

Pits & Perils Referee Companion

A Playing Aid for Old-School Campaigns

by
James & Robyn George



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Electronic Edition

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This Referee Companion is
dedicated to the players (and referees) who,
through their creative efforts, made
our little game into something all their own...

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Olaus Magnus, History of the Nordic Peoples
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at PretzCon 2013. The evil Snow Hag
never stood a chance against such brave heroes!

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FOREWORD

This is a collection of quick-reference charts for the Pits & Perils game drawn from the basic rulebook and its supplements. But it also includes new and optional rules and "liner notes" meant to assist the referee in making things happen during play. This matters because the game was always imagined as a flexible, seat-of-the pants system. If the elf positions herself on a nearby ledge and the rest of the party has the ogre pinned down, she can ask for (and reasonably get) the prone bonus (+2) with her bow...

But only if the player acts. And only if the referee is sensible enough to recognize (and reward) this bit of tactical ingenuity!

Indeed, many, if not most, old-school gamers are fine with this approach and like their referee to make on-the-spot rulings. For them, the new rules provide more flexibility. Still others approach the rulebook as an absolute, third-party authority. Here, the optional rules provide an alternate, but nonetheless quite official, version of the game, and the group need only choose what rules they wish to observe. And while we obviously prefer the former approach, there is no wrong answer when it comes to having fun...

So to those who love (and play) Pits & Perils in all its incarnations, we appreciate your support and hope this booklet helps keep your game perilous!



INTRODUCTION

Pits & Perils (P&P) is an old-school role-playing game. It is deliberately simple and open-ended, requiring little in the way of charts or in-game calculations to interfere with play. Nonetheless, there are times when this is necessary, and this booklet is a useful aid. In addition to quick-reference charts and tables, it contains additional guidance and original rules to allow seamless play both in and out of combat situations.

These rules are kept simple because:

Simple is easy. The more rules a game has, the more likely these will start doing the role-playing for you, to the detriment of all.

But simple is also smoother, as flipping through the rules interferes with the dialogue that should exist between the players and the referee and shifts focus away from decision-making and exploration.

Finally, simple is old-school. The referee is free to add or change anything, and this is easier when the rules are simple to begin with.

But despite its relative simplicity, Pits & Perils has a lot in the way of content, including enemies to fight and magic to win and wield, and the referee should become comfortable and familiar with practice. Until that happens, these quick-reference tables serve as instant experience for new referees and good advice for the most seasoned grognards!

THE CAMPAIGN

A defining attribute of "old-school" is that each campaign is a game unto itself, even if the same rules are being used, such that the best of these are more like a regional dialect, still recognizable, but with its own accent and colloquialisms (much like a southern drawl). This is the intangible factor that makes old-school games unique. It captures the amateur origins of the hobby and underscores everything we know old-school to be.

HOW TO USE THESE CHARTS

The referee can keep these tables handy for easy reference during play, enabling smoother action. Where applicable, additional guidance and rules are provided so the referee can make quick decisions without slowing things or disrupting events during combat, etc. Being an old-school game, the referee is highly encouraged to devise their own custom charts with whatever original rules (like new random encounters) seems right for their campaign...

QUICK REFERENCE CHARTS

The following quick reference charts are provided to aid the referee during play and include additional (optional) rules and liner notes to better facilitate their implementation. Consult them as needed...

CHARACTER ABILITIES

Sometimes, the referee will need to create non-player characters (including enemy combatants) on the spot. Those having a proper class get abilities determined by rolling (or choosing) on the following, with commoners possessing exceptional traits 1-2 in 1d6 of the time per the enemy rules:

2d6	ABILITY	ACTIONS	LIMITS
2	Strength	bend bars, lift gates	men only
3-4	Intelligence	know legends, lore	--
5	Dexterity	climb walls, stealth	--
6-7	Wisdom*	detect lies, find clues	--
8	Constitution	withstand adversity	--
9-10	Charisma	lead, persuade others	elves, men
11-12	Any 2 (choose)	or roll again as needed#	--

*Alternately, represents cunning as per the referee

#Ignore duplicate results and/or adjust for race as needed

Note here that wisdom is (statistically) the most common ability because it demands more from the player, who still needs to decipher any clues discovered in the course of a game. That said, it is analogous to raw cunning more than anything else and may be renamed as suits the referee...

Alternately, non-human characters can roll on the following table to account for their racial predispositions more efficiently:

2d6	DWARF	2d6	ELF
2-4	Intelligence	2	Constitution
5	Dexterity	3-6	Dexterity
6-8	Constitution	7	Wisdom
9	Wisdom	8-10	Intelligence
10-11	Charisma*	11	Charisma
12	Any 2 (choose)	12	Any 2 (choose)

*Situational; applies to other dwarves only

Of course, ambitious referees can devise their own tables, perhaps broken down by class or region as their campaigns require. Anything is possible...

SECONDARY SKILLS

Players can roll secondary skills on the following:

2d6	SKILL	NOTES
2	Beggar	avoid guards or thieves in the city*
3	Blacksmith	create simple tools at no cost
4	Bowyer	produce 1d6 arrows per game week
5	Carpenter	carry 1 additional (small) item
6	Farmer	anticipate coming weather (next day)
7	Fisherman	navigate by the sun and stars
8	Gambler	win 1d6 GP per game week in town#
9	Hunter	find/procure safe food and water
10	Merchant	appraise the value of various items
11	Performer	get free lodging by entertaining
12	Town crier	hear latest news/gossip when in town

*This is not the same as hiding or sneaking

#No experience points earned for money made this way

NON-HUMAN PROFICIENCIES

Dwarves and elves have unique cultures that lend themselves to different proficiencies rolling (or choosing) as shown:

DWARF (2d6)	SKILL	ELF (2d6)	SKILL
2-8	Blacksmith	2	Blacksmith
9	Gambler	3-7	Bowyer
10	Merchant	8	Farmer
11	Performer	9-11	Hunter
12	Town crier	12	Merchant

INHERITANCE

If a character dies, the player can designate a "relative" to inherit some of their money and equipment as per the following:

LEVEL*	MONEY	MAGIC ITEMS
1-3	25%	Full number (1st level) or any 2
4-9	50%	Any 5 chosen by the player
10+	75%	Complete selection of items inherited

*When replacement is artificially advanced in level

Obviously, 1st level characters inheriting magic items are more powerful.

EQUIPMENT

New characters have access to the full equipment list. Beyond that, not everything will be available. For game purposes, assume that a desired item is available 1-3 in 1d6 of the time, subject to modifiers for the size and/or population of the area in question: cities (-1), towns (+1), and villages (+2), so larger settlements are more likely to carry desired goods:

ARMOR	PROTECTION	COST	EQUIPMENT	NOTES	COST
Leather	light (+1)	10	Backpack	--	2
Chainmail	medium (+2)	30	Bedroll	--	1
Plate mail	heavy (+3)	50	Lantern	--	3
Shield	light (+1)	10	Mallet	--	2
			Pole	10'	1
MISSILES	RANGE	COST	Rations	7 days	5
Bow, long*	200'	25	Rope	50'	3
Bow, short*	150'	15	Spike, iron	--	2
Crossbow*	180'	20	Stake, wooden	--	1
Sling shot*	200'	5	Tinder box	--	3
			Torch	--	1
WEAPONS	RANGE	COST	Water skin	1 quart	2
Axe, hand#	30'	3			
Axe, great*	10'	7	MOUNTS	NOTES	COST
Club	10'	2	Bit/bridle	--	10
Dagger#	30'	1	Cart	--	20
Flail*	10'	3	Feed/oats	7 days	5
Hammer#	30'	6	Horse, riding	--	40
Mace	10'	5	Horse, war	--	50
Morning star*	10'	7	Mule	--	10
Pick	10'	6	Pony	--	20
Spear#	30'	3	Saddle	--	5
Staff	10'	2	Saddle bags	--	10
Sword, great*	10'	9			
Sword, long	10'	7	SERVICES	NOTES	COST
Sword, short	10'	4	Night at the inn	--	1

*Two-handed weapon (+1 damage), no shield use; assume that arrows, crossbow bolts, and sling stones cost 1 GP per 20 bought

#Maximum range for thrown melee weapons; otherwise, range will be 10'

Of course, armor and/or weaponry may be more difficult to find, especially when their use is discouraged (or banned) by the nobility. Given the creation time involved, characters will need to wait 1d6+1 days for custom work, but only after a deposit of half in advance. Otherwise, clever referees can make some items available as loot. For instance, a captured suit of mail, etc.

MAGICIAN SPELLS

The sheer number of spells available makes constructing a random table impractical. Instead, the referee can choose from the following, selecting what best suits their adventure and/or setting:

SPELL	DURATION	RANGE	SPELL	DURATION	RANGE
Ally	instant	self	Link	1d6 rounds	sight
Aura	1 turn/level	self	Load	1 turn/level	self
Bane	instant	30'	Mask	1 turn/level	self
Bolt	instant	60'	Mend	instant	touch
Call	instant	self	Mist	1 turn/level	self
Calm	1 turn/level	30'	Move	instant	60'
Copy	instant	self	Mute	1 turn/level	30'
Cure	instant	touch	Null	instant	touch
Duel	1d6 rounds	self	Obey	instant	30'
Fade	1 turn/level	self	Pass	instant	self
Fear	1 turn/level	30'	Read	1 turn/level	self
Find	instant	sight	Ring	1d6 rounds	self
Foil	instant	30'	Rise	1 turn/level	self
Form	1 turn/level	self	Rout	instant	30'
Gaze	1d6 rounds	sight	Ruin	instant	60'
Glow	1 turn/level	30'	Ruse	1 turn/level	30'
Grow	1 turn/level	self	Send	instant	sight
Heal	instant	touch	Slow	1d6 rounds	60'
Hide	1 turn/level	self	Stun	1d6 rounds	30'
Hole	1d6 rounds	self	Urge	instant	self
Jinx	1d6 rounds	30'	Vine	1 turn/level	30'
Keen	1d6 rounds	touch	Void	1 turn/level	self
Know	1d6 rounds	touch	Ward	1d6 rounds	self
Lift	1d6 rounds	60'	Wink	1d6 rounds	self

SPELL COMPONENTS

Given their potential value as treasure, the referee can roll for any material components held by enemy magicians:

1d6	TYPE	COST	SPECIAL EFFECT
1-2	Physic	5 GP	increase radius and/or range by +10'
3-4	Ingredient	15 GP	add +1 damage to any Bolt spell
5-6	Element	10 GP	extend spell duration by +1 round/turn*

*Where applicable, does not apply to instant spells

Assume 1-3 possessed, noting that rivals will surely use what they have...

COMBAT TABLES

Players are expected to keep track of their own combat modifiers, including those for class and/or magic weapons, etc. Enemy monsters (except those assigned a proper class) have attack and damage modifiers based on level and/or size as follows, making these very dangerous:

LEVEL	ATTACK	SIZE	DAMAGE*
3	+1	M	--
6	+2	L	+1
9	+3	H	+2
12	+4	--	--
15	+5	--	--

*Only applies to bite, claws, etc.

For game purposes, assume that lycanthropes and other shape-shifters get appropriate modifiers when in animal form. This includes any character using spells or magic items (i.e., beast cloaks) while in combat.

ATTACK MODIFIERS

The following applies to all combatants. Often, victory comes down to simple maneuvering, and good strategy should be rewarded:

TARGET IS...	MODIFIER
Partially obscured	-2
Underwater	-1
Outnumbered/outflanked	+1
Retreating, prone, or stunned, etc.	+2

ATTACK ORDER/SEQUENCE

The referee should require initiative at the start of combat and again if the conditions of battle somehow change (this encourages strategy):

CONDITIONS	MODIFIER
Surprised or unprepared	-2
Heavily outnumbered	-1
One or more elves in the party	+1

Some games stress special abilities over proper strategy. This one rewards players for outmaneuvering their foes and prioritizes simple choices, to include armor and weaponry. For instance, strategic placement of archers and magicians in the party's marching order can make all the difference.

ALTERNATIVE COMBAT

Optionally, the referee can base hit probability on a target's ability per the following attack matrix, which serves to speed combat:

TARGET IS...	7 OR BETTER	9 OR BETTER	12 OR BETTER
Untrained*	1 hit	1 hit	2 hits
Skilled	miss	1 hit	2 hits
Divine/diabolic#	miss	miss	1 hit

*Does not include those assigned a proper class

#Includes demons (not manes), deities, and/or seraphim, etc.

The designation "untrained" here applies to most commoners, but also those enemies who, in the opinion of the referee, lack the skill and/or training to do more than exercise brute force, etc. For instance, the lowliest of orcs wielding clubs or wild beasts that rely on other special defenses, noting that those above 3rd level will normally be skilled.

OPTIONAL DAMAGE

Some groups may prefer faster, more lethal combat in the old-school tradition, and this can be achieved by rolling attacks on the following:

2d6	DAMAGE	NOTES
2-6	--	--
7-9	1	--
10	2	Maximum for non-combatants*
11	3	--
12	4	Maximum damage for combatants#

*Assumes elves, magicians, and thieves

#Clerics, dwarves, and human/elven fighters

Note here that the above reflects the untrained opponent rule. Otherwise, damage starts at 9 (1 hit), with added damage per weapon:

SIZE/TYPE	BONUS	NOTES
Concealed/small	0	assume maximum damage of 2
Medium sized	0	most one-handed weapons
Two-handed/large	+1	two-handed and/or giant-sized*

*Includes those wielded by giants, trolls, etc.

Alternately, the referee can limit optional damage to special circumstances...

COMBAT MANEUVERS

Players will choose their own combat maneuvers, and the referee can assign them to non-players as befits the individual:

MANEUVER	REQUIREMENTS	SPECIAL EFFECT
Bash	shield	employ shield to knock back foes
Block	shield	deflect attacks using a shield
Cover	shield	raise shield against normal missiles
Dodge	--	nimbly avoid enemies in combat*
Parry	melee weapon	deflect or disarm enemy fighters*
Smash	axe/hammer	bludgeon for additional damage
Sweep	two-handed melee	mighty blow against multiple foes*
Thrust	blade/spear	pierce armor for added damage#
Volley	long/short bow	launch missiles at multiple targets

*Requires 20' free space to attack/defend properly

#Smaller blades require 5', all others (including spears) 10'

Note that barbarians, corsairs, and fighters with 2 attacks per round can execute a combination block/parry/attack. Likewise, monks can block and attack after 9th level, getting 2 attacks per round with the staff.

MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR

Armor, equipment, and even magical weaponry may require periodic maintenance, with failure to do so resulting in penalties as shown:

ITEM	PENALTY
Armor*	no protection afforded
Tools	1-2 in 1d6 chance of breakage
Weaponry#	minimum damage delivered

*Includes magic armor (half protection)

#Magical weapons deal full damage, no bonus

Repairs cost 10% of treasure taken (armored characters) or 5% (all others) based on conditions. Optionally, the referee can roll for wear and tear:

CONDITIONS	REPAIRS NEEDED...	NOTES
Basic exploration	1 in 1d6	--
Heavy combat	1-2 in 1d6	frequent battles
Traumatic conditions	1-3 in 1d6	traps and/or similar

The referee should roll once per character upon returning to civilization.

NON-COMBAT ACTIONS

Many actions, like ordinary walking and talking, do not require dice, as the character is automatically successful. Everything else is governed by a particular attribute and should be limited to those characters actually having that ability in most cases, per the referee:

ACTION	ABILITY	DURATION	SPEED
Bend iron bars	strength	--	--
Climb walls	dexterity	--	10'/round*
Detect lies	wisdom	--	--
Force doors	strength	--	--
Hide/sneak	dexterity	--	20'/round
Hold breath	constitution	1d6 rounds	--
Influence others#	charisma	--	--
Lift gates	strength	1d6 rounds	--
Recall facts	intelligence	--	--
Spot clues	wisdom	--	--
Steal objects	dexterity	--	--
Swim rough waters	constitution	1d6 rounds	10'/round
Track enemies	wisdom	--	--

*Thieves climb walls at double speed (20'/round)

#This includes acts of deception (lies) or intimidation, etc.

Alternately, certain actions should be possible for any character, albeit at a substantial penalty to reflect their lack of ability.

ACTION MODIFIERS

Non-combat actions are modified as follows:

ACTION IS...	MODIFIER
Nearly impossible*	-5
Performed under less than ideal conditions*	-3
Common task, character well-suited	+1
Simple and/or ideal conditions present	+3

*May indicate a character without the requisite ability

Note that dexterous characters should always be the fastest in a party, and this applies equally to the physically powerful, etc. This distinguishes characters and forces them to work together. At the same time, players may be permitted to try different things out, and modifiers accomplish both nicely, although the referee should always favor the naturally inclined...

FEATS OF STRENGTH

Certain acts of physical strength, such as forcing a door, might require multiple characters working together. For every strong character present and helping out, the referee can add a bonus (+1) to the dice.

HENCHMEN

Hirelings (alchemists, etc.) should be developed in advance, with henchmen conforming to the following table. While most will be human, the referee is free to make exceptions as befits the game setting:

TYPE	ARMOR	HP	WEAPON	NOTES	COST
Archer	leather	7/+1	bow/dagger	--	10
Footman	chainmail	8/+2	axe/dagger	--	20
Porter	none	6/+0	club/dagger	carry full load	5

EXPERIENCE POINTS

To keep things simple, the referee should annotate experience for specific encounters in advance of play. However; this is not always possible, especially with random encounters and/or when the unexpected happens:

LVL	EXP	BONUS*	TREASURE
1	5	+10	1 per 2 GP
2	10	+10	--
3	20	+20	--
4	30	+20	--
5	40	+30	--
6	50	+30	--
7	100	+40	--
8	200	+40	--
9	400	+50	--
10	800	+50	--
11	1,000	+100	--
12	2,000	+100	--
13	3,000	+200	--
14	4,000	+200	--
15	5,000	+300	--

*Experience for special abilities

Note that referees who desire slower level progression can award 1 experience per 10 GP found and none for magic items won and subsequently sold.

TREASURE

Once again, the referee should place treasure in advance of play, although wandering merchants and the like also carry riches:

TYPE	VALUE (GP)	CHANCE OF MAGIC
I	1d6 (1-6 GP)	--
II	1d6 x 10 (10-60 GP)	2 in 1d6*
III	1d6 x 100 (100-600 GP)	3 in 1d6*
IV	1d6 x 1,000 (1,000-6,000 GP)	4 in 1d6*

*Place as desired or roll on the magic tables

The referee can roll or simply declare wealth in the form of jewelry if this better suits the conditions of a given hoard:

TYPE	CHANCE OF JEWELRY	% OF TOTAL VALUE*
II	1 in 1d6	(50-75%)
III	2 in 1d6	(25-50%)
IV	3 in 1d6	(10-25%)

*Jewelry does not count against encumbrance

Larger hoards can be produced by using lesser denominations (copper and/or silver coins) and converting from their original GP value:

COINAGE	VALUE
Copper pieces (CP)	10 CP = 1 SP
Silver pieces (SP)	10 SP = 1 GP

Merchants, pirates, and raiding orcs often carry wealth in the form of luxury items (frequently stolen). This can be rolled as shown:

1d6	ITEM	NOTES
1	Ebony	decorative items (artwork)*
2	Incense/oils	includes dyes or spices
3	Ivory	as ebony, above (decorative art)*
4	Textiles	bolts of cloth or silk
5	Silverware	may be goblets, plates, etc.#
6	Various (mixed)	usually indicates stolen goods

*May be ceremonial or religious in nature

#Roll 1d6 for type (1-2 brass, 3-4 copper, 5-6 silver)

Normally, individuals carry Type I-II and/or jewelry of greater value...

Magic items are rare and should seldom appear in unscripted hoards unless wielded by enemies to their own advantage, etc. The referee might allow exceptions for potions (or scrolls) that might be beneficial to a party provided the players have earned it through superior choices.

WILDERNESS EXPLORATION

For game purposes, there will be a 1 in 1d6 chance per game day travelled of getting lost, modified for conditions as follows:

CONDITIONS	MODIFIER
Heavy brush/covering*	-2
No map available#	-1
Poor weather/sun obscured	-1

*All dice for initiative rolled at -2

#Guides ensure the party never gets lost

Dislocation can be determined by rolling 1d6: 1-2 (left of path), 3-4 (right of path), and 5-6 (backtrack/reverse move) when a party is lost.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Normally, random encounters occur 1 in 1d6 of the time per full turn of exploration (either above or below ground) although a party should never face multiple encounters through consecutive turns of play:

3d6	DUNGEON	3d6	WILDERNESS
3-5	Bat (2-12)	3-5	Anka (1)
6	Bat, giant (1-2)	6	Bear (1)
7	Cockatrice (1)	7	Boar (1-2)
8-10	Dwarf (2-12)	8-10	Brigand (6-12)
11	Fungi (1)	11	Druid (1-2)
12	Ghoul (1-3)	12	Elf (1-6)
13	Jelly (1)	13	Faerie (1-2)
14-15	Kobold (6-12)	14-15	Orc (2-12)
16	Rat (2-12)	16	Redcap (1-2)
17	Rat, giant (1-2)	17	Wild man (2-12)
18	Spider, giant (1)	18	Wolf (1-3)*

*Alternately, a single werewolf on the hunt

Random encounters should always be of the weakest sort (assume 1-2 HP per level in most cases), although exceptions can be made. These guard no treasure, with the possible exception of brigands (assign I-II) and orcs, etc.

For simplicity, the referee can designate specific locations where random encounters may occur. For instance, when setting up camp, etc. If the characters establish a watch, there will be a 1-2 in 1d6 chance of an encounter with some 2-3 rounds to prepare. Unprepared parties (no watch) have but a single round and must roll for initiative at -2.

For quick reference, the following is provided (where applicable, attack and/or damage bonuses are given in parentheses):

NAME	ATTACKS	LEVEL	MOVE	SIZE
Anka	3(+1)	5	50'	L(+1)
Bat	1	1	20'	S
Bat, giant	1	2	30'	M
Bear	3(+1)	4	40'	L(+1)
Boar	1(+1)	3	30'	M
Brigand	1	*	#	M
Cockatrice	1	2	20'	S
Druid	1	*	50'	M
Dwarf	1	*	#	M
Elf	1	*	#	M
Faerie	1	1	50'	S
Fungi	3(+1)	5	--	M
Ghoul	3	2	40'	M
Jelly	1(+1)	5	10'	L(+1)
Kobold	1	1	30'	S
Orc	1	1	#	M
Rat	1	1	20'	S
Rat, giant	1	2	30'	M
Redcap	1(+1)	3	30'	S
Saurian	3	3	30'	M
Spider, giant	1	2	20'	M
Werewolf	3(*)	*	#	M
Wild man	1	2	50'	M
Wolf	3(+1)	3	40'	M

*Assign level/spells where applicable

#Humanoid enemies will move by armor worn

Total hits per level are determined by rolling 1d6: 1-2 (1), 3-4 (2), 5-6 (3) or assigned by the referee. Humanoids can use armor and shield.

Some enemies have special attacks and/or spells. The referee should be familiar with these in advance. Otherwise, they might select simpler monsters, like bears or wolves, until they become more experienced. Of course, custom encounter tables are highly encouraged and keep things realistic.

URBAN ENCOUNTERS

Encounters in urban (city/town) environments can be placed in advance or determined randomly on the following if so desired:

2d6	RESULT	NOTES
2	Adventuring class	see below
3-11	Commoner/townsperson	--
12	Enemy/monster, etc.	see below

Optionally, there is a 1-4 in 1d6 chance of an adventurer travelling with a party of 1d6+1 others as per the following:

2d6	CLASS/RACE*	NOTES#
2-3	Cleric	nearly half are chaotic (evil)
4	Dwarf	drunk (1-2 in 1d6) and aggressive
5	Elf	these are aloof when solitary
6-8	Fighter	inebriated (1-3 in 1d6) as a dwarf
9	Magician	may Link with potential rivals
10-12	Thief	often (1-4 in 1d6) attempt to steal

*Or any variant (monks or savants, etc.) per the referee

#Parties and/or solitary types match or exceed player level

For simplicity, the referee can use the following templates:

CLERIC/L/INT AK: 1 (mace) LL: 5 (16/+2 HP) ME: 30' (chainmail)
MIRACLES: Ally, Cure, Heal, Null (3 FP)

DWARF/N/CON AK: 1 (hand axe) LL: 3 (13/+3 HP) ME: 20' (plate mail)

ELF/N/DEX AK: 1 (bow, dagger) LL: 3 (8/+1 HP) ME: 40' (leather)
SPELLS: Bolt, Heal, Rise, Mask (2 SP)

FIGHTER/N/STR AK: 1 (great sword) LL: 4 (16/+3 HP) ME: 20' (chainmail)

MAGICIAN/N/WIS AK: 1 (spells/staff) LL: 4 (8/+0 HP) ME: 50' (---)
SPELLS: Call (owl), Bolt, Fade, Ruin, Ruse, Urge (4 SP)

THIEF/C/DEX/CHA AK: 1 (dagger) LL: 6 (12/+1 HP) ME: 40' (leather)

Ability scores include: Strength (STR), Dexterity (DEX), Intelligence (INT), Wisdom (WIS), Constitution (CON), Charisma (CHA), with all others abbreviated as follows: Attacks (AK), Level (LL), Move (ME) plus faith/spells as shown.

Magic items (if any) can be determined randomly or by assigning something suitable to the intended power (or scope) of the encounter.

The referee can generate commoners as follows:

3d6		NOTES
3	Beggar	some function as thieves (1-2 in 1d6)*
4	Blacksmith	assume 1-2 in 1d6 are armorers
5	Bowyer	long/short bows or (1 in 1d6) crossbows
6	Candle maker	only found in larger towns, etc.
7	Carpenter	includes carpenters or woodworkers
8	Farmer	free/landed (1-3 in 1d6) or serf
9	Fisherman	possess basic boating/navigation skill
10	Glass blower	availability as per a candle maker
11	Hunter	these might serve as paid guides
12	Jeweler	may (1 in 1d6) be a wealthy moneylender
13	Laborer	general (unskilled)/migrant workers
14	Miner	roll 1d6: 1 (dwarven), 2-6 (human)*
15	Performer	treat these as beggars with charisma*
16	Stone mason	often organized in powerful guilds
17	Tailor	can include leatherworkers, etc.
18	Teamster	possess extensive traveling knowledge

*Dwarves are 1st level and thieves 1-3rd, respectively

As run-ins with the city guard are a recurring theme in many games, the referee can treat these as commoners (1-3 HP) clad in leather and armed with spears (or bows on the walls). Otherwise, sergeants (and above) are 1st-3rd level fighters wearing chainmail and armed with swords.

Finally, obvious monsters are rare in most urban settings, but might haunt chaotic temples and/or cemeteries and similar dreadful places:

2d6	TYPE	NOTES
2-4	Bugbear/orc	some bugbears pass as humankind
5	Demon/devil/manes	all linger near evil shrines
6-8	Doppelganger*	may try to gain a party's trust
9	Ghoul/ghost/shadow	spirits haunting communal crypts
10-11	Succubus/vampire	these attempt to seduce first
12	Werewolf/wyre-folk	both types manifest in human form

*Doppelgangers appear as human, seeking more victims

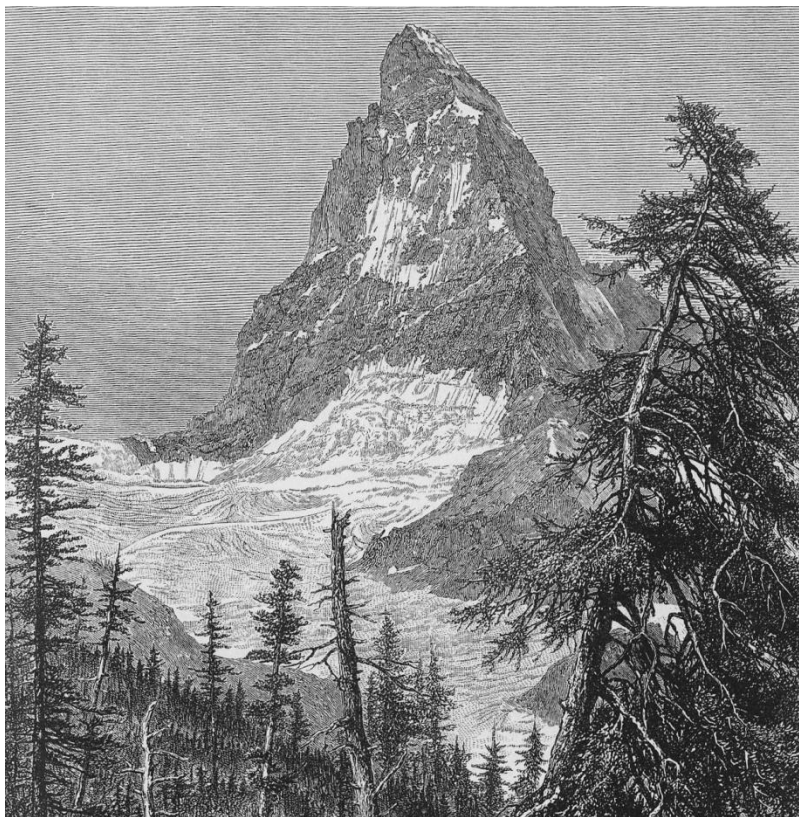
As with all such tables, the referee has the final say, adjusting the outcome consistent with conditions, perhaps picking a desired result instead...

Pits & Perils

The Snow Hag's Aerie

An Adventure for a Party of 4-6th Level Characters

by
James & Robyn George



The following dungeon was played at PretzCon 2013 and may assist the referee in preparing their own games. Although meant for higher-level characters, it can be adjusted for any party...

LEGEND OF THE SNOW HAG

(The referee is encouraged to build upon this)

Legends speak of an evil hag dwelling in the hills above Lowland Dale; stories to frighten children and entertain adults, no doubt. She was beaten long ago and fled to her tower on the mountain, assuming any of this happened at all, for weird legends are common among the peasant folk who dwell in the peaceful lowlands. Only now, the legends might be true and the people of the valley targets of her wrath.

Strange lights have been seen dancing across the brooding peaks at night, followed by savage goblin raids at dawn. The White Wound Tribe has always been a nuisance, but now something has made them bolder, resulting in excursions deeper into human lands; most recently, against estates held by the King. This is a mark against the new Magistrate, Guiscard, High Warden of the valleys and easily replaced if he cannot keep the peace, for the Fall harvest is threatened.

Worse still, rumors speak of the Hag coming bodily into the villages, causing dreadful nightmares that leave their victims, and even the Royal Guard, too terrified to act. But when a contingent of Guiscard's best soldiers failed to return from the crags, desperate action was called for lest the worst happen. And so an adventuring party was hired, hastily briefed, and offered a prize of 5,000 SP if they succeed...

Thus, armed with their own gear and whatever equipment they manage to purchase and/or haggle out of the Magistrate, the party leaves the safety of the lowlands for the peaks where the Snow Hag's aerie awaits.



THE ENVIRONS AND COURTYARD

The crumbling ruins of the Hag's tower merge with the rocky cliffs to create a labyrinthine channel. Assuming the party sets out at dawn, they should arrive at this place by late afternoon...

1 - The mountain pass leading to the Hag's tower is strewn with rocky debris and gnawed bones of many kinds. A mated pair of FROST GIANTS has taken up residence here, moving to flank the party on either side and using the sheer cliffs to their advantage:

AK: 1 (clubs/elements) LL: 7/+2 (11 HP) ME: 50' (--) SE: H/+2

Being well-adapted to their environment, at least one of these will conjure an AIR ELEMENTAL that summons a blizzard, reducing all movement and visibility within a 120' radius to 10'. They occupy a cave with a large central fire and several giant-sized implements.

Note: Buried in the north end of this is 90 GP, a SCROLL OF RISE in an ivory tube (worth 25 GP), and a bleached SINGING BONE, all treasures stolen from prior victims. Indeed, the giants are thralls of the Hag who grow fat guarding her forgotten aerie.

2 - The great outer courtyard, open to the sky above, lies bare to all comers, and the piles of charred and horribly gnawed bones bear witness to those who braved this place only to be devoured.

3 - A patrol of 5 GOBLINS keeps watch here. These bear the primitive standard of the White Wound Tribe, wear leather armor, and do battle with iron spears. Loyal to the Hag, they fight without hesitation:

AK: 1 (spears) LL: 1/+0 (1/+1 HP) ME: 40' (hide) SE: M/+0

4 - Two GOBLIN SERGEANTS make their quarters here. These keep an enormous PANTHER on a chain to set upon intruders and release it against the closest target(s) within sight, being kept both hungry and obviously abused by its handlers to make it aggressive:

AK: 3 (bite/claws) LL: 4/+1 (3 HP) ME: 40' (--) SE: L/+1

The sergeants are large, intelligent, and strategic:

AK: 1 (daggers) LL: 1/+0 (2/+2 HP) ME: 30' (chainmail) SE: M/+0

Given its proximity to the courtyard (indeed, their job is to oversee defenses), there is a 1-3 in 1d6 chance that they will join the fray should hostilities break out in area 3, above. This requires 1-2 rounds...

The sergeant's quarters are surprisingly organized, and there is a primitive cage for the great cat. Each goblin has 2d6 SP, and the party finds 1,000 CP in a locked wooden strongbox.

5 - At this juncture, the party is presented with a choice; continue southward (at ground level) or climb the (40' high) stone steps ascending north into the old ruins. Either way, curious players will find no obvious clues as to which path is better.

6 - Part of the tower has collapsed here, being scarcely passable if moving single file. The goblins avoid this area, although the party will never know this unless pursued. Observant characters may pick up the smell of plant life and acrid water as they pass...

In time, everyone will hear a waterfall and smell vegetation.

Note: Characters having the Wisdom ability may (if the player asks and makes their roll) detect a pungent aroma. When this happens, the referee secretly rolls saving dice, with failure resulting in the victim taking damage (1 hit) and a bloody nose from the spores below.

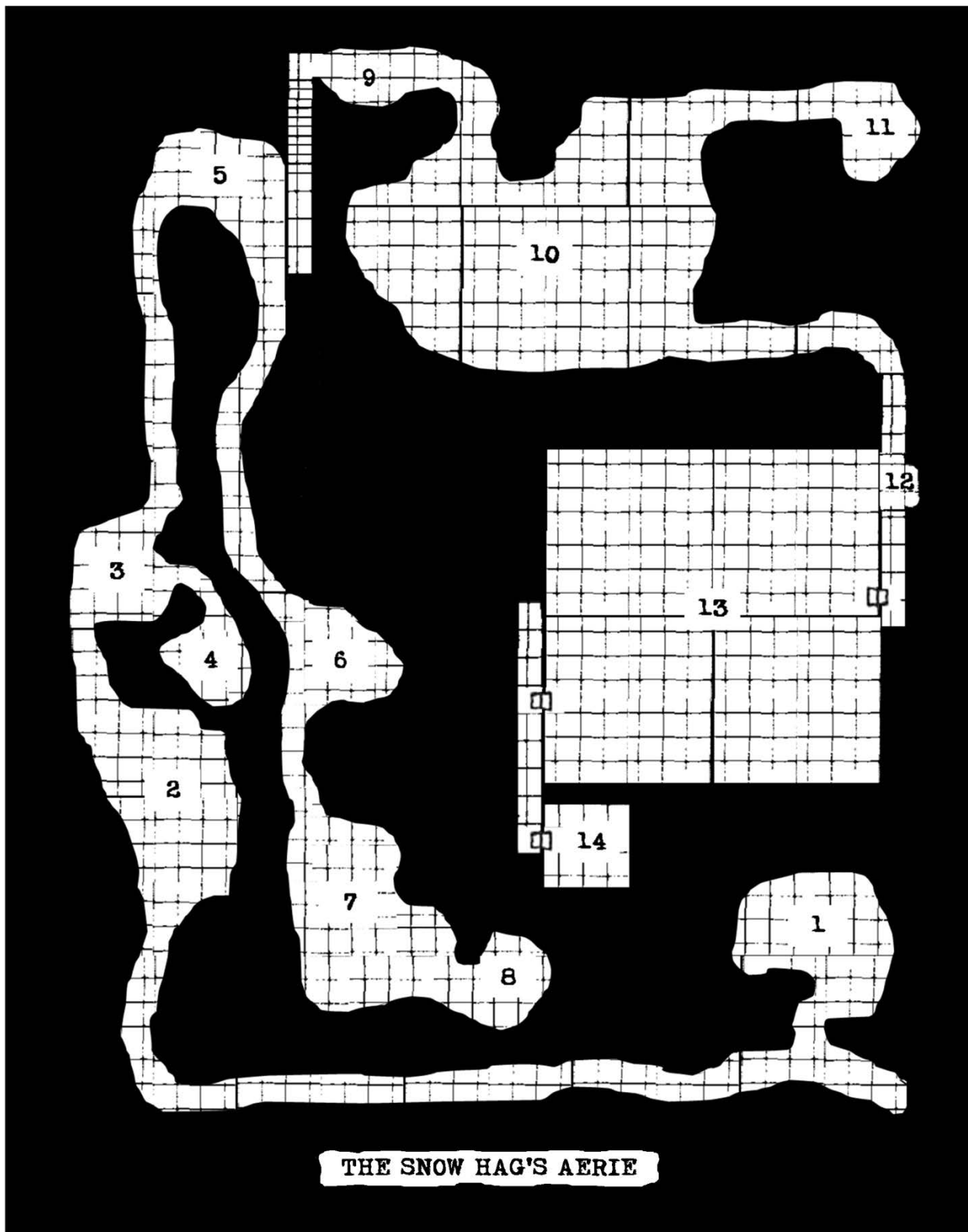
7 - This rough-hewn cavern is dominated by an impressive waterfall along its easternmost end. This feeds into a natural cave with a pool of fresh water and many small puddles of stagnant stuff unfit to drink, although not harmful. The rocks here are covered with a sticky moss that is actually a variant form of CAVE FUNGI. This covers an old skeleton holding an iron box in its limed-over embrace:

AK: 1 (spores) LL: 5/-- (15 HP) ME: -- (--) SE: H/--

Characters disturbing this must roll saving dice (+1 for elves and the dexterous) once per 10' moved or excite the spores and inhale, suffering the equivalent of a weak (1d6) poison. Covering one's mouth or similar strategies is always effective, although the referee can make exceptions when strenuous activities, like fighting, are attempted.

The box is locked, but can be picked or smashed open in 1d6 rounds, noting that this releases spores and will require saving dice (as per the above) to avoid inhalation. This holds 100 GP, an ELIXIR, and a bag of granular VANISHING DUST that is clearly quite old.

8 - The damage here is quite extensive, and no further progress is possible owing to many fallen rocks. Likewise, this area is open to the sky, making it bitterly cold, but otherwise a good place to make camp provided the fungi can somehow be neutralized. Several well-placed Fire Bolts or other strategic use of flame is generally enough, noting that spores disperse out to 120' and up to 30', making this dangerous...



THE SNOW HAG'S AERIE

The stairs in area 5, above, lead to the Hag's chamber, part of which enters the mountain. This was a strategic move, as it allowed defenders to retreat and rally their forces, and this no doubt helped the Hag to escape and recover her strength in secrecy.

9 - This area is heavily trafficked, but only at the changing of the guard in the courtyard below. Nonetheless, the cold stone gives no sign of this, with no random encounters met.

10 - The rest of the White Wound goblins dwell here, excluding any patrolling elsewhere. Accordingly, this vast chamber is a smelly place filled with stinking furs and the remains of grisly meals (human or otherwise). There are 5 big GOBLINS in leather armor armed with iron spears watching the entrance, and should a party enter this openly, its guardians cry alarums and close ranks to fight:

AK: 1 (spears) LL: 1/+0 (3/+1 HP) ME: 40' (hide) SE: M/+0

By the third round, a pair of GOBLIN HANDLERS clad in chainmail and armed with axes arrive. These lead an OGRE on a strong rope, releasing it to attack with a club so massive it deals damage as huge (+2) with a chance of knocking its victim back 1d6 x 10' and leaving them prone for the next combat round (this requires saving dice at +1):

AK: 1 (fists/giant club) LL: 5/+1 (10 HP) ME: 30' (--) SE: L/(*)

The handlers are treated as sergeants, being specially trained for the command of the monstrously strong giant:

AK: 1 (axes) LL: 1/+0 (2/+2 HP) ME: 30' (chainmail) SE: M/+0

Fighting the ogre is noisy work and calls 2d6+6 ARCHERS after a full turn of fighting. These maintain a safe distance and may be positioned around the various exits, compelling a very difficult choice, although care must be taken to keep this from becoming an impossible challenge to the players (they will exploit cover to maximum advantage):

AK: 1 (daggers/longbows) LL: 1/+0 (2 HP) ME: 50' (--) SE: M/+0

The White Wound is less of a tribe and more of a cult built around worship of the Hag. Accordingly, there are no dependants, noting here that fighters could be of either gender. That said, most effects left behind include simple items and barely edible rations, although referees might place 1-2,000 CP scattered around individual campsites and filthy bedding as a reward, although gathering them requires 1d6 turns.

11 - This is the ogre's living quarters. The floor is strewn with straw and furs thrown over a long stone slab to form a makeshift cot that reeks of rotten meat. A search turns up a few gnawed bones, but nothing worth taking unless the referee adds something special.

Note: Observant characters (players) will find a smaller stone slab between this and the wall that can be lifted to reveal 10,000 CP wrapped in a sack tied with MAGIC ROPE of elven make.

12 - The ground rises here, and moth-eaten tapestries line the walls leading up to Hag's sanctuary. These conceal grotesque mosaics too wicked even for orcs to make. The opulence of this passage attests to its great importance, although its original purpose is forgotten.

13 - Vaulted and old, this area predates the adjoining construction by many years, something dwarves will notice immediately. It now serves as the Snow Hag's court and private sanctuary. Upon the party's entrance, she will be sitting on a throne in the center attended by her pet DRAGON and 5 GUARDS, orcs armed with daggers and longbows:

GUARDS: AK: 1 (daggers/bows) LL: 1/+0 (3 HP) ME: 50' (--) SE: M/+0

DRAGON: AK: 1 (bite/breath) LL: 6/+2 (11/+3 HP) ME: 30' (--) SE: L/+1

The SNOW HAG is a 7th level magician, diminished, but still powerful. In combat, she will cast Ruin to delay the party and give her elite guard time to advance. Where applicable, she uses her Dire spell to disable any henchmen, who may be set upon by her orcs or the dragon:

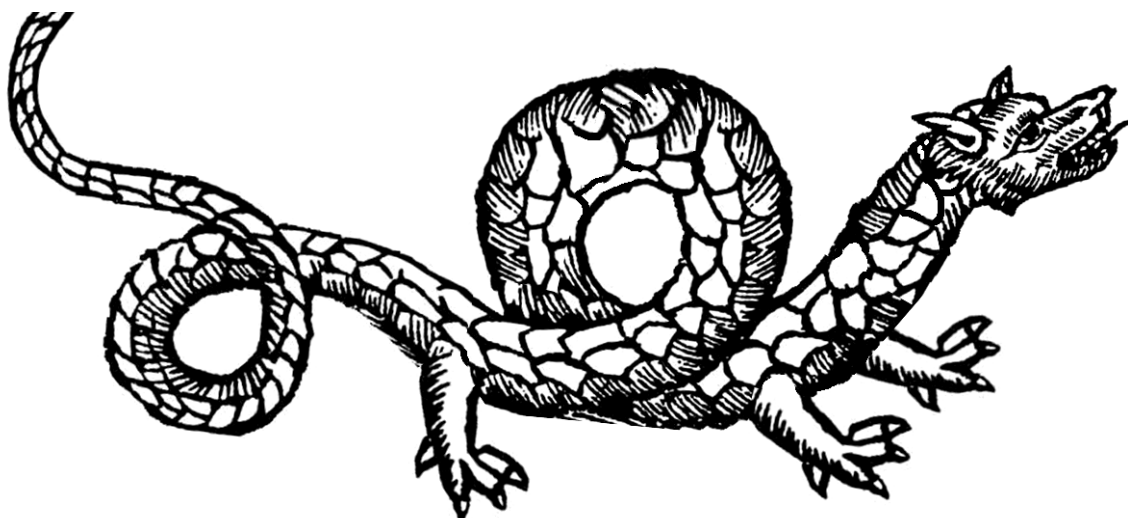
AK: 1 (spells/staff) LL: 7 (11 HP) ME: 50' (--) 6 SPELLS: Bolt, Dire, Gaze, Heal, Mort, Ruin, Ruse, Ward, Wink (6 SP)

Her dragon breathes fire (1d6/10' range) and wears a specialized plate armor (+3). This is the Hag's primary line of defense, and she may use it to retreat to area 14, below should the encounter end badly.

14 - The Hag's living quarters house a small cot and a chest holding a special ELIXIR that restores all spell points (something she may imbibe if given the chance), a WITCHES' BROOM, and 500 GP.

-EPILOGUE-

The people of Lowland Dale are obviously grateful for the aid, but the Magistrate is ashamed, believing his position was compromised by his inability to deal with the situation himself. The party is allowed to keep what treasures they found and escorted to the border. This is seen by everyone as for the best, for grateful lords tend to be suspicious lords!



NIGHTMARES

The Snow Hag has been visiting the villages on certain nights, inducing vivid nightmares by means of a unique spell:

SPELL	DURATION	RANGE	SPECIAL EFFECT
Dire	1 turn/level	30'	induce sleep, nightmares in targets

DIRE induces a deep sleep in all targets (up to 3rd level) within the spell's (30') radius. This lasts for the first turn only, during which each victim experiences unsettling nightmares. Upon awakening, they must save to avoid attacking their companions (if chaotic/neutral) or becoming paralyzed with fear (if lawful) for the remainder. This dreadful magic comes at a price; however, dealing hits to the caster equal to the maximum enemy level present. This is a thoroughly wicked spell.

Optionally, this spell is written into a mysterious, but obviously evil, tome (SOMNUM TENEBRIS) beneath the Hag's bed. This can be learned by any chaotic or neutral magician if their level permits.

REFEREE'S GUIDE TO ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are used to detail enemy statistics:

- AK Number/type(s) of attack
- LL Level/attack bonus (hit points)
- ME Movement/(armor worn)
- SE Size; small (S), medium (M), large (L),
or huge (H)/damage bonus
- (*) Refers to the encounter's text

These are used in all official P&P products and are highly encouraged!

