

THE CRUSADER™

The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer

NOTES FROM
THE MANAGING
EDITOR

BY JAMES M. WARD

TAINTED
CAMPAIGNS

BY STEPHEN CHENAULT,

DRAGON
GRUMBLES

BY TIM KASK

GAME REVIEW:
POWER GRID

BY JAMES M. WARD

ROADHOUSE
ROGUES

BY CASEY CHRISTOFFERSON

A GAGGLE OF
GOLEMS

BY MIKE STEWART

TALES OF
THE RINGS OF
BRASS

BY STEPHEN CHENAULT

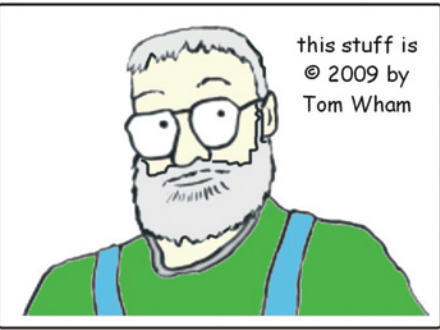
MONSTERS
OF AIHRDE

BY STEPHEN CHENAULT



LOTS O'
TROLLS
INSIDE!

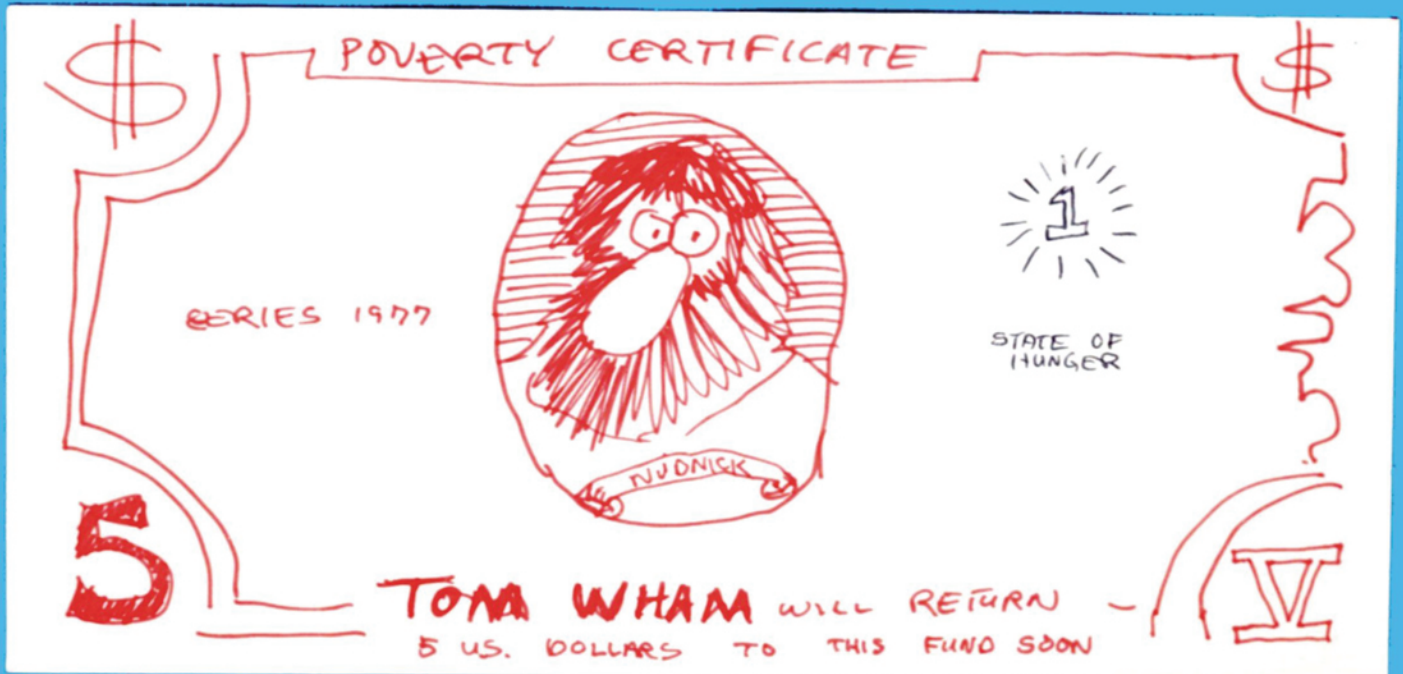
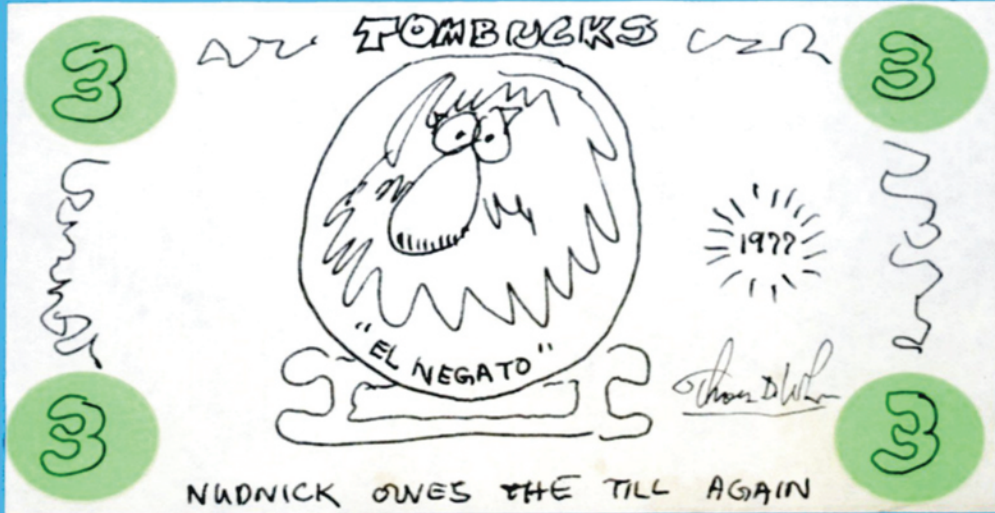
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PAGES!!!**



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Tom Wham

TOM'S FINANCIAL PAGE

A million years ago, O.K. it was the spring of 1977, I landed a job at TSR Hobbies in Lake Geneva running The Dungeon Hobby Shop. At times I was overwhelmed with the need for food or drink (we were right across the street from the Clark Station and the Pizza Hut) and my pockets were often empty. So I would make little IOU's to mark what I borrowed and pop them in the till. A few years back, I found these notes in a file folder (I had paid them off). Nudnick was my D&D character's name. Brian Blume had just done a boxing game called Ringside and Rocky Rococco was in the game. By the end of that summer, Ernie Gyax took over the store and I got bumped upstairs to do art and editing. Soon the Monster Manual, Snits, and Green things were on my mind.



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PUBLISHER: Stephen Chenault

MANAGING EDITOR: James M. Ward

EDITOR/DESIGNER: Elizabeth Stewart

VISION KEEPER: Nicole Leigh

COVER ARTIST: Peter Bradley

INTERIOR ARTISTS: Mark Allen,
Peter Bradley, Brian Swartz,
Jason Walton, Tom Wham



Letters of inquiry are welcome and should be sent to the address above or sent via e-mail to thecrusader@trolllord.com

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notes from the managing editor



Getting A Product Done



o you have lots of great game ideas and you want to get them printed. It's time to play a new game. Come play with me and we will see who wins. We are playing the GET A PRODUCT OUT BY A GAME COMPANY Game. The objective is to get one of our ideas produced by a game company. There are no rules; however, there are many strategies to win. I'm also putting an imagined percentage chance of success in each game turn to help you imagine what you can do to increase your own chances. Here was my game session.

Turn One: On my turn, I selected a game company and learned about what they made in the last year. I also learned who the boss was and if he did any design work for his company. Several times, I rejected this company or that company because they made products I didn't like. I carefully went through their web sites to see what people were talking about.

+35% chance of success with my idea

Turn Two: I became useful to that company. I helped them get their magazine done. There are lots of things any gamer can do to become useful to a company. If your actions are helpful and you don't cost them a lot of money, you can make yourself invaluable to the company.

+15% chance of success with my idea

Turn Three: I looked at what they were going to produce in the next year. I found a concept that was similar to what they were doing, but not quite what they always did. I then wrote up a proposal that merged my idea into their game world, giving up my rights to owning my idea. Right now, you might think this is a dumb idea. However, I'm trying to get them to say yes and I'm trying to get more work with them. I can make better deals later after they have come to know and like me. A good proposal sells your idea to the company and their investors.

+10% chance of success with my idea

TAINTED LANDS Horror Box Set Proposal

By James M. Ward

Inserting the C&C quick start rules.

CASTLE KEEPER'S GUIDE

Setting the horror stage

Transforming any C&C monster into a horrific creature

The nature of horror, horror themes

Running a horror campaign

Supernatural rules of the game

- Supernatural combat
- Undead, a lot of undead
- Supernatural goals, objectives, rewards

PLAYER'S GUIDE

Supernatural things for the player character

- Creating the supernatural character
- Attributes and supernatural attributes

- New Character Classes

1. Witch Hunter
2. Metals Master
3. Portal Keeper

Supernatural Equipment

Supernatural Magics

ADVENTURE

Horror adventure bringing characters from other games into the Tainted Land

The player characters are introduced to the supernatural world of horror in several scenes of horror. They have the chance to find out what is keeping them in the Tainted Land, but they soon discover the evil power is much more than they can ever match and they won't be able to destroy this horror by themselves.

Turn Four: Don't negotiate hard on your first or second contract. You are trying to start a relationship with the company and you want to sound reasonable, even when you are a closet maniac wanting to seal up every single original idea you have. Let's not let them know we are crazed until they kind-of think we are talented and "normal."

+5% chance of success with my idea

Turn Five: You are not even close to done with this game. The product isn't on the shelves yet. As you write the product, carefully try and edit yourself and give good art direction on illustrations you want in the product.

ART ORDER

All of these art requests can be found in the body text of this booklet as well at the front of the document in case you want to read the text around the art order. If you have any questions please call me (phone number provided, but not in this article.)

- full pg black and white illo of the cover from the box of the tainted lands box set
- 1/4 pg illo of a fighter held in the fingertips of a giant skeleton; the skeleton is about to eat the fighter who appears small in its huge bony hand.
- 1/4 pg illo of a giant spider coming over a set of boulders.
- full pg illo of a gypsy wagon and a good-looking man and woman as gypsies. These two have elf ears and the woman is full figured in a peasant blouse.

+15% chance of success with my idea

Turn Six: Turn over all of your design work early. Try for next day service when your editor gives you a copy of his editing work. Ask him his opinion of your writing and what you can improve. Then, even then, you have only an 80% chance of getting that product. out. At the time of this writing, I've seen lots of TAINTED LANDS parts. I'm hoping the target of Gen Con sees my product on the Troll Lord tables. Wish me luck.

James M. Ward
Managing Editor, CRUSADER



ALEA IACTA EST



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

Tainted Campaigns: The Dead, the Dying and the Undead



When I was eight, I woke up in the middle of the night. I was cold but thirsty so I climbed out of my trundle bed and walked out of my room. The movement triggered my mind awake, bringing the world around me alive. I stood then in the hallway. The dark consumed everything. A feeble light in the bathroom cast little more than shadows around my feet and failed utterly to enter the black empty that yawned before me. I stared and as my eyes adjusted to the dim it only made things worse. I now saw haunting shadows, openings into other, deeper darknesses; the stairs to the downstairs seemed to be a pit railed with bars; to the left in the living room, through that dark doorway something caught a glimmer of light, it haunted my eyes for as I turned it vanished and reappeared when I moved. Beyond this loomed darkness I could not fathom, so distant from the pale flickering light of the bathroom that it seemed complete, utter blackness.

I stood there, alone in the dark empty hall. In my mind's eye the world began turning and spinning. My mind pulled free of the world and left my physical form standing alone in the hall. I hovered there, my mind's eye watching the doom that waited my body. Slowly my feet moved, almost as if on autopilot. Down the hall, my feet falling like lead stones on the hollow floor. I watched my body walk into the inky darkness; a point of light that hung in the balance until it passed beneath the frame of the door and into the beyond. Tendrils of the dark wrapped themselves around me, coiling up my legs and arms, engulfing me. I fought. Turning to the left and right, thrashing I fought the darkness, the cold beyond but to no avail. I watched my body turn to yell, to call for help. I saw my mouth open but no sound came, only more darkness. What noise I may have made, a call for help and rescue vanished in the depths of the beyond and as quickly as it began the world stopped spinning and I found myself standing in the hall, rejoined with my body, looking into the utter black that was the kitchen door. Horror is about the unknown; about the darkness that stands upon the edge of our conscious selves; it is the fear our primeval selves fought at the dawn of time and it is the fear we struggle with now in our moments of desperation and weakness. Bringing this fear to the table is the one of the most challenging things a gamer can ever do, for it involves capturing a mood and maintaining the mood in the face of a host of stereotypes and distractions.

Capturing that horror feel is about capturing a mood. It doesn't necessarily have to do with setting up candles, keeping a room dark or with eerie music playing. Those are props and though they may help to some degree, they really only serve to detract for the game that is going on. There is nothing more annoying than having to squint to see the scribbled notes on your player sheet. Or worse, to bend over a candle to pick up a dice and catch your hair on fire ...this last ill fated move happened to yours truly when my hair was a wee bit longer. Props aside, the mood is all important, and as usual it is up to the Castle Keeper to capture it, but it is up to the players and the CK to maintain it. The mood, once it takes over the game, allows everyone to escape into the game and for a brief while captures that suspension of disbelief that makes the whole experience fun.

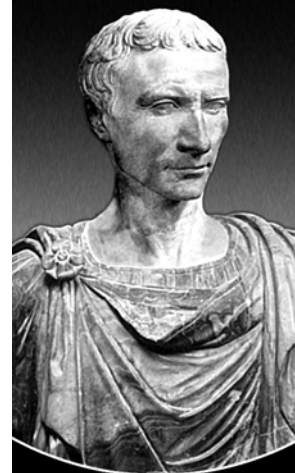
Castles & Crusades is the perfect vehicle to capture a mood; capturing the brooding darkness of our subconscious fears plays to the game's strengths. The rules-light approach is critical, because rules, like candles are no more than props for players and CKs to use in order to further their own narrow agenda. Much like the squinting at a character sheet, rules serve only to distract from the mode of play. In horror games the mood becomes even more critical, because games of horror require that you capture the players in a moment of fear and maintain them there, and for their part players have to stay in that mood and want to stay there. It is a natural defensive mechanism to quit a fearful situation so making ourselves stay is difficult, and the body and mind look for any excuse to quit the field. A question about the relative air speed of a *magic missile* when cast in the rain and how that rain might interrupt the missile's flight are moment-stopping rules errata that all gamers need to dispense with.

The Siege Engine offers a resolution system for almost every situation that might come up and covers the many areas of contention that the player character naturally encounters or that they throw at the Castle Keeper. Use it. It's very versatile. Almost any mechanic-related situation presented can be muscled through by use of this one tool.

The most obvious tool of the horror trade, the most overused and abused are the undead. Bringing the dead back to life catapults us through a maddening prism of our own fears. When we look into the yawning gulf that is the life after death, we are faced

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

with the ultimate of our fears: the unknown. This is the ultimate darkness and though each of us face it differently, we all possess a natural fear of it. It's what arrests our attention when we see the body of a dead person or animal; a sudden heart-slowng moment that focuses us and our attention on the looming emptiness that the dead must wrestle with. It's very primordial and pulls on a genetic heritage that forced early man to seek answers for their unknowns in the heavens and in hells that must surely lie beyond them. These fears of the unknown are the echoes of the dead.

For us the act of dying is every bit as fearful. For here the mind, often lucid, struggles to overcome the inevitable. We know what must come and we instinctively fight it for what we do not know, for a certainty, beyond the dictates and powers of our own faith, is what must come after. The struggle is pointless but continues. It is captured in the animal who continues to dig a hole after being shot or the star whose light explodes onto the universe, reflecting a life that is passed now, but brilliant.

From these fears rise the tool of the master horror-smith: the undead. The undead challenge all our fears of the unknown, pervert it and twist it so that what we fear the most, the unknown, comes to life and strikes back at us. It twists reality to the point that it boggles our mind's eye and we cannot understand it. The craftsmen of horror understand this and use it to play upon our fear and make it live through something our most primordial selves find utterly unimaginable.

In role playing games this tool is very easy to overuse. The undead have become so commonplace, so obvious in every dungeon, crypt, and barrow that we no longer even react to them, other than to note that if they strike our characters we'll lose a level, attribute points, age, become paralyzed, or run in stark terror. The undead have all but lost their role, as those things which should be most representative of our own fears are now cookie-cutter reflections of common, everyday monsters. How this has happened is beyond the confines of this essay, however, it is important for the horror gamer in us all to take back for the undead what has obviously slipped through their skeletal hands. In order to bring them back to the table in any guise which resembles what the undead actually are, that being figments of our deepest primeval fears, then we all must revisit the manner in which we view, use, and portray the undead.

Use of the undead should be sparing and rarely in concert with one another. An army of zombies being led by a wraith and a bunch of wights instantly portrays them as very ordinary; they are no different than an army of orcs being led by an evil priest. Each and every undead creature has a back story built into it; playing on these strengths increases its impact on the game and the impact the undead has on those playing the game.

A zombie is a corpse come to life and should reflect not a shambling gang of militants but rather the sickening thud of decay that lingers around us all. The sweet scent of their rotting flesh should pound the character's senses, disorienting him, reducing his abilities, and retarding his skills. It should not trigger a strategic response on how to hold off the said army. The zombie must pull at that part of us that finds a dead body, and all the fears of the unknown it represents, repugnant. Its very life, the very fact that it has turned the tide on death should trigger an emotive response. Using it

carefully and selectively is the best way to achieve this. Zombies are mindless creatures; they cannot follow others, nor obey commands, nor do they possess even the instincts to allow them to do so. They possess reflexes only. They reflexively stalk the living, seeking to destroy them. Here is the true terror bound within the zombie. The fact that it truly is mindless makes it a creature set apart and wholly different than anything else. Remove the factory aspect from this creature, the common image of the evil cleric raising an army of zombies and make the source of its arousal something beyond the control or understanding of the characters.

A wraith is a life poorly spent and one so foul that even the underworld refuses it entrance. The pain and suffering such a maddened soul must endure should be reflected in its own world, not surrendered to a shambling gaggle of misfit humanoid-zombies or the diabolical machinations of a mad wizard-priest. The wraith is a creature in and of itself. Its back story must by its very nature be unique for if not, why then would the creature have been denied access to the afterlife? Explore

...those things which should be most representative of our own fears are now cookie-cutter reflections of common, everyday monsters.

it and understand why a curse of such gravity has descended upon it. Building that into the play of the game is far better than hurling some mindless creature that threatens to knock out a level. Break the monster away from what the characters know and give them a reason to find out what drives the beast and in short order the creature must be resurrected from its uninterestingly undead self.

The mummy is perhaps the most maligned of the undead. On the surface it is a silly creature typified by steroid induced bandaging. We see not the original attempt to usher a creature to the afterlife but rather a comic creature that might make our skin rot if it touches us; an exaggerated case of the cooties does not reflect a fear of the unknown. Capturing the essence of the mummy is very difficult for it requires a departure from a cultural framework that we are very familiar with. But here again, as with many things in role playing games, the story dominates. Give the mummy a reason for being what it is and place it in an environment that is critical to making the creature what it is, a soul that lingers in its own decayed body hoping to regain life from the jars that hold its essence.

In short what the three examples above touch upon is the simple notion of altering the stereotypes that have come to pervade much of the gaming world we play in. Changing the monsters and injecting them into a setting that both reflects the mood of the game you want to play and shakes up the concepts people have when meeting these creatures makes them usable once again.

The setting within which a horror game unfolds of course is another key to the horror game itself. As important as reflecting the monster, the setting must offer some unknowns that the characters must unravel before they can understand it. Marsh, fog, dungeons and crypts all play to the characters' weaknesses because they can slow movement and reaction, limit visibility, etc. In short these settings reduce the controls a character has and thereby increases the unknown which, though it does not of itself make a game that much more scary, it certainly heightens the tensions and pushes the players to the edge of tolerance.

This is not a one-way street of course. Players are at the table and must be willing to sit down and prime themselves for the unexpected. It is difficult to shed the necessary desires of respond-

ing to some unknown quantity with a skill or ability. That natural response is a control mechanism, one that allows a player a handle on the situation. This is of course not to say that the players should not attempt to do certain things, or make a roll to see if they know or have experienced similar things. It is only to say that the player should open their minds to new directions, to things that aren't in their control; they must set aside their own preconceived notions about what is and what should be and embark on the story that the Castle Keeper is crafting. Do not argue over the CK's rulings; don't question them; have faith in the CK's desire to craft a good game and to make intelligent judgments.

Removing the controls is really what the Castle Keeper must do to capture that feeling of horror. Take the game over, run it fast using the simple Siege Mechanic. Revisit the tools at your disposal in order to keep an air of mystery about the game, to reset the controls. That's what a tainted campaign is, creating an environment in which the player no longer has control over what they are seeing and they do not know the ready-made answers to what is happening. From this lack of control comes the fear of the unknown and the dark becomes real again. If they don't know what is happening at the outset, and they cannot readily stop it, then the taint of the horror spreads through them and the fear consumes them and the game is suddenly a place where horror is real and the fear of the unknown places you back in the hall when you were eight years old.

Steve Chenault



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Tim Kask

Even though they tried for eight years, the nuns were not able to break his spirit, although they did give him a good education. During the sixth grade, he discovered AH's D-Day and was hooked on wargaming.

Growing up in the Corn Belt, Tim longed to see what else there was out there and mistakenly bought into the Navy recruiter's promise to "Join the Navy and see the world" upon graduating from high school. He saw a lot of SE Asia, but not much else except the flight deck of a carrier.

Upon his return from RVN, he married a girl that he had known since ninth grade, went to college on the GI Bill and rediscovered gaming and miniatures. This led him to Chainmail.

Chainmail led him to calling up one of the authors, named Gary, which led him to D&D in 1974, which in turn led to a job with a new company in 1975 called TSR editing D&D supplements and starting a magazine called The Dragon.

He left the gaming field until just a couple of years ago, resurfacing as one of the celebrity auctioneers at GenCon. He is now busy writing a couple of game columns, answering questions on his thread at dragonsfoot.org, and writing a series of modular adventures for RP games. He is still happily married (39 years in July), has two children and four grandchildren, one of whom obviously got his gaming gene, and two cats in the yard.



Just what is the role of whatever you call the one guy (or lady) sitting facing a bunch of others at a table behind some sort of screen?

Sometimes we're the conductor on the train, allowing the campaign to follow its own track while making sure the aisles remain clear for whatever might come next.

Sometimes we are the Final Arbiter (imagine James Earl Jones saying that).

Sometimes we are the Norns, weaving the tapestry of lives.

Sometimes we are the Supreme Court, making law as it applies, trying to balance "right" with "fair".

Sometimes we are Coyote, the Trickster, telling stories around the fire.

There are many motivations to be behind that artificial divider between "our" world and you:

- We like trains.
- Final Arbitration is a heady brew.
- Creating a thing in which you can take pride is gratifying.
- Passing judgments and issuing writs is FUN.
- We love creating the story for its own sake, wondering what the next chapter has in store for us.

Sometimes we cheat, although most of us prefer to refer to it as "fudging." Why and when do we do it?

We choose to sit behind that barrier for any number of reasons; many of you undoubtedly do it for reasons not listed here. But one thing we all share is that we enjoy that spot.

We want to see your smiling, tense, expectant, mournful, outraged and pensive faces down the table.

We want to have our fun, but to do that we have to provide some fun for you players. (*Wait a minute; that seems a bit lopsided.*) If we don't make it fun for you, your face will soon be missing from the table. Pretty soon, ours will be the ONLY face at the table. Not much fun playing solitaire; just ask TSR, who explored that approach in the '70's.

So we compromise, and sometimes that means fudging. I remember once many years ago devising this clever ceiling trap that morphed into an entire ceiling falling all at once, therefore squishing the whole party, one big

gelatinous TPK adventure (Total Party Killed—I do read the forums). Here come the bugbears with crackers.

This isn't the real world; we can make good things happen and prevent, or at least ameliorate, the extremes of Chance and Fortune. We can see to it that undeserved suffering does not occur. If I let that 35' x 45' three foot thick slab of granite go, what would I do next week? Would there be a next week for our group?

If we are too tough on the players, they'll complain and may stop playing. If we make every adventure a cakewalk, they'll complain and may stop playing. So we fudge, trying to smooth level off some of the peaks and valleys.

Have I ever fudged? You bet your bippy, baby! I have fudged more times than I could possibly count; but never to be harsher or vindictive. I sort of believe in game karma; some things are meant to be. Suppose you are a puny 35 or 40 HP hit points, or whatever your game calls the amount of whatever you have to expend in combat before you die, maybe a 10th Lvl M-U. You trip the devious trap where four humongous axes swish through the space you occupy; how many hit you? (secret roll by me—oh no! the one coming down from above hits you, the one coming up from below hits, and wouldn't you know it, but both swing out from the sides also impacting your frail frame.) Do I want to see you die? (Your low overall physical fitness is such that surviving *Raise from Dead* spells is becoming considerably iffy with each occasion.)

I can do one of several things: figure it was a bad day to be you and let the axes cleave where they may and almost certainly kill you, ignore the roll entirely and improvise to what I want to happen, or re-roll and see if it really happened. Natural 20's are never re-rolled, but anything else might be. If the next set of rolls is no better than the first, maybe you are supposed to die.

But, if I want the group to continue having fun living the adventure we are creating together, and not rolling up new PC's every week, or not show up anymore, I may have to mitigate here.

Am I "cheating" the PC that "should have died"? I would say no as I see our sacred purpose as promoting and providing fun. A few years after I moved to Wisconsin, a few of the "old gang" came to GenCon and we shared memories. When they asked if I'd ever fudged, I said Yes. It didn't diminish the memories or cheapen the adventure.

Jorath's Last Trick: The Shifted Crypt

By John William Wright

A C&C Encounter Crypt for Levels 4-6

Setup

Baron Jorath Blackhammer was a miserly man, who gained wealth and power through intrigue and duplicity. It is said that he never married or produced offspring because he could not stomach the thought of heirs enjoying his possessions. When the Baron began to age, he sought magic to extend his life. When, after many decades, it became clear to him he could not forestall death forever, he became obsessed with finding a way to take his riches with him...or, at the very least, keep it from any potential claimants.

Jorath employed architects and wizards to create his tomb, and located it as remotely from his home as possible (even perhaps in an existing dungeon full of dangers to help guard it), and had the wizards come up with a little trick—the tomb as found would be just a front, requiring a “shift” to an alternate plane of existence to find the real tomb, with defenses designed to not just protect but to punish any “miscreants” who would dare defile the Baron’s respite and its treasures.

Entering the Tomb

The entrance is a long sloping corridor leading down at a 40 degree angle. It could begin anywhere the Castle Keeper chooses to locate this Crypt encounter, from a hidden upper cave tomb, from an existing dungeon, etc. The details are left as open as possible for the CK to fit this encounter into their existing campaign. The door is a heavy stone door, sealed air-tight against its stone frame. It is locked (CL 2 to open) and trapped (CL -1 to discover, 2 to disarm), with the warning “*Enter and meet thy doom, in this world or the next!*” and 14 symbols representing different stars in the night sky of whatever world the Crypt is found upon. The trap releases a noxious gas into the corridor that fills it to the far end, thus DEX saves are not applicable unless a party member is near the very end of the tunnel above. PCs take 2d6+4 toxic gas damage and become violently ill, losing 1 temporary point of CON for 1d4+1 days, unless a successful CON save is made (CL 1) that eliminates the CON decrease and halves the damage.

The False Tomb

The circular crypt beyond the entrance door is the fake, but designed to make the party think it’s merely been looted already. The sarcophagus in the center has its lid slightly ajar, and inside is the skeletal remains of a human wearing rotted Baron’s robes, with a few coins still spread about to make it look like what was in it was taken. A check (CL -3) will reveal there was a wire trap designed to release 14 darts from around the room (on each column), but it has been sprung and there are a dozen darts, with dried poison, scattered about the room. There is a false bottom, also just slightly ajar and

easy to find (search CL -5), under which there appears dust which would lead the investigative party to believe coins, gems and items have been removed. There is a bent dagger and 2 silver pieces still here, as well as a tarnished cup (worthless).

On each of the stone columns there is the clear trip-hole for the dart traps, as well as a symbol of a prominent star from the night sky, in a small circular ring. Close inspection (CL 1) will reveal to the astute player that these turn, and a knowledge check (CL 1) would reveal that the 14 are a part of a mythology known as “The Path of Desire,” a pseudo-zodiac progression of a mythical demigod who travelled to 14 other worlds in the sky above. A further check (CL 3) will remember the order of the Path. Beginning with the column just left of the door coming in (facing the sarcophagus), the pattern begins and each must be depressed and turned in order, skipping the two columns after until circling the room thrice (i.e. column 1, then 4, then 7, etc, starting over with #2 and #3 coming around clockwise the 2nd and 3rd times). The party might discover these without knowing the myth, and might decipher the sequence through trial and error, but each time a wrong symbol is depressed and twisted it will reset all as well as deliver a bolt of electric shock to the operator (1d6+2 damage).

When all fourteen are activated, the room around the group blurs and seemingly dissolves as the party members are shifted to the real tomb.

The Tomb of Baron Jorath

The real tomb exists on the plane of fire, locked within a rock outcropping in a sea of lava. It is thus hot to begin with in the room. The room is similar but not exactly the same—it is reversed, with the door leading north instead of south, and the columns appear blank except for a small symbol twist-ring located at the bottom rear of one of the right-side columns (CL 2 to find—it is hidden well to look like a cracked piece of rock)—this is the return control. The other 11 columns are hollow but with enough masonry to make that fact hard to tell (CL 4 in searching the columns specifically).

Jorath had one or two more tricks up his dead sleeve even here—the door is locked (CL 1 to open) and trapped (CL 0 to find, CL 3 to disarm a trap that would fill the room with gas the same as the entrance corridor above), with a warning “*Those who disturb my rest will suffer damnation and fire!*” Adventurers who open the door thinking it leads to treasure will immediately open a door to a corridor that stretches right to an opening on a rock outcropping, lapping with lava. The heat blast will enter the room quickly, dealing 1d6+4 damage (half for successful CON save CL 1), and there is a 50% chance that some lava will flow and spurt down the hallway (DEX save CL 1 to avoid). Shutting the door quickly will need to occur or the same conditions repeat every minute.

The second trick is in Jorath’s tomb itself. Opening the locked (but not trapped) sarcophagus (CL 3 to unlock) reveals a man

JORATH'S LAST TRICK

dressed in very flowery, druidic clothes, with a dried flower garland about his head. On his right hand is a signet ring bearing the Blackhammer family seal, in the other is a faded parchment that reads “*All the treasures in the world, peace, friendship and rest at last...*” meant to infuriate pillagers and make them think Jorath had some sort of spiritual awakening. The real treasure is in the columns as follows, starting to the right of the door as you face it and going clockwise:

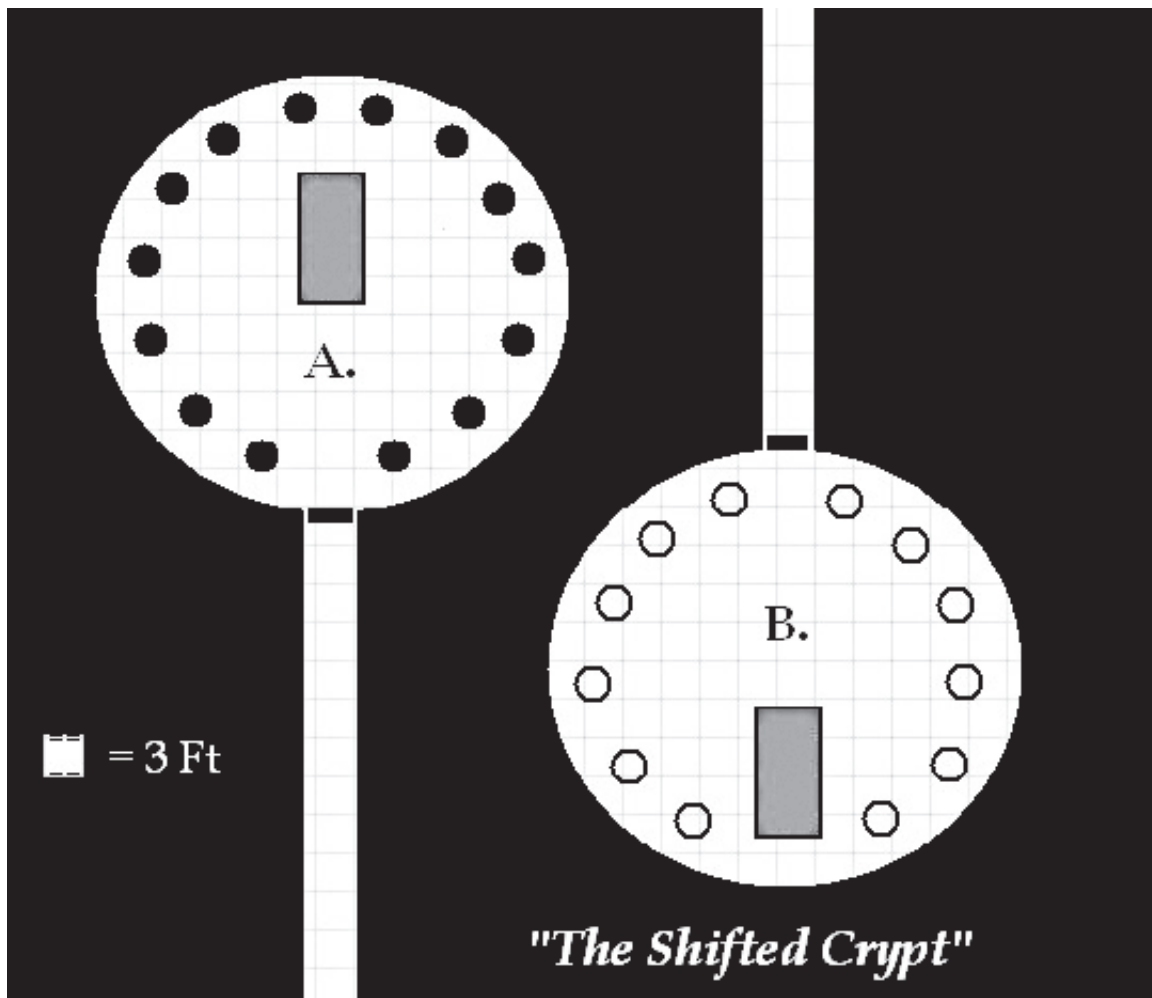
- Column A. 28,732 g.p.
- B. Eight sacks of rubies worth 10,000 g.p.
- C. Scrolls of all Zero, 1st and 2nd level Wizard Spells
- D. Empty
- E. Not hollow—has return trigger
- F. Two long swords (both +1)
- G. Cups, silverware, dishes, and other fine trappings—worth 7,382 g.p.
- H. Suit of +2 *Studded Leather* armor and a +1 *Chain Shirt*
- I. Statuary, about 8 or 9 finely carved and expensive (none magical) worth 3,212 g.p.
- J. Empty
- K. All the deeds, bank holdings and financial holdings of the Baron, wrapped in paper tubes.*

* Unfortunately, this last column has a trap, and if not located (CL 1) and disarmed (CL 5), a thing glass ceiling in the column will release several quarts of acid that will dissolve all of these documents plus deal 2d4+4 damage to the PC involved (half with DEX save CL 1).

Regardless of whether the party finds the treasure or not, their mere transportation here activated Jorath’s last trick:

The Simulacra Party

Activating the 14 column signs didn’t just shift the party to the real tomb, it also activated a powerful magic spell embedded in the tomb—a spell of temporary cloning, creating a simulacra party of opposites who wait for the party’s return. They are identical to the characters in every way except purely evil and committed to one function—killing their real selves. The CK should make sure and fight the simulacra NPCs with all the traits and skills of the PCs, making it a very tight and even battle. The simulacra characters, however, dissolve if they pass the EXIT of the far end of the entrance corridor, something a PC might discover in the course of the battle. The simulacra party has no attainable treasure, and their weapons and armor likewise dissolve to nothingness beyond the entrance corridor. If the simulacra party defeats an adventuring party, they follow the spell’s command to return the treasure and all evidence to the real tomb, restoring that space and depositing remains into the lava sea for good riddance.



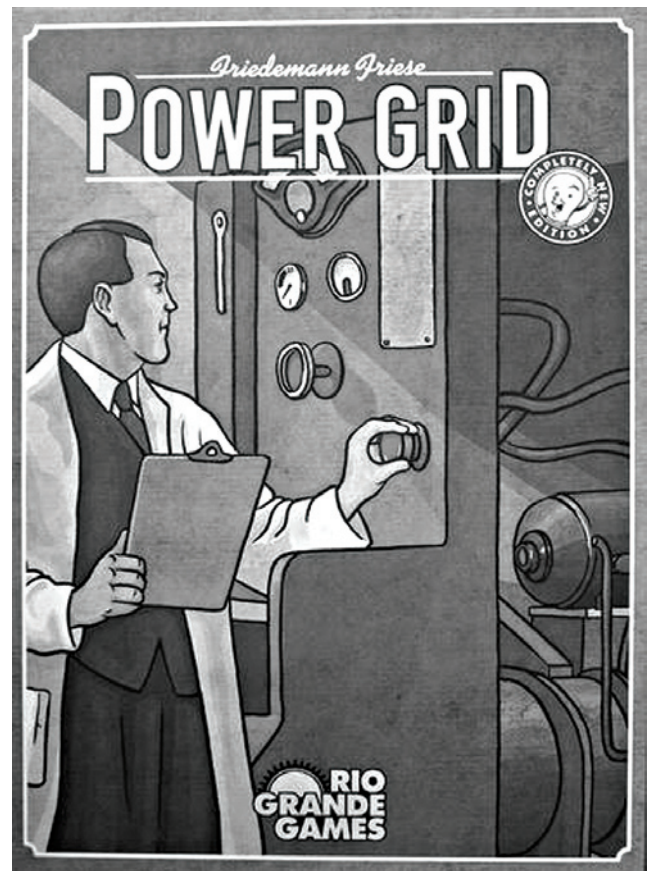
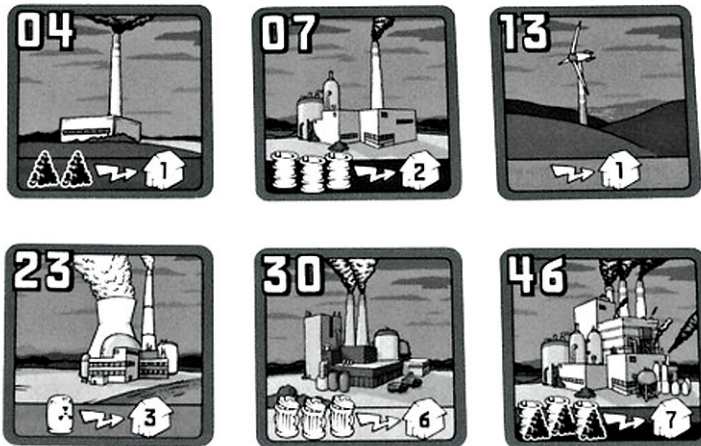
Power Grid

Game Designer: Friedemann Friese

Players: 2-6

Company: Rio Grande Games

Play time: 120 minutes



Although I'm aware of many stupid statements that players, including myself say, with POWER GRID, I would definitely include it as one of my top five games if I were stranded with some good-looking friends on a desert island.

POWER GRID defines itself as an economic resource manufacturing game. It's a great deal of fun from beginning to end. During the play of the game, gamers purchase power plants in an effort to power cities with electricity. The power plants are made to use coal, oil, garbage, uranium, and wind power. The plants come out in ever greater ability to give more and more cities power. One is constantly trying to budget enough money to buy resources to power the plants they own and to use left over cash to buy their way into new cities. The cards represent the many different types of plants that give electrical power to cities. I have a good friend, Tom Wham who always outbids all of us when a wind power plant comes up for bids. The wind plants don't use up the normal resources for fueling plants and he then doesn't have any costs when all the rest of us are buying coal, oil, and trash to burn in our power plants. The only problem he has is that often he takes too long to switch over to power plants than can power more cities than his smaller wind powered plants can handle. Wooden pieces represent the fuel for the power plants. Brown squares are coal, black cylinders are barrels of oil, yellow trash cans represent recycled garbage, and red cylinders are nuclear fuel cells. There aren't many pages of rules and they are well written and presented in an order that makes teaching others easy to do.

PLAYER INTERACTION: I'm a huge fan of the player interaction design concept. There is plenty of that going on in this game. In POWER GRID, there is a bidding process for each power plant. Auction prices can go to silly levels as people struggle to gain larger and larger power plants. People can buy up resources so that others have to pay much larger prices for their coal and oil. People can also place their new buys into cities in such a way as to block and make it impossible at times for other players to purchase their own cities.

REPLAYABILITY: In my game play experience, this feature is a must. POWER GRID has it in spades as each game plays differently every time. Added to that, the basic game has a two sided board so that you are playing in two different countries with many different type of set ups for the city's. If that wasn't enough, all aspects of the game have been changed in many different types of expansions. Since the game came out in 2004 there are been many new game boards created presenting new countries and their power needs. Added to that they often modify the rules so that the fuel resources are changed in their availability during the turn.

CATCH UP FEATURES: There are few ways to slow down the actions of a player who gets far ahead in the game. Sometimes you can play with the fuel resources and make it very expensive for the leader to get fuel. Sometimes you can also purchase rights to the various cities to slow down a player, but this is also hard to do. Just don't let your friends get ahead in the game and you will do well.

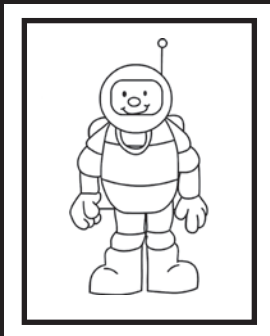
BOTTOM LINE: Buy it, buy it, buy it. The game is great. Every expansion is worth having.

Auld & Wyrnish

Wisdom from an Old Master by Mike Stewart



In 1978, Mike Stewart became interested in roleplaying games and has never looked back. He is currently a post graduate student at the University of North Texas. When he grows up, he wants to be a spaceman.



A Gaggle of Golems: Part I



ver the next several issues, I'm going to bring to the readership a few Golem types that have proven successful in my Aedenne campaign.

As this issue's theme is of James M. Ward's excellent *Tainted Lands* setting, I'm 'digging up' some unusual golems to give your players some healthy nightmares. I hope you find them as useful as I have!

Necrotic Golems

Those students of the Arcani are familiar with the more common golems that may be encountered in the course of explorations. The Clay, Flesh, Iron, and Stone golems are frequently told of in tales and legends of Wizards, Witches and those who delve in forbidden lore. Yet the vast possibilities of the golem incantations have barely scratched the surface with such common dweomercraft.

One of the truly evil aspects of magic is the necromantic arts. These fell sorcerers use the darkest magics to cheat death and force the dead themselves to do their bidding. Adventurers generally know Skeletons, Zombies, Wights and Ghouls, as well as the methods of their destruction. However, what of the forces that create golems? Do those who plumb the depths of black magic have a twisted form of the golem to do their bidding?

The answer is a terrible "Yes"; at least if the Castle Keeper allows! Below are three possible golem types useful to necromancers, demonic cultists, and other unsavory types to combat your adventurers and generally make life much more...interesting.

Rot Golem

Size: Large

Hit Dice 6 (D12)

Movement: 20 feet

Armor Class: 20

Attacks: Slam (2d8),

Special: Berserk, Immune to Magic/Turning, Lumbering Gait, Grub Cascade

Saves: P

Int: None

Alignment: Neutral (Neutral)

Type: Construct

Treasure: n/a

XP: 325+6

The Rot Golem is a large (8' tall+) creature constructed from the bones of a very large animal and enchanted to adhere to a large humanoid or animal shape. The bones are connected with the hair of corpses and within its chest are placed a Cave Troll's heart.

The monstrosity is complete when coated over its bone framework is a fleshy latticework of Rot Grubs (See entry in the *Castles & Crusades Monsters & Treasure*) to provide a wriggling carapace that is truly horrific to behold.

Combat: Like all golems, the Rot Golem follows orders given to it by its master; usually to guard place of importance to the necromancer. It will follow orders literally and not move away from this dictum regardless of events.

Berserk: The Rot Golem is vulnerable to breaking the control of its master as other golems. Please reference the *Castles & Crusades Monsters & Treasure* tome for details.

Immunity to Magic/Turning: A Rot Golem is immune to all spells and spell effects, except as noted here: Spells that inflict cold damage act as a *Slow* spell, regardless of the spell's level, for 1d12 rounds; spells that deal electrical damage will heal the golem for one hit point per die of damage inflicted. The golem, being an automaton despite its undead nature, is immune to being turned by clerics and paladins.

Lumbering Gait: As a result of its undead structure, the Rot Golem always strikes last in any round.

Grub Cascade: Whenever the Rot Golem is struck by a weapon, the attacker must avoid being sprayed by the Rot Grubs that will pour from the golem's foul parody of flesh. The attacker who succeeds in inflicting hit point damage upon the golem must make a Dexterity saving throw with the Challenge Level being the golem's Hit Dice to avoid a gruesome fate; being attacked by the Rot Grubs!

Corpse Golem

Size: Large

Hit Dice: 10 (D12)

Movement: 15 feet

Armor Class: 22

Attacks: Appendage Strike (1d10)

Special: Berserk, Immune to Magic/Turning, Lumbering Gait, Detaching Limbs

Saves: P

Int: None

Alignment: Neutral (Neutral)

Type: Construct

Treasure: n/a

XP: 975+10

The creation of the foulest rites of black magic, the Corpse Golem is a disgusting tatterdemalion of body parts harvested from dozens, sometimes hundreds, of dead bodies for assimilation into the creature's nauseous flesh. This makes the creature anywhere from 7 feet tall to 20 feet tall, as the power and demented wishes of its creator is its only limit.



Combat: In battle, the Corpse Golem does not inflict the usual double-fisted Slam damage of its cousins. Instead, it strikes with a limb, attempting to grasp the victim with the appendage's multitude of hands and claws. When attached, damage can continue by dint of limbs detaching from the corpse and continuing to claw and gouge its victim until death overtakes them.

Berserk: The Corpse Golem is vulnerable to breaking the control of its master as other golems. Please reference the *Castles & Crusades Monsters & Treasure* tome for details.

Immunity to Magic/Turning: A Corpse golem is immune to all spells and spell effects, except as noted here: Spells that inflict electrical damage act as a *Slow* spell, regardless of the spell's level, for 1d12 rounds; spells that deal cold damage will heal the golem for one hit point per die of damage inflicted. The golem, being an automaton despite its undead nature, is immune to being turned by clerics and paladins.

Lumbering Gait: As a result of its undead form, the Corpse Golem always strikes last in any round.

Detaching Limbs: As a result of its composite form, the Corpse Golem can detach limbs to attack a victim individually for continuous damage. When the golem makes a successful strike against a victim, 1–8 (1D8) arms/claws detach from the monster's putrid flesh and attempt to gouge, claw and/or strangle its victim. The limbs attack as one creature, with the number of limbs on any one defender counted as the Hit Dice of the attacker. Each does 1–2 hit points of damage, and each has 1–3 hit points each. For each limb destroyed the subsequent group attacks as a creature with the equivalently reduced Hit Dice modifier to its attack roll.

As the Corpse Golem is formed exclusively from a multitude of decaying limbs, there are always more regardless of the number used in a melee or battle.

Grave Ash Golem

Size: Large

Hit Dice: 7 (D12)

Movement: 20 feet

Armor Class: 24

Attacks: Slam (1d6)

Special: Berserk, Immune to Magic/Turning, Lumbering Gait, Choking Ash

Saves: M

Int: None

Alignment: Neutral (Neutral)

Type: Construct

Treasure: n/a

XP: 600+7

Unlike its morbid kin, the Grave Ash golem only has a semi-corporeal substance in this plane of reality. Its body is comprised of the ashes of many bodies that have been cremated as part of its construction ritual. As a result, the Grave Ash Golem can only be hit by +1 or better Magical Weapons.

Once formed the golem appears as a large (7 foot+) humanoid gray figure of soot and ash, moving slowly by hovering slightly above the ground as it floats towards those unfortunate enough to be

in its path. Red eyes seem to blow from within its head shape, but they float independently around the head-form and so is difficult to surprise (-4 to attempt).

Combat: The Grave Ash Golem can strike with its fists for a mere 1-6 hit points of damage, but this is not its preferred method of attack. Instead, it will inflict Choking Ash upon one victim at a time until its foes are eliminated. It will use its Slam attack only if the Choking Ash seems ineffective.

Berserk: The Grave Ash Golem is vulnerable to breaking the control of its master as other golems. Please reference the Castles & Crusades Monsters & Treasure Tome for details.

Immunity to Magic/Turning: A Grave Ash golem is immune to all spells and spell effects, except as noted here: Spells that inflict wind damage act as a *Slow* spell, regardless of the spell's level, for 1d12 rounds; spells that deal fire damage will heal the golem for one hit point per die of damage inflicted. The golem, being an automaton despite its undead nature, is immune to being turned by clerics and paladins.

Lumbering Gait: As a result of its ash cloud nature, the Grave Ash Golem always strikes last in any round.

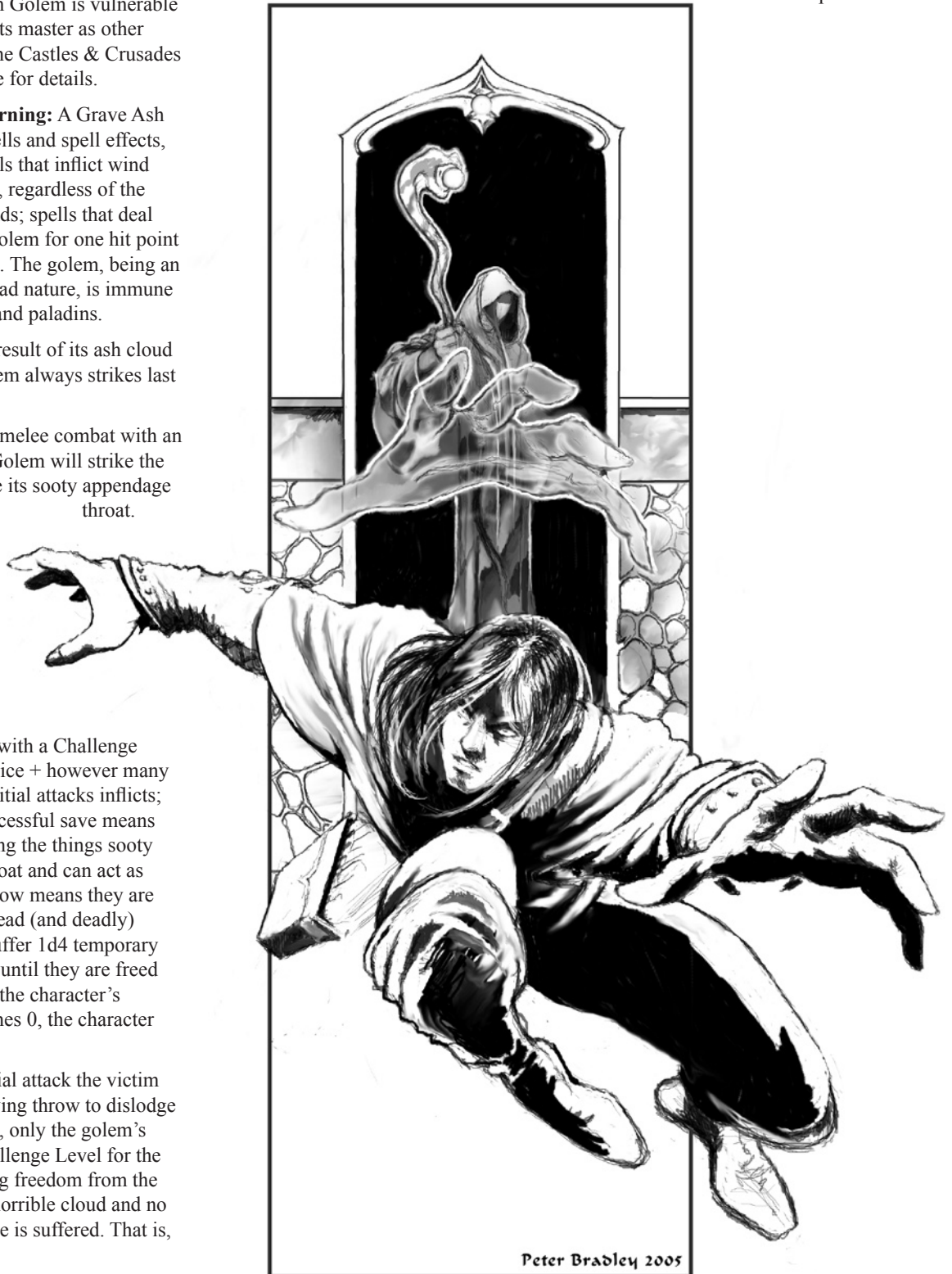
Choking Ash: When in melee combat with an opponent, the Grave Ash Golem will strike the face of an enemy and drive its sooty appendage into its victim's nose and throat. This causes the victim to begin suffocating; taking damage as follows.

Upon a successful strike by the golem on a defender, the recipient of the attack must make a constitution Saving throw with a Challenge Level of the golem's Hit Dice + however many hit points of damage the initial attacks inflicts; 1D6 as noted above. A successful save means the character avoided having the things sooty claw forced down their throat and can act as normal. A failed saving throw means they are choking on the ash of its dead (and deadly) essence. The victim will suffer 1d4 temporary CON damage every round until they are freed of the golem's grip. When the character's Constitution attribute reaches 0, the character is dead.

Each round after the initial attack the victim may attempt a Strength saving throw to dislodge the monster. For this check, only the golem's Hit Dice is used as the Challenge Level for the save; with success, meaning freedom from the asphyxiating touch of the horrible cloud and no further Constitution damage is suffered. That is,

unless the Grave Ash Golem successfully strikes the character again; at which point the above occurs again.

While the golem is attacking a victim with this attack, it will ignore others in the area until the victim is dead or the opponent frees him or herself. The Grave Ash Golem is very methodical in this attack and will move from character to character; usually attacking wizards or clerics first and then moving through the party; choosing prey depending on their power.



Peter Bradley 2005

Make It Your Own:

Adapting Shelf Scenarios To A Home Campaign

by Ron Sventz



A purchased scenario may be a wonderful stand-alone product: imaginative, exciting, and emotionally engaging. However, the one thing it is not, unless you are the author, is yours. As a result, even the best shelf products rarely are an exact fit for a home campaign. Even if a CK uses Ahrdr as her world, and attempts to conform as much as possible with Troll Lord Games' worldview, a fertile imagination may have recast the world in a different shade and tone. The fit becomes ever harder if the home story has depth and a large degree of personalization, especially if the CK has customized the campaign to her players', or her own, needs and visions.

This presentation will include a number of suggestions for taking purchased products and seamlessly integrating them into your campaign world. Before closing, we'll also take a look at adapting ideas from other genres and even other media, to a C&C campaign. The assumption here, of course, is that you are running an ongoing story, not an episodic series of unconnected scenarios.

We'll consider scenario integration with the following headings: top-down analysis, entry and exit point, flexibility of timing, and monster-swapping.

Top-down analysis refers to the first consideration that should be taken whenever you decide to employ a published scenario: how will the result and the rewards of the scenario impact your campaign vision? There's an old and simple truism about RPG rewards: you can easily give the players more, but it is very hard to take something away, when you realise that it is too powerful, or plot-killing. Certainly, it is not hard to remove an item, or contact, or other reward later, simply from the logistics standpoint. As CK, you have godlike powers over your story. It is likely, though, that your players would object to gratuitous removal of an "oops", especially a gold-plated, +3 *Oops*. At the very least, they might worry about this sort of thing happening again, in the future. To deal with this, you can use top-down analysis. Ask yourself what the best possible reward from any scenario should be, at the current state of your campaign. How much gold, what power level of magic, how influential a contact? This is easier if you have a grand, overall plan for your campaign and its magic and power level, but can even be considered on a scenario-by-scenario basis. You need to give yourself room to grow.

So, when you read over the scenario, decide what rewards can be left in and what must be taken out. Even more important, when customizing it for your campaign, is to decide what rewards and elements to *modify*. Consider substituting names and places. Can you make tie-ins to previous or future scenarios, and to "game history"? Would this scenario relate to organisations or individuals that are already, or that may become, contacts, aids for, or enemies of your heroes? If the heroes succeed, how will this affect their reputations in different quarters? What if they fail, or are temporarily set back? By considering potential repercussions in advance, you will derive many benefits. Chief among these: it will be far easier to answer your players' questions and also to "adjudicate on the fly", if

need be. Also, you will find that additional plot will spontaneously be generated by both the scenario and by your players' interaction with it. If you have already considered how it will relate to your campaign vision, you will be better able to either direct the emerging plotlines, or defuse or refocus them as necessary.

The concept of entry and exit point is a far more straightforward point. If you are integrating a purchased scenario into an ongoing campaign, it is unlikely that simply starting the heroes off in a tavern, or riding into a town, or receiving a plea for help, will be appropriate. Moreover, some published scenarios give you ideas for entry, and others simply suggest that the heroes are entering the region or town or simply leave it up to you or your group to suggest why they might be, for instance, riding up to a known abode of rapacious giants. Unless the beginning of the scenario is a happy fit for your campaign, you will want to come up with a few game-logical reasons or events that could involve your heroes with the scenario thrust.

Let's use the above, "abode of giants" idea as an example. The scenario wants to set your heroes against a fairly powerful group of giants and their chieftain. There may be no logical connection between that and your current storyline. Presuming that you have a likely geographical region in which the giants can be placed, start brainstorming from the scenario concepts. If they are supposed to be raiding the innocent, then who will those innocents be? Could they have a connection to a temple, a contact, a friendly wizard—or an enemy of the characters, perhaps a campaign nemesis? Do the giants have minion creatures, such as ogres or goblins, which might be more easily involved with the heroes? This serves the dual purpose of leading your group gradually to the giants, and also gives the option of planning ahead, if the giants are a bit too tough right at the moment. "Monster-swapping" will be described below, but in fact you can employ the techniques mentioned above to take three or four unconnected scenarios and link them in such a way that they offer either a seamless, linear sequence, or a branching, flexible set of options from which the heroes select.

Exit point also needs to be considered. The heroes have defeated the giants; now what? If there were connections that led them to the giants, then there will be people who need reports, villagers to hear the good news, or allies of the giants that may seek vengeance or, at the least, need to be considered as a follow-up. You may wish to seed the link to your next scenario among the giants' loot, captives, or with the folk that the heroes have helped. Resolution and closure of one scenario is not the end: the story goes ever on. By knowing where the heroes have come from, and the possible paths that you have in store for them next, you can establish a rich continuity that will make them realize that almost nothing happens "randomly" in your world. That kind of storytelling consideration and depth deepens player appreciation and trust, and results in far more enjoyable sessions.

This leads directly to flexibility of timing. It can also add a lot to a campaign world, if your players do not feel constrained to always gallop off in the direction to which the signpost points. In

other words, flexibility is the opposite of the “plot hammer”, or the inability to “save versus boxed text”. If you have a couple of scenarios and can take the time to do top-down analysis and to work up entry and exit points for more than one, you give yourself a menu of possibilities. Imagine seeding the lead-ins to two to four scenarios in your region of play. The players might look up and ask, “Well, which one are we supposed to be doing?” You can then smile and reply, “It’s a living, breathing world, folks—where do you *want* to go?” This is especially powerful if you do not force players into a “success timetable”. With the exception of “restricted heroism”, where “if you do not stop the ritual by this full moon, it will be Too Late”, there is nothing wrong with letting the group scout out, or gather information about, the lead-ins to two or three scenarios. They can then pick the one that they feel able to pursue, and have the ultimate sense of choosing their own destinies in the story. Because you have done your initial analysis and entry/exit work, you will also be able to keep tabs on the varying difficulty levels of the scenarios, and if necessary be able to tweak things, if the group does not pick what you thought might be the optimal order. That leads us to “monster-swapping”.

It is quite reasonable to want to be able to run a scenario pretty much as written: that is much less work for you. However, you can actually use monster-swapping not only to keep a scenario power level appropriate and theme appropriate, but also to get extra value out of your purchase.

The first and most obvious use of monster swapping is to substitute threats, of appropriate power level to your hero group, into scenarios written for lower or higher level heroes. To continue an example, you could substitute a clan of ogres for a clan of giants without too much difficulty and the lair or holding of the creatures would quite likely be usable as is, perhaps with a bit of size rescaling. Of course, rewards would have to be adjusted, also. As long as the ogres could be a credible threat, or accomplishing the same theme content of the scenario, you are essentially exchanging one kind of “powerful smasher” for another. Scenarios involving many magical or magic-using creatures are a bit more complex, but can be modified along the same lines. You should have a reasonable idea of what your heroes can handle.

You might think that this means that you have wasted a good bit of the scenario by having to re-tool it, but this need not be the case. There are three simple options for re-using the scenario.

- Some time after the heroes have cleared out the place, if they simply ride off and leave it, new creatures can move into it. The ogres left the huge cave complex, and now that your heroes have voyaged elsewhere and are busy increasing in power, the giants move in. Cue “Return to the Caves of Calamity”, or something equally alliterative.
- You can shuffle around a few rooms or buildings or caves and use the original scenario over again, with a few, minor variations to individuals and rewards. Or, simply, change out “huts”

for “caves” or vice versa, and reload. There are always more giants and goblins and ogres. You could also transport one set of threats to a different scenario’s maps. Don’t overdo this, but it is especially useful for a quick, “on the fly” scenario, when you need a session and are not quite prepared for a main event.

- You can take the scenario basics and repopulate it in an entirely different region or land, and/or with threats of a different sort: magical rather than non-magical, or unintelligent versus intelligent. They cleaned out the place, but a dragon moved in, or spellcasting monsters, or whatever is appropriate to your story.

Taking the substitution concept one step further, we come to use of other genres and even other media. As the erudite author John Campbell makes plain in his work, “The Hero with a Thousand Faces”, the thematic elements and even the specific story occurrences of “epic quests” and heroic stories are largely the same, regardless of the time, place or culture. Giving an example from my home roleplaying games, I have had great success with simply taking a scenario for one system and using it in another. The flamboyant rock star needing bodyguards for a concert becomes a bard needing an escort to a noble’s command performance. Starships become ocean-going vessels. And the rebel group opposing an evil empire becomes—er—a rebel group opposing an evil empire. See how it works? This also works in reverse: your C&C scenarios can turn into ones for a post-apocalyptic world, very easily.

Television scripts do not often port over well into tabletop roleplay, but many elements can sometimes be converted. Also, if you have a series that has a long-term continuity concept that you do like, it may be possible to adapt it quite closely. Here’s one more example.

Powerful, merciless raiders drive all of the people of a whole region out of their homes and cities. The heroes portray the leaders and defenders of this rag-tag group of wagons and herds, as they strike out across trackless wastes, through monster-infested mountains and swamps, and villages and towns of strange folk with odd customs. All the while, strike teams, assassins and mounted raiders of their enemies pursue them relentlessly.

Perhaps one, cleric hero is the spiritual leader of the community, urging them on with a firm vision of a promised haven. Another could be the military commander of the few warriors that the group possesses. One could be the incredibly courageous and talented cavalrywoman who struggles with her inner demons and conflicts when not losing herself gladly in battle and destruction of the enemy. Another could be the battle-weary, wise, yet jaded warrior who drowns his cynicism in a skin of wine every night—and every morning. And—could there be *traitors* in the travelling community? Is there a rumour that the vile enemy numbers *doppelgangers* among their allies? Oh, no...

Ultimately, the sources of adventure for your campaign world and your ongoing, heroic story are as rich and varied as your own imagination—or the imaginations of countless others. All you need do is take a published scenario or other concept source—and make it your own.

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Roadhouse Rules: A Fields of Battle Primer

by Casey Christofferson

The valley was ripe with the stench of sweat, leather, blood, and oiled steel as three thousand men and horses pushed their way double step towards the grim ruhk shield wall, which faced them. The pounding of ruhk war drums thumped against breastplate and lungs, answered now by the triumphant horns of Karbosk.

Dart-like goblin barbs fired from horn bows behind the first rank of ruhks as the human sergeants ordered cover over the screams of those who would hear no more. The rain of razors pelted their shields. The Duke urged them forward, his pennant flags waiving from burnished pauldrons. His sword stiffly canted forward and his shield rent and feathered with half a hundred black shafts.

Moving forward, their spears lifted as their boots stomped the ground double and double. Double again as the horns were blown and the charge began. Running now into the bristling wall of spears and foul ruhk shields; their feet stamping in time with the warrior next to them. Onward praying to the Gods that their armor would hold, onward to doom. Each had time for a last thought or prayer. Some remembered home, hearth, and sweet Molly's warm embrace, the reason to fight the reason to win! Led by their beloved Duke they charged onward, into the very jaws of death!

 or as long as fantasy fiction has existed there have been massive fantasy battles involving hundreds, and even thousands of combatants in duels of magic and storms of arrows. Unfortunately, despite its fantasy battles roots, fantasy role-play has long failed to produce when it comes to creating fantasy battles rules that also allow characters to do the things characters are normally allowed to do in a standard adventure.

To this end, the *Fields of Battles* rules have been developed for the *Castles & Crusades* game. A portion of these rules will appear in the *Castle Keepers Guide*. The full battle rules will also be released in manual form as a siege game offering vast expansion of the rules detailed both here and in the *Castle Keepers Guide*. Found here is the quick reference guide used to run the Battle of Felsentheim from *Falsentheim: The Dogs of War* by Davis Chenault for Troll Con VII in Little Rock Arkansas. Included are the unit stats for these combat units, though the statistics for the enemy unit commanders are found within that most excellent module.

Fields of Battle Quick Reference Guide

Units: Units are groups of like armed individuals. They attack as one cohesive force against enemies. Units are grouped in a ratio based on their physical size as well as a size ratio based on the number of combatants on the battlefield.

Medium Units: 5/1 Ratio

Small Units: 10/1 Ratio

Large Units: 2/1 Ratio

Huge or Heroic Units: 1/1 Ratio

Units retain all of the normal attacks, movement, saves, and special abilities as an individual character class or monster of like type.

Unit Hit Points: Unit hit points are the number of hit points that a unit of warriors on the battlefield has. Unit hit points are measured based on the size of the creatures who make up the unit, and the number of individuals that make up the unit. Unit Hit points are referred to as UHP.

Unit Types

Infantry: Foot soldiers, or monsters who attack from the ground. These could be comprised of units of like character classes such as rangers or fighters, or like monsters such as goblins or trolls.

Infantry has the following attacks.

Standard Melee Attack: A normal melee attack, as would be taken in a normal combat round.

Charge: As in a normal charge. Unit moves at least its full and up to twice its normal movement rate. On a successful hit, the unit deals an additional +2 points of damage, but suffers -2 to armor class.

Set for Charge: Infantry units armed with spears or pole-arms may set vs. charge, dealing double damage to foes foolish enough to impale themselves.

Cavalry: Cavalry units

Artillery: Archers, slingers, peltasts, javelins, and other ranged attackers are classified as artillery.

Artillery has the following attacks:

Basic Melee: An attack with sidearm or non-ranged weapon when pressed with melee attacks.

Direct Fire: Shots unimpeded by obstacles against enemies in a direct line of sight.

Indirect Fire: Archers target an area equal to 10ft times the number of firing squads divided by half.

Combat

Units move and engage one another as occurs in normal Siege Engine Combat.

Like units in a line make a single attack roll against all opposing forces rather than individual attacks per unit.

If a successful hit is rolled against enemies in contact with the attacking units roll damage and multiply by the number of contacting units.

Compare damage to the unit hit points of enemies. All damage that exceeds the unit hit points of an enemy unit destroys that unit, removing it from the battlefield. Record any damage that does not destroy a unit or any remainder. This damage is added to the next successful attack against the enemy line, again removing units whenever a unit hit point total is exceeded.

Heroes

Heroic Units include named NPCs and important unique monsters (such as liches, vampires, dragons and the like). Heroes may either be imbedded with units, imparting their abilities on the entire squad that they are assigned to, or roam the battlefield as individuals.

Notes

Heroes facing individual units 1 or fewer hit dice fight the unit as if it were a single creature with a number of HD equal to the number of individuals in the unit to hasten play. Thus, a unit comprised of ten goblins would fight as a 10 HD monster when facing an individual hero and have 10d6 hit points and an attack bonus of +10. The unit gains a bonus to damage reflecting their numbers and their use of squad based fighting style over the individual style of its members.

This bonus is equal to +1 for each additional squad member beyond the first. Thus, a squad of 5 has a +4 damage bonus. Squads of small figures divide this bonus damage in half.

Special: Fighters still gain their additional attacks vs. creatures with the appropriate base hit die to provoke their martial prominence. These additional attacks if successful merely add to the damage suffered by their opposing unit.

Imbedded Heroic Special Abilities

The following boosts are given to units by imbedded heroes based on their character class.

Assassins

1-4	+1 to damage anytime they attack from flank, rear, or from concealment/cover
5-8	+2 to damage anytime they attack from flank, rear, or from concealment/cover
9-12	+3 to damage anytime they attack from flank, rear, or from concealment/cover, +1 to saves vs. poison.

Barbarians

1-4	Damage from attacks to rear reduced by ¼. +1 to saves vs. paralysis, polymorph, petrification, and death attacks.
5-8	Damage from attacks to rear reduced by ½. +2 to saves vs. paralysis, polymorph, petrification, death attacks. Unit fights to -3 hit points.
9-12	+1 to damage. Unit fights to -6 hit points, damage reduction 1 point per physical blow.

Bards

1-4	Morale Bonus: The Bard's unit is considered to be Prime in Wisdom for the purposes of morale checks, all Charisma based saves increased to +1
5-8	Damage Bonus +1, all Charisma saves increased to +2
9-12	Morale Bonus: Bard grants a morale bonus of +1 to morale checks

Clerics

Embedded Asset: Clerics retain the ability to cast spells and turn undead when embedded with a unit. Likewise, area effect spells that overlap the size of the unit the cleric is embedded in effect all members of the unit.

Special: High-level clerics have the power to summon hero units and other creatures of the inner and outer planes to do their bidding on the battlefield. These units calculate UHP and attacks as any other unit.

Druids

Embedded Asset: Druids retain the ability to cast spells on their units turn when embedded with a unit. Likewise, area effect spells that overlap the size of the unit the druid is embedded in effect all members of the unit.

Special: High power druids have the ability to summon units of beasts to the battlefield that fight under their command and move on the initiative of the unit. To determine the UHP of these beasts, use the unit stat generation rules found elsewhere in this product.

Fighters

1-3	+1 to hit, +1 bonus damage (Hero present only).
4-7	One bonus attack vs. d6 or smaller hit die.
8-13	+2 to hit, +2 additional damage.

Illusionists

Embedded Asset: Illusionists retain the ability to cast spells on their units turn when embedded with a unit. Likewise, area effect spells that overlap the size of the unit the Illusionist.

Sharp Senses: Illusionists grant a +1 for every 4 levels of the Embedded Illusionist to saves vs. Illusion saving throws.

Special: High-level illusionists have the power to create "virtual" units and even armies to do their bidding through the binding of powerful illusion magic. These units have the same UHP, HD, and the like of their true counterparts.

Knights

Embedded Assets: Knights are at their best when embedded with cavalry; however, foot-soldiers also benefit from the unit bonuses that they offer. Most of the knight's embedded assets are clearly listed in the Castles & Crusades Players Handbook. The knight's abilities stack with all other units within their presence. Thus, a knight's powers stack with the embedded bonuses of other character classes.

Monks

1-5	+1 Armor Class vs. Missile Weapons, +1 to Constitution and Charisma Saves.
6-10	+2 Armor Class vs. Missile Weapons, +2 to Constitution and Charisma Saves.

Paladins

1-5	+1 Armor Class and Saves vs. Evil Opponents
6-8	+4 to Saves vs. Fear effects
9-12	+2 Armor Class and Saves vs. Evil, +2 Constitution Saves

Rogues

1-4	+1 to damage anytime they attack from flank, rear, or from concealment/cover
5-8	+2 to damage anytime they attack from flank, rear, or from concealment/cover
9-12	+1 to hit/+3 damage anytime they attack from flank, rear, or from concealment/cover

Rangers

1-4	+1 to damage against humanoid/giant opponents
5-8	+2 to damage against humanoid/giant opponents, +1 Saves/AC against Ranger's Favored Enemy.
9-12	+3 to damage against humanoid/giant opponents, +2 Saves/AC against Ranger's Favored Enemy

Wizards

Embedded Asset: Wizards retain the ability to cast spells when embedded with a unit. Likewise, area effect spells that overlap the size of the unit the wizard is embedded in effect all members of the unit.

Magic

Most magic works normally on the battlefield. Consult area of effect and range.

Specific Spell Effects

Personal: These spells affect the caster only. These function exactly as described in the PHB, usually providing the caster with some edge. Some examples of this type of spell include shield and mirror image. CKs apply the effects of these spells to the caster only.

Individual Target or Targets: These spells target individuals or a small group of individuals, sometimes based on the level of the caster. Some examples of these types of spells include charm person, magic missile, and hold person. Since they do not affect the entire unit, these spells have minimal impact on the battlefield. If a spell of this type is used in mass combat, it is less effective, especially those that deal damage. If a spell of this type is used against a squad, calculate the damage as normal, but divide the damage by 5 (minimum 1 point). This is the damage dealt to the squad. Against larger units, these spells barely have an effect, and deal 1 point of damage to the unit. Magical effects from spells of this type other than damage dealt do not affect units in a mass combat.

Small Area of Effect: These are spells whose area of effect encompasses an area equal to a 20 ft. square or 10 ft. radius or less. This area is enough to encompass an entire squad, but not larger units. When used against squads, damage from these types of spells is calculated normally and applied to the squad, and effects other than damage from these spells affect the entire squad. When used against larger units, the effects of the spell are limited. Damage from these spells against larger units is reduced, and effects other than damage do not affect units larger than a squad.

Large Area of Effect: These are spells whose area of effect equal or exceed a 25 ft. square or 15 ft. radius. This area is large enough to affect units of squad and platoon size fully. When magic of this type is used against units of squad or platoon size or smaller, damage dealt is calculated normally and applied to the unit, and effects other than damage affect the entire unit. When used against larger units, the effects of the spell are limited. Damage from these spells against larger units is reduced, and effects other than damage do not affect units larger than a platoon.

Battle of Felsentheim

Felsentheim's Defenders

Human Rabble (Commoner) 4 Squads

Size/Ratio: Medium/ 5:1

HD/UHP: 1d4/ UHP 10

Move: 30ft.

AC: 11

Attacks/AB: Shortbow (1d6) or Dagger (1d4)/ AB +0

Special: Rabble cannot form complex formations

Primes: Strength, Con, Dexterity

Morale: +0

Spells/Spell Like Abilities: None

Human Halberdiers (Fighter 1) (2 Squads)

Size/Ratio: Medium/ 5:1

HD/UHP: 1d10/UHP 25

Move: 30 ft.

AC: 10

Attacks/AB: Halberd (1d10+2), Shortsword (1d6+1)/ AB +3 Halberd; AB +2 Short sword.

Special: Combat Dominance (Halberd)

Primes: Strength, Wisdom, Constitution

Morale: +7

Spells/Spell Like Abilities: None

Human Archers (Fighter 1) (3 Squads)

Size/Ratio: Medium/ 5:1

HD/UHP: 1d10/UHP 25

Move: 30 ft.

AC: 10

Attacks/AB: Shortbow (1d6+1), Shortsword (1d6+1)/ AB +3 Shortbow; AB +2 Short sword.

Special: Combat Dominance (Shortbow)

Primes: Strength, Wisdom, Constitution

Morale: +7

Spells/Spell Like Abilities: None

Preezjlits's Forces

Orc Boar Riders (2 squads)

Size/ Ratio: Medium/ 5:1

HD/UHP: 1d8+2d8/ 32 UHP

Move: 40 ft.

AC: 14

Attacks/AB: Lance (1d8) or shortbow (1d6) plus 2d6 gore/ AB +1

Special: Darkvision 60 ft. Twilight Vision

Saves: P

Face: 10ft.

Morale: +3

Spells/Spell Like Abilities: None

Zjerd Wolf Riders

Size/ Ratio: Medium/ 5:1

HD/UHP: 2d8+1d6/ UHP 28

Move: 50 ft.

AC: 15

Attacks/AB: Light Lance 1d6 plus Bite (2d4)/ AB +1

Special: Darkvision 60 ft. Trip, Scent, Track

Saves: P

Face: 10 ft.

Morale: +4

Spells/Spell Like Abilities: None

Zjerd Elite (10 squads)

Size: Small/10:1

HD/UHP: 1d6/ 25 UHP

Move: 20 ft.

AC: 15

Attacks/AB: Short sword (1d6) or Short bow (1d6)

Special: Darkvision 60 ft.

Saves: P

Face: 10 ft.

Morale: +1

Spells/Spell Like Abilities: None

Zjerd

Size: Small/10:1 (30 squads)

HD/UHP: 1d6/ 20 UHP

Move: 20 ft.

AC: 15

Attacks/AB: Short sword (1d6) or Short bow (1d6)

Special: Darkvision 60 ft.

Saves: P

Face: 10 ft.

Moral: +1

Spells/Spell Like Abilities: None

Spider Riders: (2 squads)

Size: Medium/5:1 (2 squads)

HD/UHP: 2d8+4d8/ 48 UHP

Move: 30 ft. Climb 20 ft.

AC: 15

Attacks: 3(1d6) and Bite 1d8+type 2 poison

Special: Darkvision 60 ft.

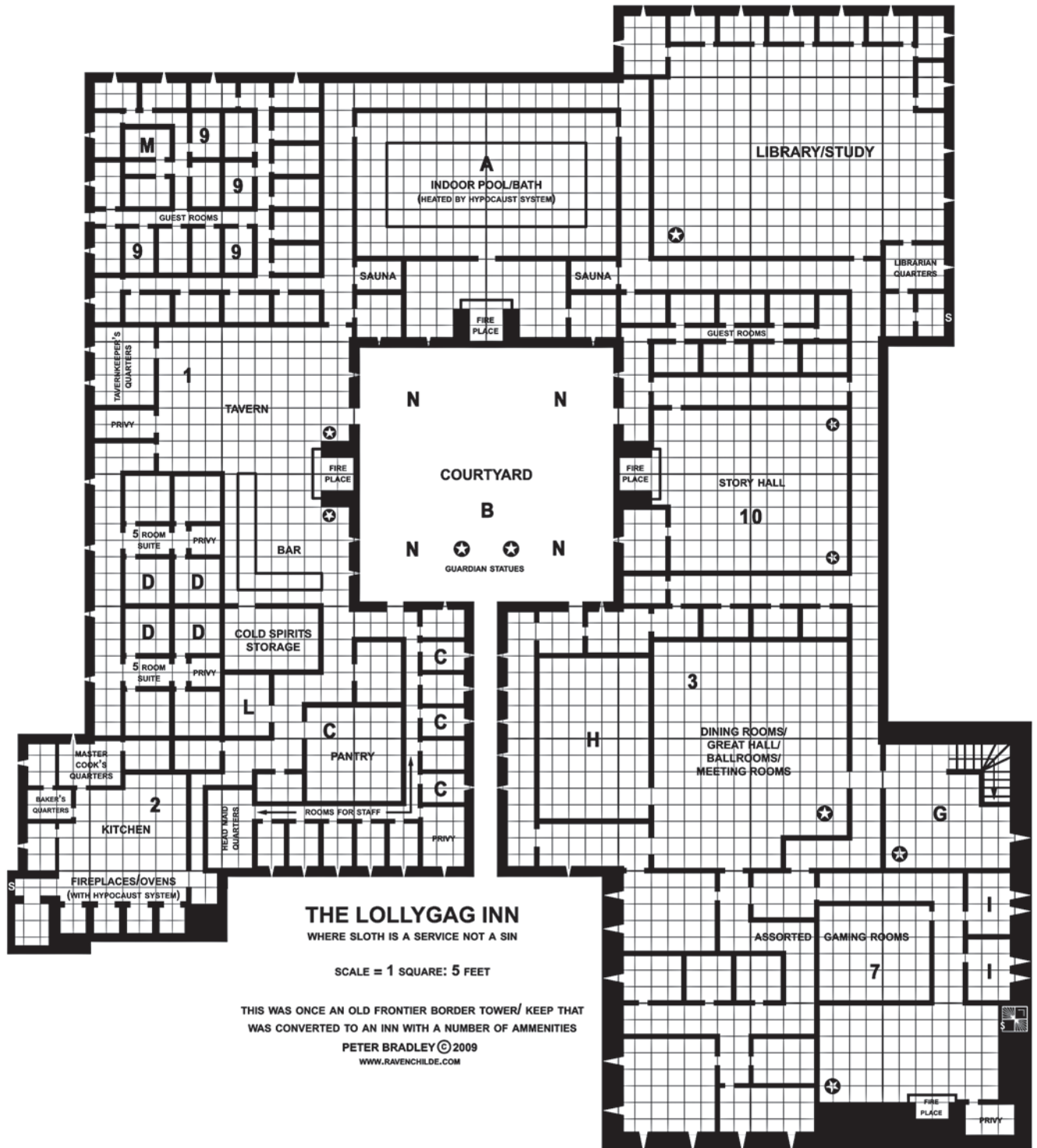
Saves: P

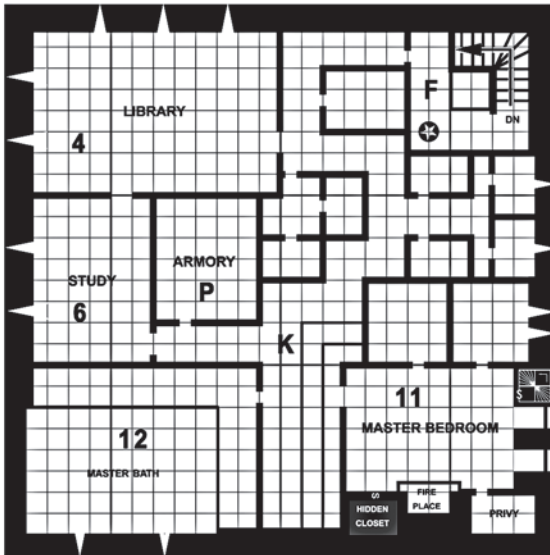
Face: 10 ft.

Morale: +4

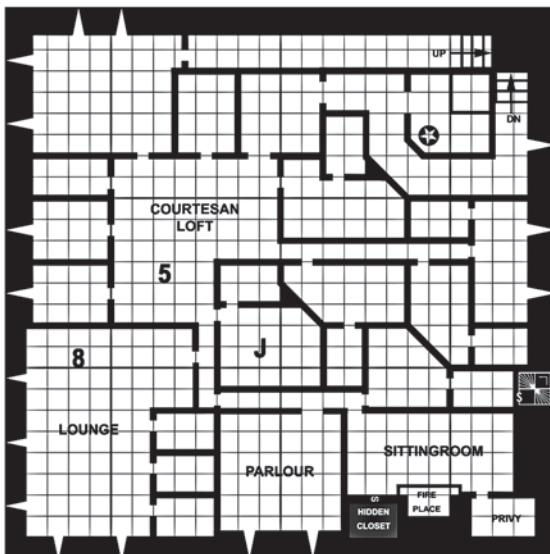
Spells/Spell Like Abilities: None

Troll Lord Freebies (just for you!)





3RD FLOOR OF CORNER TOWER
INN OWNER'S SUITE



2ND FLOOR OF CORNER TOWER

SIDDHI TIME

MINOR & MAJOR BOONS, GIFTS & REWARDS

BY KEITH HACKWOOD



Siddhis, or powers, can be attained through practice, study or hard work—or gifted by some benevolent (or crafty) deity or other; or else they can be randomly happened upon through the operations of fate or balance. Non-magical, they perhaps relate to psionic powers, being linked to the currents and depths of the mind. However they come about, they can be classed in two ways—as minor (those that basically grant a +1 to a specific attribute) or major (bestowing +3), as well as those which are permanent and those which may linger for a certain duration only. Here are a few ideas to start you playing with the possibilities that siddhis offer your campaign, for PCs, NPCs or in any way you choose.

BESTOWAL

For Siddhis granted through random circumstances (rather than ‘earned’ or gifted), use the following table. Roll d20 to see what creates the causes for the siddhi to arise:

1	During play with a child, at a certain point the PC feels peculiar...
2	Hearing (and then humming or whistling) a certain melody
3	Waking from a dream
4	Using a certain ‘power word’ brings about the feeling
5	After the itching subsides from a nasty insect bite, the feeling appears
6	On completion of a haircut (CKs choice which style is the trigger)
7	Picking a certain flower at a specific location
8	Catching a moth or butterfly and letting it alight upon a finger
9	Getting a specific tattoo (the pain of which is the trigger)
10	Eating one of the rare (but delicious) ‘Siddhi Biscuits’
11	Finding a unique and arresting sea shell
12	PC has his/her face painted as part of a disguise or for fun
13	Whilst using a wax seal
14	A certain coin (not the type, but the actual coin) triggers the event
15	Fervent prayer and dedicated action directed toward the specific siddhi*
16	Belching after slurping a particularly rich gravy becomes the trigger
17	Recovering from a life threatening fever
18	Picking ticks or lice off an animal or companion is the trigger
19	Tapping out a certain rhythm
20	Eating a certain quantity of a specific berry (CKs choice)

*In this case, the PC can choose the Siddhi they are attempting to develop

THE SIDDHIS

These powers can be randomly awarded by rolling a d100. The CK must decide whether the siddhi is to be Minor (+1) or Major (+3), and also whether it will be permanent, or will last a specific length of time. To determine the former, roll 1d4, 1–3 being Minor, a roll of 4 being Major siddhi. For the latter, if the siddhi is not to be permanent, roll 1d8 for the number of days it will last (or rule as you see fit). The attribute to be adjusted in each case is noted together with any other specific information.

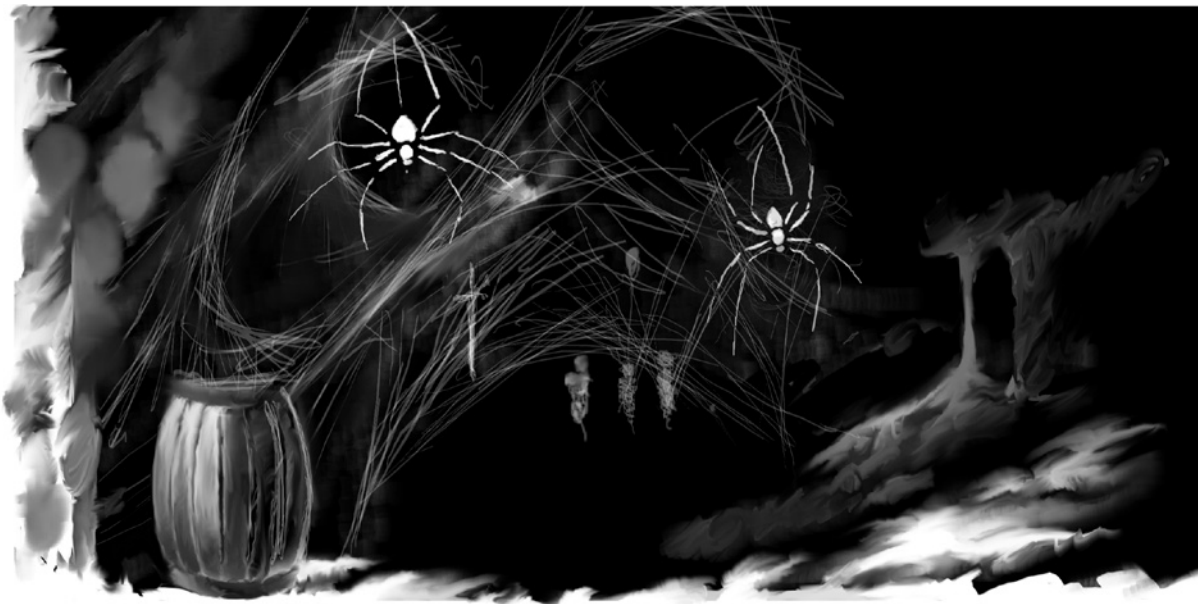
1	avoid sunburn—Con
2	protection from glare (or snow blindness)—Con
3	freedom from thirst (twice as long as normally the case)—Con
4	freedom from hunger (twice as long as normal)—Con
5	endure cold/heat (doubles their ability)—Con
6	satire (destroy another’s reputation or morale utterly)—Wisdom
7	blank mind (for a period not exceeding 15 minutes)—Intelligence
8	play dead (for up to ten minutes, no pulse or warmth)—Wisdom
9	endure pain (no penalties on HP loss until 2/3 of HP are lost)—Constitution
10	emanate glow (skin produces an 1 ft coloured aura)—Wisdom
11	hold breath (10 minute duration)—Constitution
12	telescopic zoom (eyes can see at distance twice as well as normally)—Wisdom
13	disguise (wilfully impersonate another, for 2 minutes maximum)—Chaisma
14	emanate <i>vibhuti</i> (a sort of sand that can be eaten for subsistence)—Wisdom
15	light (emit a beam of light as a torch for 10 minutes)—Wisdom
16	rope trick (climb a free-standing vertical rope, up to 50ft)—Dexterty
17	bear load (doubles load with no movement penalty)—Constitution
18	clot blood (allows self staunching of any wounds—no accrued damage)—Constitution
19	hear like a bat – Intelligence
20	grow hair (or arrest growth of hair), up to 6 inches per day—Charisma
21	produce iron (each day a nugget of iron can be produced from the fingers, no greater than 1 ounce each day)—Wisdom

22	transmute poison (a lethal dose can be ingested and processed into a single peacock feather)—Intelligence
23	intimidate snakes and serpents (create fear in them)—Wisdom
24	immunity to sound damage—Wisdom
25	immunity to sound entrancement/disorientation—Wisdom
26	immune to disease—Constitution
27	perfect balance—Dexterity
28	transform object (random, or elemental—eg shoe becomes soap, or beer becomes hot coals etc)—Charisma
29	free from gloom (can cause gloom and despair in others)—Charisma
30	no boredom (can create boredom in others)—Charisma
31	emanate perfume—Charisma
32	invisibility to infravision—Dexterity
33	incite conflict in others—Charisma
34	alter skin colour at will—Charisma
35	unmake item (up to the size of something they could hold), it is dissipated into atoms—Wisdom
36	disembody (for up to one hour)—Intelligence
37	punch through solid object—Strength
38	nose of a bloodhound (for 15 minutes each time)—Wisdom
39	fly (20 minutes)—Dexterity
40	impregnate (cause pregnancy in any female of any race through force of will)—Charisma
41	attract wealth (a form of outrageous luck in gambling and business)—Intelligence
42	change size (up to half as big again or twice as small as normal)—Dexterity
43	enter another body (10 minutes duration)—consciousness can inhabit another form, either of a living peer or a dead body—Wisdom
44	weightlessness—Dexterity
45	infinite heaviness—Dexterity
46	foreknowledge of one's time and manner of death—Intelligence
47	command—their orders will be obeyed unquestioningly—Intelligence
48	knowing the disposition of others (alignment)—Intelligence
49	knowing the intentions of others (motivations)—Charisma
50	freedom from haunting—Wisdom
51	freedom from vampires—Wisdom
52	freedom from lycanthropes—Wisdom
53	srying the future (once per day for ten minutes)—Intelligence
54	can transmute lead into gold (quarter ounce per month max)—Intelligence
55	direct astrological understanding—Intelligence
56	precognitive visions—Intelligence
57	nose for treasure (ability to intuit locations of hoards)—Intelligence
58	mind-latch (can control the mind of being of average intelligence or less for up to one hour max)—Intelligence

59	freedom from muscle tiredness—Strength
60	freedom from sleep—Wisdom
61	memory (PC can recall events perfectly and memorise multiple objects, tasks or spells at will)—Intelligence
62	deep memory (perfect recall of their soul's purpose and evolution, including all prior lives)—Wisdom
63	coiled spring (ability to jump explosively for great height or distance)—Strength
64	sobriety (no matter how much alcohol is imbibed, no drunkenness results)—Constitution
65	fleet-foot (doubles normal movement rate)—Dexterity
66	catch missile (one arrow or spear fired at the character each round can be caught and returned as a bonus attack)—Dexterity
67	throwing arm (favoured arm is able, accurately, to throw or hurl objects twice as far as normal)—Strength
68	tongues (enables comprehension and speech of 1d20 new languages)—Intelligence
69	accelerated learning (reading and absorbing information can occur at double normal rate)—Intelligence
70	epic swim (can swim equivalent of 10 miles in any conditions with only minor fatigue)—Strength
71	friend of the birds (can converse with avians and summon 1d20 species of birds to him/her in a 'parliament' to gain information and perspective)—Wisdom
72	generate fame (exploits of character are fascinating and compelling to any and all audiences—fame quickly accrues, with associated benefits and hindrances)—Charisma



Peter Bradley 2005



73	dance (can dance for 6 hours without fatigue—this can inspire or entrance others, or be used in ritual)—Strength
74	thunderclap (clapping hands causes a localised thunderstorm to arise)—Wisdom
75	battering ram (as with coiled spring, but the character intends to impact a solid object, door or person. Automatic hit, roll 2d12 for damage inflicted, and 1d4 for damage sustained)—Strength
76	flickering (as with a ring of flickering, but at will, phasing randomly onto the planes)—Intelligence
77	pressure wave (by clicking fingers, a concussion wave is sent out in a circle of 20ft radius, all in its path must Constitution save or take 1d8 damage and suffer burst ear drums and d6 rounds of stunned confusion)—Strength
78	blow (by blowing sails can be inflated, fog dissipated or other wind effects maintained)—Constitution
79	thick skin (skin becomes armoured for d6 rounds – AC increases by +1/+3 for minor/major effect)—no attribute
80	mindmapper (character can hold in mind an accurate map of where s/he has been at will)—Intelligence
81	mounts (ability to ride any and all animals, magical, aerial or otherwise)—Dexterity
82	perfect navigation (always knows direction, depth/height, movement rate and bearing)—Wisdom
83	weather forecasting (knows the weather for the next 24hrs with 95% accuracy, 48hrs with 75%, 72hrs with 33% etc)—Wisdom
84	strange attractor (can cause beings of other races or species to fall in love with him/her, or to form fraternal bonds)—Charisma
85	cosmic view (can attain perspectives on events from a truly cosmic perspective, including motives of deities, elemental beings etc)—Wisdom
86	slow ageing (can half the rate of ageing for indefinite periods)—Constitution
87	arrow-time (can perceive events in extreme slow-mo, hence always gets to (re)act first in kinetic situations)—Dexterity

88	distraction interference (can create ‘white noise’ in the minds of others, especially spell workers, affecting their concentration adversely)—Wisdom
89	mathematical (the power to solve any mathematical problem, or to apply such knowledge to engineering challenges, through mental focus alone)—Intelligence
90	poetise (the capacity to ‘read’ events poetically and to form any style or focus of verse with spontaneous and highly accomplished results)—Charisma
91	power of ten (can duplicate-self with up to ten clones for ten minutes – as a with a mirror-image effect)—Intelligence
92	absorbatrix (the power to absorb any energetic discharge without harm—from lightning bolt to fireball or plasma, all dweomered or natural energy—once per day)—Constitution
93	the twelve-arm (the ability to sprout additional arms and use extra weapons/objects without penalty: the possibilities are 4 arms, 6 arms or 12 arms and the effect will last 20 minutes max)—Dexterity
94	eyes in the back of the head (invisible eyes give 360deg vision at will, being surprised is almost impossible)—Dexterity
95	phased invisibility (the power to become invisible whilst holding breath, visible again upon exhaling etc)—Dexterity
96	limited regeneration (can regrow own limbs and heal wounds, partial transfer to other also—d% for chance of complete success in such cases)—Constitution
97	blade-stop (no bladed weapon can inflict damage whilst this siddhi is operating, though other weapons work as normal)—Constitution
98	prehensile tail (ability to manifest a monkey-like tail at will)—Dexterity
99	medicinal compound (ability to manifest a cure-all serum once per week that can heal 2d12HP of any type of damage, or even restore life if administered within 6hrs of death—subject to a successful Constitution check)—Wisdom
100	mimicry (perfect mimic of any being or sound, impersonation and accurate representation)—Charisma

TAINTED LANDS: A QUICK LOOK

BY

JAMES M. WARD

Warning, there are a few spoiler notes in this article on the TAINTEED LANDS. Those playing in this horror campaign might not want to read this article.



When I talked to Steve about product, I could write for C&C, I suggest a horror box set as something the fans might be interested in reading. The horror theme and the Ravenloft product line did very well for TSR in the “old” days and the topic certainly does well in the movies and on TV. Movie horror is also the approach I wanted to take rather than the fun Gothic horror I would say Ravenloft covered in its pages. I was the manager on the Ravenloft line and I wanted to make sure my new design didn’t impact on any Ravenloft copyright even if there was a stake in the heart of that old game line.

As I see it, there is a problem with the presentation of horror to role-playing groups. It’s hard to actually scare them when they are setting in their comfortable chairs and eating M&Ms as the poor Castle Keeper attempts to put a little fear in their jaded hearts. The book I created for TAINTEED LANDS Castle Keepers is set up to teach them a little about presenting horror to their players. The book touches on villains, feelings of helplessness, and placing constant pressure on the players. The book goes on to talk not only about the game play, but about the gaming “environment” as well. I talk about appealing to all five senses during the game so that the players are hearing odd sounds, touching horrific things, and smelling odors to help them get into the horror mood. The book sets up a horrific land and as the players explore and map it, they discover they are moving about a continent in the shape of a human skull. Naturally, TAINTEED LANDS magic items and magical spells are unique to that land and help those who discover them to survive that much longer in a land filled with undead.

I wanted a player’s book filled with things the TAINTEED LANDS player would find interesting, but I also wanted to work on other horror themes. Transformation is one of the keys to a good horror experience. The bodies of characters slowly change as they explore the TAINTEED LANDS. I also added two new attribute types. They are meant to be interesting new things for the players to experience. I know after playing years of RPGs that anything new can be fun. These attributes would also be interesting badges of honor for having survived and escaped the lands. The book also includes four new character classes that are meant to also be introductions to the strange type of people the characters would be meeting in the TAINTEED LANDS. Each

character class changes a bit when they enter the lands. While the gods of other lands can’t reach in and help their clerics in the TAINTEED LANDS there are a few TAINTEED LANDS deities that can be used to support clerical ways.

Finally, I included what I hoped would be a fun adventure for those picking up the TAINTEED LANDS box set. The adventure isn’t set in the TAINTEED LANDS. The Lolly Gag inn can be placed in any fantasy world. It started out as a large inn and the TAINTEED LANDS influence came and transformed it. Now those who wander into the deadly inn have the chance of being transported into the mists of the TAINTEED LANDS.

Encounters are tough in the TAINTEED LANDS. As characters adventure they get a lot of help from a lot of unexpected sources. Right away, gypsies start giving the characters advice on how to survive. They also try to sell characters lots of stuff they won’t need. There are enclaves where entire character classes have built fortifications to hold off attacks from the creatures born in the lands. Even death in the lands is a transformation that doesn’t end in a player ripping up their character sheet.

The question was asked, “How can you feel helpless in a world filled with high power magic items?” The question was clearly asked by someone who hadn’t read the Castle Keeper’s book for the TAINTEED LANDS. The most powerful fighter in the world can still die of thirst. A high-level wizard suddenly without his hold and charm spells can find himself in a world of trouble. What does that high-level cleric do when he finds that the next day his deity didn’t grant him the spells he thought he needed? All these questions and more are answered in playing in the TAINTEED LANDS.

I want everyone to like TAINTEED LANDS. I wrote it and spent a lot of research time working up the concepts. When I first started design work in 1975, I didn’t have to do a lot of research. In those days, I had just graduated from college and considered myself well read. My imagination is my strongest attribute and it helps me in all of my design projects then and now. I had to do a lot of research for the TAINTEED LANDS concept. I think Ernie Gyax, Gary’s son and my friend said it to me best in a conversation we had about role-playing years ago. He said players never really think about what their characters are doing as they game. If they actually worked to imagine their characters slitting throats or facing off against huge giants, able to crush

them with one blow, they never would do what they have their characters go through in their game life. This concept is even truer in a horror campaign.

A successful Tainted Lands game would have the players on the edges of their seats all the time. It would have them worrying about their character's lives as those characters are running for their lives. I don't want player characters to die during the game. I want them to have the "fun" of feeling threatened and scared during the game experience.

In other pages of this magazine, I've reprinted the Lollygag in with the Tainted Lands map index. At Gen Con, we made the mistake of selling 70 box sets with the wrong map. I just want to cover my bases and have a second chance to correct that mistake. Here we have the continent map and its map index for you to enjoy. You might not know what all the listings mean, but it's a fun map to have in your hands.

MAP TAGS FOR SKULL CAMPAIGN MAP

- | | | | |
|----|-------------------------|-----|-------------------------------|
| 1: | Ruins of the Ruse City | 6: | Mt. Fortress of Fighters |
| 2: | Lich of Sinduval | 7: | Mt. Fortress of Rogues |
| 3: | Lich of Tarnduval | 8: | Mt. Fortress of Wizards |
| 4: | Lich of Archduval | 9: | Mt. Fortress of Illusionists |
| 5: | Mt. Fortress of Rangers | 10: | Mt. Fortress of Assassins |
| | | 11: | Mt. Fortress of Knights |
| | | 12: | Mt. Fortress of Monks |
| | | 13: | Mt. Fortress of Barbarians |
| | | 14: | Mt. Temple of Clerics |
| | | 15: | Mt. Temple of Paladins |
| | | 16: | Walled City of Ten |
| | | 17: | Silver Mines |
| | | 18: | Open City of Temples |
| | | 19: | ruse Training Town with Bards |
| | | 20: | Grove of Druids |
| | | 21: | Dead Forest of Bones |
| | | 22: | Crystal Lands |
| | | 23: | Monster Enclave |
| | | 24: | Tainted Mists |
| | | 25: | Crevasse of Doom |



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The Tale of Sagramore & the Coming of the Vampire

"Do not judge a man by the role he was made to suffer!"

— St. Kuther, Lord of Dreams

My Lord, Your Imminence, Bishop Einhard IV

I have been in your service for many years. In my travels for you I have learned many things, met many diverse peoples, familiarized myself with their habits and histories; I have confronted such bizarre and eerie circumstances that even when I sleep I live them still. Nothing had prepared me for what I have of late discovered, and how.

As you now I traveled to the Northern Marches to discuss your urgent matters with the Barons of Botkinberg and Ludenshiem. While in the latter town I happened upon a street vendor who was selling paper to the wealthy for use in their toilets. I happened to be in need of such paper so I stopped to purchase what he had on hand. For a few copper coins I acquired a sheaf of papers and set about my business. While so occupied my sense of curiosity overcame me and I looked over the 'ledgers' this street urchin sold me. To my horror they were not ledgers at all, but rather the tale of a woman, though I can hardly call her that, called Lillith and even in the few brief moments I surveyed them I knew that what I had stumbled upon was extraordinary.

I retired to my lodgings and spent several days studying these papers, which I shall call by their subject: the Lillith Papers. I used what abilities I have to determine the origin of these papers and found them to be very old, written with a script only a very competent scribe could master and containing information about certain peoples and events that few outside of the learned halls would know. If these papers are to be believed, and I see no reason that they should not be, it would seem that the Wizard Sagramore, father of the necuratul, created more of the beasts than ever even he realized.

I have made copies of these papers. I have enclosed one copy with my letter for your pleasure and for the Hall of Records. I shall keep the original with me until such time as I can deliver it to Your Imminence in person. A third copy I have sent to a friend of mine in Botkinberg for safe keeping.

I used the based coins as instructed to cover my lodgings and expenses.

I should return before the first snow falls. May the gods keep you and yours in warmth and safety. Please give my respects to your consort, the Lady Traci.

p.s. I did return to the vendor to see if he had any more of these sheets of paper. He was gone of course. I queried several of the locals but it seems that none knew where he had gotten off to; indeed some said they had not even seen such a vendor.

Yours in Devoted Service.

Roland

1098, Erstfhrce 15

Of the Unklar

Vampires are a rare creature in Aihrde. There are two breeds of vampires, the Formenost and Lezzun. The Formenost came first and are far more powerful than are their distant cousins. Many people in Aihrde refuse to believe that vampires actually exist for few have encountered them and lived to bring the tale to others. They are not seen nor heard of and for the most keep such a low profile that one may live in a community for some time without ever being suspected.

They owe their existence to a strange myriad of events that began before the era of the Winter Dark a thousand years in the past, during the Age of Heroes.

In those days, before the coming of the Dark, there existed a council of mages called The Council of Patrice. They came together under the tutelage of Patrice, the Arch-magi, and Master of Prophecy, the most reasoned voice in the world. Twelve sat upon the Council and they counted amidst their numbers Aristobulus the White, the stygian Crisigrin, the mysterious Greymantle, and Sagamore the Great. This last man, Sagamore, was a powerful mage, crafty and able, who heralded from the north lands. He was quiet, speaking only when the need arose. It was a trait many said came from his Northern blood.

Sagamore, a junior partner to the council specialized in prophetic lore, dwarven languages, the rune spells and other similar antiquaries. Sagamore dabbled in the fates as well. He spoke with gods, perhaps even the supreme deities, ever seeking what paths man should take to lessen his burden in life. This magic led to his downfall and the creation of one of the most horrid of apparitions to walk the face of Airhde.

In time of years Sagamore uncovered the plot of the Aenochian Emperor and the wizard Nulak-Kiz-Din. He saw the future and witnessed the end of the world with the coming of the horned god; Unklar for the wizard summoned him using the powerful rune spells the Blood Runes through which he opened the Paths of Umbra. He tried in vain to bring this coming calamity to the attention of his fellow magi, but the Emperor and his wizard were already making war on the powers of the world. They had already slain several Council members and the most active and knowledgeable in the movements of gods, Aristobulus, was lost. So Sagamore attempted to divert the power of Nulak, but the dark mage proved too powerful and bent Sagamore to his will and enslaved him. Sagamore thus became a traitor to the Council, and he led Patrice into the trap that destroyed him. Bound to the prophecy he helped to write, Patrice was broken and hurled into the heavens.

When Unklar stepped upon Airhde, summoned via the Paths of Umbra, Sagamore became his slave. He became a toy, tortured and maligned by his masters until at last, 300 years into Unklar's reign, he rose in revolt. At that time, Unklar held unchallenged control over the entire world. He was powerful and filled with the rage of youth. Sagamore's efforts thus came to naught, and he was cast down, beaten and broken. Unklar gathered the remnants of the once proud mage and carried him far to the north where he bound him in a cave with great, unbreakable chains steeped in sorcery.

Unklar then cursed him, "Ever shall you thirst for the power you cannot have! Ever shall you gain that which you do not seek!" And he marked him with the gift of immortality, bound to a chain in a cave under a mountain in the frozen north.

Thus Sagamore suffered for eight hundred years. He became mad and raged against the walls of his prison, thirsting for sustenance that he could not have. He learned simple tricks of the mind to call small animals and unsuspecting humans or orcs who wandered nearby, and he lured them into his den. He made use of wolves and bats to bear his will-o-wisps into the mountains and lure others to his cave. There he slaughtered them, and feasted on them, ever trying to satisfy his hunger and thirst. In time he drew strength by devouring their souls.

His prison, the caves, became a charnel house of madness. The dead and dying lay discarded in a filth of rot. He ranged about the deeps, dragging his chains behind him, cutting the stone. He tore at the walls of his prison; clawing with his hands until the flesh tore and the bones of his fingers broke free.

In his lucid moments he set about writing down his knowledge. He used the blood of his victim to etch the script in dwarven rune letters. There he recounted powerful magics, set spells down in stone, twisted the earth to reflect a deeper magic that lay in the language of creation as Sagramore understood it.

The caverns became a place of horror, filled with nightmares, both living and imagined. Ghosts stalked the corridors of it, anguished souls calling for the beast to return to them what he had stolen. But the magic set there became corrupted and whatever its intent it spawned weirdlings of such dread and horror that even the wizard shied from them. In later days Dolgan named them E'nidadunn Ote, the Loathsome Hole.

Of Lillith & the Formenost

There came to him in his early years, before his madness was complete, a young lass, fair and beautiful. She found him as he sat out beneath the stars, his fetters stretched to their utmost. He talked with her some and told her his tale and she showed no fear, but listened long into the night. She told him her name, Lillith, and promised to remain with him and aid him if she could. For a time his madness abated but in the end it overcame him and he slew her as he had all others. When the feast passed he wailed for the loss of her and cursed himself over and again.

He dressed her body in garments of gossamer culled from the heavens, strings stolen from Unklar's Shroud of Darkness. He made her a crown of the same gossamer and set it upon her brow. There she lay in his caverns as he grieved his loss. At last Sagramore set to building her a coffin and he did so slowly and with perfection. For despite his losses Sagramore was a wizard of tremendous power. With the flesh of his fingers he shaped her bed from stone and carved it with delicate design. He carved the stone as a potter does the clay of a vase, sliding his fingers through it to make the design he sought. In the last he cut his finger deeply and it bled into the stone, making a long trail of deep red throughout her coffin. He lined it then with the finest furs the northern beasts could offer and made it spacious as her last resting place. When he laid her corpse in the coffin he wept, but arranged her so that she looked most fair. One last time he ran his fingers across her brow and touched her lips. Leaving a stain of blood from his fingers he said to her, "Pass now from the world of the living into the realm of the dead. Avert your eyes from the sun for to you it is accursed, walk now in the darkness until the end of time or until at last I may be rejoined with you."

In truth Sagramore's love for her hid her true nature from him. Lillith was not human, but one of the order of the Val-Ehtrakun, those gods of the Void who came to Aihrde in the Days before Days. She was a horrid creature for most things that she touched died; torn by disease and rot they faded until the life left them. Her power was malicious and her intent evil and she knew Sagramore of old for in his studies she had crossed his path. How she found him in his prison the Lillith Papers do not impart, but she did and she set herself the task of learning the secrets of his power. These he would not willingly impart. After some while Lillith surrendered herself to Sagramore setting aside her evil designs came to love him.

This is how he slew her, for her love blinded her to the danger that the Father of necuratul posed. She lay in the coffin for a great long while, until the blood of the Vampire brought her back; the small rivulet of blood on her lips was enough to spread the curse of Unklar to her and she rose from the dead. When the life of the undead came to her she opened her eyes and wondered where she was. Filled with a tremendous hunger she lay in confusion. As she looked upon the dim cavern walls her mind began to unfold; the dwarven runes of Sagramore's were everywhere and in her mind's eye she absorbed them. She did not know the runes, but she committed them to memory, as least as many as she could.

Sagramore returned on a cold wintery eve and bid her a final farewell. Without looking again he closed the lid and bid his servants, dark evil creatures with wings as black as night to bare it aloft and into the heavens, far away from him. So they did. They carried it south to the kingdoms of men and there they opened a tome, cleaned it of its occupant and set Lillith's coffin inside.

When Lillith came to she found herself one of the undead, filled with the power of the Val-Ehtrakun. The curse drove her mad at first as she feasted but, in short order she unraveled what had transpired and began to except her condition.

Thus was born the first Formenost, a vampire of dread power. She spawned others like her; in time she learned how to drain them of their lives, but by allowing them to partake of her flesh to infect them with the curse. She dwelt in her tomb for many long years, until her own kind spread to other cities and towns; eventually Lillith passed from the halls of her tomb and vanished into the southlands.

The Lezzun

For his part Sagamore became a monster, a wretch, a horrid thing of grim purpose, a mad man who feasted on the blood and souls of his victims.

When the Winter Dark Wars began, the fates guided Jaren Falkhynjager and Aristobulus to the far north. Questing for a place to hide from Unklar, they found Sagamore and made to rescue him. Jaren, filled with his own rage against a thousand years of torment, wept at Sagamore's plight, and would not allow Aristobulus to slay him. Instead, they cured Sagamore of his madness and set him free. They bore him into the north lands, far beyond the Great Northern Forests in the lands where the Aenochians originated where his one time human master, Patrice, had a watch tower. The Pale Mountains became his home and there they hid him away, promising to aid him when he called. They could do no more, for the addiction of flesh and blood had grown great in Sagamore.

As the wars took the Council of Light away, Sagamore was left to his own, hungry and thirsty, but now utterly cured of his madness. So he stalked the forests of the north for feasts. He prayed only on those doomed to die, the weak, the elderly, and the sick. Even this he regretted and pitied himself all the more. To those wild peoples he became a terror that stalked the hidden paths of the dark forests and mountain trails.

Sagamore found that he was powerful in certain ways. He could charm with a look, fade into the mist and from his old alliance with certain creatures, change into the shapes of bats, wolves, and other creatures of the north. But the worst of his powers came when Naarheit, god of Chaos, revealed to Sagamore that he could alleviate his loneliness by spreading his disease to others.

At first he did so reluctantly, for he was ever a good man, and knew in his heart that what he did was an abomination. He felt also that he owed Jaren a debt. But his loneliness overcame his reluctance, and he eventually made others like himself. These were the Lezzun.

But, to his shock, they were not so alike. They were the living consigned to a living death, and they did not possess Sagamore's magic and knowledge. A rage took them, a hatred of their creator and of life, and they stalked the lands, killing in secret, drinking the blood of their victims, and leaving hidden memories of their passing. They longed again for the warmth of life, for the undead are ever cold. Several of them, awash in residual memories of their creator, wandered even into the Lands of Ursal, the Cradle of the World where they began to haunt the men of those kingdoms. Thus came a new horror, yet another spawn of the horned god, to the kingdoms of the world.

These creatures were named by the folk of Demeter. They were called *Ordog* (devil), *necuratul* (unclean), or if female, *strigoiaica*. But most common name was *vampyr*, which is vampire in the Vulgate tongue.

Recently the vampires have begun to unite in small family groups, or cabals, which serve to protect their kind and make the more flagrant abuses of lust, seem less so. These families discourage rouge vampires, although they know that many do exist. They have divorced themselves from their master, knowing of his hatred, but they long to consume him, for amongst their kind they believe that his soul is still bound within him and the power of it is unimaginable.

What became of their master, Sagamore, few know, but in truth he stalks the northern wastes, hating himself ever more. He dwells in an old castle that once belonged to the Council of Patrice. From time to time he leaves it and hunts in the southern land, but if ever he comes across one of his cursed "children," he slays them outright. He is still the most powerful of the vampires for he has a soul within him, stained though it is.

Those of the Formenost that bother to trace their lineage, and they are few, understand it to have come from Sagamore, but without that one's knowledge.

The Lezzun are far younger, coming to the world only in the later centuries and are those who Sagamore set out to make.

Note: The Formenost and Lezzun are completely described in the forthcoming *Monsters & Treasure of Aihrde*.

CIVILIZATION DEFINES WEAKNESS



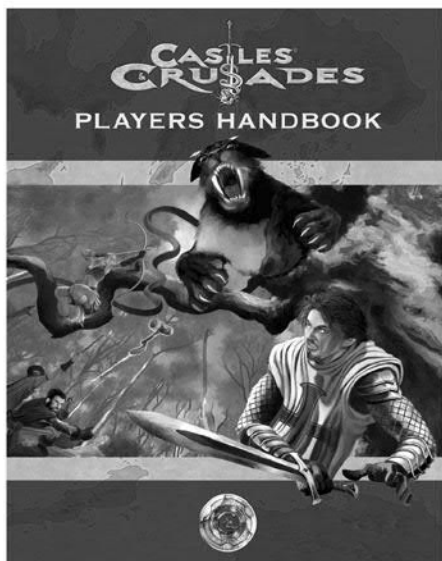
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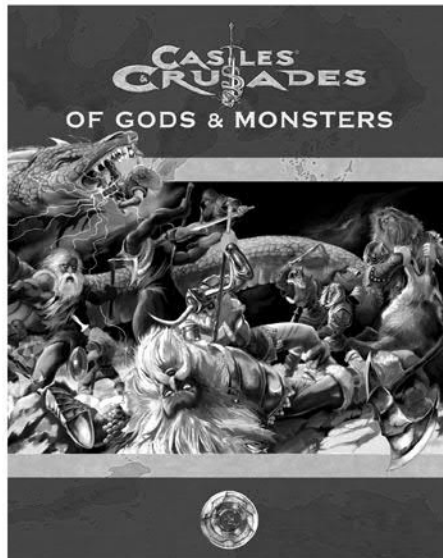
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THE FOURTH CRUSADE



TALES OF THE
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of
ORASS

THE AIHRDIAN
CHRONICLES
BEING THE 19TH NARRATIVE
OF THE
LAY OF THE LOTHIAN PRINCES

The Elven Warlord, Meltowg-Aet-Ohd, Prince of Lothian, travels west with his Vale Knights and a company of mercenaries on a journey to find the fabled Castle of Spires. The Castle of Spires, ruled by Melius the Wise, is rumored to hold gates to other worlds, wherein the Elven hosts of old have taken refuge. The Prince is possessed of a grim determination to open those gates. After many adventures he has led his men through the pass of the Antiquan Mountains and into the once fertile valleys of the Fromia River. Here the great Aenochian Forest sprawls from the foothills to the distant waters of the Sea of Shenal where lies the orc kingdom of Onwaltig. The snows of Winter Dark blanket the land, the river is partially frozen over, and the trees locked in its icy embrace. The troop had only recently scattered a band of goblins and befriended a snow steed. This latter beast revealed to the Prince that a host of elves lay upon the threshold of the world, ready to come to war against the dark; but a wizard watched the doorway and held it against them.



With haste the troop set off westward. They traveled down the Fromia River, following its banks until that water spilled into the Ogdon. Here the current was swift, the river wide and the paths along its bank unused and dangerous. Meltowg ordered river craft to be constructed so that the river might be traversed speedily and the party come to the Sea of Shenal where they could find passage. For the Twilight Wood, their destination, stood upon the far reaches of the Straights of Ursal. Ten barges they constructed; fashioned of the tall trees from the Aenochian Forest. It took nearly a week to complete the task.

“Load with care. I want to lose no man, nor horse. We must come off this river rested and in tact for it spills into the sea where lies the Isle of Onwaltig. There we will find shelter for there are many watch towers that were used by the sailors of old. Then must we determine how to cross the sea.”

The troop carted their supplies onto the barges first; wood, food, barrels of ale stolen from traders to the north; horses with grains and stacks of grasses cut from the wild meadows; and armaments, spears and arrows, swords, shields and armor. At last the men mounted the river barges and took their places to steer and pole the large boats down the swift current. Last of all Meltowg took his place at the prow of the largest of the craft. “Make haste my men. We’ve a castle to take, a door to open and a world to save. Death to Unklar!”

With a shout of “DEATH TO UNKLAR!” the men pushed off. The barges made fast into the current, and were soon carried west through the tumbling forest valley. Within a few days the deep forests gave way to broken hills of the Benluth Spurs where scrub oaks mingled with gnarled cedar trees in deep gulches and rocky hills. For days the Olgdon pushed them west, swiftly until the land gave way to a wide river delta sprinkled with scores of islands.

This land the river giants owned, but none were seen, though the Prince pointed out their rocky caves on the island heights. Soon they were in the sound where the waters proved deep and the barges less stable. Setting aside the poles they pulled out oars and rowed their way across the narrow channels, island hoping until they at last came to the great Isle of Fulth.

In later years after the Winter Dark Wars the orcs seized this island and built for themselves a kingdom which they named Onwaltig. Their first lord, Issa, ruled there and became the terror of the Sea of Shenal. But that lay in the future. When the Prince touched ground the islands had few inhabitants; the occasional wandering monster, but nothing more. Long ago the Aenochians had built towers here, to watch the sea lanes, and offer passing ships safe abode. But these were abandoned. To one of these Meltowg directed his men, with all their war gear, supplies, and horses. Within a few short days they fortified the tower and settled in until they could obtain ship passage across the straights.

The snow began falling thick and heavy soon after their landing. The wind howled, curling blue around the tower; the icy touch of it slipping in through windows, under doors, into the room where men huddled in the warmth of huge fires and beneath the horses. Safe from the misery of winter’s grip the men thanked their stars for the tower and cursed the long road’s journey.

“There is nothing for it, Lord Sedgwick, we have no other recourse.”

“I know my prince, but it is unsettling, summoning these creatures. You never know their temperament, what they are going to do or how react to your call.”

“We have no ships stout enough to cross the sea and there are no supplies to construct one. I had hoped to find one abandoned here,

but our searches have been in vain. The men are settling in too, and this is not good. The longer we shelter here, the harder to rouse them to go forth.”

“Let them rest my Prince. It has been a long trek over mountains, through forests frozen in ice and down the long river road. Crossing the channels proved a hard feat for the men. Let them rest and recoup. The journey that comes might be even further. After this crossing they have the twilight wood to look forward to and there the Dreaming God rules and all men fear that black hearted one.”

“Aye. The road has been long and hard; though I am not tired.”

“But you are not mortal, my Lord. You bleed, but you do not feel. Let the men rest for a few days more and I will go out into the wind and see what my sorcery can do.”

“We have been together for many years Sedgwick. Have I ever thanked you for your service to me?”

“No, my Lord. Nor have I asked for it.” Sedgwick stood up, gathering his heavy sheep skin cloak in his large hands. He cast it over his shoulders and pulled up his long heavy sword. Belting it on he said, “But if you are feeling remiss, my Lord, save it for one who needs a nod to give him reason.”

With that the mage crossed the room to the door. He turned then to look at the troop of men and elves sprawled about the cramped tower floor. Some sat upon the stairs leading up the tower, others hung close to the fire, still more leaned against the wall. Many slept next to their horses. The fire blazed with a warmth that defied the Winter Dark that held the world in its chilly grasp.

Sedgwick opened the door and a blast of air tumbled into the room. Roused the men shouted and cursed at the untimely visit. But as quickly, Sedgwick closed the door behind him. The wind thundered from the north bringing with it a great storm. The snow fell at slanted angles, whipped by the wind up and down to gather in drifts against rocks and along the base of the tower. The sea, half frozen with ice as it was, churned and frothy from the same wind thundered huge bergs against the walls of the island. Icy sprays of

water cascaded across the land and the wizard who passed through it. The skies were gray and cold; what light there was seemed to come from far away and seemed wholly unnatural.

Pulling his cloak around him the wizard cursed the dark and the dark god who ruled so far away. He looked into the water, white blue in the cold, wondering how on earth to cross it. “What ancient beasts would answer my summons here? Who of the ocean’s people would offer aid in this age that belongs to another?”

Turning his back to the wind he fished into his pockets. He pulled out a small pendant, hanging on the end of a long silver chain. The pendant held a tiny blue gem within it. He held it up the dark skies and looked within. “*Bethlut Cedruas iane Tul,*” he whispered into air. The magic of his spell rolled across the gem and it came alive, a light sparkling from within revealed a tiny form within the gem. Skinny, almost skeletal the humanoid creature flapped its black wings.

“You cannot escape Ulthal Beast. You are mine until this gem breaks or I decide to free you.”

The creature screeched at him though its voice sounded distant and muffled, hardly noticed over the wind.

“Lay aside your theatrics Eater of the Dead. I have no time for it and I am certainly not in the mood. I have need of you, a question you might answer.”

A hissing sound was his answer.

“I feel your hate. That is fine. Hate keeps you focused. Let the fear of limbo keep you honest. Tell me truthfully what I need to know and you’ll live to get your revenge. Play me false and I break this gem and you find a home in limbo until the All Father returns.”

“Curses upon your house and your folk. I’ll have mine wizard, even if I must wait an eternity. The Stone Fields is where you will end your time, and when you do . . . I will be there.”

“Fair enough demon. But until the Stone Fields offer my weary head a place to rest, I need a ship, a ship to cross the sea. I need a ship that can navigate the ice in the water and carry my Lord’s men,



their horses, and all their accrements. There are none to be had here, who can provide me with passage?"

"There are many creatures in the sea Sedgwick. Many creatures great and small. But few may control the seas in this cold winter. Summon the Puala Beast. He slumbers in the deeps off the Isle of Dur. Call to him."

"Who is this beast you speak of?" Sedgwick watched the demon to see if he told the truth.

"He is of the order of the Val-Eahrakun. The All Father made him. That one cast him aside before the world was made. In time he came here and took to a life in the water. He ruled the water under

the world for long eons, the dwarves paid him homage for a while, but it cared not for its mind is not bent like our own. He cares little for things or for the world. It is a force of chaos. But if any creature, man, or god might aid you in crossing these waters, call to the Puala Beast and it might come."

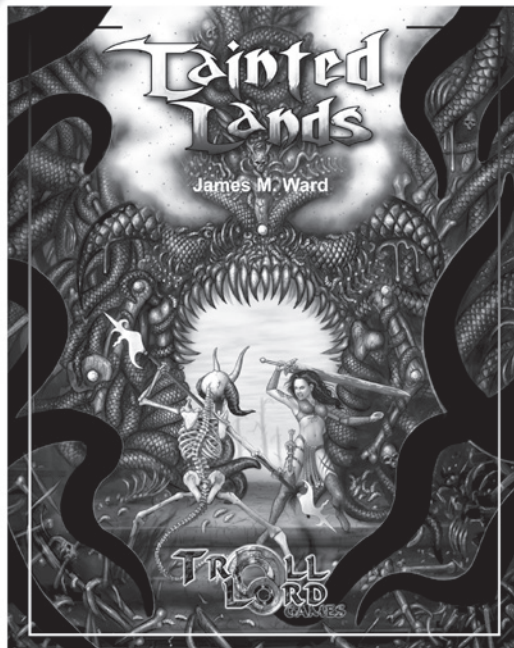
"Thank you for this. Your service is welcome. I shall call this creature and see if he can get my Lord across the sea. For what it is worth demon, I bare you no ill will."

"For what it is worth elf mage, I hate you and when the time comes I shall rend you to pieces and feed you to my brethren."

"When the time comes demon. When the time comes."

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MONSTERS OF AHRDE

BY STEPHEN CHENAULT

ULTHAL (WINGED DEMON, TVUNGENOS)

NO. APPEARING: 1-4

SIZE: Medium

HD: 8(d8)

MOVE: 30 ft, 80 ft. (fly)

AC: 23

ATTACKS: 2 claw (1d4), bite (1d4+1), scythe (1d8+1)

SPECIAL: Dark Vision 60 ft., Immune to Elements, Immune to Poison, Invisibility, Spell-like Abilities, Spell Immunity, SR 1, Twilight Vision

SAVES: P

INT: Low

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic Evil

TYPE: Planar

TREASURE: Nil

XP: 1800 + 8



his skeletal creature appears long and tall, but in fact is little more than six feet. It looks something like a humanoid, but for its large dark wings, and small head. Its skin stretches over the bones of its frame like a cadaver's and it reeks much like the dead as well. Its head, complete with a long beak, is filled with wicked looking fangs. Its narrow eyes lie hooded beneath scaly protrusions. The ulthal is known for its long toes and fingers and the wicked claws it sports as weapons. They always carry a scythe in battle. Each ulthal decorates his scythe, from haft to blade, with bones, pictographs, or any other item they find desirable.

These creatures are demons of the most abhorrent kind, living only to reap chaos and deliver their evil to the world. They do not know love, nor hate, only lusting after a never ending torment of loss and this makes them unintelligible, impossible to bargain with, and even immune to some spells. They hold no particular hatred for any one people or thing, but lust for the agony of all living things.

The ulthal serve no master, no god, nor cause of any description. They haunt the worlds of men and the planes, hunting only for torment. On occasion, they are bound to powerful wizards or priests, or even to others of their own kind, but never willingly. If they are so bound they reserve all their hate on those who have laid fetters upon them.



They do travel with other ulthal, in the deeps of negative planes, flocks of these beasts gather in the thousands.

They talk a tongue entirely their own. To the untrained it sounds much like the cawing of crows. The language is simple and not difficult to learn, but few know it beyond the confines of the ulthal's hunting grounds.

COMBAT: The ulthal are cowardly beasts, terrified of the pain they cause others. They stalk their prey from afar, hidden to the naked eye, usually hovering in the air some dozen or so feet above who they wish to torment. They wait for an opportunity to strike and then fall upon the victim, rending and tearing them as best they can. They do carry a magical +1 scythe in the ballet of death and torture.

Immune to Elements: The ulthal are extra-planar creatures possessed of natural immunities to the elements. As such all fire and cold based attacks do an automatic half damage.

Immune to Poison: They are immune to all types of poison.

Invisibility: When they are on the prime material plane they are able to make themselves invisible 3/day.

Spell-Like Abilities: animate dead (once per day), detect thoughts (upon command), dispel good (2/day) speak with dead (upon command). They cast as an 8th level caster.

Spell Immunity: They are immune to charm or charm like spells.

THE ULTHAL IN AIHRDE

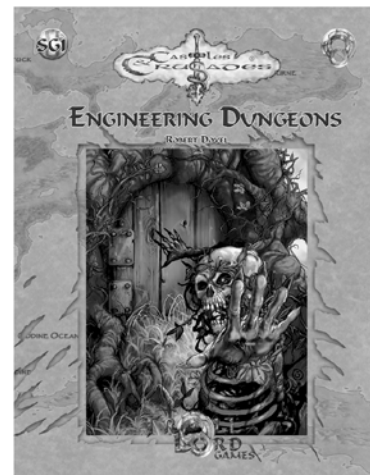
The ulthal are of the order of creatures called the Tvungenos, the unfettered, demons to men. That being those creatures that Unklar called from the Void or the other realms, but was unable to bring under his control. They predate the present millennium, however, they are not of the order of the Val-Eahrakun, but rather belong to the order of the Val-Austlich, as the ulthal were fashioned from the Language by Thorax the Red Duke.

The winged demons are well known throughout the world of Aihilde as these are the Eaters of the Dead. In the Shadow Realms they dwell in huge flocks, circling the lines of dead and lost souls who have come to that gray abyss. They swoop down upon the unsuspecting soul to pluck it from the surface, carrying them into the heavens. There hosts of the ulthal fall upon the soul/body, rending it

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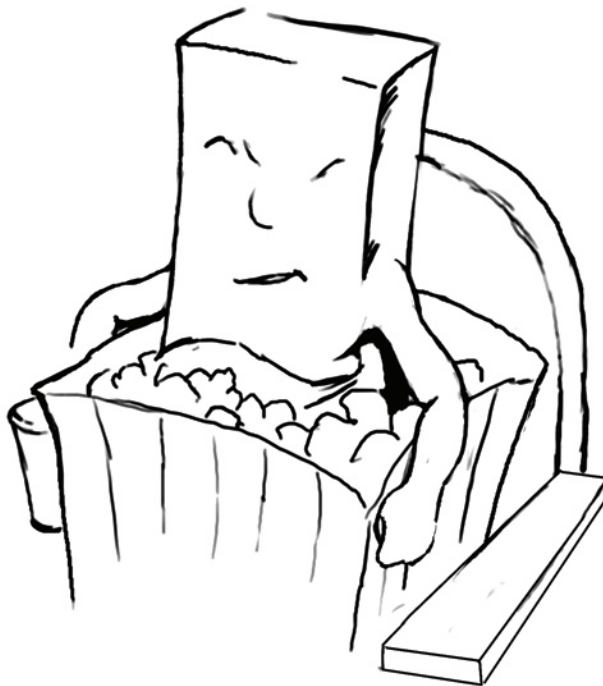
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