int: Average

Align: Any Evil

Treasure: 5

XP: 210+6



The plague bearer is a vile creature that is nothing more than a disease that has taken over the form of an intelligent creature. Their only purpose in life is to infect as many people as possible with their loathesome infection. To many they appear as a normal functioning member of society. They tend to take jobs where they can encounter as many people as possible. This includes working as maids, physicians, shopkeepers and other high profile jobs. Another way a plague bearer achieves its goal is to work as a travelling merchant spreading its filth from town to town or village to village.

Combat: A Plague Bearer only attacks if there is no other way out of an encounter. Upon entering combat they show their true form as a leonized sickly humanoid with long claws. They use these claws to attack for superficial damage but this strike also passes the disease to the victim of the attack.

Disease: A successful attack causes the disease that the bearer is carrying to enter the body of the defender. A save must be made or the disease takes root in the body and incubates for 1d6 weeks then hits full force. Some diseases known to spawn bearers are: typhoid, small pox, influenza (killer strain), and hepatitis.

Create Spawn: The Plague Bearer can create others from those it has infected. If a disease attack is successful and a victim dies from the disease a disease save is made at a -2. If the save fails the victim immediately becomes a Plague Bearer spawn that has all the abilities of the bearer and those the host had in life.

Spell Resistance: Since this creature is magical in nature it has a natural resistance to most spells. However the cure disease spell is damaging to the Plague Bearer. It cannot resist the spell but gets to save normally from it.

If the save fails the Plague Bearer cannot pass its disease for 3 weeks and is placed into a near coma like state.

Black Mantis

By Pat Bellavance

NO. ENCOUNTERED: 1

SIZE: Medium

HD: 7 (d8)

MOVE: 40 ft.; 30 ft. (climb)

AC: 14

ATTACKS: Bite (1d10)

SPECIAL: Hypnotic Gaze,
Poison,

Regeneration, Spit, Twi-
light Vision

SAVES: P

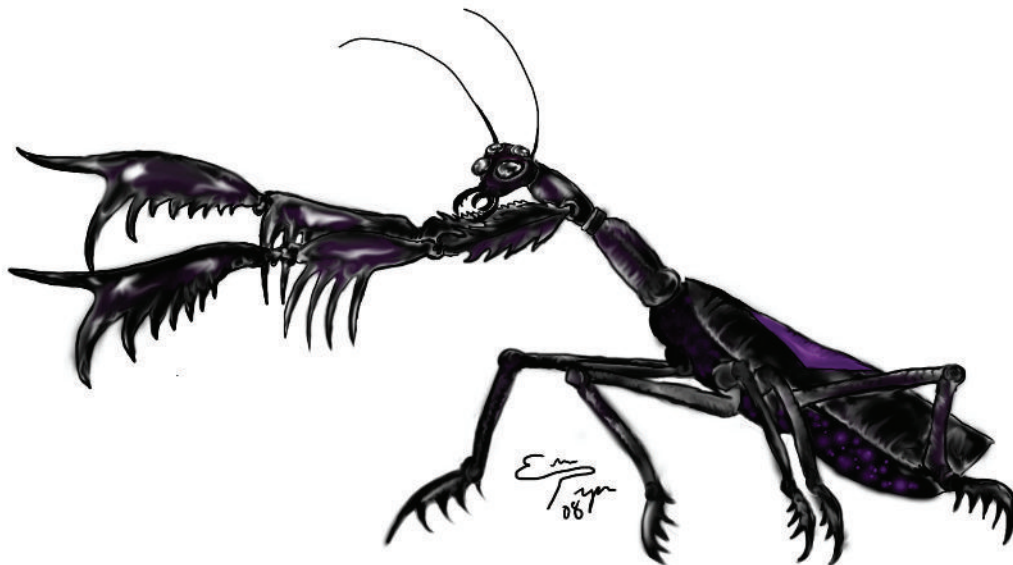
INT: Animal

ALIGNMENT: Neutral

TYPE: Beast

TREASURE: 5

XP: 400 + 7



The Black Mantis is a fearsome creature with an appetite to match. It is large and long creature, averaging 6 to 8 feet in length, with a chitinous skin and twelve legs. It is black but speckled with purple along its abdomen and has a distinctive purple diamond-shaped marking on its back and two pairs of black and highly reflective eyes. The beast kills for the express purpose of feeding but its high metabolism ensures that this creature feeds often seeking the weakest prey first. The Black Mantis will often carry its food back to its lair for consumption.

The creature's lair is most commonly found in thick or damp forests, jungles, or swamps and typically seeks a 'cave-like' structure to make its home. Any treasure the creature might have in its possession are also found within its lair. These would be the discarded possessions of former owners who became another meal. The odds that another Black Mantis occupying the lair is extremely rare, as this creature primarily reproduces asexually and leaves the lair to find a new one once it lays its egg.

Hypnotic Gaze

When encountering this creature, careful attention needs to be made to avoid its gaze. Victims who fall subject to this become fascinated by the creature's eyes as if under the effect of the *Hypnotic Pattern* spell (Wisdom Save to negate). The Black Mantis will take this opportunity to enjoy an easily won meal.

Poison

The bite of a Black Mantis is also highly toxic and anyone bitten by the creature will need to make a save against poison or be paralyzed for 1-4 hours. There are few fates worse than being eaten alive but being unable to do anything about or even scream in agony or terror.

Regeneration

The heightened metabolism of the creature gives it amazing recuperative abilities allow it to regenerate and heal from wounds it may have suffered. It does so at a rate of 2 hit points per round. However, the beast will need to feed within the hour of regeneration or suffer permanent loss of any hit points gained back in this manner. There is no known way to slow or stop this rate of regeneration.

Spit

The Black Mantis also has a form of 'spit' attack. This range of this attack is 30 feet in a direct line. Any creatures hit by this attack is effectively covered with a sticky substance which hinders all movement. The effects are similar to a *Slow* spell and the intended target may make a Dexterity based Save to avoid the attack entirely. This attack can only be performed up to 3 times per day and even then, only once per turn.

Maenayad

By Pat Bellavance

NO. ENCOUNTERED: 1-4

SIZE: Medium

HD: 4 (d12)

MOVE: 30 ft.; 30 ft. (fly)

AC: 14

ATTACKS: 2 Claw (1d6+1)

**SPECIAL: Dark Vision, Rake,
Song of Compulsion.**

Strength Drain

RESISTANCES: See Below

SAVES: P

INT: Very High

ALIGNMENT: Lawful Evil

TYPE: Demon

TREASURE: 1

XP: 120 + 4

This demonic creature resembles a birdlike cross between a humanoid and a bird. They are winged and covered with feathers from head to talon. These demons embody the frenzied excesses of dance, pleasure, and a vindictive spirit. These creatures may only be harmed by magically enchanted weapons and other forms of magic.

Rake

When the creature scores a successful hit by 5 or more, the razor sharp claws inflict an additional 2d6 points along with the regular damage caused. The sort of magical protection conferred by Bracers of Armor or a Ring of Protection negates this additional damage.

Song of Compulsion

If the Maenayad begins to sing, all those within range of the song will be overcome with an uncontrollable urge to dance (Charisma save to negate). All victims who fall under this will begin to dance in a frenzied manner and will do so as long as the demon continues to sing. Those affected will be unable to fight, cast spells, or perform any class abilities or skills while they dance. They additionally suffer a loss of their Dexterity bonus to their Armor Class. The spell is broken if any person in this state suffers damage from an attack.

Strength Drain

For each successful hit landed, there is a chance that strength is sapped away from the victim. The target needs to make a successful Constitution based save to avoid 1 point of Strength loss. For each point drained in this manner, the demon regains 1-4 hit points back in health. If the target falls to 0 Strength, they suddenly fall on the ground dead. For creature who have no rated Strength score, they instead receive a -1 to hit penalty up to the number of hit dice they possess.



Eric Piper
2008

Blldia

By Pat Bellavance

NO. ENCOUNTERED: 1

SIZE: Medium

HD: 5 (d12)

MOVE: 20 ft.

AC: 15

ATTACKS: 2 Claw (1d6), Slam (1d10)

SPECIAL: Spew

SAVES: P

INT: None

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Evil

TYPE: Undead (U)

TREASURE: 1

XP: 160 + 5

A Blldia appears as a putrid and decomposing corpse perpetually covered in slime. This creature is an undead spirit of rage in corporeal form seeking to destroy everything and everyone in its path. Scholars believe that these manifestations were once the souls of those who poisoned the minds of those around them through deeds and words because of envy and jealousy. These emotions for some became a rage that consumed them resulting in this abomination beyond death.

Special Attack: Spew

The creature will spew out a slimy similar to that that coats it. This breath weapon is a cone based attack and has a range of 20 feet. Targets who are subjected to this attack are effectively hindered and suffer a -2 penalty to all saves, their armor class, and to hit for 1d4 turns. A successful save against breath weapons will negate this effect.



DAECON'S SATCHEL

A MAGICAL ITEM BY LES ROUELL

Daecon's satchel is an example of an expertly crafted but mundane item that, through many years of use, by great people, in dangerous and wondrous situations has over time gained magical powers. Outwardly it appears to be nothing more than a large, well made but slightly travel worn satchel. The kind used by traveling scholars. The satchel gives no appearance of it special and magical powers until opened, and the contents are carefully ...looked through.... The satchel is made of finely crafted leather, well tooled in the style of the ... It was originally a light brown color but the years of use have darkened it and worn away some of the finer details of the tooling and scroll work that run along the edges of the leather case.

Daecon's Satchel is of a size that would appear to hold, when opened, two fair sized books, on left half of the satchel. The right half has pouches and compartment to hold a fair amount of small scrolls, goose feather pins, two to three small pots of ink and other writing utensils. The right side also has pockets for loose notes and various bits of paper. The magical abilities of the satchel allow it to hold much more. So much in fact, no one knows the true amount of notes, letters and scrolls contained in the satchel. The two tomes contained in the left half of the satchel are also wondrous never filling despite the over 250 years worth of writing that the two books contain in.

Daecon's Satchel has been in the possession of the Albarno delle Mosche family for at least 6 generations. The Albarno family has, through the last 300+ years, been a major trade family involved in merchant trade, and movement of monies and goods across the (I'm not sure what we are going to call the Mideast-Europe are of the G... world so add what you think is correct). The satchel has passed from one well traveled member of the family to a like minded younger member time and time again. The first holder of the satchel was Daecon Albarno d'Mosche, a younger son of a second wife of Sforza Albarno delle Mosche, the family patriarch. As a youth he was educated as all Albarno children, learning his letters which he excelled at and accounting which he never enjoyed.

Daecon received instruction in the "social graces" which was held in high esteem by all families in the Visconti e Gricea region. He and also learned the more manly arts of sword, riding and warfare all of which though he was not a master of the skills he immensely enjoyed. Upon reaching man hood, as all the most important family positions in the trade company were already filled by his older brothers and others that had married into the family through the numerous Albarno daughters, Daecon was "restricted" to becoming a traveling family member. Daecon was tasked to "assist as your skills allow and as need arises" in one of the numerous family trade caravans. He acted as an inspector of good, scribe while at the trade meetings, currier of notes, letters, and contracts for the family and their allies in trade and war. He at times also acted as the chief of the guards and at times of conflict and war, he became a family condottieri. As a condottieri he lead the guards and fee company soldiers in battles and skirmishes, also scouting new trade routs and clearing the routs, new and old, of marauders, thieves and at time monsters.

After years of traveling and working thusly Daecon had traveled far and wide collecting many bits of knowledge and experiences. He and his free company scouts and guards had rescued various peoples of



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great rank and power. Some of which would one day wield great powers of magic or receive great blessings from the gods they worshiped. Over time the good will of the many great people and the extensive knowledge possessed by Daecon began to affect one of his most prized possessions as master work satchel which had been a gift from Lady Altesa De' Rimini, a wealthy widowed duchess, friend and supposed lover of Daecon. None know exactly when or how the satchel gained power what the gifted power was originally. It was many years after Daecon's death that the wondrous powers of the satchel were known outside of a very few of the closest friends and followers of Daecon.

Upon Daecon's retirement from the works of traveling he passed the satchel to Bruni Satto Albarno d' Mosche, a cousin of Daecon, a close friend and follower for many years. Bruni Satto after many years passed the satchel to Alfonso Daecon's third son, who eventually passed the satchel on. This has continued for over three hundred years. All this time the satchel continues to gain more magical abilities.

The Satchel's Powers

The satchel's powers are many and varied, no one has cataloged the exact extent and limitations of the powers. Here is a list of powers that is "widely" known or at least expected.

First, as mentioned before, the satchel holds a never ending amount of space to store notes papers and writings. The two books in the satchel never fill, there is always room for a letter or scroll, and a place can always be found for a scrap of paper with a quickly jotted note on it. This does not extend to the various other writing material contained in the satchel. Pens must be purchased, ink pots must be refilled etc.

Second, No item carried in the satchel will be damaged as long as it is in the satchel. Over the years this has been tested by mundane and up to a point, magical dangers. Normal fires do no damage to the case even magical fire including fire balls, only slightly singes the leather of the satchel and the damage will fade over time. It is unknown exactly what effect magical fire as strong as Dragon fire will have on the satchel. This protection extends to all forms of damage not just fire. Water will not soak the satchel a fall will break none of the contents.

This magical effect extends to items in the satchel not damaging other items. The ink pots will never spill, the pin knife will never puncture the leather padding or damage a letter. Letters or scrolls will not be crinkled or crushed. Even the wax seals or special tied knots on various official contracts or correspondence will never chip, break or become dislodged.

Third, any item placed in the satchel will be copied when removed from the satchel. This ability does not extend to magical writings i.e. a scroll containing spells will not be copied but notes and theories pertaining to magic will be. This ability works only in a way where that is only 1 copy of an item or the original in the satchel at one time. If a note is removed, causing a copy to be magically created, then the note with more writing is placed back in the satchel the magically produced copy is then removed. This ability only applies to writings and drawings etc, not other items. A flower or other item placed in the satchel will not be magically copied. These copies are exact in content but are not forgeries. Special inks used in the writing of the original will not be duplicated, wax seal will not exist on the duplicate.

The following effects of the satchel are slow to manifest and do not effect the current owner of the satchel instantaneously. The effects will ... different people over various times. In general, any person that has been around a previous owner of the satchel will be the quickest to receive all the benefits rather quickly. Someone with a more scholarly mindset, like a scholar, monk or bard, will gain the benefits after a short learning time. Others that tend to be more brutal, unlearned or barbaric will not receive the benefits for an extended period of time, in theory up to a year.

It is up to the CK/DM/GM to work out their own way to measure and track the time needed to gain the full benefits of the satchel. I suggest something like a "friend and associate" of the previous owner needs to make 4+ 1d4 successful attempts to use the satchel's special powers before they receive the full benefits of the satchel. These attempts will take 1d10 min to complete. A "scholarly" type character i.e. a bard monk or druid etc will need to make 4 + 1d6 attempts taking 30 + 1d20 min per attempt to be considered a "Friend and associate". A learned, knowledgeable, or clever character, a knight, paladin,

cleric or in some cases rogue, will need to 6 + 1d8 attempts taking 1 + 1d4 hours per attempt to be considered a “scholarly” type character. A normal fighter or thief type character will take even longer to gain access to the special powers of the satchel. They will need to successfully complete 10 + 1d10 attempts taking 8 + 1d12 hours per attempt to become a “learned” type of character. A brutal or barbaric type character will normally not attempt to use the satchel however if a player wishes to attempt to gain the benefits of the satchel they must actively attempt to use the satchel for 1d4 months at the end of which they will have “learned to read” then they must make 12 + 1d10 attempts taking 1d4 days to complete to gain the benefits given to a “fighter type”. The time taken in these attempts are spent shuffling through all the various bits of paper letters etc and putting together bits of knowledge contained in different place in the satchel into actual useful knowledge.

The special effects are as follows:

Read & write, a character that does not have the ability to read or write will, over time, gain the ability. The longer the character possesses the satchel the more languages the character will learn.

General Knowledge, The character will have a wealth of knowledge at their finger tips. This will give the character a chance to find a fact about nearly any location in the (I’m not sure what we are going to call the Mid-east-Europe area of the G... world so add what you think is correct). This may be a minor tidbit of news like “Master Aryl serves the best hard apple cider in the valley hamlet of Trantalof” or some grand fact like “on the date of ??? A skirmish was fought between the Knights, scouts ... of the Free Company of the Red Banner and brigands & various monstrous races. The Red Company won the field but their force was greatly weakened by injury and death. Brigands questioned after the skirmish verified their camp was in the ... hills some 2 to 3 days walk from the river Emera. The Camp was never located as the Red Company was needed to relieve the siege of the town Tolton.”

Rumors, Over the years numerous rumors have been recorded and stored in the satchel. These rumors range from “soap operaish” concerning lovers taken husbands cuckooed, etc to stories concerning distant lands. Some of these rumors are true, some are outright lies

and most are falsehoods that are based on some small amount of truth.

Debate, Many of the greatest teachings and speeches from even the ancient teachers are contained in the satchel. From studying these speeches the character slowly learns to “turn a good phrase” and debate ideas. This ability will make the character very useful in a noble’s court or as a chancellor.

Law, Similar to the teaching and speeches there are numerous legal writings contained in the satchel. Knowledge of these writings allow the character to if not act as a true lawyer, at least understand the workings of most local laws.

Healing Arts, The character may not develop the ability to cure the sick but they will have an encyclopedic research source. The character will have at least descriptions of most of the curative (and poisonous) flora and fauna in the area. The character will also have descriptions of common sickness and even wide spread plagues plus ideas on which cures worked. At the very least the character will be able to make an ointment or brew a curative tea. They will also recognize the first signs of most sickness and have the ability to either avoid an area that will soon be over run by plague or if they so desire may assist those in the area to care for the soon to develop numerous sick.

These abilities may at first glance not seem overly important but at the very least there should be numerous hooks for the CK/DM/GM to design adventures from. Used wisely by a player and a CK/DM/GM these abilities could over time make a character one of the most politically savvy and powerful peoples in any area. As with most things there is a down side of possessing the satchel.

First the character using the satchel will slowly appear more “scholarly”. The character will eventually have perpetually ink stained fingers and will somehow have a smudge of ink somewhere on their face no matter how much they attempt to clean or remove the smudges and stains. This might not be a terrible obstacle but it may cause difficulties to a Knight who should have a scribe of their own to do such common tasks as write a letter etc.

The character will also begin to jot down notes of their own to add to the satchel. How do you think all those bits of knowledge, rumors etc were put into the satchel originally. The character will never get to the point of ignoring all around them to catalog the conversations

but if they hear an interesting bit of news they will at the first chance jot it down.

The character will also feel compelled to assist anyone that need a letter carried, a contract delivered or pledge of alliance escorted. The satchel will also prevent the corospondance from being delivered into the “wrong” hands. Through means unknown the satchel can tell if a person offering to take the letter from the satchel owner to the attended recipient will actually attempt to do so and if the attempt will be successful. This has lead to many spies and counterfeiters being unmasked.

The satchel’s current story

Eight years ago the current holder of the satchel and numerous guards, merchants, and travelers were killed in an ambush while crossing the river Ile-de-Luirane in the wild lands between the cities of Todi, and Cortona. The merchant train was eventually able to fight off the ambushers but at the loss of much life and the scattering of many of the pack animals. The pack horse carrying the satchel was found downstream dead, either from drowning in the swift water, or from bleeding to death from it’s numerous wounds. The baggage the horse carried was lost and none know if the baggage was taken in the attack, scattered in the surrounding woods or lost in the river. Three of the five surviving Albarno kinsmen in the merchant train begaain searching for the satchel after the trade goods and pack animals were recovered. They, to this time, have been uneseful in finding the satchel and have quietly contracted adventures to assist in recovering the satchel.

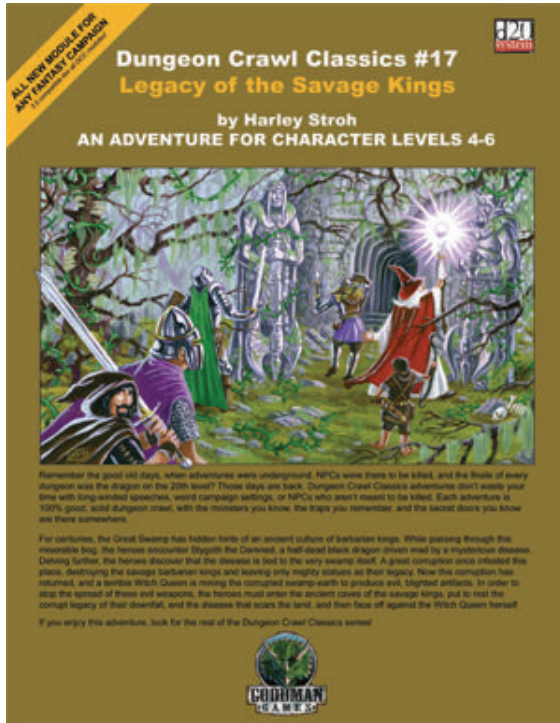
Word of the satchels loss has slowly spread and as a result many trade families, nobles, spies, scholars and others that have sent letters with the Albarno holding the satchel have also began looking. Anyone that finds the satchel and poses it long enough to begin mining the information contained in the satchel will eventually uncover many secrets that someone somewhere would prefer to keep.



The Campaign Log

“Legacy of the Savage Kings” Part III

By Lawrence Ore (aka JediOre)



The guys begin working on an answer to the riddle, when Trevor simply blurts out “death!” and bang the three PCs standing in the circumference of the torc become gaseous.

The find the dragon’s horde and read the letter of the dead cleric. They are now primed to head out towards the “other log bridge.”

By now its midnight and I end the game. We are all wiped out but had a blast.

Next week Ragnar1965 and myself are sharing a hotel room in Nebraska as we get training on a new computer system. His dwarf, halfling, druid, monk, and the “red-shirts” will continue this module in the evenings after the training sessions.

1. The party went back to all Ragnar1965's PCs:

Dwarven fighter 6th level
Halfling thief 6th level

Human cleric 5th level
Human druid 5th level
Human monk 5th level
2 1st level fighter "red-shirts"

The party left the "dragon hole" and returned to the fork-in-the-island. They walked right into the lizardmen's trap.

The dwarf, the monk, and one of the red-shirts fell into the water. Both the dwarf and the man-at-arms sank straight to the bottom. The druid used his wolf spear to snag one of the nets and yank it away from the lizardmen. The halfling pulled out her magic short sword and, yelling at the top of her lungs, leapt onto the other lizardman with the net, using her blade to "stabilize" her landing. She hit him and did big damage. The other man-at-arms used his long spear to reach out to his fellow "red shirt." Both of the men-at-arms were of no use in this fight. Neither was the dwarf. He struggled to push along to the island and crawl out onto dry ground. He ended up tired, smelly, and out of breath.

Thus the fight came down to a druid on the log, a monk swimming among the lizardmen, and a lady hobbit using her +2 short sword with wild abandon. Since the druid used his spear to snag one of the nets he put it aside and cast *magic stone* on three pebbles. Over the course of the next three rounds, the druid missed with every stone. The hobbit stabbed her opponent to death and fell into the water. Ragnar1965 was quite clear that the little thief held on to her blade with everything she had. The monk and two lizardmen went toe-to-toe in the water. He lost a lot of hit points, but his ability to use his hands for damage in the water won the day for him. The smallest lizardmen swam away and the party let him go. They were glad no one got drowned. I can't remember who helped the halfling out of the mire. Either the monk swam to her or one of the men-at-arms used their long spear as a "life line" to her.

The party, led by an angry dwarf, crossed over to the main area. They found the ancient archway, but none could read the hieroglyphs. They opted not to enter the archway yet but to continue to explore. They find an opening that lead to the lair of a

large creature. Further in the cave a small pool extended into the darkness and a single, mostly submerged, log floated forlornly at the edge of the torch light. The druid inspects the pool to see if the water might be suitable for bathing since most of them reek of swamp mud and lizard-men. The druid wades into the water and notices fish oil. He also realizes this water is somewhat foul as well and not really of bathing quality. The druid also notices the log is drifting closer. Since he is a druid, and the C&C Player's Handbook says druids have nature lore, I ruled he realized the danger and carefully backed out, motioning the others to move back. He said nothing until he was out of the water and they ran out. This monster croc measures over 30-foot.

The PCs decide that this is a dead end and return to the archway. In they go. They became introduced to the inhabitants of the dark corridor beyond the arch way. The halfling feels something pass by her and that something removed a bit of her "vitality."

Now you got to understand Ragnar1965's reaction to undead. Me, I'm spooked by 'em. Others I've known will run the moment they appear, or they unload everything they got at them in hopes of a quick victory. Ragnar1965 ALWAYS gets angry! He'll spend a minute or two griping about undead. I've

not seen such a reaction in a player before. So, while bitter words about "unfair" and "hate" are cast about dice are rolled in an attempt to remove this foul things from this plane of existence. The monk gets hit two times and two

points of strength are extracted. It's kinda fun to make him sweat about this loss, but he gets too hot around the collar to say much when it comes to undead.

Anyway, the PCs arrive at the "gate."

Ragnar1965 ponders this gate for a while. He has the party leave the room and has the dwarf use his deep-vision to look into the holes through the 'doors'. He sees a small anti-chamber beyond.

Ragnar1965 ponders more. He decides to stick the druid's arm into the hole, but at the last moment he changes his mind and has one of the men-at-arms poke his long spear through instead, all the while the dwarf watches using his dark-vision.

Scratch one spear. The dead fall trap removes the spear from play. We both agreed this was the better loss.



Ragnar1965 decides to have the party hole up here for the night so the druid can choose new spells and the party can heal for the night. He figures nothing will come here since it was the lair of some kind of undead.

I use this as a stopping point for the night since it was almost 9:45 pm.

2. Monday night's game session part 1:

As an aside, Ragnar1965 really enjoyed the Embassy Suites' Patty melt sandwich. He said it was great! He ate one almost every night.

The druid memorized *Animal Friendship* in hopes of enlisting the aid of the large crocodile. He also memorized *Hold Animal* in the event things didn't go as planned.

The party picked up two dead kobolds the PCs killed on the way back to the arch (I forgot to mention the patrol of 5 kobolds in my last report). The druid entered the crocodile's lair with the carcasses. He placed the dead kobolds at the water's edge and waited for the animal to take the offering. This is the first part of casting *Animal Friendship*. The crocodile approached and took the bait. The spell was cast and the save was made (I rolled a 19). What a bummer. I thought it would be cool to have such a companion for the druid, but that's the way it went. Ragnar1965 was even more disappointed than me. He had ideas of using the crocodile in the assault of the fort!

Plan B was put into place. Ragnar1965 had the druid cast *Hold Animal* and the other PCs rush into the room to attack the beast before it got too far into the water and became even more dangerous. The crocodile failed its save on the *Hold Animal* and for 5 rounds it was unable to move. That was more than enough time for the dwarf with his great axe and the cleric with his two-handed sword to cut its head off.

Thus the party eliminated another tough opponent with little effort! Curses!!

3. [Ragnar1965's thoughts: I am disappointed in the lack of summoning spells [for druids] in C&C. What I really like to do with my druid is flood the room with whatever animals that the druid sees fit. Nothing more fun than throwing 3 or 4 brown bears out to keep the bad guys occupied. Once the bears are on the mobs, cast *web* with my wizard or entangle with my Druid depending on the situation. Fight is pretty much over. In 3.5, *Summon Natures Ally* can be cast spontaneously (just the CLW for a good aligned cleric).



It's true that the druid has been instrumental in the party's success so far. Jury is still out. Doesn't really matter though, cause I'm trading in redshirts for a 5th level wizard anyway.]

4. Monday evening continued:

The party waded through the crocodile's watery lair. I asked Ragnar1965 if he was prepared for any threats but he said no. Nothing else is going to be in the water with such a monster so they moved through quickly. The tunnel forked and he had them take the western tunnel. After traveling along in the murky water, the party came to a landing. The landing is man-made. Ragnar1965 is sure this links up with the large double doors they had seen earlier. At the south end of this underground landing/room a flight of grandiose stone stairs leads upwards. With the dwarf in the lead and the druid with a torch, up the party goes.

About mid-way up the dwarf can see the shadowy shapes of large barrels resting at the top of the stairs. I remember seeing the puzzled look on Ragnar1965's face. Immediately the dwarf recognizes two lizardmen behind the barrels. The dwarf begins charging up the stairs. The lizardmen overturn the barrels and rank smelling

fish oil spills down the stairs and covers the feet of the party. The rest of the party then sees a light torch tossed from the top of the stairs tumbling end over end in a graceful arc to land in the midst of the party. The oil bursts into flame!

The party is undeterred by this tactic and climbs the steps through the flame. The dwarf is up the same round the oil ignited so only took one round of damage. Initiative is rolled and the dwarf, much to Ragnar1965's delight, scored high. Thirteen lizardmen wait in the room at the top of the stairs. The dwarf is out numbered, but in true dwarven fashion, goes in swinging with his great axe. The next round the halfling, cleric, and druid press through the fire and enter the room. They each have had two rounds of fire damage and are not in top health (except the hobbit thief as I rolled poorly on her damage). The lizardmen focus attacking the yelling dwarf and the human cleric with the two-handed blade completely ignoring the hobbit. That changed after the lizardmen saw the damage the thief was doing with her quickened magic short sword. The lizardmen delivered a severe beating to the party.

By the end of round two the cleric had single digit hit points and one of the men-at-arms had succumbed to the fire damage. Round three had the monk and the remaining man-at-arms entering the room. After three rounds of fire damage, both were hurt badly. The monk engaged the lizardmen attacking the cleric to give the cleric cover. Richard, the man-at-arms, went completely defensive and tried to attract the opponents to attack him.

The druid and the monk couldn't hit the side of a barn in this fight. However, it would seem the dice understood the dwarf had much pent up rage from the humiliation at the log bridge. He was a wrecking machine. Lots of damage in the teens range. Keep in mind that although the dwarven fighter is 6th level, in Castles and Crusades, he still only gets one attack around. By the end of the battle, all the lizardmen were dead, one of the men-at-arms (Monte the Moor) was at -9 hit points, and two of the PCs were in

the negative hit point range. (I think it was the druid and the monk but Ragnar1965 may remember it better.)

All in all this was the most difficult fight the party had encountered so far. This fight displayed the faster rounds that Castles and Crusades has. It had the very same feel that first edition AD&D fights had: quick and intense. Very little time was spent in figuring out how to best use the rules of combat to maximize bonuses. I loved it. It took ten rounds of combat after the dwarf rolled for initiative and about 15 minutes. In Third edition, this fight would have been over around round six as multiple attacks and cleave would have come into play. However, I think the fight would have lasted longer in real world time by roughly 30 to 45 minutes.

Watch for part IV of this Campaign Journal in coming issues!



The Secret of Red Rock Hill

A Fantasy Adventure for *Labyrinth Lord*

by John “Sir Seskis” Wright

Intended of 4-6 Characters of Levels 1-2

“The Secret of Red Rock Hill” is designed as a one-shot mini-adventure for the *Labyrinth Lord* RPG rules, but is easily adaptable by several other systems, including C&C, Basic Fantasy RPG, or even classic Basic/Expert D&D.

This adventure only requires a location that is an isolated hill, somewhere near a town, city or center of population in a campaign, but far enough that it exists somewhat on the borderlands between the civilized area and the wilds.

For the *Labyrinth Lord*:

The “Hole in the Rock Gang” is a group of mercenaries and thieves who have endeavored to take all the profit they can from merchant caravans and traders coming to and from the nearby points of civilization. For years they used a clearing in the deeper part of the woods N of here as their base, but then one day Gork, a dirty young rascal in the group, stumbled on a somewhat barren hill marked with a single large rock atop it. Gork discovered a cave that gave way to a small, narrow passage that led deeper into the earth. Thinking they’re might be some treasure or at least some “shiny rocks,” he plunged bravely (but recklessly!) into the darkness, only to hear the sound of water. Discovering very little in the way of monsters (luckily for Gork), he made his way to a chamber through which flowed an underground river. Upon returning to the gang’s hideaway, Gork informed Rocko the Red about his discovery. Rocko thanked Gork, then ran him through with his broad sword (Rocko wanted his gang to think the caves were HIS discovery). And so Rocko moved the gang to the caves, named the hill “Red Rock Hill” after himself, and found the source miles to the NW of the river – giving a quick

and easy escape route through the dark river for his raiders to bring their booty. Rocko also has infused, with the help of one of his spell-casters, local belief that some “monster” lives in the upper cave, using the “fear” of this monster to scare off young adventurers (like the unfortunate Gork before).

The Player’s party could be hired by a nearby town or entity to explore the cave and take care of “the monster,” or could be hired by merchants who want them to track the bandits (Rocko’s gang) who have been bedeviling their caravans.

Around the Red Rock Hill

The lands around the Hill are not inhabited save for natural animals and a few stray monsters. The only “civilized” presence is found in a few hearty Elves, who actually have a good idea what’s going on at the Hill but don’t really care. If the Players explore the lands around, they should find low rolling hills except for the slightly larger Red Rock Hill, small forested areas and lots of low brush. For every hour the group explores the area around the Hill, there is a 10% cumulative chance per each hour that they run into a wandering monster (use the “Grassland” table on page 104 of the LL Rules, except replace “Halfling” with “Elf”). If the Party encounters one of the area’s Elven inhabitants, and combat doesn’t ensue (the Elf will attempt to escape into the trees and brush), there is a 50% chance they can get the Elf to discuss the Hill and he will tell them “No monster resides therein – there be a foul cabal of men, halflings and orcs – they hide there with what they take from others.” The Elf will then take his leave of the Players.

The Red Rock Hill

The cave is on the NE slope of the hill, with some cut shelves of rock surrounding the opening and a few trees that partially obscures the opening.

NOTE: The direction of up or down with contour shelves on the map is indicated by the curvature

– the “outward” bow indicates the direction of “down” through-out the cave system.

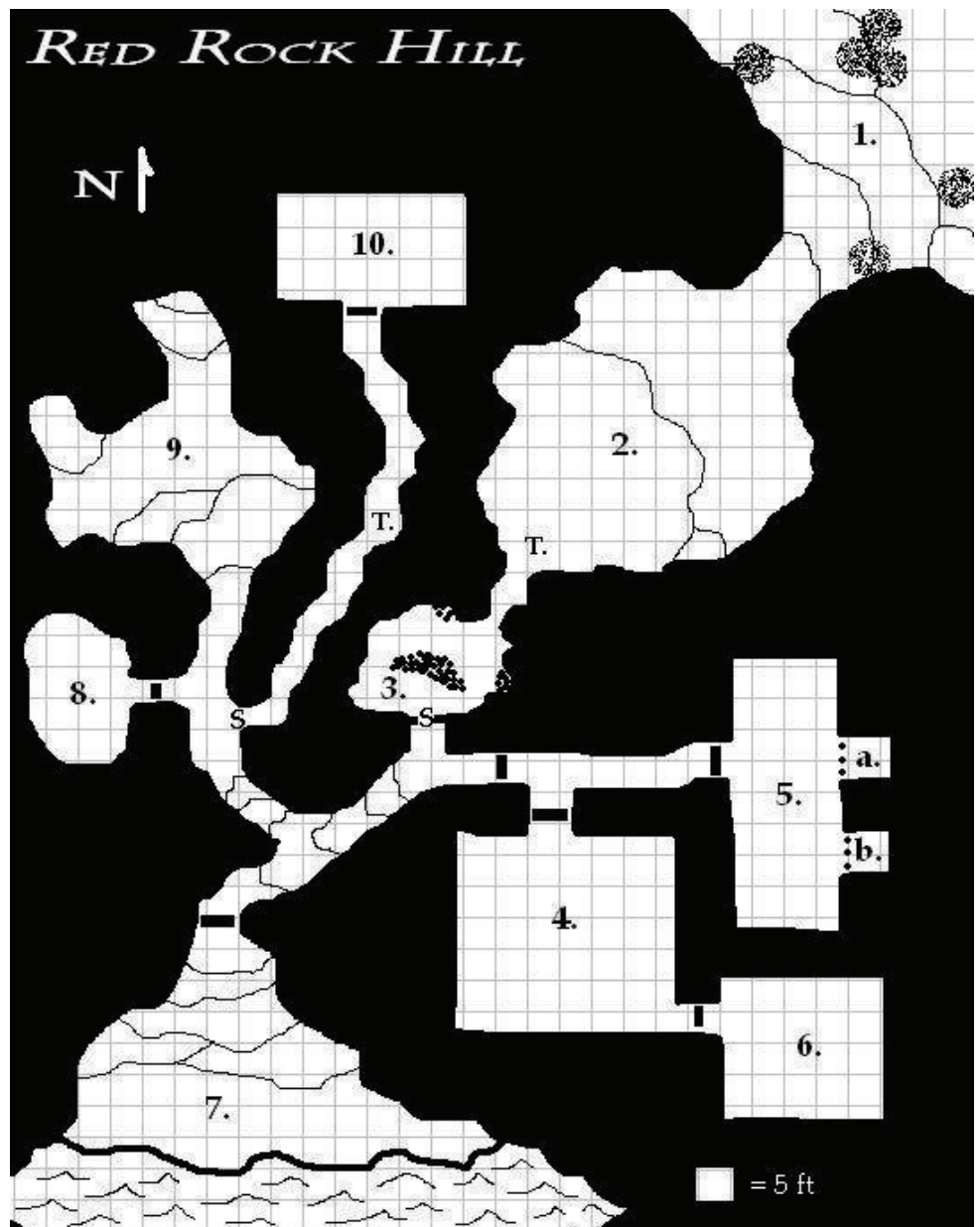
1. Cave Entrance – Several low shelves step up at 3-4’ heights toward the cave entrance. The ground is covered in loose dirt and pebbles, which are especially dense near the top-most shelf (the Hole in the Rock Gang has added pebbles and little rocks). Two Halfling Sentries are hiding in nooks of trees, armed with short bows. If the players are reckless on approach to the cave, the 1st sentry will use a wooden duck-call to signal the guards in #3. The two sentries will then wait for the party to reach the loose dirt and pebbles shelf and attack. The nature of the slippery surface will add a 1 to AC for the characters until they either go in the cave or step down to the lower shelves in front of the cave. *Sentries* (2) [AL C, MV 90’ (30’), AC 7, HD 1, #AT 1, DG 1d6 (Shortbow), SV H1] Each: Shortbow, 8 arrows in quiver, small pouch (4d6 CP)

2. Open Cave – This roughly 2500 sq. foot area is a natural cave, worn through time by water and wind that have swept in from weather from the outside.

On entering the cave, the characters will see something “move” to the N, and will see what appears to be a rather larger than normal Owl Bear shambling towards them, claws and teeth menacingly exposed. Astute party members may notice there is no noise associated with this creature, and those attacking will quickly find the im-

age is an illusion designed to frighten those who retreat from the ambush into the cave to exit quickly, but is not the most convincing of illusions if the players are able to pause and engage it fully. The source of the illusion is a small rock that glows just slightly amidst a small pile of rocks against the N center wall of the cave. Smashing the rock with a blunt weapon removes the illusion permanently.

The wide shelf cutting through the middle of the room steps up approximately 4 feet, and charac-



ters (especially shorter ones). Any character wearing armor of 30 lbs or more must make a DEX check or they will lose their grip while climbing it, thus falling backwards and making a helluva racket. If a character falls, there is a chance the Guards at #3 below will be alerted. After climbing the shelf, the players will see the SW corner of the cave narrow to a crevice leading away from the main cave. Rocko has set a trap here, a trip-wire covered with dirt across the crevice path about 5' from where it narrows. Any character tripping the wire will cause a well-disguised cage above to open, dumping several Spitting Cobras unto those characters in a 10' radius below. *Spitting Cobras* (1d6+1) [AL N, MV 90' (30'), AC 7, HD 1, AT 1 (bite or spit), DG 1d3 (poison), SV F1]. To the S end there is a small secondary shelf that, if spotted in the darkness, makes climbing easier.

3. Guard Alcove – Five guards are stationed here. They are almost always bored, and usually are playing cards or throwing dice and gambling with their small collection of copper and silver pieces. They do not pay attention or utilize their defenses properly unless they have heard the duck-call warning from the sentries outside or the sounds of the party in #2 above. Luckily for players, the guards are not the most astute listeners. There is only a 25% chance they will have heard the duck-call warning, likely missing it as someone was yelling “com'on snaak eyes!!!” General reaction or “combat” with the illusion in area #2 is even less likely to bring notice (10% chance), while each character falling has a 40% chance to alert the guards. If the trap is sprung, the battle with snakes carries an 80% chance the 1st round of combat, a 90% chance the 2nd round, and 100% chance thereafter. If alerted, they quickly drop their gambling and use the piled barricade of rubble to prepare to defend. One, Mlack the Halfling, exits to warn Rocko and shuts the S door. The other four will prepare for battle, readying crossbows for assault. If the players manage to reach the room

unnoticed, Rocko will not be alerted, and all five will be surprised in the middle of a round of gambling. They have their edged weapons fairly handy, but will not have the cover of the rubble. However, Mlack will be in the battle here then. If using the rubble barricade, the four guards will have a -2 to their ACs from the cover until a player moves around the obstruction. Guards: *Torbo* the Orc [AL C, MV 120' (40'), AC 6, HD 1, AT 1, DG 1d6 (light crossbow or short sword), SV F1], *Rand* (Human Fighter 1) [AL N, MV 90' (30'), AC 6 (Studded Leather), AT 1, DG 1d4 (dagger), 1d8 (Heavy X-Bow), SV F1], *Glun* the Dwarf [AL N, MV 60' (20'), AC 4, HD 1, AT 1, DG 1d6 (Hand Axe or Light X-Bow), SV D1], *Astria* (Female H Fighter 1) [AL C, MV 90's (30'), AC 7 (Leather Armor), HD 1, AT 1, DG 1d4 (Dagger), 1d6 (Light X-Bow), SV F1]. If *Mlack* the Halfling is here [AL C, MV 90' (30'), AC 7, HD 1, AT 1, DG 1d6 (Short sword only), SV H1]. Treasure: 1 Leather Armor, 1 Studded Leather armor, 1 dwarf splint male; weapons as listed; pile of loot being gambled over: 27 SPs, 35 CPs, 2 GPs. If the party does not find the S door and heads back out, about an hour later 2 *Orc Guards* from the Barracks at #4 come out to check on what's happened, leaving the door slightly ajar.

NOTE: Inside the rest of the cave complex, there are no wandering monsters, but if the party attempts to rest in any room without the whole of the hideaway being secured, they will be discovered and attacked by ½ the remaining Gang members from all rooms.

All doors are heavy wooden doors, but only the entrances to #6 and #10 are locked.

4. General Barracks – This 30x30 room holds barrack beds for the Orc and Halfling thugs that are the “muscle” for the Hole in the Rock Gang. There are beds for about 14 creatures here. Currently there are 6 Orcs (4 if 2

have gone to check on #3 above) and 5 Halflings. Orcs (4 or 2) [AL C, MV 120' (40'), AC 6, HD 1, AT 1, DG 1d6 (half w/spear, half w/short sword), SV F1], *Halflings* (5) [AL N, MV 90' (30'), AC 7, HD 1, AT 1, DG 1d4 (3 w/slugs), 1d4 (3 w/daggers). Treasure: In various pouches and under ratty mattresses – 40 CPs, 2d8+1 SPs, 2d10+2 GPs, 2 Gems (10, 25 GP value), 1 silver spoon (17 SP value). Around the neck of one of the Halflings is the key to #6 on a tied cord. Under one mattress the party will also find a “pulp” Adventure/Romance novel in common titled “The Days and Nights of Scum Gutar the Rogue.”

5. The Gaol and Armory – The Gaol and Armorer for the Gang is a rather irritable Bugbear named Thruluk. He commands the long chamber, which has two cells on the eastern wall, mostly empty racks on the north wall, and a (currently) cold firing stove and smithy crammed into the southern end of the chamber. The room reeks with the smell of smoke, even though no fire is present now. Thruluk sits with his large legs propped up on the creaky wooden table in the center of the room, and will be whittling away at his dirty fingernails and claws with a dagger, muttering in a guttural version of common, “damnn dirty elvisheess..... gooky green bloodesses makesss the claws too sticky....!!” He will be surprised and not happy to see the PCs. *Thruluk the Bugbear* [AL C, MV 90' (30'), AC 5, HD 3+1, AT 1, DG 2d4 (Claw) or 1d8+1 (Heavy Flail), SV F3]. Treasure: Thruluk has his flail, a flag-on of pretty poor wine and a block of cheese, a rusty dagger, a pouch with 1d8+2 GPs, and a key that opens the Cells. The PCs will also find on his pinky finger a small ring with an elvish rune for “S.” The weapons racks will have 2 Short Swords, 6 Spears, 2 Small Wooden Shields, 1 Short Bow, 1 Long Sword and 2 Hand Axes.

Cells:

- A. The remains of an elf, recently ripped to shreds, are found piled in this cell. Apparently this elf made Thruluk mad. The ring Thruluk had belonged to him, and the party

could sell it or perhaps attempt to return it to the elf's family in the near woods.

- B. The 2nd Cell holds a live occupant, albeit one in very poor shape. It is a young human male, emaciated to the point of looking skeletal. He wears only filthy, smelly rags, and is drifting in and out of consciousness. If restored and helped, he will identify himself as “Garan,” son of a wealthy merchant from nearby town or city, and ask that the party help him, with the promise of some reward from his father (the father deals in armor and will give a 40% discount to the party on all armors excluding banded or plate mails should they return the son to him alive).



Searching the forge will find 2 strips of silver (2 GPs each) and one of Platinum (13 GPs) stacked in a small coffer under the heavy iron works.

6. Larder – The main larder and storeroom for the Gang, this 23x25 room contains kegs of water, wine and ale, as well as shelves and boxes full of salted meats, hardened breads, cheeses, smoked sausages, etc. The room is slightly cooler than the rest of the complex. The water is dirty but not foul, the wines are inferiors, but the ales are actually quite good. The meats are mostly good, but the cheeses are not the best. There is also a box containing several flasks of oil (3), 2 torches, 30' of rope, 4 iron spikes, and a flint and steel set. The cooling effect comes from the underground river passing under the SE part of the chamber. Indeed, the 5'x5' SE corner has become brittle, and anyone wearing armor over 150 lbs. has a 50% chance of causing the floor to collapse into the flowing river below. A DEX save will be needed or the individual will be carried downstream for miles.

7. The River Landing – Two of Rocko's Human Thieves are overseeing 2 Halflings and 2 Orcs unloading a barge of loot here. The river flows in from the W and exits to the E, and there are two wooden logs secured along the edge to which the thieves' barges can be tied (there are 2 here now, one empty, the other being unloaded). The crew will not like being interrupted, however only the Humans are armed – the others will scramble to find implements to use as weapons. *Human Thieves* (2 Level 2) [AL N, MV 90' (30'), AC 6 (Studded Leather), HD 2, AT 1, DG 1d4 (1 dagger, 1 w/darts), SV T2). After 1 rd, the Halflings and Orcs will pick up various pieces of crates or wood

and use as clubs. *Orcs* [as in area #4 above, except DG 1d4], *Halflings* [as in area #4, except DG 1d4]. If the battle goes badly, one or more of these may try to flee by diving onto the barge and attempting to untie it and flee down the underground river. Treasure: Roll 2 Hoard Classes for the Room – 1 HC IV and 1 HC V.

NOTE: The underground river begins above ground and enters a cave some 7 miles NW of the hill, then exits under a low hill 5 miles directly E of Red Rock. In both places, the Gang has set shrubs and greenery around the area to obscure how large the underground waterway is.

8. Malek and Thon's Chamber – Malek and Thon are Rocko's "magical" hands. Malek is a Human MU and Thon is a Cleric. They share this chamber, which includes their beds and work tables. On Malek's table are the scratchy remains of a rare illusion spell scroll that he purchased to create the Owl Bear illusion in the cave, and he has obviously been trying to recreate it without success. His spell book with Sleep, Magic Missile, Floating Disk, Shield, and Detect Magic is here as well. Thon's table contains a mortar and pestle, and he will appear to have been crushing some bone marrow and teeth to make some form of horrid paste. If no warning was received, both will be here. If the alert was sounded, they will be with Reggish and Movar at area #9 protecting the main loot. *Malek* (Human MU 2) [AL N, MV 120' (30'), AC 10, HD 2, #AT 1, DG 1d4 (Dagger), SV MU 2, Spells: *Magic Missile*, *Sleep*]; *Thon* (Cleric 2) [AL C, MV 90' (30'), AC 7, HD 2, #AT 1, DG 1d6 (Morning Star), SV C 2, Spells: *2 Cure Light Wounds*]. Treasure (In room regardless of location of Malek and Thon): Roll 1 HC IV, 1 HC VIII.

9. Main Chamber – This chamber serves as the main room for the Hole in the Rock Gang.

Wide shallow shelves lead down to a central area which is dominated by a long wooden table around which the leaders of the Gang feast and enjoy their spoils. A slap-shod “throne” for Rocko is set at the N center of the table. The table itself is covered in half-eaten meats, fruits, breads and cheeses, and wine glasses and ale mugs line the places – the gang doesn’t clean much or often. Two rich piles of silks and fabrics make beds on both the E and W walls, one each for Reggish and Movar, Rocko’s two principle thieving partners. Both will be here, relaxing and drinking if not alerted, ready and backed up by Malek and Thon if they are aware of the party. *Reggish* (Halfling 2) [AL N, MV 90’ (30’), AC 6 (Studded Leather), HD 2, #AT 1, DG 1d6 (short bow) 1d4 (Dagger), SV T2], *Movar* (Human Thief 2) [same as Reggish]. Treasure: Roll 4 Hoard Classes for the room: 1 HC IV, 1 HC VI, 1 HC VII, and 1 HC IX (these are in the two alcoves). NOTE: Most of this is loot taken from area merchants. If the party has any obligation to area merchants, or has any contact with the same, they will certainly want some of their losses returned to them. The LL should determine these negotiations/demands as suits the game at hand. The silks and fabrics could be sold for approximately 20 GPs altogether.

10. Rocko’s Chamber – Whether alerted or not, Rocko remains in his room, hidden both by S and by secured door. There is a trap half-way up the hallway to #10, which if not found and disarmed will drop rocks along a 20’ section, each of about 10 lbs., onto the heads of intruders, causing 2d4 damage each. If Rocko is alerted, he will have locked the door and him inside with the key, meaning the party will have to pick the lock or bust in the door. If he is not alerted, it will be closed but not locked. The room itself is 30x18, and sports an elegant bed, a marble bath, an ornate dresser filled with magnificent clothes, a marble statue that is one of Rocko’s prized possessions, and a large locked chest for his personal stash. There is a

locked and secured trap door on the floor at the foot of the bed, which can only be opened with Rocko’s key. Rocko is splashed with psoriasis, giving large red ink-blot across his face, neck and arms (hence his nickname!). Whether he is alerted or not, he will be sitting on the bed. He will act mildly surprised either way, but not attack, “pretending” instead to offer to give everything if the party lets him leave and live. He even offers the key to the his “real stash” under the secret floorboard, and warns the party that he is capable of killing “at least two of you before you get me...” His real goal is to get them to accept the key, let him leave, and he will wait to come back in and ambush from behind as they discover his “under the floor” stash is really a rather nasty Gray Ooze that lines the chamber around some faux stacks of coins. *Rocko* (Human Thief 3) [AL N, MV 90’ (30’), AC 5 (Studded Leather Armor, Small Shield), HD 3, #AT 1, DG 1d4+1 (Dagger +1), SV T 3]; *Gray Ooze* (1) [AL N, MV 10’ (3’), AC 8, HD 3, #AT 1, DG 2d8, SV F2]. Treasure: Key on silver chain around Rocko’s neck (opens both chest and floor), possessions of room (if moved and sold valued at 80 GPs), statue (very heavy and hard to move – 200 lbs, but worth 40 GP if intact and sold). The chest is trapped with a *poison dart trap* (DG 1d4 plus save vs. poison) that must be detected and disarmed even if the players have the key. Inside, the LL needs to roll 1 HC VI for Rocko’s private stash. The “faux” coins in the floor chamber are just painted wooden chips, quite worthless. Rocko also has a Ring of Protection +1 and a Potion of Extra Healing.

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Rules are Meant to be Broken

By Rusty Schafer

I've been playing tabletop role-playing games since 1987. In my early days of gaming, I spent a lot of time memorizing and placing a great deal of importance on the rules. The first game I really got into was AD&D, and I remember knowing exactly how every spell worked, every situational combat modifier, all the racial level limits, etc... and boy did I ever enforce them! I could DM an entire session without my rule books. Years later, I look back and realize I could have had a lot more fun.

Don't get me wrong, I have the fondest memories of my teenage gaming days. Back then, we toppled kingdoms and challenged the gods themselves. How much more fun would it have been if my best friend's Elven Mage could have advanced to 20th level like the rest of the party? I wonder if he would have cast more interesting spells than Magic Missile, Sleep, and Fireball if he didn't have to pick which ones he memorized each day. Wouldn't that battle against the dragon have been more cinematic if I'd have let him clumsily wield the Fighter's magical sword after the warrior was felled?

These days, I enjoy the game more for the stories we tell than properly adjudicating an attack from a character on horseback who's stunned and fighting with a weapon they aren't proficient in. Being a working professional with wife and child, I don't have the rules to the games I play memorized anymore. So, do I look them up when I don't know them? Not usually! I make them up!

In my experience, the average player doesn't know the rules well... or even care to. They just want the GM to tell them what they need to roll to accomplish some cool action they have in their heads. Rather than bog down play by looking up each rule, I use the following guidelines. These are generic and work for just about any system:

Treat creative maneuvers in combat as an attack and let the player roll with a penalty of 20% of the highest possible roll. So, for a D20 based game apply a -4 penalty, for a percentile based game apply a +20, and so on. Creative maneuvers include actions such as disarming, hitting a specific weak spot on an opponent, aiming for a body part, and cutting away worn objects such as belt pouches.

For combat advantages such as higher elevation, greater visibility and so on, have your players add a bonus to their attack roll of 10% of the highest possible roll. The opposite applies for a combat disadvantage.

When a player attempts something for which he lacks training or proficiency, simply give them a 5% chance! That's rolling a 20 on a d20 in AD&D.

When a player is engaged in the game and tries to do something that makes sense roll with it! For example, in an AD&D game I DM'd recently a player was attacked by a wave of giant rats. He wanted to make a great swing with his sword and fend off several of them at once. While the rules stated he only had one attack that round, I ruled that he could take a -4 on his rolls and make attacks against the four rats immediately in front of him. When a player asks to do something that a rules system either doesn't cover or prohibits, find a way to say, "Yes, you have to roll a..."

These are just a few of the tricks I use to keep the game flowing. The biggest thing to remember is that the most important role of a GM is to provide an environment where the players can create memorable stories. Of course, they need not all be good stories! Muahahaha!

Until next time...may your GM's screens be tall and your dungeons impregnable.

Passing the Torch: Game Mastering for Very Young Gamers

By Eric “Piperdog” Piper

In the last few years, it has been a very rewarding experience for me to pass on my love of fantasy role-playing games to my children and their friends. Playing various pen and paper games for the last twenty-three years has left me in a pretty jaded state. My regular gaming group is quite the same. Oh, we have fun, don't get me wrong. It just seems that we struggle, especially in our middle years, to recapture that feeling we had when we were kids and first broke open that Basic D&D boxed set. Back then, just outfitting your character, looking at the items to buy for your adventure, was awesome fun! Now, to have any kind of thrill, we have to have complex cultures, political subplots, multiple story arcs, and the latest in game system mechanics to even begin to enjoy ourselves. No matter how hard we try, though, it seems that myself, and those in our gaming group, can't recapture that wide-eyed wonder we had so many years ago. Then I found the secret. The best way to relive that moment again, to recapture that spark that made us fall in love with gaming in the first place, is to share it with very young gamers, from five to eight years of age.

I introduced my oldest son, now thirteen, to gaming when he was six. I remember the day. At that phase in my life, gaming was a thing of the past. All my gaming buddies had moved away, and I was a young father working my tail off to provide for the family. I broke out some old Dungeons and Dragons books from the basement and made a character for him. We sat down and I began telling him the story. When we got to an orc encounter....well; I must have set the mood too well. He started crying and ran

out of the room, to which my wife immediately wanted to know what tomfoolery I did to cause this.

It's hard to believe that same little boy is now a thirteen year old football player that looks me straight in the eye already! Since he has started playing with the adults in our regular Castles and Crusades group, I have found that my ten year old son and my five year old daughter wanted to play as well. Of course, I agreed to start a special campaign just for them, with my daughter's age especially in mind. Once we began play, I expected my daughter to become quickly bored, not understand the mechanics, and wander off. As everyone in the family knows, she is incredibly intelligent for her age, but has the attention span of squirrel. She amazed me in that she not only enjoyed it, but she understood it. Now, they beg me to play....every day. I never thought I would be using gaming as a lever to get my children to do their chores!

For those of you who want to recapture the spirit of your gaming childhood, or would like to share your love of role-playing games with a future generation, there are a few hard and fast rules you need to follow. For the parents out there, this may seem like common sense, but for those who will be game mastering for their nephews, nieces, or younger siblings, the following tips may be very useful and save you from pulling out your hair or deliberately jamming a pencil in your eye.

Short Attention Spans = Even Shorter Adventures

Children have very short attention spans. It is very difficult to hold their interest for any length of time, so make sure adventures are ridiculously short. You need to do away with mega dungeons and hundreds of miles of cross country exploration. I found that an entire adventure, from the beginning introduction to the exciting finale and wrap-up, should be around 45 minutes to an hour at the very most.

Bedtime Story Voice

This may be tough for some of you who are not parents, but believe me, children respond incredibly well to you when you narrate the story in a very animated way. Remember the voice and mannerisms of your favorite elementary school teacher reading a children's book to your class? The younger the audience, the more animated your story telling must be, and vice versa. If you try narrating to your adult group this way, someone is calling 911.

Simplify Your Speech, Professor

Children do not have the vocabulary that you do. The typical descriptions and dialogues used in an adult game would be lost on the little guys. Use the simplest terms possible at all times, whether you are describing an area, a monster, or doing NPC dialogue. Remember, much of how something is described to children is through body language, expression, and tone of voice. Use your hands and raise your eyebrows when you give a description. Use repetition in word choices to emphasize something. For example, don't say "The grotto entrance is a devoid of light, and you sense an ominous presence that seems to lurk within." Say instead "You see the big cave in front of you, and it's really, really dark in there! It feels scary here, like something really, really frightening is waiting inside!" Watch their little eyes pop out and arguments ensue about who should go in first. It's priceless!

This holds true to NPC dialogue as well. Don't try to replicate Middle English sentence structure or grammar for crying out loud, and don't be too wordy. Keep names of people, towns, wilderness locations, and well, everything simple. Valagarlag Grove should be renamed Fairy Forest. Shalenthia the elf should be renamed Shala. Radmorikberg should be called Hay Town. This seems silly to adults perhaps, but incredibly necessary when gaming with children.

Can I See the Picture?

Try to have as many visual aids as possible. My children love the color maps and ooh and ahh when I

point out where they are in the make-believe world. Be sure to print out pictures of castles and caves to represent some of the key encounter areas of the adventure. Make sure pictures of monsters are age appropriate and not *too* scary. Draw it yourself, or if you are unable, find a friend or family member who has decent art skills to do some "kiddyfied" monster sketches.

Age Appropriate Material

I know I don't have to mention that sexual imagery, innuendo, or pictorial depictions of topless succubi are not appropriate for young gamers. I think I do need to take a mo-

ment, however, to address monster encounters. As a jaded adult gamer, both as a player and as a GM, it takes a lot for a monster encounter to interest me, let alone, frighten me. Young children are different. That's what makes it fun to get them playing the game, but also potentially harmful if you're not careful. Avoid using ghouls, zombies coming out of the grave, gibbering mouthers, and so on. The idea is to have fun, not give them nightmares. You will be



amazed at how mundane creatures can be made into the star encounter of the night. To a child, a giant ant coming at them is absolutely awe inspiring. If you choose to use a monster, try using it as a finale. And here is a real shocker: you can and should make up your own monsters! That fuzzy, mean Snagwangler is back at it kids, and he's getting the farmer's chickens! Yikes! Did you see the teeth on that Lizard Bird?

Basic Game Mechanics for Little Minds

This one seems like common sense, but you would be surprised. Don't break out Rolemaster and expect the little ones to even remotely understand what all that is about and or to care about playing. I began using a Basic Dungeons and Dragons Retro-clone

game called Labyrinth

Lord and it seems

very well suited

to bringing in

young gamers.

Remember

when your

race was

also your

class? You just

tell the kids, in

your Story Time voice,

what they can be and let them

choose from pregenerated characters. Make

sure the characters aren't named yet and let

them come up with a name. They get really

attached to the character, and as a result, the

game.

Sitting down at the table with young gamers is not the time for game mechanics lectures, folks. Don't explain much. Just start telling the story. Make sure they have only the dice they need to play; if playing a d20 based system

then give them a twenty side die and a couple die for their weapon damage. You may do as I do, and that is, throw out most rules. No encumbrance. No movement rates. No spell components or casting times. Fun is the rule here. I don't even use experience points! I use a session based system where they go up a level after only two sessions. Well, except for my ten year old son, who is playing an Elf class character. I make him go three sessions (the xp requirements for the class is much higher than the others!). He doesn't like the others advancing faster than him, and I made sure he understood that from the beginning. He opted for the Elf anyway, because the class is basically a fighter and a magic-user.

Teach only the simplest of mechanics as you play. "This is the dice we use to see if we

hit the monster or not..." and

"You roll this one to see

how hard you

smashed him!" I

even have them

repeat certain

words after

me, just like a

teacher would

do in school.

"Wow, Luke just

rolled a natural twen-

ty! Can you say 'Natural

Twenty'?" The kids then say

"Natural Twenty!" and I go on to verbally

praise him in front of the others. "That is the

very best, most awesome roll he could ever

roll! Great Job Luke!" and then give him a

high five.

Another suggestion for young gamers for all

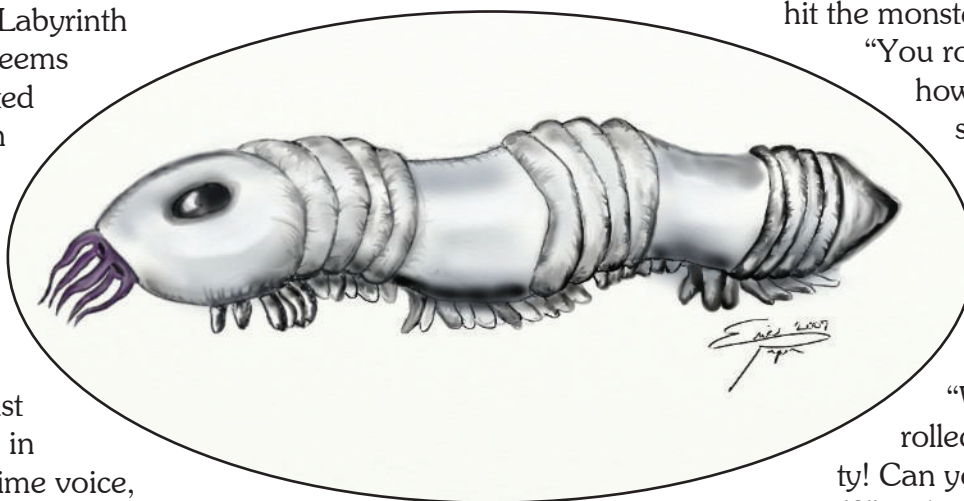
you cruel Gamemasters out there: don't kill

their characters! If you want them to literally

burst into tears at the table, and hate gaming

for life, then by all means, kill them at the first

opportunity. My goal, however, is for the kids



to have fun, get the gaming bug, and grow into the hobby. Every child is different, and a twelve year old may be able to handle the death of a character, but I assure you that an eight year old will really be devastated. Make them feel they are close to death, scare them into thinking it's possible, but let them linger at 1 or 2 hit points. They get so tense and excited, it's hilarious. Just remember, they want to be a hero!

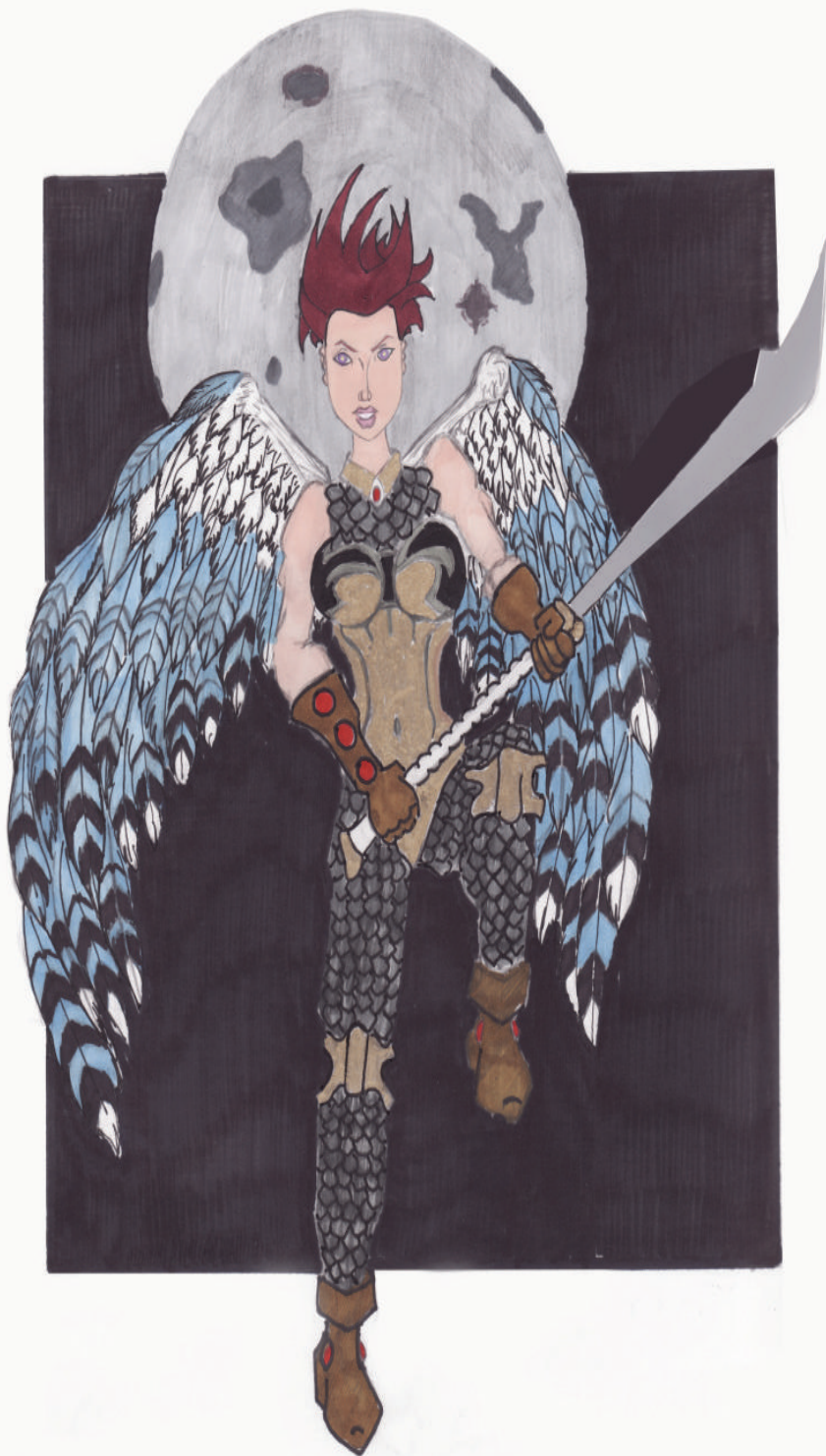
Use it as a time to Educate

My five year old daughter, Megan, told me "I turn on my flashlight, and look into the scary cave..." I used this as a way to teach her a little about history....without going on too much about it. "There is no such thing as flashlights, Megan!" Her eyes widened. "This is just like it used to be many, many years ago....I mean, a really, really long time ago. They didn't have flashlights back then...." She asked me what they used back then and I gave an oversimplified explanation of a torch, which she was as fascinated with as any encounter we had been through. Now she says "Dad, I light my torcher."

She cracks me up. Whether you need to back up and explain why there are horses pulling wagons and no cars, or why people have to get water from a well, it opens a great opportunity to teach the children about how life used to be before technology.

Have Fun!

Don't forget the main purpose of gaming is to have fun. And if the players happen to be your own children, nephews, nieces, or younger siblings, then remember that it is a great way to have some quality family time together! Let's make sure we pass the torch to the next generation of gamers and give them a life long love of the hobby!



Dealing With Dragons

To Slay a Green Dragon

By Les Rouell AKA Lurker

The common room of the Outs Inn was full to overflowing. A gathering of peoples, sages and holders of power all, had by happenstance come into being. The various keepers of knowledge and masters of deep secrets had come together to spin yarns, pass word and share lessons learned from their many years of varied experience. The shared knowledge, along with the good strong dark ale being served by the comely serving maids, drew many on this dark cool night.

Conversation filled the air as thick as the good Halfling pipe weed smoke. The conversations ebbed and surged turning into debate with added jests, turned into arguments punctuated with a few sharp insults, then settled back into simple conversation yet again. For some unknown reason a hush settled on the crowd as a simple unimposing figure stepped forth from the corner shadow he tended to lurk through the night in. "What we are all talking about, in one way or another, is simply slaying a dragon. Picket up the beast and turn it end over end, what it comes down to is in the end slaying a dragon of one type or an other. It doesn't matter what the color of the beast or the cause of the problem. The dragon must be slain before you can move one.

"That being said and first things fist" a quick swallow of beer to keep the thoughts flowing smoothly. "I have a dragon we have all seen and will see, I hope by any means, again.... The Green Dragon"

This is, hopefully, the first in a series of articles written by members of the Domesday society dealing with slaying various "dragons" or prob-

lems experienced in the hobby of role-playing. This article will specifically deal with the one type of dragon we have all not only seen but been ourselves. The Green dragon AKA the novice gamer or newbie.

First, why bother slaying a "green dragon" or in other words introduce a new player to the hobby of role-playing? If you are like me there is hardly enough time in the day to take care of all the little things that make up real life. All the work to be done around the house, taking care of the family, and finishing work projects seem to take up every waking moment of the day. If you are involved in furthering your education you have even less time to spend on a hobby. With so much real life and so little time why would anyone want to spend their precious time teaching the art of role-playing to a new player?

The first reason is simply to grow the hobby. Every new player introduced to role playing is at



least a little money for the writers and publishers of the rule books. This leads to more new books for all of us. Even better the “new player” will probably be very excited and more than willing to spend more than just a little on all the books. This relived the need of the already poor old gamer from buying every book out there. Defiantly a win win for everyone, the hobby continues to exist and grow, new books for everyone, and a possibility that the experienced gamer, that already has at least one book shelf stuffed full books, has someone that he may be able to barrow from.

Some of us are trying to grow our own “new players” but as I’ve recently found out that process is slow and time consuming. It is also a very large drain on the financial recourses of the gamer who from my experience tends not to have a whole lot of expendable wealth to start with. I am not lucky enough to have children old enough to set around the gaming table but from what I’ve heard it is a very enjoyable experience so I will encourage everyone that has or is planning to have children to introduce them to gaming. I wouldn’t count on this process to keep our much loved hobby alive.

The second reason is that our hobby is a social pastime and adding the right people to a social experience will always improve the hobby. A fresh outlook and new voice added to the table can breathe new life into an old game. A game that has ground into the monotint of “I killed my thousandth Orc today so where is my new nifty magic sword?” The excitement of a novice player may easily spread to the other players surrounding the table. A new or slightly different way to answer the same old can help old experienced gamers see things in a new light. Also seeing a novice player excited at killing the last orc guard standing between the party and the elusive Dungun exit can revive the spark in most old gamers.

Next, how to slay the dragon or actually introduce the novice to role-playing. Like all hobbies and pastimes you have to start somewhere and learn the basic. No matter how perfect for role-playing the

person there is no way the novice gamer will grasp the numerous shades of gaming right of from the first roll of the d20. From my experience there are three ways to introduce the player to gaming. One is to start them on a series of one on one games with just the DM/CK or what ever the favored title of the experienced player running the game and the new player. Second is to start the new player in a group but have the group as a whole begin a new campaign or a new series of one shot adventures. Lastly is to just throw the new guy to the wolves and let them learn on the fly.

In my opinion “One on one gaming” is the easiest way to introduce a new player to the hobby of gaming. It is simply the DM/CK and the player sitting around the table and running a game or two. The new player has the undivided attention of the GM and can ask all the questions they have without annoying any fellow players. The DM also does not have to worry about keeping the game flowing. The biggest down side of the One on One method is that there is little actual role playing. It can easily deteriorate to “You see this, what do you do?” “Ok now roll the d20, no the roundish looking blue one not the red d12”.

The “start a new, low level campaign/series of one shot games” method is, to me, the best way to introduce a new player to gaming but it does have its own problems. The player does experience the whole interaction involved in role-playing and gets to see the pros and cons of the various classes & races being played by all the other gamers surrounding the table with him. Also with other gamers around the table the numerous questions the novice will have can be answered by more than just the GM/CK. The biggest con of this method is that all the players should be enjoying themselves so be sure to let everyone know beforehand that the long running epic campaign will be on hold. The experienced players will also have to hold back on some of their usual

The last method, throwing them right in the middle of the game, is to me the least desirable way to introduce a new gamer to the hobby. That isn't to say this method should never be used or doesn't work, it just has some problems not seen in the other two methods. The benefit is that the new player experiences role-playing in all its glory. Mages throwing Fireballs, dragons flying over head and demons vanquished by the intrepid heroes. The biggest downfall is that the new gamer can easily be overwhelmed by the experience. That or they will quickly expect all role playing to be of the epic level and when they are introduced to a more low level game they may become bored or disappointed.

No matter which method is chosen it is best to follow the K.I.S.S. principle. I'm sure every experienced gamer reading this has his favorite house rules; some of us probably have whole notebooks full of house rules and modifications to their favored game. Also everyone probably has more than just a few classes that are highly modified or taken from supplement rule book x, y or z. The first few games with a new player probably isn't the best time to bring all these options out. Let the new gamer learn and master the basics before introducing some of the more advanced rules

The other players in the group should also follow the K.I.S.S. rule. No matter how much they enjoy playing a dark elf that has been raised by Halflings and has a fear of spiders and running water, or likes to play a female dwarf that has a crush on the party's half ogre barbarian. It won't impress the new player and will probably just confuse them. Also as I previously mentioned all the extra supplemental books should be trimmed back with a new player at the table.

Role-playing should also be dialed back a little with a new player at the table. Even if everyone around the table, except the new player, loves

the interaction of role-playing through the whole game. The intricacies of an evening spent in the king's court trying to find out who in the court is the assassin, wooing the youngest princess, and trying to steal the prize sapphire from the queen's jewels, will probably be lost on the new player and could lead to the new player becoming bored with the game.

Finally you need to give the new player a fighting chance. Don't give those easy to kill kobolds poison tipped blow darts in the first rounds of combat. Let the new fighter wade in there and swing away. Avoid the amazing mind bending riddle that HAS to be solved to survive the dungeon. That trap the new thief is trying to open doesn't need to be an instant death if the roll fails. It is also a good idea to give the new player an extra level or two, max HP etc. Especially if the new player has decided to play a magic user. I remember my first MU. A single Magic Missile spell and my MU was used up. The party then decided to toss



DEALING WITH DRAGONS: THE CHEAT

By Morris Golden

Cheating is a touchy subject and no one likes to see this Dragon rear his ugly head. Most of the time, the players are all friends or family who will carry at least some of what happens in the game with them afterwards. Eventually, a cheater will be in your group and when he does, he can ruin the game and everyone's fun unless the correct steps are taken.

There are all kinds of cheats and cheaters out there and in my thirty years of gaming, I think I have seen them all. The **Nat Twenty** roller is easy to spot. You know the type. The twenty sider is still rolling across the board when he sounds off "Twenty!!" Then as fast as a quickling can spit, that die is back in his hands where no one can see his true roll. The Nat Twenty is easy to handle. From the start, keep those rolls out in the open by making everyone roll in the middle of the table or some other easy to see spot.

Then there is the **Math Fudger**. This "lady" will always forget to subtract a few hit points or gold pieces and always seems to have a few more memorized spells than normal. This type is slightly harder to keep on the strait and narrow unless you have a copy of everyone's character and good notes. Once she realizes you are on to her, she will be as honest as St. Cuthbert's High Priest. At least for as long as she thinks you're looking.

Next up is the **Know-It-All**, and he really does. This guy has either played the adventure before, bought the book long ago for a good read, or maybe just for fun decided to memorize every monster in the manual. Once you suspect him, he is easy to catch. Now is the time to call upon your godly powers of DM control. Just change things up. Switch rooms around or add a few encounters, make that troll immune to fire and subject to cold. Make it so that secret knowledge

will lead him into trouble and, in my experience, it will not be long until he blows his cover.

Finally, there is the **Peek-a-boo**. His amazing ability to see over and through any GM screen has befuddled many unwary gamers. You can never leave your notes unguarded for a trip to the bathroom or kitchen, and he specializes in reading the backside of anything you pick up. The solution is simple, a swift and firm "STOP" and the placement of fortieth level dragon statistics in easy sight.

These cheaters come in every shape and variety just as normal players do. Usually after a brief confrontation, they get back in line and the game can continue; sometimes though things do not work out so well. This can be doubly hard when it is your buddy or sister sitting across the table from you. Firm up your resolve; the cheater must be stopped! You owe it to your other players and yourself. Nothing can kill a good time as fast as a player throwing the rules out the window and getting away with it.

When confronting the cheater remember to keep your cool and realize that even though you think you're sure what's going on, you could be wrong. Even if he is cheating, tact must be used. Try not to become too personal about it. Just talk to him alone at first and let him know you have some concerns about his playing. That is all it takes most of the time. If you feel it's necessary, then change your tabletop rules to make sure it doesn't continue. Remain calm and friendly, and don't let this already volatile situation become worse.

Occasionally that isn't enough. If the cheating continues then you have some tough choices. Sometimes you can bring it to the attention of the group and peer pressure will aid you. Make sure he knows that his behavior is ruining your fun and explain how it can ruin others' fun as well. If that doesn't work, you need to make clear to the player that his type of playing will not be allowed to continue. Finally if all else fails, it's time to kick a player from your group. Hard yes, but it's always better to kick him out and try to keep going than it is to let his bad habits spread and ruin your game.

FURY'S BLADE

By Todd A. Pote

It was dark and lonely where he lay. It always had been since he had been there, wherever "there" was.

It felt as if there was metal underneath and open air above. He was not alone; no, he was quite certain of that. Someone or something else was there, but what? It seemed that he could almost see a huge shape in his mind, all blurry and indistinct.

He had been there so long that he had almost forgotten his name. Guthrag. Yes, that was it. Guthrag Wyrmsbane. Occupation: Dragon killer, hero of heroes, borderline crazy. It had been so long.

He had not moved since he had arrived and was trapped there. Wait! Why had his bed moved? Blast! If only he could hear or see, but not even his voice worked so he could ask his fellow occupants why that was so.

The isolation was maddening. How he longed to sing free in the wind and cry the songs of war at the top of his voice. If only he could feel the blood of his enemies flow warmly over his body as he killed them.

There! His bed had shifted again. Even the air above him was warming. Could it be the sun finally rising to scatter this damned darkness to the winds? He fervently prayed it was so.

Now the floor trembled constantly, as if some giant were stomping hills flat in a wild dance.

The air he felt above him was becoming a gale wind, blowing stronger and faster over his body. The surface beneath him now moved constantly, as a girl in the arms of her first love. He felt something fall over him, burying him slowly, inch by inch.

Guthrag screamed in his soundlessness, hearing nothing of his own terror. He was alive, damn the spirits. He was alive, not yet ready to be put back into the ground from which he rose. Could they not see that?

He struggled in terror, futilely trying to move, gibbering silently in terror at his helplessness. He

prayed it would stop, amazed at his own will to survive after so long in that inky lethargy.

His hopes soon were answered as the wind slowed and died. He continued to struggle, for fully half of his body was covered by the heavy ground.

The air was cool now, and the floor shook less and less. Now he fought to control his fear. He relaxed in his prison, his curiosity at what had just passed overwhelming his terror of only moments before. He let his senses roam free, straining to pick up the faintest trace of anything external.

It was then he picked up the scents. They had been buried so long in his memory, yet he remembered. A dragon! Yes, that was it. His memory returned and quickly sharpened. He had been captured by a dragon and held captive. It was not earth covering him; it was the evil thing's hoard.

He quivered in rage, his lust for revenge growing, feeding his fury into a white-hot blaze. If he could be free but for a moment, the beast would pay in blood. He would cut out its heart and leave it for the carrion. His anger grew with each thought, lighting the darkness before him.

He did not even notice as coins beneath and over him began to vibrate strongly as something approached. He was aware only of his burning desire to kill the dragon. He prayed to be free of his dark hell, if only for an instant.

A burning blast of heat cut through his concentration. He could feel his body sizzle from it; the pain was incredible. Dragon fire! Yes, that was it. The beast was attempting to destroy him once and for all.

Guthrag exploded in righteous fury. The darkness about him shattered; the silence fell away. He could move and hear. In front of him, he saw the smoking visage and felt it burning into his memory. He saw many humans around him, all burned and bleeding from wounds and dragon fire. Still, they fought bravely. Now he would show them what a real warrior was.

He began to sing. His voice echoed as if it were reaching for the heavens themselves. He saw the fear in the dragon's eyes and gloried in it. His joy joined his anger at this evil, and he burned all the brighter.

Now it would die. He would slice to the heart behind the ruby red scales and remove it, silencing this evil one's voice forever, sending its spirit back to the hell from which it came.

He advanced. He could feel the astonished stares of his comrades around him. He advanced relentlessly upon the whining dragon as it crawled backward, ever deeper into the cavern.

Guthrag laughed, ignoring its foul lies and offers of riches if only he would spare its miserable life. How he gloried in its terror. Soon, too soon for him, the dragon ran out of space to retreat. Guthrag saw the creature's terror transform to resolve as it prepared to fight its last battle. He blazed in anticipation.

He watched as the beast's muscles bunched, preparing to spring upon him.

"Let it come," he thought, "for it will only hasten its doom."

It sprang at him, and time slowed for a split second as Guthrag flew to meet the monster. He grunted as he collided with it but gloried in the dragon's black blood as it flowed about him. His joy burned brightly for all to see, for his blade had pierced the dragon's heart.

He heard the screams of his companions below as his joy consumed the dragons flesh in its raging fires. A last flash and it was done. The dragon's heart pulsed ever weaker as it died upon the stony cavern floor. His fury sated, he dropped to the ground and looked at the comrades surrounding him. All had fear and awe in their eyes. Their gaze was directed toward him.

Calming, Guthrag's mind sensed another presence. It was asking him about its rightful place. He relented and let himself slip back to where he belonged as he gloried in his past and savored the memory of the recent victorious battle.

Guthrag Wyrmsbane, a proud and mighty sword, stopped singing and sighed with contented fulfillment as he was placed in a well-oiled sheath. It had been so long.



By Eric Piper 2007

The Classifieds

Here at the Society Classifieds , you will be able to buy or sell various merchandise or even look for or advertise for role-playing groups. Society Members are encouraged to submit any sale or trade requests here, from rpg's you are trying to get your hands on to the ones you are trying to get rid of. This will also be a great place to grow your home group or start one up from scratch. Just get it in to the Society Squire, John Wright, at societysquire@cncsociety.org

We hope that the next edition will be chock full of items wanted, for sale, or trade, as well as tons of gaming groups making their debut!



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