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# Abyss

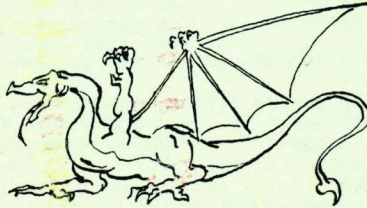
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EDITORIAL NOTES

Well, the postage increase has yet to hit us, or at least we seem safe as I'm writing this. Thus, no rise in the cost of AQ yet.

If you are reading this in September or late August, it means that you hold the product of a near miracle in your hands. This issue is being produced, or attempted, in a record time, so as to not have to double it up with #10 in the winter. This tightness of schedule is the result of the rush in getting the New Ysgarth Rules to press.

The New Ysgarth Rules are now available. They are a significant change from the old rules in many areas. They are almost a whole new system although many of the basic concepts remain the same. They can be ordered from RE for \$5.00, plus \$.50 for postage and handling. They are the most expensive rules per page in the industry, so they might be worth that small investment. More can be read about them on page 19.

There are some good things in this issue. Some fine art by Gene Ching, good articles by David Jacobson, an excellent Mini-Adventure by myself, and much more.

Dave Nalle  
Washington, DC  
September 1980

THIRD ABYSSMAL QUESTIONNAIRE

If you can, send us the following list, in order of preference of what you'd like most to see, with comments.

- |                           |                                |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Fiction                   | New Monsters                   |
| Adventure Write-Ups       | New Magic Items                |
| Art                       | New Spells                     |
| Cartoons                  | Theory of Play Articles        |
| Game Reviews              | World Background Articles      |
| Magazine Reviews          | Non-FRP Game Articles          |
| Combat Systems            | FRPing News                    |
| Magic Systems             | New Character Classes          |
| Other Specialized Systems | Humourous Articles and Stories |
| Mini-Adventures           | Ranting and Raving             |

Which of these games would you most like to see covered in discussion and variants(list your top 3):

Runequest	Traveller
AD&D	Ysgarth Rules
The Fantasy Trip	Tunnels and Trolls
Chivalry and Sorcery	FRP in general enough terms for any system
Space Quest	



REVISED MONSTERS

DAVID JACOBSON

The following are revised versions of standard monsters for use against high-power parties. They are given in terms of the original Ysgarth Rules and AD&D.

WHITE APES

HP:100 AD&D AC:-5 SC:3 Attacks:4 claws for 1D12 each  
 AC:8 HT:8ft ST:8 If 2 hit add 5D10, and if 3 hit  
 DC:26 WT:500+lbs +S:+4/0 add 1D10, and if all four add 10D20  
 These are four armed white apes, with sharp claws. They can only be hit by non-magical weapons, and these do only basic damage, without any damage from STR bonus. If attacked with magic then the damage done is halved and reversed on the attacker.

HYDRA(Any number of heads, 12 is most fun)

HP:1000 AD&D AC:-6 SC:6 Attacks:Any number of heads for 1D100 each  
 AC:15 HT:12+ft ST:3  
 DC:21 WT:3000+lbs +S:+4/0

This type of hydra differs from the classic monster in the following ways. All damage done to the monster is divided(round down) by the plus of the weapon with which he is struck. In other words, 25 points from a +5 weapon will do 5 points of damage. It can only be hit by magical weaponry and it regenerates 10 points per round.

ETTIN

HP:250 AD&D AC:1 SC:3 Attacks:2 Clubs for 3D20 + Cloud Giant STR  
 AC:11 HT:9ft ST:1 1 Breath from each head with 60'  
 DC:7 WT:1500+lbs +S:+4/Special range.

The effects of the breath is different from each head, and a save must be made versus each effect. If the save is made then that effect is the only one which will take effect. If all the saves are made then there is not any effect at all. All saves are made without adding any plusses to the Saving Throw.

Minus

To Save	Right Head	Left Head
0	Paralysis	Paralysis
-1	20D6 Damage, no dodge save	10D6 damage, No dodge save
-2	Death	Life drain 10 levels, 1 save per level drained
-3	Disintegration	Character changes into a spectre of his own level
-4	Drains power from all magic the character has	Lifedrains all in range by 1D5 levels/round for 1D5 rounds
-5	Character goes berserk against his party	Character changes to reverse alignment and protects the monster to the death.
-6	Character explodes doing his level in D4 to all in 100' radius, with no save for those hit.	The character is gated to the lowest levels of hell.

TWO BORROWED SWORDS

STEVE PARISH

These two unusual swords are taken from a series of short stories by Adrian Cole, about a wayward familiar named Elfloq. The stories were printed in WEIRDBOOK, and hopefully there will be more in the future.

THE SWORD OF OBLIVION-This enchanted sword has the power to steal a person's memory, effectively causing amnesia. It does damage as a +1/+5 1D12 sword, until it pierces flesh. When it does this, it gets an automatic critical for maximum damage. The wound thus created heals itself at a rate of 1D12+5 points per round after that, but the piercing allows the sword to steal the victim's memory. This causes the victim to become immediately disoriented, and he forgets what he is doing. His experience is lowered to 10% of what it was originally, and his Memory is lowered to zero. He forgets who he is and all that he knows. This knowledge and his MEM and Experience returns at a rate of 1% per game day.

**THE SWORD OF LIGHT**--This sword is of the same manufacture as the Sword of Oblivion, but it has a different effect. It is +1/+2, but does damage only to inanimate objects, such as armor. It hits for 1D10. However, when it hits human flesh, it pierces in that area, and the target must make a save against magic. If he makes the save, he takes no damage, but the next piercing blow has a -1 save, and this increases by one each time he makes the save. If he fails the save, the location area in which he has been hit, turning into pure energy, with an effect of blinding light, and the area being totally destroyed. Then, all adjacent areas must be saved for at minus one. If they fail, they also turn to light, and the areas by them must save at -2. This goes on, with the save progressing until the person is either destroyed, or the chain reaction has been stopped by successful saves. The sword also has the power of glowing with continual light.

These two weapons are quite formidable, and should not be just passed out. They are generally in the hands of a cursed agent of the Dark Gods, who has a mission of doom and destruction. These agents are usually very good fighters, and ruthless. Persons who acquire the swords attract the Dark Gods, who may send agents after them, or summon them for service.

**FAIRIES DON'T ALWAYS HAVE WINGS--PART III**

LEW BRYSON

The five adventurers set out on the road the next morning, headed inland. Unferth led them, his cape flapping slightly in the fresh breeze which blew off the land. He strode along, confident that this direction would bring them plunder and adventure. It had best damn well bring them something, or he was going to have a mutinous magician on his Nordic hands.

Withrandir trudged along, his heavy leather cape slapping on his sweat-soaked back. If there was one thing he couldn't stand, it was lackwits, and here he was, stuck on an adventure with four of them. Uninspired Viking leader, warped Greek lackey, totalitarian Teutonic twit, and a drooling death machine. It constantly amazed him that some god didn't simply wipe them off the face of the earth in the interest of decency. But, as long as they kept a respectful distance from him, he's stay with them, if just for laughs.

Unplumbed depths of the pool! Implotius swore softly under his breath. That magician smelled awful! Implotius kept a respectful distance from Withrandir's bearfat-impregnated cape, which was festering and steaming in the hot sun. It smelled like something long dead, thought the Greek as he moved to a position upwind of the wizard. As he sauntered around the group, he saw moving figures off to their left. He tapped the moron on the shoulder and pointed. There was a slight hum as the Hawk Helm tracked and focussed, and Alroy reported.

"It's three big guys. They tryin' to look like someone else, but I can see 'em. They's ogres!"

"Damn! Ogre 'magil! Silence everyone! Let me do the talking." Unferth signalled to Implotius to be quiet, and they waited for the ogres to approach.

"Hail! It is a fine day, isn't it? The sun's so bright, and the flowers are so pretty, gosh, its just lovely. My name's Knick, these are my friends, Will and Neisslee. Who are you?"

Sweet livid sores of Loki, homosexual ogres. Unferth, for all his practiced barbarian aplomb, was speechless for a few seconds. "Uhhhh, pleased to meet you, Uhhh... 'ly name's Rolf, and these are my companions, Balroyd, Kalos, Thimrandir, and Imotius, where are you headed?"

"We're going to town for the festival, of course! We wouldn't miss the Moon Lake Festival for anything. It's the only time of year that any kind of art is allowed around here. Honestly! You'd think they wanted to keep artists in closets!" simpered the ogre.

Implotius, noting a pointed stare from Unferth, reflected ruefully that it was people like this that gave buggery a bad name. After all, he never acted like that.

Talos kept an eye on the fey ogres as the group marched toward the festival. He had to think of something to win Unferth's favor so that he could join his band at home. Yes, of course! He'd create a clever strategem to make the ogres trust the party. "We're going to the festival too, We're

performing actors." He winked broadly and unnecessarily at Unferth.

Unferth rolled his eyes. Another one of the shapeshifter's brilliant ideas. How was he going to get them out of this one? There was one play he had seen a long time ago...and a Skald never forgets. "Yes, we are an acting troupe, on the lookout for an opportunity to become famous. We'll be performing one of our best at the festival, a play called William Tell. Ever hear of it?"

"Noooo... Is it one of Stanik's, the fellow from Cerngoth?" inquired Knick. "I like his plays so much! They're just marvelous. So insightful, yet naive and child-like."

"I'm afraid not." Unferth drew back as the ogre leaned in leering. "It's by Schiller, a friend of mine from the Nordlands. I know you'll like it though, its got a surprise ending that will be sure to please you." He saw Alroy grinning and fingering his penguin-embossed throwing knives, and hoped the moron wouldn't give away the secret.

As they walked towards the village, Unferth edged over as close as he could stand to get at Mithrandir. "Hey. These limpwrists have got to go," he whispered. "I'll cue in the Geek, and we'll let Alroy and Yellowbelly catch on for themselves."

"All right, but the one who talks too much, Knick? He's mine. I got a lightning bolt with his name on it," Mithrandir hissed back.

Unferth nodded and slowly moved across to where the Greek was plodding along. He got Implotius' attention. Pulling what he hoped was an ogre-like face, he pointed at Knick while letting his wrist go limp. Implotius nodded glumly and made a rude gesture at the ogre. Unferth locked eyes with the swordsman, pointed a limp finger at the ogre, and then drew the finger across his throat. Implotius nodded and then glanced down at Mimir. Good. He understood.

Unferth went up to the ogres, drew even with Will, and addressed him. "Well, what are you going to do at the festival? You haven't said much," he said, slapping the ogre on the back. "You're a big fellow, are you going to wrestle, throw the sheaf?"

The ogre blushed. "No silly. I play the flute. I'm going to play for the lord of the castle. I might even win a prize, wouldn't that be wonderful!" he clapped his hands and skipped a few steps.

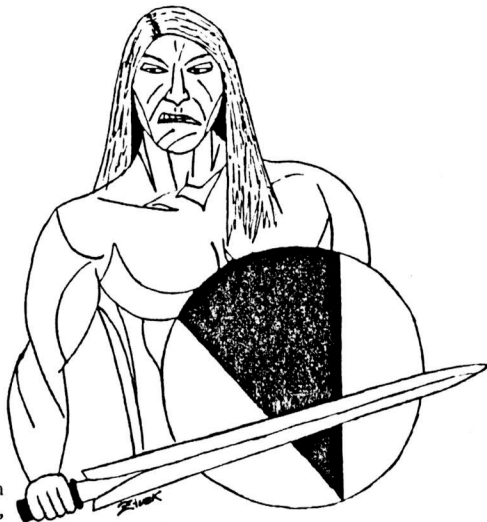
Unferth glared at Mithrandir, who gighed softly in the depths of his leather hood. While the magician was a pain in the neck, he was slowly getting to like him. "A flute player, eh? Well, none of us are musicians, but Al... ..uh, Balroyd here is an incredible juggler. Like to see some juggling, Will?"

"Oh yes, that would be wonderful! Please, Rolf, please!"  
 If we don't kill them soon....thought Unferth. He threw some stones at Alroy, who caught them and started juggling them. "Pretty good, huh? Now watch this... Okay kid, start with the knives!"

Alroy started whipping throwing knives from the scabbards at waist, boots, shoulders and forearms. The air about his head flashed with stone, steel, and grinning ivory penguins, as five rocks and eight throwing knives flew in an intricate pattern around Alroy's grinning face. The ogres were astonished.

"All right kid, bag the rocks."  
 Alroy caught each rock on his nose and flipped it away, keeping the knives in motion. "Ready for the wineskin trick?" Alroy nodded, the silly grin still pasted to his face. Unferth took a full wineskin, waited for a second nod from Alroy, then lofted the skin high in the air. Steel flashed and wine sprayed as each of the knives hissed into the skin, the last one pinning the empty skin to a tree.

Talos shook his head in disbelief as the ogres applauded wildly. As many times as he had seen the moron's superhuman eye-hand coordination in action it was still hard to accept. Of course, if Talos was a moron there was no tel-



ling what he'd be capable of. He could probably juggle as well with his feet. It might be dangerous, though, better not try it. Yes, he would continue in his savage struggle to remain a non-entity.

"Time for the second act, boy. Now watch this, gentlemen. I will throw an axe, my friend here will sling a stone, and this fellow will throw a dart. Wherever they hit, Balroyd will put a knife. Here, Knick, drop this cloth to start us. The knives will all be in their targets by the time it hits the ground. Go ahead."

The ogre dropped the cloth. By the time it hit the ground, it was spattered with blood. Mithrandir split Knick's chest with a lightning bolt, devastating at such a short range. Implotius slammed a slingstone off Will's upper right arm, breaking the bone, and Unferth's axe sank deep into Neisslee's abdomen. Thrown knives followed the missiles less than half a second later. Implotius tacked Will and held a knife to his throat. Unferth drew his Spatha and ran to Neisslee, but stopped and sheathed it as the ogre vomited blood and collapsed.

"Cash him, you jerk!" Mithrandir snarled at the Greek. "He's no good to us." Implotius didn't know what the words meant, but he caught the tone. With a smile he said to the Wizard, "Why don't you go sit on a halberd, you smelly little jit?"

"What did he say?" Yelled Mithrandir. "I know it was abusive, he's smiling too much!"

Unferth ignored him and tried to pump Will for information. He couldn't get anything out of the fainting ogre. "Skrag him," he said, drawing a finger across his throat again and walking away. The ogre's last breath gurgled around the Greek's dagger as Unferth asked Talos, "Did the others have anything on them?"

Talos turned from the bodies with a frown. "Not much. About fifty Djals and an amulet. It can't be worth much if these nitwits had it."

"Right. Why don't you try it on?"

"Oh, no, I defer to the Wizard."

"No, that's all right, I don't need it. Unferth, you try it."

"No, I don't think so. Implotius?" He offered, holding out the amulet.

The Greek made another rude gesture. "Oh. Hey, let's let Alroy try it!"

"Great! He'd try on a cobra if we asked him to," Mithrandir chortled at the prospect.

"The amulet was put around Alroy's neck. He turned into a winged dharzi dog. "Woof."

"Well, I'll be damned. Take it off him Talos. I've never seen anything sillier than a dharzi dog in armor." Unferth hid his face and shook with laughter. After Mithrandir had removed the amulet, Alroy returned to human form.

"What good is that? Who needs a moron dog?" Mithrandir kicked a stone down the road and fumed. "There hasn't been any loot worth speaking of on this whole damned trip! I've got 5,000 sunk in this stupid expedition, sunk in that stupid sunken ship! Yeah, I know we got another ship, but now we have to feed all the rowers. There better be some loot at this festival."

"Hey, go bark up a hollow olive tree," suggested Implotius, secure in his linguistic fortress. The Wizard glared at him.

After passing a large flock of ducks, and heckling the duckherd, they came to the village. It seemed fairly large, and people walked the streets, talking and selling, drinking singing, and getting ready for the morrow's festivities.

"I knew I should have saved a little more and learned that spell. It would have been great," Mithrandir moaned.

"What spell? Detect Treasure?" asked Talos.

"No, the Exploding Festering Flying Hell-Cloud of Devastating Doom. I could skrag the whole lot of yokels in one shot! Picture it, an exploding purple cloud racing down the street, maiming and killing everyone in its way. .... Great way to top off a pleasant afternoon!" Mithrandir, ignoring his somewhat stunned companions, strode over to a passing hobbit and clapped a hand on the halfling's shoulder. "Hey, short and hairy, where can I find beef, bread, brew and bed, for five Djals or less?"

"Jam it in ya' ear, ya' jerk. Piss off, I got bones to roll." The hobbit shook lose and raced down the street.

"You little prick, I'll fry you!" Mithrandir bellowed, and a corona played about his pointed finger, preparatory to another lightning bolt, before Unferth tackled him from behind.

"You ass, are you trying to start a war? I ought to split your gillikin, right here and now!" Unferth yelled in Mithrandir's face. "Don't tell me about how he insulted you, and how he was only a hobbit," he said, cutting off the Wizard's reply. "We've got the opportunity of a lifetime here. Tomorrow everyone in town is going to be at that blessed lake, and while they're all down there, we'll be up here taking everything they have back to the ship. Then we can come back and rape and burn. We won't have to worry about fire-damaged goods."

"Oh. Okay."

"Yeah, sounds safe."

"Goodieeee!"

Now what did he say....?

The five footsore adventurers went to the Inn of the Stunned Cow, had dinner and hit the sack. The next day promised incredible events.

WHERE DID ALL THE HEROES GO?

DAVE NALLE

Heroic Fantasy had its birth in magazines. The pulps of the 30s, especially WEIRD TALES, were the ground on which many of the greatest authors of Swords and Sorcery were first published, and where the genre was developed. Since then, magazines like UNKNOWN and FANTASTIC have allowed the field to grow, and opened new vistas in it. They produced new authors and a new awareness in Heroic Fantasy.

WEIRD TALES is long gone. UNKNOWN has passed away. As of its next issue, FANTASTIC will also disappear, succumbing to the economics of the publishing industry and the errors of its owners. For its ten years under Ted White, FANTASTIC kept up a steady level of excellence in its presentation of S&S stories, but White has moved on to HEAVY METAL, and FANTASTIC is moving on to oblivion. At least it will be in good company in that heaven reserved for Adventure Magazines.

With FANTASTIC gone, there is no purely professional market for Heroic Fantasy stories which appears on a monthly or even bi-monthly schedule. This is a trial for the ever increasing readers and writers in this field, who find that new stories are hard to find, or hard to sell.

Two markets remain and are growing. These are anthologies and the many small press and semi-pro magazines. Both fields are growing, and may be able to take the place of the fallen pulps.

Heroic Fantasy anthology series are becoming more popular. There are several which are well worth noting. SWORDS AGAINST DARKNESS, which has had five issues so far is edited by Andrew Offut. It features all of the best new writers of the field, and includes a lot of innovative stories. OTHER WORLDS is a less good anthology which came out recently and has had 2 issues so far. It is edited by Roy Torgeson, and features all new stories, unlike SAD, which has some old, but obscure ones. HEROIC FANTASY is the third major anthology worth investing in. It is edited by Gerald W. Page and Hank Reinhardt. It has all new stories, and some very interesting articles on writing S&S. Of the three, SAD is the oldest and probably the best, as it takes good stories, wherever they are to be found, and is willing to use reprints from recent semi-pro magazines, so that it has the most consistently high quality by avoiding second rate but unpublished stories. Many of the newer authors in the anthologies had their start in the semi-pro and small press magazines.

Small circulation magazines published by small presses are numerous, and they are as hard to get a hold of as the Devil. There are a number of very good magazines out, being published at regular intervals. Recently some of them have begun to border on being professional. I'll try to go over the top ones in order of availability and importance. WHISPERS is a magazine with Fantasy, HF, and Horror. It is as close as you can get to being a full prozine without actually being one. It is beautifully produced, pays good rates, attracts the best writers, and so on. It comes out about twice a year, and is edited by Stuart David Schiff. It is a very good magazine. A smaller competitor which has achieved remarkable distribution, being in almost every SF bookstore, or Fantasy Gaming store around, is DARK FANTASY. It comes out 4 or 6 times a year, is digest sized, looks okay, and features stories by a lot of good writers. It pays less than WHISPERS, so the more famous writers like Leibic, Wagner, Munn, and Wellman don't generally appear there, but all of the good new writers do. WEIRDBOOK used to be almost on the level of WHISPERS, for contents and production, but W. Paul Ganley, the

editor has been slow getting issues out, not even approaching the semi-annual schedule. It features top writers as well as new ones, including those in the middle, like Adrian Cole. DRAGONFIELDS is a fine magazine from Triskell Press, edited by Charles de Lint. It has great graphics and art, and fiction on about the same level as WEIRDBOOK. It appears irregularly, but hopefully at least once a year. Other noteworthy titles are NIGHT VOYAGES, ELDRITCH TALES, SPACE AND TIME, SHAYOL, THE ARGONAUT, WAX DRAGON, and PANDORA. There are many other, less well known ones.

The problem with magazines of this type is finding them, because they are printed in limited editions, and generally distributed only by mail-order. Thus, only the most enterprising store will have even one. The best source for finding out about them so that you can read them yourself is a wide circulation magazine called FANTASY NEWSLETTER, which is in many SF bookstores. It is edited by Paul Allen, and has a very good section on the small press, and also a fine section of book pre-views. It is a must for finding enough HF to read in these barren times.

Between the anthologies, and the small press, you might be able to find enough HF stories to read, especially with the addition of the one or two a month released by THE DRAGON and SORCERER'S APPRENTICE. If not, you may be out of luck, unless you write your own. So, push for the creation of a new Heroic Fantasy pulp, like WEIRD TALES or FANTASTIC, or else subscribe, and get all your friends to join you, to one of the top semi-pro magazines, so that it will go to a monthly schedule and go professional. I hope that this article will be of help to those of you in the dilemma of unsatisfied thirst for literary adventure.

**NMI: IMPLSION SPHERE**

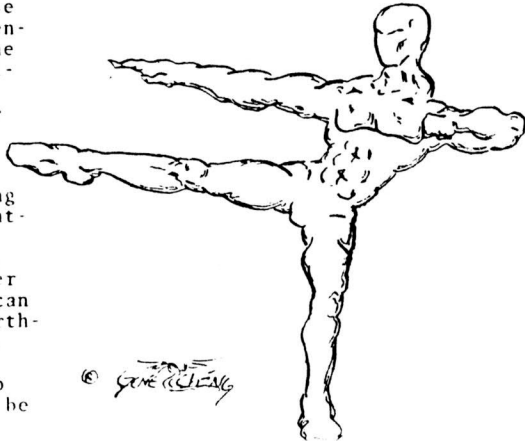
**TOM CURTIN**

This item appears to be a black sphere three inches in diameter. However, it has some unusual powers. There is a small grey circle on it, about half an inch in diameter. If this is depressed three times in a row within 30 seconds, it will begin to hum. This hum will last for some 10 seconds, at the end of which time, the sphere will implode with great force, causing severe devastation to everything within a 10ft radius, but leaving no mess. The sphere will cease to exist, and everything in the radius will be drawn to it for a period of 1CR, meeting at the center of the sphere with great force. Everything in the radius, including people and items will take over all damage for 5D20. This will destroy most small creatures and items, and do severe damage to larger ones. No remains are left behind, and the damage, unless fatal is all club type, and crushing. Beings in the area must also save -5 against shock and unconsciousness.

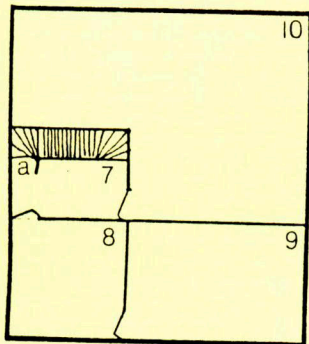
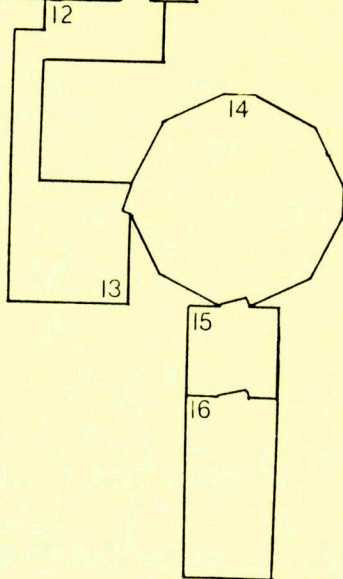
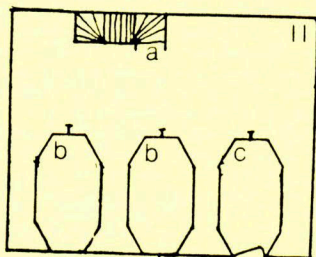
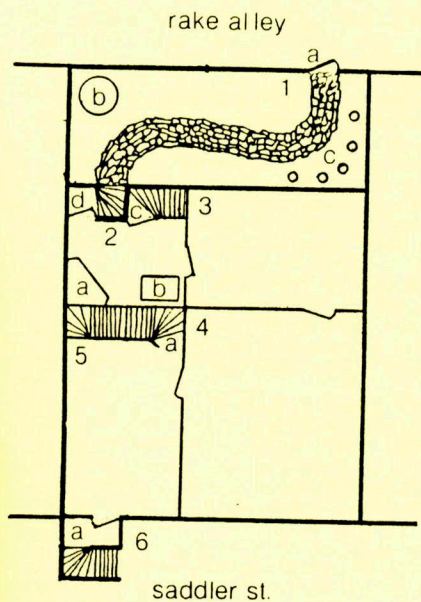
**NMI: THE RING OF ZALDUTH**

**HENRY DOVE**

This is a ring originally created by the Vampire-Mage, Zalduth, and passed on down the ages by his slayer the Vampire-Mystic Gahlthondar. You may well wonder at the multiple use of the word Vampire in the last sentence. The ring is the cause. The wearer of the ring will be automatically resurrected 3 times after putting it on. The fourth time he dies, the cost is collected. He forfeits his soul, and becomes an agent of Evil on the Earth, a PC Vampire of his own level. The ring also gives 10 levels of undead control to the wearer each time he is slain, until he becomes a Vampire. When it is first put on, the wearer takes 4D20 shock overall. If he can survive this, there will be no further problems for him with the ring. If it kills him he is permanently dead. The wearer will not give up the ring willingly, and it cannot be removed while he lives.







INTRODUCTION

The members of the adventuring party are staying in the Inn of the Silver Bow in a city called Carziaks. They are passing through on their way to a significant position as members of an elite mercenary force in a nation to the south of the city. There should only be fighters in the party, and they should be willing to undertake a task for no reward in order to see that right is done, or to satisfy their curiosity. This should be especially true of the leader. The adventurers should have no more than one magic item a piece, and that should not be too powerful. This is a mood and thought adventure rather than a good old hack and slash.

## BEGINNING PHASE

One evening, the leader of the party is sitting up late in the common room of the inn, mulling over his plans for the rest of their journey. He is alone, and one of the windows is open. He is in a pensive mood, which is broken by a flapping of wings. A bat like thing, with a human skull for a body and leather wings flies into the room, about the character's head three times, and back out the window. He leaps up, his curiosity aroused, and follows it out of the window, which is on the ground floor. It flies down the street, bobbing up and down, and going just slow enough for him to follow it but not catch it.

Before he realizes what he is doing, he is far from the inn, has forgotten to rouse his comrades, and is standing inside the ancient Necropolis of the city. It is Samhain-Eve in the city, and considered a cursed day. The skull-wing is hovering at the open gate of a grand, but decrepit crypt. Having come this far, he might as well go on, so he follows it through the gate and into the depths.

An eerie glow lights the slimey walls of the crypt, and at the bottom of the slippery stairs is a large chamber. In it are two large sarcophagi, both open, with their lids lain on them. The lid of one is broken in two. The skull-wing settles in a niche in the wall. From the sarcophagus with an unbroken lid comes a scrambling noise. The lid moves aside, and from it rises the corpse of a year-dead man. It fixes its sightless eyes on the visitor, and in a spectral voice it tells its sad tale.

"Welcome. I am Egain of Vallas, lately lord of this region, though my earthly reign ended on Samhain-last. I have had you brought here to beg a favor. I need you as the instrument of my vengeance on the foul mage who killed me. Calgwd Maglach, the dread Necromancer, and I vied for the love of the fair Ardaina, daughter of the mayor of Carziaks. I won her hand, and we were betrothed, yet the week after our betrothal, she was taken with the Black Death, and in a short time died. Knowing that Maglach might have some foul desire on her bones, I stood guards over this tomb, where she was buried among my ancestors. One night, I fell asleep at my watch, and I remember no more, save that I awoke as you see me, on this night when the dead may walk abroad, and robbers had been here, and taken my tomb treasures and Ardaina's body. I suspect that this was done by Maglach's grave-robbing associates, who also killed me. This is the only night on which I may act, so I implore you to get Ardaina's remains back from Maglach and bring them here to rest with me undisturbed. If you can find my tomb treasures, you are welcome to them, and I will be doubly thankful if you kill Maglach and end his foulness."

With this, the bones slump back into the sarcophagus, and the voice rustles out. It might be good at this point to get the character to perhaps swear a very potent oath to fulfill this task, so that he will have to carry it out. As you will see, such an oath could lead to serious confrontations and internal conflict by the end of the adventure.

After this, the leader may collect his party, and venture on the main portion of the adventure at any time in his convenience. However, if he makes his intended quest too clear, townsfolk may hear of it and tell the Necromancer. A few guarded questions would be safe, and suffice to find the mage's house.

The house is on Saddler Street, and has a garden which backs on Rake Alley. This is all that is easy and safe to learn about it. It is also generally known that the Necromancer is in the practice of summoning the spirits of the dead for clients at a fairly reasonable fee, and that he has three associates, one of whom serves him as a manservant. He also has a group of three well paid guards brought in from a far land, who speak little of the local tongue, but live in the city. He also has a cook from the town working in his kitchen, but she is not allowed in any part of the house but the kitchen and the dining room.

There are no encounters on the way to the house, unless the GM wants to add some ones appropriate to the time chosen by the players as propitious for their visit. The distance from the inn to the house is about 7 average city blocks.

## THE HOUSE, ITS ENVIRONS, AND ITS INHABITANTS

1: This is the garden behind Maglach's house. The garden is surrounded by a 15ft tall wall, at the top of which is broken glass set in mortar, which makes it very hard to climb. A-This is a gate in the wall, which bears a sign tradesman's entrance. There is also a knob in the wall, which rings a bell in the kitchen. The gate is 6 inch thick bonded oak, with a rusty grate of iron bars and spikes over it. If the bell is rung, the cook will come and open the gate, which is locked with a very good lock. B-This is a crystal-clear pool, from which will come a water sprite to attack intruders who are not accompanied by an authorized person. The sprite will wait until a moment when it can have surprise before attacking. C-These are five flowers, which are quite beautiful. Smelling them, however causes severe retching and convulsions, if a -3 save is not made.

## SPRITE

NYR AR:8 AD&D AC:2 Attacks:2 for 1D4--water blasts

NYR DR:12 ST:10

NYR AC:0 HP:30

The sprite is a being of water vapor, and can dissipate himself to be invisible, or condense himself into the form of a lithe, small humanoid made of clear water. It can attack with its fists as water-blasts, when fully condensed, but prefers to envelope a being's head as a clod of vapor, and condense around it, causing it to drown in CON/3CR, unless a -3 dodge save is made.

2: This is the kitchen of the house. The cook is here. She is a fat, genial middle aged woman, of little wit, no knowledge, and little use to the party. If they try to enter any other part of the house, she will try to stop them with a 1D4+3 soup ladle. It only has that damage in her hands. She has 5HP, and AR and DR of 2. A-Hearth, where soup is cooking. B-Cutting table with meat on it. C-Door to steps down to basement. Not locked. D-Door to steps down into the garden. Also not locked.

3: Dining Room. Silver settings on a nice table. All of the silverware together is maybe worth 800GP.

4: Living Room. A couch and two chairs are in this room. There are a few gewgaws about worth a total of 75GP.

5: This is the main entry hall to the house. Parga, the manservant will not knowingly allow strangers past this point. A-Stairs up to the rest of the house.

6: Saddle street. A-These steps lead up to a door with a knob which rings a chime inside. The door bears a sign which says "Tradesmen in Rear". If the chime is rung, the door will be answered in a few moments by Parga, the Necromancer's butler/manservant.

Parga is 5ft tall, skinny, old and has wispy hair on a mostly bald pate. He is a bit adled, and likes to make silly jokes. He has been instructed not to let strangers any farther than the entry hall, and preferably not into the house at all. He is to get their business, and then tell it to his master, who will send him back to fetch them or send them away. He has 15HP, an AR of 3 and a DR of 7. He has a dagger with which to attack of need be. He has keys to 2D, 1A, and 6A.

The door is locked, and 3 inch thick oak. It is also protected with a spell which doubles its structural strength.

7: This is the hall of the second floor. A-These are the stairs down to the first floor.

8: This is Maglach's dressing room. There is little of value here, unless you like to steal clothes.

9: This is Maglach's Bedroom. There is a small chest under the bed. In it are 2500GP.

10: This is Maglach's main work-room. There are several empty coffins here, and a triangle with three touching circles in it painted on the floor. If the party actually meets Maglach, and attempts to hire him, he will perform a summoning here, with one circle occupied by himself, one by

subject to be possessed by the summoned spirit, and one by the character who seeks the spirit.

- 11: This is the basemen/wine-cellar. There are three vats of wine. B represents the two whose taps yield wine. The tap of C yields dust, and if turned, the front of the cask comes out, showing it to be empty and the door beyond. A is the stairs up to the kitchen.
- 12: Rolf Hreduk, one of the guards is loafing here, leaning back in a chair. He is a level 5 fighter with 35HP and an AR of 6, a DR of 7.
- 13: Verki Denju and Illek Krakis, two more hired fighters are waiting here, dicing on the floor for a total of 20GP. They are both level 6 fighters with 45HP, +2 on damage, and ARs of 7, DRs of 8.
- 14: This is the main summoning room, set up as the one given in 10, but in this room is Maglach, with 2 Grave-Robbers/Assistants, Jerrik and Krastulgi, trogloditical thugs with the same characteristics as the fighters in 13. Maglach is a level 12 Fighter/Necromancer with 90HP. His AR is 10, and his DR is 13. He is +4 on damage, and uses a +3/+4, black-bladed two handed sword, which gives the bearer +30 on MI with Necromantic and Sorcerer spells when used in the summoning.
- Also in the room are three zombies which serve the will of the necromancer totally. Standing at the back of the room is a beautiful, scantily clad girl, with APP of 18 and CHA of 20, who the Necromancer is about to have his men force into the triangle so that he can use her as a recepticle for a summoned spirit. She is reluctant, but under the Necromancer's power in some way, so she will be reluctantly obeying. She is Ardaina, and quite alive, stolen in time to be revived by Maglach, and kept under his power since then. She will be freed if he is slain, but will not much want to go to the grave.
- The zombies are equivalent to normal humans, but have AR and DR of 5, with an effective 50HP each. They will attack until they are destroyed or incapacitated, and are not bothered by non-function-halting wounds. They attack with clubs for 1D8+3.
- 15: This room contains a beautiful woman chained to a ring in the middle of the floor she has CHA and APP both of 22. There is a -3 save against charm for any male who sees her. She begs to be freed from the chain, which the nasty mage put on her. She is in fact, a succubus, and will attack those who get near enough.

#### SUCCUBUS

NYR AR:10 AD&D AC:3 Attacks:1 Bite for 1D6 plus drain 1CON and 1STR  
 NYR DR:10 ST:9 for 3D20 hours.  
 NYR AC:0 HP:50 2 Claws for 2D8 each

The succubus is a type of demoness, which lives on human blood. They can change sex at will, and those whose CON is lowered to 0 by their bite become weak vampires.

- 16: This is Maglach's treasure room. It contains all of the tomb treasures of several tombs, including Egain's. The treasures totalled are worth 75,000GP. There is also a Rod of Measuring Dimensions, depth, width, volume, &c. Also among the treasures is a +3 mace, and a sword.
- The sword is the Sword of Solitude. It has no magical benefits when the user is engaged in a battle where he has people fighting on his side. However, if he is alone, against any number of foes, it is +5/+3, hits for 1D20, and does a critical on a roll of 19 or 20.

This treasure is guarded by a double-strength zombie, with twice all of the characteristics given for those in 14, including his weapon. Thus he has 100HP, AR 10, DR 10, and his club hits for 2D8+6. However, if he is shown Maglach's severed head, he will collapse dead. In any case he will revert to dead status 3 hours after the death of the mage.

ANOTHER CRITICAL HIT SYSTEM

DAVID JACOBSON

In ABYSS #7 Bob Ellis presented a Critical Hit system. For those of you who do like charts, I present the one I have revised from the ARDUIN GRIMOIRE. Its main point is that it is keyed to where the blow landed. It is intended for use with a hit location table.

When a Critical Hit is determined to be major(10% chance) then roll on the appropriate one of the following tables for where the blow has been located.

HEAD

1D20	Result	Extra Damage
1-3	One eye torn out(-4 to attack and pass out in 1D10CR)	1D6/Turn
4-5	Jaw ripped off(pass out in 1D10CR)	1D16
6-10	Stun for 1D6 minutes(loss of voluntary action)	1D6
11-13	Both eyes torn out	2D6/Turn
14-17	Brain penetrated	Death
18-19	Skull crushed	Death
20	Head totally pulped and splattered	Death

NECK

1D8	Result	Extra Damage
1-3	Spine Severed(paralysis)	2D20
4-5	Throat Ripped out(loss of breath)	1D8/CR
6-7	Throat cut(1 or 2 jugulars slashed)	Dead in 1D3CR
8	Head Sliced cleanly off	Death

ARM

1D12	Result	Extra Damage
1-3	Tendons cut(loss of muscle control)	1D8
4-5	Elbow smashed(loss of arm movement, pass out in 2D6CR)	1D8
6	Wrist severed	3D8
7-9	Artery severed(die in 1D12 minutes)	1D6/Turn
10-12	Arm torn off(die in 1D50 seconds)	4D8

CHEST

1D18	Result	Extra Damage
1-4	1D10 ribs broken(lose 10% mobility for each)	1D8 each
5	Kidney ruptured(incapacitated)	2D20
6	Ruptured organs(incapacitated)	2D10
7-8	Spine Slashed(paralysis)	2D20
9-10	Lung punctured(cut movement by 50%)	1D12/1/2 Turn
11-14	Intestines spilled(cut movement 50% & 20% chance of fall)	2D10
15-16	Impalement(weapon stuck)	x2 damage +4D10
17-18	Heart pierced	Death

LEG

1D16	Result	Extra Damage
1-3	Broken bone(cut movement 75%)	2D6
4-5	Knee smashed(fall and crawl)	2D6
6-8	Tendons cut(fall and crawl)	1D8
9-11	Artery cut(lower movement 75%, die in 1D5 minutes)	1D8/turn
12-13	Achilles tendon severed(fall and crawl)	1D4
14-16	Leg torn off(fall, no movement, shock, die in 1D3CR)	4D12

MISCELLANEOUS(there is a 1 in 6 chance that a crit. is in this group)

1D16	Result	Extra Damage
1	Breasts cleaved(shock for 20-1/2CON CR)	2D10
2-5	3 times normal damage	
6-7	Thigh Fractured(cut movement 75%)	2D12
8	Genitals cleaved(shock for 3D4 minutes)	3D10
9	Buttock cleaved(fall, shock for 20-1/2CON CR)	4D6
10-11	4 times normal damage	
12-13	5 times normal damage	
14-15	6 times normal damage	
16	Body split in twain	Death



The *Sidhe* (pronounced Shée) are an important element in Irish folklore which has never really been adequately examined by anyone in magazines or rule-systems. This is a pity, because they have a great potential for use in a well developed campaign. There are a number of ways in which the numerous myths of the Sidhe can be interpreted, depending on how the subject is examined.

The Sidhe are generally considered a race of lesser gods and godlings, not worshipped, but respected, and offered to because of their power. They inhabit the numerous *side* of the countryside, a type of large, flat topped mound. They are neither malevolent nor benevolent, but delight in doing mischief to mankind, and his works. Each side is inhabited by a tribe of Sidhe, who are ruled over by a king. The various side are independent of each other, but will work in unison.

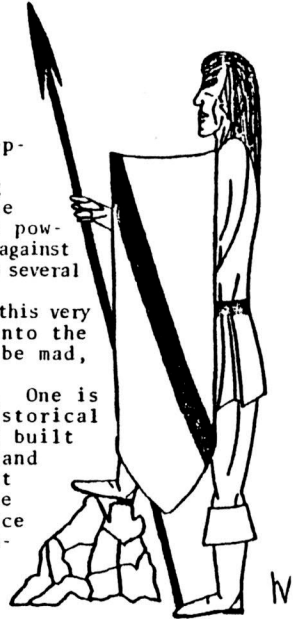
Common practices of the Sidhe include the kidnapping of humans, especially children, and the disruption of the various human festivals through the use of their magical powers. They will also engage in other pranks, especially against humans who annoy them. They are similar in many ways to several other traditional groups of fairy-folk.

They horde great wealth in the sides, and they guard this very jealously against human thieves. Those who disappear into the sides may not reappear at all, or if they do, they will be mad, or a bit odd and touched by the experience.

There are two main views of the nature of the Sidhe. One is primarily historical, the other mainly mythical. The historical theory is that a pre-celtic race which inhabited Ireland built the mounds, and the Celts, coming there later from mainland Europe and discovering that they were burial mounds built up the superstitions surrounding the Sidhe to explain the mounds. The mythological position is that they are a race of early Celtic gods who fell from power to the more famous group which is given in TSR's "Gods, Demi-Gods, and Heroes".

Unfortunately some aspects of Celtic mythology are quite indistinct, which leaves us room to interpret the Sidhe as we see fit. The two best views are that they are spirits of a lost race which existed before the current memory of man and used the Side as burial mounds, or that they are one of the many fey races, similar to the traditional elves which exists in a kind of exile, opposed to the gods, and man who is the servant of the gods. A third position is also popular, in that some of the gods, notably Mannanan Maclir, are considered to be of the Sidhe. Perhaps the most playable view is that put forward by William Butler Yeats, who presented them as a race of Warrior Demi-Gods which lived in the hills, and had strange powers, mostly involved with trapping men and bringing about the ruin of their lives. Yeats presents Cuchullain as fighting the Sidhe and their powers in his series of plays about the legendary hero. Michael Moorcock presents them as a race of Giant-SuperElves.

With any of these approaches the Sidhe can be made a usefull race in your campaign, as they horde treasure, are inimical to mankind, and have some wondrous powers, no matter which approach is taken. This makes them a very worthwhile NPC type for wilderness adventures. They are also just one of the many aspects of Celtic mythology which could be brought into a campaign, and have not been used much before.



BOWMAN SKILLS

STEVE WARBLE

As the result of an editorial mess, a section of the article on Bowmen in ABYSS #8 was missing. That section, on skills has been re-created and improved, and is presented here. The article in ABYSS #8 is needed to use the skills given here and understand their purpose.

1-Tracks as a Ranger of his level.

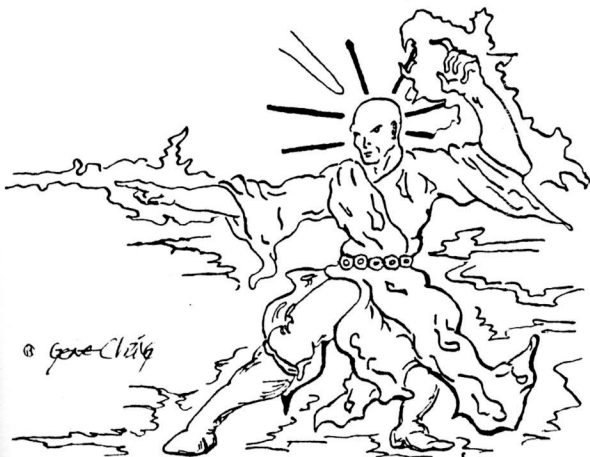
- 2-Climbs as a Thief of 1st level; goes up one level per level advanced.
- 3-Hides in Shadow and Moves Silently as a 1st level thief; goes up in each per level advanced.
- 4-Because of their function as scouts, Bowmen can memorize up to 5 square miles of terrain(including the strengths of any military units, defenses of forts, etc.) or up to 500' of dungeon corridor(including traps, secret doors, and what is behind doors). This skill goes up 1sq mi/100' with each level. Bowmen must roll INT-5 or less on 1D20 to successfully remember each sq mi or 100'. A Bowman cannot keep something memorized for more than a month, unless he re-familiarizes himself with it during the last week of the first month and once every two weeks after that.
- 5-Ability to make +1 arrows at a rate of up to 10 during a month. If he is disturbed in his work, they come out as normal arrows. This requires total solitude. This skill increases by +1, or by 5 arrows per level advanced, at the character's choice. Arrows cannot be raised beyond +3, nor can more than 25 be done in a month.
- 6-This is as above for bows, starting with one bow or X-bow at +1, advancing with a level by one bow or 1 plus. This goes to a maximum of 4 bows at +3.
- 7-This is the ability to repel any arrow coming within 10' of the Bowman so that it goes back and attacks the original shooter as if the Bowman had been the one to fire it. He must be able to see the arrow in question.

Bowmen may also make normal arrows, if materials are available, at a rate of their level in arrows per 30 hour period of work, or their level in bows per 240 hour period of work.

LEGIONS OF THE FAITHFUL—I: THE CULT OF NERTHUS

JON SCHULLER

This is the first in a series of articles designed to expand the aspects of religion in Adventure Games, most notably in the NYR, D&D, and related variant systems. I will attempt to present new religious orders which might be of at least some interest to Fantasy Role Players. These will be in the form of character classes with the nature of the religious order and the faith explained, and a good idea given of the nature of the god or goddess, with the maximum amount of completeness.



The Druids of the Celtic people are well known. They are perhaps the best known of any pagan priestly order, far better known than even the Asar of the Vikings. Just as the Celtic Druids led the worship of their goddesses, Arhanrhud, Rhiannon, and others, the people with whom the Celts of Britain were almost always at war, the Saxons, had a similar faith of nature. This was embodied in the worship of two nature deities, Nerthus and Njord. Of these two, Nerthus was transcendent in Saxon faith above all others, and it is often theorized that Njord was just a trans-sexual alter-ego, though he plays a rather greater role in true Scandinavian mythology. Our

interest then, in exploring the essence of Saxon religion is to look at the cult of Nerthus, which flourished during the pre-Christian Dark Ages in North Eastern Europe, and in the Eastern parts of Britain, when the Saxon tribes were migrating. Though they had other gods, none was as widespread among the common folk as Nerthus, not even Donnar.

Nerthus is that most common of goddesses, a Maternal Fertility Goddess. She was also known as the Dark Lady, and associated with the hunt and the moon. There is much to suggest that a great deal of her nature was derived from Cybele, the later-Roman fertility goddess. Tacitus devotes a fair amount of space to her in his Germania, and she was rather well known to other historians of the period.

Nerthus is a white-skinned, golden haired woman of surpassing beauty. She is large and well built. Her hair is kept in place with silver threads which are woven through it. She wears a silver circlet around her hair which bears on it 2 silver stag horns. Her powers are over animals, and plants. She also has powers over men. Essentially she is a non-violent goddess, but she is not against killing. It is just generally non-violent killing. She can control any animal, especially hooved and horned beasts.

Her priests can serve in either of two ways, and may have served in both at one time or another. There is a grove on a sacred island somewhere between England and Europe (possibly Thanet). On this isle is the most sacred spot, the grove, which none but the inner circle of the priesthood may approach. It is sacred because it is the resting place of the Chariot of the Moon, in which the goddess rides across the heavens. Twice a year, once at the Vernal Equinox, and once at the Autumnal Equinox, the High-Priest, who resides on the island receives a summons to the grove. At any other time it would be death to enter the grove, but at those times he may. There he meets the goddess, and they ride in procession through the great festival which is held on the isle. The chariot is drawn by two sacred oxen, which the High-Priest leads. At the festival there are human sacrifices of semi-willing victims, who are bled into boxes of earth brought by the representatives of all of the villages, who bear the blessed earth back to inaugurate the planting in their villages. The sacrifice of sinners is different from this. Those who transgress against the Dark Lady are killed by drowning, considered a terrible and damning way to die.

On the island there is a college for the training of priests, who go out to serve in villages after studying there. Older priests also return there to study and run the church.

The autumn festival also involves sacrifices, not for fertility, but to celebrate the hunt season and in celebration of the harvest. These victims may be killed in any of a variety of ways. With both festivals, smaller versions are held in each village. During the festivals, the presence of the power of the goddess makes it impossible for anyone to draw a blade. The sacrifices are done with pointed stag-horn/daggers made of silver by the priests. The ability to freeze swords in their scabbards is an inherent ability of the goddess, which is in force at all times in her presence.

Priests of Nerthus are a promising character class, similar to druids, but without some of the druid powers, as their concentration is more in the area of animals, and they would not have any weather spells.

In terms of the NYR, they would be Beastmaster(20%), Herbalist(15%), Prelate(15%), Enchanter(15%). They would be on Experience Class II. They are a fairly versatile class.

For AD&D run them as normal Druids, but with no spells that in any way involve water or the sun, and with moon, animal and some charm spells from the magic-user class. The specific spells are up to you.

It is important to note that although Nerthus is a general Fertility Goddess, she has two aspects, the Huntress and the Earth Mother. The Huntress is closer to her true nature, as are the winter and the moon. The maternal aspects are deemphasized in the goddess herself, but promoted by the priesthood, as they are far more attractive to a largely agrarian population.

The alignment of the Goddess is Lawful/Neutral/Active, and her priests tend to be of the same alignment.

A SECOND LOOK AT DRAGONS

CARL JONES

What is a dragon? It is the most feared of all monsters in mythology and fantasy fiction. There is nothing more dreadful than the Dread Worm, and nothing will strike fear into the hearts of a bold hero than the hiss of steam from its nostrils.

What is a dragon in AD&D? A pitiful little lizard who can take about the same amount of damage as a 10th level fighter. Is this a dire foe? Is this the hissing horror which broke Beowulf? Not by a longshot. A decent 7th or 8th level character has a fair chance of doing it in less than a full turn. An average party of 4th or 5th level adventurers could do it even faster, and with fairly minimal losses to the party, inspite of the monster's dread attacks.



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Dragons are not punch out monsters, manufactured on an assembly line to be slain by fighters when they need a little warm-up before going on to tackle something really serious, like any of the AD&D demons. Dragons are the living embodiment of doom and destruction.



What's more, who ever heard of dragons breathing chlorine gas? Lightning? Acid? Dragons breathe fire, and maybe on a rare occasion frost. They don't breathe noxious gas or other outrageous substances. They are generally of the firey element, and that is their main attack. This is the wrong way to run dragons.

Then, AD&D is not the only place to find fault. Back in ABYSS #1, our renowned editor did some damage to the worm, with that classic article "Dragonlore", also known as "Dragonbore". If anything could be duller than AD&D dragons, it's randomly rolled dragons. The only advantage here is a realistic sense of the power of the critters. At least AD&D gave us pretty pictures.

So, how do you make a real dragon? With care, thought and precision. There are several things to consider with dragons in an adventure. First, they are extremely rare. Second, they should be deadly, just at the limit of the party's capacity to deal with. Third, they should be unique, taking into account their intelligence, age, and potential. Fourth, they must be played as dragons, not just as a big, nasty monster. Hell, a Giant's a big nasty, but I'd set 20 of them against a good dragon and bet on the worm.

There should be no more than one dragon on an adventure, and an adventure with a dragon should come up only once or twice in 10 adventures. They should be spaced out in your world, with at least a 25 mile radius of private foraging ground, within which other dragons are trespassing, and in danger. Dragons live alone, except when very young, so there should not be more than one adult in a territory.

Dragons are powerful. The reason for this is their vast size, and great age. They should be one of the largest land creatures in the world, and of 10 to 20 times the age of the oldest human. This time has given them well developed minds, which they have used to develop their natural magical abilities, so that it should be expected that they can cast spells, and almost all should be able to shapechange into human form, and would do so often. They are also crafty, and no human could hope to match wits with one. The best way to overcome them is through wild and unexpected stratagems, as they are rather staid, and lack imagination.

Each dragon is different. Being separated from each other for centuries, and growing in ability and intellect all the time, they will have gained a different set of powers, and be as diverse as any human character. Since the GM should have few of them, he can take the time to develop them fully. With their wealth and power, they might easily be able to go out and either bribe or coerce other powerful beings into engineering powers and abilities into them so that they will be even better death machines.

Taking all of this into account, dragons should be played differently from other monsters by a GM, and once the players encounter their first such dragon, they will treat it with the respect it deserves. Dragons don't want to kill a party, unless they are very hungry. Its hard to get them out of their armor! They are very feline in temperament, and would rather play with an enemy than destroy it, unless hungry or enraged. Also, they don't really use their treasure, so they might go out and collect bizarre and useless MI for it, or have some deadly ones made to get robbers. They have very twisted senses of humour.

Using these guidelines you can certainly run more realistic and more exciting dragons, making your world more complete, but they are only my ideas of what the Great Worms should be, so you can just ignore it. If you do, you'll be stuck with the old belly-crawling lizards, instead of glorious sky-wrenching legends, but that's your loss.

NMI: THE STAFF OF FALDYG

DAVE NALLE

This is one of the great artefacts of the world of Ysgarth, the staff lost by the fallen Archaeurge, Faldyg when he was cast into the Abyss, causing the Time of Changes. It is a four foot long staff made of a grey-

blue metal. Its powers are simple and connected. It allows the bearer a DEX x Level chance of catching any spell which has no material form, or any ray, beam or equivalent, if it is cast at him. These can only be caught at a rate of one per CR. The staff can store up to 100 spell levels of energy which it catches, and throw these back at will at any target within 50ft, as a blast of pure energy, for 1D4 per spell level fired. The bearer can fire no more than half of the spell levels held at one time. Levels also bleed off at a rate of one spell level per CR, thus it will lose all stored power within 10 minutes of catching it. The main problem with it is that for each spell level discharged to do damage from the staff, the bearer takes damage overall, which is permanent. Damage is at a rate of 1 point per 25 levels discharged. Thus it is fairly safe to use for a short while.

CELTIC FEAST DAYS >

BRIAN MACAFFEE

Adding feast days to a game calendar can provide some interesting encounters for characters, or some amusing and fascinating twists to add to less than exciting events. The advent of a festival can change the atmosphere and the population in a region considerably.

In the Celtic calendar there are four major feast days. These are given below, with descriptions of their effect, nature and date.

**SAMHAIN**-This is the main feast, to celebrate the start of the new year. It is held on November first. On Samhain-eve, all of the spirits are free to wander abroad. This is the origin of modern Halloween. Magical forces run wild, and people stay indoors Samhain-eve. On Samhain itself, the major sacrifices (sometimes human) are made. It is a solemn event, and there are cleansing rituals and ordeals by fire and water. It is a time of subdued joy. It is also the time when the gods are suspected to mate.

**IMBOLC**-This is a festival held in great esteem by shepherds, but of less importance than Samhain or Bealtaine. It is a big gathering time for merchants, in spite of the weather. It is on the 1st of February. It is a time for dealing, but not for selling. It is a big time for betrothal. The arrangements of Imbolc are resolved in Lughnasad. It is also a good time for political meetings and coronations.

**BEALTAINE**-This is the second greatest festival, held on the 1st of May. It is the most joyous of festivals, when the gods of fertility are praised, the planting is completed, and there are various fertility rites, including a number of different types of orgy's. In the event of a late frost that year, delaying the planting, virgins are sacrificed.

**LUGHNASAD**-Deals for crops are resolved at this festival, prior to the harvest. It is held on the 1st of August, and is always accompanied by town fairs, where merchants gather to trade, having been abroad collecting wares since after Imbolc, when they presumably got backing. Thanks is also given at this festival if the crops are healthy. If not, more sacrifices, probably youths of either sex, or oxen and other animals.

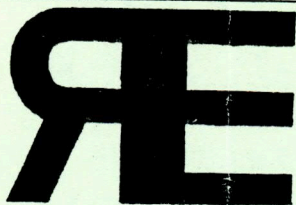
Using these festivals gives a campaign a noteworthy measure of time, and a nice schedule for doing certain necessary things, and then, who wants to turn down a chance for a good old human sacrifice or two, or three....

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"MUST BE SOMEONE I ATE."



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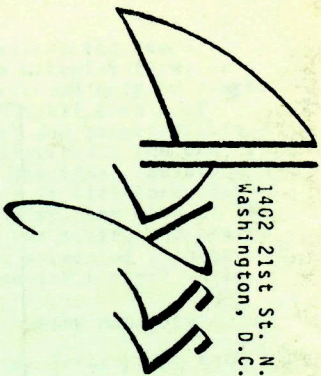
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