



ZOR DRAXTAU

Letter from the Publisher



Here we are with number 2! — judging by the number of downloads of **ZD** No. I, I have at least gotten you curious as to what the newsletter and the **USHERWOOD ADVENTURES** are all about. And that was the main goal!

Now, to continue delivering great content!

This issue of Zor Draxtau is SimShip with the third book in the Bone-Hilt Sword campaign; **THE SHADOWED KEEP**. And I am very excited about this adventure's release. Not just because it is by far the most ambitious project Usherwood Publishing has attempted (90 pages, 60 defined encounters, 10 new creatures, 10 adventure maps, whew!), but also because it is literally more than 10 years in the making.

THE SHADOWED KEEP continues the party's search for the dread grip of the Bone-Hilt sword; an artifact of unsurpassed evil. The module is in fact a small campaign in and of itself, and contains four smaller modules. Those playing **THE SHADOWED KEEP** as a stand-alone adventure will find this to be a classic treasure haul, with more than enough Big Baddies to challenge the most seasoned fantasy veteran.

Also in this issue of **ZD**, I reprint the setting's considerations for standard PC classes. There's lots of opportunity for players to role play new aspects of the standard First Edition and OSRIC classes; from druids' orders to magic users' colleges. We even include an illusionist's ability to done disguise!

In **ZD3**, we'll be talking about PC classes unique to the **USHERWOOD ADVENTURES** landscape. Of course, you can always cruise over to the **USHERWOOD ADVENTURES** website and get that information early if you can't wait.

KRAMER

August, 2010
Everett, WA

Got a module you're looking to pitch? Are you an artist/illustrator looking for some contract work? Usherwood Publishing, though small, is a paying publisher. Authors and illustrations are encouraged to make contact with us at kramer@usherwoodadventures.com

Open Gaming Content:

Giant frost frog

Source: **THE SHADOWED KEEP**

Size:	S to M (2 ft, 4 ft, or 6 ft in overall length)
Move:	90 ft.
Armor Class:	4
Hit Dice:	3
Attacks:	1
Damage:	3d4
Special Attacks:	radiate cold
Special Defenses:	Impervious to cold-based attacks
Magic Resistance:	Standard
Rarity:	Rare
No. Encountered:	1d4
Lair Probability:	40%
Intelligence:	Average (low)
Alignment:	Neutral
Level/XP:	2 / 50+2 per HP

These amphibians inhabit cold regions, or far beneath the surface of the ground. The hop of this giant frog can clear the entirety of its movement distance, and also up to one-third that distance (30 ft) vertically.



Interested in being a contributor? Have a short article you think would be beneficial to your fellow First Edition/OSRIC gamers? Feel free to shoot the publisher an email at kramer@usherwoodadventures.com, and we'll look at getting it into our next edition.

In addition to their powerful bite, the frost frog continually radiates an aura of cold which inflicts 3d6 HP damage to any creature within 10 ft of the creature's body. The creature is particularly susceptible to fire-based attacks, making any saving throws at -2, and all damage inflicted upon them thusly is made at 150% of that rolled.

The frost frog will always seek to avoid contact with humans and similar creatures. But if cornered, will attack viciously. Similarly, bold display of fire will cause the frog to retreat if possible.

Giant frost frogs have their own language which is a complicated series of croaks and groans.

A giant frost frog complies in all other respects to other species of giant frog.

Description: The hide of the giant frost frog is thick and tough, and appears as pure white to powdery-blue or silvery-gray. The skin, when properly cured, makes excellent leather armor (AC 7 instead of the normal AC 8), and provides a level of warmth to the wearer in harsh winter climates.

Treasure: none

Open Gaming Content:

Bone Hound

Source: **THE SHADOWED KEEP**

Size:	M (4½ ft-tall at the shoulder)
Move:	180 ft.
Armor Class:	6
Hit Dice:	3
Attacks:	1
Damage:	2d4
Special Attacks:	howl causes <i>fear</i>
Special Defenses:	Nil
Magic Resistance:	Standard
Rarity:	Very rare
No. Encountered:	1d4+1
Lair Probability:	See below
Intelligence:	Non-
Alignment:	Neutral
Level/XP:	3 / 65+2 per HP

Much like a bone golem (see **THE SHATTERED SKULL**, by Usherwood Publishing), the bone hound is created by a cleric

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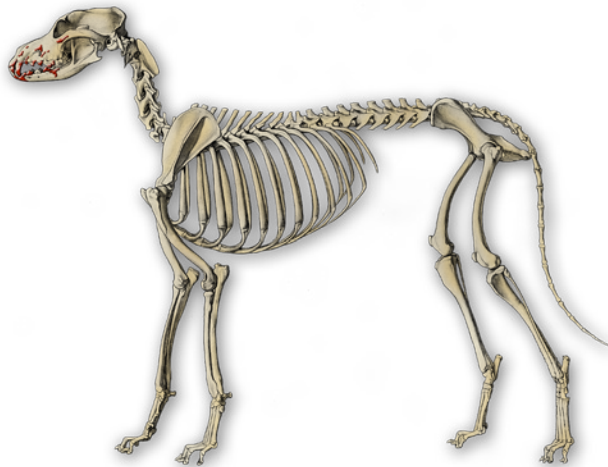
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of at least the 8th level of experience using the following spells; *animate dead*, *geas*, *prayer*, *bless*, *shield*, *command*, and *fire resistance*. Also, the material components required to construct the golem will cost at least 5,000 g.p. The bone hound is constructed from the bones of any canine standing 4 ft – 5 ft-tall at the shoulder. The cleric must have collected enough bones to create a complete skeleton in order to ensure success. Each missing bone will add a 10% (cumulative)



Open Gaming Content:

Ice golem

Source: **THE SHADOWED KEEP**

Size:	L (9 ft-tall)
Move:	60 ft/30 ft underwater
Armor Class:	2
Hit Dice:	40 HP (9 HD)
Attacks:	2
Damage:	2d6/2d6 + breath weapon
Special Attacks:	See below
Special Defenses:	edged weapons do ½ damage
Magic Resistance:	See below
Rarity:	Very rare
No. Encountered:	1
Lair Probability:	Nil
Intelligence:	Non-
Alignment:	Neutral
Level/XP:	7 / 2,180

An ice golem is created by a cleric of no less than 12th level employing the following spells; *resurrection*, *animate object*, *geas*, *prayer*, *bless*, *shield*, *command*, and *fire resistance*. Also, the material components required to construct the golem is at least 15,000 g.p. The creature is created first by the cleric sculpting — or by hiring an appropriate artisan — the likeness of a large 10 ft-tall man from a single block of ice. The ice

likelihood of failure. The bones need not be from the same individual animal, but all the bones used must be from the same species of canine. Construction time takes 3 weeks.

As with golem constructs, the bone hound is created to protect a specific place or item. Once the bone hound has been given its commands, such instructions cannot be changed. Such an attempt will cause the magics giving life to the golem to be dispelled, destroying the creature.

Unlike normal skeletons of the undead variety, bone hounds are not undead, and thus cannot be turned by clerics. Bone hounds are also not affected by *charm*, *sleep*, and *fear* based spells. They are also impervious to normal and magic flames, and electrical-based attacks do only 50% damage.

Resurrection spells will destroy the bone hound utterly; causing it to explode into a cloud of bony fragments (the resulting explosion will inflict 1d4 DAM to all creatures within a 20 ft-radius).

Attacks against the bone hound using bladed weapons will inflict only 50% of the damage rolled. Attacks using crushing weapons will inflict normal damage.

In addition to its biting attack, the bone hound can emit a spine-chilling howl which will cause *fear* in all those within 100 ft-radius who fail their saving throw vs. spell.

Treasure: none

must be pure, clean water, and must be free of any impurity or imperfection (i.e., it must be free of any air bubbles or cracks). Also, the construction of the creature must take place where ambient temperatures are consistently 0° Fahrenheit or below. For every 1° of temperature above 0° there is a 3% cumulative chance that the construction will fail.

The ice golem is created to protect a specific place or item. Once the golem has been given its commands, such instructions cannot be changed. Such an attempt will cause the magics giving life to the golem to be dispelled, destroying the creature, causing it to explode in a shower of small icy fragments.

Ice golems can move while underwater, as long as the water is less than 40°. Warmer water will melt the golem at the rate 5 HP per round of exposure. While underwater, the ice golem is 90% undetectable.

Ice golems are not affected by *charm*, *sleep*, and *fear* based spells. They are also impervious to normal flames, and electrical-based attacks. Magical flames will inflict normal damage. *Resurrection* spells will destroy the bone golem utterly, as will the reverse of a purify water spell (contaminate water) if cast by a druid of no less than the 9th level.

The attack of the bone golem is comprised of either a two-fisted pummeling. The icew golem can also breath a *cone of cold*, that is 20 ft-long and 10 ft-wide at its base. The cone will inflict 1d6+4 HP damage vs. any opponent failing a save vs. breath weapon.

Edged weapons of any type do only half damage when striking the golem.

UA Setting Scriptorium:

Player Character Classes

Setting considerations for standard FEADAD classes

Source: **THE USHERWOOD ADVENTURES** sourceweb
(<http://www.usherwoodadventures.com/support/html/dol/racesandclasses.html>)

Over the long course of Beshian and Verméan history, the standard character classes have developed their own unique quirks and role-playing opportunities that players may wish to consider as they develop their character's attitudes, morals, and interactions with other characters and non-player personalities alike.

The Cleric

Clerics can be found most anywhere upon the continent and the surrounding islands where the Nine Gods and their courts are worshipped. Clerics will receive bonuses in combat when wielding the weapon of the deity and demigod (see the section on Verméan Pantheons). As a result of this weapon specialization, some clerics may even be allowed use of edged and bladed weapons (at the discretion of the GM).



The Druid

The ranks of druids are organized into five Orders. Each Order controls and protects a territory of the Verméan continent;

Canutulahina; in sheer numbers, this order of the Central Continent makes up nearly 50% of all druids encountered throughout the entire Verméan continent.

Domanus Imperium; this order governs the Isle dar de Xerksis. The smallest of the five Orders, the Domanus Imperium nevertheless wields great power in its struggles against the sprawling city-states of Merthyr and the Imperium Vallis.

Eddarrnonn it'an Tudur; this order tends the hot deserts in the Southern Continent. They are experts in extracting water from the dry regions, and their talents at locating and purifying water are greatly sought, and highly prized.

Edith Duer; the druids of this order tend the delicate ecosystems of the Omanthrid Archipelago. Often confused with the pirates and thieves of the island chain, druids in this order resort to pirate-like tactics in protecting the waters and tropical desert islands of the region.



Noes'Cennaleph; this order covers all the lands of the Northern Territories. Geographically, it covers the largest land mass, and so its druids are kept very busy throughout the region, and their numbers, while large, are spread thin across the land. Being the home of the traditional home of the Great Druid (located in the village of Usherwood), it also wields the greatest power.

The Druid School at Usherwood; Within the Druidic school at Usherwood (famous throughout the continent among druids and rangers alike), there are nine Initiates of the 8th Circle (10th level), who are the teachers at the school; three Initiates of the 9th Circle (11th level) who serve as Masters; and one Druid (12th level) who serves as the Head Master at the Druid School at Usherwood.

Druids (12th level druid); of the remaining eight druids of this experience level; one commands each of the Orders of Domanus Imperium, Edith Duer, and Noes'Cennaleph; two command the Order of Eddarrnonn it'an Tudur; and three command the Order of Canutulahina.

Archdruids (13th level druid); of the Archdruids; one resides in a dense copse of woods within the Chandril Forest; one directs efforts against the Imperium Vallis and Merthyr from a secret mountaintop retreat on Imperium Mons; one holds an oasis which wanders the shifting sands of the Tar'l'a Desert.

The Great Druid (14th level druid); whence resides the one Great Druid is ever a secret, and made known only to the three Archdruids. Rumors say that the Great Druid is naught but a legend, invented to inspire the ranks of the druid followers. Others say the Great Druid is moved to Parad'yse Isle, in order to protect this highest of nature defenders. Still others claim that the Great Druid resides on lands yet unknown. Very few claim that the Great Druid wanders the continent under mortal skies as a simple man or woman of modest needs in order that they may witness the doings of the lesser druids without prejudice.

The Fighter

Fighters are found in all societies; great and small, human and demihuman. The ordinary fighter is akin to a mercenary, and hires out his skills for the right price. But even these 'lesser' skilled force of arms may have skills and abilities not accounted to the Paladin, or to the Ranger.

Fighters who declare a deity, or religious following, will benefit by the use of her deity's chosen weapon (see the section on Verméan Pantheons). Such fighters are considered knights of their religion, and have a somewhat higher respect by fellow members of their religious sect, and receive additional assistance when visiting temples dedicated to their god.



The Paladin

It is from among the nobility in the city-state of Bodibeve that most paladins originate. And within Bodibeve, it is only the males who may apply to the state of paladinhood. Women may be considered for knighthood (see Fighter above), but may not apply for the House of Paladins (this restriction only applies to paladin candidates from Bodibeve). There are 23 noble families with the city (not including the ruling family). They are, in order of wealth (and thus, importance); Druisten, Tamia, Urcind, Urfeth, Alauna, Brude, Udrost, Wurgest, Giron, Gartnait, Budros, Decantae, Leo, Garthnach, Galanan, Tourlaine, Briduo, Uuradech, Volas, Bliesblituth, Garnard, Talorc, Gadbre. Of these families, Druisten, Brude, and Budros tend to be the most virulently open about their racist attitudes (see notes on Bodibeve in the Five Kingdoms section). And of the other families, Alauna, Giron, and Tourlaine tend to be the most accepting of other races. Though, these are rules of thumb. There are always exceptions within individual houses.

The paladin should always originate from a city large enough to support a sophisticated and well-provisioned training school for candidates, and a large Avitorian temple to promote the ideals that drive the paladin. Therefore, while it is noted here that most paladins will come from Bodibeve (also, due to its large lawful good population), paladins may come from any large city (with populations of 12,000 or greater) which has a substantial lawful good populace, and a noble class sufficient to propagate new candidates.

Paladin's warhorses; candidates seeking their warhorse must follow a strict regimen of prayer and ritual. To execute this edification, the candidate paladin must visit the tomb of Peter the equestrian (see the Legion of Purity in the Verméan Pantheons), which is hidden on the eastward-facing slopes of the Galan Heights, and meditate for at least 2 days undisturbed, during which time Peter the Equestrian will show the paladin where his warhorse can be found. However, they will not be shown what task must be overcome in order to retrieve the horse. During this period of meditation, the paladin will not eat, and will drink a mere eight ounces of water per day in ritual purification.

The Ranger

Rangers are frequently found in close alliance one of the 5 druid orders (see the section on Druids above). As with druids, rangers may select an Order with which to be associated (though this is not a requirement for rangers). Where a ranger has declared an alliance, she may call upon druid



members of her Order for favors. Irregardless of alignment and deity, the base-chance that a ranger would successfully be able to convince a druid of her Order to perform a favor is 9% plus 5% per point of CHA. Therefore, a ranger with a CHA of 12 is 69% likely to successfully call a favor from a druid of his Order.

However, this is double-edged sword, as rangers may be (and frequently are) required to repay the favor in kind. Failure to comply would result in the banishment of the ranger from the Order, and place a bounty of his head.

It is not required that Rangers declare an alliance to an Order. Where a ranger maintains no such alliance, they are seen as a rogue, and regarded as reckless by their brethren rangers, and also by any druids they may chance across. Such relationships may be strained, and the ranger would be viewed as having a CHA 2 points lower than the actual attribute score.

The Magic User

Magic-Users tend to be solitary figures throughout the continent, and are regarded with suspicion and trepidation in most circumstances. However, in larger civilizations — the Imperium Vallis in particular — magic use and research is a highly regarded skill, and it is to these communities that most human magic-using apprentices will come, seeking sponsorship into one of the various colleges of magic. All colleges require an official invitation by a member magic-user in order to be interviewed for possible acceptance into its ranks. In all colleges, acceptance is dependent upon the successful completion of a series of tests to determine the candidate's worthiness.

For the purposes of establishing player character status as a magic-user, it may be assumed that a first-level character has passed the aforementioned interview and testings appropriately. However, GM's may wish to devise actual tests of their own for the testing of new members. Where this is the case, consult the following list of colleges to determine an appropriate regimen.

Magic-users and illusionists may of course buy or 'discover' new spells for the spell books through methods acceptable to the GM. But where the character has travelled to their college, the acquisition of such magics might be provided free of charge to the petitioner. A rule of thumb might be 1 spell level per level of the character, per game month.

Player character magic-users may declare a college with which to be associated. It is through this relationship that the magic-user generally acquires new spells to add to their spell books. Further, members of colleges may expect a better than average opportunity of gaining assistance when required from fellow collegiates. However, they may also expect prejudice from rival collegiates (this rivalry is more pronounced between certain colleges, which will be described hereafter). Though membership in a college is not required, it does



provide the spell-casting character certain advantages (and disadvantages) according to the particular college selected.

It should here be noted that Sonneteer Magicians and Sonneteer Tricksters (see the section on Verméan Bards later in this section) are generally not accepted into any of the colleges (except where noted below), as they are seen as flighty and lacking the discipline and serious-mindedness required for magic study by true magic-users and illusionists.

Similarly, multi-classed magic-users and illusionists of any stripe are unlikely to be granted access to any of the colleges. Such individuals are usually educated by individual spell casters as apprentices, which in part serves to explain their interests and training in arts outside those of an arcane nature. This is to include Rangers, who may cast magic-user spells at higher levels of experience.

Rumor states that a small but highly skilled (and thereby dangerous) college exists in the Omanthrid Guilds, secreted away on small rocky island. This college, so it is said, is comprised of multi-classed thieves and assassins who dabble in the necromantic arts. Reports have it that a high level Jongleur Magsman is their guildmaster.

The colleges represented here are simply the largest and most famous. Many smaller colleges exist throughout the continent, those these are often of middling to insignificant power.

Charn'Xaas; the state-sponsored college of the Imperium Vallis, the most difficult to get into, and the most politically powerful. The college occupies a block of buildings that surround the Mage Council grand hall in the Imperium Vallis. It is reported that late at night strange visions, explosions, and noises surround the building complex. The alleys about the college are avoided by any who know of its reputation.

Entry into the Charn'Xaas is closely monitored, and generally limited to human members (though rarely an elf or half-elf is granted membership), though gnomish illusionists are not uncommon within this college's halls. The tests for entry into the Charn'Xaas are rumored to be deadly, since no 'rejected' member has ever been heard from to relate tales of the tests within.

This college has members of both magic-user and illusionist classes. As such, it does not support a specific sphere of magic as do some of the other colleges. However, the Charn'Xaas' power comes from its belief of its own superiority, not just over the other colleges of magic, but over all the inhabitants of the Verméan continent. Evil characters would see their position within the college as granting them their right to rule and dominate others (autocratically) through their magic, while goodly characters might see their position within the college as dictating their duty to rule others (benignly, perhaps) through their magic.

Where a Charn'Xaas spell-caster is encountered, and their college made known, they will likely be seen as a domineering imperialist, irregardless of their stated purpose. However, they will also be regarded as highly intelligent (irregardless of an actual INT attribute).

Political intrigue and jockeying for power amongst their ranks are the only things keeping this college from achieving their goals of actually controlling all the lands of Vermé.

Members may be of any alignment.

The Lost Styg'oran and the Styg'oran Questors

Magic Users and Illusionists who do not declare membership in any of the above mentioned colleges are referred to as one of the Lost Styg'oran; those who practice wild and unpredictable magics. And, irregardless of their alignment, past deeds, or associations, the Lost Styg'oran spell caster will be hunted by any college aware of their existence. In this task, the colleges employ bounty hunters known as the Styg'oran Questors to hunt down and capture — with 'dead or alive' orders — any Lost Styg'oran spell caster. Each Styg'oran Questor will always be on the hunt for a specific spell caster when encountered outside their associated college. The Styg'oran Questor will always be a fighter (of at least the 10th level of experience) or assassin (of at least 8th level of experience). A Styg'oran confronted by a Questor will always be given one chance to submit themselves to the laws of the Questor's college before 'elimination' is mandated. The JoAT Styg'oran (see the section on the Jack-of-All-Trades character class below) will always be destroyed on sight.



Flosshilde College; a college of Bodibeve that is situated inside a great open hall. This college is closely associate with the House of Paladins. As such, most members of this college are lawfully good aligned, but members may also be lawful neutral, true neutral, and neutral good. However, only lawful good alignments will ever attain a position of leadership within the school.

Membership is always limited to only human candidates, however, this does not preclude human members to take demihuman apprentices. Therefore, while rare, it is not unheard of to see demihuman races (even the odd goblinsque half-orc) about the college's halls performing some errand for one of the college's members.

Tests for membership into the Flosshilde College will always begin with vow of allegiance to the College, and its membership, irregardless of test outcome. This is executed with a devise which determines the candidate's honesty in taking the vow. Anyone determined to less than earnest in their vow, will be expelled from the college, and their continued citizenship in Bodibeve placed into doubt, as the Deans of the college report the individual to the House of Paladins.

The tests themselves most typically center on the candidate's ability at casting protection spells, as magic-users from this college are typically used in support of paladin and knightly troops of the city-state.

Only magic-users will ever be admitted into the Flosshilde College, as feats of illusion are seen either deceitful, or else viewed as parlour tricks for the amusement of lower-classes.

Nectonius Taixali; a powerful college located within Maglocvani. Second in power and influence only to the

Charn'Xaas. It is rumored that to even be allowed onto the grounds of the college (let alone, actually entering the buildings themselves) requires approval from the Dean Wizard, as well as from the Grand Visir of Maglocvani. To do so without such permission is to sign one's own death warrant.

It is reported that once, a young child wandered into the courtyard of the Nectonius Taixali searching for a lost toy. That evening, the entire family was placed into the city's dungeons in order to protect any college secrets the child may have inadvertently seen.

Any race capable of magic-use is allowed to petition for membership, and the college's ranks are open to both magic-users and illusionists. However, failure of the college's admissions tests leaves the candidate subject to possible public execution. This is done to protect the college's secrets. Upon failure of the tests, the candidate is allowed to make a plea for clemency to his sponsor and the college's regents. The plea must be approved by a two-thirds majority of the regents and the sponsor. If the plea is approved, the candidate becomes the bonded servant of the sponsor for a minimum of 20 years, the death of the sponsor, or the death of the candidate (whichever occurs first).

Should it pass that the sponsor approves a failed candidate's plea, but the regents reject the plea, the failed candidate is put to death, and the sponsor has his membership in the college revoked, and they are banished from the territories of Maglocvani. Should a banished member reveal any secrets of the college, they will have a sizable bounty placed on their head.

Membership of the Nectonius Taixali can be of any alignment with the exception of lawful good and lawful neutral. Candidates thusly aligned will never find a sponsor to represent them to the college's regents.

Nuir Lechrolk; a modest college (in power and prestige) of the Northern Territories, located in a remote citadel on Stacius Island. It is known for being the most open to non-spell casting folk. In fact, the Nui Lechrolk even has what might be termed "open house" days, during which those seeking entry may come to openly petition for a sponsor among the college's membership. Consequently, the Nuir Lechrolk has the largest membership body of any of the colleges.

A result of the college's open-door policy, is that it also supports the widest range of races and alignment classifications. It also allows both magic-users and illusionists with equal status.

Among non-spell casting populations, members of the Nuir Lechrolk are likely to be welcomed with respect until their actions prove otherwise. Members of this college frequently are seen as the stereotypical wizard, wandering the countryside, doing good deeds and entertaining folk with their minor spells of necromancy.

However, because of this desire to make magic more 'mainstream', members of the Nuir Lechrolk are also seen as 'lesser' wizards by other colleges. Even colleges much smaller in size and esteem would regard the Nuir Lechrolk as the equivalent of a trade school for common-place magicians.

But, nothing could be further from the truth. The fact is that because of their openness, the Nuir Lechrolk have come into

far greater spell crafts and necromantic powers than any of the other colleges could possibly imagine. The difference is, the Nuir Lechrolk use these greater powers rarely, preferring to keep such powerful magics under tight restraint, lest they get out of control.

The test of the Nuir Lechrolk pertain mostly to an individual's ability to control magic, and their desire for study, more than the acquisition of power. Even-temperedness and an ability to reason are the hallmark of the Nuir Lechrolk magician. For this reason, mages of this college are very likely to have higher than average WIS attribute scores than might be seen in other individuals (though this certainly is no requirement).

Shakila Laksha; a minor college of the Omanthrid Archipelago, headquartered on Vipoig Island.

Shakila Lakshan philosophy instructs its members in the teachings of illusion (to disguise one's true intent). Therefore, illusionists make up most of its membership, however, the odd magic-user is known to contribute to its membership roster.

Humans predominate in this college. However, gnomes have been known to rise to very high ranks, despite any human prejudices which may (and do) exist within the college.

The tests of the Shakila Lakshan, as can be assumed, rely greatly on the candidate's ability to weave tapestries of illusion. Generally, the tests will include several displays of various feats of minor illusion, and in identifying illusory elements among a collection of actual objects.

Members may be of any alignment, though most typically, the membership at large is some variation of neutral.

Magic-Users and Illusionists manipulate science to produce their spells' effects. As such, magic-users need not declare a deity if one is not desired.

The Illusionist

In addition to suffering the optional requirements for the Magic Colleges described in the previous section, Illusionists are masters in the art of disguise and camouflage. This ability makes them highly desired by play productions as make-up artists. This ability allows the Illusionist to alter his appearance (or the appearance of others) to change sex, height (+/- 3 inches from the actual height), weight (-15 pounds, or +40 pounds from the actual weight), race (as long as it does not exceed height and weight restrictions), hair color, etc. The chance of success of pulling off a successful disguise is a base chance 20% + 6% per level, less the viewer's INT attribute (as a percentage), with a maximum chance for success of 90%. Therefore, a 5th level Illusionist donning a disguise to get past a palace guard who has a 12 INT, has a 38% chance of pulling the disguise off successfully (i.e., 20% + 30% (6% multiplied by his experience level) - 12% (the guard's INT) = 38%).



Thieves and Assassins

Thieves and assassins are generally typical of those described elsewhere. The primary point to highlight here, is that it should be the professional goal of every thief and every assassin to travel one day to the Omanthrid Guilds, and there, become a member in good standing of one of the powerful guilds there, many of which are continental powers with branches in several cities and villages (refer to the section describing the Omanthrid Guilds for more information).



The Monk

All monks must declare a monastic following of one of the deities of his alignment (see the section on Verméan Pantheons). Due to a monk's training in both spiritual and physical combat disciplines, the monk must adhere to his monastic's rituals and practices as described in his deity's summary. Monks making a declaration of a religious following gain certain benefits to their class skills, as described within the deity's or religion's summary.



The Artbeau Cinites; There exists, however, a rogue monastic following. These monks do not celebrate a particular deity, but only the tenants of a lawful life. This sect is called the Artbeau Cini.

Members of this following are not tied to a specific religious order, and answer only to the laws guiding the sect's beliefs.

The monks undergo rigorous physical training, and specialize in open-hand combat. As such, a member of the Artbeau Cini sect will never employ a weapon in combat, but will instead rely solely on her body as a weapon. Due to this emphasis on physical discipline, the Artbeau Cinite monk adds 2 points DAM to her open-hand attack on a successful hit. Further, the effective armor of the Artbeau Cini monk is adjusted by +1 at each level due to her advanced training.

Artbeau Cini monks may utilize improvised weapons (i.e., sticks, clubs, rocks, etc.) when circumstances provide opportunity. Other weapons may be used which are normally available to monks, however, they will always use such weapons suffering normal non-proficiency penalties. They may use thrown weapons (daggers, darts, etc.) without a non-proficiency penalty.

Rival schools will frequently have potentially violent confrontations where interests are in competition with other schools.

The Artbeau Cini itself is a collection of smaller regional schools. Each specializing in a singular form of physical combat, dress, and meditation practices. Each school will have its own name (individual GM's should monitor these as best suits their campaigns). Therefore, an Artbeau Cini monk is just as likely to be of any lawful alignment as are other characters who follow specific deities.

The Bard

Ever since the Drago'nith Karg — the Second Dragon War — the bard has played a significant role in the recording of Verméan history. For this reason, bards have evolved into many specialized functions, as well as the standard First Edition bard character class.

Return next issue when we'll include information on new setting specific character classes.



Open Gaming Content:

Mace of Radiance

Source: **THE SHADOWED KEEP**

This mace is made of a material which resembles quartz. The *mace of radiance* functions as a +3 weapon, but it has an additional power. The wielder may command the weapon to cast a *light* spell. This light is twice the brilliance of the first level clerical spell, *light*. Creatures sensitive to light will recoil at the brightness for 1d4 rounds. The mace is as hard as steel, but is breakable. An unadjusted roll of 1 in combat results in a 20% probability that the weapon will shatter. If such occurs, the resulting breakage will spark an eruption of the *light* spell contained within the weapon, causing all within a 60 ft-radius to be blinded for 2d6 rounds. A successful save vs. spell will halve the duration of this blindness. In combat, the mace glows softly with an internal light.

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