

Back to Basic X



A quarterly Fanzine dedicated to the simpler time of RPGs—covering the Basic and Expert editions of Dungeons & Dragons.

In Memoriam — A Note from the Fanzine Creator

Those of us most familiar with the B/X system are arguably and likely older gamers, players and GMs from the pre-Wizards of the Coast era of tabletop roleplaying. Of course, this is not entirely accurate; newer and younger players, first introduced to RPGs with the 5th edition of D&D, are trying older systems to experience the origins of the early games.

With time, though, comes the vicious side effect of mortality — aging. Many of us that started in those early days of gaming are reaching and passing semicentennial milestones. D&D and Gen-Con—the earliest gaming convention—have both surpassed fifty years! I am the same age myself and have logged thirty-seven years of roleplaying! Although I play with gamers of all ages, I still see many players of my generation (and older) at game conventions throughout the USA.

Unfortunately, our kind (on average) is an unhealthy bunch. We've

spent far too much time on our backsides indoors, shirking exercise and healthy diet choices. This “gamer lifestyle” has led to some great people departing our world far too early. In just the last year I've seen several gamers who I've either regularly communicated with or followed online pass away at far too young an age. These early deaths have left devastating holes in the gaming industry — gamers, customers, and creators alike, lost to poor health.

The best way to celebrate this hobby and to honor those that have fallen too early is to live a healthier and full life, sharing these early games and experiences with new players. We are the ambassadors of the old-school gaming style and it is our duty to live long enough to positively affect as many gamers as possible.
—Thom Wilson

This issue is dedicated to: Timothy Wagoner II, Donald A. Turner, and Mike Cary.

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Created by: Thom Wilson

Articles by: Thom Wilson

Cover Illustration: Matt Ray

Back Cover: Darlene

Logo: Isa de Mendonca Silva

Comic: Travis Hanson

Interior Art: Darlene, Dean Spencer

Art, Je Shields, William McAusland

Cartography: MonkeyBlood Design

Editor: Michael J. Gross, III

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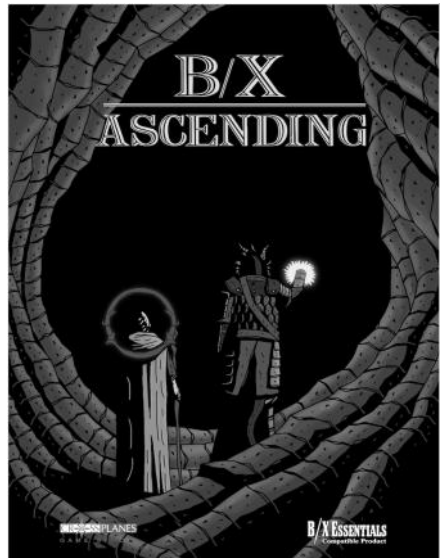
B/X Ascending by Crossplanes Game Studio focuses on the “roll-high” mechanic, and introduces players to the blend of old-school B/X with a modern twist. After d20-style games removed the need to calculate THACO* and look up to-hit values on large matrices, many players became used to high armor classes and roll over values for actions and feats. Although B/X and other original game formats were developed with descending AC and rolling under statistics, many players have tried to blend the two styles together to try to satisfy both desires. *Swords & Wizardry* by Frog God Games injects offers both ascending and descending armor class rules into in their system. However, S&W is more akin to AD&D than B/X D&D. Crossplanes Game Studio tries to introduce ascending AC with a focus on Moldvay Basic.

The PDF is 63 pages and is filled with mostly player-related B/X rules. Classes, spells, and a few optional rules make up the book. Classes include non-standard B/X classes like Druid, Paladin, Assassin, and others. While this is fine, it does deviate from the early caveat in the book that references Moldvay's Basic. That said, this product also is B/X Essentials (Necrotic Gnome) compatible—they have an advanced class book with add-on classes. This book has full Illusionist and Druid spell lists, leaving the Cleric and Magic-User spells as referenced in the Necrotic Gnome books.

The author adds a few twists of his own that make for interest-

ing game play. Each class has an attack bonus value added by level, to reflect the character's increasing skill in combat. He does a decent job of leveling the bonuses for classes with maximum levels while letting the fighter class have the highest bonus. I'm not sure I'm a fan of 12th level Druids and 12th level Dwarves having the same attack bonus but I can see the simplicity in the author's design. There's no mention of increasing bonuses of the demi-human classes that have a maximum level with added experience (as referenced by in the BECMI rules, for example).

Many of the classes have specialized abilities or feats that make their class a little more interesting. I'm always a fan of adding a little something special to characters. I prefer this as a background option—less class-based perhaps—and a little more specific or unique to the charac-



ter. What's presented in this book works and adds some things for GMs and players to talk about. A few of the options seem a little confusing or overpowered. For example, the Assassin has a base assassination attempt percentage as 50% for a target of equal level. That's pretty darn good. Targets of lesser level or even easier and targets of higher level are harder. However, the wording of the assassination attempt for level difference is odd and confusing—it makes it sound like higher level targets are easier (based on the roll-high mechanic). I think a little more editing and cleanup of wording is needed in this section.

One of the things I really like is tailoring Thieves abilities to the “roll-high” mechanic. Each thief ability is now a target on d20. Unfortunately, there is nothing in the book that discussed added difficulty (e.g. challenge ratings or added difficulty for harder feats). So, a 14th level thief can pretty much do anything, failing only when a “1” is rolled (5% chance) on a d20, except Hear Noise. This aligns to the B/X thief of course, so no points lost here. There may have been an opportunity to discuss change in difficulty (the +4/-4 rule in B/X) or Dexterity bonuses for the roll.

There's nothing in the book that breaks any major rules. This adaptation of an ascending B/X system is useful – players and game masters will find nuggets of good information to use as desired. My biggest issue with the book is not in the content

per se, but in the format of the PDF. The company gives us a two-page spread file—unprintable unless you're familiar with large format printing and have a printer that can handle the large page size. If you're a pure digital player/GM, this won't be much of an issue, but for those of use that like to print PDFs for use at the table or to have stored with our other materials, it's problematic.

All in all, it's a good little book that many can find useful. It could use an update, more editing, and some additional play-testing to stress-test some of the overpowered rule options.

B/X Ascending, a B/X Essentials Compatible product by Crossplanes Game Studio (Mark Craddock). Found at DriveThruRPG – PDF \$3.99.

*THACO is a TSR-reserved mechanic, used here only as a reference with no other intention.



Artwork by Darlene

Interview with a Legendary Artist—Darlene

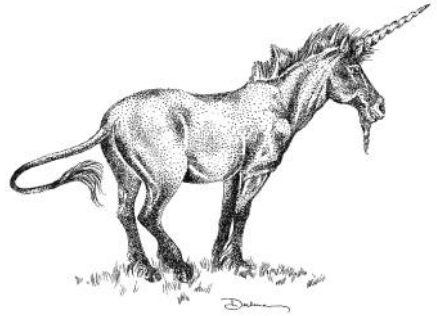
When I think back to the iconic illustrations of the early eighties, the work of Darlene instantly comes to mind. I remember those wonderful Greyhawk maps, the unicorn on the title page of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the cover art of *In Search of the Unknown*. In this issue, we check in with her and talk about the artwork in those early days of roleplaying.

[Thom] What year did you get hired (or started freelancing) at TSR? Do you remember your first assignment(s) there?

[Darlene] It was a year after I was graduated from Beloit College that I settled myself in Lake Geneva, WI. That would be 1977. I was a local gal, having grown up a farm girl less than five miles east of Elkhorn, Wisconsin. Jim Ward was in the same high school class as my older sister, the Class of 1969. They were seniors when I was a freshman at Elkhorn High School (Go Elks).

When I met Mike Carr (the 6th employee hired at TSR; *Fight In The Skies* creator), I was working at Graphics Printing doing paste-ups and graphics. Mike was a client who wanted to update a flier from the previous year. I was assigned to assist him with an event called Gen Con. It meant swapping out some dates and adding new information to the schedule. After he approved the final proof, in our final consultation, Mike Carr asked me on a date.

It wasn't long before Mike took me to his place of work, which



Darlene's Unicorn from the DMG

was only a few blocks away on Main Street next to the Pizza Hut. He wanted me to show my portfolio of artwork to the person in charge of art, Dave Sutherland. Dave happened to be Mike's room-mate at the time—was it on Cedar Street?

At any rate, at that meeting, Dave chose several art pieces on the spot. Of the two I remember, there's the (now iconic) unicorn on the title page of the DMG and the "Paladin on his War Horse," which I think (but am not sure) became the title page for the Rogues' Galley.

I believe I met Tim Kask on the same day. He was hard to miss as his office took up the whole reception area of the house on Williams Street. Tim Kask was the first person you see when coming in and the last person going out. Good thing he was sociable, (but still well on his way toward "curmudgeonhood", even then). We hit it off immediately.

Tim had a good appreciation and grasp of calligraphy, having

been taught by Prof. Bill Han-
non who was an expert in it.
Tim immediately saw the possi-
bilities of having someone
around who could illustrate and
letter. So from the get-go, I
began doing header-type things
for *The Dragon* magazine. I was
glad for the work, and the con-
versation.

I did a lot of behind-the-scenes
stuff. I painted a double-sided
sign for TSR in the shape of a
shield, and two others for Gary
personally: one for Dragonlands
Stables and the other his own
coat of arms. I created station-
ary for Dragonlands Arabians,
TSR Periodicals, and *The
Dragon* magazine. I created the
Wizard head logo. Much of my
work was doing logos and titles,
like those in Deities and Demi-
Gods and for articles in *The
Dragon* magazine. It was not
often I would get pure illustra-
tion assignments.

[T] *Do you recall which of your
works was first published in a
TSR product?*

[D] It's really strange to ask an
artist when something was pub-
lished. Once a piece of artwork's
completed, it's always on to the
next illustration. The one you
just did is forgotten. So, essen-
tially, out of sight, out of mind.
Often, we didn't know anything
until later after the fact when
something was published. When
we finally saw a printed version,
we'd say, "Oh yeah, I remember
doing that."

But the lapse of time between
final delivery and publication can
be considerable. We artists have



Darlene's Wizard Head logo for TSR

since memorized the dates so
we can accurately answer fan's
questions. But it's not like we
actually remembered it. Ok. I'm
speaking for myself. However
unlikely it may be, maybe some
TSR artists do remember.

Having said that, I credit my
first official TSR art commission
as a poem I "calligraphied" in
spiky letters for Lawrence
Schick's "White Plume Mountain"
adventure.

[T] *How did you get the project
for Gary Gygax's Map of the
Flanaess?*

[D] I've always known them as
The Greyhawk Maps.

The last time I spoke with Allen
Hammack, (*Top Secret* author),
at GaryCon XI, he set me
straight on the Greyhawk maps.
Allen said he advocated for me
in a meeting with Dave Suther-
land regarding the map and told
Dave he'd "be a fool not to
have me do it." Actually, I did
not know that and I'm glad to
have the mystery solved. So
there you have it—there'd be no
Greyhawk Maps as we know
them without Allen Hammack
speaking up on my account.
(Thanks, Allen!)

Now, I wish to briefly address
everyone who's been a fan of
my Greyhawk maps. You have
all been close to my heart be-
cause I poured my heart into

creating the Greyhawk map and I believe you can somehow still feel my creative energy. What I'm saying is that there's a shared resonance between the map and me—and the users of the map (who know each detail more intimately than I). I didn't set out to do that, but that's what happened. For some, it's just a map, and that's perfectly OK. They are simply not on the same wavelength and don't need to be.

Incidentally, when I became aware of the possibility that projections of energy can be channeled into artwork, I decided to purposefully place positive vibes in the artwork I'm creating for girls. The idea is to use positive energy to effect positive change. Well, it can't hurt... I'll mention more of this at the end.

[T] Can you recall your inspiration for the cover of *B1 In Search of the Unknown*?

Search ye far or search ye near
You'll find no trace of the three
Unless you follow instructions clear
For the weapons abide with me—
North past forest, farm, and furrrow
You must go to the feathered mound
Then down away from the sun you'll burrow
Forget life, forget light, forget sound.
To rescue Wale, you must do baffle
With the beast in the Boiling Bubble
Cross cavern vast where chain-link rattle
Lies Whelm, past water sprouts double.
Black razor yet remains to be won
Underneath inverted ziggurat
That garnered, think not that you're done
For now you'll find you are caught
I care not, former owners brave
What heroes you seek to hire.
Though mighty, I'll make each one my slave
Of send him to the fire.

Darlene's scroll from White Plume Mountain!

[D] I think all Mike told me was something vague like "an adventure party underground with giant mushrooms." Everything else was pretty much up to me. The back cover had the same characters, but I don't recall much if anything about it.

However, what is truly interesting is I just finished some more B1 drawings for Demos Sachlas. He is interested in having me illustrate the old B-1 module from years ago. And so I decided to show you one of the newest illustrations (hot off the press, so to speak) to have emerged from my imagination. Hope you like it!

[T] Do you have a favorite piece or project from the days at TSR?

[D] Yes, the Unicorn on the title page of the DMG and my "The Story of Jasmine" illustrated fantasy-adventure series, which ran for a year in *The Dragon* magazine, (beginning May 1980). At the beginning of January last year, I found an old box I've been lugging around for 40 years. In it, I found pages of writing continuing *The Story of Jasmine*. I wanted to make the fact I kept them into something meaningful, so I decided to share them. I published them, one at a time, on a daily basis for 100 days. By the end of that time, fans had emerged to help fund me in continuing with "The Story of Jasmine" for eventual publication on Kindle.

To join my intrepid *Story of Jasmine* fans, become my patron: <http://www.patreon.com/darlene-artist>

[T] *Were there any works that you created during the TSR days that was never published?*

[D] The second year for *The Story of Jasmine* series to run in the *Dragon*. I only found out a couple years ago that Kevin Blume was dead set against having any depictions of violence. Well, no one told me there were any rules about this because I kinda showed an eensie weensie decapitation in my December 1980 *Jasmine* installment. If I did not have a contract, my adventure story would have been pulled on the spot. But try as I may, I could not get the rest of my story published for a second year in *The Dragon* magazine ever again. It may have been Kevin's edict. The editor's hands might have been tied. Who knows or remembers?

That's why I created "*Jasmine: the Battle for the Mid-Realm*" collector card game, which I based on the characters of the story. I got together a group of people who helped fund me with printing and published my card game in 1982. I was so happy when it received the Strategist's Club Award in 1983 for the "Best Game in 1982 in an Open Category" (see <https://boardgamegeek.com/image/590905/jasmine-battle-mid-realm> and [https://cf.geekdo-images.com/imagepage/img/rTVrRd3fr4d8koE_UGGtfZQqBPI=/fit-in/900x600/filters:no_upscale\(\)/pic590905.jpg](https://cf.geekdo-images.com/imagepage/img/rTVrRd3fr4d8koE_UGGtfZQqBPI=/fit-in/900x600/filters:no_upscale()/pic590905.jpg) for a pic) announced at their Ninth Annual Awards at Gen Con. There are still a few games left from the original 1982 print run (my sis-

ter found some in her basement)—signed and numbered—still available and now it really is a collector's item. I have them available. See my website: <http://darlenetheartist.com/jasmine-games> for a copy.

[T] *What sort of things do you do to "recharge the batteries" or to spark artistic inspiration after a lengthy project or heavy workload?*

[D] Cleaning the house somehow recharges my batteries. I do it right after I complete an art project. It's like I'm clearing out the old so the new can come in. I'm more of a "Walks in nature" kind of gal than a nightclub person. Good thing I live in a remote area of North Carolina where there is no nightlife. I'm also into my kitties: I love watching and interacting with them.

[T] *Are there any personal projects you'd love to work on if you had more time?*

[D] I presently live in a 1909 Queen Anne Victorian house located in a part of North Carolina seldom traveled. It was perfect for a curmudgeon writer and introverted artist. We knew choosing *The Arts* would be lean and challenging to navigate. My husband died several years ago. Our nest egg disappeared with his health. I look around me and this old house has really suffered from my lack of resources and desperately needs tending. My ultimate wish is to restore my 110-year old house to her former dignity and glory. I think it would rejuvenate me as well.

[T] What are you working on these days?

[D] I wish to give back to the community and to my fans who have believed in me all these years.

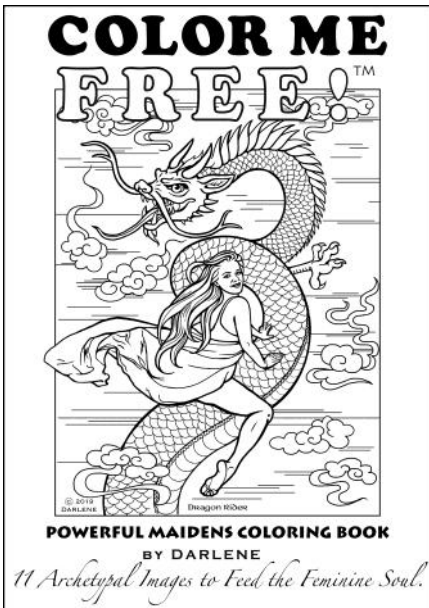
The best way I'm giving back is to depict positive images of powerful women/maidens for the next generation of gamers. In my last three coloring books, the art is clearly in the fantasy realm. My latest 2019 Coloring book, "Color Me Free" is about powerful ladies moving freely and independently, such as on a polar bear, a moose, a skateboard, and a stingray. I also include fairies and pixies. These coloring books are for "girls of all ages." And I'm so pleased at how well they are being received. If you want one, here is the link: <http://firesidecreations.com/darlene>



Harmony by Darlene

I just finished designing and illustrating a 50-page spiral-bound "PlayBook" called "Dancing the Enneagram With Kate." My friend Kate's innovation is to add movement to the intellectual construct of The Enneagram, adding a tactile sense to learning each of the 9 Types. My contribution is to illustrate the 9 personality types in the form of coloring book pages. In my introduction, I explain how the process of coloring, like dancing, gets other parts of yourself (besides the mind) involved in the learning process. I also go through the symbology of color as a means to integrate different parts of yourself.

Very special thanks to Darlene for a wonderful and insightful interview!



Darlene's coloring book

Product Spotlight

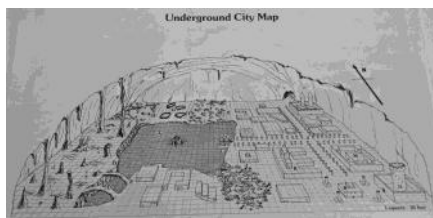
The early authors at TSR really knew how to cram months of campaign material into a 32-page book. **The Lost City** by Tom Moldvay is a perfect example of how the original modules were made—over one-hundred detailed encounters, several maps, and new monsters spill out of the short book, providing a DM with more material than they could probably ever use. There are several interesting design elements that are worth examining.

Tom Moldvay, known most notably for editing the Basic D&D rulebook, follows the same pattern of an earlier adventure—the Isle of Dread (X1)—when writing this gem. In both books, we see how well he blends detailed backgrounds with a crawler. As in the island adventure, *The Lost City* has plenty of encounter areas, a dozen maps, a framework section for game masters to expand, four new monsters, and a glossary of terms. This pattern is great for new and experienced game masters alike. Moldvay sets up the start of the adventures with an introduction page that prototypical of early D&D modules.

Background information on the setting, including the rival factions of the pyramid and city deep below the surface, is a single page and gives the game master everything they need to know about the motivations and conflict of the denizens within. It's the right amount of detail to help set the stage for gameplay without miring the GM with unneeded minutiae.

Characters were never safe in these early D&D adventures. The *Lost City* is filled with many traps and foes that can wipe out a party in no time. In just the first two tiers of the pyramid, there are enough traps to set the characters on edge for the rest of the trek through the pyramid – there are three traps in the first room alone! If that wasn't bad enough, the monsters of the first dozen rooms are pretty hard for even third level characters. Ten killer bees, stirges, green slime, and sprites can quickly reduce a large party to a few hardy souls before the group even gets going. What party of low-level characters can survive Save or Die mechanics and a flesh eating slime?

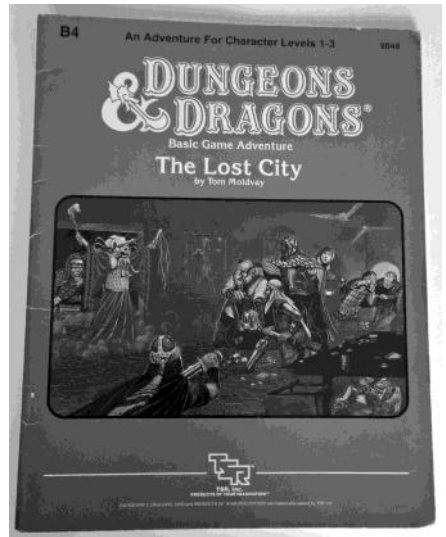
The tiers get bigger as the party descends down into the center of the pyramid. Adventurers will face the dilemmas of revolving passages, warring factions, undead, and—of course!—more traps. Moldvay throws everything at characters, testing their mettle and luck. As a GM, I've never had a group exit this adventure unscathed and unless they aligned with one of the factions, even leave at all.



Famous Underground City map in *The Lost City*

After 20 pages, the bulk of the detailed encounters are wrapped up. Tiers 6-10 are filled with the other half of the planned encounter areas but are far less detailed, providing the GM with a section of the adventure to further detail on their own. Although names, foes, and treasure are listed, most of the areas lack the detail of the previous tiers. A secret passage found in tier 5 bypasses the five lower tiers and leads directly to the underground city far below. Characters delving into the lower five tiers of the structure may eventually encounter the primary villain-creature of the complex, a terrible 12 HD creature with a daunting armor class, loads of hit points, and seven attacks per round! An impossible foe for a low-level party, best avoided by savvy players.

The underground city is given a cursory overview but begs to be further detailed by a willing GM. Nineteen areas across a one thousand foot-wide cavern can be expanded to provide many more hours of exploration and adventure. An island in the middle of the underground lake and cliff-caves filled with a wide variety of denizens can add more adventure material to an otherwise full book. To top it off, Moldvay provides eight additional adventure hooks to keep the characters underground for weeks or months! I especially like the new Banshee and Polymar monsters in this book. The wail of the banshee and the early Mimic-like creature (Polymar) are enough to send most parties running back to the entrance.



Purple cover, red banner of *The Lost City*.

I'd be remiss in not mentioning the great artwork of Jim Hallows throughout the entire book. His style is iconic in these early books and **The Lost City** is no exception. Unlike some of the later books by TSR, this module has an adequate amount of artwork for the page count. The three-panel cover, a common style of TSR modules, displays maps and a standard equipment pack player handout.

This is a fantastic adventure for low-level characters. It's filled with great risk but the rewards in experience and treasure are immense! If you've never played **The Lost City**, put it on your list. It's worth your time.

B4, The Lost City, written by Tom Moldvay. 1982. ISBN: 0-935696-55-5; #9049, no price on the cover; 32 pages; trifold cover; for 6-10 characters of 1st to 3rd level.

The Magic Shop

In this issue of the fanzine, we take a look at four new magical items that GMs can add to their adventures.

Wand of Dragon Fire

When the command word is spoken, the wielder of this magical device can send forth a cone of fire similar to that of a red dragon (90'x30'). A single charge deals damage equal to that of the hit points of the wand's user to any creature within the fiery blast. The fire from the wand has all the properties of dragon's breath.

If used more than once per day, each subsequent charge deals one half the damage to the wand's user. For example, if the magic-user or elf has 40 hit points, the charge deals 40 points of damage to those within the cone of fire (saving throw versus Magic Wands for half damage) and 20 points of damage to the caster (no saving throw allowed).

Maximum charges 10. Used only Magic-Users and Elves.

Value: 25,000 GP.

Casks of Teleportation

These four-foot tall clay casks are nearly three feet wide at their middle and weigh over 150 pounds each. When a character steps into one cask, they will instantly appear in the other, regardless of its planar location. If one of the casks is destroyed, the other cask ceases to work.

Value: 10,000 GP.

Rainbow Potion

This powerful potion changes consistency and magical properties every hour, with each property aligning to a color of the rainbow. The colors always rotate through the seven rainbow colors in order, adding an eighth color (brown) before returning to the starting color of red again. Consuming the potion when the potion is brown in color provides a random property of one of the other colors (except Poison). The potion can only be consumed once.

Value: 5,000 GP.

Rainbow Potion	
Color	Effects
Red	Cure Serious Wounds
Orange	Fire Resistance
Yellow	Gaseous Form
Green	Poison (save or die)
Blue	Invisibility
Indigo	Heroism
Violet	Invulnerability
Brown	Random (choose one of the above, not including poison)

Leather Mask of Disguise

When this flexible, leather mask is placed over a face, it instantly becomes the face of any known humanoid. The wearer of the mask must have seen the target face at least once and must be conscious for the magical mask to work. The mask does not change the voice, height, weight or mannerisms of the wearer to match the target. However, scars, eye and skin color, and other facial features will conform to the desired look. The wearer must make a saving throw versus Wisdom to remove the mask. *Value: 2,500 GP.*

Mythology

This issue of *Back to BasiX* presents two new monsters for use in your adventure campaigns!

Ettoar

A horrible cross between an ettin and a boar, the **Ettoar** strikes fear into the hearts of any who face their kind. Like ettins, they are hard to surprise—one head is always awake while the other sleeps. They are most often found alone but occasionally may be found with another of the opposite gender.

Armor Class: 5
Hit Dice: 5+1
Move: 90' (30')
Attacks: 2-4 weapons
Damage: 1-10 each
Special: Cannot be surprised

No. Appearing: 1-2
Save As: Fighter: 4
Morale: 10
Treasure Type: E x2
Alignment: Chaotic



Illustration by Je Shields (KS)



Illustration by Je Shields (KS)

Yurktogg

The planes of hell are filled with countless demons, many of which have yet to be discovered by mortals. The Yurktogg is one such demon—rarely encountered. This flying demon prefers to float above hapless adventurers, dousing them with fiery missiles before swooping down to finish injured victims with cruel knives.

Armor Class: 2
Hit Dice: 4
Move: 120' (40') - fly
Attacks: 1 by weapon
Damage: 2-12 fire missile
or by weapon
Special: Cannot be charmed; cannot be injured by non-magical weapons

No. Appearing: 2-4
Save As: Fighter: 3
Morale: 11
Treasure Type: Nil
Alignment: Chaotic

Quarterly Dungeon Crawl #1

Dragon Chambers of t'Zeel

by Thom Wilson. An adventure for 4-6 characters of 7th to 10th level.

Background: An ancient race of dragon-men once dwelt in these lands, living their lives as scaly humanoid wizards and priests. Although they have not been seen for centuries, their ruinous temples, towers, and fortifications are still found throughout the mountains, abandoned yet avoided by most. Rumors of great power and immeasurable wealth within these empty places are often whispered in shadowed taverns and quiet inns by locals—brave adventurers overhearing such talk may become interested in the perilous and likely exaggerated tales uttered by farmers and merchants.

One such place is within a day's ride of the small farming village of Yellen Hill. The local tavern overflows with gossip each night and adventurers stopping in for a quick meal may discover a wondrous tale of wizards, dragons, and treasure.

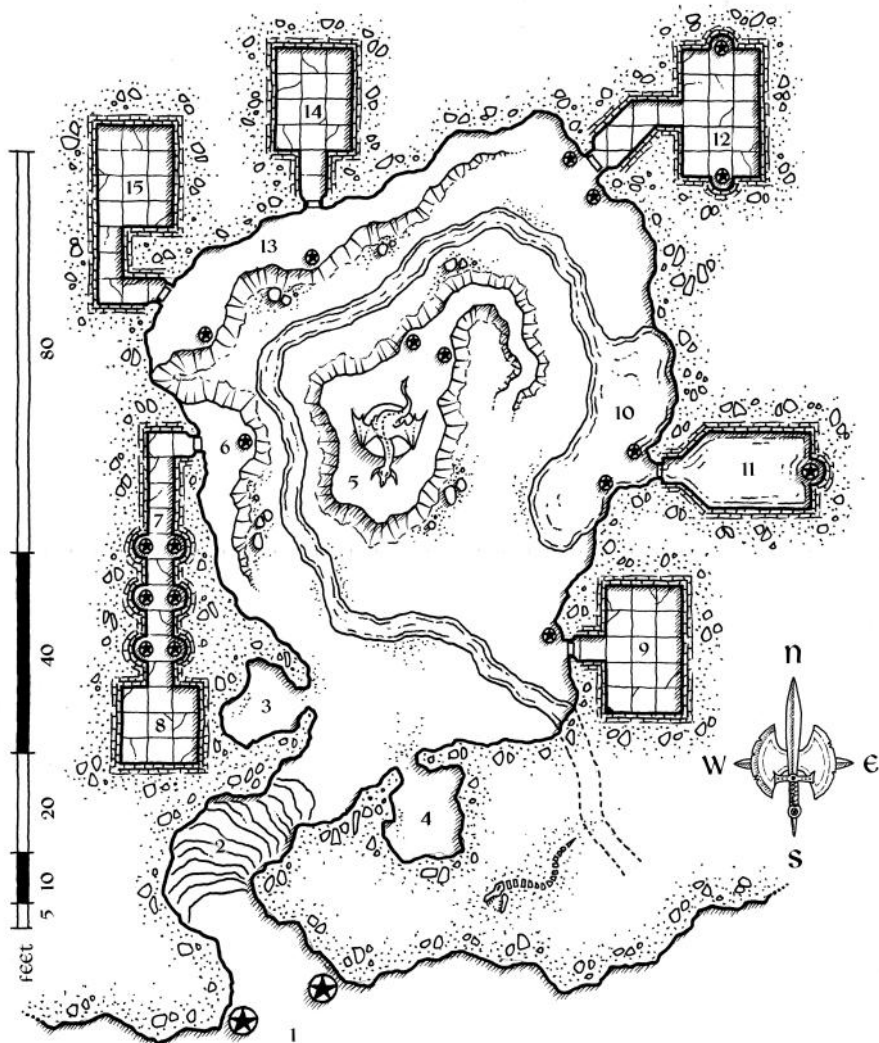
Detailed Background: In the tradition of his mentors before him, the dragon-priest t'Zeel maintained a small temple in the mountains where his brethren could assemble and pray to their planar god, Kragkothamon. Like some of the great priests who preceded him, t'Zeel had the option to perform a final ritual after his 100th year on this plane, that would transform him back into dragon form. Many dragon-priests elected to remain

in humanoid form, living out several more centuries in this world, before lying down one final time in a prepared crypt within the temple.

Although initially undecided, t'Zeel made the choice to transform back into dragon form just before his centennial anniversary. With a young disciple ready to take his place as the temple priest, he began the painful ritual only days before the last day of choosing. During the process, a group of armed soldiers attacked the temple, killing the young priest and preventing the ritual from completion. A violent battle between the soldiers and temple guards left everyone dead—not a soul left the temple alive.

The great dragon-priest t'Zeel remains in a partially transformed state, appearing as a small dragon statue in the middle of the temple (area 5). Most of the remains of the dead have all but withered away with only trace bone fragments and rusted weapons found lying in various places throughout the abandoned shrine. Former priests and wizards are still lying in their crypts within the temple but a couple have become restless and are roaming their chambers as undead.

Disturbing the temple by touching the dragon statue or unsealing the crypts of former dragon-priests will restart the transformation ritual. Within six rounds, t'Zeel will break free of his stony exterior and emerge as a famished Red Dragon.



DRAGON CHAMBERS OF t'ZEEL

Notes About the Crypts

Much of the history and deeds of the temple priests are inscribed on the walls of the burial chambers. Characters may learn who they were and what they did by reading the lengthy chapters of their life on the walls.

1. Temple Entrance

Two towering dragon-men statues, each with long, folded wings, stand guard over the entrance to the temple. Neither of the 20-foot statues animate but their presence instills fear (as the *Cause Fear* spell, saving throws allowed) in all but the bravest of mortals.

2. Temple Stairs

Naturally made stone stairs lead down to the temple floor. Still present on the stairs are the remains of a fallen human soldier who stopped his crawl up, likely expiring from wounds suffered from his fight with the temple guards.

A small leather pouch under his rusted breastplate and rotting leather armor contains **20 gp** and **10 pp**.

3 and 4. Guard Stations

These two chambers were temple guard stations, occupied by two to four dragon-men sworn to protect their priests and shrine. All that remain in the area are rusted weapons and broken furniture. The remains of the guards, slain by the human soldiers long ago, are found throughout the temple in several areas.

5. Dragon Statue

Appearing as a single, marbleized statue, the partially transformed priest t'Zeel remains frozen, a short step away from ritual completion. The statue is but a tenth of the size of a normal red dragon. At ritual completion, it will fill out to full size. The eyes of the statue appear as large garnets and its nails look like elongated opals.

Touching the statue will restart the transformation process, ending it within a few minutes. There is no way to stop the process once it begins.

t'Zeel, Red Dragon: AC -1, HD 10**, HP: 60, #AT 2 claws/1 bite or breath, D 1-8/1-8/4-32 or breath, MV 90' (30') or flying 240' (80'), Save F10, ML 10, Special: breath 3x day, spells, AL C, XP 2,300

The dragon-priest will emerge from the transformation enraged, knowing that his ritual was halted centuries earlier. He will attack any and all living creatures for several days before returning to the temple and departing to his home plane.



Illustration by Je Shields (KS)

6. Cursed Statue

A statue of a dragon-man, his arms crossed and holding two sickles, stands facing the door to the oldest crypt in the temple. Any who approach within 5' will be engulfed in a fiery blast that issues from the statue's maw. Characters may make a saving throw versus Dragon Breath to take only half of the 5d6 fire damage.

7. Trapped Hallway

A pressure plate in the floor fills the hallway with barely detectable gas in four rounds. Any character that makes a save under half their Wisdom will detect an odd smell after the trap is triggered. For every ten rounds characters stay in the hallway,

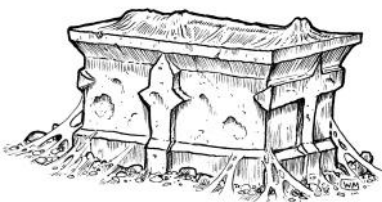
they will suffer 1 hit point of damage.

Six dragon-priest statues stand facing inward, their hands in an open, receiving gesture. If anything is placed in a statue's hands, its eyes will flicker with a small flame. There is a 20% accumulating chance per round (per statue) that the flame will ignite the gas in the hall. Characters caught in the explosion will suffer 6d6 explosion damage (or half if a save versus Death Ray or Poison is made). Note that the gas and subsequent damage reaches into area 8 as well.

8. Crypt of the First

A niche in the southern wall contains the wrapped form of the dead dragon-priest, t'Kral the First. Being the first to refuse the transformation ritual, his body was buried with great reverence and respect. Several jars of platinum coins and gems surround the body in the niche and his bony hands hold a small wand. Along with one hundred garnets (each worth 100 gp), there are **500 pp** in the jars. A **Wand of Dragon Fire** with six charges can be pried from the firm grasp of the deceased priest. (The Wand's abilities are found in the Magic Shop section of this fanzine)

Note that an explosion in the hallway has a 10% chance of destroying the wand.



9. Crypt of the Fifth

The last dragon-priest to remain in humanoid form was buried in this simple tomb. A slab adjacent to the east wall holds the decaying form of t'Durg, the fifth and last priest to refuse the transformation ritual. His form has been partially consumed by long-dead creatures, leaving broken bones and bits of linen wrappings atop the slab. Several broken clay pots, pushed from the slab, lie on the floor. Their contents are spilled and scattered. Silver and gold coins are found on the floor (**500 sp** and **250 gp**). A pair of silver bracers on bony forearms remain unblemished by time. These are **Bracers of Cold Protection** (adds +1 to saving throws versus cold-based attacks, both magical and natural).

10. Pool of Remembrance

Although the water from the winding stream is normal and clean, it changes once it enters the pool. A magical aura at the bottom of the pool gives the water both healing and mental restoration abilities. Drinking from the pool heals 1d8 damage (maximum once per week) and cures any mental affliction (once per character). For every half minute a character submerges themselves within the pool, there is a 10% cumulative chance that they can recall any lost memory from their past.

Thousands of donated coins line the bottom of the pool, reflecting light from torches and lanterns throughout the temple. There are **1,790 sp** and **865 gp** at the bottom of the clear pool.

11. Crypt of the Sixth

When t'Zeel felt that he may elect to remain in humanoid form, he had the construction of his burial chamber started. However, the work was stopped when he changed his mind. A water-filled crypt appears empty at first until the room is entered and the room's guardians, three **Electric Eels**, attack.

Electric Eels (3): AC 9 HD 3* HP 12 each, ATT 1 bite, Dam 1-4, MV swim 120' (40), Special; shock once per turn (5' range, 3d8 dam; 10' range 2d8 dam; 15' range 1d8 dam), ML 7, Save F2, AL Neutral, XP 25 each

12. Crypt of the Fourth

A pair of dragon-men statues watch over the narrow door to this crypt. After turning into the chamber, characters will find a bent-over, shambling creature partially wrapped in rotting linens and carrying a glowing spear. The dead priest t'Gath has risen as a vile **Wight** and wanders about his burial chamber seeking some forgotten vengeance.

t'Gath (Wight): AC 5 HD 3* HP 18, ATT 1 claw or 1 weapon, Dam energy drain or 1d6+2 (spear), MV 90' (30), Special; energy drain reduces character's level by one, ML 12, Save F3, Align Chaotic, XP 50

The **spear +2** that t'Gath carries also protects the wielder from Fire (+1 vs. all fire attacks and saving throws, magical or natural). Additionally, several rotted leather bags have split open revealing several piles of gems. There are 1d100 gems of each of the following types: diamond, sapphire, emerald, ruby, and

topaz. Each gem is worth 10 gp. An ornate tapestry hangs from the east wall, depicting a scene of Kragkothamon engulfing an entire world with a single, fiery breath. It is worth 1,000 gp to tapestry collectors.

13. Statue Trap

When characters reach the midway point between the two dragon-men statues on the slope, each will animate and converge on the group. Each wields a sickle and spear, attacking once per round with each weapon. Each weapon is treated as +1 to-hit and damage. The weapons will disappear when the statues explode upon death.

Dragon-men Statues (2): AC 4 HD 5** HP 30 each, ATT 2 weapons, Dam 1-8+1, 1-6+1, MV 60' (20), special: upon death, explodes in a ball of fire for 3d6 damage to any within 20', ML 11, Save F3, Align: Chaotic, XP 425 each

14. Crypt of the Thirds

Twin priests once shared the duty of administering service to members of their race. Wrapped and buried side by side on two stone slabs, t'Reth and t'Relk were identical and were never apart in life. When t'Reth died before his brother, t'Relk took his own life moments later to remain by his side in death.



Each brother holds a half shield and a short sword upon their wrapped form. Both swords are **short swords +1** and illuminate on command (10' radius). Although non-magical, the shields are adorned with language and images that—when seen—may prevent any dragon-man (statue or undead) from attacking (1 in 6 chance they will attack someone else).

A single clay pot between the burial slabs is filled with platinum coins (**350 pp**).

15. Crypt of the Second

Upon entry to the area, characters will hear the scraping of nails on stone in the dark beyond. A **Mummy** digs at the wall seeking a way out. Awakened from his eternal sleep when the ritual was halted, t'Shrin has ever since tried to escape his burial chamber.

t'Shrin (Mummy): AC 3 HD 5+1* HP 31, ATT 1 touch, Dam 1 -12 + disease, MV 60' (20'), Special; disease, unaffected by sleep, charm and hold spells, ML 12, Save F5, Align Chaotic, XP 400

A small chest and three clay jars are set near the east wall. The chest contains 3 scrolls (*Bless*, *Hold Person*, and *Snake Charm*), **chainmail +1**, and a **war hammer +1**. The clay jars contain **668 gp**, **981 sp**, and two dozen pieces of gem-encrusted jewelry (each piece is worth 1d1000gp).

Conclusion

If characters inadvertently restart the ritual, they will have to contend with an irate red dragon looking for revenge and a meal. If t'Zeel is slain in dragon form before he returns to his home plane, his body will return to its humanoid state after several rounds.

Spellbound

In a previous issue of *Back to BasiX*, we briefly discussed Druidic spells. I was recently asked about necromancy and spells of this type for B/X. I've come up with a few spells that I think I would use if a player wanted their character to have more of a necromancer feel.

Note that I haven't specified whether the base character class would be Cleric or Magic-user—I believe I would allow either but I'd lean more toward the Cleric class for this build. However, GMs can choose either base class or create a new class entirely.

Necromancer Spells

Level	Name
1	Destroy Life
1	Dispel Undead
2	Rot Flesh
2	Summon Undead
3	Gravesight
3	Hold Undead
4	Animate Bone Golem
4	Speak with Dead
5	Resist Death
5	Vampiric Touch

Spell descriptions are found on the following page.

First Level Spells

Destroy Life

Targets unintelligent life, destroying 1 HD or ten square feet (depth of 1') per level of the caster. Useful for destroying vegetation or swarms of insects. Targets must have less than 1 HD each to be affected.

Dispel Undead

Caster affects 1 HD undead per level, turning them as the cleric's Turn Undead ability. This spell can be used on undead that have previously been turned or unaffected by a turn attempt. This spell can also be used to cancel the effects of an *Animate Dead* spell.

Second Level Spells

Rot Flesh

For the number of rounds equal to the caster's level, any successful touch by the caster has a chance to pass on a rotting disease (like that of a Mummy). Affected victims may make a saving throw versus Spells to avoid the disease effects.

Summon Undead

The caster may summon 1 HD of undead to their location. Each undead creature may be controlled by the caster using verbal commands. Undead of 4 HD or higher may make a saving throw every turn to avoid being controlled. Undead must be within 100 feet per level of the caster. The undead follow the commands of the caster for 1 turn per caster level.

Third Level Spells

Gravesight

The caster may look into one grave or burial location, gazing through solid rock, wood, or dirt to examine the contents within. For each level of the caster, the distance is increased by ten feet and the length of time increased by one minute.

Hold Undead

This spell works on undead like the *Hold Person* spell except that the undead targets do not get a saving throw.

Fourth Level Spells

Animate Bone Golem

Using a pile of bones, the caster may create a Bone Golem that will follow his or her simple instructions. A full-sized Bone Golem requires over two hundred pounds of bone. One hundred pounds of bones will create a half-sized Bone Golem.

Speak with Dead

The caster may be able to speak with the dead, asking simple yes or no questions or queries that may produce a one-word response. Each level of the caster increases the number of days the target may be dead to allow the spell to work. For example, a 10th level caster can speak to the dead who have died within ten days. The caster may only target one dead being. The spell lasts for 1 turn per level of the caster.



Fifth Level Spells

Resist Death

Any creature or person who has been killed can be held in a state of "near-death" for a number of days equal to the level of the caster. During this time, the affected target's form will not naturally deteriorate or heal. Magical healing may be applied at anytime, but cancels the spell's effects immediately.

Vampiric Touch

For 1 round per character level, the caster has the same deadly, energy draining touch as a vampire. Each successful strike heals the caster 1d4 hit points while draining the victim two levels or HD. Any creature killed with Vampiric Touch will not turn into a vampire but has a 50% chance of returning as a Zombie within 24 hours of death.

Quarterly Dungeon Crawl #2

Pyramid of Reversal

by Thom Wilson. An adventure for 4-6 characters of 10th to 14th level.

Background: Village elders of Ghantala have had a loose agreement with demons living below the desert dunes for centuries – a child from a single village family each generation must be sacrificed to the demonic denizens to prevent a catastrophic disease from decimating the remote village. However, only the elders are aware of the arrangement. Villagers believe that some of their children have been born "possessed" and had to be left in the nearby pyramids to be judged, taken away, and healed by the gods. Children are actually drugged by elders making them behave erratically. Parents are led to believe that to save them, they must give them over to the gods.

Unfortunately for the elders, the centuries-old secret was somehow discovered by villagers after a recent sacrifice. After enraged families dispatched their elders in a night of bloodshed and retribution, they have tried to recover

lost children at the pyramids but their attempts to discover an entrance has failed. They are offering a substantial reward to characters to enter the pyramid and retrieve any children they can find.

Detailed Background: Elders have been trading children for bricks of gold for centuries. Demons have been paying the mortals in gold in exchange for young children, used to work as slaves in their mines below the surface (among other nefarious purposes). The elders have been stockpiling the gold, spending it only when necessary. A secret vault under the village council chambers is well hidden and unknown to any who remain in the area. It is filled with hundreds of gold bars.

Many of the abducted children are still below the village, serving their demon masters in the upside down city of Xak'tor. Children are forced to mine for gold and silver, serve lazy demon masters, and defend the upside down city from subterranean threats.

Pyramids of the Dead

1. Funeral Area

Most of the villagers have gathered in this area, awaiting heroes who are willing to enter the Pyramid of Death to retrieve their lost loved ones. Daring to go no closer than the gathering area between the pyramids, they have assembled in prayer and lamentation, heart-broken from the deceit of their trusted elders. None of the villagers will go any closer than this area.

2. Pyramid of the Sun

A smaller pyramid nearby is used to offer sacrifices of vegetables and fruit to the Sun god, Zharr. The small cubicle at the top of the pyramid lacks a roof, allowing the sun to reduce sacrificed food to a watery pulp. In exchange for the bounty, Zharr is said to bless his people with long life and healthy bodies. The door to the pyramid interior has been sealed for centuries—no one knows what is within the structure, if anything.

3. Pyramid of Reversal

Called the “Pyramid of Death” by the people of Ghantala, this structure is nothing more than an overbuilt entryway to an upside-down city below the surface. Elders of the village have convinced villagers that the pyramid was constructed as a sacrificial temple to their god of Judgment, Lorfandu. Since no child has ever escaped the judgment of the gods, the people have also called Lorfandu the god of Death.

4. Sacrificial Pole

A single pillar emerges from the stone floor of the uppermost tier of the blackened pyramid. Leather ropes, used to lash children down, hang from the stone pole. No door or entry can be found anywhere on the pyramid unless a lengthy and meticulous search is made. A concealed trap door around the pillar opens to reveal a circular stairwell leading to areas 7 and 8 below.

Find Concealed Door: 2 in 6 chance, or 3 in 6 chance for elves and dwarves.

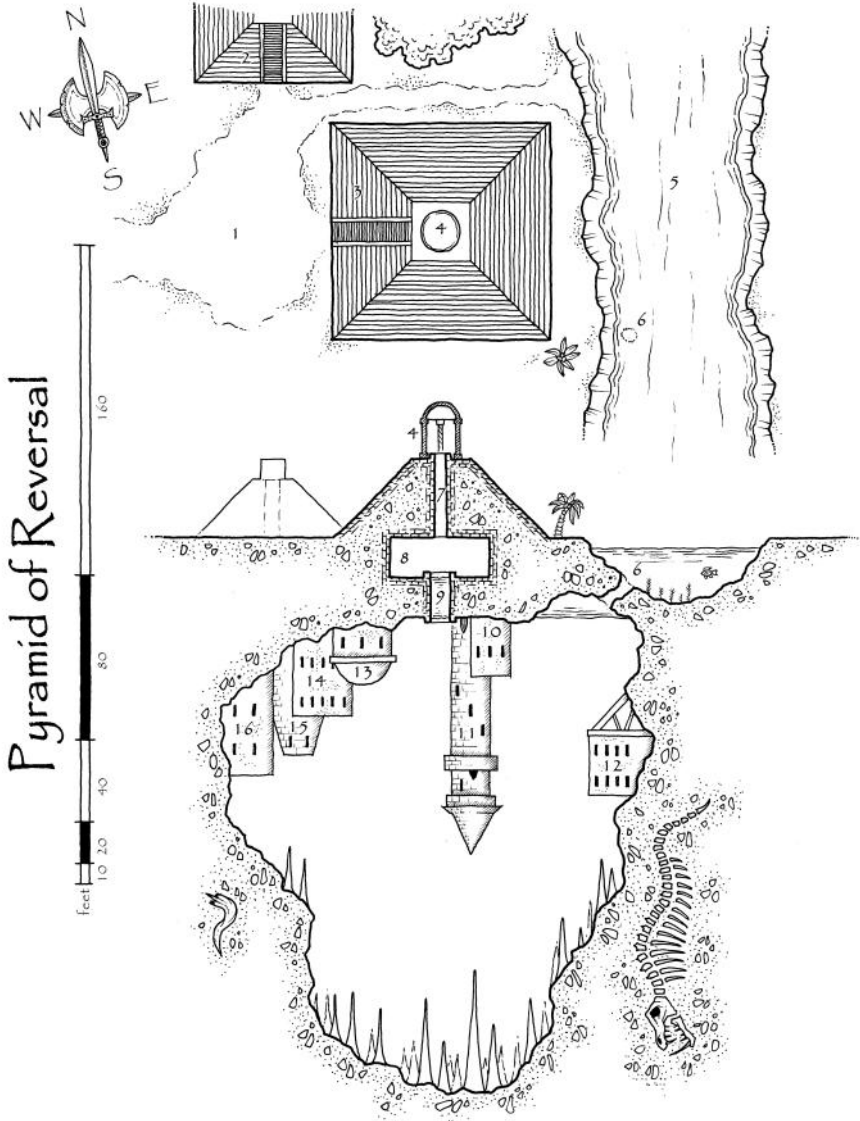
5. Sulfuric River

A river of sulfur-rich water flows past the pyramids, depositing the yellow-tinged fluids to a shallow sea in the south. The slow-moving water is undrinkable, giving anyone who consumes more than a mouthful of it serious stomach pains, cramps, and *diarrhea* for 24 hours. However, the water is safe to bathe in and provides a cleansing feel to the skin and a calming effect to the nerves.

Avoid Sulfuric Sickness: Roll under one-half Constitution score (rounding up).

6. Secret Tunnel

Villagers bathe and relax in one especially warm spot in the sulfuric river near the shore. Heat from the underground city emanates through a secret tunnel that connects a lake below to the river above. The secret tunnel at the bottom of the river is challenging to discover. Some characters may detect a change in water flow or direction near the spot, hinting at an opening at the river bottom.



Find Secret Tunnel: 1 in 6 chance, or 2 in 6 chance for characters with aquatic backgrounds.

7. Weightless Drop

Circular stairs wind downward forty feet before ending in a trap door. An overwhelming feeling of weightlessness increases as characters descend the stairs. By the time they reach the bottom,

they will feel like they have to fight to stay grounded. Any who jump from the top of the stairs down into the center opening between the steps will find their descent slowing almost to a halt as they reach the floor.

The trap door in the floor is locked from the other side, requiring considerable strength to break the bar and chains holding the door in place.

Open Reinforced Door: 1 in 12 chance (Strength bonus applies).

8. Sorting Chamber

Weightless children floating in mid air were evaluated for service suitability in this large room. Demon masters choose new workers for their mines, towers, and tunnels after a lengthy review of their minds and bodies. Those found to be unlikely suited to the harsh environment of the reversed city are disposed of.

9. Testing Tunnel

A final test is performed by those that pass the initial sorting evaluation in the previous chamber. Mortals must move through a current of swirling darkness to access the opposite side and door to exit the tunnel. Resisting the urge to fight the pull of the chamber makes it more likely to pass the test and survive the final area before entering the upside down city.

Access Opposite Side: Roll OVER Strength (stronger characters are less likely to succeed).

The door exits into the fully upside down world of the demons within Xak'tor. By this time, characters will fully feel that up is down and down is up. As they emerge from the testing tunnel, they will be able to plant their feet on the floors of the structures and cave without much difficulty. However, for

each failed check made in the tunnel before exiting, they will be penalized -1 to all actions for 24 hours (cumulative) as they fight the urge to right themselves.

Most denizens of Xak'tor are indoors, lounging while their slaves perform all necessary duties. There is a 10% chance that **1d4 Cambion Demons** may see the characters as they emerge from the tunnel.

Cambion Demons (1d4): AC 4, HD 6, HP 36 each, #AT 1 weapon, D weapon+3, Save F6, ML 9, Special: 18 Strength, Thief abilities, XP 820 each



10. Guardhouse

This two-story structure houses demon guards while off duty. Luckily for characters, the demons are rarely idle, preferring to spend their time making mortal lives miserable. Many torment the slaves within the city or are off to different planes or worlds to war and pillage. Characters will find only a handful of demons here at any time.

1d4 Shadow demons are often here, awaiting orders.

Shadow Demons (1d4): AC 1, HD 7+3, HP 45 each, #AT 2 claws/1 bite, D 1-6/1-6/1-8, Save F7, ML 9, Special: Spell-like abilities, XP 1,320 each

11. Tower of the Demoness Ixnatak, Great Guardian of the Plane of Reversal

The slender tower contains six levels of empty living quarters for the demoness Ixnatak, a Marilith Demon of great importance. She resides in the uppermost level of the tower, served by slaves and many Succubi. Dozens of valuable items are found throughout the tower, including 1d6 magical items. Pairs of Succubus guards are rarely far from the demoness' great possessions.

Succubus Demons (GM decides): AC 0, HD 6, HP 36 each, #AT 2 claws, D 1-3/1-3, Save F6, ML 7, Special: Magic weapons to hit, level drain, XP 1,320 each

Demoness Ixnatak (Marilith Demon): AC -6, HD 7+6, HP 36, #AT 7 swords/1 tail, D 1-8+3/1-8 (other 6 weapons)/2-8, Save F7, ML 10, Special: +1 weapons to hit, Spells as MU7, XP 1,700

The demoness carries the magical gemstone, *Soulblood*, a red ruby that contains all the souls of the countless mortals she has defeated. It is worth 75,000 to 100,00 gp. She also wields *Willbreaker*, a magical sword that reduces the target's morale to half on a successful hit and steals souls on natural 20s. Otherwise, it is treated as a **sword +3** for to-hit rolls and damage.

Ixnatak often has chests of gems, platinum, gold, and magic items scattered about her private



quarters. Characters should find in plain sight 1d100 gems (value 1,000 gp each), 5d100pp, 10d100gp, and 1d6 magical items.

12. Slave Quarters

Broken or injured slaves are left here to recover or die. The door is locked from the outside and is always guarded by a single Balor Demon.

Grizzled Balor Demon: AC -2, HD 8+7, HP 55, #AT 1 sword or 1 whip, D 2-9 or 1-6, Save F8, ML 10, Special: +1 weapons to hit, whip adds 3d6 fire damage, spell-like abilities, XP 1,820

There are 3d6 sick, injured, and near-death slaves within the building (50% are children).

13. Temple of Demogorgon

A high-domed, single story structure, the Temple of Demogorgon the King of Demons, contains a gargantuan statue of the two-headed leader. Although the temple is filled with hundreds of kneeling and prayer mats, it is rarely attended by demon patrons. Demogorgon mandated that the temple be built in Xak'tor, but none of his

minions regularly visit its interior. A single, fanatical **priest** and his **three acolytes** provide worship services and advice to visitors as needed. Non-demon visitors (other than slaves) are treated with hostility unless given specific instructions otherwise. In battle, the acolytes will protect their priest, preferring to die to save him or give him time to cast spells against foes.

Human Priest of Demogorgon, Xak'tor temple: AC 3, Cleric 7, HP 24, #AT 1 mace or spell, D 1-6+2, Save C7, ML 11, Spells: 1L) *Protection from Good, Detect Good*, 2L) *Bless, Hold Person*, 3L) *Cause Disease, Curse*, 4L) *Cure Serious Wounds*, 5L) *Commune*, **mace +2**, plate mail, XP 1,250

Acolytes (3): AC 3, Cleric 1, HP 5 each, #AT 1 mace, D 1-6, Save C1, ML 12, XP 13 each

Four massive opals are set into the statue's four eye sockets. Removing them marks the characters for life, creating an open-ended plot hook for many demon encounters to come (DM to create and use as needed). However, if the characters can sell the opals, each will fetch 15,000 gp each. Note that gem dealers and craftsmen will consider the unnaturally large opals to either be fake or cursed making them hard to sell.

14. Storehouse

Grains, vegetables, and fruit are stored in this warehouse in large quantities, used primarily to feed the slaves in the small city. Most of the supplies are either nearly or fully spoiled, yet still given to starving slaves nonetheless. There is a 50% chance

that one or two Cambion Demons will be patrolling the storehouse.

15. Storehouse

The entrance to a vast mine of countless tunnels is found at the ground floor of this structure. Thousands of slaves mine the tunnels for gold, silver, and gems while watched over by dozens of demons. Entering this area is considerably dangerous and should only be encouraged if the characters are capable. It is easy to get lost in the darkness beyond as hundreds of wretched and foul things lurk in the shadows and dead-end tunnels. Somewhere at the end of the mining operation lies a hidden exit to Avernus, the first level of Hell. It is guarded by a dozen Balor demons.

16. Visitor Quarters

Although rare, visitors occasionally visit Xak'tor to meet with Ixnatak or attend a special service at the Temple of Demogorgon. Demons, devils, leaders of underdark factions and—very rarely—an elder from Ghantala may use the special quarters at the edge of the city by invitation only. When multiple visitors stay in the elegant quarters, violence often ensues.

Adventure Conclusion

Characters should easily find a few children slaves in several areas, attending demons, working the mines, or cleaning up after visitors. Attempting to gather as many slaves as possible may create issues when trying to sneak them out. Demons will be sure to miss multiple slaves and will search the city for intruders.

Crimson Abbey of the Broken God — Part 9

Finding the tunnel below the dais of the old temple, the brave heroes navigate the darkness and dozens of corpses littering their path to emerge in the new shrine of the Broken God (Area 28).

The map for this part of the adventure can be found on the next page.

A21-23. Monk Quarters

A private wing of single rooms was added here for monks both excelling at their studies and showing great promise in the order. Each of the three rooms is outfitted with a single bed, writing desk, stool, and side table. The rooms are filled with years of undisturbed dust and smoke residue. If searched, adventurers will find old scrolls, books, and dried writing utensils. There is a 25% chance that a character may find a scroll or book that details the Crimson God in further detail.

A24. Monk Quarters

A single monk was charged with watching over several monks, providing assistance and advice as needed. This monk was called an “Observer” and often had his quarters near his charges. This room was the quarters for this wing’s Observer. It is furnished similarly to that of his initiates with the exception of having more books and scrolls on his bookshelf than the younger monks.

When searching the bookshelf, adventurers will find a magical tome that will add one point to Wisdom permanently after a full,

uninterrupted read. Only one character may read the book and only if they have at least an Intelligence score of at least 12.

A25. Empty Library

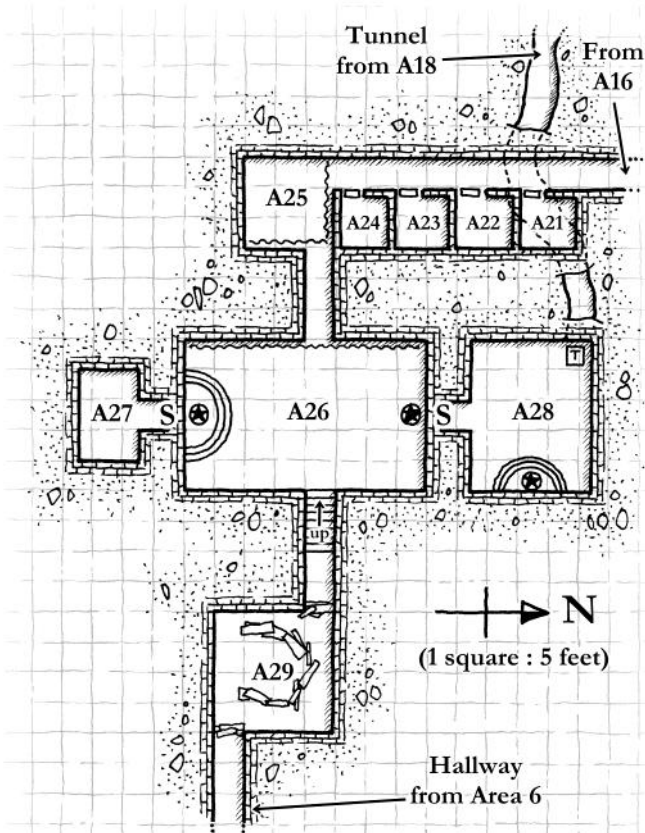
Two massive tapestries slide on rails to reveal two openings into this room. Several empty bookcases are found in the room, apparently cleared out in a hurry. Books and scrolls are lying about the room as if dropped or thrown to the side in a rush. In fact, monks fleeing the area in the abbey’s last days grabbed whatever they could and left.

A note on a shelf reads, “Take three others and grab whatever you can from the western library. Make sure to get *The Crimson Veil* and the unfinished *Breaking of a God*. Hurry back!”

A26. Private Shrine

Monks often attended worship multiple times per day privately. Although they spent time with villagers and visitors in the main temple (area 18), they preferred the private shrine in this location when furthering their prayers and devotions. Unlike the main temple, this shrine lacks benches or chairs. Monks were expected to kneel upon the hard floor to show their faith.

A statue of a broad-shouldered man on the dais at the western side of the room has been defaced, marked with splashes of black and red paint. The hallway



Crimson Abbey of the Broken God
Map 6

to the north is covered by a great tapestry of monks helping men, women, and children in several different locales. An archway on the southern wall leads to stairs and a hallway beyond.

Find Well-made Secret Doors:
 Two secret doors in the room are hard to find (Elves and dwarves may find them on 1-2 on 1d8, and others on a 1 on 1d8).

A27. Secret Chamber

This area was known to the lawful monks of the order before the Broken God's influence spread throughout the abbey.

The secret room contains one of the many artifacts of their god: the *Shield of the Broken God*. Additionally, the monks stored much of their donation money here. Ten small chests hold a total of **967 gp, 1,896 sp, 2,751 cp**.

Shield of the Broken God:
shield +1, +2 versus Chaos.
 Provides 1-2 hp regeneration per eight hours to one Lawful character (must possess the shield for a majority of the time during that period). Once per day wielder may automatically knock one adjacent target back 1d4x5 feet.

A28. New Temple

When the Broken God became tainted by the crimson entity below the abbey, the order broke into two factions. Those that served the newly transformed evil god created a smaller, secret temple in the upper level of the abbey. This temple was used for secret prayer and worship until the main temple was finished in the crypts of the monastery far below.

The statue that once stood in the main temple (area 18) was dragged through the tunnel to this secret room and erected on a makeshift dais. The arms and head were broken off the statue and the entire sculpture was splashed with crimson paint. A glass container filled with blood was set in place of the head (since dried, now just lined with a dried, red substance). The remains of several dead monks, an equal number of both orders, are found here and in the tunnel below. Note that none of the dead have headbands—all were presumably removed after the battle.

A trap door in the floor leads to a hidden tunnel that emerges in area A18.

A29. Barricaded Room

When the battle for the abbey erupted and monks were decimated in the main temple, the remaining monks of the original order made their last stand in this common room. Piling up furniture and crates, they stood their ground to the last. A pile of skeletal remains in the center of the room hints to the gruesome and bitter end of the

monks of the untainted Broken God. Several dead monks outside the barricaded area wear ruby headbands. If any headpieces are removed, 2d4 skeletons will rise to attack characters.

Skeletons (2d4): AC 7, HD 1, HP 5 each, #AT 1 claw, D 1-4, Save F1, ML 12, XP 10 each

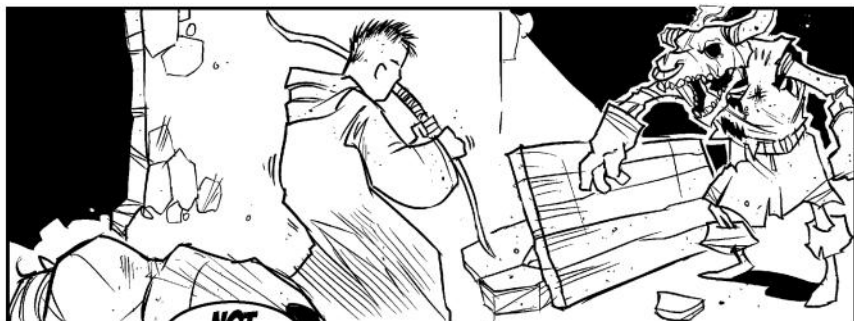
A search through the dead skeletons in the center of the room will reveal two important tomes: *The Crimson Veil* and *Breaking of a God*. These were to be secured and kept from the evil monks. The monks hid the books in their robes and died protecting them.

The Crimson Veil chronologically details the slow change in the order after a few monks stumbled upon the evil ruby below the abbey. It specifically details the location of the gem where it was found and several events that should have forewarned the evil to come.

Breaking of a God discusses the rise and fall of an immortal angel who finally rises to deity status after self-sacrifice. The story hints to the origins of the original order of the monks and their faith in their god's teachings and deeds.

Convention Calendar

Convention	Date, Location
Origins Game Fair '19	Jun. 12th—16th, Columbus, OH
Gen Con 2019 (52)	Aug. 1st—4th, Indianapolis, IN
ShireCon II	Sept. 21st, Falls Village, CT
GameHoleCon VII	Oct. 31st—Nov. 3rd, Madison, WI

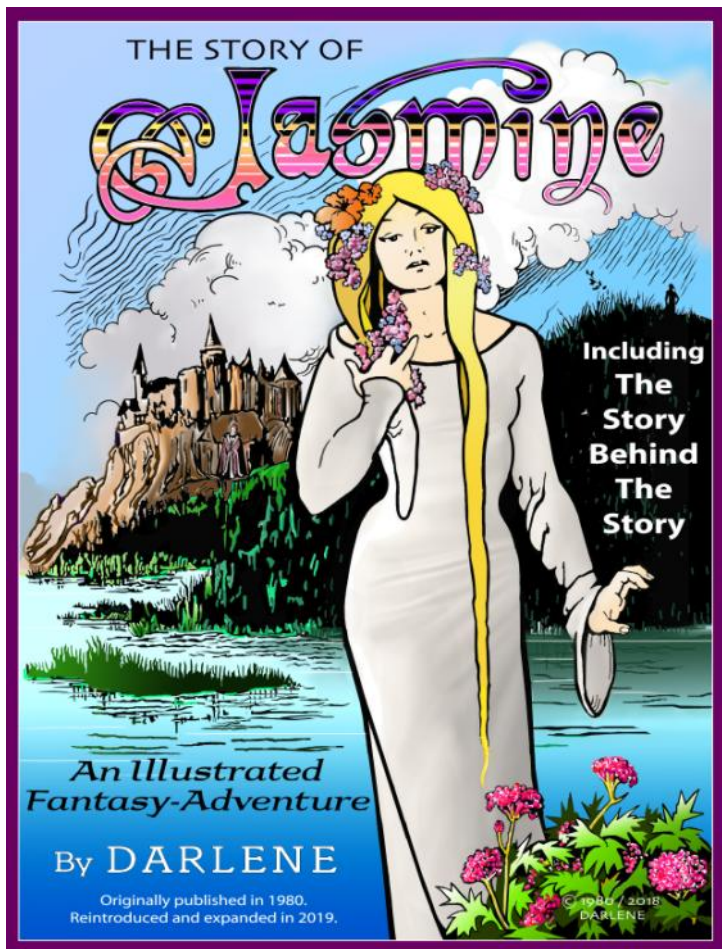




NEXT TIME: THE GROUP LEARNS MORE ABOUT THE FALLEN ABBEY.

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B/X Fanzine



Artwork by Darlene

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Comic Strip and Adventure
MonkeyBlood Maps!
Contributor Interview



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