

Crawl!



Crawl!
No. 7:
Tips!
Tricks!
Traps!

COMPATIBLE WITH
DCC
RPG

Crawl!fanzine

No.7

Digital Edition

Credits!

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COMPATIBLE WITH
**DCC
RPG**

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ART! OR

SCIENCE?

That is the question when it comes to campaign refereeing. The Judge's job is, without a doubt, tricky. The goal of this issue was to bring some tips, tricks and traps to make that work easier. Some of these articles started as forum questions about how to do this or that. This issue is focused on that, helping Judges. We start off with some tips by Kirin Robinson on how to run mazes and labyrinths without them getting drawn-out and boring. Then we have some magical fountains to stock your dungeons, written by Thom Hall, who hacked the fountains from the open sourced game Nethack, to be used with DCC RPG! Sean Ellis returns with his series of taking standard monsters and making them something new, this time it's the Ogre. Jeffrey Tadlock brings us traps, and makes them even more dangerous by giving them a Crit Table! Then we have a really awesome example on how to make magic items exciting, but dangerous, with the Shadowsword of Ith-Narmant by Jürgen Mayer. Finally, we have some tips by Paul Wolfe on how to use character occupations to justify skill checks with a d20 instead of the measly d10.

Tricky stuff, I tell you.

Reverend Dak

(Dungeon) Master in Chief

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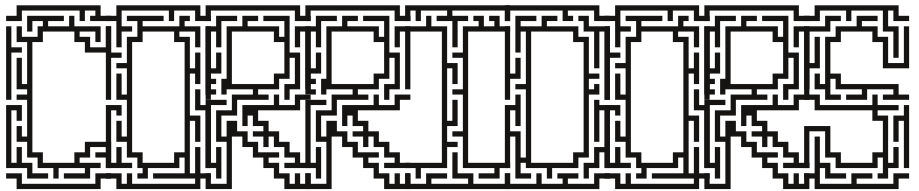
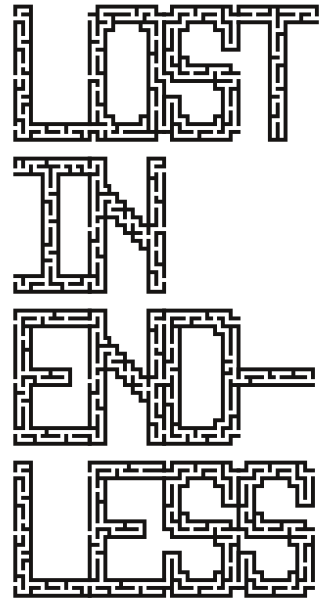
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Art by Greg Allen



Running Mazes by Kirin Robinson

In adding diversity to different parts of your dungeon, you may want to consider the fabled Maze. From Theseus questing to slay the Minotaur to Jennifer Connelly looking for her baby brother; the idea of a part of a dungeon primarily made up of an endless-seeming conglomeration of corridors designed to befuddle and despair has some appeal in terms of bringing a new sense of threat to your players: being trapped and hopelessly lost. The threat becomes less one of deadly horrors (though these can still very much exist in a maze) to one of more existential doom: trapped in a place of possibly no escape - or worse, of a place where escape exists but one simply can't find it.

Becoming trapped is usually simply a matter of making a wrong turn. Unless PCs take precautions, the way they came may perhaps change, or attempts to retrace their mapped route may suddenly yield incomprehensible results. Although smart player forethought could defeat a maze before it starts.

The actual playing of being lost in a maze is pretty difficult to make not boring. It's a challenge of finding the right balance between wanting to foster a sense of growing frustration and dread against the potentially annoying or even boring repetition of escape denial; and the usual play of dungeoncrawl exploration (we go right, go left, go down the stairs, etc) can start to feel like you're just taking away the important choices that make dungeons an interesting experience of cause and effect (every route leads to being lost, or the route that leads out is essentially random).

That loss of agency, a sense of “whatever we try, we're still lost, we're gonna die in here” can be both a pro and a con and can easily frustrate players in a bad way rather than concern players in a good way. Wanting to get that thrill while still offering a potential way out and an ultimate sense that the way out is figure-outable is a tricky one. Hard gametime-based time limits can certainly help quicken that sense of growing worry, something like (adjust depending on player's resources or game pacing needs):

In half an hour of gametime the PCs run out of light fuel.

In 45 minutes of gametime the PCs begin feeling weak from thirst.

After an hour of gametime despair sets in enough that PCs have to make saving throws to keep going on.

In my opinion, for a lot of groups it's probably better to eventually handwave to a point of “every direction you explore is seemingly a dead end or endless,” because that's what a maze effectively means. How then, to give players the opportunity to solve the maze?

One possible way is to make escape from the maze clue-based rather than exploration-based. Whether this is just an abstraction of sleuthful exploration or an actual defeating of a magical effect can be up to you.

You can start by coming up with a resolving fact that will solve the maze: Something as simple as “Alternate between the skull-decorated doorways and the stairs marked by a claw” or even something magical like “circle the fountain five times and the exit will be revealed”. Some backstory of the dungeon may apply: theoretically the creators designed the maze so they would be able to get through if they knew the right way.


Then create a table of random events/occurrences/discoveries, some of which relate to the resolving solution, some of which might be red herrings, some of which are just flavor, some which might even be maze-specific wandering monsters.

- 1. A door decorated by a skull, seemingly looking in a certain direction.**
- 2. A chamber with multiple exits, with a stained and dry fountain mocking your thirst.**
- 3. Some scraps of paper with sketched and crossed out mappings, a symbol of the fountain has been circled.**
- 4. A room with the number five carved repeatedly in the wall.**
- 5. A skeleton slumped against the wall, wearing the remnants of eaten shoes.**
- 6. .**
- 7. ...**
- 8. etc.**

The point is to both keep the maze interesting and to also stimulate discussion and thinking among the players as the real-time clock is ticking. Clues can be metered out dependent on the players moving on to explore further or not, or other events (hearing something in the distance, whatever). If they manage to piece together the resolving solution, they escape the maze (insert treasure here if you feel it's deserved); and if they don't, they are lost forever (though they could always turn up later crazed and desperate as NPCs).

Whatever happens the maze should never feel arbitrary.

Either way, the players will be either proud that they figured the maze out, or aware that there was a solution that they simply couldn't put together, and it doesn't feel arbitrary.



Roguelike Fountains

By Thom Hall

I am a huge fan of a lineage of computer adventure games often called, **Roguelike**. **Rogue** was originally written by a friend and past coworker of mine named Michael Toy. His friend Glen Wichman helped Michael on **Rogue** during his time spent as a student in Santa Cruz and later at UC Berkeley he collaborated with Ken Arnold. This was around 1980.

The messages and varied effects from fountains within **Rogue** and later games like **Nethack** are thematic and entertaining! Many hackers have died at the hands of poisonous water moccasins and rusted their swords. Why not bring this level of fun to your DCC RPG game?

Here are some rules founded in the (open) source code for **Nethack**. As some of the messages are influenced directly from the source code, I want to be sure and credit the long line of **Nethack** “dev team” members and Michael Toy for their creativity. Thanks for many late nights of turn based distraction while working as a UNIX SysAdmin in the epicenter of a burgeoning industry.

So without further ado let the cool draught refresh you and enjoy the tables.

Fountains

Fountains come in many different shapes and sizes. In your world of the weird and fantastic the decision is left completely up to you how you would like to describe the pool the party has come upon. Then use the following tables to help determine a random effect.

First determine if the fountain has magical properties or not, and that is done simply by rolling on **Table a**; Players are encouraged to spend their luck to improve their chances:

Table a (as in soldier ants, d20):

Roll	Magical?
1-17	Non-Magical
18-20	Magical

Quaffing

If the fountain is magical, roll on **Table b** and apply the result. Regardless of the result applied, the fountain will not dry up.

Quaffing from a Non-Magical fountain, roll on **Table c** and apply the result. Regardless of the result applied, the fountain will dry up on a d3 roll of a '1'. When reading the results from the following table, multiple messages are provided in some cases to better tailor the action to the current PC state. Those states will be noted (in parenthesis).

Magic Fountains

Table b (as in acid blob, d10):

Roll	Effect	Message
1-4	Your hunger is reduced slightly and d3 HP are restored.	"The cool draught refreshes you."
5-8	Your Personality attribute is increased by 1 and all your HP are restored to their maximum.	"Wow! This makes you feel great!"
9-10	One attribute is increased by 1; if your Luck modifier is 2 or higher, this last effect will increase all your attributes by 1; After this effect, the fountain is no longer magical.	"A wisp of vapor escapes the fountain..."

Non-Magic Fountains

Table c (as in cockatrice, d30):

Roll	Effect	Message
1-9	Your hunger is reduced slightly.	"The cool draught refreshes you."
10-17	No effect.	"This tepid water is tasteless."
18	Your Personality score is increased by 1 if you have a positive Luck modifier and reduced by 1 if your Luck modifier is negative.	"You feel self-knowledgeable..." "The feeling subsides..."
19	You vomit and your hunger is increased.	"The water is foul! You gag and vomit."
20	You lose d10 HP and temporarily lose d4+2 STR. (No effect if poison resistant.)	"The water is contaminated!"
21	You lose d3 HP and hallucinate for d20 turns. (If poison resistant, lose only 1 HP, you are no longer hungry and hallucinate for only d5 turns.)	"Perhaps it is runoff from the nearby slime farm."

Roll	Effect	Message
22	d5+1 water moccasins are created. Water Moccasin: Init:+6; Attack Bite +3 (d4 damage + poison); AC 12; HD 1d6; Move 30 or Swim 40; Act 1d20; SP poison DC14 FORT save or die in d6 rounds; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +0; AL N.	"An endless stream of snakes pour forth!" Blind-"You hear something hissing!"
23	A water demon is summoned. It has a chance of being hostile (on a d10 roll of 3-8) (100% if you have the 'Amulet of Yendor'); if peaceful, he'll grant one wish and then vanish.	"You unleash a water demon!" Blind-"You feel the presence of evil." Demon is peaceful-"Grateful for his release, he grants you a wish!" Summoning Failed-"The fountain bubbles furiously for a moment, then calms."
24	A water nymph is summoned - She will seduce the closest member of the party and steal one item at random and then teleport away. No save allowed.	"You attract a water nymph!" Blind-"You hear a seductive voice." Water nymphs are extinct-"A large bubble rises to the surface and pops." Blind and water nymphs are extinct- "You hear a loud pop."
25	Roll a d5 for Each item in your inventory, on a roll of a '1' it's cursed outright; your hunger is increased and your constitution drops one point until you rest.	"This water's no good!"
26	You gain the ability to see invisible and your Personality is temporarily increased by 1 (until the next day).	"You see an image of someone stalking you. But it disappears." Blind and invisible-"You feel transparent." (blind, invisible) Blind, not invisible-"You feel very self-conscious. Then it passes."

Roll	Effect	Message
27	You briefly see monsters on this dungeon level and your Personality is increased by 1 (until the next day). If no monsters on the level (other than you), no visible effect.	<p>"You sense the presence of monsters."</p> <p>No monsters, beginner, not hallucinating-"You have a strange feeling for a moment, then it passes."</p> <p>No monsters, beginner, hallucinating-"You have a normal feeling for a moment, then it passes."</p> <p>No monsters, not hallucinating-"You feel threatened."</p> <p>No monsters, hallucinating-"You get the heebie jeebies."</p>
28	You find a random valuable gem or piece of worthless glass and your Personality is increased by 1 (until the next day). If you have already acquired gems or gold from this fountain, a nymph is summoned instead (as above).	<p>"You spot a gem in the sparkling waters!"</p> <p>Blind-"You feel a gem here!"</p>
29	Monsters on the level flee you for a while.	"This water gives you bad breath!"
30	A number of deep puddles and pools may be created in your vicinity. (Never two orthogonally adjacent, never on your square, the more likely the closer to you.) Be aware that any precious items laying near you may end up at the bottom of a pool! Items that get wet fade and dilute.	<p>Pool created-"Water gushes forth from the overflowing fountain!"</p> <p>No pools created-"Your thirst is quenched."</p>

Dungeon Messages

The following messages all indicate there is a fountain somewhere on the level:

"You hear bubbling water."
 "You hear water falling on coins."
 "You hear the splashing of a naiad."
 "You hear a soda fountain!" (If character is hallucinating)
 "You hear the ravings of a madman cursing monsters with wands."

As Judges, we have the opportunity to surprise players and remind them of gaming in a simpler time. Before RPGs, monster descriptions were contradictory, strange, and more likely to depend on an author's need to tell a story than a judge's need to offer balanced encounters. Monsters should never feel generic. They are magic, otherworldly things. This column will reconsider typical monsters in order to make them fresh and mysterious... the way they were to us before we memorized our first Monster Manual.



Art by Jason Adams

CONSIDER THE OGRE

A MONSTER COLUMN by SEAN ELLIS

“What are generally referred to as trolls are more properly ogres -- intermediate creatures between men and giants.” - Gary Gygax and Jeff Perren, Chainmail

In folk traditions, trolls are not rubbery, long-nosed regeneration machines. They are large, brutish, child eating beasts that grow rutabagas in their filthy hair. Any Norse, Scandinavian, or Welsh trolls of which you read are more properly the Ogres of the Brahman, Buddhist, and Native American mythologies.

In the early times, cosmic power was awaiting it's official assignment. Larger beings, born of rock, thought to challenge the Gods for power. At certain points in the struggle they would have won, too, if not for the involvement of the smaller races of Dwarves and Elves who ran to the aid of their deities. Failing to secure this power, the races of Giant fell to infighting. Gods took the opportunity to cast these Giants out and scatter them into warring tribes of disparate beasts (Hill, Stone, Frost, Fire, Cloud and Storm Giants, the various Ogres described below, and the nations of man) so they would never rise up again. This gave the world the wide selection of Giants, as described in DCC RPG, but also the many races of Ogres.

Ogres as described in the DCC RPG are the redneck cousins of High Ogres. High Ogres possessed the ability to shape-shift, something they abused immediately to grow as large as gods. Nowadays, Ogres can be human sized, and also grow as tall as twelve feet (1d7 + 5 feet) tall. Physical appearance varies widely amongst the solitary Ogres and their tiny, isolated societies that exist. Their form is is also very dependent on any given Ogre's remaining shape changing abilities. On the whole Ogres are coarse, dominant, and chaotic with an obsession for stealing human babies as meals or to raise as novelties, a revenge for mankind's role in the failure to overthrow the gods.

Some Ogres are repentant. They see the flourishing of man in the aftermath of the Gods War, and they want to join in. Some establish themselves as protectors of villages or individual homesteads, and others (those with a less repulsive visage or who are able to shape shift) marry into human families. Those that ingratiate themselves into human culture are still easily spotted. Whether exceptionally ugly or beauteous, Ogres have a sense of fashion and behavior that harkens back thousands of years to an era not even faintly remembered by man. Clothes and etiquette of such specimens are usually bizarre and archaic.

Two magics war within all Ogre's biology: the power of their High Ogre heritage, and the lingering effects of the godly curse. This alchemy creates Ogres with sometimes subtle to drastic results. The giant humanoid with red hands and the thin beast with a bird's beak and eyes on his instep are both Ogres.

Roll on the following charts for an appearance alteration, a power and a weakness. For the appearance chart, start by rolling a d8 to determine the body part affected, then roll on the next chart to see the alteration. Roll a d8 to select a power, then re-roll for a weakness. Find a way to connect the power with the alteration. It is perfectly logical for an Ogre to use his long, dirty hair to tangle his enemies or absorb attacks. Weaknesses are listed not as role playing suggestions, but as ways to defeat the ogre in addition to or instead of engaging in combat. Sometimes some fast-talk or preaching can save a life faster than a sword arm.

Appearance:

Roll	Body Part	Alteration
1	Head	Multiple body parts (roll a d8 to determine number. If an eight is rolled, continue rolling until you get a number other than eight. Add up all numbers rolled).
2	Arms	Animal like (1: Bird. 2: Hyena. 3: Wasp. 4: Elephant. 5: Ox. 6: Horse. 7: Snake. 8: Elephant).
3	Torso	Human like (1: Beautiful human. 2: Attractive, but square shaped. 3: Stretched to incorrect proportions. 4: Ugly. 5: Appearance is that of a human child).
4	Legs	Covered in hair
5	Tail (roll on "Animal like"alteration)	Covered in moss or dirty enough to grow small plants.
6	Ogre possesses enormous ears and/or nose. Do not roll on next table.	Growing in wrong place (Re-roll on first table using a d4, ignoring a result if you roll the same location. Place some or all of the first body part at the location of the second. i.e. a head could grow out of the creature's leg, or the eyes could grow off of a foot.)
7	Re-roll twice	Strange color (1: Red. 2: Blue. 3: Green)
8	Nothing special	Covered in spikes, dentaderm, or bone outgrowth.

Roll	Power	Weakness
1	D4 AC bonus.	Amazingly vain.
2	Illusionary shape change or invisibility 3X per day.	Exposure to sunlight turns ogre to stone.
3	Flight 3X a day.	Obsessively hungry for man flesh.
4	Spells as per NPC magician.	Easily converted to a peaceful religion.
5	Sickening smell or disease. Opponent takes -1 to all rolls while in melee range.	Blindly tyrannical.
6	Genius intellect.	Embarrassingly gullible.
7	+1 die dmg.	Attention deficit.
8	Nothing Special	Nothing Special

Any Ogres receiving a “nothing special” result may appear as the Ogre in DCC RPG, but with perhaps a less stupid look in their eyes and a better ability to dress. A human child stolen and raised from birth (known as a “Changeling,” often exchanged for a baby Ogre) may also roll on the above tables on his 7th birthday.

Fallen High Ogre: Init +2; Atk slam +5 melee (1d6+6) or as weapon +5 melee, +6 dam; AC 16; HD 4d8+4; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP as per chart, plus roll 3d6 for Int; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +1; AL C.

For more of this series by Sean Ellis, check out:

Consider the Greenskins: Goblins, Hobs and Orks - Crawl! #5
Consider the Kobolds - Crawl! #3

CRITICAL

TABLE T: TRAPS

TRAPS and CRITS

FOR TRAPS BY

JEFFREY TADLOCK

Traps. The bane of players everywhere. Walking down the dungeon hall, those stairs that lead down to the lower levels of the dungeon where the treasures lie, or simply the poison needle protecting the lock on the treasure chest. Traps catch their characters when they least expect it. Traps are what keeps players on their toes as they explore their environment.

This article contains six traps ready for placement into your game. Use



Art by Jason Sholtis

these traps as a springboard to come up with your own devious traps. There is something quite satisfying as a judge when an intricate trap you designed inflicts damage upon the PCs you run an adventure for.

The traps below all use attack rolls to determine their success. These are all meant to be used in conjunction with the accompanying **Critical Trap Table**, allowing you to unleash even more random lethality upon your PCs!

Pit Trap, Spiked: find/disable trap DC 12; Atk +3, dmg 1d4 per spike.

A 10' pit is concealed with a faux stone cover. PCs that do not find the trap must make a DC 12 Reflex save or fall into the trap for 1d6 damage. The pit has numerous spikes at the bottom. 1d4 spikes could impale the falling character.

Poison Needle Lock: pick lock, DC 16; find/disable trap DC 13; Atk +6, dmg 1d4 plus poison: DC 14 Fort save or -1d4 Stamina.

An intricate lock that is also protected by a poisoned needle. A failed pick lock or disable trap check will trigger the needle.

Scythe Hall: find/disable trap DC 18; Atk +8, dmg 1d12.

Four slender scythe blades are recessed in the ceiling of this hall in 5' intervals (find DC 20). A portion of the floor under the fourth scythe is weighted in a manner to cause all four scythes to swing downwards at the same time. Failure to find the trap or disable it triggers the trap, each scythe targeting the character in that square.

Falling Block: find/disable DC 15; Atk +15, dmg 4d6.

A large stone block is rigged above the doorway of a closed door. Opening the door without finding the hidden lever triggers the trap. The large block falls from the ceiling potentially crushing the character opening the door.

Poison Arrow Trap, Repeating: find/disable DC 16; Atk +6, additional +4 if standing in doorway, dmg 1d6 plus poison: DC 13 Fort Save or -1d3 Stamina.

Failure to find or disable this trap results in one arrow being fired every round for 6 rounds.

Critical Trap Table

Traps with attack rolls were in need of a table to roll on for critical hits. From this rose the Critical Hit Trap Table referenced below, **Crit Table T: Traps**. The die to roll on the table depends on the attack modifier. A PC's Luck modifier alters a trap's critical hit. A positive Luck modifier reduces the roll, a negative Luck modifier increases the roll.

Entries listed as All Types covers bludgeoning, piercing, slashing, and poison traps with an attack roll. Damaging entries cover bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing. Poison entries cover poison. Effect lists the extra damage or result of the critical hit.

Attack Modifier	Crit Die/ Table
+0, +1	1d4/T
+2, +3	1d6/T
+4, +5	1d8/T
+6, +7	1d10/T
+8, +9	1d12/T
+10, +11	1d14/T
+12, +13	1d16/T
+14, +15	1d20/T
+16, +17	1d24/T
+18 or higher	1d30/T

Crit Table T: Traps

Roll	Result
1 or less	All Types - Trap sprung nearly perfectly! Effect - Add 1d3 damage.
2	All Types - The trap leaves the PC with blurry vision. Effect - +1d3 damage, -1 to Reflex Saves for 6 hours.
3	Damaging - Blow causes immediate swelling. Poison - Causes an allergic reaction, slows reflexes. Effect - +1d3 damage, -1 to Reflex Saves for 6 hours.
4	All Types - The trap scores a solid hit, penetrating deep into the PC's body. Effect - +1d6 damage.
5	Damaging - The blow strikes a particularly vulnerable area. Poison - The poison burns as it enters the PC's body! Effect - +1d7 damage.
6	Damaging - The blow from the trap knocks the wind out of the PC, cracking ribs. Poison - Poison directly affects lungs, reducing capacity. Effect - +1d6 damage, 1d2 temporary Stamina damage until healed.

Roll	Result
7	<p>All Types - The trap causes severe convulsions, leaving the victim exhausted.</p> <p>Effect - +1d7 damage, 1d3 temporary Stamina damage until healed.</p>
8	<p>All Types - The trap causes bleeding that is difficult to stop.</p> <p>Effect - +1d3 damage per round for 4 rounds unless healed.</p>
9	<p>Damaging - Blow strikes unprotected area.</p> <p>Poison - Poison unusually virulent.</p> <p>Effect - +1d8 damage.</p>
10	<p>All Types - The trap strikes a central nerve.</p> <p>Effect - +2d4 damage, DC 14 Fort Save or fall unconscious.</p>
11	<p>Damaging - Blow strikes spinal area.</p> <p>Poison - The poison overwhelms central nervous system.</p> <p>Effect - +2d5 damage, DC16 Fort Save or fall unconscious.</p>
12	<p>All Types - The trap springs with tremendous effectiveness.</p> <p>Effect - +1d12 damage.</p>
13	<p>Damaging - Blow causes severe numbing of muscle tissue.</p> <p>Poison - The poison has a brief, but very powerful chilling effect on the PC's muscles.</p> <p>Effect - +1d14 damage.</p>
14	<p>Damaging - Trap breaks multiple ribs.</p> <p>Poison - Poison causes marrow in bones to painfully expand.</p> <p>Effect - +2d6 damage.</p>
15	<p>All Types - The trap causes trauma to the PC's spleen.</p> <p>Effect - +2d7 damage.</p>
16	<p>Damaging - The trap crushes the PC's knee.</p> <p>Poison - The poison causes the victim's joints to swell.</p> <p>Effect - PC's movement rate is reduced by 5' until healed by a cleric, 3rd level or higher.</p>

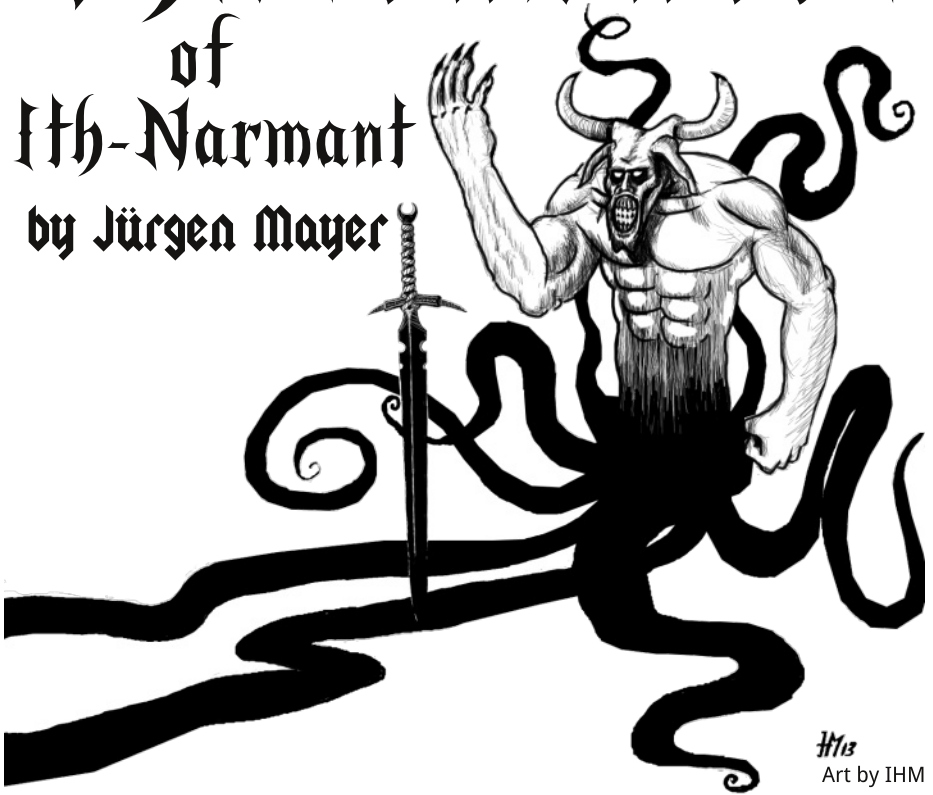
Roll	Result
17	<p>Damaging - Blow causes nerve damage. Poison - The poison causes paralysis in the PC's arm. Effect - PC loses use of one arm until healed by cleric, 3rd level or higher.</p>
18	<p>All Types - The trap causes a sudden and extreme amount of blood loss. Effect - +1d16 damage. DC 16 Fort Save or fall unconscious.</p>
19	<p>Damaging - Blow strikes with enough force to cause a heart arrhythmia. Poison - The poison speeds its way to the PCs heart causing minor heart attack. Effect - +1d24 damage. DC 16 Fort Save or fall unconscious.</p>
20	<p>All Types - The trap causes ocular bleeding. Effect - PC is blind for 2d3 turns.</p>
21	<p>Damaging - Blow damages optical nerve. Poison - The poison fogs the vision. Effect - PC is permanently blind.</p>
22	<p>Damaging - The trap delivers a stunning blow to the head causing irreversible vestibular system damage. Poison - Damages vestibular system causing irreversible damage. Effect - 1d6 Agility damage.</p>
23	<p>Damaging - The blow causes irreversible brain damage. Poison - The poison affects the PC's core brain function. Effect - 1d6 Intelligence damage.</p>
24	<p>Damaging - The trap's blow causes severe damage to the PC's spinal column. Poison - The poison targets the PC's central nervous system. Effect - Complete and permanent paralysis.</p>

Roll	Result
25	<p>Damaging - Blow severs or smashes limb to point of requiring amputation.</p> <p>Poison - The poison causes rapid atrophy of limb to point of requiring amputation.</p> <p>Effect - Roll 1d4 (1 - Left Arm, 2 - Right Arm, 3 - Left Leg, 4 - Right Leg). Result indicates the loss of that limb.</p>
26	<p>Damaging - The trap flays the flesh and exposes a wide swath of muscle.</p> <p>Poison - The poison causes the victim's flesh to slough off.</p> <p>Effect - +3d12 damage.</p>
27	<p>Damaging - Blow severs an artery resulting in severe bleeding.</p> <p>Poison - The poison has an acidic reaction with the PC's blood stream causing extreme pain and anguish.</p> <p>Effect - +3d14 damage.</p>
28	<p>All Types - The trap damages multiple organs with a single strike.</p> <p>Effect - Immediate PC death.</p>
29	<p>Damaging - The blow causes an unexpected increase in the PC's heart rate.</p> <p>Poison - The poison sends the PC's heart rate into impossible to maintain numbers.</p> <p>Effect - Heart explodes in the PC's chest, killing him.</p>
30 or more	<p>All Types - The gods frown upon the PC as the trap springs with uncanny execution and kills the PC outright in an extreme fashion.</p>

Shadowsword

of Ith-Narmant

by Jürgen Mayer



H/13

Art by IHM

The Shadowsword was forged from the shadow of the demon Ith-Narmant, who resides on a world circling a black sun where only ghosts, demonspawn and creatures of the night can prosper. His prime domain is shadow, but he is also a master of chill, solanaceae and fear of the dark. His altars are always built in pitch-dark places. Unlike most other creatures of Chaos, he is always calm and hard to anger, but quick to judge, delighted by any suffering of Law, a connoisseur of dark magic and craftsmanship, and everlastingly plotting the spreading of Chaos into other worlds. His ultimate goal is to blacken the sun of another world to add it to his dominion.

Ith-Narmant has bound a circle of shadow warlocks and artificers to his will, who craft artifacts from the demon's own shadow and scatter them on different worlds to increase Ith-Narmant's influence and grow his cult. The Shadowsword is one of those artifacts. Its blade is literally a solid shadow, but does not cast a shadow itself.

Shadowsword of Ith-Narmant Special Effects Table

Treat the Shadowsword as a longsword, but roll 2d6 for damage. If you roll doubles, check the following table for special effects:

1+1	Lifesucker. Deals 2 damage to target. Wielder loses 1 hp permanently. This effect is cumulative. When the blade has sucked 3 hp from one single wielder, it becomes sentient and gains a level. Its personality is similar to that of its wielder, albeit with the demonic taint of Ith-Narmant. The Shadowsword levels up every 3 hp. The demonic taint gets stronger with each level (see the Sword Level Table below).
2+2	Demonsign. Deals 4 damage to target. Wielder receives a demonsign and suffers a Corruption depending on sword level (see the Sword Level Table and note the total number of demonsigns on the character sheet). Corruption in form of a demonsign cannot be prevented by Luck expenditure. If a demonsign bearer wants to fight with any other melee weapon at any time, a successful Will Save against DC10+number of demonsigns is needed (roll only once per encounter). If a demonsign bearer wants to get rid of the Shadowsword or give it to someone else, a successful Will Save against DC15+number of demonsigns is required (this roll is only allowed every 13 days).
3+3	Taintburst. Deals 3 damage to target and 3 damage to wielder as demonic energies burst from the blade on impact. If this brings the wielder to 0 hp, the blade's demonic energy fuses with the irrevocably dying character, who then rises as a demon minion of Ith-Narmant under control of the judge in 1d20-1 turns (instantly on a 1). If the wielder does not die directly from a taintburst, but dies later in the same turn, there is still a chance of fusing with the lingering taint and turning into a demon if a DC 15 Fort Save is not successful. Preventing this fate with healing attempts before bleeding out does not work, because the character is claimed by demonic forces. A Luck check when recovering the body always fails for the same reason. The character can only be saved in the unlikely event that Ith-Narmant is destroyed or if the character's soul is rescued from the realm of Ith-Narmant. A slain enemy that was affected by a taintburst can also rise as a demon at the judge's discretion, if it fails a DC 15 Fort Save.
4+4	Shadowrage. Deals 8 damage to the target. Wielder goes demonically berserk (+2 STR, +2 AC, needs to succeed in a DC 10+sword level Will Save to stop fighting, which can be attempted at the end of each round - wielder will attack anyone in vicinity while berserk, including allies if no foes are present).
5+5	Hellpower. Deals 10 damage to the target. The target additionally suffers the effect of a d3 roll on Critical Hit Table DN in the DCC RPG Rulebook (improve this die by the sword's level; the wielder's Luck modifier affects the result). Wielder gets +1 STR for the remainder of the encounter. This is cumulative and stacks with any other STR modifiers.
6+6	Deathbringer. Deals 12 damage to the target. Any damage dice of the Shadowsword that show a 6 will explode for the remainder of the encounter (roll the die again and add the damage, continue if another 6 is rolled). This already affects the double sixes just rolled.

All damage dealt by the Shadowsword of Ith-Narmant is considered magical. Any Luck spent on the damage roll adjusts the damage value, but the special effects are only triggered by natural doubles. Damage is adjusted by ability modifiers or deed dice as usual. Furthermore, spending Luck cannot prevent a special effect from occurring. All effects occur in addition to any potential critical hits or fumbles. The Shadowsword is of chaotic alignment and once sentient, will intend to harm law-aligned beings.

Sword Level Table

The Shadowsword of Ith-Narmant can gain levels by sucking the life force from its wielder (see result 1+1 Lifesucker on the special effects damage table). Check the following table for the consequences of the sword's level:

Sword Level	Personality	Communication	Demonsign Corruption*	Mind-Control Will Save**
0	None	None	Minor Corruption	n/a
1	Similar to wielder, but slightly mischievous	Simple Urges	Minor Corruption	DC5 + no. of demonsigns
2	More mischievous and bloodthirsty	Empathy	Major Corruption	DC10 + no. of demonsigns
3	Malevolent and eager to inflict pain and suffering	Empathy & Speech	Major Corruption	DC15 + no. of demonsigns
4+	Vicious and hell-bent on corrupting all that is good and innocent	Speech & Telepathy	Greater Corruption	DC20 + no. of demonsigns

*See special effects damage table result 2+2 Demonsign. All rolls on the Corruption tables are made with a d10 and adjusted by the wielder's Luck modifier.

**Any time a fumble is rolled on an attack with the Shadowsword, it can mind-control its wielder's next action if a Will Save is not successful.

Wielders, Alignment and Demonsigns:

Like all artifacts crafted from Ith-Narmant's shadow, the Shadowsword can be wielded by characters of all alignments - for a cost. A lawful character gaining a number of demonsigns equal to their Personality changes their alignment to neutral. Acquiring a number of demonsigns equalling Personality while neutral shifts the alignment to Chaos. A chaotic character accumulating a number of demonsigns equal to Personality becomes a Champion of Ith-Narmant. Every so often, such a Champion will be given quests to further Ith-Narmant's schemes directly by the shadow warlocks, but can also call on their help in times of need. Extraordinary service can result in a boon like a new artifact or gifting of magical powers pertaining to Ith-Narmant's domains. If a wielder of the Shadowsword dies, the blade loses all previously gained levels as the absorbed life essence reunites with the wielder's soul.

MY GONGFARMER CAN'T DO SH*T!

eldritch powers of a cracked universe. But, the mundane lives of these swarthy adventurers left an impression -- and not always exactly what you think.

Rather than build an exhaustive list of skills from pot making to pot growing, my group uses a simpler strategy. When the game grinds to a halt because no one seems to have the skill or spell to unwind a problem, a player makes a case for why Suzy Shoeman the cobbler/warrior can understand an ancient phrase carved into a skull-carved pillar deep in the Crypt of Everlasting Horror. And the Judge makes a ruling, usually based upon the creativity of the scenario presented.

Back when Suzy Shoeman was an apprenticed cobbler, a traveling tinker stopped by to sharpen all the crazy cobbler tools lying around. While he worked, the tinker told the apprentice a story about a king with three slutty daughters. The story was jam packed with melodrama, blood and rhetoric, but then the king disowned one of his slutty daughters -- and here the tinker spoke an ancient tongue -- "As son of the Leopard God, I hereby banish you." It just so happens that the mad tinker drew out hieroglyphics for the phrase right there in the dirt. Three of these words are right there on the evil skull-carved column. And with a simple d20 roll, Suzy Shoeman, now a she-hulk warrior, might be able to work out the meaning of the phrase. It was this story of mystery, intrigue and slutty princesses that set little Suzy Shoeman on a path to danger, gold and rhetoric.

This is not necessarily a way to handle every situation. Sometimes characters just don't know how to do stuff. But, if the Judge is trying to figure out what an elven chandler actually knows how to do, tap into the player's creativity. This fleshes out the character for the player, making it even more painful when Melan the Magnificent falls into the maw of the Mad Beast of Hilo, and gives the characters a few more strategic options when presented with a typical adventuring situation.



Art by bygrinstow

By Paul Wolfe

Dungeon Crawl Classics RPG presents many occupational options that presuppose a set of skills that translate to the adventuring life. For instance, a farmer can probably handle an animal or two, knows stuff about weather patterns, and some natural history. But, there are certain occupations that make everyone shrug. Chandler? My elf is an expert at making candles and understands the business end of a candelabrum. Gongfarmer, anyone? Gleaning an animal's last meal by its scat? Sigh. So, for essentially every real world skill not "scat" or arcane magic related, your ex-gongfarmer wizard has to roll a d10 to accomplish it? While the farmer is dropping d20s to track down the parties' enemies, woo away their mounts, make distracting woodland animal noises and then cook a delightful breakfast for the party?

Characters need skills. Adventuring skills arrive when weary and bloodied 0-levels take a class. Dwarves can smell gold and hit things with boards. Elves can call on



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Plus brutal TRAPS
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by @rinstow '13



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