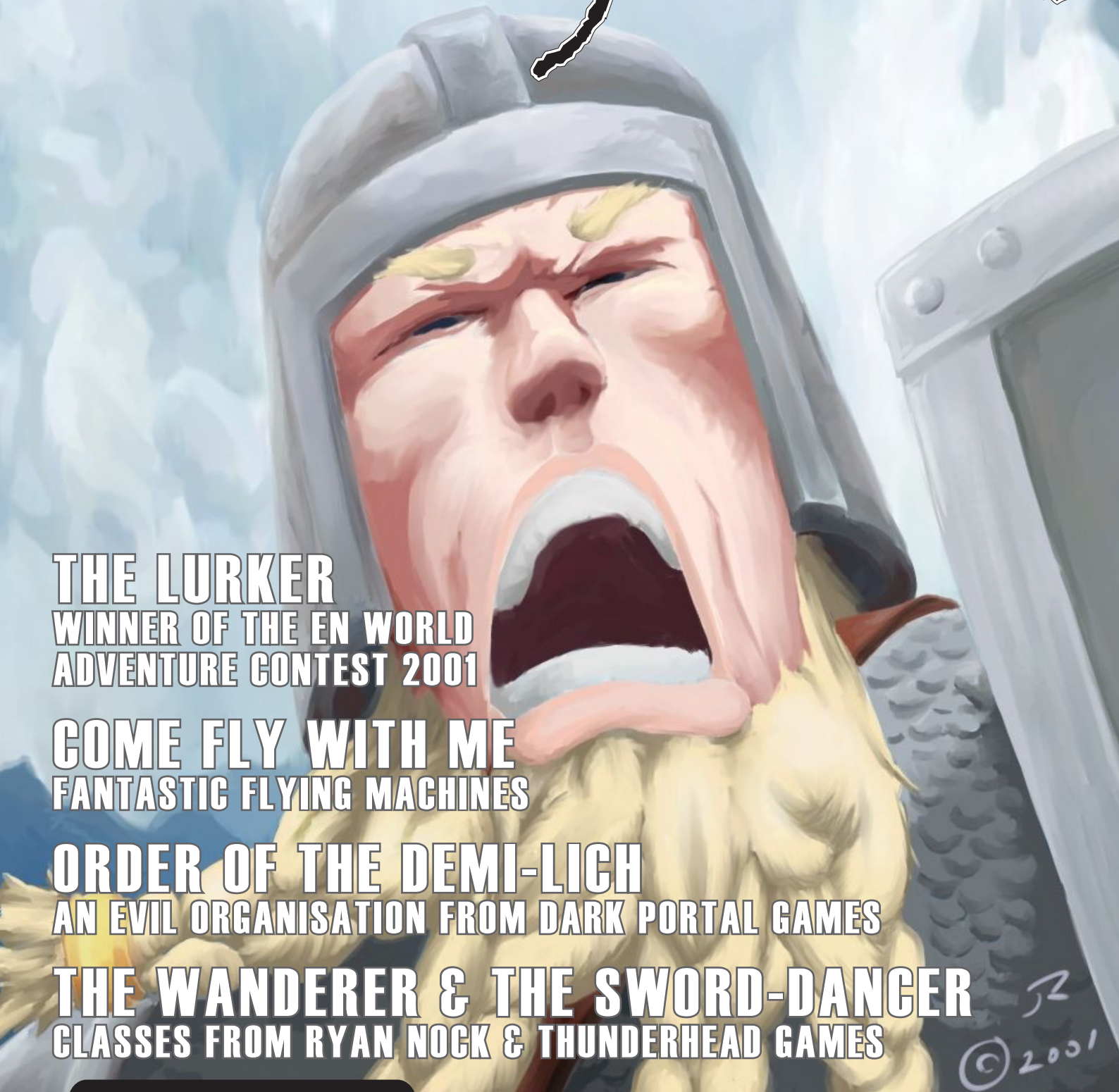




# Asgaard

D20 SYSTEM MAGAZINE



**THE LURKER**  
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PRODUCT REVIEWS, THE JACK-O-LANTERN, ORC SCARS, WILD SPELLCRAFT PREVIEW, STORYCRAFT & MUCH MORE...

# Morrus Dancing

In about a week's time, the Lord of the Rings movie will be hitting the cinemas and theatres of the world. It's a movie that is being eagerly anticipated by many, none more so than the D&D community. Advance reviews have been very positive, with only minor criticisms at best and it looks like Steve Jackson has finally done the one thing we've all been waiting for for so many years: he has created a credible, blockbuster fantasy movie.

Of course, we all remember the Dungeons & Dragons movie. There are mixed feelings about that film, but the general impression is that it didn't really do us RPGers any favours when it came to the portrayal of our hobby to a mass-audience. Will the Lord of the Rings and the Harry Potter movies help to make fantasy 'cool'? I certainly don't think that they'll perform miracles in the regard, but I imagine that they'll help a little.

Wizards of the Coast recently announced a Forgotten Realms TV show - this to be made by the same people who produce Andromeda, Xena and Hercules. I have to admit that I've never seen Andromeda, and I'm not a fan of Xena or Hercules, so I'm not holding my breath here. But if the show is any good, I imagine it will be a major step in WotC's D&D strategy for the next few years, which involves, according to Anthony Valterra, WotC's RPG Business Manager, "expansion of the RPG industry as a whole".

So what else do we know about WotC's plans for cross-media marketing of their D&D licenses? Well, we know the following:

\*Forgotten Realms, Darksun and Greyhawk have been licensed, although others are in the works.\*A deal has been made with an animation company to create "fully interactive movies for D&D"; these will be essentially "pick-a-path" stories on DVD, where the viewer can make decisions for the hero using a simple remote control.

\*Dark Sun is to be made as an animated series.

\*Spelljammer is being developed for "TV and movies".

\*After the Forgotten Realms TV series has been premiered, Fireworks have plans for Dark Elf motion pictures.

\*Hasbro is closing a deal for a Forgotten Realms comic-book series, as well as other cross-marketing gimmicks such as T-Shirts,

posters etc.

\*Lastly (this is unconfirmed) Anthony Valterra has hinted at the possibility of a Dragonlance venture of some kind, although he was no specific whether he had an animated series, live-action TV show, movie or interactive movie in mind.

Looking at all of this, I think that it can

be safely said that the general public are likely to become more aware of D&D over the next few years. Of course, whether or not this is a good thing largely depends on how the licenses are handled - will they amount to another Dungeons & Dragons movie or another Lord of the Rings? If the latter, at least in treatment if not in scale, then the future looks bright indeed for us all!



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### Open Gaming Content

The following content is "Open Gaming Content" as defined in the Open Gaming Licences 1.0A:

- Those Daring Young Humanoids and Their Flying Machines (Complete Article)
- Taranesti Sword-Dancer (Complete Article)
- Nevae Wanderer (Tables, Class Mechanics Item Stats)
- Jack-O-Lantern (Complete Article)
- Wild Spellcraft Preview (NPC Stats)
- Orc Scars (Complete Article)
- Order of the Demi-Lich (Monster/NPC Stats)
- The Lurker (Complete Article)

# D20 Reviews

By Simon Collins & Alan Kohler

## Bandits!

by Rhys Hess  
Bastion Press  
<http://www.bastionpress.com>  
Price: US\$5.99

Bandits is a downloadable .pdf adventure for 4-6 4th-level characters. It costs \$5.99 and can be downloaded via [www.bastionpress.com](http://www.bastionpress.com)

## Presentation

Bandits is a 48 page Adobe Acrobat file. The front cover depicts a fiery wolf's head against a grainy-wood background. The back cover holds a small picture of an osyluth against the same grainy background. Neither picture is particularly inspiring. The sparse internal colour artwork is no better; the creatures portrayed seem to have limbs reminiscent of a praying mantis and are all stick-thin and seem out of proportion - they are definitely inferior to the artwork in Bastion's other release, e-Minions. The third page holds credits and contents and the penultimate page has the OGL. The maps are computer-generated and lack style, though they are clear. Text density is standard though a surrounding margin is large and reduces the available space for text considerably.

## The Story

The module begins with an adventure background (gnoll bandits are slaughtering and kidnapping whole caravans along a trade route, and an exiled devil resides beneath the gnoll lair). There is a sidebar outlining ideas for scaling the adventure for PCs of different levels. Following this are some basic and unimaginative adventure hooks. The adventure begins in the stereotypical hamlet of Thornbury and there are some vignettes of a few of the local NPCs and a useful set of rumours that link to different parts of the adventure. Some of the NPCs have secrets to hide, and there is some help for the GM in running encounters where the PCs can interact with these characters. There is also a possible timeline of events outlined after this. An optional encounter to follow a caravan out of the hamlet and ambush the ambushers is then detailed. The next section explores the area surrounding the gnoll fort and the module goes on to detail the gnoll fort itself, focus-

ing on the behaviour and tactics of the gnoll bandits and introduces the idea that some of the non-gnoll opponents are being controlled in some way. A sidebar details Gnoll morale. the PCs have a chance to rescue a gnome merchant and come across some 'controlled' non-gnoll opponents. We finally learn for certain that the devil is the leader of the bandits and that there is also a pack of wererats stealing from the bandits who as yet remain undiscovered. The following section explores the wererat lair in the upper levels of the gnoll lair, before moving on to the lower levels which is inhabited by undead, a destrachan, an ogre mage, and a number of humanoid guards, as well as slaves. There are a couple of interesting traps in this area. The adventure climaxes with a combat against a female wizard, her weasel familiar and an osyluth devil, after which they can discover the being that controls the captives within the complex - a two-foot-round ball of flesh known as The Master, which the PCs can easily destroy. The module continues the return to Thornbury and ideas for expanding some of the threads from the adventure. The appendices offer new creature stats from the adventure - Guardian Shadow, Slave Controller and Master Controller.

## The Good

The adventure is regularly interspersed with ideas on how to modify the adventure and deal with varying PC tactics, as well as detailing the tactics used by their opponents well. The use of innocent controlled NPCs to attack the PCs is an interesting concept, and the devil at the end makes for a good climactic encounter. The 'Scaling The Adventure' sidebar makes it useable by PCs of levels 2-6.

## The Bad

I couldn't get too excited about this adventure - the ideas on the whole were very stereotypical and at times bland (apart from the central theme itself). Take this as a compliment if you want, but the adventure reminded me of the banality of some of the recent WotC adventures such as 'Forge of Fury', but without the production values. The spread of monsters often seemed contrived and the encounters possibly a little underpowered. The Adventure Background



and Adventure Synopsis did not give enough information, mentioning nothing of the Master Controller and those it controls.

## Conclusion

A disappointing adventure - I expected more from Bastion Press. The adventure in itself might have scraped an Average rating, but the artwork and huge margins pull it down into Poor. I would have liked to have seen an EL Summary, some more creative roleplaying hooks for the NPCs, and some more plot complexity, amongst other things. Against this, you do get 48 pages for your 6 bucks, which isn't a bad 'cents per page' ratio.



## Mystic Warriors

Mystic Eye Games  
<http://www.mysticeyegames.com>  
ISBN # 0-9708265-3-2  
Price: \$US14.95

The third edition D&D game (and ergo D20 system) brought with it many refinements and a few new features. One of these is the prestige class mechanic. This provided a method to introduce new character options into the game under the scrutiny of the GM.

This creates possibilities for the format of new products. A great many D&D and D20 system products have featured prestige classes as at least part of the material to help shape setting material or other special character concepts associated with the product. However, to date few products have made prestige classes their major focus.

Mystic Warriors is among the first such products. The book details a number of distinct warrior traditions that share the use of a force that the book call vitus. The various classes use vitus to use some of their class abilities as well as a number of special abilities that the book calls techniques. The book is written with Mystic Eye Games'

The Hunt: Rise of Evil campaign setting in mind, but claims that the classes within can be used in other settings.

## A First Look

Mystic Warriors is a perfect bound soft-cover book with 128 pages. The book sells for \$14.95 US. This gives Mystic Warriors a price per page that is very low for a book of this price and size. Compare this with books with more typical pricing. Most \$14.95 D20 system books have about half as many pages, and most books with 128 pages are priced in the \$20+ range.

Looking inside, the font used in the book is rather small, and the line spacing is rather close, giving a fairly high text density. However, there are some practices that detract from the delivered value somewhat. For example, the tables detailing class features have cell padding that is rather excessive, and there are two tables that are repeated many times throughout the text.

The cover graphics are fairly good. The book has a grey stylized backdrop, and the color picture on the front cover is a decent depiction of three of the classes in the book in an arboreal setting.

The interior artwork leaves something to be desired. The illustrations appear somewhat unprofessional, with a sketchy appearance and depicting characters with disproportionate body features and unrealistic looking faces.

## A Deeper Look

The presented mystic warrior traditions form the bulk of the material of Mystic Warriors. Each includes a prestige class. These prestige classes share a common underpinning: the vitus and technique system presented in the book.

Techniques are special abilities that each of the presented prestige classes can use. The classes receive them in a similar manner to spells. The techniques are arranged into 5 levels, and each class has a chart describing how many techniques they can use of each level according to their class level. Like the spells of a sorcerer or bard, there is a table determining how many techniques the characters know and a separate table describing how many they can use per day. Unlike spells, you get more techniques known from high ability scores instead of getting more uses per day. However, one error in the text is that the book never states which ability score you use to get extra techniques, though it would be possible to make an educated guess that it is the same stat that the class uses to get bonus vitus (see below).

The book states that techniques are all special abilities. I found that decision somewhat questionable, as many of the abilities sound like they could only come about by magical effects and should be considered spell like or supernatural abilities. For some techniques this makes sense, such as vital strike that give the character a chance at a critical strike automatically. However others do things like make a glowing double or create a burst of life force that seem like they would be explicitly supernatural to me.

In addition to the limited uses per day, techniques cost the character a number of vitus points. Vitus are a resource representing the warrior's self confidence. In essence, the vitus system is a spell point system. In addition to being the currency with which you pay for the use of techniques, vitus is also used for the class abilities of some mystic warriors. Some techniques can be enhanced by the expenditure of additional vitus.

A new skill is introduced in the book, harness vitus. The primary purpose of harness vitus is to enhance the use of techniques. It can also be used to give the character a second chance saving throw if she fails a willpower save. For some reason, no vitus seems to be expended in this latter use of the skill. The skill is a cross class skill for all classes but the mystic warrior classes presented in the book, and all such classes require some ranks in the skill as an entry requirement.

All classes gain some vitus each level. This is a meager 3 points per level for non-mystic warrior class. Mystic warriors receive from 7-10 points (depending on class) plus charisma bonus plus the bonus from one other stat (again depending on class) per mystic warrior class level.

The tracking of vitus seems like it would not fit well with the styles of some groups. Fortunately, some notes are provided for excluding the use of vitus and making other adaptations to fit the classes and technique system to a different setting.

Each mystic warrior tradition includes a prestige class that defines members of the order and a short vignette showing an example of the members of the order. All of the prestige classes have a techniques per level table, but it is not made clear whether this is supposed to describe the techniques known or the techniques available per day, but by comparing those tables to standard tables in the beginning of the book, they appear to be the latter.

The prestige classes are conceptually sound. Each is built around an order, cult, or sect. The concepts vary widely, giving

players a good range of options. Some are typical fare that you might expect your players to want to play, like a pugilist order and a knight-like order. Beyond those, there are many unique and interesting concepts. For example, the Revenant Guard is a very cool concept. People become Revenant Guards who were forced to take vengeance for wrongs done to them. They are sympathetic to the plight of those who passed on without the chance to avenge themselves. They occasionally share their body with the spirit of such an unfortunate, and help them achieve vengeance. Some of their class abilities stem from this co-habitation. This is a great concept, loaded with campaign possibilities.

However, the prestige classes seem fairly powerful. They have moderate to good fighting abilities, a good selection of special abilities, and access to techniques. The author hopes to address this by giving each class several role-playing strictures, a technique that I do not think works in general.

Some prestige classes also use nonstandard BAB and saving throw advancement for no apparent reason. This is despite the fact that in the beginning of the book, they reiterate that the classes will use one of the standard advancement schemes. This makes me suspect that the numbers were in error and that some authors weren't fully versed with D20 system conventions.

In addition to this material, some special magic items and sample NPCs for the orders are also presented.

## Summary

In a strange way, this book was disappointing. When I first started reading about the techniques, I hoped that it would pan out to be an interesting and useful concept. To a certain extent it is, but it needs some work. I found it rather odd that they gave both a point system for their use and a uses per day chart, and threw in other uses of the vitus system. Combined, this makes it seem like the system would require some tedious accounting during play to little effect. The recommendations for removing vitus sound like they would make the techniques more workable, however.

In addition, I found the classes a bit overpowered. As mentioned, the authors appeal to the presence of role-playing disadvantages as a balance. In my experience, this does not work out well, and it is a general D&D 3e / D20 system practice to avoid using role-playing strictures as a major balancing point, and for good reason. Consider, for example, how much more balanced and playable the 3e barbarian is than the one that appeared in the

Unearthed Arcana years ago. Attitude problems are a poor reason to give characters benefits, especially when virtually any character can have such role-playing issues, yet no other character gets compensation for it.

If you are willing to polish up the classes and work with the vitus system, there is a lot of good material to be had in this book. However, as is the case with any book -- even of this size -- which required a lot of retooling by the end user, I can only give this book an average rating.



## E-Minions: Cunning Creatures

Bastion Press  
<http://www.bastionpress.com>  
 Price: US\$5.99

e-Minions is a .pdf download available at [www.bastionpress.com](http://www.bastionpress.com). It is a sourcebook featuring 16 new monsters. It costs \$5.99.

### Presentation

e-Minions is a 2.2MB Adobe Acrobat file, and is 27 pages long. The first page reproduces the texture of black vellum and there is a colour picture of two of the featured new monsters. The last page also shows of the black vellum lookalike but with no picture. The second page has credits and contents. The penultimate page has the OGL. The internal colour artwork runs the gamut from appalling to superb, despite nearly all being by the same artist. The artists' style of portraying ultra-thin creatures with praying mantis-like limbs evokes a sense of horror with some creatures (the ushabti for example), whilst with others it provokes a curious frown (the groundling). In addition, the portrayal does not always match the textual description. The text density is good, there is little white space and the artistic margins are minimal.

### What's Inside

There are sixteen new monsters. Each monster comes with full stats, a combat section that also details special attacks and qualities, and a very useful Campaign section, with advice on how to include the monster in an adventure in your campaign. For some creatures, there are additional sections - Construction details for the constructs, Training information where

relevant, Society (for Groundlings) and a section on Characters for Udamentaz and Groundlings. The book features the following:

Amber Golem - a golem of amber, jewels, and living fire

Brainweed - a plant that causes victims to spill their blood on the roots if affected by its psychoactive pollen

Force Guardian - a construct that uses force beam as a weapon

Fox Maiden - a werefox enchantress who champions the rights of foxes

Groundling - a magical beast that resembles a cross between a gnoll and a groundhog

Heart Stalker - an undead creatures that cuts out hearts from living beings condemning them to rise as new heart stalkers

Hound Of Insanity - canines with a maddening howl and a bite that permanently transforms victims into hounds of insanity too

Ka Spirit - a guardian spirit forever doomed to prevent the desecration of his master's tomb

Lifetap - an aberration, a two-foot-round ball that steals victims' life force, aging them

Locking - a fine-size dragonfly-like outsider with a sting in its tail

Rocanny - a black panther with wings and an aura of darkness

Serpard - a magical feline with a sinuous neck and an ability to detect and protect nobility

Skinwraith - undead sheets of flayed human skin that smother their victims

Udamentaz - a spider-like shapechanger with a poisonous bite, confusing gaze, and diseased spore expulsion that takes on humanoid form with rogue abilities to feed on the unwary

Ushabti - funerary statues who curse those desecrating tombs

Xoleroth - evil outsiders who gate into the prime to kidnap victims and bring them to their hive-like plane

CRs range from 2-14, with most in the 2-5 range.



### The Good

As mentioned previously, there are one or more adventure hooks in each of the entries. These hooks are on the whole well thought out and creative, and are by far the best feature of this sourcebook. There were some creative ideas for the monsters themselves (e.g. Udamentaz, Lifetap), and one or two of the pictures were excellent (e.g. Ushabti, Xoleroth).

### The Bad

There were also some naff ideas for monsters (e.g. Groundling) and some of the monsters had not much new to offer (e.g. Ka Spirit and Ushabti). Some of the pictures were dreadful (e.g. Groundling, Ka Spirit). It would have been useful to have had a summary of the CRs presented in an introduction or appendix.

### Conclusion

A bizarre mixture of the superb and the appalling, both in terms of ideas and artwork. Also had poor, average and good stuff too. All in all, I have to give an average rating but there are definitely some jewels in this hodge-podge of monsters.



## Jade & Steel

Avalanche Press  
<http://www.avalanchepress.com>  
 Price: US\$ 12.95

The timing of the release of the Oriental Adventures supplement for the D&D 3e system seems to have inspired a few D20 system publishers to release their own Asian-themed products. Among these are Buring Shaolin by Atlas Games and Jade Dragons and Hungry Ghosts by Green Ronin. A third product in this category is Jade & Steel, by Avalanche Press.

Unlike the other publishers in this category, Avalanche Press claims settings and adventures inspired by real world history and myth as their forte. Their other recent releases include the late Byzantine adventure *The Last Days of Constantinople*, and the Norse myth inspired *Greenland Saga* and *Ragnarok*.

Jade & Steel details life in a mythical version of China during the three kingdoms era. It includes a brief overview of the setting, rules material, and an adventure.

## A First Look

Jade & Steel is a staple bound, softcover book. The book has 48 pages and is priced at \$12.95 US. This gives it an overall cost per page that is a little high for books in the size and price range.

The cover is full color and depicts a woman with dark complexion and raven hair. She is clothed in skimpy attire and is holding a sword. In the backdrop is a rugged landscape with a single pagoda-style building in the background. This would have been a fine picture if it was on an issue of Heavy Metal magazine. But it seems woefully out of place on this book. The woman does not look Chinese, and nor does her garb. Further, her sword appears to be of Japanese make. The picture does not well represent the book.

The interior is black and white. The art appears to be ink drawings of Chinese buildings and art objects. For the most part, the pictures appear more ornamental than illustrative to me, and they are certainly a deviation from typical RPG art.

The book has thin margins, but uses a fairly large font. Most rules material is in boxes with a thick patterned border; these text boxes seem to waste a lot of page space. Coupled with the book's high cost per page, I couldn't help but feel that the value for money was a little low on that basis.

## Setting and Rules Material

Jade & Steel is divided into three sections. The first is entitled Life and Times in the Three Kingdoms. It covers the history and culture of ancient China with an eye towards the gamer. It covers such things as the prevailing geopolitical situation (and a little history behind it) and the concepts associated with Chinese mysticism, and prevailing philosophies and modes of thought in China. It only spends six pages on this material, so it feels somewhat inadequate. A DM running a full blown campaign in this setting would do well to do a little of their own research as well.

There is a little rules material in this first section. Of the major religious divisions described -- Animism, Buddhism, and Taoism -- each is provided with a brief description of how to represent divine spellcasters using the basic D20 system rules.

The bulk of the rules material is actually in part 2, entitled Characters. The basics of character generation are covered very briefly, giving just a recommendation that characters should probably be human and made specifically for the game, and a side-

bar details the roles that female adventurers could logically play in the setting. Presumably, the author may have assumed that many or most DMs using the setting will be using Oriental Adventures for the more basic assumptions of an Asian campaign. The bulk of the rules material is in the form of new prestige classes, feats, and weapons appropriate to the Jade & Steel setting.

There are six new prestige classes introduced in the book. They are:

**Alchemist:** A prestige class for spellcasters, this is the Chinese version of an alchemist. Most of their abilities are similar to what you would expect for an alchemist in other settings: improved alchemy and potion creation abilities. However, their ultimate ability, Elixir of Life, allows them to brew an elixir that extends their life.

**Dim Mak Practitioner:** This is a martial arts class that focuses on deadly touch attacks. They gain some monk ability, but gain improvements to their stunning blow ability that allow them to weaken or even blind foes. Their ultimate ability is the ability to strike at a distance using Ch'i alone.

**Diviner:** This class is based around the Chinese mystical tradition of I Ching, a method of divination that relies on the reading of patterns made by the tossing of 6 specially marked sticks. The diviner can use a scry skill check to make predictions. The potential effects of their readings depend on their diviner class level.

**Geometer:** The geometer is a divine spellcaster that practices the art of Feng Shui, achieving favorable results by arranging the landscape to be in harmony with the natural forces of the area. The geometer can use their abilities to endow an area with bonuses to those who reside there or to endow it with an enchantment.

**Iron Hand Disciple:** The iron hand disciple is a martial artist who has undergone rigorous physical training to make their body like iron. They can shatter objects with their bare hands and gain natural AC bonuses and damage reduction.

**Sword Saint:** The sword saint is a Taoist who learns to master a weapon. They have a philosophy that prevents them from using their full abilities against those that they don't consider "worthy opponents." However their abilities are pretty impressive, including many monk-like abilities that they may perform with their weapon.

Overall, I found the classes fairly balanced and fairly true to the setting. The spellcasting classes have full spellcasting

advancement. This is usually a trouble sign for a class, but the class abilities they receive are actually pretty modest. The combative classes are likewise very interesting, and make good use of the rules. The only one I consider a little powerful is the sword saint.

In addition to this, the prestige classes make use of the intended qualities of prestige classes. Owing to the way prerequisites are structured, they fit the classes in the Oriental Adventures book as neatly as the classes in D20 system reference document that they were written around.

The new feats are primarily combat oriented. A few feats are focused on improving two-weapon combat a little further. The modest Leap of the Monkey feat allows the character to ignore penalties to AC when climbing.

There are many unarmed combat techniques. Grappling Finesse allows the character to use dexterity in place of strength when grappling. Improved Grapple which lets the character make a grapple as a move equivalent action without suffering an attack of opportunity. Sticking lets the character anticipate their foe in combat by providing a bonus to disarm, grapple, and trip attempts. Typhoon attack allows the characters to strike multiple opponents in a charge. Whirlwind kick allows the character to strike an additional target during a full attack. Finally Willow Step allows the character to attempt a tumble check after a charge to continue moving. Of these, I found Whirlwind kick and Willow step the iffiest. Whirlwind kick is poorly phrased, implying that it takes a full attack but then implying it does not prevent with the character's normal full attack. Willow step seems like a weaker version of spring attack.

There are a few new weapons and weapon equivalences, different from the Oriental Adventures book's version. For example, where the OA states the jian is equivalent to a longsword, Jade & Steel gives its stats equivalent to a short sword except that it can slash or thrust. Finally, the book introduces Chinese rockets as a weapon.

## The Adventure

(Warning: there are spoilers regarding the adventure in this section.)

The last half of the book is the adventure For Love or Money. The adventure is for D20 system characters of 11th - 14th level. There are a variety of hooks provided, but it is generally assumed that the characters are wandering heroes during the warring states period. The adventure is primarily

event driven, split into four "acts".

The first act depicts the players arrival in the area. The players can pick up some facts surrounding the adventure, but eventually they will be invited to dinner with the lord of the local region, Lord Chiang. After some decent role-playing opportunities (and the chance for a cultural faux pas), Lord Chiang asks the PCs to perform a task for them. Recently his daughter, who was traveling to wed a member of the Lim, a rival family. The wedding was set up to heal the longstanding rivalry, but his daughter was kidnaped by a group of bandits called the Black Tigers. Lord Chiang is relied upon by the merchants to protect them. He must continue to do so, and cannot alarm them by letting them know that his own daughter disappeared in the very lands he was charged to secure. So he asks the PCs to help recover her.

The truth is that the whole situation is a set up. There are two spies within Lord Chiang's house, one of them one of his concubines. They work for the Lim. The spies were responsible for convincing Lord Chiang to set up the wedding, and introduced his headstrong daughter to the leader of the Black Tigers. The Lim hope that they can use this distraction to create an opening during the upcoming pearl festival that will allow them to issue a coup.

The second act has the PCs on the trail of the black tigers. Some Lim soldiers attack the PCs in the guise of Black Tiger bandits. After the imposters are dealt with, the PCs will also have to deal with a devil summoned by a Lim wizard. During this battle, Black Tiger (leader of the Black Tiger bandits) and Black Crane (an ally of his, a druid), who have been casing the battle, will join them in fighting the fiend.

Once the battle is over, the players will find themselves in an interesting roleplaying situation. The enemy they were sent against stands before them, but he will show that the Lim soldiers are imposters and not bandits. The players will have to decide what to do from there. However, he also relates the news that Kim Nan (Chiang's daughter) is with him willingly, and if the players have not trounced or captured him, he is willing to show the PCs back to his campaign to demonstrate that this is true.

In the third act, the players find their way back to the Black Tiger's camp -- either with Black Tiger or following his trail. There they will meet Kim Nan. The text provides for a variety of different possible paths at this point, but most likely when Kim Nan hears the news of the situation, she will become suspicious that something is up, and will probably be willing to accompany the PCs back to the Chaing compound.

When they arrive, they will find the Lim have indeed sprung their coup. They have a force inside the city and control the gates. A group of Chiang wardens are assembling a force to go in and assure their Lord's safety. It is up to the PC to get in and help expose the spies and resolve the situations. The adventure is tolerant to some of the paths the PCs may have taken to get to this point, but there is a good chance they will end up in a face off with the Lim spies, and may or may not be able to save Lord Chiang.

## Summary

The rules and background material seemed fairly good to me. The prestige classes were well put together and appropriate, and the feats were generally interesting and balanced. The addition of some more details to flesh it out would have been very nice. For example, character names, significant NPCs and factions in the setting, adventure seeds, and character roles all would have nicely enhanced the book.

I found the adventure very good. There were a few points that seemed a little contrived. For example, I fail to see how Kim Nan concluded something was up back at the Chaing city. However, it was a nice little intrigue and showed a lot more robustness for differences in the flow of events than most event based adventures do. I found this a very refreshing break from the site-based fare that is so common in the D20 universe.

My feelings can be summed up as: nice stuff, give me more. Overall, I thought that the author did rather well in the background material, the rules material, and the adventure. The drawback is that the presentation was somewhat poor and the price was high for this size of a book. If you are running an Oriental Adventures campaign, it may be worth your while. The prestige classes fit well with OA, and the adventure and background material would work well if you are running a game in historical China or a fantasy analog of it.



## Jade Dragons and Hungry Ghosts

Green Ronin Publishing  
<http://www.greenronin.com>  
 Price US\$14.95

If you keep your finger to the winds of gaming news on the internet, then by

now you have probably heard something about this book already. Oriental Adventures author James Wyatt reviewed it on his site and DMG author Monte Cook pretty much blasted it in a review on his website. You've heard tales of giant babies and wasted space.

Well, any diagnosis deserves a second opinion, doesn't it? After all, how could Chris Pramas and Green Ronin, who brought us the widely praised Legions of Hell go wrong? Let's give this one a second muster, shall we?

Jade Dragons and Hungry Ghosts is the second monster book by Green Ronin, following their popular Legions of Hell book. Jade Dragons & Hungry Ghosts' theme is creatures appropriate to an East Asian style setting. Its release was timed to closely follow that of Wizards of the Coast's Oriental Adventures book. Though D20 System publishers are not allowed to use material in WotC supplements that have not been added to the SRD, the hope that it will sell to those using the OA book is obviously there.

Contributing authors include such industry names as Chris Pramas, Erik Mona, Wolfgang Baur, and Dave "Zeb" Cook.

## A First Look

Jade Dragons and Hungry Ghosts is a soft-cover perfect-bound book. The color cover, by rk post, depicts a creature (a Shiko Me, an outsider described in this book) wearing a ceramic mask against the backdrop of Asian appearing structures and a gray sky. The interior is black and white and fully illustrated. The book boasts the talents of a number of well known artists in the game trade: rk post, Quinton Hoover, Michael Phillipi, Tony DiTerlizzi and Toren "MacBin" Atkinson. As one would suspect, the interior art is top-caliber.

The book is arranged such that each creature begins on a new page. In some cases, this generates a little white space on pages where the entry ends early; Green Ronin fills much of the space with art and flavor text. This is nowhere near as egregious as Monte Cook made it out to be in his notorious review, and it does make for an easily readable layout. Further, the book uses a font size and line spacing that keeps the overall text density fairly high.

The book is \$14.95 for a 64 page book.

## A Deeper Look

The first pleasant surprise to me as I was reading the book was the table of contents. The table of content has a column describ-

# WINDHAVEN

## CITY CAMPAIGN SETTING

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ing which countries myths the creature in question spring from. Creatures herein are taken from myths of Japan, China, Burma, Vietnam, and Malaysia. I consider this a massive improvement from the attitude taken by James Wyatt in the writing of *Oriental Adventures* that the source of a legend is unimportant. However, much like *Oriental Adventures*, the bulk of the material is drawn from Japanese myth & legend. Some of the creatures are new and not drawn from any specific nation's folklore.

There are 64 monsters and one template in the book, ranging in CR from 1 to "no hope" (I'll get to that in a minute.) Most of them are in the CR 1 to 5 range and many of them are suitable for or assumed to have character classes.

The monsters vary in quality. Most are beautifully illustrated and most have concepts that sound like they would make a good encounter in an *Oriental Adventures* campaign. However, the creature concepts don't sound like they would lend themselves to quite the level of extrapolation into full-blown adventures and campaigns that you might get from those in *Green Ronin's Legions of Hell*.

As this is a D20 System product, the book was written without the luxury of being able to refer directly to the *Oriental Adventures* book. In some places it does things like refer to a samurai class without ever telling where to look for such a class. In other places, you will obviously have to use your own judgment on how to apply the OA book, but in some cases it is fairly apparent. For example, many creatures would properly use the spirit subtype, and in many cases creatures are described as "spirits" in the descriptive text, which should make that task fairly easy. There are other apparent openings as well, such as replacing the honor / dishonor oriented spells for alignment spells like protection from evil. For another example, see the description of the Shiko Me below.

Rule compliance seems to be an ever-present stumbling block for D20 system publishers when it comes to designing D20 system creatures, and this book is no exception. Some authors did an outstanding job. Pramas (who already has a list of D20 system accolades under his belt) and Mona (who is still on staff with WotC) seem to have the most rigorously compliant creatures. But these two probably should have played a stronger role as rules compliance editors of the creatures by the other authors, as many creatures have rules issues (see below for some examples.) The most common error seems to be arbitrary or unjustified allotment of skill points.

As the saying goes, "don't tell, show." With that and mind, lets take a look at some of the 56 creatures in the book as examples of the good and bad:

**Bamboo Elves (and Giant Pandas):** This is one of those creatures "not drawn from Asian myths," elves that dwells in the bamboo thickets and rides giant pandas. On a superficial level the concept seems okay, an attempt to fit the D&D concept of the nature-loving elf to an Asian style setting. However, when I visualize the end result, it seems a little too silly to me.

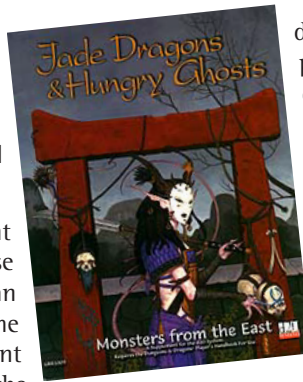
**Carp Eater:** This is an example of one of the creatures that have a baffling skill assortment. A carp eater is a monstrous humanoid that radiates an aura of despair. I'm not sure why the author decided to make this a monstrous humanoid - it does not have any bestial features. As a 2 HD creature, it would normally be limited to 5 ranks in skills. However, all of its skills are above this limit. Normally, if a creature has a quality that gives it a bonus with a skill, it is assigned a racial bonus. The unusual thing here is that it has a racial skill bonus that makes one of the skill levels possible, but it totally neglects mentioning any modifier to make the other skills possible.

**Clay Soldier:** This creature is derived from Chinese folklore, and they represent the many clay soldiers that were buried with some ancient Chinese royalty. While a decent concept, this is an example of one of the poorly executed creature write-up. The creature description lists what should be a special quality, namely that the creature can be turned as undead. Additionally, there is an "impale" ability listed in the stat block that is not mentioned in the combat description.

**Jade Dragon:** This is also another new creature, but it comes of a little better. Jade dragons are just creatures that occasionally become overzealous, whose task it is to seek out those who have transgressed against the kingdom of heaven.

**Poison Dragon:** Another dragon variant, this one comes from Japanese myth. A poison dragon is a dragon that has been corrupted while in the egg. They swell in power rapidly and die early (for dragons) but not before causing havoc in their wake.

**Feng Huang:** The Chinese version of a phoenix, the Feng Huang is a huge bird with a head like a pheasant an a sinuous, scaled body and a tail like a peacock's that



deploys in a shimmering display. Feng Huang are servants of the Celestial Bureaucracy.

**Hidari Construct:** This one is an example of a good concept but confusing execution. The basic concept is that if a statue is carved perfectly, the gods will bring it to life. As such, the statues are constructs, but always have some character class levels.

However, the information seems incomplete. Some sample skills are provided for a few classes, but no mention is made of what level those skills correspond to. Additionally, if the constructs are supposed to be a duplicate of a living being, you would think that a template would be used on the base creature instead of a creature that could have totally different stats.

**Jikininki and Shi-ryo:** These are undead creatures from Japanese myth. The Jikininki are undead scavengers. Shi-ryo are undead creatures who do not realize that they have passed on. Decent enough creatures on the surface, they have the common error of being stated with a constitution ability score. Fortunately their constitutions are average, so the error is easily enough fixed, but it shows a bit of amateurism in the design.

**King of the Tengu:** Tengu are detailed in the *Oriental Adventures* book. The king of the tengu is a unique creature. He is a wicked creature, but possessed of great knowledge of sword use and manufacture. In some cases, he can be persuaded to take on a student.

**Kino-o-bake:** The kino-o-bake is a kindly tree spirit, linked to a particular tree. Similar in concept to a dryad you would think that the author would designate its type as fey. But for some reason, Baur has decided that it is a shapeshifter, despite the fact it has no ability to alter its form.

**Konaki Jiji:** This is the one you probably have heard about. It is a creature that disguises itself as an abandoned child, but when picked up, transforms into a huge baby and crushes the well meaning would-be rescuer. On this note I agree with Monte Cook: some creatures from myth do not translate well to an adventuring game.

**Monkey:** Monkey is the legendary creature from Chinese myth who could challenge the gods, and the sole contribution by Dave "Zeb" Cook, author of the 1e *Oriental Adventures* book. Cook made him nearly invincible, and gave him the unique CR rating of "no hope." To be honest, I really didn't appreciate this approach. It does have some precedence in myth, as it

was said he could contend with the lords of heaven themselves. However, the lords of heaven in Chinese myth were not viewed as omnipotent in the same way western-type D&D campaigns do. A creature targeted at a CR of 25-30 probably would have done nicely, and would have made more interesting opposition. That said, statistics aside, the entry has some interesting idea on how to deploy him in a campaign.

**Ryujin:** Another unique creature example, Ryujin is the Japanese Dragon-God of the sea. Unlike Monkey, this creature's stats are incredible but not ridiculous, making it a little less pointless to include it in the book.

**Shiko Me:** This is the creature depicted on the cover. They are outsiders that serve certain devils. In Japanese myth, they in their description, it mentions that they have spellcasters that use blood in their rituals and have certain twisted effects. It mentions how to do this using the SRD - they are sorcerers with access to the clerical evil domain - but it seems to me that the mako tsukai class from OA would be a perfect fit.

**Tiger General / Chiao:** Derived from myths of Thailand and China, these are tiger-like humanoids. The tiger general is a master of martial arts and an animal lord of tigers. The Chiao is a more mundane tiger-man, jungle savages said to bear their stripes as marks of shame from mating with the beast of the wild.

## Summary

As has already been said, there are some creatures in here that are not done by the letter of the D20 law. For those who have read my reviews before, you know that I consider that a bona fide flaw - a product is less worthwhile if you have to spend time shoring up the included statistics. However, the nature of the flaws are such that the creatures are serviceable, and only some of the creatures are thus affected. Indeed, the ones by Erik Mona and Chris Pramas appear very well done. Fortunately, a list describing which author did which creature is in the front of the book, so you have a good idea of which creatures you should examine carefully before using.

In general, the artwork is excellent and the ideas are very good. Anyone planning an Asian style campaign should definitely consider this book, as it expands nicely upon the creature selection presented in the Oriental Adventures book.



## Burning Shaolin

by Robin D. Laws  
Atlas Games  
<http://www.atlas-games.com>  
ISBN 1-58978-006-X  
Price US\$8.95

Atlas Games has already thrown their hat into the D20 System ring with their Penumbra line of products. But Burning Shaolin is not part of Atlas' Penumbra line. It is part of a new line called Coriolis.

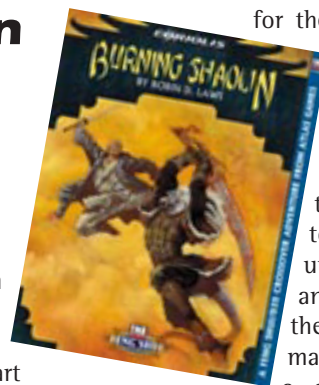
So, just what is the Coriolis (other than the effect that causes water to swirl down your drain, that is)? Well, it appears that where the Penumbra line of products are straight-up D20 System supplements, the Coriolis line will be dual system games that will be targeted in tandem toward the D20 System and one of Atlas' in house games: Feng Shui, Unknown Armies, or Ars Magica. Their stated reasons for doing so are to facilitate the importing of features of those games into D20 System terms and to help bring forth products for their other games at a lower price point than if they were for the Atlas game lines alone, and to introduce D20 System fans to the Atlas product lines.

Burning Shaolin is the first guinea pig in this experiment. Burning Shaolin is a dual system adventure targeted at Feng Shui and the D20 System. To be more precise, the adventure claims it is suitable for use in an "Asian style D20 game." That sounds to me like D20STL/OGC speak for Oriental Adventures to me. And it would stand to reason that in the backdrop for this adventure -- ancient China -- using the Oriental Adventures book would help in running this adventure in the setting intended.

With that said, let me proceed with a little disclaimer. I have the Feng Shui game and I am familiar with it on a basic level, but I rarely play it. I cannot claim to have the same familiarity with issues that affect Feng Shui players as I have with those affecting D20 System players. Accordingly, this review should be taken primarily as a review primarily from the D20 System standpoint. The adventure is designed for beginning Feng Shui characters or D20 system characters of 7th to 9th level.

## A First Look

Burning Shaolin is a 32 page soft-cover adventure. The cover color, depicting a pair of leaping warriors armed with swords facing off in combat. The interior is black and white. The interior layout is attractive and functional. An Asian styled font is used



for the section header, and the sidebars conveniently contain the names of the section for easy reference. Distinctive symbols and text coloring are used to distinguish material unique to Feng Shui and material unique to the D20 System. Rules material is offset using a gray watermark style

backdrop.

The artwork, on the other hand, leaves something to be desired. Perhaps it is just me missing yet another artistic trend, but I found that the sketchy pencil-work that passes for art in the adventure leave something to be desired.

The font and line spacing used are a little on the large side, giving the book a fairly a slightly below average text density. The adventure is priced at \$8.95 US.

## The Rules Material

One of the expressed purposes of the Coriolis line is to introduce some methodologies that Atlas calls innovations into the D20 System. In the case of Burning Shaolin, the purpose is to bring the wuxia-style adventure of Feng Shui to the D20 system.

A full page is introduced to the faceless hordes rules. This is an emulation of Feng Shui's unnamed character rules. For those not familiar with Feng Shui, the game has special rules for unnamed characters. Also commonly called mooks, these characters represent the rabble henchmen that characters in martial arts flicks beat up in droves. In FS, the GM does not track damage inflicted on such characters. Instead, if the character hit the mook by a large enough margin, they go down. Otherwise, they are treated as if they took no damage other than for cosmetic purposes.

Some of you probably think this sounds like a neat little trick for making brawls with flunky henchman manageable, right? Well stand by. The basis of the rule is that they only hit on a 19 or a 20, and if they are hit for 4 hp in one shot, but ignore any damage less than 4 hp. That would have been a nice little optional rule to fit the genre if the author had stopped there.

He didn't stop there. In addition to this basis, the author allows characters a saving throw based on armor modifier to avoid hits by faceless hordes, a lucky shot rule to make them more dangerous, rules modifying how certain feats are applied to faceless hordes, and special rules for the number of

attacks you get when you are only attacking faceless horde. I consider it quite unlikely that in a heated combat I would want to process all of these rules in each blow exchanged with faceless hordes. It seems like the extra burden associated with all of this would work counter to the purpose of streamlining the task of beating up flunkies.

In addition to the faceless hordes rules, a page is also devoted to a variety of rules and vague guidelines aimed at giving your combats a more wuxia-esque style. The rules can be summarized as follows:

Characters get bonuses when the player makes an effort to describe their characters' attacks in a creative and entertaining way.

Players are allowed (with DM discretion) to make up trappings during a fight scene. Of course, these are there merely to be exploited during the fight.

Characters in a fight scene double their forward and upward jump distances, and can take a full move and full attack in the same round.

A vague guideline implies that no move should be denied the players if it sounds cool.

Characters are easily disarmed, but improvised weapon performs just as well. However, if the character recovers their own -- or another's -- lost weapon, they get a bonus.

I find the first two and the fourth guideline to be fairly appropriate ways to add a little levity to the combat. The last one had me scratching my head a little, but okay. The third rule -- especially the bit about full move plus full attack -- seems like it would have some unintended consequences. Namely, it would make rogues and characters with whirlwind attack into wrecking machines, and it would make spellcasters into grease-spots.

## The Adventure

The premise the adventure is pretty well steeped in the Feng Shui secret war. The foe in this case is the sorcerer Kan Kuei, a member a society of evil sorcerers called the Eaters of the Lotus. For those not familiar with the Feng Shui game, several antagonistic factions are in a war that spans over specific time periods called junctures. These factions are vying to control or destroy places called Feng Shui sites, which can give them great power. Kan Kuei is out to control one such site set in the AD 69 juncture in ancient China. It is assumed that if you run the adventure under the D20 System that the characters are natives of

that time period, or a fantasy setting close to it. Feng Shui characters can be from any juncture as per normal.

Feng Shui characters become involved in the adventure when they here that some operatives in their faction are injured while the PCs are visiting the juncture. The hook for D20 System characters is much sketchier. The author suggests that D20 System characters will naturally want to travel to town to shop and if they don't that the GM should drop rumors of masterwork armor for sell. I'm not sure whether I find that hook laughable or insulting, but there is one thing that I am sure of: Robin D. Laws, who authored multiple GM advice articles in *Dragon* magazine, can surely come up with a better hook than that.

The adventure gets underway as the characters wander into town, and stumble upon a horde of Kan Kuei's lackeys advancing on five injured men. The PCs are expected to intervene in a bout of wuxia action.

After the bout is over, the characters discover that the injured men are a group called the Crippled Heroes. The Crippled Heroes all have deformities and are foes of Kan Kuei. They are in dire straights having been poisoned by Kan Kuei. They appeal to the PCs to retrieve the jar of poison needed to provide a cure. They also mention that Kan Kuei is out to take over the world and appeal to the PCs to stop that as well.

To find Kan Kuei, the Crippled Heroes refer the PCs to an ally of theirs by the name of Johnny Ko. Ko is said to have found Kan Kuei's hideout. The Crippled Heroes were supposed to meet him, but due to their poisoned state, cannot make the appointment.

Johnny Ko lies in the Netherworld. In Feng Shui, the Netherworld is a cavern network that connects the different "junctures." But don't worry, D20 GMs -- the players won't be hopping junctures. Using a map provided by the Crippled Heroes, the players can find their way to the cave that leads to the Netherworld.

Once in the Netherworld, the players will knock around and face a few hazards, but eventually will find Johnny Ko. It may take a little roleplaying, but eventually the PCs should be able to get Ko to tell them what he knows. Ko is from modern times, and has placed a bug on one of Kan Kuei's minions. Of course for the benefit of D20 system characters (or any characters from the ancient China setting/juncture), he will describe it as a "scrying device." At any rate, Ko will direct the players to the ancient volcano lair of Kan Kuei.

Once the players arrive at the volcano lair, they will find it nearly abandoned, for Ken

Kuei is already off to launch his attack on the Shaolin temple that is the Feng Shui site. The players will be attacked by demon monks left behind to guard the lair. After they overcome that threat, they will find Chien Chieh, a cowardly minion of Kan Kuei that had been tortured by his master. It takes little persuasion to get him to sing. He reveals that since Kan Kuei must travel with his minions under cover of Darkness, the players have sufficient time to make it to the temple ahead of Kan Kuei.

The final battle is at the Shaolin temple by a mirror lake. The characters are assumed to get there ahead of time and can try to coordinate with the monks to set up a defense plan. Kan Kuei arrives with his minions and with the Crippled Heroes entombed in glass coffins that can be telekinetically controlled. The players will have to clash with Kan Kuei and his minions and rescue the crippled heroes.

## Summary and Conclusion

Overall, the strongest feature of the adventure is the setup of the combat scenes. Lavish notes are given on each major combat location that provide possibilities in creating a detailed combat scene. Most of these benefits probably fall on the Feng Shui side of the house, however, as many of the staples of D20 system combat such as detailed combat grids are absent. Large maps are provided that are good for general purposes, however.

That said, I was not impressed with the module. It seemed very linear and it seemed like that for such a short adventure, there were many places where the adventure can skip the track if the PCs (as PCs so often do) do not follow the footsteps laid out for the author for them.

Overall, the D20 system details seem to be handled well, with a few exceptions. For example, in one location, an ichor pool is described as doing damage equivalent to an acid arrow spell. Okay, but at what caster level?

The fact that the adventure has to list every set of game statistics for each system (and there are quite a few), you are losing a significant chunk of the module to redundancy. In the beginning, the author implies that Feng Shui fans benefit from the scale economics associated in publishing the adventure targeted towards two systems. That may be true, but if you are seeking a D20 system module, for the price charged you can do much better than this.



# Those Daring Young Humanoids and Their Flying Machines

By Tim Hitchcock



Flying machines have long been a staple in both legend and fantasy literature. Providing everything from shorter travel time, to exotic and unique cultural flavors, to harrowing near fatal crashes, flying machines can add a multitude of dimensions to your campaign. Like any technology, flying machines can seriously unbalance a campaign, so before adding them to your game, consider how they will effect things. The trick is to make the "cons" to each machine at least as plentiful as the "pros".

Here are a few ways to balance out seemingly more powerful flying machines

1. Make them very difficult to operate. Examples include high skill levels, or specific knowledge (flying machine type) prerequisites
2. The machine is made from rare and expensive materials.
3. The machine has serious design flaws. For example, only a certain amount of flights can be made before the machine shakes apart; the machine is highly flammable; the machine can only hold a small or specific amount of weight; the machine is exhausting to use.
4. Limit the types of weather, flight duration, or specific conditions a device can fly in.
5. Make the machine impractical. For example, the flying machine is very slow, extremely bulky, or takes a very long time to make.

## General features of all flying machines.

All flying machines require a certain amount of skill to use. The prerequisite skills that determine how successfully a machine can be operated, are listed in their descriptions.

All machines have a weight maximum. If the machines weight maximum is exceeded by no more than 10%, the machine functions at 50% efficiency. If the weight maxi-

imum is exceeded by more than 10% the machine ceases to function.

All machines have a wind speed minimum and maximum. The minimum represents the least amount of wind necessary to fly the machine. The wind maximum represents the highest wind speed the machine is capable of handling properly. Exceeding the wind speed maximum causes the flying machine to become uncontrollable, and they begin to break apart forcing the pilot to make a crash landing, or worse. Under these conditions, a machine breaks apart in 5 + 1d6 minutes.

Although a crash landing destroys the flying machine, pilots are allowed to make a crash landing check against one of the machines prerequisite operating skills (each is listed below). A successful check allows the pilot to convert the amount of falling damage they would normally suffer from such a crash to subdual damage. The total damage is determined by the height of the fall.

Below are seven different one creature flyers, each specific to a different race.

## Dwarf Lookout Balloons

Floating high above the mountain crags, Dwarves in their small look-out balloons, keep careful watch over their strongholds and precious ore mines. Dwarves like balloons because they are fairly safe and very practical. Each balloon is approximately 20ft. in circumference and made out of soft, thin leather. A balloon is filled with hot air created by a small stove like device, that is modeled after dwarven smelting furnaces. Suspended from the balloon is a small wooden basket that holds the air heating device, and has enough room for

one medium-sized creature. Also mounted on the basket is a huge spyglass. Sometimes balloon pilots train pigeons to take messages to and from the balloon, and it is not uncommon for a balloon basket to also have a pigeon coop on it. The maximum weight a look-out balloon can hold is 500 pds.

Dwarves don't use their balloons for travel, instead, they are kept on a long cable connected to a winch at the entrance of a mine or stronghold. Their are two reasons that they are not used for travel. First, they are not maneuverable, (except for going up and down) and are completely subjective to wind speed and direction (this makes going to specific destinations difficult). And secondly, many dwarves are afraid of flying. True pilots are a rarity among dwarves, and for most of them, the mere thought of going up in a balloon is a nerve wracking experience.

Large versions of these balloons have been known exist, but these are extremely rare

Prerequisites: Wilderness Lore, Use Rope

Task	Skill	DC
Raise/Lower balloon in strong wind	Wilderness Lore	15
Remain aloft in a storm	Wilderness Lore	20
Pilot balloon without rope	Wilderness Lore	25
Crash land	Wilderness Lore	30

## Elven Wind Skiffs

Elves rarely do anything without adding a little magic to it, and wind skiffs are no exception. The wind skiff consists of a wooden hull, which is carved to look like a large oak leaf. The hull is fitted with a curved wooden mast which bends back and forms a tiller. Attached to the mast is a single silken sail. The skiff stays aloft by levitation, but it is powered solely by wind (like a small boat). The pilot stands on the hull and uses their body weight against the tiller to maneuver the skiff. Because skiffs are extremely weight sensitive, they are difficult to balance on. Skiff pilots



Those Daring Young Humanoids and Their Flying Machines

must make Balance checks every 20 minutes when flying a skiff, to avoid falling off. A pilot must also make a Balance check each time they attempt to turn the skiff. The difficulty of these checks is based on wind conditions (see DMG pg 87. for descriptions of wind conditions).

The base Balance check for piloting a wind skiff in light winds is 10, for each increase in wind speed the DC for the Balance check is raised by +5, (ie. the DC for balancing in severe winds is 25). A sudden increase in wind speed also requires a Balance check. For this reason pilots usually wear a harness in case they slip, to avoid falling to a horrible death. If a pilot falls, the sail is released and the skiff points directly into the wind. The skiff will then drift at wind speed in the direction the wind is blowing, until the pilot is able to regain control of the skiff.

Wind Skiffs are also physically tiring to fly. A pilot can fly a maximum of 2hrs. + their strength modifier. This amount decreases in heavier winds at the rate of -1 hour in strong winds, -2 hrs in severe winds, -3 hrs in windstorms. Pilots who attempt to fly for longer periods of time suffer from the effects of exhaustion (see DMG pg. 84. for effects of exhaustion). A pilot whose Strength drops below 11 is unable to pilot the skiff.

The skiff can only accommodate one medium-sized creature. The maximum weight a skiff can hold is 140 pds. The skiff operator cannot be shorter than 5 ft tall and must weigh or be carrying enough personal ballast to weigh at least 100 pds.

All wind skiffs are masterwork items. They are made from extremely rare and expensive woods, and the masts are grown from seedlings. For this reason, skiffs take a minimum of 50 years to build, but most builders usually take between 75 and 100 years to complete one.

There is a legend that tells of a larger version of the wind skiff that was used by the high elves of Eisalynowei to flee their homeland before the "Cataclysm of Fire". It was build over the course of 500 years, under the guidance of the great elven prophet Theropane', after she received a vision from Corellon. The "wind schooner" was massive and held over 200 occupants.



Prerequisites: Strength 11, Balance+4, Knowledge(Sky Sailing)

Task	Skill	DC
Every 20 minutes of sailing	Balance	10*
Turn	Balance	10*
Steer in inclement weather	Knowledge(Sky Sailing)	15
Steer at night	Knowledge (Sky Sailing)	20
Crash land	Knowledge (Sky Sailing)	30

\* (+5 per every wind increase above light)

Gnomish Battle Blimps

Gnomes don't particularly use battle blimps for battle, but they like the way the name sounds. Their blimps are technical marvels of both gnomish ingenuity and their "pranksterish" impracticality. They consist of large, 12x8 ft., egg-shaped frames made from bent, green saplings that have been stretched with animal skins.

The skins hold hot air which is provided by a coal burning stove, similar to a balloon. Gnomes prefer to use an eclectic patchwork of furry skins, each patch dyed in a different color. This allows pilots to easily see and identify each other when they travel in groups.

Attached to the egg-shaped frame is a scaffold that supports a small treadmill. By running on the treadmill, the pilot powers a propeller system that moves the blimp. Also hanging from the scaffolding are lots of bags that hold tools, extra fuel, food, and other items. Powering a blimp by treadmill can be very tiring. In light winds, the duration and speed pilot can keep a blimp powered is the same as their normal movement rate. In moderate winds the duration and movement are -1/2 of the base rate, and in strong winds they are -3/4 the base rate. A blimp not powered by treadmill, will drift at wind speed in the same direction as the wind.

A blimp can only be operated by one small humanoid. The maximum weight a battle-blimp can hold is no more than 80pds.

Occasionally, groups of gnomes make larger versions of these blimps that are capable of holding small huts. However, larger blimps are not powered by treadmills and can only hover. Sometimes groups will travel long distances in these blimp huts, sleeping in them at night, and pulling them along with their smaller blimps during the day.

Prerequisites: Wilderness Lore, Knowledge (Blimping)

Task	Skill	DC
------	-------	----

Spot and avoid lightning storms	Wilderness Lore	15
Patch a small hole in the blimp while airborne	Knowledge (Blimping)	20
Make a rapid dive	Knowledge (Blimping)	25
Crash landin	Knowledge (Blimping)	30

Halfling Sky Sleds

Out in the plains and the deserts, where there are great expanses of space and few trees, some halflings have been known to fly sky sleds. Powered by severe winds (winds over 31-50 miles an hour), a sky sled consists of an eight foot circular frame stretched with hard lacquered reptile skins that is bound to a huge 15 foot kite. The halfling lies in the sled face up and places their feet against a foot brace. Long, light, ropes run from hand controllers through pulleys and attach to the kite, these are used to steer the sled. Sky sleds are completely dependent on wind direction and they can only travel if the wind is coming from behind them (downwind). They can hold one small sized creature but the maximum weight a sky sled can carry is 40pds.

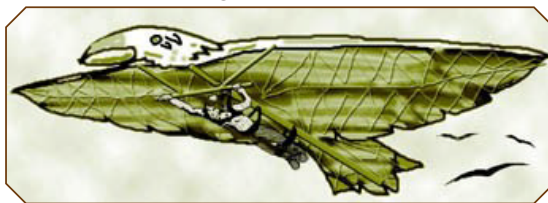
Sky sleds are used mostly for racing. The races are very popular and competition is fierce between different villages. Halflings often place heavy wagers on these races, so the sky sleds are heavily guarded to avoid sabotage.

Prerequisites: Balance +4, Use Rope.

Task	Skill	DC
Land safely	Balance	12
Turn	Use Rope	10
Pilot out of a sudden calm spot	Balance	25
Crash landing	Balance	30

Half Elven Cliff Gliders

Where high cliffs overlook rocky shores, ocean winds slam against them creating strong updrafts. It is in such conditions, that half-elven druids learned the secrets of gliding by studying the hovering flight patterns of gulls.



Half-elven cliff gliders are made from light wooden bird shaped frames with widened wings that are stretched with canvas. When decorated with feathers and bright paints, they look like huge seabirds. The wing span of an average glider is 25ft. They can hold one medium-sized creature, but the maximum weight a glider can carry is 200lbs. Cliff Gliders can stay aloft for long periods of time, floating on the wind, so

long as the pilot can keep finding updrafts to lift them back up. This limits gliders as to where they can be flown, and they cannot stray too far from their launch areas. Gliders are launched by a device that looks like a small cart. The cart is placed atop a 50ft ramp that is located on the edge of a large cliff. The pilot is first strapped into the glider and then is helped into the launch cart. Next, the cart is pushed down the ramp towards the edge of the cliff. Right at the edge, the cart is stopped short by a rope, but the glider continues over the edge, becoming airborne as it catches the updrafts blowing off the cliff face. Without updrafts, gliders descend at the rate of 5 ft. per every 250ft travelled. Gliders are usually landed in the ocean, landing on the beach, or other hard surfaces requires a successful Knowledge (Use Glider) check.

**Prerequisites:** Knowledge (Use Glider), Swim.

Task	Skill	DC
Land safely on hard surface	Knowledge (Use Glider)	12
Find new updraft.	Knowledge (Use Glider)	18
Pull out of a nose dive	Knowledge (Use Glider)	25
Crash land	Knowledge (Use Glider)	30

### Half-Orc Hurlers

If it doesn't work for battle, it doesn't work at all. That's the way orcs see things. In order to launch surprise attacks, and attack up hills and over walls, orc battle strategists developed the most ludicrous (and dangerous) flying device ever, the hurler. Relying only on brute strength and dimwittedness, and used solely for combat, the hurler is a special device that allows one medium-sized creature to be launched from a light catapult (See DMG pgs. 151-152 for catapult statistics). Light catapults must be manned by at least two operators who also

aim the device. The time and distance for flying a hurler is the same as it firing a light catapult.

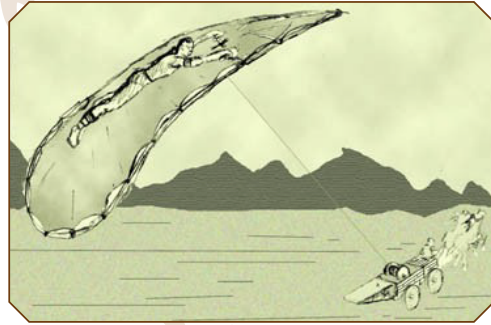
In order to survive the flight, the pilot is given a hard lacquered shell that is 8 ft diameter and shaped like half of a globe. It is hollow and is bisected by a wooden handle. When the pilot is thrown, they sit in the shell until it reaches the proper arch, then they must spin the shell backwards. Once the shell flipped, it fills with air, allowing the pilot to drop slowly to the ground. Flipping the hurler requires a successful strength check (DC 15) or the passenger continues with the normal flight of a hurled object, taking appropriate impact damage (150ft = 15d6 damage). This damage can be minimized if the character is able to make a successful crash landing check. Landing the hurler is a full-round action and provokes attacks of opportunity, the landing requires a successful Tumble check (DC 15) or the passenger takes the half of the appropriate falling damage. The time it takes to operate a hurler is also the same as a light catapult.

**Prerequisites:** Strength 13+, Tumble.

Task	Skill	DC
Land without taking damage	Tumble	15
Flip the hurler at the proper arch	Strength	15
Land as a partial action	Tumble	20
Land in combat without provoking an attack of opportunity	Tumble	25
Crash land	Tumble	30

### Human Pull Flyer

Pull Flyers are tear-shaped, hard-skinned kites which can be ridden on. They are launched from a special chariot with a giant rope winch mounted on it. Horses pull the chariot to generate the initial air speed for launching the flyer. Once the chariot is moving



fast enough, the pull flyer can be launched. Next, the pilot scrambles on top of the flyer and holds the handles. The flyer is slowly let out, using the winch, until it gains enough altitude and forward momentum to be released. The pilot releases the rope and steers the device by weight. Pull flyers fall at the rate of 5ft. per every 500 ft. of distance travelled. The total duration of the flight depends on the altitude the flyer was released at. A chariot can let out 5 feet of rope for every hundred feet it travels in a straight line at it's top speed. That means the maximum distance a device can fly is 10,000 ft. Pull Flyers cannot fly upward unless they are being pulled by the chariot. Pull flyers can hold one medium sized creature. The maximum weight a pull flyer can hold is no more than 200 pds. They are used mostly for recreation.

**Prerequisites:** Balance.

Task	Skill	DC
Turn	Balance	10
Mount a pull-flyer post launch	Balance	12
Land gracefully	Balance	15
Crash land	Balance	30

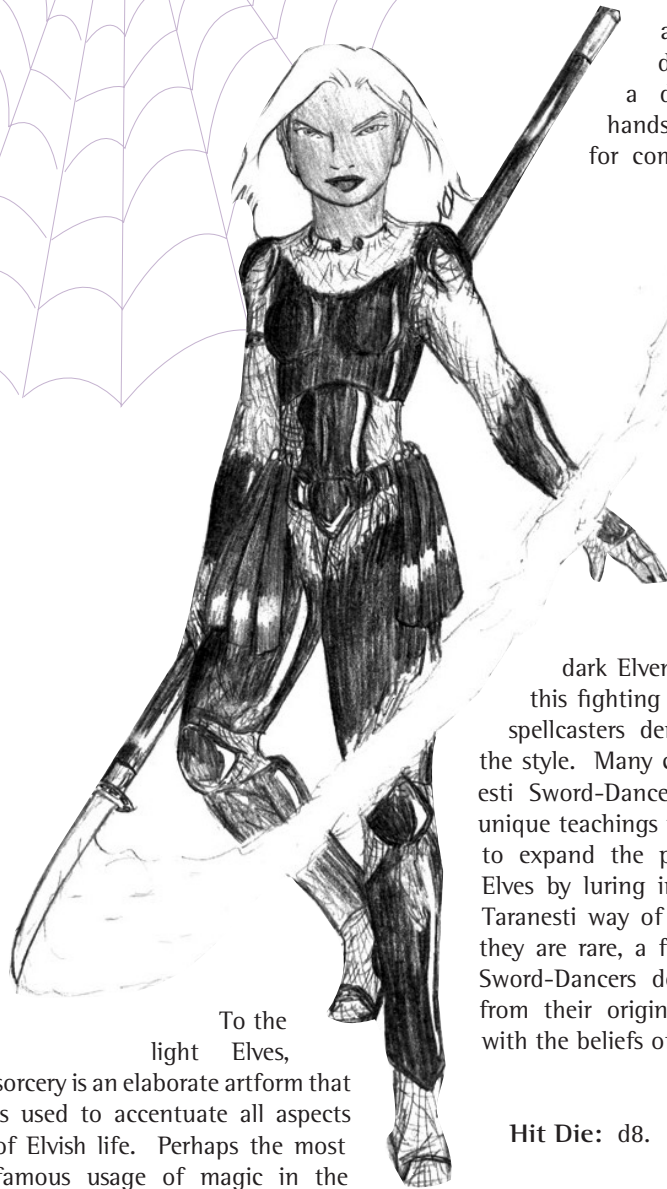


	Balloon	Wind Skiff	Battle Blimp	Sky Sled	Cliff Glider	Hurler	Pull Flyer
Float	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	no
Glide	no	yes	no	yes	yes	no	yes
Steering	as wind	tiller	hand controls	hand controls	weight	aimed	weight
Speed	as wind wind	as propeller /20ft.	as wind	40ft.	as lt. catapult	30ft.	
Down Speed	20ft	X2	30ft	as wind	60ft	20ft	same
Min/Max Wind MPH	0/20	11/30	0/30	01/74	21-50	0/74	11/50
Turn	no	45dg./5+	30dg./5	15dg./5+ 45dg./5	none	30dg./5+	
Up Angle	90_/0	45dg./5	90dg./0	45dg./5	45dg./5	45dg.	45dg./5^
Duration	5hrs./lb.fuel	as wind	5hrs./lb.fuel	as wind	as wind	as lt.Catapult.	drop/500ft.fwd
Wt. Max.	500 lbs.	140 lbs*	80 lbs.	40 lbs.	200lbs.	500lbs.	200pds.
Cost	750gp.	5,000gp.	1,000gp.	50gp.	1,000gp.	50gp. <sup>Et</sup>	900gp. <sup>S</sup>

# Taranesti Sword-Dancer

By Ryan Nock

Illustrated by J.L. Jones & Ryan Nock



To the  
light Elves,

sorcery is an elaborate artform that is used to accentuate all aspects of Elvish life. Perhaps the most famous usage of magic in the light Elvish culture is the bladesinger, a warrior who has mastered the usage of magic during combat.

The philosophy of the dark Elves, however, holds a subtle difference. The dark Elves, or Taranesti, do not add magic to their lives, but rather draw magic from every aspect of life, every word, and every movement. Deeply magical creatures, the Taranesti do not draw magic from the world around them, but from even the subtlest action they take.

Epitomizing this talent is the Taranesti Sword-Dancer, a masterful warrior who eliminates the distinction between physical weapons and weapons of magic. To her,

a lightning bolt is little different from a sword, a dagger and a burning hands both tools intended for combat. Striking with her spells as keenly and quickly as a standard warrior would with blades, the Taranesti Sword-Dancer is the perfect, dark union of the arcane and martial arts.

Most Sword-Dancers are expertly-trained dark Elf fighter/sorcerers, or occasionally monk/sorcerers. A few vicious clerics of the dark Elven goddess have mastered this fighting style, but usually arcane spellcasters derive more benefits from the style. Many centuries ago one Taranesti Sword-Dancer brought his artform's unique teachings to non-Taranesti, hoping to expand the power base of the dark Elves by luring in skilled warriors to the Taranesti way of thought. Thus, though they are rare, a few human and light Elf Sword-Dancers do exist, often perverted from their original morals into agreeing with the beliefs of the dark Elves.

**Hit Die:** d8.

## Requirements

**Base Attack Bonus:** +5

**Skills:** Bluff 2 ranks., Concentration 4 ranks, Perform 2 ranks (including dance as one form), Spellcraft 4 ranks.

**Feats:** Cleave, Power Attack, Silent Spell, Weapon Focus (any melee weapon or unarmed).

**Spellcasting:** Ability to cast spells.

**Other:** Must receive training from a Taranesti Sword-Dancer. This training takes eight weeks, and in addition to simple training in swordcraft and spellcraft, it involves subtle indoctrination with Taranesti beliefs.

## Class Skills

The Taranesti Sword-Dancer's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Jump (Str), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Scry (Int, exclusive skill), and Spellcraft (Int). See Chapter 4: Skills in the Player's Handbook for skill descriptions.

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 2 + Int modifier.

## Class Features

All of the following are class features of the Taranesti Sword-Dancer prestige class.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** A Taranesti Sword-Dancer gains proficiency in all simple and martial weapons, and in light armor.

**Spells Per Day:** For the purposes of determining spells per day, caster level, and (for spontaneous spellcasters) spells known, whenever a level as Taranesti Sword-Dancer grants the ability "+1 level of existing class," the character adds 1 effective level to one of her previous spellcasting classes. If she has no previous spellcasting classes, such as if she casts her spells innately, she gains effective casting levels as sorcerer.

The Taranesti Sword-Dancer can only cast spells gained from these effective casting levels if she is armed with one of her preferred weapons (see below). If she is not armed with her preferred weapon, her caster level is reduced to that from her original spellcasting class, not including the levels from Taranesti Sword-Dancer. She cannot cast any spells that would be too high level for her to normally cast at that level.

For example, if Denna, a dark Elf fighter 4/sorcerer 2/Taranesti Sword-Dancer 6, is disarmed of her favored weapon (a glaive), her caster level is reduced to 2. She cannot cast any spell higher than 1st level. Even when not using the sword-dance, Denna must use her weapon to shape the magic she desires.

**Sword-dancing (Su):** Taranesti Sword-Dancers do not just wield weapons and cast spells, but rather cast spells by the act of wielding their weapons. A flourish of a blade may begin the casting of a burning hands, and as the Sword-Dancer slashes across her opponent's chest, her weaving recovery finishes the spell's casting, sending forth a blazing fan of magical energy to sear her foe. The Sword-Dancer accomplishes this without speaking a word, without

needing to hold any material components. Through the artform of swordplay, she can evoke a myriad of magical effects without breaking the cadence of her attack.

Unlike the more restricted bladesong of the light Elves, dark Elven sword-dancing does not actually require a sword. The Sword-Dancer can cast spells through the sword-dance whenever she fights with any melee weapon with which she has taken the feat Weapon Focus. The skills of the sword dance can only be utilized while armed with one of these preferred weapons.

The Sword-Dancer is restricted in what spells she can use in the sword-dance, and in how effective they are, but gains some unique benefits in exchange. The sword-dance is only useful for spells that function like the attacks of a warrior. It can only be used with any of the following types of spells that depend on the skill of the attacker:

- “ Spells with the range of touch, such as shocking grasp. A Sword-Dancer must still succeed in a touch attack for the spell to be successful.
- “ Spells that allow a saving throw, such as fireball. The power of the Sword-Dancer’s spell depends on her spellcasting prowess, and the target has a chance to resist, just as a melee opponent has a chance to dodge.
- “ Spells that require a ranged touch attack, such as Melf’s acid arrow. The Sword-Dancer must strike successfully with her attack roll, retaining the need for martial excellence.

The sword-dance cannot be used with spells such as power words, detect magic, or polymorph self, since these spells are always effective. A Taranesti Sword-Dancer’s spells, like her attacks, always carry a risk of failure.

If the spell allows a saving throw, the save DC is equal to the Sword-Dancer’s base

attack bonus + the spell level + the relevant ability modifier. For example, Denna, a dark Elf fighter 4/sorcerer 2/Taranesti Sword-Dancer 1 with a +2 Charisma bonus and a +5 base attack bonus, casts burning hands. The Reflex save DC is 8 (+5 for base attack bonus, +1 for spell level +2 for Charisma bonus).

When casting a spell with the sword-dance, a Taranesti Sword-Dancer never uses verbal components (her spells are all automatically silent without changing the level they are cast at), and must always use somatic components (she cannot benefit from the Still Spell feat while using the sword-dance). If the spell requires a material component or focus, the Sword-Dancer must only have it on her person, not necessarily in her hand.

**Defensive Sword-casting (Ex):** Because a Taranesti Sword-Dancer casts by the act of using her weapon, she never incurs an attack of opportunity by casting a spell as long as she is armed with one of her preferred weapons.

**Sword-Dance (Touch Attack) (Su):** A Sword-Dancer can deliver touch attack spells through her preferred weapon as though through a touch. All other normal rules for touch attacks apply, including that casting a spell causes the charged touch attack spell to dissipate. The touch spell is discharged upon the first target she successfully strikes with her weapon. If the Sword-Dancer wields more than one weapon, the touch spell can work through either blade, whichever strikes first. She cannot choose to ‘hold the charge’ in only one weapon.

When delivering a touch attack spell with a weapon, the Sword-Dancer can choose to deal damage with her attack. Instead of making a normal touch attack that ignores armor-based AC, she must make a normal attack roll. If successful, the touch spell is discharged and her weapon deals normal

damage. If she misses with her attack, the spell is not discharged, and she deals no damage.

**Sword-Dance (Spellslash) (Su):** While neophyte Sword-Dancers just use weapon movements as the somatic components of their spells, a Sword-Dancer of 2nd level or higher can incorporate those movements into her array of attacks, allowing her to mix melee attacks and spellcasting in the same round. Once per round while taking a full attack action, the Sword-Dancer can cast a spell instead of making one of her attacks.

Regardless of the normal parameters of the spell, this spell has a duration of no more than one round. If it has targets, it affects only one target. If it has an area of effect, this area is only one 5-foot square. Either way, the effect of the spell cannot extend beyond the reach of the Sword-Dancer’s weapon.

If the Sword-Dancer chooses to replace one of her iterative attacks (gained from having a high base attack bonus), the spell’s save DC is modified by the same amount that her attack bonus is modified. For example, Denna is now a dark Elf Fighter 4/Sorcerer 2/Taranesti Sword-Dancer 2, with a Charisma modifier of +2 and a base attack bonus of +6. As a full attack action she would normally get two attacks per round, one at +6 and one at +1. Instead, she could choose to make one attack and cast one spell, such as burning hands. If she replaced the better of her two attacks with the spell, the spell DC would be 9, but if she replaced the worse of her two attacks with the spell, the DC would only be 4, reduced by 5 for being her first iterative attack.

A Sword-Dancer who casts spells spontaneously cannot modify a spell cast through the Spellslash ability with metamagic feats, since doing so would extend the casting time too long to fit into the flurry of combat.

Class Level	Attack Bonus	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day
1	+0	+2	+0	+2	Sword-dancing, Defensive Sword-casting, Sword-Dance (Touch Attack)	
2	+1	+3	+0	+3	Sword-Dance (Spellslash)	+1 level of existing class
3	+2	+3	+1	+3	Extra Spellslash	+1 level of existing class
4	+3	+4	+1	+4	Sword-Dance (Power Attack)	
5	+3	+4	+1	+4	Sword-Dance (Cleave)	+1 level of existing class
6	+4	+5	+2	+5	Extra Spellslash	+1 level of existing class
7	+5	+5	+2	+5	Dual sword-dance	
8	+6	+6	+2	+6	Sword-Dancer (Imbue Weapon)	+1 level of existing class
9	+6	+6	+3	+6	Extra Spellslash	+1 level of existing class
10	+7	+7	+3	+7	Sword-Dance (Greater Spellslash)	



## Taranesti Sword-Dancer

**Extra Spellslash:** At 3rd level, a Taranesti Sword-Dancer can use her Spellslash ability with up to two attacks per round. At 6th level, she can convert up to three attacks per round into spells via the Spellslash ability, and at 9th level she can change up to four attacks into spells per round.

**Sword-Dance (Power Attack) (Su):** A Sword-Dancer of 4th level or higher with the Power Attack feat can cast her spells more powerfully, increasing force at the expense of accuracy. On her action before casting a spell, she can choose to subtract a number from her spells' DC, and add half that number to her caster level. This number may not exceed the Sword-Dancer's base attack bonus. The penalty on spell DC and bonus on caster level apply to all spells she casts through the Sword-Dance, until her next action.

She cannot cast a spell whose DC would be less than 1. For example, Denna, now a fighter 4/sorcerer 2/Taranesti Sword-Dancer 4 with a base attack bonus of +8, tries to cast a fireball with her Spellslash ability. She chooses to replace her second attack (at +3) with the spell, so the spell's DC is 8 (+8 from base attack bonus -5 for being an iterative attack +3 for spell level +2 for Charisma bonus). Even though her base attack bonus is +8, she cannot use a full Sword-Dance (Power Attack) with this spell, because it would reduce the spell's DC to 0. The most she can do would be to reduce the DC by 4 and increase the caster level by 2. This ability can only be used on spells that allow a saving throw to resist.

**Sword-Dance (Cleave) (Su):** At 5th level or higher, whenever a Taranesti Sword-Dancer drops a creature with a spell cast through the Spellslash ability, she can use her Cleave or Great Cleave feat to gain an extra attack as though she had dropped the creature with a normal melee attack.

**Dual Sword-Dance (Su):** A Sword-Dancer of 7th level or higher finds sword-casting second nature. It has become so easy for her that she can potentially cast two spells at once by using two weapons. If the Sword-Dancer has the Two-Weapon Fighting and Ambidexterity feats, she can use her Spellslash one more time per round, but can only use this extra Spellslash with an attack gained from using a second weapon.

**Sword-Dance (Spell Disarm) (Su):** At 8th level, a Taranesti Sword-Dancer learns how to cancel an existing spell that is affecting a target, removing the spell effect from that target like a warrior disarms his foe. In place of her normal attacks, the Sword-Dancer can use a Full Attack action to try to dispel a spell on any foe she can

### Rumblings from Thunderhead Games

<http://www.thunderheadgames.com>



**February 2002**

**Bluffsides: City on the Edge**  
Written by Jim Goveau, Curtis Bennet, Jeff Quinn & Andrew Troman  
TGS 1001  
A d20 City Sourcebook  
Specs: 144 page, 8.5 x 11 B&W throughout with 4-color glossy cover  
18 x 24 map of the city included  
Price: \$22.95

Civilization is still picking up the pieces from an asteroid strike hundreds of thousands of years ago. The epicenter? Bluffsides.

Bluffsides features new character races, prestige classes, feats, magic items, spells, deities, and much, much more.

**December 2001**

**Interludes:**  
**Brief Expeditions to Bluffsides**  
Written by Jeff Quinn  
TGS 1004  
A d20 Adventure Sourcebook  
Specs: 64 page, 8.5 x 11 B&W throughout with 4-color glossy cover  
Price: \$10.95

An adventure for 4 2nd-level characters (can be adjusted accordingly). Includes 12 new Creatures, 2 new Spells, 11 new Items, 2 new Prestige Classes, 2 new feats, 12+ new Places of Interest (POIs) in Kirkwood, and 30+ new NPCs.



strike.

She must make a touch attack against the target with her weapon. If successful, she can expend one prepared spell or spell slot of 3rd level or higher to cast dispel magic. This casting of dispel magic affects only the target struck, but the Sword-Dancer adds her base attack bonus to her caster level check to determine if she can dispel spell effects on the struck foe.

**Sword-Dance (Greater Spellslash) (Su):** The Spellslash ability adapts the power of a magical attack into the form of a melee blow, affecting only a single target, as would a spear thrust or sword slash. A master Taranesti Sword-Dancer, however, understands how to channel magic through her attacks without sacrificing the spell's normal potential.

Once per round, when a 10th level Taranesti Sword-Dancer uses her Spellslash ability, she can choose to have the spell she casts have its full range and area of effect, instead of being limited to the Sword-Dancer's reach or just a 5-foot square.

For example, Denna, now a fighter 4/sorcerer 2/Taranesti Sword-Dancer 10, dashes into a furious melee against a group

of light Elves. She has an attack bonus of +12, and wields a +2 glaive of speed, giving her 4 attacks per round. She tumbles amid a group of light Elves and lashes out with her glaive at one warrior, using the extra attack granted by her speed weapon. Then, with her normal three attacks, she slashes an X in the air, casting icestorm at a second Elf (save DC 18, affecting only his square). The tight barrage of ice kills the Elf as Denna's glaive swings past him, and she cleaves into a third Elf with a normal attack (base +12 to-hit). She does not even pause her flurry of attacks, thrusting backward with the butt of her glaive, sending a lightning bolt at a third Elf (save DC 12), and finishing off by a whirling flourish over her head, thrusting her blade outward toward a distant group of Elf, calling down a fireball upon them (save DC 7, cast using the Greater Spellslash ability). An Elf wizard, standing within reach of her glaive, tries to cast a spell, and so with an attack of opportunity she thrusts toward him, frying him with a lightning bolt (save DC 17).



# NEVAE WANDERER

By BECKY GLENN, HAL GREENBERG & MATTHEW MOSHER

This prestige class was written for a specific race called the nevae, for the full stats and description of the race please go to: <http://www.thunderheadgames.com/downloads.asp> with small adjustments this class and the items listed can be used by any race or class.

The Nevae as a race depend on their ability to deal peacefully with strangers-to get through territories without conflict. Having no home base of their own, most Nevae wander constantly. Those who are most successful gain reputations as problem-solvers and peacemakers.

**Hit Die:** d6.

## Requirements

To qualify to become a Nevae Wanderer, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Alignment:** Any Neutral.

**Race:** Nevae.

**Skills :** Diplomacy 8 ranks, Intuit Direction 6 ranks, Knowledge (Geography) 4 ranks, Sense Motive 4 ranks.

## Class Skills

The Nevae Wanderer's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Hide (Dex), Innuendo (Cha), Intuit Direction (Wis), Knowledge (Geography, Local), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Perform (Cha), Read Lips (Int, exclusive skill), Ride (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (none), Spot (Wis), and Wilderness Lore (Wis). See Chapter 4: Skills in Core Rulebook 1 for skill descriptions.

**Skill Points at Each Level:** 6 + INT modifier.

## Class Features

All of the following are class features of the Nevae Wanderer prestige class.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** The Nevae Wanderer gains one additional weapon proficiency, either Martial or Exotic. He is also proficient in light armor and shields.

**Spellcasting:** Through years of travel and experience, the Nevae Wanderer has picked up pieces of useful magic. Begin-

ning at 1st level, the Nevae Wanderer learns to cast a small number of arcane spells helpful in his travels. He does not have to study or prepare spells in advance. To cast a spell, the Nevae Wanderer must have an Int score of 10 + the level of the spell. The difficulty class to save against a Nevae Wanderer's spell is 10 + spell level + Int modifier. Bonus spells are based on Int. When the Nevae Wanderer gets 0 spells of a level, he may get bonus spells of that level.

**Custom Lore:** As he travels, the Nevae Wanderer learns local customs quickly. Eventually, he can draw parallels between cultures and make educated guesses as to what the local customs might be for any area. The Nevae Wanderer may make a Custom Lore roll to determine local customs and taboos, adding his Wanderer level and Int modifier to the roll. If he succeeds, this grants a bonus (determined by the game master, but ranging from +2 to +6) to any attempts to blend in as a local (i.e., through Disguise or Bluff).

**Shortest Path:** The Nevae Wanderer is adept at finding the shortest route and the easiest. Therefore, when calculating daily movement overland, consider him and those with him to be on a surface one step better.

**Example:** Darrell Longheart is leading a small caravan through the mountains. There is a road, which would normally improve travel through mountains to 1/2 movement, but with Darrell leading them, they make 3/4 movement each day.

**Fast Talk:** The Nevae Wanderer often has to talk himself out of dangerous situations. At first level, he gains a +2 competence bonus to all Diplomacy, Bluff and Intimidate checks when trying to avoid violence. This bonus increases to +4 at 5th level and +6 at 9th level.

**Long Stride:** The Nevae Wanderer has developed a long, ground-covering stride that allows him to travel further without using more effort. On a smaller scale, this increased pace also gives him a better speed in combat. At 2nd level, the Nevae Wanderer increases his base speed by +5. This improves to +10 at 4th, +15 at 7th and +20 at 10th level. The bonus is added to the character's base speed, before any other adjustments for magic or feats. This ability does not stack with a barbarian's Fast Movement, but does with the monk's unarmored speed.

**Mysterious Stranger:** The Nevae Wan-

derer is perceived as the stranger just passing through town. He is a neutral observer, someone you can trust, someone you can tell your secrets, because tomorrow he will not be there. If the Nevae Wanderer can spend a few minutes chatting up a local for information, the target must make a Will save or spill one of his secrets into the sympathetic ear. The DC is equal to the Wanderer's Diplomacy skill check. A Wanderer may only use this ability once per town per level of Wanderer within a year. Thus, a 3rd level Wanderer can use it on 3 people in a small village. He travels to a nearby, larger village, and uses it on 3 more. He returns to the smaller village, but cannot use this ability on locals of that town again until he has been absent for at least a year.

**Man with No Name:** Adept at slipping through territory unnoticed, even when the Nevae Wanderer enters a town he leaves little evidence of his passage. People questioned later about where he stayed and what he did have a difficult time recalling details. This requires a Will save DC 10 + twice the Wanderer's level. This roll is modified by the character's level of activity and length of stay, as follows:

Activities	Modifier to DC
Participate in major public event involving a dozen or more people	-6
Participate in minor public event involving a half-dozen or so people	-2
Made major purchases (1,000 gp or more)	-8
Made significant purchases (500-1,000 gp)	-4
Public performance (roll 31 or more)	-8
Public performance (roll 21 - 30)	-4
Public performance (roll less than 20)	-0
Used Disguise to mute features	+5
Minimized visible activity	+5
i.e., stay in rooms, change appearance frequently	
Stayed 1 day only	+5
Stayed less than 3 days	-0
Stayed 4 - 7 days	-5
Per additional week after the first	-2

While this list does not cover everything a character might do, it provides guidelines for the game master to assign modifiers.

**Trackless Step:** Starting at 3rd level, a druid leaves no trail in natural surroundings and cannot be tracked.

## Spell List

Nevae Wanderers choose their spells from the following list:

**1st level:** Alarm, Animal Trance, Change Self, Charm Person, Comprehend Languages, Cure Light Wounds, Deathwatch, Expeditious Retreat, Feather Fall, Magic

**Nevae Wanderer**

Stone, Message, Mount, Purify food & Drink, Sanctuary

**2nd level:** Alter Self, Arcane Lock, Augury, Charm Person or Animal, Delay Poison, Detect Snares and Pits, Endurance, Fog Cloud, Find Traps, Invisibility, Locate Object, Obscure Object, Rope Trick, Tongues, Whispering Wind, Undetectable Alignment

**3rd level:** Charm Monster, Clairaudience/ Clairvoyance, Detect Thoughts, Haste, Leomund's Tiny Hut, Nondetection, Phantom Steed, Shrink Item, Slow, Suggestion, Water Walk

**4th level:** Dimension Door, Helping Hand, Improved Invisibility, Leomund's Secure Shelter, Locate Creature, Minor Creation, Modify Memory, Remove Curse, Remove Disease

**Sample Nevae Wanderer**

**Darrell Longheart:** Male Nevae Aristocrat4/Nevae Wanderer6; CR 10; Size Medium (5ft 11in tall); HD 4d8+6d6+10; hp 54; Init +4 (+4 Dex); Spd 40ft.; AC 20 (touch 16, flat footed 14); Attack +12/+7 (1d6+2, 15-20x2 Rapier), or +13 (2d3+1, 15-20/x2 Rip-Shot Crossbow); SQ Nevae Racial Traits, SA: Local Custom Lore, Fast Talk +4, Shortest Path, Long Stride, Mysterious Stranger, Man with No Name, SV Fort 9, Ref 9, Will 14; AL NG; Str 12, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 17, Cha 16.

**Skills and Feats:** Bluff +6, Concentration +5, Diplomacy +15, Disguise +17, Escape Artist +8, Gather Information +10, Hide +18, Intuit Direction +8, Knowledge (Geography) +7, Listen +12, Move Silently +18, Perform +10, Read Lips +6, Ride +9, Sense Motive +12, Spot +12, and Wilderness Lore +8. Exotic Weapon Proficiency Rip-Shot Crossbow, Alertness, Expertise, Track, Weapon Finesse (Rapier).

**Spells Per Day (2/2/2 with DC 13+ Spell Level):** 1st level: Expeditious Retreat, Cure Light Wounds, Feather Fall, 2nd level: Invisibility, Tongues, 3rd level: Haste, Water Walk

**Possessions:** Wanderer's Guard, Keen Rip-shot Crossbow +1, Masterwork Bolts (10), Keen +1 Rapier, Ring of Protection +2, Ring of Sustenance, Cloak of Resistance +2, Pearl of Power 1st Level (Qty 2), Hat of Disguise, Heward's Handy Haversack, and Gloves of Storing (Holds Rip-Shot Crossbow usually). Masterwork Lute.

**Nevae Equipment**

**Ripshot Crossbow**

The Ripshot hand crossbow is named for the ripping sound it generates when deployed. The Ripshot is a variation on the hand crossbow, with a pair of bowblades instead of a single bow. Each bowblade has a special locking device that holds it in place so it may be fired. The Ripshot also has a very powerful spring embedded within the handle that, when sprung, makes the bow ready to fire. The bowblades lock in place with the bowstring taugth and a bolt ready to fire with a squeeze of the trigger. The Ripshot is smaller than a normal hand crossbow, but has greater force in its shorter range. Because of the intricacy of its mechanism, the DC for crafting the Ripshot is as for a masterwork item. Actually crafting it as a masterwork adds the usual extra cost and time.

**Cost:** 400gp, **Damage:** 2d3, **Critical:** 18-20/x2, **Range:** 15ft, **Weight:** 2 lb, **Type:** Piercing

**Wanderer's Guard**

Wanderers guard is typically a suit of jet black, brown or forest green studded leather armor. The studs are often lacquered over in a dull brown or black or otherwise nonreflective color. The armor is well oiled to help waterproof it and minimize noise, but it is also magically enchanted to make little sound. The armor carries a +1 enchantment, and in addition grants a +10 circumstance bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks. This bonus does not stack with the Hide bonus granted by a cloak of elvenkind.

**Caster Level:** 5th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *silence*, *invisibility*;

**Market Price:** 9,175gp; **Cost to Create:** 4,587gp 5sp + 360 XP.

**Force Bullet**

This is a special property that may only be used on slings. When a sling is so enchanted, it magically conjures a small sphere of force that functions as a sling bullet. The sphere of force disappears the round after it exits the sling (whether flung at a target or otherwise removed from the sling). The number of spheres of force that may be conjured in a single round is limited to the enhancement bonus of the sling, plus one. A +1 Sling of Force Bullets could conjure up to two bullets each round. Some Slings made with this enchantment look like little more than a strip of leather, thus making it easily disguised.

**Caster Level:** 5th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Magic Missile or Magic Stone; **Market Price:** +1 bonus.

**Magic Bullet**

This is a special property that may only be used on slings. When a sling is so enchanted, it magically conjures a small sphere of force that functions as a sling bullet. The sphere of force disappears the round after it exits the sling (whether flung at a target or otherwise removed from the sling). In addition, the force bullet has an enhancement bonus equal to one less than that of the sling for penetrating damage reduction. It does not confer any additional bonus damage or attack rolls. The number of spheres of force that may be conjured in a single round is limited to the enhancement of the sling, plus one. A +2 Sling of Magic Bullets could conjure up to three bullets each round, with each bullet having a +1 enhancement bonus for the purpose of penetrating damage reduction. Some Slings made with this enchantment look like little more than a strip of leather, thus making it easily disguised.

**Caster Level:** 5th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Magic Missile and Magic Weapon or Magic Stone and Magic Weapon; **Market Price:** +2 bonus.



Class Level	Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day				Spells Known			
						1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1	0	2	0	2	Custom Lore, Shortest Path, Fast Talk (+2)	0	-	-	-	1*	-	-	-
2	1	3	0	3	Long Stride (+5),	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	-
3	2	3	1	3	Mysterious Stranger	1	0	-	-	2	1*	-	-
4	3	4	1	4	Long Stride (+10)	1	1	-	-	2	2	-	-
5	3	4	1	4	Fast Talk (+4)	1	1	0	-	2	2	1*	-
6	4	5	2	5	Man with No Name	1	1	1	-	3	2	2	-
7	5	5	2	5	Long Stride (+15)	2	1	1	0	3	2	2	1*
8	6	6	2	6	Trackless Step	2	1	1	1	3	3	2	2
9	6	6	3	6	Fast Talk (+6)	2	2	1	1	3	3	3	2
10	7	7	3	7	Long Stride (+20)	2	2	2	1	4	3	3	2



# JACK O LANTERN

BY SCOTT GREENE  
AND ERICA BALSLEY

Wis 11, Cha 2  
**Skills:** Climb +9, Hide +10, Listen +7,  
 Move Silently +10  
**Climate/Terrain:** Any land  
**Organization:** Solitary  
**Challenge Rating:** 3  
**Treasure:** None  
**Alignment:** Usually neutral  
**Advancement:** 7-12HD (Medium-size),  
 13-18HD (Large)

A jack-o-lantern is an animated plant creature brought to life by a combination of druidic magic and fey sprits. It is a roughly humanoid shaped tangle of vines and leaves with a large pumpkin for its head. The pumpkin-head bears a leering face that appears to have been carved there, and glows from within with an eldritch fire. The nature of the face generally reflects the alignment of the animating spirit.

## Combat

A jack-o-lantern attacks with its many tendrils, rending and tearing at its prey; a given jack-o-lantern will have one tendril strong enough for attacking for every 2HD it has. Occasionally one will be armed with a pitchfork or scythe.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** A jack-o-lantern that hits a Medium-size or smaller oppo-

nent with at least two slam attacks in a single round can choose to either constrict or rend the opponent.

**Constrict (Ex):** A jack-o-lantern that hits with at least two slam attacks on a single opponent deals automatic slam damage every round to a grappled opponent.

**Rend (Ex):** A jack-o-lantern that hits with at least two slam attacks on a single opponent deals 2d6+3 points of damage at it wrenches and tears the flesh.

**Fire Seeds (Su):** 1/day-as the spell cast by an 11th level druid. The jack-o-lantern can only make use of the first version of this spell, and it casts them on its own pumpkin seeds rather than acorns.

**Skills:** Jack-o-lanterns receive skill points as if they were Fey.

**Plant:** Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and polymorphing. Not subject to critical hits.

## Creating A Jack-O-Lantern

To create a jack-o-lantern, the caster must be a druid of at least 11th level. Creating a jack-o-lantern involves placing a single pumpkin seen into the mouth of a corpse and burying it in an open field. The body must be that of a humanoid of at least 6th level-the jack-o-lantern what grows from the body will have the same hit dice and alignment as the humanoid did in life. Once the body is buried, the creator must cast control plants, awaken, summon nature's ally IV, and fire seeds.

The pumpkin plant that grows from it must be carefully nurtured and tended, requiring a Profession (farmer) check (DC 15). The farming check does not need to be made by the creator. Several pumpkins will grow on the vine, one of which will contain the essence of the nature spirit that will eventually animate the plant. The creator must make a Knowledge (nature) check (DC 20) to determine which pumpkin holds the essence-all others must be picked off the vine and discarded. By harvest time, if the creator chose the right pumpkin, the jack-o-lantern will animate and seek out its creator for instructions.



## Jack-O-Lantern

Medium-size Plant

**Hit Dice:** 6d8+6 (33 hp)

**Initiative:** +3 (Dex)

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**AC:** 14 (+3 Dex, +1 natural)

**Attacks:** 3 slams +6 melee, or by weapon +6 melee

**Damage:** Slam 1d6+2 melee, or by weapon

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.

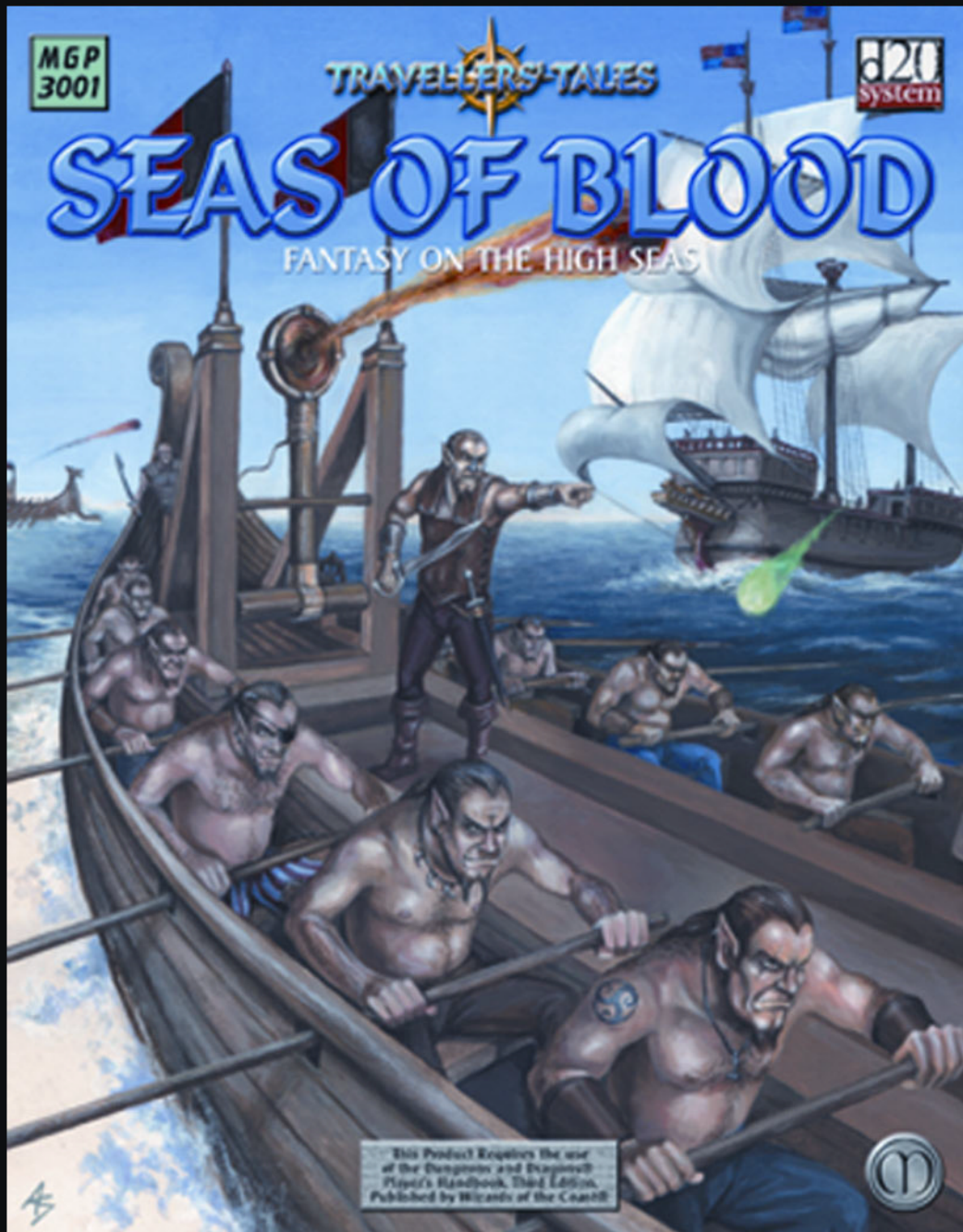
**Special Attacks:** Improved grab, constrict, rend, fire seeds

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60', plant

**Saves:** Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +2

**Abilities:** Str 14, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 6,

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# Wild Spellcraft Preview

By Ryan Nock

Wild Spellcraft is a d20 sourcebook due for release in January 2002 by Natural 20 Press, which can be found at [www.d20reviews.com/natural20/](http://www.d20reviews.com/natural20/).

Wild Spellcraft uses three iconic characters to illustrate the rules, prestige classes and spells in the sourcebook. These iconic characters are presented in this article. You will see references to various elements of Wild Spellcraft in these character write-ups, but you'll have to wait until January to find out what they mean!

## Anna Kulpa

**Background:** Following her parents' guidance, Anna joined the clergy at the age of 12. She had the spark and talent to learn magic, and studied eagerly so she could learn the skills necessary to defend her home and her church. Unfortunately, she did only mediocre in her early lessons in scripture memorization. Her tutors chastised her for not caring enough, and she felt she had failed her parents' hopes. Though she redoubled her efforts, a variety of similar events slowly undermined her confidence in herself, and by the time she completed her training, she had developed a deeply rooted fear of failure.



Doubting her own worthiness to be a priestess, Anna would sometimes incorrectly recite prayers at mass or make mistakes during rituals. Other members of the church often joked about her ineptitude, and though she pretended to take it in good humor, it hurt her deeply.

She began to miscast spells from time to time while serving as a healer in her third year as a full priestess. Sometimes her spells would simply fail, but occasionally odd side effects would happen as well. One patient with a broken leg had the injury healed, only to have it break again a week later, and again the week after. A baby with a fever had to be given to another healer in the church when Anna was unable to do anything for the child; the next month the parents reported that their son was beginning to speak in Elvish with no training. A

horse that had been bruised turned into a sheep.

Amid all these bizarre occurrences, the pastor of the church called in the aid of higher-ranking clerics to determine if the spells were Anna's intentional fault, or simply poor luck. The priest who answered the pastor's request determined that it was merely Anna's mild, nervous errors in casting that made her magic go awry, but there was no malicious intent.

When Anna learned of this, however, the accidents only increased in frequency. Unhappily, the pastor secretly asked her to leave and try to overcome her worries some place else, where people would not be endangered. They made a show of sending Anna off on a journey of good will to another church, but though Anna's reputation was spared, her ego was hurt yet more.

Resignedly, uncertainly, she left her home town to the well wishes of friends and family. Traveling alone, she had faith that God would help her overcome her weakness, but she lacks faith in herself. She passed through the town which was her destination, but found no help there.

Recently, after two months on the road, she met a Dwarf wizardress named Nadia, who had experienced similar woes with her own magic. From their shared problem, they have begun to develop a mild friendship, and Anna has started to rely on Nadia to teach her how to overcome her problems. She assists Nadia on the occasional treasure hunt or adventure, and her confidence is slowly returning.

**Appearance:** Currently in a state of mild depression, Anna dresses plainly in simple priest robes and stole, with a moonstone cross necklace. She usually wears her red-blond hair tied behind her head, but a few strands typically slip loose when she gets nervous. She has a full, shapely figure, but prefers to look humble, and so she prefers loose clothes. She only wears armor when actually planning to enter some dangerous place, but she feels safer



and more secure when so protected. Anna tries to please anyone she meets, and smiles readily, but tends to do so nervously.

**Roleplaying Notes:** Anna is always ready to react in response to one of her spells going awry, and tends to cringe just as she utters the last syllable of any spell. Realizing her own shortcomings, she tries to compensate by being extra careful—stockpiling healing potions, purchasing scrolls, and always having at least two dispel magic spells prepared.

Though she tends to be shy at first meeting, Anna opens up readily to anyone who she thinks will be willing to overlook her fragility. Of course, she's always quick to apologize for any mistake she makes, or thinks she makes.

### Anna Kulpa

Female human, 7th level cleric

Strength	12 (+1)
Dexterity	13 (+1)
Constitution	10
Intelligence	11
Wisdom	15 (+2)
Charisma	15 (+2)
Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +7	
Algn LG	
Height 5'4"	Weight 146 lbs.
HP 35	AC 17

**Armor:** Half Plate, Small Shield

**Skills:** Concentration +10, Craft (brooms) +1, Knowledge (arcana) +5, Knowledge (religion) +5, Spellcraft +9.

**Feats & Abilities:** Brew Potion, Iron Will, Silent Spell, Spell Focus (Transmutation); Domains (Law and Protection), Turn Undead; Wild Spellcaster Template.

**Spells/Day:** (6/4+1/3+1/2+1/1+1; save DC 12 + spell level)

**Possessions:** +2 Heavy Mace; Cross of Protection +3; Potions-cure light wounds (x10), bull's strength (x2), cure serious wounds (x5), delusion (causes drinker to think he is being devoured by insects for 1d6 rounds); Scrolls-dispel magic (x20).

## Meece Upknot

**Background:** Meece had a wretched childhood, enduring his parents breaking up, several of his brothers dying of disease, and repeated beatings from older, bigger gnome children. He was always resilient, however, trying to overcome everything life threw at him.

At the age of twenty, Meece began to shape his powers of illusion, magic innate to all gnomes, into more powerful and dangerous effects. He recklessly experimented with his powers, always stretching himself just to see what his limits were. His eagerly displayed power earned him a reputation as a fun, but dangerous person to be friends with.

Meece's father died when Meece was only thirty-five. Having no desire to stay with his siblings or help his family prosper, he set off on foot, traveling to the nearest human city.

For several years he survived in and around the city, never holding a legitimate job, but also never quite delving into crime. After years of living off others' generosity, however, he decided to move on to a greater risk: adventuring.

He traveled, explored, and hunted for treasure alone for ten years, following whim whenever it would not get him into trouble. By the age of fifty, however, he had amassed enough wealth and power to begin hiring assistants on his adventures to help him overcome obstacles he could not prepare for.

One particular adventure took him into the ruins of an old arcane academy where the overflow of magic had rendered the forces in the area unstable. Several of Meece's spells went awry in their exploration of the ruins, amusing him but frustrating those working for him.

The main vault of the academy's library was guarded by a magical construct capable both of wielding offensive and dispelling magic. Meece tried to aid his hirelings in destroying the guardian, but it repeatedly countered all his spells. To Meece's horror, all of his hirelings were dispatched in less than a minute, and the guardian construct remained operational enough to direct its attacks at him. He tried to cast a fly spell to escape, but he felt the local magic slip from his control. His spell

held tentatively, and he tried to fly upward beyond the construct's range. A pain shot through his back, and he began to fall as the fly was dispelled, but then he felt his descent slow. After a moment he regained control of his flight, and though uncertain of what had happened, he flitted away to safety, regretfully abandoning his aides.

When he landed, over a mile away, his back ached, and he finally realized how he had managed to fly even after the construct had cancelled his spell. He had sprouted huge wings, green and swift like those of a hummingbird, from beneath his shoulder blades.

When he awoke from his shock-induced fainting spell, he realized that he had survived only by incredible luck. After first trying to compensate the families of the men who died working with him, he began experimenting, trying to call forth the same unpredictable magic that had saved his life from the construct. After much strain and risk, he discovered how to let all of his magic run wild at will. Relishing in the pandaemonium he could now wield, Meece continued adventuring, always testing his limits to see what new powers of chaos he could command.

He developed a new reputation for being a dangerous gnome to work for, and so Meece returned again to traveling and exploring alone. Seven years passed, until last week Meece returned to the academy and claimed its lore, leaving behind a misshapen mound of metal and gears where the guardian had once been.

**Appearance:** Meece dresses warmly, wearing a coat and gloves to ward off the chill of winds as he flies. Due to the bizarre nature of the surge that granted him wings, he can wear any normal clothes, and the wings will simply work through the garments without damaging them.

Meece recently completed his Staff of Chaos, made of a half-dozen twining branches of different lengths and species, bound together by various ribbons and chains. One end of the branches twine around a flawed, multi-faceted quartz crystal.

Meece has grown very confident of himself, believing luck favors him. The only thing he is self-conscious about is nearsightedness. However, a gnomish friend supplies him with darkly-shaded glasses, which both overcome his nervousness and add to the look he cultivates.

**Roleplaying Notes:** Meece always rolls with the blows, typically laughing off anything that hurts him, all the while planning how to make his come back. When with those less powerful than him, he usu-

ally relaxes and uses his powers to entertain and dazzle. When outmatched, an occurrence which has become rare, he stays for as long as he can without losing, always hoping to find a way to win. Even if no plan presents itself, sometimes he'll simply let loose with a surging spell, hoping for some useful effect.

## Meece Upknot

**Male gnome, 7th-level sorcerer/ 11th-level pandaemonicist**

Strength	8 (-1)
Dexterity	13 (+1)
Constitution	12 (+1)
Intelligence	14 (+2)
Wisdom	8 (-1)
Charisma	19 (+4)
Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +7	
Align	CN
Height	3'4"
Weight	22 lbs.
HP	65
AC	22

**Armor:** Bracers of armor +5, coat of greater deflection +5, small size, dexterity

**Possessions:** bracers of armor +5, coat of greater deflection +5, 10 +1 returning darts, staff of chaos\*, wand of summon monster III, wand of chaos bolt

**Skills:** Alchemy +4, Bluff +14, Concentration +20, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Perform +9, Spellcraft +12, Tumble +6.

**Feats & Abilities:** Combat Casting, Craft Staff, Craft Wand, Dodge, Maximize Spell, Mobility; Risky Magic, Raise the Stakes, Pandaemonium at my Fingertips, Resist Wild Sorcery, Recalculate Chaos, Cleaning up the Mess, Chaotic Disruption, Pandora's Blessing, Immune to Transformation, Delude Divination, Personal Pandaemonium, Infinite Improbability; Wild Spellcaster Template.

**Spells Known:** (6/7/7/7/7/6/6/6/5/3; save DC = 14 + spell level) 0-level-dancing lights, detect magic, ghost sound, light, mage hand, Meece's cartomantic flourish\*, open/close, prestidigitation, read magic; 1st-level-burning hands, flashy defenses\*, expeditious retreat, shield, shocking grasp; 2nd-level-chaos bolt\*, daylight, flaming sphere, random action, shift aim\*; 3rd-level-bestow fluctuating curse\*, fly, protection from elements, summon monster III; 4th-level-chaos blast\*, confusion, hallucinatory terrain, soliptic disillusionment\*. 5th-level-cone of cold, greater shadow conjuration, Rodinn's rhyming doom\*, telekinesis; 6th-level-chain lightning, chaosphere\*\*, mass haste; 7th-level-delayed blast fireball, power word stun, wildstroke\*; 8th-level-chaos in the mind's eye\*, prismatic wall; 9th-level-the road left untaken\*\*.

\*New Item spell appears in *Wild Spell-*

craft.

## Nadia Stoneshaper

**Background:** Nadia's choice as a child to study magic displeased her family, which thought that spellcraft went against Dwarven tradition. She overcame all the tests they set before her, and continued to desire magical training from her youth until she married at the age of 40. Admitting to themselves that Nadia would not change her mind, and understanding that she was unhappy simply learning the art of the forges, her parents acquired skilled tutors for her, hoping that perhaps she would utilize her magic to enchant the weapons and armor her family crafted.

After completing her initial training by the age of 60, Nadia took a temporary leave from her family to join a group of Dwarven adventurers and explorers for ten years. Forced to use her magic to overcome foes and obstacles, she honed her skills for three years before disaster struck.

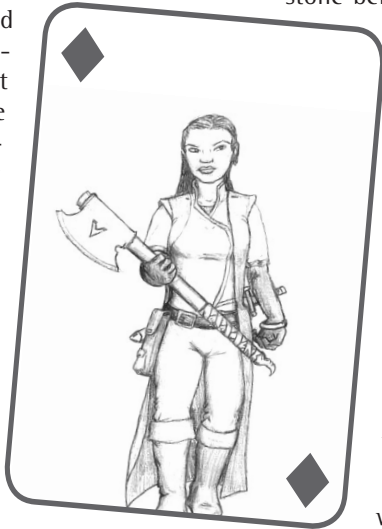
Late in her third year with her wide-ranging companions, she helped them defeat a dark Elven sorcerer. For her share of the treasure, she claimed a Dwarven war-axe that had apparently belonged to the last Dwarf who had tangled with the sorcerer.

When she picked up the axe, however, she felt immediately that something was wrong. Energy crackled along the haft, and then flowers sprouted from the wood. Before she could drop the weapon, small leaves began to appear along her forearm. She tossed the weapon away and immediately dispelled the magic on her, not wanting to risk turning into a plant. She carefully wrapped the axe in heavy cloth and carried it off for later study, and thought little of it for the next few days.

Soon, though, she realized that the weapon had disrupted her magic somehow, as once every few days one of her spells would perform completely randomly. Realizing their companion was cursed, her fellow adventurers traveled with her to a Dwarven sanctuary for help. Weeks of meditation and study did not show any progress toward freeing her from the affliction, and though her friends insisted it was not truly a problem, she refused to leave the sanctuary until she could control the diffuse magical energies from the axe.

A year of prayer later, in frustration, she

began traveling to a secluded area each day and casting as many spells as she could, looking for the root of the problem. Consciously trying to lure out the wild forces in her magic, Nadia suffered from a variety of bizarre effects for several months, but slowly she began to understand the nature of the curse. Where her magic had been like stone before, now it was wet clay, loose and liable to lose its shape if not masterfully sculpted.



She could see no way to remove the curse, but her new understanding let her develop ways to overcome the drawbacks of this fluid magic. She trained and practiced for another year, then rejoined her companions, having gained a new outlook on the nature of spellcraft.

She continued to travel with her fellow adventurers for another five years, but she felt increasing tension between them and herself. Because she had begun to ponder the usefulness of unpredictability, her sturdily traditional friends found it harder to understand her. Likewise, when she returned to her family after her service was completed, she found her fellow Dwarves to be too straight-minded and rigid. To her disappointment, she realized that she could no longer be a well-fit piece of Dwarven society.

Wishing her children, husband, and family safety, Nadia left to find a place where she could belong. She has experienced many different cultures, and studied a variety of views on the nature of magic, but it was not until recently that she found someone with whom she could empathize. A human priestess suffered from a remotely related problem with her own magic, and Nadia gladly offered to help.

**Appearance:** Nadia typically dresses in a well-tailored and tended long coat of soft gray leather. She carries several spellbooks and minor scrolls in a sturdy duffle, and is always to travel. She carries her cursed axe on her back, and a short sword at her hip.

Modestly attractive in a Dwarven sense, Nadia has a sturdy nose and an somewhat slender (and thus, to most Dwarves, unattractive) figure. She wears her dark brown hair in an array of thick braids, which hang to slightly below her shoulders.

Her hazel eyes keenly consider anything or anyone new she encounters, and though she is not immediately friendly, she tends to tap her foot anxiously when she meets

someone she likes.

**Roleplaying Notes:** Unusual for Dwarves, Nadia tends to seek out things she doesn't understand, having learned from her magic that alternative viewpoints can deepen one's understanding of the world. She still enjoys working with her hands, and likes to spend spare time helping build or repair things. Despite her family's uneasiness with her new way of thought, she views sculpting chaos as a uniquely Dwarven style of magic.

Nadia Stoneshaper  
Female dwarf, 6th-level wizard/ 6th-level sculptor of chaos  
Strength 10  
Dexterity 8 (-1)  
Constitution 16 (+3)  
Intelligence 18 (+4)  
Wisdom 14 (+2)  
Charisma 12 (+1)  
Fort +7 Ref +3 Will +14  
Algn NG  
Height 4'2" Weight 106 lbs.  
HP 62 AC 17

**Armor:** +2 mithril shirt, amulet of natural armor +2, dexterity

**Possessions:** +3 wild Dwarven war-axe of spell storing, +1 heavy crossbow, +2 mithril shirt, bustier of giant strength +4, amulet of natural armor +2, hairpin of disguise, various scrolls. **Skills:** Concentration +14, Craft (sculpture) +11, Craft (weaponsmith) +7, Craft (armor) +7, Knowledge (arcana) +19, Knowledge (architecture) +7, Knowledge (religion) +7, Scry +11, Spellcraft +19.

**Feats & Abilities:** Craft Magic Arms & Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Dwarven war-axe), Heighten Spell, Iron Will, Light Armor Proficiency, Scribe Scroll; Fluid Magic, Spellbrushing (3 attributes), Improved Safe Casting, Resist Wild Sorcery, Substance Substitution (cold, fire, sonic), Reshape Spell; Wild Spellcaster Template.

**Spells/Day:** (4/5/5/5/4/3/2; save DC = 14 + spell level)

**Preferred Spells:** 0-level-Meece's carotomantic flourish\*, minor surge\*; 1st-level-Malcom's chaos theory\*, Nadia's spellbrush\*; 2nd-level-chaos bolt\*, surge protector\*; 3rd-level-correct fate\*, Tri'ni's telepathic tribulation\*; 4th-level-chaos blast\*, polymorphic aura\*; 5th-level-coporeal instability\*, Pandora's blessing\*; 6th-level-Nadia's brief reprieve\*, surge shield\*.

\*New spell appears in Wild Spellcraft.



# Orc Scars

By Tim Hitchcock

Everyone knows that scars are a significant part of orc culture. They are used to signify a diverse number of things about orcs and half orcs such as name, rank, tribe, deeds done, events participated in, maturity and even marital status. Some orcs love scars so much they even modify their existing scars to denote additional things about what those scars represent. The reason that most orcs love scars so much is that they are permanent. In fact, scars are one of the few things that an orc can rely on during their short chaotic lives.

Perhaps it is for this reason that scar forgeries are taken as a serious offense. An orc believed to have faked or forged a scar in order to represent themselves falsely, would be lucky to receive a merciful death. In any case, (because of their extreme importance in orc society) knowing more about your half-orc character's scars can help both you and the DM tremendously. Not only can scars tie the PC to historic events, but they can also lead to potentially dangerous situations, or they might even be able get you out of a tight fix.

Creating a scar for your PC is based on five different elements.

**Body Location:** Where the scar is located.

**Pattern Type:** What the scar looks like.

**Cause:** What caused the scar.

**Meaning/Purpose:** What the purpose of the scar is.

**Modification:** If and how the scar is modified.

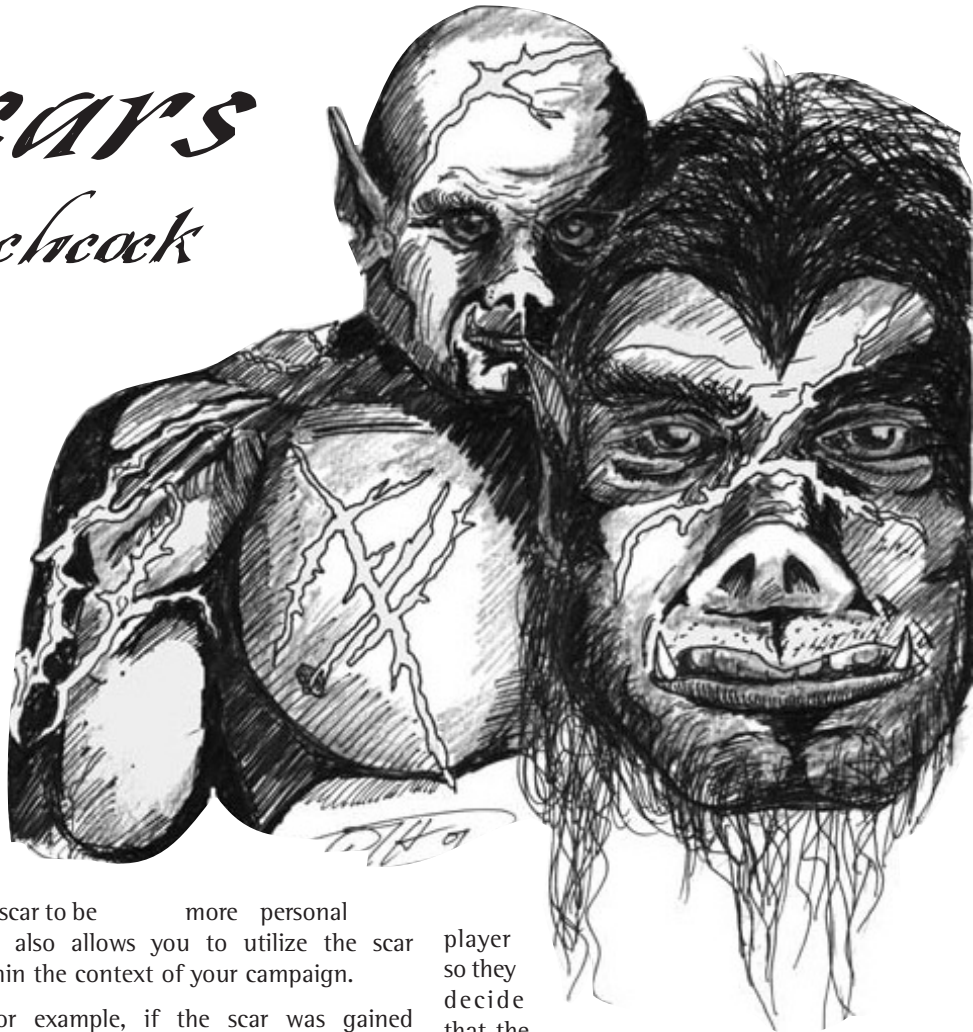
**Mod Meaning:** What the modification represents.

First, roll on table A to determine the general location of the scar, then use tables B through E to determine a more specific location.

Next, roll on table F to determine the type of pattern, keep in mind that scars don't always resemble the original shape of the wound.

Next, roll on table H.

Once you have determined the cause of the scar, it's up to you to think of the specifics of how it was caused. This allows



the scar to be more personal and also allows you to utilize the scar within the context of your campaign.

For example, if the scar was gained during a catastrophe, you need to determine what types of catastrophic events occur near the character's tribe. You're not going to say that your scar was caused by a red-hot chunk of volcanic rock if your character has never been near a volcano. Likewise if your character has a scar which was caused by a monster, it was most likely

caused by a creature indigenous to the area where the character grew up.

Once you have determined what the scar looks like and how it was caused, you can determine its general meaning, it's more specific meaning, if it was modified, and what the

meaning of the modification is. To do this, first roll on table 4-1 (if you roll a 20-check chart 4-2). Once you (or the DM) have established a general meaning for the scar, then it's up to you to make it more specific. Again, this is so it's meaning fits within the context of your campaign. For example let's say your character has a v-shaped scar which she got from an accident. You roll on table 4-1 and determine that the scar has something to do with "lineage/family". You then decide that the accident occurred when the character was doing something for their family, let's say chopping wood. The concept starts to feel a little bit to endearing to the

player so they decide that the character would have modified the scar, perhaps out of embarrassment. To determine the shape of the modification they roll on table 2. Again and get the pattern type "crossed-lines". The player decides that the "crossed lines" represent a barrier protecting the family name. The scar serves as a reminder to the character that she must continue working to strengthen her lineage, because weakness does not survive in orc society. It then becomes the PC's self-appointed duty to protect her family name. In other words, these tables should be used to help players create a general concept for the scar, but the specific details about that scar must be furnished by the player or the DM.

The following are some examples of completed scar charts.

**Body Location:** Head (neck)

**Pattern Type:** Circle

**Cause:** Bite mark from mating ritual

**Purpose/Meaning:** Denotes marital status

**Modification:** Straight line that bisects the circle

**Mod Meaning:** Denotes that the marriage produced a son.

**Body Location:** Torso (chest)  
**Pattern Type:** Crossed Multiple Straight Lines (total of twelve)  
**Cause:** Bear Claws  
**Meaning/Purpose:** Denotes personal strength and power.  
**Modification:** None  
**Mod Meaning:** The absence of a modification shows that all 12 scars are real, proving the great power of the individual.

**Body Location:** Limb (right thigh)  
**Pattern Type:** Curved Lines (total of two)  
**Cause:** Whip from slave owner  
**Meaning/Purpose:** Denotes personal history and the presence of a personal vendetta.  
**Modification:** Seven short bisecting lines in each curved line.  
**Mod Meaning:** Each bisecting scar represents a year of freedom.



- 7) Upper back
- 8) Lower back
- 9) Hip
- 10) Gluteal region
- 11) Combination (roll twice)#
- 12) Combination (roll 3 times)#

**Table A : Location (1d4)**

- 1) Multiple locations ( Roll again, twice. Each time you get a 1 it means you have another scar )
- 2) Head (roll on Table B)
- 3) Torso (roll on Table C)
- 4) Limb (roll on Table D)

**Table B: Head (1d12)**

- 1) Neck
- 2) Cheek
- 3) Eye
- 4) Nose
- 5) Ear
- 6) Forehead
- 7) Whole face
- 8) Back of the head
- 9) Side of the head
- 10) Top of the head
- 11) Combination (roll twice)#
- 12) Combination (roll 3 times)#

**Table C: Torso (1d12)**

- 1) Shoulder
- 2) Clavicle
- 3) Pectoral muscle
- 4) Chest
- 5) Abdomen
- 6) Ribs

**Table D: Limb (1d10)**

- 1) Upper arm
  - 2) Forearm
  - 3) Hand
  - 4) Finger
  - 5) Thigh
  - 6) Calf
  - 7) Shin
  - 8) Foot
  - 9) Combination (roll twice)@
  - 10) Combination (roll 3 times)@
- # ignore any roll higher than 10  
 @ ignore any roll higher than 8

**Table E: Patterns Type (1d10)**

- 1) Straight lines
  - 2) Crossed lines
  - 3) V-shaped
  - 4) T-shaped
  - 5) Zig-zag
  - 6) Curved scars
  - 7) Circular scars
  - 8) Triangular
  - 9) Combination (roll twice)@
  - 10) Combination (roll 3 times)@
- # ignore any roll higher than 10

@ ignore any roll higher than 8

**Table F: Meaning/Purpose (1d20)**

- 1) Family history
- 2) Personal achievement
- 3) Survivor
- 4) Rank in tribe
- 5) Marital status
- 6) Adulthood
- 7) Personal name
- 8) Tribal name
- 9) Regional name
- 10) Strength
- 11) Power
- 12) Masculinity/femininity
- 13) Wisdom
- 14) Offspring
- 15) Blessed by a deity
- 16) Lineage/family
- 17) Favored by tribe
- 18) Ruthlessness
- 19) Holy
- 20) Negative meaning (see Table G)

**Table G: Negative Meaning (1d8-1)**

- 1) Cursed
- 2) Shunned
- 3) Doomed
- 4) Weak
- 5) Slave
- 6) Bad luck
- 7) Traitor

**Table H: Cause (1d8)**

- 1) Single combat
- 2) Animal/ monster
- 3) Accident
- 4) Ritual/ceremony
- 5) Catastrophe
- 6) War
- 7) Training
- 8) Duel

# Storycraft by Ryan Boel

## World Secrets

Before I start, I would like to give a shout out to my pre editor editor Frank. This article goes to 2 editors and I would like to thank them both for the hard work they put into helping me on my articles and wanted to thank them. I also want to thank Mr. Winninger for his article in *Dragon*; you have inspired me.

Welcome to the fourth installment of *Story Craft*. In this issue, I will be telling you how to create World Secrets in your campaign. NPCs need motivations, governments need hidden agendas, and regions need secret societies.

The world, The Material Plane--Whatever you call it, there are secrets crawling beneath the surface, coursing through the hidden veins of every town and city. Organizations, objects, people, stories--they all bear hidden truths that most people never see. I'm going to tell you how to give your campaign some pizzazz by adding secret nuances, societies, and plot twists to your game.

To organize your secrets, I suggest you use a method similar to the one that I use. Along with my *Core Rulebooks*, I have a small black box--the kind your mother probably puts her coupons in, with dividers. Inside this case are five separate files, for PCs, NPCs, Places, Objects, and Organizations.

## PCs

Among my PC cards is a character named Talon--played by Thom. The player wanted his character to be a Monk from the *Oriental Adventures* sourcebook, when we discussed it we settled on a stipulation that Talon must be able to travel and fit in with the existing group of Player Characters. Some of Talon's secrets include the fact that he is an assassin, his wife and child were killed while he was fulfilling a contract, and that he belongs to the Dragon Clan. The Dragon Clan Goddess has been dead for a while, and he they are secretly working to bring her back. He is out in the world trying to do right by his Clan by performing assassinations when he can. On his card, I have written, "Talon: Dragon Clan, assassin, dead family."

Next, is Cali Numar; a Monk who began life as an orphan. She was raised in a monastery where women didn't have any rights and her mentor was very abusive. Finally, she befriended a Seer named Aiondelle, and they ran away together.

What my players don't know is that Cali comes from Talon's culture, but not from the same tribe. They are half-brother and

half-sister, separated when they were young and neither one knows that the other exists. This ties together Cali's No Family and Talons Dead Family secrets. While these PC secrets give plot lines, it's always best to use them sparingly. While they can be great if used occasionally, too many PC secrets can make players jaded and jealous if you mess with their characters too much.

Another thing I like doing is giving a PC a dark secret. Like with Talon; when he returns to his homeland he will discover that his wife and child are not actually dead. They have become wraiths. And they aren't too pleased that he failed to save them.

## NPCs

I do the same thing with my NPCs that I do with PCs. Sure you may introduce a small, one-time villain; but what has really happened in that character's past--Extortion, murder, rape? I like giving my NPCs a secret or two, as well and tying it in with a PC secret or story line, as it is easy to do.

Exercise caution here because too many NPC secrets can cause the players to get riled up. The game should always be about the Player Characters and their deeds, not about the NPCs, secrets, and so on--these things should never upstage the PCs. The best rule of thumb is this, every NPC should have a secret--even if it's a beggar lady on the tavern street; maybe she is a long lost princess. These secrets can either hinder or help you as the DM, as your campaign progresses. Perhaps the Villain has a soft spot for fine wine. Maybe the local priest likes to spy on people. Secrets can enhance the game and provide depth to the story, but they should not bog down the story unless you want them to become the story.

## Organizations

All organizations need hidden agendas. They wouldn't be any fun if everyone knew what they were really up to. What if thief guilds were not all evil and conversely, church orders weren't all good? The thing I would like to do is for each guild, government or place of power, provide a dirty little secret for the Player Characters to eventually unearth. A good example is in my upcoming campaign in *Season 2*: a priestess and her four female paladins run the small village that the PCs call home. While they have had help from a local wizard's guild--which gives them funding and magical assistance from time to time--the guild's leader is a 8th level necromancer out to rule the town himself!

## Magic Items

Tired of those +1 whips or +3 swords? Spice them up by giving them secrets as well, for instance: a mithril music box enchanted with the spell ghost harp. It functions as a music box with a dark secret; a man may have made it for his daughter on her wedding day, but it was stolen by orc raiders. Or a deranged toy maker could have created it to lure children into his factory where he could butcher them. Magic items are a lot more interesting when they provide a mystery that can come back to affect the players later in their lives. An enterprising DM could also slap secrets on items that are mundane in nature, giving them names with their regular stats--soon, your PCs may learn the truth, unlocking their hidden power.

## Places

Perhaps the setting is a simple library or herbalist, a weapon smith or armorer's shop--by adding a secret or two, things could suddenly become more interesting. The Phantom Armorer could be known for its high quality work and the ominous suit of armor that stands guard outside, with its glowing red eyes warding off trespassers and loiterers. A good DM could keep his PCs asking 'Where did this suit come from?' And 'Who made it?' Perhaps they might even try to purchase the thing. The village I mentioned earlier is a kind of spiritual refuge for Psions and Psi-warriors. It is a small café of sorts, but only special patrons who pay staunch dues are allowed in the back rooms where reputedly, a gateway lies hidden behind a beaded curtain. Where that gateway goes is a mystery; perhaps it leads to a demiplane where the psions and psi-warriors pray to their ancient Deities, or it could simply be a neglected well. The secret of the café is that it has a portal to another realm--where it goes and why makes no difference until the PCs find out, either by tailing an NPC inside, or being tricked into breaking in to snoop around.

When all is said and done and the world needs some pizzazz, secrets are probably the best way to go. Not only do you feel like you are helping advance the world, you also give the PCs something wondrous to look forward to figuring out as well. After all, one of the primary elements in *Dungeons and Dragons* is exploration; piquing curiosity and wonder are of the legacy. From graph paper and graphite, to mapping utilities and keyboards, the stories should always be told with an atmosphere of discovery. Use this advice and I guarantee your players (and their PCs) will be thanking you, and hopefully trying to help you out by contributing plot ideas and extra effort to your game.

# ORDER OF THE DEMI LICH

BY DARRIN DRAER  
AND TONY BOUNDS

This article contains supplemental material for Gateway: City of Living Waters, which is made available for free from Dark Portal Games LLC at their web site <http://www.darkportalgames.com/>. While this is fully compatible with the city of Gateway and the Lands of Arekoz, this can easily be modified to fit into any fantasy campaign setting.

The enigmatic and elusive Order of the Demilich menaces Gateway, consistently thwarting the efforts of the sworn protectors of the city. Numerous thieves belonging to the order work the streets, while other members peddle both opium and lotus to the addicted masses. As if these activities don't cause enough lawlessness, the group actively patrols the sewers and connected tunnels, easily evading patrols of the city guard, while stopping anyone who hasn't negotiated clearance through controlled areas with them.

Many people have heard tales that an immensely powerful demilich named Bekarris runs the order. Rumors abound that he once belonged to a noble house, and sought immortality by transforming himself into a lich. Through the years his power and influence have grown, attracting numerous living followers; people who are awestruck by his might and are inspired to follow his lead. This is exactly what the order wants people to believe...

Most members of the order are thieves and rogues. They work the streets, taverns, and shops of the entire city rather than restraining themselves to a particular district. Though much smaller in number than the Scarlet Sashes, the Order of the Demilich is feared and respected due to the perception that they are backed by a large force of undead. Again, this is exactly what the order wants the populace of the city and rival organizations to believe.

In truth, the organization operates from beneath the city, claiming territory in the sewers and the tunnels below. Many members live above ground, but a large number

of them permanently stay in the subterranean guildhouse to protect the abode, and maintain a constant presence in the areas that the organization has claimed. These members frequently visit the surface to engage in thievery, fence stolen goods, and take care of more mundane matters.

Generally, if an individual asks permission to use the underground passages, her request is approved, provided that she pays five gold pieces per month for the privilege. She is given a copper coin with the mark of the order and the expiration date minted onto it, and she is required to abide by the order's rules. Anyone caught down below without a copper coin bearing a valid expiration date is given the option to immediately pay triple the price for the month long pass, or accept an escort to the surface. Several unknowing people have met their demise by refusing to pay up or get out. Because the group reveres the undead, order members feel that the greatest honor that they can give an enemy is to kill him and animate his corpse.

Guests down below are not allowed to track members of the order through the sewers. Doing this could jeopardize the security of the guildhouse, and leave them vulnerable to blackmail or raids. Anyone caught tracking order members are ambushed by superior numbers, subdued, and brought back to the guildhouse where they are brutally tortured for any information regarding individuals or organizations that might have put them up to this.

Guests are not allowed to bring others with them down below. Each person wishing to use the underground passages as a means of covert travel beneath the city must pay the price. Paying guests are also told to keep to the main routes through the sewers, and not follow the smaller side corridors. While the entrance to the guildhouse is magically hidden, they don't want people accidentally blundering into it.

In addition to thieving and general thugery, the order makes a great deal of gold from the sale of lotus and opium. In most cases Opium is bought from the dream merchants of Mhul, then smuggled into the city through the sewers. The Lotus sold by the group is actually grown in chamber 5 of the guildhouse (see below). Because of the magical lighting, the rich soil, and the special strain of the flower they have hybridized over the years, lotus made by the Order of the Demilich is some of the most powerful, most sought after, lotus sold in or around Gateway. Both opium and lotus are sold in three ounce stoppered bottles. A bottle of opium sells for fifteen gold, and a

bottle of lotus extract sell for ten gold.

## The Order's History

Thieves and necromancers form the modern day continuation of the ancient organization that worships the undead. Nearly a hundred years after Gateway gained its independence from Mhul, Sovereign Dominus Pralir ruled the city. To this day historians regard his rule as fair and just, but most never learned of his fascination with necromancy, the undead, or his belief in a largely dismissed prophecy of old.

In the text *The Call for Greatness*, written in ancient Mhulnish by Gingus the mad sage, numerous prophecies were scribed, including the following: In the ages to come, the living shall become the dead. But the dead shall once more become the living as they pass judgment. And when this day comes to pass, the once dead ruler of nations shall sit in dominion over the lands.

While most scholars have dismissed this passage along with the rest of Gingus's writings, some believe that this segment describes some sort of a new beginning for those who have died, and this will happen after the end of the world. After studying the true connotations behind the original words written in the ancient Mhulnish language, Pralir and his court seers interpreted a much different meaning of the prophecy. Their translation states that those who became undead would one day regain the flesh, and live forever as immortals. Pralir believed that "passing judgment" referred to his own act of ruling the city and the surrounding lands. He also believed that the use of the word "dominion" was a veiled reference predicting his own name "Dominus."

Since he had been a young boy, Pralir studied magic. This was an aspect of his background that he hid from the people, mainly because he did not want people to have the perception that the city was slipping into a mageocracy. After becoming fascinated with Gingus's prophecy, his magical studies began to progressively delve into necromancy.

Pralir discreetly scoured the libraries of Gateway, took frequent but unnecessary diplomatic trips to Verhmon, Mhul, and even Xotchgahmml, and dealt with numerous underworld contacts in his efforts to seek out the arcana that causes the

## Order of the Demi-Lich

transformation into a lich. After extensive research, he discovered a record describing what he believed was the correct process.

Before going the final step of ending his life to achieve perpetual undeath, Pralir gathered his advisors and several others he trusted, and shared his beliefs with them. His guards killed the few who had the boldness to denounce him as mad. Those who followed him helped create what quickly grew into the Order of the Demilich. Pralir established the order under the guise of a thieves' guild, though the primary goal was to find new recruits for the cult, and to gather gold they used to fund their research. Money making became a central focus since Pralir knew that after he became undead, he would not have access to the city's funds or even his own considerable fortune.

While he was building the organization, his followers searched the underground sewers and the aqueducts for hidden or forgotten areas that they might be able to inhabit. When a suitable place was found, they moved their operations there, and a trusted wizard was hired to create a permanent illusion of a rock wall hiding the passageway leading to their new guildhouse. After claiming the area, they excavated additional areas, and created a private room where Pralir could find sanctuary.

Five years after establishing the order, Pralir became confident that the organization would continue to grow, so he decided the time was right for him to end his public life. Pralir constructed a phylactery, and he prepared a tea imbued with spells, which he believed would kill him and bring him back as a lich. That day he ventured into the market accompanied by his guards and advisors. While stopping to look at the wears of a tunic vendor, he suddenly fell to the ground, convulsed and appeared to die. His guards carried him back to the castle and his advisors announced his death to the city within the day. Pralir, still alive, then drank the tea.

Though effects of the tea transformed him into one of the undead, it failed to make him into a true lich. As a member of the undead, Pralir passed himself off to his followers as one of those most foul beings, commanding their respect, fear, and admiration. Under his leadership, the organization continued to recruit necromancers and thieves, maintaining its size for nearly a thousand years. Pralir insulated himself from the majority of his followers and ordered his top ranking necromancers to bring him tomes of arcane knowledge so he could study the ways to bring about

his final ascension to immortality and near godhood.

## Societal Interactions

Both initiates and masters frequently journey to the surface of Gateway, both for mundane supplies and to conduct business. The masters maintain aboveground dwellings within the city to maintain the façade that they are ordinary citizens. While traveling the surface, they pose as ordinary wizards, and do not advertise that they are necromancers.

The upper levels of the organization actively try to recruit the nobles or their family members into the organization. In most cases members contact the malcontents, the disenfranchised siblings, or simply the apathetic privileged. After selecting the subject of their interest, thieves are ordered to watch that person for his daily habits. Once their subject's habits are discovered, members approach him casually, requesting a brief audience. If the noble accepts, the cult members meet him in one of several aboveground locations that are meant to appear to be the actual guildhouse. There they make a case for their organization, appealing to the source of that noble's discontent; though they will be careful to avoid divulging the name of the group during their first conversation. In some cases the nobles not only reject the offer, but inform the city guard of the location of the false guildhouse. The order doesn't concern itself when this happens since the guard usually finds either an empty structure, or one or two token thieves who vehemently deny all the accusations.

Nobles who want to learn more are slowly accepted and indoctrinated into the organization. One of the undead lords was once a noble who gained membership in this way. These individuals, once they prove their loyalty, are urged to donate money, or provide information about their family. In many cases this information gives the order the necessary leverage to blackmail those houses into "donating" large sums of gold, or precious magic items. The order sometimes uses this connection to pressure the city guard into releasing any of their thieves that have been arrested - a strategy that has effectively stopped several potentially revealing investigations over the years.

## Recruitment

Joining the Order of the Demilich is not

easy since members pick those that they will attempt to recruit. Members watch the streets for promising thieves or thugs that show little remorse for cruelty. They also look for people who appear to be lone wolves as opposed to those motivated by advancement in rank.

Once a candidate is spotted, the order takes the time to introduce themselves. Since most of the thieves who work for the Order of the Demilich live in dwellings within the city, they usually arrange a meeting at a neutral location where the prospective member is blindfolded and led to the abode of the thief or thug. The member's dwellings are usually decorated in finery and obvious displays of wealth. She goes to great lengths to show the prospective thief that she does not lack money, and she explains that her organization allows them to keep an unusually high amount of their stolen items. Most thieves guilds in Gateway demand twenty five percent of a thief's stolen property, whereas the Order of the Demilich asks for only ten percent. In most cases, this display is enough to convince newcomers to give the organization a chance. In many cases the order actually prefers for the newcomer to remain affiliated with any thieves' guilds to which she may have belonged so that the organization can acquire inside information about those other groups. In such cases the thief's dues are refunded by the Order of the Demilich, and the thief reports half of her earnings to each organization.

Necromancers are the other major group that is approached with membership offers. These may be individuals whose power is already established, obviously powerful individuals who are passing through the city, or those whose power has increased over time. Because most necromancers are obsessed with the power of death, recruiting them is often as easy as telling them of the group's existence, and asking them if they would be willing to join. Once in a while a new necromancer learns that the focus of the organization is to bring about Gingus's prophecy, and she will attempt to leave. This usually results in a quick death at the hands of the masters or the undead themselves.

## Methods of Research

Pralir and the other undead conduct most of the magical research. They believe that the way to fulfill Gingus's prophecy of is to restore life to themselves while retaining

the benefits they have gained through their undead status. Pralir has experimented with nearly every known arcane spell, finding each one of them to be lacking for his purposes. He even tried to cast wish, but found that his request merely returned him to a normal mortal's life. He was forced to cast another wish after this failed attempt, asking to be transformed into a true lich, but was rewarded only by resuming his previous undead state. Pralir has come to the conclusion that the gods will not fulfill his wish to transform into a lich because of the threat he would possess to either them or his followers.

The main focus of Pralir's research, as well as that of the other undead, is the study of unique magic items, relics, and artifacts. While the powers of many magic items are already well documented, often times there will be hidden aspects - secrets needing to be slowly pried out of them. These items are acquired by searching ancient ruins and by negotiating for their purchase from various nobles, adventurers, and merchants. If the order cannot negotiate for these items, they resort to thievery. If this still doesn't work, they sometimes challenge the items' owners, harming them if necessary. More than one experienced adventurer has found his doom after refusing to give up a magic item in their possession.

The final method that the organization employs is to dredge up ancient knowledge or forgotten arcane lore. Whenever they find something that shows promise, they follow this lead its conclusion. They often travel great distances to seek magic items, ancient temples, or forgotten ruins.

Recently their research has focused on the mysteries of the ancient gods. While these powers have long been on the decline, their rule was the first Arekoz had ever known, and their methods were not as gentle as those of the younger gods. Perhaps there are useful secrets to be unearthed, or alliances to be forged. While the undead recognize the dangers inherent in dealing with the ancients, they believe that it is worth the risk since the ancients may have been the source of Gingus's divine inspiration.

While their research has so far been for naught, they tirelessly continue to find new sources of information, travel throughout the known world, and acquire others' valued items to study. Their belief in the prophecy is unshakable, and their resolve is unwavering. They believe that since they are the only ones to know the truth of Gingus's prophecy, they are the ones foretold of who will rule the lands as immortals.

## Organizational Structure

The Order of the Demi-lich is a four-tiered network. At the bottom of the network are the thieves, the petty thugs, and the opium and lotus dealers. These people are attracted to the order because it provides structure, but it allows them to keep a larger percentage of their take than most standard guilds. They have no knowledge of the true nature or motivations of heads of the order, nor do most of them care to know who they serve or why. Many of the people involved at this level buy into the myth that the demi-lich Bekarris is their leader, and take a certain degree of comfort from the knowledge that their leadership is strong, if unnatural. Usually between one hundred and one hundred twenty people are involved at this level.

The next level of the network consists of the initiates of the cult whose job is to supervise the thieves and thugs at the bottommost level of the organization. There are usually fifteen of these mid-level necromancers. Unlike those beneath them, they know exactly who they serve, and they usually reside within the guildhouse. Although they do not have direct dealings with the undead heads of the guild, they attend most of the religious ceremonies conducted by the master necromancers.

The next level of power is made up of more powerful human necromancers who are known as the master necromancers. Only four of these people are currently part of the hierarchy. Their job is to provide direction to the lowest levels of the organization, and to act as liaisons between the undead lords and their followers. These people conduct all but the most important and sacred ceremonies and they handle most of the other necessary administrative duties. The ultimate goal of these "priests" is to become undead and join their masters. Few ever achieve this goal.

Pralir presides over eleven undead necromancers at the top of the hierarchy of the organization. All of these undead believe that they are liches, though they have all come by their current status in the same manner as Pralir, actually becoming failed liches instead. While Pralir knows the truth, and in fact has discovered the correct way to create a lich, he has no intention of bringing in a new undead lord more powerful than himself.

Each of the twelve undead necromancers hold a rank in the organization that is determined by their tenure in their posi-

tion. Pralir is careful not to allow subordinate necromancers to become undead if their casting powers become great enough to rival his own. Additionally, if an undead necromancer's powers grow to dangerous levels, and this has only happened twice in hundreds of years, Pralir creates a reason that the individual's interests are no longer compatible with those of the organization, and has it destroyed. As in life, Pralir is politically expedient, and knows how to maintain his hold on power.

## The Guildhouse

If invaded, the first line of defense is at the portcullis. If this defense proves to be ineffective, one of the thugs remains there to hold off invaders for as long as possible, while the remaining thugs alert the rest of the guildhouse. If more than two of them are able to flee the portcullis area, one of them helps guard room 3.

Once alerted, the initiates engage the invaders and attempt to turn them back. If the fight still seems to be going against them, one of the initiates leaves the fight and alerts the masters, who telepathically signal the undead. As the invaders fight their way into the guildhouse, overwhelmed defenders allow themselves to be pushed back first to room 7 where they attempt to regroup and rally, and then to room 12, where they join the masters.

By this point the undead are aware that the guildhouse is being invaded, and they hide themselves within the eleven upright sarcophagi in room 12. In order to communicate, they cast Rary's telepathic bond on one-another as well as Pralir before entering into battle. The undead allow three rounds to pass before emerging from their places of hiding, attempting to achieve surprise against the invaders. If the undead are cut down to half of their number, the remaining ones teleport to room 11 where they prepare to planeshift out of this location. They remain here for 1d4 rounds while Pralir hastily packs his belongings and casts the spell allowing them to flee.

Note that a good amount of magical treasure is stored within these chambers. In order to not unbalance a game, the exact nature of these magical treasures is left up to the GM. At any given time there is a 60% chance that all twelve of the undead are present. If less than that are present, roll 1d4 and subtract that number from twelve to determine the number currently here. Also present are 1d6 common thugs, 2d10 common thieves, 2d6 initiates, and 2d2

## Order of the Demi-Lich

master necromancers. Any of these that are not accounted for by random die rolls in each of the rooms are encountered in the corridors.

Unless otherwise stated, doors can be unlocked with an Open Locks check (DC 25) and secret doors can be found with a Search check (DC 20).

### 1. Hidden Entrance

The effect of a permanent image spell this area is located in a corridor adjoining the sewers, and looks exactly like the stone walls found in these areas below ground. If detect magic is cast, the illusory nature of the wall does not appear. Characters wishing to move beyond the wall must disbelieve by making a Will save (DC 30), or someone must lead them through. Characters who have passed through the illusion once do not need to make any further checks in the future.

### 2. Guardpost

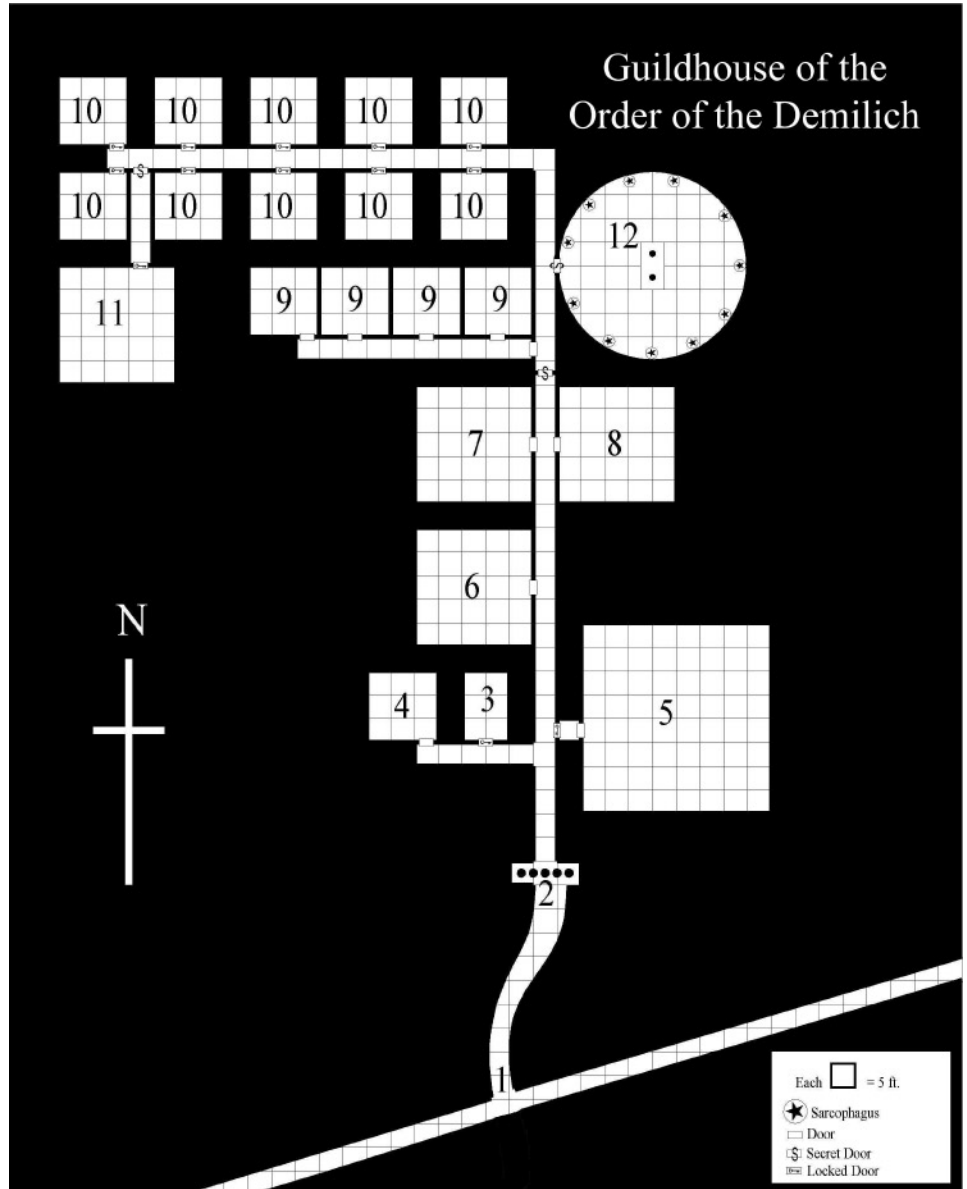
A portcullis that drops down from the ceiling barricades this hallway. Four thugs guard this post, shooting crossbows through the gaps between the bars at any intruders who come through here. They admit people if they know them by sight, and they grudgingly allow guests through if they are accompanied by other members after questioning them about their intentions in the guildhouse. It is assumed that any new people in the guildhouse are either invited there to join or brought there to die.

### 3. Treasure Storage

This room stores only coins. Magic items are kept with their owners. Although the amount of treasure in this room fluctuates based on how much money has been spent by the order, there are usually various types of coins that are the equivalent of six hundred thousand gp. here, plus or minus one hundred thousand.

### 4. General Storage

This room is full of items commonly used in the upkeep and care of the guildhouse. Hammers, nails, mortar, buckets, and rags are found within. Also within are some rather macabre items such as sacrificial daggers, bleached and polished bones, and piles of detritus from victims that have been dealt with.



### 5. Lotus Nursery

Except for the narrow walkways, the floor of this room is filled from wall to wall with potted lotus plants. Four globes with continual light cast upon them hang—one in the center of each quadrant of the ceiling. The low level thieves who live down here tend to these plants.

### 6. Sleeping Quarters

For the fifteen initiates who make up the second level of power of this organization, this room is their place to sleep. Furnishings here include bedrolls, personal chests to store their belongings, and their clothing. It is normal to find 1d6 initiates in this room at any given time.

### 7. Common Area

Low-level members are not allowed any deeper into the guildhouse than this room, except to go to room twelve for ceremo-

nies. This room serves as kitchen, dining room, and recreation area for those who live here. A natural fissure in the ceiling that leads to an abandoned set of tunnels up above serves as the chimney for the wood burning stove in this room. In the center of the room, built up from the floor, is a well that is drilled into the rock below, and provides the inhabitants with drinking water. Normally 1d10 thugs, 1d6 initiates, and 1d4 master necromancers are in this room.

### 8. Master's Sleeping Quarters

This large area contains the cots and personal belongings of the four master necromancers who make up the second highest level of power. This room is bare of furnishings aside from the chests that contain the necromancer's belongings and a purple tapestry that hangs on the wall with a skeletal hand emblazoned in gold upon it. Unless encountered elsewhere in the guildhouse, 1d4 of the masters are normally

found in this room.

## 9. Studies of the undead

These four large rooms are crammed with bookshelves, desks and tables. Musty tomes, arcane markings, and candles litter the desks and stands. The undead use these areas to further their research and their pursuits to fulfill the prophecy of Gingus. Under normal circumstances there are 1d6 of the undead necromancers in these rooms.

## 10. Personal quarters of the undead

Each of these rooms were excavated when a new undead necromancer was added to the enclave. Each failed lich has its own personal room. These rooms are decorated spartanly with few personal belongings since these beings have given themselves wholly over to magical research.

## 11. Dominus Pralir's Quarters

Much like the 11 quarters that make up area 10, this is the room that Dominus Pralir takes as his own. Unlike the others, he was accustomed to all the trappings of royalty during his life, and he has decorated his quarters as such. His floor is covered in a gold gilded red carpet. His walls are adorned with purple drapes. Upon the north wall is a twelve foot painting by Kugyt Lihruht, a famous painter who died a hundred years before Pralir. With a successful appraise check (DC 18) the characters learn that the painting is worth between 20,000 and 25,000 gp, and the carpet is worth 5,000 gp.

## 12. Ceremony Chamber

This round chamber is where the cult conducts meetings and performs ceremonies. In the center of the room is a seven foot long stone platform that stands four feet off the ground. Eleven upright stone sarcophagi, each with the face of the once living inhabitant etched into the stone, are spaced evenly along the walls. This room is also usually inhabited by 2d6 skeletons - the animated bones of the people who have found themselves on the receiving end of the order's wrath. During ceremonies, the skeletons stand guard outside the room.

After becoming undead, Pralir altered part of the ceremony to make others undead, adding the physical act of killing them after they had drank the magical concoction.

During these rare ceremonies, the highest ranking necromancer gives the soon to be undead person the drink, and then plunges a ceremonial dagger into his beating heart.

## Adventure Hooks

"A noble or lord's son or daughter has become involved with the cult. He's looking for adventurers to extricate his progeny from their clutches. Unfortunately the young initiate doesn't want to be rescued and will fight the party. Accomplishing the mission without killing noble's family member could be a real challenge.

"A rival necromancer or wizard wants the PCs to destroy the cult leader. Their would-be employer also happens to be evil, so the party may be duped into destroying one evil to allow the ascension of another, possibly worse, one.

"The party, traveling through the sewers for whatever reason, is confronted by members of the Order of the Demilich who want to strip them of fifteen gp. each, as well as all of their magic items. Unless the party complies, the order members attack. Unless defeated, the PCs track their attackers back to their lair where they face the horrors contained within.

## Characters

➤ **Dominus Pralir, Male Human Necromancer**20, Undead; Size: M; hp 154; Init +2; Spd Walk 30'ft.; AC 14; Atk = +9/+4 melee, +12/+7 ranged; SA:Summon Familiar; AL:NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, +12; Str 9, Dex 14, Con -, Int 20, Wis 16, Cha 16.

*Skills and Feats:* Alchemy +28, Concentration +23, Diplomacy +15, Innuendo +14, Scry +26, Search +10, Spellcraft +28, Spot +10, Brew Potion, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Empower Spell, Leadership, Maximize Spell, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Spell Focus (Necromancy, Evocation), Still Spell.

*Special Qualities:* Darkvision (Ex): Range 60 ft. Undead: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain or death from massive damage.

*Possessions:* Dagger +1; Wizard's Robe; Pouch (Small/Belt).

*Spells Castable:* Wizard 0: Arcane Mark, Dancing Lights, Daze, Detect Magic, Detect

Poison, Disrupt Undead, Flare, Light, Mage Hand, Mending, Open/Close, Prestidigitiation, Ray of Frost, Read Magic, Resistance 1: Cause Fear, Chill Touch, Hold Portal, Identify, Magic Missile, Protection from Good, Ray of Enfeeblement, Shocking Grasp 2: Arcane Lock, Detect Thoughts, Ghoul Touch, Melf's Acid Arrow, Scare, Spectral Hand 3: Dispel Magic, Explosive Runes, Fireball, Halt Undead, Lightning Bolt, Vampiric Touch 4: Contagion, Detect Scrying, Enervation, Fire Shield, Wall of Fire 5: Animate Dead, Cloudkill, Contact Other Plane, Dismissal, Leomund's Secret Chest, Teleport 6: Circle of Death, Disintegrate, Flesh to Stone, Greater Dispelling, Legend Lore 7: Control Undead, Delayed Blast Fireball, Finger of Death, Plane Shift, Sequester 8: Binding, Clone, Horrid Wilting, Polymorph Any Object, Trap the Soul 9: Freedom, Imprisonment, Meteor Swarm, Summon Monster IX, Wish.

➤ **Undead, Male Human Necromancer**15; Size:M; hp 90; Init +2; Spd Walk 30'ft.; AC 14; Atk = +8/+3 melee, +9/+4 ranged; SA: Summon Familiar; AL:NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, +9; Str 14, Dex 13, Con -, Int 19, Wis 13, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Alchemy +22, Appraise +7, Bluff +3, Concentration +17, Diplomacy +8, Scry +22, Search +8, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +22, Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Staff, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Empower Spell, Enlarge Spell, Maximize Spell, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell

*Special Qualities:* Darkvision (Ex): Range 60 ft. Undead: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain or death from massive damage.

*Possessions:* Dagger +1; Wizard's Robe; Pouch (Small/Belt).

*Spells Castable:* Wizard 0: Arcane Mark, Dancing Lights, Daze, Detect Magic, Detect Poison, Disrupt Undead, Flare, Light, Mage Hand, Mending, Open/Close, Prestidigitiation, Ray of Frost, Read Magic, Resistance; 1: Cause Fear, Chill Touch, Magic Missile, Ray of Enfeeblement, Shield, Sleep; 2: Arcane Lock, Darkness, Ghoul Touch, Knock, Scare, Spectral Hand; 3: Fireball, Fly, Halt Undead, Hold Person, Lightning Bolt, Vampiric Touch; 4: Contagion, Detect Scrying, Enervation, Evard's Black Tentacles, Fear, Wall of Fire; 5: Animate Dead, Rary's Telepathic Bond, Magic Jar, Passwall, Teleport; 6: Acid Fog, Circle of Death, Disintegrate, Guards and Wards; 7: Control Undead, Finger of Death, Forcecage; 8:



Clone, Horrid Wilting.

➤ **Master, Male Human Necromancer**10; Size: M; hp 36; Init 0; Spd Walk 30'ft.; AC 10; Atk = +4 melee (Dmg 1d4+1, dagger +1, +5 ranged); SA: Summon Familiar; AL:NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, +7; Str 9, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 17, Wis 12, Cha 13.

*Skills and Feats:* Alchemy +16, Appraise +9, Concentration +14, Knowledge (History) +16, Scry +16, Spellcraft +16, Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Rod, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Empower Spell, Scribe Scroll

*Possessions:* Dagger +1; Outfit (Traveler's); Pouch (Small/Belt);

*Spells Castable:* Wizard 0: Arcane Mark, Dancing Lights, Daze, Detect Magic, Detect Poison, Disrupt Undead, Flare, Light, Mage Hand, Mending, Open/Close, Prestidigitation, Ray of Frost, Read Magic, Resistance; 1: Cause Fear, Chill Touch, Magic Missile, Ray of Enfeeblement, Shocking Grasp, Sleep; 2: Arcane Lock, Darkness, Ghoul Touch, Scare, Spectral Hand, Web; 3: Fireball, Gentle Repose, Halt Undead, Hold Person, Vampiric Touch; 4: Contagion, Enervation, Fear, Ice Storm; 5: Animate Dead, Magic Jar, Transmute Rock to Mud.

➤ **Initiate, Male Human Necromancer**5; Size:M; hp 9; Init 0; Spd Walk 30'ft.; AC 10; Atk = +2 melee (Dmg 1d6, Quarterstaff), +2 ranged; SA: Summon Familiar; AL:NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, +4; Str 11, Dex 11, Con 9, Int 17, Wis 10, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Alchemy +11, Concentration +7, Scry +11, Search +7, Sense Motive +4, Spellcraft +11, Brew Potion, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wand, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell

*Possessions:* 1.0 Acid (Flask); 1.0 Bedroll; 1.0 Candle; 1.0 Flask; 1.0 Outfit (Traveler's); 1.0 Parchment (Sheet);

*Spells Castable:* Wizard 0: Arcane Mark, Dancing Lights, Daze, Detect Magic, Detect Poison, Disrupt Undead, Flare, Light, Mage Hand, Mending, Open/Close, Prestidigitation, Ray of Frost, Read Magic, Resistance; 1: Cause Fear, Chill Touch, Magic Missile, Ray of Enfeeblement; 2: Ghoul Touch, Knock, Scare, Spectral Hand; 3: Fireball, Halt Undead, Vampiric Touch.

➤ **Thief, Male Human Rogue**3; Size: M; hp 12; Init +6; Spd Walk 30'ft.; AC 14; Atk +2 melee (Dmg 1d6, shortsword), +4 ranged (Dmg 1d4, throwing dagger); SA: Sneak Attack +2d6, Evasion, Uncanny Dodge (Dex bonus to AC); AL:NE; SV Fort +1, Ref

+5, +1; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 9, Wis 9, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +6, Disable Device +5, Disguise +6, Escape Artist +3, Gather Information +1, Hide +8, Move Silently +7, Open Lock +7, Pick Pocket +7, Search +2, Spot +3, Armor Proficiency (Light), Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes

*Possessions:* Caltrops; Dagger (Throwing); Disguise Kit; Grappling Hook; Leather Armor.

➤ **Thug, Male Human Warrior**3; Size: M; hp 13; Init 0; Spd Walk 20'ft.; AC 16; Atk +6 melee (Dmg 1d8+3, battleaxe), +3 ranged; AL:NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, +1; Str 16, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 12..

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +-1, Intimidate +5, Armor Proficiency (Heavy), Armor Proficiency (Light), Armor Proficiency (Medium), Cleave, Martial Weapon Proficiency, Power Attack, Shield Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Sunder

*Possessions:* Banded Mail; Battleaxe.

*\*Dominus Pralir is made using the undead template published in Necromancy Beyond the Grave, by Mongoose Publishing. That template is designated Open Game Content. The other characters shown below are representative of the members common to the order. Note that while only one undead other than Pralir is presented, GM's are encouraged to develop their own undead to fit their individual needs.*

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## The Short Straw

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# The Lurker

By David Sarkies

This was the winning adventure in the EN World Adventure Contest, 2001.

'The Lurker' is an adventure for a party of good-aligned characters of 12th lvl and above. The adventure is essentially an escort mission where the PCs must protect a child as she travels home, but the adventurers are caught up fighting a powerful enemy they cannot see. Though it is possible to scale the adventure for characters of lower levels, the nature of the enemy, and its potential power, will present a much greater challenge.

## Adventure Background

A creature known only as The Beast lurks in the Ethereal Plane, and has only the power to affect a limited region of the Physical realm. Thousands of years ago he rampaged through the old empires, bringing great destruction through his vessels. The Beast proved to be more powerful than even the empires' greatest mages, but in a combined effort they were able to bring him under control. The mages (known as The Enchanters) imprisoned the Beast in a location so remote that he would be unable to reach out and possess another creature. The tomb was sealed, and the phylactery that enabled him to influence the physical realm was sealed inside.

The Enchanters had attempted to defeat the beast in its own Realm, but those who went to face him never returned. Some say he simply stole their souls and they now exist in eternal torment as the beast's slaves.

Centuries passed since the beast was last heard off. Its existence slowly left the minds of the mortals. Nobody ventured near the tomb and nobody recorded its existence or location; with that the memories of it also vanished, though much quicker than that of the Beast. Trapped in his chains, the Beast still remembered, and through out the millenia, his anger continued to rise.

The population had been growing over the last thousand years, and the kingdoms that rose from the ashes of the old empires expanded their territories. First came the farmers, and then came the merchants, and then the roads. The once wild lands were

tamed as forests were cut back and swamps drained. Still much land was left unused, but the tomb was not to remain in isolation forever. Soon someone would pass close enough to the tomb for The Beast to awaken; and when it awoke, it would seek its way back into the physical realm to destroy, first those who dared imprison him, and next all those whom they loved dearly.

## Adventure Summary

The adventure, though divided into three parts, is not linear through these parts. The PCs, who are travelling through the wilderness after receiving invitations to the reading of a will, pass by the School of Etiquette for Young Ladies. Outside the school waits the last remaining teacher and a little girl. The teacher explains that the Spring Harvest festival has almost arrived and the school closes down for a moon. Unfortunately the escort for the little girl, Talina, to take her home, never arrived. The teacher thus asks the PCs if they could help. Just as it happens, Talina is the grand daughter of Lord Schunkter the Elder, the deceased to whose reading of the will the PCs are going. Moreso, Lord Schunkter the Elder was the descendant of one of the Enchanters that imprisoned the Beast.

On the road back, the PCs find the remains of an ambush, and a quick search will reveal the remains of the girl's escort. Unfortunately the PCs have wandered into the area in which The Beast holds dominion, and nightfall will force them to camp. During the night he will possess the girl, and she will wonder off into the woods. PCs following her will be led to the entrance to the tomb. Talina will attempt to enter the tomb, claiming that she wants her 'Squishy Toy' and if prevented will begin to turn violent. Once she has the toy, she will continue the journey.

Unbeknownst to the PCs, the Squishy Toy is the beast's phylactery and he is able to influence the physical world through it. The Beast lurks in the girl until they arrive at her father's house, or if the PCs become violent. Once the girl is delivered, the fun will begin. The Beast will reveal itself through the girl, allow the PCs to leave since they assisted in freeing it, and then proceeded to destroy the girl's father's house.

By this time the PCs should realise that it must have something to do with the tomb they encountered, meaning that they will need to return. This the beast will not like and thus attempt to hinder them on their way back. Once at the tomb, the PCs will need to find the entrance to the sealed level, and then look for information on how to deal with the beast.

At this stage the DM is free to finish the adventure here, or continue through to the Ethereal Plane. By destroying the anchorpoint in the second level, the Beast can be freed, and the Ethereal Winds will carry him off. Otherwise, the PCs must use the anchorpoint on the second level to travel to the Ethereal Plane, and then cut the chains from the Ethereal (which is much quicker than doing it on the physical).

## Adventure Hooks

Read the following to the players:

You have been travelling for a couple of days now in this remote region of the land. Last night you spent in a barn at a nearby farmhouse, but as the forested mountains begin to close in, you wonder if there is any friendly settlement ahead, especially since the sun has now begun to vanish behind the mountainous curtains.

You wonder what it is that brings you to this desolate place, and you cast your minds back to when it all began. One day a messenger arrived with an invitation from Lord Schunkter the Younger. His father had recently died, and had mentioned each of you in his will. Though the messenger did not say what had been left for you, he did believe it was something substantial. The reasons simply reads 'for services rendered.'

You continue your journey following the road as it winds through the forest. The forest seems to creep up beside you, and come in ever closer, but before you realise it, the road turns into a clearing. The road crosses the clearing and runs directly towards the mountains, vanishing into the forest at the far end.

Beside the road, in the clearing, is a large compound. Iron fences surround the central building, and vicious spikes line its tops. The building itself is grand, remind-

## The Lurker

ing one more of a palace than of a remote fort, though a large tower rises from behind.

This is the School of Etiquette for Young Ladies (its name being cast into a sign that sits above the gate), and is presided over by a solitary mage, only known as 'Tawny Owl'. As the PCs approach the gates they will see somebody run from the building towards the gates. This is one of the school's Mistresses, the ladies who take the role of the teachers for the young ladies. The Mistresses, who calls herself Landa, will pass through the gates and attempt to intercept the PCs asking for help.

If the PCs agree to help, read the following:

Thankyou, thankyou.

As you know, Spring Harvest is approaching, and we have to send the children home. The fathers insist on it: they are the ones who pay us. All of the escorts but one, the one for little Talina, arrived. The Owl insists that all of the children must leave, for she does not have the time to keep them while we Mistresses are at home with their families. Please could to take her home?

**Note:** The PCs may not realise that this is a school; if this is the case, try to get them to work it out.

If the PCs ask the Mistress where the Talina's home is, she will reply:

Why, she is the daughter of Lord Schunter the Younger. He rules the land beyond the forest to the west. Follow the road to the crossroads, and take the path to the west, the one that leads into the woods. Talina should know, she can direct you. It's just that we don't like the little ones wondering around in those woods alone.

☞ **Mistress (Landa), Female Human Expert 7:** CR 7; Medium-sized Humanoid (5 ft. 6 in. tall); HD 7d6; hp 29; Init +5 (Dexterity +1, Improved Initiative +4); Spd 20 ft.; AC +1 (Dexterity +1); Atk +4 melee (1d2, unarmed); AL NG; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +9; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 17, Cha 14.

**Skills:** Diplomacy +4, Gather Information +4, Handle Animal\* +10, Knowledge\*\*(Religion) +10, Knowledge (Mathematics) +8, Knowledge (Local History) +8, Knowledge (Etiquette) +10, Profession (Teacher) +13, Ride +8, Sense Motive +10, (+2 Listen, +2 Spot). Feats Alertness, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Run.

**Possessions:** Landa's possessions are contained in her room in the school. These consist of books on various subjects that interest her, and a number of curios. She has a work desk, where she studies and

writes critiques of various works, or developing her own. She also has rough notes of students, though seems to consider them an annoying occupation.

Personality Landa doesn't particularly like company, and is wanting the PCs to move on quickly so she can return to her work, or pursue her pleasure of riding in the country. She tends to be quite firm and commanding, using The Owl's authority to back her up ("I'm sorry, The Owl will not allow any stranger to stay the night on her grounds"). She is willing to part with minor information (though will simply say that Talina is a good child if asked about her), though persistent questioning will quickly begin to annoy her. If forced to, Landa will give each PC a bag of 200 silver pennies and tell them that Talina's Father will no doubt reward them further. About her history, she is tight lipped since it is definitely intruding into her past.

\* The Mistresses specialise in a specific animal, usually (such as Landa) being horses. Landa owns a lovely brown and white mottled steed name Chariot.

\*\* Mistresses have 4 Knowledges as class skills. Landa's knowledges are listed above.

☞ **Talina, female human child:** CR 0; small humanoid (3 ft. 7 in. tall); HD 1d4; hp 3; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC +0; Atk -2 melee (1 hp, unarmed); AL CN; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 7, Dex 11, Con 9, Int 5, Wis 8, Cha 17.

**Skills:** Listen +3, Spot +3. Feats Alertness.

**Possessions:** Talina has her clothes packed in two suitcases, and a small satchel in which she carries her note pads and a little book entitled 'A Little Ladies Guide to Etiquette'. She is dressed in an embroidered dress with an under coat (to keep her warm). She also has a deep red blanket (purple, and thus quite valuable, about 100 silver) which she wraps around herself as she travels.

**Personality:** Talina is a very curious little girl. Upon first seeing the PCs they will immediately become her heroes, and she will ask them to tell her stories of their adventures. She will continually tell them of her love to travel 'beyond the mountains and explore the big wide world'. She wants to see 'dragons, flying horses, dragons, unicorns, dragons, elves, dragons' etc. and she does have an obsession with dragons 'beautiful beasts of grace and wonder' (she saw one fly over at the age of 6, she is now 11, and has been enthralled ever since). If asked about anything, she will make up some reply if she does not know the answer.

As for her father, she knows where to go, 'the town is at the base of the mountains,

left at the crossroads ahead!'. She thinks of him as 'a wonderful king that rules a great land' (though in reality he is a simple lord of a border demense - she always exaggerates). She knows nothing about her grandfather except, 'he is a Sorcerer. I saw him one night. Down in his basement.'

## The Crossroads

The shadows of the woods, with the setting sun, begin to leer over you. Ahead the road seems to divide: one heads into the mountains while the other turns into the woods at their base.

"Down there!" Talina cries with joy, "the forest, father's place is just through there! It's a lovely walk!"

The path that Talina indicates does indeed lead to her father's domain, but the path passes through some quite untamed forest. Though the path is easy to follow, careless PCs can easily wonder off and become lost in the forest. The forest covers an area of roughly 300 square miles. The road only travels 50 miles through the forest; roughly two days journey by foot.

## The Domain of the Beast

A dark presence lurks within this forest, but it is trapped: restrained by bounds that had been placed upon it a millennia ago. Now it sleeps, waiting for a time to wreck vengeance upon those who defeated it. The presence: the Beast, is bound in the ethereal plane. When he was bound, this was untouched wilderness, inhabited only by loose tribes of humanoids. The Enchanters believed that civilisation would never reach here and placed the phylactery, the Beast's prison, deep in the mountain.

They knew that the beast was not defeated, and they knew that they required other anchors around the world to fully hold the beast in place. As such they believed that access to the phylactery may be required. Thus they built a tomb, deep into the mountain, and there they placed the phylactery, sealed the chambers, and left.

### 1) Ambush Site

"NOOO!!!", Talina cries as you see the remains of a carriage ahead: smashed against a tree with a log protruding from its side. The horses are gone, and there is no sign of life.

"What happened," Talina cries as she becomes very frightened. Sure enough, there are signs of combat, but it seems that

the bodies have been removed.

The carriage was attacked by a gang of ogres, who rammed the coach as it raced by. They were simply having fun, but were a bit upset when they killed the driver and the guard before they could have some fun. So they buried them and left. The horses had broken free during the crash and run off.

The ogres did rummage through the coach, and this is very noticeable. The remains are scattered everywhere. The coach carried little since it was on its way to meet Talina, but the ogres were not concerned.

The ogres did leave an obvious trail, two actually (both DC 15), one leading to where they buried the bodies, and the other leading into the forest.

### 2) Graves

The two servants that came to collect Talina are buried here. There is nothing of value on their bodies.

### 3) Run-off pond

Thousands of years ago, this pool used to be a spring. When the beast was imprisoned, the ancient mages knew that guardians were required not only to prevent the beast from escaping, but to also prevent unlikely travellers from stumbling across the tomb. As such, they built this pond (which serves as a catchment for streams running

down from the mountain) and bound two water elementals to it.

Entering the Anchor site will activate these elementals, who will thus prevent anybody from leaving the region. They will concentrate their attacks upon anybody who either carries the beast's phylactery, or are possessed by the beast.

**Creatures (EL 7):** The elementals are unintelligent and cannot communicate without the aid of magic. If spoken to, they will reveal that they are guardians summoned to protect a tomb that contains 'a great destructive force'. They have no knowledge of what this force actually is, or the form that it takes: they simply know that the force is present and if anybody or thing is possessed by this force.

➤ **Large Water Elemental (2):** CR 5; Large Elemental (water) (16 ft. tall); HD 8d8+32; hp 60, 63; Init +2 (+2 Dexterity); Spd 20 ft., swim 90 ft.; AC 20 (-1 size, +2 dex, +9 natural); Atk +10/+5 melee (2d8+7, slam); Reach 10 ft.; SA Water Mastery, Drench, Vortex; SQ Elemental, Damage Reduction 10/+1; AL N; SV Fort +10, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 20, Dex 14, Con 19, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 11.

**Skills:** Listen +11, Spot +11. Feats Cleave, Power Attack.

**SA-Water Mastery (Ex):** A water elemental gains +1 to attack and damage if both it and opponent touch water. A -4 penalty to attack and damage is imposed if the opponent and elemental is land

bound.

**SA-Drench (Ex):** The elemental can put out non-magical fires of large size or smaller with a touch. The elemental can also dispel magical fire it touches as a dispel magic cast by an 8th lvl wizard.

**SA-Vortex (Su):** see Monster Manual pg 85

**SQ-Elemental:** Immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stun, and critical hits.

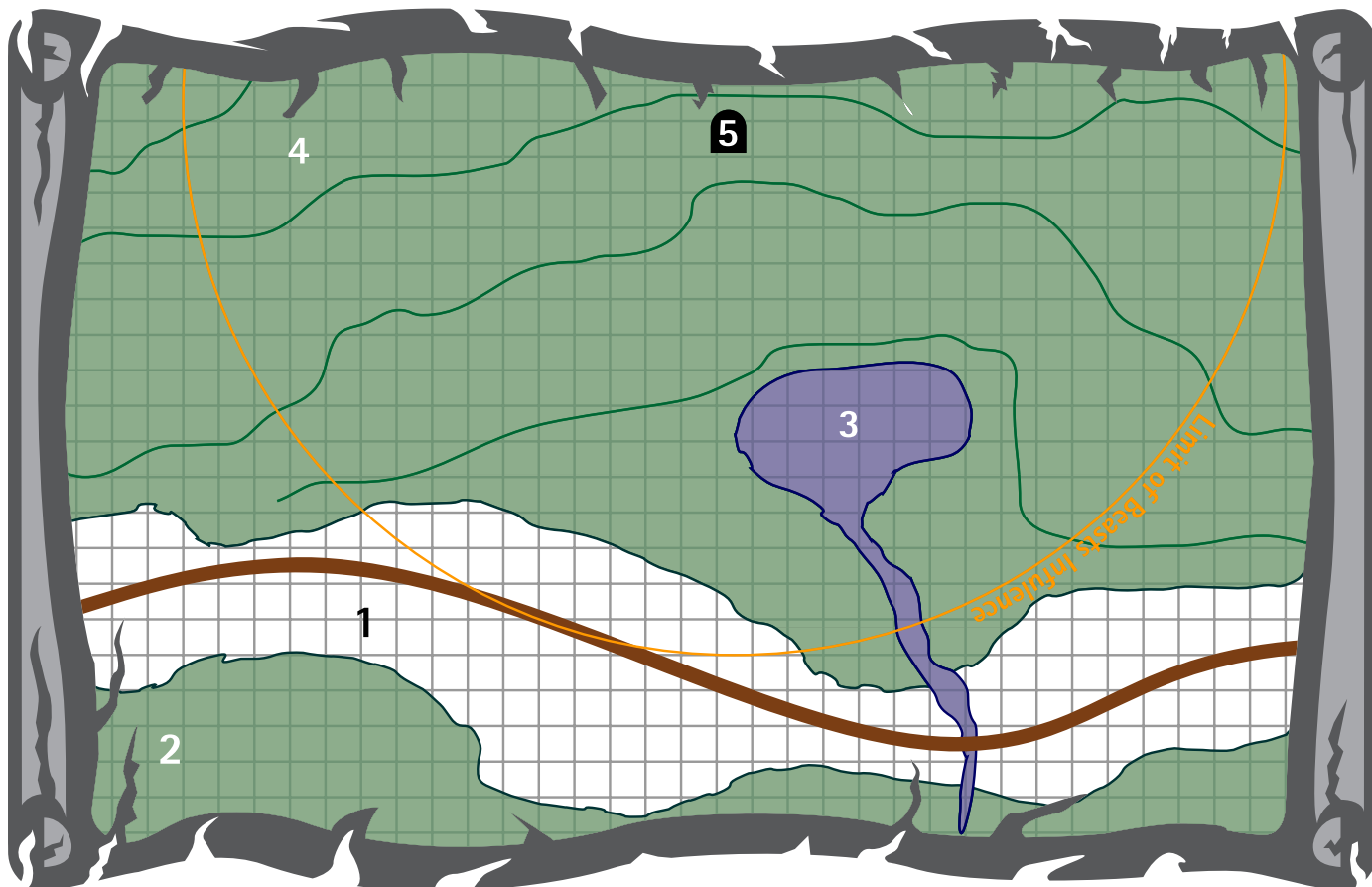
**SQ-Damage Reduction (Su):** 10/+1

### 4) Battle Site

Following the trail from the ambush site will lead the PCs here. Read or paraphrase the following:

The track ends at a small campsite, the forest having been cleared rather quickly and recently. Your hopes at catching the perpetrators of the ambush are shattered as you look around another scene of devastation. A number of ogres lie here dead, their bodies mutilated and their bones smashed as if they were chalk. One corpse hangs from a tree, a branch protruding through his torso, and another seems to have been tossed a great distance, his mangle corpse lying crumpled around the stump that it struck.

There are no other trails leading from this site, nor is there any evidence of who or what attacked the ogres. What is clear is that whoever killed the ogres were capable of doing it without any weapons, and quite easily. A Search Check (DC 21) will reveal



## The Lurker

that one ogre appears to have slain himself.

↗ **Trap:** As can be seen from the map, this site is within the domain of the beast. If the PCs remain here for too long the beast will attempt to attack them: this is what happened to the ogres. The beast easily possessed one of the ogres, and once he has slain the others, forced the possessed ogre to kill himself.

The beast will attempt to possess each of the PCs individually, testing their willpower. Unlike the ogres, the beast recognises the PCs superior intelligence, and believes that they will be capable of releasing it (whereas it was doubtful that the ogres could).

See below for more information regarding the Beast possessing members of the party.

## 5) Old Building.

Suddenly forest falls away as you climb up the difficult slope. The clearing is small, and quite overgrown, but an old stone building, set into the side of the mountain, is quite visible. Much grass and bushes grow from the dirt that has fallen around it, and there appears to be no visible entrance.

It is unlikely that the PCs will stumble across this building, and thus the beast will seek to lead them to it. The Beast's most likely tactic is to possess Talina and use her to draw the PCs to this site. This is further discussed below under 'The Possession'.

The building is buried in the side of the hill: all that is visible in the clearing is a part of the roof and the front wall, though grass and bushes make access difficult. The door is buried under the dirt, and a number of bushes have grown over the area making digging difficult. Removing the bushes requires a Strength Check (DC 15). A Search Check (DC 25) will reveal that behind the bushes there is a small opening that leads into the building. The opening is narrow and only creatures of size small or smaller will be able to crawl through; if the bushes are removed then medium-sized creatures will be able to crawl through (Dexterity Check DC 15. If the check is failed, the PC will not be able to squeeze through. If the check is botched, then the PC is stuck and will require assistance to escape).

## The Anchor-site

There are two distinct levels to this complex. The upper level has been dug from the mountain and reinforced with 1 inch thick masonry walls made from granite blocks. The lower level has likewise been dug from

the mountain, but the walls have been reinforced with 5 inch thick black marble slabs. Likewise the floors of the upper level are granite flagstones while the lower level are smooth and polished black marble floors. The ceilings of both levels have been reinforced with granite arches on the upper levels and marble arches on the lower level. The arches are spaced 5 ft apart.

The outer area of the upper level is covered in cobwebs, and small animals and rodents find their home here. There is more rubble in this area than the rest of the complex, as well as signs of passage. The occasional party has stumbled upon this domain, and either left unable to open the door to area 3, or killed by the ghouls in area 2.

↗ **Trap:** Years of disuse has left the complex very dusty and covered in cobwebs. Violent motion such as running, rapid searching, and combat, will disturb this dust. Creatures with sensitive nostrils (such as PC characters) must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or erupt in sneezing imposing a -4 penalty on all actions.

### 1) Chamber

The tunnel leading into the mountain side opens up into a small chamber here. A pile of unused masonry sits in the corner along with rusted tools. Bones of two humanoid skeletons lie scattered across the floor. These bones are the remains of two adventurers who were killed by their companions when the Beast possessed them, and have been picked over by scavengers. Over time the bones have become very brittle and will easily break if struck.

The room also shows signs of usage. The remains of a campfire, a circle of scorched rocks, and food scraps are here, though a number of mice are already fighting over them.

When the PCs enter this room, they will hear a faint cry for help coming from area 2.

### 2) False Prisoner

The tight corridor is choked full of cobwebs, but the distinct cries for help can be heard coming from down this passageway. Through the cobwebs can be seen a pile of rubble.

This rubble has been placed here by the beast. Close examination of it will reveal that it has not come from the walls, nor have the walls collapsed in this area. The blockage is not thick, and will take half an hour for a single person to clear. Once the blockage is cleared, the PCs can see into the room beyond.

Your light spills into this duty room full of cobwebs. The sight that greets you is one of horror, for lying on the floor are many corpses in the process of decomposition. A horrid stench of rotting flesh assails you as you attempt to peer further into this room. The cries for help can be heard clearly now, and your light illuminates a humanoid figure at the far side of the room.

The figure is a Phantasmal Force created by the beast and is of Talina's (or, if Talina is present, of her Mother). Once the PCs clearly see her, she will begin to communicate with them, telling the PCs that she cannot move. If asked what happened here, she will tell the PCs that she fell climbing over the rocks, and now she can't get up. She claims no knowledge of the other bodies.

These corpses are of the inhabitants of the region that the Beast had lured into his domain. Upon becoming trapped in here, they resorted to survival by eating each other, and in the process became ghouls. If asked about personal information, the Illusion will reveal what Talina knows. If the image is of Talina's mother then Talina will be convinced that this is her mother, and will desire to rescue her and take her home "as a surprise for father."

On the far wall of the alcove is an inscription. The inscriptions are composed of a number of sigils, eight in all. These sigils represent the settings for the transportation pillar in area 3. Dust, cobwebs, and clumps of dirt conceal the sigils, and can be found on a Spot check (DC 30), or a Search check (DC 15).

↗ **Trap:** When the PCs approach the illusion it will reveal its true nature. The image will dissolve and a cave in will block the exit from this room. The cave in is little more than an illusion.

**Creatures (EL 6):** The ghouls remain motionless until activated by the beast. This will occur once the trap has been set off and the PCs believe they are trapped. The ghouls will not leave the room if the PCs manage to pierce the illusion and flee through the corridor. If the PCs, once leaving the room, head deeper into the complex, then the ghouls will be waiting for them in area 1.

➤ **Ghouls (8):** CR 1; Medium-Sized Undead (6 ft. tall); HD 2d12; hp 8, 10, 11, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 22; Init +2 (Dexterity); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+2 dex, +2 natural); Atk +3 melee (1d6+1, Bite); +0 melee (1d3, 2 claws); SA Paralysis, Create Spawn; SQ Undead, +2 turn resistance; AL CE; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 15, Con --, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 16.

**Skills:** Climb +6, Escape Artist +7, Hide

+7, Intuit Direction +3, Jump +6, Listen +7, Move Silently +7, Search +6, Spot +7. Feats Multiattack, Weapon Finesse (Bite).

**SA-Paralysis (Ex):** Those hit by a claw or bite attack must make a Fort Save (DC 14) or be paralysed for 1d6+2 minutes

**SA-Create Spawn (Su):** Bodies of humanoid victims that are not devoured rise as ghouls in 1d4 days.

◆ **Treasure:** There is little of actual value in this room, though if searched (DC 15) a small pouch containing 4 opals (500gp each) will be found. This was in the possession of one of the ghouls victims. Along with this, one of the ghouls has a rusted dagger that is actually a Dagger +1/+2 vs Ethereal Creatures. Though a Detect Magic will reveal that the dagger is magical, its properties will not be realised until the dagger is cleaned and polished.

### 3) Transportation Room

At the entrance to this room is a 5' thick wooden barrier. The barrier is inscribed with the image of a dragon and around the image is a phrase written in an ancient language. Translating the phrase (Decipher Script DC 27) says "this domain is the prison of a Beast. Those who foolishly open this ward will release great destruction upon the realm". The wood has been preserved through the use of powerful magic and a number of protective sigils have been placed on it. These sigils are invisible and can only be revealed through the use of a Detect Magic and a Read Magic spell.

The barrier can be broken down, but requires a Strength Check (DC 25). Breaking down the barrier also activates the sigils: a lighting trap which charges the area before the door (10' by 5') with electric current. Anybody in the area takes 4d6 hp damage, and will continue to do so until they move out of the area. The area remains charged for 24 hours.

A Dispel Magic (DC 26) will destroy the magic upon the door. There are three spells upon the door though: the trap, the preservation spell, and the spell that holds the barrier in place. Unless a specific spell is targeted (and the specific spells will be revealed through the use of Dispel Magic, though a Concentration Check, DC 15, is required to recognise the spells) a random spell will be dispelled. Dispelling the barrier spell will cause the barrier to vanish, as well as dispelling the other spells. Even if the barrier is dispelled, it will reappear after a week.

If the PCs were diverted to area 2, Talina will be down here. She has no idea how to get through the barrier, but the Beast does. The beast will cast a Dispel Magic at the barrier spell (he can only do this

when possessed by a being that is capable of spellcasting, such as a human) and pass through the barrier. Once through, Talina will grab the 'Squishy Toy' and then look for the PCs to take her home. If the PCs come up here, they will simply find Talina standing before the barrier. She will look at the PCs and say "my Squishy Toy is in there."

Once the PCs are through the barrier, read the following:

Your light illuminates a large room, but shadows of darkness still lurk in the corners. The centre of the room is raised, and at one end is a dull metal column. Unlike the rest of the complex, this room is clear of cobwebs and other signs of animal life.

The column is set into the floor and the ceiling, 4' off the ground, the column has a series of eight rings. Around the rings are numerous sigils and set at the base of the column is a small arrow. Each of these rings turn, and the sigils click into place over the arrow. This is the controls that operate a transportation device which teleports everybody on the raised platform to area 4, above the pit.

The settings for the rings are inscribed upon the wall in area 2, but PCs who have not found them can discover the settings by other means. Trail and error (Int Check DC 45), through the use of divination spells, or skills such as Decipher Script (DC 30).

◆ **Treasure:** In the corner of the room lies a small toy. It is made of dyed cloth and filled with dried peas. The toy looks like a lizard, but it is human shaped. Talina will notice the toy and run to it and grab it, calling it her Squishy Toy. This toy, though, is actually the Beast's phylactery. Though the Beast is capable of possessing those who come within its domain, it cannot leave the domain unless the creature possessed is carrying the phylactery. As such the Beast attempts to lure creatures into the lair to retrieve its phylactery. One the phylactery is in the possession of an individual (such as Talina) the beast is automatically able to possess the new owner (see possession below, the Beast will attempt to make the bearer of the Phylactery the level four possessed). If a PC takes the Squishy Toy before Talina gets it, Talina will attempt to steal it.

### 4) Marble Hall

The black marble walls and pillars of this room seem to absorb rather than reflect your light, and thus creates eerie shadows that seem to flit across the walls and the ceilings. At times your eyes seem to create images of demonic figures, but they quickly vanish as the darkness moves in to take over.

The walls, floor, and ceiling of this room are in a pristine condition, though dust has still collected on the floor, which your movement stirs up. Thick marble pillars support the massive arched ceiling of this room, and surround a 10' wide well in the centre. Like the rest of the room, the marble blocks around and inside the well seem to also absorb your light.

The walls radiate subtle magic if examined, though this magic is not the result of a spell, but rather residual magic from years of isolation. The walls absorb light, and though light sources still work, they will only work at 50% efficiency. Magic that replicates sunlight will temporarily cancel this residual magic and such spells will operate normally.

The column to the right of the pit is identical to the column in area 3. An examination of the column will reveal that the rings are in reverse order, and if the rings are set in position opposite to those in area 3 then the PCs will be teleported to the platform in area 3 resetting the column there.

↗ **Trap:** If the PCs arrive in this room through the teleport in area 3, they will appear above the well. The well has a diameter of 10' and descends 50' into the ground. At the bottom of the pit are numerous sharp bones (from earlier victims of the trap). PCs falling down the pit take 5d6 hp damage plus an extra 1d6 hp from landing on the bones. A successful reflex save (DC 20) means that the PC has time to perform a simple action upon appearing above the Pit. A rogue who successfully saves (with Evasion) manages to avoid falling into the Pit. Other PCs will require a successful dexterity check to avoid falling in.

**Creatures (EI 8):** Lurking about the room are four shadows and a shadow mastiff. The mastiff hides in the hallway while the shadows flit around the darkened areas of the room. The shadows will watch the PCs for a short while before attacking. If the PCs have been divided by falling down the pit, then the Shadows will attack those in the room, and then turn upon those in the Pit. The mastiff will watch the pit while the other shadows are dealing with the PCs, and anybody attempting to climb out of the pit will be attacked.

↗ **Shadow (4):** CR 3; Medium-sized Undead Incorporeal (6 ft. tall); HD 3d12; hp 20, 21, 23, 29; Init +2 (Dexterity); Spd 30 ft./fly 40 ft.; AC 13 (+2 dex, +1 deflection); Atk +3 melee (1d6 strength temporary, incorporeal touch); SA Strength Damage, Create Spawn; SQ Undead, Incorporeal, +2 Turn Resistance; AL CE; SV Fort

The Lurker

+1, Ref +3, Will +4; Str --, Dex 14, Con --, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 13.

**Skills:** Hide +8, Intuit Direction +5, Listen +7, Spot +7. Feats Dodge.

**SA-Strength Damage (Su):** The touch of a shadow deals 1d6 strength damage. A creature reduced to 0 strength dies.

**SA-Create Spawn (Su):** Any humanoid reduced to strength 0 by a shadow becomes a shadow under the control of its killer in 1d4 rnds.

**SQ-Undead:** Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

**SQ-Incorporeal:** can only be harmed by other incorporeal creatures, +1 or better magic weapons, or magic, with a 50% chance to ignore damage from an incorporeal source. Can pass through solid objects at will, ignores armour, and always moves silently.

➤ **Shadow Mastiff (1):** CR 5; Medium-size Outsider (Shadow); HD 4d8+12; hp 35; Init +4 (+1 dex, +4 improved initiative); Spd 50 ft.; AC 14 (+1 dex, +3 natural); Atk +7 melee (1d6+4, bite); SA Bay, Trip; SQ Shadow Blend, Scent; AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 17, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 13.

**Skills:** Listen +8, Spot +8, Wilderness Lore +7. Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative.

**SA-Bay (Su):** All creatures except evil outsiders must succeed at a Will Save (DC 13) or be panicked for 2d4 rnds. Immune for a day afterwards.

**SA-Trip (Ex):** If hits with bite, may make a trip attack without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity.

**SQ-Shadow Blend (Su):** Other than full daylight, may disappear into shadow giving it 9/10th concealment.

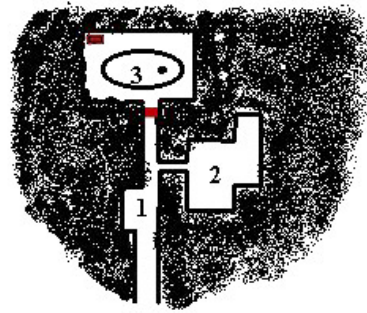
**SQ-Scent:** gains a +4 bonus to wilderness lore checks when tracking by scent.

5) Old Reading Room

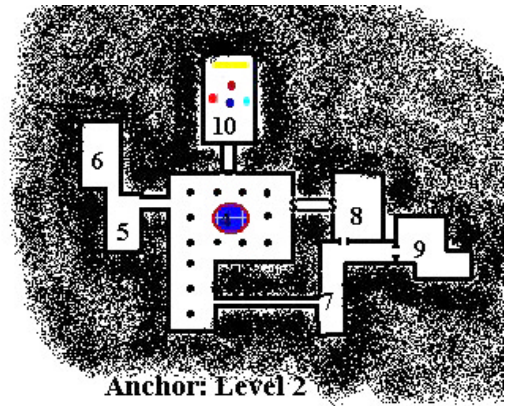
The door to this room has long since rotted away and all that remains are shards of wood on the floor and hinges set into the wall. Inside the scene is much the same with a number of rickety tables and chairs. Some books and sheets of paper are on the table, but if mistreated they will easily crumble. Like the rest of the complex, violent movements will stir up the dust that covers the room.

6) Old Library

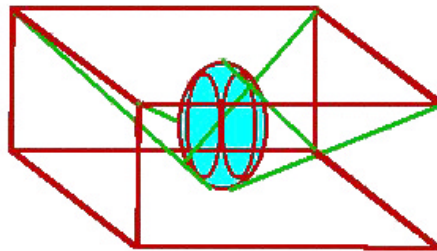
The light flickers around this room revealing bookshelves that line the walls. Parts of the shelves have collapsed and some books lie scattered across the floor. Much



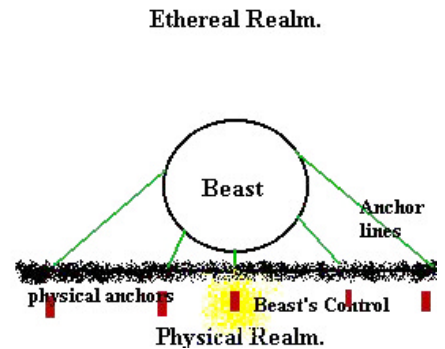
Anchor: Level 1



Anchor: Level 2



Anchor: Ethereal Plane



of the shelves remain intact, and numerous thick books have been jammed into them. There seems to be no logic or order to these books.

Like the reading room, the shelves and books are very old and mistreatment will cause them to crumble to dust. This has already occurred to the books of the ground: their pages being torn and extremely brittle. The covers are still quite strong though. Among the books on the shelves is a single book that has withstood the rigours of time. A detect magic will reveal that this book radiates preservative magic.

This book was inscribed by the enchanters that originally built this place and reveal the traps that they have put in place. The book contains the settings for both columns, as well as hints to opening the doors to area 10. In relation to that, it notes that the hallway between area 4 and area 10 is trapped (though it does not say what sort of trap it is), and also states that area 9, the Puzzle Room, contains the keys to opening the door. The book also outlines the Ethereal Anchor in area 10, though for further information regarding the anchor, see area 10.

The first page of this book contains an outline as to why the book was written. The enchanters outline what they know of the beast, and state that even though they believe that the beast is sufficiently imprisoned in this domain, there may come a time when someone will have to deal with him again, and as such they have left this book for those to know what to do.

**Creatures (El 8):** Once the PCs have

arrived here it becomes obvious that they seek to destroy rather than release the beast. As such the Beast will animate a number of books in the room in an attempt to drive out the PCs, and to prevent them from discovering the enchanters' book. If a Detect Magic is cast during this combat, the magic empowering the books will hide the magical aura of the enchanters' book.

➤ **Animated Books (12):** CR 1/2; Tiny Animated Object (1 ft. long); HD 1/2d10; hp 1,1,1,1,3,3,3,3,4,4,5,5; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 40 ft./fly 60 ft.; AC 14 (+2 size, +2 dex); Atk +1 melee (1d3-1, slam) or +1 ranged (1d3-1, spit page); SQ Improved Speed; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will -5; Str 8, Dex 16, Con --, Int --, Wis 1, Cha 1.

**SQ-Improved Speed:** Flight with good manoeuvrability.

7) Pipe

This is a narrow 3' diameter pipe that tunnels through the rock. A Web spell was cast into this pipe centuries ago, and it is still here. The web simply blocks entry and can be easily removed.

8) Hall of Remembrance

Through the marble archway you see a room with murals on the wall. Around the room are a number of statues. The murals depict a scene of immense suffering and a message has been inscribed below it. Each of the statues seems to depict a man of great valour; a king or a warrior, and

maybe a mage. There is one statue that catches your attention though: a little girl who looks remarkably like Talina.

The statue is Talina. The murals on the wall were created by the enchanters as a reminder of the suffering that the beast had caused. The message below can be read on a successful Decipher Script (DC 25), or similar ability. It simply says, “[some unpronounceable name] must not be released. He seeks only to destroy life and must be put to rest indefinitely”.

The statues though are the Beast’s creation, and are mere illusions. Every time the PCs return to this room the statues will change: all except that of Talina.

A plaque has been placed on the western wall between the murals and contains a list of names, none of which are recognised. Inscribed above the names is the message ‘In Remembrance of Those Who Died’. This plaque hides a secret door that allows access to area 4. The plaque can be opened by pulling on a couple of hand holds on the side: they can be found on a successful Search (DC 15). Opening the secret door enables the second secret door at the far end of the corridor to be opened. This second secret door can only be opened from the passageway, and opens into area 4. Even though it can be found if area 4 is searched, it is very difficult to open from that side.

## 9) Puzzle Room

The northern wall of this room bears a strange mosaic of random tiles and colours. These colours meld into each other and create a chaotic mess that seems to give you a headache as you stare at it. This pattern seems to spill onto the floor in the northern section.

A small alcove is directly across the room from the archway, and in this alcove are three statues: a robed man, an armoured knight, and a shifty character. Each of these statues clutches an object in their hands: the robed man carries a sword, the knight carries a blackjack, and the shifty character carries a staff. Each of these objects, though held by the statues, do not seem to be part of the statues.

The statues represent a Warrior, Wizard, and Rogue, and the weapons they hold are not the weapons they are supposed to be holding. These weapons can easily be removed, and those removing them will notice that they don’t seem to fit properly in the hands of the statues holding them. If the weapons are placed into the hands of the correct owners (the sword in the knight’s hand, the staff in the wizard’s hand, and the blackjack in the rogue’s

hand) then the weapon will become stone, and a three amulets will appear, floating between the statues. The amulets are of a star, a shield, and a coin. The amulets are magical, but if worn, show no distinct properties. If placed around the necks of the statues (the star for the wizard, the shield for the warrior, and the coin for the rogue) two things will occur. First one of the barriers separating area 4 from area 10 will vanish, and a pair of tinted spectacles will appear on the ground. These glasses assist with the mosaic.

To the naked eye, the mosaic is little more than a mess of colours. If studied, a willpower save is required (DC 15), failure means that the character suffers a headache and has -2 on all actions, while success means nothing happens. If the spectacles are worn, the pattern on the mosaic will become relevant.

The mosaic shows two things: first it shows four columns, one of fire, air, earth, and water. In these columns appears to be a single gem, ruby in fire, sapphire in water, diamond in air, and black opal in earth. The gems can be prized out, and have the following values: Ruby 2500gp, Diamond 7500 gp, Black Opal 1500gp, Sapphire 1000gp. The mosaic on the floor reveals four humanoids each placing their right hand upon a wall, and beneath each of the people are the words: Pyros, Hydros, Gaios, Stratos.

## 10) Ethereal Anchor

There are two barriers leading to this area, both of which are opened by solving the puzzles in area 9. The first barrier, in area 4, is opened by solving the statue puzzle, while the second, on the other side of the short hallway, is opened by solving the mosaic puzzle. The mosaic puzzle in area 9 points to this second barrier: this barrier is a white marble wall, which stands out from the black walls in the rest of the complex. 4 ft above the floor, on the white marble wall, are four black images of clawed hands. Each of these hands are right hands, and if four living right hands are placed upon the images and the words, “Pyros, Hydros, Gaios, and Stratos” are spoken (one word spoken by each of the creatures placing their hands upon the image) then the barrier will vanish, allowing access to area 10. The barrier will reappear ten minutes after it is removed, though those in area 10 will still be able to leave: the barrier does not exist on this side, and in effect is a one way wall.

Once the PCs have entered area 10, read the following:

As you step into the dustless hall, four pillars instantly catch your attention. Each

of these pillars seem to represent one of the four elements: a pillar of water, a pillar of flame, a pillar of dust, and a pillar of cloud. No heat seems to radiate from the pillar of fire.

Floating in the centre of each of these pillars is what looks like a fist-sized gemstone: in the pillar of fire is a sapphire, in the pillar of water is a ruby, in the pillar of dust is a diamond, and in the pillar of cloud is a black opal.

Beyond the pillars, standing before the far wall, are two carved silver columns. These columns are 6’ high and are topped with bolts of lightning carved from gold. A haze seems to flicker between these pillars.

There are two options for DMs in this room: the pillars can be a gate allowing access to the Ethereal plane, where the PCs must go to release the bindings that hold the beast, or it can be the anchor, that when destroyed, releases the beast and casting him free in the winds of the ether. The ethereal domain of the beast will be discussed below, but it is simply an option for DMs who wish to continue the adventure beyond this conclusion.

To activate the gate or destroy the anchor (the two silver columns at the far end of the room) the gems will need to be placed in the correct column. Putting the gems into the column is simple, but taking them from other columns is not. The gems can be pulled out of the columns, but cannot be knocked out. PCs simply placing their hands into the columns will suffer the following effects:

**Fire:** though this pillar does not produce any heat, it is still incredibly hot. PCs placing their hands into the column will suffer 5d6 hp of fire damage. A Reflex Save (DC 15) is allowed, but if successful then the damage is halved, but the gem remains within the pillar. If the save is failed, then the PC takes full damage, but will have taken the gem.

**Water:** this pillar operates similarly to the pillar of fire, except that it produces 5d6 hp of cold damage. A failed save means that the PC is magically frozen. If the PC’s hand is removed from the pillar, then the effect will reverse and the PC will thaw in 1-6 minutes.

**Earth:** placing one’s hand in this column will petrify the PC as per the spell Stone to Flesh. A successful save (DC 15) will mean that the PC is not petrified, but has not managed to acquire the gem.

**Air:** the air in this column swirls around with the force of a hurricane. If anything is placed into this column (other than the correct gem) then it will be thrown out in a random direction. A successful Strength



Check (DC 25) means that the PC can hold the object in place for 1 round; after that another Strength Check is required. Anybody being hit by the flying object will take 2d6 hp damage. Anybody placing their hand in the column must make a reflex save (DC 20). If the save is failed then the PC is thrown against the wall, taking 2d6 hp damage, and being stunned for 1-6 rounds. A successful save means that the PC has managed to land without suffering any damage.

Once the gems have been placed in the correct columns, then one of two things will happen. Either the two silver columns at the far side of the room will shatter, releasing the Beast from its anchor and the Ethereal Winds will carry deep into the Ether. Otherwise the haze will become more apparent and a gate to the Ethereal Plane will open allowing the PCs to pass through to the Beast's prison.

## The Ethereal Plane.

Since the Beast is tied to more than one anchor, and since these anchors are like the phylactery: a squishy toy, it will be time consuming for the PCs to look for them and then destroy them. By travelling to the Ethereal Plane, the PCs can cut the cords there.

On the ethereal, the cords are anchored to five of the eight corners of a box. A number of the cords have already been broken, and by cutting the remaining five, the Beast will be released, but get caught up in the Ethereal winds and carried off deep into the ether. From the ether, the Beast is enshrouded in a huge cloud. The cloud is constantly shifting in the winds, but always conceals the true nature of the beast. The beast is able to physically attack anything that enters the cloud.

DMs who wish to bring their players into this realm are free to develop the obstacles in getting to the anchors, and the means and ways of cutting the cords.

## The Possession

The mechanics of this power of the Beast are fully outlined below.

The Beast's first target is the girl Talina. He will not reveal this instantly, but rather subtly use the possession to lead Talina to the squishy toy. If the PCs camp, the Beast will wait until night to draw Talina to the tomb. His objectives are to use Talina to remove the squishy toy from the tomb and take it to the first of the Enchanters whom the Beast wishes to destroy: Lord Schunkter

the Elder (who is now dead, meaning Lord Schunkter the Younger by default).

Talina will be very persistent, and if physically restrained, will reply in violence, but only to the extent that it enables her to escape her restraints and get into the tomb. Once she has the squishy toy, she will cooperate unless the PCs attempt to take the toy from her. The beast will only reveal its presence in Talina when it has arrived at her father's house.

## Lord Schunkter's Demise

Lord Schunkter, the father of Talina, lives in a manor that overlooks the small cross-road trading town of Schonheiler. Forests and mountains surround the town to the north and east while farmland stretches off to the southwest. From Schonheiler, much of the civilised lands can be reached.

Schunkter's father, Shunckter the Elder, who recently died, descended from a line of wizards: the Enchanters that originally dealt with the beast. Unfortunately Shunckter the Elder had isolated himself from the populace and kept his knowledge unto himself. Lord Schunkter pursued the path of the warrior, and thus Shunckter the Elder died without an apprentice.

As yet the will have not been opened. Since his son has chosen the path of the warrior, Shunckter the Elder had no-one to receive the workshop and the library. He did remember, at one stage, a wizard that helped him (one of the PCs) and decided to include him in the will.

The reading of Schunkter's will is approaching.

Lord Shunkter's house is typical of a manor: the private rooms are in the upper levels and the basement, while the common area, containing the kitchens, dining halls, and guest rooms are on the lower level. When the PCs arrive, there will be a number of guests present, since the will of Shunckter the Elder is soon to be read. Lord Shunkter, who is happy that his daughter has arrived back safely, has other thoughts to consider.

The Beast will lurk for a day before making his presence known. Lord Schunkter will invite the PCs into his study where he will reward them for returning Talina safely. He will note that some of the beneficiaries are no longer alive, and reward the PCs with a couple of trophies (worth about 500gp) for his father's estate.

The beast will begin by attacking the other children in the manor, and when Talina is physically restrained, she will burst her bonds, fly into the air, and in the image

of a demonic hag, will say the following:

We are the beings who were, who are, and who will be forever. You, humanity, have sought to rule supreme over us and have bound us for millennia. Now that we have been freed, we shall seek our vengeance upon you and turn your world into a shattered waste land.

To the PCs, the Beast, through Talina, will say:

You have proven yourselves useful in bringing us back, and for this we will reward you with life: temporarily. We will come for you last, but you may now leave in peace.

Then to Lord Schunkter, she will say:

The bladed one: your descendancy was responsible for my imprisonment, and the foolishness of your father has brought my wrath upon you. You shall be the first to suffer our fury for the sins of your fathers shall be judged in full upon your head.

The beast will then attack Lord Schunkter, first by possessing him, and once he is possessed, destroying his body. If the PCs manage to save Lord Schunkter (9th lvl warrior, Willpower +5, see pg 53 DMG) he be grateful, and is more than willing to offer the PCs parts of his estate if they stop the Beast. If the PCs ask about the will, Schunkter will notice the PCs names upon it, and will also note that it is Schunkter the Elder's library. With this is a sealed scroll which says the following:

I vaguely remember your face, but I clearly remember your name from when you assisted me that day long ago. I remember also that you knew of the arts: that which my Father taught me, and that which I hid from for many years. Even as I write this with my dying breath, I sense that something that occurred long ago is about to be overturned, and I believe that the words that were handed down from my father's father may be of help. My library is yours and if it were to provide any useful information about whatever you face, then my gift is a valuable one indeed.

## Conclusions

What happens from here on is up to the PCs. Schunkter does not know what is going on, but his father's magical library might prove useful. Indeed it does for numerous books contain references to the anchor and the beast. The beast does not know about these books and will try to destroy them if he does. The books explain the nature of the anchors, though is sketchy on what will happen if released. One book

suggests that if the beast is to be released, he will be cast out by the winds of the Ether. Nonetheless, it points the PCs back to the Anchor Site, though does not say how to pass through the obstacles.

Talina (or another if she has been killed) will follow the PCs back to the anchor site in an attempt to stop them. The beast is more concerned that its link to this world will be severed preventing him from turning against the race that original imprisoned him. If the PCs have killed Talina, this should work negatively against him, and Lord Schunkter, once the crisis is over, will be extremely hostile towards them.

## Scaling the Adventure

This adventure is designed for characters of 12th Lvl. In approximating the difficulties for characters of higher (or lower) level, the Beast should act as a character of the average party level add three. For example, a party of 15th lvl average would confront the beast at CR 18 (a character of 18th Lvl). If the PCs seem to be able to succeed regularly at the set DCs, the DM should feel free to increase them. Theoretically a party of any level could go through this module, though some of the encounters may be more difficult for lower level characters.

## The Beast

The beast is a creature that cannot effectively be fought, but nor does he fight in the typical way. The only way he can influence the physical world is through his powers, and though limited in some respects, he will work within these limitations to his maximum capacity. All of his powers, except possession, can only be used within the confines of the anchor.

**Animate Dead:** The Beast can animate dead, as per spell, at will. The only requirement is that there are bodies that can be used. The beast is not selective, and can animate parts of corpses as well as whole corpses.

**Animate Object:** The Beast can animate object, as per spell, at will.

**Create Figment:** With this power the beast can create full sensory illusions within the anchor. These illusions are created from the ether and can be disbelieved (as an illusion) or dispelled as if it were a spell. The beast casts spells as a 15th Level wizard.

**Dominate Animal:** As per the spell of the same name. The beast can use this power at will.

**Manipulate Dreams:** Through the

power, the Beast is able to attack his enemies through their dreams. The dreams created are generally drawn from the victim's memories, and the beast will use them to drive the victim to the point of terror. The victim's Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution use the values for Charisma, Intelligence, and Wisdom respectively. Though the victim can use physical skills in the dream, the victim uses his mental as opposed to physical abilities to make the check. If the victim dies in the dream then the victim is dead.

**Possession:** The beast can possess any sentient creature within 100 ft of the phylactery. When a possession attempt is made, the victim must succeed in a Willpower Save (DC 20) to avoid the effects of the possession. If the victim fails the save, then the victim gains a level of possession. The only way to remove possession is if the beast willingly relents. The beast can possess 20 beings at level 1, 10 beings at level 2, 5 beings at level 3, and 1 being at level 4. Talina will be possessed at level 4. If the beast chooses to dispossess a victim, then the beast must start from the beginning if he wishes to possess again (ie: if the beast possess Randy at Lvl 3 possession, and then dispossesses him, then the beast attempts to repossess Randy, a failed saving throw will mean that Randy will only be at lvl 1 possession). Once a character has been dispossessed the character will have a limited telepathic ability (20' radius) for 24 hours.

**Level 1:** The beast can force the victim to perform a single, instantaneous action. The victim performs this action based upon his or her ability to perform it. Though the beast still possesses the victim, any further actions require the victim to make a Willpower Save (DC 25) or perform the action.

**Level 2:** The beast controls the victims basic actions. The victim has limited freedom, but if the victim desires to do something that the Beast does not approve, then a Willpower Save (DC 25) is required to perform it. The Beast cannot speak through the victim, and can only force the victim to perform basic actions.

**Level 3:** The beast is in control of the victim. The victim has no power over his or her actions and is subservient to the will of the beast. If the victim resists the Beast's desired actions, then the beast receives a -2 situation penalty. Checks are performed from the victim's statistics.

**Level 4:** The beast has total control and the victim is little more than a passenger in his own body. At this stage the Beast will try to destroy the victim's hold and drive him into insanity (since even passengers can be annoying). The victim becomes a possessed, as outlined in the template below.

## The Possessed

**Hit Dice:** Increase to D10

**Initiative:** +2

**Speed:** Gains Fly 30 ft (good)

**AC:** The base creature's armor class improves by +6

**Attacks:** The possessed retains all the attacks of the base creature and gains a slam attack if it didn't already have one.

**Damage:** slam 1d6

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft x 5ft/ 10 ft

**Special Attacks:** Laugh of Madness, Horrific Appearance, Telekinesis

**Special Qualities:** Undead, Detect Magic (at will), Detect Invisibility (at will), Damage Reduction 20/+1

**Saves:** Same as base creature

**Abilities:** Increase from the base creature as follows: Str +20, Dex +10, Con +10, Wis +5.

**Skills:** Possessed get +8 bonuses to Hide, Move Silently, Sense Motive, and Spot.

**Feats:** Possessed gain Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative.

**Challenge Rating:** Same as base creature +8

**Alignment:** Chaotic Evil

Possessed retains all feats, skills, and special qualities and abilities of the base creature. The following are the descriptions of powers than possessed's receive.

**Laugh of Madness (Su):** The possessed, to use this power, must cease all other actions (though if flying, can still fly). All within hearing range of the laugh must succeed in a Willpower Save (DC 17) or be stunned for one round. A second Willpower Save is required (DC 15) if the first is failed. If the second save is failed, then the victim is struck with madness and will flee at the fastest possible rate. Otherwise the victim can still act, but is at a -2 penalty on all actions.

**Horrific Appearance (Su):** The beast can change the appearance of a possessed at will. Anybody within 60 ft of the possessed must succeed at a Fortitude Save (DC 15) or immediately suffer 1d4 points of temporary Strength Drain and 1d4 points of temporary Constitution drain. If the save is successful the victim cannot be affected by this power for 24 hours.

**Telekinesis (Su):** The possessed can use Telekinesis at a level equal to the possessed's HD +5.

**Undead:** The possessed receives all bonuses that undead receive while possessed. The possessed can be turned as a 10 HD creature. If the turning check results in destruction of the possessed, then the possession is ended. The beast or its possessed cannot be rebuked (though the Beast will act as if it is).



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# Asgard

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