

December 2009 Volume 5 Number 22

THE CRUSADERTM

The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer

NOTES FROM THE MANAGING EDITOR

BY JAMES M. WARD

IRON GUTS - HIGH LEVEL ADVENTURES

BY STEPHEN CHENAULT

DRAGON GRUMBLES

BY TIM KASK

PASSING THE TORCH

BY ERIC PIPER

THE SOCIETY TAKES ON GENCON

BY JOHN WRIGHT

THE RINGS OF BRASS

BY STEPHEN CHENAULT

MONSTERS OF AIHRDE

BY STEPHEN CHENAULT





*A Very Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year!*

*~From Everyone Here At
Troll Lord Games*

P.O. Box 251171

Little Rock, Arkansas 72225



The Crusader is dedicated to exploring the experience of Fantasy and other Role Playing Games. Sold at better hobby shops, bookstores, and by subscription.

Subscription Rates for 6 issues:

UNITED STATES: \$23.50

CANADA: \$47.00

Outside the U.S. & Canada:
\$55.00

Checks should be payable to
TROLL LORD GAMES

or visit us online at

www.trolllord.com/crusader.htm

Please allow up to one month for address changes to be processed.



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

The Publisher will not assume responsibility for unsolicited materials, which will not be returned unless accompanied by a return envelope and appropriate postage.

The Crusader Journal, Castles & Crusades Players Handbook, Castles & Crusades Monsters and Treasures are trademarks of Chenault & Gray Publishing. We apologize in advance for any inadvertent use of names of products without mentioning trademark ownership. Please don't construe any omissions of this kind as a challenge of ownership status.

Unless otherwise noted, everything within this publication is © 2009 Chenault & Gray Publishing, LLC, All Rights Reserved

It is expressly forbidden to reprint anything in whole or in part without express written permission from Chenault & Gray Publishing, LLC.



CONTENTS

- 2 NOTES FROM THE MANAGING EDITOR:
Help Me Get Subscribers • *by James M. Ward*
- 3 ALEA IACTA EST: Iron Guts-High Adventure
For Low-Level Characters • *by Stephen Chenault*
- 6 DRAGON GRUMBLES: Fellowship of the Dice
• *by Tim Kask*
- 7 UPON THE BLACKTOOTH RIDGE
• *by Stephen Chenault*
- 10 GAME REVIEW: Endeavor • *by James M. Ward*
- 11 BOOK OF FAMILIARS FINDS A PATH
• *by Stephen Chenault*
- 13 PASSING THE TORCH: Game Mastering for
Very Young Players • *by Eric Piper*
- 16 THE SOCIETY TAKES ON GENCON AND
BEYOND! • *by John "Sir Seskis" Wright*
- 18 TROLL LORD FREEBIES • *by The Trolls*
- 20 TWELVE TENTS: • *by Christina Stiles*
- 24 THE AIHRDIAN NEWSLETTER: The Coming
of the Vampire • *by Stephen Chenault*
- 32 THE AIHRDIAN CHRONICLES: The 20th
Narrative of the Lay of the Lothian Princes
• *by Stephen Chenault*
- 34 MONSTERS OF AIHRDE: Ulthal
• *by Stephen Chenault*

NOTE: The cover artist for last issue was incorrectly cited as being Peter Bradley instead of the actual artist Mark Allen. We sincerely apologize to Mr. Allen for the error.

notes from the managing editor



Help Me Get Subscribers



ELP! As I write this in November, I'm very much thinking about Christmas and what I have to do to get people the presents I feel they need. I'm sure if we ever manage to get this magazine out on time, Steve will be happy, so hopefully, his present is getting done as I turn over the articles for this magazine. Speaking of presents, I could really use some help from you readers. The magazine is always in need of subscribers. Steve has even consented to give away modules for those who subscribe now. It would be extremely handy if every reader of CRUSADER decided to give a year's subscription to one of his or her friends, and C&C players. Our numbers are low right now and the more subscribers we get the better the quality of the magazine.

If you don't already, you need to get online and start talking the magazine up on the trolllord.com website. It's a fun place to go for role-playing fans and especially people who like C&C. There is a forum page, just for CRUSADER magazine. Everyone should feel free to get on the web site and talk up the articles they liked. Ordering the magazine is extremely easy as you can go into the TLG store and order it from the web. Please, seriously consider getting a subscription for a friend.

On to other topics, there are a lot of Troll Lord products coming out this fall. I want to thank all of you who bought OF GODS & MONSTERS and TAINTED LANDS. Once again, I'm web site to answer any questions you might have on my products. I visit the site every day at least twice a day. Currently we are having a talk about the TAINTED LANDS adventure in the box and how useful it is for the CKs who purchased it. Let me tell you that

I'm constantly looking to improve my writing craft. I'll happily take ideas from the fans about improving what I'm making. I'm fairly new to C&C, but it feels a lot like the old AD&D that I used to play and write for back in the day, C&C is a great, easy to use system and I want to do everything I can to keep it growing and healthy.

I want all of you readers to start looking into the Society if you haven't already. Steve is going to begin trying to grow that group of fans. They are going to get a number of perks. More and more conventions are going to have fun Society tournaments. The web site is going some more Society perks as well. In the old TSR days, I had a great deal of fun working with the RPGA. The Troll boys are going to take some of the best features of that older organization and work those features into the Society. So, if you haven't checked out that group please go check them out. I'm putting Society articles in every issue of the CRUSADER.

I've seen the next year's tentative product and I can honestly say there are some way cool items in the design line. You can do your part by getting a friend to subscribe. We'll do our part by continuing to make the CRUSADER more interesting. If you have additions you would like, get on the Troll Lord web site and tell me what you want. I'm a good listener.

James M. Ward
Managing Editor
CRUSADER



Troll Lord Games Supports Our Troops

We offer all active duty Military Personnel a 50% discount
on any of our products purchased through our websites.

Visit http://www.trolllord.com/newsite/troop_support.html for more info!

ALEA IACTA EST



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

Tainted Campaigns: The Dead, the Dying and the Undead



Running a game can be a challenging enterprise. Playing in a game that someone else is running can be as equally challenging. Throw in various levels, powers, skills, personalities; mix all that up with some Dr. Pepper, Mountain Dew, Twinkies and some hostess cakes and you can have one heck of a time. There are many challenging parts to running games, not least of which is the actual level spread. High-level characters (levels 9+) have power, hit points, experience; their levels are greater and they can withstand the attacks of powerful monsters; they have survived and as such have a greater chance of continuing to survive all the while offering the CK and the players hosts of options to choose from, spicing up the game. Mid-level characters (levels 4-8) have power and hit points, but they still have weaknesses that wear down or fail outright in the face of continuing challenges. They are fun because everyone can do so much more than they could at other levels, but still run a risky gauntlet, even from lesser creatures. The low-level characters (levels 1-3) are seemingly the most challenging to run for they have few abilities, no levels with which to augment those abilities; their hit points are low so single blows can lay them low and in many instances the players are trying something new and haven't quite learned the ins and outs of a character class. However, running and playing low level characters is, in many respects the most fun. Low-level characters test the skill of the CK and player like no other and through the use of the proper planning and fluid role play the CK and the players cannot help but find the experience of playing and running low-level characters to offer breath taking challenges like no other character level.

Low-level characters are, in many respects, the most enjoyable characters to CK and play. Everything presented is on a scale that is easy to understand. The battles and challenges they face are often over very quickly, not allowing time to drag on while casting complicated spells or wild combat maneuvers to unfold. The preparation time for a CK is negligible

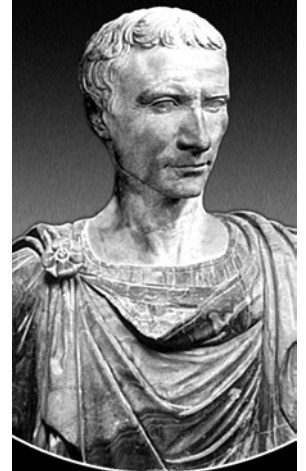
when compared to the vastly complicated encounters required to challenge high level characters. An edge exists in the low-level games because the threat of character death looms over every action. Low-level adventures also everyone a fresh start, "to begin again" (to quote one of my favorite movies.

Preparing any game can be a time consuming process, each level spread offering its own challenges. For the low-level game preparation is important because the CK does not want to create a scenario that is so challenging that it wipes the characters out immediately, nor so weak that they over come the encounter. It is much easier to fall into the former trap. When laying out the low-level game the CK must first participate in the creation of the characters with the players or, if they already created, look to them and make certain they have a good idea of what each player is bringing to the table. In the creation process it is not necessary actually 'create' the character but rather take the time to listen to the players and get a good handle on what a character's abilities are and what weapons or tools they use. Things like a horse can certainly benefit a party of adventurers and the CK can use them to their own benefit.

Design of a low-level character is centered on their hit points and equipment. All the rest of the abilities pale because these two items are necessary to live long enough to use their extra abilities. Characters should pay close attention to the way they design; keeping in mind that armor is as important as hit points. Keeping a blow from ever landing reduces the chances of death far greater than having a few more hit points. For the blow that does not strike does no damage and who knows what havoc comes from the blade or claw that lands.

Equipment plays a huge part in whether this blow ever lands or not. Good armor can deflect it. A shield can absorb the blow. Missile weapons, and in no small degree, pole arms are able to dispatch a foe long before it makes contact. Items such as oil, rope, torches, and the like can be used to keep the enemy at bay as well. Packing a proper ruck and carrying

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

the proper weapons can turn the tide, keeping the character from death's door. To properly equip of course, the starting character or the continuing adventurer needs gold.

Gold of course is as chancy as hit points and both are in high demand at the beginning of any gaming session. Whether the game is a new one or one that has been going on for several sessions, the focus on hit points and equipment will be tremendous.

Allowing the characters to begin play with maximum hit points is a very common CK tool. This allows the fighter to withstand at least one or two blows before falling, as opposed to the fighter beginning play with 4 hit points and dying at the hands of the first orc they encounter. Starting play with maximum hit points is not necessary and the rules do not call for it, but it is a way to hedge their bets. The only problem with this approach is that it skews the character's hit points as they gain in levels so that monsters designed for mid-level play find themselves fighting a little off balance. The chances that the strength or constitution based classes are going to outstrip the rest of the party are great and this off sets the hit dice spread of monsters so that what is challenging for a 3rd level fighter is deadly for a 3rd level wizard. If play begins with regularly rolled hit points, it is doubly important that the CK be aware of the hit point structure; so that killing the fighter with 4 hit points isn't a surprise and encounters can be planned accordingly.

A far better approach for long term game balance is allowing the player characters to begin the game with maximum gold. This allows characters to equip with enough armor and weapons to keep themselves protected. Armor is a key to this. A character with chain mail that gives them a +4 to armor is going to be much harder to hit and the damage caused by the weapon far less. Pole arms and missile weapons are expensive as well, allowing a character to equip with them can make up for the loss of all ma Used in conjunction with maximum hit points is really unbalancing.

If this choice becomes a reality, players must take full advantage of it. Knowing that death awaits a PC at the hands of simple traps and or encounters...an orc rolling a natural 20 can kill a 1st level fighter quit quickly...it behooves them to equip properly. Armor, helms, and shields for those who fight, are the most important aspects of you character. These items can absorb damage (see below) and slow hit point loss and stave off the fall. Weapon choice is as important. A few missile weapons are a must, as these tend to slay enemies at a distance; bows, crossbows, spears, slings and the like all serve the character very well in blooding the enemy and muting the danger long before it strikes. This is especially true for the wizard or illusionist. They begin play with next to no hit points, so entering into a fray with a dagger, though romantic is almost a certain ticket to dying fall. Polearms are handy too, as they can literally keep an enemy at bay and are able to strike before the enemy connects. Equipment compensates for hit points. Utilize the compensation to survive a little longer.

If hit points are a must, consider granting characters a point of constitution. This allows characters to gain a hit point or two, without affecting combat oriented encounters, and gives them a long term, balanced attribute that they cannot help but find useful countless times.

Of course most low-level games do not necessitate making new characters, and these decisions, if they were ever considered have long sense been made. For low-level games that are well underway it always behooves both players and CKs to keep the characters well supplied and to advance enough time to allow for proper healing between adventures. A ragtag band of characters can be fun to run in a grinding fight, but the CK must be aware of the condition of the combatants or the combat will end far quicker than they anticipated. Grinding fights are best left to mid-level or high-level characters as they can sustain the damage.

The challenging part of low-level games is how to make them challenging without making them boring or too deadly.

The challenging part of low-level games is how to make them challenging without making them boring or too deadly. Knowing the characters abilities and limitations, equipping the characters properly, and establishing their hit points as a known quantity are important, but pale when compared to the structure of the game. The Castle Keeper must be fluid at low levels; willing and able to change the direction of play quickly and without reservation.

Design encounters, or adventures that are loose, do not make them too structured. Obviously, consider the monsters' abilities and the amount of damage a trap may do and balance this with the character's ability to heal themselves, which at low level is going to be very small. Do not make the encounter too strong; weak encounters are far better because it allows the CK to throw more into the mix, whereas strong encounters, once committed are there for the duration. A group of six 1st level characters who meet two ogres have to contend with those ogres. The fates may smile on their dice and they roll very well, but if they do not, they risk a death with each swing as an ogre's damage is equal to their beginning hit points. This same party who meets six orcs on the road does not suffer such a threat for the orcs are much weaker. If the characters are able to overcome the orcs quickly then it is a simple thing to send in a 'second wave,' making the encounter a little more challenging. No one will be the wiser. It's a simple trick and perhaps the oldest in the book; if an encounter, once initiated isn't gaining the attention the CK desires, simply add more to it. Beginning the encounter with a loose structure allows the CK to do this.

In this same line of thinking characters must design and play their low-level characters with a realistic expectation of their abilities. Fodius the 1st level mage, frustrated at the lack of action from his comrades, decides to leap off the berm and into the circling warthog-riding goblins. Fodius' funeral is short for his mangled remains are hard to find. Be aware and use equipment to avoid certain death.

Equipment is, as I have said countless times, the greatest tool given to the CK and the player. It serves as a buffer between

FROM THE CREATIVE MIND OF
JAMES M. WARD
TOWERS OF ADVENTURE
ON SALE NOW!

TOWER ADVENTURES IS THE ULTIMATE ADVENTURE ON THE GO BOX SET. DESIGNED BY JAMES M. WARD FOR THE CASTLES & CRUSADES ROLE PLAYING GAME, TOWER ADVENTURES OFFERS THE CASTLE KEEPER A MARVELOUS SET OF INTERCHANGEABLE TOWER LEVELS, ROOMS, MONSTERS, NPCs, TRAPS AND TREASURES. THIS BOX SET ALLOWS YOU TO MAKE LITERALLY MILLIONS OF EXCITING TOWERS FOR YOUR PLAYERS TO EXPLORE. TREASURES, TOWER INHABITANTS, AND TOWER MAPS ARE AT YOUR FINGERS AND SO EASY TO USE YOU CAN PUT TOGETHER A COMPLEX ADVENTURE IN FIVE MINUTES OR LESS.

TLG 8313
\$24.99

DIGEST SIZE BOX SET



ON SALE NOW
AT YOUR FRIENDLY
LOCAL GAMES STORE!

wrecking a game and keeping it fun and challenging. The well equipped character gives the CK a target; directing damage at the gear, destroying, weakening it, reducing it to nothing all serve the greater purpose of making the adventure more challenging, without squashing the fun of the players. It's real enough that it keeps them riveted to the game and the wise player can't help but pick up on this.

Willingly sacrificing equipment to the ravages of the adventure is wise and gives the CK the perfect out to keep the character alive. This is never truer than at low levels. One blow can reap so much damage that many low-level characters cannot survive. Shift some of that damage to the equipment they carry, from swords to shields, from back-packs to staves and the ruin the dice reap on the gear will serve to heighten the experience for all involved. Not only does it bring a material cost to the characters as they must replace all that damaged gear, but it also drives home the proximity of damage and death the characters themselves face.

A note of caution is running these games. A CK should never treat it as a contest, where the number of characters killed is somehow a badge of successful game mastery. This only serves to do two things. First it belittles the impact of the fallen character so that the threat of a character's death is expected and the player attempts every crazy fool thing that crosses their mind. They are going to die anyway, why not. Secondly it often spoils the fun. Killing a character that is obviously playing recklessly is one thing, but killing a character because an encounter's difficulty was too high is only frustrating and rather boring.

All of these concepts highlight that this is a role playing game. Descriptive text, mood, setting, all comes into play. By using all these tools the CK easily engages the characters in what can't help but be a fun evening of adventure and mayhem. Setting up a loose encounter that the CK is both able and willing to adjust allows for a fluid game that keeps the players guessing on what is going to happen next and allows the CK to ratchet up the challenges and the fun. Equipment is the most overlooked, yet important aspect of low level games that its importance cannot be overstated. Gear up properly for the contest to come and the CK is able to wear the characters down without wearing the characters out. It has the added benefit of expanding a characters abilities beyond the meager character skills given in the *Players Handbook*, for uses of the equipment are countless and not geared toward any one situation. Having this on hand put the game on a far more dynamic footing that simply having a few more levels or a few more hit points.

Of course more levels and hit points have their advantages, something we intend to look at next issue.

Steve Chenault



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.



THE FELLOWSHIP OF DICE



One of the very few advantages of age is that once we have accrued a goodly amount, we can look back over a span of time and pick out the episodes that most resonate for us. What sticks out in our memories at 20 might be completely forgotten by 40.

What is even more intriguing is our ability to categorize these milestones of our youth. As a fisherman, I can recall memorable catches, first catches, non-catches, well, you get my point. As a parent I have another set of milestones along that road; as a husband, as a teacher, as a whatever.

I was prompted to think along these lines by a question I heard recently in the context of gaming and game conventions. So, I thought back on the milestones on my gaming road for memories that really stood out and realized that there are four particularly strong and pleasant memories that all share a common component.

Number one has to be that day in 6th Grade when Mike Gengler and I finished slogging through our first, only-half-correctly-played, game of D-Day. WOW! That was fun...! A whole new world opened up. From that day on, I had a new fascination. To be honest, though, I hardly knew that at that time, well, you know...I don't claim any prescient powers.

Mike and I played a number of times and then went our separate ways; he to parochial high school, me to public. Gaming went on the shelf for a while, until 5 or 6 years later when I found a friend to teach war gaming to in the Navy. (I think it's important to point out that the term "war gaming" mostly meant "board gaming".) Our playing time was short as we transferred to different units and then I quit again when I sailed off to Southeast Asia.

My next big gaming moment came about five years later (curiously enough) when I got to Southern Illinois University at Carbondale and found out that there was a WHOLE CLUB full of gamers that met every Saturday in the Student Center!!! Man, I can't tell you how pumped up I was to hear the news. When I found out the next meeting was that coming Saturday, I counted down the hours.

...Migawd, more gamers...I'm not alone...how geeky will they be...will they accept me 4 or 5 years older than the avg. college student...????What do they play?

So, I get to the Student Center, find out what room they are supposed to be in, find the room, open the door and have ONE OF THOSE MOMENTS.

(It is difficult to describe the physical aspect, but it was certainly there and an integral part of the moment. The components of this moment had names in the 60's and early 70's that aptly described them; some called them "flashes", others used the word "rushes". They both describe that first initial feeling we get connected to something we find pleasurable. Whether head rush or body flash, or vice versa, or versa vice, that wave of endorphins that sweeps over you is a very powerful memory maker.)

I stepped into a room with about a dozen other gamers... what a wonder that was. Up until this time, I had only known three other people that I played games with; here were four times that many. And what a group they were; two of the members were Tom Wham and Gary Jaquet.

One year later, summer of 1974 and I trek off to GenCon. Same curiosities, same questions but with a bunch more gamers, plus I'm meeting face to face with one of the most interesting gamers I had come across to date, a fellow named Gary.

I arrived in front of Horticultural Hall, entered and thought I had died and gone to Gamer's Heaven. Games and gamers as far as the eye could see... I proceeded to see and try new games, new mini's rules, this weird game called Dungeons & Dragons, and most importantly, meet new gamers.

Fast forward 32 years to GenCon 2006; away from and out of the hobby since 1983. Going out into the hallway between the auction venue (into which I had come through a "back door") and the exhibit hall, I was literally awed by the enormity of the crowd (something like 35K that year).

"That feeling" nearly overwhelmed me when I realized the enormity of the mob of fellow gamers in which I found myself.

"That feeling" is what all four of those milestones share; that sense of belonging, of shared interest, of "grokking" each other (it's Heinlein, look it up). If herring had emotions, it would be what the single herring feels upon finding and rejoining the school. Home amongst my own, safety in numbers... go to any con you can. Make friends and memories.



Upon the Blacktooth Ridge

Assault on Blacktooth Ridge is, without a doubt the best selling *Castles & Crusades* adventure module ever published. It has sold thousands of copies. It launched very soon after the game and was supposed to presage a series of 13 adventures that would take characters from the 1st to the very highest level, ending as in the deeps of Aufstrag with the characters, those lucky enough to survive, pitted against the Lord of Aufstrag, Coburg the Undying. When first turned over the original manuscript, an estimated 22000 words weighed in at 34000 (or something thereabouts) and had plenty of extra material with, adventure hooks, notes, and rambling thoughts of encounter areas. After diligently paring this down we released the book and began to release the secondary material in electronic format. Some went into later modules, who also suffered from bloated text and some we just discarded. As each adventure arrived, never on the planned schedule, more unused material accumulated. Of course Davis honed his skill and pared his text down with each new book. But what this all led to, after several years of work on the Blacktooth Ridge and Barren Wood areas was a great deal of material and maps scattered over electronic downloads, published modules and left in unused folders on the virtual desk top. When the arrival of the 4th Crusade and Davis' renewed interest in the series coupled with my work on *Monsters of Airhrde* and the subsequent work on *Aufstrag* (A13) it seemed a good idea to revisit the whole project. Davis and I talked about it, and looking at what we had decided on three box sets to bring the whole series together. The first of these, now available, represents the first *Castles & Crusades* adventure box set, a landmark achievement for us. *The Umbrage Saga* represents more than a simple adventure, it encapsulates the history of the game, has established itself as the dominate entry point for gamers into the wonderful world of Airhrde, as well as created a voluminous mountain of adventure!

The original idea for the "A" series dropped from Davis to my desk back in 2005, well before C&C was a complete game. In it Davis wanted to create a gateway to Airhrde and bring the full force of adventure and story that the title city, Aufstrag, could bring to the gaming table. Though different in tone and style from his own Inzae, Davis has always enjoyed Airhrde as the default fantasy setting. In the proposal, he named 12 adventures to be scripted by him and Todd Gray and written by him. The 13th adventure he gave over to me. This of course was A13 *Aufstrag*. The adventure paths for the first 12 would bring the characters ever close to the great tree and to the confrontation with the Coburg the Undying. Through this long journey we

could develop and publish more of the world, complete with maps etc.

We discussed it and all decided it was very doable. Davis would do *Assault* while Todd began working on A2 *Slag Heap*. The two of them had it worked out pretty well. Two momentous events hit the process during the development phase. The first was great news; Gary Gygas agreed to publish *Castle Zagyg* as a C&C setting adventure. But soon thereafter the warning signs of the impending collapse of d20 proved true and the market fell; TLG staggered under the blow as sales went into a tailspin. Work on the new game hit overdrive (hence the release of it before it was properly edited); and the long struggle began. Todd was the first victim, Davis followed suite. Both took temporary jobs in order to keep the company's solvent and Todd's turned permanent.

The effect this had on the company is another story, but the effect it had on the already announced adventure series was devastating. *Assault* was finished, but Todd had never had time to work on A2 and eventually Davis took it over as Todd drifted further from TLG's gravitational pull. When Davis left work stalled as I focused the bulk of the company resources on the *Monsters & Treasure* and working with Gary on the *Gygaxian Fantasy World's* next release as well as CZ. Discussions had of course already begun on *Legendary Adventure*. So the project stalled out. I didn't want anyone to write it but for Davis (and Todd if possible) as Davis' particular style would be lost if we farmed it out. With this decision the "A" series remained in the shadow, and when time afforded, Davis would drop an ms on my desk. Over the next 4 years 5 such manuscripts hit my desk. Much like C&C, the "A" series struggled in the face of overwhelming odds.

But we are Trolls and we don't quit. So work continued.

When *Assault on Blacktooth Ridge* first came out, back in 2005/2006 it was the only C&C adventure available for sale. Retailers ate it up; mixing it with the *Players Handbook* that was only then gaining rapid ground and market share. The sales were not unexpected as the adventure was the only thing people with which people had to run their games. But as time passed, more adventures hit the street, my own *Mortality of Green*, Mike Stewart's *Shadows of the Halfling Halls*; some freebies etc, *Assault on Blacktooth Ridge* began to surprise us. It kept selling. We gave this over to the fact that Davis Chenault, one of the C&C main line writers, wrote the adventure. But then it kept selling and kept selling and today it still keeps selling. Aside from a few d20 modules, *A Lion in the Ropes* and *Malady of Kings*, *Assault on Blacktooth Ridge* proved to be the best selling



adventure in our stable, and in the C&C stable the best selling adventure. Period. This includes *Slag Heap* and the other “A” series adventure written by Davis.

I think in looking at this it is because that particular adventure has certain strengths that the others do not. *Assault* is the perfect entry adventure for new players and people new to RPGs in general. The adventure itself is dense, with lots of NPCs and monsters. It has a loose thread that connects a bunch of serial adventures. The manner in which it is played and CKed reminds me of my favorite Gary Gygax adventure module of all time, *The Village of Homlet*. That village was so open ended and the adventure so simple and unscripted that as a DM I could run it countless times, and I have. *Assault* has that same benefit. Here we have a Baron who is only vaguely attached to the story, a bunch of NPCs that have bits and pieces of information and several humanoid bands competing over the same stretch of ground, but not directly set as the object of plunder for the characters. Throw in the terrain, particularly the river, and a bunch of small dungeon crawls and suddenly you have an adventure that gives the CK everything they need to run the game. The experience CK goes into it with tons of small plot lines to develop as they see fit; the novice CK enters into with tons of small plot lines that don’t overwhelm them. Add the right price, some great art and Davis’ own style of writing in a tone that echoes with

the mirth of someone truly loves a good yarn and you have the perfect storm of adventuring material.

Assault is the flagship adventure for C&C and probably always will be. That’s not to say that the adventures that followed, particularly the ones in the *Umbrage Box* set are bad. Not at all. In fact, they are expansions of what was delivered in *Assault*. Davis doesn’t present us with another *Assault*, but rather brings the CKs focus into events and areas, proving the versatility of the whole adventuring landscape. If all this “adventure” lies here in these old salt mines, then what must lie beyond, in the Blighted Screed, the Barren Wood and beyond the Ridge. *Slag Heap*, *Wicked Cauldron*, and the others resound with the potential Adventure bound within the whole landscape.

Umbrage Saga means “In the Shadow of the Tree.” The title derives from the fact that these six adventures, take place in the Shadow of Aufstrag, a fortress built to mimic the Great Tree worshipped by many of the old world. The Shadow of Aufstrag, though a sliver of its past glory, remains strong in the nearby area. Where these adventures unfold, the Blacktooth Ridge, Barren Wood, Hreuseun River, Blighted Screed that shadow is like an echo. It is obvious, for the great fortress lies just to the north, but it does not dominate. That is the difference between A0-A5. Those adventures take place apart from the overall campaign that compels the characters to the gates of that vile fortress. These adventures are for lower level characters; only hints at the greater story arc are supplied. Loosely connected one can run them separately or together as a campaign.

But as an adventuring area that introduce people to Aihrde in a way that no other area on the map can because here, the Blacktooth Ridge represents the furthest reach of New Aenoch. This country is ripe with the history of the world, carving its existence out of the shadow of Aufstrag, rebuilding on the shades of the past and has called to adventurers from across the world to come on Crusade, driving back the forces of evil, carving out kingdoms for themselves while swearing allegiance to the Empress. It is an area rife with political intrigue, monsters of myth and legend, it wrestles with the darkness of Aufstrag, there is wealth, land, power, all for the taking. All these things are signals for adventurers to come and plunder the wealth of gold and glory!

New Aenoch highlights the advantages of Aihrde as a setting. Not only is the area designed for fun adventures, but also it shows the design elements that went into Aihrde. We specifically chose 60 years after the fall of a thousand year empire to give the CK and player’s history and background to build their games, but no real restrictions on the setting. It is all fresh, new, born again and ready for the enterprising Castle Keeper to tackle and change. Aihrde does not drive the design, but rather it serves the CK much like the Siege Engine, it is the engine for design.

With this release we happily bring together the first six adventures in the “A” series, along with a smattering of electronic additions and about eight or so new adventures. All this is bound in a beautiful book of 160 pages, comes with several area maps and gives everyone, hopefully, everything then need to run long exhausting campaigns as we scramble to get more of the series out!



A History of the Blacktooth Ridge

The history of the Blacktooth Ridge begins with the Ineng Tree. In the Days before Days this tree wandered the earth; twisted with evil it took the shape of a troll, indeed it was the first of the trolls, and wreaked havoc on the world at large. In time Ineng grew weary of his struggles and settled upon a small patch of earth along a ridgeline overlooking a river. The river tumbled in slow gyrations to the east before it turned south. Here Ineng settled into his new home. The roots of his evil grew deep, spreading through the ridge, cutting tunnels that became caves, breaking rocks and opening fissures deep beneath the ridge. The ground rose until the depth of his evil pushed the ridge up, breaking the earth into many gulches, banks, crags, and escarpments. Ineng did not pass into stone but melded with the earth and the magic of his being fed the whole region, attracting many creatures who knew not its source, nor its evil. So the jutting finger of broken hills that men later called the Blacktooth Ridge came to dominate the whole region.

The land changed. The ridge now dominated the area; high and barren, it pushed the river south and flooded the lowlands, making the land fertile and ripe. Many small rivers and creeks crisscrossed the area, as did ponds and lakes. A forest took root and grew, birch and oak mostly, but a generous amount of sycamore and broad-leaved popular trees. Wild tribes of Aenochians settled in the forest, which they called the Saelic Forest, but most did not stay, for they deemed it an evil land, and they moved further south to the fertile coastlines. But the elves came and made the forests their home. The ridge called to them and they knew it possessed great magic. They named the place the Avishean Ridge, that is in their own tongue, the "Wellspring" and the forest and river they called the Hruesen River Valley, though later the forest took on the more sinister name of the Barren Wood. They made peace with those wild men who remained and they did not fear the fey that came and settled in this enchanted country. So they lived for many long years.

But the world's ages turned, and so with them the fortunes of those who lived along the Blacktooth Ridge.

Long ago, beyond the memory of most that now live in the Hruesen River Valley, the region came under the rule of the Kings of Men, the Lords of Aenoch; and they ruled from their city of Al Liosh for many long centuries. Their power waxed and waned as the tides over time. They grew masterful in the art of sorcery, and the Lords spent their days upon the silken pillows, besotted with the corruption of wine, but their nights they

spent in exploring the worlds beyond their own. It was then that one of their own rose to power, a wizard of such dreadful capacity that all feared him. Nulak-Kiz-Din ruled behind the throne and guided the Emperor and the priest, using them for his own means. With their powers he navigated the deeps of the Maelstrom and found what he sought, the source of a wondrous power. He summoned it to Aihrde, to the very halls of Al Liosh, where the court of the Emperor watched in amazement.

So the horned god, Unklar, came to walk the worlds of men. The Emperor died, as did the priests; Nulak he bound to him as a slave. Unklar destroyed the great city of Al Liosh and it fell beneath his cloven hoof. He rebuilt it then, fashioned a tower of dreadful horrors that he named Aufstrag, which is the Citadel of Command in the tongues of men. He gathered a great army about him and lay waste to the world at large.

In those days, the Horned One's shadow hung over all the world and he ruled from his great fortress of Aufstrag, whose long shadow cast a dark pall over the Blacktooth Ridge. When the Horned One first conquered the lands of the Hruesen, the land was as restless and troublesome as its inhabitants; the elves, fay of many type, and those stalwart men of noble bearing did not easily bend to his will. So it was, after many a rebellion and uprising, the Horned One turned his armies loose upon the lands of the Hruesen. A great many orc and goblin issued forth from the foul pits of Aufstrag and laid waste to the lands of the Hruesen, driving the inhabitants south into the sea, enslaving them, or scattering wide the free peoples that had been living there. His evil emptied the forest of its inhabitants and razed all the region's cities and towns.

For centuries after, the woods and vales of the Hruesen lay abandoned and empty. These were the long years of the Winter Dark.

ON SALE NOW

Umbrage Saga: The Wicked Cauldron

Product Type/Format & Price: Box Set; \$19.99

Written By: Davis Chenault

Ordering Info: TLG 8033, ISBN: 978-1-929474-44-8

Endeavor

Game Design: Carl De Visser & Jarratt Gray

Players: 3-5

Ages: 12+

Company: Z-Man Games, Inc.

www.zmangames.com

Stock Number: ZMG7033

MSRP: \$49.99

Play time: 90 minutes

Bottom Line: Own it, love it, play it!



From the rulebook:

The goal of Endeavor is to earn the most glory for your empire. Players earn glory by increasing their scores in Industry, Culture, Finance, and Politics, as well as by occupying cities, controlling connections between cities, and by holding certain Asset Cards and building Tiles. Short-term goals of constructing useful buildings, gathering Trade Tokens, and obtaining Asset Cards must be balanced with overall goals of attaining glory as you compete for control over various regions of the world. The game only lasts seven rounds and when it is over you want to be the one who has earned the most Glory points!



Let me say at the beginning that this has become my favorite board game. I take it to all my game sessions and I have the fun of teaching any gamer I can grab to play the game and then they are as hooked as I am.

It's a game of trade and expansion from Europe to the colonies. Each player has a set of wooden circle counters that are like the citizens of your country. There is also a set of four, square counters that mark your success at gaining points in the four categories of the game: Industry, Culture, Finance, and Politics.

All players do the same thing every turn. Each builds a building, gains a certain number of new citizens, pays for the work the people do, and then works on politics to gain more cards.

To my mind, there are four different ways to win the game. The first way is to work as hard as possible on your industry. This is done by collecting brick tokens and cards with bricks on them. The more bricks you have the better the buildings you can add each turn. In the fourth stage of brick building there are two Cartographer buildings and these are the best in the game to my thinking as they allow a player to ship twice. The second way to win is the Culture strategy where you work to get as many people tokens as possible. More people, (wooden circle tokens) allow you to do more with the buildings you own. The third way to win is the Finance strategy where you collect as many gold tokens and gold cards as possible. These cards allow you to get your working citizens out of the buildings and back your harbor where you can use them again. The final way to win is to work hard on your Political strategy. In this method, you gather as many shield tokens as you can. These shields allow you to gather more colonial cards. The cards have resources on them that can increase all of your categories: **Industry** (bricks), **Culture** (people), **Finance** (gold coins), and **Politics** (colonial cards.)

There are tokens placed on the board for every section of the map. These tokens represent the four categories, plus there are blue tokens that allow for special actions. In every game, the tokens are placed randomly on the board.

Some reviewer tips include the following:

1. Gain a cannon card by turn three, you'll know why when you start to play.
2. Don't allow any blue tokens to be placed in Europe; the game is lots more fun that way.
3. It's lots of fun to try and end slavery by getting five cities in Europe.
4. Doing a lot of shipping is always good.



THE BOOK OF FAMILIARS FINDS A PATH

BY STEPHEN CHENAULT



did a bit a wandering about the internet the other day, searching for images of from the heyday of d20. The heyday, for those of us who lived it, ran from about 2000 to 2005. It was a mad period as publishers and designers began to quickly realize the market potential for secondary *Dungeons & Dragons*® products. Our numbers started small but rapidly ballooned into a gigantic pool of fish in an ever shrinking pond. Things moved fast, news was constant, the number of products more than any of us imagined. I remember conventions, most notably Gencon, Origins, and GAMA out in Vegas. At these shows the publishers would gather, often in their own social groups, talk market strategies, game concepts, swap horror stories, exchange information, and attempt a little industrial espionage. I remember sitting with Matthew from Mongoose watching as the Tanks rolled into Iraq and arguing politics long into the night. I remember a dinner of champions at Origins where a host of us gathered to eat and drink. I remember old Hal Greenberg and his constant sarcasm. And of course I remember Gary Gygax, reluctantly joining the fray that he knew could only end one way. Great times, really, great times all around. Those days are long gone, the echo of them still in the office, but drowned out now by the constant ruffling of spreadsheets. In the midst of this mental reverie it came to my mind that we created, both at TLG and in cahoots with Gary, a large body of work for the role-playing game we no longer played. In the midst of it all, that which remained to us of course, I found one of the best of the d20 books we ever created: the *Book of Familiars*. This book stood out amidst a crowd of yammering concepts that overlapped and consumed each other. This book, original when it was pitched to me, remained a pillar of our intellectual property (legal and otherwise), despite its several versions and its very checkered past. It is, without a doubt time to revisit this book, both its history and its design concept and its future. The *Book of Familiars* is being reborn. Again.

Mac Golden first pitched this idea to the Trolls way back in 2002. If memory serves we were working on Gary Gygax's *Living Fantasy*. This was a very hard project as we were converting some of Gary's electronic files at the time. We were, as always, short handed and Davis and I spent entirely too much time arguing politics. But the idea instantly intrigued all of us. We had recently finished work on *Path of the Magi* and were in touch with a number of writers. Tapping the pool of folks that we knew in the Living Ahrde community we managed to slowly assemble a team of writers. Casey Christofferson had only recently become a common name in the hat pool around the offices. We were working on *Blood Royal* I believe, a great little adventure we need out for C&C. We had known Casey for a while, but as a writer for Necromancer Games, very good

friends of ours, we did not want to tap him too much as he was busy with them. I'm pretty sure this is also when we were going into partnership with Necromancer and work had begun on their material as well. But Casey joined us nonetheless, and this is where I first became acquainted with his truly amazing abilities as a designer and writer.

The project came together slowly. It took time to put it together as we were very busy with existing projects and our limited resources were focused on Gygax and Necro and the other odds and ends. By 2003 we had finished the pool of writers, passed out job assignments and were in the market for art. Gary suggested an old friend of his, Daniel Horne for the cover, so we contacted him and commissioned a cover piece. The book began to slowly morph into shape; material was turned over and editing began. The pagemaker files set up and we were intent on releasing it in late 2003 or early 2004. About the time we completed the manuscript, *D&D* 3.5 came out and we struggled with whether to convert it or run with the backside of the split market. I put a hold on it, with a wait and see attitude. I did not want this very valuable book, a really fresh concept, to hit the wrong target audience. It became rapidly apparent that 3.5 would dominate the market as retailers began to dump 3.0 materials in wholesale fashion (the first of the d20 liquidators appears about this time).

The market went into frenzy and TLG found itself caught up in it. We hired some folks to do the conversion to 3.5 for us and we went right to it. By this time the dynamics of the company had changed markedly, Todd had left and Davis with him. I was on solo for awhile, with far too many projects to manage. Talk was beginning of doing our own game (Davis and Mac anyway); Gary and I were in talks about CZ and other stuff. Into this fray the finished 3.5 version of the *Book of Familiars* landed on my lap. With little fanfare, as my burdened schedule would not allow it, I ushered it into the pool. This was late 2004 I believe.

It sold well. The concept, fresh and inviting, proved something new on the market. Here people saw a product that took their existing games and expanded upon them through role playing. The Familiars and Animal Companions gave substance to a depth of playing in all classes and races that had long been lacking. Not just a simple wizard's cat, suddenly the paladin's holy item had structure, the barbarian's totem beast a driving purpose and so on. All these impacted the game in way that fused both DM and player by creating an avenue for actual rules-based role playing. The *Book of Familiars* broke out the gate in numbers of sales, moving off the shelves and from our warehouse with tremendous speed. In comparison with the *Path of the Magi*, released a short time before, it blew that book out of the water.

But all this came to end as 2005 opened and d20 hit its tipping point. Suddenly customers found they had just too much and they quit buying; retailers found shelves burdened with overstock; distributors possessed inventory they could not move. Giant backlogs blossomed everywhere and the d20 market collapsed.

The *Book of Familiars*, a wonderful concept, a beautifully executed project, found itself in a collapsing market. With *C&C*'s release, it proved the death knell of the wonderful project and book as our attention and resources shifted in other directions: *C&C*, *Castle Zagyg*, *Legendary Adventures* etc.

So it languished for some time. Dying the quite death of all our d20 when I pulled it from the shelves in 2008. We stored it, and though I cannot say I forgot about it (as Peter Bradley has pressured me to revive this project for some time), I cannot say it remained in the forefront of my thoughts.

But with the release of Pathfinder and what it represents, my mind began to turn again to the *Book of Familiars*. Pathfinder has an interesting place in the game world's pantheon. To create a Tolkien metaphor, Pathfinder is Gondor, it represents that part of D&D that has survived beyond the fall of Numeneor. Here the last vestiges of 3.5 rally. In its bosom, on its new Path, the *Book of Familiars* finds a new home and new role.

This book brings so much to the gaming table it is hard to quantify. Players who have bought dogs for their characters, or who have wanted their characters to possess magic items that have depth and meaning, or who call upon the totems of their people for aid and succor now have the ability to do that in meaningful way. In the *Book of Familiars* each character can take the opportunity to gain a familiar or animal companion through the use of summoning rituals and deeds. There are new animals

presented, new monsters and spells, feats and skills. All this to bring you closer to your animal companion or familiar.

In this work we present ways to award or earn familiars. The familiars themselves come with powers and abilities that they of course pass on to their masters. There are new feats and skills to govern this abilities and a framework to work them in. Along with his familiar choices, the barbarian looks to spirit guides through his totems, special mounts to carry him through the wilderness. His muse, who expands his power beyond that of normal bards, complements the bard's familiars. The cleric must look to the dreaming to find his companion and messenger and the druid gains both familiars and elemental allies. The fighting hero can truly merge with his weapon, an item now possessed of the same qualities that make him heroic. The monk looks to his ancestors for his guides and the linger with him through the adventures of his choice. The paladin, already in possession of a mount, gains more for that mount as well as spiritual armor and weapons granted by the gods to which he pays homage. The rogue possesses shadow familiars to cover his trail more than any normal cutpurse. The sorcerer and wizard of course gain all the more through the creatures that have long been the hallmark of their trade.

The Book of Familiars returns to the TLG fold after only a short nine month hiatus. Casey Christofferson has boldly launched into the conversion for *Pathfinder* and Peter Bradley has already painted a wonderful new cover. It's coming back and we are both grateful and excited.

And for those of us who are *C&C* gamers? The book must eventually be released as *C&C*, but not too soon as there are other more pressing projects. And for the record, if Pathfinder is Gondor, then *C&C* must truly be Andor, smaller perhaps, but from whence the true king returned!



PASSING THE TORCH

GAME MASTERING FOR VERY YOUNG GAMERS

BY ERIC PIPER



In the last few years, it has been a very rewarding experience for me to pass on the love of the fantasy genre and role-playing games to my children and their friends. Playing various pen and paper games for the last twenty-three years has unfortunately left me in a pretty jaded state. My regular gaming group is quite the same. Oh, we have fun, don't get me wrong. It just seems that we struggle, especially in our middle years, to recapture that feeling we had when we were kids and first broke open that *Basic D&D* boxed set. Back then, just outfitting your character, looking at the items to buy for your adventure, was awesome fun! Now, to have any kind of thrill, we have to have complex cultures, political subplots, multiple story arcs, and sophisticated game system mechanics to even begin to enjoy ourselves. No matter how hard we try, though, it seems that myself, and those in our gaming group, can't recapture that wide-eyed wonder we had so many years ago.

Then I found the secret. The best way to relive that moment again, to recapture that spark that made us fall in love with gaming in the first place, is to share it with very young gamers.

I introduced my oldest son, now fourteen, to gaming when he was six. I remember the day. At that phase in my life, gaming was a thing of the past. All my gaming buddies had moved away, and I was a young father working my tail off to provide for the family. I broke out some old *Dungeons & Dragons* books from the basement and made a character for him. We sat down, I began telling him the story, and when we got to an orc encounter... well; I must have set the mood too well. He started crying and ran out of the room, to which my wife immediately wanted to know what tomfoolery I did to cause this.

It's hard to believe that same little boy is now a teenager that looks me straight in the eye already! Since he has started playing with the adults in our regular Castles and Crusades group, I have found that my eleven-year-old son and my six-year-old daughter wanted to play as well. Of course, I agreed to start a special campaign just for them, with my daughter's age especially in mind. Once we began play, I expected my daughter to become quickly bored, not understand the mechanics, and wander off. As everyone in the family knows, she is incredibly intelligent for her age, but has the attention span of squirrel. She amazed me in that she not only enjoyed it, but she understood it. Now, they beg me to play. I never thought I would be using gaming as a lever to get my children to do their chores!

For those of you who want to recapture the spirit of your gaming childhood, or would like to share your love of role-playing games with a future generation, there are a few hard and fast rules you need to follow. For the parents out there, this may seem like common sense, but for those who will be game

mastering for their nephews, nieces, or younger siblings, the following tips may be very useful and save you from pulling out your hair or deliberately jamming a pencil in your eye.

SHORTER ATTENTION SPANS :: EVEN SHORTER ADVENTURES

Children have very short attention spans. It is very difficult to hold their interest for extended periods of time, so make sure adventures are ridiculously short. You need to do away with mega dungeons and hundreds of miles of cross-country exploration. I found that when running a game for ages 6-8 years old, the entire adventure, from the beginning introduction to the exciting finale and wrap-up, should be around 45 minutes to an hour at the very most. Children 9-12, depending on their personalities, can handle sitting at the table for a longer duration, but generally, their attentions begin to wane at the two-hour mark, no matter how exciting your adventure is.

BEDTIME STORY VOICE

This may be tough for some of you who are not parents, but believe me, children respond incredibly well to you when you narrate the story in a very animated way. Remember the voice and mannerisms of your favorite elementary school teacher reading a children's book to your class? Raise your eyebrows and speak in a whisper as you slowly describe the dark dungeon corridor they are creeping down, and then suddenly let your voice boom when you describe the monster coming at them. Use silly voices for various NPC have and just have fun with them. The younger the audience, the more animated your story telling must be. Be forewarned, however. If you try narrating to your adult group with the Bedtime Story Voice, someone is calling 911.

SIMPLIFY YOUR SPEECH, PROFESSOR

Children do not have the vocabulary that you do. The typical descriptions and dialogues used in an adult game would be lost on the little guys. Use the simplest terms possible at all times, whether you are describing an area, a monster, or doing NPC dialogue. Remember, much of how something is described to children is through body language, expression, and tone of voice. Use your hands and raise your eyebrows when you give a description. Use repetition in word choices to emphasize something. For example, don't say, "The gargantuan grotto entrance looms menacingly before you, and an inexplicable, ominous presence seems to lurk within." If this is how you typically narrate your adventure, young folks will have a difficult time visualizing the story you're telling. Say something like this instead: "You see the big cave in front of you, and it's really

dark in there! (voice drops to a whisper) It feels scary here, like something really, really bad is waiting just inside!”

Watch their little eyes pop out and arguments ensue about who should go in first. It’s priceless!

This holds true to NPC dialogue as well. Don’t try to replicate Middle English sentence structure or grammar for crying out loud, and don’t be too wordy. Keep names of people, towns, wilderness locations, and well, everything simple. Valagarlag Grove should be renamed Fairy Forest. Shalenthia Tel’alethi the elf should be renamed just plain ol’ Shala. Radmorikberg, a small village where our heroes start their careers, should be called Hay Town, or something similar. This may seem silly to adults perhaps, but incredibly necessary when gaming with children.

CAN I SEE THE PICTURE?

Try to have as many visual aids as possible. My children love the color maps, “ooh,” and “ahh” when I point out where they are in the make-believe world. Be sure to print out pictures of castles and caves to represent some of the key encounter areas of the adventure. Make sure pictures of monsters are age appropriate and not too scary. Draw it yourself, or if you are unable, find a friend or family member who has decent art skills to do some “kiddified” monster sketches.

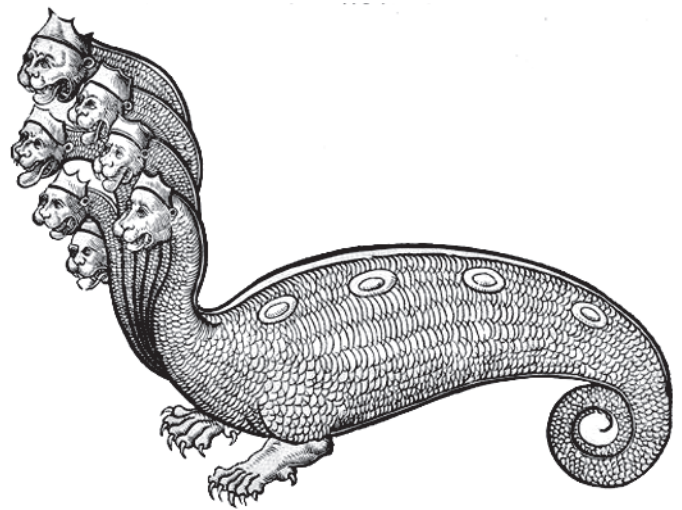
AGE APPROPRIATE MATERIAL

I know I don’t have to mention that sexual imagery, innuendo, or pictorial depictions of topless succubus are not appropriate for young gamers. I think I do need to take a moment, however, to address monster encounters. As a jaded adult gamer, both as a player and as a GM, it takes a lot for a monster encounter to interest me, let alone, frighten me. Young children do not suffer from this jadedness at all. That’s what makes playing the game with them so much fun, but also potentially harmful if you’re not careful. Avoid using flesh-eating ghouls, zombies coming out of the grave, demons crawling from a blazing abyss, and so on. The idea is to have fun, not give them nightmares. Choose something out of the ordinary for sure, but use some common sense. You will be amazed at how mundane creatures can be made into the star encounter of the night. To a child of 6–7 years old, a giant ant coming at them is absolutely awe inspiring and plenty scary enough.

If you choose to use a monster that is pushing the envelope in the scary department, try using it as a finale. In addition, here is a real shocker: you can and should make up your own monsters, especially when running games for really young children. That fuzzy, mean Snagwangler is back at it kids, and he’s getting the farmer’s chickens! Yikes! Did you see the teeth on that Lizard Bird?

BASIC GAME MECHANICS FOR LITTLE MINDS

This one seems like common sense, but you would be surprised. Don’t break out *Rolemaster* and expect the little ones to 1) even remotely understand what all this stuff is about and 2) to care about playing.



If this is the first time they have ever played a role-playing game, start out by giving them a brief explanation of the various characters they can pretend to be; it’s often much easier to have them choose from pregenerated characters in the beginning, complete with colorful character portraits. If you do happen to provide some pregenerated characters, be sure to let kids come up with their own name. They get really attached to the character, and as a result, the game.

Sitting down at the table with young gamers is not the time for game mechanics lectures, folks. Don’t explain much. Just start telling the story. Make sure they have only the dice they need to play; if playing a d20 based system then give them a twenty-side die and a couple die for their weapon damage. You may do as I do, and that is, throw out most rules. No encumbrance. No movement rates. No spell components or casting times. Fun is the rule here. I don’t even use experience points! I use a session-based system where they go up a level after only two sessions.

Teach only the simplest of mechanics as you play. “This is the dice we use to see if we hit the monster or not…” and “You roll this one to see how hard you smashed him!” I even have them repeat certain words after me, just like a teacher would do in school. “Wow, Luke just rolled a natural twenty! Can you say ‘Natural Twenty?’” The kids then say “Natural Twenty!” and I go on to verbally praise him in front of the others. “That is the very best, most awesome roll he could ever roll! Great Job Luke!” and then give him a high five. Obviously, this elementary school approach is not desired for older kids, but certainly, making a big deal out of great rolls really pumps them up, regardless of age.

Another suggestion for young gamers, for all you cruel Castle Keepers out there: don’t kill their characters! No, seriously. If you want them to literally burst into tears at the table, and hate gaming for life, then by all means, kill them at the first opportunity. My goal, however, is for the kids to have fun, get the gaming bug, and grow into the hobby. Every child is different, and a twelve year old may be able to handle the death of a character, but I assure you that an eight year old will really be devastated. Make them feel they are close to death, scare them into thinking it’s possible, but let them linger at 1 or 2 hit points.

They get so tense and excited, it's hilarious. Just remember, they want to be a hero!

USE IT AS A TIME TO EDUCATE

My six-year-old daughter, Megan, told me what her character was doing. "I turn on my flashlight, and look into the scary cave..." I used this as a way to teach her a little about history... without going on too much about it. "There is no such thing as flashlights here, Megan." Her eyes widened. "This is just like it used to be many, many years ago... I mean, a really, really long time ago. They didn't have flashlights back then..." Incredulous, she asked me what they used back then, and I gave an oversimplified explanation of a torch, which she was as fascinated with as any encounter we had been through. She still has some problems remembering her new RPG vocabulary word and still says "Dad, I light my torcher, and go in." She cracks me up.

Whether you need to back up and explain why there are horses pulling wagons and no cars, or why people have to get water from a well, it opens a great opportunity to teach the children about how life used to be before technology.

HAVE FUN!

Don't forget the main purpose of gaming is to have fun. In addition, if the players happen to be your own children, nephews, nieces, or younger siblings, then remember that it is a great way to have some quality family time together! Let's make sure we pass the torch to the next generation of gamers and give them a life long love of the hobby!



Castellan's Guide to Arms & Armor



Available NOW

Over 120 Entries
Weapons
Armor
Stats, Uses and
History

TROLL
LORD
GAMES

PO Box 251171 Little Rock, AR 72225
WWW.TROLLLORD.COM OR TROLL@TROLLLORD.COM

THE SOCIETY TAKES ON GENCON & BEYOND!

BY JOHN "SIR SESKIS" WRIGHT

"Man, this adventure is really great, but...I don't have the new Player's Handbook so I'm not sure what *Dragon Bite* or the other new Illusionist spells are..."

Eric Piper is calling me just about a week and a half before GenCon 2009 is set to open its doors in Indianapolis, and where he and I are set to run the first *Castles & Crusades* Society Tournament. Steve Chenault has just sent us the manuscript for the tournament module, *Lure of Delusion*, and we are excitedly going over it during one of our many phone chats leading up to the convention. The adventure IS excellent, and is a terrific showcase for some of the additions (especially to the Illusionist) in the 4th printing of the *Player's Handbook*. But, as Eric is reminding me, he doesn't have that yet. I actually have just received my own copy, and have not really looked at those new spells either. Oops... one more thing to do as we prepare for our sojourn towards the gaming Mecca of GenCon.

This year's GenCon was something of a watershed for the Society, because it marked an important starting point for what we hope to be in the coming years: a living, vibrant organization dedicated to promoting gaming in general and *Castles & Crusades* specifically. Over the past year, we have gone from a rather moribund, wandering entity "out there in the internet ether" to a solid group of about 220 members. We had produced several online e-zine releases of *The Domesday Book* featuring wonderful member-created gaming material, and established a pretty active weekly chat room. Yet with all this success, we still were not really growing, at least not in terms of being a Society that served a core purpose, a mission if you will. After all, we are Crusaders! So what did we want that to actually mean?

As with any group, lots of people had many ideas and suggestions, but over the course of the last year two major themes have emerged from those who have contributed, chatted, or been active in the Society:

1. That our main purpose should be in support of actual gaming events, rather than merely an online presence, and that we should be promoting game-days, Society demos and gatherings locally, and a more visible convention presence – this was the genesis of what became the GenCon C&C Society Tournament as well as the foundation for much of the restructuring the Society is currently announcing.

2. That we were just too diffused, too separate and unwieldy, with message boards and website that were separate and cut off from TLG to a great extent. And, while the Society is dedicated to "all gaming," it is impossible (nor desired) to try and remove a Society from a company and game system which bears the same name.

With those thoughts in mind, I began discussing with Steve and TLG in the months leading up to GenCon what would be a beneficial re-alliance of the Society and the Trolls, bringing our endeavors more under the auspices of the company when it comes to support and online presentation. I, in turn, wanted to be able to see the Society become "ambassadors" for C&C across the lands, and so by "returning to the fold," so to speak, we could generate officially sanctioned and supported Society events, with both prize and promotional support from the guys in the Troll Denz. To me, this was a win-win prospect, and would give us our clear purpose and intent as we went forth.

So, to those ends, we have made the following changes to the Society (which I realize might be a bit frazzling as we just had a Society article in *Crusader* which detailed information that is now *outdated* in terms of the Society, but such is the nature of the beast...)

We have begun the process of closing down our independent message boards and website, as TLG has begun implementing new pages via the official company website. This achieves two things: it brings us all back together to a single, unified location, and it legitimizes and sanctions the Society and its activities as having "standing" with "official" C&C and Troll Lord Games.

Where www.cncsociety.org currently is will soon disappear, though yours truly will reorganize this web domain into a "Squire's Corner" for my own Society informational posts, as well as hosting of material that is fan produced but needs to remain separate from TLG's main site (i.e. fan-made netbooks and the like).

- Any society member who organizes a game or demo at a local store, a local event, a regional con, or even a regular "Society meet-up" will receive TLG support in terms of promotional material of some sort. Steve has caused a truly remarkable Society banner to be rendered, and we will get 13 × 19 sheets of these to everyone, and perhaps even have a larger banner

that can be loaned for bigger events. Members who do the organizing will receive benefits in some product too.

- All heraldry will be changed over to a "title reward" system, where organizing or just participating in such events will gain greater title - i.e. no longer based when joining on "number of people in group," but by activity as a member. Current titles will be "grandfathered" in as is. Down the road, TLG will be minting "Society Coins" which will also be added, eventually, to this reward/incentive membership program. These coins will be good for purchasing product, of TLG at first, but also hopefully for other entities in the future.
- Other things we have been attempting will need to be wrapped up and "cashed out" as it were. This involves closing out a couple of attempted endeavors and streamlining others, as follows:

For the Domesday Book, we will produce one more issue (number 5) as we have been this fall. Then, beginning in January 2010, we will shift to a monthly newsletter format under the same title. This format will only be an 8–12 page newsletter with the following sections:

- a.) "Horn Blasts", updates and news from myself and us as officers to members (1 page), including updates on what's new in release from all publishers tied to C&C (Brave Halfling especially, AGP, Goodman if they start up again);
- b.) "Call to Arms", which will be 1–2 pages of updates on who's doing what, where, when and how, as pertains to the above focus on games;
- c.) "Creative Crusading", 6–9 pages that will showcase member creativity specifically in three areas—Society "Artist" of the Month, showcasing one or several pieces of art by submission, "New Monster or Class" of the Month, and "Special Feature" of the month which could be any single article of 1200 words or less (could be a review of some product, could be similar to the Weather articles, or a How to Deal with players). All material submitted to the Society for the Domesday book will get circulated to all officers as editors, and we will vote on what is best, selecting what we want to showcase. All deadlines will be standardized to first of the month, period. This will increase our quality, competitiveness, and regularity/quantity of material. It will also maintain the Society's commitment to showcasing member-driven, fan-created material for C&C.

We will be closing down and "cashing out" on two ongoing Society endeavors, the First Society Contest and the Grimoire Crusadus netbook of magic, with each of these being wrapped up—a winner will be declared for the contest and the netbook produced and hosted on the Squire's Corner site mentioned above.

Which brings our tale back around once again to the streets and venues of Indianapolis and GenCon 2009. With our Society's mission firmly established, Eric and I descended on the con with our pre-gens, our copies of C&C (yes we got Piper set up with a new Handbook!) and began the running of the first ever C&C Society Tournament at this, the "greatest four days in gaming." Our first day was filled with a whirlwind of activity, including Steve showing us the special edition GenCon softbacks of the PHB, with our new Society heraldry at the front, leading the 4th Crusade for TLG. Hanging proudly to one side was a banner of this new heraldry, proudly proclaiming the Society as having arrived at GenCon! Eric & I huddled, went over our preps, and onward to the games we went.

We ran two tables on Friday, of five players each. The *Lure of Delusion* is a module all about deception, of chases and red herrings. Both Eric and I delighted at creating the mood and the setting for this wonderful piece, and from the reactions of our players they had a great time. We ran a combined single table of eight on Saturday, and our only regret was that we probably need more days and times to really allow those who were interested to be able to get into the events. In the end, we tried for the feel of "hey this is just a game, we're here to have fun and play C&C, so prizes are really just a bonus," and our players all agreed. Indeed, it was a "tournament," but with the feel of just good old-fashioned role-playing. Still, I would be remiss not to proudly announce the winners of the tournament:

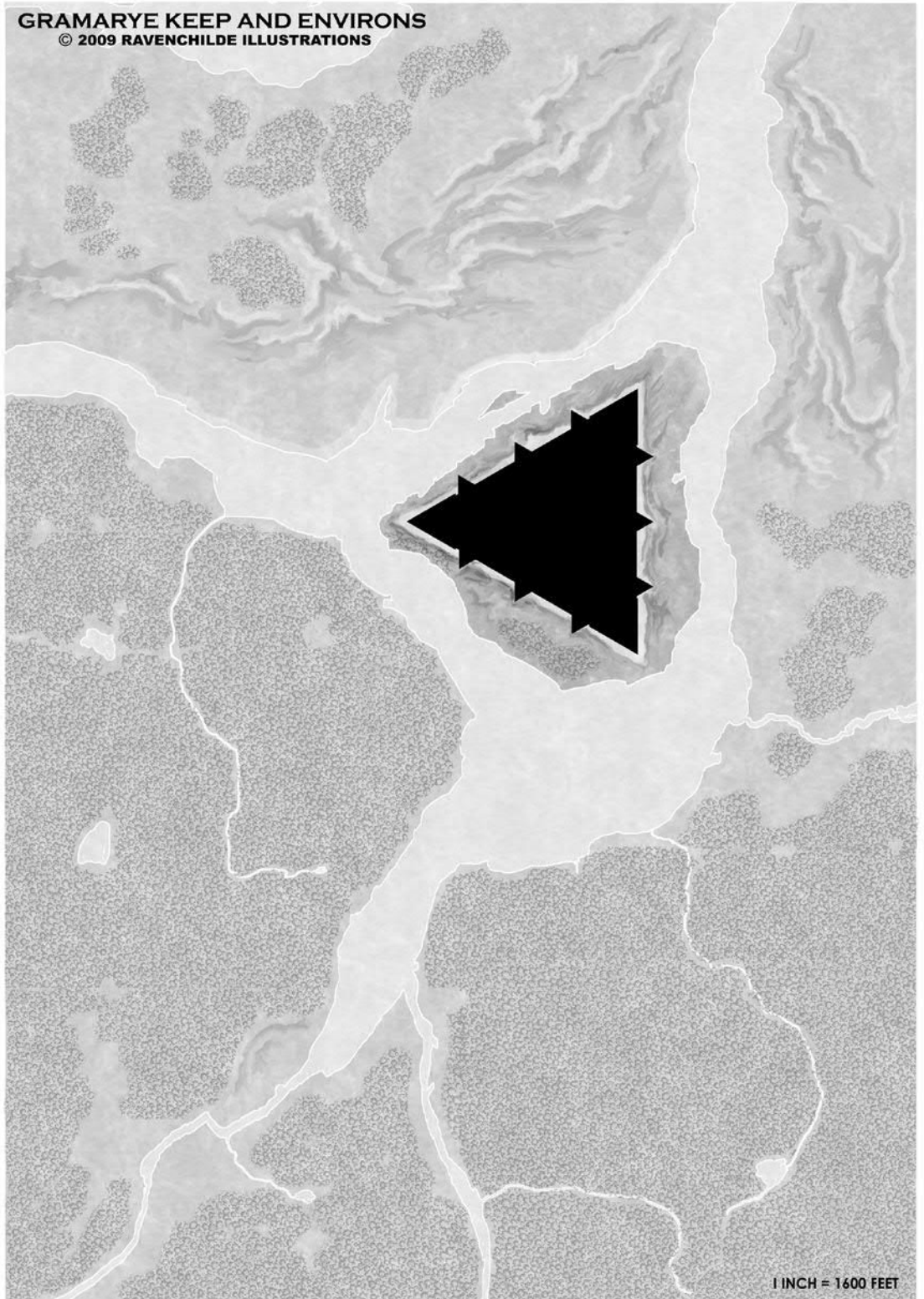
1. Gerry Buldak (aka "Sir Osis of Liver")
2. Jason Lund
3. Rhiannon Miller (aka "Titania LeFay," daughter of Treebore)
4. Chuck Morris (aka "Rigon")
5. Will Boudnik

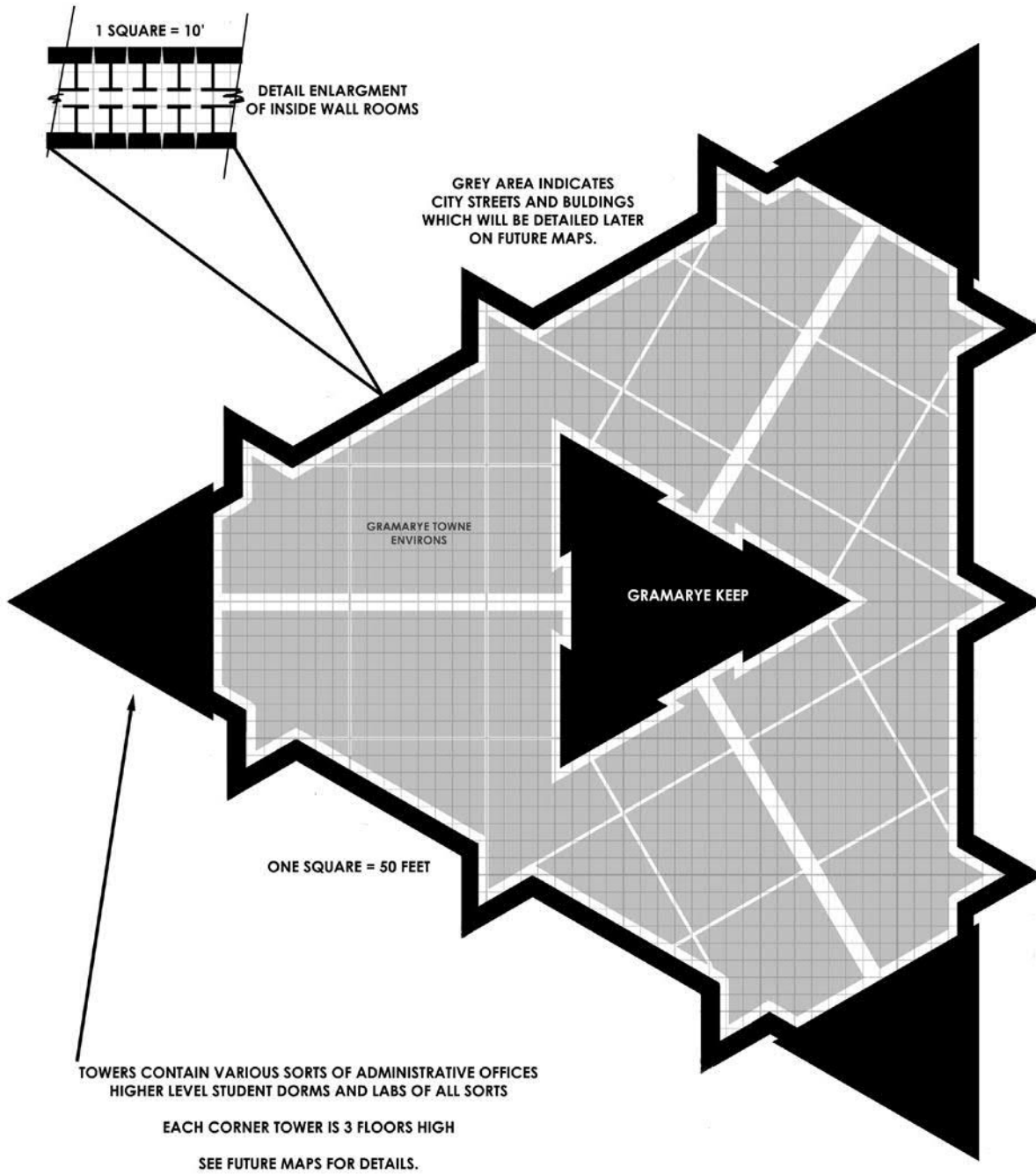
So, till next time, stay tuned for all that is new and in progress with the C&C Society.

Alea Iacta Est!



Troll Lord Freebies (just for you!)





Twelve Tents

Hajirin's House of Pleasant Respite

by Christina Stiles

Christina Stiles is a freelance game writer/editor from South Carolina and a member of Misfit Studios (www.misfit-studios.com). She maintains a web site at: www.christinastiles.com.

Type: Inn/Tent Town

Alignment: Lawful Evil

The Twelve Tents “inn” lies in a lush oasis situated off a main merchant route. Twenty large tan tents with red flags flying above encircle a beautiful, thriving garden of palms and flowers. A brass fortress (called the Brass Fortress) rises 250 feet from the garden’s center, with its two spires climbing another 50 feet above the main structure. Humans, dwarves, and large, hairless humanoids with burnished-copper skin move about the establishment.

Background and Description

Hajirin’s House of Pleasant Respite began as a mud-brick tavern on the outskirts of an oasis about 15 years ago. Initially, 12 tents surrounded the drab central building, and as the number of tents remained the same for well over a decade (only recently burgeoning to twenty), the locals began referring to the place as Twelve Tents. A rare few now remember the establishment’s original name. Now, the tavern resides on the bottom floor of the Brass Fortress (Area 1A), and the tents and rooms within the fortress serve as the inn.

Jen’di’karan, a crafty efreeti, currently owns Twelve Tents. He took over the inn three years ago after his former master, Hajirin al Hammad, made his final wish, unleashing him from his bottle-prison for good. Hammad’s first wish was the splendid Brass Fortress to replace the former dilapidated central inn building. His second was the beautiful gardens, filled with exotic plants, which now surround the fortress. It took Hajirin 11 long years to request his last wish, and the wish ultimately proved his demise. He asked Jen’di’karan to make him a very wealthy man, so, Jen’di’karan, twisting the wish to his own benefit, turned Hajirin into a gold statue—a wealthy man! The 200,000 gp statue of Hajirin rests in the efreeti’s quarters in Area 1J.

Jen’di’karan lives in the Brass Fortress most of the time (sometimes he returns to the Elemental Plane of Fire to rest and relax). Rumors do float about Twelve Tents about the change in ownership and the unusual new owner, but few patrons truly care. Even when the Brass Fortress arrived overnight 14 years ago, the Twelve Tents’ visitors just took it all in stride. Weirder things have been known to happen in the surrounding desert, after all.

Once he took over the operation of the inn, Jen’di’karan found he inherited not only an inn, but a prosperous slavery ring, as well. The efreeti’s unger warriors work the area, raiding nearby villages and

attacking unwary travelers. They sell their spoils to underground races like the drow and any other paying parties. They are not picky.

Exterior of Twelve Tents

1. The Brass Fortress

The Brass Fortress rises from the beauty of the surrounding gardens like a beacon. During the day, the sun dances off the fortress, coloring its spires in prisms of light. The tower houses the local tavern on its bottom floor, and there are a few rooms to rent within on the second and third floor, though travelers may also rent the tents in Areas 3 and 4.

2. Gardens

The gardens surrounding the brass fortress are breathtaking, lush, and exotic. Some of the rarest plants can be found here, and alchemists and wizards make special trips here just to purchase spell components. A staff of three gardeners maintains the flora, but in truth, they do little but keep it neat, for the gardens seem to grow and bloom of their own accord.

3. Partitioned Tents

Four tents are normally partitioned into four private sections each. Each partitioned area contains a hammock, a blanket, and a medium-sized chest for equipment storage. Each tent has two servants assigned to it who clean equipment, fetch food and drink, or run errands for the guests. Their services are included in the room charge. Two guards always protect these tents.

4. Common Tents

These 16 un-partitioned tents provide shelter for the numerous travelers who stay at the inn. They serve as common sleeping quarters for up to 25 guests each. The occupants are provided only a straw pallet and a blanket.

5. Market

On the northern side of Twelve Tents sits a small market area where trinkets, supplies, and foodstuffs can be purchased. A few horse and camel traders (thieves, really) can be found here, as well, along with a slave trader or two—though the latter don’t broadcast their trade or presence.

6. Stables and Slave Pen

A massive mud-brick stable on the western side of Twelve Tents provides room for over 70 horses or camels. A large room on the build-

ing's backside holds 3d10 slaves at any given time. Five half-orc guards keep an eye on them. Three stable servants take care of the animals and the slaves.

7. Oasis

This large lake provides water for Twelve Tents, and it's the largest source of water for many miles. The oasis area is always bustling, as men and women lead horses and camels to drink here, or they carry buckets of water back to the tents and to the fortress.

Brass Fortress First Floor

The brass fortress stands 250 feet tall and sports twin spires. Double doors lead into the tavern on the fortress' first floor.

1A. Tavern

Two guards are stationed just inside the double doors that open into a tavern. The large common room holds 30 round tables. Its floor is tiled in an elaborate mosaic of fiery reds and oranges, making it appear as if its patrons are walking through a blazing inferno. The room smells of smoke, horses, camels, coffee, and unwashed bodies. The bar sits at the northern side of the room and is manned by a large half-orc named Okmmed who watches the servants carefully (See Inn Staff for more info on the servants). Okmmed is also the innkeeper for the Brass Fortress' rooms in Area ?? (See Services for prices). A locked chest (CL 6) containing 150 gp, 50 sp, and 80 cp sits behind the bar, along with a loaded light crossbow.

Guards (They are lawful neutral, humans, 3rd level fighters. Their vital stats are HP 19, AC 14. Their primary attributes are constitution, strength, and dexterity. Their significant attributes are strength 13 and constitution 14. They carry a +1 short sword, dagger, chain mail shirt, a light mace, and 10 gp in coin and gems)

Okmmed (He is a lawful evil, half-orc, 7th level fighter whose vital stats are: HP 54 and AC 17. His primary attributes are: strength and dexterity. His significant attributes are strength 13 and dexterity 16. He wears +3 leather armor at all times and carries a +2 light mace, a dagger, and a pouch of gems and jewelry worth 1,500 gp. A loaded light crossbow rests behind his bar.)

Servants (These are neutral, mostly human, 0-level commoners whose vital stats are: HD 1d6, AC 10, and HP 5. Their primary attribute is charisma. Their significant attribute is charisma 13. They wear common clothing, the women in veils. They have no money or weapons.)

1B. Stairwell

A guard stands outside the door to this stairwell leading to the second and third floors. The guard will only allow patrons to pass if he is given a nod of approval from Okmmed.

Another guard stands at the entrance to the third floor, blocking curious patrons from exploring the master's private level in the tower.

Use guard stats from 1A.

1C. Kitchen

This small kitchen is crowded with pots, pans, utensils, crates, and barrels. The stone oven keeps the room very hot, but the half-orc servant overseeing the kitchen looks to be used to the heat. Metal pipes rise from the oven and through the ceiling, expelling the smoke through the tower's spires. Other servants come and go from the kitchen. They are responsible for taking care of the rings from the various colored (for room identification) bell ropes that hang down in the kitchen.

Use servant stats from 1A.

1D. Private Entertainment Room

A guard stands outside the archway to this private room, which Jen'di'karan uses to entertain his special friends and business colleagues. Large, plush cushions cover the floor in a circular pattern. In their center is a short, round table filled with pitchers of wine and water and trays piled high with meats and fruits. Occasionally, dancing girls and minstrels perform here for the master's pleasure, as well. As Jen'di'karan is a jovial soul, deep, thunderous laughs can often be heard emanating from this room.

A locked door (CL 6) sits in the eastern corner of the room. Behind it is a private staircase that leads from the first to third floor; it is walled over on the second level, so no one can enter from that level. The stairwell enters directly into Jen'di'karan's private quarters (area 1J), and only he has the key to unlock the door.

Brass Fortress Second Floor

1E. Library and Parlor

Patrons purchasing private rooms in the tower have access to this library and parlor. The parlor has numerous tables and lamps for studying, and there is a rope bell here for parched or hungry patrons to call for food service. The books found in the library are all on mundane historical topics of local interest, though they could be of help to persons seeking knowledge of ancient places. A guard stands against the center of the northern wall. His presence assures that no one tries to make off with any of the books.

1F. Rooms

These private rooms can be rented. They contain fancy, four-poster beds, fireplaces, chests for storing gear and valuables, a desk and chair, oil lamps, and bell ropes to summon servants any hour of the day or night. The rooms are also stocked with fresh fruits and a good bottle of wine.

1G. Storage

The storage room houses extra linen and chairs and tables. It also houses the servants' cleaning supplies.

1H. Servants' Quarters

The servants' quarters contain over a dozen pallets. Small unlocked chests rest at the foot of the pallets, each containing only a change of clothes. The servants here are really slaves, so they have no money or many personal effects.

Brass Fortress Third Floor

1I. Jen'di'karan's Quarters

Two guards stand outside the door to the master's quarters. The door is always locked (CL 6). Inside, the room contains an enormous bed with a mahogany headboard and footboard—Hajirin's former bed, which the efreeti hasn't touched. Wood encases the sides of the bed, too. The boards are carved with intricate scenes of djinni. The bed is easily worth 4,000 gp. Plush chairs and sedans sit in the room, along with numerous pillows. Jen'di'karan's wealth is hidden (CL 8) in a section of the wall that opens up when a certain section is touched, revealing a hidden chest. The golden statue of Hajirin (200,000 gp) stands in front of the hidden compartment. Moving the statue requires a CL 7 strength check.

If located, the hidden chest (Lock CL 8) contains: 150 pp, 3,500 gp, 400 sp, several gems valued at 2,500 gp total, and two potions of cure light wounds. The cache is money earned from the slave trade.

Jen'di'karan (This neutral evil creature's vital stats are HD 10d8, HP 65, AC 18. Its primary attributes are mental and physical. It attacks

with a slam for 2d8 damage or uses its spell-like abilities. Its special abilities are spell-like abilities, Darkvision 60 ft., immunity to fire (full), vulnerability to cold, plane shift, telepathy 100 ft., mighty physique. Jen'di'karan wears a ring of +3 magic resistance he located in Hajirin's hidden chest.)

Use stats from 1A for the guards.

1J. Personal Sitting Room

Jen'di'karan uses this private area to unwind with Okmmed and occasionally with the visiting Vorkaal (See Guests). Besides the guards and the servants bringing food and wine, these are the only other two people allowed on this level.

1K. Private Rooms

These rooms contain expensive furnishings: a nice bed, desk and chair, a sedan, and a lockable armoire. Okmmed sleeps in the left room, and Vorkaal stays in the right room when he visits Twelve Tents. Okmmed prefers to keep his wealth close by, so he exchanges much of his coin for gemstones, which he carries in a pouch on his person.

Personalities

Inn Staff

Okmmed is a 250 lb., seven-foot-tall half-orc who manages the tavern. He has a deep-set scar running across the left side of his face and has been known to break a few necks when things get out of line. He keeps an orc double axe under the bar and has two poisoned daggers strapped at his side. In addition to overseeing the tavern, he also manages Jen'di'karan's slave business.

The serving girls Jameira, Altiva, and Z'mara all wear long red dresses and cover their faces in veils. The women and the other male servants who work for the inn (Djilkan, Galte'ir, Muhar, Ildak, Fared, and a half-drow named Aleric Flor), are all slaves taken from neighboring lands. These servants have been beaten and tortured so much that their spirits are broken. Many of them bear visible scars, and they speak—in barely audible voices—only when spoken to, their eyes remaining downcast at all times.

Guests

Abras is a prince and diplomat of the Nange, both feared and respected throughout the area. Abras controls a small band of thirty Nange, and often hires out his group to protect caravans or travelers trying to make it safely through the desert. He knows about the slavery ring in Twelve Tents, but it does not concern him; Abras's concerns are with the political station of his people. He is stoic, quick-witted, and fierce.

Tarizah Il'Mara is a slight, dark-haired woman standing just five feet tall. She is very pretty but no-nonsense and fierce. She heard rumors that Twelve Tents is the center of a large slavery ring and has come here seeking the truth. Tarizah and her band of 20 young rangers, known as the Desert Hawks, try to protect travelers in this area, and she is concerned about any such vile endeavor (slavery) occurring in her territory. She is renting a room in Area 1?

Tarizah Il'Mara (She is a chaotic good 7th level ranger whose vital stats are: HP 37 and AC 18. Her primary attributes are wisdom, dexterity, and constitution. Her significant attributes are dexterity 15 and charisma 14. She wears full chain mail, a shield, and a ring of ????. She carries a +2 long sword and 300 gp of gems and coin.)

Vorkaal is one of Jen'di'karan's special guests, and can usually be seen entering or exiting the tavern's guarded archways. Vorkaal is one of the efreeti's slave-buying customers. He wears nondescript hooded black robes, and rarely associates with anyone other than the efreeti. When staying at the inn, Vorkaal always stays in the brass fortress, and

he purchases food items not listed on the menu. Five other mind flayers always accompany Vorkaal on his travels to Twelve Tents, but they are quartered in a private tent, not in the fortress.

Offerings

Beverages

Camel's milk: 3 cp per cup, 2 sp per pitcher

Ale: 4 cp per mug; 2 sp per gallon

Tea (cinnamon, ginger, mint, red, thyme): 5 cp per cup; 3 sp per pitcher

Coffee: 7 cp per cup; 3 sp per pot

Wine, bottle: 5 gp

Victuals

Bread: 2 cp

Falafel: 2 cp

Vegetables (eggplant, fava beans, lentils, okra, potatoes, vine leaves): 6 cp

Soup (beet, chicken, lentil, meatball, yoghurt): 1 sp

Cheese, peppered: 2 sp

Fruits: 1 gp

Meat tarts (lamb): 2 sp

Kibbeh (meatloaf made with lamb): 3 sp

Pigeon in wine sauce: 3 sp

Saffron rice with stew (beef, chicken, or fish): 4 sp

Stuffed lamp: 4 sp

Pudding (bread, browned flour, pumpkin, starch, tapioca): 3 cp

Services

Common tent (area 4): 5 sp per night

Partitioned tent (area 3): 2 gp per night

Rooms in the tower (four rooms, second floor): 25 gp per night

Stabling (with feed): 1 gp per night

Usage

As the Castle Keeper, you could decide that the slavery ring and other assorted evil plans going on at the inn are something the PCs need to worry about, or you could ignore it entirely and just use the Twelve Tents as a large desert-oriented inn. Letting your players stay here a few times, dropping vague hints that something untoward might be going on, then unveiling the truth of this place could serve you well.

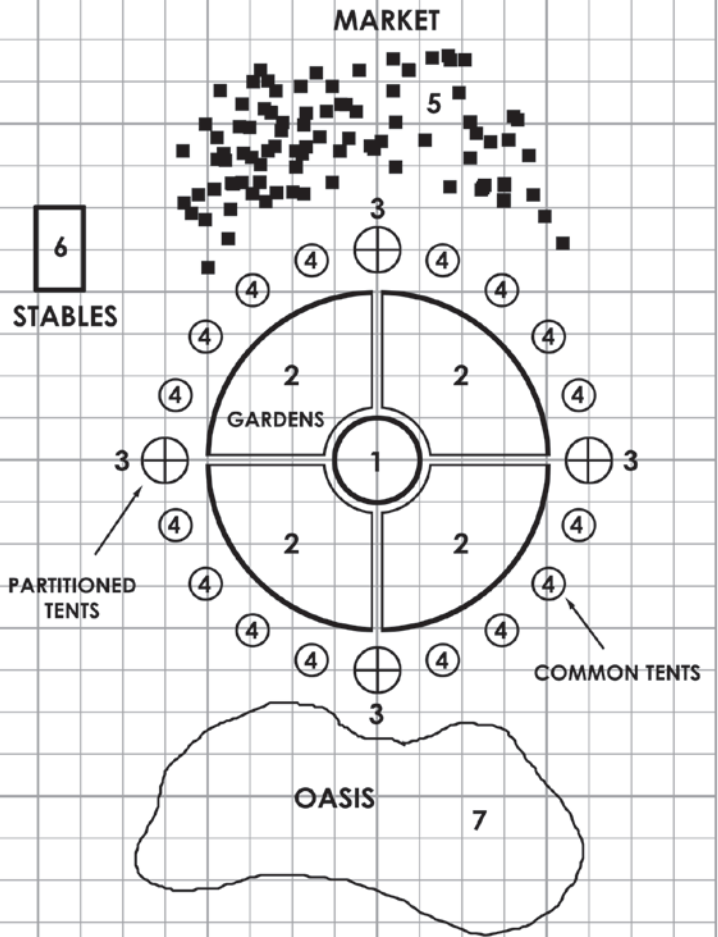
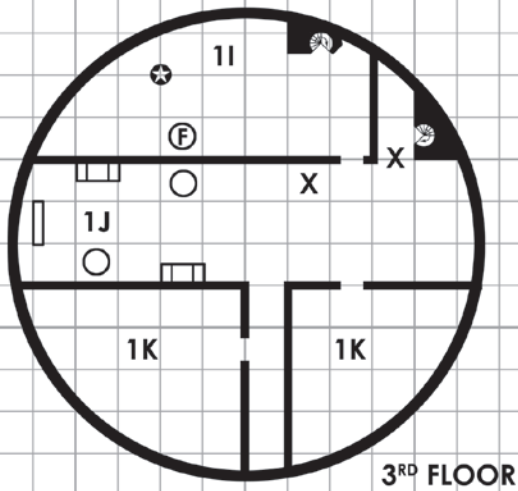
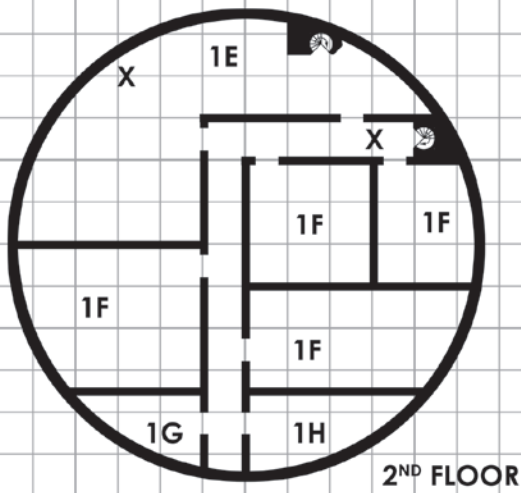
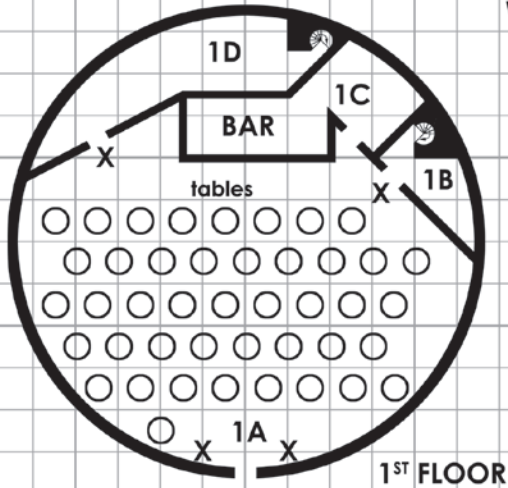
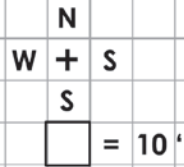
The Brass Fortress is a good place to introduce planar races to your campaign. Such races will find a haven here with Jen'di'karan at the inn's helm. Eventually, the odd inn becomes an extraplanar marketplace.

Hook: Fearing that Tarizah's snooping may upset his slavery ring, Jen'di'karan has some of his Ungern fighters and some of Vorkaal's henchmen attack the Desert Hawks. The attack kills eight of Tarizah's band, but she lives. Certain that the mysterious owner of Twelve Tents is behind the attack, she seeks the PCs' aid in ridding the area of the slavers.

Hook: While serving the PCs, the serving girl Z'mara quietly implores them to emancipate her and return her to her lands, where she is a noblewoman of considerable wealth. If they free her and return her home safely, she promises to give them 3,000 gp each. GMs must decide if she is telling the truth or if she is trying to entrap the PCs.

TWELVE TENTS BRASS FORTRESS

(ENLARGED VIEW AREA 1)




 HE
 
 IHRDIAN

In wondrous Ascalon her Imperial Highness the Empress of Aenoch, First of Al-Lios, the lady Pryzmira, sits upon the throne of her ancestors. The heraldry of the Empire reflects the political complexity of its makeup. The hawk harkens to the ancient heraldry of the House Golden. In its claws are the red and white rose of the old realms of Aenoch and Ethrum. The sword he bears is holy Discepro, the blade forged by Sebastian in the days of old. The bulls flank and support the Golden hawk with their backs, even as the followers of Demeter and the church in New Aenoch support the Empress. Five heraldic shields represent the Duchies of the realm, and two banners represent each of the city states. Woven throughout the background are snaking daggers, the birth right of the House, the Mark of the Emperor Marcus IV. And above it all the Cunae Mundus Usquam, the Cradle of the World with the jewel of god, the Eye of Thorax.

We have thrown off the yoke of one autocrat, we will not except the yoke of another. Know that we Free Cities of New Aenoch have signed a pact to elect the Empress to her throne. She has been in contact with us, as you very well know, for several years and we had some inclination of you coming from her.

Desmond of Ascalon to Jaren Falkynjager of the Council

The Land

The Empress & her Empire: New Aenoch, a name given to the lands by those coming and going from the west, is small in comparison to the greater Kingdoms elsewhere. It constitutes the whole of the isle of Ionus, much of the Kellerwald Forest on the east bank of the Udunilay, and south of the Gunz River the coasts; it extends to the Hreusen River and the lords of Ascalon make some claim to the Blacktooth Ridge. On maps the lands of the Empress encompass all the country from the Gulf of Barachia to the Blacktooth Ridge, and east from the Aratok Mountains to the banks of the Undunilay. But the reality is different. Much of that country is wild, consisting of Crusader states that have risen and fallen, leaving only ruins behind. Some have survived, the northern most in the Estang Forest, others have thrived, such as Ludenshiem. But the country in between is only sprinkled with these small realms, carved out of a dangerous and violent region. This does not stop the never ending flood of adventurers of course, the lands call to them, the call of the Empress brings them and the promise of wealth and power, influence and prestige drive them into the wreckless abandon of adventure.

The country is productive no matter who owns it. The rolling hills and plains are rich in black earth and where the land is not cultivated a deep prairie grass grows. The Kellerwald is a deep, dark forest, where strange creatures abound. Too close to the Grausamland to be safe, it is more wild than civilized. The land is wet, with plenty of rivers, lakes, pools and ponds; rain fall is steady and gives good seasons for farming and livestock.

The Government & Army

In 1097md, Pryzmira celebrated her 57th year as Empress of New Aenoch. She is old, 87, and the last of the rulers who emerged from the Winter Dark Wars. She has seen the world born in war and remake itself in its aftermath. The venerable old woman is much beloved by her people. Whole generations have grown to maturity while she has sat upon the throne of Aenoch. Many view her person as the Empire, dreading the day of her demise. For her part Pryzmira has long since laid aside



NEWSLETTER

the heavy hand of rule and takes a less than active role in the administration of her realm. She struggles with increasing the commercial power of Ascalon in the markets owned by the Electors. Her military power is much greater now, due to the frontier conquests of so many crusader knights. They swear fealty to her alone, a fealty she gladly accepts.

In truth, her one great goal is to see her daughter, Neratite, crowned Empress, but to do this she must gain at least four votes from the seven Electors. To increase her bargaining position, in 1095md she called for another crusade.

The seven Electors of New Aenoch elect the Empress to the throne. These Electors are lords of the towns and provinces of the region and are the Dukes of Aesperdi, Barachia, Dundador, Kourland and Meteira, and the Magistrate of the city of Vilshofen and the Bishop of Heimstadt. These are the lords that the Empress Pryzmira must influence, garnering their votes for her daughter's dignity.

The electors gather once a year to confirm their bonds with the Empress and discuss the business of the day. Each year the meeting is held in a different portion of the realm, hosted by one Lord or the other. Many consider hosting the council a great privilege. The council convenes with the Empress' introduction, followed by the introduction of each of the seven electors, who swear their oath to the throne. The Empress in turn swears oaths to recognize the electors and to defend them. Business follows the introductions and carries for days if not weeks. The council is open to the attendance of all the greater and lesser lords of the land and many come to watch, though they are not allowed to participate. The Electors and Empress conduct much of the business in private; here the political battles between factions and individuals dominate the floor.

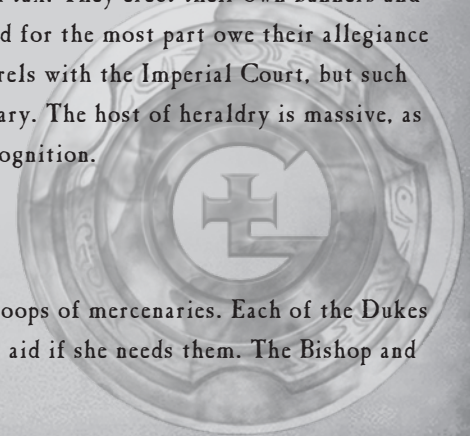
From time to time the electors go to war with one another, or with some of the Crusader states, though this latter is rare for these states are owned by the Empress.

The Crusader States constitute a host of small and large realms sprinkled throughout the land. Those lands not directly held by one of the Electors are open to colonization. Anyone who can take land and hold it is entitled to owning it, once they have sworn an oath of loyalty to the Empress. She in turn grants that Crusader the land, with the right to remove the grant at her discretion. These states in turn are required to outfit her army and pay a small tax. They erect their own banners and govern their own halls as petty kings. These Lords do not gain a voice in the land and for the most part owe their allegiance to the Empress; some turn to one of the Electors for support and aid when they quarrel with the Imperial Court, but such quarrels are dangerous for the Empress may retract a grant when she deems it necessary. The host of heraldry is massive, as each of these states and many of the freebooters and adventurers claim a right to recognition.

By and large the Crusaders are loyal to the Empress.

The Army

The army of New Aenoch is small, consisting of the Imperial Guard and several troops of mercenaries. Each of the Dukes fields their own armies, a portion of which they are required to send to the Empress' aid if she needs them. The Bishop and



Mayor of Vilshofen have the same commitments. Otherwise the Empress is able to call upon her vassals, the Crusader state, for they are required to fill out the ranks of her army. It consists of several thousands of knights, men at arms and archers.

The navy of New Aenoch is small, a few ships only. Vilshofen has a powerful mercenary fleet of ships but the real naval power comes from scattered knights who have taken hold of ships and ply the waters attacking pirates. The Empress usually awards them with the bounty they seize.

New Aenoch

The people of New Aenoch live in small towns or one of the few cities in the area, such as Vilshofen, Ratsdorf, and Gunz. The lands about are dangerous, due to the proximity to Aufstrag, and most of the towns are walled. Castles, mostly small affairs abound, built on river banks, hill tops, along the roads here and there mingle with the fortified farmsteads. The farms themselves are usually heavily fortified and defensible, built of stout timber and slate shingles where they can get them.

The people are very independent and many settle here for they consider it a frontier. Being a vassal to the Empress requires only a small tax and service from time to time, but few remember the last time she sent forth a call to arms. A stout minded and purposeful people settle the land, people who attempt to carve a life out of the wilderness for themselves.

There are scores of estates throughout the Kingdom owned by petty knights, wizards, rangers and the like. People, who paid their dues, carved out land and called for the recognition of the Empress. Once given they are landed gentry. Often these estates do not touch one another, but extend from one creek to a hillock. They are small for the owners cannot safely defend more. Some have villages they support and defend, others have little, or nothing, earning their keep from plunder in the north. These are the Crusader Knights and their small realms are referred to as the Crusader states.

Several roads and paths link the various communities but these are dangerous to travel alone. Though many watering holes exist along the way, they are often nestled in the forest and fortified. Bandits, landless knights, vagabonds, travelers, thieves, and all manner of ruffians ply their trades here, extracting money from the Crusaders who are always in route. Orcs are plentiful, ranging down from the Blighted Screed and the tibral areas just south of the Gausuamland. Also goblins, ogres, some giants and many strange creatures, evil and good, who dwell in the Barren Wood.

Religion

The worship of Ore-Tsar is strong here; churches and monasteries abound. In general the people are devout. The Empress struggles with maintaining the worship of the elder gods in the face of the church of Ore-Tsar. The Bishop in Heimstadt is a prelate of that church and has tremendous influence over the Crusader knights that pay the horse god homage.

The Crusader States yield a nominal wealth to the Empress, a tax of their non movable good being assessed by the Imperial Court every few years. This tax flows south, though is often paid for by plunder taken from others, extracted from dungeons or on raids deep in to the northern country. The moneys are fickle and the Court does not rely upon them.

The true wealth of the Empire lies on the sea, derived from the silk trade and from several spices culled from the sea. The silk trade is slowly slipping from their hands as new routes, over land, or via the southern oceans are cropping up; this largely because the waters of the Bay of Barachia are becoming increasingly more dangerous due to pirates from the United Kingdoms and Eloria. They still control the sea spices and sell at ever higher prices in the far west. They are also well known for their luxury items, silver work and statuary. Another and more recent source of wealth has been the church. Taxation on pilgrims

and protection services are growing in leaps and bounds. In turn great quantities of food and livestock are imported, for the land around is often too dangerous to farm.

The Crusade

The Crusade, which the Empress has recently re-instituted, brings hosts of young hopefuls to the Empire on every boat. The docks and quays of the towns of Dundador, Barachia, Oeaita, and Ascalon overflow with men and women seeking glory and fortune. What they conquer is theirs, they have but to swear fealty to the old Empress and she will grant them title to the land. This attracts all manner of people to the cities and towns, making them dangerous places where thieves and rogues stalk the unwary. The Church of Orc-Tsar supports her in this crusade, continually calling for the brave to travel to the New Empire to war upon the enemy.

Crusader conquests bring mixed blessings to the Electors. On the one hand they enjoy an increase in trade of goods to the crusaders and the newly conquered frontiers. On the other hand these conquerors swear fealty to the Empress and she gains their dues in monies, kind, and service (see below). This increases the might and the bargaining power of the Imperial House. So the Electors bend their wits and fortunes to restrict the acquisition of new land and hold back the crusaders

New Aenoch promises high adventure and quick wealth. The political and religious unrest cause constant feuds between the seven Electors and the Empress, between the old and new gods. The added threat of pirates from the United Kingdoms only stirs the tumultuous waters. A continuous call for crusaders to rid the lands to the north of wild orcs and remnants of the horrors of Aufstrag make New Aenoch a beacon for would be glory hunters. And of course the Imperial promise that “what one conquers, one keeps, what one keeps one swears homage for” only draws more adventurers, for land, after all, is power.

The Long Reign of Tradition and the Making of an Empire

The history of the early empire as told elsewhere relates the story of the Mark of the House Golden, the line of the Emperors of Aenoch. Any child born of this line bore a birth mark of a snaking vine with a needled point. In the year 1010md a slave of Aufsttag gave birth to such a child. The Empire of Aenoch's history is mired in the depths of time and predates much of the world's struggles. During the long years of the Age of Heroes the Empire existing and flourished. But their last Emperor, Sebastian, who ruled from Al-Liosh summoned the dark god Unklar to aid him in his lustful conquests. But the god turned on him, slew him and took his crown, the Cuna Mundus Usquam and placed it on his own head. From that moment the world changed the thousand years Empire of Winter's Dark began. He renamed Al-Liosh, Aufstrag and ruled from his throne, eventually conquering the world.

The tales relate how Jaren of the Order of the Scintillant Dawn, who fought the coming of the Winter Dark, but eventually fell, suffered a thousand years of torment in the pits and upon the walls of Aufstrag. At times he lay at rest in dark dungeons, Nulak, his ever present tormentor worried lest the spirit of a his play toy be destroyed. He let the monk heal, with copious amounts of food and drink. A slave woman in the pits with Jaren served him during these times. Eventually the two became enamored with each other. The end result was the birth of their child, whom they named after the old Ethrumanian goddess, Pryzmira. Jaren entreated his paramour to flee the pits, knowing that Nulak, if ever he got wind of the child would make them all suffer and encouraged her to flee during chaos of the Trench Wars (reference the Histories, Codex of Erde, p. 34-35). She traveled into the Kellerwald where she joined a group of Halflings.

In time Jaren escaped dark Aufstrag and joined the Dwarf Lords and others in the Winter Dark Wars. He sought out the halflings and brought his love and his daughter to safety upon the Isle of Dreams. There, while not at war, he raised Pryzmira as a priestess of Toth. When he shaved her head for the induction he found the Mark of the House Golden, that ancient brand which the Emperor Marcus IV gave over to his descendants. Pryzmira stood as heir to the Imperial throne of Aenoch. In a few short years she came of age and when she learned of her heritage she declared she would seek her throne.

The Winter Dark Wars raged across Aihrde for two decades. Everywhere men waited to see which way the wars would go, but after Olensk it seemed obvious. Pryzmira knew she had but to find the right allies to support her claim. She soon found them, or they her, in the lands south and east of Aufstrag in the Kellerwald. The provinces and cities of Heimstadt, Vilshofen, Dundador, Ascalon, Aesperdi, Barachia, and Meteria had lived under the shadow of Aufstrag for a thousand years. They grew wealthy through control of the overseas trade routes and they suffered little from the hand of Unklar. In consequence, a powerful, educated merchant class came to rule these cities. When war came to the Empire, these lords and Burghers banded together in a loose confederation and prepared to rebel.

In those days, much as it is today, the merchants of that region employed a small host of house wizards, sages and the like. They did this mostly to learn of weather and bandits, but on an occasion one would surface with the true powers of a magi. Such a one came to the Lords of the seven cities and claimed that a new Empress waited upon the Dreaming Sea for a call from her people to come to Aenoch and rule again. They sent their prayers to the Lord of Dreams and bid him bring her to them. This St. Luther did at her request.

Pryzmira, last daughter of the House of the Old Empire of Aenoch, came to them and promised the wealth and power of the Council if they would support her claim to the ancient lineage. She bore the Mark and they believed her. They agreed to league with Pryzmira under the stipulation that each of the seven lands, be given the rights to elect the Empress and her heirs to the throne. In turn, she demanded that their borders be permanently fixed, that they give her the city of Ascalon to rule from, and that they grant her wide privileges of taxation and expansion. This the Electors did for they saw their wealth lay not in the ruined lands to the north, but upon the sea. In this there was some truth, but afterwards they regretted giving up the right of expansion.

In 1030md, the provinces and cities declared themselves against Aufstrag and invited Pryzmira to rule them. Aufstrag had no strength left to combat this final blow to her prestige, there armies were drawn into conflict everywhere and they had lately suffered the massive defeat at the Battle of Olensk. The rebellion went unchallenged. Pryzmira refused to be crowned without the Cuna Mundus Usquam, the crown of the Emperors of old Aenoch, so her father, Jaren Falkhynjager gathered his companions of the Council, and they tore the crown from the undead hands of the Lich Baron Harakon Petrovich, that servant of the Emperor Sebastian who had held it in safe keeping lo these many years. At last in 1040md, the Electors crowned the 30 year old Pryzmira Empress of New Aenoch, by placing the Cuna Mundus Usquam, the "Cradle of the World," upon her head.

In short the constitutions drawn up were these: The military and mercantile alliance of the cities and provinces of New Aenoch granted their support and elected Pryzmira Empress after she conceded the following: 1. Pryzmira recognized the territorial rights of the League members and agreed to the investiture of Ducal authority for each territory with subsequent rights given to the Lord, including justice, maintenance of troops, and taxation. 2. Pryzmira recognized the rights of the

City Burghers and Lords to choose the successor from their own number to each Ducal throne. 3. Pryzmira agreed to support the League militarily, maintaining the League's mercantile rights. 4. Pryzmira agreed to support a general free trade throughout the League 5. Pryzmira agreed to maintain an army from her own expenses to act as protection of the League and "Empire." She agreed that the Imperial army would not be used but for extreme purposes within the territories of the League itself. However the members agree to supply 500 well equipped men-at-arms in support of the Imperial Army for a period of 40 days each year or in the advent of no troops being available to supply monies to hire mercenaries.

In turn the League bestowed the crown of Aenoch upon Pryzmira's brow and installed her as their new Empress. They gave her lands surrounding the city of Ascalon to support her household. In Ascalon a castle and tower were built for her at the League's expense. Furthermore, she was given all rights of taxation upon the roads and rivers and sea ports (this last only upon non-League members). At last the Imperial House gained sole rights to the minting of coins and the status and conquest of territory they left to the Empress's judgement.

In this manner Pryzmira came to rule the New Empire, though in truth hers was but a shadow of her ancestors power. Though for many years she strove to combat the Dukes and gain leverage over them. This led to many internal conflicts and the slow evolution of a complicated feudal system. Pryzmira introduced the cult of Toth to the realm to vie for the souls of the common men. Only a few converted, and mostly those possessed of great wealth.

As she grew older the Empress mollified her demands and rarely struggled with her Dukes. She turned instead to conquering new land and in this vain called to the west for a crusade, promising land and wealth. The summons generated wide enthusiasm in the west and hosts of men came to carve holdings for themselves. Though the coming years saw many victories and some expansion, the Empire failed to expand much beyond its original borders. The worship of Demeter, however, came with the crusaders. Before long the seven lands became powerful supporters of the new religion only adding to the complexity of the highly charged politics of the realm.



PLAYERS HANDBOOK

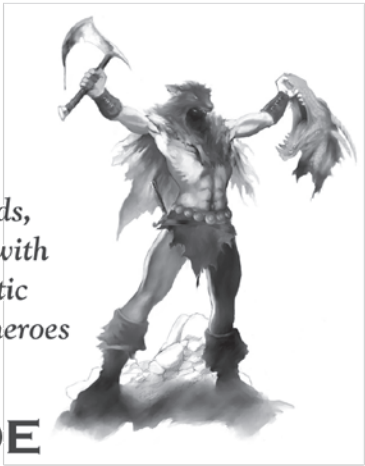
A 4TH PRINTING

FOUR REASONS YOU'LL LOVE
CASTLES & CRUSADES!

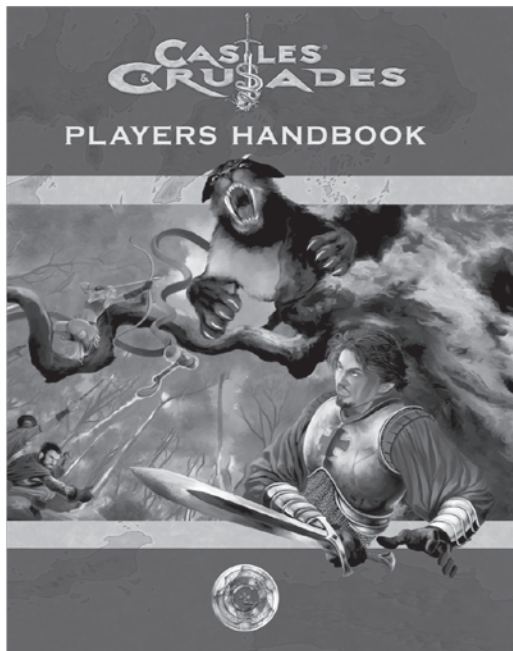
- 1) EASY TO LEARN
- 2) FAST CHARACTER GENERATION
- 3) RAPID PLAY
- 4) LOW PRICE POINT

\$24.99

*We imagine other worlds,
mystical places fraught with
danger. In these fantastic
worlds magic is real and heroes
abound!*



THE FOURTH CRUSADE



AVAILABLE FOR IMMEDIATE
PURCHASE

TLG 80104 Players Handbook
A Fantasy Role Playing Game
Hardback, \$24.99, 128 pages
4th Printing, ISBN:

This is the 4th printing of the complete Unabridged version of the **CASTLES & CRUSADES PLAYERS HANDBOOK**. This Fantasy Role Playing Game is what so many other FRPGs claim to be, its simple to learn . . . even a novice can master the attribute check system in just a few minutes . . . its easy to make out characters . . . 15 minutes or less.

You may not know it yet, but your already familiar with **CASTLES & CRUSADES**. This game has the same 13 classes, the same 7 races, the same spells, same equipment (with the inclusion of a diggery doo and a crowbill), the same mosnters and more. Its the game you've played for years. However unlike other fantasy role playings, Castles & Crusades is unified under one driving mechanic, The Siege Engine™. Our simple attribute check system allows for all non-combat related challenges to be resolved quickly and easily with a minimum of fuss. Guidelines are given but your imagination is the limit. The power of the game returns to the Castle Keeper and the quick paced action and riddle solving fun returns to the players.

The Players Handbook is one of two books needed to master and run fantasy role playing games. The first part of the PH is dedicated to the player, the rules to play, how to make a character, the races, classes, spells and more. The second part of the PH is dedicated to the Castle Keeper.

C&C invites any style, from high fantasy to the dark and gritty. You'll set the tone for your game.

What's new in the 4th Printing? We've revamped the Barbarian and Illusionist classes to bring them both more into line with the other classes. We've added a small host of new spells for the Illusionist and cleaned up the text a little!

MONSTERS & TREASURE

A 3RD PRINTING

“Upon wind-swept battlefields, they seek their glory. With weapons of steel, stout shields, and sorcery, they drive ever onward, seeking the grandeur of conflict with creatures of terrible wrath or beasts of legend. In all hours of every day, they gird themselves for war and struggle, to drive those evil beings of foul intent to doom and oblivion. But before glory can be obtained, before fame and riches can be won by these heroes of renown, they must face and overcome those that would oppose them - MONSTERS.”

What Lies Herein

CASTLES & CRUSADES MONSTERS AND TREASURE is a core rule book for the CASTLES & CRUSADES ROLE PLAYING GAME. It is designed to be used with the CASTLES & CRUSADES PLAYERS HANDBOOK. In it, you will find a wealth of information about roleplaying monsters, handling combat with monsters, creating monsters and defining and awarding treasures. Monsters & Treasure is divided into two parts.

Part One brings to you, the Castle Keeper, a host of monsters that you can use to populate your adventures and your campaign world. Listed alphabetically, they include monsters like the ever popular dragons, orcs, and giants, as well as unusual creatures like the chimera, the lamia, and the shambling mound. Each monster is fully described, complete with important statistics, for your ease of use.

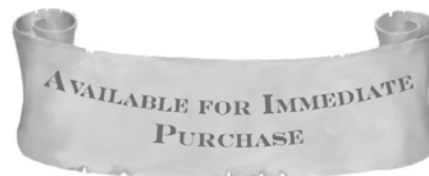
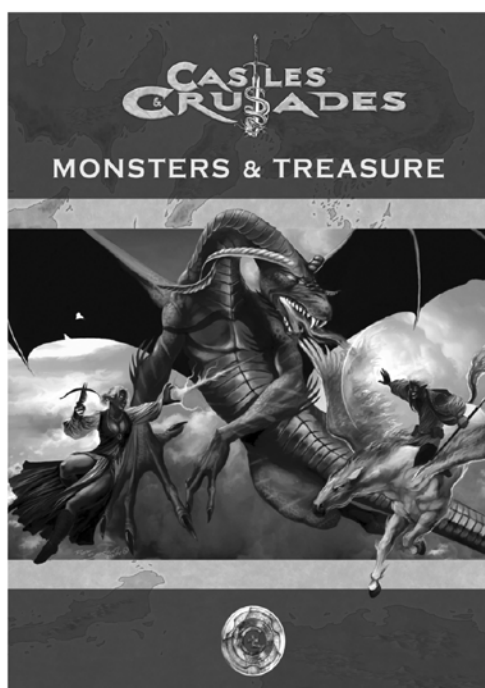
Part Two deals with the adventurer’s favorite topic: treasure. For your reference, this section discusses specific treasures that can be found by brave and enterprising adventurers, and provides advice about how to award them. This section also contains a discussion about the mundane or extraordinary items that can comprise treasure, rules for the creation of magic items in CASTLES & CRUSADES, and random treasure charts to serve as an aid for the Castle Keeper.

What’s new in the 3rd printing of the M&T? We’ve added more monster pictures, revised some of the magic items and cleaned up the text a little!

\$19.99



**OVER 170 MONSTERS!
HUNDREDS OF
TREASURE ITEMS**



TLG 80113 C&C Monsters & Treasure
A Fantasy Role Playing Game
Hardback, \$19.99, 128 pages
3rd Printing, ISBN:

THE FOURTH CRUSADE!

TALES OF THE
RINGS
of
ORASS

THE AIHRDIAN
CHRONICLES
BEING THE 20TH 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. Their journey across the whole western lands of Ursal land them at last upon the Isle of Onwaltig where they wait passage across the stormy sea. It is the Age of Winter's Dark and the seas know no peace, being besieged with ice and wind all the yearlong. So the Prince commissions his Wizard Cousin to summon magical means to move his troop across the sea so that they might come to the Twilight Wood and the end of their Quest.



aying aside the pendant where the ordag lay housed Sedgwick returned to the tower. The wind at his back tore at his cloak and leggings, reaching icy fingers into his clothing to sting him. He stopped at the door, looking north perceived a great white capped wave thundering on some out crop of rock. A towering geyser hurtled chunks of frozen sea up into the darkness before it crashed back down into the gray-blue waves and white capped tumult. "From the cold or drowning, there must we go, to the bottoms of the sea." Muttering he entered the room.

There, the fire's warmth grasped him and pulled him in. He lingered in the embrace and cast his glance at the room of now sleeping men. The Prince alone stood watch, sitting at a table a mug of warm froth in front of him. "So cousin, what have you found? What sorcery might carry us across the sea?"

"My Lord," the warrior-wizard laid his cloak and sword upon the table and filling his own mug, took his sea opposite. "I have spoken to a demon I command and he imparted the knowledge of a beast I might summon who could carry us across the sea."

"But?"

"The creature has a name, the Puala; he is of the old order, the Val-Eaharakun. They are fickle creatures, made before the world took shape. They are as often helpful and they are dangerous."

"Are these our only choices?"

"Aye my Lord. We can, if you like, travel back to the mainland, move north where the Straights are not so wide, and attempt passage there. Many pirates ply those waters."

Meltowg's laughter took the wizard by surprise. "Tis true. Pirates abound, mercenaries and even merchants who might carry us in their boats. But with the scarcity of elf meat, its great demand, and our being in possession of copious amounts of it I think the risk there would be greater. Better to slay the crew and take the ship than risk such a thing.

"But no. We'll go your way. The Old Gods, if they still live, owe me a great debt, for it seems that I am the last of their servants who wage war upon the Darkness."

"So be it. Let the men rest for awhile. I must collect my wits and recall this sorcery; it is old magic and difficult and I have not used it in awhile."

The night wore on and the men slept. The horse too kept still in the tower room. The cold outside battered at the walls, hurling fists of snow and ice into every crevice and crack but the warm red glow of the fire and the heat of many bodies kept it at bay. Beyond the wind the sea thundered, rolling against the island rocks in unceasing attempts to bring them down.

Sedgwick searched about his belongs for various implements and finding the necessary tools he studied what he must do to summon this creature; he studied until the night stood dark and deep, and dawn's herald unarrived. At last he gathered himself up and went outside to cast his spell. Stopping at the door he turned, "My Lord. In about one hour I shall be gone from this island or I shall have passage for us. Gather the men for the boat will not tarry long."

As he entered the snow Meltowg drained off the last of his brew. "Knights! Lords! Warriors! Soldiers of Fortuen! It is time

again to take up your armor and swords, outfit your horses, and let's make ready for war. Get up! Get up! To War we go!"

Even above the battering wind Sedgwick heard the cursing groans of the men as they rolled from comfortable beds and prepared themselves for the next leg of the journey.

Sedgwick traveled down the cliff, following its curve for over mile until he came to a long beach running the length of the north side of the island. There he sat down in the sand, just beyond the reach of the cold waters. The cool gravel called images of the sea's bottoms to him. Beyond that tumultuous seascape lay the ocean's bottom, and along its length lay the bones of many sailors.

Setting aside thoughts of his own mortality Sedgwick bent himself to the task of his sorcery. Slipping into a trance, he hurled himself into the maelstrom of sorcery that lay over the entire world and began his spell.

Long he sat, not noticing the troop of men who gathered behind him, grim faced and tired, worn from years of struggle and conquest, but looking ever thirsty for more. The host numbered barely a hundred men. They wore battered armor, carried weapons both magical and mundane. Their horses were war steeds one and all and the accoutrements they carried paid no head to worldly comfort. These were soldiers, the last of a dying breed. Men who stood the wall, took a post; all for the sake of others who hadn't the will or strength to carry the fight. Meltowg stood at the forefront of the troop. The Prince slouched a little in his saddle, peering forward at the sea and the wizard, as if waiting. His men knew what he looked for, the sign or hint of something that might harm his cousin. The black blade Noxmorus lay draped over his saddle.

At last Sedgwick stood up, gathering his robes behind him he raised his arms high, calling to the powers of the elements to aid him, casting eldritch words into the air where the wind captured them and carried them on high before they took on a weight the wind could not hold and fell back again, into the sea. Their impact created craters in the water, and the water parted as the word's of summoning plunged into the depths and shook the earth beneath, rattling the bones of the sailors buried in her deeps.

Time stood still. The waters shook and reverberated. The wind howled, pounding the water into white fury as if the wind sought to capture the words of sorcery for itself. The waves responded in kind, reaching frothy tendrils high into the air, tearing gaps in it so that thunder boomed.

In the midst of this madness the waves suddenly exploded apart, cut into two great halves they folded back over themselves, creating tidal currents that washed the shore to the wizard's knees. The wind too fell back, affrighted at the sound of chaos that rose from the depths. For before Sedgwick stood a mountain of madness in flesh. The torso of a man, capped with long fin upon its arms, though all crowned with the head and eight arms of some madness from the deep raised the Puala. With beady eyes it gazed around it until it lighted upon the figures on the beach.

It did not speak, though all clearly heard its voice. "Who summons me from my slumber?"

"I do. I am a Lord of Elves. I am called Vianarth-Aet-Brule, Lord of the House Lothian. I call to you for I have need of you."

The puala beast looked upon the wizard for a long while; what many mistook for a keen curiosity Sedgwick knew for complete disinterest. "You have bidden me to do this task, of carrying you across the sea. I shall do it Vianarth-Aet-Brule, Lord of the House of Lothian. But remember that memory is deep, if clouded and some day I may call to you, and bring you to do my bidding."

Those who knew the wizard well, and Meltowg was not alone of that company who counted him as a friend noticed a slight sag in his shoulders, as if another weight had just been laid upon them. "As you wish Lord of the Sea, I shall come if you remember to call. You know my needs and desire I see. We await your pleasure."

"I'm not sure I understand your words, 'pleasure'..." The beast seemed to struggle with the word for a moment before casting it aside as inconsequently. Turning to the sea he looked to the west.

The water in front of him began to part and rise up on four sides, creating a great trough. The air fell away and the snow and ice it carried did not batter the trough so. The shape of the bowl narrowed at the ends and the interior began to take on the shape of benches, as water flowed into long straight forms. Before the men could comprehend what stood before them they found themselves looking at a boat, a long ship, fashioned of water, complete with a sail...though this last Sedgwick thought an affect the beast added for the men.

"Now men! Into the surf and on the ship before the puala comes to mind that something else might work better or worse! GO!"

Meltowg leapt forward, driving his steed into the maelstrom, with him he pulled the wizard's horse. Sedgwick joined him as did all the men. They rode through the water to the magical ship and boarded it, passing through the wall of water that kept out the sea. After the last of them had embarked, Sedgwick turned to the beast. Only his head remained, huge tentacles floating upon the churning waters. The boat lurched into the darkness and with a speed unheard of by mortal men, cut across the sea to the shores of the far off Twilight Wood.



MONSTERS OF AIHRDE

BY STEPHEN CHENAULT

PUALA BEAST

NO. APPEARING: 1-4

SIZE: Large

HD: 25(d10)

MOVE: 60 ft

AC: 32

ATTACKS:

SPECIAL: Capsize, Dark Vision 120 ft., Spell-like Abilities, Regeneration 4, Water Mastery, Whirlpool

SAVES: M

INT: Average

ALIGNMENT: Neutral

TYPE: Magical

TREASURE: 18 × 2

XP:

The puala is a huge aquatic beast, ranging up to 20-foot long, over 30 with its tail. It has legs like a man's, but its torso is long, shaped more like a fish. It has a long tail that tapers toward the end, lined with fins that allow the beast to guide itself through the currents. These fins range up the whole length of the beast's body to the tentacles of its head. Its arms are huge, muscular things, but bound to its torso by wing like membranes that allow it to swim very fast and in the most turbulent seas. The puala beast's head is round, like an octopus, it has a dozen or so tentacles that shroud its shoulder. These tentacles are beaked and each possesses multiple eyes that allow the creature to see in many directions at once. The beast is deep green to blue, but the fins that run the course of its body are crimson colored.

The puala beast does not need to breath air, nor feed or drink. It is a magical creature that is most at home in the deep waters. Its skin is ice cold, holding the Void within it, and when it comes into contact with warm water it also creates a mist. When the beast lingers in one area for too long the mist grows, encompassing vast stretches of the ocean.

The puala beast is very intelligent and able to communicate telepathically with almost any species. Its origins are beyond those of mortal men and it is not able to understand their drives or reactions. It does not believe in

fate, or anything other than the natural unfolding of the universe. Much like a storm, the puala passes over the world, through the deeps, with little thought to what it might harm or aid. They can be reasoned with, but only the cleverest are able to do so.

COMBAT: When roused in anger the puala uses its powers over the weather and water to react. It usually changes the weather patterns to suit its nature, the stormier the better, followed by a whirlpool. It then uses its spell-like abilities to the greatest benefit. It does not have the capacity to forgive, but neither does it have the capacity to hold a grudge.

Capsize: A puala beast can rise out of the water with such force that a vessel with a beam of 25 feet or less is automatically capsized. A vessel with a wider beam has a chance of capsizing equal to the hit dice of the puala divided by the vessel's beam width expressed as a percentage; thus a galleon with a 30 foot beam will have a 53% chance of being capsized by a 16 hit dice water elemental.

Spell-Like Abilities: *Air/water walk* (perm), *antilife shell* (1/day), *astral projection* (3/day), *control weather* (3/day), *storm of vengeance* (1/day), *transmute metal or wood to water* (3/day), *warp wood* (5/day).

Water Mastery: The puala beast gains a +2 bonus on attack and damage rolls if it is touching water.

Whirlpool: A puala beast can create a whirlpool once every 5 minutes, provided it is underwater. The whirlpool is 10 feet wide at the base, up to 50 feet wide at the top, and 20 feet or taller. The puala beast controls the height of the vortex. It lasts 1-100 rounds or until the puala beast breaks it apart.

Any creature half the height of the vortex or less must succeed on dexterity save when it comes into contact with the vortex or take the indicated 5d8 points of damage per round they remain in the vortex. A swimming creature is allowed a strength save each round to escape the vortex. The creature still takes damage, but can escape if the save is successful. Except to try to escape the vortex, creatures trapped within it cannot move, and are carried to the bottom of the vortex where they are held until the whirlpool dissipates. Any action, to include most spells, is impossible so long as the victim is caught in the whirlpool. Magic items can be used of course.

THE PUALA IN AIHRDE

The puala, a Val-Eahrakun, came to life in the deep Void, long before the All Father discovered the Maelstrom and created Aihilde. He toyed with the beast for awhile, but grew tired of it and cast it aside to live out its life in the Great Empty. As with many creatures the puala discovered the world of Aihilde during the age of its making, drifting across the Void, drawn to the light of creation. Like so many other creatures, great and small, the puala slipped into the world without arousing concern from the All Father.

In those Days before Days the puala beasts settled into the deep oceans avoiding much of the struggles between the other Val-Eahrakun in those days before the rising of

the sun and moon. The rising of those great orbs roused only a little curiosity as theirs was a world of darkness and freedom. The puala beasts made concourse with some creatures but for the most part dwelt in obscurity until the coming of the dwarves of Alanti. These paid the puala homage, but to no avail for the beasts cared not, passing on in indifference.

During the last battle of Corthain and Thorax when the bull fell and the Lord of Law cast his judgment the puala succumbed to a deep sleep and settled in their dens about the ocean floors. There they lay for many eons, passing through the Winter Dark unaware of the struggles of man or god. Recently they are raised from the deeps, as with Unklar's passing, as the scholars note, the Wall of Worlds is diminished and the Judgment has lost its power.



This book is published under the Open Game License version 1.0a by permission of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. The Open Game Content appearing in this book is derived from the System Reference Document v 3.0, copyright 2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. This publication is copyright 2007 Troll Lord Games. All Rights Reserved. Castles & Crusades, C&C, SIEGEngine, Castle Keeper, Troll Lord Games, and the Castles & Crusades and Troll Lord Games logos, and products published by Troll Lord Games are Trademarks of Troll Lord Games. All Rights Reserved. All Rights Reserved.

Designation of Open Game Content: The following is designated Open Game Content pursuant to the OGL v1.0a: all stat block information of characters, monsters, and traps that appears in the parenthetical following the tables on pages 34-35, including the names of items and spells and monster type, but not the specific names of any character or monster. Also, the following open game content related words, phrases, and abbreviations wherever they appear: Strength (Str), Dexterity (Dex), Constitution (Con), Intelligence (Int), Wisdom (Wis), Charisma (Cha), Class, Fighter, Ranger, Rogue, Assassin, Barbarian, Monk, Wizard, Illusionist, Cleric, Druid, Knight, Bard, Paladin, Race, Demi-human, Dwarf, Elf, Gnome, Half-Elf, Halfling, Half-Orc, Hit Dice (HD), Hit Points (HP), Alignment, Lawful Good (LG), Lawful Neutral (LN), Lawful Evil (LE), Neutral (N), Neutral Good (NG), Neutral Evil (NE), Chaotic Good (CG), Chaotic Neutral (CN), Chaotic Evil (CE), Level, "to hit", Damage, Experience Point, Saving Throw, Player Character (PC), Non-player Character (NPC), Turn Undead, Spell, Arcane, Divine, Magic, Spell Resistance, Item, Equipment, Armor, Weapon, Potion, Rod, Staff, Wand, Scroll, Ring, Wondrous Item, Artifact, Cursed, Bonus, gold piece (GP), silver piece (SP), copper piece (CP), platinum piece (PP), electrum piece (EP), d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, d20, d%, round, and turn.

Designation of Product Identity: Product identity is not Open Game Content. The following is designated as product identity pursuant to OGL v1.0a(1)(e) and (7): (A) product and product line names and other names, including Castles & Crusades, C&C, Castle Keeper (CK), Castles & Crusades: Player's Handbook, Castles & Crusades: Monsters and Treasures, Castles & Crusades: Castle Keeper's Guide, Castle Zagyg, Yggsburgh, Zagyg, Workhouse, City Expansions, East Mark Folio Edition, Mouths of Madness; (B) logos, identifying marks, and trade dress; (C) all artwork, logos, symbols, graphic designs, depictions, likenesses, formats, poses, concepts, themes and graphic, photographic and other visual representations; (D) logos and trademarks, including Castles & Crusades, Castle Keeper, SIEG engine, and Troll Lord Games, and Trigeer Enterprises Company and any and all Trigeer Enterprises Company logos, identifying marks and trade dress, or any other trademark or registered trademark clearly identified as product identity by the owner of the product identity, and which specifically excludes the open game content; (E) the story, storylines, plots, thematic elements, dialogue, incidents, language, depictions, likenesses, concepts, world and campaign descriptions, proper names of the characters, creatures, groups, spells, enchantments, personalities, teams, personas, likenesses, skills, items, deities, and special abilities other than those designated as open game content above, as well as places, locations, settings, and environments and their descriptions and other accompanying text, though not their stat blocks.

OPEN GAME LICENSE Version 1.0a

The following text is the property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and is Copyright 2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc ("Wizards"). All Rights Reserved.

1. Definitions: (a) "Contributors" means the copyright and/or trademark owners who have contributed Open Game Content; (b) "Derivative Material" means copyrighted material including derivative works and translations (including into other computer languages), potation, modification, correction, addition, extension, upgrade, improvement, compilation, abridgment or other form in which an existing work may be recast, transformed or adapted; (c) "Distribute" means to reproduce, license, rent, lease, sell, broadcast, publicly display, transmit or otherwise distribute; (d) "Open Game Content" means the game mechanic and includes the methods, procedures, processes and routines to the extent such content does not embody the Product Identity and is an enhancement over the prior art and any additional content clearly identified as Open Game Content by the Contributor, and means any work covered by this License, including translations and derivative works under copyright law, but specifically excludes Product Identity. (e) "Product Identity" means product and product line names, logos and identifying marks including trade dress; artifacts; creatures characters; stories, storylines, plots, thematic elements, dialogue, incidents, language, artwork, symbols, designs, depictions, likenesses, formats, poses, concepts, themes and graphic, photographic and other visual or audio representations; names and descriptions of characters, spells, enchantments, personalities, teams, personas, likenesses and special abilities; places, locations, environments, creatures, equipment, magical or supernatural abilities or effects, logos, symbols, or graphic designs; and any other trademark or registered trademark clearly identified as Product identity by the owner of the Product Identity, and which specifically excludes the Open Game Content; (f) "Trademark" means the logos, names, mark, sign, motto, designs that are used by a Contributor to identify itself or its products or the associated products contributed to the Open Game License by the Contributor (g) "Use", "Used" or "Using" means to use, Distribute, copy, edit, format, modify, translate and otherwise create Derivative Material of Open Game Content. (h) "You" or "Your" means the licensee in terms of this agreement.

2. The License: This License applies to any Open Game Content that contains a notice indicating that the Open Game Content may only be Used under and in terms of this License. You must affix such a notice to any Open Game Content that you Use. No terms may be added to or subtracted from this License except as described by the License itself. No other terms or conditions may be applied to any Open Game Content distributed using this License.

3. Offer and Acceptance: By Using the Open Game Content You indicate Your acceptance of the terms of this License.

4. Grant and Consideration: In consideration for agreeing to use this License, the Contributors grant You a perpetual, worldwide, royalty-free, non-exclusive license with the exact terms of this License to Use, the Open Game Content.

5. Representation of Authority to Contribute: If You are contributing original material as Open Game Content, You represent that Your Contributions are Your original creation and/or You have sufficient rights to grant the rights conveyed by this License.

6. Notice of License Copyright: You must update the COPYRIGHT NOTICE portion of this License to include the exact text of the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any Open Game Content You are copying, modifying or distributing, and You must add the title, the copyright date, and the copyright holder's name to the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any original Open Game Content you Distribute.

7. Use of Product Identity: You agree not to Use any Product Identity, including as an indication as to compatibility, except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of each element of that Product Identity. You agree not to indicate compatibility or co-adaptability with any Trademark or Registered Trademark in conjunction with a work containing Open Game Content except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of such Trademark or Registered Trademark. The use of any Product Identity in Open Game Content does not constitute a challenge to the ownership of that Product Identity. The owner of any Product Identity used in Open Game Content shall retain all rights, title and interest in and to that Product Identity.

8. Identification: If you distribute Open Game Content You must clearly indicate which portions of the work that you are distributing are Open Game Content.

9. Updating the License: Wizards or its designated Agents may publish updated versions of this License. You may use any authorized version of this License to copy, modify and distribute any Open Game Content originally distributed under any version of this License.

10 Copy of this License: You MUST include a copy of this License with every copy of the Open Game Content You Distribute.

11. Use of Contributor Credits: You may not market or advertise the Open Game Content using the name of any Contributor unless You have written permission from the Contributor to do so.

12 Inability to Comply: If it is impossible for You to comply with any of the terms of this License with respect to some or all of the Open Game Content due to statute, judicial order, or governmental regulation then You may not Use any Open Game Material so affected.

13 Termination: This License will terminate automatically if You fail to comply with all terms herein and fail to cure such breach within 30 days of becoming aware of the breach. All sublicenses shall survive the termination of this License.

14 Reformation: If any provision of this License is held to be unenforceable, such provision shall be reformed only to the extent necessary to make it enforceable.

15 COPYRIGHT NOTICE Open Game License v 1.0 Copyright 2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

System Reference Document Copyright 2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc; Authors Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, based on original material by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson.

Castles & Crusades: Players Handbook, Copyright 2005, Troll Lord Games; Authors Davis Chenault and Mac Golden.

Castles & Crusades: Players Handbook, 2nd Printing, Copyright 2006, Troll Lord Games; Authors Davis Chenault and Mac Golden.

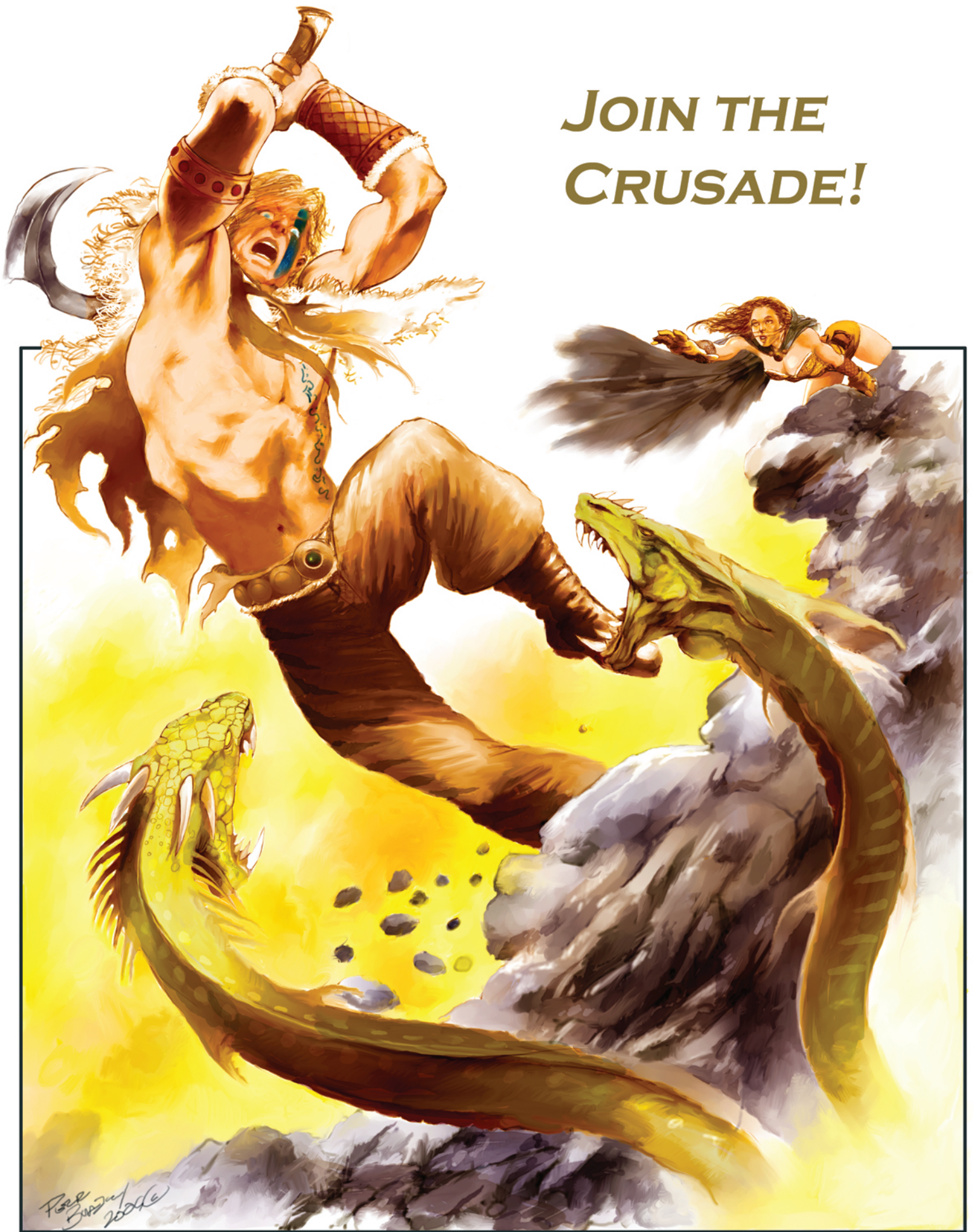
Castles & Crusades: Players Handbook, 3rd Printing, Copyright 2007, Troll Lord Games; Authors Davis Chenault and Mac Golden.

Castles & Crusades Monsters & Treasure, Copyright 2005, Troll Lord Games; Authors Robert Doyel Stephen Chenault.

Castles & Crusades Monsters & Treasure, 2nd Printing, Copyright 2007, Troll Lord Games; Authors Robert Doyel Stephen Chenault.

Crusader Vol. 5, No. 22, Copyright 2009, Troll Lord Games; Text Copyright 2009, Author Troll Lord Games.

**JOIN THE
CRUSADE!**



AIRHDE, WHERE THE BONES OF THE PAST HARBOR WORLDS OF
ADVENTURE! THERE LIE TREASURES BEYOND THE PALE &
MONSTERS OF WILD ABANDON.

MONSTERS & TREASURE OF AIHRDE

BY STEPHEN CHENAULT

TLG 8019, \$19.99
Softcover, 128 Pages



TLG 1122
\$3.99



TROLL LORD GAMES
PO Box 251171, Little Rock, AR 72225
www.trolllord.com
Printed in the United States of America