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# THE CRUSADER™

*The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer*

HOW IT ALL  
HAPPENED

BY GARY GYGAX

SWORDS &  
SORCERY

BY STEPHEN CHENAULT

HAMMER  
& ANVIL

BY CASEY CANFIELD

TO THE STARS

BY JOSH CHEWNING

THE ANGRY  
GAMER

BY A TROLL

THE AIHRDIAN  
CHRONICLES

BY STEPHEN CHENAULT

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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...*

## *Risky Things*



### 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".

Some of what I relate in this portion isn't technically "risky," more like typical stuff for a rough-and-tumble boy. Some of it is about taking dangerous chances. The combination goes towards how I developed and came to do what I did in regards to gaming.

Growing up in Chicago back in the early 1940s meant being used to fist-fighting and free-for-all wrestling. Nothing risky about it, but when we moved to Lake Geneva just before my 8th birthday I was ready for a scrap. I got one immediately, gave better than I got, and later the stranger from a block away, John Parshal, became a pal. One other lad prodded me when 4th grade class started (I skipped 3rd grade), and in a basement boy's restroom fight I thoroughly drubbed him. From that time on I could pick a fight with one of the really tough kids and get walloped, but otherwise things were more peaceful than in the big city. As usual, though, John Rasch and I had a semi-annual fight to see who was going to be top dog in the punching department—we both had bad tempers. When we were age 12 going towards 13, we got into a scrap, both of us wound up and landed looping right hands. Neither of us went down, but each went staggering back shaking his head to clear the stars. Both of us being big and heavy, strong from working on a farm for fun, John and I discovered we were past the point of casual frays. Luckily for me that ended, as Rasch grew to about 6' 4" height and 250 pound weight, while I got to only 5' 11" and around 185.

The risks I took were other sorts, and often quite unintentional if otherwise foolish. Time to get to the advertised theme of this essay!

I went out to feed the bull and heifers without carrying a fork. Sure enough that huge animal came around a corner of the barn, was there behind me without sound, and lifted me up and aside two feet with one motion of his head and horns under my extended left arm. Luckily for me he wanted the silage I was dumping out from a basket, not some sport tossing me. I emptied the metal contained into the trough before that bull, then backed away to the barn door.

Twice other youngsters let loose at me with 410 shotguns, never hitting me with a single pellet. One of those fools was Bob Reed, a boy of about four years older than I, later to become a judge in Walworth County and rule against me in my suit against TSR. The other was "Big Mike" O'Neil of whom you'll read more later. Reed was with two other cohorts, threatened me so as to get my BB pistol, then fired his shotgun at me and my friend Mickey Patton when I yelled about his theft. I got some slight revenge on one of Reed's buddies when I saw him later on the railroad tracks and shot him several times with my BB rifle before he caught me and knocked the wind out of me with a belly punch. When I refused to back down he asked why, and I told him the reason. Then Ron Hudson remembered the incident of the theft of my pistol, and thereafter we became friends of a sort.

The most dangerous firearms incident involved several of us out doing some general plinking with our .22 rifles. As we were out roaming the marshland that is now part of a large resort here (formerly the Playboy Club) a hail of bullets splattered around us, many coming close enough to spray water and mud on us. As if trained troops the six of us fell prone in the mire, loosed a sustained volley of counter fire into the trees about 200 yards distant from which the attack was coming. Carl Chrisman's Stevens semi-automatic had a worn sear pin, so when he shot he rattled off 13 rounds on "automatic." Bill Fleming had a pump action rifle, and was shooting rapidly too, while the rest of us made do with slow bolt action shoots. The immediate return fire silenced the attackers. We worked our way to the woods, found them empty, and about then realized how lucky we were in not being hit or being responsible for shooting someone else regardless of the provocation.

Next issue will conclude this general topic and thereafter we'll move closer to dungeons...

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# ALEA IACTA EST



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

## Swords and Sorcery: Our Primeval Selves

# SWORDS & SORcery

The classic motif of our hobby, the words "swords and sorcery" conjure very distinct images and feelings. But it is fantasy at its best. Whenever I hear those words or see them plastered about in logos they instantly bring to mind a host of images. At the center of my mind's eye lies a brawny warrior, thick blade in hand. He's moving through a dark background where mists and shadows move at the will of some stygian wizard dressed in black and as dark minded as the night. At the man's feet lies a woman of surpassing loveliness, her clothes in tatters and flesh exposed to the horrors of the sorcerous nightmare. This is Swords and Sorcery. In it magic is a rare and powerful force used almost entirely by evil men who scheme for world domination by using otherworldly power. But only the hero, bold and cruel in his own right, can overcome him and this he must do with the iron power of his muscles and the steely resolve of his monstrous will! Swords and Sorcery is *not* as generic as those who wield the words would have us believe and who themselves tend to use it as a catch phrase for everything that has magic and swords in it. Swords and Sorcery is very distinct and remains, to this day, a cornerstone of the fantasy gaming universe.

Swords and Sorcery has its origins in the 1920s, largely in the pulp magazines. What the pulp authors conjured for their audiences were dark worlds of utter make believe, escapism unheard of, yet escapism that tapped into a psyche hungry for something other than the modern world. By the 20's modernity was a common part of our collective experience, at least in the western world. Industrial machines were the norm and people were growing, or had already grown, accustomed to machines solving problems of any scale. Electricity had become commonplace, at least in the urban areas. This lit homes and opened the doors for domestic tools like the washing machine and ice box. Tractors were plowing the earth; cars were carrying people to and fro. And men

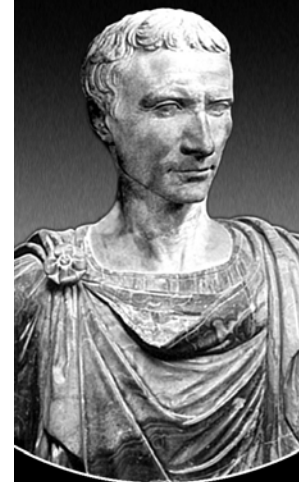
were crossing over and through mountains, across peninsulas and into the deepest forests with all manner of engines. It seemed as if nothing could stop the forward tread of modernity and the taming of nature.

World War I accelerated these many technological and industrial developments and through radio and the newspaper brought much of these, at least the rumor of them, to the dinner table of people from Gumbinnen, Prussia to Barstow, California. Everyday people heard of the daring exploits of aero pilots, U-boats that plundered the depths, canon that shot rounds 80 miles or more, mines that blew up whole acres of land, iron wagons that lumbered over the most fortified trenches and the radio. The average man in the 1920's clearly understood the message: the world was conquerable, Mother Nature could be tamed. The terrors of the dark were fading in this new order of things, replaced by factories belching black smoke and grinding out tomorrow's world.

Turn of the century adventure literature, such as Burrough's Tarzan and John Carter, embraced rather than challenged the modern world. The heroes, by and large, were products of the modern world who were able to overcome the natural world by their intelligence, bravery and strength. John Carter is an ultimate example of this as he plies the heavens in wild adventures on Mars, embracing even wilder technology than that realized on earth to rescue his adoptive people. It's a technology however, that everyday people could understand, because they lived in a world of flying ships and radio waves. Audiences could easily relate to this science fiction and they devoured the genre in mass.

Tarzan on the other hand serves as a bridge between the wild primeval in us all and the modern world. Here is a man of noble English lineage who was raised in the jungles of darkest Africa.

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

By his own natural abilities, those possessed by any man, he pulls himself up above the jungle canopies and realizes a world beyond. He masters that world as easily as he masters the jungle and he does so unflinchingly. He is the ultimate hero for he achieves all that he does with little or no help from anyone or anything. He is man overcoming nature and himself to rise to the top. But despite all of modernity's advantages Tarzan longs for the forest. Whenever he finds himself on a city street or sitting in a trolley he looks around with indifference if not disdain because it is when he is in the jungle, with his knife at his side and a coiled rope over his shoulder that he is most at home. Only there does he settle into the natural state that is man's animal side. Tarzan stands on the threshold of the wild and promise of the modern one in his hand, and he is unafraid, in fact he is more at home in that primeval darkness than in the midst of the grinding machinery of New York or London.

This type of fiction hinted at what we all fear. We are animals and despite our mastery of 'technology' the world is bigger than all of us. We are animals who are only able to push back the darkness, to hold it at bay for only a short while. But eventually, inevitably, it must come cascading down upon us like a wave from the ocean deeps. The darkness is primeval and in our subconscious we want to believe that only our primeval selves can overcome it. No amount of technology or machines can do that for us, for within that dark harbors nightmares unimaginable.

That primeval darkness is exactly what the Swords and Sorcery writers tapped into. They spun yarns of wild adventure with heroes that were both recognizable and situations that were part of the everyday panorama of life. But publishers quickly realized that the audience hungered for more. Instinctively they spun ever wilder tales, exploring the dark recesses of our mind with creatures like Lovecraft's Cthulu. They opened up forgotten memories of a past we never really lived but only understood in our dream laden musings. Here the

monster under the bed comes alive for we are given to believe that magic can be used to open portals to other worlds, worlds beyond our understanding and where our precious science fails us. There in those dark multiversers lie monsters, foul and evil. These are creatures hungry for flesh and possessed of the sole purpose of devouring souls too weak to resist them. Ever there are those foolhardy enough to master the black arts and summon these foul creatures to the world and wield them as tools. These sorcerers are dark minded men consumed by their own selfish desires and a lust for power that can only be attained by Kings in sandaled feet or those willing to thrust themselves into the nether world and plunder its wealth of power. We find ancient temples and dungeons, carved by long forgotten hands. But dungeons that still harbor the wicked evil of their creator's intent and here too dwell horrid creatures of darkness and madness.

But into these tales of darkness and mystery, into these wild tales, strides the heroes, men, and sometimes women, of tremendous power. These are more than heroes, they are creatures that possess an overwhelming sense of self-preservation, an inner power that hurtles beyond the limiting confines of the world with bone crushing strength. They shed the accoutrements of civilization in a moment and lend themselves to the primeval forces that drive all things in order to beat down and conquer the darkness that surrounds them. They overcome the primeval with the primeval and they do so with a wild abandon that taps into our own subconscious and makes us, the reader, yearn for more and long in our heart of hearts to be able to tap into our own primeval selves. The sword, knife, axe or even the arrow is only an extension of this primeval will and serves as the cutting instrument that brings man freedom from the darkness and sorcery that dwells within.

Swords and Sorcery is a genre that speaks to every man and woman that yearns for something extraordinary, something beyond the tedious reality that is the technology of our machine driven world. It calls to that part of us that looks into the dark and fears. We know beyond the shadow of that doubt that if we suppress our instincts and use the tools at our disposal that we can push that darkness back. But Swords and Sorcery unleashes the inner knowledge that though



we may push the darkness back, the only way to overcome it is to drop the shackles of modernity and enter the darkness and grind its mystery to dust. It is only then that we may take up our sword, save the fair maid who herself has suppressed her primeval will and trod the world's jeweled kingdoms beneath our sandaled feet.

This is a genre that goes beyond the adventure novels of Jules Verne or Edgar Rice Burroughs. It is a genre that sets aside all the coming science from science fiction. Furthermore, it is one set apart from the fantasy genre as encapsulated by the master script writer J.R.R. Tolkien, or his many peers from Orson Scott Card to Jack Vance and our own industries' Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman. Swords and Sorcery exists a part of and apart from the fantasy milieu. The term *Swords and Sorcery* itself wasn't used until early in the 1960s when Fritz Leiber coined it to describe Robert E. Howard's particular brand of fiction and it harkens back to the early days of the pulp magazines because here authors of a like mind found a home and readers found a whole new form of adventure tale. Under its aegis a host of authors instantly found a home. Today, the genre can be found in comics, movies and television. It has been revisited a score of times from a score of different authors and artists, but at its core it remains that dark motif of evil wizards, strange monsters and those brave and strong enough to challenge them.

There have been countless attempts at Swords and Sorcery role playing games, and now computer games. These have met with varying degrees of success. The greatest in our field is of course Dungeons & Dragons® but it is not in itself a Swords and Sorcery game but rather, as Gary Gygax himself stated, "an amalgam" of a wide variety of sources from fantasy literature, the pulps, history, miniature games and so forth. D&D is far more in the vein of a fantasy game than a Swords and Sorcery game. The motif is there but it shares the shelf with countless others. Castles & Crusades, the most recent version of the original role playing game, suffers the same description. Other more traditional interpretations of the genre for the gamer have hit the wall of mass appeal for several reasons.

Primarily the makers of Swords and Sorcery games don't seem to be aware of what they have or what they are working on. In many cases they simply attempt to piggy back the existing games in the broader fantasy genre, making the mistake of assuming that Swords and Sorcery is the generalization under which fall all things fantasy, when in fact, the very opposite is the truth. *Fantasy* is the generalization that includes hosts of genres and sub-genres including *Swords and Sorcery*.

Interestingly we published our early version of C&C as *Swords and Sorcery*. These appeared in the year 2000 in the backs of the original non-d20 publications of *Mortality of Green*, *Fantastic Adventure*, and *Vakhund Into the Unknown*. The early game attempted to reverse engineer the D&D model of "class"



by generalizing the class based terminology and making each of the four classes serve as nets to capture a wide variety of genres. Whether this would have met with success or not was lost in the d20 onslaught of the early part of this century as TLG set aside its game design aspirations to hitch our wagon to another's team. However, looking back at what we were doing and thinking then and at the various projects that have come since I notice hints of the original concept cropping up from time to time.

Material I design or write seems to have a more heroic-epic fantasy feel to it, but at its heart lays a darkness and sorcery that is encapsulated in the *Winter Dark*. There is more to the struggle than orcs, goblins and demons or devils, but monsters lie at the root of all the turmoil, creatures bent and twisted in the All Father's forges lost in the Void. These nightmares settle on the edge of the world, waiting to enter through the Paths of Umbra.

In Davis' it is far more apparent as there is a greater mythological design, perhaps with less detail, but one that is wholly dark and dismal. For those lucky few who have traveled and adventured in the world of Inzae as Davis presents it, they are aware of the tremendous struggle it takes to merely survive, much less gain wealth or prosperity. And by survive I meant the players as well as the characters, for to struggle through a game and live in Davis' world, under his tutelage is much the same as a Conan story. Far more often than not, Conan rides away from his adventures with little more than a stout steed, a girl on his arm and some coin. He's happy to be alive and cares not a whit for the worldly possessions he lost or could have gained or didn't gain for they are after all nothing but shackles for his freedom. This is Davis' game in a nutshell. When I play in them and survive I'm ecstatic and count myself as a hero of renown.

Of course much of this is lost to the reader of our material as it has to be couched in terms of the broader fantasy market, a market that expects certain dividends from their adventures. But the germ of our early influences is always there.

Watered down with other genres Swords and Sorcery becomes a generalized term that has no real meaning, but by focusing in on what it is and was allows us to understand what it can be and what it can bring to the gaming table. Swords and Sorcery is a sub-genre within the gigantic fantasy milieu. It cannot be used as a catch phrase or a generalized reference to hosts of like-minded games and concepts. Such a bastardization of the phrase waters down its focus. Swords & Sorcery is not an umbrella, but rather a genre of fantasy that allows us to ply the waters of our uncertain fate and explore the recesses of our subconscious primeval selves where we learn that gaining treasure and worldly goods is of little worth. What is of utmost value is survival. The reward at the end of the trail is not money, jewels and marble halls; the reward is that you still possess a good steed, a sword at your side and a golden haired woman on your arm!

That is Swords and Sorcery. It is fantasy at its best.

# HAMMER & ANVIL

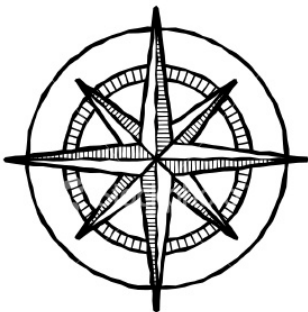
THOUGHTS FROM A  
GAMER MASTER'S FORGE



BY  
CASEY CANFIELD



*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 Endicott, New York.*



## The Campaign Setting: Environs, Part II

*It's the little details that are vital. Little things make big things happen.*

*– John Wooden*

In the last issue I started rudimentary descriptions of the most important areas within the campaign setting. The heart of the milieu is now beating, as it were, and now I need to continue building a detailed structure around it. In this installment, I will provide further detail to the most prominent of areas in the setting: the villages and hamlets.

The process of grafting detail onto a general concept actually becomes easier as one adds detail. The difficult part is beginning the process. Once started, the details tend to feed off one another, and in my experience, bond together to create a more believable and entertaining whole. My work in the last issue is going to help me add color and character to my setting in ways that are most meaningful to the feel I wish to portray.

I've created maps of the townships to aid in visualization of the areas, and to help in locating shops, homes, and other important places. At this stage, I turn to the use of a map because my foundational work is complete, and I can tailor the map to my preconception of each town's layout. I'll present my detailed listing for each town in the form of a map accompanied by keyed encounter areas. When noteworthy, I'll describe the process used to create a given area in boxed text.

It is also important to note that I have not bothered to place details for every possible citizen or building in these towns. It is far more important to provide details to those areas and NPCs that have some special significance in the campaign setting. Mundane concerns can either be improvised or detailed later. I would also like to note that I did not provide statistics blocks for any NPCs described herein. The reason for this is to allow the written descriptions to take precedence over hard numbers, and also to allow easy use in multiple rule sets.

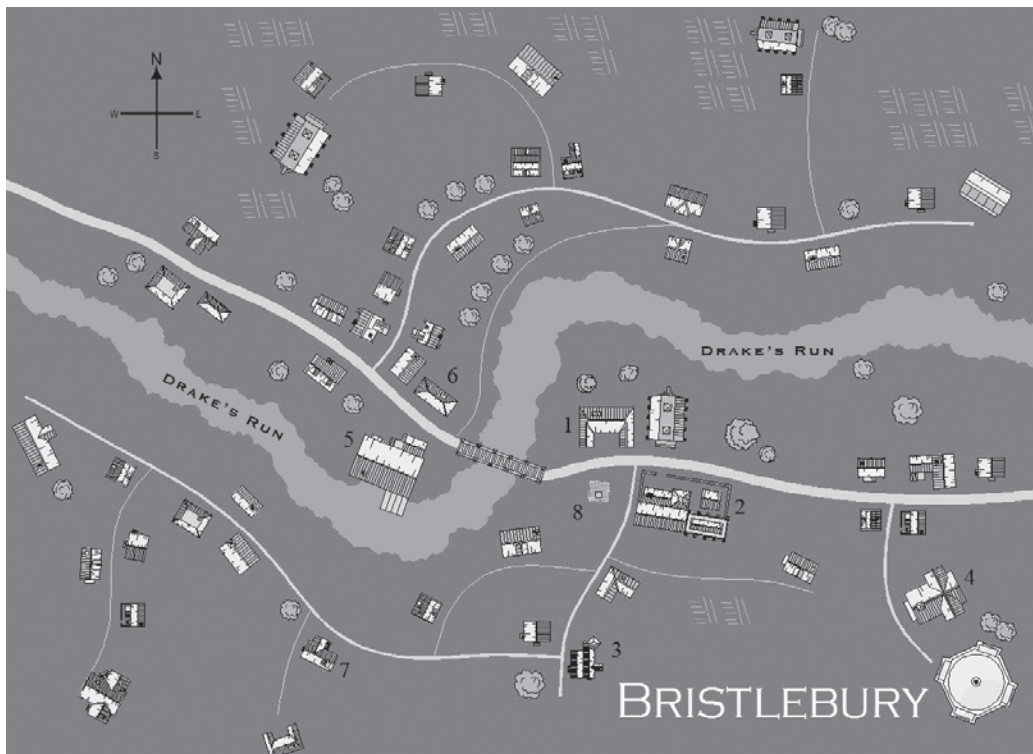
I'll start with Bristlebury, the largest town in the campaign area. For continuity purposes, I referenced my description of Bristlebury in the prior issue. This helps to ensure that I don't contradict myself between my written text and the map's depiction of the area.

### Bristlebury

#### 1) The Spit and Spigot

The Spit and Spigot is a large inn located close to the center of Bristlebury. It has five private rooms for rent and one common room where beds can be rented for a smaller fee. Hamill Hale, the proprietor, is a gruff example of frontier sensibilities. Gruff and recalcitrant during





the best of times, he becomes borderline hostile when dealing with those from outside the valley. Hale is successful, however, due to his meticulous attention to cleanliness and his ability to craft a smooth, strong mead with Acton Dinsbury honey.

Dory Hale, his daughter, is 27 years of age and a spinster. Though not unattractive, Dory has few suitors, thanks to the gruffness of her father, and the fact that she has inherited some of his demeanor. Her reputation as a shrew in her personal life does not interfere with her work; she has the uncanny ability to act as though any customer is the best she's ever served. She is jealous of the younger woman who works as the cook of the establishment, both for her looks and for the attention she receives from young men.

Cammy Bedrew is the cook for the Spit and Spigot. A charming, soft spoken, and polite young woman of 17, she took over kitchen duties for Hamill Hale's wife Beatrice after she fell ill and died suddenly. Cammy is a better cook than Beatrice, and Hamill is protective of her. He is often seen chasing young men from Bristlebury and the nearby towns out of the kitchen. His protective streak often angers Dory, who feels that Cammy has become her father's favorite instead of her.

*The intent is to keep the generic tavern from seeming generic. There's nothing terribly earthshaking going on here, just some rough personality conflicts. However, describing that is often enough to bring life into a location and make it seem more real to the player.*

## 2) Renwistle's Goods

Abner Renwistle owns the local mercantile outfit. Nearly every commodity for trade passes through his establishment on the way in or out of Bristlebury. Abner himself is a congenial fellow that has a more measured attitude toward outsiders than most other residents of Bristlebury. Far from a neutral distributor of goods, Abner sees it as his duty to advocate for Bristlebury and the other regional towns when dealing with the sale or purchase of goods from parties not native to the area. He will not attempt to cheat a visiting merchant, but will insist on at least a fair deal for the goods and services, to protect his neighbors from a fleecing.

Bryce Hamm serves as Renwistle's clerk. A hardworking boy of early teenage years, Bryce is the son of Rafe Hamm, the town's expatriate baker from Dunlock. Rafe remembers some of his former life in the city, but has acclimated to his new surroundings, is considered a "local", and refuses to talk about much of what he experienced there.

Adventurers seeking re-supply can find a selection of common goods at Renwistle's, with the exception of weapons and armor. While Abner can obtain these goods with enough time and money, he does not keep items of this type in stock, most of the time.

*The merchant is a must-have in an adventuring town, and Renwistle fits the bill nicely. Coupled with the foundry (below), starting adventurers should have everything they need to get equipped and stay supplied.*

*Adding Bryce Hamm as the clerk was an intentional maneuver designed to give players inquiring about Dunlock a place to ask.*

### 3) Bristlebury Foundry

Will Graymain runs the local foundry. A large but quiet man, he is an accomplished blacksmith. His weapon crafting is quite good, but his armor making is rough, and he will sheepishly admit this to all who inquire. However, for the right price, his mastery of sword making can be commissioned. He usually has between two and four apprentices working with him, but he currently has only one.

Graymain also commands the local militia, when called upon (see area 8).

Flip Rumlet is the pre-teenage son of a prominent local family. Known for his mischievous streak, he was apprenticed to Will Graymain in an attempt to show him discipline. While he is bright and accepts his assigned tasks without complaint, it is obvious that this is not the trade he would have chosen for himself.

*Having Graymain's specialty as weaponry is not very exciting, but it does make things interesting for players seeking fancy armor. Unless characters happen across well constructed armor, chances are good that they will have to make do with more crudely fashioned pieces. The addition of Flip Rumlet provides a possible source of comic relief in Bristlebury.*

### 4) The Chapel of the Siblings

This chapel is the regional center of the Siblings religion. The priests headquartered here are responsible for ministering to the needs of the entire valley populace, and are often traveling to ensure the sanctity of the local barrows and graveyards throughout the area.

The chapel itself is austere. Regular services are not required, so the chapel generally sees use only during funeral services. It is kept meticulously clean by the resident priests, but usually stands empty. Attached to the chapel are the living quarters of the three priests. These accommodations are rustic but comfortable.

Attached to the chapel by a tunnel through the basement is the local barrow for Bristlebury. In contrast to the chapel, the barrow is very well appointed for a rural building. It is a round, dome-shaped building that perches atop a rise that overlooks the town. Inside, murals and decorative sculptures and inscriptions honor the dead. The barrow itself is enormous, and has been built downwards into the hill for over 100 feet, with antechambers and extensions

crafted as needed. As such, the outward appearance of the barrow belies its true size.

Each Sibling has a representative stationed in Bristlebury. (See Hammer & Anvil in Crusader issues #7 and #8 for more details on the religion.) Britte, a human woman in her mid-40's, represents Darshai. She is the informal leader of the trio of clergy, and is considered the most level-headed of them. Yvette is a fiery young human priestess of Kheloria. She is also a gossip, and can often be found sharing tales with others in town. Larash represents Incordis, and he is a dark and brooding individual who generally keeps to his own company. Residents of the valley respect and fear him, and know that transgressions against the Siblings will be punished by his hand.

*The priests of the Siblings will likely be among the highest profile NPCs in Bristlebury and the entire region. It is important to give them strong characteristics and to differentiate between their personalities. Likewise, it is important to have a clear visual of the chapel and barrow, as clerical characters will likely be spending time there.*

### 5) Ripplestone Mill

The mill in Bristlebury is one of the largest buildings in town. It is run by Daniel Ripplestone, one of the most respected members of the regional Ripplestone family. He supplies most of the milled grain needs for the locals as well as Hamm's Bakery, located across the street. While usually friendly in demeanor, Daniel Ripplestone is extremely xenophobic, and will not allow himself to be approached or to converse with anyone known to originate from outside the valley.

*The addition of a xenophobe is intended to reinforce the idea that many of the area's residents are distrustful of outsiders. Daniel Ripplestone takes this idea to the extreme, as occasionally happens. This lends some reality to the situation. It is reasonable to expect that not everyone should get along. In fact, it can be argued that any setting depicting such a situation should be considered very suspect by the players, and they should be on their guard!*

### 6) Hamm's Bakery

Several years ago, Rafe Hamm and his family moved from the city of Dunlock, far to the west, to the small town of Bristlebury. They have not, to this day, revealed the reasons for the move, and refuse to speak of Dunlock if asked. Some say that the haunted looks on their faces when the word "Dunlock" is spoken tells enough of the story.

The Hamms were regarded with the distrust normally accorded to outsiders in the valley, but gradually won the trust of the locals through a monumental effort to acclimate. While they had trouble with the occasional thug wishing to bully them into leaving, all persecution of the Hamms ended when the three Sibling priests spoke publicly on their behalf. Since then, Rafe Hamm has established a hugely popular bakery, and has become as much of a fixture in Bristlebury life as those born in the town. The Hamms have been so successful in putting their unknown past behind them that even Daniel Ripplestone will associate with them.

*To counter the xenophobe, we have the outsider-turned-local. The interesting part of the Hamm dynamic is that the players might just be less likely to obtain useful information from the outside world from Rafe Hamm and his family. That, of course, is up to the CK, as only he or she can decide what the Hamms experienced in Dunlock.*

## 7) Weaver

Edwina Damp is a master weaver. She produces distinct and beautiful work that visiting merchants often purchase for sale in larger distant towns and cities. She is a kindly older woman known for her compassion and hospitality. She is one of the few residents of Bristlebury with very

little distrust of outsiders, and will often board a traveler for the night if the Spit and Spigot has no vacancies.

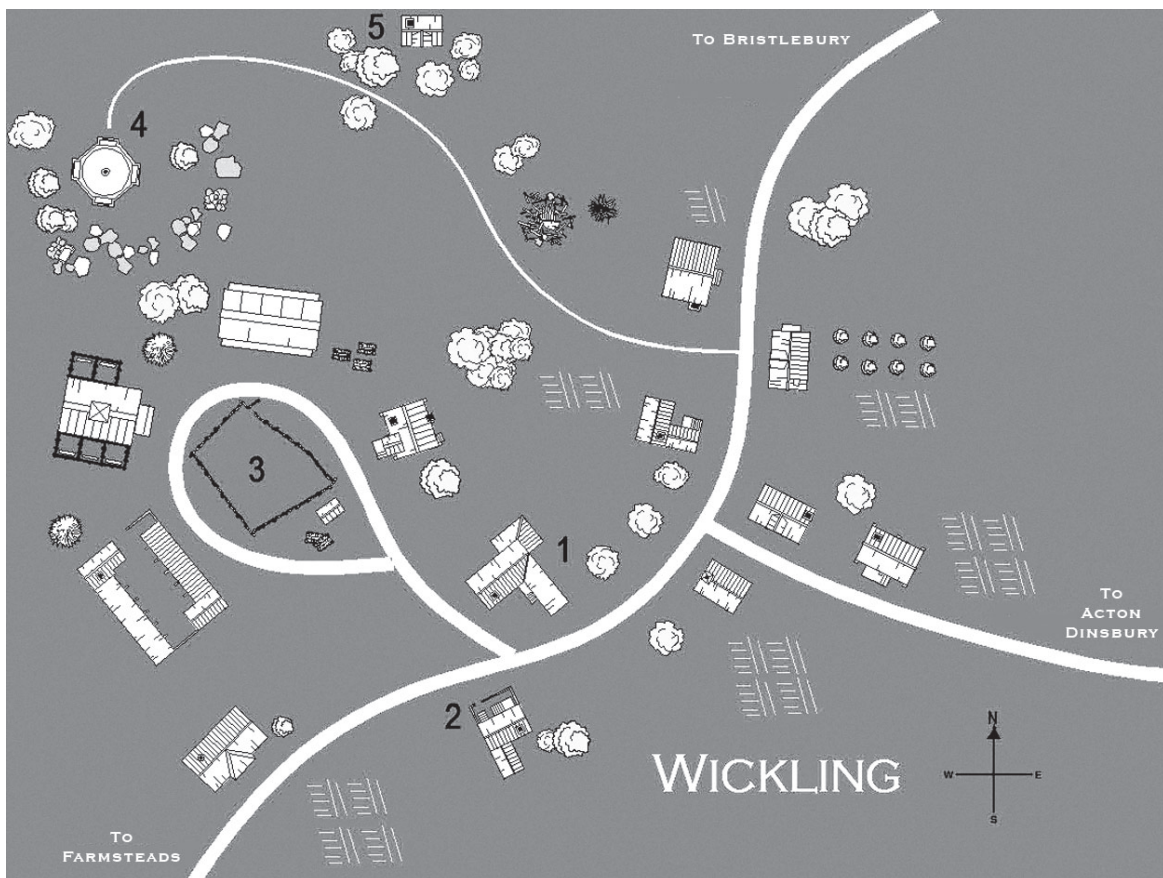
Milla Hoste has been her apprentice for almost two years, and handles most of the routine work for Edwina. Edwina's health is slowly failing, and Milla is scrambling to learn as much of the trade as possible.

*A weaver, even one of remarkable ability, is generally not worthy of an entry, but Edwina Damp serves as an informational contact for characters seeking information about outsiders. Her hospitality makes her a source for gossip, but also potentially a target.*

## 8) Watchtower

This humble tower stands 14 feet above the town, overlooking Drake's Run. A brass bell hangs from a hook at the top of the tower, used to warn the residents and the militia members of an impending danger. The tower usually has a volunteer in it, though this is not always the case.

*When the bell rings, Will Graymain hurries to the tower to organize the militia in response. He will sound his horn while summoning the militia to service. While usually humble, he is a stern commander, and tolerates no question of his authority during an emergency.*



# Wickling

## 1) Wax and Wick Boarding House

The Wax and Wick is a rough tavern and boarding house that serves as one of the few landmarks in the small hamlet of Wickling. Its construction is of rough-hewn lumber, and its main source of business is local folks stopping by to quench their thirsts after long days of work. During livestock auctions and other busier times, the Wax and Wick is patronized by those traveling from some distance to do business with the local farmers.

The accommodations are rustic, but comfortable and clean, and the food and drink is ordinary but satisfying.

The proprietor, Weller Macnew, is a friendly sort. While not currently raising livestock himself, he is an excellent judge of the quality of horses that can be found in Wickling. He does not advertise his knowledge, but those that have spent some time in the area eventually seek his advice.

Macnew is also a rampant practical joker with a very robust sense of humor. One of his favorite pastimes is the sharing of new jokes and pranks with travelers from out of town.

*Again, a rather ordinary place becomes extraordinary when details are added and personality is applied to the NPCs found there. Two simple personality characteristics – humble knowledge and a sense of humor – define a very interesting NPC that the players can grow to “know.”*

## 2) Wickling Elder’s House

Tyden Harbuckle is one of the oldest people in Wickling. Once a farmer near Acton Dinsbury, Harbuckle relocated to Wickling when his children decided he was too fragile to continue working the fields. Since that time, he has become the curmudgeonly old grandfather to a great many local residents. Gruff but approachable at the same time, Harbuckle often dispenses advice to the locals, regardless of whether they’ve asked him for it. At the same time, the locals see him as an amusing source of anecdotes and the occasional piece of wisdom.

One easy way to get on Harbuckle’s good side is to bring him a supply of honey from Acton Dinsbury. Since he left, he misses the locally-produced honey the most.

*Harbuckle is a hoot! There’s nothing quite as amusing as having a bunch of stern-faced adventurers screamed at from a front porch by a crotchety old man*

*that actually means well. It adds flavor to the town, without adding a lot of overhead.*

## 3) Market Corral

The Market Corral is the true center of activity in Wickling. On any given day, someone is purchasing, selling, or appraising livestock here, especially horses. Once per season (four times per year), Wickling holds a large livestock auction. Most purchasers coming from distant lands choose that time to buy stock, but commerce does take place between the auctions as well.

There are three large stables around the perimeter of the corral. These are owned by three different parties who act as proxies during auctions, and also provide boarding and care for animals that are up for sale.

The westernmost barn is owned by a farmer named Baden Dann. He and his son Rory run one of the largest horse farms in the area, and they have constructed the barn in town in order to facilitate the sale of their horses to clients. The Dann family raises exceptional riding and draft horses.

The central barn is owned by the Hostetler family. Bin Hostetler and his son Matty also have a horse farm in the area, and it is specialized to the breeding of race horses and war horses. While the Hostetler livestock are arguably not the best to be had in the area, they are certainly excellent animals and in high demand.

The third barn is owned by Jubal Wargreen. Wargreen acts as the auctioneer during the seasonal auctions, and operates his barn in service to other small local farms that cannot afford their own facility in town.

*The corral is probably the most important section of Wickling, and has the most detail. The family establishments help to broaden the range of contacts within the area. The campaign has more depth when multiple families have enterprises in the area. Even if the CK does not use them in adventures, having the names available and throwing them out there for the players gives the campaign a living feel.*

## 4) Barrow

The Wickling Barrow is a smaller scale version of the barrow in Bristlebury, sharing some of the same features. See **Area 4** in Bristlebury for more information.

## 5) Sage’s House

This small house, nestled deep within a grove of pine trees, is the current residence of the sage Rebictus, a

scholar and educator from the large city of Dunhammer. Rebictus is not a recluse or a hermit, but prefers to maintain his distance from everyday concerns in the town, so he has chosen a location near the barrow – out of the way for most folks. He is certainly approachable with inquiries or research requests, and will be willing to assist adventurers for a price. His specialties are languages and outer plane lore, but he has at least some practical knowledge in a large variety of subjects.

Rebictus will describe his life in Dunhammer, but anyone speaking to him at length will eventually get the impression that there were aspects of his life there that he prefers to forget.

*Rebictus is a PC's primary knowledge source, when the going gets rough. Inquiries about difficult subjects will probably begin at his door, and the players will probably establish a healthy relationship with him. As such, his personality and proclivities need some detail to maintain consistency during role-playing. The tendency of Rebictus to gloss over Dunhammer adds to the feeling that there is something wrong in the big cities – first Dunlock, now Dunhammer?*

## 6) Outlying Farm\*

This farm is not on the map, but is in a section of rolling hills about a half-day's ride southwest of Wickling. This farm breeds heavy warhorses and draft horses, and is owned by a sweet woman named Opal Hardby. Her teenage children, Effie and Hobbes, help Opal maintain the farm after her husband Uri fell from the barn roof and died more than a year ago. Opal brings stock to town quarterly to board at Jubal Wargreen's stable, and usually sells every animal she brings. On her last trip to town, she mentioned to several people that several of her horses have gone missing in the last year, and the barn door has been left open on occasion as well. Both of her children have denied any negligence on their part.

*This is an entry designed to set up a plot hook, but also to provide a potential source for quality mounts if the characters help Opal Hardby with her problem.*

## 7) Destroyed Farm\*

This farm is also not on the map, and can also be reached by traveling for about one day south of Wickling. Burk Yoll and his entire family were destroyed by unknown raiders not long ago. However, Yoll rarely ventured into the town itself, and Wickling is therefore unaware of the tragic demise of his family.

*This is another plot hook. The intention is to have this event related to the events at the Hardby farm. The next issue will contain more details about the perpetrators of these crimes.*

# Acton Dinsbury

## 1) Renwistle Farm

The Renwistle farm produces grain and corn for local consumption and for use in brewing spirits of all kinds. Aiden Renwistle is Abner Renwistle's brother, and occasionally travels to Bristlebury to sell his grain and goods through Abner's business. Perigee Renwistle is a native of Acton Dinsbury, and displays the characteristic beauty of its lifelong residents. Their oldest son, Jess, recently became engaged to the very beautiful Millicent Cooper, which has caused a bit of a stir in town. Jess was the most eligible bachelor in the small town, and his betrothal has broken some hearts.

The Renwistles also produce the famous Acton Dinsbury honey, sought after by Tyden Harbuckle and used to produce mead by Hamill Hale in Bristlebury.

*Jess Renwistle sets up an excellent plot possibility in Acton Dinsbury, involving a love triangle between him, Tamara Oldstoke, and Millicent Cooper.*

## 2) Dinsbury Vineyard

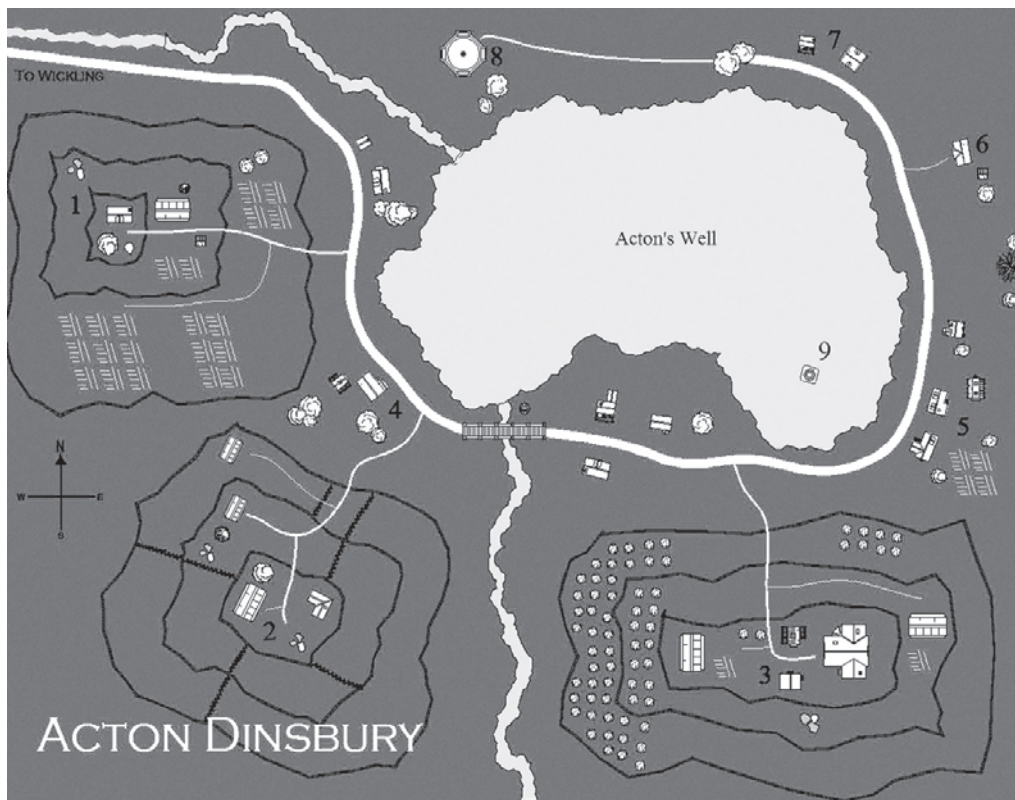
The Dinsbury Vineyard produces wines from locally grown grapes, but also from the Oldstoke apples and the Renwistle grain. Yarbur Ripplestone operates the farm, leaving his wife Norby and his eldest daughter Patrice in charge of the production of spirits. The Ripplestones produce beverages of the highest quality, regarded highly throughout the region and beyond.

Norby Ripplestone is the sister of Burk Yoll, the Wickling farmer who was slain by unknown assailants in recent days. Though Norby has not heard from Burk or his family in some time, she is not concerned yet.

*Norby serves two purposes. She highlights that familial ties run across the entire valley, but she also can serve as a hook into the problems experienced on the Wickling farmsteads.*

## 3) Oldstoke Farm

The largest farm in Acton Dinsbury produces apples, grain, beer, and wine. Bent Oldstoke is a former adventurer credited with helping preserve the frontier of the Dunlock Mounds during a humanoid offensive twenty



years past. After the strife ended, he traveled extensively, and met his wife Marisol, a younger woman from Dunlock. As one of the most respected men in town, Bent Oldstoke acts as an informal council member, along with Fiddler MacTaggish and Yarbur Ripplestone.

While Bent has a favorable relationship with the town, the same cannot be said for his wife and children. Marisol is regarded as untrustworthy and distant, and would likely be ostracized completely if not for the charisma of her husband. The locals whisper of her as a witch, and would never be caught speaking to her without her husband present. Acton Dinsbury residents speculate as to how long it will take for her to corrupt Bent. Tamara, the eldest Oldstoke child, is beautiful, petulant, and arrogant, and usually involves herself inappropriately in the business of others. It is a rare week when Fiddler MacTaggish does not send Tamara home from his tavern due to some scrap she has had with another local girl. Graven Oldstoke is the image of his father, and is also well respected as a hard worker and level head. He is betrothed to Milla Hoste, the weaver's apprentice in Bristlebury.

The Oldstokes have hired Orph Bedrew as a farmhand. Orph is about the same age as Tamara and Graven, and has nurtured an immense crush on Tamara, who refuses to give him any attention unless she needs him to do something questionable on her behalf. Orph is the first

cousin of Cammy Bedrew, the cook at the Spit and Spigot in Bristlebury.

*This is one of the key areas. There are multiple distinct personalities living here that are likely to cooperate or conflict with characters in the area. Marisol herself is a shady character that draws suspicions. A clever CK can either cause her to be a source of trouble or use her as a red herring.*

#### 4) Tavern of the Strings

Fiddler MacTaggish, the proprietor of this tavern, is probably the most skilled musician in the valley, and is an accomplished instrument-maker as well. Fiddler has the distinct advantage of being able to provide his own musical entertainment in his tavern. He and his paramour, Lanna Olaie, duet with violins when not serving rounds of drinks.

Some of the more adventuresome youths in Acton Dinsbury are shepherded by Fiddler, who tends to provide discipline when their parents are busy handling farm business. He acts as a monitor and a mentor, and has a good relationship with all of the Acton Dinsbury families.

*Another important area, as characters are likely to spend a great deal of time here. Fiddler is an attractive NPC for a lot of reasons. He knows the area and the people, and is a source of information.*

*He provides an expert service with instruments. He can serve as a source of adventure hooks. Finally, his mistress can be portrayed mysteriously and can serve as a potential suspect in unsavory events.*

## 5) Cooper

In a town that produces wine and spirits, barrels are in great demand. Falgrave and Falandra Cooper have established a comfortable but busy life in Acton Dinsbury. Regarded as upstanding people, the Coopers generally mind their own business and remain out of scandals. Recently, however, the engagement of Millicent Cooper to Jess Renwistle has caused a fuss. It was widely expected that Jess would choose to ask Tamara Oldstoke, and it is said that tensions between the three families are high because of the change of heart.

*Millicent Cooper is as pure and sweet as Tamara Oldstoke is spoiled and nasty. This counterpoint is needed to add contrast for any plot involving Tamara.*

## 6) Wainwright

Norick Bottle builds and repairs wagons for the needs of the farmers in Acton Dinsbury. Most of the regions wagons have passed through his hands at some point. He is a dour man who never married, and buries himself in his work.

Bottle retains contacts in Dunlock, with whom he continuously corresponds. Fiddler MacTaggish is aware of this correspondence, but has not approached Bottle about it.

*Norick Bottle is the suspicious man with outsider contacts. Should the CK desire it, he can easily be used as a source of information for outsiders seeking to exploit or do harm to Acton Dinsbury.*

## 7) Berdun family

Eck Berdun is a local small farmer, scraping out a modest subsistence living raising chickens and turkeys. During a raid by orcs about ten years ago, Eck's wife was killed and his daughter Aragee was kidnapped. A year later, Aragee wandered back into town, delirious and very pregnant. She gave birth soon after to a pair of half-orc twins that she named Hunt and Bodie.

The boy, Hunt, is extremely tall for his age, appearing about 13 when his actual age is 9. Despite his half-orc ancestry, he is very handsome, though very shy. Bodie, the girl, is likewise beautiful, but reclusive. Their pointed ears, slightly upturned noses, and olive skin betrays

their heritage. While the residents of Acton Dinsbury have always been outwardly supportive of the twins, it is rumored that their mother never recovered from her ordeal, and has difficulty relating to her children.

The Berdun children are exceptional athletes, and usually defeat others in their age group at the annual contests held in Acton Dinsbury.

*The Berdun children illustrate in stark detail that Acton Dinsbury produces exceptional looking people. If half-orc children are beautiful, something is surely happening in Acton Dinsbury that defies coincidence. They are the shock that may trigger characters to investigate the source of the "beauty genes."*

*Aragee Berdun also serves as an information source about local orc tribes, as she lived with one for the better part of a year.*

## 8) Barrow

This barrow is a smaller scale replica of the large barrow in Bristlebury, and has many of the same design features. See **Area 4** in Bristlebury for more information.

## 9) Water Tower

One of the most unusual features of Acton Dinsbury is the remains of the ruined tower that protrudes from the water in the middle of Acton's Well. The tower is about thirty feet in diameter and is round, constructed of the sandstone found throughout the area. It appears that the tower had a spire atop it, but that has crumbled and left only a trace of its existence.

Hunt and Bodie Berdun once swam to the tower on a dare, but this act was admonished by the elders of the village and has not been repeated since. Several have taken boats to the tower, but have been unable to enter or gather any information about it. No one in the village is sure who built the tower, or what the function was, so it remains an accepted mystery in the lives of the people.

*This is the most obvious indicator that there is more to Acton Dinsbury than meets the eye. The tower is eye-catching and prominent, and will cause the players to ask questions. How they are answered is up to the CK.*

# Cobb's Wells

## 1) Typical Abandoned Shop

This shop is a large ruined building, the second floor decimated by fire, and the first crumbling under exposure

to the elements. At one time, it was a large general store. With the abandonment of Cobb's Wells, this store was left to burn and rot, and very little of use remains inside.

**2) Afterlife Inn**

The largest building in Cobb's Wells, the Afterlife Inn is still standing, though in declining condition. Built on a perching hill overlooking the steam wells, the Afterlife Inn was a favorite lodging for travelers looking to benefit from the healing properties of the wells. While abandoned, the interior still retains most of the furnishings.

Standing next to the Afterlife Inn is the livery stable. The stable is standing, but the stalls simply contain rotted hay, the bones of horses or mules, and rusted, decayed harness.

*Characters investigating the area may choose to stay here. The CK can decide whether or not that is a mistake. The option exists, however, for an extremely sleepless night.*

**3) Steam wells**

The five steam wells in town retain a constant temperature of 100 degrees F, and can be seen steaming all year. The largest pool has an island in the middle, upon which a ruined structure can be seen, along with a large hole or crater. The area is rocky, though smooth trails have been constructed that lead between and around the wells. An acrid smell wafts off the water in the direction of the town. All of the vegetation near the wells has died, bare trees, shrubs, and dead grass indicating something is awry.

*Yes, obviously something is wrong with the wells, and I'd bet that island and hole upon it have something to do with it. This is an obvious hook.*

**4) Typical Abandoned Home**

Most homes in Cobb's Wells were comfortably appointed. The industry of the town was primarily catering to pilgrims to the wells, and business was excellent until the town was suddenly abandoned. This particular house, high on a hill overlooking the wells, is a typical example of a Cobb's Wells home. It has two stories, one partially ruined. It was large enough at one time to support a large family of six to eight. Other houses, larger or smaller, might be in better condition, but all had roughly the same amount of affluence.

*This reinforces the idea that Cobb's Wells was not a run down town, or a place of poverty, but a well settled affluent town that suddenly saw disaster.*

**5) Barrow**

This large barrow is also modeled after the barrow in Bristlebury, but it has been very clearly sealed and warded by priests of the Siblings. Brightly painted ward letters circle the stone door and wander around the exterior of the building. The trees growing near the barrow appear healthier than in the rest of the town, but they still have a stunted appearance.





*This barrow contrasts with the barrows in the other three towns, because it has been sealed and warded to a greater degree. Adventurers with a healthy sense of mortality will guess why and avoid it, while others may try to see what is within.*

The major points of interest in the four towns are now mapped and keyed. The approach I took with many of these areas was to insert interesting facts that either seed adventures or simply make the area interesting. The effort is to avoid cookie-cutter areas where the NPCs living therein cease to seem like they could be real people with real motivations. As a whole, plotting out the major areas with this sort of detail allows the CK to describe the feel of the culture with confidence, and allows for adventures to be developed that feed upon this uniqueness.

In the next issue, important wilderness areas will receive the same treatment. Areas like the Dunlock Mounds will be described in more detail, along with specific locations elsewhere that merit special descriptions. When coupled with the information provided in this installment, enough necessary details will exist to help get the PCs in the campaign out of town and adventuring.

Until next issue, happy designing!

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*Josh Chewning has wasted much of his adult life constantly tinkering with games and game design. With well over fifty unfinished game manuscripts under his belt, he was introduced to Davis and Steve Chenault at a convention in St. Louis, Missouri. It was there he was invited to bring his untested ideas to the development of Castles & Crusades.*

*After many months of online arguments about the nature of game design and "old school" ethics, most of Josh's suggestions were left by the wayside of C&C's development as being too radical or against the spirit of the game.*

*Somehow along the way, he had managed to trick the Troll Lords into respecting his game design ideas. He's even responsible for the much "loved" Encumbrance section of Castles & Crusades. Now Steve and Davis have given him a chance to expand their SIEGE Engine into new areas and some those "off the wall" proposals from the early C&C development can see the light of day in StarSIEGE: Event Horizon.*

# TO THE STARS

## CONVERTING YOUR CASTLES & CRUSADES CHARACTERS TO STARSIEGE: EVENT HORIZON

BY JOSH CHEWNING

### WELCOME TO THE SIEGE

*StarSIEGE: Event Horizon* is a sci-fi RPG based on the familiar *Castles & Crusades* rule set. And while it was inspired by the mechanics found within C&C, *StarSIEGE: Event Horizon* is also a complete departure. StarSIEGE is designed to be a skill-based system that revolves entirely around the Primary Ability mechanics popularized by C&C. Gone are base-attack bonuses and class abilities. In StarSIEGE, players can make whatever type of character they want.

That said, some might wish to port their Castles & Crusades game into the new StarSIEGE mechanics. Others might want to see how their C&C Fighter would square-off with their Soldier from *StarSIEGE: Event Horizon*. While the games have a similar base-mechanic, there are enough differences that a conversion would be required.

This article will outline some examples of how to convert "the Big Four" classes from C&C into StarSIEGE. It will show examples of the Fighter, the Rogue, the Wizard, and the Cleric as modeled in *StarSIEGE: Event Horizon*. These are merely examples and SIEGE Engineers should feel free to modify or change the Professions and Special Abilities listed below to suit their style of game.

### THE FIGHTER

In *Castles & Crusades*, the Fighter is often considered the "base class". It almost seems that all other classes XP charts were based off of the Fighter as a baseline. Looking at the class, it's easy to see why. Their base-attack bonus progression, hit dice, and abilities make a perfect foundation to base the other classes off of. Once an internally consistent formula

was developed for the different abilities of the Fighter and what they translate into for XP requirements, the development team was able to create the XP progressions for all classes while maintaining an internal level of balance.

In *StarSIEGE: Event Horizon*, XP are spent, rather than accumulated, and thus become a balancing factor in that all players use their XPs to purchase abilities and advancements. Thus, the balancing factor becomes the amount of XPs granted to the characters by the SIEGE Engineer.

Looking at the Fighter, we see that they have the following abilities: Strength Prime, +1 BAB per level, d10 Hit Dice, can utilize any weapon or armor type, Weapon Specialization, Combat Dominance, and an Extra Attack. Translating this into StarSIEGE will take a little bit of effort.

#### PRIME

First, the Strength Prime must be converted. In *StarSIEGE: Event Horizon*, Primes are not based off of attributes. Instead, they are tied to Skill Bundles. Also gone are the concepts of Saves. If we take into account the Fighter's Strength Prime as well as their +1 BAB and weapon and armor training, it's easy to see that the Fighter should have the Combat Skill Bundle as Prime. This Skill Bundle allows the character to make attacks using their Prime Challenge Base as well as covers weapon training, tactics, and other aspects of martial prowess.

It is also suggested that Fighters take the Athletics Skill Bundle as their second Prime to cover the other aspects covered by their C&C Strength Prime. This isn't required, however, if players wanted to modify their character's archetype some.

## HIT DICE

Modeling the Hit Dice is more difficult. In *StarSIEGE: Event Horizon*, the Hit Die has been replaced by Physical and Mental Wound Tracks, with all characters being placed on an even playing field. There is an option for importing Hit Dice into the game in the rules. In that case, the Fighter would have 2d10 starting Wound Hit Dice and 2d8 starting Stress Hit Dice (assuming the Fighter took Athletics and Combat as their Skill Bundles).

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

*StarSIEGE: Event Horizon* allows for players to custom-build special abilities for their characters. This allows for the players to build the characters they wish. This mechanic can be used to simulate the Class Abilities found in C&C. Special Abilities in StarSIEGE are built with Building Points that are then translated into the Ability's Potency, Drain, and XP costs. Potency demarks a Special Ability as a Psychic power (or in the case of C&C, Magic). Drain represents fatigue the Ability causes, be it physical or mental. Drain is used to limit how often a Special Ability can be used. Each level of Drain means that the ability cannot be used for one combat round. The XP rating for a Special Ability is the cost in XPs the player must pay before the character can access the ability.

Looking at the Class Abilities for the Fighter, we'll first model the Weapon Specialization ability. In C&C, this is a fairly straightforward ability that grants bonuses to attack and damage for a specific weapon. This can be modeled with StarSIEGE with one of the following Ability blocks:

**Melee Weapon Specialization:** P0 D0 X5, Combat. +5 Melee, +1 Wound Box, Flaw: Specific Weapon

**Ranged Weapon Specialization:** P0 D0 X5, Combat. +5 Shooting, +1 Wound Box, Flaw: Specific Weapon

The player could even spend 5 of the character's starting XP to purchase this ability at the start of the game. This ability has a Flaw built in that requires the Fighter select a certain weapon type (such as sword, axe, pistol, bow, etc.). Once the type is selected, this ability can be invoked at any time by the character and grants a +5 bonus to any Melee or Shooting rolls made with the weapon of choice. The weapon also deals an additional Wound box on a successful strike.

Next up is the Combat Dominance ability. In C&C, the Combat Dominance allows for a fighter to make extra attacks against lesser foes. This is harder to model in *StarSIEGE: Event Horizon*, since the concept of Hit Dice has been removed. If the Mook rules are being used this can be modeled pretty easily with the following Special Ability.

**Combat Dominance:** P0 D0 X6, Combat. SFX (x4): Time Dilation, Flaw: Melee Specialty only, Flaw: Mooks Only.

This would translate into a second melee attack every combat round that can only be used on Mooks. For games that aren't using Mook rules, modeling this power might look like this:

**Combat Dominance:** P0 D0 X6, Combat. SFX (x4): Time Dilation, Flaw: Melee Specialty only, Flaw: Only targets without Combat Skill Bundle.

This configuration works in a similar manner, giving the character an extra melee attack against any opponent that doesn't have the Combat Skill Bundle as Prime. The SIEGE Engineer could even let the player purchase this multiple times to represent the Fighter's ability to make more attacks as their Level increases.

Finally, the Extra Attack ability is probably the easiest to model. This simply allows for an additional attack to be made by the Fighter every combat round. This would look like this:

**Extra Attack:** P0 D0 X12, Combat. Time Dilation

Finally, for groups that are using the basic Wounding rules, rather than Hit Dice, the SIEGE Engineer may optionally allow the Fighter to purchase the following Special Ability:

**Hardiness:** P0 D0 X8, Automatic. +1 Armor

This would grant the Fighter a bonus Wound Box due to their hardiness.

## SUMMING IT UP

Given all the information above, the Fighter Class would look like this in *StarSIEGE: Event Horizon*.

### Profession: Fighter

Available Skill Bundles: Combat (required) and Athletics (optional)

Available Special Abilities:

Melee Weapon Specialization: P0 D0 X5, Combat. +5 Melee, +1 Wound Box, Flaw: Specific Weapon

Ranged Weapon Specialization: P0 D0 X5, Combat. +5 Shooting, +1 Wound Box, Flaw: Specific Weapon

Combat Dominance: P0 D0 X6, Combat. SFX (x4): Time Dilation, Flaw: Melee Specialty only, Flaw: Only targets without Combat Skill Bundle

Extra Attack: P0 D0 X12, Combat. SFX (x4): Time Dilation

(Optional) Hardiness: P0 D0, X8, Automatic. +1 Armor

Optional Wound Hit Dice: 2d10 (if both Combat and Athletics are taken as Skill Bundles)

Optional Stress Hit Dice: 2d8

## THE MONK

Not as much of a fantasy trope as the Barbarian, the Monk presents interesting challenges as a Class conversion. Furthermore, many of the Special Abilities for the Monk might be useful for general *StarSIEGE: Event Horizon* games. As an exemplar of the Constitution Prime Classes, the Monk is a Class, much like the Rogue, that is rife with Class Abilities. Converting some of these abilities will be a mixture of suggested Specialties to actual Special Abilities.

### PRIME

The Monk is a Constitution Prime Class, which would most directly translate into the Athletics Skill Bundle, at least for the Monk. Their focus on physical perfection lends itself to the Athletics Skill Bundle. Their second Skill Bundle would be a toss up between Combat or Spiritual, depending on the type of Monk the player envisions.

### HIT DICE

Looking at the Monk Skill Bundles available, it becomes obvious that regardless of choosing Spiritual or Combat as a Skill Bundle, the Monk will still be granted 2d10 Wound Hit Dice. Their Stress Hit Dice will only be affected if they choose the Spiritual Skill Bundle, so generally they will have 2d6 Stress Hit Dice.

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

The Monk is absolutely brimming with Class Abilities. Beyond its copious and exotic weapon list, the Monk has the following Abilities in C&C: Mind Over Body, Stunning Attack, Unarmed Attack, Unarmed Defense, Deflect Missiles, Fast Movement, Ki Strike, Slow Fall, Purity Of Body, Still Body, Fast Healing, Still Mind, Quivering Palm. Looking at the actual abilities, Unarmed Attack and Unarmed Defense would best translate to the Unarmed Specialty and the Defensive Maneuvers Specialty. The Mind Over Body and Still Mind Abilities grant bonuses to Saving Throws, the closest analogue to which is the Mental Endurance Specialty.

**Extra Unarmed Attack:** P0 D0 X9, Combat. SFX (x4): Time Dilation, Flaw: Unarmed attacks only.

This ability allows the Monk to make a second action each round, but is limited to Unarmed attacks only.

**Stunning Attack:** P0 D0 X4, Combat. +4 Unarmed, SFX: Stun, Flaw: Five times per day.

This ability lets the Monk make an Unarmed attack that forces the target to make a Challenge Level 0 Athletics check or else be incapacitated for d20/2 rounds. This power can only be used five times a day.

**Deflect Missiles:** P0 D0 X9, Automatic. SFX (x2): Deflection, Flaw: Requires Athletics Check.

The Deflect Missiles Special Ability grants the Monk the chance to knock incoming ranged attacks from the air. Whenever a Monk is successfully struck by a ranged attack, the Deflect Missiles ability automatically triggers. On a successful Athletics Skill Bundle check, the Monk gains the Deflection ability, which instantly foils a single successful Shooting check that the Monk was the target of.

**Fast Movement:** P0 D0 X15, Automatic. Move 2, Flaw: Cannot be Encumbered.

The Fast Movement Ability pushes the Monk's Move up to a 2. The only restriction on this power is that the Monk cannot be Encumbered or Overburdened.

**Ki Strike:** P0 D0 X7, Combat. +4 Unarmed, SFX: Armor Piercing.

When utilizing the Ki Strike Special Ability, the Monk gains a +4 to their Unarmed attack. Furthermore, their training has allowed them to ignore any Armor rating the target may possess.

**Slow Fall:** P0 D0 X7, Automatic. Armor 2, Flaw: Falling Damage only.

A Monk that possesses the Slow Fall ability is granted an Armor rating of 2 for any falling damage they might incur. This means they effectively take two fewer levels of falling damage than others due to their training and reflexes.

**Purity of Body:** P0 D0 X21, Automatic. SFX (x5): Immunity to poison and disease.

A Monk who attains the level of physical perfection required for Purity of Body finds themselves completely immune to the ravages of poison and disease. They take no further damage from those sources.

**Still Body:** P0 D0 X12, Athletics. SFX (x2): Feign Death, SFX (x2): Persistent, doubled.

Still Body affords the Monk the ability to enter a death-like trance. This trance will fool all but the most advanced medical equipment. Upon entering the trance it will last for up to six rounds.

**Fast Healing:** P0 D0 X12, Automatic. SFX (x3): Double Natural Healing Rate, Flaw: Tranquility.

The Fast Healing Special Ability grants the Monk an increased healing rate. So long as they are in a completely tranquil environment while they are recuperating, they double their normal healing rate. The environment must be free of extremes in temperature, stress, or physical duress.

**Quivering Palm:** P0 D0 X54, Combat. +6 Unarmed, Deal +3 Critical Boxes, SFX: Delay death, Flaw (x2): Victim must fail Athletics check, Flaw: Must be familiar with Anatomy of target.

Quivering Palm is the most feared ability of the Monk. Upon a successful Unarmed strike with this ability, the Monk can deal 3 Critical Boxes of damage (effectively killing the

target) at any point they wish within the same day of dealing the damage (Delay Special Effect). The only stipulations are that the target must fail an Athletics check and the Monk must be familiar with the vital spots to strike the opponent to make the attack.

### Profession: Monk

Available Skill Bundles: Athletics (required), Combat (optional), Spiritual (optional)

Available Special Abilities:

Extra Unarmed Attack: P0 D0 X9, Combat. SFX (x4): Time Dilation, Flaw: Unarmed attacks only

Stunning Attack: P0 D0 X4, Combat. +4 Unarmed, SFX: Stun, Flaw: Five times per day

Deflect Missiles: P0 D0 X9, Automatic. SFX (x2): Deflection, Flaw: Requires Athletics Check

Fast Movement: P0 D0 X15, Automatic. Move 2, Flaw: Cannot be Encumbered

Ki Strike: P0 D0 X7, Combat. +4 Unarmed, SFX: Armor Piercing

Slow Fall: P0 D0 X7, Automatic. Armor 2, Flaw: Falling Damage only

Purity of Body: P0 D0 X21, Automatic. SFX (x5): Immunity to poison and disease

Still Body: P0 D0 X12, Athletics. SFX (x2): Feign Death, SFX (x2): Persistent, doubled

Fast Healing: P0 D0 X12, Automatic. SFX (x3): Double Natural Healing Rate, Flaw: Tranquility

Quivering Palm: P0 D0 X54, Combat. +6 Unarmed, Deal +3 Critical Boxes, SFX: Delay death, Flaw (x2): Victim must fail Athletics check, Flaw: Must be familiar with Anatomy of target

Optional Wound Hit Dice: 2d10 (regardless of the two Skill Bundles selected)

Optional Stress Hit Dice: 2d6 or 2d8 (depending on if the Spiritual Skill Bundle is selected)

## THE ROGUE

The Rogue is the skill-horse of *Castles & Crusades*. But, being a class-based system, the skills needed to be encoded in the Class Abilities of the Rogue. Since StarSIEGE has divorced skills out of the profession and allowed for both Skill Bundles and Specialties, the Rogue loses some punch in Class Abilities, but more than makes up for it in customization of abilities.

### PRIMES

The C&C Rogue is known for specializing in Dexterity. In StarSIEGE, the Rogue need not be so focused. In fact, there

is, in the default rules, a Rogue Profession listed. The Rogue is listed as having the option of selecting any of the following Skill Bundles: Awareness, Persuasion, and Mechanics. The Awareness and Mechanics bundles most represent the former Dexterity Prime of C&C, with Mechanics covering things like picking locks or disabling traps while Awareness is used for sneaking around or noticing small details. As such, those two Bundles should really be the focus of a part of the C&C Rogue over.

### HIT DICE

Using the optional Hit Dice rules would grant the starting Rogue 2d6 in Wound Hit Dice and 2d8 Stress Hit dice assuming the Rogue chose the Awareness and Mechanics Skill Bundles. Otherwise, use the rules outlined in the StarSIEGE core rulebook to determine starting Hit Dice.

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

The Rogue is loaded with Class Abilities in C&C that can mostly be modeled through the use of purchasing Specialties. In particular, the Climb, Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Open Lock, Pick Pockets, and Traps Class Abilities would translate into the following Specialties:

Climb	Climbing (Athletics)
Hide	Stealth (Awareness)
Listen	Detection (Awareness)
Move Silently	Stealth (Awareness)
Open Lock	Disable (Mechanics)
Pick Pockets	Sleight of Hand (Athletics)
Traps	Disable (Mechanics)

Rogues would best be served by spending XP to improve the Specialties rather than modeling these as Special Abilities. The other Class Abilities of Sneak Attack, Back Attack, and Cant would get a more robust treatment using the Special Ability creation rules. For Sneak Attack, it would probably best be modeled as such:

**Sneak Attack:** P0 D0 X4, Combat. +3 Melee, +3 Shooting, Close Range Only, +1 Wound Boxes, Flaw: Opponent must be unaware of attack.

This Special Ability would grant the Rogue a +3 bonus to a melee or ranged attack made within Close Range on an unprepared opponent (i.e. the rogue is hidden from view or is making a preemptive strike). A successful strike will deal two extra Wound boxes of damage to the target.

Back Attack in C&C is available to a lower level rogue, but is more limited in its use. For StarSIEGE we'd see:

**Back Attack:** P0 D0 X8, Awareness and Combat. +3 Stealth, +5 Melee, +2 Wound Box Damage, Flaw: Must be familiar with Anatomy of target, Flaw: Required Additional Class.

The Back Attack Special Ability requires that the Rogue be familiar with their target's anatomy, and thus know a vital or weak spot to attack. It also requires that the target be completely unaware of the Rogue, requiring the Rogue make an Awareness check to remain hidden from the target. If both those conditions are met, the Rogue may make a Combat check at a +5 to hit with a Melee weapon that will deal an additional 2 Wound Boxes of damage.

The Decipher Script Class Ability grants the Rogue the ability to decipher all forms of codes and to even access the power stored in magical scrolls.

**Decipher Script:** P0 D0 X6, Lore. +3 Obscure Knowledge, SFX: Can utilize Arcane Scrolls.

This Special Ability allows the Rogue to cast spells from Divine or Arcane scrolls provided they can pass a Lore check. In these endeavors, however, they gain a +3 bonus to any attempts to decipher Obscure Knowledge from texts or scrolls.

Finally, the Rogue's cant ability gives all Rogues a common form of communication (via code words, hand signals, and other forms of communication) to speak to one another with some degree of secrecy, even if done in public. This would translate to:

**Cant:** P0 D0 X5, Lore. +5 Cultural Understanding, Flaw: Rogues Only, SFX: Hidden in plain sight.

This ability gives Rogues a +5 to any Cultural Understanding rolls with any other Rogue they encounter. They can hide this understanding in seemingly normal conversation due to the "Hidden in plain sight" Special Effect, allowing them to pass secrets back and forth without anyone being tipped off.

### Profession: Rogue

Available Skill Bundles: Awareness (recommended), Mechanics (recommended), Persuasion (optional)

Available Special Abilities

Sneak Attack: P0 D0 X4, Combat. +3 Melee, +3 Shooting, Close Range Only, +1 Wound Boxes, Flaw: Opponent must be unaware of attack

Back Attack: P0 D0 X8, Awareness and Combat. +3 Stealth, +5 Melee, +2 Wound Box Damage, Flaw: Must be familiar with Anatomy of target, Flaw: Required Additional Class

Decipher Script: P0 D0 X6, Lore. +3 Obscure Knowledge, SFX: Can utilize Arcane Scrolls

Cant: P0 D0 X5, Lore. +5 Cultural Understanding, Flaw: Rogues Only, SFX: Hidden in plain sight

Optional Wound Hit Dice: 2d6 (if Awareness and Mechanics bundles selected)

Optional Stress Hit Dice: 2d8 (if Awareness and Mechanics bundles selected)

## THE WIZARD

Magic using classes like the Wizard, Illusionist, Cleric, and Druid represent a special problem to *StarSIEGE: Event Horizon. Castles & Crusades* makes use of a "Vancian" style of magic where practitioners have a certain number of spells they can memorize or make use of in a given day and each spell requires time to prepare it before it can be cast. This is markedly different from the Psionics System of StarSIEGE. There are multiple ways of fixing this problem. One would be to simply model the "per day model" and then allow casters to use spells straight from the C&C book. This would require a lot of Ad-hoc adjudication on how the spells would translate from system to system.

The second option would be to give magic users Psi powers and let them build their own powers as they see fit. This doesn't follow the spirit of C&C as much, but is a more elegant way of solving the problem. Both methods will be examined below.

### PRIMES

The Intelligence prime of the Wizard pretty much directly translates to the Lore Skill Bundle found in StarSIEGE. It's possible that some considerations could be made to the Spiritual Skill Bundle (especially for the connection to Channeling Psychic powers) as well. As such, the Lore Skill Bundle is considered required for a Wizard whilst the Spiritual bundle is strongly recommended.

### HIT DICE

The optional Hit Dice mechanic in *StarSIEGE: Event Horizon* assumes a baseline d6 Hit Die, so Wizards will get a slight bump in that respect. Based off of their suggested Skill Bundles of Lore and Spiritual, the Wizard should have 2d8 Wound Hit Dice and 2d10 Stress Hit Dice.

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

There are two paths to be taken to model the Wizard's Spell Casting Class Ability. The first is to model the per day use ability and then allow players to port in spells from *Castles & Crusades*. The second method would be to re-imagine the Wizard's abilities using the confines of the base Psionics System. We'll present both options in turn.

To model the "per day" usage paradigm, each "Spell Level" would require a separate Special Ability. Thus, to build a host of Spell Casting Special Abilities:

**Cantrips:** P0 D0 X1, Automatic. SFX: Cast 0-Level Spells, Flaw (x3): Usable five times daily.

**1st Level Spells:** P0 D0 X6, Automatic. SFX (x2): Cast 1-Level Spells, Flaw (x3): Usable five times daily, SFX: Bonus daily casting per Savvy bonus.

**2nd Level Spells:** P0 D0 X6, Automatic. SFX (x3): Cast 2-Level Spells, Flaw (x3): Usable five times daily, SFX: Bonus daily casting per Savvy bonus, Flaw: Requires 1st Level Spell Ability.

**3rd Level Spells:** P0 D0 X9, Automatic. SFX (x4): Cast 3-Level Spells, Flaw (x3): Usable five times daily, SFX: Bonus daily casting per Savvy bonus, Flaw: Requires 2nd Level Spell Ability.

**4th Level Spells:** P0 D0 X12, Automatic. SFX (x5): Cast 4-Level Spells, Flaw (x3): Usable five times daily, Flaw: Requires 3rd Level Spell Ability.

**5th Level Spells:** P0 D0 X15, Automatic. SFX (x6): Cast 4-Level Spells, Flaw: Usable five times daily, Flaw: Requires 4th Level Spell Ability.

The Special Abilities listed above show how to model spells from Cantrip level to 5th-Level. Higher level spells can be extrapolated from the pattern listed. These spells require that the Wizard possess the Special Ability to be able to cast all lower level spells before accessing higher level spells. Each Spell Level can be used 5 times daily (and some gain bonus uses from the character's Savvy Score).

Now to limit access, we'll need to introduce the Wizard's a Spell Access Ability as well as a Spell Book item.

**Spell Access:** P0 D0 X1, Automatic. SFX: Can cast from Arcane Scrolls, Flaw (x3): Requires spell to be in Spell Book if not on Scroll.

**Spell Book:** T4 S6 R0 V3, +1 Lore Skill Bundle, SFX: Can hold up to 50 levels worth of Spells, Durability 2.

These two abilities limit access to the spells for the Wizard, requiring the Wizard to have a spell in their Spell book before they can cast it and making the Spell Book an object that can be destroyed or lost. The Wizard's Spell Access does let them cast directly from Scrolls, however, granting a level of flexibility.

To use the Psionics system rather than trying to port C&C spells into *StarSIEGE: Event Horizon*, the only thing necessary would be to model individual spells into Special Abilities. This would allow Wizard players to customize their spell lists to make "theme" or "specialist" Wizards if they so wished. The only real suggestion here would be to rename Psi to be Mana and make sure all Wizards start with at least a 1 in their Mana score. What follows are some of the more popular C&C Spells modeled as Special Abilities.

**Prestidigitation:** P0 D0 X7, Automatic. SFX: Various minor effects (puff of smoke, minor heat, change colors, etc.), Close Range Only.

**Magic Missile:** P1 D3 X3, Automatic. +1 Wound Box Damage, Close Range Only.

**Invisibility:** P2 D4 X6, Automatic. SFX (x3): Make target completely invisible, Flaw (x2): Pacifist, SFX: Continual

**Fireball:** P3 D5 X5, Combat. +3 Shooting, SFX: Combust, Deal +1 Wound Box Damage, SFX: Area Effect, Short Range

**Polymorph:** P3 D5 X10, Automatic. SFX (x4): Target and all equipment takes form of any other living creature, SFX: Gain mundane abilities of new form, keep mental abilities of original form, Flaw: Self Only.

**Teleport:** P6 D5 X10, Lore. SFX (x8): Completely relocate self and all possessions to new location, regardless of distance, Flaw: Taxing.

Some notes on the spells above, the Pacifist Flaw means that the caster cannot make any hostile or aggressive actions. Do so would end the powers effect immediately.

As you can see, modeling spells becomes quite subjective when it comes to the Special Effect costs. Following the guidelines outlined in the Fashioning Worlds section of *StarSIEGE: Event Horizon* should give a good indicator of how many Special Effects bonuses a specific effect is worth.

### Profession: Wizard

Available Skill Bundles: Lore (required) and Spiritual (recommended)

Available Special Abilities:

#### Option 1 (Port C&C Spells)

Cantrips: P0 D0 X1, Automatic. SFX: Cast 0-Level Spells, Flaw (x3): Usable five times daily.

1st Level Spells: P0 D0 X6, Automatic. SFX (x2): Cast 1-Level Spells, Flaw (x3): Usable five times daily, SFX: Bonus daily casting per Savvy bonus.

2nd Level Spells: P0 D0 X6, Automatic. SFX (x3): Cast 2-Level Spells, Flaw (x3): Usable five times daily, SFX: Bonus daily casting per Savvy bonus, Flaw: Requires 1st Level Spell Ability.

3rd Level Spells: P0 D0 X9, Automatic. SFX (x4): Cast 3-Level Spells, Flaw (x3): Usable five times daily, SFX: Bonus daily casting per Savvy bonus, Flaw: Requires 2nd Level Spell Ability.

4th Level Spells: P0 D0 X12, Automatic. SFX (x5): Cast 4-Level Spells, Flaw (x3): Usable five times daily, Flaw: Requires 3rd Level Spell Ability

5th Level Spells: P0 D0 X15, Automatic. SFX (x6): Cast 5-Level Spells, Flaw: Usable five times daily, Flaw: Requires 4th Level Spell Ability.

Spell Access: P0 D0 X1, Automatic. SFX: Can cast from Arcane Scrolls, Flaw (x3): Requires spell to be in Spell Book if not on Scroll.

Spell Book: T4 S6 R0 V3, +1 Lore Skill Bundle, SFX: Can hold up to 50 levels worth of Spells, Durability 2.

#### Option 2 (Use StarSIEGE: Event Horizon Psionics Rules, example powers)

Prestidigitation: P0 D0 X7, Automatic. SFX: Various minor effects (puff of smoke, minor heat, change colors, etc.), Close Range Only

Magic Missile: P1 D3 X3, Automatic. +1 Wound Box Damage, Close Range Only

Invisibility: P2 D4 X6, Automatic. SFX (x3): Make target completely invisible, Flaw (x2): Pacifist, SFX: Continual

Fireball: P3 D5 X5, Combat. +3 Shooting, SFX: Combust, Deal +1 Wound Box Damage, SFX: Area Effect, Short Range

Polymorph: P3 D5 X10, Automatic. SFX (x4): Target and all equipment takes form of any other living creature, SFX: Gain mundane abilities of new form, keep mental abilities of original form, Flaw: Self Only

Teleport: P6 D5 X10, Lore. SFX (x8): Completely relocate self and all possessions to new location, regardless of distance, Flaw: Taxing

Optional Wound Hit Dice: 2d8 (assuming Lore and Spiritual Skill Bundles)

Optional Stress Hit Dice: 2d10 (assuming Lore and Spiritual Skill Bundles)

## THE CLERIC

The Cleric will share much in common with the Wizard in that it is another spell using class. As such, we won't outline the different options for Spells other than to model the Cleric's Spell Access ability and to provide some examples of C&C Divine Spells ported into *StarSIEGE: Event Horizon* Special Abilities. That said the Cleric is a lot more than just a divine spellcaster. The Cleric represents a holy warrior that is taking the word of their deity and manifesting it physically, in both deed and thought.

### PRIMES

Clerics in *Castles & Crusades* have Wisdom as their Primary Ability. In *StarSIEGE: Event Horizon*, it would be suggested that Clerics take the Spiritual Skill Bundle first and foremost. Beyond that, the Combat, Lore, and Persuasion bundles all fit the archetype, depending on the god being followed. It's suggested that the SIEGE Engineer outline which Skill Bundles are granted by specific deities according to the setting being played.

### HIT DICE

*Castles & Crusades* give Clerics a d8 Hit Die, representing the warrior-priest aspect of the traditional Cleric. Using the optional Hit Dice mechanic and looking at the fact that there is a wide variety of options for the Cleric's second Skill Bundle, it's hard to affix hard and fast numbers to the

Cleric Hit Dice. Warrior clerics (Combat and Spiritual Skill Bundles) would have 2d10 Wound and 2d8 Stress Hit Dice while Evangelical Clerics (Persuasion and Spiritual Skill Bundles) would have 2d8 Wound and 2d10 Stress Hit Dice.

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

Clerics have access to spells much like Wizards do, so there same two options present themselves: Port C&C or use the Psionics system. Clerics should use the same rules as Wizards with two small differences. First, their Cantrips are called Orisons. Second, their bonus Spells per day are based off of Confidence rather than Savvy. Otherwise, they'd use the same progression to purchase the ability to cast different levels of spells.

That said, their Spell Access Special Ability will be different:

**Spell Access:** P0 D0 X9, Automatic. SFX: Can case from Divine Scrolls

The Cleric's Spell Access is a bit more expensive because they are not limited to only the spells in their spell book; they gain access to all the Spells provided by their deity.

If using the Psionics System, here are some example Cleric spells ported as Special Abilities:

**Light:** P1 D3 X3, Automatic. SFX: Low Light Vision, Flaw: Obvious.

**Cure Light Wounds:** P2 D3 X4, Automatic. Restore 2 Wound Boxes, Flaw: Must touch target.

**Aid:** P3 D3 X3, Automatic. +1 Armor, +2 Melee, +2 Shooting, Flaw: Must touch target, Flaw: Cannot cast on self, SFX: Persistent.

**Animate Dead:** P5 D3 X5, Lore. SFX: Area Effect, Close Range Only, SFX (x5): Animate dead bodies as a Mook combatant, Flaw: Requires mostly intact bodies.

**Sending:** P5 D5 X11, Automatic. SFX (x3): Send short message to any one known person, SFX (x2): No upper limit to range.

**Cure Critical Wounds:** P6 D3 X12, Automatic. Restore 1 Critical Wound Box, Flaw: Must touch target.

Spells are not the only part of a Cleric's repertoire. They also have the Class Ability of Turning Undead. This ability is pretty specific to a fantasy setting, but can be fashioned like any other Special Ability, with some creative use of Special Effects and Flaws.

**Turn Undead:** P0 D2 X2, Spiritual. Close Range Only, SFX (x3): Sanctuary, Flaw: Undead Only.

This Special Ability lets the Cleric gain Sanctuary from any Undead in Close Range. After a successful Spiritual Skill Bundle check, any Undead creatures within Close Range to the Cleric must withdraw to a minimum of Short Range, if they cannot then they cower until the Cleric leaves (this is



the Sanctuary Special Effect). They cannot willingly enter into Close Range of the Cleric until they have completely lost sight of the Cleric.

### Profession: Cleric

Available Skill Bundles: Spiritual (required), Combat (optional), Lore (optional), or Persuasion (optional)

Available Special Abilities:

Turn Undead: P0 D2 X2, Spiritual. Close Range Only, SFX (x4): Sanctuary, Flaw: Undead Only.

#### Option 1 (Port C&C Spells)

Orisons: P0 D0 X1, Automatic. SFX: Cast 0-Level Spells, Flaw (x3): Usable five times daily

1st Level Spells: P0 D0 X6, Automatic. SFX (x2): Cast 1-Level Spells, Flaw (x3): Usable five times daily, SFX: Bonus daily casting per Savvy bonus.

2nd Level Spells: P0 D0 X6, Automatic. SFX (x3): Cast 2-Level Spells, Flaw (x3): Usable five times daily, SFX: Bonus daily casting per Savvy bonus, Flaw: Requires 1st Level Spell Ability.

3rd Level Spells: P0 D0 X9, Automatic. SFX (x4): Cast 3-Level Spells, Flaw (x3): Usable five times daily, SFX: Bonus daily casting per Savvy bonus, Flaw: Requires 2nd Level Spell Ability.

4th Level Spells: P0 D0 X12, Automatic. SFX (x5): Cast 4-Level Spells, Flaw (x3): Usable five times daily, Flaw: Requires 3rd Level Spell Ability.

5th Level Spells: P0 D0 X15, Automatic. SFX (x6): Cast 5-Level Spells, Flaw: Usable five times daily, Flaw: Requires 4th Level Spell Ability.

Spell Access: P0 D0 X9, Automatic. SFX: Can cast from Divine Scrolls.

#### Option 2 (Use StarSIEGE: Event Horizon Psionics Rules, example powers)

Light: P1 D3 X3, Automatic. SFX: Low Light Vision, Flaw: Obvious

Cure Light Wounds: P2 D3 X4, Automatic. Restore 2 Wound Boxes, Flaw: Must touch target.

Aid: P3 D3 X3, Automatic. +1 Armor, +2 Melee, +2 Shooting, Flaw: Must touch target, Flaw: Cannot cast on self, SFX: Persistent.

Animate Dead: P5 D3 X5, Lore. SFX: Area Effect, Close Range Only, SFX (x5): Animate dead bodies as a Mook combatant, Flaw: Requires mostly intact bodies.

Sending: P5 D5 X11, Automatic. SFX (x3): Send short message to any one known person, SFX (x2): No upper limit to range.

Cure Critical Wounds: P6 D3 X12, Automatic. Restore 1 Critical Wound Box, Flaw: Must touch target

Optional Wound Hit Dice: 2d8 or 2d10 (depending on Skill Bundles)

Optional Stress Hit Dice: 2d8 or 2d10 (depending on Skill Bundles)

## THE BARD

The warrior-skald presented in the *Castles & Crusades* rule book will serve as the Charisma-prime example for conversion. From the perspective of Class Abilities, the Bard presents some interesting buffing abilities to model. The Exalt and Exhort Greatness Abilities could find use in normal *StarSIEGE: Event Horizon* games even without the conversion.

### PRIMES

The Bard is representative of the Charisma based Primary Ability Classes in C&C. Charisma-based Primes can be translated into at least two Skill Bundles pretty easily: Persuasion and Spiritual. Persuasion covers the Bard's ability to appeal to the logic of others and to reason with them while the Spiritual bundle covers more emotive pleas. As such, it's highly recommended that Bards take both these as their available Skill Bundles. The Lore Skill Bundle also holds some portion of the Bard's skill set, but the Legend Lore Class Ability (which will be modeled as a Special Ability) can be thought to make up for the lack of the Lore Skill Bundle. Otherwise, Lore is optional, with the player having to sacrifice either Persuasion or Spiritual to pick it up.

### HIT DICE

Assuming the Persuasion/Spiritual Bard base, Bards are assumed to have 2d8 Wound Hit Dice and 2d10 Stress Hit dice. Comparing these to C&C, we see Bards take a slight Wound Hit Dice reduction, but the full optional Hit Dice rules for StarSIEGE will probably make up for this difference.

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

The C&C Bard has five Class Abilities: Decipher Script, Exalt, Legend Lore, Fascinate, and Exhort Greatness. The Decipher Script works exactly the same as the Decipher Script Special Ability presented above for the Rogue.

**Decipher Script:** P0 D0 X6, Lore. +3 Obscure Knowledge, SFX: Can utilize Arcane Scrolls.

Looking at the remaining abilities for the Bard, Exalt and Exhort Greatness are both somewhat related, in that they grant bonuses to allies. They differ in that one (Exalt) concerns with non-combat activities while the other (Exhort Greatness) is purely combat related. Purchasing a bonus to all non-combat Skill Bundles would be a grossly expensive Special Ability,

making Exalt a somewhat tricky ability to Model. So, looking first at Exhort Greatness we can build it as follows:

**Exhort Greatness:** P0 D0 X13, Persuasion or Spiritual. +2 to Combat Skill Bundle, +2 Armor, SFX: Persistent, Flaw: Does not affect self, Flaw: Ally must be able to hear oration, SFX: Supplemental Class.

Thus when the Bard takes an Action to perform some kind of oration (either using the Persuasion or Spiritual Skill Bundles) then a single ally gains a +2 to all Combat Skill Bundle rolls and an Armor Rating of 2. This effect lasts for three rounds.

To build Exalt, some creative use of Special Effects will be necessary as well as use of the Cooperation rules found in StarSIEGE.

**Exalt:** P0 D1 X2, Persuasion or Spiritual. SFX: Supplemental Class, SFX (x3): Mass Cooperation, Flaw: Allies must be able to hear/see Bard, Flaw: Taxing, Flaw: Does not affect self.

With the Exalt Special Ability, a Bard must first make a Persuasion or Spiritual Skill Bundle check. If successful, any of the Bard's allies that can hear or see the Bard benefit as if the Bard were Cooperating with them (per the Cooperation rules in *StarSIEGE: Event Horizon*) for one round. Use of this ability, however, is Taxing to the Bard, so it can only be used once an hour.

Bards are perhaps best known for their storytelling and knowledge of history. This could be modeled by selecting the Lore Skill Bundle, but this Ability will grant a bonus even if the Lore Skill Bundle was selected.

**Legend Lore:** P0 D2 X7, Automatic. +1 Lore Skill Bundle, Flaw: Taxing

Whenever the Bard buys this ability they can use it at any time to gain a +1 to any Lore Skill Bundle checks, but then they cannot access it again for two hours, due to it taxing their mental recall limits.

Finally, Bards in C&C are able to Fascinate opponents, effectively placing their target into a trance-like state.

**Fascinate:** P0 D0 X6, Automatic. SFX: Daze, Flaw (x2): Pacifist, SFX: Continual

This power forces the target to make a Spiritual check at a Challenge Level of 0 or be Incapacitated for the remainder of the current round as well as the whole next round. The target will remain Incapacitated so long as the Bard maintains concentration (+3 Challenge Level to any other actions). However, if the Bard makes any hostile actions towards the target, the Fascination and its Daze effect immediately ends.

**Profession: Bard**

Available Skill Bundles: Persuasion (suggested), Spiritual (suggested), Lore (optional)

Available Special Abilities:

Decipher Script: P0 D0 X6, Lore. +3 Obscure Knowledge, SFX: Can utilize Arcane Scrolls.

Exhort Greatness: P0 D0 X13, Persuasion or Spiritual. +2 to Combat Skill Bundle, +2 Armor, SFX: Persistent, Flaw: Does not affect self, Flaw: Ally must be able to hear oration, SFX: Supplemental Class.

Exalt: P0 D1 X5, Persuasion or Spiritual. SFX: Supplemental Class, SFX (x4): Mass Cooperation, Flaw: Allies must be able to hear/see Bard, Flaw: Taxing, Flaw: Does not affect self.

Legend Lore: P0 D2 X7, Automatic. +1 Lore Skill Bundle, Flaw: Taxing.

Fascinate: P0 D0 X6, Automatic. SFX: Daze, Flaw (x2): Pacifist, SFX: Continual.

Optional Wound Hit Dice: 2d8 (assuming Spiritual and Persuasion Skill Bundles).

Optional Stress Hit Dice: 2d10 (assuming Spiritual and Persuasion Skill Bundles).



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# The Angry Gamer

by Some Angry Troll Dude



## MAGIC IS THAT MAGIC WAS

I knew this would happen. There wasn't a doubt in my mind that it would happen. Furthermore, I knew that our lazy-eyed CK would make it happen. Several months ago, whilst on a grand adventure through the Darkenfold we slew some creature and robbed it of its treasure. In that treasure was a magic blade. The party decided that I should have it. Fine by me, I like magic items.

"What is it?" I asked our enterprising CK.

"Huh? Ah, the blade is worked over with runes and has a jewel embedded in the pommel. It is light and warms to your hand."

"Is it magical?"

"Yes. The bonus is only +1, but so great is its craftsmanship that you are certain that it has greater powers than that."

Same as usual, he tells me the bonus if it's not too powerful. I have to figure out the rest!

"Can we cast detect magic on it?"

"You could if Chris was here to play his mage."

Details! Any other time he would be all too happy to NPC Chris' mage. It's like arguing the finer points of good with an Ungern!

That was that. I took the +1 sword and fought with it from time to time. As the weeks passed and I used my powerful battle axe, I forgot about the sword. So did our uncommonly stubborn CK. Suddenly I realize it's several months of real time later, and I still don't know what my blade can do. I asked again about the nature of the sword.

"Huh? What? It's +1."

Sometimes it helps to lead him into his description.

"But you said it's got some kind of extra power or ability."

"Er what are you talking about? Let me see." He begins scratching through his notes, or what he would have us

believe are notes, but are really nothing more than a jumbled pile of scribbles of creatures' hit points, damage they have taken, names, monster concepts, dates and various geometric shapes that might resemble letters to some one other than the author. Page after page he flips through, earnestly looking at the papers, until finally he announces, "I got nothing. What did I tell you it did?"

I will remain calm.

"You didn't tell me jack, chowder head! You told me it had some hidden power."

"And I didn't tell you what that was?"

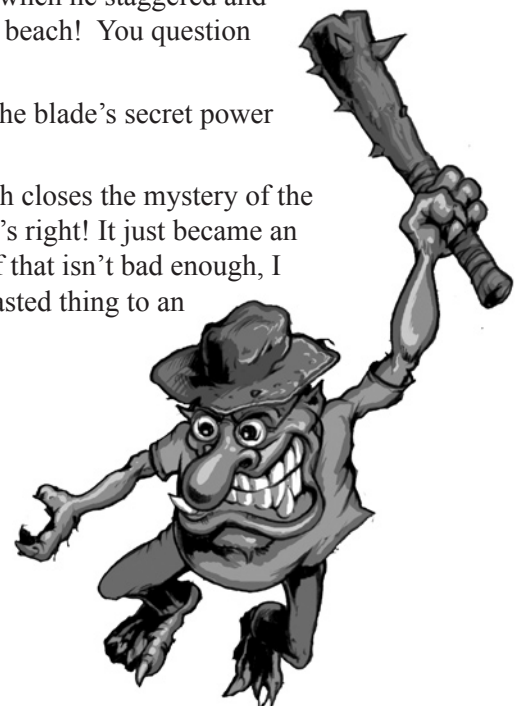
"NO!" Some day I shall kill him.

"Hmmm... Well I got nothing. You sure you remember that right?"

"YES!!! I'm the only one who can remember what Yellowbeard said when he staggered and crawled up on the beach! You question my memory?"

"Hmmm. Well the blade's secret power eludes you!"

That pretty much closes the mystery of the magic blade. That's right! It just became an inane +1 sword. If that isn't bad enough, I had to give the blasted thing to an NPC!!!!



# THE AIHRDIAN CHRONICLES: THE INENG TROLL'S TALE

BY STEPHEN CHENAULT

*The Elven Warlord, Meltowg-Aet-Ohd, Prince of Lothian, has wandered the world in the Shadow of the Long Centuries. Bitter and filled with rage his life is one of unceasing war against the tower of Aufstrag and its great horned god. In his travels, he learned of the Castle of Spires, its guardian Melius the Wise, and its location in the Twilight Wood. He learned too that it held the gates to other worlds, where his kin had fled and now dwelt. Returning from his travels, he gathered with his small band on the Avishean Ridge that is the Blacktooth in the Vulgate, where stood the Ineng Tree, from whose roots poured a small stream of healing water. In drinking the waters, roads were opened for him, paths that led to the world's past. He has learned from whence came the Sentients, and the Trolls. He has learned too that the Ineng Tree itself was in fact a Troll of old who had grown roots into the stone and rock of the earth. But there is more to learn from this old Troll...*



**M**eltowg watched as his men mounted their steeds. They were a grim looking lot, battered and torn from years of wearisome war. But they were unflinching in their loyalty, at least the Vale Knights, those elves and few men who had traveled with him for the past centuries. The mercenaries were a typical lot, rough and dangerous, well armed, carrying the many signs of many campaigns. The Winter Dark was a cruel land and those who obeyed its laws, suffered its yoke. Those who refused to suffer but chose to fight were few but fearless. Meltowg's band was such.

He had bid them leave him and move on so that he could investigate the Ineng tree, the Troll. They rode their heavy, armored steeds down the trail and through the scrub oak that lined it. The rangers, he could see, moved out and ahead of the troop, protecting their flanks from attack. There were just over a hundred of them and they had a long journey from the feet of Aufstrag to the far side of the Cradle to the Twilight Wood.

As his men vanished into the wood line he turned, unbuckling his sword he crouched again next to the old gnarled tree. It was stunted and worn, mostly dead if alive at all. Its bark belied its age and the Prince knew that it was thousands of years old. Taking his flask he filled it again with the waters that flowed from the Ineng Tree's roots and drank a long drought. It was cool and relaxed him so that he leaned against the tree and rested. His steed came over and nosed about him but he did not move for his mind was even then wandering back down the road's of the past where he could see the beginning of things and the first Trolls as they were then but in his time largely forgotten.

Huge, the creature towered over the small bearded men with their axes and maces. He swept them aside as would a storm, battering them to the left and right in his rage at their interloping. Ineng had almost wholly abandoned his roots and his form, shaping himself in mimicry of the All Father. He stood now on two thick, if stubby legs, his branches were arms, long and powerful. His torso was

thick, his hands huge, and his head shaped more like a battering ram than anything else. He had at last learned to use the Language of Creation and made himself eyes and ears and mouth from which he could see, hear and bellow. In many respects he looked as did the All Father, but his form was hard and his skin thick like bark, forever shedding in long thin strips.

When first he encountered the dwarves it was in the high plateaus of the Shadow Mountains upon the slopes of Iseldrim Mountain. Ineng, fleeing all those of his kind, had settled upon a small pool of mountain water and there rested his feet and soaked in the deep clear waters. He looked in many respects like an old, gnarled tree. The dwarves found him thus and settled about him to make their camp. They were young in those days and the world was new to them. The goblins were not made or at least had not come out from beneath the earth. But there were other dangers in the world and the dwarves had long since girded themselves in armor and carried weapons of bitter iron.

This party of dwarves was exploring, coming from the distant west in search of new homes, new mountains in which they could build, mine, and carry on the myriad tasks those dwarves so loved to do. The winds were cold and they decided to make a fire from the tree that rested by the pool.

The first bite of the axe was a new sensation for Ineng. By a lucky chance, it bit into his otherwise impenetrable bark and scarred his leg deeply. He howled in rage at this new agony inflicted upon him and he swept the dwarf aside with a long backward sweep of his arm. The dwarf was hurled through the air and crashed into the rocky wall, dead as the iron he wielded. Mayhem followed as axes were drawn and the dwarves fell upon the great beast. But Ineng was beside himself, his solitude shattered in pain and noise. The dwarves shot him and hacked at him, but their weaponry proved weak, breaking against his hide. Those that cut deep, quickly pulled free as Ineng moved. Ineng brushed the dwarves aside, stomping on some, and crushing others with his huge hands. But they were too many and he fled up the mountain side seeking to be rid of them. A score of them he left battered and dead upon the ground. The dwarves were amazed and gathered their dead and laid them to stone as is their fashion. But they gave the creature a name and they called him a Troll.

For his part, Ineng climbed into the high cliffs above, settling at last on an outcrop of rock overlooking the pool. He crouched there and watched as the dwarves busied themselves with the burial of their fallen. He marveled at them for they looked like the All Father, but nowhere in his language, or that of the All Father were there words for these creatures. They were small and fragile but able

to shape wood, stone and iron. This in truth captivated Ineng for though the All Father had taught the Sentients the Language of Creation; he had not given them the lust of creation. The dwarves he had treated differently for he both taught the language too them and filled them with a great lust of making.

Ineng watched and he wondered at these creatures and their strange harnesses and tools. When they moved on he determined to follow them. He watched as they gathered their gear and set out, criss crossing the ridges, vanishing into valleys only to come up again many miles distant. The Sentients and especially the Trolls possessed extraordinary senses and they could see and hear great distances. When the dwarves stopped, Ineng set off with great, measured strides moving in a straight line across country until he came near their encampments where he could listen, watch and learn. Eventually they wandered down the western slopes of the mountains and joined a larger company of dwarves upon the foot hills. These were busy building a walled town.

Ineng settled in the mountains high above and watched and listened for a great while. The seasons came and went. The dwarves were ever busy, building and fashioning and the Troll learned many things. A great lust rose in him then, to know how and what they were doing. How did they create so many varied things he wondered? But he could not see into their buildings, nor reason what they did all the time and at last he rose and in massive leaps and bounds leapt down the mountain side and entered the town.

The Great Troll's approach caused havoc in the dwarven town and they attacked him even as he approached the gates, but he ignored their bolts and missiles. They shut the gates before him and he battered them down and a great section of the wall besides. By then the dwarves had marshaled in the streets and sought to bar his way with axe and shield. Thoughtless of the destruction he tossed them aside and crushed them, but they fought, ferocious and unyielding for these dwarves were kin to Argrind Darkeye, King of Gorthurag who had stood against the god Thorax, the Red Duke. The battle raged all day and into the night and the dwarves fought from house to house, but the Great Troll was too powerful and their blades were not made of stout enough iron to wound him deeply. Soon all was in ruin, the towers and buttressed walls pulled down, houses broken open, the town's well buried in rubble. Fires rose from the ruins and the dead were everywhere scattered. Some dozens escaped, fleeing the Great Troll and returned to the west to seek their kin and spread word of the dread monster they had encountered.

One at least survived in the ruins; Ineng found him pinned beneath the rubble.

“What purposed ghastly Troll? Why have you killed us all?”

Ineng looked at him for a great while. “I would know your crafts. How you shape things. You should teach me.”

“Burn and die, creature of evil.”

“I have spared you, little all father.” Ineng took hold of the dwarf.

“What is that to me? You have slain all my people and left my home in ruins. You can burn for all I care. My name is Upack and I serve none but my King. Now go from me and let me die.”

“I cannot burn, little all father. But you will teach me.” Ineng lifted him up then, casting aside the timber that pinned the dwarf as if it were a pile of twigs. He brought Upack into the high country, moving north along the craggy mountains, passing the high peaks of Iseldrim and through what later became Dante’s Pass until at last giant Mount Gardrim loomed overhead and he came to the tops of the world. He brought the dwarf to a cave he had dwelt in long ago. It was deep and dark, and spread under the mountain like a spider’s web. At the center of these many tubular caverns lay a huge vaulted chamber with a large lake in its center. The lake was fed by many hot springs that made the water steam and bubble in tumultuous agonies.

Here he set the dwarf down and cast spells upon him so that Upack became disoriented and confused, thinking now that he was at home in his smithy. The Great Troll, for that is the name he took for himself, shedding forever his relation with the Sentients of old, mesmerized Upack. The dwarf came to believe that the troll was his apprentice. In this way, Ineng fooled the dwarf into teaching him many things he would not otherwise have known. For many years the two worked together. They harnessed the fires of the earth and began shaping all manner of things. Eventually they built a huge forge, lined the halls with cobbles and blocked the passages with doors. In time they built gates at the cave’s entrance to guard it from the dragons and other monsters that were forever wandering in the mountains in those days. Ineng learned more from Upack than just how to build things, he learned how to forge weapons, armor and fashion clothes for himself.

In time his smith craft surpassed that of the hapless dwarf and Ineng realized there was nothing else he could learn from him. Upon a cold winter’s day he carried the dwarf to the gates of his home and cast him out. He lifted the fog of spells that had held him for so long and turned to shut the doors on him. Upack was dazed but realization came to him fast. His race was young in those days and resilient beyond the measure of later days. “How now Great Troll? My beard has grown gray and my hands are

covered in soot and scars that only an old forge master might possess. What devilry have you delivered me into?”

Ineng turned to face the dwarf. The Troll was dressed in a heavy cloak and the creature proudly wore a dragon bone helm of his own creation. On the Trolls breast, was an iron breastplate worked over with many glyphs. At the monster’s side was a long sword in a dragon hide scabbard. “Be off, little all father. I have no use for you. Go back to your people and know that you have done me a great service.”

Upack looked at the Great Troll and marveled. For before the creature had been naked, and now he looked mighty in his armaments and cloaks. “Creature of evil, my curse is on you and all your kin! May time wither you and turn your bark to stone!”

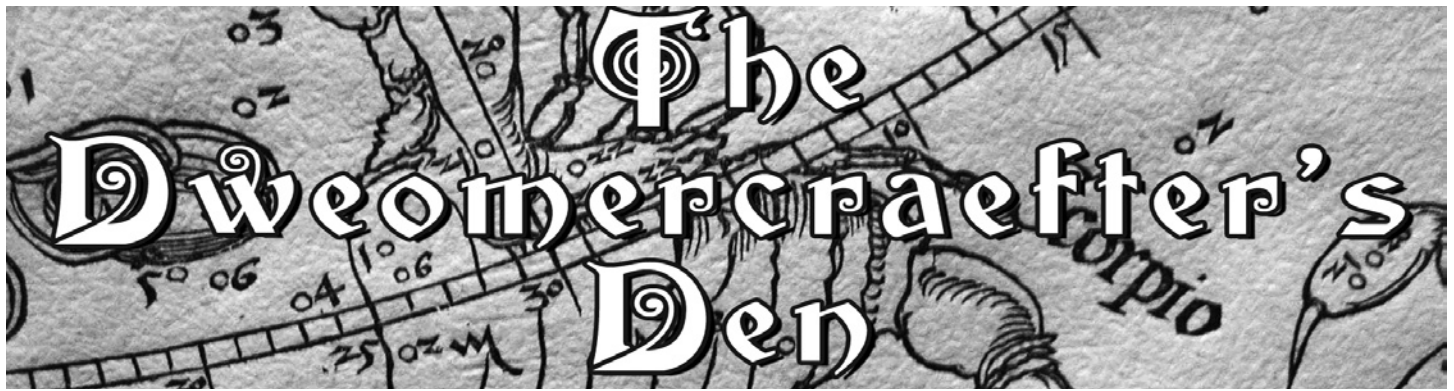
“Be off little all father before I kill you.”

Upack fled down the slopes of the mountain and into the west. Ineng had knowledge of him after that; rumor came to him in after days that the dwarf returned to his people with much lamentation.

Ineng returned to his forges and dungeons and there set to fashioning all manner of things, great and small. One of his greatest creations was a horn. Fashioned from the bones of a dragon, and banded in gold. He shaped and molded it with spells and the Language of Creation. Into it he poured some great part of his longing for the lakes of the east where he had spent his youth. He took this horn to the high slopes of the mountain and set it on a great stand. There he blew a long and mournful note upon it and the sound of it carried across the valleys and mountains and echoed over the sea and across the rolling plains even to the furthest reaches of the world.

Others heard it. Sentients of a like mind to Ineng and the sound of the horn called to them and they rose up from wherever there were to follow the trail of it. In time, much to Ineng’s amazement, they gathered upon the slopes of Gardrim Mountain, called by the horn and its master.





by Jeffrey Talanian

**O**n Tuesday, March 4, 2008, Gary Gyax passed away in the early morning at his home in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. The primary architect and main driving force behind fantasy role-playing games since the early 1970's, Gary did something more than just design games. This has been abundantly revealed by the outpouring of sentiment from thousands of fans on the internet, and the recognition of his accomplishments by the general media. Fellow gamers from all about the globe have expressed sadness over Gary's death and gratitude for what he's given us all: fun, friendship, and family. He did it with a game of the imagination in which its participants roll strangely shaped dice and pretend to be heroes in a world of make-believe, where dragons, magic rings and swords, and gold and treasure abound.

At the 40th anniversary of Gen Con this past year, Gary, his wife Gail, and a group of about 20 friends and family had dinner at **The Ram Restaurant & Brewery**, located in downtown Indianapolis. There were many fellow gamers at the restaurant that night (Gen Con pretty much takes over the city), glancing over from their booths, but only a few stopped by to see Gary, or to shake his hand, or to simply thank him for the fun times he'd been instrumental in providing them. Most just glanced over their dinner and mugs of beer, likely not wishing to disturb Gary as he ate his dinner and spoke with the lot of us. Believe me, Gary was very approachable and wouldn't have been disturbed.

When dinner was through and we were all rising to leave, a man came over to thank Gary for his creations. He told Gary that he was a soldier who just got back from Iraq, and that playing D&D in a tent with his fellow soldiers got him through a lot of long and difficult nights out in the desert. He gave Gary some old

Iraqi money, with Saddam's face imprinted thereon, and he gave some to me as well after I'd briefly spoken with him. When he'd found out that I worked for Gary, he thanked me and shook my hand. "You're thanking me?" I said, dumbfounded. "Are you kidding? My friend, it is I who owe you all the thanks!" However, he shook his head and said no, continuing to stress how role-playing games got him and his buddies through some of the toughest of times. I was blown away by this.

Such outlooks were further cemented throughout the long weekend when, during the hours of Gen Con, I stood there and bore witness to the lines and lines of fans who'd waited for hours on end to meet Gary, to get his signature, take a photograph, and to thank him for all the memories and good times his games had provided them. The outpouring was very touching, and we who were with him at the Troll Lord Games' booth could only smile and shrug, collectively amazed at what Gary's creations had done for people from all over the world, from all walks of life.

The first installment of *The Dweomercrafter's Den*, a new regular feature of *The Crusader* that will focus on *Castle Zagyg*-related topics, was the last piece that Gary and I actively collaborated on. But it will not be the last. It was Gary's sincere wish that *Castle Zagyg* continue, and while he was alive he not only provided me all the tools to complete the job, he also took me under his wing and showed me "how it's done." Gary wasn't feeling well at the time Jim Ward, the new Editor-in-Chief of *The Crusader*, requested of us the first article. So I volunteered, and Gary said he'd review it after I was through. In typical Gary fashion, he edited, revised, and directed me on what to alter. There was one paragraph in particular that I had to rewrite thrice, each time Gary scolding me about

*Jeffrey Talanian hails from the woods of New Hampshire. A gamer since 1981, he is presently working as Gary Gyax's co-author of the Castle Zagyg™ Campaign Module Series, including the recently published Castle Zagyg: The East Mark Gazetteer folio, by Troll Lord Games. He is also the author of four of the Yggsburgh Town Expansion Series modules, including the recently published Yggsburgh: The Town Halls District. When not developing adventuring material with Gary, Jeff is changing diapers, bussing his 3 children about, reading old books, watching movies and TV with his lovely wife, Erica, or gaming with his stellar group of companions, The Knights of Next Tuesday.*

my word choices. “Fine, I’m a knucklehead,” I’d tell him, “but I still don’t understand what you mean!” Finally, he wrote the paragraph himself, to which I responded, “Oh, that’s what you meant. Well, why didn’t you say that in the first place!” I loved driving old EGG nuts, and I’m pretty sure he got a kick out of me, too.

Over the last year or so, I’ve been asked how I got the job co-authoring *Castle Zagyg* with Gary. I usually shrug off such questions, because I don’t feel that my minor contribution to Gary’s creative masterpiece is really worth noting, but now that Gary is gone, I feel the time is appropriate to talk about how I got to work for the Father of Role-Playing Games.

In late 2005, I’d completed a novel I’d been working on for nearly 5 years, including three complete rewrites as I learned and honed my craft. Satisfied with the final manuscript, I’d decided to seek other publishing opportunities before editing the novel and looking into getting it published. I only had a few professional publications under my belt, and I felt that I could use some more experience, perhaps branching out into other media forms. Surfing the internet, I happened upon Gary’s call for game designers to develop and expand *The Free Town of Yggsburgh*. Intrigued, I sent Gary a proposal letter and a few writing samples. I’d never spoken to Gary before, but often enjoyed reading his Q&A forums on the internet. I was shocked when I opened my email the next morning and saw Gary Gygax in my inbox. “Well, here is the polite rejection,” I thought. But it wasn’t. Gary accepted me in the fold, but as a standby designer in the instance that someone dropped out of the project, because every slot had already been filled. Well, someone did drop out, so I took up his module. So began my regular correspondence with Gary.

Over the next year (2006) I picked up three more such modules, and I routinely barraged Gary with questions, comments, and observations. He might’ve thought I was a pain in the neck at first with my inane questions, but I think he got to like me. Then came the unfortunate impasse between Gary and Rob Kuntz in regards to the main project, *Castle Zagyg* itself. Rob had been developing the project while the group of us freelancers were expanding the town, but he chose resign for professional reasons, so *Castle Zagyg* became an orphaned project. It was Steve Chenault, with Gary’s blessing, who asked me if I’d be interested in taking up the project as Gary’s co-author of *Castle Zagyg*. Of course, I accepted. Why I was chosen I can’t be certain of, but I can say with some small measure of satisfaction that it must have had something to do with hard work.

Taking on the *Castle Zagyg* project also represented a shift in my relationship with Gary. I’d gone from working **for** him to working **with** him. We were in contact nearly every day, and although we’d been friendly in our past correspondences, now we’d become good pals, chatting more about family, sports, history, and even how to mix a good martini. Of course, this never precluded Gary from scolding me for some bonehead adventure design idea of mine, but he always did so with candor and humor. Could he be difficult, opinionated, and ornery at times? Sure thing, but he never talked down to me. He gave me ample latitude in the decision-making processes, and he always

treated me like an equal. This is also how he engaged his many fans on the internet and at the conventions who oftentimes would address him as “Mr. Gygax.” He’d say, “Just call me Gary. We’re all fellow gamers here.” That was the Gary I got to know: the self-effacing genius and innovator. Rest in Peace, Gary.

So, what is the future for *Castle Zagyg* now that Gary is no longer with us? It goes on, per his wishes and per the wishes of his lovely wife Gail and the Gygax family. Gary gave me something before he died. He gave me a toolbox. Inside this toolbox, there are tools of many shapes and sizes. They come in the form of notes, outlines, encounter information, springboards, tables, and lists full of information. Contained within these many pages are some of his most well kept secrets and enigmas, creations he’d dreamed up from over 30 years ago to present. But that’s not all that is in my toolbox, fellows. There are also the tools he made just for me. You see, as Gary directed me to develop the manuscripts for *Castle Zagyg, Vol II: The Upper Works*, I went about drafting each component of the boxed set and then submitted them to him in piecemeal. Gary didn’t just take these manuscripts and revise/rewrite them; rather, he edited, revised, and explained why they needed each particular edit and/or revision. He pointed out my oversights, scolded my poor decisions, and praised the good ones. He directed me to make several of the changes myself, citing precise reasons as to why. At each instance, I was provided another tool. Simply put, Gary Gygax taught me how to become a better writer and designer of adventure material.

He’d also come to trust me, and in his final months he often leaned on me to help make decisions of and related to *Castle Zagyg* and its many related side projects. I was always humbled that he would actually seek my opinion on something or other, whether it be trivial or large, for although he always treated me as a peer, I never felt the same. Gary Gygax, in my opinion, was peerless in the realm of game design and adventure writing. His fertile imagination has touched the lives of millions of people, many of whom don’t even realize it (usually because they are young and playing some video game derivative of his creations).

*Castle Zagyg* will continue, seekers. It will continue in Gary’s memory and honor, this legendary mega-dungeon adventure that has already been enjoyed in its many incarnations by convention gamers, and of course those players who were fortunate to game in Gary’s house or out on his porch. Next month in the *Dweomercrafter’s Den*, we will resume discussing more of the nuts-and-bolts of the *Castle Zagyg* project. We will talk about specific encounter information, dungeon design, and Castle Keeper advice, but for now, I’ve got to take up my toolbox and get back to work on *Castle Zagyg*. See you next month here in *The Den*.

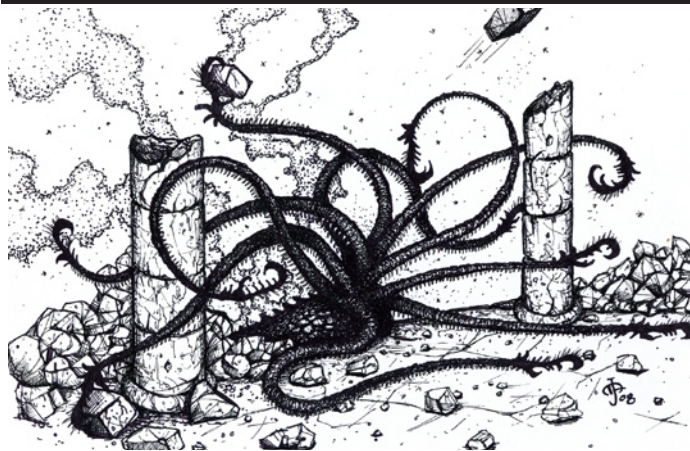




# MONSTERS OF AIHRDE

BY STEPHEN CHENAULT

*The world of Aihilde spins upon an earth-like axis of ancient civilizations where good and evil have struggled for countless years. It is a world bearing the markings of its past; where ancient evils slumber, stained with the power of eldritch wizardry; where gods dwell in bejeweled halls of wonderment, worshiped by men and women of all creeds; where dragons live in great dens of heaped treasure; where the new stands upon the ruins of the old in beds of ancient glory. Here, kingdoms have risen and fallen, ground to dust by war, famine, plague or time. Aihilde is a world reborn, and in the After Winter Dark heroes tread in iron, shod boots and wizards lean on crooked staffs to plunder the buried wealth and power of the ages. Here, the eternal struggle goes on, age after age, for Aihilde is a world of adventure, of undaunted heroes, untainted by the decadent philosophies of those meek who suffer in the shadows of lesser men. For here, the stone columns of history are wiped clean, awaiting the bold to carve their mark and gain entry to the halls of immortality.*



## Naerlulth

**NO. APPEARING:** 1

**SIZE:** Large

**HD:** 12 (d10)

**MOVE:** 30 ft., 40 ft. swim, 20 ft. climb

**AC:** 24

**ATTACKS:** See below

**SPECIAL:** Ash cloud, Devouring Assimilation, Engulf, Fear/Inspire, Incorporeal, Regeneration, Rock Throwing, Spawn, SR 12

**SAVES:** P, M

**INT:** Supra-Genius

**ALIGNMENT:** Lawful Evil

**TYPE:** Magical Beast

**TREASURE:** 20

**XP:** 9950 x 12

Naerlulth are creatures from the nether planes fashioned of ash, smoke and the dust of burnt things. The naerlulth's body is generally oblong in shape, though crusted over as with scabs and the like. It is possessed of long ashen colored tentacles; they sprout from the creature's upper torso, are long, thin and adorned with thousands of tiny appendages. These run the length of the tentacles and allow the creature to grasp almost anything. The number of these tentacles ranges

from a few to a dozen or more, depending on the age of the creature. They constantly shed, fall off and re-grow if they are damaged. A naerlulth possesses no bones or cartilage, and its shape changes with its mood. It can flatten its body, spreading it out or it can contract itself, making its bulk look truly imposing. It has no legs, but rather uses its tentacles to pull itself along or to climb or swim. They have no head, eyes or ears but sense vibrations in the ground or movement in the air through long hairs on their skin. Their ashy skin itself is constantly peeling or flaking off, leaving trails of ash behind them and forever floating around them.

Naerlulth devour any living creature, plant or animal, by engulfing it with their body and secreting acid through their soft underbellies. The acid breaks down armor, clothes, skin, and bone in a matter of minutes and absorbs what remains. Items turned to ash are left on the ground. The naerlulth feed constantly and the residue of their meals are discarded through their shedding skin in the guise of more ash. Huge flakes of which are constantly falling off replaced by regenerated skin and tissue. These creatures settle in almost any environment, but prefer regions of lush vegetation where they can pull themselves across the ground, destroying all they pass over. They poison the land, for nothing grows in their wake but for a thorny vine of their own making.

They devour the wealth of the land, burn off its vibrancy and shed the ashes of its remains in ever growing clouds of ash. Given time these creatures can poison whole landscapes, burning rock into jagged slag, destroying all plant life, turning soil to ash and constantly shedding clouds of ashy skin into the air and in the ground. They occupy deep holes or dark waters, constantly coming forth to feed in fields ever further away. Whole mountains, valleys or regions become poisoned fields of death after only a few years. For this reason their lairs are generally huge fields of blackened, dead earth, with clouds of burnt dust hanging over them.

Naerlulth are very intelligent and can communicate with most creatures telepathically. They hate all living things and are possessed of the singular drive to destroy life. They tend to avoid civilized or settled areas, preferring to nurture their hatred

in the peace of their ruin. They do however attract creatures of a like disposition and alignment, so much so that some of them command large armies. At times their minions bring them food, living and otherwise.

**Combat:** Naerluth attack with their many tentacles, hurling boulders, trees, bodies or anything else they can reach at their enemies. Simultaneously they attempt to grapple their foes and drag them into the morass of their flesh, there to be destroyed by acid. Each tentacle possesses its own hit points (3d4) separate from the monster's hit points. Tentacles can be hit or even destroyed but damage done to a tentacle does not translate to damage done to the creature's 12d10 hit dice. Any tentacle destroyed immediately starts re-growing (see below). Whenever any creature approaches too near the naerluth belch clouds of burning ash on them in order to disorient and cripple their opponent. They are able to assume a frightful presence as well as inspire their own minions. They are very intelligent and very hard to actually kill. If defeated, or near defeat they flee, shedding much of their form to slip into whatever crevice or crack they can manage to squeeze into.

**Ash Cloud:** Naerluth are able to spray a cloud of ash from any one of their tentacles. The tentacle snaps forward, disintegrating into a jet of burning ash up to 30 feet away in a line 10 feet high and 10 feet wide. Any target caught in the cloud is successfully hit and takes 3d8 points of acidic damage, half damage with a successful constitution save. Furthermore, the victim must make dexterity save or be blinded for 1d6 rounds. The tentacle is rendered useless until it regenerates. It takes 12 hit points of regeneration to grow one back.

**Devouring Assimilation:** When the naerluth's underbelly comes into contact with any material it secretes an acid that begins to break the object or creature down. They devour stone, wood and metal as well as flesh but the harder the substance the harder and longer it takes to consume. It consumes such matter at different rates, but because of the creature's great size it can destroy more than might be expected. It will feed on a patch of earth for a day or so, reducing 10-15 square feet of trees, metal or earth to ash. Flesh and softer substances are almost instant. Metal is slow, but is generally reduced to nothing in about 6 melee rounds (if enchanted armor is attacked by the creature, an additional round per magical plus is necessary before the equipment is turned to ash). Flesh that comes into contact with the creature's underbelly takes 1d10 points of damage a round.

**Engulf:** If an opponent is struck by 3 or more tentacle attacks in the same round, the naerluth will attempt to pull that victim to the ground and flow across it. The victim is allowed a strength save (CL 5 + 1 per successful tentacle) to avoid this effect. If the save fails, the target is slammed to the ground near the creature and pulled under it. The naerluth attempts to smother the victim and devour it and the victim is held in the equivalent of a Challenge Level 15 grapple.

**Fear/Inspire:** A naerluth is able to put forth its frightful presence and strike fear in its enemies. It does so by projecting itself as a huge, monstrous minion of the nether planes. Any enemy within site of the creature must make a charisma save or suffer a -1 on all combat rolls (initiative, to hit and damage),

attribute checks and saving throws. Conversely any creature allied with the naerluth is inspired to fight greater and gains a +2 to all rolls. If the creature is destroyed or driven from the field its loss is catastrophic to its allies who must make a charisma save (CL 12) or flee the field in terror.

**Incorporeal:** They can if necessary become incorporeal, but doing so reduces them to shadow creatures and they must find a new lair to rebuild their strength, a process that can take years. They generally only do this when on the verge of destruction. In this form it can move up to 100 feet a round.

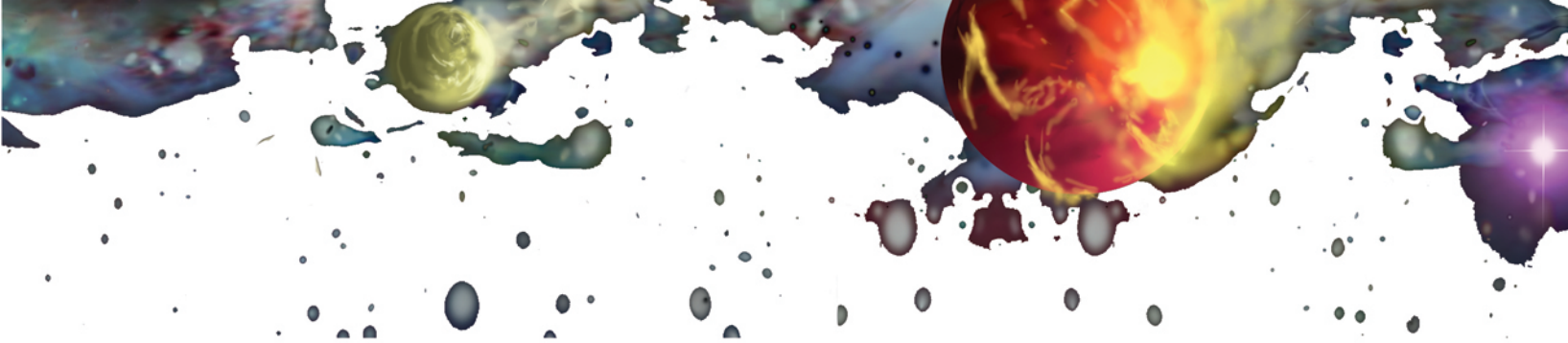
**Regeneration:** Immediately after suffering damage the naerluth begins to regenerate itself. It can control what it regenerates. It will always heal wounds on its body first, and tentacles after that. They regenerate at a rate of four hit points per round. They cannot heal damage to their body caused by magical attack, including magical weapons. A naerluth reduced to 0 or less hit points sheds its physical form and becomes incorporeal and flees the area immediately. For all intents and purposes the creature is dead, however it can as already mentioned return, but only after many years.

**Rock Throwing:** Naerluth can hurl boulders or other similar objects up to 350 feet. Successful attacks inflict 1d12 points of damage.

**Spawn:** Creatures killed and devoured by naerluth are often cast into limbo and their tormented spirits are left to occupy the lands the creature has devoured and laid waste. These spawn are often undead but have no shape or form until they assume one. For more see Naerluth (forthcoming in *Crusader II*).

## Naerluth in Aihrde

*In the early days of the Winter Dark when Klarglich, the Pit of Woe that was Unklar's forge in the bowels of his fortresses was newly made, Unklar set himself the task of making creatures of his own design. There were many foul beasts and fantastic creatures that he labored upon. These came to haunt the world of the Winter Dark as many still do. Some were small and without purpose, others were great and possessed of his will and mind. The naerluth were of the greater order of these creatures. Shaped from the ash of burnt sentients and other ancient trees and scorched with fire, they took on the shape of blackened coal. Made in mockery of the trees that the All Father loved so greatly, the naerluth were given long tendrils or tentacles to mimic roots. The creature was not given a hard shape however, only a shell that it could alter and change with only small efforts. It was filled with a thick sap-like acid that it secreted wherever it went; indeed naerluth's meaning in the ancient dwarf tongues is "The Bleeding Ash." They were given minds of their own and in time of years became possessed of great wisdom. But this has always been offset for Unklar filled them with utter disdain for all living creatures and set them the task of unmaking the beauty of the world. This task they took up readily and Unklar gave them dominion over many of his other minions in order to further their designs. When he fell from the world and returned to the Void the naerluth did not suffer as did others of his creations, but rather they thrived, settling in wild places and devouring the world. To them many of the refugees of Unklar's rule have gravitated, so that many of them lord over small kingdoms of ash and desolation peopled by orgs, trolls, and the dreaded unger.*

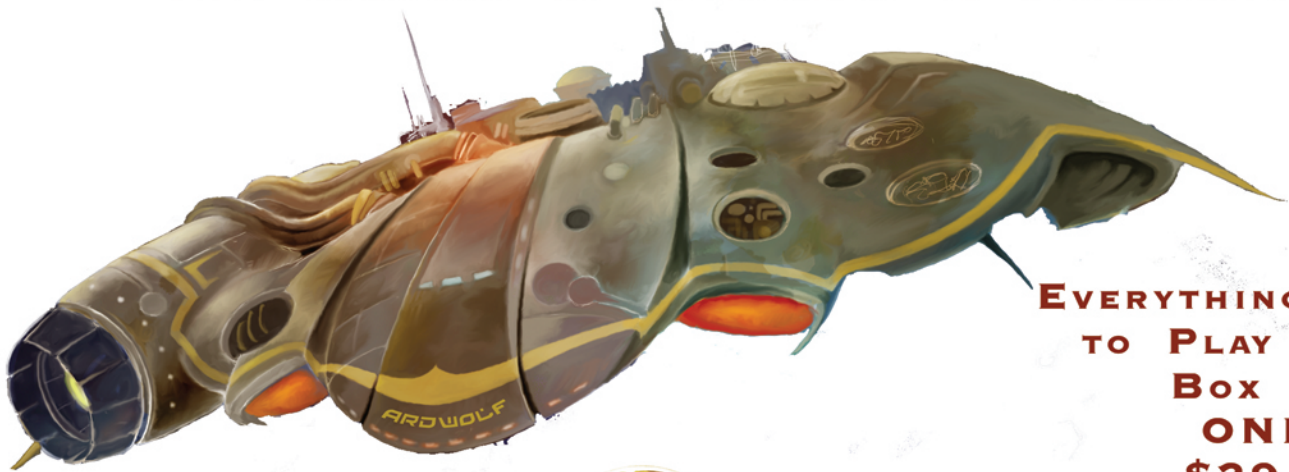


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