

A fanzine dedicated to the Classic D&D® Game!

# ENCOUNTER

Issue 1 • March 2010



# 1

ENCOUNTER • March 2010

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*“Imagine: it is another place, another time. The world is much like ours was, long ago, with knights and castles and no science or technology – no electricity, no modern comforts of any kind.”*

**D&D® Set 1: Basic Rules (1983)**

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<b>From the Editor</b>	<b>4</b>
Testing. One. Two. Is this thing on?	
<b>Looking Back: X1 The Isle of Dread</b>	<b>5</b>
By Ben McCann	
Good things come to those who wait	
<b>Treasure Chest</b>	<b>6</b>
Take a peek at some recent Old School releases	
<b>Death Mask</b>	<b>8</b>
By Jesse Walker	
A Classic D&D® adventure for 3-6 players, levels 1-3	
<b>DM's Toolkit: NPC Peculiarities</b>	<b>16</b>
By Andrew Baker	
Random NPC 'quirks' for your Classic D&D® game	
<b>Trial By Ordeal</b>	<b>18</b>
By James Wilson	
Fire, blood and water! Justice the Mediaeval way	
<b>Codex Monstrum: Parasites</b>	<b>22</b>
By Andrew Baker	
Be infected by three new parasitic horrors	
<b>Seven Sins</b>	<b>24</b>
By Jeff Carrington and Jesse Walker	
Personality Traits for the <i>Labyrinth Lord</i> ™ RPG	
<b>Truesight</b>	<b>27</b>
Views from the Old School blogosphere	



# FROM THE EDITOR

## Testing. One. Two. Is this thing on?

**WELCOME** to the premiere issue of *Encounter*, a new quarterly fanzine dedicated to the Classic DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Game! A totally free resource by fans for fans, *Encounter* will endeavour to provide a vibrant online voice for the classic edition of the game we know and love. Although the Classic D&D® Game has now been out of print for some fifteen years it still continues to inspire the imaginations of thousands of gamers like you who have kept to the old ways and ensured that the classic edition remains a lively part of our gaming community.

It's an exciting time for the Old School movement, with several publishers releasing a variety of quality retro-clone roleplaying systems, along side a broader flowering of new

content for the venerable editions of D&D®. With this in mind *Encounter* will also be a welcome haven for the Old School Renaissance as a whole and *Labyrinth Lord™*, the fantastic classic edition simulacrum by Goblinoid Games, in particular. Although the 'zine will touch on aspects of the OSR, the primary focus of *Encounter* will always remain on presenting free fan-created resources for the original, classic game.

Inside this first issue we have an interesting collection of articles for your gaming pleasure, including a new host of bizarre parasitic nasties, a perspective on Mediaeval justice and the D&D® game, a short Basic level adventure by yours truly, tables of random NPC 'quirks' and much, much

more. Naturally, a fanzine such as this will always rely on the contributions of readers such as yourself, so please send in those submissions! Hopefully with your support *Encounter* will grow into something worth remembering.

Whether you're a cranky old grognard reliving your roleplaying glory days or are new to the Classic D&D® Game, we hope that you enjoy this our debut issue. As soon as you've finished reading *Encounter* why not drop us a line and let us know what you think? We certainly look forward to hearing from you. ■



Jesse Walker

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# LOOKING BACK: X1 THE ISLE OF DREAD

Good things come to those who wait

By Ben McCann

**WHEN** I opened the 1983 Expert Set as an eager young teen I was not only excitedly anticipating what new rules I could add to my growing gaming experience, I was also excited to own my very first module, *X1 The Isle of Dread* by David 'Zeb' Cook and Tom Moldvay. Having started on the red Mentzer Basic Set in the mid 1980s, like countless other players, I had missed out on the earlier Moldvay set containing B2 *Keep on the Borderlands*. Now, at long last, I had a *real* module to pit against my friends! I wasn't to be disappointed.

X1 was enormously influential on me. Being the first module I had ever owned, and would continue for a long time to be my only module, X1 became my ideal of how all published adventures should be. Naturally, as I grew older and less broke my module and *Dungeon* magazine collection slowly grew and I discovered new adventures to enjoy and new ways scenarios could be. Nevertheless X1 still stands out for me as a model module.

Although it was intended as an introductory wilderness adventure for relatively inexperienced DMs, as a kid I admit to

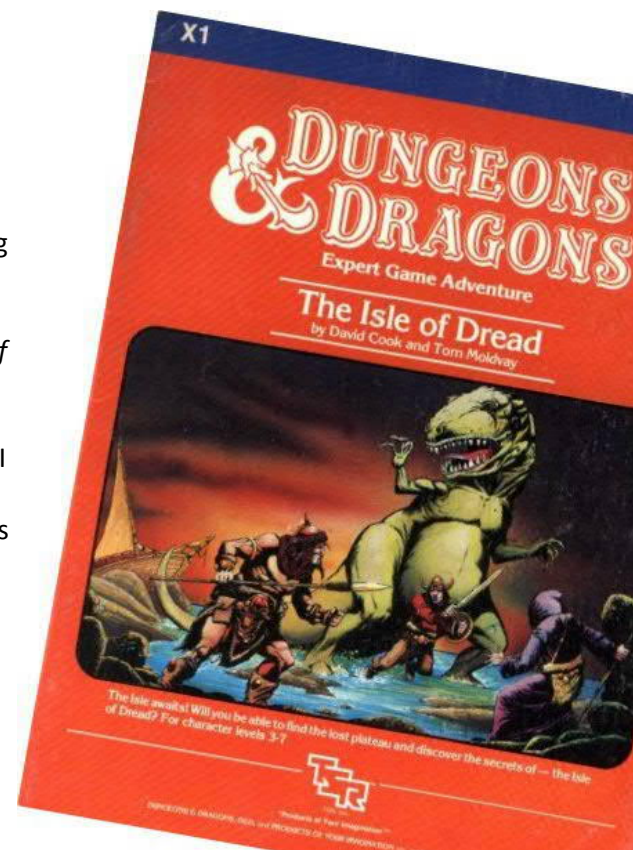
finding X1 more than a little daunting. My own adventures had been simple affairs and here was a whole island, numerous encounter locations, and several maps to get my young head around. However, despite my initial reaction I found that X1 did an able job in helping me learn the DMing ropes, so to speak.

The adventure itself wasn't so much a scenario as a ready made setting to explore. The plot, such as it was, revolved around the flimsy pretext of a treasure map luring the characters into a quest in search of the lost isle. This notion of the sand box – an open ended locale for players to do with as they will – is a concept much lauded by today's old-school fraternity. But that meant nothing to me; I enjoyed the open ended nature of X1 long before I had started theorising about adventure design.

Another element of *The Isle of Dread* I remember fondly is the coloured detachable map at the rear of the scenario. For reasons I can't logically explain I have always loved this little map. Boy's Own Adventure stuff, with the blank hexes at the centre of the isle ready to explore and chart,

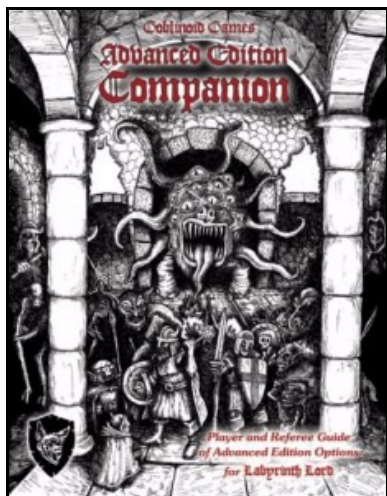
plus it was always nice to give the players something to play with. But my favourite part of *The Isle of Dread* is Taboo Island. Indiana Jones eat your heart out! A lost temple only accessible by canoe, the remains of a huge idol straddling the entrance, mud pits, crocodile pools and more. A great location and often replicated in my own more amateurish ways.

Although there have been countless more adventures since I first ran *The Isle of Dread*, X1 will always have its own special place in my gaming heart. ■

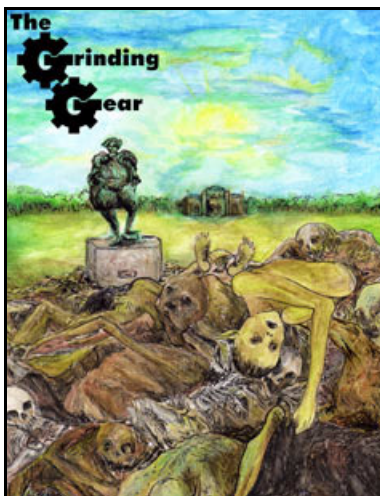


# TREASURE CHEST

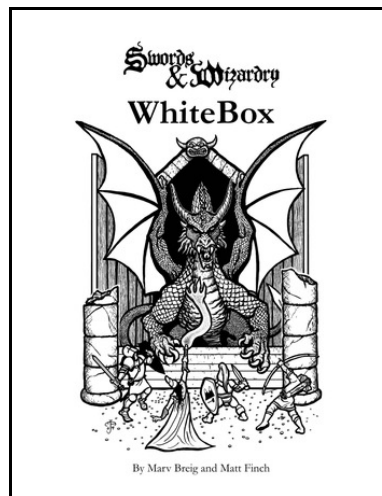
Take a peak at some recent Old School releases



From Goblinoid Games comes the *Labyrinth Lord* RPG accessory *Advanced Edition Companion*. This book is a player's handbook and referee guide that allows the use of the array of advanced character possibilities from the 1978 (first edition) rules, and first edition monsters and magical items. Character class options from the *Labyrinth Lord* core rules, the *Original Edition Characters* book, and *Advanced Edition Companion* are cross-compatible. Purchase a copy from [lulu.com](http://lulu.com) or download a complimentary no-art version from [www.goblinoidgames.com](http://www.goblinoidgames.com)



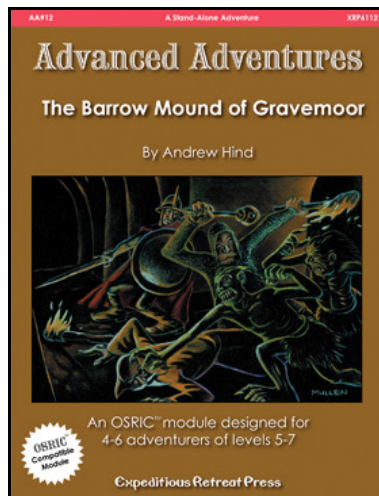
*The Grinding Gear* is the latest offering from Lamentations of the Flame Princess. A self-contained adventure setting consisting of an abandoned inn and the dungeon below it, the book includes over 50 detailed locations, three referee maps, a player handout, plus referee notes and "designer notes" that tie everything together. The print version is a sixteen page adventure booklet surrounded by three detached glossy heavy-stock covers featuring maps, artwork, and the player handout. The PDF version comes with both A4 and Letter-sized formats. For more information visit [www.lotfp.com/rpg](http://www.lotfp.com/rpg)



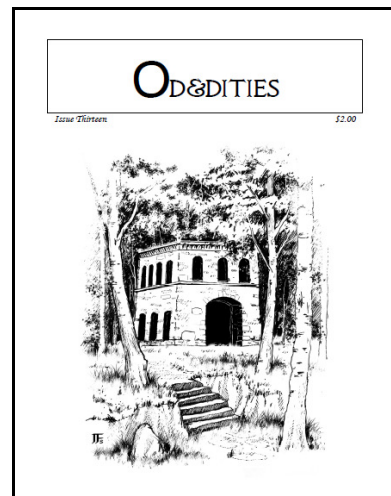
We've waited over thirty years but the white box is back! Brave Halfling Publishing has begun shipping the first print run of the *Sword & Wizardry WhiteBox*, under licence from Mythmere Games. Inside the box you'll find four digest-sized rule booklets, a set of dice, a tablet of digest-sized graph paper, twelve 3x5 index card character sheets and a digest copy of Matt Finch's *A Primer for Old School Gaming!* The second print run is now available for order and you can also purchase (or download for free) the single volume edition from [lulu.com](http://lulu.com). To learn more visit [www.bravehalfling.com](http://www.bravehalfling.com)



Newly in print from Chris Gonnerman is *Morgansfort: The Western Lands Campaign*, a campaign module for the *Basic Fantasy Role-Playing Game*. Intended for 2 to 8 beginning (1st level) player characters, the module includes a briefly sketched campaign area, a detailed “home base” for an adventuring party, a two level dungeon suitable for beginning adventurers, a tough three level dungeon, and a dungeon controlled by an evil magic-user! To download a free PDF version visit [www.basicfantasy.org](http://www.basicfantasy.org) or purchase the new print copy of the adventure from [lulu.com](http://lulu.com)



The Highlands are aflame with the fires of rebellion! Barely submissive at the best of times, the restless clans have risen up in arms against the rule of good king Oldavin. What began a few years ago as local disturbances has flared into widespread revolt that saw Oldavin’s rule over the Highlands, always superficial at any rate, crumble away like ancient masonry! New from Expeditious Retreat Press is *Advanced Adventures #12: The Barrow Mound of Gravemoor*, an OSRIC™ module designed for 4-6 characters of levels 5-7. A PDF version can be purchased from [yourgamesnow.com](http://yourgamesnow.com) or directly from [www.xrpshop.citymax.com](http://www.xrpshop.citymax.com)



After a six year break the venerable classic edition fanzine *OD&DITIES* has returned! The magazine’s new focus is on the *Labyrinth Lord* RPG, which is of course completely compatible with the Classic D&D® Game. Issue 13 kicked off the new monthly format in late February with a cornucopia of old school goodness and issue 14 continues the fun with this month’s theme of thieves. If you would like to learn more about the ‘zine visit [odditiemagazine.blogspot.com](http://odditiemagazine.blogspot.com) or to purchase copies of issues #13 and #14 visit [RPGnow.com](http://RPGnow.com)

# DEATH MASK

## A Classic D&D® Game adventure for 3-6 characters, Levels 1-3

By Jesse Walker • Illustrations and Cartography by Jesse Walker

**DEATH MASK** is a Classic D&D® Game adventure designed for 3-6 characters of 1st to 3rd level (about 9 total levels). Although a Cleric would be of assistance a balanced mix of classes should be able to successfully complete the adventure. The scenario takes place near Hobarton, a small trading town nestled on the grassy banks of the Derwynt River. Tied to no particular campaign world, the scenario could easily be adapted for use in any campaign with only a few minor alterations.

### Background

A thousand years ago an evil magic-user named Cuthach desperately sought the secrets of death. Terrified of his own mortality, the ageing wizard used all his worldly resources to find a mythical mask that enabled the wearer to see a vision of one's own death. Cuthach believed that he could use his magical arts to manipulate fate through the mask so that his death would never be. But during the ritual something went horribly wrong and the mask consumed his body in a flash of brilliant light. At the

moment of his demise Cuthach's soul was fused with the mask where it has dwelt in agony ever since – growing ever more bitter as a terrible rage wells within.

In the centuries that followed Cuthach's mysterious disappearance the mask was passed from one owner to the next, only for misfortune and death to befall those who attempted to use the accursed item. Two hundred years ago the mask vanished from the records but now it has once again resurfaced.

Recently a wealthy and sometime unscrupulous merchant by the name of Kadrin Tarik located and obtained the mask for his own collection of artefacts and curios. Drawn only to its dark and intriguing history, Tarik had little interest in the mask's alleged powers. Arrogantly, Tarik took little heed of the warnings of history and brought the mask into his home, Chell Manor. Over the weeks that followed the spirit of Cuthach slowly poisoned his mind and the merchant became ever more disturbed until one night he put on the mask and was consumed by the spirit of the vile necromancer.

Transformed into the living embodiment of Cuthach, Tarik rampaged through his home killing all in his path in a gory orgy of violence, transforming those not completely torn asunder into zombies. With no word from Chell for more than a week dark rumours of mysterious happenings at the great house have begun to spread among the good folks of Hobarton.

### Beginning the adventure

The adventure begins in the small town of Hobarton where the heroes are recuperating after their most recent exploits. How the PCs become involved in the adventure is ultimately up to the DM. A few suggestions may include:

- The PCs are employed by the local authorities to investigate the sudden and mysterious disappearance of three of the local townsfolk who worked as servants at Chell Manor.
- The heroes were intending to visit Tarik for some purpose, perhaps as a source of employment or adventure.





- A rumour of strange happenings at Tarik's mansion alert the heroes to the events taking place at Chell Manor and the Party decides to investigate.
- The Party are called upon by the local Temple to investigate the rumour that Tarik has obtained a dangerous and dark artefact that must be destroyed.

For whatever reason the heroes become involved in the adventure the Party visits Chell Manor to uncover the horrors within. The great house has stood outside the walls of Hobarton for centuries. If the heroes leave the town and head north they cannot miss it.

## Chell Manor

Although Chell Manor is surrounded by its own tendered gardens the stone structure is nonetheless a little forbidding. For centuries the dwelling was the Hobarton residence of the Dukes of Avram. Tarik obtained Chell when the 8th Duke of Avram fell into enormous debt with the merchant, and was

forced sell it to him for a fraction of what it was worth in order to clear the obligation.

Over the years Kadrin Tarik managed to create a large number of enemies due to his dubious business dealings. As a result, the merchant installed a number of traps and defences throughout his home, as well as employing his own personal guard to protect both himself and his belongings.

Chell Manor has three main entrances, all of which are locked; the front entrance (area 1), a servants' entrance (area 7) and the double doors which open into the Great Hall's ante-chamber (area 4). In addition to the obvious entrances there are also several locked ground- and first floor windows, which are covered by closed shutters.

If the PCs engage in combat during their exploration of the manor there is a chance that the fighting will raise the alarm and draw zombies to the fray. Each round of combat the DM should roll 1d6; any result of 6 indicates that 1d6 of the nearest zombies react to the noise and will arrive in 2d4 rounds (to the maximum of six zombies in total).

With the shutters all closed a grim atmosphere awaits those who enter Chell Manor. Once inside a dank stench of decay permeates the opulent home, with domestic debris from the battle with Cuthach littering the rooms.

### Ground floor (map 1)

**1. Entrance hall.** The manor's front doors are locked but have not been trapped. However, Chell's entrance is protected by two zombie guards stationed in the hall by Cuthach. As the heroes enter the chamber, read or paraphrase the following:

As you enter the chamber you are met by a powerful stench of decomposing flesh. The room's gloomy grey stone walls are lined with numerous portraits of noble personages and the floor is splattered with several large spots of dried blood.

If the PCs have not raised the alarm thus far they also see two rotting zombies dressed in crimson tunics bearing a large black eight pointed star slumped motionlessly on chairs on either side of the entrance hall. If the

## Random Encounters

Either choose the most appropriate event or roll 1d6 to determine randomly.

**1. Zombies (2):** AC 8; HD 2; hp 10 each; MV 90' (30'); #AT 1; THACO 18; Dmg 1d8 (claw); Save as F1; ML 12; AL C; XP 20; Treasure Nil.

**2.** The Party hear a faint scratching sound coming from beneath a pile of debris. If they investigate a grey cat leaps out and quickly scampers from view.

**3. Zombie Dog:** AC 8; HD 1; hp 6; MV 90' (30'); #AT 1; THACO 19; Dmg 1d6; Save as F1; ML 12; AL C; XP 15; Treasure Nil.

**4.** The Party hears a very faint whimpering from somewhere on the first floor.

**5. Insect Swarm (Flies):** AC 7; HD 3; hp 16; MV 30' (10'); #AT 1 area effect; THACO 17; Dmg Special (see below); Save as Norman Man; ML 11; INT 0; AL N; XP 50; Treasure Nil.

Armoured victims within the area automatically take 2 points of damage per round. Unarmoured victims take 4 points per round. Any victim who runs out of the swarm, or who swats the insects, takes only 1 point per round.

**6. Giant Rats (4):** AC 7; HD ½; hp 3 each; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1; THACO 19; Dmg 1d3; Save as Norman Man; ML 8; AL N; XP 5; Treasure Nil.

heroes enter the chamber via the doors or from the hallway the zombies lurch into attack.

**Zombies (2):** AC 5; HD 2; hp 12 each; MV 90' (30'); #AT 1; THACO 18; Dmg 1d6 (short sword); Save as F1; ML 12; AL C; XP 20; Treasure Nil; chainmail.

**2. Hallway.** This corridor leads from the entrance through to the manor's large central chamber. A wide carpet runs the entire length of the stone floor. A set of double doors leads northwards into the Great Hall.

**3. Great Hall.** This large, but uncomfortably humid, chamber was once Chell's great hall where the Dukes of Avram met their supplicants. Now the room contains a portion of Tarik's large art collection. The walls are lined from floor to ceiling with dozens of tapestries and paintings of every description imaginable, from ancient portraits of nobles and kings to hideous monsters, landscapes and momentous events in history. However, several of the items are now scattered across the floor, torn from the walls during the dwelling's inhabitants' struggle to fend off the enraged Cuthach.

Feasting upon the rotting flesh of one such unfortunate victim is a nest of five giant centipedes. Obscured by the debris on the chamber's floor, a faint scuttling sound can be heard if the PCs stop to listen. The centipedes will attack if the Party venture near to their meal lying at the foot of a dais at the eastern end of the chamber.

**Giant Centipedes (5):** AC 9; HD ½; hp 3 each; MV 60' (20'); #AT 1 bite; THACO 19; Dmg Nil (poison); Save as Normal Man; ML 7; AL N; XP 6; Treasure Nil.

**4. Antechamber.** This is the Great Hall's antechamber where those arriving for a noble audience would assemble before being presented to Chell's previous owners. There is little of note in the room other than a large tapestry of some long forgotten battle.

If the heroes enter the manor via the doors they see a small stone statue of a beautiful winged angel in an niche above the entrance. The statue is a specially disguised gargoyle that was created for Tarik. The gargoyle attacks anyone who forces or unsuccessfully attempts to pick the locked doors.

**Gargoyle:** AC 5; HD 1\*\*; hp 8; MV 90' (30') Flying 150' (50'); #AT 2 claw/1 bite/1 horn; THACO 19; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6/1-4; Save as F8; ML 11; INT 5; AL C; SA can only be hit with magic or magical weapons; SD not effected by *sleep* or *charm* spells; XP 175.

**5. Common room.** This room is where the servants and guards met when they were not on duty. The room contains a small table and four wooden chairs.

**6. Kitchen.** Chell's kitchen is fairly typical for a house of its size. There is a large open fireplace and shelves lined with various pots, pans and other cooking utensils. At the centre of the room stands a large oak

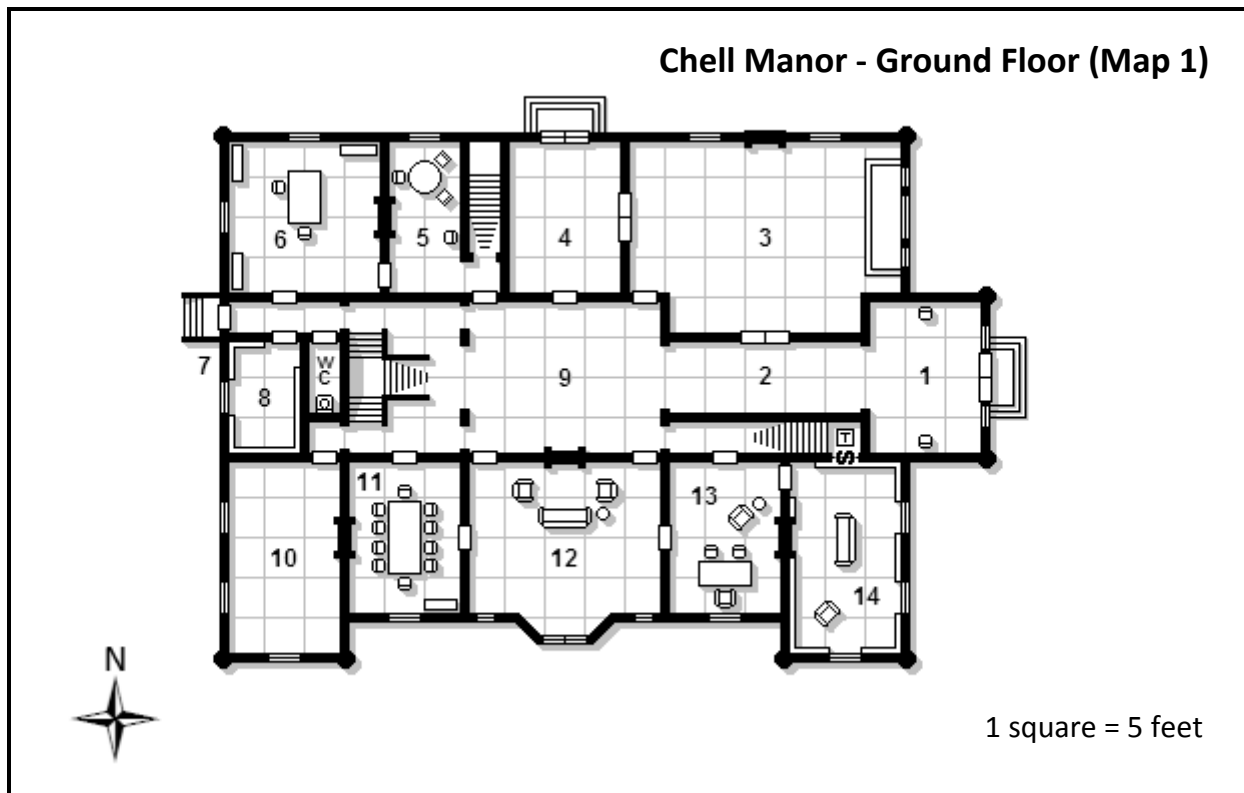


table. The room also contains three zombies (if they have not been previously alerted to the PCs' presence) who were once members of the manor's kitchen staff. The rotting remains of another unfortunate victim are also scattered about the room.

**Zombies (3):** AC 8; HD 2; hp 9 each; MV 90' (30'); #AT 1; THACO 18; Dmg 1d4 (knives); Save as F1; ML 12 AL C; XP 20; Treasure Nil.

**7. Servants entrance.** This simple wooden door was used predominately as a servants entrance. To prevent unwanted visitors the lock has been magically trapped. If the lock is not successfully disarmed creatures within a 15' radius must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Spells or suffer the effects of a *sleep* spell.

**8. Pantry.** The small pantry is filled with rotting foodstuffs, together with some unspoiled bottles of wine and mead.

**9. Central Hall.** This impressive chamber is the heart of Chell Manor, with various doors leading off into different parts of the large house. The floor is of grey stone and the walls are decorated with a number of trophies, paintings and tapestries, as is the case elsewhere in the old manor. The vaulted ceiling rises some 35' above the floor. Small arched stain glassed windows, which run around the top of the room, provide a sickly green light for the chamber during the day.

A large stairwell at the eastern end of the chamber (viewed through a large pointed arch when approached from the

western end of the hall) leads up to a first floor gallery, which overlooks the chamber below.

**10. Trophy room.**

The door opens to reveal a dark musty room lined with a bizarre assortment of exotic weapons, curious artefacts and assorted strange objects. The unsettling array of items cover almost every surface.

This room is where Tarik keeps his collection of artefacts he has gathered over the years (legitimately and not so legitimately). The collection includes several rare and unusual masks (valued around 125 gp each), a clockwork cat (150 gp) a stuffed baby silver dragon (350 gp), a giant's helm

## Mask of Cuthach

The *Mask of Cuthach* (pron. *koo-thatch*) is a crudely carved wooden mask made to resemble a stylised human skull. Once coated with a white paint, which has badly faded, the mask appears unassumingly fragile.

Any creatures placing the mask over its face must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Paralysis or be consumed by Cuthach's enraged spirit. Creatures 'possessed' by Cuthach wither into the diseased undead form of the vile madman and compelled to commence a violent, uncontrolled killing spree. The host also takes on the spell casting abilities of Cuthach as a 4th level magic-user. Once bonded with his victim, the only way to drive out Cuthach's spirit (without killing the host) is the use of the 5th level clerical spell *dispel evil*.

**Cuthach:** AC 8; HD 2; hp 16; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1; THACO 19; Dmg 1d8 (claw) + special; Save as M4; S 10 I 15 W 14 D 9 C 10 CH 7; ML 12; AL C; XP 75; Treasure Nil.

Spells: *1st - shield, darkness; 2nd - cause curse, confusion.*

Any creatures reduced to 0 hp must make a Saving Throw vs. Paralysis or become a zombie under the control of Cuthach.

(30 gp) and numerous skulls of unidentifiable monster species. The DM is free to stock the room with other unusual or valuable items. If the PCs investigate they notice that a mask appears to be missing from the collection.

The room's contents are protected by a permanent *teleport* spell. The spell is activated when anyone, other than Tarik, attempts to leave the room with one of the objects. The victim is teleported to a secret chamber located beneath the stairs in the Central Hall, leaving any item behind in the trophy room. Access to the chamber is via a hidden door in the side of the stairs. The spell can only be removed by *dispel magic*.

**11. Dining hall.** This room is Chell's formal dining room. The chamber is dominated by a large polished rosewood table, chairs and a cabinet containing fine crockery and silverware (the silverware is valued at about 100 gp). On the table stand three ornate candle holders (valued around 50 gp). A butchered cat, formerly belonging to Tarik's cook, is draped across the table.

### 12. Sitting room.

Paintings and tapestries line the walls of this opulent room. A broad shuttered widow, which dominates the southern wall, looks south out across the manor's gardens towards the grey walls of Hobarton beyond. Debris litters the chamber and a dark pool of dried blood stains the floor.

Lying face down on the floor behind a large sofa is the bloodied corpse of an armoured man dressed in a fine crimson tunic. Creatures searching the diseased corpse must make a Saving Throw vs. Poison or suffer 1d6 points of damage.

Sitting on the mantelpiece is a large gilded music-box. The box is unlocked but if the heroes open the lid without disabling the music mechanism the device plays a well known folk melody. As the lilting music plays all creatures within the room must make a successful Saving Throw vs. Spells or fall to sleep for 4d4 turns. The box contains two small silver keys which open a secret compartment in Tarik's desk (see area 13).

### 13. Study.

A large oak desk and a worn leather armchair sit below a window in the south wall. An acrid smell of smoke fills the air with a smouldering log having rolled from the open fireplace.

Tarik's desk contains two small drawers. The drawers are not locked and contain various nondescript letters and unimportant business papers. However, if the two silver keys—found in the music box in the sitting room (area 12)—are turned in the keyholes of each draw at the same time a hidden compartment is revealed. The compartment contains papers detailing the recent construction of a secret vault and electrified floor trap in Tarik's bedroom (see area 16b for more details).

Another set of papers also records the recent acquisition of the Mask of Cuthach, which was obtained on the black market from an infamous relic hunter named Tane Ameril. The DM could consider placing other papers of interest in the desk to lead to other adventures.

#### 14. Library.

The walls of this chamber are lined with shelves groaning beneath countless scrolls and leather bound tomes. Tattered books and scraps of shredded parchment have been strewn haphazardly across the floor.

This chamber is Tarik's library. The room also contains a large comfortable sofa, in front of the fireplace, and an old leather armchair by the southern window. Topics covered by the tomes include warfare, philosophy, commerce, history, geography, astronomy, and politics. If the heroes search carefully they find a scroll containing an incantation for the *Speak with Plants* spell tucked into a tome on gardening.

If the heroes successfully detect or search for secret doors they discover that a section of shelves on the north wall swing out to expose a heavy metal door. A magical mouth emerges from the metal door and recites the following short riddle:

*Way down deep where no one goes,  
There they creep on grimy toes.  
Waiting 'til the dead of night,  
For they fear the sun's warm light.*

The mouth then asks: "To let thee pass answer this; who art thou?" The correct answer to the riddle is 'goblins'. However, the correct answer to the question "who art thou?", is 'Tarik'. If the riddle is answered incorrectly the mouth lets out an ear piercing scream. Anyone within the room must make a Saving Throw vs. Paralysis or suffer 1d6 points of damage.

If the question is answered correctly the door opens to reveal a vault containing four earthenware jars filled with the following collection of coins; 150 ep, 320 gp, 425 sp, 545 cp, together with a small velvet bag of various gems (valued at approximately 300 gp).

**Privies.** Chell has a number of indoor water closets, which are marked as 'WC' on both floors.

### First floor (map 2)

#### 16a. Tarik's bedroom.

The furnishings in this room are among the most lavish you have seen yet. A huge canopied four-poster bed dominates the chamber and an overwhelming stench of putrefying flesh fills the air.

Also sitting in a high-backed chair by a large window is the corrupted figure of Cuthach:

Seated by a large window in the southern wall is a tall rotting figure wearing a crude wooden mask fashioned to resemble a human skull.



Cuthach will attack the PCs on sight, calling any remaining zombies to the battle and using his spells to strike at the PCs (for Cuthach's full game statistics see the sidebar on page 12).

The room also contains a dressing table, a chair, and a ceiling high book case. The book case holds various political treatise as well as some older, more valuable history books bound in dragons skin.

Apart from storing some of Tarik's gaudy crimson clothes, a cupboard in the east wall also contains a hidden compartment. This is where Tarik once stored some of his more valuable items before the larger vault was constructed in the walk-in wardrobe (see area 16b). The compartment now merely holds

## Chell Manor - First Floor (Map 2)



his trusty old *mace* +2. Although the concealed door is no longer trapped, if a PC enters the small compartment the door swings shut with a dull thud. A successful *Strength* roll is required to reopen the heavy door from the inside.

**16b. Tarik's bedroom.** The walk-in-wardrobe contains a secret vault concealed behind the clothes hanging on racks covering the walls. The vault's entrance is skilfully disguised and a successful detect or search for secret doors is required to locate the hidden entrance.

The vault is protected by a deadly trap. If the trap is not disarmed bolts of energy shoot from the floor of the room. Anyone within the area of effect takes 2d8 points of damage. Victims must make a Saving Throw vs. Spells to reduce the

damage by half. The trap's effect can be negated by lying the entire contents of the wardrobe on the floor.

Once the trap is disarmed or overcome the door silently swings open to reveal a plain stone chamber. The room hides four small chests containing a hoard of treasure: 1500 gp, 2500 sp, 3250 cp, three bags of black pearls and precious gems (valued at approx. 1000 gp), a *Ring of Fire Resistance* and an *Elven Cloak*.

**16c. Tarik's bedroom.** This was Tarik's private bathroom. There is nothing of interest in the room other than a secret door leading to Tarik's bodyguard's bed room.

**17. Sjarlson's bedroom.** This room belonged to Tarik's loyal and trusted dwarven bodyguard. It now contains a zombie of the

fallen dwarf (if it hasn't already been disturbed). When the PCs enter the room it will attack.

**Dwarven Zombie:** AC 8; HD 2; hp 11; MV 90' (30'); #AT 1; THAC0 18; Dmg 1d8 (axe); Save as F1; ML 12 AL C; XP 20; Treasure Nil.

The room also contains a dwarven sized single bed, wooden chair, and a chest containing clothes and a few personal items. If the heroes carefully search the room they find 28 sp in a small purse under a loose floor board.

**18. Main guest bedroom.** This opulent room is reserved for Tarik's most important guests. It contains a four-poster bed, two chairs, a large chest, and a walk-in wardrobe. A set of double doors open out onto a small balcony.

**19. Secret chamber.** Behind the guest room is a secret chamber and spy-hole which Tarik used to snoop on visitors (in order to gain an unfair advantage in business negotiations). Access to the room is via a secret door on the gallery.

**20. Cook's quarters.** This room belonged to Tarik's cook. It is identical to Sjarlson's room in most respects except the furniture is human sized.

**21. Servants quarters.** The servants' quarters is the least decorated of all Chell's bedrooms. The room contains two sleeping cots, a wooden stool and two small chests.

**22. Captain's quarters.** This was the private quarters of the Captain of Tarik's personal Guard. His slain body lies rotting on the floor. The room contains a single bed, a small chest, and a chair.

**23. Officers' quarters.** This was the room of the two lieutenants in Tarik's guard. It contains a single bunk-style bed (two beds in all), two small chests, and a wooden chair. The chests each contain a spare guard uniform and other personal effects.

**24. Guards' quarters.** This room contains three bunk-style beds (six beds in all), six small chests, and a small table. Five of the six chests are unlocked and contain the guards' clothes and various personal items. The sixth chest is trapped with a deadly poisoned needle and contains and 30sp.

On the floor is a large blood stain and (if the PCs have not

disturbed the zombies already) two putrefying bodies. If the PCs enter the chamber the slain zombie guards arise and attack:

**Zombies (2):** AC 5; HD 2; hp 10 each; MV 90' (30'); #AT 1; THACO 18; Dmg 1d8; Save as F1; ML 12; AL C; XP 20; Treasure Nil.

**25. Storage cupboard.** This large cupboard contains linen and cleaning instruments. Two guards, the sole remaining survivors of Cuthach, have also barricaded themselves in the room. The guards will be very happy to see the PCs and will willingly explain what has occurred in the house. Although traumatised, they offer to assist the PCs in any further fighting:

**Guards (2):** AC 5; hp 7 each; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1; THACO 19; Dmg 1d6 (short sword); Save as F1; ML 12; AL N; Treasure Nil.

**26. Guest bedroom.** This room is similar to Sjarlson's room (see area 17) but with grander furnishings and a large four-poster bed and a walk in wardrobe. If the PCs search the room they find nothing of value.

## Concluding the adventure

If the heroes manage to rescue Tarik from the clutches of the Cuthach, the extremely grateful merchant will offer the PCs a substantial reward of 350 gp each. Tarik will also offer to provide assistance to the heroes should the Party require any aid in the future. ■

## Kadrin Tarik

Kadrin Tarik is a tall, strongly built man in his late forties. He has dark grey hair and brown eyes.

Tarik began his long and successful career as an adventurer and mercenary. After one particularly lucrative campaign he had amassed enough wealth to retire with a small fortune. Through a combination of shrewd investments, low cunning, and simple thuggery, Tarik has since become one of the richest men in Hobarton.

In more recent years Tarik has indulged his taste for exotic and unusual items, which he sometimes collects with or without their owners consent, as much for their innate novelty as their financial value. He is well known in the region for offering generous rewards for those willing to seek out such items for his collection.

With a fondness for wearing crimson coloured clothes, his personal symbol is an eight pointed star, which was chosen to represent eight fallen former adventuring comrades.

**Kadrin Tarik:** AC 9; hp 18; MV 120' (40'); F3; #AT 1; THACO 19; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); Save as F3; S 10 I 16 W 15 D 9 C 9 CH 10; AL N; dagger, *ring of x-ray vision*, a silk purse containing 25 ep.

# DM'S TOOLKIT: NPC PECULIARITIES

## Random NPC 'quirks' for your Classic D&D® game

Compiled by Andrew Baker

**COMING** up with a distinctive NPC in the heat of a gaming session can sometimes be a challenge, as players will often take a greater interest in an NPC than you, as DM, had anticipated. The tables that follow can help spur your imagination when this occurs and help ensure that your NPCs aren't of the cardboard-cut-out variety. To randomly determine a 'quirk', roll 1d12 and then roll 1d20 on the resulting table:



1

1d20	Result
1	Carries a scabbard without a sword
2	Wears clothing that is too small
3	Unusually friendly
4	Leers at the opposite sex
5	Complains about price of goods
6	Laughs at inappropriate moments
7	Lewd
8	Gesticulates wildly
9	Lies about age
10	Has an annoying laugh
11	Incontinent
12	Frequently sneezes
13	Tanned skin
14	Bursts into tears
15	Has black oily hair
16	Arrogant
17	Frequently sniffs
18	Spits in hand before shaking hands
19	Speaks with a low voice
20	Clothes splattered in dried mud

2

1d20	Result
1	Face is badly scarred
2	Chokes back tears
3	Hates non-human races
4	Whittles wood with a dagger
5	Un-helpfully honest
6	Has hearing difficulties
7	Food crumbs on clothes
8	Forgetful
9	Begs / asks for money
10	Has a terrible cough
11	Sweats profusely
12	Suspicious of strangers
13	Arm is bandaged
14	Tired and sleepy
15	Exceptionally pale
16	Complains of poor health
17	Has a flushed red faced
18	Predicts good weather ahead
19	Breathless
20	Practical joker

1d20 Result

1	Frequently cracks knuckles
2	Intoxicated
3	Informant for local thieves guild
4	Frequently rubs neck
5	Cannot keep a secret
6	Tells jokes but forgets the punch lines
7	Obnoxious
8	Carries a basket
9	Afraid of the dark
10	Cannot swim
11	Mute
12	Stands too close
13	Has a tattoo
14	Missing a leg
15	Distracted
16	Smells of straw
17	Has red hair
18	Lost
19	Smells of tobacco
20	Complains about the weather

3

1d20 Result

1	Clothes are bloodstained
2	Several rings hang from a necklace
3	Speaks of the good ol' days
4	Smells of alcohol
5	Wears an obvious wig
6	Picks teeth
7	Frequently belches
8	Calls PCs by their wrong names
9	Clothes are dirty, boots are spotless
10	Has blonde hair
11	Frequently coughs
12	Smiles for no apparent reason
13	Has calluses on hands
14	Trying not to giggle
15	Carries a small pet (e.g. mouse)
16	Large birthmark on face
17	Frequently rubs eyes
18	Exaggerates
19	Has brown hair
20	Frequently twists rings on fingers

4



**5**

- 1d20 Result**
- Keeps looking over shoulder
  - Complains about mother-in-law
  - Frequently uses bad language
  - Pretends not to speak the PC's language
  - Has warts on hand
  - Conceited
  - Mutters under breath
  - Toothless
  - Quotes passages from religious texts
  - Talks to them self
  - Wears threadbare clothes
  - Hyperactive
  - Has a runny nose
  - Carries a large sack
  - Rubs ear
  - Has a mustache
  - Complains of sore joints
  - Shivering
  - Doesn't like large crowds
  - Hiding from crooks

**1d20 Result****8**

- Afraid of heights
- Large gap between front teeth
- Self-righteous
- Rolls "R's"
- Speaks in riddles
- Smells of dogs
- Tells long winded jokes
- Looking for a lost necklace
- Annoying laugh
- Speaks in whispers
- Greedy
- Has puffy red eyes
- Plays with hair
- Rubs forehead
- Infected with lycanthropy
- Speaks with a strong accent
- Has missing teeth
- Has pockmarked / damaged skin
- Unusually short
- Spits when speaking

**1d20 Result****11**

- Rubs hands together
- Has different coloured eyes
- Gruff
- Quotes bad poetry
- Cross eyed
- Has an unusual weapon
- Lame
- Facial scar
- Likes Céline Dion
- Limp changes foot
- Speaks with a lisp
- Missing an arm
- Keeps hand on weapon
- Feels nauseous
- Rubs chin
- Liar
- Speaks with a lisp
- Has Acne
- Picks nose
- Bites on lip

**1d20 Result****6**

- Wearing clothing that is too big
- Flatulent
- Predicts bad weather ahead
- Speaks too loudly
- Asks rhetorical questions
- Has a large nose
- Eats while speaking
- Relaxed
- Unusually tall
- Speaks with a slight accent
- Plays with a pendant around neck
- Scratches a rash
- Has large bosoms
- Overweight
- Fidgets nervously
- Dresses in expensive clothing
- Speaks too quickly
- Smells of sweat
- Missing a finger
- Keeps hands in pockets

**9****1d20 Result**

- Has the hiccups
- Has long finger nails
- Wears expensive leather gloves
- Complains of old injury
- Eloquent
- Jolly
- Dressed in traveling clothes
- Has an identical twin
- Sporting a black eye
- Wears an eye patch
- Has a stutter
- Has dirty finger nails
- Frequently blinks
- Appears distracted
- Begins each sentence with "Um"
- Tongue tied
- Underweight
- Incorrectly uses big words
- Has an enormous debt
- Smells of horses

**10****1d20 Result**

- Has mud on clothing
- Has large ears
- Very elderly
- Has a squint
- Graceful
- Frequently brags
- Atheist
- Refuses to make eye contact
- Superstitious
- Wears exotic jewelry
- Leg is bandaged
- Has small bosoms
- Talks too loudly
- Pompous
- Has cobwebs on clothing
- Facial tic
- Frequently scratches head
- Obese
- Missing teeth
- Has freckles

**7****1d20 Result**

- Calls everyone "chum"
- Tardy
- Uses old fashioned words
- Reading a book
- Slovenly
- Readily gossips
- Speaks too quietly
- Frequently nods
- Missing a hand
- Speaks of self in the third person
- Chews tobacco
- Frequently yawns
- Flips a lucky coin
- Wears outdated clothing
- Plays with dice
- Has a high voice
- Wanted by the authorities
- Paranoid
- Looking for a six fingered man
- Mole on top lip

**1d20 Result****12**

- Chews a piece of straw
- Angry
- Frequent mood swings
- Makes bad puns
- Clumsy
- Wears foreign clothing
- Has poor teeth
- Speaks very slowly
- Nervously chews fingernails
- Talks abruptly
- Frequently apologises
- Unusually pious
- Tries to sell stolen goods
- Has a lazy eye
- Answers own questions
- Arms are folded
- Insane
- Wears a beard
- Blind, has a child guide
- Overly helpful / obsequious



# TRIAL BY ORDEAL

## Fire, blood and water! Justice the mediaeval way

By James Wilson • Illustration by Gustave Doré

**THE** justice systems in many D&D® campaigns follow a pattern that we would be familiar with today: judges, trials and even city guards all depicted much as they are in their present forms. However our modern concepts of law and order evolved over many centuries from a justice system that was in many ways very different than we see today. This article discusses just one of those past differences – trials by ordeal. The following sets out a history of the trials and suggests ways they can be incorporated into your D&D® campaigns.

### Fire, Blood and Water

Trial by ordeal was the principal form of legal proof throughout England until it came under attack by the Mediaeval Church in 1215. ‘Ordeals’ were a semi-magical method of determining guilt or innocence, which stretched back to prehistoric times (and through many cultures) prior to the coming of the Anglo-Saxons in England. Such ordeals were only used in ‘criminal’ matters rather than in what we would today call ‘civil’ cases. There were essentially two types of ordeal

employed in England: the unilateral and bilateral ordeals.

Although there were a number of different forms of unilateral ordeal recognised by the Church, the most common in England were the ordeals of fire and water. In an ordeal by fire the accused individual was forced to take a red hot iron bar in his or her hand for a specified period of time. The burns were then bandaged for several days before being examined by the relevant legal authorities. The accused would be acquitted if the wound was declared to have ‘properly’ healed. An ordeal by water on the other hand was resolved by throwing the accused into a pond or other body of water and observing whether he sank or floated. If the accused floated he would be found guilty because the water had refused to accept him. If the accused sank the water had accepted him and was therefore exonerated (and hopefully rescued before he drowned!).

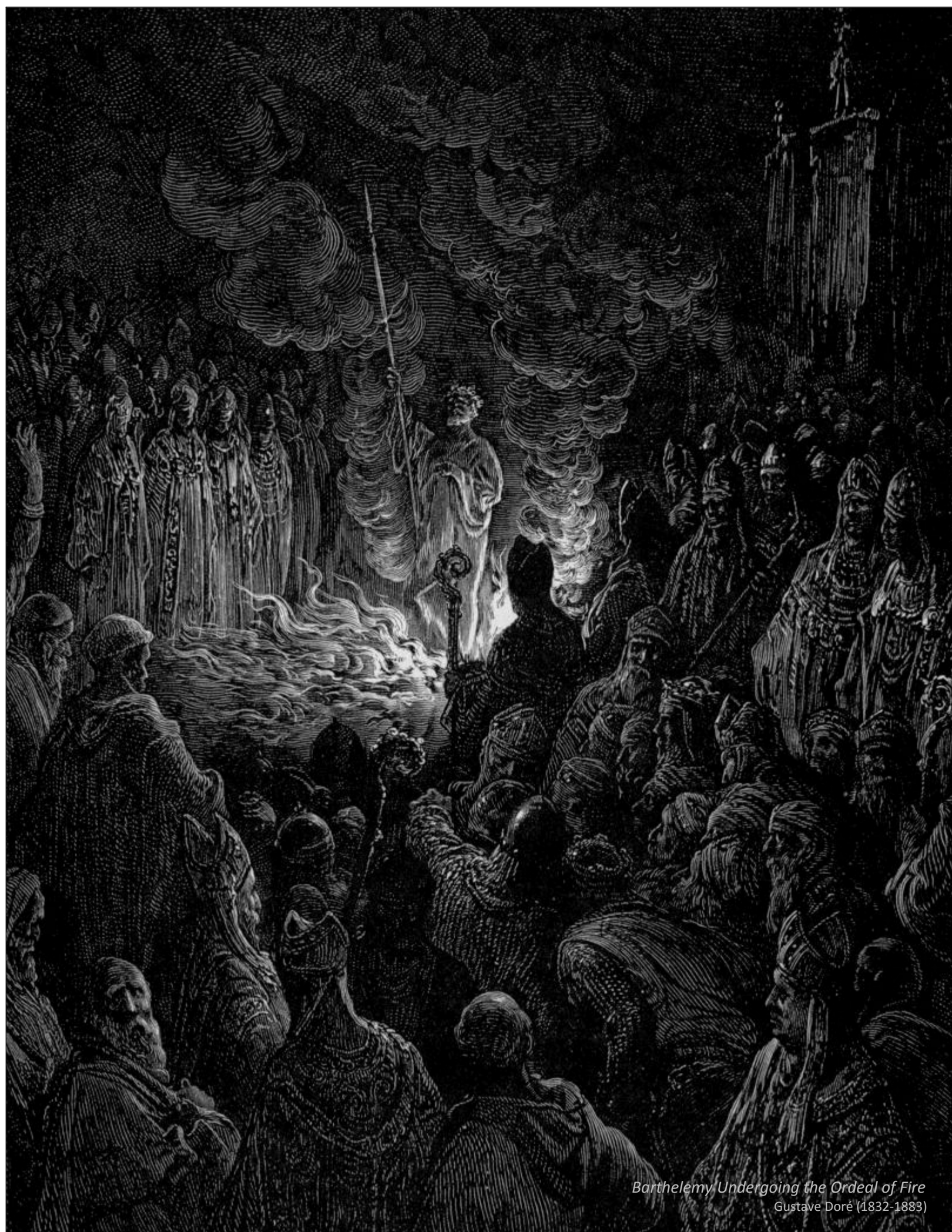
The second type of ordeal, brought to England with the Norman invasion of 1066, was the bilateral ordeal of trial by combat. This form of ordeal

was largely only applied to the Normans. Essentially, the aggrieved party claimed the right to fight the alleged offender. In theory, at least, combat was to be engaged between the accused and the accuser. However, a champion was often paid to fight in place of one or both of the two parties.

The theory behind unilateral and bilateral ordeals went along similar logical lines; everything that happened in the world happened because it was God’s will; God wanted justice and right to prevail and would always intervene to protect the innocent and expose the guilty. Therefore, in trial by combat, for example, a weaker opponent could prevail with God’s assistance over a stronger opponent. Indeed, had not the Bible itself given a startling example of this in the story of David and Goliath?

### Innocent or Guilty?

In 12th Century England most ‘criminal’ matters were prosecuted privately. However with the advent of the Assize of Clarendon (an Act of King Henry II) in 1166, a new system



*Barthélémy Undergoing the Ordeal of Fire*  
Gustave Doré (1832-1883)

was established; a jury of twelve lawful men from each small administrative area (called a 'hundred') were called to report to Royal justices those who were accused of having committed a 'felony'. Those reported were then required to 'make proof' by the ordeal.

Modern historians believe that the presenters had probably already determined the guilt or innocence of the suspect and the ordeal may have simply been a way to confirm their judgement. In fact there is reason to suspect that the ordeal was not enforced on every prisoner set to undergo it. There is also evidence that many subjected to the ordeal were merely administered a mild version of it. If so, this could suggest that the true guilt or innocence of the accused was already suspected, and the ordeals' administration was applied according to the strength of suspicion against them.

In theory the presenting jury's role was merely to name those who were suspected of committing a felony. However, in practice, the jury then stated its belief in the credibility of those accusations. In many instances when a hundred jury presented the accused felon it then stated that the accused was not suspected and thus spared the ordeal. In other words, those suspects a jury exonerated were let free and only those who a jury truly suspected were sent to undergo the ordeal. It seems that the ordeals may have simply been in many cases nothing more than a ritual to confirm the judgement of the jury.

Other evidence suggests that expectations of what the ordeals could achieve was somewhat limited. The use of hired champions, for example, in trial by combat suggests a degree of scepticism, implying that there was an absence of an absolute belief in trial by ordeal's ability to identify the guilty. In fact there were a number of exemptions from the ordeal that applied to protect the weak and old against the young and strong.

## **Longevity of the Trials**

The primitive methods of proof by ordeal 'worked' for hundreds of years despite the apparent doubts and qualifications. There are a number of possible reasons for the ordeals' effectiveness and longevity. For the most part ancient and medieval society was a face-to-face community of extended family or kinsmen. The desire to keep the peace and to maintain consensus in such communities was always of paramount concern. The ordeals may have operated to achieve that consensus; a way to avoid conflict and to defuse local tensions.

Another reason for the ordeals' effectiveness may have been because the interpretation of the 'trial' by onlookers was subjective and open to consensus. A wound, for example, may or may not have healed properly or an accused may or may not have floated depending on other objective facts such as the strength of the evidence against the accused.

The effectiveness of the ordeal must also be seen in the

context of the widespread faith amongst the general populace in its accuracy. The psychological effects, in a time of deep belief, may have played a very significant role in the system's longevity. In a time when God was seen to intervene in the daily lives of ordinary men, perhaps more often than the King, an accused faced with a priest threatening the Lord's wrath may have genuinely feared the ordeal.

Although it appears that the ordeals had worked for many centuries, the system received a major blow from the most important of its patrons, the Church. In 1215 an Edict of the Fourth Lateran Council banned the practices as a relic of 'barbaric' pagan times. However the edict did not see the disappearance of the ordeal immediately, in fact the ordeal by water persisted for witches' trials through until the 17th Century.

Nor was judicial combat ended by the Edict. Although the Church disapproved of trial by battle it was seen as less mystical and required no clerical participation. Eventually however this method of proof also died out by the 13th Century, but it was merely forgotten rather than legislated against. As late as the early 19th Century trial by battle was still possible, in theory at least. In 1818 the defendant in a murder trial threw down a gauntlet and announced he would defend the case "by my body" to a startled Court of King's Bench. The defendant had invoked his right to the trial by battle which had

## Using trials by ordeal in your D&D® campaign

With a bit of imagination the ordeals could easily be introduced into your Classic D&D® game in a variety of ways. Although trials may seem redundant in a game that includes spells such as *Speak with the Dead* or *Detect Evil*, the existence of such mechanical devices shouldn't preclude the trials being used to enliven a campaign setting's justice system. The unavailability of Clerical spell casters, for example, could leave villagers using the ordeals to take justice into their own hands, or perhaps the trials are a part of the necessary rituals when using such spells for determining the

innocence or guilt of an accused.

In a campaign world where trials are common place, the characters could find themselves subject to an ordeal. For example, in a low fantasy setting a magic-user could be accused of witchcraft by suspicious tribesmen and then be subjected to a trial by water at the hands of a baying mob. Alternately, a cleric could be asked to conduct such a trial them self, acting as the intermediary between their deity and the people (or local authorities) calling for the ordeal against the accused.

Another obvious method of using trials by ordeal in your campaign is a player character being accused of transgressing against some local personage and then being challenged to a trial by battle. In a fantasy

setting this need not only be a trial by *combat*. A trial could involve a dangerous magical test between the accuser and accused. Or in the case of a thief, even a trial of wits in a specially designed arena. Or perhaps the player characters could be hired, or offer themselves for hire, as champions to fight in a trial by combat on behalf of an accused or accusing party.

Finally, 'tests' or rights of passage could be an alternative method of introducing a form of ordeal into your campaign. Specific cultures, clerical, magical or martial orders might require novices to complete some hazardous and gruelling test before they can become fully initiated into their number.

remained the law of England until it was repealed by parliament the same year!

## The End of the Trials

Underlying the trials was a prolonged intellectual debate about the legitimacy of the ordeals. Real doubts were expressed by the Church as to the effectiveness of the whole process. What if God chose to absolve the repentant guilty party, or even perhaps, chose not to intervene at all? Some scholars of the 12th Century interpreted successful ordeals of a notorious felon as a measure of God's grace; he was being given a second chance by God. Was it even proper to invoke

God in the mundane matters of ordinary men? The Church seemingly did not believe so, in fact, teaching that constantly demanding miracles, even to protect the innocent, was dangerously 'tempting God'. In the end the fundamental problem was a 'crisis of faith' in its efficacy and justification.

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# CODEx MONSTRUM: PARASITES

## Be infected by three new parasitic horrors

By Andrew Baker • Illustration by Jesse Walker

**LURKING** beneath the surface is the unseen world of the parasite! Presented here are three new diabolical parasitic monsters for your Classic D&D® campaigns:

### Treebane

**Armour Class:** 8

**Hit Dice:** 3 (S)

**Move:** 3' (1')

**Attacks:** crush/crush/poison

**Damage:** 1d4/1d4 + special

**No. Appearing:** 1 (0)

**Save As:** F2

**Morale:** Not applicable

**Treasure Type:** C

**Intelligence:** 4

**Alignment:** Neutral

**XP Value:** 30

**Monster Type:** Monster (Rare).

Treebanes are semi-intelligent bug-like parasites, roughly the size of a small cat, that infest trees and other large plants.

Typically treebanes bore into the hearts of large trees where they secrete an enzyme that enables the parasite to manipulate the tree's limbs and roots.

The parasite uses this ability to ensnare unwary passers-by in order to consume them. Once the parasitic treebane has fused with its host plant it can not be removed unwillingly without destroying it and its host.

Creatures passing within 10' of a treebane will be attacked by the deadly creature. Once in combat a treebane will attempt to grab hold of its target. If it succeeds the creature squeezes its victim for 1d4 damage per round. The enzyme secreted by the parasite also leaves a poisonous residue on the surface of the host plant. Creatures coming in contact with the residue must make a Saving Throw vs. Poison or fall unconscious for 2d6 rounds.

Once a creature has been subdued it is enveloped by the host plant's roots and pulled beneath the ground where the treebane absorbs the nutrients from its decomposing victim. As the treebane parasite can live for the life of the host plant the

creature will ensnare many victims over its lifetime. As a result large quantities of treasure can sometimes be found buried beneath such trees, leading to treebane hosts' often being called Trove Trees.

**Terrain:** Swamps, Woods.

### Aphidoa

**Armour Class:** 4

**Hit Dice:** ½ (1-4) (S)

**Move:** 120' (40')

**Swimming:** 60' (20')

**Attacks:** 1 bite

**Damage:** 1d4 + special

**No. Appearing:** 1d6

**Save As:** F1

**Morale:** 6

**Treasure Type:** Nil

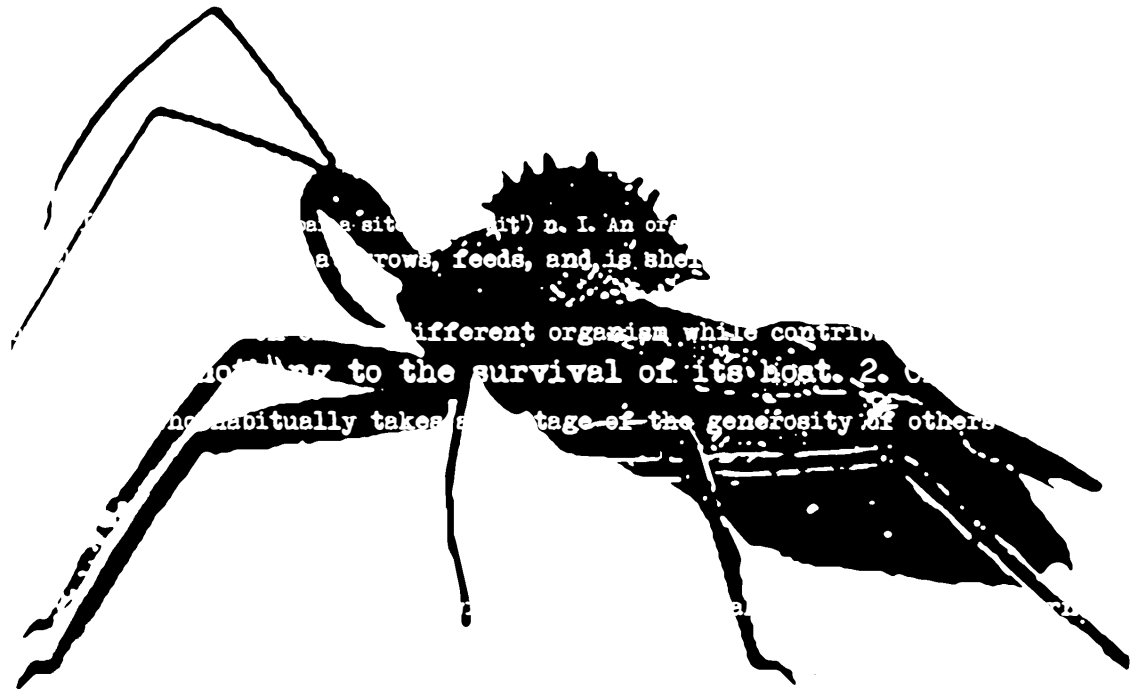
**Intelligence:** 0

**Alignment:** Neutral

**XP Value:** 20

**Monster Type:** Monster (Rare).

Aphidoa are large subterranean parasites with six multi-jointed legs and a long proboscis mouth. Aphidoa spend most of their life



deep underground but require sunlight every two years in order to trigger the creature's mating cycle.

Aphidoa drop onto their victims in dark, underground locations and use their long needle-like mouth to attach themselves to the back of their host's neck. Once attached the creature must make a Saving Throw vs. Spells or fall under the parasite's control in a similar manner as the magic-user spell, *Charm Person*. Effected creatures experience an overwhelming desire to leave the subterranean location and seek out the surface. As a result of this behaviour creatures not normally found above ground can be found in the open sunlight. Such creatures are fortified by the Aphidoa's chemical secretions in order to survive above on the surface. Effected creatures have add +2 HD to their existing Hit Dice.

Although it is less common, Aphidoa occasionally attach themselves to creatures that

have wondered into their subterranean world from above. Such creatures also must make a Saving Throw vs. Spells or succumb to the parasite's mind altering powers. Once on the surface the Aphidoa will simply drop off its host within 1d4 days.

**Terrain:** Cavern, Ruins.

## Slumberworm

**Armour Class:** 5

**Hit Dice:** 1

**Move:** 90' (30')

**Swimming:** 10' (3')

**Attacks:** Special

**Damage:** Special

**No. Appearing:** 1d10

**Save As:** F1

**Morale:** 9

**Treasure Type:** Nil

**Intelligence:** 0

**Alignment:** Neutral

**XP Value:** 35

**Monster Type:** Monster (Rare).

Slumberworms are the young larvae of some species of enormous carnivorous worms.

After hatching the larvae seek out hosts to infest. Commonly the small parasites slither into the mouth of its target when the potential host is asleep.

Once the parasite has infested its victim the host must make a Saving Throw vs. Spells or fall under the parasite's control with a similar effect as the magic-user's *Charm Person* spell. Effected creatures have an overwhelming urge to delve deeper into the darkest recesses of the worm's subterranean habitat. This desire is in fact the slumberworm larvae driving its host towards its much larger parent. Once within 50' of its parent the Slumberworm releases a toxin rendering the host unconscious for 1d6 rounds.

The only way to remove the parasite without injuring the victim once a host has been infested is with the application of the Clerical *Cure Light* or *Cure Serious Wounds* spells.

**Terrain:** Cavern, Ruins. ■

# SEVEN SINS

## Personality Traits for the *Labyrinth Lord*™ roleplaying game

By Jeff Carrington and Jesse Walker

**LABYRINTH LORD (LL):** OK, Black Leaf climbs down over the face of the giant idol using a rope for support. She is now only inches away from the statue's huge ruby eye.

**Marcie:** The Eye of Diana is finally within my grasp! I'll be rich beyond my wildest dreams!

**LL:** But wait! You hear a large cracking sound and a piece of the stone idol breaks off and falls, alerting the goblins below who start shouting wildly with alarm.

**Debbie:** Quick, come back up! They've spotted us!

**Marcie:** No?! I think Black Leaf can still reach it...

**Debbie:** Forget it! Let's escape while we can!

**LL:** The goblins come rushing towards the idol with their bows at the ready. You're running out of time!

Many players when confronted with the above situation will choose to play it safe. Faced with a hoard of goblins baying for blood, players will often retreat to fight another day. However, what would Marcie's character do if she were driven by insane greed? What if Black Leaf just can't resist stretching that inch

further for the alluring giant ruby as the goblins close in, putting both herself and the Party in danger? Good role-playing is often the answer but sometimes a little assistance in leading to a PC's (or NPC's) reaction could be useful.

The following article presents simple Personality Traits rules for the *Labyrinth Lord*™ role-playing game. The rules, adapted from the Classic D&D® Game supplement GAZ7 *The Northern Reaches*, can be used as a simple guide to role-playing or they can be used in a similar manner as *Saving Throws*, only PCs are trying to avoid 'temptation' and not some other magical or physical effect. The rules also allow LLs to set a new type of subtle 'temptation trap' for unsuspecting players.

### Determining Personality Traits

The Personality Trait system codifies a method of recording motivations or weakness which can help to define a character's personality. At the heart of the rules presented herein are Personality Traits based on the

traditional 'seven deadly sins' of Pride, Envy, Wrath, Greed, Sloth, Gluttony and Lust. Although these have been chosen in part to convey a medieval tone LLs should feel free to adopt other qualities to form the basis of different personality traits.

To determine a character's Personality Trait (PT) scores players select a number between the range of 1 – 20. The greater the number the better. Players may also choose to randomly determine their character's PT scores by using the tables listed on the following page.

Of course, if PCs have Traits then so too should NPCs and other intelligent creatures. In accordance with an NPC's chosen alignment the LL rolls as indicated on Table 1 and then assign the results to the list of Traits. LLs can also choose to apply the Class modifiers on Table 2 as considered appropriate.

### Temptation

When a character is faced by a difficult choice pertinent to a PT score, the character must make a *Temptation Check*. To make a Temptation Check the player



rolls 1d20 against the relevant Trait score. If he or she rolls equal to or lower than the score, they have successfully avoided succumbing to the temptation; if the roll is higher than the PT score, the PC has failed. When a temptation is particularly weak or strong the LL can modify the check by adding an appropriate modifier to the player's roll.

The effect of failing a Temptation Check is left to the LL to interpret in each particular circumstance. Examples might include: insulting a powerful nobleman after failing a humility roll, attempting to steal a fabulous weapon when a PC falls prey to envy, or falling under the sway of a beautiful NPC where a PC has succumbed to lust.

Players could also use the Personality Trait rules to tempt NPCs or monsters. For example, a Party might attempt to cause a rift between their captors by planting the seed of envy in the mind of one of the guards, "Why should they get all the loot? They always get the treasure when you always do all the work" etc. In such circumstances the LL rolls versus the guard's Generous trait, and modifies the check by adding an appropriate bonus or penalty (such as a bonus for the players' persuasiveness). If the guard fails the Temptation Check the DM could determine that he picks a fight with the other captors and, in the confusion that ensues, the PCs attempt to make their escape.

These rules should be used sparingly. A Temptation Check is best reserved for circumstances where it would increase the

### Table 1: Random Personality Trait

**Lawful:** 12 + 1d6  
**Neutral:** 6 + 1d6  
**Chaotic:** 2d6

### Table 2: Character Class Modifiers

**Fighters:** +3 Diligent, -3 Meek  
**Clerics:** +2 Chaste, +2 Charitable  
**M-Us:** -2 Humble, +2 Meek  
**Thieves:** -2 Charitable, +2 Meek  
**Dwarves:** -2 Generous, -2 Meek  
**Elves:** -2 Humble, +2 Temperate  
**Halfings:** +2 Meek, -2 Diligent

dramatic tension of a moment or perhaps where a LL feels that a player has refused a temptation that would be glaringly out of character for the PC to reject. However, personality traits should not be used to restrict the actions of player characters.

## Seven Sins

Personality Traits, based on the seven deadly sins, and some suggestions on how each Trait could be played, are described below. The traditional punishments awaiting sinners in the afterlife are also provided.

### Humble (Pride)

Humble PCs are unassuming and dislike being the centre of attention. Unlike the excessively proud, humble PCs can accept criticism with grace.

Excessively proud PCs are haughty, arrogant and overbearing. Such PCs' belief in their own superiority can be humorous where the self belief falls short of reality.

The haughty sinner's punishment in the afterlife is to be broken upon the wheel.



## Charitable (Envy)

Charitable characters seek to help others and will often give aid to the poor and downtrodden, even if this is nothing more than a kind word or a few copper coins.

Envious characters covet the possessions and glory of others, including the belongings and abilities of his own friends and companions. Envious PCs can become spiteful when they are denied what they seek. Thieves are especially susceptible to envy.

The envious sinner will be punished in the afterlife by immersion in freezing water until the end of time.

## Meek (Wrath)

Meek characters are often better able to control their anger in trying circumstances and will always look to find a peaceful solution to problems.

Wrathful PCs are often short tempered and prone to physical or verbal outbursts of anger (often in the most inappropriate moments to the dismay of his or her companions). Especially susceptible to wrath are fighters and righteous clerics.

The wrathful sinner will be punished in the afterlife by being dismembered alive.

## Generous (Greed)

Generous characters will go out of their way to assist their companions and strangers, willingly sharing their wealth and good fortune with others.

Frequently causing problems with his or her companions, greedy characters are driven to gain wealth at any costs. Greedy characters will often risk all to gain their prize, but never seem satisfied and always wanting more than they can have.

The greedy will be punished in the afterlife by being eternally boiled alive in oil.



## Diligent (Sloth)

A diligent PC works hard and is often never satisfied unless he or she takes the hardest road by the most difficult means possible, much to the dismay of his or her companions.

A slothful PC will usually choose the easiest, least difficult option, often expecting his or her fellow Party members to do all

the work. A slothful PC might also constantly make excuses as to why he or she cannot, or should not, complete certain tasks.

The punishment in the afterlife for the slothful sinner is to dwell in a pit of deadly snakes for all eternity.

## Temperate (Gluttony)

Temperate characters abhor excess of any kind, believing that all things should be taken in careful moderation.

Gluttonous characters, if allowed to wallow in their own excesses, will consume all, leaving nothing for their friends and companions. Give a glutton an inch and they will take a mile.

The gluttonous sinner's punishment in the afterlife is to be eternally force-fed rats, toads, and snakes.

## Chaste (Lust)

Chaste PCs emphasise modesty and self control. But sometimes their desire to lead a virtuous existence can see them display a puritan-like zeal.

Lustful characters often allow their cravings and desires to get out of control until these desires become obsessions. The obsessions are usually about sex, but they can also be about food, money, or power.

The sinners punishment in the afterlife is to be covered in fire and brimstone. ■

# TRUESIGHT

## Views from the Old School blogosphere

**EACH** issue *Encounter* will take a quick stroll around the world wide web and bring back a sprinkling of comments and opinions from the lively Old School blogosphere...

### Forgotten Negative

tao-dnd.blogspot.com

“Yes, it is a major bitch that my character’s constitution is so low that eight hours of marching leaves him so weak that he can no longer lift his quarterstaff, much less gather together the magical forces necessary to sweep his enemies aside – but I want my weakness, I want to have it to bitch about, to torture the other party members with, to insist again that we have got to stop and rest because my feet *hurt!* I’m not interested in running a perfect being.”

### “How Many Games Can the OSR Sustain?”

lotfp.blogspot.com

“Our games can stand proudly next to anything ever done for this hobby (because they largely are the games that laid the foundation for the hobby, untrademarkedly speaking). The trick for anyone releasing

material is to stand your ground and release only material which reflects and reinforces *your* gaming principles, not adjusting those principles to any sort of movement/philosophy and not for the sake of appealing to the larger market.”

### Combat Balance as the be all and end all of Game Balance?

blog.retroroleplaying.com

“Personally, I think shorter combats are one of the main things that attract people to return to or try older versions of D&D. Long detailed combats are great for those who are really into combat, but they are boring for those who find combat less fun. Making sure their characters are more combat effective does not make combat more fun if combat isn’t the player’s thing. In fact, it can make them less interested in playing if that combat effectiveness means other players suddenly expect them to be sure their characters now pull their weight in combat and/or it if comes at the expense of the non-combat abilities that the non-combat-focused players enjoyed.”

### I Hate Change

grognardia.blogspot.com

“What is so amazing about the old school blogs and forums is that, even though we all play a mish-mash of early editions, retro-clones, and simulacra, we nevertheless share a common vocabulary. We speak the same language even if there are lots of regional ‘accents.’ This is why I dislike ascending AC, for example. Whatever its mechanical benefits may or may not be, it’s a divergence from tradition that makes it harder to communicate with my fellow players of D&D without a ‘translator.’ A degree of immediacy is lost.”

### Re-thinking Story

9and30kingdoms.blogspot.com

“A railroad is a GM-created, pre-planned, strict control plot. I’d argue that a true railroad has a few more features, but that’s not my current point: if players don’t like a totally uncontrolled setting with no GM-defined motivations for engagement with the world, there are plenty of other options. Few old school GMs completely avoid planning, control, or creation.” ■

## **COVER ARTIST**

*Dragon Fire!* There could scarcely be a better way to introduce our premiere issue than with Jon Hodgson's fantastic image of a dragon doing what dragons do best! To view more of Jon's artwork visit [www.jonhodgson.com](http://www.jonhodgson.com)