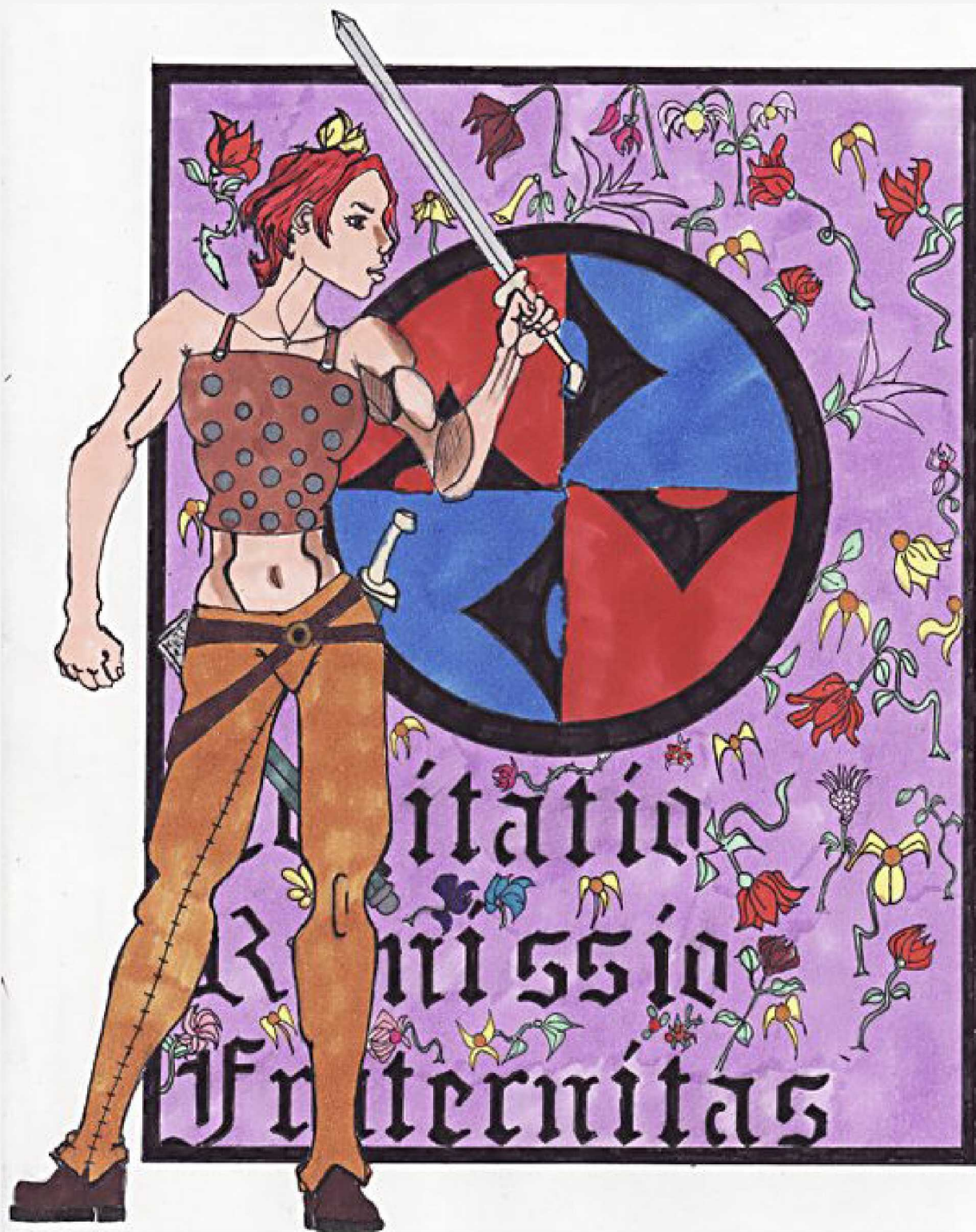
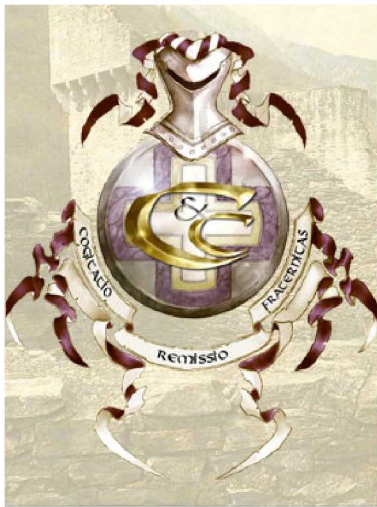


The Domesday Book



Volume 1, Issue 2



The Domesday Book

The Official Newsletter of the Castles & Crusades Society

Volume 1, Issue 2 = July 2008

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The Crusader's Market

A Place to Recruit, Share and Deal!

I. Bagglely



The Castles & Crusades Society welcomes the ongoing contributions of its members to the second issue of The Domesday Book! It is hoped that these editions will help revitalize our society, and perhaps even persuade some who had grown frustrated with the society in the past to return and become, once again, an active part of what should be a dynamic and energetic [RPG and general gaming experience. The C&C Society now has its own discussion boards at the following address:

<http://domesday.proboards80.com/index.cgi>

C&C Society Editor - Robert "Serleran" Doyle
Layout and Editing - John "Sir Seskis" Wright
Artwork - Kevin "CuchulainKevin" Morton and
Ian Bagglely, Cover Art by Kevin Morton

Reviews

Chimera's Roost (D1)

Author: Davis Chenault

Editor: Corey Ca Serta

Front Cover: Jason Walton

Art Direction/Interior Art/Layout: Peter Bradley

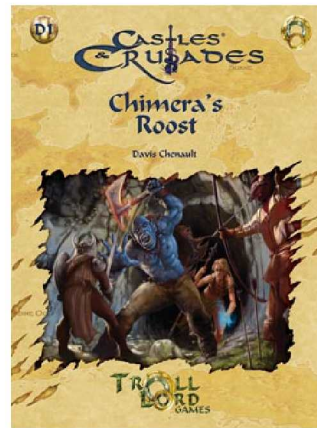
Cartography: Peter Bradley

Production: Troll Lord Games, 2007

Chimera's Roost is the 1st module in the "D" series from TLG (this reviewer is guessing "D" stands for Davis modules). The mod is designed for 4 to 6 characters of levels 6 to 8. *Chimera's Roost* is also the first adventure by Davis Chenault outside of the A (Aihrde) series, and is not specifically set or attached to any setting. Indeed, the placement suggestions indicate that it is intended to be dropped in anywhere, "the only necessary ingredients [being] a fairly sparsely populated area, a baron who pays little attention to his holdings, a rather inexperienced constabulary and a chain of hills or cliffs in which to place the dungeon." In other words, D1 is extremely flexible as a mid-level adventure for any of us CKing to simply adapt into our worlds, whatever they may be. Right off the top, this to me is a very successful move for the mod, and I would add my thoughts that whenever adventures can be made this flexible in terms of setting it is good.

As with my first reviews last issue, I will begin by evaluating the presentation. D1 utilizes the newer look of the deeper orange/yellow Aihrde world map as background, and eschews extraneous text on the front color. To my mind this makes for a cleaner presentation, and I like that the exterior description text is placed on the back along with TLG's currently available product list. In fact, can we perhaps say now with confidence that the big

issue many have had in the past with editing in TLG products has been pretty much addressed and corrected? Looking through this product, I notice a few minor typos, but certainly no more than I see in an average release from Wizards of the Coast or Paizo. The layout is also crisp, the maps are placed now at the end of the mod for easy copying and are large and quite well done.



The cover art is quite evocative of the level of danger present in this particular module, and the interior art is every thing we've come to expect from Peter Bradley. The full-page picture of the pool mon-

ster on page 17 is a standout. I cannot say enough about how well-done the more recent production values have been on this and other products.

The adventure itself is excellent, albeit this one is certainly one of the deadliest of TLG's mods. I can imagine many CKs will report high body counts from groups attempting to breach the Chimera's Roost. This is a good, old-fashioned and perilous dungeon-crawl very much in the spirit of TSR circa late 1970's and very early 1980's. The setup is minimal, and seeks to put the party right into encounters as they seek the main dungeon. CKs who run more "story arc" campaigns might consider carefully where to place this mod, I might suggest, simply because it is a rather involved dungeon-crawl and will take more time than other mods (I have a feeling) to run. Overall, I am happy to be able to recommend this product strongly.

-- John "Sir Seskis" Wright

Castle Keeper's Screen

Production: Troll Lord Games

Art: Peter Bradley

Maybe you're a player who's played countless of hours in various roleplaying games and you have finally decided to run one yourself. Maybe you're a seasoned veteran who has run many games and have decided to try and run a different one. Or perhaps, this whole thing is new to you and you're just looking for all the help you can get. Whatever the reason, the *Castle Keeper Screen* is a valuable tool to have if running a game of *Castles & Crusades*. If you have the books already and are familiar with the game, you might be asking yourself if you truly need the screen. After all, the game is far from complicated right?



Even if some people would argue that point, anyone who has played any sort of RPG will agree that having to look up that some information is an easy way to break the flow of the game or the mood that one is trying to get set.

It could be something as simple as looking up weapon prices or damage or it might be an obscure modifier that could affect the outcome of a critical battle. If you happen to be new to certain aspects of the game, having some of this information staring you in the face could prove to be extremely beneficial. However, the screen also serves another key purpose. It is something you can put up to hide your notes for a well-thought out deathtrap of a dungeon which you wouldn't want your devious players sneaking a peak at.

The *Castle Keeper's Screen* is designed with rigid and laminated cardboard which should be sturdy enough to provide cover in the event that players start throwing dice at you. In all seriousness

though, the screen is made up of four panels which fold out to cover the adventure you might be running. One side is beautifully illustrated with an evocative piece of fantasy artwork illustrated by Peter Bradley. The other side contains much of the information you might need in the course of running your game.

One of these panels is devoted entirely to the various class abilities in the game. A quick glance will enable you to lock in on a particular class and be able to judge and see what skills and abilities they may get at various levels. This information is set up on the furthest left hand panel. On the panel furthest to the right, you have tables for the Weapons and Armor along with damage they do, applicable weapon range, and appropriate armor bonus. You also have a chart for determining treasure sorted by type.

The two middle panels contain even more tables dealing with the game mechanics. These cover the Siege Engine and how attribute checks work, saving throws, combat, and other game play variables and other bits of information that can prove to be immensely handy. In fact, with a suitable amount of preparation work, it'd hard to imagine having to consult the books at all during the game save for the occasional spell or a creature's statistics.

Is the *Castle Keeper's Screen* perfect? Unfortunately there are only a couple of little problems with the screen and they are hardly worth mentioning. On the third panel from the left-hand side, there is a small table concerning height. Basically these classify sizes between Small, Medium, and Large creatures and, at least in the screen from the print run that I possess, instead of the word 'Small' you have the word 'Size' repeated from the Table Header. I mention this in particular since this wouldn't have been the first time that an editing issue comes up for the company. The only

other criticism I have is the lack of spacing between the Ranger and Rogue sections found on the first panel. These are the only minor quibbles I have about the screen. If these two little things are corrected in subsequent printings of the screen, it would result in a perfect product for me.

However, the value for the screen is still second to none in the opinion of this reviewer. I found the rigidity of the panels and the lamination job to be one of the best in the market when measured against the durability of other screens. However, if the screen itself was not enough for you, an adventure unique to the screen has been included as well. The adventure is entitled 'The Golden Familiar'. This scenario is set up in the world of Ahrde. Though not the focus of this review, it is worth noting that this adventure is a fantastic little gem. The module comes roughly at half the size of a typical adventure put out by Troll Lord Games but there is a surprising amount of detail packed in this scenario. It provides a rich tapestry and history which acts as the backdrop for the adventure and could easily be used to kickoff a campaign in this setting.

Like many published modules, the success of the adventure rests on what one makes of it and this scenario can be best characterized as a gauntlet. For a novice, the adventure will be easy enough to run once the party is set on the right path. For an experience person running the game, there is plenty of material that can be fleshed out and expanded upon to suit a particular style. Naturally, it is recommended that the Castle Keeper familiarize themselves with the module and adjust the strength or numbers of the creatures accordingly. As a bundled extra, the inclusion of the adventure gives immense value to a great product.

Are gaming screens ultimately needed? Some people prefer not to use them while others will swear by them. However, I find it's hard to argue

against the versatility of having certain pieces of information at your fingertips. This is certainly a great product to have if the idea of a screen appeals to you.

-- Pat Bellavance (aka "moriarty777")

I. Baggley



Interested in Writing a Review for The Domesday Book?

We are looking for reviews for any of the following material especially, or for other gaming material that you might wish to write about:

TLC's "Engineering Dungeons"

Any of the "T" Series Modules

The Haunted Highlands Setting and Adventures

After Winter's Dark Folio

The East Dark Folio

CZ: Uggsburgh

Any other C&C Module, whether published by

TLC or Goodman Games

Any Legendary Adventure Module

and

Other Systems, Games and RPG Materials
(This Domesday Book is not exclusive to TLC lines, and we welcome discussion and reviews of lines and publications from other companies!

Send all submissions for The Domesday Book to:

ccsociety@gmail.com



"They sift the human storm for souls, eat flesh of reason, fill tombs with sinners. They frenzy forth. In gusts they beetle-scurry, creep, thread, filter, motion, make all moons sullen, and surely cloud al clear-run waters. The spider-web hears them, trembles—breaks. Such are the autumn people. Beware of them." - Ray Bradbury

-- Art by Kevin Morton

FEATURES

"2008: A Real Reawakening For Me"

by John "Sir Seskis" Wright

In January of this year, my wife Mona and I loaded up our beagle Jonah and all our C&C and LA rulebooks and drove from Manitowoc, Wisconsin to Lake Geneva, a mere two and a half hours ride. We were going to TLG's Winter Dark, to meet some Trolls, some friends I had made on various message boards, and to finally get the chance to meet and shake the hand of a man who had made such a major difference in my life, E. Gary Gyax. We had planned on going to LGGC twice and the 1st Winter Dark the year before, but something had always come between us and these events, despite our relatively close proximity. But this time we looked at each other and said, we have to get there this time. And, by the graces of the gods of luck and some re-juggling of schedules, we did indeed make our way, checking in to a room at The Plaza and searching out the Lakeshore Room to sign in!

Not much was happening at first - Steve was gone to Gary's house and (as it is a smaller event), we saw only the guys playing their d6 Star Wars games, and an exuberant fellow leading a group through a small table-top game called "Exploring the Depths of Uranus." Thus we met Chris Clark and his son, and spent the first evening watching and enjoying this particularly, uhm, probing adventure. We had dinner, and my wife retired to our room while I went back to the con. I got to meet Steve and spend a good bit talking with him about C&C, his plans for TLG, etc. My first reaction was - my god, this guy looks like the twin of my major professor at LSU. Seriously - Steve could be the evil,

long-lost sibling of the man who had spent the last seven years of my life handing back page after page of dissertation and other work covered in red, purple and blue corrections. That they are also both "southern boys" with a twisted sense of humor added to this very weird doppelganger effect. But beyond this, the man I met was a true lover of this hobby, an enthusiast for both fantasy and history who was clearly pursuing this as a labor of love.



The next day, Mona and I returned to the Lakeshore Room, and there I looked up and saw Gary. He was jovial and chatting with, if memory serves correctly, Rhuvein. I grabbed my copy of B2 and the 1e DM's Guide and, feeling more nervous than I would have expected - hell, I've lit Jennifer Aniston's cigarette at a bar before and I didn't feel nervous (ok, so I felt a different feeling!) - I snuck like Gord the Rogue around to stand before "the man" himself.

"Mr. Gygax?" - I asked tentatively, like I didn't know to whom I was speaking. "Yes?" He answered with a smile. I introduced myself and asked if he would sign my copies of B2 and the DM's Guide, which he did. I asked how he was doing, having heard of his recent health issues. He said he was doing better, but wasn't up to 100% - so he was only going to run OD&D because it was simple to prep. I shook his hand and thanked him. My wife had hung back, I think feeling a little intimidated but also worried that he didn't look like he was feeling well. Later, after the event, I exchanged messages with him about my wife's reticence and he said "what? intimidated by me? heh..."

A few weeks later I had gone to check on some postings on the TLG board and couldn't, for some reason, get on. The connection seemed clogged. When I finally managed to, I sat in dumb disbelief, reading Steve's message that Gary had passed away. I felt a sense of unreality. I had just met and talked with him but a brief time before. Not only was I devastated at the tragedy of his passing, but I thought of his family (I had met Alex and Ernie in Lake Geneva as well) and all those he had touched and influenced with his life's work and creativity. I even stopped to reflect on my own life. Now, while I had only returned to RPGing in 2001, I had played various games with my brother and had loved D&D as a child. Indeed, Gary's World of Greyhawk, his adventures and the game itself had been such a major influence that I transferred my desire to "create the imaginary" to my own primary life focus: theatre and film.

Today I am one of the lucky ones - I truly am making my living doing what I love. I teach and direct theatre at a small 2-year university here in Manitowoc. Looking back now, I doubt I'd have really turned to theatre without the sparks of imagination that my youth provided. Surely, my own father's love of sci-fi (Heinlein, Asimov and Piper were read aloud in our house) and Tolkein

combined to spark the fascination I had with that boxed game with the dragon on the front. So, to some extent, like many of us I felt I had lost someone who was more than just a legend of this hobby, but rather someone who I had been "close" to even though I had barely met him, and that just once.

But something else happened to me with this sad event as well. For the past several years, I had worked 7-day weeks, endless hours producing and directing plays and teaching a full load. I discovered my own health was not what it should be. I had quit smoking in December, but in the aftermath I ate so unhealthily my diabetes was out of control. Looking at my own life, I realized I was burning the candle at both proverbial ends. I also knew that I wanted to do more with this game that I loved, not to just sit back and play, but to actively contribute in whatever small way I could. I drew a line in the sand with my school, carving out time for my life to pursue adoption with my wife, not to mention time for creative writing as well. I rectified my health issues and got things under control.

So, as I sit here and write this, I look back on this year already as having great purpose and meaning for me. Gary's passing affected many, many people, but in the end, the impact he had on our culture and so many lives was undeniable. My wife and I are now going through another of those bumps in the road of life - she's having valve replacement surgery in the next several weeks. One of the primary reasons we had not made it to earlier cons had been some surgeries she had had. Early this summer, as we knew she was having issues (it's a congenital valve defect - we've known for some time this would eventually happen), I asked again if she would rather cancel the trip to LGGC a little over a month ago. She turned to me and said, "No way in hell. We're GOING no matter what." -- That's what Gary would've done.

"Weather Lore"

by Lesley Rouell (AKA "LURKER")

The party of intrepid adventures walk slowly through the inn's gate. The clank of a great and enchanted flail on armor and the clop of horseshoe on cobble stone echo through the court yard. The players' voices blend into happy banter. The CK had done such a good job in painting the world picture that they are still talking about the stuffed trout dinner, the figs and the olives eaten around the dice table, the quail eggs and the gryphon milk cheese consumed for breakfast. Durbur the dwarf, complained that Halfling brown ale caused a worse



headache than a good Dwarven stout as he shared a good pipe of fine Halfling tobacco. Then the dice clatter... "Oh yeah, Silverthorn it's going to rain this afternoon" the CK announces to the party's ranger. The spell is broken and the magic lost.

In my last article I attempted to explain the working of weather and how it would relate to a world -- well a realistic world any way. Knowing how the weather works and what kind of weather

is reasonable is only half the information that a CK needs. A good CK also needs the skills, and in this case words, to paint a picture of his world: words to describe the weather to come.

Fortunately there are already centuries of knowledge used by old wives, farmers, shepherds and sailors to accomplish this. Words, phrases and rhymes that date from before a time when there was a voice coming out of a shiny box telling you to "... wear a coat tomorrow. We have a blue northerner headed our way", "... don't forget your umbrella, a storm will blow in afternoon tomorrow so be ready" etc. This collection of wives' tales and weather lore can paint a picture for almost any weather the CK wishes, rolls up, or otherwise throws at his players.

In this article I'll cover some of the more useful bits of weather lore and, in some cases, pass along some insight to why a specific bit of lore actually works or relate real world experience associated with the lore. A few times I'll demonstrate how the lore can be used by a CK in hopes of getting your imaginative juices flowing

Most of the lore is old, some even ancient; old enough to be mentioned in the bible. Other bits of lore and phrases are fairly recent. I have tried to keep the lore as close to original as I can, well as original as can be for many different poems & rhymes saying nearly the same thing. I have had to paraphrase some bits of lore, those old wives can be long winded at time, or rework some of the poems and rhymes. Older English gives me a headache and some of the newer sayings don't apply to a medieval-styled world.

There are actually thousands of differing pieces of lore so I will by no means cover all or even most here. Also, much of this lore deals with a specific region, village, or date, often referring to a specific date or a specific time as to the affects of a whole

season. This, by its nature, is out of the scope of what I feel a CK will need in a normal gaming session or even in an extended campaign.

Things seen in the heavens

First I'll cover the weather lore that is seen in the "heavens". Things associated with the sun, moon, and sky etc.

Red sky at night, shepherd's delight. Red sky in the morning, shepherds take warning

This is actually fairly accurate, having to do with water droplets in the atmosphere, sunlight from the sunrise or set, and the direction, east or west, of the weather phonima. It is also one of the oldest sayings, being used in the bible -- well not the rhyme itself, but the same thought.

This is easily seen 4-12 hours before the weather moves in.

Mackerel sky, Mackerel sky, Not long wet, Not long dry.

The herringbone mare's tale is associated with high altitude clouds that cause a "Mackerel Sky" and indicate an approaching system from the west in the next 12-24 hours. The system in theory will be fast moving and could be fairly windy.

Like the Red sky there can be a significant amount of forewarning between seeing the clouds and the storm blowing in.

When halo rings the moon or sun, rain's approaching on the run

This is similar to the "Mackerel Sky" but the clouds are more uniform than wispy. Not only does it forewarn a storm but, in winter, air pushes in after the storm and moves through the area and can be unusually cold. I can attest to the validity of both the Mackerel sky & Halo as good weather

predictors. The forewarning with this condition is even longer than the previous two: 6 -14 hours is not un-realistic.

Narneth sat on the hill top communing with the Great Spirit seeking guidance from the hunter/panther. Questions answered and path seen, he slowly stands and lumbers back to the awaiting party. As he looks up the CK tells him, "The silver moon shines down but it is surrounded by a faint glittering halo." As he reaches his friends and fellow adventures he rumbles out "Little brothers grab coats, tomorrow brings cold snow!"

If clouds move against the wind, rain will follow

In the real world this is only moderately accurate but is fairly easily described by the CK and will at the least get the players thinking about the weather.

Beware the bolts from north or west, In south or east the bolts be best

This is fairly reliable, in the northern hemisphere. In the southern the flow is a mirror image, as the normal storm flow is from the west to the east/northeast. This is usable for when the party doesn't have a character that is able to give a long-range warning to the approaching weather.

"Sir Erlcer, you halt on the hill crest, your retainers milling around behind. You and Ekter Magi gaze to the south, seeing the play of lightning from large, gray, angry clouds" Erlcer smiles "Boys! Come on -- we'll reach the keep this evening and be dry to boot, if we ride hard enough."

Rainbow to windward, foul fall the day, Rainbow to leeward, rain runs away

Rainbows tend to be opposite the sun so if the rainbow is upwind from you more than likely the

rain will be headed your way. If the rainbow is already down wind then you should remain dry.

If fleecy white clouds cover the heavenly way, no rain should mar your plans that day

Fleecy white clouds refer to clouds that don't have the vertical extent to produce rain. This is very accurate, as long as the clouds remain small and fleecy.....

When clouds appear like rocks and towers, The Earth's refreshed by frequent showers. or Mountains clouds in the morning, Fountains rains in the evening

The "fleecy white" clouds can change into weather producers by late morning or early afternoon. I'm sure everyone reading this, no matter where you call home, needs little help picturing rain and storm clouds.

When stars shine clear and bright, We will have a very cold night.

This is very accurate, especially from early fall through late spring. Clouds help keep warm air warm. If the night is crystal clear, then the air will radiate its heat out into the night sky. The temperature can easily drop from its afternoon high down 30-some degrees F. (18 C) In a desert, where the temperature is above 100F (38C), that drop can be to around 65 (18C) still feel cold.

When Ol'man Mountain has his hat on, there's gonna be rain in the valley in six hours

This is also fairly accurate depending on the clouds that are forming on or over the mountain. The timing might be off some and if the clouds are building fast and moving you might have as little as 15-20 minutes. Also, again from experience, on a mountain top "rain" can actually be sleet, snow or even smallish hail, even in July. All of which can be fairly painful if you can't find shelter!

When the wind is blowing in the North, No fisherman should set forth,

When the wind is blowing in the East, 'Tis not fit for man nor beast,

When the wind is blowing in the South, It brings the food over the fish's mouth,

When the wind is blowing in the West, That is when the fishing's best!

This one is fairly long and specific to fishermen, but still gives a good description of the effects wind has on weather in the Northern hemisphere.

No weather is ill, if the wind be still.

Good weather needs a description too ...



Things smelt and felt

Now I'll cover the other senses that can give insight to the weather, other than just your eyesight.

Sound traveling far and wide, A stormy day will betide.
or

*When the forest murmurs and the mountain roars,
Then close your windows and shut your doors*

Before a storm, the conditions help to enhance sound and "duct" it so noise travels farther. Plus the phrase "Forest murmurs & Mountain roars"

lends itself to gaming. Take this effect one step further and you get the muffling conditions and difficulties of pinpointing the exact location of the noise in thick heavy fog.

A coming storm your aches will throb, your hollow tooth will rage

I'm sure most people reading this have a trick knee or twitchy elbow that they swear hurts as a storm approaches. Now picture what people that make a living hacking monsters and killing demons and dragons feel.

When flower and pond affect the nose, look for rain and stormy blows

Just like a little water helps "Open up" a good three fingers of fine scotch, moisture in the air helps to "Open up" your nose. This will be true up to 3 or so hours before the storm arrives. In a desert, this is also true -- but the smell, at least to me, tends to be more "sourish". I'm not sure why, but I guess it might be that we are used to smelling dry dust. Then, when things "open up," you smell just how foul you and everything else actually is.

*Catchy drawer and sticky door, Coming rain will pour and pour. Or
If salt is sticky, And gains in weight; It will rain Before too late*

Increased moisture ahead of a storm system will cause things to expand and swell. This also is only good for a few hour's foreknowledge.

Dust rising in dry weather is a sign of approaching

After spending more time in deserts than I truly enjoy I can say this is fairly accurate. Small puffs of air and changing winds normally indicate approaching weather hours ahead of the system. These small changes easily lift lose dust and dirt into short lived wisps. This can be any where

outside of forests or wet areas, not just in a desert.

Rain not touching the ground, heavy winds blowing down

Ok I admit I made that up but it is VERY accurate, especially in the desert. Rain that evaporates before reaching the ground is classified as VIRGA. The science behind it doesn't need to be covered here but believe me it is a good sign of the weather. It can also lend to a good description by the CK.

When smoke hovers close to the ground, there will be a weather change. Or

Chimney smoke descends, our nice weather ends

This is a sign that there is a "cap," usually at 800ft up to a few thousand feet, between the relatively light winds at the surface and the strong gusty winds above. The cap actually holds the strong winds aloft until it breaks. As the smoke rises and then hits the cap the smoke will then be blown horizontally under and along the cap. When the cap breaks, normally at 10:00ish unless a strong system approaches before then, the winds previously held aloft descend down to the surface and become strong and gusty. If the smoke doesn't just blow horizontally but is blowing up and down the conditions are more unstable implying the approaching weather will be more severe.

The Birds, bees flowers and the trees

Here I'll cover some weather lore that is seen in nature.

Frost or dew in the morning light Shows no rain before the night

This isn't overly accurate but fairly easy to describe so useful to the CK

When leaves show their undersides, be very sure that rain betides

Again this is only moderately accurate, and then only with certain kinds of trees -- but again it's easily used by the CK.

Silverthorn and his companions cross the alpine clearing. Keeping a keen eye out, the ranger sees, "the light green and silver flash from the underside of oak and elm leaves." He calls back to the adventures following him. "Tighten your cloaks, rain and wind will be here before noon!"

Geese fly toward the sea in good weather, and toward land in bad

I'm not sure how accurate this one is. My experience with flying geese is sitting in a blind, cold & wet, wishing they would drop down and try to land....

Large numbers of birds sitting on tree or ground, Strong rain coming round. or Hawks that light in trees, Rain comes on the breeze

These are both true, especially the birds on the ground in a desert. Birds like good calm air and are smart enough to find shelter before the winds and rain arrive. In a desert, birds will use literally anything for shelter before a dust storm. Surprisingly, if you get used to how birds in your area act, you can have a few hours' warning before the storm hits -- four would be about the extent.

Bees flying close to the hive foretells bad weather, whereas bees that fly far from the hive foretells good weather. And, When spiders' webs in air do fly, the spell will soon be very dry.

I can't attest to these but, to me, they makes sense.

Wolves always howl more before a storm

Again I'm not sure exactly how accurate this is but it is classic game fodder. Also is the wolf howling for the coming rain, to pass word to his pack mates

that a sick moose has been seen or something more sinister. "Ranger make a check..."

Cattle graze in low lands for a storm and on high ground for clear weather

When cows refuse the pasture in the morning, expect rain before night

If cows lie down in early morning, expect rain at night

A cow with its tail to the West makes the weather best, A cow with its tail to the East makes the weather least

When sheep huddle by tree and bush, expect bad weather with wind and slush

Expect good weather, when sheep graze and scatter

Coming from cow country, I know that cows aren't as simple as they look while standing there chewing the cud. On top of that, few animals like to be soaked to the bone so ... As to the Sheep, the only thing dumber in the barnyard is a tame turkey but there are still people even less intelligent so they might know something some people don't.

On the high seas

Lastly, here is a small sample covering weather lore that deals with conditions on the high seas. Of course, some of the lore previously discussed will work perfectly in this area. Just change a few words and you take something a farmer lives by and turn it into knowledge a crusty sea dog uses.

Evening red and morning grey, two sure signs of one fine day Or

Red sky at night sailor's delight...

Mackerel sky and mares' tails make lofty ships carry low sails.

Both very similar to the lore already covered.

When the wind before the rain, Let your topsails draw again

When the rain before the wind, Topsail sheets and halyards mind

Storm systems that are fairly weak have winds out ahead of the line of showers and thunderstorms, again long scientific reason why this is so can be omitted, but it is true. So, the sails can be lowered as the winds pass even before the shower arrives. On the other hand, if the wind arrives shortly before the storm it will be a good blow. No sailor wants to risk sail to strong winds so they are

Seagull, seagull, get out on T'sand, We'll never have good weather with thee on the land

This is the same principle as the birds landing in the desert to avoid bad weather.

Sounding whales foretells stormy weather

Cuttlefish swim on the water's surface before a storm

When cold weather comes, sharks swim out to sea

Storms follow large accumulations of jellyfish

I'm not a sailor so can't say one way or another, well the shark one makes a little sense but I wouldn't want to follow on to see if it was heading out to hunt deep or avoid the cold. I do doubt that jellyfish affect storms in any way.

When ropes are tight it's going to rain; When weather's fair, they're slack again

This, I assume, is similar to the salt sticking and dweaver catching.

When the wind backs, and the weather glass falls, Then be on your guard against gales and squalls

This particular bit of lore is solid scientifically, as a ship would be one of the few places a group of active adventurers would see a "weather glass" or a barometer. As to the backing wind that is just

referent to wind that is changing in a counter-clockwise manner.

The party of stalwart adventures travel down the mountain pass. Silverthorn leads the way as a good ranger should. The party is spread out behind him in a rough line, Durbur the dwarf smiles from remembrances of home. They come to a small clearing with two game trails cutting left and right. The CK rolls a few dice and smiles. "Silverthorn the clouds covering the mountains surrounding you are starting to grow quickly, Alvar you catch a whiff of high mountain flowers that remind you of a certain redhead you "knew" in Istaldar. You also notice a finger of smoke from down into the valley. It rises up for a few hundred feet then is blown off to the east resembling waves spanning a wind-blown lake, before shredding apart and disappearing in the distance."

"The Dagger's Hilt Legendary Adventure: The Best RPG You've Never Heard Of"

by Rusty Schaffer (aka "dagger")

Legendary Adventure is a fantasy role-playing game created by E. Gary Gygax. It's a skill-based system that emphasizes creative and effective play by the players. The rules system is charming... filled with enough detail to run the game, yet vague enough to invite the ingenuity of its players and game masters to make it their own. In some ways it harkens back to the original D&D, when the rules were the basic guidelines that participants used to create their stories of men and magic.

One of the most intriguing parts of the game is how it breaks away from the standard idea of basing characters on physical and mental attributes such

as Strength, Dexterity, and Intelligence. LA takes a different approach by basing characters (which the rules refer to as Avatars) on skill bundles called Abilities. An Avatar can possess Abilities such as Ranging, Sorcery, Weapons, and Stealing. The premise is that the various tasks a character performs in a role-playing game rarely ever relate to one attribute alone. For example, in many systems, hunting for game is a Wisdom check or a usage of a Wisdom-based skill. Does that really make sense? Is Wisdom the only part of a character that makes them good at hunting? In LA, this activity would be covered by the Hunt Ability, which is based on a combination of physical and mental precision. An Avatar is comprised of things he/she is good at... not a list of abstract physical and mental attributes. However, if a player wants an Avatar who is exceptional strong, dextrous, or intelligent, there are Abilities that cover those types of things as well (Physique, Minstrelsy, and Learning for example).

The concept of Abilities also fosters player creativity. A player is encouraged to find ways to use their Abilities to accomplish tasks. In many RPGs there are hard and fast rules for what attribute checks to make, skills to use, etc... in many situations. In LA, if an Avatar is trying to snatch someone from a crowd and drag them away for interrogation, they could simply use their Waylaying Ability. In other game systems, this would have to be played out round by round... using a series of Dexterity checks, attack rolls, etc...

Rather than use a class and level based system of progression, Lejendary Adventure allows a player to select Abilities to make up their Avatar. Merits (similar to Experience Points) are earned each session and the players can spend them to increase their Abilities or even learn new ones. This skill based approach allows a player to build the character they want to play. Rather than create a "Fighter" and try to individualize him/her with proficiencies, skills, and feats, the player

can simply choose the Abilities that evoke the character they wish to play.

Any type of fantasy character can be created in this system: A burly fighter who wields a two-handed axe, an elven archer with psionic powers, a powerful wizard who backs up his magic with a long sword, a street fighter with ecclesiastic aspirations... anything is possible!

There are many reviews of this game available online at such places as rpg.net and amazon.com. A quick-start version of the rules can be downloaded from dragonsfoot.org and trolllord.com. I hope all of you give this extraordinary game a chance!

Until next time... may your blades strike true and your magic never falter!



"Alternative Weaponry" by Matthew James Stanham

Melee Weapons

Weapon	Cost	Weight	Length	Space	Speed	Parry	Dmg 1- Handed	Dmg 2- Handed
Club	5	2 lbs.	3 ft.	2	2	1	1D4	1D6
Staff	5	3 lbs.	6 ft.	3	3	3	1D4	1D6
Axe, Light	10	2 lbs.	2 ft.	1	1	1	1D6	1D8
Axe, Heavy	20	3 lbs.	3 ft.	2	2	2	1D8	1D10
Axe, Great	30	4 lbs.	4 ft.	3	3	3	1D10	1D12
Falcatta, Light	20	2 lbs.	2 ft.	1	1	1	1D6	1D8
Falcatta, Heavy	30	3 lbs.	3 ft.	2	2	2	1D8	1D10
Falcatta, Great	40	4 lbs.	4 ft.	3	3	3	1D10	1D12
Flail, Light	10	2 lbs.	2 ft.	1	1	0	1D6	1D8
Flail, Heavy	20	3 lbs.	3 ft.	2	2	0	1D8	1D10
Flail, Great	30	4 lbs.	4 ft.	3	3	1	1D10	1D12
Hammer, Light	10	2 lbs.	2 ft.	1	1	1	1D6	1D8
Hammer, Heavy	20	3 lbs.	3 ft.	2	2	2	1D8	1D10
Hammer, Great	30	4 lbs.	4 ft.	3	3	3	1D10	1D12
Mace, Light	10	2 lbs.	2 ft.	1	1	1	1D6	1D8
Mace, Heavy	20	3 lbs.	3 ft.	2	2	2	1D8	1D10
Mace, Great	30	4 lbs.	4 ft.	3	3	3	1D10	1D12
Pick, Light	10	2 lbs.	2 ft.	1	1	1	1D6	1D8
Pick, Heavy	20	3 lbs.	3 ft.	2	2	2	1D8	1D10
Pick, Great	30	4 lbs.	4 ft.	3	3	3	1D10	1D12
Scimitar, Light	20	2 lbs.	2 ft.	1	1	1	1D6	1D8
Scimitar, Heavy	30	3 lbs.	3 ft.	2	2	2	1D8	1D10
Scimitar, Great	40	4 lbs.	4 ft.	3	3	3	1D10	1D12
Spear, Short	10	4 lbs.	6 ft.	1	1	1	1D6	1D8
Spear, Long	15	6 lbs.	9 ft.	1	2	1	1D6	1D8
Spear, Great	20	8 lbs.	12 ft.	1	3	1	1D6	1D8
Sword, Short	20	2 lbs.	2 ft.	1	1	1	1D6	1D8
Sword, Long	30	3 lbs.	3 ft.	3	2	2	1D8	1D10
Sword, Great	40	4 lbs.	4 ft.	3	3	3	1D10	1D12

Pole Arms

Weapon	Cost	Weight	Length	Space	Speed	Parry	Dmg 1-Handed	Dmg 2-Handed
Bardiche	20	4 lbs.	6 ft.	3	2	2	1D8	1D10
Bec de Corbin	20	4 lbs.	6 ft.	3	2	2	1D8	1D10
Bill	20	4 lbs.	6 ft.	3	2	2	1D8	1D10
Glaive	20	4 lbs.	6 ft.	3	2	2	1D8	1D10
Guisarme	20	4 lbs.	6 ft.	3	2	2	1D8	1D10
Halberd	20	4 lbs.	6 ft.	3	2	2	1D8	1D10
Lance	20	8 lbs.	12 ft.	1	3	1	1D6	1D8
Lucern Hammer	20	4 lbs.	6 ft.	3	2	2	1D8	1D10
Partisan	20	4 lbs.	6 ft.	1	2	1	1D6	1D8
Pike	20	8 lbs.	12 ft.	1	3	1	1D6	1D8
Ranseur	20	4 lbs.	6 ft.	1	2	1	1D6	1D8
Spetum	20	4 lbs.	6 ft.	1	2	1	1D6	1D8
Trident	20	4 lbs.	6 ft.	1	2	1	1D6	1D8
Voulge	20	4 lbs.	6 ft.	1	2	2	1D8	1D10

Missile Weapons

Weapon	Cost	Weight	Length	Space	Speed	Short Range	Long Range	Damage
Bow, Short	20	2 lbs.	4 ft.	1	1	30 ft.	600 ft.	1D6
Bow, Long	30	3 lbs.	5 ft.	1	1	30 ft.	900 ft.	1D6
Bow, Great	40	4 lbs.	6 ft.	1	1	30 ft.	1,200 ft.	1D6
Crossbow, Light	20	4 lbs.	2 ft.	1	1	30 ft.	600 ft.	1D6+1
Crossbow, Heavy	30	5 lbs.	3 ft.	1	1	30 ft.	900 ft.	1D6+2
Crossbow, Great	40	6 lbs.	4 ft.	1	1	30 ft.	1,200 ft.	1D6+3
Dagger	10	1 lb.	1 ft.	0	1	10 ft.	90 ft.	1D4
Axe, Light	10	2 lbs.	2 ft.	1	1	10 ft.	90 ft.	1D6
Hammer, Light	10	2 lbs.	2 ft.	1	1	10 ft.	90 ft.	1D6
Javelin	10	4 lbs.	6 ft.	1	1	30 ft.	300 ft.	1D6
Sling	5	1 lb.	3 ft.	3	1	30 ft.	900 ft.	1D6

Bows: All bows have a strength rating. A short bow can be used regardless of strength; no bonuses apply, but all penalties do. A long bow requires a character to have a strength of 13+ to use effectively, whilst a great bow requires a character to have a strength of 16+ to use effectively. In general, bows with heavier draws are available for characters who desire them. A character with a lower strength rating than the bow he is trying to use may suffer additional drawbacks at the discretion of the game master.

Crossbows: All crossbows have a strength rating independent of the characters using them. A light crossbow grants a +1 bonus to hit and damage. A heavy crossbow grants a +2 bonus to hit and damage. A great crossbow grants a +3 bonus to hit and damage. At the game master's discretion, crossbows with a higher strength rating may exist and be available for purchase.

Note on Strength Ratings

It should be understood that the strength ratings apply as follows: short bows equate to strength 9-12 (+0), long bows to strength 13-15 (+1) and great bows to strength 16-17 (+2). Any of these bows can be constructed for a higher strength rating, which increases their range proportionally.

Notes

Weapon Names: In the spirit of simplicity, I have renamed various weapons and removed or introduced others. The names presented here may not correspond to the reader's understanding of historical weapons; this is partly because they are not intended to and partly because weapon nomenclature is not a stable discipline. Certainly, horseman's, footman's and two handed could just as easily be applied in place of light, heavy and great or some other combination.

The designations are intended to be fairly broad; scimitar, for instance, includes a wide array of curved single edged blades, including, but not limited to, the seax, falchion, katana, tachi, dao, saif, kilij, talwar and shamshir, whilst falcatta is intended to stand for those weapons with curved blades that are reverse edged, such as the falx and khopesh. Similarly, the long sword encompasses the spatha, viking sword, arming sword, jian and so on.

This is all for the purpose of simplicity. Of course, should an individual game master feel the need to differentiate between such weapons, he should feel free to adjust these entries to suit his taste.

Cost: This is the value of the weapon in gold coins. I took a more general approach to pricing, partly to facilitate the simple use of the below optional weapon quality rules and partly because the prices have always seemed kind of out of whack to me (even in the gold rich society that swords & sorcery type games presuppose). Obviously, these prices are not fixed, they are only intended to be relative value guidelines.

Weight: For the most part I have erred on the side of caution with these and opted for what I understand to be the higher historical values. Some weights were, however, judgement calls and may well be just flat out wrong. In particular, some historical two handed weapons may be considerably longer and heavier than what is listed here.

Length: In this case I have generally opted for the longest extant historical values I am aware of, but these are intended to be guidelines only. So, a light mace may be anywhere from 1-2' in length, whilst a heavy mace might be anywhere from 2-3'. In the cases of daggers, falcattas, swords and scimitars, the lengths postulated here are blade lengths, hilt, guard and pommel might add on anywhere from 6-12". As with the other weapons, the blade lengths represent the higher end of the range. A dagger might have a blade anywhere from 6-12", a short sword 1-2', a long sword 2-3' and two handed swords 3' or more.

Space: Taking as my guide Polybius and current thinking on ancient and medieval spacing on the battlefield, I have opted for four spatial designations, 0 (grapple) 1 (close order), 2 (open order) and 3 (individual); these roughly correspond to 0', 3', 6' and 9', but are just guidelines and could as well be 0', 2.5', 5' and 10'. For the sake of clarity, these spaces should be treated as facings. A game master should feel free to create consequences for using weapons without sufficient room (I would advise at least a -4 penalty to hit).

Speed: This column indicates the relative speed of the various weapons and governs on what initiative number they may be used with a value of 1 being the best and 3 the worst. A character capable of making multiple attacks with the same melee weapon can freely ignore this restriction. A bow, crossbow or sling must have been loaded in the previous round if they are to take advantage of their speed ratings.

Parry: Some weapons are more useful for deflecting blows than others and this column suggests relative values for each. This is the number added to the parry defence of a character when using the optional parry rule and the indicated weapon.

Range: The short range of a weapon is the distance at which it may be shot, slung or thrown without penalty to hit or damage; targets at greater distances are harder to hit and damage and those beyond the long range of a weapon are usually safe from harm.

Damage: All weapons are listed with one handed and two handed damage ratings. Usually, adventurers cannot wield two handed weapons one handed; in those cases, the listed one handed damage applies only to their use by large creatures.

I opted for more standardised damage ratings than in conventional swords & sorcery games to facilitate certain rules more easily. However, a game master should feel free to treat 1D8 as 1D6+1 or 2D4 and so on, if it so pleases him; the difference is negligible and the form presented here is just that which I find most convenient.

Weapon Quality

Very High: A very high quality weapon costs at least ten times the listed price and is extremely difficult to find. However, it so well balanced and finely made that it has a +8 bonus to saving throws and when wielded it grants the user a +1 bonus to hit and damage.

High: A high quality weapon costs about twice the listed price and is difficult to find. Quality shows through, though, as such a weapon is so well made that it has a +4 bonus to saving throws and when wielded it grants the user a +1 bonus to damage.

Average: An average quality weapon costs the listed price and is reasonably easily available. It has no saving throw bonus and grants no bonus to hit or damage.

Low: Adventurers must beware of low quality weapons that are sold by unscrupulous merchants as though they are not. Such weapons may be purchased openly for half the listed price, have a -4 penalty to saving throws and when wielded cause the user to suffer a -1 penalty to damage.

Very Low: Whether through ages of neglect or incompetent craftsmanship, very low quality weapons are shunned by all but the most desperate individuals. Such weapons are rarely purchased openly and almost never for more than one tenth of the listed price; they have a -8 penalty to saving throws and when wielded they cause the user to suffer a -1 penalty to hit and damage.

"The Merits of Evil"

by Don Keough (aka "Σιμυκυσοταν")

Aside from giving birth to a plethora of interesting villains to sweat the pots your worlds, as an ethos, evil can easily sprinkle spice onto any character, situation or campaign.

Too often Game Masters lock themselves into routines which limit rather than expand gaming possibilities. "A dragon has moved into the area surrounding the kindly folk of Goodenville? Let's band together to save the townsfolk! Warfare on the horizon? Save the king!"

Indeed, we've all tried our tired hands repeatedly throughout our roleplaying careers to save some group, ideology, or even at times, campaign world.

What then, of the missed role playing possibilities? What of the band of evil drow, struggling to invade a rival house? Or the evil band of slavers, plying their vile trade along the banks of some remote riverway?

Yea, when handled correctly, evil can be the tool that provides much in the way of increased intrigue and novelty for Game Masters and players alike.

Some players and Game Masters however, struggle with the concept of evil, viewing it as a rather elusive notion which defies concrete definition. As a result, such people often quickly grow frustrated with the concept, inevitably placing evil in the category of any 'self-serving practice', and in effect, dumbing-down its truly multi-faceted character.

Surprisingly, this is not so much due to the rigidity of evil's definition, but rather due to the fluidity and broadness of its concept, and therefore, the common tendency of its viewers to see it as rather two-dimensional. Alas, when one comes to



realize this fact, one can begin to explore the many, many varieties of evil, ready for use in their campaigns, much in the way an artist plays with many shades of dark when creating his or her masterpieces.

Intrigued yet? Kinda?

Well, let's look at some of these juicy varieties of evil, which can add a plethora of fresh, dark shades to **your** worlds...

Amongst others, evil can be a philosophy which places loyalty in a position of paramount importance. One need only look at real-world examples, where such-and-such a family, extremely loyal to its own members, commits terrible acts in an effort to increase its position in society's social order. Ruthless murder and corporate takeover anyone?

Lawful Evil is indeed one such a domain, where bonds can and do indeed bind. Witness here the fanatical followers of some philosophy or doctrine, who often give their lives to further its cause.

Indeed, LE -as part of its very nature- holds qualities such as honor and loyalty in very, very high regard. Indeed, the very structure of the Nine Hells exists in such a balance, where order is key, with only the most Chaotic seeking to upset its twisted harmony.

A Chaotic Evil party itself can in fact be workable, provided the party has a clear goal, and the players are good natured enough to enjoy some internal strife along the way. "I'm the only Cleric...so what can you give me for healing you?"

Neutral evil anyone? "Maybe we won't be helping the King until we see the gold, soldier..."

In employing evil, one masters a powerful subject to bend to one's will, and can therefore go far in opening up far reaching vistas to expand any role playing universe; tragic personas may now be created by players who perhaps wish to pull the game more towards reality, and open worlds in which knights struggle with their own burning angers or prejudices, clerics occasionally fall from grace, mages often tamper with the necromantic arts, and paladins become embittered as a result of prohibitions placed upon all too human emotions of love -or lust.

And these are but samples of some of the fresh storylines readily available to be explored.

Aside then, from providing great villains and antagonists for us Game Masters, evil can -when used with much care and foresight- be a force which can add much needed variety and excitement to the lives of the characters we come to know and love...allowing us as players, to be contributors of creative and unique worlds of our own.

"Introducing the HOR

Shaol" by JOSHUA SHERRER

(AKA "JULIAN GRIMM")

They were the keepers of the kingdom of the Witch-King of Karthem. Twelve utterly evil servants of the lord Azarik, governors of the land and enforcers of the will of thier king. They dwelt in the blackest of towers, surrounded by undead hordes and demonic abominations. The wizard knights forged from the abyssal netherworld that spawned their unholy master. We do not speak their name for fear they would hear us and find us. Though trapped by Erasel their shades still roam looking to be free in the lands of the living to do their evil.

~ Opening from a lecture given at the Acadamy at Hidleguard by Jerris Sunvort scholar of the dark ages.

As mentioned above the beings that came to be known as the Hor Shaol were forged in the darkest of ages when Azarik's empire of Karthem dominated the land scape. They were the governors of the twelve regions of the empire and ruled with an iron fist. Most records cannot account for the first appearance of these creatures, nor the exact locations of their citadels since these records were largely destroyed by the Earselian church in order to keep foolish scholars and disciples of evil away from the sites. What is known about them is that at Azarik's hieght of power he returned to the plane of his birth and forged the Hor Shaol out of the very substance of his black realm. With them he crafted the citadels that they would reside in and forged the first of their armies.

These armies consisted of massive amounts of undead, demonic abominations and were supplemented by goblins of all kinds. From their dark towers, the Hor Shaol commanded a successful war of domination over the free lands

subjugating them in a matter of weeks. Those that fought against them soon saw the full power of the Hor Shaol as their war dead were raised to fight the free peoples and the generals and leaders were turned into wraiths to serve the Hor Shaol for eternity. Within a year and a half of their appearance, the Hor Shaol had dominated all the important free lands and subjugated the peoples therein.



With the war of conquest over, the Hor Shaol role changed to that of overseers. The towers of the Hor Shaol somehow linked to a black council chamber in Azarik's fortress. There they would council, plot and plan the next moves of domination, or how

to exploit their subjects further. However, they failed to see the uprisings that would spell the end to their dominion.

In one of the last free cities, a beggar child named Erasel had gained a following as a prophet. He foresaw an end to the Karthem Empire and the return of the free lands. He also began teaching the true nature of the gods of the world, showing that they were not true gods since they were as fallable as humans. He taught of an Unknown God who was supreme and would wipe the lands of the Hor Shaol, Karthem and the false gods. Though many scoffed, Erasel's following grew when he called upon his God to destroy a temple to a spiteful goddess and was heard. He also led an uprising against a Karthem regiment of five-hundred and defeated them with only ten men.

Erasel soon had enough followers to strike at the Karthem and hurt them. Though the tales of Erasel's war are interesting, we do not have the space to detail them here. Suffice to say that Erasel crippled the Karthem armies and had moved into the realm of Azarik's tower of Night in one short year. There, the final battles were fought and ended with Azarik being sent to his realm of origin and the Hor Shaol being locked away in prisons only Erasel knew. But this war did end with Erasel being killed by one of Azarik's captains.

Thus, the Hor Shaol were left to legend. Four millennia have passed since then, and very little of that age lies in the open. I wish I could say our tale ends here, but legends have passed down of the Shades of the Hor Shaol, working to free themselves -- looking for the keys to their prisons. Tales of the Dark Man who walks the graves and buys bodies of nobles who dabbled in the dark arts are becoming more common. And, finally, a curious rumor from Raven's Kee: adventurers have broken into a recently unknown series of crypts under the city. They are said to have fought

something that fits the description of a Hor Shaol, a wraithlike form enshrouded as the dead are, and wearing the blackest of armors. I pray this be just rumors. For the rest of the story is that the thing they fought escaped and made wraiths of it's attackers....

I go there now to see if this is true.

~ The last letter of Professor Daveier Hornquist



"Farkenjhaver's Freehold"

by John "Sir Seskis" Wright

So you wanna pint 'o ale, mate?

What are ya willin ta give up for 'it?

Far from civilized towns and kingdoms, amidst a broad swath of the violent border-lands, adventurers are often startled to find what appears to be a tranquil keep. Surrounded by a stout wall of heavy pine, this isolated respite seemingly floats on a hillock, untouched by the barbarity and dangers that surround it. A bubbling creek feeds a mill and an ironworks, and the main keep boasts one of the best taverns in all the lands.

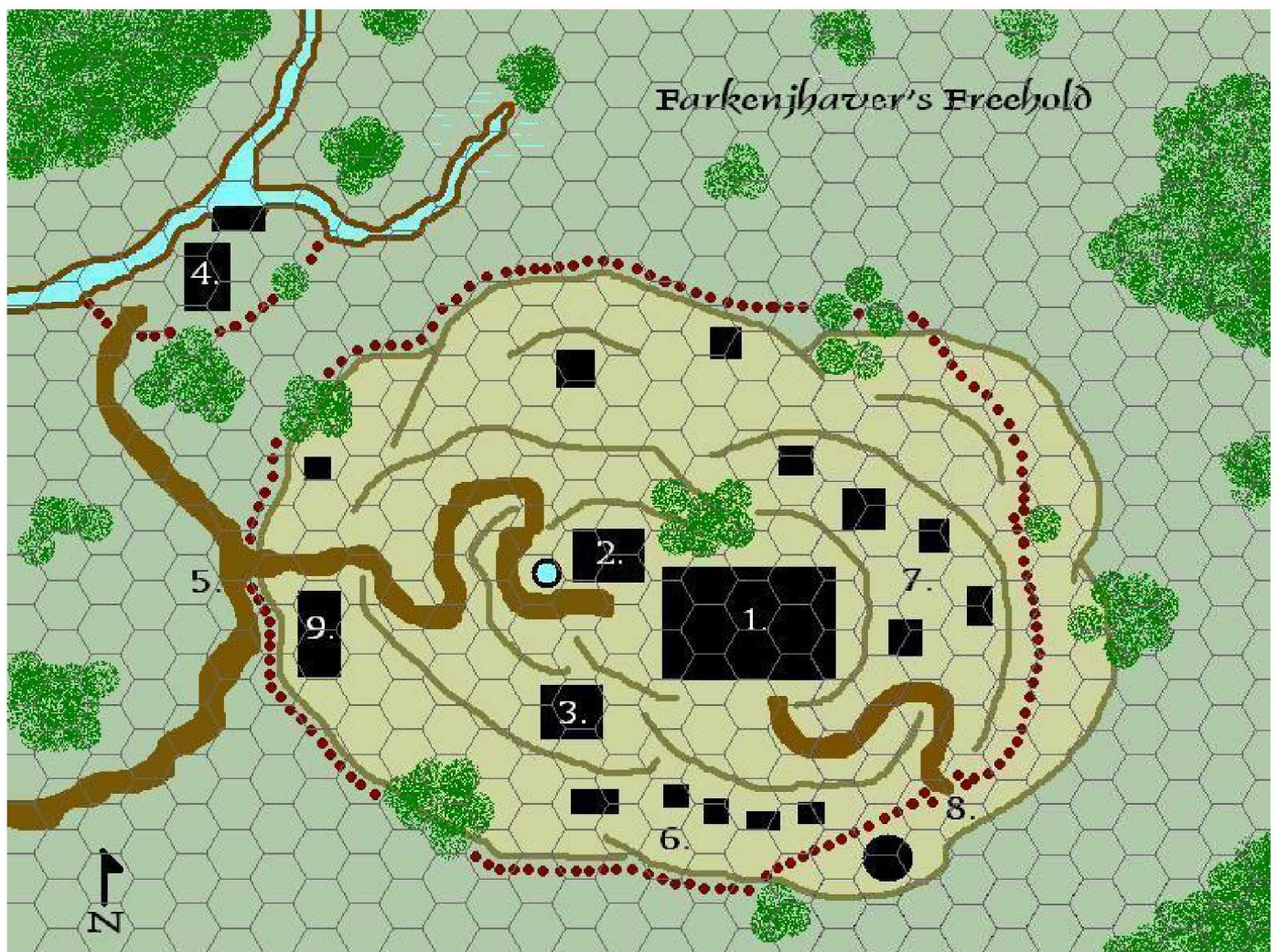
A welcome shelter from the scourge of the wilds? Indeed, but this unassuming fort hides secrets of its own, and can test the mettle of even the most battle-hardened warrior.

Some two decades ago, Argos Farkenjhaver was a Ranger/Fighter of great repute, hailing from common stock in a rather rural kingdom. He had set out at a very young age to seek fame and fortune in the world abroad. After many, many years (and stories of valor too long to explore in these meager pages!), Argos met a young woman

named Daria Enova, the only daughter of his adventuring compatriot Lorian Enova. Lorian was an illusionist of modest power, but had a penchant for spending more time in taverns and inns with the courtesans offered therein. Argos had found him "weak" and wanting for hero's virtues because of these habits, and so summarily kicked Lorian from his party. Returning many years later from a particularly deadly adventure to another plane of existence, Argos learned of Lorian's death at the hand of a cuthroat in a tavern he owned. By now he had come to realize there were, indeed, other worthy pursuits in life beyond just gold and glory, and in paying respects to Lorian met his daughter Daria -- and from that moment onward, Argos's heart was lifted and he became committed to helping other adventurers "stop and smell the dragon-flowers," as they saying goes.

To that end, Argos and his bride Daria journeyed to an isolated spot amidst one of the wildest and untamed regions of the world, an intersection he and his party had camped upon many times during their own forays into heroism. Upon this solitary hill he built his Freehold. He asked his compatriot Mokar the Archmage to help imbue the respite with strong protective magic; his Druid friend Reanna purified the lands and the brook below. He hired a Dwarven fighter named Block Mort to act as his chief enforcer. And thus, just over twenty years ago to this day, flyers began to appear in towns and thorpes throughout the borderlands of "the last, best chance for rest in the wilds."

But Argos Farkenjhaver desired not just to entertain young adventurers. From his own life, he sought to challenge them to be better, to strive to be more than they were. He looked back on his own youth and found himself to be brash and wanting for compassion and wisdom. Therefore, he resolved, his Freehold would accept all those who knocked on his doors. But with the stern belief in his own wizened knowledge, Argos decided to set a series of traps and challenges amidst his seeming



innocent tavern and guesthouses. While most visitors simply enjoy the spectacular hospitality, food and spirits of the tavern and its guest houses, when a party of great ambition and undeniable strength comes through, Argos and his friends gleefully lull them into comfort, isolate each individually, and set them into his "rooms of valor or despair," a series of sub-levels only accessible through Mokar's magic that are designed to test the mettle of the would-be epic heroes.

The problem is that Argos has become too exacting, setting too high a standard. This has especially been the case since Daria died from disease some four years ago, and indeed his own daughter Amelda has pled with him to stop the "trials of valor." To appease Amelda, whom Argos holds most dear, he has indeed of late been more easygoing and has been more likely to simply enjoy the company and war stories of veteran adventurers who visit his

Freehold. However, every now and again a party comes through that is brash and arrogant in its own powers. Sometimes it's merely the affections of a party member towards the very beautiful Amelda that sets Argos off, and in the midst of the night party members will awake to find themselves alone in a subterranean arena or maze, facing perils that will most likely kill them.

There are 5 sub-levels, controlled by Mokar (who's always been just a bit mad and chaotic himself): 1. For martial endeavors (challenges set for fighters, archers, pugilists, etc.); 2. For arcane practitioners (wizards, illusionists, etc.); 3. For those who would master the wilds (for rangers, druids and the like); 4. For those who adventure by stealth and trickery (rogues, thieves, assassins, etc.); and, 5. For those who would be Legends (singular and specific, set



The gang of regulars at the Main Room in Farkenjhaver's Freehold - Amelda Farkenjhaver serving Block Mort, Telari Telmori and Miranda Bask.

--- Art by Kevin Morton

aside for the most arrogant and individually deserving, in Argos's view. Each level is merely an open and magically isolated arena, protected by enchantments to prevent teleportation, scrying or other escape (Mokar having some artifacts in his possession for this). To successfully survive the "trial," the PC must defeat five successive challenges, each more dire than the previous one. The nature of these encounters is left to the imagination of the GM/CK to provide -- each should be customized to the particular weaknesses and flaws of personality of the individual character, as that is what Argos seeks to challenge.

There is ONE alternative - at the beginning of each "trial," Argos will ask the most arrogant of the PCs being tested "what are you willing to give me for your freedom? Would you give the lives of the others? Or, would you give your own life for

theirs?" If the PC offers money or other remuneration for this, Argos and Mokar simply proceed with the tests. If a PC tries to throw his party to the fire to save his or her own skin, then Argos and Mokar cast him into a rather unpleasant plane and proceed to test the others, but at less strenuous or deadly goals (only 3 encounters needed). If, however, the PC would give themselves to save their party, then Argos says "perhaps I underestimated you," and the rest of the party is freed and Argos instead tests the primary PC, but more thoroughly and fairly, aiming to train rather than kill.

For all other purposes, and indeed if a party rises to challenge during the "trials of valor," Farkenjhaver's Freehold is everything its reputation says it is. It is comfortable and well-protected, offering shelter and services to the weary traveller.

The layout of the Freehold is as follows:

1. The Main Keep - A large, three-story square stone and heavy beam building at the top of the hill. The lower floor is the tavern, common rooms and kitchen. The second floor holds a small library, several guest rooms, and quarters for Block Mort, Telari Telmori and Miranda Bask. The upper level is the private suite of Argos and his daughter, including his private treasury and collections.

* The rooms of "valor and despair" lie directly below, the first at 100 ft depth, the 2nd at 200, etc. There is no physical entrance to these spaces, only via Mokar's magic. The two monitor the progress of the tests and set each challenge from a scrying chamber in Argos's private quarters.

Prices for the tavern are just a bit more expensive than average, about 10% higher than standard.

2. The Shrine and Well - A small temple for any and all to worship (excepting evil gods). Offers some minor potions and healing.

3. The Common Inn - Bunkhouse inn that Argos rents - includes common rooms with 10 bunks each (4 s.p. per night per person) and group rooms (up to 6 normal sized individuals, 5 s.p. per person in group).

4. The Iron Works and Mill - Run by Block Mort and his compatriots, can provide basic arms and armor for sale at market prices. Mokar can enchant weaponry and items, at much higher than average costs (he doubles the cost for *everything!*)

5. The Main Gate - Seemingly there is no guard or closed gate, just an opening through the pine wall. However, there is a powerful magical field in place, and those who step forward will here a magic mouth asking about the party (certain past visitors may enter unchallenged).

6. Guest Houses - Very nicely furnished and prepared guest houses, 15 g.p. per month.

7. The Baths and Pleasure houses - Argos and Mokar believe in creature comforts now, and these houses offer services ranging from the merely luxurious (messages, oriental baths, etc.) to the decadent (stimulants and favors from both male and female, hired by Argos personally for their attractiveness and skill).

8. The South Entrance and Mokar's Tower - Also called "The Hunting Gate" for those who like that sport. Mokar actually likes to have his tower separate from the main keep, because he occasionally dabbles in dark arts that the magic field he has placed around the main keep would not allow (note - PCs will discover that magic, both divine and arcane, will work only in limited ways within the field - offensive spells fizzle instantly).

9. The Stables and Supply - Boarding and services for mounts, as well as a general store for basic equipment (standard prices).

NPCs:

Argos Farkenjhaver - H Fighter/Ranger 15, CG

Amelda Farkenjhaver - H Non-classed

Mokar the Archmage - Half-Elf Wizard 14, CN

Block Mort - Dwarf Fighter 10, NG

Others:

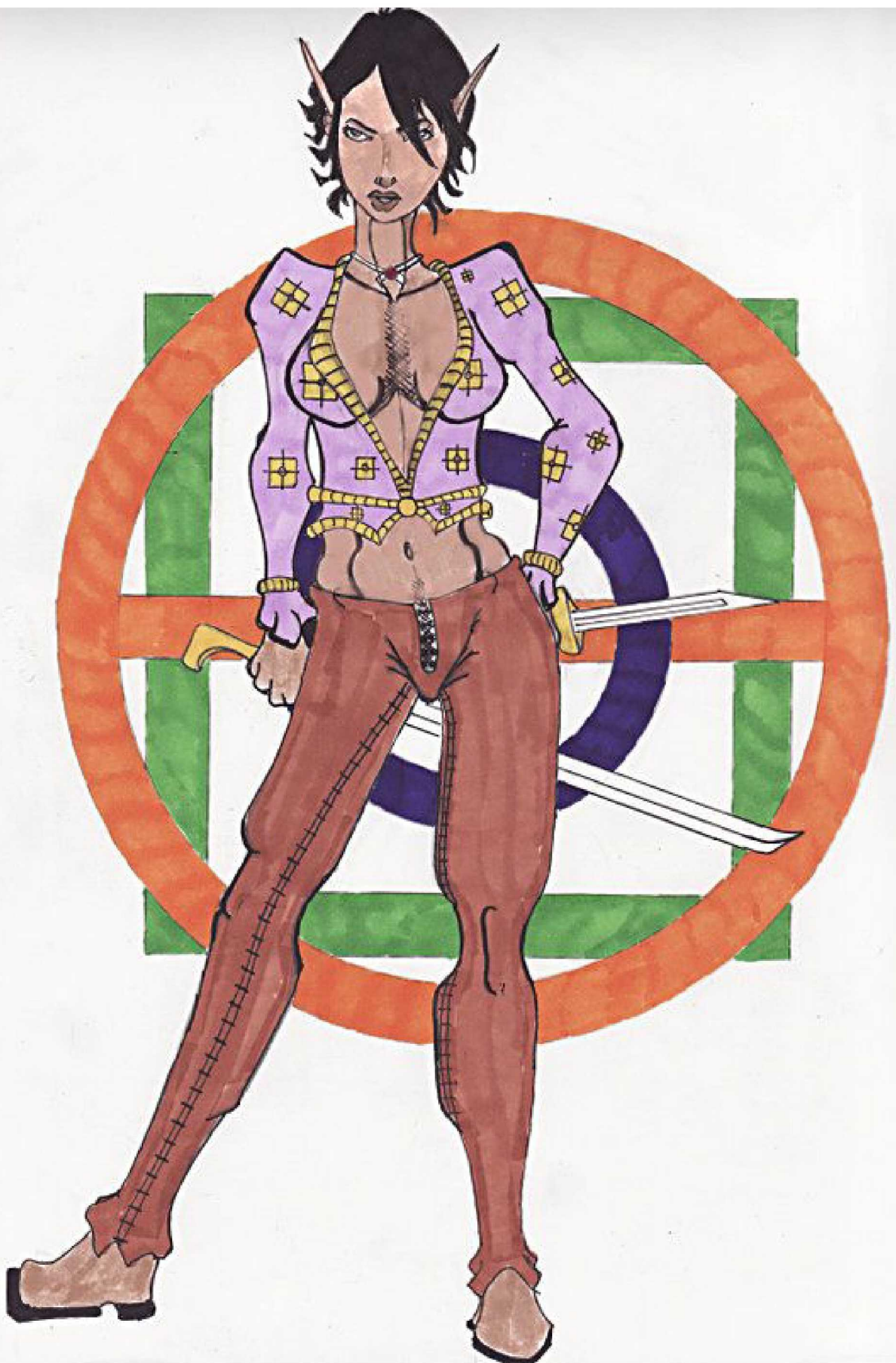
Jorath Anders - H Non-Classed N, the Stable master and operator of the General store.

Telari Telmori - Elf Bard 7 CG, In charge of the entertainment in the Freehold, also can help Block as an enforcer in the main room if necessary.

Miranda Bask - Half-Elf Monk 10 NG, acts as bartender and main room host, but is a deadly enforcer when needed.

Chor Kalane - H Cleric 9, NG, serves the clerical needs of the Freehold and runs the Shrine.

Selivar - Elf Ranger 7, CG, master of the wilds and the hunt - also serves as an enforcer.



"Confront them with annihilation, and they will then survive; plunge them into a deadly situation, and they will then live. When people fall into danger, they are then able to strive for victory." -- Sun Tzu

-- Art by Kevin Morton

What's Happening

"Adventure in Garham"

by Matthew James Stanham

For those interested, I thought I would write up a report of the Gygax remembrance game I ran back in March. Apologies in advance for the poverty of style. At the suggestion of Jeffrey 'Ghul' Talanian, I set the game in Garham (Yggsburgh, pp. 117-124) and adapted one of the adventure hooks provided on page 124. The party was made up of three player characters:

Glorissa (Level One Human Fighter)

Attributes: Strength 16, Dexterity 14, Constitution 14, Intelligence 13, Wisdom 13, Charisma 13,

Defences: Armour Class 18, Hit Points 11,

Possessions: Mail Armour, Large Shield, Long Sword, Dagger, Long Bow, Twenty Four Arrows,

Rolan (Level One Human Rogue)

Attributes: Strength 10, Dexterity 14, Constitution 11, Intelligence 13, Wisdom 12, Charisma 10,

Defences: Armour Class 14, Hit Points 6,

Possessions: Studded Leather Armour, Short Sword, Dagger, Short Bow, Twenty Four Arrows,

Aleena (Level One Illusionist)

Attributes: Strength 12, Dexterity 13, Constitution 10, Intelligence 15, Wisdom 9, Charisma 15,

Defences: Armour Class 15 (*Armour Spell*), Hit Points 4,

Possessions: Staff, Short Sword, Dagger,

Glorissa was played by my girlfriend Maki, Rolan by our friend John and Aleena by our friend Leanne, who is also John's wife. It was the first time Leanne had agreed to join us and so her character was rolled up on the night. Glorissa and Rolan, on

the other hand, were veterans of an ill fated foray into the *Dark Chateau*, during which an encounter with an Owl Bear had decimated a party of six. Amongst those reduced to negative Hit Points were Glorissa and Rolan, so this adventure was set nearly a month later (slow healing times in my campaigns). Having heard of the skills of the master bowyer and fletcher, Alfred "Goose" Gandy (referred to as "Goosey Gander" for the rest of the game), the three companions made the journey to Garham in order to visit his workshop and peruse his wares.

Glorissa, Rolan and Aleena arrived in Garham at around midday. Although most of the boats were out on the lake, there were plenty of folk going about their business, but rather than ask one of them where they might find Alfred's workshop, they made straight for the *Jolly Fisherman* ale house. After striking up a conversation with the owner, Grady "Garfish" Hunter, and inquiring as to the location of Alfred's workshop, the companions ordered three flagons of 'fishy ale' and three platters of 'fish and chips'. After they finished their meal, Grady introduced them to Eldred Gandy, one of Alfred's sons who had happened to stop by on an errand. An amiable young man, he showed them the way to the workshop and introduced them to his father before resuming his errands.

Having looked over the prices cited in the book and knowing about the pricing problem, I decided to use standardised costs from my own campaign world:

Great Bow - 400 SP	Great Arrows - 25 SP for six
Long Bow - 300 SP	Long Arrows - 25 SP for six
Short Bow - 200 SP	Short Arrows - 25 SP for six

High quality versions (+1 to damage) cost twice the listed amount.

After a bit of bargaining with Alfred and a half hour or so testing out the various staves, Glorissa negotiated a deal on a quality long bow and a sheaf of twenty four high quality long arrows for seven hundred silver coins. Just as the deal was being agreed, though, there was a sudden commotion in the vicinity of the ale house.

A small crowd had gathered around a rather tired, but animated, young man. "There's been another murder at the stone quarry! Same as the last. The men are leaving the quarry!" After a short exchange, it was established that Trebor, son of Robert [my little Gygaxian salutation], had disappeared from the quarry lodgings during the night, but that what little remained of his body had been discovered around mid morning. According to the messenger, the flesh, eyes and ears had been removed and bones broken; indeed, they could only really be sure it truly was Trebor from his boots!

Well, the adventurers needed hear no more, but boldly offered their services in investigating the murders. Rolan inquired as to a reward, but in the absence of Robert "Skipper" Ketchum, who was out on the lake, little was forthcoming from the villagers, that is until Alfred offered a second sheaf of quality arrows and Grady free meals and lodgings. Rolan's fellows were a little embarrassed at his cupidity, but once the offer was made, they did not turn it down. So, without further debate, Glorissa, Rolan and Aleena headed out along the dirt road towards the stone quarry. About an hour or so along the trail they encountered the quarrymen, escorting the body of Trebor back to Farham. The foreman, whose name was Rufus, showed them the body and warned them against staying near the quarry after dark. Used to the threat of danger, though, the companions were not disheartened and continued on their way.

Towards mid afternoon, they reached what was evidently the open stone quarry; a collection of

ramshackle wooden structures and tents crowded one end of a roughly diamond shaped rend in the landscape. Stopping to listen, Aleena claimed that she could hear the sound of metal on stone somewhere in the distance. So, whilst she and Glorissa headed down into the quarry, Rolan stealthily picked his way around the edge, listening out for any indication that the illusionist hadn't let her imagination carry her away.

Whilst investigating the tents in the quarry, Aleena disturbed a pile of rags, which turned out to be a rather excitable, and half drunk, old man who introduced himself as Cedric. After listening to his rantings for a while, they discovered that his family had once owned the rights to the quarry and that he "wouldn't leave on account of a couple of murders; too much work to be done", though his feeble efforts at handling a pick didn't seem to achieve very much. More usefully, he did claim to have seen several shadowy figures a few nights earlier and to have heard harsh voices speak words that he did not understand. Glorissa and Aleena left him to his ramblings and finished searching the area. The only other thing they turned up was a crude looking broken knife, surely not of local manufacture!

Meanwhile, Rolan had made his way to the other side of the quarry and now thought he could indeed hear the noise Aleena had described. As he crept closer, the sound became louder, until at last he found himself on the edge of a small clearing and the source of the noise was revealed, a brutish looking humanoid, armoured in rusted mail and sat upon an old log, whetting the blade of a long handled axe. Though Rolan considered attempting to take the evil looking on by himself, he thought better of it and went to fetch his companions.

Move Silently (1 in 4) - Failed

Surprise (1 in 2) - Succeeded

On hearing his news, Glorissa and Aleena agreed that they should try and take the creature by surprise. Together, the three of them quietly approached the place where Rolan had seen him, but just as they were ready to strike, the Orc looked up and caught the glint of Rolan's steel. In a flash, he was up and racing towards the unlucky rogue, axe raised to strike. Rolan turned tail and fled back towards his companions. An arrow whistled by, shot from Glorissa's bow, but it did not find its mark. Suddenly aware of the new danger, the Orc redirected his charge towards her, but she, dropping her bow to the ground, dodged his axe, drew her sword and struck him such a blow to the head that his helm was cloven and his skull split open. The axe fell from numb fingers and the beast fell to his knees before collapsing upon the ground.

Move Silently (1 in 4) - Failed

Party Surprise (1 in 2) - Failed

Round One - Glorissa misses with an arrow; Orc charges Glorissa and misses.

Round Two - Glorissa hits the Orc (1d10+2 = 9); Orc is slain.

Of course, our heroic protagonists quickly fell to despoiling the body of their fallen foe, discovering two human ears hung from his belt, and, after searching the area, a crude horn and leather wrapped packet of presumably human flesh. Rolan also discovered booted tracks leading off along an animal trail. Aleena suggested that the Orc had probably been a guard set to watch the stone quarry and, after a short discussion, the companions agreed to follow the tracks and seek out any others of his wretched ilk. It was late in the afternoon when they came upon a fork in the trail; a second less worn path led up a rocky hillside, whilst the main trail meandered downwards along a more accessible route. Since the more recent tracks followed the less worn path, they elected to do the same and soon found themselves above the tree line. Deprived of cover, they proceeded

cautiously, but it did not avail them much. The sound of harsh voices told them they had been discovered.

Move Silently (1 in 4) - Failed

Party Surprise (1 in 2) - Failed

Monster Surprise (3 in 10) - Failed

Rolan turned on his heels and ran for the trees, whilst Glorissa did her best to conceal herself behind a rocky outcropping. However, Aleena, thinking quickly, used her magic to transform into the likeness of the monster they had slain and, when his expected fellows appeared, she pointed excitedly down the trail, as though being pursued by enemies. Her duplicity was rewarded and four of the creatures sped down the trail to search for fictitious foes.

I was surprised to discover that the Castles & Crusades version of the Change Self spell doesn't allow the caster to give the illusion of another race. However, since several of us were used to the Advanced Dungeons & Dragons version, I decided to allow it.

Once the four humanoids were out of sight, Rolan and Glorissa emerged from their hiding places and joined Aleena. Knowing that they had to move quickly, Rolan snuck towards the place from where the Orcs had emerged. He found himself about six feet above a cleft in the hilltop; below him was another of the monsters, apparently guarding a cave entrance. Not waiting for his companions, he dropped down to strike the unwary creature from behind, but his blow went awry and his enemy whirled around to face him. In a moment, it had drawn its broad bladed sword and struck a blow that Rolan barely avoided, and which left him sprawled upon the ground. Just as all seemed lost, Glorissa leapt from above and with one blow slashed the beast's throat.

Move Silently (1 in 4) - Succeeded

Party Surprise (9 in 10) - Succeeded

Monster Surprise (1 in 10) - Failed

Surprise Round - Rolan misses with a backstab.

Round One - Rolan misses; Orc hits (1d8+1 = 4); Glorissa charges Orc (1d8+2 = 10); Orc slain.

Wary of the cave entrance and the prospect of returning Orcs, both Glorissa and Rolan strung their bows, hoping to take at range any further enemies. Aleena followed her companions down into the cleft and, anticipating the presence of another foe, used her magic to illuminate the cave mouth. Sure enough, her spell revealed an Orc stood in the tunnel mouth, poised to attack with a cruel looking spear. The companions let loose with arrows, but to no avail. The wretched creature too quickly fled down the passage. Bellowing a war cry, Glorissa drew her blade and gave chase, her companions close behind. The short tunnel terminated in a largish room; as Glorissa entered, the Orc sprung from the shadows and attacked, but her mail coat turned his spear thrust aside and her return stroke ended the matter. The evil creature fell dead upon the floor.

Aleena casts a [i]Light[/i] spell

Party Surprise (5 in 10) - Succeeded

Surprise Round - Glorissa misses with an arrow; Rolan hits (1d6 = 2).

Round One - Orc flees; Party gives chase.

Round Two - Orc misses Glorissa; Glorissa hits Orc (1d8+2 = 5); Orc slain.

A swift search of the room turned up several packets of meat of undetermined provenance, as well as several carefully packed eyeballs and a small wooden box of spices. In the centre of the room was a sturdy table and nearby a large brass cauldron containing a vile looking stew. Since there were no other exits, the companions retraced their steps. About half way down the passage they discovered an adjoining chamber that contained a half dozen or so sleeping pallets. Worried that they were taking too long, Glorissa went to the cave mouth to watch for the return of their enemies. Meanwhile, Rolan and Aleena discovered a smaller third chamber adjoining the second. Inside was a

more elaborate, if filthy bed, a wooden box, a desk and what appeared to be a small altar.

Before they were able to explore further, though, Glorissa called to them that she could hear their enemies returning. Between them they quickly devised an ambush. Glorissa headed for the first large chamber, dragging the corpse of the Orc guard with her, whilst Rolan lay hidden in the second. Aleena, using her magic to assume the form of the Orc guard, stood at the cave mouth to greet his returning companions. As soon as her foes came within sight, Aleena gestured for them to follow her inside and sped down the passage. The Orcs fell for this second duplicity almost as easily as the first; following swiftly behind they were caught off guard when she turned on them. Glorissa attacked the first Orc to emerge after Aleena and, though he evaded her blow, Aleena brought him low, slashing at his belly with her short sword and burying her dagger in his throat. At the same time, the shadowy form of Rolan emerged from the adjoining chamber, flitted along the passage and struck another from behind, thrusting his short blade down deep between his shoulder blades.

The largest of the Orcs still stood, though, and he struck Glorissa a hard blow with his wicked two handed axe. Though her mail coat saw off the worst of it, many links were ruptured. Nonetheless, she fought back with skill and valour, turning aside a second blow with her shield, she thrust her blade up under his jaw, through the pallet and deep into the brain pan. It was at this moment that Rolan realised there were only three Orcs and spun on his heels just in time to see the last barrelling down on him with a spear. He was fortunate to dodge the blow in that narrow passage, but the Half Orc was not so lucky, for Glorissa was soon upon him, pinning his spear to the wall with her shield she slew him before he could draw blade.

Party Surprise (1 in 1) - Success

Surprise Round - Glorissa misses; Aleena hits twice (1d6 + 1d4 = 5); Orc slain; Rolan backstabs (1d8+5 = 8); Orc slain.

Round One - Glorissa misses; Rolan misses; Aleena misses; Orc hits Glorissa (1d12+2 = 7).

Round Two - Glorissa hits (1d8+2 = 6); Aleena misses; Orc misses; Glorissa hits (1d8+2 = 6); Orc slain; Half Orc charges and misses Rolan.

Round Three - Glorissa charges; Half Orc misses Glorissa; Glorissa hits Half Orc (1d8+2 = 10).

Satisfied that there were no further enemies, the companions took some time to rest and tend to their wounds. Once properly recovered they renewed their search of the adjoining chambers. In the wooden box they found a small bag of assorted coins and jewellery, whilst on the desk a sheaf of papers in an unfamiliar language. Rolan let his greed get the better of him when he noticed a ruby embedded in an Orc skull sitting on top of the altar. With a greedy grin, he used his dagger blade to pry it out. Holding the ruby up to the light, his smile faded and an inexplicable sense of dread assailed him. After a few moments it passed, but Rolan was left with the unsettling feeling that something unpleasant had noticed him.

As the afternoon faded into early evening, and after gathering the heads of their fallen foes as proof of their deeds, the three companions set out to return to Garham.

"The Legacy of the Savage Kings" PART II

by LAURENCE ORE (AKA "JediORE")

So, after pulling back from the fort the gang headed back to the start to check out "that other bridge."

Upon seeing the statue it begins to rise. Everyone gets prepared for a battle. The cleric catches a glint of something metallic off near the edge of the island.

.Ragnar1965 has the cleric pull out his warhammer and run pell mell at the metallic glint to whack it hard. He and Trevor thought it may have been a lever that could affect the statue (I think).

The statue rushes at the large half-orc barbarian and hits him for some damage. They all noticed the statue was not carved with much detail. Except for an odd, 5-eyed skull. It was plain this skull must represent the prize trophy of this long dead "savage king." Sad to say, the statue was in over its head between the dwarf and the half-orc.

The cleric however won the boobie prize for finding a very large torc with the mighty blow of his warhammer upon the offending silver orb on one end. That was FUNNY!!!

Terry (er, Ragnar1965) realized quickly this must have been worn by the late black dragon. Perhaps a trophy? They had the magic-user detect if it was magical. Of course it was. They figured out the runes, but had no idea what they meant. Trevor came to the conclusion it must reference the dragon since it didn't care a wit about mankind.

After the battle with the kingly statue, the group headed back into the mire to explore further.

They came upon an old mud hovel built off of the base of a large tree.

They called out into the darkened doorway but got no reply. They could make out a low fire in the dwelling. All of them seemed to have "a bad feeling about this."

The 12-year old playing the elven wizard shouted out they needed to go in to see what lived there. The others offered to allow the elf to go first but he declined. (It's always fun to see one of the gamers suggest doing something dangerous but not willing to do it themselves).

Finally they had the dwarf, halfling, and the half-orc go in. The met the mad elf. I had fun playing him. I stared off between two of them, as though blind, and offered the PCs "tea" from the bubbling pot on the fire. I'm guessing it was the lizard legs that made them decline.

They started asking questions to which I had the elf begin the "crazy talk" about the Witch Queen and the demon, a prince and the blight. I babbled like a brook. I don't normally get into the "roll-playing" aspect but last Saturday (with the ease of C&C) I was having a blast.

Then in a quiet voice the elf asked if they "wanted to join my army?" The players were still talking among themselves about what all this crazy talk meant when, all of a sudden, I slammed my palm down on the kitchen table as hard as I could (it hurt) and shrieked "Do you want to join my army!" Ragnar1965 must have jumped six inches out of his chair! Boy did I get their attention. Ragnar1965 said "don't you EVER do that again!"

The PCs begin to ask about the army when the skeletons burst through the ground and attack. Ragnar1965 and Trevor launched everything they had at the old elf, cleaving him between a long sword, two-handed axe, and a magical short sword. My spooking them caused a lot of aggression towards the elf, with no regard of the undead. The battle ended fast.

The PCs searched the room and found the letters.

After leaving the hovel the PCs explored south and found the log bridge. Few could stay upon it, with the half-orc simply giving up and began trudging through the mire along side the bridge. They had spotted several large lizard-like beings watching them in the distance, only the eyes and tops of the heads protruded from the swamp. No one made any hostile moves at these things. Everyone had to

make several Constitution saves since they kept falling into the mire. All are afraid they may have caught this blight the dragon had.

At the "fork" in the log bridges, the party went eastward and arrived at a small land mass which abutted a large granite cliff facing. The rock facing went high up into the mists with no end in sight. The group explored the island and found it bounded by the mire to the north and this granite tor to the south. They had no way to go but back the way they came via the mostly submerged logs. On a whim, and perhaps the look on my face, Ragnar1965 had his dwarf explore a small water-filled depression which rested against this granite facing. He saw a small 4-inch hole in the rock, roughly 6-foot above the water! Large claw marks, perhaps made by the dragon, scar the rock about the hole.

The party decides this is worth investigating. Which they do. They spend over an hour and a half in real time trying to figure out what to do. They poke long bones (with a *light* spell on one end) into the hole. They toss pebbles into the hole. They want to know how such a hole could come to pass. (Why, it seems to be a natural phenomenon the dwarf calls a clay pipeline. At some point in the distant past, this 20-odd foot 4-inch hole was filled with clay. Over the years the clay was displaced.) But most importantly, why did the dragon have an interest in it?

An *augury* proclaims 'weal' to the question "is there something on the other side of this tunnel that will aid the party." The guys take stock as to what the PCs have. A potion of gaseous form is produced. Hummmmm. Lots of discussion about using this occurs. The elf wizard has *spider climb* in his spell book but not memorized. Trevor is interested in having his monk climb the granite facing to see if he can reach the top and see if the hole's end might be seen from above. The party

agrees to rest the night to have the wizard memorize *spider climb* and *identify* (for the torc).

As they set up for the night, the half-orc heads down to the mire's edge to heed "nature's call" (my way of having the random encounter work). The half-orc is attacked by a 30-foot croc! Ragnar1965 has his dwarf grab his axe and race down to help the barbarian. I ask what the barbarian is going to do, and Trevor says, "First things first: ZIIIIIPPPPP!" (making the motion of zipping his fly). We all paused to laugh about that. The croc got a good hit in on the half-orc, and had he not used his attack to retreat away from the swamp, death was waiting for the barbarian as the croc would have pulled him into the water. However, the dwarf, monk, and halfling all assailed the beast. With the help of *magic missile* all went well.

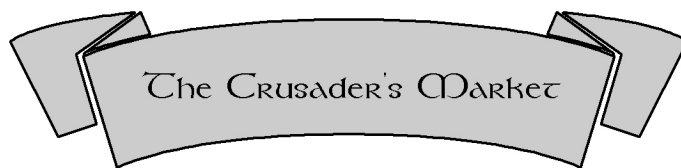
Later that evening the party could see two "regular" crocodiles come up to sun themselves in the waning light near the dead giant croc. One of the animals had the blight. Alex (the 11/12-year old) simply could not resist and had his wizard shoot a fireball at the unsuspecting animals. Alex had never had a wizard before and his dad, Trevor, is well known for *fireballing* everything and anything that may be considered dangerous. Alex had to "try out" his *fireball* spell. The beasts both failed their saves and promptly died (no experience points to be awarded for that).

During the night the dwarf, on watch, began to notice a horrific smell. Something beyond rotten. Two sets of dim, red-glowing, eyes could be seen just outside the glow of the fire. The dwarf could hear the beings whisper to him to come out and join them. They hungered and wished to know him, etc. The dwarf did the manly thing and, failing a save, puked from the stench. Ragnar1965 made it plain he did this on the half-orc to wake him up! The things retreated into the night and they never did see what they were.

The next day, they have the monk climb, via spider climb, up the cliff. He finds nothing but more cliffs. He returns unsuccessful. By now everyone has forgotten the *identify* spell (as it was now past 10:30 at night, remember Ragnar1965 and I have been going at it since around 10am) and we spend lots more time debating the potion of gaseous form.

Finally, just after 11pm, I reminded Alex that his elven wizard memorized *identify* for a reason. They cast it on the torc and find out its powers but not its command word. The *identify* spell does note the answer to the riddle is the password. I remember Ragnar1965 commenting on the inscription, "That's a riddle?" He-he-he.

Stay tuned for Part III in this ongoing Campaign Journal!



Submit articles to future Domesday Books!

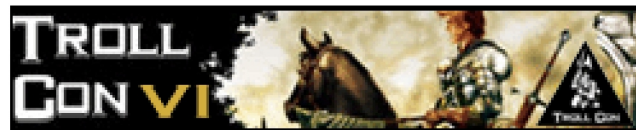
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Portland, OR - Looking for fellow Crusaders!

I'm new to Castles & Crusades and have convinced a few friends to let me run a game for them, but would love to meet some more folks who play. Drop me a line if you are in the Portland area. Hope to hear from you! email: dachda@aracnet.com

Alea Iacta Est - The die is cast!

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