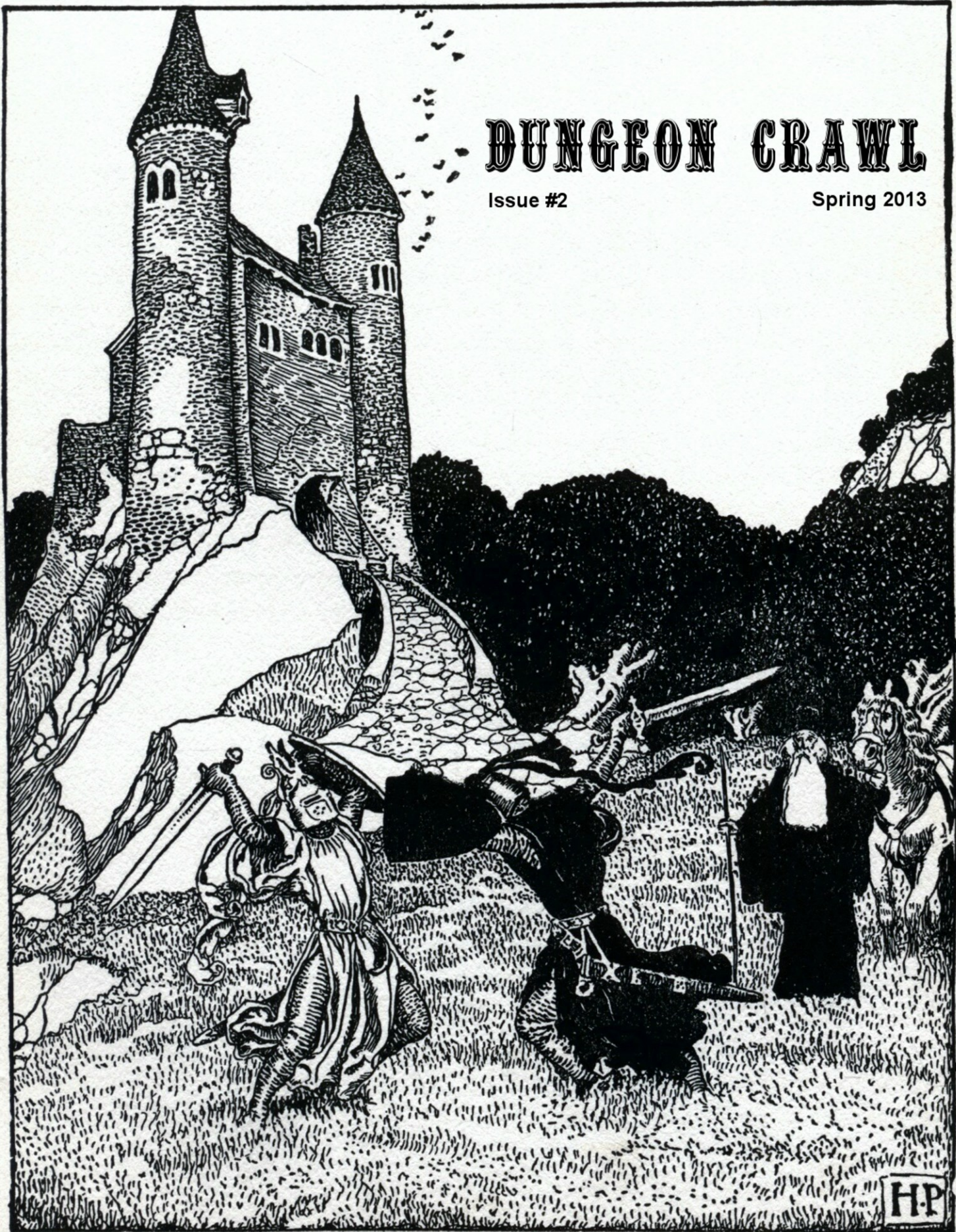


DUNGEON CRAWL

Issue #2

Spring 2013



Editorial

This is the second issue of *Dungeon Crawl*. The first came out a year ago, at a time of considerable personal instability; I was in the middle of moving and had a baby on the way. Now we have the house and the baby, and it feels even more insane to commit to writing a zine. Which is how I know it's right.

Dungeon Crawl #2 has a few submissions that aren't by me, but its page count is lower than I was hoping, and that's mostly because I wound up writing the majority of the issue. Since my intent is ultimately to supplement the lack of *Fight On!* – which is wrapping up with issue 14 or 15 – I ultimately want this to become much more of a community project. I had some terrific art contributions, charts from Ivan Sorensen and an article-length magical item from David Przybyla. I look forward to more from them, and hopefully others as well, in the next issue and beyond.

The centerpiece of this issue is *The Caverns of Temeluc*, a module designed in the style of B1 *In Search of the Unknown* where the module's text is not keyed to the monsters and treasure, but each referee is intended to decide the placement. This is because I see the caverns as a very living environment rather than a hard set of encounters. Believe it or not, the map is actually from my hand-drawn original, which I scanned and my wife Jen Rossi helped me to turn into a legible digital image.

The monster listing is closest to my heart, but I really enjoyed coming up with all of the content. The *Dark Age Dungeons* article describes some of the process of a historical game I have been running on Google+ and the *Obscure Gods* were inspired by the old Judges Guild *Unknown Gods* supplement – it's of great pleasure to me to see that *Petty Gods* will be released after all.

This issue retains *Dungeon Crawl*'s fundamental goal, to provide you with things that will immediately be of use in your game. I hope it provides you with some interesting things to use in your campaigns!

Wayne Rossi

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Dungeon Crawl #2
Spring 2013

Edited by Wayne Rossi
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Special thanks to the Caverns of Temeluc playtesters:
Lou Goncey, Jason Hobbs, Ron Redmond, Eliot
Wilén, Clayton Yamatani

Caverns of Temeluc

Adventure by Wayne Rossi for low-level characters

The caverns of Temeluc have a foul reputation going back hundreds of years. It was here that the brave knight Avvelos and his companions confronted the great evil known as Ghasora, and dealt it a great defeat. Legend says that it was not completely destroyed but continues in some form. Yet treasure is hidden deep in the caverns, and hard-bitten explorers have come out with tremendous gems.

This adventure is atypical in several ways. The caverns are not meant to be a static adventure location but rather a living ecosystem whose inhabitants are not always found in the same place. Even subsequent visits might find new denizens in places already visited. Toward this end, encounter and treasure listings are provided separately, and themselves are separate from the room keys. Further, the encounter listing doubles as the wandering monster chart. If a creature or an NPC is killed, obviously it will no longer be encountered.

Before the adventure is begun, the referee should decide rough locations for each encounter. At least four encounters should not be linked to a location, as the creatures will have temporarily left the caverns. They will remain available for wandering encounters.

Each referee is encouraged to make this adventure his or her own. I have purposefully left out any humanoid encounters, but the bandits are easily re-themed as orcs if that is your preference, and likewise the berserkers could also be made into hobgoblins.

Rumors known about the caverns (roll 1d10):

- 1: Men coming out of the caves have been driven mad by the remains of the Ghasora (true).
- 2: There is a grotto with a statue; it cries tears that have magical properties (true).
- 3: The Ghasora is in the form of a large mutant animal (false)
- 4: There is a cache of gems in a deep pool in the caverns (false).
- 5: Gnomes have been seen near the cave entrances (true)
- 6: A grotto deep in the caverns has the rare blue lotus flower prized by oneiromancers (false).
- 7: There are bees in the cave whose honey fetches a high price from wizards (true).
- 8: The Ghasora craves human sacrifice (true)
- 9: A mountain lion has taken up residence near the east entrance to the caves (false).
- 10: A cleric, Tomasz, entered the caves and has not been heard from since (true).

Room Keys:

1 – This broad, open cavern admits a small amount of light from the cave leading into it. The stalactite-covered ceiling rises 30 feet above the floor. On the far end, the exit is a hole about 10 feet high in the cavern wall.

2 – The west side of this chamber contains a pool of water about 8' in diameter and 12' deep. The water is surprisingly fresh and clear. There is an alcove at the bottom where any treasure in this room will be hidden.

3 – Scratch marks on the cave floor in this junction lead toward the west exit.

4 – This is a sub-cave, along with 5 and 6, which goes down to about 5 ½' high.

5 – A central column where stalactites and stalagmites have met dominates the geography of this room.

6 – This is the giant weasel's lair and contains a nest with two baby giant weasels (each about the size of a cat). The ceiling is only about 5½ feet high. The giant weasel may or may not be here, but if it is, it will defend its young fiercely. The nest is made of detritus.

7 – The walls of this room are marked with several signs. These are thieves' signs and will be 80% recognized by a thief character. The sign on the northeast corner says "danger ahead." The sign on the northwest is similar to one used when police are doing a dragnet. A third is over a stone on the southeast wall, and says "move this." If the stone is moved, any treasure will be found.

8 – This chamber contains an imposing bronze statue of a man in flowing robes, with the hands clasped together beneath the robes. If a person makes eye contact with the statue, it will ask them the following questions:

"Do you serve Law or Chaos?"

"Are you here for righteousness or petty gain?"

If the respondent is Lawful in alignment and is genuinely on the adventure for reasons of good, and says so, the statue will part its hands and reveal a scroll with *lightning bolt*. If the character lies or is Chaotic, it will unleash a small fireball (1d8 damage, save vs dragon breath for half).

9 – The alcove in the southern part of this room is raised about four feet above the remainder of the chamber.

10 – The tunnel to the north of this chamber is lined in sharp protruding crystals. There is an extremely precise series of maneuvers to get through it safely, known to characters who are under the thrall of the Ghasora. If a character attempts to get through without it, they must roll under their Dexterity on 1d20 or take 1d6 points of damage from the crystals.

11 – What appears to be a small pool in this room is actually green slime. It lies beneath about 6 inches of water.

12 – The eastern wall of this chamber has a boulder that blocks off a tunnel to room #14. The boulder requires a total strength of 42 to move by brute strength, but mechanical or magical means will allow a single character to move it.

13 – This is the lair of the Ghasora. It is a room covered in glimmering crystal; in fact, one of the largest crystal groups is where this evil secreted itself centuries ago. If it is looked upon directly, there are shadowy glimpses of the demonic horror that was its original form.

The room is dominated by a large stone formation which acts as a sacrificial altar used by characters dominated by the Ghasora (see the special note on the encounter list). If the characters are with any NPCs who are dominated, the NPCs will attempt to slay them as an offering. If they overpower the NPCs the Ghasora may attempt to *control* the mind of the most powerful PC (save vs. magic to negate). In its crystal form the Ghasora can only attempt this once per day.



If the PCs figure out what the Ghasora is, touching the crystals housing it will cause a shock (1d6 damage). They have effectively 30 hit points and can be damaged only by bashing or electricity.

14 – This room has a tunnel to room #12. However, because of numerous differences in elevation, the opening to the tunnel is 40 feet above the cave floor.

15 – In the western part of this chamber there are three undespoiled graves. Each grave is covered by a stone slab that requires a total of 16 Strength to move. The referee may assign a treasure to one or more of these graves, or roll on the random crypt generator found elsewhere in this issue.

16 – The north exit of this room is a tunnel leading down 20 feet. The tunnel is particularly slippery and characters who try to move down it quickly, or up it without the help of a rope, should roll under their Dexterity on 1d20 or find themselves slipping down the way.

17 – This room is a large but shallow pond, with an island in the middle. At the deepest the pond is only three feet deep, and contains weird blind fish. The island contains a statue, which is of a human female in robes and will radiate powerful magic (and powerful good). The robes have been painted a vivid blue in the past. The statue slowly cries tears of a slightly amber-colored liquid, at a rate of about 1 ounce per hour. Four ounces of the liquid will act as a *potion of healing*. The tears slowly evaporate.

18 – The floor of this opening is highly irregular, and characters are reduced to ½ normal move going through it.

19 – This large chamber has a number of growths of fungus on the ceiling growing down in long, white spines. They are edible and quite delicious if cooked wetll. If investigated closely the fungi have been harvested over time by some inhabitants.

20 – On the northeast wall of this area is a curious feature: an iron piton that was

apparently driven into a copious amount of wax about four feet high on the wall. The piton is under some pressure if touched. If it is removed, a pocket of methane will be expelled from the hole. If a character is holding a torch, the methane will flare off and act as a 2d6 *fireball* (save vs dragon breath for half damage).

21 – This chamber has four vents that act as skylights; in the mid-day they will appear as if there were spotlights on the cave floor.

22 – This room has special acoustic properties. Sound will resonate extremely strongly, and anything above a whisper or quiet step reverberates throughout the chamber. Loud noise is so intense that it will shatter glass and crystal. Check for each object, shatter on 1-2 in 1d6.

23 – The floor of this area is covered in bioluminescent fungi, with a 5' path that has been cleared by creatures walking in it. Any unintelligent creatures will be feeding on the fungi. The light emitted by the fungi is eerie but does not illuminate the area.

24 – Long stalactites prohibit easy movement and make this point particularly prone to ambushes.

25 – This passage is clogged with stalagmites and characters can only move at 1/3 their normal movement rate.

26 – This is the nest of the giant bees. There will be four more bees near it, identical to the bees in encounter D.

The honey being produced in the bee nest has special magical properties. A jar with 16 fluid ounces of it fetches 100 gold pieces from magic-users who will use it in the manufacture of *potions of flying*. A total of 16 such jars (2 gallons) can be extracted. 16 ounces of honey 1½ lbs, and 2 gallons will weigh 24 lbs.

27 – The floor of this chamber is unstable. Add up the number of characters and monsters (counting every 150-250 pounds as a character). This is the chance on 1d20 that the floor will collapse, each character falling 20' (2d6 damage).

28 – This room is a series of four tiers 5 feet high, so that the south exit is 20 feet higher than the north exit.

29 – The cave ceiling is very low in this room, in many places barely six feet high – enough for a human to pass but not easily. There are several columns formed by stalactites and stalagmites meeting around the room. Additionally the passage into room 30 is very low, only three feet high.

30 – As stated above, the passage into this room is one where characters basically have to crawl. Any creature in this room has an easy time making an ambush.

31 – This cavern is filled with mushrooms of several different varieties. A skilled woodsman or mushroom-picker might know how to tell the differences, but average characters will generally not. Roll 1d8 to determine type.

1-3 – Edible, tasty

4-5 – Inedible, due to poor taste

6 – Hallucinogenic, character is on a trip for 4d6 turns. (These fetch 10 GP per specimen on the black market.)

7 – Poisonous, causes vomiting/incapacitation for 2d6 turns.

8 – Poisonous, fatal (These fetch 150 GP per specimen on the black market, but good luck testing them.)



Encounters:

A – Gnomes, 4.

AL N, HD 3, HP 6/7/9/12, Dmg 1d6, AC 7
Dex 11/12/9/14, MV 60, Morale 8

The gnomes are acting as a rival adventuring party, and they are constantly on the move. If there is treasure in any room adjacent to the gnomes, there is a 25% chance that they have taken the treasure by the time that the party finds them.

Each of them is capable of casting *Phantasmal Forces* once per day. The illusions vary from gnome to gnome; some will be of chthonic horrors, others will simply hide their existence and possibly create a false wall blocking off a route they have not yet explored. They will try to flee any direct combat.

The gnomes know who Tomasz is and are implacably hostile to him. If he is accompanying the party they will try to lure him to his doom. Otherwise their motivation is treasure.



B – Bandits, 7.

AL CE, HD 1, HP 2/2/4/4/5/6/8, Dmg 1d6/1d8, AC 6,
Dex 9/12/11/9/14/16/9, MV 120, Morale 6

This is the larger of two groups of bandits who are loosely allied. They will tend to set an ambush in one of the larger caves and if they are able to do this will attack with short bows. If more than 50% of the bandits are defeated, and the remaining bandits are outnumbered, they gladly surrender and guide their captors through the caverns.

C – Bandits, 4.

AL CE, HD 1, HP 4/5/8/8, Dmg 1d8, AC 6
Dex 17/9/10/8, MV 120, Morale 8

In this group of bandits, one bandit (determined secretly by the referee) is under mind-control by the

Ghasora. They will attempt parley with a party of equal or greater size than them, and will offer to help them through the caverns. See the notes below for NPCs possessed by the Ghasora.

D – Giant Bees, 4.

AL N, HD ½, HP 1/3/3/3, Dmg 1d4+poison, AC 7
Dex 15/13/17/14, MV 10 / Fly 50, Morale 9

These bees, like the other set of bees, are not aggressive unless they are defending their hive.

E – Giant Bees, 3.

AL N, HD ½, HP 2/3/4, Dmg 1d4+poison, AC 7
Dex 15/14/12, MV 10 / Fly 50, Morale 9

F – Tomasz, an evil cleric.

AL CE, HP 18, Dmg 1d6 or by spell, AC 4
Dex 14, MV 120, Morale 11

Tomasz is an anti-cleric, 3rd level. He has memorized *Cause Fear* and *Cause Light Wounds* and will attempt to befriend the party. He is under the Ghasora's influence as detailed in the special notes section below. Tomasz seems to be a particularly friendly and helpful cleric, but will not cast a spell in the presence of the party. If he is encountered and ignored, he will attempt to find the skeletons and control them, and use them to ambush the party.

G – Giant Weasel.

AL N, HD 4+4, HP 17, Dmg 2d4 + special, AC 7
Dex 16, MV 150, Morale 8

H – Fire Beetles, 6.

AL N, HD 1, HP 3/4/6/7, Dmg 1d6, AC 7
Dex 13/7/15/10, MV 120, Morale 8

I – Skeletons, 8.

AL CE, HD ½, HP 1/1/2/3/3/4/4/4, Dmg 1d6, AC 7(8)
Dex 2/3/4/8/3/4/7/3, MV 60, Morale n/a

These skeletons are covered in corpse lichen, a foul remnant from the time when they were enchanted. The lichen gives the skeletons a bonus of 1 to their armor class, and absorbs 1 HP of damage on each skeleton. Once it is gone, the skeletons revert to AC 8. Attempts to turn the skeletons will automatically reduce the corpse lichen to dust but at the cost of not turning the skeletons!

J – Berserkers, 8.

AL N, HD 1+1, HP 2/2/3/5/6/8/9/9, Dmg 1d6, AC 7
Dex 13/7/4/12/14/11/12/10, MV 120, Morale n/a

These are eight wild men who will fight (at +2 to hit) until killed. The berserkers are not under the Ghasora's influence.

K – Wild boar.

AL N, HD 3, HP 15, Dmg 2d6, AC 4
Dex 14, MV 120, Morale 8

L – Geckos, Giant, 2.

AL N, HD 3+1, HP 10/14, Dmg 1d8, AC 5
Dex 14/16, MV 40, Morale 7

These giant lizards (5' long) stick to the ceilings of the caverns, if not seen they should surprise on 1-4.

M – Corpse Lights, 6.

AL CE, HD 1, HP 1/2/2/4/5/7, Dmg 1d6, AC 7
Dex 10 each, MV 120, Morale 9

These are the ghosts of torch-bearers who have died in the dungeon. They appear as the fire from invisible torches and attack with cold fire. As undead they turn as skeletons.

N – Living Statues, Crystal, 3.

AL CE, HD 3, HP 10/14/16, Dmg 1d6/1d6, AC 4
Dex 4/6/9, MV 90, Morale 11

These are animated statues made entirely of quartz. They were originally good but have been corrupted and become servitors of the Ghasora and will attempt to take characters to it for sacrificial purposes.

O – Luvell, an insane wizard.

AL CN (CE), HD 4, HP 11, Dmg 1d6, AC 9
Dex 12, MV 120, Morale n/a

Luvell is a wizard who contacted the Ghasora and was not dominated but has gone mad from the experience. He has cast *Enlargement* upon a frog, making it a 3 HD giant frog that does d8 damage on a successful attack. It is continuously transported on a *Tenser's Floating Disc* trailing behind Luvell. He claims that it is Meezu the Frog God and demands that characters he encounters worship it. If they do not, he will cast *Ray of Enfeeblement* on them and Meezu will attack the afflicted characters.

P – Tatzelwurm, 1

AL N, HD 4, HP 20, Dmg 1d3/1d3/1d6, AC 4
Dex 13, MV 120, Morale 8

See the description of the Tatzelwurm elsewhere in this issue for full detail. It constricts opponents for 1-8 damage per round after a successful hit.

Treasures:

I – A spell book containing: *Floating Disc*, *Explosive Runes*, *Fireball*, *Fly*. The spellbook is in an elaborate wood book case on which *Explosive Runes* has been cast. If the runes are read, they will explode for 6d4+6 damage (save vs spell for half) in a 20' radius. Magic-

users have a 5% chance per level to detect the runes' nature, or *Identify* will tell what they are.

II – 749 gold pieces in an elaborate iron casket (casket value 25 GP).

III – An ornate goblet, gold, encrusted with rubies and emeralds. Total value 2200 GP.

IV – A cache of six aquamarine stones, each 400 GP in value, total 2400 GP.

V – An elaborately carved jade figurine of a man with a lion head. Value 900 GP.

VI – A gigantic green pearl, perfectly spherical (3 inches in diameter), with a brilliant exterior. It has no particular magic qualities but is worth 720 GP.

VII – A cache of nuggets of iron pyrite (fool's gold). They weigh a total of 30 lbs and are worthless. If the pyrite is cut with a knife or bit into, it will not bend unlike real gold.

VIII – 19 chalcedony gem stones, each valued at 50 GP (total 950 GP). One of the stones is particularly lovely and undead will not attack a character carrying it if they have other options (roll 1d20 to determine which).

IX – Mirror of Kaliapeolox. The name Kaliapeolox inscribed on this palm-sized mirror in a strange script (unless the character knows a suitably ancient tongue, this requires a *Read Languages* or a Sage to decipher). Saying the name "Kaliapeolox" three times while looking into the mirror will summon or banish an air elemental of that name. It is bound to do a favor once, and only once, to the possessor of the mirror. If summoned again it is free to do as it will unless banished. If sold as an "ordinary" mirror this is worth 50 GP.

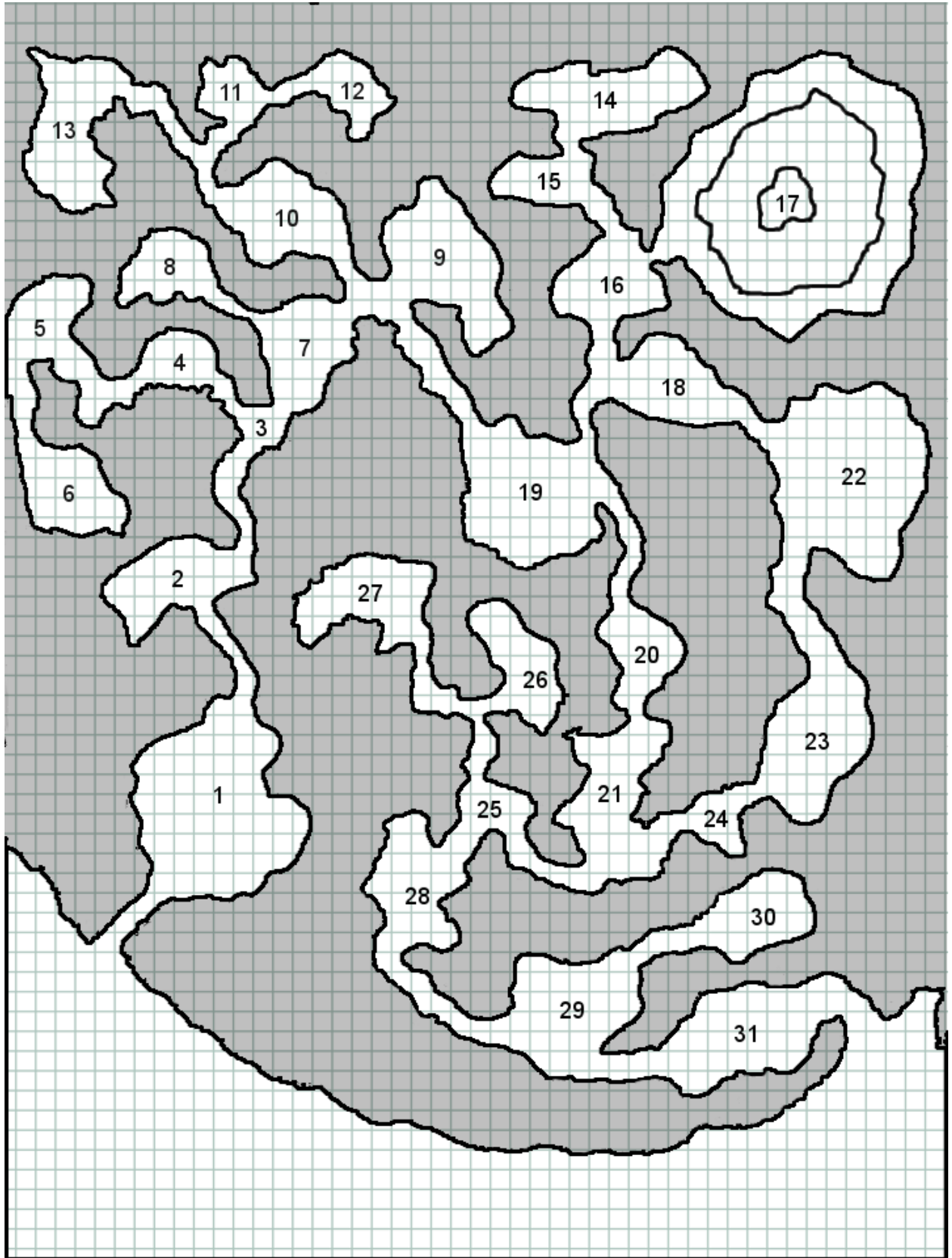
X – A sack with 3 potions: *healing*, *invisibility*, and *delusion*.

XI – A *ring of animal control*.

XII – A *sword +1, +2 against Magic-Users and Enchanted Monsters*.

Special Notes:

NPCs under the control of the Ghasora: Tomasz and one of the bandits are under the Ghasora's control. They will take the opportunity to befriend characters if possible, and then lead them to a chamber with "something truly amazing" in it (both will use these exact words).



What Trap Charts? – Setting an Ambush

by Wayne Rossi

In this issue's column, there are in fact no trap charts. Never say I've done nothing for your credibility as a referee. Instead I'm going to look at some of the traps that are useful for setting an ambush, both outside and inside.

Traps

The "Lilies"

This is a trap dating back to the campaigns of Julius Caesar, used in siege warfare by the ancient Romans. The lilies are holes three feet deep, with sharpened logs placed in them and protruding about one foot down from the surrounding ground. The lilies then are covered with twigs and brush wood to conceal the trap. These are effective for trapping a character's legs, doing only 1-2 points of damage but taking 1-6 rounds to escape, in which time the character is unable to move away.

Snare

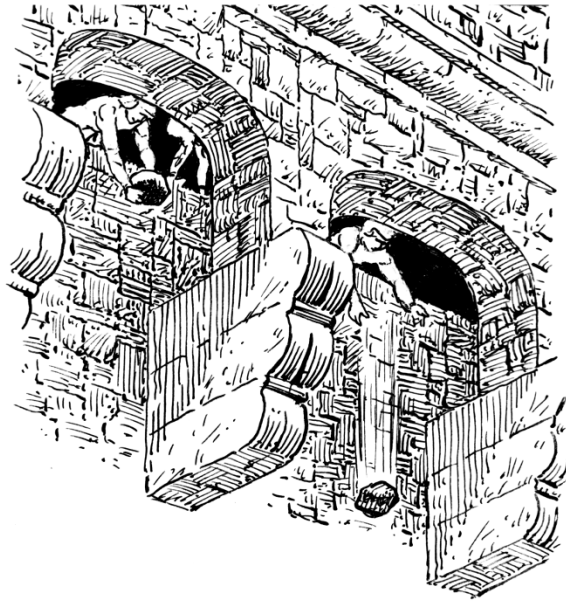
In many ways the snare is a deceptively simple trap. Its basic design uses a rope with an end tied so that a limb inside will draw it shut and thus entrap the leg of the victim. Snare traps are not particularly effective if humans are on the lookout for them, and do no damage, but they can be used to grant 1-2 rounds in which a given character cannot make a step.

Foothold Trap

The prototypical "bear trap" type of device, this is a pair of spring-loaded jaws triggered by a central plate, and tethered to the ground by a rope or a spike. It can be hidden in the underbrush, but this is one of the more obvious, if painful, types of trap and can do 1-3 points of damage, immobilizing a character until a full round is spent extracting them from it. However there should be a good chance (at least 3 in 6) of characters noticing such a trap on the trail.

Caltrops

A caltrop is a device that usually consists of two metal bars with prongs on either end, twisted together in a pyramid shape so that one end always points straight up. These can be concealed using brush but like a foothold trap they are fairly obvious (at worst a 2 in 6 chance to detect). Caltrops should do 1-4 damage (this should be rolled using a d4, as many gamers can well attest).



Murder Holes

A murder hole is a hole in the ceiling of a fortification (or, if you prefer, a dungeon) that can be used to throw rocks, fire arrows, or pour some substance such as scalding water, hot tar, or boiling oil. This sort of tactic is very useful for the defense of the lairs of kobolds or goblins, small enemies that can easily burrow up above the dungeon ceiling, and require no normal light to see that their targets are coming. Murder holes are obvious if one looks up, but that's a different story.

Booby Traps

Modern booby traps tend to be improvised explosive devices. Based on the realities of your fantasy world, this may not be a practical way to ambush characters. There are three options for a booby trap. One is chemical: for instance using the reactivity of sodium, an alchemist or wizard could build ceramic pots that are easily shattered, with one chamber containing pure sodium in kerosene, and the other holding liquid water – which have a well-known explosive capacity. A second is to use more magical entities, such as pots full of green slime,

Herding into an Ambush

The art of an ambush is in being able to control the movement of the opponent. When possible obstacles and even "obvious" traps should be used to lead the victims into the trap.

The Steel Wheel: An OSR Item

By David Przybyla

Steel Wheel (+2 Large Shield)

History

Holden Crane became wealthy through a series of fortuitous adventures. At the end of his last quest, surrounded by dead comrades, he alone remained to collect the Splintered Staff of Alhembaric. He almost could not seize the staff, for the cost was just too high, and treasure no substitute for the loss of his friends.

Still a young man, Holden retired from adventuring and decided how to use the rest of his life. He first commissioned a magical shield called Steel Wheel, which cost a substantial portion of his fortune. He then used his fame to attract a band of fighting men. He trained them rigorously and paid them more than they could otherwise earn.

Holden led his free company to remote rural villages where hard working people wrested a living from the land. These places were too far from civilized society to merit soldiers for defense, and often suffered under the depredations of monsters. Holden's men slew the monsters without recompense and he became a folk hero. Steel Wheel was the symbol of "Holden's Band".

When Holden's long career of monster hunting was over, Steel Wheel hung upon the wall near his favorite chair, reminding him of better times as he sat before the fire on cold winter days. After his death, a greedy relative sold Steel Wheel and its location was lost.

Powers

The famed dwarven smith Brodus "Squinteyes" Thennin forged Steel Wheel from special steel of his own devising. Unlike most large shields, Steel Wheel is round. The polished face gleams in the weakest illumination. Dwarven runes inscribed along the outer edge declare the purpose of the shield.

I am strong: let no blow break me.

I am a barrier: let no attack breach me.

I am resilient: let no corrosion rust me.

I am balanced: let no wielder be encumbered.

The wielder of Steel Wheel must recite the runes each morning while holding the shield. Failure to do so will negate the shield's magical properties for that day.

After reciting the runes, the wielder must feed the shield his blood. When equipped, Steel Wheel extrudes a blade near the grip that cuts the forearm and draws the wielder's blood into the steel. The metal acquires a reddish tinge and is now ready to be used for the day.

The cut causes 2 points of damage that cannot be healed until the next day. Steel Wheel's powers will only work for a wielder that has freely given blood to the shield.

Steel Wheel is a large round shield with the following magical properties.

1. The shield grants +2 to AC and weighs only 5 lbs.
2. Three times per day, the wielder may invoke the *Implacable Foe* power. The wielder chooses a particular foe against which he is currently engaged and takes 2 points of damage. For the remainder of the battle, Steel Wheel grants +4 to AC against only this enemy. The damage can be healed after the battle.
3. Three times per day, the wielder can invoke the *Brilliant Shine* power. The power can affect any single foe within 40 ft. of the wielder. The target must make a saving throw versus spell or become blinded for 1d6 rounds. The target receives a -4 penalty to all rolls to hit if sight is its primary sense.

Adventure Hooks

1. The current owner of Steel Wheel travels through a rural village. A number of older residents warmly greet him and wish him well. A few make cryptic comments about how he has returned to "clean up the mess". It is obvious that the villagers expect something of him.

Should the wielder ask what this might mean, and even if he doesn't, he will learn how Holden Crane saved the village from one or more monsters. The monster's relations have now returned for vengeance, and the villagers assume that the wielder has come to finish Holden's work. Why else would someone carry Steel Wheel?

2. An adventurer encounters an old man that served with Holden. The old man has recently seen a bandit leader wielding Steel Wheel. There can be no mistake, for no other shield looks like Steel Wheel. The old man swears that he would challenge the bandit if he still possessed the strength. He begs the famed adventurer to relieve the bandit of that which he does not deserve.

The old man will explain the powers of Steel Wheel as an inducement for the adventurer to act. He will also mention that the bandit leader apparently does not understand all of these powers.

Ready Reference: Random Crypt Contents

by Wayne Rossi

The following charts are intended for use when characters come across a crypt or tomb from centuries past. Accessing the crypt's contents should always take a deliberate action, such as breaking the tomb's seal or disturbing the remains in a niche of the catacombs.

Table 1: Crypt contents (1d10)

- 1-5: Deceased body
- 6-7: Roll on Table 2: Crypt Threats
- 8-9: Roll on Table 5: Items
- 10: Roll on Table 6: Special

Table 2: Crypt Threats (1d8):

- 1-2: 2d4 rats, nonmagical
- 3-4: 1d6 animated skeletons (q.v.) come to life
- 5-6: Roll on Table 3: Other Creatures
- 7-8: Roll on Table 4: Traps

Table 3: Other Creatures (1d6):

- 1 - Green slime (q.v.) on the top of the crypt will fall if contents are disturbed.
- 2 - Yellow mold (q.v.) is on the skeletons
- 3 - Grey ooze (q.v.) lurks at the back of the crypt
- 4 - 2-8 centipedes (as normal insects, special attack: poison)
- 5 - 2-12 normal rats (as normal animals, 5% chance of disease if bitten)
- 6 - Snake (as normal animal, special attack: poison)

Table 4: Traps* (1d10):

- 1 - An arrow fires out at the closest person, 1d6 damage
- 2 - A poison needle is hidden amongst the debris. Save vs. poison or die
- 3 - A scything blade sweeps out over the nearest square. 1d6 damage, save vs. breath weapon to avoid.
- 4 - Acid sprays out at the character exploring. 1d6 damage, save vs. breath weapon to avoid.
- 5 - The tomb contains a vial of sleeping gas which is broken by exploring through the remains. Save vs. poison or fall asleep for 4-24 (4d6) turns.
- 6 - The crypt itself collapses, injuring anyone trying to rummage through it.
- 7 - A heavy stone from the adjacent ceiling falls toward the character exploring. Does 2d6 damage, save vs. dragon breath to avoid.
- 8 - The nearest square is a pit trap, triggered by moving an object greater than 30lbs weight in the crypt. The opening swings back to shut after 2 turns and must be re-triggered to open.
- 9-10 - Disturbing the remains moves a lever, which triggers the following effect (1d6):
 - 1 - Shock for 1d6 damage

- 2 - Rings a bell (alerts any creature in the area)
- 3 - Opens a secret door behind the crypt
- 4 - Reveals a secret compartment near the crypt
- 5 - Opens a trap door next to the crypt
- 6 - Awakens the body in the crypt

* Traps are only triggered on 1-2 in 1d6



Table 5: Items (1d10):

- 1-6 - 10-60 coins (d6x10)
 - Roll 1d6 for type:
 - 1-2=Copper
 - 3-4=Silver
 - 5-6=Gold
 - 7 - Random jewelry, roll for value/type.
 - 8 - Random gem, roll for value/type.
 - 9 - Scroll with *Invisibility**
 - 10 - Healing potion*
- * If this result is rolled more than once, re-roll the die.

Table 6 - Special (1d6):

- 1 - A ceramic jar filled with wine long since turned to vinegar (value 10 gp)
- 2 - Musty old tome in an ancient language (value 100 gp)
- 3 - Religious artifact, determine deity randomly (value 15 gp)
- 4 - Decorative statuette, ivory (value 25 gp)
- 5 - Spellbook, determine 1-4 spells randomly
- 6 - Musical instrument (random type, value 5-30 gp)

Ready Reference: Stranger Statues

by Wayne Rossi

Choose Subtable (1d8, Roll 1d4 times):

- 1 – Missing Parts
- 2 – Unusual Material
- 3 – Unusual Subject
- 4 – Holding Object
- 5 – Mounted Statue
- 6 – Hiding Places
- 7 – Unusual Trappings
- 8 – Unique Statue

Table 1: Missing Parts (1d8):

- 1 – Head
- 2 – Arm, left
- 3 – Arm, right
- 4 – Leg, left (unstable)
- 5 – Leg, right (unstable)
- 6 – Hand, right
- 7 – Hand, left
- 8 – Genitalia (50% covered by fig leaf)

Table 2: Unusual Material (1d8):

- 1 – Wood
- 2 – Bone
- 3 – Obsidian
- 4 – Jade
- 5 – Porcelain
- 6 – Crystal
- 7 – Iron (double weight)
- 8 – Gold (value is weight x 10 GP)

Table 3: Unusual Subject (1d6):

- 1 – Humanoid (1-2, Goblin/3-4, Orc/5-6, Hobgoblin)
- 2 – Animal (determine randomly)
- 3 – Commoner (1-3 Farmer/4-5 Tradesman/6 Servant)
- 4 – Child (determine age with d12-1, 0=infant)
- 5 – Demihuman (1-Elf/2-Dwarf/3-Hobbit/4-Gnome)
- 6 – Roll twice

Table 4: Holding Object (1d8):

- 1 – Weapon (sword, spear, etc)
- 2 – Magic Implement (1-2 Rod/3-4 Staff/5-6 Wand)
- 3 – Bag (1-2 Empty/3-4 2d6 coins/5-6 random item)
- 4 – Bottle (1-4 Empty/5 poison/6 random potion)
- 5 – Book (3 in 6 chance of being an actual book)
- 6 – Gem (4 in 6 chance of being fake)

Table 5: Mounted Statue (1d8):

- 1 – Horse, standing
- 2 – Horse, rearing back
- 3 – Horse, galloping
- 4 – Donkey
- 5 – Tiger
- 6 – Elephant



Table 6: Hiding Places (1d6):

- 1 – Hollow inside head
- 2 – Hollow in chest (1-3 opens in front, 4-6 in back)
- 3 – Hollow in groin
- 4 – Compartment in hand
- 5 – Compartment in foot
- 6 – Compartment in base

Table 7: Unusual Trappings (1d8):

- 1 – Seated on a chair (throne, bench, etc)
- 2 – Standing on a pedestal
- 3 – Stained glass window behind statue
- 4 – Enameled artwork behind statue
- 5 – Surrounded by animals
- 6 – Inset in a grotto
- 7 – In front of a tree
- 8 – Statue is a relief

Table 8: Unique Features (1d10):

- 1 – Unusual color (1-Red/2-Orange/3-Yellow/4-Green/5-Blue/6-Indigo/7-Violet/8-Roll twice)
- 2 – Armored (1-2 Leather/3-4 Chain 5-6 Plate)
- 3 – Points (roll 1d8 for direction)
- 4 – Glows (roll color as 1 above, treat 8 as white)
- 5 – Contains a working lantern
- 6 – Horned
- 7 – Winged
- 8 – Tail (1-2 Pointed/3-4 Blunt/5-6 Forked)
- 9 – Speech
- 10 – Roll twice

Ready Reference: Save vs. Death Ray!

By Wayne Rossi

Death rays have different color beams, which determine the overall effect.

Red: Red death ray beams are based on extreme heat. They will cause wood or cloth to burn, and if intense enough, may cause metal to become white-hot.

Orange: Orange rays are derived from acid, and must be extremely corrosive to any object in their path. Items must make a saving throw or be destroyed.

Yellow: Yellow rays are effectively lightning, and will be conducted by any metal they come in contact with.

Green: Green death rays are based on poison.

Blue: Blue death rays are based on extreme cold. Liquids (canteens, holy water, potions etc) must save or the vessel containing them will be destroyed.

Indigo: Instead of causing physical destruction, indigo death rays affect the mind. A character who fails his or her saving throw will go irretrievably insane.

Violet: Violet death rays reduce living matter to its constituent elements. A person killed by a violet death ray will be reduced to a pile of ashes and a mass of super-hot, boiled water. This has no effect on non-living matter.

And, of course, death rays have to be launched from something.

Ray Gun: These are small enough to be held by hand and do 2-3 dice of damage per blast (save for half). They only strike their target if the wielder first makes a successful "to hit" roll, considering all man-type creatures to be effectively unarmored. A ray gun will have enough energy for 1-100 (roll d100 to determine) blasts.

Cannon: The cannon is a form of death ray too large to be held by hand. Based on their size, cannons (which may weigh from 100 to 1000 lbs) may do 4 to 12 dice of damage. A cannon will have enough energy for 4-40 blasts.



Daily OSR: Charts

By Ivan Sorensen

Character motivations

When creating henchmen, non-player characters and other bystanders in your campaign world, it can sometimes be hard to find unique and interesting personality traits. Otherwise, you may enjoy a certain level of surprise and unpredictability in your designs. If so, here is a system to generation random character motivations in 3 quick rolls of a 10 sided die. The system can also be utilized to generate random motivations for a player character, if you enjoy a challenge or are out of ideas.

First, generate what the feeling is:

1 Love	6 Shame
2 Admiration	7 Lust
3 Hatred	8 Abstinence
4 Disdain	9 Curiosity
5 Pride	10 Fear

Second, generate the subject of the feeling:

1 Romantic	6 Food and drink
2 Wealth	7 Faith
3 Reputation	8 Cause
4 Power	9 Friendship
5 Influence	10 Immortality

Lastly, generate the intensity of the feeling:

1 Life goal	6 Inclination
2 Overwhelming	7 Convenient
3 Strong	8 Forced
4 Dedicated	9 Indoctrinated
5 Philosophical	10 Expected

As an example, for an old merchant character, we roll 4,7,2. This gives us “disdain, faith, overwhelming”. Obviously this character is no friend of the religious. It can then be interpreted what this means in the specific campaign situation. Maybe he hates all faiths? Maybe he hates the corrupt clergy in the town? Maybe this character trait inspires you to add a corrupt clergy in town?

As a second example, a newly hired fighter henchmen rolls 6,2,4. This gives us “shame, wealth, dedicated”. Maybe the guy comes from a terribly poor background and fiercely wants to make up for it? Maybe he has taken strict vows of poverty?

As you can see, multiple interpretations are possible, and should be encouraged. An important character should probably have 2 or 3 motivations, while a less significant character can get by with one trait.



Morale Failures

On a failed morale check, characters and monsters generally flee. However, that can be somewhat boring. Instead, you can use the following table to introduce an element of unpredictability into your games. Make sure to use the correct table for the character in question.

Monsters

- 1: Flee in a panic (abandon the fight as quickly as possible, likely dropping weapons and abandoning wounded)
- 2: Hasty retreat (will try to recover weapons and wounded if possible)
- 3: Orderly withdrawal (will conduct a fighting retreat, with some fighters trying to slow the enemy pursuit)
- 4: Negotiate (try to reach an agreement or avoid further bloodshed)
- 5: Bribe (use any wealth possessed to buy safety)
- 6: Surrender (give themselves up and be at the enemy's mercy. Possible henchmen but would be untrustworthy)

Hirelings and generic hangers on

- 1: Flee in a panic
- 2-3: Hasty retreat
- 4: Withdraw in good order (usually remaining near battle area and may provide support if not in danger)
- 5: Turn traitor (join or aid enemy)
- 6: Desert (runs away and is never found again)

Henchmen and trusted characters

- 1: Flee
- 2-3: Retreat
- 4-6: Withdraw

Magic Malfunctions

It is generally accepted fact that magical spells work the same way, all the time. However, in many stories and game worlds this is not the case. Indeed, strange happenings can occur all the time, and can lend a whimsical, or even dangerous, air to the world.

If this sounds desirable to you, you can use the following tables to generate unusual happenings when spells are cast.

First, you need to decide how likely this is. Pick a dice type to represent magical flux. The smaller the dice type, the more likely it is that something unexpected occurs.

On any roll of 1, something negative has happened. Roll on the table below to determine the effect. In some instances, the rolled effect may not be possible. If so, the spell simply fizzles (treat as a 1)

- 1: The spell fizzles with no effect other than some sparks.
- 2: A random other spell in the casters memory is cast instead, at the original target if possible.
- 3: The spell strikes an unwanted target (a help spell will strike an enemy for example)
- 4: The spell has the opposite effect (A fireball heals all in the blast area, while an invisibility spell would alert everyone to your presence)
- 5: The spell works as intended, but the caster takes 1D6 points of damage.
- 6: The spell works, but a random other memorized spell is lost from memory as well.
- 7: A random creature is summoned (use level appropriate wandering monster table). The creature is confused for 1 round, then attacks the caster.

8: The spell works, but the caster is unable to cast any more spells for 10 minutes.

9: The spell works but any saving throws against will succeed automatically.

10: The spell works, but the casters alignment changes randomly for 1D6 days.

Any roll of the maximum number on the die (6 on a D6 for example) results in a positive effect. Roll below, treating any impossible result as a 1 (spell remains in memory)

- 1: Spell remains in memory
- 2: Any saving throw is at -2
- 3: Duration and area of effect is increased by 50%
- 4: Caster recovers 1D6 hit points due to magical energies
- 5: The spell is cast super quick, at the beginning of the round, and the caster can take another, non-casting action this round too
- 6: The spell effect is permanent. (A fireball creates a permanent ball of flame, while an enchantment lasts. The spell can be dispelled however)
- 7: The spell has its normal duration but cannot be dispelled during that time, and will ignore magic resistance
- 8: A random creature is summoned. It is confused for 1 round, then acts as if charmed by the caster.
- 9: Through mystical insight, the caster receives 100 experience points for every level of the spell cast.
- 10: For 10 minutes, the caster is shrouded in mystical energies, giving him +2 to all saving throws.



Dark Age Dungeons: Gaming in Late Antiquity

By Wayne Rossi

Most old school fantasy role-playing games exist in a world that has a number of familiar features: It is a medieval fantasy set in a period after a great empire has fallen, set in a time period that jumps around anachronistically from the 800s to the 1500s, although usually steering clear of anything after gunpowder became widespread. This article will discuss playing in fantasy Europe a few decades before that, during what is often called late Antiquity, the early Middle Ages, or (in a way that historians frown upon) the Dark Ages, focusing on the years following the end of the Western Roman Empire in AD 476.

In terms of mood and content, the Dark Ages are superior material for fantasy games involving characters who want to make their stamp on the world. Only the Hellenistic world offers comparable freedom; we are in a period of upheaval all across Europe, where kingdoms rose and fell and great swaths of humanity migrated and settled lands that had become borderlands. This makes much of the old Western Empire good fodder for games that will involve characters settling their own domains, building up their possessions and even warring with neighbors.

There are several distinct advantages for a historical game. One of the biggest is that history is perhaps the richest “sourcebook” you could ever ask for. There are unlimited maps, books and online resources for history. And there is a distinct richness when, for instance, real-world peoples and myth become part of the game that even the most detailed fantasy setting cannot provide. For a starting source one can do much worse than Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.

The World in Brief

The last puppet emperor on the throne in Ravenna was one Romulus Augustulus, whose reign lasted less than a year. The Ostrogothic king Odoacer had deposed Julius Nepos in 475, and Nepos was the last crowned emperor

recognized by the Emperor in the East, Zeno. Romulus was deposed in 476 and Odoacer’s kingdom was supreme in Italy.



Western Europe had long since lost the ability to resist the tide of Germanic tribes moving across it, and had come to increasingly desperate deals for most of the fifth century. In AD 410, the Eternal City of Rome was sacked by Visigoths. The Vandals had taken northern Africa, one of Rome’s bread baskets, and set up a kingdom centered upon Carthage. Hispania (Spain) and Gaul (France)

were primarily taken by the Visigoths in the 5th century. Italia (Italy) and Dalmatia (former Yugoslavia) were part of the Ostrogothic Kingdom. This world order would be undermined throughout the 6th century.

Gaul was conquered by the Franks, a Germanic-speaking people, in the late 5th and early 6th century. In the reign of the Merovingian king Clovis, the Visigoths were driven back into Spain and the last holdouts of the old Roman order were broken. The Franks did not practice primogeniture and the kingdom was broken up; it did not reunite until Charles the Great, or Charlemagne, almost three centuries after.



The Eastern Roman, or Byzantine, Empire began a project of Reconquista in AD 533. Belisarius, the great Byzantine general, retook Africa from the Vandals, and then Rome from the Ostrogoths, but lost the confidence of his Emperor. Constantinople, the “new Rome,” had been struck by a great plague in AD 542 and Emperor Justinian I barely survived, becoming notoriously paranoid in the aftermath. Most of Italy remained outside of Byzantine control.

Belisarius’s conquest was the furthest extent of the Byzantine world, the last time that it was a world empire rather than a regional power in modern Turkey and the Balkans. A century later, the rise of the Islamic Caliphate would take

bread-rich Egypt and Africa forever, along with Syria and the hotly contested holy land in Palestine.

All of these kingdoms – Frankish, Visigoth, Vandal, and Ostrogoth – as well as the Empire itself were at least in some way Christian. The Goths and Vandals had mostly adopted the Arian heresy that thought of Jesus Christ as being subordinate to God the Father, while the Franks under Clovis had accepted the



Britain, which had been a marginal Roman province, had been invaded by Germanic-speaking Angles, Saxons and Jutes, and was now inhabited by Anglo-Saxon settlers in its east and Romano-Britons in the west (including Wales and Cornwall). The eastern kingdoms were pagan, unlike the Christianized groups living in continental Europe, and it is this period that inspired the legends of King Arthur – a king of the Britons, as opposed to the Anglo-Saxons.

Europe was no longer the civic Roman world that had been built over centuries. Cities had shrunk to small remnants of their height in the second century, with only limited areas within their fortified walls even occupied. The majority of their citizens have long since left and engage today in subsistence farming, trying to eke a living out of the soil under a local warlord, no matter how little this seems to be. The western world is really the kind of wilderness imagined by fantasy role-playing, rather than a neatly tended range of farmland as it would be in the later medieval period.

Religion and Language

The original fantasy RPG featured a cleric who was implicitly Christian, if not explicitly so. The later generic “holy symbol” was a cross, and the abilities were explicitly Christian in their making. It is hard to imagine the same clerics as actual pagans, whose priests were often ceremonial roles held by non-professionals and lacked the drive and mission needed for a real “cleric” type. So, if your group is comfortable playing it, having characters be Christian is recommended. The late Roman identity was fiercely proud of its association with Christianity; after Julian the Apostate every

Trinitarian view that prevailed in the Empire. There was not yet the later schism between the Greek church in the East and the Roman church in the West, and the Pope was still ostensibly the first among several patriarchs, including those of Constantinople, Alexandria in Egypt, Antioch in Syria, and Jerusalem. Yet the century’s end would bring Gregory I, who would vastly expand the Papacy into something resembling its modern form.

emperor was Christian, and much of the moral authority of the empire moved into the Church through the Popes.

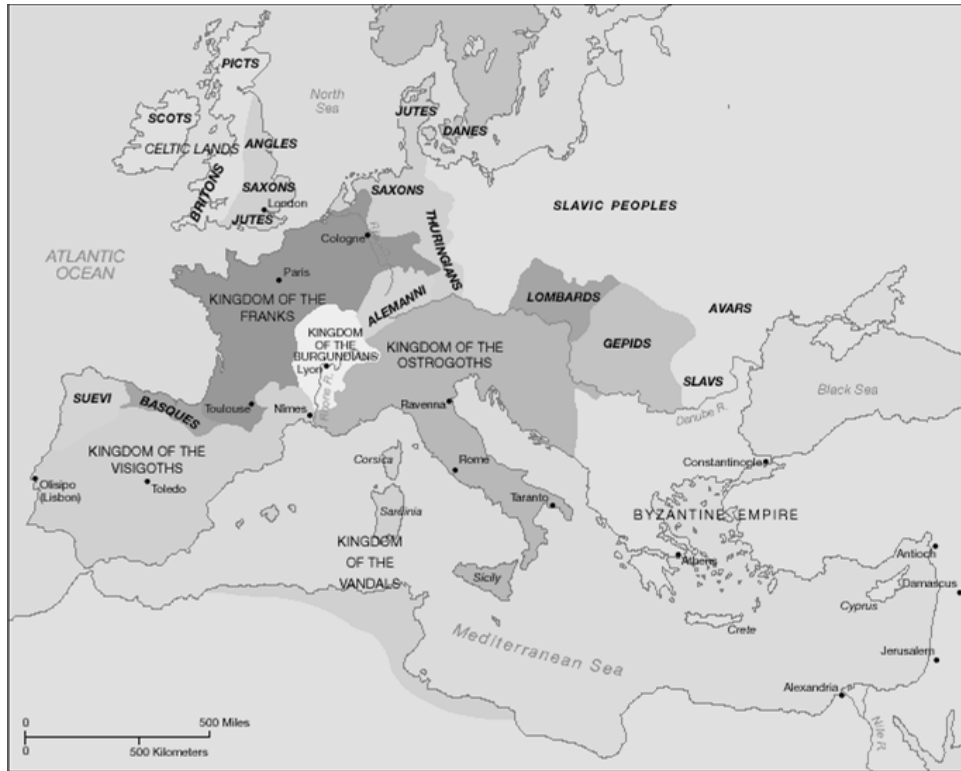


For those who find playing with real religion uncomfortable, I would suggest substituting a late pagan deity with some vaguely messianic characteristics. The god Sol Invictus (the Unconquered Sun) is a good choice, allowing the referee to easily substitute solar imagery for Christian, and has a solid imprimatur from the Roman Empire under Aurelian.

The kind of Christianity embraced in Late Antiquity was often a deeply civic religion, with ties to the tribe or the Empire. Laypeople often addressed their prayers to saints, rather than having the audacity to pray to God directly. Monasticism is in full force, particularly strong in Byzantium where the monks are the moral center of Constantinople. Clerics are militants of the faith, defending it against heretics and pagans (in a century or two Islam will become the main threat to Christianity but it has not come about yet).

My recommendation is to make all kinds of priests and/or druids have functional magic. Even in the Book of Acts, Simon Magus is able to perform miraculous acts – we should be no less judgmental. Of course different faiths, and Christians on both sides of theological disputes, will differ as to whether God or the Devil (or some other being) is responsible for each other’s spells.

In terms of languages, there was a “Common” tongue in much of the former Western Empire, vulgar Latin. This was like the Latin of the classical period, but slowly changing into separate tongues: in northern and



southern Gaul, the early forms of French and Occitan and Provençal; in Hispania the forerunners of Spanish, Portuguese, Catalan and Galician; in Italy the various Italian dialects. There was a Gothic language that was related to modern Germanic languages, and Frankish which was similar to Dutch. Gothic was displaced by the Romance languages in Hispania and Italia, and died out over time. In the western Merovingian kingdoms, Old High German was spoken, the direct ancestor of the modern German language. Frankish only prevailed in what is now the Low Countries – elsewhere it was an administrative language spoken mostly by the upper classes. In the Byzantine Empire, Greek is the language of the whole empire.

Other languages will be determined by race.

Kingdoms and Empires

The majority of kingdoms still paid nominal homage to the old Roman Empire. Rome remained the foremost cultural and political touchstone of Europe and held pride of place long after the empire had fallen as a political entity.

Frankish Kingdom: This encompassed modern France, the northern parts of Germany and the Low Countries. After Clovis's death, it was ruled as up to four kingdoms: three in Gaul (Soissons, Paris and Orleans) and one in Germany (variously ruled from Reims or Metz and sometimes called Austrasia). The Merovingian

kingdoms were hardly paragons of order, with virtually yearly war between the Frankish kings. Much of the outlying areas were virtually independent, such as Aquitaine and Gascony.

Visigothic Kingdom: This was almost entirely in modern Spain and Portugal. The Visigoths ruled the main holdout of Arianism until the conversion of Reccared I converted to Catholic Christianity.

Ostrogothic Kingdom: This existed only up into the 540s, when Belisarius took Rome through the ruse of accepting elevation to the imperial

throne. The Ostrogoths were Arian heretics like the Visigoths and ruled over a severely depleted Italia. After AD 568, the Lombards conquered much of Italy and would hold it until Charlemagne.

Britain – this was a panoply of Saxon and British kingdoms. Wales and Cornwall were both several different kingdoms in this period, and the Britons stretched north into the more southern areas of Scotland. Many still spoke their Celtic languages through this period. In the Anglo-Saxon lands, old English was spoken, as was old Frisii, with all their well-known peculiarities.

Incorporating Fantastic Elements

A fantasy Europe is not as difficult as it often seems to manage. The approach I favor is to blend the fantasy with the history as if they had been a part of real world history. For obvious reasons fantastic elements will tend to exist at the fringes of society, but we should remember that the people we are talking about most certainly thought of magic as a real phenomenon; the idea that it was made-up would have been ridiculous.

Ancient Rome is an easy and convenient place to have been a magical realm. Its pagan roots were closer to the old ways, and as a slave economy it never fully embraced any technological change. As with the great engineers, the truly great wizards of Rome served in the Roman army, where they were treated more or less as

mobile artillery. It would have been rare for the Roman nobility to dabble in the arcane arts, although possible; I like the idea that Domitian (AD 81-96), who was voted *damnatio memoriae* (the condemnation of his memory) from the Senate, kept a large staff of magic-users and engaged in various arcane tests and experiments that led to no good. Other historical figures may have similarly been patrons of the magical arts.



Librams of ancient magic are written in ancient Greek and classical Latin, the latter of which may require a second language slot to understand, or in even older tongues such as Aramaic or Phoenecian. This period saw the advent of the codex as the form of books instead of scrolls, and who is to say that magic books did not make up a good chunk of the great lost Library of Alexandria? In general arcane magic should be seen as a force on its way down.

For clerics it is the other way around; unlike paganism, now is an age of Christianity, holding civilization together through the long night of the Dark Ages. Faith is an almost physical attribute and Christian influence is at its peak around the Mediterranean Sea. Zoroastrianism in the East is a state religion of the Sassanid Persian empire that is entering into its final century and has lost much of its religious zeal from centuries earlier. Islam is still a century away. Heresies are a problem, but more often than not the complex theological debates over the nature of Jesus Christ are expressions of the cultural and political differences between regions or ethnic groups. So the Goths are Arians not out of deep and abiding faith in a single god rather than a Trinity, but because it was a way to adopt Christianity without setting themselves up in the complex web of imperial bonds.

In the real world, ancient Rome was insatiable in its desire for new and strange creatures. If a bestiary's worth of fantastic animals and monsters actually existed, they were probably hunted fairly widely and used in gladiatorial games. Such creatures should be appropriately rare, occurring mainly on the far-flung fringes of civilized society, a rarity to actually encounter.

Dragons and such are special cases. The mountain ranges in Europe offer tremendous possibilities; one can see the great dragons periodically flying above the Alps or the Pyrenees on rare occasions, but they mostly live underground, coming up to the surface only periodically to get treasure. In early Christianity the dragons carried a special symbolism, and represented

both something sinister and Satanic, and indeed sin itself. Saint George of Lydda remains the most famous dragonslayer, having lived in the late 3rd century. How much more fantastic is a world where he actually slayed a dragon? And the famous marking on maps – “here be dragons” – are not ignorant but rather represent good knowledge.

In some respects, this is a good template for understanding the magical world of late Antiquity. In no small part, the people living in that period still believed very fervently in much of what modern humans take for granted as myth. If we only took the stories in the hagiographies and legends as good coin, we are much of the way to a world that today we would call a fantasy world already.

Despite having converted to Christianity the world of late antiquity retained some of the same spirit that it had when it was predominantly pagan. There was official opposition from the Church to astrology, but all kinds of fortune-telling remained popular among the masses; others include methods such as opening a book and seeing what page it lands on, and the varied methods of soothsayers from antiquity. No matter what theology they put around it, the common people in late antiquity embraced wildly varied forms of folk superstition. Pagan beliefs did not die, they mostly just adapted to the new terrain.



Humanoids offer entirely different possibilities. The Roman Empire was invaded by non-civilized peoples from the Russian Steppe; there is no reason that all of those peoples needed to have been *human*. Orcs and hobgoblins may have lived on the steppe along with the nomadic tribes we recognize, and been co-opted into the various federations. This is *not* intended to say that real-world cultures are replaced by humanoids! Rather, they are added into the mix, which was generally a fairly heterogeneous group of nomadic raiders to begin with.

Other humanoids have resort to the underworld, the central focus of so much of classic fantasy RPGs.

Obscure Gods

by Wayne Rossi

Name: Oceses
Symbol: A burnt-out torch.
Alignment: N
Movement: 60
Armor Class: 8
Hit Points (Hit Dice): 42 (12)
Attacks: 1 torch
Damage: 2d6 + fire damage
Save: Normal Man
Morale: 5
Treasure Type: J

Oceses, Lord of the Blackened Hand, is the minor god of torchbearers and lackeys. He is squat and ugly, blind in one eye, his features permanently darkened by pitch. He always carries a large torch that inexplicably fails to illuminate more than 10' around him, but radiates powerful magic.

Most frequently Oceses is found in the deepest levels of various dungeons. He wanders, lost in labyrinthine corridors and unable to find his own way.

If encountered, Oceses will react kindly to any NPC retainers or henchmen that are with the party. His behavior toward PCs will be determined by how they have treated henchmen. If he attacks, the fire from his torch burns for 1d6 damage per round for 1-4 rounds or until extinguished. Henchmen will instinctively trust Oceses and will refuse to take any action that could result in harm to him.

Oceses' torch is a powerful magic item. First, it will *never* cease burning; until the end of time, the torch cannot be extinguished. This can be quite dramatic if the torch is, for instance, submerged in water; it will slowly heat the liquid rather than dim its flame even a tiny bit. Second, it prevents henchmen from attacking the character holding it. In the presence of a "leader" type, the least powerful creatures will not assault a character holding the torch. Yet if the character who has the torch has a henchman who dies, and he fails to use *raise dead* on that henchman within a week, the torch will inexplicably cause the character to lose an eye.

Boons granted by Oceses are always of a deeply odd type; for instance, he will give a piece of chalk or other dungeon oddity. He can also give bonuses to rolls such as hearing noise within the dungeon.



There are small shrines devoted to Oceses in many dungeons. These are drawings of a torch and the god's single remaining eye in chalk on the dungeon walls. This frequently marks the spot where a henchman lost his unfortunate life.

Reaction Table (2d6):

Reaction Die	Result
2	Hostile, immediate attack
3-4	Distrust
5-6	Inquires about the treatment of henchmen
7-8	Ignores the party and continues exploring
9-12	Grants a boon (if henchmen present); otherwise ignores party.

Creature Feature: New Monsters

By Wayne Rossi

Andionic Devil

Appearing: unique

Move: 120' (12'') / 180' (18'') flying

Hit Dice: 8

Armor Class: 2

Treasure Type: C

Attacks: 3 (claw/claw/bite)

Damage: 1-8/1-8/2-16

Alignment: Chaotic Evil

The Andionic Devil dwells in deep, ill-favored woods, far from civilization. According to legend, it was the offspring of a foul devil and a human woman. It flies on leathery, batlike wings and is amazingly quick. This monstrosity has the head of a horse, but with sharp and vicious teeth; the body of a serpent, two short arms and two cloven goat's hooves. Despite its appearance, it is not actually an infernal creature; it only resembles one.

In combat it will bite and kick with its powerful teeth. Creatures with less than 1 full hit die (excepting player characters) must save versus paralysis when it appears or be immobilized by fear for 1-3 turns. The Andionic Devil has a propensity to hunt travelers lost deep in the wilderness. Its shadow will often be the only hint a victim sees before the Devil attacks.

Chickcarnee

Appearing: 1

Move: 60' (6'') / 120' (12'') flying

Hit Dice: 1

Armor Class: 5

Treasure Type: nil

Attacks: 3 (claw/claw/bite)

Damage: 1-2/1-2/1

Alignment: Chaotic Good

It is difficult to distinguish the Chickcarnee from a normal owl with odd, and slightly ugly features. They live in trees, and have red plumage. Their nests are typically at a point where two trees meet.

If a traveler is kind to a chickcarnee and offers it food or helps it when injured, he or she will act as if under the effects of a *bless* spell for the following game week. If they are unkind to or harm the chickcarnee, they will be under a *curse* for the next week. Killing a chickcarnee will result

in a *curse* that is permanent unless a *remove curse* spell is cast.

Chickcarnees will attempt to fly away if engaged in combat.



Corpse Lichen

Appearing: Special

Move: immobile

Hit Dice: 1 hit point / square foot

Armor Class: 9

Treasure Type: nil

Attacks: n/a

Damage: n/a

Alignment: Chaotic Evil

Corpse lichen is the result when a skeleton is re-animated by a necromancer or evil priest but is no longer physically intact. It forms into a bony white structure that grows around rock formations, statues, or other undead. 3 square feet of corpse lichen can grow onto a skeleton, and will be treated as armor, decreasing its armor class by 1. The lichen will also absorb 3 hit points of damage done to the skeleton. No similar effect happens on zombies.

When a cleric attempts to turn undead, any corpse lichen in the area is immediately reduced to dust. However, each square foot of corpse lichen absorbs 1 HD worth of turning, and the cleric may not make a second attempt against the same group of undead.



Dweomer Moss

(No applicable statistics)

A dull blue moss, often found in caves and areas where there is residual magic nearby, dweomer moss is not a sentient or even mobile threat. The only reason it is anything more than a curiosity are its spores, which are its mode of reproduction. Dweomer moss spores are extremely sticky, and characters who come in contact with the moss automatically come away with enough to trigger its effect; for characters who are in a 10' radius of dweomer moss when it is disturbed, the referee should secretly roll versus their Dexterity to see if they are affected. Spores stay on a character for 1-6 days.

Dweomer moss spores only come into play when magic-user spells are cast; wands, staves or rods are used; or scrolls are read. At this point, the spores become electrified and explode off of affected characters, doing damage - 1 point per spell level for affected characters within 20 feet of a spell being cast, 1d4 points per spell level if an affected character casts a spell. Additionally, the referee should roll 1d12 and add the spell's level. If the result is 11 or 12, the spell fails to cast; if it is higher than 12, the spell goes horribly wrong in some way (determined by the referee). Note that this may be triggered by non-player character spell casters but not by spell-like special abilities.

Gorynych

#Appearing: 1-3

Move: 120' (12")

Hit Dice: 8

Armor Class: 3

Treasure Type: E

Attacks: 5 (2 claw/3 bite) or fire

Damage: 1-4 (claws) / 1-8 (bites) or 3d6 (fire)

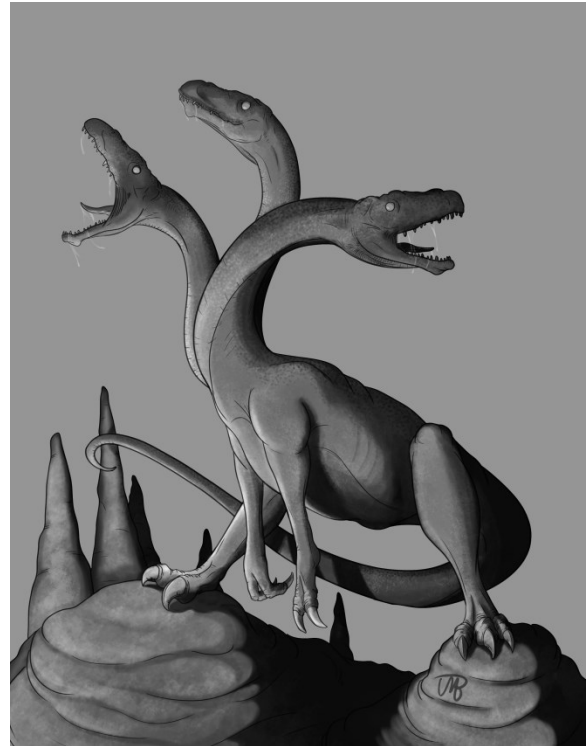
Alignment: Chaotic Evil

The Gorynych is a wingless dragon-like creature that walks about on its two hind legs. It has three heads, each at the end of a long, reptilian neck, and a powerful tail. The danger of the Gorynych is in these three heads, each of which can bite independently in combat.

A Gorynych is not a true dragon and does not have the same life cycle. Legend says that if a Gorynych head is severed and left unburied, it will grow into a new monster. Whether or not this is true, it is true that the Gorynych's heads are especially vulnerable to attacks from spears, which attack at +2 against the beast.

Once per day, instead of biting, each head can breathe 3d6 points of fire in a 10' cone (save for half damage).

Each of the heads may breathe at once, or on separate turns. These horrors are usually encountered alone.



Grug Beetle

Appearing: 1-4

Move: 120' (12")

Hit Dice: 1

Armor Class: 5

Treasure Type: Nil

Attacks: 1

Damage: 1-4 points (bite) + special

Alignment: Neutral



The grug beetle is a giant beetle about 1½' long found only in underground environments, and feast on carrion and excrement found there. Their hard carapaces are similar in color to the floors or walls of their habitat, growing more so as they reach maturity,

when they seem to “blend in” with their surroundings. This allows grug beetles to surprise on 1-3 on 1d6.

Grug beetles are most notorious for their oily secretions. A character bitten by a grug beetle, or touching the trail they leave behind, must save vs. poison (add +2 to the throw). For the next 4-24 turns (1d6x4), characters failing this roll become horribly clumsy and take -2 to normal attacks, -4 to missile attacks, and are unable to perform thieving skills or cast magic spells.

The nest of a group of grug beetles will be constructed from the sort of detritus that often exists in caverns and dungeons, and is saturated with its oil. Attempting to sort through it will inevitably result in a character being exposed to it. Grug beetles are highly territorial in their areas and will be natural enemies of other insects and vermin of the dungeon.

Muscaliet

Appearing: 4-6
Move: 120' (12")
Hit Dice: ½
Armor Class: 7
Morale: 7
Attacks: 3 (claw/claw/bite)
Damage: 1-2/1-2/1-6
Alignment: Chaotic Evil

This animal has the body of a small hare, the legs and tail of a red squirrel, round ears like a weasel, the muzzle of a mole, coarse pig-like hair and the vicious teeth of a boar. It is most frequently found in forests, where it climbs ably in trees and devastates their leaves and fruit. Muscaliets are hot to the touch, and after the first combat round the discomfort from their inner heat makes opponents take -1 to their to-hit rolls. They are intelligent, and quite malevolent.



Selenites

Appearing: 2-8
Move: 90' (9")
Hit Dice: 1-1
Armor Class: 7
Morale: 6
Attacks: 1
Damage: 1-4 or by weapon
Alignment: Lawful Evil

Selenites are short, insect-like humanoids who dwell beneath the surface of the Moon. They have large, dull eyes on either side of their heads and long beaks with downturned mouths. Their bodies are covered with a soft exoskeleton, which provides them with a limited armor, and in place of hands they have lobster-like claws.

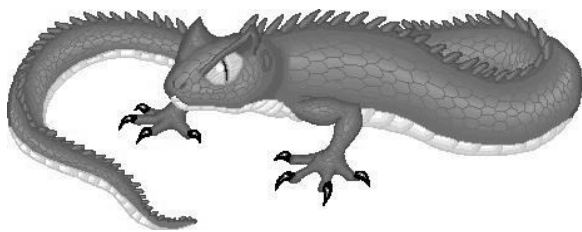
Selenites vary in height from four to five feet and live in a tightly hierarchical society. They are hostile to humans from contact, and while they do not speak any human tongue, can be taught it. Selenites tend to the monstrous mooncalves.

Tatzelwurm

Appearing: 1
Move: 120' (12")
Hit Dice: 4
Armor Class: 4
Morale 8
Attacks: 3 (claw/claw/bite)
Damage: 1-3/1-3/1-6
Alignment: Neutral

The tatzelwurm is a lizard-like creature between 4 and 5 feet in length. It is most common to see one in caves or near forested regions, where it stalks its prey using tunnels and logs. It is a carnivore, distantly related to the dragon, but with a face like a scaled cat. It has a serpent-like tail and only two forelegs, each with four sharp claws.

Tatzelwurms prefer to leap out and spring upon their prey. On a successful attack, a tatzelwurm will begin to constrict around opponents for 1-8 points of damage per round. While constricting it does not continue to bite.



Theta

Appearing: 4-24
Move: 30' (3")
Hit Dice: 1-2 hp
Armor Class: 9
Morale 12
Attacks: 1
Damage: 1-2 plus special
Alignment: Lawful Evil

Thetas are evil spirit beings from another world. They appear on our world as small creatures much like a bug or crab, with a relatively soft shell about 6 inches in diameter, and eight pincer-like legs atop a body like a jellyfish. Thetas have no eyes, and move about blindly until they contact something like human flesh.

When a theta attacks, the victim must save versus paralysis. If this fails, the theta injects itself into the

host and becomes a *body theta*. This causes a randomly determined attribute to be lowered 1-3 points until the theta is removed by *cure disease* or *cure paralysis*.

If the body theta embeds itself into a magic-user, it will quietly absorb spell energy until the victim has cast a total of 12 spell levels. After this, the theta will position itself in the stomach of the magic-user, causing a bout of uncontrollable vomiting. What emerges is an *actualized theta*. All negative effects go away once the theta emerges.

Theta, Actualized

Appearing: 1-4
Move: 120' (12")
Hit Dice: 3
Armor Class: 5
Morale 12
Attacks: 2
Damage: 1-8 / 1-8 (claw/claw)
Alignment: Lawful Evil

An actualized theta is the form a theta takes after it has absorbed 12 spell levels in a magic-user's body. It is a much larger crab-being, about three feet in diameter, with two vicious fore claws. However, the real threat of an actualized theta is to the free will of others.

The actualized theta has an innate *charm* ability that it uses 1/day. Victims will become fanatical followers of the theta's religion, which preaches a number of bland platitudes about doing good and "the road to complete liberation" but boils down to collecting money for the Grand Theta, a being who currently has assumed the shape of an aging red-haired wizard with his own personal navy. Once a follower of the theta religion is out of money, he or she will be strongly encouraged to sign up for "volunteer" work which amounts to virtual slavery aboard ship until the unfortunate believer is no longer useful and is cast aside, living or dead, by the Grand Theta.

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