

# CLAW/CLAW/BITE



d20  
system

Issue 16 - Winter 2009





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# CLAW/CLAW/BITE

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## CREDITS

Thanks for reading this issue of *CCB* – Claw/Claw/Bite #16 by S.D. Hilderbrand.

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## INTRODUCTION

Hail and well met, fellow role-players! Welcome to Claw/Claw/Bite, a resource for storytellers and gamemasters to create thrilling worlds of adventure for your players to test their mettle in. Every day or two, on our website, we post an article containing at least one new character, creature, magic item, encounter, spell or area description for use in your campaigns. We also include little nuggets that will enrich your campaign setting with cool details and intriguing features. These articles and others like them are routinely posted at **clawclawbite.com** as blog posts, many of which are collected in these monthly issues.

Our goal is to be a one-stop shop for you, the storyteller. All of our creations are designed for d20 3.5 rules. Many of the game elements that you see in this periodical will find their way into modules published by Unicorn Rampant, which will be available on our sites: **unicornrampant.com** and **clawclawbite.com**, as well as at **rpgnow.com**.

So welcome to our world of strange and wonderful things, traveler. Bizarre treasures, cunning adversaries, powerful adventurers, and mystic realms are waiting for you. This issue is devoted largely to magic items and locations, serving as a minor compendium of magic available later this summer from Unicorn Rampant.

Enjoy your stay in Ft. Wood, Fallon House, Dindle Keep, Tannen, Piran Point, or wherever the book of dreams takes you!

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## CAMPAIGN FLAVOR

### Traveler's Tables

Traveler's tables are nice little elements to add some spice (and encounter locations) to your worlds. Placed outside the city walls, though often in view of the town guard, these are simple tables set up so that merchants and travelers can regroup, take in a meal, and generally rest up before heading into the hustle and bustle of town and city centers.

The construction of the tables varies per region, with some city-states erecting magnificent stone tables, complete with moderate shelter, horse ties and posts, working wells and shrines. Other, less well-to-do locales offer more meager accommodations, but all municipalities consider it their duty to accommodate the weary traveler, and this is one such gesture of welcome.

These locations are often named for famous adventurers who hail from the towns in which they are placed.

## DEITIES

### Saha Ra and Ohases

Saha Ra is a neutral deity who provides clerics with access to the Sun and Earth domains. His wife Ohases provides his cool complement, Moon and Water.

He is concerned with the role of light and heat, and she with the role of shadow and cold. They are both favored by cultures which live in or near deserts.

His symbol is a the sun with the earth below, represented by a horizon line. A simplified version of the symbol is a circle with a horizontal line under it. Hers is a crescent with a wavy line below.

Tales of their troubled romance peppers the mythologies of those who worship them, as well as those whose religious practices allow for them in their larger pantheons.

## SPELL

### Cone of Silence

**Illusion (Glamer)**

**Level:** Brd 1, Clr 1

**Components:** S, M

**Casting Time:** 1 standard action

**Range:** Touch

**Area:** 30-ft.-long cone that emanates from the caster

**Duration:** 1 min./level (D)

**Saving Throw:** Will negates; see text or none (object)

**Spell Resistance:** Yes; see text or no (object)

Upon the casting of this spell, complete silence prevails in the affected area. All sound is stopped: Conversation is impossible, spells with verbal components cannot be cast, and no noise whatsoever issues from, enters, or passes through the conic area. The effect emanates from the cone held aloft by the caster. An unwilling creature can attempt a Will save to negate the spell and can use spell resistance, if any. Items in a creature's possession or magic items that emit sound receive the benefits of saves and spell resistance, but unattended objects and points in space do not. This spell provides a defense against sonic or language-based attacks.

The material component is a small cone that the caster holds in her hand when casting the spell.

## CHARACTERS

### Khadiya Umberbær

Khadiya was born and raised by the Bær tribe on the edge of a vast desert. From his upbringing, he has learned to worship Saha Ra, god of sun and sand, and live off the fruits of this deity. As he's moved into more urban environments, he's taken up various rogues skills to survive.

**Khadiya Underbær**

**Medium-size Male Human**

**Rogue 5 Ranger 2**

**Hit Dice:** (5d6)+(2d8)+14

**Hit Points:** 54

**Initiative:** +4

**Speed:** Walk 30 ft.

**AC:** 18 (flatfooted 18, touch 14)

**Attacks:** \*Shortbow +1 +10; Sword (Short/Masterwork) +7;

**Damage:** \*Shortbow +1 1d6+1; Sword (Short/Masterwork) 1d6+1;

**Vision:** normal

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

**Special Qualities:** Archery Combat Style, Evasion (Ex), Favored Enemy (Humanoid (Reptilian)) +2, Sneak Attack +3d6, Trap Sense (Ex) +1, Trapfinding, Uncanny Dodge (Dex bonus to AC), Wild Empathy (Ex) +3

**Saves:** **Fortitude:** +6, **Reflex:** +11, **Will:** -1

**Abilities:** Str 13 Dex 18 Con 15 Int 13 Wis 7 Cha 12

**Skills:** Appraise 2; Balance 16; Bluff 1; Climb 6; Concentration 5; Craft (Untrained) 1; Decipher Script 2; Diplomacy 1; Disable Device 7; Disguise 1; Escape Artist 10; Forgery 3; Gather Information 4; Heal -2; Hide 10; Intimidate 1; Jump 6; Listen 4; Move Silently



14; Ride 8; Search 5; Sense Motive 0; Sleight of Hand 9; Spot 1; Survival -1; Swim 2; Tumble 10; Use Magic Device 4;

**Feats:** Armor Proficiency (Light), Dodge, Martial Weapon Proficiency, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Shield Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Track

**Challenge Rating:** 7

**Alignment:** Chaotic Good

**Possessions:** Aquamarine; Rope (Silk/50 Ft.); Arrows (20); Arrows (20/Mithral); Backpack; Bedroll (Fine); Case (Map or Scroll); Elixir of Sneaking; Fishhook; Flint and Steel; Grappling Hook; Leather +2; Magnifying Glass; Onyx; Piton; Potion of Cure Moderate Wounds; Pouch (Belt); Rose Quartz; Sack (Large); Sack (Small); Sard; Shortbow +1; Signet Ring; Sword (Short/Masterwork); Thieves' Tools; Torch; Waterskin (Filled); Whetstone;

**Spells:**

**Spells per Day:** (0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/ DC:8+spell level)

**Ranger – Known:**

**Level 1:** Alarm, Animal Messenger, Calm Animals, Charm Animal, Delay Poison, Detect Animals or Plants, Detect Poison, Detect Snares and Pits, Endure Elements, Entangle, Hide from Animals, Jump, Longstrider, Pass without Trace, Read Magic, Resist Energy, Speak with Animals, Summon Nature's Ally I

## Tasun Sölya

A hooded figure clutching an ornately carved shortbow steps quietly from the shadows. He bows slightly, intoning a solemn greeting in a foreign tongue, the light revealing a silver medallion around his neck in the shape of a moon eclipsing a sun.

Tasun Sölya was raised by a monastic order in a kloster (Kloster Saiben) overlooking in a small alpine village along a trading route. He studied the crafts of brewing and writing and would sneak out into the fields where he practiced archery and herbalism. From time to time, wandering traders would come through the small town offering tales of far away places and strange herbs and spices. He memorized some of these stories, which have moulded the way he thinks about the world. In his late adolescence, he learned that the interactions of salt, pepper, and other spices have a profound affect on food, something he has begun to explore in his alchemical concoctions. Toward the end of his stay in the kloster, he began to think he is a half-elf, and so he has taught himself to read elvish script out of one of the elven tomes in the kloster (there were no elves around to teach him to speak).

He set off to adventure as soon as he could, in dire spiritual need of new forms of spices and herbs. Along

the way, he has come to realize that his religious beliefs are aligned more with those he believes are his blood brethren, rather than the monks from the kloster who raised him.

In game terms, Tasun is a cleric with druidic leanings and a penchant for skills commonly associated with rogues and bards – archery, sneaking, and storytelling. He'll take levels of rogue and/or bard in time.

**Tasun Sölya** (goes by Tæsundel Sölya-mun because he thinks he's half-elf)

**Medium-size Male Human**

**Cleric of Eilistraee**

**HP:** 18 (2d8+2)

**Initiative:** +2

**Speed:** Walk 30 ft.

**AC:** 15 (leather armor, dex+2)

**Base Attack Bonus:** +2 melee, +3 ranged

**Attacks:** Shortbow +1 (+4 to hit), Dagger (+2 to hit)

**Damage:** Shortbow 1d6+3, Dagger 1d4+1

**Vision:** normal

**Face/Reach:** 5ft, 5ft.

**Special Qualities:** none

**Saves:** Fort +4 Ref +2 Will +3

**Abilities:** Str 12 Dex 15 Con 13 Int 10 Wis 13 Cha 12

**Skills of note:**

Bluff 2

Concentration 4

Diplomacy 4

Heal 4

Knowledge: Nature 2

Knowledge: Religion 2

Listen 1

Spellcraft 3

Survival 1

**Languages:** Common, Elven (Read/Write, not speak so well - knows a few catch phrases, but has a strong human accent)

**Feats:** Point Blank Shot, Brew Potion

**Possessions:** Shortbow +1, Leather Armor, Leather Belt, Spell Component Pouch, Travelers Outfit, Tinwhistle, Hooded Cloak, Leather Boots, Boot Sheath, Masterwork Dagger, Quiver, 40 arrows, Small Backpack, Holy Symbol, Silk Gown, 3 Days of dried food, Quill, Scroll Case with 2 pieces of parchment, Small Traveller's Journal, 2 Potions of Cure Light Wounds

**Deity:** Eilistraee

**Domains:**

Community

Rune

**Spells:**

**Spells per Day:** (5/4/0/0/0/0/0/0/ DC:10+spell level)



**Often Prepared:**

**0th:** Detect Magic, Detect Poison, Light, Mending, Read Magic

**1st:** Cause Fear, Detect Undead, Entropic Shield, Shield of Faith

**Tipene**

Hailing from an vanaran island culture, Tipene is a trained shaman who has studied martial arts. He and his companions seek information on "floaters," human pirates that once ransacked ports on their home island. Tipene is very academic and dry around new faces, but warms up and tells plenty of war stories once he gets to know those around him. He maintains a skeptical, scientific eye on most things. Even his deep-rooted spirituality has an explanation! But you'll have to get to know him in person to learn more.

**Tipene**

**True Neutral Vanaran Rogue 1 Shaman 8 Natural Scientist, worshiper of Zaius**

**HD:** 8d8+1d6+18

**HP:** 51

**Init:** -1

**Speed:** Walk 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

**AC:** 17 (touch 12, flat-footed 16)

**Attacks:** hands +6/+1 1d8 20, masterwork war claw +7/+2

**Damage:** 1d3-1, 1d6-1

**Base Attack Bonus:** +6/+1

**Vision:** normal

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

**Special Qualities:**

Sneak Attack +1d6

Trapfinding

Ancestor Domain - Summon ancestor

Travel Domain - Freedom of movement 1/day

Improved Unarmed Strike

Animal Companion - Monkey, Claudius

Spirit Sight - see ethereal creatures

Rebuke Undead

Spirit's Favor - charisma as a bonus on all saves

**Saves:** Fort: 5, Ref 5, Will 12

**Abilities:** Str 8, Dex 8, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 20, Cha 10

**Skills:**

Appraise: 8

Concentration: 12

Craft (Bookbinding): 11

Decipher Script: 10

Diplomacy: 4

Handle Animal: 2

Heal: 10

Hide: 0

Knowledge (Arcana): 6

Knowledge (Religion): 7

Knowledge (Spirits): 6

Knowledge (Planes): 7

Listen: 9

Move Silently: 0

Profession (Bookkeeper): 6

Ride: 1

Sense Motive: 10

Spellcraft: 14

Spot: 10

Survival: 11

Use Magic Device: 3

**Feats:**

Great Teamwork

Coordinated Attack

Karmic Twin (Tarapiki, fellow Vanaran and travelling companion)

Dodge

Quicken Spell

**Spells:**

**Free:**

**Travel Domain:**

1 Longstrider

2 Locate Object

3 Fly

4 Divination

**Ancestor Domain:**

1 Detect Undead

2 Ancestral Vengeance

3 Speak with Dead

4 Dimension Door

**Mana:** 62

**Spells per Day:** (levels 0-4): 10/9/8/7/4

**XP:** 40,175

**Languages:**

Vanaran

Olman

Sylvan

Spirit Tongue

**GP:** 14

**PP:** 7

**Possessions:**

roc feathers

scarlet brotherhood robes

luckstone

bag of holding (type 1) full of a necromancer's collection

of items from her skeleton



ivory carving – elephant  
 wooden tiger figurine  
 masterwork war claw from a coatl  
 chain shirt +3  
 dastana  
 deck of illusions (jack of spades already drawn)  
 elixir of sneaking  
 elixir of hiding  
 elixir of fire breath  
 dust of appearance  
 explorer's outfit  
 2 potions of cure moderate wounds  
 white wood staff with a diamond and silver setting  
 (magical)  
 black cloak with silver trim

Tipene was cursed by an evil bat god. Ever since then, he has taken on a palsy that has permanently reduced his Dex by 6 points. In combat, he usually casts *cause serious wounds* and uses his great teamwork feat to flank his opponent with his companion, Tirapiki.

## Tristega Thistlewood

Tristega grew up the daughter of a wealthy merchant family in Piran Point, which made its money on the fish and rope trades.

However, finding the merchant life dull and wholly without adventure, this heiress walked away from the family's fortune (taking some of it with her to bootstrap her own operation). She has developed a small trade network of her own between a few of the coastal towns of the Jæruel, establishing a small black market in "hard to find items," weapons, armor and outlawed arcane reagents that wizards delight in. This side of merchant operations it seems is worthwhile to her; keeping below the surface and a step ahead of the law. She is known to dress in flashy dresses and parade around in her impressive hat collection, one that grows with each successive adventure.

She is a devout follower of Geld, younger brother of Pelor, adhering to St. Grisdon's ten virtues of trade, which places one's honor and word above all things, and encourages dealings with only those who also uphold this honor among merchants and thieves.

**Tristega Thistlewood**  
**Medium-size Female Human**  
**Rogue 5 Merchant 2**



**Hit Dice:** (5d6)+(2d6)+7

**Hit Points:** 41

**Initiative:** +7

**Speed:** Walk 30 ft.

**AC:** 17 (flatfooted 17, touch 13)

**Attacks:** Sword (Short/Masterwork) +5;\*Crossbow +1 (Repeating Light) +7; ;

**Damage:** Sword (Short/Masterwork)

1d6+1;\*Crossbow +1 (Repeating Light) 1d8+1; ;

**Vision:** normal

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

**Special Qualities:** Evasion (Ex), Sneak Attack +3d6, Trap Sense (Ex) +1, Trapfinding, Uncanny Dodge (Dex bonus to AC)

**Saves:** Fortitude: +2, Reflex: +7, Will: -1

**Abilities:** Str 12 Dex 17 Con 13 Int 14 Wis 7 Cha 10

**Skills:** Appraise 12; Balance 11; Bluff 4; Climb 7; Concentration 1; Craft (Alchemy) 5; Craft (Untrained) 2; Decipher Script 7; Diplomacy 1; Disable Device 7; Disguise 2; Escape Artist 7; Forgery 9; Gather Information 3; Heal -2; Hide 3; Intimidate 4; Jump 3; Knowledge (Geography) 4; Knowledge (History) 4; Knowledge (Local) 4; Listen 3; Move Silently 3; Open Lock 7; Ride 3; Search 6; Sense Motive 0; Sleight of Hand 5; Spot 1; Survival 0; Swim 3; Tumble 8; Use Magic Device 3;

**Feats:** Armor Proficiency (Light), Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Crossbow (Repeating Light)), Improved Initiative, Rapid Reload (Crossbow (Light)), Simple Weapon Proficiency, Track

**Challenge Rating:** 6

**Alignment:** Chaotic Neutral

**Possessions:** 40 Bolts, Crossbow; Sword

(Short/Masterwork); 20 Bolts

(Crossbow/Adamantine); Crossbow +1 (Repeating

Light); Leather +2; Potion of Cure Serious Wounds;

Potion of Remove Disease; Potion of Sanctuary;

Signet Ring; Rogue Boots (Thieves' Tools in boots);

## Combat

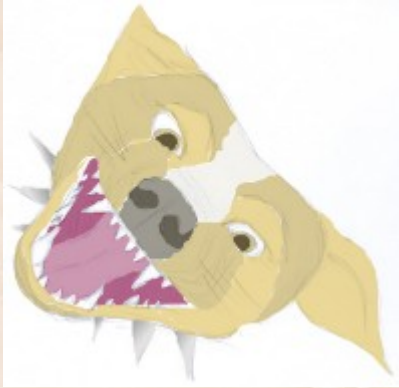
Tristega tries to avoid combat at all costs, even offering money to spare her the work. However, if she has the upper hand (for instance when she can corner an opponent) she will not think twice about pouncing on the opportunity. She attacks from the shadows with her repeating crossbow. When in melee, she prefers the short sword, again keeping her distance whenever possible.



## CREATURES

### Dogs of War

*Dogs of war and men of hate  
With no cause, we don't discriminate  
Discovery is to be disowned  
Our currency is flesh and bone  
-- the bard band  
Floudus Pinkus*



#### Dogs of War

##### Medium

##### Outsider

(Neutral, Extraplanar, Lawful)

**Hit Dice:** 8d8+16 (52 hp)

**Initiative:** +7

**Speed:** 50 ft. (10 squares)

**AC:** 22 (+3 Dex, +6 natural, +3 hide armor), touch 13, flat-footed 16

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +8/+16

**Attack:** Bite +13 melee (1d8+3/19-20 plus 1d6 electricity)

**Full Attack:** Bite +13 melee (1d8+3/19-20 plus 1d6 electricity)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Breath weapon, electric bite

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60 ft., immunity to electricity, scent, vulnerability to water

**Saves:** Fort +9, Ref +9, Will +6

**Abilities:** Str 20 Dex 17 Con 15 Int 8 Wis 11 Cha 4

**Skills:** Intimidate +15, Jump +16, Listen +12, Spot +15, Survival +8\*, Tumble +7

**Feats:** Alertness, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (bite)

**Environment:** Lawful plains, battlefields

**Organization:** Pack (5-12)

**Challenge Rating:** 6

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always lawful neutral

**Advancement:** 9-12 HD (Large); 13-16 HD (Huge)

**Level Adjustment:** +3 (cohort)

A typical dog of war stands 5½ feet high at the shoulder and weighs 160 pounds.

Dogs of War are never encountered alone. They travel only in packs, and are often conscripted to fight both sides of large battles. They do not speak but communicate through a series of barks, yelps, and growls and can be taught battle commands.

#### Combat

Dogs of war are trained to fight as tight packs, using their

strong initiative and skill with their razor-sharp teeth to swarm and flank their opponents. They are also often used as artillery, breathing bolts of lightning into melee.

The natural weapons of dogs of war are treated as neutral-aligned and lawful-aligned for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

**Breath Weapon (Su):** 10-foot-long bolt that travels up to 100 feet, once every 3 rounds, damage 2d6 electricity, Reflex DC 17 half. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Electric Bite (Su):** Dogs of war deal an extra 1d6 points of electric damage every time they bite an opponent, as if these bites are electric weapon.

#### Skills

Dogs of war have a +5 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks, though these are rarely used, except in surprise raids.

\*They also receive a +8 racial bonus on Survival checks when tracking by scent, due to their keen sense of smell.

### Flying V

These are nasty bat-like creatures that drift along the stratosphere until dark, when they swoop down to the surface to feed.

#### Flying V

**Huge Magical Beast (extraplanar)**

**Hit Dice:** 8d8+20 (60 hp)

**Initiative:** +8

**Speed:** fly 60 ft.

**AC:** 23 (-2 size, +8 Dex, +7 natural), touch 16, flat-footed 15

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +7/+26

**Attack:** Bite +10 melee (1d8+6)

**Full Attack:** 2 Bites +10 melee (1d8+6)

**Space/Reach:** 15 ft./20 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Fly-by Attack

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision (200'), Low-light Vision (500')

**Saves:** Fort +11, Ref +15, Will +8

**Abilities:** Str 20, Dex 26, Con 18, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 6

**Skills:** Hide +12, Listen +18\*, Move Silently +18, Spot +14\*

**Feats:** Alertness, Stealthy, Fly-by Attack

**Environment:** Lofty Peaks, Night Sky

**Organization:** Colony (5-8)

**Challenge Rating:** 5

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always neutral

**Advancement:** 9-16 HD (Gargantuan)

**Level Adjustment:** —



A flying V has a wingspan of 25 feet and weighs about 400 pounds. They have hands near the ends of their wings that allows them to grip their prey.

### Combat

Scouting the night sky with their strong nightvision and low-light vision, flying Vs swoop down upon unsuspecting prey from above, using a fly-by attack to either grapple or simply attack their unsuspecting prey.

### Skills

Flying Vs have a +4 racial bonus on Spot and Listen checks.

## Otherworld Dog

**Otherworld Dog**  
**Medium**  
**Outsider**  
**(Chaotic, Extraplanar)**

**Hit Dice:** 4d8+8  
(26 hp)

**Initiative:** +6

**Speed:** 40 ft. (8 squares)

**AC:** 17 (+2 Dex, +5 natural)

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +4/+5

**Attack:** Bite +5 melee (1d8)

**Full Attack:** Bite +5 melee (1d8)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Trip attack

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60 ft., spell resistance 10, scent

**Saves:** Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +4

**Abilities:** Str 11 Dex 15 Con 15 Int 6 Wis 10 Cha 6

**Skills:** Hide +15, Jump +11, Listen +10, Move Silently +14, Spot +8, Survival +7\*

**Feats:** Improved Initiative, Run, TrackB

**Environment:** A chaotically-aligned plane

**Organization:** Solitary, pair, or pack (5-12)

**Challenge Rating:** 3

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always chaotic neutral

**Advancement:** 5-8 HD (Medium);

**Level Adjustment:** +3 (cohort)

A typical otherworld dog stands 4 feet high at the shoulder and weighs 100 pounds. Their coats are a mix of pastel and light-colored hues, ranging from blue to lavender to tan across their coats.

Otherworld dogs do not speak, but they do communicate with each other through a series of howls, barks and whimpers.



Otherworld dogs have never been domesticated, though some have tried. They have the ability to plane shift a will, complicating the process of trying to keep them in one place for very long.

### Combat

Otherworld dogs are efficient hunters. A favorite pack tactic is to surround prey quietly, then attack with all the hounds, tripping prey with their trip attacks. They do not give their prey a chance to escape.

An otherworld dog's natural weapons, as well as any weapons it wields, are treated as chaotically-aligned for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

**Trip Attack(Ex):** An otherworld dog has a trip attack resembling that of a wolf.

### Skills

Otherworld dogs have a +5 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks.

\*They also receive a +8 racial bonus on Survival checks when tracking by scent, due to their keen sense of smell.

## Rug Rats

Created by a mage who once sought world dominance through sales of a specially-tainted rug, rug rats are now relatively common in most lands.

### Rug Rats

**Tiny Magical Beast(Swarm)**

**Hit Dice:** 8d8 (26 hp)

**Initiative:** +4

**Speed:** 20 ft. (4 squares), climb 20 ft.

**Armor Class:** 16 (+2 size, +4 Dex), touch 16, flat-footed 12

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +3/—

**Attack:** Swarm (1d6 plus disease)

**Full Attack:** Swarm (1d6 plus disease)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./0 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Disease, distraction

**Special Qualities:** Half damage from slashing and piercing, low-light vision, scent, swarm traits, meld with fabric

**Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +9, Will +6

**Abilities:** Str 2 Dex 18 Con 10 Int 2 Wis 16 Cha 2

**Skills:** Balance +16, Climb +16, Hide +16 +18, Listen +8, Move Silently +10, Spot +8, Swim +8

**Feats:** Alertness, Stealthy, Weapon FinesseB

**Environment:** Any

**Organization:** Pack (2–4 swarms), or infestation (7–12 swarms)

**Challenge Rating:** 4

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always neutral

**Advancement:** None



**Level Adjustment:** —

### Combat

Rug rats seek to climb up from the rug they're in and attack any warm-blooded prey they encounter. A rug rat swarm deals 1d6 points of damage to any creature whose space it occupies at the end of its move, 2d6 if they stand upon the rug they inhabit.

**Disease (Ex):** Filth fever—swarm attack, Fortitude DC 14, incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Distraction (Ex):** Any living creature that begins its turn with a rug rat swarm in its square must succeed on a DC 14 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1 round. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Meld with Fabric (Su):** A rug rat swarm can meld with the rug it inhabits. This makes them unable to be attacked, though the rug can still be destroyed. If the rug is destroyed, they immediately meld back into their rat forms and scatter, at which point they are treated as normal rats.

**Skills:** A rug rat swarm has a +4 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks, and a +8 racial bonus on Balance, Climb, and Swim checks. A rug rat swarm can always choose to take 10 on all Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened. A rug rat swarm uses its Dexterity modifier instead of its Strength modifier for Climb and Swim checks. A rug rat swarm has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard.

of adventurers having disappeared for long period of time, only to return to the Prime Material Plane acting like the creature form that represented them in the Dream Plane.

**Price:** 10,000gp. Books of dreams require Craft Wondrous Item, *plane shift*, and *dimensional anchor* to construct.

### Book of Escape

This book, when any passage is read from it, transports the reader to a location considered safe by the the reader. This can be anything to a decadent palace to a crib in her parents' home. This depends on the reader

and how well the player rolls when the book is read. Higher rolls mean more lavish accommodations, lower rolls more spartan ones. The effect is that of a *word of recall* spell. The book can be reread, though any passage already read loses its value for any given reader. A typical book of escape has 150 passages for each reader.

This tome led to the meaning of the term "book" meaning to run from a situation.

**Price:** 2,500gp. It requires the ability to Craft Wondrous Item and *word of recall* to create a book of escape.



## MAGIC ITEMS

### Book of Dreams

The stories in the book of dreams are centered around themes that resonate between the Prime Material Plane and the Dream Plane. Readers of a book of dreams travel into the Dream Plane as they sleep, appearing in whatever form is negotiated between the character's will and the passage read. Readers remain on the Dream Plane for the duration of their sleep cycle. If awakened, readers are immediately whisked back to the plane on which the books are read.



Minor tomes allow passage to the Dream Plane for an hour, and Greater/Major tomes transport readers to the Dream Plane indefinitely. There are none too rare cases

### Feather of Falling

This feather is plucked from a flying creature's wing, and is enchanted with a *featherfall* spell. It acts exactly like a feather fall spell, activated immediately if the wearer falls more than 5 feet.

Faint enchantment; CL 1st; feather of a flying creature; *featherfall*; **Price:** 1,800 gp.





## Silken Scarf

These come in many varieties, colors, and textures. Most are smooth, and of a solid color or a basic pattern. The more exotic the scarf, the more powerful the incantation. In order to activate the magic contained in the scarves, the wearer must place them over their mouth, usually accomplished by wrapping them around the neck and slinging them over the mouth. When not activated, they serve a decorative purpose.



Common silken scarves include:

- \* Black – invisibility
- \* White - protection from evil
- \* Green – sustenance
- \* Blue - water breathing
- \* Red - fire resistance +5
- \* Gold - diplomacy +5
- \* Silver - bull's strength

Of course, these common options are supplemented by various variations upon themes, for as varieties of silken threads are woven together in different patterns, different wondrous results arise, not unlike the variations found in alchemy and potion-making.

The price of silken scarves varies, based on the nature of the enchantments upon them. In general, the more complex the pattern, the more enchantments, and thus the more expensive the silken scarf. To craft a silken scarf, one must start with enchanted silken threads, and have Craft Wondrous Item and a weaving skill of at least 5.

## Skin Robe

When this robe is put on, the wearer takes on the form of another. A skin robe enables its wearer to be aware of this new form. This allows him a +10 competence bonus on Disguise checks. The wearer adopts aspects of the appearance of another creature, those whose skin comprise the robe. All creatures failing a Spot check versus the disguise wearer see him in this altered form, even those acquainted with the wearer.

Moderate illusion; CL 10th; Craft Wondrous Item, disguise self; **Price:** 25,000 gp; Weight 1 lb.

## Sitar of Confusion

While the sitar of confusion is played, all within earshot must make a (DC 10 + the Perform (music) skill of the player) Will save or find themselves



under the effect of a *confusion* spell. The player must make a DC 10 check or be affected.

Those under a *silence* spell or similar effect are immune to the effect of the sitar.

## Staff of Wandering

Purportedly developed by the mysterious mage of the Goduanil, versions of this staff have been found in the hands of mist elves and other creatures who maintain civilizations on the fringe of the great ooze flows.

This +1 staff usually provides the following effects:

- \* freedom of movement
- \* path finding
- \* intuit direction

Occasionally, variants of this staff also include some of the following capabilities, replacing one of the above:

- \* create food and water
- \* purify food and water
- \* longstrider

The standard staff of wandering costs 40,000 and requires Craft Staff and the ability to cast whichever spells it supports.

## Tablas of Persuasion

These portable drums appear normal until played by someone who succeeds at a DC 15 Perform (drums / percussion) check. At this point the rhythm of the drums causes all who are within earshot (typically 60') to make a DC 15 Will save or be at a -10 on all Will saves while the drums are played. This makes them more susceptible to persuasion, charm, and command effects originating from the player or those aligned with her.





Faint enchantment; CL 8th; Craft Wondrous Item, creator must have the bardic music class feature, *charm person*; **Price:** 15,000gp; Weight 5 lb.

## Tome of Ensnarement

If read, this tome traps the reader, not allowing them to stop reading until the entire book is complete. This takes varying amounts of time, depending on the intelligence of the reader and the length of the book. The effect requires a DC 35 Will save to avoid.



Minor tomes number a hundred or so pages and are DC 20, and Greater/Major tomes number in the thousands and are DC 30 to avoid. Many an adventurer has met their demise by these tomes, which is why the major ones tend to be found with a desiccated corpse close at skeletal hand.

**Price:** 20,000gp. Tomes of ensnarement require Craft Wondrous Item, *hold monster* and *dimensional anchor* to construct.

## Wine of Telling

The various wines of telling inspire wondrous stories of faraway lands in those who drink them. Those consuming the same wine as the storyteller receive bonuses to follow the story as it is being told. In the hands of a powerful enough bard, these stories lead to adventures in these lands. Different wine types lead to different stories (and thus different adventures) -- think forks tuned to different planes.

Here, the effect is felt by those who hear stories told by those under the influence of the wine. For instance, if a bard tells a story about a far away land, and has been drinking wine of telling, all those who can hear the story are whisked away to the foreign land for the duration of the buzz.

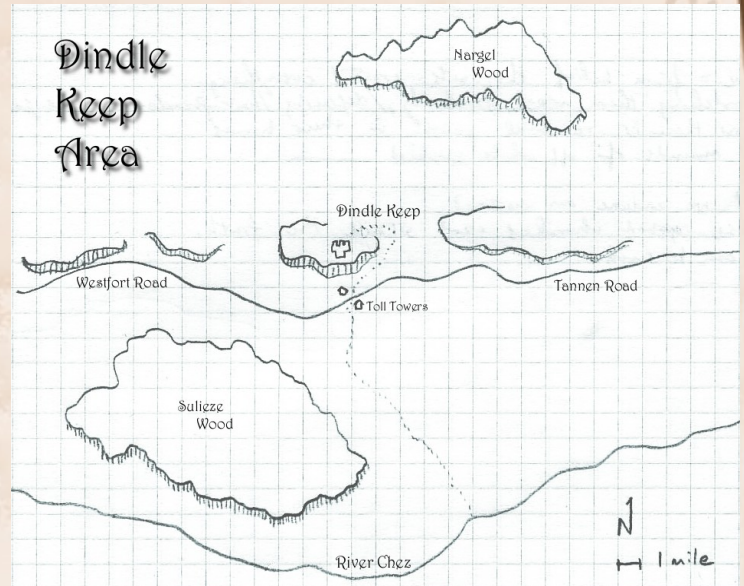
Wine of telling is usually served from the clay decanters in which they are distributed. This keeps the sunlight from ruining the flavor or the enchantment.

**Price:** 500-1000gp. To make wine of telling, it takes someone with a Profession: Vintner of 5 one month per batch. In addition, the vintner must have access (either through arcane magic or access to magical grapes) to the



ability to *teleport* or *plane shift*. The effects of the wine are limited by which of these powers the vintner imbues the wine with.

## LOCATIONS AND ENCOUNTERS



## The Story of Silas Dindle

Silas Dindle is a local baron with a keep along the road between Tannen and Chez. The small barony has profited from the trade route that runs from Westfort to the capital.

Lately Silas has been acting strange, insisting that his twin teenage daughters (who look only remotely alike) remain in his keep out of fear of having it overrun with goblins if they leave. It's as if he sees them as guardians of the keep, though he employs a full retinue of soldiers to guard the keep itself. This has created some friction between him and his daughters, who wish to travel to Tannen to enjoy the prime of their youth. The Jæruel is beginning to threaten to step in if he is unable to gain control of the situation and explain why his daughters cannot leave the keep and why his men have been unable to provide escorts along the nearby roads. They too have been pressed into a new service, that of protecting the daughters so they can protect the keep.

Lady Dindle is long gone; she died during their birth some fifteen years ago. Silas has mourned her ever since. If the party visits the small graveyard at the rear of the castle, they will learn this, and her ghost will visit the party and tell her side of the story, a tale of wanting to keep her man happy while at the same time losing herself in him. They were unable to conceive,

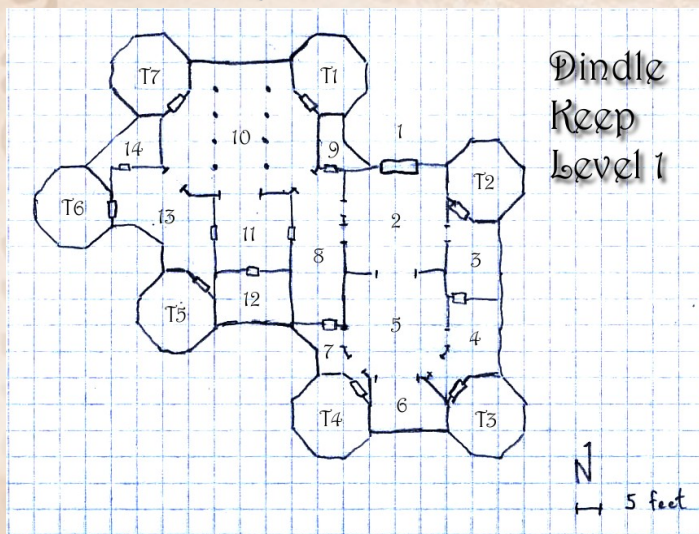


and instead she was impregnated by one of his god's angels, giving birth to the half-angel beings that protect the keep. At least that's her side of the story.

### Plot Resolution

It turns out, they were able to conceive, but Lady Dindle died with the twin daughters, who were replaced with angels (Antaigne and Emmaigne) on earth due to Silas' devout nature. Recent events, including his joining the Jæruel have led him to question his god and perform acts which are considered less devout by his god's followers, including overtolling the local merchants and imprisoning a merchant who asked for one of his daughters' hands (Emmaigne, the younger of the two) in marriage. The party will need to restore Silas' faith by helping him perform a series of heroic deeds. This will enable him to retain the angels and thus his sense of fatherhood, and maintain a reason for living.

### Dindle Keep - Level 1



The party will arrive from the trail to the south, having had the guards in the toll houses far below signal up that they en route on business. This trail wraps around the front of the keep, which is inaccessible from the side facing the road.

Note of course that if the party is caught stealing anything or is deemed dangerous and unfriendly by Silas, the guards will attack the party, taking custody of them, and preparing them for delivery to Jæruel headquarters in Tannen.

If the party decides to sneak into the keep at night, Silas will be sleeping up in his room, his daughters both awake and sending messages to one another through a series of taps on the walls. Guards will be posted in many of the towers, in the entry hall, and outside their three rooms, two for Silas, and one for each of his daughters.

Towers – each of the hexagonal towers contains a small bed at the bottom of a staircase leading up. There is no

level to the keep below ground; the bedrock was too hard to easily build into when the keep was built over a hundred years ago.

### 1 Outside the Keep

The tall door leading into the keep is nestled in between two towers on the uphill side of the keep. Tight clusters of cypress line the walls in patches along a neatly-fitted brick and stone walkway. The tall door is emblazoned with the emblem of the profile of a woman's head and shoulders on a deep yellow shield. A man in impressive field plate with the same emblem upon it steps forward, says "Ho!" and waits for the party to bow.

Once they do, he steps forward, introducing himself as Lanx and holding his arm out, pointing the way to the door.

### 2 Entrance Hall

As the party approaches, read the following:

The oversized door creaks on its hinges as it opens, leading into the keep from the uphill side. A man who introduces himself as Lanx bids the party, "Welcome to Dindle Keep. Keep your troubles outside!" As everyone steps through the door, two armed guards wield the heavy portal and latch it shut with a large caber. They turn to watch the party.

### 3 Study

This moderately-sized room is lined with short bookshelves. Atop the shelves are various houseplants taken from the fields and forests in the local region. Upon the walls are landscape oil and watercolor paintings of sunrises and sunsets in brilliant hues. A lone candelabra illuminates a table in the center of the room. A book lies open in the central reading chair.

The book is on the local folklore, containing small, hand-drawn maps from storytellers. There are annotations pencilled into the margins, and the names of places underlined.

In the early evenings, Silas retires to the study to improve his knowledge of history, geography, and religion. He will be found here if visited in the



evening.

#### 4 Library

An impressive collection of books lines the walls of this room, the leather spines like the scales of a dragon. In the center of the room is a large table upon which rest a collection of maps.

If thoroughly searched, the party will find books on the local geography and history, which if studied, raise those skills by a point each.

#### 5 Statuarium

Worn, humanoid statues occupy the two hard corners of the room, with the far walls coming together at 45 degree angles toward the rest of the keep. The stone ceiling rises another two feet above the floor to accommodate the tall statues.

The two statues have the emblem of the Dindle family etched in them. A careful inspection of the statues reveals small sets of wings on both of them, jutting out just past the shields slung over their backs. This hints at a relationship with the celestial.

#### 6 Back Chamber

Passing under another large arch, the wooden ceiling lowers to a more normal height. A stone fireplace occupies the center of the exterior wall, with a gold leaf framed, life-sized oil rendition of a middle-aged man eerily staring out across the keep back toward the entrance.

#### 7 Small Hall

Between two arches, modest paintings of former denizens of the keep find refuge in a dark corridor with wooden doors at either end.

Artistic renditions of multiple generations are represented in the frames. In a hidden alcove behind one of the paintings of the twin girls is a key ring with extra keys to each of their rooms (on Level 2).

#### 8 Wide Hallway

Paintings of old relatives line this wide hallway, including as the most illuminated one, labeled "Lady Dindle." Doors are set in opposite ends of the hall, and one is also set in the center of the hall. Three archways keep the hall fairly open-feeling, like the rest of the keep.

If the painting is studied in any detail, read the following:

Lady Dindle was an beautiful, yet austere woman. These traits come out in her appearance, with a scornful scowl scratching the surface of her glowing skin.

#### 9 Closet

This moderately-sized closet is adorned with wood-paneled walls. Jacket, coats, mittens, hats, two sleds, tack, and other sundries are hung here on various metal hooks that jut from the walls.

**Treasure:** In the pocket of one of the jackets is a pair of gloves of storing.

#### 10 Throne Room

Eight alabaster columns line the fine carpet leading up to a pair of sitting chairs etched with the Dindle arms.

If it is daytime, and there are guests in the keep, Silas will be here, providing them an audience. If Silas is here, he will be flanked by two guards armed with swords at their sides. Merchants pass through, bringing stories, which Silas is eager to hear. He has been known to reduce the toll on the road for those who provide him with quality entertainment. (more in a later post)

**Treasure:** A masterwork instrument called the Silverhorn hangs to the right side of the throne.

#### 11 Dining Room

A large table is set in the center of the room, requiring everyone to walk along the walls to navigate the space. A large brass candelabra



rests upon the table, illuminating the room in a warm glow. Along the floor, paralleling the impressive table, is a finely-woven rug.

**Treasure:** The rug is worth 1500gp, the candelabra 500gp.

## 12 Den

Small tables and chairs are tastefully laid out in the room facing each other, with a simple rug in the center.

**Treasure:** There are a few loose coins in the seat of the chairs.

## 13 Kitchen

Years of caked on grease and other food cling to the walls, leaving them black toward the ceiling, where a tapered ceiling has led thousands of plumes of smoke out of the keep. A large oven and multiple stoves line the exterior brick walls of this room. Pots and pans hang suspended from the ceiling in the center of the room.

Various foodstuffs can be found throughout the kitchen.

## 14 Pantry

This oddly-shaped, dusty room is full of large crates, barrels, and bags of flour and wheat. Tiny flour footprints lead in all directions.

**Creature:** There are 3 large rats in this room.

**Treasure:** A potion of charm person lies at the bottom of a crate otherwise full of hay.

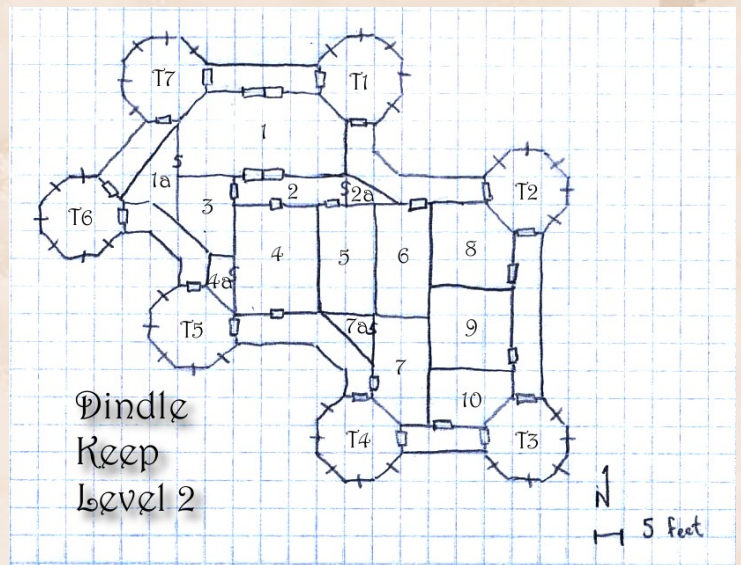
## Dindle Keep - Level 2

On level 2, most of the entrances to the rooms need to be approached through the hallways that line the outer walls. This means that the keep is dark on the inside, except when the torches are lit. These are found in the center of each of the hallways and hanging at the top of each stairwell. This floor is full of secrets, passageways leading to caches of items and information.

**T1-T7 Towers:** Each of the towers contains a small,

wooden sitting chair at the top of a circular flight of stairs. The chairs face small windows through which guards keep watch on the surrounding countryside.

**Hallways:** The hallways between the towers are empty save torches in sconces which provide moderate light and decorative crossed swords behind wooden shields hastily painted with the logo of Dindle Keep. Spent torches are propped up against the wall. The exception is the hallway between T1 and T2, which features two guard chairs, one on each side of the door leading to 6, where the daughters are being kept under Silas' orders, who fears that goblins will otherwise take them.



## 1 Master Chambers

The plushness of this room has faded with time. It appears the master has not kept up with recent trends which have swept the Jæruel, as the hardware is decades old. An unmade bed lies in the center of the room, the concave mattress showing signs of heavy use. On the floor in front of the bed is a brown bear rug. Under a colorful woven fabric, a wide armoire fills the eastern wall. An old dresser lines the southwest wall, its mirror rimmed with a black smudge.

The armoire is filled with dirty clothes. At the bottom are a leather belt with a fancy belt buckle and a pair of fur riding boots.

In the drawers of the dresser are an ornate dagger, a pouch of gold dust, and a small key. The key fits in a small, invisible keyhole in the west wall hidden by the dresser, which the party will find on a successful DC 30 search check combined with a *detect invisibility* spell. An 8'x5' door opens inward once the key is placed in the keyhole and turned.



## 1a Secret Walk-in Closet

Chests line the walls, two deep. Hanging above the chests are ornate outfits from various events in a man's life. Across from those are a set of outfits befitting a lady, from age eight to twenty-eight.

**Creature: Babau** (See MM page 40) Living here is Silas Dindle's demon, Nadas Baran, or if you have the need to make this a more powerful encounter, substitute this demon for a marilith or other, more powerful demon. This demon will occasionally masquerade as a merchant, bringing ill news from the surrounding forests, and driving Silas into his fearful state. Nadas Baran's minions bring plunder from surrounding lands, and this is traded for writs and other powerful pieces of paper. Nadas Baran's ultimate goal is to lure Silas into conflict with the goblins on their terms, in their lands, or at least to convince him to send his guard out and leave the keep alone, so that he may acquire the keep.

Two of Silas' seven guards work for Nadas Baran as do countless other merchants who operate both inside and outside the Jæruel merchant collective. Nadas Baran's men are very loyal, and will fight on his side if he is challenged.

Silas knows nothing of this demon; Nadas Baran has been able to successfully hide from him and his men for months now, patiently running the operation of influencing Silas from the shadows.

Nadas Baran will only attack if the party has already explored much of the second floor of the keep. Otherwise, he will remain hidden until the dramatically-appropriate moment.

**Treasure:** various coins, gems, and jewelry totalling 2,500gp.

## 2 Interior Hall

This dimly-lit hall is lined with small paintings of rustic objects - a hoe, a still-life of fruit and a loaf of bread, and the portrait of a multi-generational family dressed to work the land. Sturdy-looking wooden doors lead in various directions and a man-sized mirror at the east end of the hall makes this room feel like it is larger than it is.

If the party studies the mirror in great detail, they will notice that along the frame is a latch. Flipping the latch, they are able to remove the mirror from the wall, where whoever removes it will need to make a DC 15 Balance or Strength check, due to the topheaviness of the mirror, or drop it and have it shatter. If it shatters, the various

pieces attack the party as mirror shards (to follow in a future post).

In the space behind the mirror is a small archway hiding a makeshift closet.

## 2a Secret Hall Closet

A pile of papers fills this closet. Among them are many unsigned writs of passage and recommendations filled out in Silas' name, as well as personal letters.

**Treasure:** scrolls full of information and unsigned writs. These can be sold or used to curry favor with other merchants and landowners. They would need to be signed and stamped with the Dindle seal to be made official.

The letters tell the story of Silas Dindle as a series of personal communiques. If the players read through these papers in depth, they will find out that Lady Dindle was the true keeper of the fortune, and that Silas took her surname in marriage. He once considered leaving her, but feared the wrath of her father. Then, when she took ill, he felt guilty for having considered divorce, and began to see his twin daughters as her, and thinking he was seeing double, began turning mad. The latest letters are written in an illegible hand.

It turns out these last letters have been written under the influence of his demon. They have, luckily, not been sent, but Nadas Baran is trying to get him to send them through legitimate channels to legitimize his claim to Dindle Keep.

## 3 Small Nursery

The walls are a pleasant color resembling a robin's egg, which is slightly faded. Off to one side is one crib, and off in the room's corner is another. The musty smell mixed with the stench of rotten eggs and the large amount of dust and cobwebs throughout the room indicates this room has not been used in years.

If the cribs are searched, down below the cobwebs which hang over them, they each contain a shiny, black egg with brown speckles. These are Babau eggs. Nadas Baran is already acting as if he owns the keep, turning this room into his nest.

## 4 Large Room



This room is set aside for children's studies, with two desks facing opposite walls stacked with books.

Reading the books on local history and geography will improve the characters' knowledge skills. If the party searches the desks closely enough, they will discover a small latch behind one of them. The latch opens a child-sized door leading to a secret cache.

#### 4a Secret Cache

A bookcase is nestled into the corner, and a chest lies on the other end of this secret cache.

**Treasure:** Among the children's books on the shelf is a minor tome of ensnarement. In the chest are various toys and dolls.

#### 5 Long Room

This bedroom contains a bed, a chest of drawers, and a small chest serving as a footlocker at the end of the bed. A pile of rugs occupies the far end of the room.

One of the rugs contains a pack of rug rats (see future post), which rise up from the rug if anyone pulls the rug from the pile and steps upon it. The bed is normal. The chest of drawers is full of female young adult clothes.

#### 6 Long Room

This chamber is sparsely decorated with a pair of cots, a small lantern on a wooden table. Two tomes lie open in the light.

This is where the daughters have been kept behind lock and key. They are still here, unless some other event has caused them to be moved. As the DM, use your judgment here. The books are fantasy novels that the daughters have been reading, something like *Wuthering Heights* but backdated to match your campaign world.

If the party is able to enter this room, they will have to have convinced Silas to let them speak with them (difficult), occupied or disabled the guards (moderate challenge), or used some form of magic or sneakery to accomplish the task (less difficult).

The daughters both know the story of what has transpired, but are unaware of much of the secret information found in 2a. They are both ready to escape the keep; living as captives in their home is unacceptable.

However, because of their love for their father, they will want to help him first. Once he is freed of his demon, they will leave, Emmaigne with Lieutenant Hass and Antaigne with Captain Danus.

#### 7 Bedroom

This bedroom contains a fine bed, a dresser, and an old rocking horse.

The bedpost farthest from the center of the room contains a small, hidden compartment, visible with a DC 30 Search check. Within the bedpost is a small scroll. Upon the scroll is a love note written in a finely-printed male hand.

The note is from the lieutenant, who is in love with one of the daughters. If pressed, he will admit this and beg the party to help him free her so they can leave this haunted place, even issue an order to the guards to let the party see the girls. He will help in the battle against the Babau if the party agrees to let the lovers leave.

The dresser contains a woman's clothes, mostly dresses and floral tunics. The rocking horse is masterwork, built by one of the master wood workers of the Jæruel at his shop in Tannen.

#### 7a Secret Cache

The dresser slides away, revealing a wood-paneled room. Weapons are stockpiled in this triangular room, stuffed haphazardly into the corners of the room.

**Treasure:** Among the weapons are a long sword +1 and a masterwork dagger. Both belong to the Dindle household.

#### 8 Lieutenant's Quarters

This neat room is sparsely decorated. The white sheets on the bed are clean and pressed. The keeper of this room is very organized. A lone armoire stands at the other end of the room.

Inside the armoire are two tunics and a jerkin, folded neatly. Hanging above them is a canvas uniform with multiple honors pinned upon the lapels. In the bottom of the armoire is a pair of leather sandals.

This is where Lieutenant Hass sleeps.



## 9 Captain of the Guard's Quarters

The elements in this room are slightly dissheveled. Apparently the room is not regularly cared for as its 15'x15' size deserves. The room is filled with wall-to-wall shelves, some open, some closed, some half-open, half-closed.

The open shelves reveal trophies from past battles, including chalices, small figurines, and other trinkets taken from the battlefield or potentially traded for. The closed shelves contain items considered more personal to the captain - clothing, a small, jade figurine, and various writs of passage and commendations from nobles across the Jæruel.

This is where Captain Danus sleeps. He has been troubled of late by needing to follow his liege's orders to imprison his love, Antaigne in 6.

## 10 Head Archer's Quarters

This room is decorated with a collection of feathers from various flying and non-flying avians. Used bows are hung on the wall, trophies of battles past. Leather straps and bowstrings are scattered atop the desk which serves as a workbench for a bowyer.

The head archer keeps watch not far from this room (hallway between T3 and T4), where he can see down over the south-facing cliff that faces the road below, so if the party spends much time here, he will come and watch them as they peruse his items. He also has a few uncommon items for trade if the barter is right.

Pernice is one of the more accurate archers in the Jæruel, and has worked for their organization for some time. He secretly works for the Jæruel administration in Tannen and has been stationed in Dindle Keep to keep watch on Silas. The Jæruel seeks an excuse to have him arrested so that they may take control of the keep. In this, Pernice is not evil, he is merely serving his true master. For this, he is well paid. he carries an official writ from the Jæruel which grants him the authority to make arrests in their name.

This will lead to a tense moment that the party gets to involve themselves in. Once the action reaches the climax, where Nadas Baran is exposed, Pernice will attempt to haul Silas off to Tannen, citing treacherous behavior. Of course, he has committed no crime, so this is a false accusation.

## Ft. Wood Area Map



This map shows the area around Ft. Wood.

## Fallon House

This location is inspired by the work of E.A. Poe, though none of it explicitly derives from his work.

This three-story dwelling is characterized by its distinctive lean. Each of the floors melds into the others, with very few staircases. Instead small one-step and two-step passageways pass from floor to floor, leaving all but the most astute dungeoneers disoriented. The corridors within are also oddly-shaped, starting wide and ending narrow. Ornate doors lead to rooms which face the outside in all cardinal directions, and a raised passage leads from the second floor main hallway to a two-story gazebo out back.

Throughout the house, cobwebs fill the corners, and a layer of dust coats the furniture and floors. Small animal footprints gather around the central hearth and lead off in all directions. Bats and giant caterpillars complete the ecosystem, in the broken rafters and under loose floorboards, respectively. Under these floorboards are old catacombs which predate the house itself. These catacombs can be cited as another reason for the lopsidedness of the house.

Outside, the barren trees have long-since grown away from the house, all they can do to distance themselves from the darkness within. A darkness that grows with each passing night. The timbers themselves have rotted from the inside, just like the human denizens of Fallon House.

The Fallons were once skilled translators of ancient texts, counting the most prominent political figures



among their clientele. Since those halcyon days, however, the eldest couple in the Fallon household faced marital problems, eventually disintegrating the marriage. This collapse of the foundation of the family had visible physical effects, leaving the house and family lopsided as relationship upon relationship ended. The inhabitants left the house, one broken relationship at a time, until it was left deserted, as it has remained for a few years now.

This location holds many ancient secrets in the moldy tomes still within. It also hosts many creatures, as mentioned above.



Drawing by Ben Dare.

## Piran Point

Town: AL CN; 2,000gp limit; Assets 900,000gp; Population 920; Mixed (70% human, 15% halfling, 5% dwarf, 5% gnome, 5% other)

On the coast of the Jæruel, south of Tannen, there is a rocky point that juts out into the sea. This was once the home of a great serpent that fed on the schools of fish that swam around the point, as well as the occasional human who made their way here off-course from their intended destinations. This lair serves as the undersea port down the cliff from the main town center.



### Architecture

The larger, more established buildings of Piran Point are hewn from the surrounding stone, a mix of limestone on the coast and granite further inland. More recent single-story buildings are of wood construction from the nearby oak, maple and pine forests.

### Layout

At the top of the cliff, the town is laid out in a series of

semicircles that run along the peninsula, the outermost being the poorest, and the region closest to the fresh water and woods the wealthiest. As the area was traditionally prone to piracy and attack by marauders, the wealthy moved farther and farther from the edge of the cliff, leaving their buildings unoccupied as they built increasingly more opulent estates inland. Because of this, there are various historic buildings that have been occupied by the working and non-working classes.

Encounters in this region include:

- \* low-scale thieves and pickpockets
- \* defensive family men
- \* various brawls and other pre-existing conflicts

Key locations elsewhere:

- \* St. Grisdon Square - where four churches come together in each of the cardinal directions
- \* Darkhouse Inn - featuring tinted windows; "what happens within stays within"
- \* Shelt's Pelts - center of the halfling market
- \* Fishing Market - varieties of fish from varieties of merchants
- \* Town Hall - center of the village

This town has long been at the crossroads of merchants and rogues, lying within seven miles of three known robber barons, though this town has largely escaped their direct advances, as they have found the passers-through along the broad roads more vulnerable and thus worth their effort. This has led to more armed caravans, which has reduced the frequency of their arrivals and departures.

Out at sea, there has been pirate activity as well, making Piran Point a refuge for travellers both by land and sea. Sea trade has mostly ended, the merchant vessels converted to fishing ships. Those vessels which sail into Piran Point are escorted by larger galleons decked out with many arms.

### Personas

Piran Point is home to several merchant families of the Jæruel. Elton Thistlewood runs the local chapter of the merchant house, aided by Jossathon Radvell and Saldon Thede. Each keeps control over their own region of the merchant quarter.

Reverend Marden and Brother Sandis run the Cathedral of St. Grisdon, by far the largest of the four churches in the center of the town. In it, sermons to the words of the dearly-departed Grisdon, worshipper of a merchant-sect of Pelor's younger brother Geld, and creator of the ten virtues of trade.

### Plot Points

Tristega Thistlewood has split from her family and opened up a profitable business dealing in black



market goods. Her father seeks to bring her back into the fold, and is willing to pay anyone willing to help convince her of this. The Radvells and Thedes have since made a play for power, realizing this distraction leaves the Thistlewoods vulnerable to infiltration and unable to rightly control their holdings across the town.

With this infighting among the merchant class, the streets have seen a rise in crime, the unorganized type that leads to confusion in the masses. Many poor have taken to picking the pockets of others, especially wandering parties. Of course, this news has not yet reached the lips of anyone in this town; why would they, when they profit from the unspoken truth.

The St. Grisdon sect of Geld has grown in influence among the more lawful-minded citizens of Piran Point, and can be called upon to assist the party if they uphold the ten virtues of trade. Tristega Thistlewood anonymously attends the sermons in the cathedral, and is a devout follower of St. Grisdon's teachings.

## Tannen

Town: AL CN;  
15,000gp limit;  
Assets 9,000,000gp;  
Population 5,000;  
Mixed (90% human,  
5% halfling, 2%  
dwarf, 3% other)



On the coast of the Jæruel, where the river meets the sea, lies Tannen (pronounced TAW-nen), a bustling seaport of a town built on sandy soil.

### Architecture

The larger, more established buildings of Tannen are of sandstone and light wood from the forests harvested upriver near the village of Ches.

The buildings on the capitol grounds are of carved alabaster, taken from the mines east of Alabaster. The humbling, white edifice in the center of the city lies on a 5-acre plot surrounded by formal gardens decorated with flowers from the farthest reaches of the Jæruel. This is truly where the goods of the Jæruel comes together in an impressive display of what a successful merchant collective (some would say oppressive) can accomplish.

### Layout

Along the banks of the river Ches runs a short wall of sandbags to keep the river in its banks in rainier months. Within five feet of these walls rise the older and more ornately-decorated buildings made of old hardwoods, including the town hall, the Jæruel central offices, the two inns that made Tannen famous (Inn of Golden Meadows and The Lark's Nest), Smullivan's Emporium, and, where the river meets the sea, the shipyard, where ninety percent of the seaworthy vessels in the Jæruel are

built.

The town blocks off the river are devoted to residences, including the mayor's house and on a low hill the wealthy neighborhood inhabited entirely by those in executive positions within the Jæruel, retired merchants who now manage their personal matters from their estates.

The rest of the town is a hodge-podge of market squares, shops on lower levels, and residences rising in the second and third storeys.

### Key locations:

- \* Capitol Grounds - large, new construction that towers over town hall
- \* Town Hall - a converted keep that predates the town
- \* Jæruel Central Offices - new constructions across the river
- \* Twin Lighthouses - one in north-town and one in south-town
- \* Smullivan's Emporium - market for many items
- \* Inn of Golden Meadows - standard inn named for the surrounding countryside
- \* The Lark's Nest - exotic inn, featuring delicacies and fine things
- \* the shipyard - busy, working-class district where the river actually meets the sea

This town has served as the center of government for the Jæruel since the central offices of the merchant collective moved here two generations ago.

### Personas

The Jæruel hierarchy represents the most notable personas in town. Galway Froid (mayor), Fennel Chatwid (head consulate), and Zann Diacon (finance minister) are the highest-ranking officials in Tannen.

The innkeeper owner of the Lark's Nest is a boistrous legend. Of foreign descent and well-traveled, he tells stories the way most men tell lies, with the upmost of ease. Chariz Muqatad is known throughout the Jæruel, and there are those who visit Tannen just to meet him and hear his stories. In the process, he listens to their stories, which he uses to continue to embellish his own tales.

J.P. Smullivan is a trader who has recently joined the Jæruel, electing to pay his membership dues rather than risk losing his business to the town guard. Though less-than-friendly to new faces, largely due to this pressure to join the Jæruel, he is aware of much that transpires in Tannen and thus represents a great source of knowledge.

The key is getting him to share it.

### Plot Points

Each of the executives in the wealthy district finance treasure hunting expeditions and each have constant need for couriers and escorts. In addition, the Meldor House is known for financing voyages inland, past



## ALE BREAK EDITORIALS

Westfort into the mountains and plains beyond. Zane Meldor is a known eccentric, known for his misadventures in the brothels in Tannen's slums. He is ailing, and has been convinced that the fungal cure for his illness lies west of Westfort.

Smullivan is always after new supplies, especially those of an exotic nature. He knows of certain individuals who possess such items, and runs a secret business trading such items. Interestingly, it seems he has thieves steal from one Jæruel or Tannen city official which he then sells to another, and so on. He is likely to hire a party with an experienced enough thief to acquire such items from the homes of the wealthy.

Chariz Muqatad needs a message delivered to his extended family back in the dry lands to the far south, across the Old Bay. He is willing to pay handsomely for the message's delivery. The message itself is so important that it has been stuffed inside a chicken, and must be delivered while the chicken still lives. This is an age-old custom for communicating among his people.

Galway Froid's daughter, Ammie has gone missing.

Rumor has it she is being held for ransom, but there is no official word on this. If the party inquires too directly in official circles, they are likely to be taken to the dungeons beneath the town



hall, a converted keep that predates the rest of the city, for probing and questioning. Others who have relevant information include Chariz Muqatad, who said he overheard some of the kids joking about staging an abduction, and Smullivan, who sold a load of face paint and robes to some of the local teens. The real story is that Ammie had her allowance cut back and so she and her friends decided to stage a kidnapping to collect the ransom. It turns out, however, that when a local thug heard of this, he took her from her friends, and now holds her in a cliffside camp overlooking the sea to the north of Tannen, where he awaits delivery of the ransom sum.

Once the teens are found, they will admit their part in the staging, and provide a description of the thug, who happens to be Thaddius Brewster, former employee of Smullivan's. He used to lift large crates by himself and earned various nicknames for his feats of strength. If asked, Smullivan will mention Brewster's departure from his shop lines up with the time of the supposed kidnapping. Once returned, the mayor will pay the party handsomely, though less than the original ransom. He is a shrewd merchant, after all!

The dungeons beneath the keep lead in various directions throughout the city. They are well-explored in the vicinity of the town jail; however, the secret, windy passages are said to hold more in store for an adventurous enough lot.

### Ale Break: Immediacy in Storytelling

Here is a problem that plagues many role playing campaigns. The story isn't driven enough by the need to move. Think of many classic fantasy stories that inspired the creation of dnd and have been written since then - *Lord of the Rings*, *Golden Compass*, the novels of Jack Vance, etc. time and time again, these stories move from location to location because the protagonists aren't allowed to idle. There are no two-month periods where they sit around spending loot in bars and brothels. Sadly, too many dnd games devolve into this, with players playing out their adolescent fantasies in the campaign world. This is also the pacing of games like *World of Warcraft*, where the goal is to level your characters without ever actually role playing. This too has become too often the norm. Sure, players love shouting one-liners across the table, and this should be encouraged, especially when it's done in character. But in too many games, real role playing is often the afterthought.

Unfortunately, *World of Warcraft* has made its snickering (and highly profitable) way into the latest edition of the rules, which are written to entice players to want to level up to get that next encounter power, and making that the focus, rather than actual role playing. This perversion of the rules (huh... why's everyone able to heal themselves fully ~10 times a day?!?! and where's spellcasting gone?!? it feels like fighters wield as much magic as mages...) More reasons why 4th ed is subpar compared to other, more realistic, though perhaps more loop-hole-ridden systems to follow in a later opinion post.

Back to the topic at hand. One thing I've noticed (remember that this is an opinion piece) is that so many decent fantasies come from Britain, and so few from the U.S. It's not to say that Americans (and I'm one of them) can't create them, but why are we as a culture so stunted when it comes to deep storytelling? Maybe because there's not much of an oral tradition anymore, or really any sense of history at all. More people my age can name all the thundercats and transformers than can name all the U.S. state capitals or the 44 presidents. And don't dare utter the term *Magna Carta* unless you want to face blank stares.

In role playing sessions (and outside them as well), this bugs me, for without knowing your history you have no context for what you're doing. History (though often confined to thick tomes and a certain not-so-aptly-named cable channel that shows more infomercials than actual history) is living... history provides context... history provides immediacy. And it's this immediacy that makes role playing fun and exciting. Not all campaigns feature short people who



travel the land to deliver an evil ring to its maker, but certainly any epic-scale campaign should include some reason for the characters doing what they're doing.

Otherwise they're just floundering around the world, a drunk gambler with a penchant for whores, like a gamer with no opposing alignment. And thus, no need to move!

So if you're a DM, keep reading up on history (or make some up!), and introduce or maintain a sense of immediacy in your storytelling. Your players will thank you... maybe not today, but when they look back on your campaign through the lens of their future's past.

### Ale Break: Questing for spells

One way to add some meaning (and difficulty) to spell-casting is to require spell casters to learn their spells in-character. Some characters may have a formal tutor, but many others will likely not, especially if they are sorcerers, woodland casters (druids, rangers, less-structured clerics) or rogue casters.

For these characters, there is a great way to make them (and their players) really respect and cherish their spells. *Make them quest for them!* Here are a few ideas.

\* The party learns about an ancient tome containing a story about a historical figure who could disappear and reappear across town almost instantly. They decide to track down the tome, which leads them into a large city or the Plane of Knowledge (giant library, the size of a plane, with all known knowledge within – see upcoming CCB article) for more information.

\* Someone in the party is killed or otherwise rendered incapacitated (due to an expected player unavailability for the next few sessions), and the rest of the party needs to gather the rare reagents to create the ritual environment for a *raise dead*, *remove curse* or similar to be successful.

\* A young apprentice wants to learn the *invisibility* spell, but in order for his master to feel that he has learned the spell, she will hide the scroll that must be scribed in a secret location, and the scroll itself is invisible. The apprentice will need to locate the scroll, and this earn the spell, before he will learn the spell. The master might quip, "First you must know what it is like to be on the other side before you are mature enough to wield the spell."

\* A high-level spell is spread across multiple scrolls, which have been sent via courier to the princely barons of the land. Only by convincing these royals to hand over their parts of the scroll will the party acquire the spell, which happens to be, for instance, *charm monster*. This may require the party to perform tasks and take on quests for each of the barons, leading to even more adventure!

More to come in a future article.

### Ale Break: Use of the written word

It's nice to take a break every now and again and reflect upon running role playing games in a way that adds drama and excitement to the experience.



The written word doesn't tend to take place so much in fantasy worlds, partly due to the historical precedent of illiteracy in Medieval European societies. However, most player characters end up interacting with the upper classes and powermongers of the societies they roll in, so at some point, they will likely encounter the written word.

This can provide a fun game element, especially if many of the characters do not read the official written language. Present your characters with a riddle, cryptogram or a set of hieroglyphs and watch the players try to solve the puzzle. This will likely lead to various competing interpretations, which, if your players are really role playing, will play out in their interactions. A cleric may consider it a message from a god and consider it his word and thus up to him to interpret. A rogue may see it as a coded message leading to a treasure. A fighter may see it as a document of surrender. An elf may find it primitive dribble. Hopefully your players will find a more nuanced position, assuming you present the right symbols.

For sources, check out books in the library or have a look online in old books for something that looks right. Or make one up yourself. It's easy to sit down and write something up. For instance, in a recent session, I presented my characters with a sheet that was nailed to the door of an abandoned keep. What was written wasn't as important as that fact that it was written in three distinct languages. So I made up some characters and used them in ways that looked like a fancy, almost magical script, a character-based language, and a hieroglyphics-inspired pictorial representation.

In addition, consider using writs of passage and official documents that travel the land, as well as secret messages sent out during the night. These present opportunities for characters to be sent on missions as couriers, and end up starting or preventing a war upon delivery, involving them very directly in the overarching story of the campaign and thus have the players feel agency in the game itself. These scenarios also allow the party to discuss the ethics of opening mail before it arrives at its intended destination, etc. Some may find this despicable, others may consider it the only way to ensure that the right things is done. Still others may be dastardly rogues



who just want to meddle in other people's affairs. All of these are welcome (nay, encouraged) in fantasy role playing games!

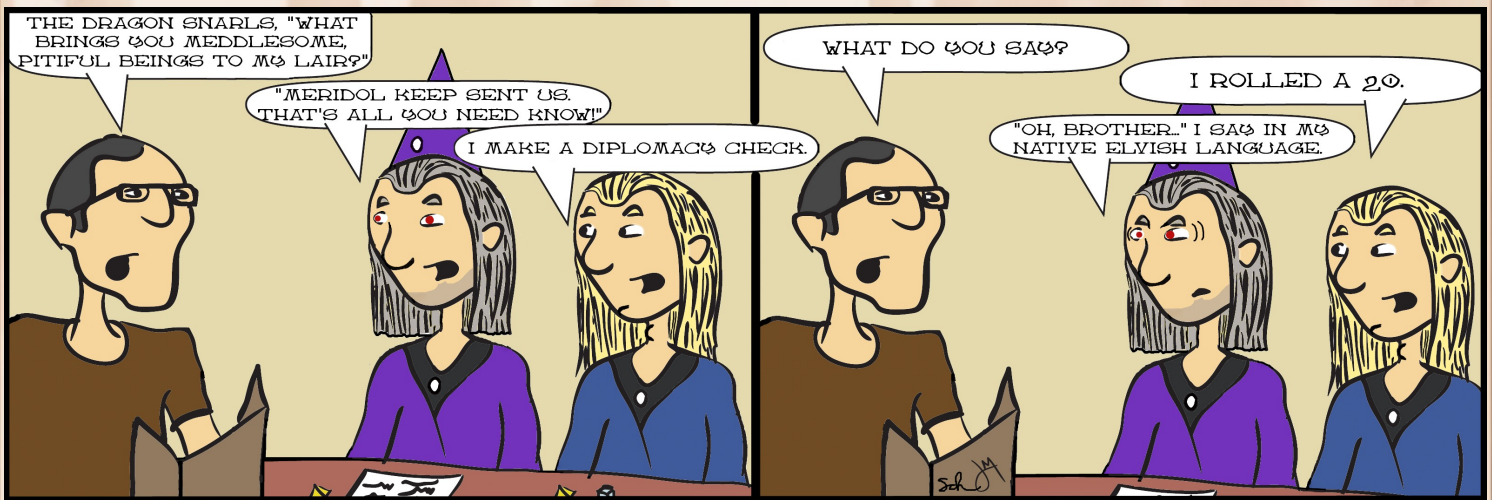
This drama is harder to sustain and play out with the common use of *message*, *sending* and other spells. Limit the use of these spells in your campaign if you want the written word to have any use. I recommend it; in my opinion, convenience kills role playing. It is *urgency* that propels storylines, not *convenience*.

The same is true for the use of multiple spoken languages. One way to spice up your game is to give NPCs who do not speak so-called "common," or perhaps speak a different common than the PCs, strange accents and broken use of the language. Imagine a Frenchman or German speaking English. Even when they do speak it well, there are regular pronunciation artifacts that tag someone as having a "French or German accent." This can be a great way of linking an NPC that the party knows nothing about with a specific region, based entirely on accent, no in-game "Where are you from?" "I hail from the Kingdom of Blah" dialogue, which can be cumbersome, and not necessarily realistic. Why would this person who doesn't know you tell you where he's from or even more fundamental, why would this NPC parley with the party in the first place? But if the characters overhear him gloating about killing a giant, they learn much about where he's from and what's been doing.

Of course, spells like *tongues* can completely negate the use of different languages in your game. This is why it may make sense to remove these spells entirely from the game, or have them only be able to be learned after a considerable amount of work or a quest.

Questing for spells is another way to add texture to your campaign. More on that in a later post.

## COMIC: TROLLS AND TRIBULATIONS 2: DIPLOMACY



Text: S.D. Hilderbrand

Image: Jason Maggitti and S.D. Hilderbrand





Claw/Claw/Bite is a resource for storytellers and gamemasters to help create thrilling worlds of adventure for your players to test their mettle in. In each issue, you'll find new characters, creatures, magic items, encounters, and locations for use in your campaigns. We also include little nuggets that will enrich your world with interesting details and intriguing features.

Our goal is to be a "one-stop shop" for you, the gamemaster. With little or no tweaking on your part, you will be able to drop any game element from Claw/Claw/Bite into your adventure setting and run it how you see fit. All of our creations are designed for d20 fantasy rules. And of course, everything is carefully reviewed and balanced to fit into your game without disrupting your play balance or awakening the dogs of war.

This issue of Claw/Claw/Bite includes:

- \* Campaign Flavor in the form of Traveler's Tables
- \* Two new diets, Saha Ra and Ohases
- \* One new spell, Cone of Silence
- \* Four new characters, including a Vanaran Shaman-Scientist
- \* Four new creatures, including the Dogs of War and Rug Rats
- \* Ten new magic items, including three new transport-related Tomes
- \* Five new locations, including Dindle Keep and two towns in the Jaeruel
- \* Three new Ale Break editorials on improving the gaming experience
- \* And Session 2 of the new comic Trolls and Tribulations.

