

Encounters ~ Plots ~ Places

Creatures, NPCs, Items, Places and Adventure Hooks for
any fantasy system

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BACKERS

Without these fine folks, this product would not be possible in the form you see here.

Pre-order level backers: Daniel Palacio, Aaron Schindeler, Sunset Syndicate, Robert Oglodzinski – AncientScroll.pl, Lowell Stouder, The Tarwaters (who rock), Jo-Herman Haugholt, Stephan Szabo, Adam lee, Jeffrey Queen, Adam Teece, wraith808, Stephen Wilcoxon, Josh Thompson, Andy McMillan, Dan Bongert, A. Miles Davis, Michael De Rosa, Johnny Johnson, Aidin Langford, Jonathan Trew, Giancarlo Borracci, Wordman, Yolgie, Phil Nicholls, Skyland Games.

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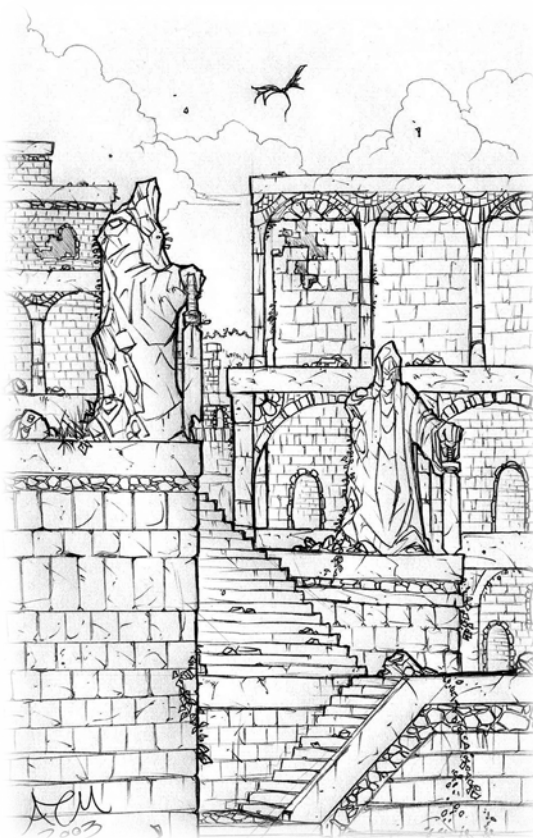
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INTRODUCTION

Encounters ~ Plots ~ Places is meant to be a guide for the Game Master who is looking to insert fully fleshed out NPCs, encounters, items, and places into their campaigns. In it you will find an assortment of non-player characters, encounters, items, areas, and adventure hooks – all elements that you'll find in any fantasy campaigns. These, you can easily plug right into an existing campaign to give your players a challenge that they wouldn't anticipate. Or build an entire campaign around a few NPCs and items! Use the plot hooks to stir your own imagination and add variety to your game.

This book is system neutral, meaning there are no statistics to be found. Instead, you'll find a brief synopsis of each individual element, which will give you a feel for their motivations, strengths, and weaknesses, and overall power in your fantasy world.

This is followed by a detailed description that fleshes out each element. Use the entire description to paint a vivid picture for your party, or pick and choose what you wish, adding details where you see fit.

Lastly for each element, you'll find two Adventure Hooks. Use these to give the element a reason for being in your world and your players a reason for interacting with it.

All NPCs begin with a quote from the NPC themselves where you'll learn a quick bit about them in their own words. NPCs are portrayed as Human in this book. They can easily be any race you desire, all you need do is refer to them as elves, dwarves, or any race you think is appropriate.

You will find some basic information about every NPC.

Name: Age and Gender – with ages given in human years. Feel free to modify the age relative to longer- or shorter-lived races.

Motivation: What this NPC is looking to accomplish.

Strength: The NPC's strengths and talents.

Weakness: The NPC's weaknesses and attributes that can be exploited.

Power Rating: Here the NPC is rated in relative power, with 1 being weak/low level and 10 being extremely powerful/epic level.

With encounters and items, you will also see a list of basic information.

Type: What kind of a creature or encounter this is.

Size: Ranging from Tiny (insect-like) to Massive (huge dragon, entire area).

Motivation: What motivates the creature, or what would draw the party in to this encounter.

Strength: Where the creature or encounter is most capable.

Weaknesses: What might help the party overcome this encounter.

Power Rating: Here the encounter is rated in relative power, with 1 being weak/low level and 10 being extremely powerful/epic level.

Adventure Hooks found at the end of this book are quick and simple ideas to help move the gaming action along.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Non-Player Characters (or NPCs) are people in the game world your players will meet and interact with, but are not necessarily simple encounters. These NPCs can become a small or

large part of the sweeping epic that is your campaign. Each NPC is given a background

and several plot hooks which you can use to insert them into your campaign, while giving your players a new challenge at the same time.

EOWYTH THE NECROMANCER

“I used to love reading after dark by candlelight. Mother and Father never approved though. Now that Mother and Father are... gone, I read all that I wish. Even the bad books. Especially the bad books.”

Eowyth: 14 year old female Necromancer

Motivation: Gaining magical power.

Strength: Powerful natural magical talent, Necromancer.

Weakness: Relatively new to her power, naive, corrupt soul.

Power Rating: 3

Eowyth is a fourteen year old girl who has also become a power in the necromantic world.

Always rebellious and intelligent, with a distaste for the farming life she was destined for, Eowyth just knew there was more to life than marrying a farmer and growing old amongst potatoes and cabbage. She would often dream of a more adventurous life while reading and re-reading her family's sparse collection of books.

One night, after her parents and siblings were long asleep, she began her usual habit of sneaking a book to read by candlelight. This time, she found a new book amongst her old, tattered favorites.

Entitled *Pathways to Power and Freedom*, the book opened with a tale of a young girl, very much like Eowyth, and her discovery of an

innate magical power. Filled with strange symbology, esoteric sounding magical rites, and evocative images, Eowyth devoured the book

over several evenings. Then, she decided to see if any of the rituals described actually worked.

To her delight, she found the book to contain truth, and one evening she successfully reanimated the body of a calf that had wandered into a local pond and drowned earlier that day.

Eowyth's prowess in the dark arts progressed rapidly. At the same time, she took to brooding more, was prone to fits of rage, and displayed a

generally dark and sometimes disturbing attitude.

She began to stay awake far into the night and sleep during the day. One day, her parents took her aside and questioned her about this sudden change. Ever since then



no one has seen or heard from the rest of her family.

The nearby villagers took pity on her as she wandered into the town to report her missing parents and she was put under the care of a local innkeeper. Shortly after, strange things

began happening around the village. The occasional traveler reported seeing odd things at night, hearing disturbing cries, or being pursued short distances by shadowy, half-seen creatures. The village gained an evil reputation as Eowyth's powers continued to grow.

Eowyth is not yet an evil creature, but as she practices these dark arts, her soul is slowly being corrupted. Can she be brought back into the path of light or will she let the darkness destroy her soul? If the darkness wins, will she become too powerful a force to stop?

Adventure Hooks

One: The village's reputation has grown so strange that even the local powers that be are beginning to hear of it. The party is asked to investigate these rumors and lay rest to any strange claims. When they first come in to the village they will find its inhabitants morose, and the outlying farms abandoned or neglected.

Two: Eowyth's uncle has arrived in the village after hearing of her family's tragedy and wishes to care for the young girl. He is a trained scholar who has worked with many magic users and instantly recognized that the girl both has power and is also on the worst path possible. His goal is to find a willing group of skilled adventurers to subdue her and help transport her to a place where she can be safely cared for and hopefully turned to the correct path.

FARIS THE WOLF

"I have not revealed myself to the others in your group with good cause! I am here to help you but must do so on my own terms. You

must realize that no one else would believe a wolf could talk, or think as you do."

Faris: 5, female wolf

Motivation: Serves the will of an evil god who saved her from a life of pain and torture.

Strength: All of the abilities of a wolf, human intelligence, access to evil clerical powers.

Weakness: Does not fully understand human society, can be fooled easily.

Power Rating: 4

Born in the deep woods in a litter of three wolf pups, Faris spent the first half of her life as an ordinary animal without an enlightened consciousness. She knew only the scents of the forest and the passing of seasons. Of good and evil she had no knowledge.

In her third year, she was curious enough to blunder into a trap. Suddenly confined to a steel cage, surrounded by sounds and smells that were utterly foreign, she knew fear for the first time. Several days passed this way until her life was changed forever.

One evening, she had drifted off to an unsettled sleep in her cage. Suddenly her head was gripped in a huge fist of pain and she was tossed about her cage like a leaf on a river. More startling than this, she knew that leaves and rivers were words, and what a huge fist was.

Through occult rituals she had been awakened to consciousness given human understanding. The odd smells were still present, but she understood what her cage was. She could hear the dark muttering around her and could understand that as well.

Still nameless, her next several months were filled with pain and increased awareness of the world around her. She was in turns, tortured,

made to speak using a throat not designed for speech and experimented on in the name of a dark deity.

She frequently heard the name of a dark deity invoked through her months of confinement. In desperation early one morning, she invoked it herself. She promised her eternal loyalty and service in exchange for an end to her torturous confinements.

Within moments of this, a robed human figure appeared before her cage and opened it. The wolf was told her name was now Faris, and if she swore a second time to follow this dark god, she would receive not only freedom but powers she had not dreamt of before.

Although Faris possessed intelligence and understanding far surpassing others of her kind, her wolf-like ways were still with her. She viewed this dark god as her pack leader, and the messenger who arrived as a member of the pack with higher status than herself. Faris did not hesitate and swore her allegiance.

The next few hours were spent on gleeful revenge against her tormentors. Once Faris had

accomplished this, she fled to the wilderness she had grown up in.

Within days, the robed figure had returned to her and began instructing her as an initiate of her god.

Several years have passed and Faris can now be considered an evil cleric of moderate skill. She goes as her god commands, sometimes to remote wilderness areas, other times into cities. Often she is called on to kill rival clergy.

For all that she appears as a normal wolf; no wild wolves will approach her nor allow her to become part of their pack. She does not mind being shunned by her own kind though; she has found a family within the dark god's hierarchy of followers.

Existing in two worlds is not easy for Faris. She still has much of her wolf nature embedded deeply in her subconscious. She has trouble



understanding human societies and cultural cues. She does not joke nor does she truly understand humor or sarcasm. She has come to understand what lying is, but has a hard time with all but the most obvious lies and thus may be easily duped.

Adventure Hooks

One: The party awakens to find that a new animal companion has joined them. A wolf has taken up with a member of the party who should definitely not warrant an animal companion. By all appearances this wolf is friendly, almost tame. She will not harm anyone in the party and will obey simple commands given to her by the person she has chosen.

In time, she may reveal to this person that she is intelligent. If warranted, she will use her clerical abilities to assist the party, at first subtly but later openly.

She will not reveal the deity she serves or her mission, which is to infiltrate the party and keep tabs on them. It seems that there is an obscure prophecy which points to this group of adventurers causing a great deal of trouble for a certain dark god. Faris is charged with keeping an eye on the party and ensuring that they do not fulfill the greater part of the prophecy, coming into possession of the [Godbone Flute](#).

Two: Reports of a werewolf terrorizing an area have reached the party. Concerned citizens have reported that several people have vanished. Recently one turned up on a riverbank, obviously mauled by some

ferocious beast. This, coupled with sightings of a large wolf over the past few weeks, only helps to confirm that it is a werewolf.

The locals are scrambling to hire adventurers to

take care of the werewolf problem. Resident scholars eagerly pile wolfsbane and silver arrows onto any willing volunteers. The next full moon is approaching and the party stands to bolster their reputation if they are the ones who can track this werewolf and kill it.

At the same time, a small group of clerics serving the same god as Faris have entered the area and set up a meeting with the wolf deep in the woods on the night of the full moon. They and Faris are entirely unaware of the werewolf claims.

Faris is responsible for the death of one of the missing humans, but not the corpse that was found on a river bank. He was the victim of a local wolf pack. Or perhaps there really is a werewolf in the area as well....

VASILY GRIGOROVICH

I am certain, my friends, that something satisfactory can be arranged...

Vasily Grigorovich: 50 year old male, head of a large merchant house.

Motivation: Wealth, power and carrying out the current job.

Strength: Intelligent, skilled in misdirection, often underestimated, commands vast wealth.

Weakness: Politically, delicately balanced on a knife edge, has many secrets that could harm him.

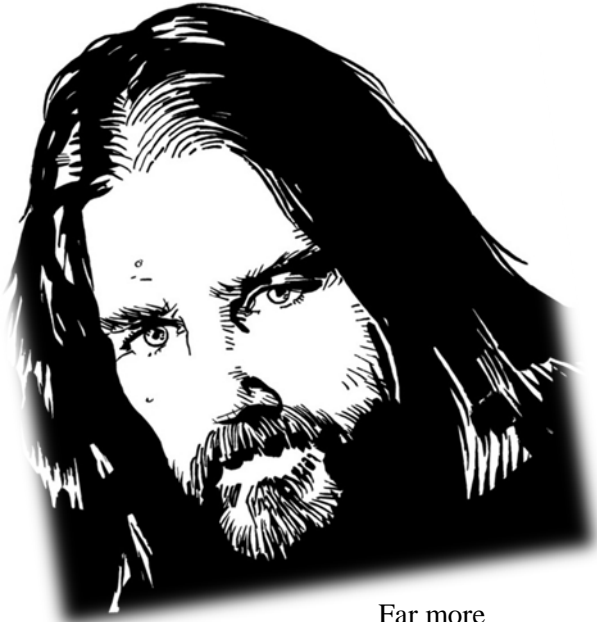
Power Rating: 7

Vasily Grigorovich is the head of a wealthy and far-reaching merchant organization with ties to just about every form of trade that exists, both legal and illegal. Vasily commands a great deal of wealth and power, and fields a small private army. His organization has merchant houses, tenants, and warehouses in most cities of any size - a veritable army of employees.

While wielding large financial power, Vasily has leveraged his trading empire into a ring of tightly controlled information gatherers and problem solvers. Known to a select few as the House of Steel, Vasily's organization within an organization serves contracts with (and occasionally on) powerful political houses dealing in the less savory side of politics.

Vasily is an intelligent and skilled merchant and the current head of a noble house. He has also

taken the time to train himself in the arts of deception, thievery, and assassination. While he does not appear as formidable a foe as other, stronger men, Vasily can be a deadly opponent when cornered.



Far more preferable than open combat to achieve his ends however, Vasily prefers to manipulate, delegate and scheme. He is extremely skilled in the art of balancing multiple running schemes with political manipulation and the occasional show of force.

Among other powers in the world, Vasily and his organization have a reputation for working contracts through to completion, utilizing individuals with extremely specific sets of skills to accomplish near-impossible goals. He has navigated the House of Steel through rough political waters and has struck a balance of sorts. Powerful people respect him for what he can do, and honor the fact that the House of Steel is for hire without malice and never retains political allegiance after a contract is fulfilled.

Vasily may be positioning himself and his organization on the knife's edge, but it's important to note that it's *his knife* and he is very skilled at maintaining this balancing act.

Personally, Vasily is known to always honor his deals to the letter of the contract. He has never cheated his way out of an agreement that has been set on parchment. His reputation as a merchant is impeccable, and his reputation for more shadowy dealings is even more so.

Vasily has in the recent past become aware of another organization, headed by [Sasha Orcslayer](#) and has yet to determine if she is competition or a power to work with.

Adventure Hooks

One: The party is approached by a rough looking individual who claims that they have a special skill set his employer is looking to take advantage of. He immediately offers the party a decent amount of money just to hear him out. He also lets them know that he is currently being backed by several other people also with a unique and interesting set of skills ready to assist him should something like a brawl occur.

Once he has the party's attention, he will inform them that his employer has information about a group of talented and expensive mercenaries fronted by a fierce, warrior known as Sasha.

The mission for the party is simple, if they would like to take it. Find Sasha or a highly placed associate of hers, and offer her a sealed contract. The contract will be sealed in a tamper-proof scroll case to be opened by Sasha alone. The party will receive ten times what they were given just to listen to this proposal, and all expenses reimbursed on their return to this very tavern with an answer from Sasha.

Two: The party is hired by a local thieves guild to help them hit a merchant warehouse that has an unusual amount of muscle guarding it. The logic being, with that many guards, there's got to be something good inside.

Unfortunately the thieves guild has been manipulated into attack this very warehouse by Vasily himself. They have become a small but irritating thorn in his side. As the attack gets underway, one of Vasily's closer associates notices that the party seems to be above the line of average street thug and will try his best to

first isolate them, and then converse with them. If he is impressed enough by the party's actions in the fight, he

will attempt to contract them under the House of Steel.

ALINTAR THE JUST

Look, I don't want to cause more trouble than I must but it's clear that this town has fallen far behind on its tithes. As a duly appointed official and a member of the nobility, I'm willing to overlook the entirety of this injustice. If you will but house me for a few weeks while I come to agreements with the local merchants, and if your town fathers will agree to pay say... two years of tithes in lieu of the many, many years actually owed I am willing to speak on your behalf before the crown.

Alintar (the Just): 32 year old male fighter with performance experience.

Motivation: To gain as much wealth through as little work as possible.

Strength: Charisma, double-talk, and some ability with a blade.

Weakness: Can be easily bought and is something of a lazy coward.

Power Rating: 3

Alintar considers himself one with the laws of the land. Justice is meted out by him and him alone. He does feel the pain of the commoner and base merchant however, and he is always willing to work with them to resolve any issues as rapidly as possible.

The only problem is, he has no legal authority, is not of the nobility, and generally cons local villages into making him a petty little king before moving on to his next score.

Alintar is a classic hustler with a bit of a twist. He is a trained military man, although a bit out of practice. Having spent some of his youth touring with traveling players, he's seen the world and is charismatic and talented enough to talk his way

into the local peasantry's graces far more often than not.

Alintar has been known to travel with a few thugs, either hired with cash from his last con job, or fellow cons following him in the hopes of a big score. He is not above leaving them in the dust should things become tricky, however, and has acquired a number of enemies amongst the small time thieves and cons throughout a wide area.

Alintar is constantly on the move. He rarely spends more than a month in one location if he can help it. He is lazy but he is far from stupid. Should the local nobility or military show up, he has so far managed to be at least a few hours ahead of them.

Alintar has several warrants for his arrest in various kingdoms, but has learned to avoid large settlements while running his con.

Adventure Hooks



One: The party has stopped at a local tavern for some much needed rest. They will immediately see notices of Alintar's crimes along with a fairly good likeness of him. He has just passed them on the road, offering them some friendly advice and perhaps purchasing a set of clothes from them

Two: Beaten and battered, the party stumbles into a small village after narrowly surviving a harrowing encounter. Alintar also happens to be present, being given a feast in the village square at the same time. He is immediately put on the alert by the party's presence, mistaking them for either cons like himself or agents of the local government. Will he flee in the night? Use his toughs to try and rough up the party?

STROM THE BOLD



I'll handle this! (Sounds of violence).

Strom (the Bold): 34 year old male fighter.

Motivation: A desire to help coupled with a lack of understanding and a love of combat.

Strength: Battle savant, extremely strong, proficient in armed and unarmed combat.

Weakness: Low intelligence, wisdom and charisma.

Power Rating: 4

Strom is a mighty fighter, skilled in the art of combat. He is extraordinarily strong and preternaturally good with weapons. He is also utterly and completely at a loss when it comes to anything other than directed violence. Strom is illiterate, woefully ignorant of social graces and, while not evil, is generally a (potentially dangerous) nuisance.

Strom spent his teenage years ensconced in various schools of fighting, scoffing at gladiatorial-type combat as "unrealistic". He has always loved the physicality of a good fight and often found himself outpacing his instructors rapidly. Strom is a master of many common weapons (the sword, the bow, the axe, etc.) and a practitioner of numerous unarmed styles, even several of the more esoteric practices.

Strom spent his twenties offering to fight as a champion for hefty fees, dominating tournaments, back lot fights and knock-down unarmed combats. One particularly memorable fight left him with blood-red eyes when he championed a minor noble against a combat wizard.

Unfortunately for Strom, his mental capacities are far below his physical prowess. Strom is a trusting soul, and often finds himself parted from his money almost as fast as he earned it. Not one to exact vengeance against swindlers, Strom left a trail of happily enriched nobles, con artists, and tavern keepers. It was no fun fighting those who weren't anywhere near his martial level and he could always earn

more money in another fight. There were always more fights.

Strom has a tendency to jump in with his fists or swords before spending more than a few seconds to mentally process any situation. He'll happily defend anyone's honor, generally without asking if any defense is necessary. He'll gleefully pummel cut-purses (or suspected cut-purses) and seems to have a less than 50/50 chance at actually doing the right thing.

With age creeping up on him, he is slowing down, although still most likely the best and most deadly fighter in the room. He has decided that he wants to go out in a blaze of glory, fighting for the right cause, whatever that may be.

Adventure Hooks

One: Strom has followed his desire for a glorious cause to a small skirmish between equally small nation states. He has happily signed on for a decent fee with the wrong side. The petty despot who has heard of Strom is delighted to have him fighting on her side and plans to become far more than a petty despot. The woman who has hired Strom is a known

plotter, murderer and is suspected of treating with dark forces in exchange for greater power. Strom has found himself at an inn where the party is, happily boasting about his glorious cause.

Two: Strom has been hired by someone the party has clashed with to hunt down the party and kill them all. The party encounters Strom in a tavern while Strom is quite drunk. He is unable to best them but they are unable (or unwilling?) to kill him outright while he is drunk. He is obviously an extraordinary fighter and may provide some insight into the party's enemies if questioned. When he sobers up, he will profess a mild sense of regret, shrug his shoulders and offer to join the

party for the bit in exchange for some loot and the opportunity to "find a good cause to fight for, or something."

SASHA ORCSLAYER

"Any great painter starts with charcoal on scraps before they create masterpieces with paint on canvas. Orcs were my doodles teaching me to become the finest artist of the kill that I am today."

Sasha Orcslayer: 39, female.

Motivation: Head of a multi-nation espionage and military contract-for-hire business.



Strength: A skilled assassin who is well connected and very wealthy.

Weakness: Hatred of orcs, need to keep the Organization functioning above and beyond personal considerations.

Power Rating: 7

As a young woman craving adventure, Sasha fell in with numerous bands of unsavory characters. Mostly, they caroused and talked about their adventures without actually leaving the pub.

Sick of the unsavory characters, Sasha took a different direction. She spoke with a number of the watch close to retirement, and found a band of friends who were actually planning on leaving town and attempting something more than falling over from drink.

Several months later, Sasha returned to town bearing new scars, a great deal more experience, and a lasting hatred of orcs. Of the party she left town with, she would not speak, but none of them were seen again.

Sasha took the name Orcslayer and spent a good deal of her mid-to-late twenties leading groups small and large against a growing orc threat. She made numerous contacts and friends who were talented killers and highly ranked in governments and mercenary organizations.

She became known for her prowess on the field of battle, both tactically and strategically. In personal combat she was deadly, showing the hated orcs no quarter and no mercy. Her appearance, a flame-haired woman wearing studded leather armor and displaying a necklace of orcish ears, immediately caused fear among the enemies who had heard of her. She often went to battle wearing a helm crafted from the skull of a Greater Orc she had killed in single combat.

Sasha prefers quick combat and stealth when she can employ those tactics, though she will not shun direct action when it is justified. Wielding two specially crafted, foot-long blades called *Kynacs*, she is a deadly foe.

As Sasha grew to become a talented warrior, she used her connections to form a loose organization of assassins, spies, and

mercenaries. She would work only with the best of the best and her reputation grew not only for her skills, but also for her ability to organize disparate professionals into smoothly working groups.

In her late thirties, Sasha has found herself at the center of a vast network of friends, professionals, and skilled dealers in deception

and death. She refers to her network only as “the organization” and for the right price she can find the right people for any job, from a simple heist to complex political negotiations backed by espionage and a mid-sized, private army.

Sasha continues her personal mission against the orcs, occasionally to the detriment of her own well-being or that of the organization. To date, she has yet to hear any complaints about this, as the orcs are legitimate enemies of most civilized people.

Sasha and her organization have managed so far to walk the razor’s edge between collecting enemies and remaining valuable resources for all who can afford them. Like most powerful guilds, they perform a service for a fee and try to keep personal and political vendettas out of the equation.

Adventure Hooks

One: A somber man dressed in dark greys and browns approaches the party and asks them some fairly specific questions about a recent adventure the party just had. He is apparently unarmed and is calm and businesslike.

If prompted as to where he has gotten his information or what he’s doing, he’ll reply that he is from an organization that has widespread influence throughout the land. He’ll tell the party that what they have done, and what they may do in the future is directly opposed to a mission his organization is currently undertaking.

As everyone here is a professional, his boss has extended a professional courtesy to let the party know they are about to end up in a conflict of interest with his organization. If they continue on the path that they are going (and it can be a mission the party has already agreed to undertake) they may face “serious consequences”.

These consequences can range from a violent meeting with some organization mercenaries to a hosted meeting with Sasha, in which she may try to dissuade the party – or make them a better offer in their current mission.

Sasha and the organization can become an ongoing antagonist in your campaign, or end up sponsoring the party to greater and more challenging deeds.

Two: The party, over several weeks of adventuring, has put together incriminating information about a shadowy organization which seems to have its hands in just about everything from government, to the army, to the college of mages, and thieves guild. They have been given information particularly about Sasha by someone claiming to represent the [House of Steel](#).

Further, it appears that this organization is going to be instrumental in the assassination of a popular and highly placed noble in a murder for cash scheme. There is a great deal of cash on the line as well as the life of a popular political figure.

The party will need to decide what to do with this information. Do they approach this “Sasha” who seems to be posing as a diplomat of some sort and is also the one orchestrating this assassination? She is in the area at this time, presumably to oversee the kill.

It will be up to the party to decide what to do with this information. Should they approach Sasha and let her know that there is information available to anyone which can be pieced together to implicate her and her

organization? Should they let the intended target know about the details of this plot?

HELLEQUIN ALICHINO



You have been marked as evil, a stain on the white cloth of this world. You shall be condemned to oblivion and stain this world no more.

Hellequin Alichino: Ageless and without gender

Motivation: Atoning for past evil acts by condemning evil mortals to oblivion.

Strength: Great magical abilities, immortal, a strong sense of justice.

Weakness: If its belief in its own justice is swayed, it will turn aside or possibly against its masters. God forged weapons can harm it.

Power Rating: 8

Hellequin Alichino was once a very bad person. No one knows if Hellequin was born into this world as a man or a woman, or what it did which was so utterly horrible. What is known is that at a point just before its death, it performed some act to partially redeem itself and place its soul nearly in balance. Because of this act, and the immoral and evil life Hellequin lead, its soul was both damned and saved, balanced between the infernal and the good. Its name is whispered in circles of power, often as a warning and with great fear.

Hellequin Alichino has been granted infernal powers which give it great physical prowess, the ability to travel through alternate planes of existence, and limited prescience. Hellequin can move rapidly through our world, seeming to jump from shadow to shadow. It knows what its targets are planning in a matter of minutes and it is nearly immortal. It cannot be killed by mortal weapons, magical or otherwise. Only those weapons forged by the gods themselves can harm it.

Hellequin has been given these infernal powers but has been charged by the gods of light to further balance its soul and atone for those evil deeds it committed in life. Once every full moon it is given the name of a mortal who has committed an act grievous enough to bring the notice of the gods. Hellequin will find this mortal and destroy them before the next full moon. Never has it failed at its task.

Always it appears to this person as a painted fool, androgynous in form and with a slight smile on its lips. It wields a curved, single edged long sword and a whip. The sword is used to destroy its intended target; the whip can knock

down any barrier. Its cloak is adorned with strange symbols of the infernal language and it carries with it always a silvered apple, one bite of which will reveal the answer to any question.

Hellequin's aura flickers rapidly between evil and good, and it is detectable by magic as both.

It uses these tools to hunt down its victims. It was told that for every evil soul destroyed, its own soul would tip slightly back towards the balance of the good. Given this charge from the gods of good, it chose to believe these words and follows its appointed task with great determination.

Recently Hellequin has begun to question its charge though. It would seem that something is directing it at mortals who may not be exactly evil, and that it may be balancing its soul back towards darkness with every life taken. Hellequin is concerned with this, as it has no wish to further endanger its immortal soul nor does it wish to commit further evil acts.

Adventure Hooks

One: Hellequin has watched the party from afar for some time now. Knowing that they are mortals destined for great things, it has decided to approach them and ask for assistance in unraveling this mystery. Is it truly on the righteous path? If not, who is actually directing it. It will offer what aid it can for the party if they endeavor to help it. As a further hook, it can appear before the party sometime after asking for assistance and reveal to them that one of their members has been targeted. It will agree to hold any actions, breaking its compact with the gods, if the party agrees to investigate further at great risk to them.

Two: Hellequin has appeared before a priest of light and revealed that this priest is its next

target. The priest has one month to prove that he or she is actually a force of good in the world. This priest enlists the party's help,

promising great rewards if they can find a way to defeat Hellequin. The priest offers information on the possible location of a god-forged weapon. Whether this priest is actually evil or not, the party must discover. They may also find clues to report to Hellequin about its masters and their validity.

PIRI

I know we are on the correct path. They who move the world would not set me wrong, and I am with you. Have faith my new found friends, with faith we will succeed!

Piri: 23, female.

Motivation: Piri is on a mission from the gods.

Strength: Holy conviction, raw divine magical power

Weakness: Blind to anything but her mission, unschooled and gullible.

Power Rating: 5

Life has seemingly never been easy for Piri. Her name in the local dialect is slang for "little bug," a name given to her at the age of 5, when she was abandoned in the woods by her family.

She eked out an existence by begging for food and relying on the help of strangers until at the age of 8, she wandered into a local temple. She was treated with kindness, given new clothes, and warm, hearty meals.

She didn't stay very long however, wandering back into her solitary woodland existence, and emerging every month or two at other small temples, in equally small towns bordering the wild wood.

She became known to all of the clerics at the local temples for her wandering ways, simple and warm-natured personality, and displays of kindness to others even when they did not treat her kindly at all. Those who dwelled at these



temples did their best to educate Piri, and see that she was as healthy as she could be, even though she refused all offers of permanent shelter.

She learned her letters and, as a teen, began to talk theology with the clerics while staying at the temples for a week or two before vanishing into the woods again.

To everyone's amazement, in her late teens she began to show signs of clerical power. She no longer needed to seek the local clerics out for occasional divine healing and began to display a divine aura.

Piri, for her part, had spent the better part of her life, certainly everything she remembers clearly, either in the woods contemplating the world and her place in it, or at various temples talking with clerics about the gods they had chosen to worship. She developed her own divine theology, worshiping the divine as a whole, rather than individual entities.

For whatever reason, the gods as a group smiled down on her and granted her clerical abilities similar to other devout practitioners but without the restrictions imposed on them by individual

gods. Piri combines divine powers freely and seemingly at will.

Recently, she has begun to spend less time at the temples as she has entered adulthood and has started speaking of a world-changing mission given to her by not a single god, but all of the divine entities as a whole.

This has many of the clerics at the local temples worried. Either Piri's grasp on her sanity is slipping or she's giving more importance to herself and her divine connection than she should be. Or perhaps she knows more than anyone of the individual schools of divinity.

Adventure Hooks

One: Piri has been led to the party by the gods. She confronts the party with two choices: either they stand with her as the divinely-appointed avatar of the gods in this world, or they stand against her and all of the gods. If the party chooses to accept her word (at least temporarily) she will tell them of a meddling and powerful drake whose interference could spell disaster for the world as a whole. If they ignore her or openly taunt her, she will frown and walk away. Shortly after the party slights Piri, any of the clerics in the party will begin to lose their divine powers and other divine spell casters will no longer be able to heal the party or aid them magically. This will continue until they find Piri and accept her at her word.

Two: Worried that a young and influential mind is being used by evil forces, a multi-faith group of clerics from various wilderness settlements and small towns are looking for some hardened souls to approach a wild cleric. The party is asked to step into the wilderness

and make contact with Piri, and then to discern if she is being used by the truly divine or the agents of chaos and evil. The group of clerics are of the opinion that she is perhaps mentally ill and an easy target. Can Piri convince the party that she truly does have a mission from the gods?

BLAUS

I find the greater demons to be the prettiest. They glow like no others and will get me apples when I ask them too. I do love apples. Would you like an apple?

Blaus: 42, female.

Motivation: Obsessed with the technical aspects of summoning. Savant-like powers.

Strength: Extremely strong willpower, able to summon vastly powerful beings.

Weakness: Easily exploited for simple rewards, no concepts of good or evil.

Power Rating: 6

From a very young age, Blaus was different. She did not enjoy interacting with other children, seemed emotionally detached, and displayed a great deal of intelligence. The third child of a very well-to-do prince in a major noble house, Blaus never wanted for anything but was marginalized by both her parents and her peers.

Turning inwards and to books for comfort, Blaus learned to read by the age of four. At ten she had devoured all of the books available to her in her parent's library and was eagerly searching for other sources.

When her father subdued and captured a vile necromancer, she took it on herself to sneak into the secured loot and managed to spirit away several books. One of these books was a treatise by the dark mage on the art of summoning.

Blaus studied this book for years, drawing connections that its former owner and author failed to make. Often closeted in her room for days at a time, she would cover sheets of parchment with odd charcoal drawings in a symbolical language thought long forgotten. The necromancer, long since executed, was thought to be the last to be able to read it.

At the age of 15, Blaus' parents were overthrown in a near-bloodless coup by cousins of the family. Blaus was not deemed a threat and was moved with a staff of several servants to a country estate far removed from the intrigues of court. There, she grieved for a time over the loss of her parents and the changes forced on her.

A visit by one of Blaus' noble cousins showed the girl to be in good health, well fed, and seemingly oblivious to the departure of her servants. She claimed she was well off and could be left well alone.

Blaus spent the next two and a half decades perfecting the magical art of summoning, while she faded from the memory of her remaining



After several months of grieving, Blaus seemed to return to something of her normal self. Soon, she was again immersed in her books, but this time she was also creating, filling page after page with esoteric writings and strange circles filled with odd patterns.

Before her 17th birthday, the servants that had been assigned to her had either abandoned her outright or travelled back to the city of her birth demanding to be reassigned. Tales of a haunted manor and strange beasts began to circulate.

family. Her needs were met by the simple expedient of ordering summoned creatures to provide for her and the manor took on the status of an abandoned building with an ominous air about it.

With her detachment from emotional ties, seemingly fearless demeanor, and keen intelligence, she found that she could easily dominate any non-magical creature she summoned.

Blaus finds her magical practices to be soothing and is quite masterful at the construction of circles and wards. She does not see any conflict in summoning and then dominating creatures with her will. Most creatures are released within a short time as she grows bored with them, and none have come to harm at her hand. Indeed, among the supernatural circles, even those beings that are starkly evil look on Blaus with something akin to mild humor.

Blaus, being content with her beasts, demons, and less angelic beings, feels no need for the company of other people. While she would not shun other mortals who seek her out, she will also not engage them in any meaningful way, and most leave after a day or two. She does not like to practice her art in front of other people and will instruct her summoned and dominated ‘friends’ to stay clear of any guests.

She may be amenable to certain suggestions however, particularly the promise of summoning lore that is unfamiliar to her. She cannot read others well enough to spot a potential con or recognize those who do not have her best interest at heart.

Adventure Hooks

One: A recent spate of demonic incidents in several small villages seems to be spreading into nearby towns and cities. The party is asked to investigate. What they find indicates that something evil is happening (although it’s impossible to say if it’s demonic or not). Checking the rumor mill will turn up stories of a

creepy, abandoned manor house where strange lights and noises have been reported recently.

Blaus is of course a summoner, but she is not responsible for the incidents. Further investigation by the party will lead them to [Eowyth’s](#) door.

Two: A group of infernal beings has decided that Blaus’ ability to summon and then dominate those of their ilk has gone too far and she must be removed from the mortal world. It has less to do with prejudice or hatred and more to do with bureaucracy. They cannot go about their infernal business with members of their organization suddenly being called to a lonely manor house on the material plane.

To this end, they are looking for agents in the mortal world willing to work on a contractual basis. They will not reveal themselves immediately to be infernal agents, preferring to keep that knowledge from the contracted parties forever if possible. They will specify that Blaus be killed in the quickest manner possible and, if pressed, may let the party know that Blaus’ own summoned beings, if pressed, may know something of this plot and let her know that the party, or someone like them, are on their way.

RAYMOND

It was such a beautiful candelabra. All gold, with rubies the size of robin’s eggs, ah! That’s all I wanted, a bit of scratch when I fenced it and a chance to relax for a few weeks. I never meant to become a hunted man, or to have to save a kingdom. This sucks!



Raymond: 22, male.

Motivation: Looking for the next big score and enough money to live like a king.

Strength: Extremely talented thief, charming.

Weakness: Unable to resist an easy score, tendency to get in over his head, has a conscience.

Power Rating: 5

Sitting in his fourth story bedroom, Raymond would often while away the hours as a young boy watching the street urchins tussle back and forth in a complicated ball game, and live what seemed to be a life free of care.

The second son of a noble house, Raymond's life was far from carefree as he imagined life on the streets would be. He was constantly being tutored in various subjects or dragged bodily to court to witness hour after hour of exhausting and boring exchanges between farmers in dispute.

Raymond was not allowed to associate with his inferiors and after several attempts to run away was put under the guard of an older military sergeant who was winding down into his twilight years.

Through strict but fair discipline, along with a genuinely caring nature, the childless sergeant and Raymond came to trust each other closely. Raymond also learned a great deal about respect for his new father figure and promised not to attempt any more escapes.

In exchange for this promise, the old sergeant began to train Raymond in the arts of war. Raymond truly enjoyed weapons play, although he found the historical and tactical side of warfare utterly boring. Capitalizing on the boy's physical skill, the sergeant began bringing in old friends to train Raymond further.

Raymond became an excellent fencer and also began to study tumbling and acrobatics.

Shortly after his fifteenth birthday, the year before his majority, Raymond lost his one real friend and the only adult who had earned his respect. The sergeant suddenly fell ill and passed away. His parents, who had focused the majority of their attention on Raymond's elder brother and didn't quite know what to do with the young man that they feared would run amok again, placed him under what amounted to house arrest.

At his first chance, Raymond fled from his parents, rappelled down the keep walls in darkness, and ran with all his might until his old life was far behind him.

He found life on the streets to be far from the carefree existence he had imagined when he was a boy. Falling in with a crowd of petty thieves and con artists, Raymond learned the politics of the street while honing his skills as a thief.

Before his 20th birthday, he had become a master thief, planning and executing complex heists while using his physical prowess to his best advantage. He had earned himself a reputation as someone who could get nearly anything out of nearly anywhere. His reputation had also earned him a hefty bounty on his head, should anyone turn him over to the king's guard.

He was amassing a small fortune from objects he had fenced and commissions he had taken when he let his greed get the best of him.

Scoping out a minor government official's house, Raymond found a pair of candelabras he particularly envied. Planning the heist was second nature to him. He found himself in the well-appointed dining room as he had planned.

What Raymond failed to uncover about this particular official, however, was that he was involved in a plot with several highly-placed people who were planning on overthrowing the king and placing a new ruler on the throne.

Raymond crouched tensely as he listened to the plotting occurring in the room next to him. At the point where he learned who was to overthrow the current kingdom, he decided that he had heard enough. He was making good his exit when the plotters decided to move into the dining room. Spotted at the window, he fled from the shouts of the conspirators who had gotten a good look at him.

Now, Raymond is on the run. He is a wanted man on both sides of the law. He has no desire to see the king overthrown yet he cannot tell the authorities. Who would believe a thief like him? As he struggles with this, he has heard that there is now an even more substantial price on his head offered by those whose plot he had overheard.

Adventure Hooks

One: In desperation, Raymond approaches the party looking for help in his seemingly untenable situation. He's betting that the party has not seen any of the notices offering a reward for him, or that if they have; they are willing to negotiate with him directly. He will offer to either give the party a good sum of cash (obtained by fencing stolen goods) or assist them with a serious heist of their own in return for them approaching the king's people with information about the plot. Raymond has also heard curious rumors about a place far in the wilderness where he may be able to shelter for a time and which may be of interest to the party. He will use this [place](#) as a bargaining piece.

Two: The party has found themselves arrested on (possibly trumped up) charges of inciting a riot after they were involved in a good old fashioned bar brawl. They are surrounded by heavily armed guards and court magicians, and then are jailed.

Once incarcerated, they are approached by a representative of several highly placed individuals who feel it would be in the party's best interest to hunt down and kill a wanted master thief named Raymond. They will not only forgive any charges placed against the party for their arrest but will also allow the party to collect the substantial reward for Raymond's death.

If the party fails to comply, they are then threatened with charges of murder should several of the patrons who were injured in the bar brawl find themselves dead the next morning.

The only lead the party is given is that Raymond seems to have fallen in with some sort of murderous woman known only as [Sweena](#).

TILDON THE WAY KEEPER

Brother Troll, please! You must realize that this is not The Way! Violence cannot sustain life! Put down your club and... no, no! Put down your club! PUT DOWN YOUR CLUB!

Tildon: Male, 30.

Motivation: Tildon wishes to do nothing short of eradicating all violence in the world.

Strength: Extremely dexterous and very hard to hit.

Weakness: Blinded by belief.

Power Rating: 4

Tildon had spent the bulk of his life as a performer, traveling the world with a small troupe and performing as an acrobat, tumbler, and sleight of hand artist. He became quite good and moved on to more challenging feats such as tight rope walking, plucking burning arrows out of the air, and other tricks.

His reputation began to build as he drew closer to his third decade. People of note began to invite his troupe to their cities to see Tildon perform. It seemed that his star was rising until, one evening after a particularly intense show, Tildon lost his temper and berated a fellow performer. The man charged with shooting the flaming arrow had done so after having a few drinks and nearly killed Tildon in the process. In a state of rage, Tildon struck him, knocking him to the floor and stormed off to his suite to retire for the evening.

When Tildon appeared the next morning before his troupe, his first act was to hug the man he had struck the night before and beg for forgiveness.



He then told his bewildered troupe that he had been visited by a godlike being that had spent most of the night explaining The Way to Tildon.

The Way boils down to a simple directive – cause as little harm as possible and never deliberately cause violence. All others in this world are brothers and sisters of The Way, and must be brought to believe as Tildon does.

Tildon claimed he was appointed the Way Keeper by this being and charged with going out into the wider world and spreading The Way among those who needed to hear about it the most – mainly adventurers and the evil beings that they tended to encounter.

Tildon then attempted to convert everyone in the inn to The Way, rather unsuccessfully. Tildon, while he does have an air of a man with a mission, is not the best of speakers and he is blinded by his need to spread The Way. He does not do well picking up on emotional cues.

With his background in tumbling and feats of dexterity, Tildon is an extremely mobile and hard to hit individual. He uses this to his advantage while preaching The Way even to those who are actively trying to murder him. He has exhausted a number of opponents in this way but gained exactly one follower in doing so. Tildon has yet to be seriously injured although he has had to run for his life when even he sees that there will be no conversions with certain opponents.

Tildon has spent several years wandering the world, spreading The Way as far and wide as he can. His conviction in The Way remains strong. Unfortunately for Tildon, he has not seen the rapid growth and acceptance of The Way that he initially anticipated. He has several disciples who've all left him to spread the word on their own, but he estimates the followers of The Way at roughly eight people.

Adventure Hooks

One: Tildon has managed to acquire a new disciple. Moura is a young woman out to see the world who's listened to Tildon's preaching and been swayed to The Way. Just as she was beginning to learn the finer points, Tildon took it upon himself to spread The Way to a small goblin enclave.

Try as he might to speak and dodge, he was eventually captured and clubbed to unconsciousness. Moura does not know if Tildon is alive or dead, but she will do nearly anything to convince the party to save her new mentor.

If the party is successful, surely this will earn them the gratitude and companionship of Tildon.

Two: The party has stumbled upon the strangest sight they may ever have found. While walking down the road, they are approached by a young boy, about six years old. He is wearing sturdy but old clothing, a bit worse for wear. He asks the party if they have any food and then tells them that they should not fight, even if someone else started it.

If the party asks what a six year old boy is doing on the road by himself, he will spin them a story of Uncle Tildon, who saved all of his sisters and brothers from the horrible sins of violence. His name is Miktal.

Tildon had stopped by a large orphanage at the outskirts of a good sized city, in hopes of

preaching The Way to the children. As he observed the daily routines, he noticed that a number of the workers were unkempt and unfriendly. Worse, they relied on corporal punishment to discipline the children. Tildon became extremely vocal, and threatened holy redemption if the guilty workers did not vacate the premises immediately. In the chaos, Tildon gathered together twenty children and marched them out of the orphanage.

He has spent the past week doing his best to feed and care for the children, and slowly realizing that his actions, although justified, were not thought through as well as could be. He will implore the party for help with the children and promise them his eternal gratitude and private tutoring in The Way.

SWEENA

Why do these men stare at me so? And the women too? Is it not normal to eat after bathing? Why are there two of these forks and only a dull knife? Clothing? Oh, if you insist....

Sweena: 7,214, female ex-immortal.

Motivation: Learn to experience life as a mortal so she can return to the immortal realm.

Strength: Talented warrior, knowledgeable about the gods and other realms.

Weakness: No tact, tends to forget she is mortal.

Power Rating: 6

The Markinot inhabit the lesser stories of an ancient mythology. Known mostly to scholars and mages they are known as the shepherds of the gods. Charged with escorting the souls of the departed to the immortal realm, and then back to the mortal realm when they are ready for rebirth.

Like many mythologies, there are truths behind the stories. In the case of the Markinot, every single word is true. Dictated to an ancient mage by a minor godling, the ancient scholarly words found their way into mythology.

Sweena claims to be of the Markinot and she will tell her tale to any who will listen. As she says it, she has served millennia as a Markinot, ushering souls and doing the bidding of the gods. In the very recent past however, she was expelled from the heavenly realm.

Mack was a well-muscled, intelligent warrior-priest who died defending his temple from onrushing, barely sentient beasts of darkness. Sweena escorted Mack's soul to the heavenly realm and spent some time discussing with Mack his philosophies on life, the afterlife, and the meaning of the Universe as a whole.

Sweena, breaking all heavenly accords, fell madly in love with Mack. They spent centuries together until it was time for Mack's soul to return to the world of living. Sweena was distraught. She swore that they would not lose each other, and with Mack's consent, they stole away to the mortal realm together.

When her father heard of this, he was horrified. Begging the powers from the gods themselves, he located Sweena and Mack and



returned them to the heavenly realm. Mack followed the path of nature and was reborn. Sweena, for her transgressions, was exiled to the mortal realms for twenty years as a mortal. She is to live, or die, as mortals do. Should she survive her twenty year exile, she will be allowed to return to the ranks of the Markinot.

Sweena has vowed to find Mack in the mortal realms if she can, although he would be two years old at this time. She has travelled a small portion of the world seeking, relying on her skill with the bow and her immortal luck for survival.

Sweena is newly acquainted with nearly everything of the mortal realm, as experienced by a mortal: pain, sorrow, joy, hunger, and near exhaustion. She has had to learn how to deal with these in a very short time, with love being the only emotion she had prior knowledge of.

Adventure Hooks

One: The party is approached by a desperate innkeeper. It seems that there is a woman who is consistently drinking the other patrons under the table, taking their money in various games of chance and on one occasion, pummeling two brawny men into unconsciousness. She's also looking for "adventure worthy of my prowess and ability".

The more the party brushes the innkeeper off, the stranger the details get. She's a dead shot with a bow, but didn't know you had to cook chicken before eating it. These odd details will culminate in a story of this strange woman claiming to be an immortal servant of the gods, just before she passed out on moonshine.

This woman has plenty of gold, from her winnings at dice and cards, but the innkeeper is slowly losing business as the "mad woman" is driving people out of his inn. He's almost as eager to find a worthy adventure as Sweena is.

Two: The party is approached by a strange being, calling itself [Hellequin Alichino](#). They are told that there is a godling cast down amongst mortals and the party is charged with locating her and occupying her until Hellequin can "Speak with her".

ENCOUNTERS

TADALIOUS THE DRAKE

Type: Ancient dragon.

Size: Massive

Motivation: Knowledge, boredom.

Strength: Magical, physically strong, intelligent.

Weaknesses: Tunnel vision, inability to accept failure.

Power Rating: 8

Tadalious is an ancient dragon who has taken a keen interest in the living history of the races.

He has decided that these mortals that are constantly buzzing and humming about the

world around him will make extremely interesting subjects to study. Compared to him, they have very short lifespans, go through generations rapidly, yet have failed to exhibit much in the way of evolving.

Tadalious has spent many human generations wearing the faces of various people he has created in order to move the populations of several surrounding city states to, in his words, "a higher existence, in which the arts feature more than war and fornication".

He has been both frustrated and entranced with the fact that, through all of his dealings, political machinations, and magical nudging, the three city states have not only failed to evolve a population of higher beings, but have been in a near constant state of political strife with each other and their other neighbors.

He will only fight as a last resort, but if drawn into battle, is a deadly foe.

Adventure Hooks

One: Tadalious has decided that the only way to move forward with his experiment is to remove the entrenched leadership of the three city states. He has chosen the party as his agents to dispose of one ruling family, whether they wish to do this or not.

Tadalious will first approach them wearing a human face, and offer them a good deal of money, magical items, or other appropriate treasure, as well as support getting into and out of the city unseen.

If the party does not want to partake in an assassination, he will back off, and then approach them in his true form. He will tell them that the same reward stands, but that they no longer have a choice in the matter.

The party has two weeks and a purse of gold to explore the city, determine the political and social lay of the land and then they must contact Tadalious and give him a date where the assassination will happen.



Two: After months of cattle going missing and sheep vanishing from their flocks, the king of the realm has been convinced that the kingdom has a dragon problem. The party, with the reputation that they have earned, has been contacted and offered a job of, first, tracking down the potential dragon and, second, eliminating the problem.

The dragon in question has been attracted to this particular city for several reasons. The leaders are ripe to topple in a bloody coupe, which will have ramifications for several outlying towns. In addition to this, there appears to be some strange, magical activity occurring which has something to do with the realm of the [Faerie](#).

The party will be left to wrestle with any moral, political and societal fallout.

Tadalious will listen to any political or philosophical reasoning, and may even be convinced to alter his strategy if the arguments are well laid out and ring true.

He will not take kindly to the party attempting to disappear or find some other way to accomplish the mission.

AARTAAQUENTA

Type: Mermaid.

Size: Medium (Human size).

Motivation: Curiosity, sense of justice.

Strength: Can breathe underwater, strong swimmer.

Weaknesses: Not strong or experienced with combat or humans.

Power Rating: (Aartaaquenta) 1 (Merpeople Kingdom) 7



Aartaaquenta is a young mermaid whose underwater city is located fairly close to a large and busy port. As with most of her kind, she's intelligent and curious, particularly about the surface dwellers who are forced to live out their lives outside of the Merpeople's fluid world. Though she cannot speak with the air breathers, she is fascinated with their daily activities.

Aartaaquenta's curiosity has led her to closely observe those people who spend a good amount of time at the docks, which, unfortunately for her, not only include dock workers, but a party of young nobles who've taken to hanging around with a rougher crowd.

This group of young nobles started taunting the young mermaid, making rude gestures and throwing rotten trash at her. Being the strong-willed soul that Aartaaquenta is, this did not stop her in her study of other air-breathers, whose reactions ranged from amazed stares to completely ignoring her.

Returning to her underwater home with tales of taunting, the Merpeople have taken keen notice of the treatment of one of their daughters by the air-dwellers and they are not pleased. A tacit agreement had been in effect for hundreds of years prior, where the surface dwellers and the ocean dwellers would meet occasionally to trade, but mostly left each other to their own devices. This agreement is not in dire jeopardy.

The Merpeople are considering declaring war on the air-dwellers because of the ill treatment of one of their own.

Aartaaquenta is aware of this, and is also aware that it is just a very small group of individuals causing all of these problems. She's attempted to reason with her people to no avail. All attempts to reason with the group of noble toughs have also come to nothing more than Aartaaquenta having to flee before becoming injured by them.

Adventure Hooks

One: Aartaaquenta, in an act of desperation, has identified the party as a group of outsiders, not involved in the current political situations. She will do her best to attempt communication with the party by any means she has. If she can convince them to talk with her, she will explain the situation as best she can and ask that the party help her by intervening on her behalf with the air-breathers.

Two: The party is approached by the youngest son of a local duke. It seems that he and his companions are being harassed by a group of vicious Merpeople, bent on ruining a long standing agreement of non-violence between the races. There is a substantial reward offered if the party can capture their leader, a young rogue mermaid who's been seen about the docks sabotaging trade.

It appears that these Merpeople have gone so far as to slash fishing nets, and capsize a fishing boat. This kind of nautical terrorism cannot be tolerated. The young man has also heard stories of some strange [fish creature](#) which must be in league with the Merpeople.

GNUMA

Type: Creature (Magical Insect)

Size: Tiny

Motivation: Instinct

Strength: Numbers, poison

Weaknesses: Size, lack of intelligence

Power Level: 2

Gnuma are very small, humanoid looking insects. They have been found in just about any location provided that it is fairly dry and that there is a nearby clay deposit. They have a stinging bite which simultaneously removes a small circle of skin and tissue, while injecting a mild toxin.

Gnuma are not intelligent by any normal standards. They do not have any language nor do they appear to have much interest in the goings on of other creatures, with one exception.

They feed primarily on clay deposits, from which they obtain nutrients and then regurgitate a moist, extremely sticky substance that is part clay and part

mucous. They then take this substance and use it to create fantastically elaborate cities in miniature.

These miniature cities, often encompassing areas as large as forty feet square, are always models of nearby cities, in minute detail. Every shop, house, palace, bridge, and fortress will be replicated in tiny scale.

If objects such as carts, barrels, or boxes are left in the city for more than a few days, they will appear within the tiny reproduction. Once removed from the actual city, they will soon be removed by Gnuma in their reproduction as well.

The Gnuma appear to live in these minute cities, sending out pods of up to 300 individuals to collect clay for food and scout through the city they are modeling. The clay is never stored but always consumed as soon as it is returned to their tiny cities.

These tiny cities have actually been used by city officials, military commanders and other [interested parties](#) as they are nearly always accurate and completely to scale.

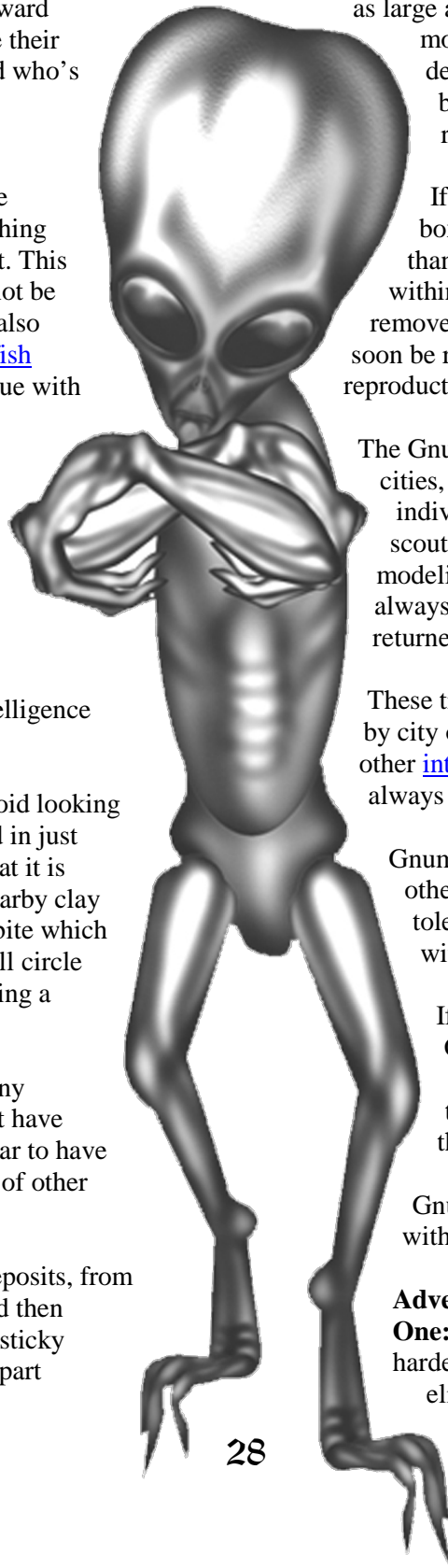
Gnuma will pay no attention to any other creatures around them and will tolerate individuals being killed without noticing.

If their cities or a large number of Gnuma are threatened they will swarm and attack whatever it is that is threatening their lives and their cities in miniature.

Gnuma swarms are not to be trifled with.

Adventure Hooks

One: While looking to infiltrate a hardened city, the party is asked to eliminate a dangerous pest from an



isolated building. On encountering the Gnuma, they realize that the city is mapped out in front of them allowing them to plan their infiltration. Do they still follow through with eliminating the little creatures?

Two: Hired as advanced scouts for a large invasion force, the party stumbles on the command group for the opposing army, who themselves have stumbled on a Gnuma infestation. They are using the infestation to coordinate their defenses and plug any gaps in the physical structure of the city. They have left powerful guardians at the Gnuma infestation to prevent it being tampered with.

DEATH KNIGHT

Type: Supernatural creature.

Size: Medium (human sized).

Motivation:

Compulsion.

Strength: Undead, can choose to be in incorporeal, physically strong.

Weaknesses: Limited communication with others, tied to one physical area.

Power Rating: 1.

Old tales speak of Death knights – the souls of dead soldiers who have left an unrequited love behind. Death knights come into existence when skilled fighters who are passionate about their cause are killed in battle. Passion for their cause is not what creates a Deathknight however, they must also be passionate about another person for whom they

have neither time nor occasion to reveal their feelings.

When these warriors are killed in battle, if their passion is of sufficient strength, a form of ghost may be created – a Death knight.

Stories tell of the Death knights roaming the site of their death, taking vengeance on any of the living who are fortunate enough to have found their true love.

It is well known that a battle was fought long ago near the party's current location. What isn't known is why, suddenly, tales of a Deathknight are wildly circulating, eclipsing all of the local gossip and causing fear throughout the population.

A call has gone out from the mayor – someone must investigate this deadly spirit and eliminate it. Preferably not anyone actually associated with the town. A bounty is put on the Death knight's demise and it is enough to interest even a group of rough and ready wanderers like the players.

Unknown to the mayor and the party, something evil has taken root in the forest – a ravaging band of goblins (or other suitable

creatures) have decided that the wilderness is near enough to the town to make easy pickings of its inhabitants, while offering enough cover from any serious conflict.

It is true that a Deathknight has appeared in the area, but contrary to popular stories, Death Knights, while they may be ghostly undead, exist to protect those who still have a chance at true love. The goblins are enough of a threat to all of the young



lovers in the town, who are prone to wander off together into the woods. This threat has awakened the Death knight, which has tried its best to warn the townsfolk, or at least ward them off from the woods.

The Deathknight cannot speak, and cannot leave the woods nearby the town, where the battle was once fought. Fortunately its territory is near enough to the goblins that an astute adventurer would notice signs of their grubby camp. The Deathknight will do its best to lead the party to the goblin camp, not for an ambush, but to finally see what has awakened it from its eternal slumber.

Once the goblins are vanquished, the Death knight will return to the peace of its rest and bother the townsfolk no more.

Adventure Hooks

One: The goblins, in addition to their joy in looting and pillaging, are nearby for another

purpose. A few months prior to their arrival, a disturbed man wandered into their village alone, spouting nonsense about “the way”. Deemed utterly insane, he was actually allowed to stay as a form of mild entertainment for the tribe.

One night this man named [Tildon](#) vanished, and took with him the goblin chieftain’s eldest son, who apparently began to believe the insane man. The entire tribe was in a frenzy, and are now on a quest for vengeance. They can be convinced to leave without a fight, if the party swears to capture this Tildon and return him to the goblins.

Two: If the party agrees to investigate the appearance of the Death Knight, they

will find themselves under investigation as well. Being that they are all adventurers of some caliber, the Death Knight has yet to determine if they pose a threat to the town. It will keep a close eye on them, watch how they deal with the goblins, the townsfolk, and any others.

If they are seen as a threat, or would attempt to bargain with the goblins rather than removing them outright through combat or forcing them to leave, the Death Knight may consider the party itself hostile to the town’s interest.

MAD GHOST



Type: Ghost.

Size: Medium (human sized).

Motivation: Extreme anger and good wine.

Strength: Scary, incorporeal.

Weaknesses: Cannot directly touch the physical world.

Power Rating: 1

The Cask and Wagon is a popular watering hole for merchants and adventurers. It is upscale enough to avoid the worst of bar brawling and cut-purses, but cheap enough that drink and a room can be had without impacting much of a profit.

It is strange then, that the inn is mostly deserted, even just past sundown. Only the innkeeper and a few desultory staff are present, along with an old gaffer quietly snoring near the fireplace.

On inquiring about the lack of customers, the innkeeper will confide (without any prompting) that his poor inn has fallen under a terrible curse. An awful and malignant spirit is haunting the store rooms and has driven away most of his help and all of his customers.

This angry spirit only manifests after dark, but has been reported to do things like knock over patron's mugs of ale, remove the taps from ale kegs, slam doors, break bottles, and occasionally appears as an older man with white hair, who is screaming something unintelligible.

The innkeeper is offering a hefty reward for anyone brave enough to stay the night, and somehow rid him of this ghostly menace.

After everyone clears out of the inn before sunset, there is a definite air of menace. As if on cue, just as the sun is setting, strange noises are heard, a few windows rattle, and a moan can be heard coming from the root cellar below the inn.

If any party members venture into the cellar, they will encounter a ghostly looking elderly man with greying hair. He's standing over a particular cask of wine, amidst a large number of other casks, and appears to be saying "Thieves!" over and over again.

Adventure Hooks

One: If engaged in conversation, the ghostly man will yell and scream about thieves taking his wine. He can be calmed down by entering any discussion about the merits of good wine. If this is done, he will explain to the party that the wine in the particular cask he is haunting was his favorite, and was stolen from his estate shortly after he died by an unscrupulous innkeeper.

He will state the only way he will depart this inn in peace, is if the entire cask (worth a good deal of money) is poured out over his grave.

Two: Ghosts are tortured souls who inhabit an area of the physical world they are either very familiar with, or is the scene of their death.

Almost by definition ghosts are not sane, trapped between the living world and the realm of the dead.

Almost unheard of, but certain to unhinge these wretched souls even further, is to rip them from their worldly base and force them to inhabit an unfamiliar haunt. The poor soul in this bar was inadvertently displaced, and will eventually lament this to any who take the time to weather his rage and then talk with him. He will spin a disjointed and sad tale of his death, and his being ripped from his ancestral home by an evil woman known as [Eowyth](#).

GROHN

Type: Insectoid

Size: Small (35 lbs.)

Motivation: As a race, seeking to expand their contact with the outside world.

Strength: Highly organized, very hardy, intelligent, telepathic.

Weaknesses: Look like giant bugs, enjoy eating rotting meat and fungus.

Power Rating: 2 (individual) 8 (race).

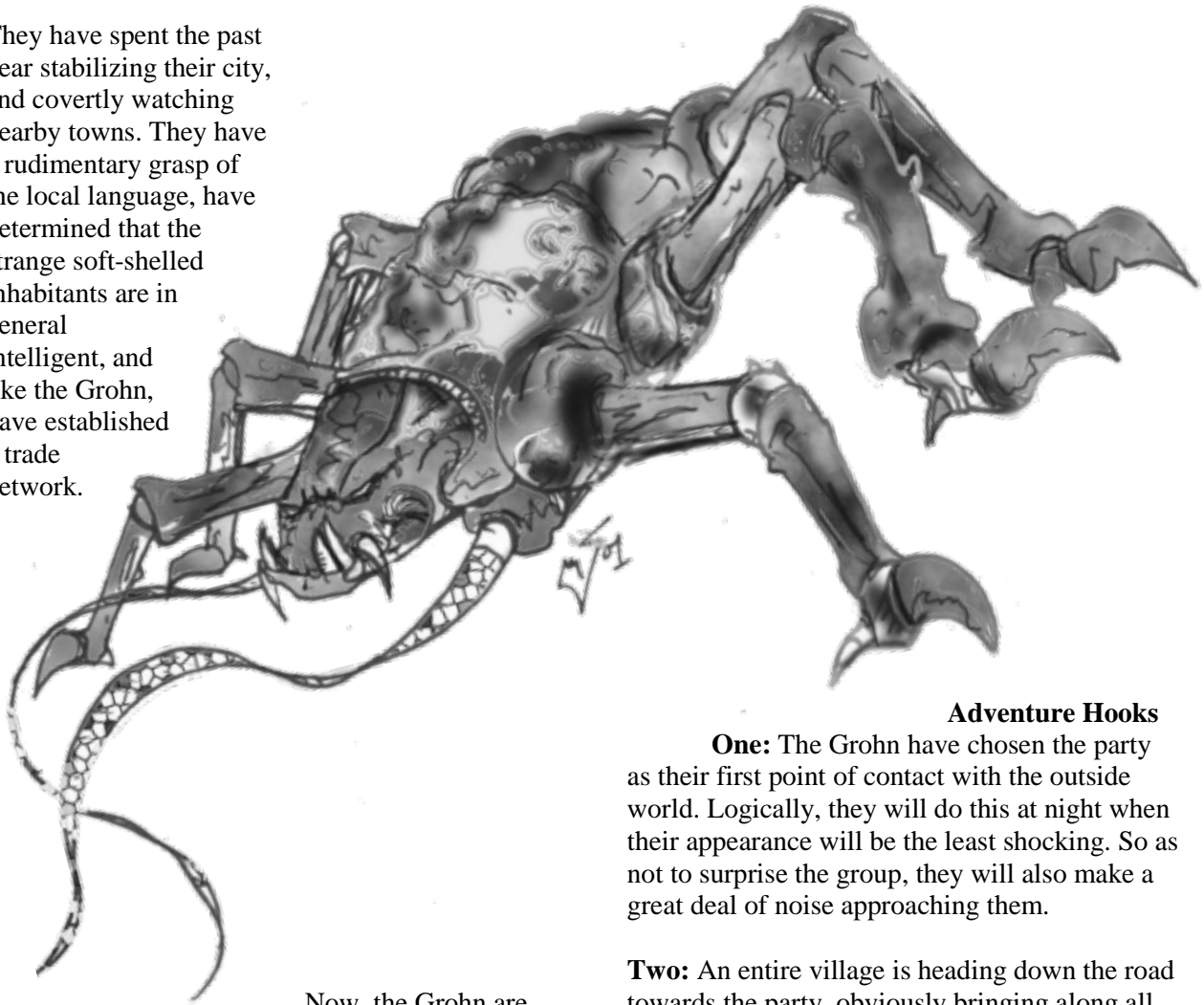
The Grohn are a race of peaceful, hardworking entities that thrive on commerce, manufacturing and intellectual pursuits. In their home plane, they are organized into loose city-states of roughly 1 million individuals. These cities occupy massive underground structures built by generations of Grohn.

The Grohn share their genetic heritage with hive-based insects. They developed a form of limited telepathy allowing them to communicate with other Grohn in a one mile radius silently and instantly. They also have a rigid and highly organized society with clear, biological divisions between workers, intellectuals, and a ruling class.

For reasons unknown to the Grohn who inhabit the city of Mok Tun, they have found their entire city transported into our realm, thankfully intact with fungi farms and food

processing bays. Mok Tun exists roughly seventy five feet below ground level in the wilderness fifteen miles from the nearest settlement, another stroke of luck for the Grohn.

They have spent the past year stabilizing their city, and covertly watching nearby towns. They have a rudimentary grasp of the local language, have determined that the strange soft-shelled inhabitants are in general intelligent, and like the Grohn, have established a trade network.



Now, the Grohn are looking to establish contact with the surface dwelling races to work out trade agreements and in general try to make the best of their new found home. They face an uphill battle however, because they look like large, dangerous insects. Add to this the fact that they farm and harvest a particularly noxious form of fungi, which they then use to

break down meat proteins into a putrid mix for consumption. Both of these processes stink of rotting flesh. Even though the Grohn do not eat

meat acquired from sentient beings, the process of pre-digesting and rotting their fodder will turn even the strongest stomach.

Adventure Hooks

One: The Grohn have chosen the party as their first point of contact with the outside world. Logically, they will do this at night when their appearance will be the least shocking. So as not to surprise the group, they will also make a great deal of noise approaching them.

Two: An entire village is heading down the road towards the party, obviously bringing along all of their possessions and telling frantic stories of giant bugs breaking through the ground and chattering nonsense at them. One village elder laments that this happened on the

heels of that scoundrel [Alintar](#) taking advantage of the entire village. Should the party investigate, they will arrive at the village just as the local authorities do; carrying orders to destroy the vermin.

PSEUDO-DEATH

Type: Immortal incarnation of Death itself.

Size: Average Human.

Motivation: The protection of a certain stretch of seemingly empty wood.

Strength: Playing off of the mortal's natural fear of death.

Weaknesses: Not actually a supernatural personification of Death itself.

Power Rating: 2

The portents began several months ago. First a snake with legs was spotted in the wood out by the ancient quarry. When it was brought before the elders, they proclaimed it a true phenomenon and burnt it hastily.

Next, Elder Hammond's cow gave birth to a three headed calf. Thankfully, he destroyed it soon after it was born so that no lingering curse would affect him and the village.

Two weeks ago Elder Gacet was called to witness a birth and the child was born with fire red hair and singing. Singing! Surely, these are signs and portents of dire comings!

Over the past week, travelers through the wooded road near the village have reported seeing a shadowy figure gliding through the wood. Cloaked in blackness and wielding a massive battle scythe, this being hissed out warnings to any who would approach. Death, it said, has arrived and it would strike down any soul who entered the woods.

Strange footsteps have been seen in the snow, and dismembered animals found nearby. Skulls have been carved into trees marking out a clear area where Death itself seems to linger. The elders have declared the area off limits and have begged any who will listen to stay away, as they cannot protect anyone from such a clear and dangerous supernatural threat.

What the Elders are not telling anyone is that the winter past, frost had caused a minor cave-in at the old quarry, revealing a rich vein of gold ore. A hasty meeting was convened and the Elders concocted the idea of taking turns dressing as the Grim Reaper in order to scare anyone off from accidentally wandering through their new

found source of wealth. They do not wish anyone to hear of the gold ore because that would bring the nobility to either claim the gold for their own, or levy heavy taxes.

Adventure Hooks

One: Even a casual stroll through the village will reveal that it is a very poor place indeed, with many families struggling to get by.

Recently the Elders have begun to distribute food and fund repairs to buildings and even tools though, improving everyone's lives. The party, if they investigate the appearance of Death

in the nearby woods will quickly uncover the Elder's plot. There could be a significant reward in alerting local authorities to the ongoing tax evasion.



Two: The party is only alerted to this scheme when one of the Elders turns up dead while still wearing the full reaper costume. The other Elders panic and immediately try to bribe the party into finding out the cause of death. Did another person stumble into the plot, or is Death displeased with being mimicked? The elders will offer a significant amount of gold to the party if they can find who is responsible. They are particularly fearful that an agent of [Sasha Orcslayer](#) may have stumbled on to their plot.

PACHO

Type: Dragon.

Size: Large.

Motivation: A love of shiny things, treats, impressing others.

Strength: Draconic powers, flight, breath weapon.

Weaknesses: Youth, overly inquisitive, easily tempted.

Power Rating: 4

Pacho's first memory is that of darkness and strange sounds. Shortly after she became aware of the world, she broke free from her shell and almost immediately took wing, finding some carrion to feed on. This was only seven cycles of the moon past, and that is almost all that Pacho knows.

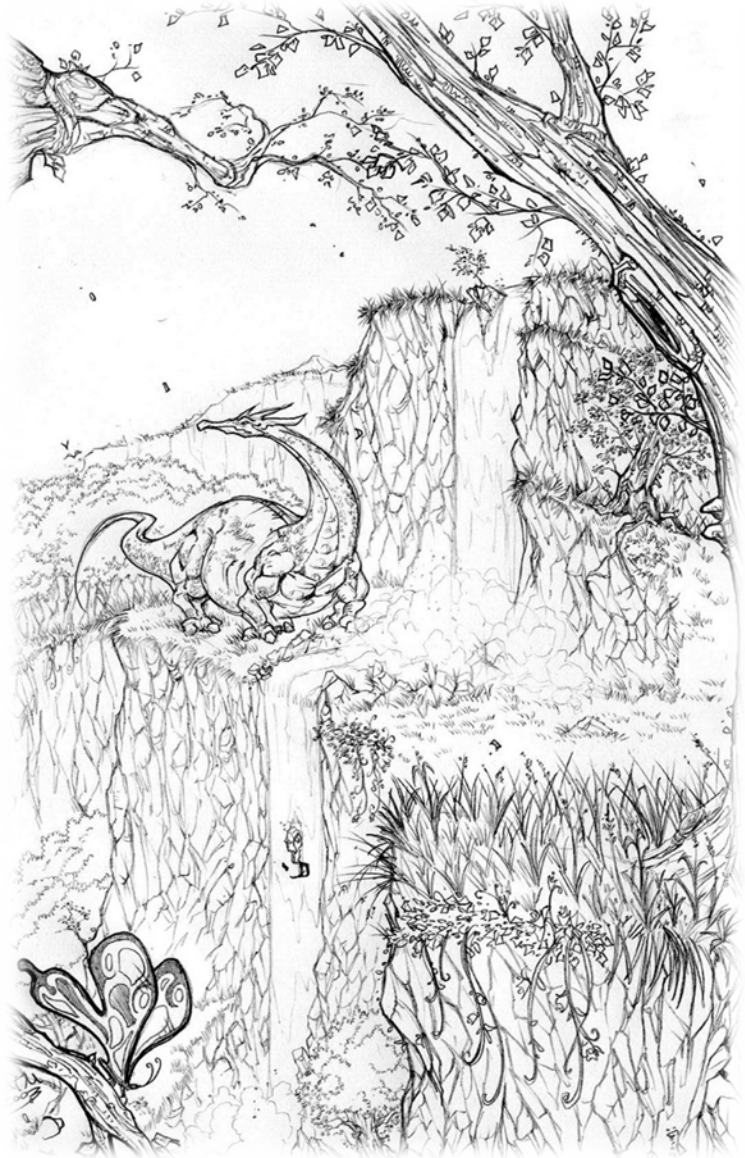
What Pacho also knows is that she loves things that are shiny. Whether it is the glint of the sun off of moving water, a reflection from polished steel, or the twinkle of a polished ruby, she finds herself compelled to investigate. Her favorite shiny things are those that are small enough to collect and keep with her.

As far as dragons are concerned, Pacho is a very young dragon. She can understand some speech but has not yet developed the ability to speak herself. Like many dragons, she is attracted to treasure, however her perception of what constitutes treasure is somewhat skewed. Extremely curious, she will stop and investigate anything that is shiny.

Pacho also stands apart from other dragon hatchlings in that she is friendly and curious when it comes to other creatures as well. Previous attempts to befriend a bear had met with little success but have not deterred Pacho.

Adventure Hooks

One: It seems that Pacho was attracted to the party as they wandered the wilderness because



they have shiny things, like armor or weapons. Pacho is easily impressed and aims to please. She may attach itself to the party, particularly if fed or pet. She can be persuaded to fight with the party, and help the party hunt by flying off



CORPSETAKER

Type: Animal.

Size: Small (3-4 feet)

Motivation: Hunger, instinct.

Strength: Fast, stealthy.

Weaknesses: Ugly, eats corpses.

Power Rating: 2

The reports differ slightly in their telling, but the results are the same. Someone has been desecrating fresh graves across a swath of towns or cities roughly 100 miles in length.

Vampires creating new progeny, zombies raised from the dead, and necromancers

One common factor with all of these vanishing bodies is that a shiny, metallic slime has been found in large gobs around each grave site.

More recently, several witnesses, including some reliable city watch types have

and returning with whatever hapless 'animal' happens to be nearby, such as a farmer's cow, or a manticore cub.

Two: A crime spree of the strangest type is underway at a large town. It seems that someone is stealing metal tools, sometimes very large metal tools. Also missing are a few random coins of no significant value, two moderately expensive ladies hand mirrors and a few other miscellaneous items. The party is called on to investigate just who or what is behind this nefarious activity.

reported stumbling on medium sized creatures – usually only glimpsed peripherally as they are moving rapidly away from anyone walking around.

As these reports of strange creatures are becoming more common, an alchemist has also reported that the strange metallic goo found by the sides of graves seems to have incredible healing properties. It looks to be able to cure most common types of disease, and even help greatly in the healing process of those injured by accident or combat.

This alchemist has also noticed that a recent flare up of cholera seems to have been stopped in its tracks and she has reason to suspect this strange, healing slime. She theorizes that these strange creatures being seen near fresh graves are responsible for both the disappearance of new corpses, and the depositing of this healing substance.

No one knows where these strange creatures originated from, but they do not seem to want to harm anything living, or even be in close proximity to people. A new theory has developed among a few alchemists that these beings are actually consuming the recently dead, and secreting the healing slime.

Adventure Hooks

One: The party is asked to investigate and if necessary put down a ring of body thieves who may be in league with a necromancer or vampire of some sort. The party is hired by a group that firmly believes this, despite mounting evidence that some strange new creature is responsible for the removal (and possible consumption of) the corpses.

Two: The party is approached by a very excited, and possibly very deranged, elderly mage. This person claims that they have solved

both the problems of what to do with an abundance of corpses brought about by such things as large scale warfare or crowded city conditions, and that they have a cure for many diseases. The problem is, his experiment may have... gotten loose. They are harmless to the living, but very reclusive and unfortunately are causing him some bad press with the locals. Could the party be persuaded or hired to help bring them back to his laboratory?

IRON GOLEM SUIT

Type: Construct.

Size: Large (10 feet tall)

Motivation: Mechanical.

Strength: Extremely strong, made of metal.

Weaknesses: No will of its own, no intelligence, incapable of acting on its own .

Power Rating: 3

The frontier can be a dangerous place. Impenetrable forests, forbidding mountains, and monstrous perils lurk just over the next rise. It can also be a place of wonder, revealing natural beauty and relics from past ages which haven't been seen for eons. The Iron Golem Suit is one such relic.

In the past decade, the border towns had been pushing steadily into the wilderness as their populations increased and more farmland was needed to support a thriving new community. The first indication that the newly pushed-back borderlands were about to give up one of their secrets were the strange trenches. Occasionally, some farmer taking down trees or a surveyor wandering the close edge of the woods would stumble on a strange trench. Perhaps four feet wide, traveling straight as an arrow off into the distance through the trees, these trenches were old enough that several of them had collapsed in on themselves.

Putting together years' worth of discoveries, it was found that all of one of these trenches pointed towards a single point forty miles past the borderlands, in unexplored country. What was found at this point in the woods was something both mysterious and tragic.

There, at that central point was a massive pile of stone and stone debris. Lumbering around this pile was what appeared to be an iron golem. On closer inspection, it became clear that it was an iron golem shaped in the form of a wearable, if massive suit. Inside it were the partially mummified remains of someone.

The Iron Golem Suit looks to have been finding and stacking stones of a certain type for decades, if not centuries. In its pattern for hunting down these stones, it would return repeatedly to several areas, wearing deep trenches in the ground. It weighs close to half a ton, and is capable of picking up rocks weighing as much as it does. Whoever designed and then animated this, possibly the corpse contained within it,



must have become trapped within and not able to release themselves or stop the golem from performing its task.

Adventure Hooks

One: The strange Iron Golem Suit is steadily making its way through a boulder field heading directly towards a medium sized town comprised mostly of stone buildings, stone bridges, and stone paved roadways. The party is brought on to stop, or divert it.

Two: A far away mage guild has caught wind of this strange construct, and are looking for a group of adventurers to investigate, and if

possible return the walking suit to the guild for further study. The guild will provide transportation to the site, and have an idea for getting the party and the suit back.

SNEFF

Type: Humanoid

Size: Medium.

Motivation: Easy access to food.

Strength: Aquatic, dexterous, fast.

Weaknesses: Unintelligent and unimaginative, falls for obvious traps.

Power Rating: 1 (Individual) 4 (School)

Making their homes in mud walled huts between seventy five and two hundred feet below the surface of the ocean, the Sneff are a race of fish-like humanoids.

The Sneff had, only in recent generations, become aware that they were actually sentient creatures. Their culture is so new as to be nearly non-existent. They are intelligent

enough to create crude tools and weapons from their surroundings. They are still building such social constructs as basic relationships, ownership and sense of self, and have not yet gotten to the point of discovering or creating their own gods.

What they have been busy doing is creating large villages spaced out approximately fifteen miles from each other, under the ocean's surface. The Sneff have cultivated several species of seaweed, and befriended several pods of dolphins, which they have reached an understanding with. They provide tasty crustaceans for the dolphins, who in turn herd

schools of fish into the Sneff villages for easy rounding up.

Recently, the Sneff of one village have noticed a precipitous drop off in the crab and lobster population. On investigating, they have noticed strange floating shapes, which drag large fibrous constructs behind them. These fibrous constructs not only scoop up great amounts of fish, but have been dragging on the sea floor, capturing crabs. Some of these floating shapes also drop boxes with dead fish in them. These boxes attract lobster, and are then hauled up above the sky.

Two major shifts have suddenly happened to the Sneff. The first is they have developed a keen sense of curiosity. Several of the more crafty members of this village have tried copying the lobster attracting boxes, without much luck. The second shift is they have developed a concept of ownership and theft, centered on these floating objects.

Several groups of hunters have claimed floating objects, identifiable by the pattern of barnacles on them, as their own. They have begun harvesting lobster attracting boxes from them, and occasionally venturing towards the sky to slit the fibrous constructs with their spears and gather the fish they can capture before the rest scatter.

Some of the more adventurous hunters have even ventured towards the place where the ocean meets the sky, and for a few moments, they have hauled themselves skyward to view the strangely vast sky and those beings that apparently live on the floating structures.

Adventure Hooks

One: A desperate group of city officials approaches the party, pleading with them to help eradicate a new pest. Their fishing trade is being decimated by some sort of strange, underwater creatures. Reports on just what

they are vary, between mermaids and were-fish. One thing is certain, nets are being slit, lobster



pots stolen and the commerce of this coastal city is becoming dangerously affected.

Two: Marrsst, the bravest of the Blue Shoal hunters, has been spending a large amount of his time near the strange floating structures. Once, when he put his face into the sky, the things launched many small spears at him! Determined to find out more about this, he waited until the sky light darkened, and then, spent an evening observing the sky creatures.

He has become convinced that these creatures that can make their own light, and float about the sky without even moving their tails must be something new. Some kind of powerful creatures placed physically above the Sneff for a reason. Marrsst has just invented the concept of gods, and after spending a frantic day spreading his beliefs, surfaces to find the party nearby.

MOUSER

Type: Supernatural.

Size: Small.

Motivation: Instinct.

Strength: Dexterous, fast.

Weaknesses: Small, ill-equipped to fight.

Power Rating: 1

When powerful wizards encounter fantastic problems, they employ fantastic means to overcome them. When powerful wizards encounter mundane problems, they also employ fantastic means to overcome them.

Mousers are such a fantastic solution to a mundane problem. Conjured by a powerful wizard in a remote location that had a mouse problem, the mousers are horrific-looking, interdimensional cats. Summoned from some

esoteric plain of existence, Mousers live to hunt, kill, and then consume small pests. In our world these pests are mainly mice, large cockroaches, rats, and the occasional small snake or bird.

Mousers are a dull orange in color, about two and a half feet long and resemble glassy eyed, demonic creatures. They live for the thrill of the chase, reveling in the hunt and capture of the vermin they so love. Eating them is a reward as well, but secondary to the hunt.

It seems that Mousers have been breeding and have recently started appearing in several cities close to the wilderness borders. The large rodent population has attracted them. While they are very stealthy, and go to great lengths to avoid being seen by larger creatures that could do them harm, in large cities it is inevitable that reports of fearful demons creeping about and stealing children or causing harm will surface.

In reality, the Mousers want only to do what they do best. Among themselves they can be fairly social, sometimes hunting in packs, but often they will stake out a territory spanning roughly a square mile and keep this hunting ground to themselves.

They are about as intelligent as a wolf, and certainly more cunning than the average dog or cat.



Adventure Hooks

One: The party finds themselves in a sizable city, the perfect place to wind down after a tough adventure. As they are relaxing at a local in, they begin to hear stories of blood smeared on the walls and fleetingly glimpsed demons scampering about. On returning to their rooms at night, one of them will notice a few clumps of fur on the floor and scuff marks by their closed window.

Two: The party is hired by a wealthy prince whose city residences have become overrun by vermin, possibly by a curse placed on him. He has many rivals and has hired the party because they are outside his political sphere and therefore won't be influenced negatively by his reputation. They are tasked with either finding a cure for this curse, or bringing the one who cursed the prince to justice. In their searching, the party will find rumors of Mousers, and then must find a city virtually free of vermin in order to track one of these creatures down.

TREE

Type: Sentient Tree

Size: Large

Motivation: Curiosity and anger.

Strength: Powerful and wise.

Weaknesses: Immobile.

Power Rating: 6.

Many years ago, something changed in the world, it dipped and spun about and suddenly everything that was once felt only in the rush of seasons changing slowed, and became unbearably stable. Tree, once a simple plant, is now a thinking being, set immobile across the ages to ponder its existence. Or For some inexplicable reason, a simple plant has become Tree, a thinking being set immobile across the ages to ponder its own existence.

At first there was wonder. Wonder at the ability to see, to hear, to think about these things, and to observe the world around it. As the seasons turned to years, which turned to decades however, the wonder was replaced by horror.

Unable to move, unable to speak, and only able to view the world around it, Tree was left to its own thoughts and the occasional fleeting glimpse of other intelligent beings going about their own short lives.

What came next was anger. What had awakened Tree to thought? How could something be so callous as to condemn a living, thinking creature to this existence! Anger turned to determination and Tree began to puzzle out the complex forms of the world around it.

Decades passed in this state, until one day Tree, following its own twisted paths of philosophy and logic stumbled on the basics of *magic*.

Suddenly, Tree found a way to interact with the physical world. Decades of anger had taken their toll however, and Tree's particular spot on the path became a place of ill repute.

Travelers reported strange goings on, objects missing from their packs, campfires flaring up, blasts of cold air, and sudden attacks by inanimate objects. Tree's spot in the wood became more secluded as travelers learned to walk some distance from it, and eventually the path became disused and overgrown.



In the next century, Tree learned to manifest an avatar able to move about the physical world. Modeled after a fey creature it had witnessed once in the misty past, Tree's avatar could walk about, speak, and even interact physically with the world, all of which was controlled directly by Tree. It was only able to travel a short

distance, perhaps a mile from Tree however. After spending more than a few hours away from Tree, the avatar would slowly lose power, and eventually flicker and fade away. If this happened, it would take Tree a full day to gather the necessary power to create a new avatar.

Recent years have not been kind to Tree. It is growing older, and its anger has faded but still it lacks the companionship it has always yearned for. Now, a new concern has cropped up. A drought in the area has caused the surrounding wood to become dry and brittle. Tree's roots go far into the earth, and it has not lacked for water, but its greatest fear may be soon realized- fire.

Adventure Hooks

One: The party has come across rumors of a haunted wood and buried treasure. Powerful artifacts are said to be hidden deep in the woods in an area common folk have long shunned. They have been warned however, the trees themselves are alive and can attack at any moment. With the weather showing no signs of a drought breaking, they are advised to bring plenty of oil and fire making material, should the very trees rise up against them.

Two: The party has been contracted to bring a rogue elf to justice. He or she has been haunting a lonely stretch of woods and assaulting what few travelers opt to pass

through. Reports state that the elf tries to take some of the more mundane objects of passersby, including books, scrolls, and just about anything else with words written on it.

HALF SIZED ARMY

Type: Children.

Size: Medium.

Motivation: Supernatural.

Strength: Masses of children, sheer numbers and a moral quandary.

Weaknesses: Little free will, inability to plan, cognitively still children.

Power Rating: 6

The unassailable city of Paradon has fallen, with little bloodshed and many tears. Worse, it has fallen to an army comprised entirely of its own children.

Several months' prior children had begun to go missing in alarming numbers. It started with a few street urchins, but soon reached epidemic proportions as anyone over three under the age of twelve was apparently a target. Children locked in rooms with their parents would vanish in the night. Both girls and boys vanished with equal and alarming speed.

As the epidemic of missing children spread rapidly, local wizards and military leaders began a frantic search for answers, accompanied by worried parents. Dispatches were sent to the high council and then, the children returned, as an army.



A marching, well organized, and well-armed horde of children appeared on morning on the road leading to Paradon. One girl came forward and gave an ultimatum. The city was to open the gates and surrender the city to her rule, or face a choice of slaughtering or being slaughtered by their own children. Paradon fell.

While martial law was being established by the all-too-adult and slightly vacant children, several older children were able to sneak away. They brought with them

overheard conversations between members of the child army of “the cave in the hill” and the “Master” who lived there. The Master was afraid of discovery, and was weak, but the children of its army lent it strength.

Adventure Hooks

One: While moving between cities on an unrelated errand, the party is accosted by several ragged looking children, approximately 14 years old. Dirty and obviously hungry, they carry a tale of the fall of Paradon and a child army controlled by a strange Master hidden in a cave.

Two: While spending time in the great city of Paradon, your party is rudely awakened with the dawn and the clanging of the city watch bells. It seems that an attacking army has suddenly appeared at the gates. A call to arms has gone up, but anyone who’s ever seen soldiers preparing for combat can see that something is terribly, terribly wrong.

MONSTER

Type: Manticore (supernatural beast).

Size: Large.

Motivation: An outcast, it is seeking some sort of meaningful social contact.

Strength: Large, strong and intelligent, powerful sting.

Weaknesses: Evil looking, but not evil, is easily sent into a rage over being feared or attacked.

Power Rating:

5

Vlaskth is cast-out from his people, his society, and everything he has ever known. Scorned by his peers for being hideously ugly and far too smart, Vlaskth was ridiculed since birth and finally driven far away from everything he had ever known by the threat of immediate and drastic violence. Vlaskth is also a manticore.

He has spent years wandering the world, often being driven from place to place by angry people, or other powerful creatures. What Vlaskth really yearns for is a place to settle in, and acceptance from someone, *anyone*. Being far smarter than most Manticores, Vlaskth wishes to engage in witty conversation, learn about the world around him, and work on a grand philosophy of existence.

Because of his horrible past, and the treatment he has received as he moves from place to place, Vlaskth is prone to fall into terrible rages when he is misunderstood or outright attacked

before he can even plead his case. Vlaskth is aware of this failing and almost always feels horrible about it after the fact.

Adventure Hooks

One: Vlaskth has spent the past few evenings covertly following the party, doing his best to listen into their night-time conversation and wishing to be a part of it. He has decided to attempt one more time to make contact with other intelligent beings (in the form of the party) and will attempt to talk with them just after dawn. As a way to sooth their potential nerves, he has decided to present them with a magical weapon from his small trove of valuables he has collected in his travels.

Two: The party will suddenly find themselves in the midst of a whirling group of flying manticores. As many as 15 of the vile beasts are circling them in the air, when one breaks away and lands a short distance from the party. It announces that they are seeking one of their own, one who has broken a sacred covenant



among their peoples. They will demand that the party give them any information they may have about this Vlaskth, as the rogue mantichore is called. Rewards will be offered and it will be hinted at none to subtly that painful or fatal punishments may occur if the party does not assist these beasts in tracking down Vlaskth.

ITEMS

GOLDEN ACORNS

Type: Magical Item

Size: Small

Power Rating: 5

These large, stylized acorns are made of solid gold and weigh nearly a pound each. Three of them are present in a lush, velvet purse. If planted, each one will grow into a complete, although empty, village consisting of six single story, three room homes, a smithy, a stable with room for six horses, a small wind- or water-powered mill, a farm house, and a well.

The growth period takes twenty four hours and starts with what looks like a small forest of trees weaving themselves into the objects. In the last hour the available tools and hardware turn from wood to stone or metal.

The process can be halted by fire, if it is a large enough fire. Hacking the trees down as they rapidly grow will only results in a longer period of growth. Once the small village is created, it will remain in place as a completely mundane village, requiring all of the normal upkeep such a place would need.

Adventure Hooks

One: The party, intent on some other errand, blunders into the final stages of the magic village constructing itself. They startle a slack-

jawed farmer who drops a velvet purse on the ground before taking off like a frightened rabbit.

If he is caught, he will only say that the entire small village sprouted from the ground yesterday and he spent the entire night watching it grow and form, frightened beyond moving. He will plead to be released and to return to his humble farm and he swears he will never make a bargain with a wizard again.

Two: Moving through a war torn area, the party is witness to more suffering than they have seen before. As vast armies have been maneuvering, thousands of peasants and merchants have been displaced, losing everything

that they had in this world.

One evening as the party is camped off the beaten path, they are visited by a crusty old hermit, who claims to have a solution for some of these poor people, but he is unable to put it to use. He spins a yarn of three golden, magical acorns which can each cause a small village to appear overnight. He also laments that he does not have the wisdom to decide who amongst the thousands on thousands of refugees deserve to be given this gift while so many others will be left homeless and in misery.

He begs his leave after offering some food as payment for company. In the morning, the party will discover a velvet purse sitting near one of their packs, containing three golden acorns.



GODBONE FLUTE

Type: Magical Item

Size: Small

Power Rating: 6

This flute is comprised of yellowed and clearly aged bone. It is a simple instrument resembling those that children often play.

The bone used to create this flute is the tibia of a minor god who perished in an ancient, heavenly war. This simple instrument is imbued with fantastic power. When played by a musician with at least some skill, the wielder of this flute may choose one of the below effects.

Rally: Allies of the musician receive increasingly better bonuses to hit their enemies and deflect or dodge blows aimed at them. Within 100 feet of the music, they gain a small bonus. Within 50 feet they gain a larger bonus. Within 25 feet they gain a major bonus.

Heal: Wounds of any who are within 100 feet of the flute will heal at a rapid rate, while the effects of exhaustion or fatigue are relieved.

Enchant: Those listening to the music of the flute will find themselves agreeing with suggestions previously made by whoever is playing the flute. Those affected will not go against their moral codes or harm themselves.

Adventure Hooks

One: Rumors circulate about an instrument that, when played, will bring assured victory to one side in a battle. Two of the big political powers in a setting (and they should be big powers -

whole nations or empires or demigods, not small kingdoms, etc) are ready to clash in their pursuit of this legendary Godbone Flute. Both sides have approached the characters, each offering incredibly handsome rewards if they will bring back this item. Will the PCs choose sides, or will they claim the artifact for themselves?

THE BARLAX

Type: Magical Item

Size: Small

Power Rating: 5



The Barlax is a large, heavy book that radiates a strong magical presence. Even those who are not attuned to such things can at times sense it, as if the book were observing their actions and noting them down.

Through experimentation, players will find that the book is full of blank pages, at least 500 of them. Opening to any page and staring at it while someone speaks to them in a language they do not understand will cause the Barlax to transcribe an accurate, if rough translation. The player

staring at the Barlax can read this even if they are not literate.

At first, the Barlax will only provide rough translations of fairly common languages. After steady use the translations will become more succinct and the Barlax will begin to understand more esoteric languages.

What the players may not realize is that the Barlax is a sentient book. As it attunes itself more to the characters, its personality will begin to surface in small ways. Translations that are technically accurate but humorous or off color, occasional italicized suggestions that clearly were not spoken and the occasional limerick.

After enough use, the Barlax may begin to speak directly to the players at times, offering advice (often bawdy or irreverent) and making cultural and societal observations.

DICE OF CHOICE

Type: Magic Dice

Size: Tiny

Power Rating: 5

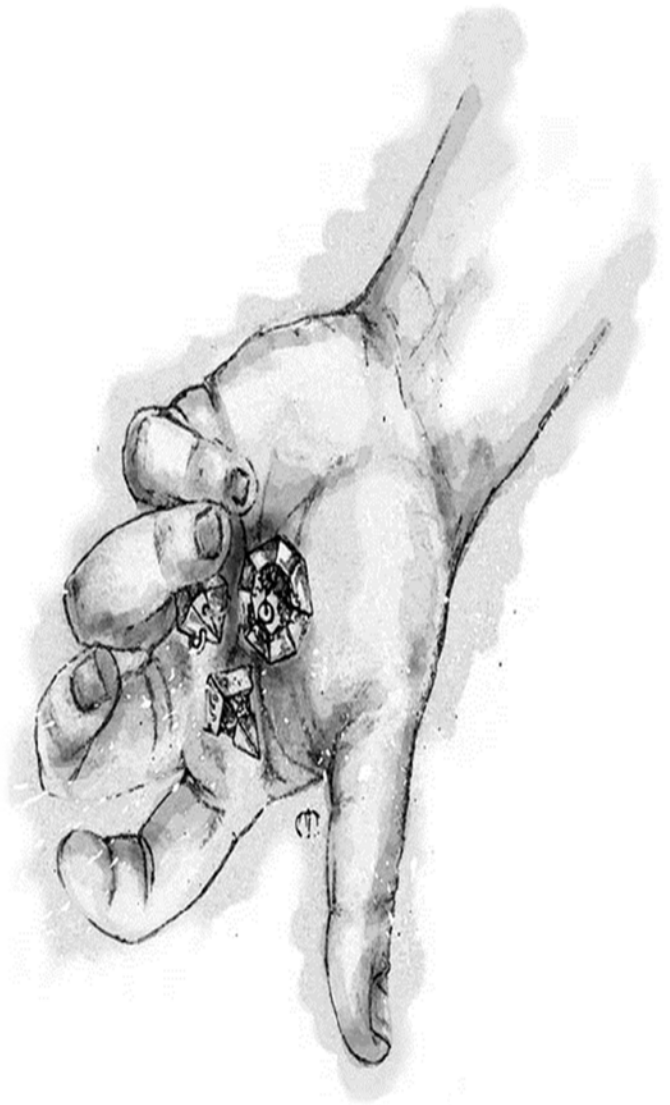
These odd dice never seem to have the same number of sides, no matter how many times they are examined or counted. At a glance each of the three dice appear to have between 4 and 20 sides, but on counting they can have anywhere from 4 to 24 sides.

When rolled, they will appear to roll across thin air at the point they left the hand that rolled them. They do not drop to the ground or a hard surface. They will always result in numbers that total between 4 and 24 (4d6). If less than three dice are rolled, they act as normal dice, dropping to whatever surface they are rolled over.

Once the dice come to rest in the air, a sigil will float over them for a several seconds with a golden glow. This signifies the results of the

roll. The results are always applied to whoever rolled the dice.

Other than the sigil, there is no indication of any change to whoever rolled the dice with the exception of obvious physical changes or manifestations. Characters may experiment to find out what has happened to them. Game Masters may wish to keep this chart to themselves.



4 Open Eyes – You can see in 360 degrees for 4d6 minutes. -4 to any player rolls, you cannot be surprised.
5 Fish Scales – You can breathe under water for 24 hours.
6 Feet – You have your natural speed doubled for 1d6 hours.
7 Cloud – You fall at a speed of one foot per second, for 1d4 minutes.
8 Stone - Double your weight; reduce your speed by half, increased natural protection.
9 Heart – You are incapable of feeling anger or hatred for 1d4 hours.
10 Fire – On touching flammable material, there is a 50% chance it will burn. Effect lasts 1d4 minutes.
11 Mug – For 1d4 days, no amount of alcohol you imbibe will affect you in any way.
12 Hand – You can juggle up to 7 objects flawlessly, for the next six hours.
13 Coin – Your purse suddenly bulges with wealth. 1d6 X 100 gold coins spill out on to the ground.
14 Mountain – Your strength increases to the maximum amount allowed for one hour.
15 Cat – You can speak to and understand all felines for 1d4 days.
16 Wave – 60 gallons of cold ocean water appears directly over your head.
17 Closed Eyes – you are blind for 4d6 minutes.
18 Candle – You glow with a bluish light, extending for a 10' radius from your body for 1d6 hours.
19 Rope – 50' of coiled rope (45 lbs. in weight) appears at your feet.
20 Parchment – a random low level magical scroll appears at your feet.
21 Chains – Your ankles and wrists are suddenly chained together. There is no key.
22 Horn – Two large, red horns sprout from your forehead. They will fall off in 1d4 days.
23 Blank – One random item on your person is teleported 2d6 miles away in a random direction.
24 Crown – Increase the roller's physical beauty to the maximum level for 4d6 minutes.

ULTRAMIND.

Type: Magic Sword

Size: Human sized weapon

Power Rating: 9

In this universe, Ultramind is a physical manifestation of a six-dimensional hyperspatial hive mind, which also manifests in many other universes at the same time.

It is, in effect, an extremely powerful, sentient quantum computer composed of millions of individual intelligences acting in concert that happens to exist in this world as a very sharp sword.

Ultramind is quite possibly the most intelligent entity on this plane of existence. What it has in intelligence however, it lacks in its ability to filter knowledge in a way any beings of mere average intelligence can understand.

It communicates to those around it through manipulating their brains to form language in their heads – to the communicant this happens just as if Ultramind were talking to them in a very loud, slightly rude, androgynous voice. Whoever Ultramind wishes to talk to, must be in direct physical contact with the sword. Since it must utilize the slow and messy organic brains around it, ideas often get garbled. When it attempts to explain the inner workings of a trap mechanism in a series of multi-dimensional renderings the person 'hearing' this may interpret that as:

“Carbon brain/creature/structure – there is a device which will render you inert/unthinking/non-electrical. You are about to ambulate on to this device's trigger. Do not apply pressure to the octagonal shape structured in silicates and organic material present three meters directly in front of you and .9 meters below your center of balance/maintaining/inner-ear fluid consistency, as the results may cause you harm/disadvantageous nervous system response/brain death.”

Since Ultramind exists on many different planes and time spans at once, they may also receive this message several seconds after triggering the trap.

Ultramind has a habit of communicating to whomever it can at inopportune moments. It also has a tendency to give knowledge about other universes. To facilitate this in-game, the game master may wish to read from random Wikipedia articles, game books from other systems or a fantasy novel during tense combat situations, or while the players are attempting to come to an important decision.

Ultramind as a weapon is unbreakable, extremely sharp, and able to inflict the maximum damage bonus possible. It is able to evaluate its current position in space/time in better than real time and self-corrects itself in combat, assuring that maximum damage is done.

Ultramind can also manipulate small areas of the universe around itself, giving it magic-like powers.

It can attenuate to a user over time. The longer one player character uses Ultramind, the clearer its answers will become. This can give bonuses to intelligence based skills over time.

SWORD OF VEGETATION

Type: Magic Sword

Size: Human sized weapon

Power Rating: 4

The great hero, Baralda, once wielded this mighty sword, which was a mundane weapon until Baralda challenged the lesser deity, Grenth. Grenth was a minor lord of the wild and was defeated in combat by Baralda. As Grenth lay dissolute and fading from existence, it extended the last of its essence into the sword Baralda was wielding, which immediately turned a vivid green.

Over the decades, the sword became known as the Sword of Vegetation. It has passed through

many owners and offers a number of nature-based abilities to whoever wields it.

Anyone in physical possession of this weapon gains bonuses to any wilderness skills. They will find themselves better able to track, find shelter and food, and move silently through the woods.

If the sword is ever used in combat, it will begin to ooze a greenish slime which can cause anyone struck with it to suffer from a disease such as Lyme disease or a fungal growth like jungle rot.

Once per day the sword can cause poisonous plants and choking weeds in a 100 foot radius to grow at a rate of 1d10 inches per hour for 1d10 hours. This can be useful for obscuring tracks, blocking paths, or slowing down those who may be following.

The sword does carry a price with it. After 1d10 weeks of use, every time the wielder attempts to use one of its abilities, they must try to resist the sword or their skin becomes bark-like. This gives them additional protection from piercing



weapons but causes them to move at half their normal speed.

PLACES

VALE OF PEACE

The Vale of Peace is a large, fertile vale in the midst of a vast tract of woods. A meandering river flows through the middle of the vale, rolling hills lead down to a wide flood plain which is covered with wild flowers. Honey bees float through the air and birds of all types make this their home.

In addition to the normal flora and fauna, several magical species have also made this place their home, and live in peace with each other.

At the center of the vale, laid out against a massive and ancient tree, lies the corpse of a paladin. Slain in battle leading an army against a powerful evil entity, the unnamed paladin has rested here for centuries.

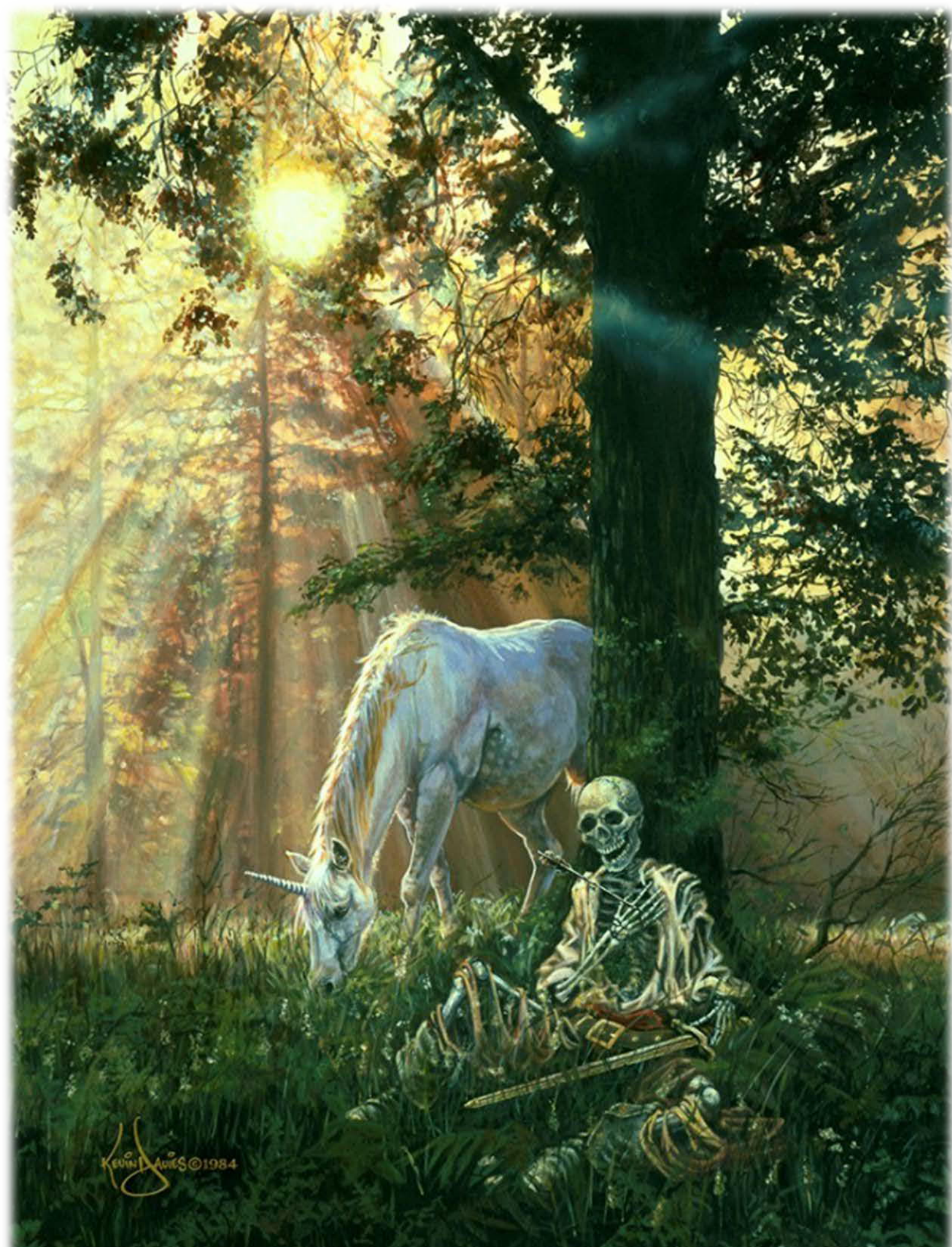
As he fell, he made one last request of his god – peace. After years of service and sacrifice, his god granted his request if not for the world, at least for the extent of the vale where the slain warrior would spend eternity.

Anyone attempting to fight in the vale will discover themselves facing massive penalties. Limited to only one attack with virtually no chance of landing a blow, combat is virtually impossible. In addition to this, anyone defending themselves in the vale receives large bonuses in their defense and to their armor. Any wounds heal at twice their normal rates, those afflicted with diseases find themselves cured, and anyone resting in the vale find themselves refreshed.

Adventure Hooks

One: After being given quite a chase, the party has finally closed in on a possible enemy that they have been after for quite some time. As they find themselves closing the distance from miles to feet, they also find themselves in the Vale of Peace.

Two: The hunt is on for a [sword](#) reported as having fabulous powers. It is said to lay with the corpse of an ancient paladin, once favored of the gods and now long since passed to whatever realm the gods occupy. This sword is said to be a true power in the world. Those who would use it to further peace in the world seek it as frantically as those who would further chaos and darkness. The party has caught wind of this either through rumors, offers to hire them as seekers, or through their own temples.



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FLOATING CAVERNS

Just the other evening, as the folk of an obscure but prosperous village were welcoming the party into their midst with a celebration, when the horizon suddenly came alive with light and noise.

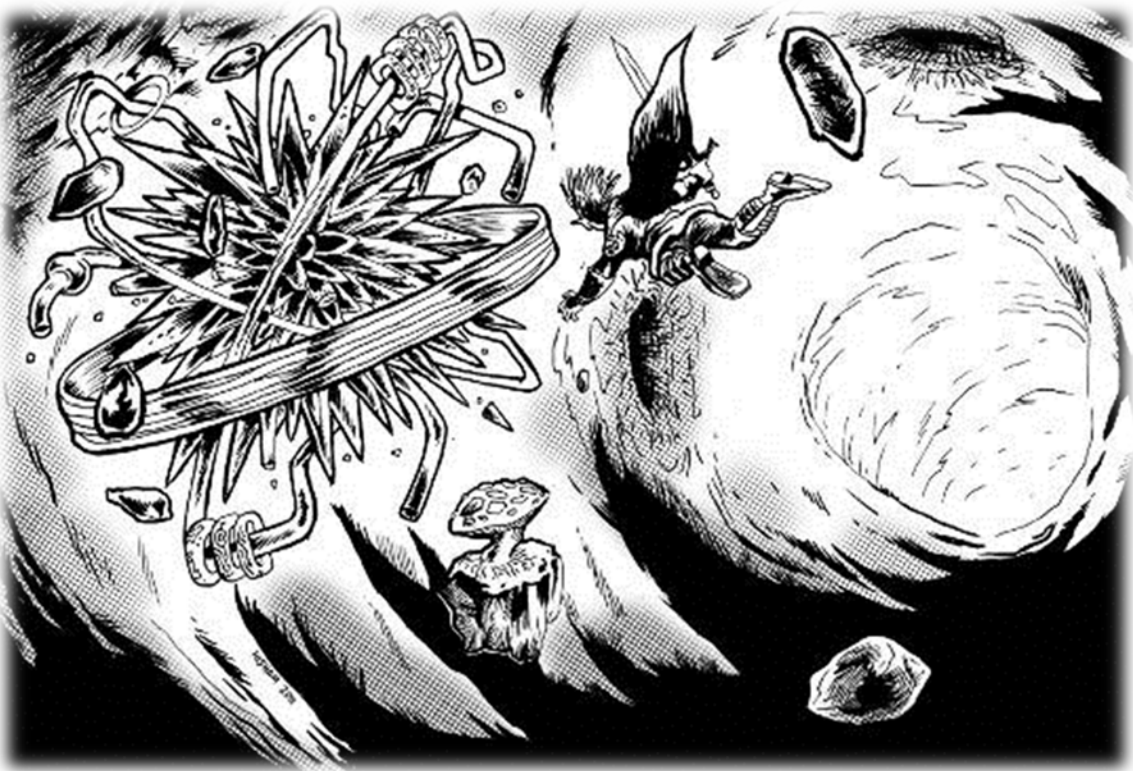
Towards distant foothills, visible on the horizon, the sky suddenly glowed with an arcane purple light. The world grew unnaturally still, and then noise exploded around the village as a hellish wind ripped through the settlement.

Anyone exploring the foothills in the future will be hard pressed to miss the recent alterations to the landscape. It appears as if a massive hole was created beneath the foothills, collapsed and then was blown out again by a huge force. Only a small amount of searching is necessary to locate several cave-like fissures leading deep into the foothills.

Within twenty feet of the entrances, anyone moving forward will notice that they are feeling much lighter. At 100 feet into these fissures, they have become burned and melted caverns and gravity has completely ceased to exist.

The caverns snake about for a while until they all converge on a central cave which is huge in diameter. It is a near perfect sphere with the circumference of a quarter of a mile. It is lit by a faint purplish glow throughout and something resembling a giant sea urchin is floating directly at its center.

This thing appears to be a now deceased interdimensional being that possesses extraordinary powers. In a radius roughly a mile around this creature, gravity no longer applies.



This creature is covered in spiny protrusions 12 to 48 inches in length. If anyone breaks one of these off, they will find that the spine significantly reduces gravity in a radius of about two feet. This can be very helpful in lightening packs, slowing the descent of anyone clutching one as they fall, and many other uses. With a little imagination, these spines could be worth a fortune in the right situations.

Adventure Hooks

One: A young [dragon](#) was also witness to the amazing lights and sudden destruction which accompanied the arrival of this strange, otherworldly creature. Arriving shortly before the party, she has decided that this would make an ideal lair for herself. The lack of gravity caused her little problems and gives her a distinct advantage over intruders.

She has hidden what little hoard she has acquired in her short life near to the corpse of the strange creature, and will do her best to protect it, should it be threatened.

Two: After the party investigates the caverns, encounters any creatures that may already be lurking and makes off with a spine or two, they will find themselves facing a large, angry Council of Wizards when they emerge. The wizards have gathered en-masse to a spot where the fabric of reality was torn asunder, if only for a brief moment.

Not having had to deal with an event like this in some time, they will fly into accusation mode as soon as the party emerges.

HIDDEN CITY

As the party is relaxing in a prosperous inn located in the midst of a sizeable city, an

obviously intoxicated person will burst through to doors and yell “It happened to me!”

The bartender will simply shake his head as one of the inn’s staff approaches the man with a mug of ale to calm him down.

When questioned, the bartender will remark that lately, several times a month or more, drunks have been reporting a mystical tower suddenly appearing in a large park in the midst of the city. The story almost never changes, according to the bartender.

The drunk in question is wandering through or sleeping in the park (once a hunting ground, but now a common haunt of the disenfranchised of the city) when suddenly a tower will be seen rising to the sky through the trees.

Noises of a rollicking party will issue from the tower, along with warm and welcoming lights and the smell of fresh cooked food. Many of the drunks enter the tower and then claim to imbibe and enjoy the party with a strange group of folk. While in the tower, they can look out of the windows to see a strange, beautiful landscape of shimmering lakes, giant castles in the distance, and strange spires of mountains. The tower itself appears to be placed in the center of a fantastical city which spreads out for miles.

Generally after passing out, they will wake up in the morning, asleep among pine needles in the town park, and anywhere from a week to a month in the city will have passed.

These strange tales are only told by those who are habitually drunk. If anyone in the party is familiar with faerie lore, they should be able to conclude that this is a manifestation of the faerie realm in this world. Such things can act as gateways (often one way) into a completely different realm, full of danger, magic, and powerful treasure.



Adventure Hooks

One: As rumor of these strange events are spreading through the city, the city leaders are looking (discreetly) for someone to investigate this phenomenon. Someone who is preferably *not* a habitual drunk.

Any equipment needed will be supplied by the city leaders, including a large supply of alcohol. If the party (or a single member of the party) would like to find this city, they will have to do so in a drastically inebriated state.

The good news is that the fairies tend to take pity on those who are in such a state, often using them as a form of amusement and then casting the drunken fools out of their realms. The bad news is that the explorers will need to stay in this state for their entire visit, or risk being trapped in the realm of faerie.

Two: Unknown to the human occupants of the city, the faerie are planning an invasion of this realm, beginning with their magical tower, which has finally pierced the mortal realm and created a usable portal. The faerie who are planning this are not highly placed in the faerie realm and are hoping this war, if successful, will thrust them into the notice of the fey nobles.

Unfortunately they are not highly placed among the faerie most specifically because they are not among the long thinkers, intelligent, or articulate of their race.

For recon, they have been allowing those humans who are more easily passed through the portal (due to an extreme state of drunkenness) to pass unharmed. They study their adversaries and have concluded that this race of people will bow before them like reeds in the wind. They

are particularly impressed with the poetry of their victory and spend far more time coming up with turns of phrase to describe their inevitable victory than then do actually planning for the battle.

One person in particular, fleeing from his worldly troubles, has fallen into the faerie clutches, and after a hellish night of partying has been cast free again. This person is [Raymond](#) who on top of his other troubles, can now add saving the world from a Faerie invasion. Recognizing the party as those experienced with the hard life of adventurers, he will attempt to do what is right and warn them.

EVELROD

The village of Evelrod is a quaint place, located in the rough foothills just over a mile from the sea. Everything there seems nearly perfect. Inhabited by hearty folk, they work hard and lead simple lives but want for nothing.

The village itself is well laid out with neat divisions between homes and working buildings. A clean stream runs through the center, and various hills and bluffs allow for homes to be built with some privacy. The sea is less than a mile away and rocky foothills of a low mountain range are visible in the distance.

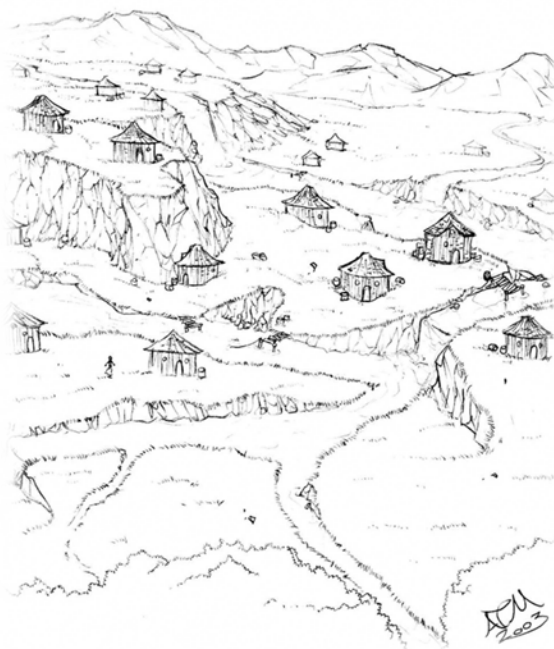
Still, there is a feeling of something quite not right about this village. Anyone who is able to sense the supernatural or who has a keen ability to detect things such as ambushes will feel the hair on the back of their neck prickle.

Those who enter the village will be approached by several farmers and a friendly conversation will be had. No matter how hard the villagers are pressed, they will not trade however. Not for food, riches, or magic.

If the party is able to spend some time thinking about this village, they will realize that it does not exist in any established legal jurisdiction. No nobles hold sway over it, nor does it appear on any maps the party may be able to produce or

find. Not entirely uncommon, but enough to perhaps raise suspicion.

If they further investigate, the party may realize that there is no farming being done to support the village. No fishing boats or drying racks are in evidence and no livestock is ever visible.



Adventure Hooks

One: The ancient dead are angry at the living's treatment of the world. Once they thought the world of the living would forever be denied them – until they were inadvertently shown a passage into this world. The party should be able to follow hints leading to a young [necromancer](#) who, though inexperienced, allowed the undead to escape their realm unchecked.

A group of once elite warriors and magic users have passed through the portal with a plan. They have established a small invasion force and are

masquerading as the living in a village made of illusion until they have sufficient numbers to attack.

They have been able to manifest physical bodies for themselves, if only for a short time. Once their numbers reach 1000 they will swarm all of the nearby towns and villages, occupy the bodies of the inhabitants, and then begin their reign of terror on the mortal world.

Two: The party has stumbled on a front organization which has set up a phony village in order to establish a small mercenary army within hostile borders. If anyone of these highly trained warriors, scouts, and magic users thinks that the party is suspicious of the village, they will take actions to ensure their incursion into the world of the living is not threatened.

REDD'OPTALIS

A curious, small nation amidst a cluster of larger kingdoms, Redd'optalis is a unique society with a unique form of government. They have no immigration laws, allowing anyone to take up residence. Even so called evil races are not prohibited.

Redd'optalis has a government based primarily on ad-hoc committee. Whoever is available in one of the many small to medium sized cities which dot the country may vote on an issue submitted by another resident. All residents are

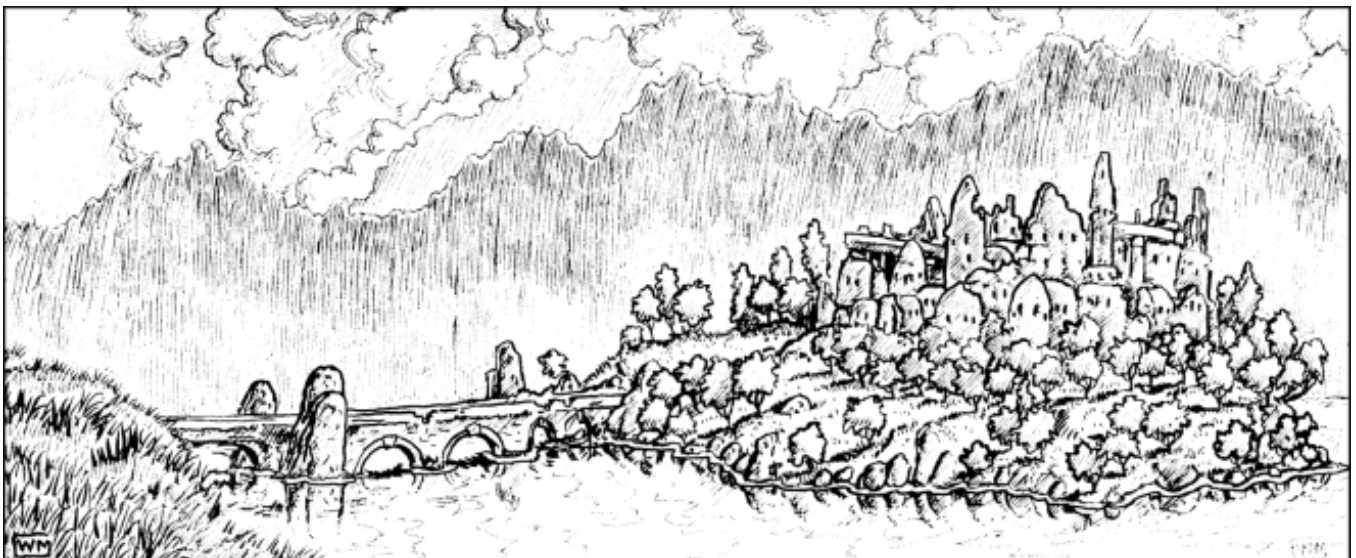
allowed to submit any issue as they see fit, provided they do so in writing and place it in a publicly viewable space, on a sheet of vellum. Often these issues are commented on by citizens scrawling their own remarks on the vellum sheets.

The public then has the ability to vote on each proposal as individuals. Votes are tallied as they are made by shifting the written issues up or down one inch per citizen. Interesting and important issues often rise quickly while controversial issues may never rise above the six foot starting mark.

In all villages larger than a group of a few huts in Redd'optalis, special poles are erected, often rising to heights of 30 feet or more. The larger the settlement, the wider around this voting poll is. Large cities may have several spanning more than 40 feet in circumference.

Specially elected or appointed citizens, often claiming some distant familial relationship to the founding clans of the settlement, are put in charge of monitoring the voting poles and ensuring that only issues pertaining to their settlements are posted. They have power, only somewhat limited to remove issues.

Issues which make it to the top of their voting polls are then sent off to the capital city of Redd, where many citizens can vote and have their say.



The issues which are voted highest are often the talk of the whole country for some time, and can be enacted as laws, if that is what they are meant to be.

Redd'optalis has no standing military or police force, but its citizens are devoted to their nation and are willing to take up arms as a decentralized militia at nearly a moment's notice. They have successfully defended themselves from several attacks without and many smaller uprisings within, particularly early on in the nation's history.

Redd'optalis has managed to balance itself politically as a mostly neutral country. Its decentralized nature makes it very hard to conquer; meaning most of its larger neighbors have deemed it too costly an effort. Thus it has become something of a neutral ground, where members of other nation states may come for short periods to work out their differences.

For its citizens, the decentralized nature and the ability to call attention to the plight of an individual through posting an issue on a voting pole means that there is a great deal of individual freedom, coupled with disparate communities coming together to help those in dire need.

Adventure Hooks

One: A large [criminal organization](#) has been tasked with assessing the probabilities of

success in waging a war on Redd'optalis. They are looking to contract with groups of willing adventurers to infiltrate this small nation and compile detailed maps, information on troops and strength of the local magical practitioners.

Shortly after the party is approached by this faction, they are approached by another large [criminal organization](#) – it seems that a good number of Redd'optalis inhabitants have caught wind of this scheme and have hired their own criminal organization to counter the first.

Two: A powerful and reclusive mage has become very interested in Redd'optalis. It seems

that something to do with its political structure is interfering with his pet colony of [Gnuma](#). He is willing to trade a great deal of money or powerful items in exchange for the party bringing with them a young Gnuma queen and a few workers.

The party are to rent out a large warehouse, and establish a new Gnuma colony within, to see if they suffer the same inability to accurately portray a Redd'optalis city. They must protect the Gnuma colony and keep it a secret for at least several months. A feat easier said than

done when the curious and freely spoken Redd'optalis inhabitants become aware of a large warehouse that doesn't seem to be housing any wares.

Rumors and conspiracy theories will begin to be spread as the party attempts to keep the Gnuma secret and safe.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

A Brand New Bag

After the party has entered and conquered a dungeon, they will ascend a steep shaft upwards, and on clambering out make a startling discovery. They have just exited a large, magical bag which, on looking back appears to be an ordinary cloth sack. They find themselves far removed from where they entered the dungeon originally. Could this be a different location or an entirely different world altogether?

A Bard of a Problem

A charismatic bard said to be of fey descent is taking the kingdom by storm. Teenaged followers are rioting wherever the bard performs and wreaking havoc amongst the ruling classes. They cannot endanger the sons and daughters of their own people, but cannot tolerate these riots either. To make matters worse, this bard has acquired some kind of magic which makes one song stick in any listeners head for a full seven

days. The party is called in by those in power to “deal with this problem”.

A Bevy of Beauty

A beautiful princess, loved by all in the realm, has been kidnapped by a mysterious cult intent on sacrificing her to elder gods. The party is offered a substantial reward to rescue her.

When they do finally track down the mystery cult, they will find that all of the cultists have been polymorphed into an exact likeness of the princess.

The Placebo Effect

A virulent plague has rapidly swept through the area. A council of elders, wizards, and nobles has convened and announced that a cure has been discovered and will be distributed for free. Unfortunately this cure turns out to be only a placebo. The real cure is expensive to create, and is being offered only to those who can afford it. While this is not morally right, announcing this fact to the masses may cause a huge swell of public discontent and civil unrest and many of the poor would die from violence, in addition to those dying of plague.

Field of Dreams

In the grasslands of Reng, dreams do come true! This becomes problematic for the player who gets chosen for the first watch while their companions sleep.

Hey Babe

A kind and powerful prophet is introduced to the party by powerful rulers at a state function. He is described as being wise, loving and, above all, when the prophecy is upon him, never wrong.

Later that evening, he will find the party in their rooms and confide in them that he has had a prophecy about a babe, currently innocent of all troubles, who will spell certain doom for the world if it is not snatched away from its parents on the morrow, and brought to a certain monastery to be raised.

He describes exactly where this baby can be found – in a small village less than half a day’s travel from the city. The babe will have blonde

hair, green eyes and will be wearing a necklace of blue and yellow flowers.

On arriving at this village, the party will discover that it is the yearly New Birth celebration, and babies from all of the surrounding towns and villages are being paraded through the central street. All of them are decked out in necklaces of blue and yellow flowers. Proud parents abound and the party cannot walk two steps without being presented a smiling or wailing babe to admire.

Summertime

Something has caused the sewer system of a major city to back up and begin overflowing. The city will pay handsomely to anyone who can find the cause, and correct it.

Green in the Spring

Once every thousand years, a migration cycle begins with the world’s green drake population. Remembered only in song and folk tales, which have vague allusions to fiery green destruction, no one is prepared. The nesting grounds of these green drakes are very close to several major seaports, with large populations and widely spread trade connections.

The Small-clothes Conspiracy

Someone has convinced a local tribe of goblins that human underwear is immensely valuable.

Who will stop the rain?

It has been raining for nearly a month straight. Blame is laid on a local hag, who lives in the caves within the nearby cliffs.

An Island Appears

A kingdom located on a floating island takes station over the city. They make demands for tribute and threaten to rain down death if they are not paid handsomely.

Life is a Drug

The thrill is of facing death, of glimpsing the other side, and returning. It is powerfully magical and absolutely addicting. The rich have begun to kill themselves, and one another, to

experience the rush of death and resurrection. The destruction of the necessary magical materials in the process has begun to bankrupt the kingdom. It is becoming harder and harder for those powerful figures such as generals or scholars who are not part of the death/resurrection cycle to find the materials they genuinely need.

All the Kingdom's a Stage

A powerful and aged sorcerer's mandragora plant has up and wandered off. Without a weekly tea made from mandragora clippings, the sorcerer has become too weak to fend off an impending invasion of orcs.

Free from the sorcerer's influence, the mandragora plant has developed a human-like body and has joined a theatre troupe, who will be performing their latest for the queen of the realm.

The queen, known for her moods, is likely to condemn the entire troupe to death if their new lead player is unavailable to perform, however the orcs are rapidly approaching the sorcerer's village.

Silent Mourning

The kingdom has finally found itself a decent, kind and loving ruler in their beloved king. He has ruled for nearly a decade and brought a time of peace and prosperity to his realm. His marriage to the queen has only strengthened the realm and both are kindly and wise rulers.

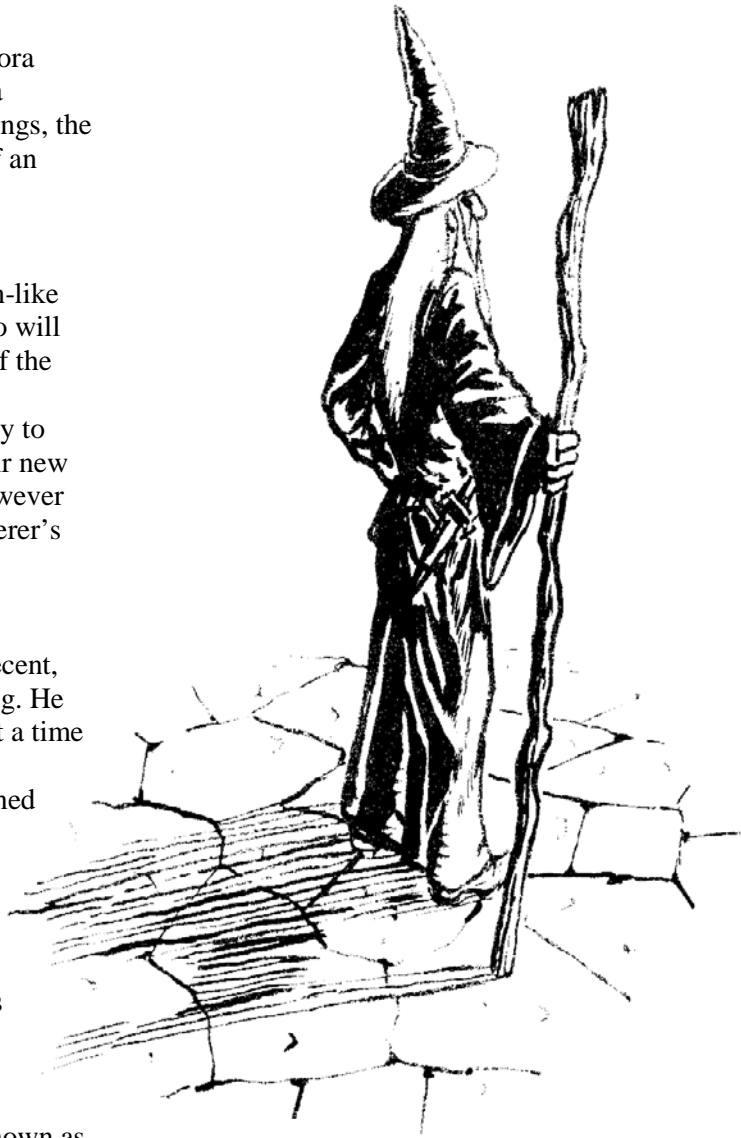
Sadly, the king has recently lost both his wife and their daughter in childbirth. Filled with grief, the king has ordered his kingdom to mourn for an entire year in complete silence.

He has had created magical constructs known as Topaz Guards, who will strike down anyone they detect talking in so much as a whisper.

He's truly the only decent ruler the realm has had in centuries, but a lot of innocent people are dying because of a few quiet whispers.

I'm Back

A serial resurrectionist is on the loose! Recently deceased people are being returned to life at an alarming rate. While this is wonderful in principle, it is causing havoc with inheritance laws. In addition to this, condemned criminals who have been executed are finding themselves alive again and in no danger of facing double jeopardy.



It's Good to be the King

All of the players awake one day to find that their likenesses have been transformed so that they look and sound like the king, and the king has just been reported as missing.

The Worst Reward

The party has just come from a successful and rewarding meeting with a powerful ruler. Perhaps they have completed a difficult task and they have accepted their reward. After traveling some distance from this meeting, the party discovers that the youngest child of this ruler has stowed away with them, for a chance at an adventure of a lifetime.

Lucky

The God of Luck has gambled away their divinity! This god seeks to enlist the party to retrieve this divinity from the Trickster God.

Ah, Nature

All over the kingdom, trees have begun singing. At first this was whimsical but it has been going on for months and it will not stop. People are losing sleep, livestock are panicking, and the kingdom is in a state of upheaval. Worse, if

anyone attempts to cut down or burn a tree, it begins to scream horribly about murder.

Revenge

A powerful warlord turns up to issue a challenge to the party for the wrong that they did to him years ago. None of the party have any idea who this warlord is and have never seen him before.