

THE CRUSADER™

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The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer

HAMMER & ANVIL:
MYSTERIOUS PLACES
Exploring the Real World as Inspiration

Auld Wyrnish
Multiclass as Classes: Part 2

How It All
Happened

Gary Gygax
continues
his story

NEW FEATURE
FABLES OF LEJEND
by Jon Creffield

FICTION:
The Forge King's Malice
&
The Aihrdian Chronicles:
Plumes Upon The Blue

NEW FEATURE
ONE NIGHT STANDS:
3 Quick C&C Adventures by Bill Webb!

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How It All Happened by Gary Gygax

The Inspiration for the D&D Game, its Creation, GenCon's Founding, How TSR came into Being, and its Early Days...

"Older Boys"

The summer that I turned 12 years of age was monumental for one reason only. Dave Dimery from Chicago, my oldest friend, and I were taken by our respective mothers to spend a week in the Michigan countryside. I was bored to tears there, so when in the nearby town's lone drug store I perused the magazine rack for something to read. My eyes fell upon a copy of a pulp magazine, *Startling Stories*, as I recall. I had recently read *Conan the Conqueror* at the local filling station I liked to hang around, the paperback battered and with grease marks abundant upon its pages. How I was enthralled by the brawny barbarian's adventures! Now, there in a rustic drug store, I had discovered a magazine filled with more thrilling action, this in space! I spent my lone quarter without a qualm. The next day I had read the whole of the zine and was forever hooked. The stories were better than those I'd read in horror anthologies I discovered in the local library, and all the other sorts of books I'd read. In time I acquired a near-complete collection of all the pulp SF and fantasy magazines published in the US from 1940 on, as well as most of the novels published in hard-bound and paperback. Now I am well ahead of the storyline, in 1955, so back to 1950 we go.

As much as I loved reading, would finish a book a day regularly, good weather meant outdoors activity for at least most of the day. By wheedling I had managed to convince my parents that a BB gun was mandatory for a boy of my mature 11 years of age. Most of the other lads I hung around with had them, in fact. After a year of being cautious, it was time for BB-gun wars, they being safer than exchanging bow shots or fighting with real swords. Many a happy day was spent with my friends shooting cans, bottles, and each other. The latter was usually reserved for camping trips. My grandfather owned a couple of tracts of farmland about five miles outside Lake Geneva. The smaller, 40 acres, was used for family picnics and much loved by my friends and me for "exploring" and overnight camping. There my play-tent was finally used for what it was meant for. As it rained at night about every other time we went out for such an excursion, all were glad I had it to tote along on the mile or two walk from the

road back to where we liked to encamp. Once settled in, we'd split into two opposing factions, move into the woods, and then hunt for the "enemy" with our Daisy air guns at the ready. Stalking the foe quietly despite twigs and dead leaves, camouflage and ambush techniques were quickly learned. Gentle Reader, do not try such foolishness yourself. We were fortunate that no one was badly hurt, no eye was lost.

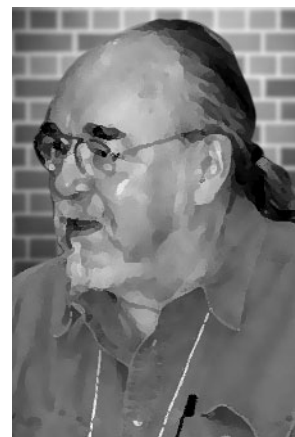
Fencing was something we lads enjoyed, so I saved up and ordered a pair of foils from the Johnson-Smith novelty company. They were expensive, but surely they'd be worth it. With such weapons we could sword-fight with parental approval. When the package containing the fencing foils arrived I tore it open, phoned my friends, and in but minutes the first match began. It was the last fought. No one was hurt, but the foils were of soft metal, and did not retain their original shape. What a disappointment. What a waste of hard-earned spending money! Then and there I vowed to stick with real weapons in the future.

Soon enough we were experimenting with "medieval handguns" made from a length of pipe with a fuse hole drilled in the cap screwed onto one end. A firecracker charge would send a cloth-patch-wrapped ball bearing through a two-inch thick wood plank at close range. Not even the most juvenile of us ever thought of using them as weapons, only as experimental toys. That's why no one was ever hurt.

Perhaps the best way to sum up my outlook at this time in my early days is to say that I was greatly influenced by Mark Twain's *Tom Sawyer* and *Tom Sawyer Abroad*, and as much by the "Jerry Todd" series of boy's adventure books by Leo Edwards.

There awaits you in the next installment the revelation of how I became a fantasy fan, more live action combat, and tales of wilderness survival.

Because books and reading played so large a part in the formation of realization of topics under consideration here, my next foray onto these pages will deal mainly with that and their influence on my closest friends and me.



GARY GYGAX

has written and had published over 70 games, game products, and books since he began creating in the 1960s, when he founded the world-renowned GENCON gaming convention.

His first professional gaming work was published in 1971.

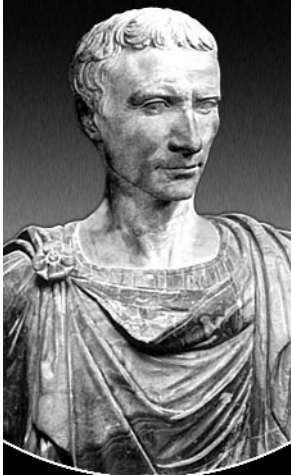
He co-founded the game publishing company Tactical Studies Rules (later TSR, Inc.) in 1973 with his longtime friend from Lake Geneva, Don Kaye.

His best known game and fiction credits include co-creating and authoring the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Role-Playing Game, creating the AD&D game, WORLD OF GREYHAWK Fantasy World Setting, and the Gord the Rogue novels. He is often referred to as the "Father of Role-Playing."

Gary is currently living in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, his childhood home.

WHEN CAESAR

STOOD UPON THE
BANKS OF THE
RUBICON LOOKING
SOUTH TO ROME,
HE HESITATED.
BEFORE HIM STOOD
THE VAST, COMPLEX
MECHANISM OF THE
PAST, GLOWING
WITH A HOST OF
INTRICATELY WOVEN
STRATAGEMS.
WITH HIM, HE HAD
BUT ONE LEGION,
WEARY FROM EIGHT
YEARS OF BRUTAL WAR
WITH THE GAULS.
BUT WHEN CALLED
TO SURRENDER
HIMSELF TO THE
SENATE AND CERTAIN
EXILE, HE DID NOT
HESITATE.
HE CALLED HIS
LEGIONARIES TO
CROSS INTO ITALY,
TO CROSS
THE RUBICON.
AND AS HE DID SO,
HE SAID ONLY THIS:
ALEA IACTA EST!



JULIUS CAESAR

ALEA IACTA EST



"The Die is Cast" – An Editorial by Stephen Chenault

Going Tarzan

Their party picked up the orc band's track just west of the ledge that served the Hermit as a home for so many years. They followed it several miles to the river where scouts found signs of an ambush. Itching for battle, the party moved on, even as short horn blasts sounded in front of them warning any and all at the river's edge of their approach. They picked up their pace and plunged into the broad clearing that had served the orcs as an encampment. The orcs sprang their trap; archers poured arrows into them from the left, a group of heavily armored raiders attacked from the right and the forest exploded in life behind them. Without hesitation the group of adventurers swung to their right and attacked the raiders with such ferocity that before the orcs could recover they were thrown back, a third of their number dead or wounded on the ground. But the raiders were soon joined by the archers and scouts in the woods and the melee pressed in on all sides of the party. But they held firm and drove the orcs back, killing more, wounding more, and scattering the rest. The party, seven strong, had routed over 30 orcs through bold and decisive action.

Soon they retired across the river and set up camp. They had not come through the battle unscathed. They were all wounded, their spells were exhausted, armor and shields torn and dented. They set guard and tried to get some much needed rest.

But unbeknownst to them, the orcs had not left the valley. They had retreated deep into the tree line and regrouped and been reinforced by a returning patrol of a dozen or so. These replaced their earlier losses to some degree. Their chief plotted his revenge. As evening fell, he sent his troops across the river, snuck them into the wood line and infested the whole area. Then he himself crossed with his raiders and the attack began.

Arrows fell into the camp and scattered the beleaguered adventurers. They armed and armored themselves with anything at hand, so were able to take to the attack quickly. They did so, fearing the arrow volleys might slay them in their camp. But the dark proved their undoing. They fought along the banks of the river, slaying some orcs but their camp was infested, their equipment stolen or destroyed and they themselves attacked from the rear and ultimately overwhelmed; two of the members going down, one dropping her sword and the others being pressed and wounded. In the chaos the cleric sacrificed himself to save the party and led some of the orcs on a merry chase before he fell alone in the brush, shot repeatedly by orc arrows. The half-elf ranger too fell upon the banks of the river holding a horde of orcs back as the rest of the party drug the dead and wounded into the dark waters of the slow moving Mistbane River.

There were as many wounded as alive and the river was their only hope of escape. They were forced to abandon their armor and arms to the cool dark currents so that they could float downriver unimpeded. By morning, they were able to drag themselves up upon the river's bank where they found themselves destitute: without food or camping gear, without armor, weapons or gold. Even their clothes were rent and torn, stained red from the blood of too many orcs and too many friends. They had only themselves and a few paltry items such as boot daggers, flint and steel and the like. None of them had managed to save their monies or weapons and they looked up to the hostile eyes of the Darkenfold...

To begin again... you have nothing... These are the words that no player wants to hear their Castle Keeper utter. All your hard work, your struggle, the fruit of your many adventures plucked from you like grapes from the vine. Once said, it cannot be taken back, amended or changed. The phrase is absolute. You must begin again... Those words echo like a thunderclap of doom. How can they not? Your magic weapons are gone. Your books and scrolls, your holy symbol, your armor, your rogue's tool, your lute, the very boots off your feet are all gone and you have to begin again. Despair and anger almost always rage over the table when these words are uttered... you must begin again.

But it does not have to be that way. For this, beginning anew, can and should be the ultimate challenge. It is a phrase heavy with bitterness but one that should be ripe with re-birth. This is the chance given to you by fate to begin again, to leave aside the tangled vines of your past adventures, the mistakes, the calamities and missed opportunities. It is a phrase that promises a new crop of adventure, a road one sets off on fresh and ripe for new adventure. Too, it is the most exhilarating thing you can ever do as a player in Castles & Crusades, for it forces you to pit all of your knowledge, experience and most importantly, your imagination, against the wiles of an indifferent world and the cruel machinations of its inhabitants. In short, it pits you the player against the Castle Keeper like no other scenario does. And vice versa it creates a gaming environment in which you, the Castle Keeper, have to really expand your own motifs.

Scenarios in which characters are forced to start with virtually nothing can be tremendous tools toward revitalizing a game of Castles & Crusades. As campaigns develop, characters gain levels, dungeons are plundered, monsters vanquished and treasure accumulated the campaign itself begins to suffer from a bit of drag. Castle Keepers have by this point learned what scenarios best fit the players and their characters and they tend to run them, or versions of them over and over again; especially those who are pressed for time. Players usually don't react negatively because these are the very games they've learned to enjoy. Even those who keep it shaken up may find themselves at a loss as to how to effectively challenge the party that is stronger than it was, but not so strong as to begin plundering the giants. Perhaps the characters have hit a plateau in their character abilities, explored nuances of their characters or the Castle Keeper's imaginative flow has been overwhelmed. Whatever the case, and its frequently all the above plus some, the game needs a jolt; some type of shock to 'bring everyone to their senses' as I used to say.

Begin again. Whether instigated by the very bold player who voluntarily sheds their equipment or the Castle Keeper who forces the issue, it doesn't matter. Beginning again forces everyone's creative juices to flow. A whole new perspective is created in a moment. Suddenly all the props that have carried the game forward are gone and players have to scramble to figure out how they are going to get food and weapons. The

shock period alone is worth the value of the change from having it all to having nothing. Emotions run high and an inevitable round of blaming one or the other crops up as the players scramble to redefine characters long ago defined by material possessions and not by racial or class abilities.

The key challenge for any gamer here is to discard the past. One has to give up the idea of the magical sword, the holy symbol, the hard earned spell book and move on. A veteran who climbs out of the trench doesn't worry about his misplaced grandpappy's watch, but rather thanks the powers that be that he is intact and alive. The same approach has to be taken by the players. The sword was cool but can't become part of the character. It's lost. Let it go and plan on getting a new sword down the road and work toward that. The hardest and most difficult to work with are the magic users, as loss of a spell book can be catastrophic. Couple that with a magic users class abilities and the character may be eviscerated. But that alone should prove the most challenging, convincing the other players that you are 'out of the game' as a useful adventurer until some spells are gained. That should galvanize a good party to aid a stricken fellow.

The key challenge for any gamer here is to discard the past.

Of course Castle Keepers have to be aware of items, such as magic, that are integral to the players' characters and their value to those characters. In the above scenario the wizard's spell book was later found and retrieved. He spent a horrible few weeks before it was done, but eventually it came back to him as did the magic sword of the ranger. Keeping things reasonable becomes the challenge of the Castle Keeper. Also the challenge level of the monsters, traps and other encounters has to be softened as well as though they may have the same number of hit points, but they don't have the same armor or equipment.

The true gift that beginning again brings to the table of course is it and it alone taps all the imaginative qualities of a player and the Castle Keeper. Stranded in the woods with no food and little water means the ranger will have to track and hunt, the cleric manufacturing his own holy symbol must choose spells carefully, and the rogue uses class abilities like never before. Staying alive is as hard as anything in such a game and players will thrive in or shrivel beneath the heat of this dangerous fire. Most rise to the occasion of course, and relish the chance to utilize knowledge they have, both real as the player and conceived as the character.

Whether beginning again in the wild or urban areas, creative and judicious use of racial and class abilities is essential to survival. The presented scenario almost forces players to explore different aspects of their characters. It allows backgrounds to be fleshed out. More than this, skills that are not outlined in the core books as specific to the class and race can be expanded upon. It may be that the wizard worked as a carpenter as a young man, and he can fall back upon that skill to earn some coin to buy his equipment. Here the Castle Keeper sees a perfect opportunity to create a non-player character, the employer, who can now seed future adventure ideas to the

party through the wizard. Perhaps he worked on a manor house on the outskirts of town that has since become infested with strange beasts... a new adventure. Or the bard uses her high charisma to talk the inn keep into a job, or even to invest in her by purchasing equipment and other needed gear for a small stipend taken from her adventurers. Role playing will take a defining place at the game table as both parties explore these new avenues and the Castle Keeper is forced to make normally one dimensional non-player characters three dimensional and the players are forced to solve problems with more than their normal skills.

The number of new scenarios that will naturally present themselves throughout the course of play is staggering and will drive the campaign back into high gear, so long as both the Castle Keeper and the players embrace the situation and don't shrink from it. This becomes the new, the latest adventure. And though there are limiting factors, combat for instance has to take a different tone as the characters may only have their bare fists to fight with. But by and large the only real limiting factor are the collective imaginations of those involved.

Of course all of this becomes little more than overblown hyperbole if the Castle Keepers does not become a true arbiter of the game. They should allow a generous interpretation of the rules when players respond by attempting new non-class/race related skills such as diplomacy, herb lore, spotting or anything else conjured up. Also, adventures must be crafted that allow for the character's present weaknesses. This task alone offers the Castle Keeper a host of different tracks that they can lead their adventuring party down.

A note of caution for the Castle Keepers: Springing this on a group of 5th level characters can be very disadvantageous to the game. Like anyone, players like their stuff and don't want to face up to losing 10 months of play on the whim of some supposed power crazed Castle Keeper who has decided that going Tarzan is the way to go. Build the loss into the game. Through the course of combat equipment is destroyed, worn down, stolen or cast aside. Truthfully this is the best way. In any battle, equipment is lost and should actually be a normal part of your game. A person wearing chainmail that takes 12 points of damage must know that that chainmail was hit too

and weakened thereby. Give them options. They can keep this or that piece of equipment ... yes you can keep the heavy fur cloak on, but swamp's muck and mire clings to it and constantly pulls you back, it keeps dragging you down. It cuts your movement in half and the rest of the party is beginning to leave you behind... keep these options going so that they voluntarily give up the equipment. In wilderness areas, this is easy to do. If you have them wake up one morning hanging upside down in a county jail with no explanation as to why and wherefore, you are going to have a rebellion on your hands and rightfully so.

It's probably not a bad idea to prep your table a little as well. Even talk about it with them and get their gut reactions. Some will be highly receptive, others will not be. Try to build it up as an inevitable course of events brought on by their previous actions. Anything to get the players involved is a good thing.

The most important thing to remember is that this cannot last for more than a game session or two. Players who struggle over earning enough pence to buy a dagger for six games and for weeks of real time will become very bored. And rightfully so. Castles & Crusades is a game of heroic combat, exploits and adventure, not one of pencil pushing and tallying numbers. Time in the game can be fast! Have time pass and the characters heal and earn a little money and learn of some simple dungeon or job to exploit and they can begin building their wealth and power again.

To begin again! That has always been one of my favorite expressions, one that comes from the movie Blade Runner with Harrison Ford. I love it. It holds wonderful connotations and presents a whole imaginative landscape that everyone should be able to take advantage of. The concept carries over into role playing games beautifully. Run such a game to get the creative juices flowing in a different direction and the players to explore new aspects of the world and their characters and to expand upon their existing skills and the whole "begin again" scenario will work to everyone's advantage. And after all, it's not much different than running first level characters with less equipment but a whole heck of a lot of hit points.



STEPHEN CHENAULT

was born into a world with a bewildering array of worthless "life choices" and meaningless "life options." As a youth, it was with great insight and eagerness he took to examining those options and pathways, promptly ridiculed them and dumped them into the wastebin that would become other's lives.

Stephen chose the path of brutal verbal assaults which, on occasion, lead to brutal physical rebuttals. Brittle teeth in hand, Stephen chose an academic path to lengthen what was about to become a shorter than average life span. He wasted years of his life pursuing a higher education in history before realizing that we all are, no matter what, doomed to repeat it.

Forsaking those noble causes rife in academia (such as bra burning, speech filtration, self-aggrandizement and longer summer breaks), Stephen founded for mere moments before, in a dollar bill induced stupor, deciding to strike it rich by creating a company that sold games. He has since gone on to create such luminaries as the Codex of Erde and Troll Lord Game's best selling adventure module, The Lion in Ropes. He is also well known for his curt phone conversations and one word emails.

MYSTERIOUS PLACES



**CASEY
CANFIELD**

*has been playing and
game-mastering RPGs
since 1983.*

*Casey currently plots the
deeds of nefarious characters
and creatures from his lair
just outside of Poughkeepsie,
New York.*

In the first installment of Hammer and Anvil, I offered some advice to game referees that may attempt to improvise details of their adventures. I made the point that a Castle Keeper (or any game master) should be aware of ways that they can draw inspiration from media sources – television, books, film and music. In my last column, I provided some examples of how a Castle Keeper might adapt some real-world mythology for his or her game. Media and mythological sources can be incredibly useful when planning an adventure or campaign - they help take some of the imaginative workload off of our shoulders, drawing on the creativity of others, and even the imaginations and histories of entire civilizations.

In this column, I'd like to present another source of inspiration for creating campaign settings and adventures: the mysterious place. Our world is riddled with tales of strange locations, like the Bermuda Triangle, Easter Island or Stonehenge. Rather than present the most famous (or infamous) locations in a C&C context, however, I thought it would be more entertaining to present some examples of less famous locations.

Their significance in our mundane world does not make these locations interesting. Instead, it is that they retain their oddity even while existing in a world of magic. When adapting anything from real-world inspiration, it is helpful to maintain a perspective that includes magical influences and potentially the actions of divine powers. When viewed through the lens of magic, locations that may seem strange and mysterious in our world may leave an entirely different impression in a campaign world.

Location: Sedona, Arizona, USA

Sedona is a tourist haven - a destination for those that desire breathtaking views of southwestern rock formations and scenic canyon vistas. However, Sedona garners attention in other ways, as well.

It is believed that Sedona plays host to four different vortexes - phenomena that supposedly act as focal points for the earth's mystical energy. These vortexes are said to have a subtle effect, providing a sense of well-being and spiritual cleansing or healing to those that are exposed to it. "Awakening" is a common word used to describe the sensation of the vortexes. Visitors come to Sedona from all over the world to experience this effect, and have for millennia.

The rock formations in Sedona might have a large influence on the energy experienced in the area. The rock is sandstone, and contains deposits of silver, gold, copper, iron and granite. Some think of these formations as natural electromagnetic "conductors" that set up resonances derived from the earth's magnetic field. Others prefer an explanation that is less rooted in geophysics - that the Sedona area is a nexus of ley lines - bands of magical power that wrap around the globe. The intersection of these lines in Sedona creates the vortex phenomena. For those that study the supernatural, Sedona is often ranked alongside Stonehenge and the Great Pyramids in terms of paranormal significance.

The Vortexes of Sedona are virtually pre-packaged for adaptation into a C&C campaign, but this is worth a cautionary note. As the Castle Keeper, you will need to develop the answers to the mysteries contained in the place. Are the emanations of a geophysical nature, channeled by minerals in the rock, or are they of a spiritual nature, placed there by a deity or deities? Perhaps the cause is a spiritual resonance of a long-forgotten series of rituals, or the hauntings of ancient spirits rooted to the place.

For a campaign, one might develop an area like Sedona

as a place nearby and known to a populace that takes the effect for granted. The people know about the vortexes and the effects they have, but they pay no special heed - that's just the way things have always been.

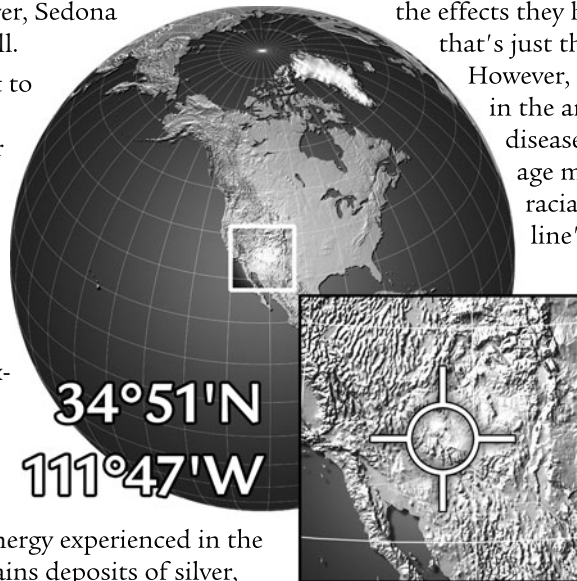
However, people who have lived their entire lives in the area may have remarkable resistance to disease (+2 to all saving throws vs. disease), or age more slowly than others of their given racial background. Also likely, if the "ley line" explanation is favored, is that the area would tend to produce individuals naturally gifted in the magical arts (+1 to the level of effect of all spells cast, for instance). In any case, it would be obvious that something about the area makes these people different.

The Castle Keeper should also decide whether or not there is a tangible cause that can be investigated and uncovered by the players. Is the source of the vortex phenomena something the player characters could learn to harness at will? Is there a magical generator buried deep within an ancient dungeon causing the energy to extend from the area? Is the source an extraplanar portal? Is it something the player characters could deactivate? Or, should the area remain a source of mystery that "just is," a riddle that might never be solved?

Finally, for a twist, the Castle Keeper might decide that the energies have a long-term consequence. If the area provides intuitive magical skills to those born and raised there, perhaps there is a negative influence as well - a problem that player characters might be inspired to "solve." Are those

touched by the vortexes somehow physically weakened (-2 to strength or dexterity)? Are they more susceptible to magic (-2 to all saving throws vs. magical effects)? Does it have a slowly maddening effect on their psychological well-being (possible random insanity)?

It's easy to see why the mysteries around Sedona, Arizona can help inspire a very robust location in a campaign world.



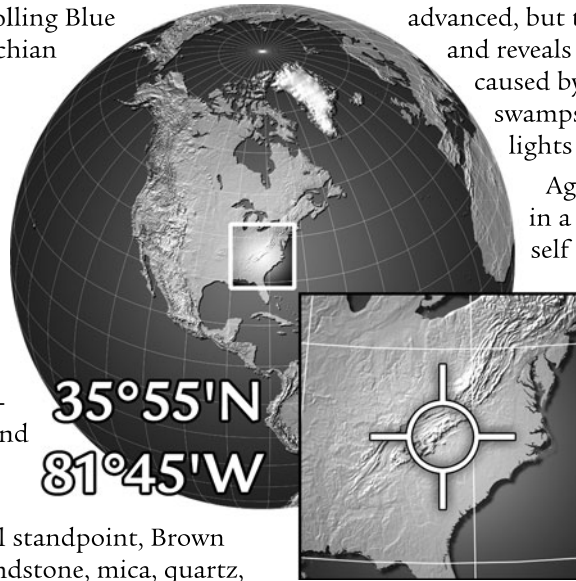
Cathedral Rock, Sedona, Arizona

Location: Brown Mountain, North Carolina, USA

Brown Mountain is a peak in the rolling Blue Ridge Mountains, part of the Appalachian chain. The mountain itself is rather ordinary in appearance, being rather flat with a somewhat higher area on one end. However, the strange light phenomenon that appears to race up the side of Brown Mountain and disappear over the top are anything but ordinary. Sometimes there are only a few, and sometimes there are hundreds, dancing and bobbing up the mountain. They happen more frequently in the fall, for some reason, and often appear after a rainfall.

Many attempts have been made to explain the lights. From a geophysical standpoint, Brown Mountain is composed of granite, sandstone, mica, quartz, iron and magnetite. Mica, quartz and magnetite are crystals, and quartz and magnetite have well known electrical or magnetic properties. Also, as part of a mountain chain, there are several well-known fault lines in the area. One theory is that the lights are plasma caused by water rushing around beneath the mountain and colliding with rock and mineral formations. This energy, along with the magnetic composition of the mountain, would cause the energy to be released in the form of light. While many scientists believe this is somewhat feasible, it doesn't explain why this phenomenon does not occur in other places with similar qualities.

While automobile lights, trains and reflections from nearby towns may all account for some of the lights witnessed on Brown Mountain, those potential causes do not satisfactorily explain accounts from Native Americans and settlers to the area that witnessed the lights before these technologies came into prevalence. The idea that the lights are St. Elmo's Fire has been



advanced, but that phenomenon is well understood and reveals itself differently. The lights cannot be caused by swamp gas, because there are no swamps in the area. So... what causes the lights on Brown Mountain?

Again, if you choose to use this location in a campaign, you will need to ask yourself a set of questions similar to those presented in the case of Sedona. What causes the lights to appear? Are they geophysical or supernatural in origin? If they are supernatural, are they spiritual energies from the deceased? Are they undead manifestations, summoned for some nefarious purpose, or assigned to protect a valuable object hidden beneath the mountain's skin?

Can the lights be encountered up close? Are they will-o'-wisp? Do they have combat or spell abilities of any kind? Are they considered harmful or benign? What happens to those touched by them?



Brown Mountain, North Carolina

One idea is that any creature approaching a huge, natural looking mantle-stone on the flat top of the mountain is subjected to a barrage of magical energy that serves as a warding against intrusion. In this case, it should be decided whether this applies only to sentient creatures, or if a deer or elk that is unfortunate enough to wander too close to the place would also fall victim to the energy. What might thwart the energy, and what does it guard?

On the other hand, perhaps the lights are just lights, and should remain mysterious. Not everything needs to be an adventure hook, and some things will always remain unexplained, especially in a world full of magic. You be the judge.

Location: Tunguska, Siberia, Russia

In 1908, an explosion leveled a forest in the Tunguska River valley area of Siberia. This swath of destruction enveloped an area of 2000 square kilometers, the size of Greater London, England. People as far as 70 kilometers away were knocked to the ground by the force of the shock-wave. At 500 kilometers, witnesses reported a loud bang and a blazing cloud in the distance. Seismic equipment picked up tremors caused by the blast wave as far distant as Germany and even the British Isles. The sky was unnaturally bright that night throughout Europe and western Siberia, and stayed that way for several weeks.

In 1930, a Soviet expedition searched the area. The area remained destroyed, even 22 years after the explosion. Within 40 kilometers of ground zero, all trees were uprooted and blown flat, except for those sheltered by the terrain. Trees within 18 kilometers were scorched black on the side facing the blast. The radius of tree destruction reached as far as 52 kilometers, however, there was a vigorous growth of young plant life retaking the area.

The expedition hypothesized that a meteorite was the cause of the explosion, but could not find a trace of a crater. The scientists excavated the earth beneath ground zero, searching for traces of a meteorite, but nothing was found. Some scientists believe that the meteorite was reduced completely into dust upon detonation. It is now thought that the blast was caused by a meteorite approximately 50 meters in diameter that exploded with the force of 15-30 megatons of TNT.

You might be thinking, sure, this is a huge explosion, but where's the mystery here?

There have been several biological consequences of the explosion that have not quite been explained. First, the growth rate of the biomass in and around the epicenter of the blast was highly accelerated, and this has continued since the event. There was an increase in the rate of biological mutations in the area and nearby, including in blood types of local nomadic peoples, a local ant species, and one species of pine tree.

Further, there are researchers that remain convinced that the cause was something other than a comet or meteorite explosion in the atmosphere. While evidence exists that supports the meteorite

theory, it is far from conclusive, and leaves plenty of room for speculation and ongoing investigation.

Now, here is a massive can of worms. As I was researching this event, it occurred to me that the explosion and subsequent biological mutations could explain the existence of a large number of fantastic creatures in a world with a magical influence. Perhaps not the tried-and-true creatures of mainstream fantasy, like unicorns or sphinxes, but certainly the presence of large, strangely evolved insect life, strangely formed humanoids with odd abilities, will-o'-wisps, creatures glowing with radioactive energy, predatory plants and many other possibilities. It also stands to reason that possible mineral deposits from such an event could be discovered and used for exceptional weapon creation or to empower magical items.

A creative Castle Keeper might even use such an event as the rationale for the entire state of the campaign world. Imagine a world, much like ours perhaps, that was impacted with a meteorite of such magnitude and composition that the fantastic grew out of the devastation and established a new reality. Imagine a young player character, completely unaware of the origin of many of the things, such as magic, that he or she might take for granted.

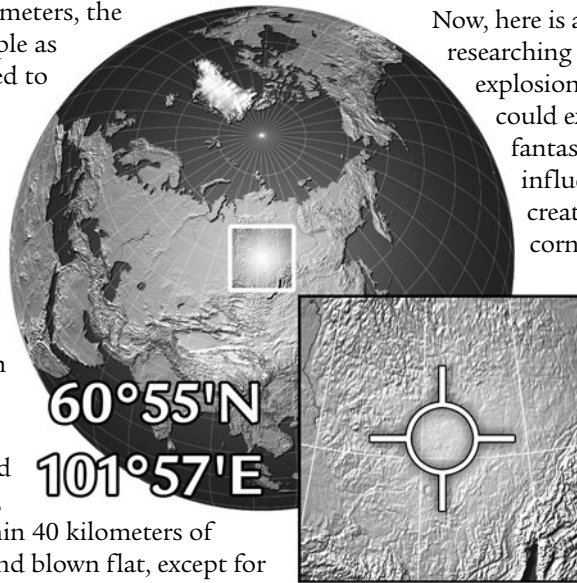
Even if such grandiose visions are not your cup of tea, an event like Tunguska could still inspire a localized area of your campaign world, allowing you to introduce weird and fresh creatures and occurrences. Such a region would add an interesting twist for experienced and novice players alike.

Other places you might research could include:

Oak Island, Nova Scotia, Canada - for a story of buried treasure that has yet to be uncovered, even with modern equipment.

The Lost City of Nan Madol, Pohnpei, Micronesia - for a story of ancient stonework and construction that defies explanation.

I encourage all Castle Keepers to spend some time researching those strange occurrences and places that remain the source of so much speculation and mystery, even in this age of sophisticated science.



*Fallen Trees, Tunguska
 (Photographed by Kulik Expedition, 1927)*



THE FORGE KING'S MALICE

FICTION BY STEPHEN CHENAULT

Listen now as I sing of bold deeds and heroes born, of Dolgan, son of Hirn, slave of Mithgefuhl. A song of the making of the Krummervole and the Mogrl and the naming of the Dark One in the deep places of the earth...

As other Dwarven Holds fell in the Goblin Wars or were lost in time, those of Grundlich Hohle, or Deep Halls in the tongues of men, delved ever deeper. Ruled by the kin of old King Fund, they plundered the deep places of the earth for their forges and made mighty things of great renown. Human Kingdoms came and went; yet the Dwarves took little heed. But in time the folk of Fund fell in number, and Angrod and his people took the mantle of Grundlich Hohle. When the Great War of Winter came, the King, Angrod's offspring, old now and bitter, closed his halls and buried them deep under mountain and stone. And the people under the mountain fell and declined. But at the last the Dark One came and unearthed them and made great war upon them. He unmade the doors and opened the deeps and slew the whole of Angrod's kin but a few.

But the Dwarves were fierce yet and hearty, and though they fled into the surrounding mountains they swore vengeance and eternal hatred to all of the Dark One's Folk. Here in the high wastes was Dolgan born and raised by his father Hirn, a distant child of King Fund's second son who too was named Fund. Dolgan took to the forge before he could walk, and as a child his skill surpassed all. The Wise Ones took notice and spoke of the prophecy of his birth and doom, that he must be the Forge of the Sword and in time remake the Halls of Grundlich Hohle.

Rumor of this came to the Dark, and ever fearful, he plotted to take the yearling dwarf, to bend him to his ill purpose or slay him outright. By guile and sorcery, Dolgan, a child still by dwarf reckoning, was taken to the grim holes beneath The Dark One's Halls and lost.

So by evil ways Dolgan, son of Hirn, with some few companions and friends of his youth, were stolen from the terrible heights of the Wustling Mountains. His brother, Margnan, younger by some few years, was with him and left the bright light of hills for the dark ways of the Underworld. Goblins and orcs most foul carried them to the pits of Rau, that fell city which Dolgan later called Mithgefuhl, which is the Land of Pity in the ancient dwarf.

And it was not known to him then, in his 43rd year, that the whole of his life but for its passing would be spent in those foul holes. He and his companions and brother were put to work in the mines and foundries and made slaves by

the orc chiefs and their kin. For years he labored. But in time the Troll Lord, a Wizard most foul, Mongroul, in the High Tongue's of man Nulak-Kiz-Din, found Dolgan and wondered upon him. He took him from the mines then and put him at the forge to see what he could see.

Taking up his slave's hammer, Dolgan's blows rang clear and hard, and precious metals he cast into form. Taken with the forge he lost memory of who or where he was. He worked and slaved over the burners and anvils, both their master and slave. He made a wondrous helm through his fashioning, and this would be the least of his creations, for Dolgan held his time, seeing that fell revolt now would mean his end and the end of his brother and his father's line, that line of Fund of old. And the Troll Lord watched him and saw not his hate, so mesmerized by Dolgan's fashioning was he. Mongroul commissioned him to craft a ring that he imbued with amazing power, and with the Wizard he ensorcelled the ring of iron.

And so it was for years without count that Dolgan worked as a slave to the forge. But too, as the tales recount, the forge was his great love, for his hands and heart were made to the craft, and only his mind bent towards war and revenge. So he worked and grew in skill, and in time of years far surpassing all those of reckoning, he was made Master of armaments and the fashioning of fortifications of the Dark Hole. He came to know every hole and fissure of those caverns. But at last through Dolgan's growing power and place in the underworld he came again to the attention of the Dark God.

Brought before that unclean God, Dolgan knew fear. Upon a throne of fear sat the beast. Great horns of the Devil rose as a crown from his brow, his skin glowed the sullen red of burned flesh, and he bore himself on the legs of a goat with cloven hoof. He saw through and knew Dolgan for what he was and bent himself to break him within. Great was the battle Dolgan bore in the black pit with the Dark as one sought to master the other.

In the deeps, Dolgan wrestled with Him and knew him in time as a power unspoken. The weight of the foul Beast's bore down upon him, and the terror of it was more than any mortal man could stand against. But Dolgan was no mortal man. He stood before the God straining mightily against his dark fate. And Dolgan did not break nor would he be sundered from the honor of his kith and kin. For lo, never before had a

THE FORGE KING'S MALICE

living Dwarven King bent knee lest it was cloven from beneath him. And Dolgan withstood the Dark and more, for he unearthed the Beast's name. He called him then, Unklar.

'I will not yield to you fell Unklar, nor to your sorcery! I know you now and I will not yield!'

Unklar saw then that upon the dwarf lay the curse of Doom and he named the dwarf anew.

Unklar named Dolgan, in his own Dark tongue, Ungekront, which is the 'uncrowned' and other of Unklar's servants called Dolgan Furchtlos, which is the 'undaunted'. And the Dark made him Lord then in his Manner and King over his Smiths, Master of the making of his machines of war and dread. Dolgan left the beast to the deep pits where lay his forge and fell in exhaustion and fear. He tore at his beard for he could not overcome the Dark one, Unklar.

In time he returned to his labors and worked hard in the dark places under the earth making dread things of unknown power.

The Black God could not be deceived however, and for want of fear Dolgan fashioned all tools well in those days

and made for the folk of Mithgefuhl things of such craftsmanship that he was lauded as the Greatest of the Worlds Smiths, and there was truth in those words. For these were the days of the great and powerful.

Dolgan had utter freedom of the Great Halls and ways of the Rau, and he made himself known and came to visit in wonder what he saw as the most marvelous of the creatures of the Dark's ill will. A man pinioned to the fortress walls, utterly un-aging and without hope of recourse. But ever did he defy the Dark and laugh at the Wizard, and he was reckoned a fearful source of power. Though it was not until after years that Dolgan learned of this man's fell purpose and power.

So he worked and fashioned such crafts as will not be seen by men or elves or dwarves again in the ages to come, and he made iron of his vengeance and steel of his hate and girded himself in silence preparing as if for war.

Beneath the halls of Mithgefuhl, he labored in pains of solitude. Upon a high day in his 400th year of life and his 357th of captivity, the great and terrible Dark Lord summoned him to his throne and bid him forge for Him an iron mace, and to adorn it with cruel spikes and sorceries. So he left away to the dark regions beneath Mithgefuhl, the pits wherein his stove and pipe and foundry lay, named dark Klarglich, the pit of

Woe, and he bid all leave until the task was

done. So great in the councils of the Dark had he grown that the hosts of Darkness followed his bidding.

And there in the dark solitude Dolgan bent iron and shaped the great weapon to meet the Dark One's lust for war, and he crafted the shape with magic held in the deeps themselves and released by the might of the Dark God. For twelve days he labored unceasingly, until his brow was weighted and frowned. But at last the task finished, Dolgan held up his greatest creation and was smitten with the love of it and desired it in his heart for it was made of the stuff of the earth and therefore separate from Unklar's

black soul. And he secretly named it in his ancient tongue, the

Krummervole, that is the 'Hand of Sorrow.' But Unklar came. Sensing the dwarf's lust, he took the mace from him and held it in on high, 'This cudgel of iron I name Urteil!' And it was the Mace of Judgement.

Though the Krummervole was taken from him, Dolgan was undaunted. He stole from Unklar a moment of his dark malice and with this he fashioned for himself the head of an axe of great weight and powerful sorceries. And he hid it away in the dark to be used when the time for his vengeance should come.

But lo, into Dolgan's dark hole came a light. A horse of such beauty and majesty that his heart was uplifted, for in its eyes he saw the light of the world when it was young and free of the black menace of madness and despair. And the mare bore upon her brow a crown of horn, singular and a full meter and more in length, pointed terribly so.



His eyes rested on her for a moment, and he saw in her death and demise, a weight as a great battle fought and won at terrible cost. Gently the mare laid herself upon the flagstones of his forge and bid the dwarf to come to her.

Then the unicorn spoke: "Dwarf Lord, reborn stone of your Fathers of Old, I bid you unmake that which the Dark has made...in me. Take from him that which I would keep for the good of the world but can no longer...for my life is at an end. I bid you take from me what you may and win for my undead spirit justice. Redemption. I beg..." And the mare passed from the halls in spirit, though her body still lay at Dolgan's feet.

He lay his work aside and took his axe from its hiding. And the unicorn was unmade and the dwarf's malice formed. For with the horn he fashioned a haft of unbreakable will and placed the axe upon it, and with magic of the Dark meant only for the Krummervole he made his weapon whole and knew it then as an article of war unequalled by any but the Mace of the Dark alone. He rejoiced in his creation and taking the hide of the noble mare he made a shirt to protect him from harm and mounted the tail upon a great helm he fashioned, and in this way Dolgan was outfitted for war.

Dolgan brooded in the dark for the space of many years after the making of the Krummervole and the fashioning of his axe, all the while forging weapons of ill purpose and wonder. But in time there was great unrest in Mithgefuhr, and Unklar was roused into a rage of black despair. Dolgan learned that the High Walls ornament, the crucified human who was the plaything of Mongroul, the Troll Lord, had made good his escape and fled into the wilds of the West. There was threat of war.

Rumors came to him, ever in the dark at his forge. Rumors of war and vengeance, deeds great and terrible - and death. But the Dark Will was roused, and He came himself to deep Klarglich with intent and desire. His cloven hooves grinding the stone of the forge as he crept into the Hall, and so great was the Power of Unklar that Dolgan's servants died in screaming madness or fled in terror, lost to the deep places under the world. The blood of His skin burned hotter by far than any flames of any forge and His eyes, terrible in evil, turned into Dolgan. His voice, deep with echoes of madness and memories rank and foul thundered forth: 'DOLGAN, MAKE TO YOUR BELLOWS AND DO AS I BID!'

The dwarf and the Dark labored long and hard in that fell place. The pit doubly earned its name of woe. He forged, with sorcery and magic, with spells crafted in a time before time, great Beasts of the Pit. He made them from His own twisted soul and from the stuff of dark places of the world and gifted them with life.

His face was torn with the effort of childbirth, and His pain-filled cries brought forth a dark never seen before or would ever be seen again. His agony was their life, and they were pure in malice with no thoughts but thoughts of evil and madness and chaos.

They were terrible to behold and Dolgan knew fear as he had when he wrestled with the Black God himself. Their coming was a weighty thing in the world, and Unklar named them

Mogrl, and they were demons of horror. And the Mogrl rose one by one and lifted themselves from the halls and strode forth into the world.

The God sagged in exhaustion and wandered from the hall muttering that a time of war had come to the world. Unklar rose high and laughed, shaking the Krummervole in his mighty grasp so that it split the high roofs and walls of Mithgefuhr and turning he said, 'Dolgan. Make ready for war. The time of doom is at hand.'

'Doom, master? Your words ring true.' Taking up his helm and shirt he donned them and took a mighty shield from the walls and picked up the huge axe of his malice. 'Thy doom, master, thy doom is at hand!'

His fierce cry tore the air as he leapt upon Unklar, cleaving a mighty blow to the Beast's thigh. Black blood gushed from the wound, the foul ichor splattering Dolgan's face and beard. Unklar's howls rent the air and shook the caverns of the under-deep. And Dolgan clove again, his axe biting to the bone, washing the ground in hot, thick blood. Pressing his attack with lust for vengeance, Dolgan drove Unklar to fall back into the deeps of Klarglich.

But Unklar was as strong as His heart was black and He withstood the mighty blows and gathered himself behind His own mace, Urteil. With shouted rage He drove the mace down upon Dolgan's shield with such force that the unholy iron bent and crumpled beneath the blow. The Dwarf King's arm was numbed and shook.

The clanging echo of the mace on shield brought a host of minions from their dark hiding and they clustered about to witness the rebellion.

Unklar drove his attack with pressing fury, and Dolgan was hard put to fend off the blows with his shield and axe. But his mane of unicorn tail flowed behind him, and his shirt fended off the claws of the Dark One and the haft of his axe glowed in the dim chamber. The ringing sounds of their battle echoed in the far deeps under the world. The iron-studded mace crashing into the shield, sparks scattering from each blow; Dolgan returning each blow with a mighty stroke, his axe cleaving Unklar's scaly hide. Dolgan's muscles were soon tired and swollen from this great effort, but still he pressed the attack and Unklar became dismayed for never had one stood against him for so long.

They danced an eerie dance, the demon and the dwarf, in that dark hole. Their forms were as shadows to the flames of the great forge. The web of steel and iron they wove was a magical thing and the sound of it were as music in those dim halls. And the battle carried on for hours without count.

But Unklar was a Lord of the underworld and was crafty and strong. He did not feel the exertion as the Dwarven Lord did and he did not fear the little death of exhaustion. So he pressed his attack, rising at times into the air and crashing down again upon the dwarf's back and shield, beating him to the floor.

After one such attack, Dolgan, staggering back, tossed the twisted remnants of his shield aside. Taking the axe in both

THE FORGE KING'S MALICE

hands he cursed Unklar. And the Dark One turned on him and laughed for he could see the end of his foe in his sweat and blood.

On sudden Dolgan struck. And such was the speed of the stroke that Unklar was caught unawares. The blow was a mighty one and clove Unklar in the chest, and he fell back from the weight of the attack and his own pain. But he struck Dolgan a great backhanded blow and sent him sprawling.

Dolgan pulled himself up, staggered and, at last, fell to the floor. Bright blood flowed from numerous cuts and scraps, and his shield arm hung limp in the soil and blood on the ground.

Unklar towered above him, his hide burning red, his great chest heaving for breath and his muscles swollen from the effort of the titanic struggle. And he laughed. He lifted his horned head to the smoky caverns above and laughed. Around him swirled the smoke of the forge and the silken cloaks of his office and he held grim Urteil aloft and shook it to his laughter.

At last he turned and looked down upon Dolgan with hate and rage.

But his victory was stolen from him as the dwarf spoke.

"I am Dolgan, Hirn's son, son of Fund of old. And I will not die at your hand!" He leapt then with the last of his strength, his axe singing in the air about it, as Dolgan once again hew with both hands at Unklar's chest. The blade cut flesh, while sinewy muscle was torn at its passage and more black blood splattered the ground. The tip of the haft, the unicorn's horn, broke free and lodged in Unklar's chest and burned him with a fire hotter than his own evil hate.

Unklar's rage and pain rent the air and split the caverns above. He clutched the bitter wound. With one sweeping blow He drove Urteil against Dolgan and utterly broke the dwarf. His bones shattered and his head cracked open. Blood, red and fierce, splattered the chamber floor and the Dwarven Lord slumped against the wall into which he had crashed.

Clutching the wound, Unklar staggered from the hall, His pain wracked shouts and cries driving the greater part of His folk into hiding for fear of death.

The pride of Unklar was unmade in that battle and the folk of His who were slaves knew some little hope.

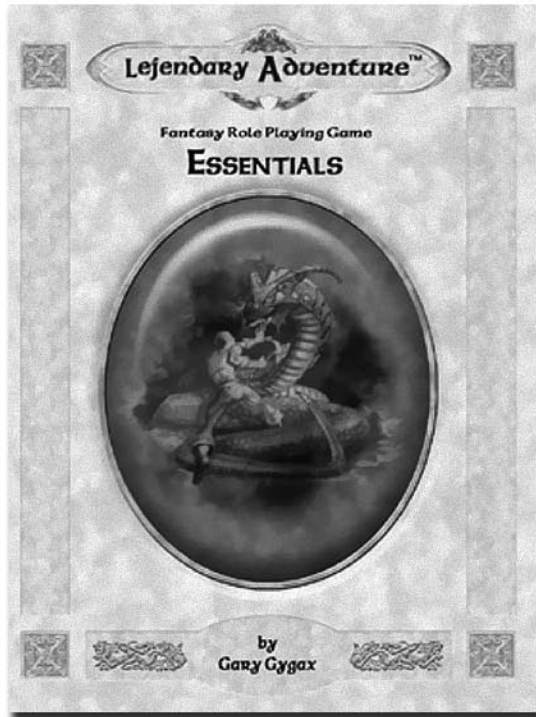


Of Dolgan, this tale here ends. But know you that a host of his servants and companions took up his broken body and bore it into the deep places of the Fortress. Those places not even Unklar knew, and they hid him there and healed him. So that there, in the dark, Dolgan rose again, rose to lead a rebellion against the evil and chaos of Unklar. But those tales are for another day.



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Legendary Adventure™ Fables of Legend

Legendary Adventure game people, places and things: that's what this column is about. Here we will feature intriguing Non-Avatar Characters (NACs), adventure locales, fell creatures and extraordinary items too. We'll begin with a cursed magician specializing in dealing with death and the dead, one who looked beyond the mundane world and was changed forever by what he saw...

"My ambition is to search out life's meaning and cause!" So spoke the student Cirvicar fully eight decades past. The intervening years have taken him down disquieting paths but he has trod them without fear. If the journey has changed him he does not care. What is knowledge worth unless it comes at a price? The lean, fit, bright-eyed student of yesterday is long gone, replaced by a brooding semblance of a man: corpulent, grey skinned, with oddly elongated yellow teeth and eyes a soulless black. Standing only a little over five feet tall, Cirvicar shuffles rather than walks, always stooped forward, born down by a prominent hunchback. His head is misshapen, bulging out on the right side where worm-like veins are visible. Attempting to hide his deformities beneath a hooded robe, he draws his hands up into its voluminous sleeves, one hand is large and paw-like while the other is spindly but tipped with claws. A faint smell of flowers lingers about him, an aftereffect of the baleful ointment that caused his affliction.

CIRVICAR

AN AUGUR (NECROURGE)

ORDER AVATAR:

H: 127 P: 28 S: 6/19

Abilities: Arcana 103, Alchemia 64, Chivalry 33, Enchantment 29, Evaluation 44, Learning 74, Luck 66, Necrourgy 144, Pantology 57, Physique 83, Pretense 39, Scrutiny 27, Tricks 31, Urbane 38, Waylaying 33, Weapons 44 (50).

Attack: Talons for 2-16 preternatural Harm bypassing normal protection, bite for 1-6 preternatural Harm plus vampiric drain of 1-4 Health per ABC of contact bypassing normal protection, plus roll under current Health or contract blood poisoning that causes the loss of 1-6 Health per hour, all at +17 Harm due to Abilities possessed.

Defense: Preternatural energy conveys a constant 13-point protection, plus a preternatural pendant of protection for 5 and a shielding ring for 3 vs. up to two opponents for a total of 21 points of preternatural armor.

Vulnerability: Suffers 1-4 Harm per ABC of exposure to sunlight.

Powers (104 AEP):

Necrourgy: Become Like a Restless Human Spirit, Bone Splinters, Charnel Heap, Cloak in Shadows, Dominant Shadow, Encrypting Ring, Hidden Soul, Ritual of the Living Death, Ritual of the Unhallowed Spirit, Shadow Bolts, Spell of Calling Restless Human Spirits, Spell of Commanding Restless Human Spirits, Spell of Creating the Free-willed Living Dead, Spell of Creating the Unwilled Living Dead, Talk with Shadows, Touch the Weave, Treat with Cunning Living Dead, Treat with Supernatural Spirit

Enchantment: Disrupt Power, Ixgat's Doorman, Sense Power

As a student in the city of Hocvincius, capital of the Rhomilian Empire, Cirvicar applied himself to the study of anatomy. However neither lecture hall nor dissecting table held the answers to the metaphysical questions that plagued his mind. Leaving that great city, he journeyed to Egypt where he learned to brew the Balm of Anubis, a fluid intended to anoint the dead. In applying it to his own body, he gained the curse of eternal un-life. Viewing the transformation as a setback to be reversed when the opportunity arose he plumbed the depths of black knowledge, visiting the hidden places of Varan and Apphir. If he encountered depraved initiates he would, after learning all he could, destroy them for he still considers himself a good man. He now holds the most eminent rank in the dark society of Augurs, that of Abyssal Warlock. Maintaining his existence requires human blood, but he aims to kill only the "wretched and useless", beggars, thieves and their ilk. He reasons that it is a "justifiable sacrifice for the enrichment of mankind's knowledge," a sentiment his victims are unlikely to share.

JON CREFFIELD

is the author of the Legendary Adventure module They Who Watch and Project Manager of the Zagyg City Books.

CASTLES & CRUSADES

ONE NIGHT STANDS

ADVENTURES BY BILL WEBB

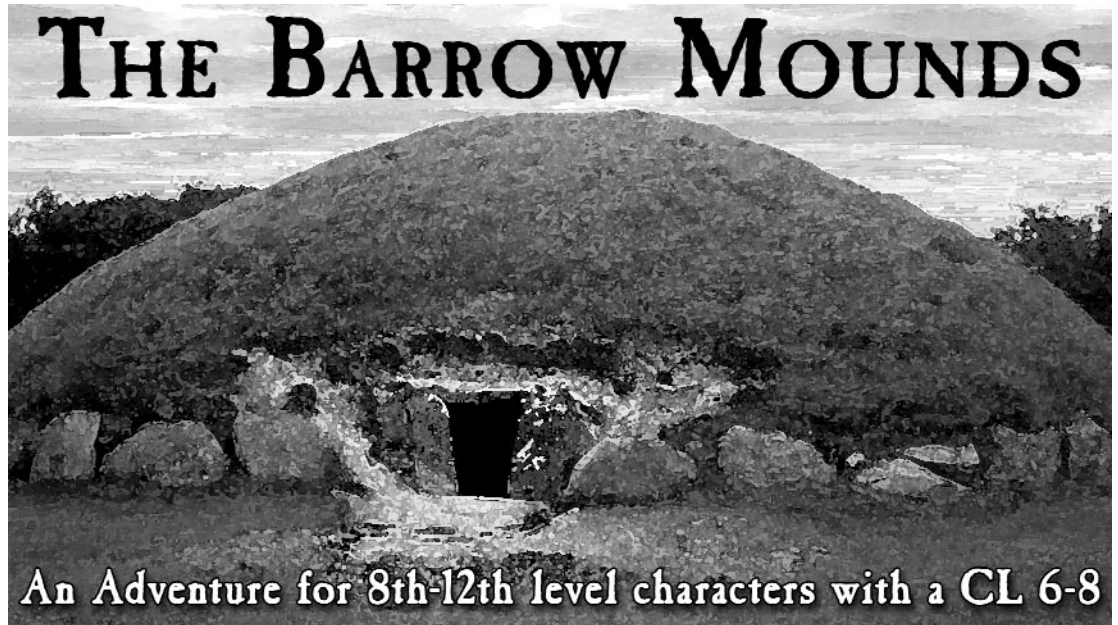
Introduction from the Author:

What you hold in your hands is the first of several in our *One Night Stands* collections for *Castles and Crusades*. These books are intended to serve as a resource for you, the Castle Keeper, in supplementing and filling out your own adventures. This text contains several short adventures, each intended to act as a “drop in” to be used as a side adventure to your regular session. This type of material is particularly useful when the players turn right down a tunnel instead of following the breadcrumbs you left for them down the left passage. Likewise, *One Night Stands* can be used to fill out areas that you have not yet detailed, as side adventures during those tedious periods of overland travel, or as short adventures on the fly when you haven’t had time to prepare for a session. Each adventure is designed to take no more than a couple of hours to play.



BILL WEBB

*is the co-founder and
co-owner of the
award-winning
NECROMANCER GAMES.*



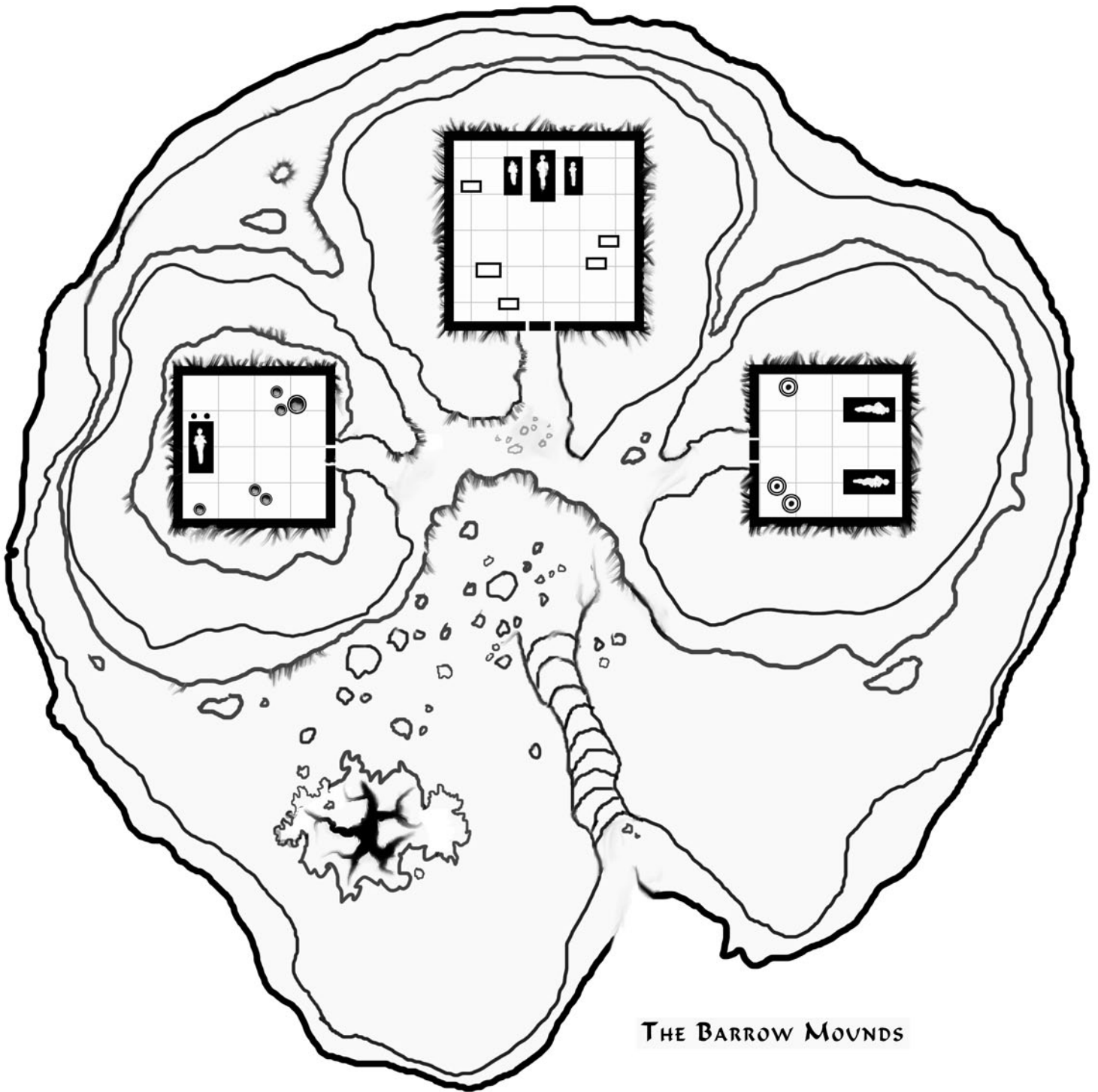
The players find a stone-paved path leading up a small hill, atop which are three mounds. If searched, a successful intelligence check (CL 8) reveals that each mound has a door leaning at 30 degrees to the flat top of the mound. The doors are located about 2 feet above the ground surface, and are obscured with dirt and moss. The doors have no keyholes, and open out. Above each mound, hidden behind the vines and written in strange magical writing (requires a *read magic* spell to decrypt), is the following:

“Disturb not the rest of the king, lest your souls be taken as repentance.”

The soil cover over the mounds is 8 feet thick, and ends in a cut stone building. Digging through from the top would take

weeks of hard labor, but could be managed by creative adventurers. It is far more likely that egress into the barrows will be made by the doors. The mounds themselves are over 20 feet high, and covered with evil, twisted looking vines and brambles. The stone doors are slightly cold to the touch, and partially covered with moss. If the moss is scraped free from the center door, a *symbol of fear* is revealed.

The doors themselves are constructed of smooth stone, 2 feet thick and have no handholds. By digging around them and chipping away at the stone, players can break them free with a successful strength check (CL 6) if a pry bar or similar lever is used to pull them outwards.



THE BARROW MOUNDS

Small Mound #1

Inside is a small (20 ft. by 20 ft.) burial chamber. The chamber is constructed of cut stone faced with plaster. Old weapons, personal effects, husks and decayed baskets of food lay strewn about. On a stone slab in the rear of the room lies the skeleton of an ancient warrior wearing a suit of rusted and decayed chainmail. A large steel shield is strapped to its bony arm, an axe is on its belt and a broken longsword lies 10 feet in front of the slab. Two painted clay urns lay near the head of the warrior, and around his neck hangs a gleaming necklace of silver and gold inset with a gemstone. The urns

contain dried herbs and spices. If burned, this blend of dried plants causes hallucinations in anyone breathing the smoke. A successful constitution check (CL 6) avoids this for anyone within 10 feet. A failed save is treated as a *confusion* spell, with a 10 minute duration. The urns are worth 20sp each and the necklace (a symbol of fealty to the king) is worth 1,100sp. There is nothing else of value in the chamber.

Murals on the walls depict the warrior performing heroic deeds in various acts of combat. Strange hieroglyphs of a bygone age are scribed in multi-hued colors detailing the exploits of the warrior.

Small Mound #2

Inside is a small (20 ft. by 20 ft.) burial chamber. The chamber is constructed of cut stone faced with plaster. Old weapons, personal effects, husks and decayed baskets of food lay strewn about. On a pair of stone slabs in the rear of the room lie the skeletons of two ancient warriors, each wearing a suit of rusted and decayed chainmail. Each has a sword on its belt, and a long spear lies nearby. Four electrum urns lay near the head of one warrior, and around each neck hangs a gleaming necklace of silver and gold inset with a gemstone. The urns are worth 2000sp each and each necklace (a symbol of fealty to the king) is worth 1,100sp. There is nothing else of value in the chamber.

Murals on the walls depict warriors performing heroic deeds in various acts of combat. Strange hieroglyphs of a bygone age are scribed in multi-hued colors detailing the exploits of the warriors. Two of the paintings hide a terrible secret...each contains the remains of an undead warrior cast into the plaster. If the plaster is broken before they animate, the mummified remains of each can be found. Nothing appears to happen for two minutes after the door is opened.

Two minutes after the door is breached, the undead remains of the warriors buried here claw their way out of the plaster walls with a dreadful moaning sound. During the 10 seconds it takes to rip their way free, they may be attacked with a +4 bonus. These creatures are known as *wet mummies*. The mummies attack all within 100 feet.

Wet Mummy

This creature's vital stats are HD 7d12, HP 56, 61, AC 20. Their primary attributes are physical. They attack with one slam for 1d12 points of damage. They can cause despair in victims as well as spread mummy rot upon a successful hit. Unlike normal these mummies are resistant to fire and can sense living creatures with a 100 foot radius.

Large Mound

Within this 30 ft. by 30 ft. chamber, at the far end stands a four foot-high marble platform flanked by two lower platforms and on which rest three skeletons. Two of the skeletons—on the lower platforms—are similar in dress and adornment to the skeletons found in the smaller mounds. The third skeleton, atop the tallest platform, is over seven feet tall, dressed in full plate, and wearing a gleaming crown. The chamber also contains several chests, various rotted items and old weapons. In the chests are 12,500cp, 3,500sp and 300gp. In a secret compartment (intelligence check, CL 8) in the largest platform is a *rod of resurrection* with 8 charges (three charges kills the barrow wight), and a *gem of seeing* (six uses).

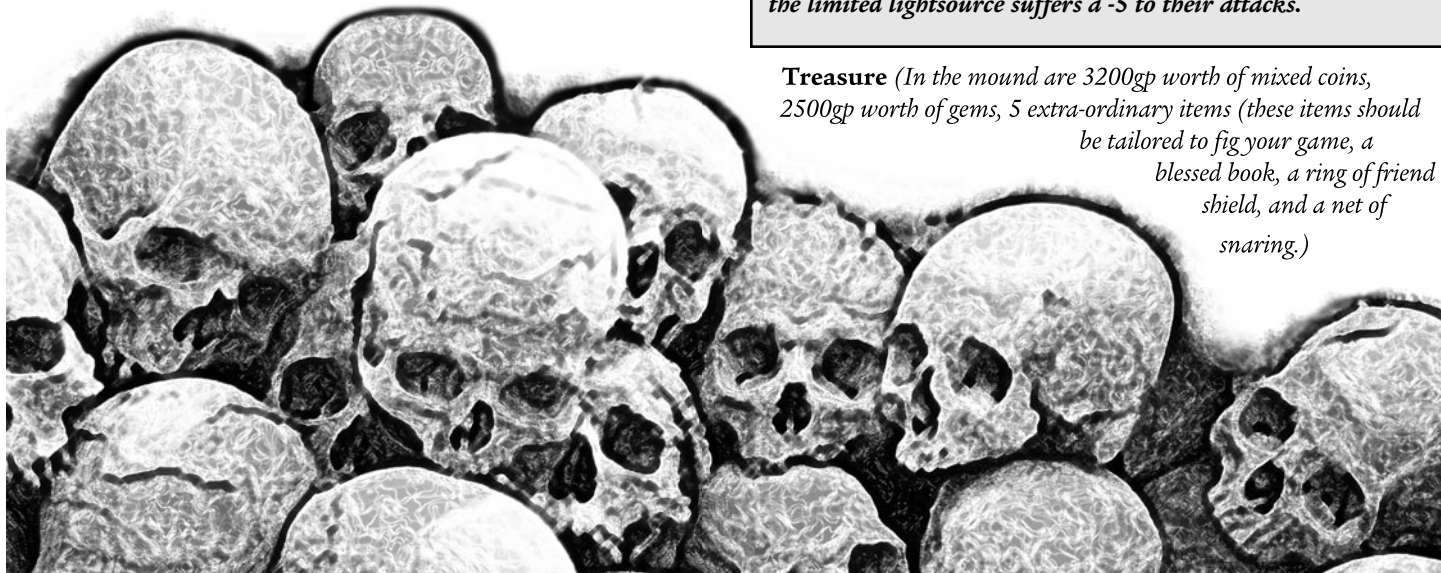
Once the door to the mound is opened, the Castle Keeper should begin counting to ten slowly and quietly. If anyone remains in the chamber by the end of his counting, both inside and outside the burial mound suddenly becomes very dark (the barrow wight's *radiate darkness* ability). Outside, the horses begin to panic, and an icy wind blows through the mound. The three skeletons then rise from their pedestals and advance on the player characters.

The two smaller wights are normal wights, except that they cannot be turned as long as the barrow wight remains intact and unturned. The barrow wight wields a greatsword that glows with an eerie blue light.

Barrow Wight

This creature's vital stats are HD 15d12, HP 105 and AC 23. Its primary attributes are physical. It attacks with a slam for 1d6+2 points of damage that causes energy drain or wields a +6 frostbrand bastard sword for 1d10+6 points of damage. Its special abilities include energy drain, it can create spawn as a vampire, regenerates 7 hit points per every level drained and a +4 on its turn resistance. Barrow wights have improved darkvision and can fight in the dark as if it were daylight. They also radiate darkness up to 100 feet radius that reduces light sources by 1/4. Anything moving or attacking outside the limited lightsource suffers a -5 to their attacks.

Treasure (In the mound are 3200gp worth of mixed coins, 2500gp worth of gems, 5 extra-ordinary items (these items should be tailored to fit your game, a blessed book, a ring of friend shield, and a net of snaring.)



THE CRYSTAL CAVE

Deep within the tunnel is a covered hole descending deep into the caverns below. A 4-foot square board, partially covered with sand, bits of rope, rusty metal and other cave detritus, hides the entrance itself.

Curiously, no stalactites are present over the area of the entrance. Broken off stubs litter the ceiling in a 10-foot long area, allowing the curious (wisdom check, CL 6) to notice that the area has been worked. The board is fairly stable, and can support up to 300 pounds without collapsing. If a creature heavier than this crosses the area, there is a 25% chance that the board will give way and collapse, dropping the unfortunate 120 feet into the cavern below (12d6 damage, dexterity check CL 8 avoids).

Once the entrance is cleared, it is a simple matter of fixing a rope and repelling down. As the entrance is in the cavern ceiling, climbing down without a rope would require a Herculean effort (CL 20) for this greater than vertical effort.

As soon as any descent into the depths of this cavern is begun, it is immediately obvious that this is no normal place. The walls and mineral deposits in the cave reflect light brilliantly due to the various crystal formations that fill the room. Literally hundreds of multi-hued formations in all colors of the rainbow lie scattered in this living cavern. In the northeast corner of the cave lies a 30-foot diameter pool of blue-tinted water. The pool is 20-feet deep, grading from a shallow east end to a deep west end. It is filled with broken sand and gravel sized pieces of crystal.

The crystals and minerals in the cave have some value, and can be harvested by clever adventurers. Each pound of material carefully removed (to preserve the beauty of the material) is worth 0-60sp (1d100-40). Anyone who is a skilled jeweler or alchemist can add 20 to their roll when determining value. Up to 50,000sp of material could be mined from this cave, taking several weeks in the process. A real entrance, however, is what lies on the floor of the pool, hidden beneath the colored sand.

An Adventure for mid to high level characters with a CL 4-6

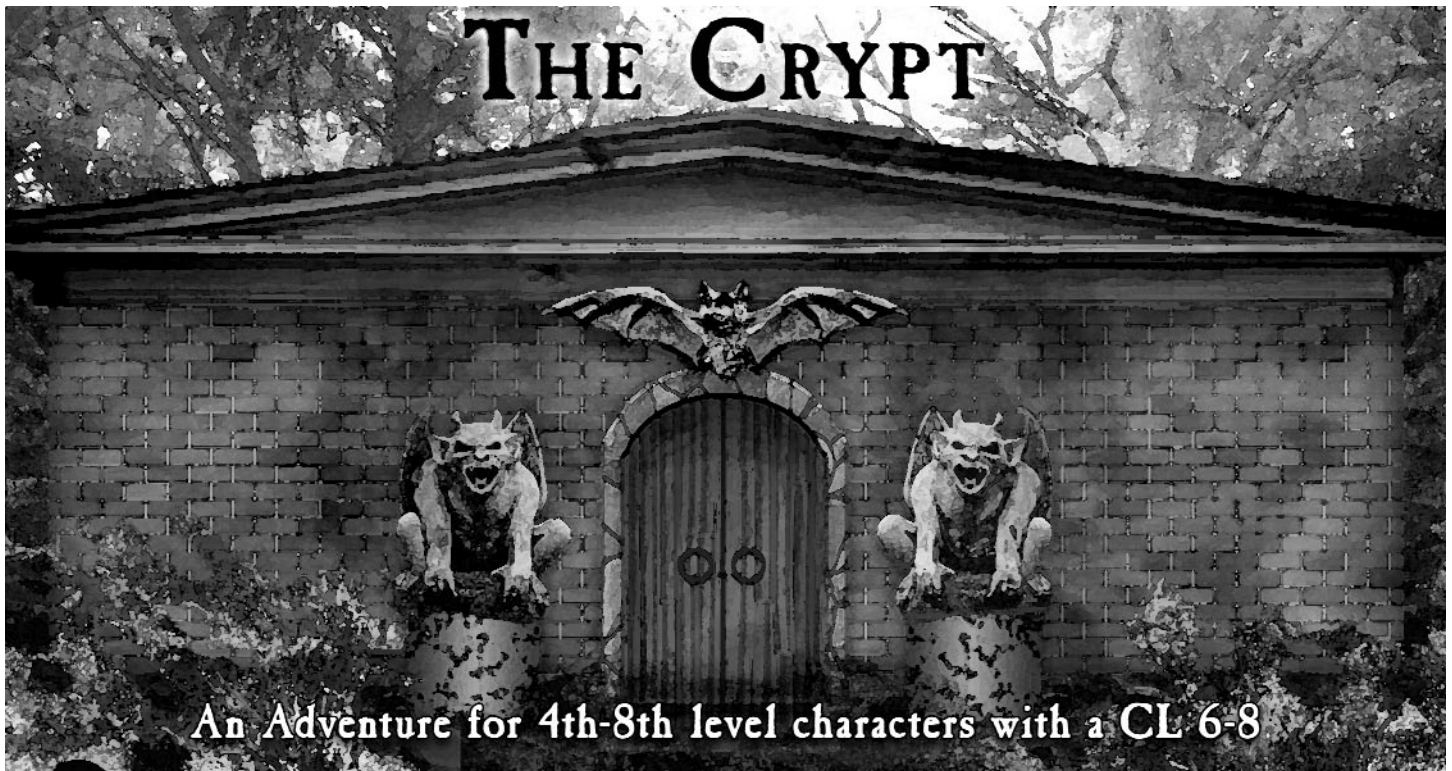
If the pool is carefully examined, and the shards of sand and gravel moved aside, an underwater staircase is revealed. There is no other way to spot the staircase other than moving material, as it is buried and not visible.

The staircase itself must be excavated in order to be accessed. This requires removal of a little over 14,000 pounds of wet (and worthless) sand and gravel from the cold, cold water. There is no easy way to do this, as anyone spending more than 10 minutes in the water will get hypothermic (-2 to all rolls, 1d4 of non-lethal cold damage per 10 minutes) unless magically protected by cold. Bear grease (or equivalent) will add 20 minutes to working time. Removal of the material requires 140-10 minute periods (1400 minutes). Once the bottom of the pool is excavated, the cold becomes the least of the adventurer's worries...

The stairs lead down to a reflective slab of crystal, a *mirror of life trapping*. Anyone gazing at the surface of the mirror must make a successful charisma save (CL 10) or have his or her soul trapped inside the mirror. This trap is made extra nasty, as the soulless husk that is their body is now 20 feet under water, and will immediately begin to drown.

There is no way that the mirror can be removed, however it can be broken if struck by a blunt object for 10 points of damage (the mirror absorbs the first 5 points from any blow due to its inherent hardness and the difficulty of swinging a blunt object under water). If broken, all souls trapped within are released (similar in effect to a *magic jar* spell). If no live bodies remain, the soul is killed.

Beneath the mirror is a rectangular box containing the calcified body of a long-dead wizard. The clothes, scroll and books that were buried with him are long since decayed, however the corpse itself still wears a *ring of spell storing*. It holds 7 levels of spells. Also inside the box near the feet of the mage is an ivory case containing a *wand of polymorph other* with 14 charges.

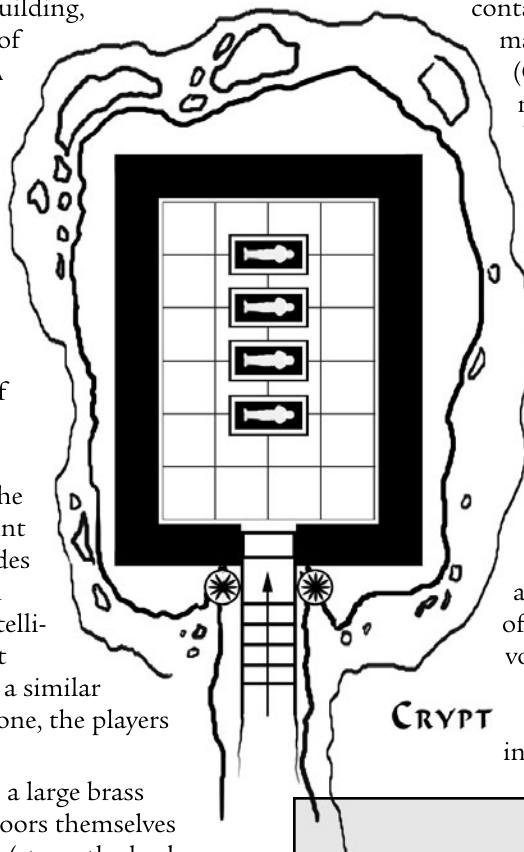


An Adventure for 4th-8th level characters with a CL 6-8

The crypt is a small, 30 x 20 x 6 foot building, set into the moist earth such that the roof stands only five feet above the ground. A set of dirty and broken stone steps leads down to a pair of double doors, the only entrance. Bits of bone and dead leaves litter the stairs. The walls of the crypt are 4 feet thick and made of very dense, hard basalt. On either side of the doors stands a moss-covered stone pedestal, atop which rests a stone gargoyle. The crypt radiates a low-level evil aura and a moderate necromantic aura if magic is used to detect such things.

A large, stone vampire bat's image is carved over the center of the doorway. The bat's mouth is hollow, and a cold pinpoint cylindrical tube, 12 inches inside protrudes barely a quarter inch from the stone and can be felt if a careful search is made (intelligence check, CL 8 to locate). If located, it could be plugged by clever use of wax or a similar substance (*disable traps*, CL 4). If this is done, the players can avoid a nasty exit from this crypt.

The doors of the crypt are locked with a large brass fitted mechanism (*open lock*, CL6). The doors themselves are lined with iron, and are very difficult (strength check, CL 12) to break down. The hinges reside on the interior of the crypt. Three rounds after the crypt is entered, a dense fog of pure negative energy begins to spill forth from the bat's mouth completely obscuring the exit. This fog causes a terrible effect if it touches any exposed skin. Two rounds after



contact, each person touched by the fog must make a successful constitution based save (CL 10) or gain 1d6 negative levels. Plate mail and other heavy armor allows a +4 bonus on the save, however, unless a player states that he is totally covering up to prevent contact (even cloth will work), this effect cannot be avoided... a better means would be to plug the tube in the bat's mouth to begin with.

Within the crypt are 4 biers upon which rest the desiccated bodies of four humans. They appear to have been dead for several years, though the charnel smell of decay and incense still linger here. The biers are four feet in height, each standing but two feet below the ceiling of the crypt. Six rounds after the crypt is entered, or if the remains of any of the corpses are disturbed, a black void will begin to spew from the skeletal mouths of the bodies. Each of these forms itself as a wraith in but one round.

Wraiths

These creature's vital stats are HD 5d12, HP 25, 28, 32, 33, AC 15. Their primary attributes are mental. They attack with an incorporeal touch for 1d6 points of damage and possible energy drain. Their special abilities include energy drain, create spawn, powerlessness and unnatural aura.

The wraiths attempt to drive players towards and through the fog. They then follow (wraiths are unaffected by the fog, of course).

Each of the stone platforms is covered by a loose stone slab (effectively a lid placed on top of it). This “lid” may be removed by a character making a successful strength check (CL 6). Three of the platforms are simply stone blocks, and are of no further interest. The platform in the northwestern corner of the map contains a hidden secret. If the surface of the slab is carefully inspected, a small, circular raised area about a quarter inch in diameter can be located about two feet from the southern edge. Careful feeling is the only way it can be located, as it protrudes a mere 2-3 millimeters above the flat stone. If pushed, it does nothing. Depressing this “button” requires it to be forced down, using a hammer and nail (dagger tip, sharp spike, etc.). No test is necessary if the proper approach is used.

If the button is depressed, the fog stops pouring from the bat’s mouth, and a 3-foot square pit opens in the floor of the crypt. The pit lid is one-foot thick and locked with a stone slab, and thus cannot be detected by normal means. This pit drops a mere 3 feet into the earth below, revealing the treasure.

Within the pit are a silver necklace encrusted with gems, two small bars of mithril, a black, semi-see-through robe, and two halves of a cloven breastplate of solid black metal. The necklace is mundane, though quite valuable. It consists of interlocking rings that form a complex puzzle when stacked and twisted in the correct order. The whole forms a shape of a pyramid when assembled. Figuring out the puzzle requires an Intelligence check (CL 6). The value of the necklace is 300sp as a necklace, though it is worth double that if its curious nature is discovered. The blocks of mithril each weigh 2 pounds (32 coins each). The gossamer robe is woven of pure spider silk, and while mundane, is incredibly resistant to cutting. This robe grants the wearer a 50% damage resistance to all slashing attacks. The only drawback is that should the wearer ever fail a saving throw against a fire-based effect while wearing it, the robe will be destroyed. It offers no protection to blunt or piercing attacks. The real treasure, however, is the sundered breastplate.

Strange runes and etchings are present on the metal skin of the breastplate, and the left half contains a large red gem (ruby, worth 2000gp) right at the spot where one’s heart

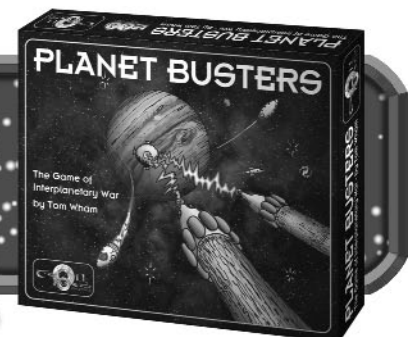


would be. If the two are joined, a brilliant light flashes through the area (40 feet radius), blinding all within the flare for 2d6 rounds unless a dexterity save (CL 4) is made, and welding the two halves together. This armor serves as a +2 *breastplate*, with the added features of adding 10 feet to the movement rate of the wearer, and allowing the wearer to activate a *jump* spell once per day with a 6 round duration (CL 6).

Ever felt like blowing up the Earth?

Of course you have.

Well, DO IT. We dare you.



The Aihrdian Chronicles
Plumes Upon The Blue
Fiction by Stephen Chenault

Meltowg lay in his own ruin. His armor rent and torn, his shield battered. He lay in the mire of the swamps at the foot of fell Aufstrag and watched as rivers of his own blood trickled from beneath him, gathering in a blackish pool and running down a small cleft in the earth to mingle with the murky cold waters of the marshland. He watched in fascination, as his life seemed to spend itself upon the useless wet of the swamp. He thought then of Londea, his princess, his love, his commander...

She had stood with him at Blue Creek, but left before the battle began, for the orc lord Guthlaugr had led two armies into the Ohd and Londea brought the great part of the elves against the northern column. She had not seen him slay the giants nor route the folk and only rumors came to him of her battle with the dragons and the greater host of the orcs. Two huge black dragons had fallen to her archers and he heard that she led her spearman against the orcs. She wore armor of gold, fashioned by dwarfs of Norgorad Kam in happier times. Her plume was white and rode the back of her helm like a gentle pony's tale. She always fought with a long sword and axe, both crafted of magical metals in the world's dawn, gifts from her mother the Elven Queen.

Londea was proud and beautiful and a warrior to meet any other. She was long and lean, with golden-red hair that flowed from beneath her helm and curled about her in writhing protest. She did not relish fighting, but she would yield no ground, even when the battle seemed lost. Few could withstand her rage for in it her beauty shone like white-hot fire and burned those near her with fear so that more often than not they fled. He knew she fought thus and feared for her, for there was true power in Aufstrag and it feared nothing but its grim horned master. He instructed her knights to always remain close by and to keep her safe at the cost of their own lives.

When the battles were over and Guthlaugr withdrew his armies, the Ohd was in ruin. Few survived, and those that did fled to hidden places to live lives not meant for a noble elf. Meltowg searched high and low for his princess but he could find only distant rumors. She had fought the dragons and her guard and driven the orc army back in disarray. With victory complete, she pulled back into the hills to rally her forces, only to learn of their crippled condition. Her proud guard was destroyed, wounded or dead, and her army wasted away

from hundreds of warriors to scores. She disbanded them, instructing them to go to the hidden places and heal, and to gather again in six months time. A place was chosen and the time set. And they fled into the hills.

Londea took 12 warriors with her, the best archers and most loyal spearman. They had moved south, this Meltowg knew for certain. They crossed the Mistbane River south of Petersboro at Merric's Forde and entered into the Darkenfold, seeking shelter or aid or something else. Meltowg left her trail, knowing that she would be safe in the bosom of that wood for it was ever a place of shelter for the elves. That had been his mistake. He should have hunted her down and made certain of her safety for then he could have watched over her.

She returned several months later, a few scant weeks before the muster was to occur. She was seen at the Blue Creek crossing, where she planted winter lilies upon the graves of the fallen elves and her and her guard moved on into the Shelves. That was the last she was ever seen. Her guard vanished with her and no trace could be found. For years many thought she had fled to Shindolay. But no one who knew her would ever believe such a travesty and Meltowg suspected it was a lie spread by the agents of the foul one that now commanded in Du Guesilon.

It was only years later that he came upon one who had rumor of her last moments. A chance encounter at a tavern on the Southernway just north of the Darkenfold brought him into contact with an old and infirm human who bore with him a plume of white, bound to his walking stick. It was Londea's plume without a doubt, so Meltowg questioned him, who had served with Guthlaugr in the Seven Years War. He was a ranger and tracked the wastes of the Shelves even after the war was over. He hunted the elves of those hills for their scalps brought good money in Du Guesilon.

Meltowg shuttered at the memory, more from rage than ought else. The human was a hunter of his kin and bore a staff upon which were carved 17 marks, one each for the elves he had slain. Some of these were half marks, for he hunted children as well. The Elven Prince remembered that foul day and how he choked back his rage to hear the human mouth his story.

While hunting, he had come upon a defile through which a clear, warm spring ran. He followed it for some distance, coming at last to a low overhang under which the water ran. It was warm, a magical place that defied the snowy cold of the shrouds in the sky. Long mosses grew like curtains from the overhang, blanketing a small, shallow cave. A mist filled the cave, but a strange mist for it would not go beyond the moss. He watched for a while until, to his amazement, the plume floated out, borne by the strong current



of the stream. It came to rest at his feet and he took it as a gift from the gods and he bore it ever after. Meltowg remembered the old man's proud face as he beheld the plume mounted on the stave. He remembered too the man's astonishment as Noxmorus plunged into his chest arresting his life. He rode away from that tavern, leaving all but a few of its inhabitants dead, and the place in flames. He bore the plume with him.

Like the wind he rode north and west into the Shelves searching for this defile. It was not hard to find, for Meltowg knew those lands well and he hunted out the warm springs. He stood before the place, the overhang where the moss still grew and watched for a great while. There were no signs of a battle but the mist was cold and bore the memory of some pain. It called to him and he entered the cave. He found their battered armor and weapons, those of his princess and the scattered shards of bones. He wept then, openly for his mind was torn for never had he believed, nor felt, Londea was dead, but felt rather that she lived but was in dire need of aid.

Long he wept and his soul withered still further. At last he gathered up armaments and carried them to the Blue Creek. The mist followed him and he thought that here was her spirit. With lamentations he laid the bones and her armor to rest amidst the winter lilies that grew upon the banks of the Blue Creek. But he took the plume and set it into the water and let the current carry it away. He watched as it spun down the wide creek, vanishing at last in a trickle of water that turned and jumped around a wide, flat stone.

The mist took shape, or it seemed, and followed the plume, skirting above the water, until at last, it too vanished into the distance. In the years that followed, the Blue Creek became patchy with fog. Small patches of mist gathered and followed the current into the south, the Darkenfold and on through Littly Fare and to the sea. The mists rarely dissipated but rather stayed aloft, above the river, moving slowly south, ever south until they were lost in the forest eves. In time the river was renamed the Mistbane River and was held to be a magical place where the elven spirits found refuge from the memory of their burnt corpses after the Seven Years War.

But this came later for Meltowg, for his journeys took him to the far flung corners of the world, and many adventures, to last arrive on the steps of Aufstrag, battered and bleeding in search of the Lady of Gilgum.

The Mistbane River

The Mistbane River's headwaters are in the far Rhodope Mountains where it begins as little more than a trickle. It tumbles and flows, following many courses through the Shelves of the Mist, where it gains more strength from tributaries and earns its river name. It breaks free of those hills just north and east of the small town of Petersboro and the Darkenfold. The river widens here and slows its pace considerably, drifting down beneath the eves of the Darkenfold where it continues its southern journey. The river is slow, ranges from 80-120 feet wide and is rather deep except in the few fords that breach its travel. The Mistbane's flow is often accompanied by patches of light or heavy fog, which reduce visibility considerably. The fog is considered by many of the locals to be dangerous and is avoided at all costs. They speak of tales of ghosts who snatch the unwary from their roosts and carry them to the seas beyond. The river continues its course through the Darkenfold by turning sharply west in the Millorian and passing through Lilly Fair, an even more dank and deadly portion of that horrible wood. It is eventually joined by the Westerling and then flows into the Bay of Brundus near the sandy beaches of Lawn. The banks of the Mistbane sport many wonderfully tall and full-bodied willow trees. These trees' often reside on small grassy knolls at the water's edge allowing their branches and leaves to brush the water. They are guardians of sorts, offering refuge from the river or the forest, or both.

The Mistbane is indeed a haunted river. From its course in the mountains it tumbles down in clear blue waters, hence its original name of Blue Creek. Deep in the Shelves of the Mist where the winter lilies grow, the river's nature changes. The winter lilies are often covered in a thick fog for here the dead gather on their journeys south. These are the spirits of the fallen, both of the great wars and those who live in modern times. The scars of the Winter Dark still haunt the elves of Aihilde and their fallen cannot come back to life. When they die, their spirits perish with them or wander as lost souls throughout the world. And here where the winter lilies grow, they gather for rumor of their princess Londea comes to them and they seek to follow her to the sea.

In patches great and small they travel the length of the Mistbane, following the river's course to the Bay of Brundus. They do not travel quickly and only the strongest winds can move them, but even then these patchy clouds of soul dust defy the wind, moving slower than one would think. Each patch contains 1-4 banshees, some are evil, some are good, and most are uncaring, seeking only to be reunited with their princess. They haunt the river all year long, and are often hidden in real patches of fog or river mist. Encountering these creatures can be deadly as any encounter with a banshee can, though the banshees rarely travel more than a dozen or so feet from the waters edge. Protection can be found in the shades of the Willow Trees that dot the bank of the Mistbane. Here the spirits of the dead will not go, for the Willow Trees hold a deeper appeal than that cast by their fallen princess - they fear them.

The Willow Trees are possessed of a powerful sleep magic. Those who find refuge under the eves of the Willow Trees are often taken by a great weariness and a desire to sleep. Once one lies down beneath the eves of a Willow, the tree casts a sleep spell upon them (CL 5 for a young tree, 10 for a middle aged tree and 20 for an ancient older tree). Those who fail, fall into a deep slumber and sleep for weeks, if not months. Once ensnared, the Willow casts hallucinatory terrain on the victim, hiding them from any prying eyes (the illusion possesses a CL as above). When the victim awakes, they are well rested and healed, possessing only a great hunger and thirst. The Willow does not do this from malice but rather to aid those in need. But being a tree, it thinks like a tree and takes little note of the time that may elapse when they snare someone. A Willow will ensnare groups of people, but if a Willow already has a victim (2 in 20 chance) then it will not try again and those who find refuge under their eves can rest unmolested. The banshees will not go beneath the willow eves, and the orcs of the region hate and fear the trees and avoid them always.

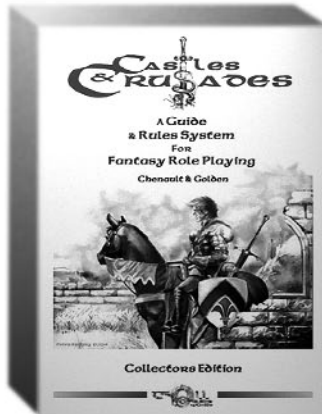


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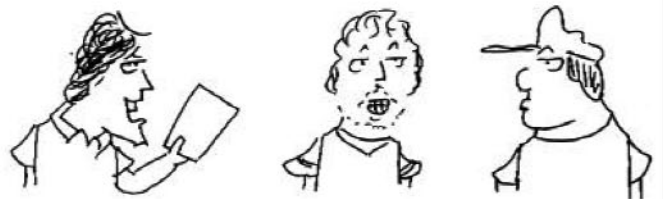


Fellowship of Foragers 02

OKAY, GUYS. HERE IS THE C&C SET I TOLD YOU ABOUT. NEAT! REMINDS ME A LOT OF A CERTAIN BOXED SET FROM MY RECKLESS YOUTH. CAN YOU REMEMBER THAT LONG AGO?



AND A SHEET OF HOUSE RULES FROM MY BINDER. I SEEM TO RECALL THAT YOU KEEP SOME STRANGE RULES AND MONSTERS IN THERE. OH, THE MEMORIES. I'D LOVE TO HEAR SOME OF THE STORIES OF THE "GOOD OLD DAYS."



MAYBE LATER... LET'S PLAY! ONCE WE WERE IN THE DUNGEONS OF THE VAMPIRE LORD AND TURNED THE STONE CEILINGS INTO GLASS! WOW!



FRIED ABOUT THIRTY VAMPIRES WHEN THE SUN CAME UP. TOO BAD THAT WHEN THEY DIED SO DID THEIR MAGIC THAT HELD UP THE CEILING. OOPS.



F i n a r v y n 2004

Auld Wyrnish

Wisdom from an Old Master by Mike Stewart



MIKE STEWART

became interested in roleplaying games in 1978, and has never looked back.

He is currently a post-graduate student of medieval history at the University of North Texas.

Multiclassing as Classes: Part 2

In Crusader #4's Auld Wyrnish, I introduced the concept of "Multiclassing as Classes" for Castles & Crusades. This is a method of combining classes into a new class rather than use cumbersome systems with averages, decimals, variable level advancements per class, and such like. The system is simple, with the xps already combined into the new class for ease of advancement and a uniform Hit Die.

The last article gave the details on the Mortis (Cleric/Assassin), the Crusader (Cleric/Fighter), the Templar (Fighter/Cleric/Wizard), the Mocker (Fighter/Illusionist) and the Charlatan (Wizard/Rogue). The below completes the list with other class combinations typical in traditional "Advanced" Fantasy RPGs that we love to play!

Note: Some of the below classes have been given special abilities a bit beyond simple combination of extant classes. These are specifically for class flavor and will be denoted by an asterisk () and can be ignored if the unadulterated class combinations are desired.*

INDEX OF CLASSES	
ORIGINAL MULTI-CLASS	COMBINED CLASS
Cleric/Wizard	Witch
Cleric-Ranger	Shaman
Cleric-Rogue	Hermit
Fighter-Assassin	Bounty Hunter
Fighter/Wizard	Warcaster
Fighter-Rogue	Brigand
Fighter/Wizard/Rogue	Scoundrel
Illusionist-Rogue	Mocker

BOUNTY HUNTER

Combination: Fighter/Assassin

Class Primes Strength and Dexterity

Hit Dice: D8

Typical

Races:

Humans, Half Elves and Half-Orcs

Armor

Allowed:

Studded Leather or less and Shield

Weapons

Allowed: Any

Alignments: Any non-good.

Abilities: As Assassin and Fighter of equal level. * Though not allowed Fighters Specialization, Bounty Hunters can Track as a Ranger of equal level. Also, they may only use the Assassination ability to render an opponent unconscious instead of killing them. If such is performed, a successful roll means that the target is unconscious for D4 rounds plus the level of the Bounty Hunter.

Base to Hit (BTH): As Fighter

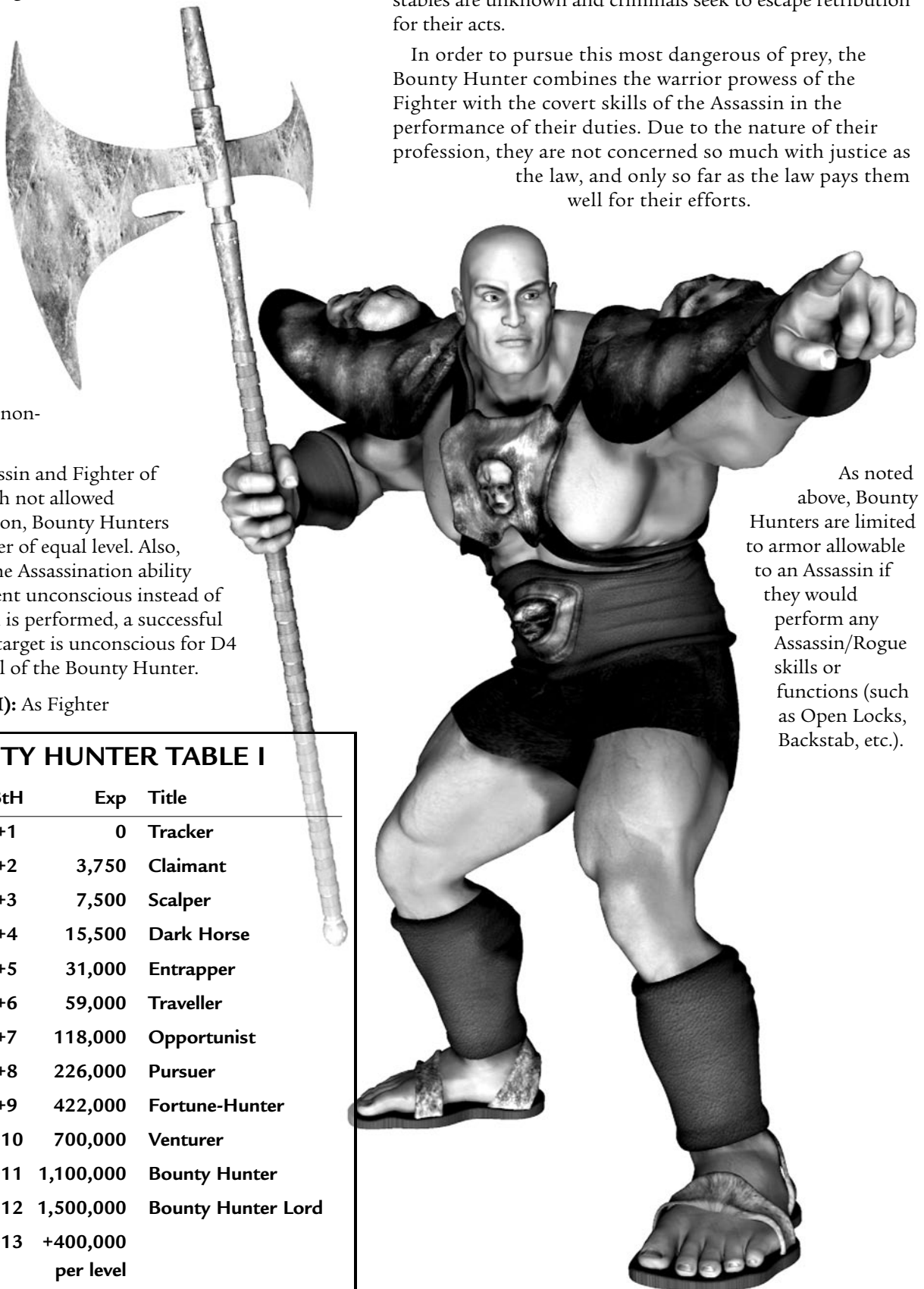
BOUNTY HUNTER TABLE I

Level	HD	BtH	Exp	Title
1	d8	+1	0	Tracker
2	2d8	+2	3,750	Claimant
3	3d8	+3	7,500	Scalper
4	4d8	+4	15,500	Dark Horse
5	5d8	+5	31,000	Entrapper
6	6d8	+6	59,000	Traveller
7	7d8	+7	118,000	Opportunist
8	8d8	+8	226,000	Pursuer
9	9d8	+9	422,000	Fortune-Hunter
10	10d8	+10	700,000	Venturer
11	+2 hp	+11	1,100,000	Bounty Hunter
12	+2 hp	+12	1,500,000	Bounty Hunter Lord
13+	+2 hp	+13	+400,000 per level	

In a world rife with banditry and the reach of the law is often all too short the Bounty Hunter finds themselves both needed and appreciated (if not loved) by the authorities of the realm. They wander the wild places of the world, where constables are unknown and criminals seek to escape retribution for their acts.

In order to pursue this most dangerous of prey, the Bounty Hunter combines the warrior prowess of the Fighter with the covert skills of the Assassin in the performance of their duties. Due to the nature of their profession, they are not concerned so much with justice as the law, and only so far as the law pays them well for their efforts.

As noted above, Bounty Hunters are limited to armor allowable to an Assassin if they would perform any Assassin/Rogue skills or functions (such as Open Locks, Backstab, etc.).



BRIGAND

Combination: Fighter/Rogue

Class Primes Strength and Dexterity

Hit Dice: D8

Typical Races: Any

Weapons Allowed: Any

Armor Allowed: Any, but armor stronger than Studded leather precludes use of Rogue Skills.

Alignments: No Lawfuls allowed

Abilities: As Fighter and Rogue of equal level. * Though not allowed Fighters Specialization, Brigands may Track as a Ranger of equal level.

Base to Hit (BTH): As Fighter

As civilization spreads throughout a land, trade and commerce are its lifeblood. For every merchant willing to stake all they own on goods and trade, there are those who long to take it away from them. The Brigand is an exceptional bandit, combining the capabilities of the Fighter and the Rogue in order to maximize their ability to extort and plunder. Usually found as leaders of Bandits, Brigands have a wealth of skills and talents to call upon to separate someone from their hard earned coin....willingly or not.

As noted above, Brigands are limited to armor allowable to a Rogue if they would perform any Rogue skills or functions (such as Open Locks, Backstab, etc.).

BRIGAND TABLE I

Level	HD	BtH	Exp	Title
1	d8	+1	0	Churl
2	2d8	+2	3,250	Villein
3	3d8	+3	6,500	Skulker
4	4d8	+4	14,500	Prowler
5	5d8	+5	29,000	Caser
6	6d8	+6	58,000	Bandit
7	7d8	+7	116,000	Highwayman
8	8d8	+8	216,000	Highwayman Lord
9	9d8	+9	392,000	Robber Baron
10	10d8	+10	675,000	Brigand
11	+2 hp	+11	1,075,000	Brigand
12	+2 hp	+12	1,450,000	Brigand Lord
13+	+2 hp	+13	+375,000 per level	

HERMIT

Combination: Cleric/Rogue

Class Primes Wisdom and Dexterity

Hit Dice: D6

Typical Races: Humans and Half-Orcs

Armor Allowed: Studded Leather or less, no shield

Weapons Allowed: As Rogue

Alignments: No Lawfuls.

Abilities: As Rogue and Cleric of equal level. * Though not allowed Sneak Attack, Hermits may use Survival as a Ranger of equal level at start of play.

Base to Hit (BTH): As Cleric

There are many paths to faith. Some become Clerics, others Druids or Paladins. But there are those whose methods of worship are a bit less rigid than normal Clericism. These individuals also see little wrong in breaking the occasional law or regulation so long as the greater benefit to their deity is assured. These individuals combine both Cleric and Rogue to live as Hermits, occasionally preaching for their faith and always asking for donations to the cause. If gold is not forthcoming, they are not above 'liberating' some donations from miserly sinners. No doubt they just forgot to donate, and the hermit will take care of the oversight for them. Due to misunderstandings about their activities, hermits like Witches are frequently found in the wilderness, living alone or in small groups in order to better commune with their deity. Probably near some inns or beside caravan routes.... The better to preach to the unwashed, of course!

As noted above, Hermits are limited to armor allowable to a Rogue if they would perform any Rogue skills or functions (such as Open Locks, Backstab, etc.).

HERMIT TABLE I

Level	HD	BtH	Exp	Title
1	d6	+0	0	Outcast
2	2d6	+1	4,000	Avoider
3	3d6	+1	7,500	Solitary
4	4d6	+2	15,000	Recluse
5	5d6	+2	30,000	Seeker
6	6d6	+3	59,000	Seeker of Wisdom
7	7d6	+3	118,000	Contemplator
8	8d6	+4	220,000	Contemplator of Wisdom
9	9d6	+4	420,000	Collector of Wisdom
10	10d6	+5	600,000	Eater of Wisdom
11	+2 hp	+5	975,000	Hermit
12	+2 hp	+6	1,350,000	Master of Wisdom
13+	+2 hp	+6	+375,000 per level	

MOCKER

Combination: Illusionist/Rogue

Class Primes Intelligence and Dexterity

Hit Dice: D6

Typical Races: Humans and Gnomes

Armor Allowed: Studded Leather or less, no shield

Weapons Allowed: As Rogue.

Alignments: No Lawfuls.

Abilities: As Illusionist & Rogue of equal level. * Though not allowed Sneak Attack, Mockers may cast Ventriloquism once a day (without the need of memorizing the spell) as a class ability.

Base to Hit (BTH): As Rogue

The Mockers are similar in some ways to the Charlatans, as they are certainly motivated by the same drives (namely greed) that motivates the Charlatans. However, due either to predispositions or a belief that illusion is preferable to the rigors of true magic, the Mockers have instead emphasized the use of illusions in their thievery instead of Wizard spells.

While not as powerful at low levels as MU spells, Illusions aid the Mocker in giving greater versatility at lower levels with spells of deception and distraction. Mockers, however, are notorious for boasting of their exploits...usually to their own victims; albeit at a discrete and safe distance. This eccentricity is therefore the basis for the name 'Mocker'.

SCOUNDREL

Combination: Fighter/Wizard/Rogue

Class Primes Strength, Intelligence and Dexterity

Hit Dice: D6

Typical Races: Humans, Elves and Half Elves

Armor Allowed: Studded Leather or less, no shield

Weapons Allowed: Any , but two handed weapons prevent spell use

Alignments: Any non-Lawful

Abilities: As Fighter, Rogue and Wizard of equal level. * Though not allowed Fighters Specialization, Scoundrels may use the disguise ability of an Assassin as if of equal level.

Base to Hit (BTH): As Fighter

Unlike most other classes, the "Scoundrels" were given their moniker by others in their society.

Eschewing the laws of the Guilds of Magic and Thievery, they freely dabbled in both as well as the fighting arts.

Much to their critics chagrin, a few have excelled in all three fields of endeavor and become dangerous opponents.

Due to their thieving nature and the disdain of the more ordered paths and professions, the Scoundrels can never be Lawful in alignment.

MOCKER TABLE I

Level	HD	BtH	Exp	Title
1	d6	+0	0	Hooligan
2	2d6	+1	2,850	Defamer
3	3d6	+1	7,700	Disdainer
4	4d6	+1	16,400	Mimic
5	5d6	+2	32,800	Miscreant
6	6d6	+2	66,700	Misanthrope
7	7d6	+2	165,000	Parodier
8	8d6	+3	250,000	Grand Parodier
9	9d6	+3	460,000	Collector of Wisdom
10	10d6	+3	675,000	Mockingbird
11	+2 hp	+4	700,000	Mocker
12	+2 hp	+4	1,450,000	Master Mocker
13+	+2 hp	+4	+375,000 per level	

SCOUNDREL TABLE I

Level	HD	BtH	Exp	Title
1	d6	+1	0	Scamp
2	2d6	+2	5,850	Vagabond
3	3d6	+3	11,700	Caitiff
4	4d6	+4	24,900	Panderer
5	5d6	+5	49,800	Flouter
6	6d6	+6	100,500	Cheat
7	7d6	+7	201,000	Incorrigible
8	8d6	+8	386,000	Mischief-Maker
9	9d6	+9	732,000	Rascal
10	10d6	+10	1,175,000	Rapscallion
11	+2 hp	+11	1,825,000	Scoundrel
12	+2 hp	+12	2,450,000	Master Scoundrel
13+	+2 hp	+13	+500,000 per level	

SHAMAN

Combination: Cleric/Ranger

Class Primes Strength and Wisdom

Hit Dice: D8

Typical Races: Humans and Half-elves

Armor Allowed: Any

Weapons Allowed: As Ranger

Alignments: Any

Abilities: As Cleric and Ranger of equal level. * Though not allowed to Turn Undead, Shamans can cast a number of 0 and 1st level Wizards spells equal to the same number of 0 and 1st level cleric spells they attain.

Base to Hit (BTH): As Ranger

Shamans are the healers and spiritualists of their tribes and peoples. Attuned to nature much like the Druid, they are different in that they are concerned less with the balance and harmony of nature so much as in using the spirits of nature for the benefit of themselves and their communities. Solitary by nature, they are respected by their tribes...yet kept distinctly apart from those that revere them. They are more warlike than their druidical counterparts, and can frequently be found as part of war bands and other such conflicts.

WARCASTER

Combination: Fighter/Wizard

Class Primes Strength and Intelligence

Hit Dice: D6

Typical Races: Human, Elf and Half Elf.

Armor Allowed: Any

Weapons Allowed: Any, but two handed weapons prevent spell use

Alignments: Any

Abilities: As Fighter and Wizard of equal level. * Though not allowed Fighters Specialization, Warcasters may cast one offensive spell per day with maximum damage (no need to roll damage dice, max damage is automatic); though saves may still be applicable.

Base to Hit (BTH): As Fighter

The Elves are legendary in their ability to meld the best of the Fighting class with the mysteries of the Wizard, an ability other races have struggled to attain for themselves. With much diligence and effort, those lucky few have attained the balance needed to combine the arcane with the sword. These warrior-mages, called Warcasters (translated from the Elven), are both respected and feared wherever their presence is known. The Elves seem to perform the feat of combining such contradictory professions easily, but few outside this race have discovered the secret of the Warcaster. Those that do are powerful and respected (and envied) wherever they travel.

SHAMAN TABLE I

Level	HD	BtH	Exp	Title
1	d8	+0	0	Outlander
2	2d8	+1	4,500	Faith Healer
3	3d8	+2	9,500	Totemist
4	4d8	+3	18,000	Witch Doctor
5	5d8	+4	36,000	Runecaster
6	6d8	+5	75,000	Spiritualist
7	7d8	+6	145,000	Spirit Master
8	8d8	+7	290,000	Medicine Man/Woman
9	9d8	+8	550,000	Exorcist
10	10d8	+9	925,000	Shaman
11	+2 hp	+10	1,375,000	Medicine Shaman
12	+2 hp	+11	1,850,000	Great Shaman
13+	+2 hp	+12	+475,000 per level	

WARCASTER TABLE I

Level	HD	BtH	Exp	Title
1	d6	+1	0	Novice
2	2d6	+2	4,600	Spellsword
3	3d6	+3	9,200	Mage-at-Arms
4	4d6	+4	18,900	Warder
5	5d6	+5	37,800	Warder of the Grey
6	6d6	+6	76,500	Warder of the Iron Ring
7	7d6	+7	153,000	Arcaner
8	8d6	+8	306,000	Arcaner of the Grey
9	9d6	+9	612,000	Arcaner of the Iron Ring
10	10d6	+10	1,000,000	Warcaster
11	+2 hp	+11	1,500,000	Arch-Warcaster
12	+2 hp	+12	2,000,000	War Magus
13+	+2 hp	+13	+500,000 per level	

WITCH

Combination: Cleric/Wizard

Class Primes

Intelligence and
Wisdom

Hit Dice: D6

Typical

Races:

Humans and
Half Elves

Armor Allowed:

Any

Weapons Allowed: Any non-edged
save for dagger (which is considered a
ceremonial weapon of their
religion).

Alignments: Any

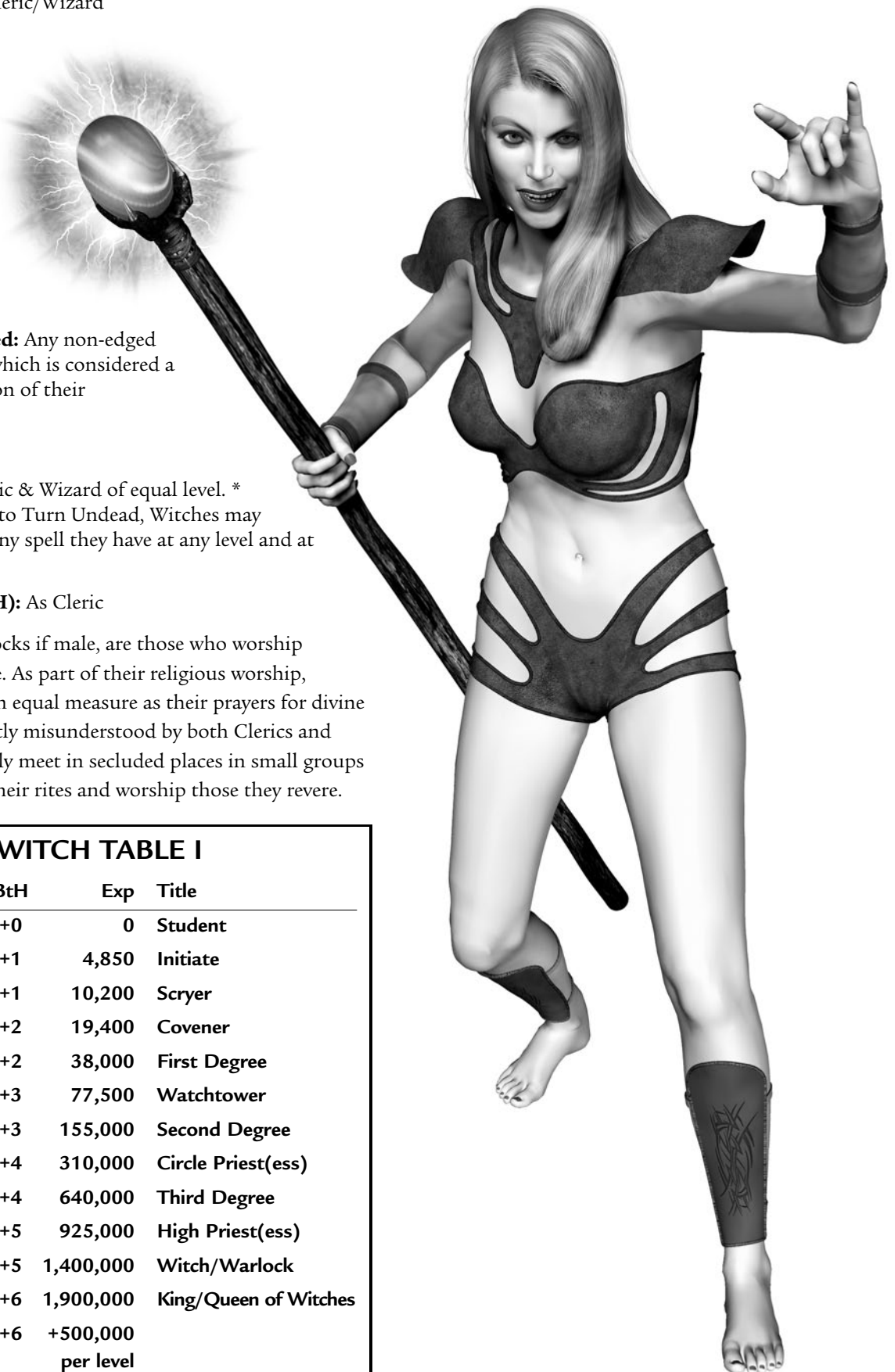
Abilities: As Cleric & Wizard of equal level. *
Though not able to Turn Undead, Witches may
brew potions of any spell they have at any level and at
½ cost.

Base to Hit (BTH): As Cleric

Witches, or Warlocks if male, are those who worship deities of the arcane. As part of their religious worship, magic is practiced in equal measure as their prayers for divine assistance. Frequently misunderstood by both Clerics and Wizards, they usually meet in secluded places in small groups or covens to work their rites and worship those they revere.

WITCH TABLE I

Level	HD	BtH	Exp	Title
1	d6	+0	0	Student
2	2d6	+1	4,850	Initiate
3	3d6	+1	10,200	Scryer
4	4d6	+2	19,400	Covener
5	5d6	+2	38,000	First Degree
6	6d6	+3	77,500	Watchtower
7	7d6	+3	155,000	Second Degree
8	8d6	+4	310,000	Circle Priest(ess)
9	9d6	+4	640,000	Third Degree
10	10d6	+5	925,000	High Priest(ess)
11	+2 hp	+5	1,400,000	Witch/Warlock
12	+2 hp	+6	1,900,000	King/Queen of Witches
13+	+2 hp	+6	+500,000 per level	





the Angry Gamer

A Column by Todd Gray & Friends



The Popcorn Reigns



I love going to the movies. I love going to the movies and eating popcorn. I love going to the movies, eating popcorn and drinking a coke ... not a diet coke, not a sprite, not lemonade or Kool-Aid or some mocha-cream cappuccino in a bottle mix of crap, but coke! I love going to the movies, eating popcorn, drinking a coke and watching the movie. I love to watch movies. Movies are great. Movie theaters are great. They're dark, quiet ... phones are only occasionally ringing, though in my youth they never rang, because people couldn't carry their life lines with them - you see people need phones; if they couldn't talk at every bloody minute of the day then they would expire. They would curl up into fetal balls of goo and die because they might have missed the revelation of the century that their best friend had while sitting in front of their Tivo'ed re-runs of Friends ... but wait I digress, let me step back ... Movie theaters are great. They're dark, quiet, all the shades of the world fall away into darkness and you can focus all your attention on the cinematic event unfolding before your eyes. Your brain can rest its weary journey and become lost in the visual extravaganza that is the movie, interrupted only by the occasional jolt of salt-covered, buttery popcorn or the swirling cool swish of God's gift to the world: Coca-Cola!

I assume that other people enjoy the movies. Why I assume this, I don't know. Because every time I go to the movies, they complain. They complain about the price, the popcorn, the coke, but worst of all, they complain about the movie itself. They have all these pointed observations about the movie, what was wrong, what would have made it better, what one actor did or didn't do and so on and so on. Probably the most egregious affronts are the following: "The movie wasn't realistic" and for re-makes, "That was nothing like the original." There are a host of other inane observations that range from 'symbolism' to 'historical accuracy' to 'costumes' and blah, blah, blah.

Why do you go the movies? Do you go to the movies to recreate the actual feelings of what occurred in the Ardennes Forest in December of 1944? No, of course not. Because if you did, you

would be sitting in a warm puddle of your own urine, with your buttery fingers stuck in the frozen mask that is your pie hole because you would be so filled with terror at the on-rushing Germans that you couldn't move. Realism? Really. The movie wasn't realistic. Wow. Who ever would have thought, a movie produced by a bunch of yahoos in Hollywood, and a script acted out by a gagging gang of stage monkeys with tights isn't realistic. Oh my god. Write the Press ... wait, that would be assuming that anything those monkeys produce would be realistic, and the powers that be know that anything coming out of ANY news desk in the free world is a heap of rubbish produced by yet another gagging gang of idiots, equaled only in corruption and incompetence by our good representatives in Congress and the Senate ... but I digress again ... where was I. Oh yeah.

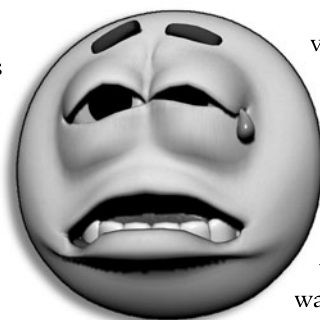
IT'S A MOVIE. ENTERTAINMENT. ITS NOT SUPPOSED TO BE REALISTIC. A movie's job is to capture a moment and suspend your disbelief. The moment the movies

become realistic we should all fear, because then that gagging gang of screen monkeys who wouldn't know the ass end of anything if it weren't read back to them would have actual power over us, the jibbering masses. Then where would we be? Gagging gangs of screen monkeys in tights leading jibbering salty butter sticks around by the nose. What kind of world would that be? Talking about the blind leading the stupid.

And I gotta get this off my chest. So the 2006 version of your movie was different than the 1978 version of your movie. How could this be? How could they change it? It should have been shot frame by sorry frame, just like it was decades and decades ago when I was young and a spoiled butter stick! I'm sure when I was 10 years old that Superman was AWESOME. It was the bomb, or as we liked to say in those days, "It was cool!" But things have changed! Since those far-flung years, the world has continued to revolve around the sun and change. There was a SOVIET UNION in those days. There's not now (Reagan saved us from that menace!). Porn movies had actual scripts. We didn't have cell

The movie wasn't realistic?

It was nothing like the original?



Nope!

THE ANGRY GAMER

phones, blackberrys, or blueberrys; we had only dingle-berries...wait, we didn't have computers!!! In the 1970s when the originals of the movies were being made, or the original remakes of the 1950's originals were being remade, the movies were different. Special effects were nothing like they are now. If you look at the 1980 whatever version of King Kong and compare it to the 2005 version of King Kong you're going to come up with two different movies. Same story. Two different movies. Two different visions. Two different moments in which you and I the mass of butter sticks can lose ourselves for an hour or two or three. Just to be clear because I'm sure I've lost a great many of you in my hopeless rumblings: **THEY ARE DIFFERENT MOVIES!**

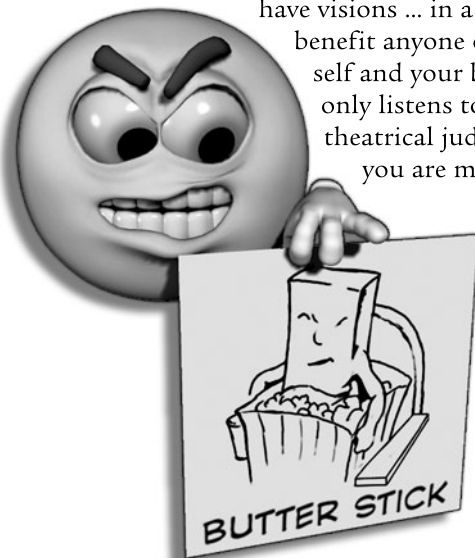
"Its not my Battlestar Galactica!" Of course its not! You don't own it! And there is a reason for that. Because if it was your Battlestar Galactica you would be trying to recapture that lost misspent moment that was your youth when you were a ten-year-old google-eyed baby butter stick. Here's what you should do. When you are sitting in the seat and looking at the latest rendition of Superman and your wincing because this superman's moves aren't precisely like those of Christopher Reeve's back in 1902, then think about this ... somewhere, in this great country of ours (or yours if your reading this and not living in the United States) there is a 10 year old boy watching this movies of the world's greatest superhero unfold like a magical tapestry and he's every bit as much jazzed by it as you were when you were still young!

I was standing in a comic book store once. I was reading an old silver aged Green Lantern and commented to the clerk, "Aw, I remember when comics had that newsprint smell to them." This kid standing not far over turned to me and said "Oh yeah, like the dog pee on newspaper. I'm so glad they have better paper now."

That should be our life philosophy. It might not be the same. It might not be realistic. But it will be different. Watch the movie. If it bores you, great: leave, don't recommend it. But don't go off on some tangential assumption that you are more than a butter stick and can correct the vision of these artists ... yes, screen monkeys with tights have visions ... in a way that would benefit anyone other than yourself and your bored wife, who only listens to your insane theatrical judgments because you are married to her.

The movies are what we make of them. Enjoy them.

Or don't.
I don't care.



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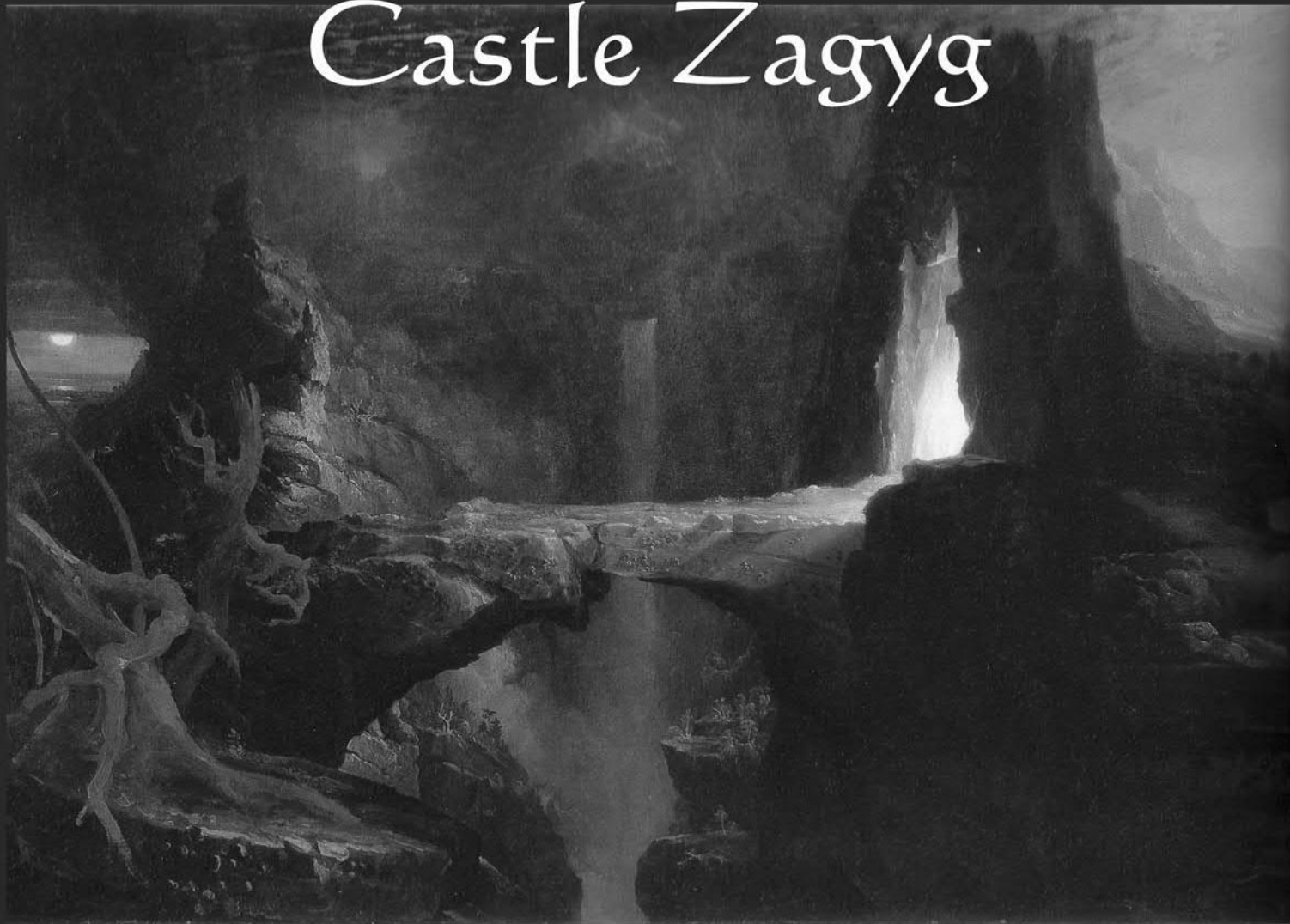
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