



EM

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Fantasy Short Fiction.

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Ryan Boell, formerly of Asgard, brings us the new Story Craft.

Plus Gaming News & Rumours



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JB BINGHAM
2003



credits

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editorial

Hi guys. Welcome to the first issue of Ethos Magazine.

Ethos is looking to be the best ezine on the web yet. We have an excellent staff and some good submissions, plus my skills as an editor and layout artist, have gone together beautifully to make this wonderful ezine. On behalf of my staff, we thank you for taking the time to read this, the first issue, and invite you to subscribe to the mailing list and receive next month's by email.

I couldn't leave you to consume our first issue without offering my thanks to a few people. Here they are.

Thank you, of course to my wonderful staff team, from Dimitrii and Clayton with their enthusiasm and dedication to the experienced Bruce, Ryan and John O'Connor. Thank you also to Herman and John Bingham (whose excellent art is displayed on the front cover) my other two illustrators. And, finally, thank you to all the other staff members.

Thank you to all those on the ENWorld message boards who offered advice and constructive criticism and thank you especially to Steve Creech of the D20 Magazine Rack and editor of 'D20 Zine!', for his support and for his original offer of joining the Magazine Rack syndicate, which we

have accepted.

Finally, I want to thank you, the reader, for finding our site and downloading our first issue. Thanks!

This month all the staff are showing off their writing skills. Clayton, our resident cartographer, has a quick adventure 'add-on', which will fit into any campaign setting with relatively little difficulty. Chris Morris, my best friend and a modelling and miniatures specialist, talks about using miniatures in Dungeons & Dragons. Ryan Boell, formerly of Asgard Magazine, begins a new series of StoryCraft articles with us. This month's is on generating adventure hooks randomly using cards. We spoke to Steven Creech of the d20 Magazine Rack and d20 Zine! about him and the d20 publishing industry. Dimitrii gives his spirited response to a website which is damning all role-play. And finally, yours truly writes about advanced role-playing technique in the first of two articles. I'll leave you to enjoy it.

See you next month,

**James
:-P**

James Henley,
Editor.

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submissions

Ethos Magazine will accept submissions from anyone as long as they follow the appropriate guidelines at www.ethos.Oc atch.com/submissions.htm. Email your submissions to ethosmagazine@hotmail.com.

Storycraft #1: "fate, fortune and fabulous adventures!"

The first in the new series of StoryCraft by Ryan Boell

Some people have problems coming up with great storylines for their adventures. Most people get stuck or have writer's block. What I have found that helps me is two tools that I have and use quite constantly. They don't cost much actually, maybe \$20.00 each. One is the **Alastair Crowley Toth Tarot** deck. The cards have words at the bottom of them. The other tool I use is a card game from **Atlas-Games** called **Once Upon A Time**. It's a storytelling game in which a group of people have to collectively string a story together. I find both of these help and I will give examples of each.

Alastair Crowley Toth Tarot Cards

I shuffled the deck and now I pull cards. Usually you need a conflict and a reason for conflict. The one thing to understand is that, when a card is upside-down (also known as reversed), it means the opposite of what it means. I pulled 3 cards: 3 Disks

(Works) - Reversed, The Sun and 2 Disks (Change) - Reversed.

Works means things like business, paid employment, growth and increase of material things. This is reversed, so it is the opposite of these things. The Sun means glory, gain, riches, truth. Change means just that, harmony of change, alteration of loss and gain, weakness and strength, etc.

So one possible way to see this plot is: The PCs have exhausted their wealth and finances and now, their employment with their contractor has run up. So they leave and start seeking out glories, riches and fame. After all, that is what adventurers do, isn't it? They return to a hometown or a place they know real well to find that things have changed quite a bit. A favorite leader is no longer a leader, the town's wealth has decreased considerably, where it was safe, it is now dangerous.

Now we have a part of a plot. A familiar place has taken a

turn for the worse. Let's use the hometown scenario, shall we?

I draw another card, Ooh, The Devil. This means ambition, blind impulse, temptation, secret plan about to be executed. Well, now we know what is going on with the town, but why and by whom? Two more cards please. The Ace of Disks and the Queen of Swords. For those who aren't into the pagan arts, a book comes with these cards so you can look up some of the meanings. The Ace of Disks means the beginning of money, finances, wealth and so forth. The Queen of Swords means perceptive, graceful, keen observer. Hmm. That doesn't fit. However, we'll reverse it so it reads; cruel, sly, deceitful, superficial attractiveness which makes her more dangerous.

Hmm. I smell a lot of potential here. A rich and wealthy woman who is cruel, sly and very cunning and beautiful. A motive is what we need now, a reason for her to



Artwork: Herman Lau

H. Lau

turn the heroes hometown upside down. Three more cards reveal: Knight of Wands, The Chariot (Reversed) and 10 Swords - Ruin (Reversed). The Knight of Wands means a man of generosity, prideful and swift. The Chariot means Faithfulness, success, victory. But it is reversed so it means authority under authority, violence in mating traditional ideas and lust of destruction. The 10 Swords is reversed so the reversal means spiritually may end the delusion.

Well, weaving them together, this is what I have.

Adventure Plot #1

The PCs have exhausted their wealth and finances and now, their employment with their contractor has run up. So they leave and start seeking out glories, riches and fame. After all, that is what adventurers do, isn't it? They return to one of the PCs hometown. The towns wealth has decreased considerably, where it was safe, it is now dangerous. And the local priest (the guy or gal who married one of the PCs parents, or even a mentor to a priest PC) has vanished and the local church is now under new management.

The new priest is a man in his mid to late 30s. He seems very cordial although aloof at first. When the PCs start poking around, he informs them the town leader (mayor or whomever) had past away due to a disease and as law, his daughter has taken over. They should see her if they wish to find their priest friend.

The PCs will inquire about the new ruler and many peasants will be uneasy and sing her praises. Some local arcanists will say that she is in league with devils and demons. They will meet her and she will accept them into her home to

talk about their missing friend and they will notice she is extremely beautiful and will try to use the male PCs against each other. The other PCs will try to figure out what is going on and will find the priest's son in hiding. He will explain the woman came to town and the plague hit. He has proof she is a demon. He saw her with a true seeing spell. She is in actuality, a succubus.

Teaming up with the priest's son, they find their friend ...

ok. Im stumped. So i pull another card and come up with the Ace of Wands. Aces are beginnings and wands are spirituality and fire. *snaps*

...Teaming up with the priest's son, they find their friend in a local burned down church that has been abandoned for quite a while. There they will find the way to defeat the succubus and regain control over the town.

See? With just a few cards, we pulled an adventure together in just a few minutes. No more borrowing from modules or books or even TV shows and movies. These tarot cards will definitely spark your imagination!

Once Upon A Time Cards

With **Once Upon A Time** Cards, you are given a set of cards that have staple ingredients of a typical fairy tale story. You are also given **Happy Ever After** Cards to help you end the story but we're going to ignore those because as we all know in role-playing, all things don't exactly end happily ever after. The cards also come with what are called **Interrupts**. We will be using these but not interrupting. If you have the game, this will make much more sense.

So, following the example above, I shall shuffle the cards. I will draw 5 cards and see if i can weave them into a descent story. The fun thing with these cards are, if you don't like a card, discard and draw again. My five cards are: Transformation, Happy, Cottage, Parent and Home. I think i will discard Home and Happy. My two new cards are: Tree and Gypsy. My hand now reads: Tree, Gypsy, Transformation, Cottage and Parent. Now this has started some sparking in my brain.

Once Upon A Time, there was a cottage on the outskirts of a small village where a gypsy lived. Now we discard the two cards Cottage and Gypsy and draw two more. I drew Sleeping and Singing.

One day, a child went missing and a nosey, uptight parent came searching for her and the gypsy was tired of the accusations of kidnapping the child, transformed the parent into a large tree with a gypsy curse.

Same as before. Discard Parent, Transformation and Tree. Drew three more: River, Old Woman and Long Lost. I don't think I can use River, so, I'll discard it for another. The new card is Blind.

The child grew up without its parents and eventually became a blind, old woman...

See what you can do easily with a deck of story cards and or tarot cards? Why don't you try an adventure using one of the above methods and send it to me@Angelsboi21@hotmail.com. Let me know what you have done and what cards you have used.

As always, happy adventuring and till 30!

The Sojourner's Diary

Opulentium Arcus: the city of canals

The first in a series of stand-alone scenarios to add to your campaign by Clayton Bunce.

Welcome!

Opulentium Arcus is the premier installment of *The Sojourner's Diary*. The premise is to present a stand-alone scenario that can be used to inspire a new campaign, expand an existing campaign, or fill in gaps for a one-night gaming session. Some general details and maps for each setting are provided, but plenty of room is left for the GMs' devices, enabling them to alter whatever is desired to fit into their campaign world. In the future, look here for new cities, castles, dungeons, temples, and much more-- all with unusual locations, attributes, histories, and purposes. If you have a great idea for a future installment of *The Sojourner's Diary*, please let us know! Good Gaming!

Opulentium Arcus

The founders of Opulentium took advantage of the naturally calm and deep bay they discovered and immediately began to build what was to become a premier trade center. Over time, more and more trading companies and guilds have made Opulentium their home and base of operations. The existing backshore slope - which is firm, yet still pliable - made the construction of the service canals possible, effectively quadrupling the capacity of the Port complex. The cities' location among fertile meadows and hills

made an overland road network viable and attracted thousands to the area.

The docks and wharves of Opulentium can service as many as twenty fully laden vessels at a time, and often the bay itself has as many as a dozen ships waiting for permission to put in. Once offloaded, cargo makes its way to barges that maneuver through the twenty-foot deep canal system to the trade depots and commodity processors, which line the canals. After that, the goods go to the trade caravans for further travel and distribution or to merchants to be bought. The Arcus, responsible for managing the port, is housed in the Arcus Lighthouse on the northwest tip of the bay. Its forty employees are charged with the maintenance of the canals and docks and work close beside the many other dockworkers dealing with the transport of freight to and from the ships.

A population of 20,000 enjoys the fruits of the trade company's labors—plenty of work, food, and wealth. It is also a magnet for opportunists. The Ereptoris Faction, the largest thieves' guild, is legendary for its ingenuity and subterfuge. Led by Ar'hon Buchetan (11th L. Human Thief/Illusionist), the Ereptoris create complex and minutely detailed capers, which identify and target the rare cargoes that come through the city. They have a tenuous relationship with the Ghal Trading Company

(located at (5) on the map), a thinly veiled front for a black market fence network. This organization is impressive, though, with a number of resources at its command, including ships, caravans, and stealthy agents in disguise who keep shaded eyes watchful for any new opportunities to report anything useful to their masters, kidnap the elite for ransom, and carry out punishments on those who interfere in the company's black market activities.

Several other notable trade operators in Opulentium are the Aquia Ferrum, Gray Traders, and The Vexillum. The Circumscribers are an order of monks that call the Parchment Abbey (10) home; specializing in trading in spices, they are well-known for their meticulous record-keeping of the current and past prices for most of what is traded in Opulentium. The Copper Keepers (9) also claim their share of profits, but behind their title lurks an alliance of pirates, hell-bent on commandeering a share of the Ghal's profits. More than once a confrontation between these two organizations has resulted in blood on the piers and ships flaming in the port waters. The Grandiculum Mercatus (2), itself - a huge, hexagonal expanse of property set aside as an around-the-clock bazaar - is the epicenter of commerce and the haggling, wheeling, dealing, and scamming place of hundreds of merchants who

pay the city for the charter and space to pitch their tents and peddle their wares. The waiting list for space holds names literally years from the present. Representatives of the trade companies and guilds, craftsmen, merchants and artisans for miles around keep vigil here, as thousands of customers filter through every day. If it can be bought anywhere, it can be bought here.

In The City

Among the more distinctive buildings in Opulentium is the Warrison Donjon (1), or the moneychangers' complex, the financial center of Opulentium. Overlooking the Grandiculum Mercatus; this seven-story building houses the Trade Exchange, with representatives of the trade companies and guilds also working here. The workers in the Exchange consult among themselves, and with the leaders of the local countries and regions. They work brokering commerce rights and prices, as well as conducting peace talks and advocates alliances. This very powerful entity holds huge sway over the conduct and business of untold numbers of kings, tyrants, and clan leaders alike. Thus, with so much power to protect, independent security forces are hired in large numbers and instructed to restrict the comings and goings into the complex. This leads to occasional disagreements among competing members of the Exchange, with no one trusting any other and all willing to do the unscrupulous to best the rest.

The governor of Opulentium himself lives in the Arx (3), perched across the Mercatus from the Warrison Donjon. Atris Creegath rose to power as a mediator of

trade disputes and still sits on the board of directors of the Exchange. The rumor is that there is a network of tunnels underneath the Mercatus, which allows Creegath to come and go securely as he pleases. The ten-story tower atop the Arx provides a magnificent view of the city and the surrounding bay, as well as a fantastic vantage point from which to scope the entire area for miles around, to warn of possible invading armies. Because of the extreme wealth, power, and influence Opulentium possesses, The Moenium, a great wall, is under construction. It will eventually surround the entire city and several of the most prolific and prosperous farms, vineyards and ranches. A number of free-traders (those not associated with a guild) do not like the idea of the restrictions which a wall might well impose, so vandals have sprung up, striking frequently and effectively, slowing the construction virtually to a snail's pace. This means plenty of work for Commander Earlen Denqueward, head of the recently established Watch, which is essentially the local military presence of the city. The Watch is mainly a ragtag *mélange* of mercenaries from abroad and retired soldiers who are willing to serve as city protection. The neutral stature of Opulentium was once such that a standing militia was never deemed necessary, at least until Creegath began sitting on the Board of Exchange. Some have considered this a brazen "conflict of interest". Though the other board members who complain would hesitate to reveal their own ulterior motives and business concerns. Another noteworthy structure is the Kelamno

Apothecary (6). Kelamno (7th L. Human Alchemist/Healer) makes use of the most unusual and rare ingredients that pass through the canals, purchasing herbs, plants, and artifacts found in lands only mentioned in wife's tales. His clientele includes the highest of priests of all religions, wizards, sorcerers, and other such important figures.

Opulentium is flush with entertainment, from theatres to gambling houses, and brothels to the Lascivio Arena (4), as well as numerous taverns, especially along Broken Barrel Road (8). Among the more notorious of these frequent establishments is The Beehive Tavern, favored by the dockworkers, sailors and shipmates, and The Rusted Blade, where many of the fights of the Lascivio Arena end up in challenges and duels. The Albico Caupona is known internationally for its collection of eclectic spirits and elixirs. The Stables (7), a three-story mansion overlooking Canal Street, is a Den of Pleasure which offers its services to visiting traders, dignitaries, and heads of state and is also rumored to be yet another front of the trading company Ghal. The Grandiculum Mercatus itself is ripe with tent-taverns, musicians, jugglers, mimes, and sideshows - it is a colorful tapestry of constantly shifting color, noise, and scenery.

Rich in history, busy with many divergent agendas, the characters who populate Opulentium share complex dynamics and constant challenges to survive, prosper, and outdo each other. Travelers and the occasional stranger are always welcome. Each has something to offer, whether it's money to spend (or be stolen), skills, rare goods to trade, or just a good song or story. Travel to

Opulentium. Experience the intrigue and the unexpected. The plots change, as the canal waters pass under the bridges, and no day is exactly the same as another in the City of Canals.

The Sojourner

In Your Campaign

Opulentium Arcus is representative of a large, established trade center that would fit into most late medieval-style RPG's. It could be a base of operations for thieves, a source of materials for wizards, a challenge for a righteous paladin or a rumor mill for the fighters. Here are

a couple of suggestions for introducing the city into your campaign:

- ♣ A certain merchant in the Mercatus has a permanent charter for his tent - inside is a portal - if that is the method the Party uses to enter the city, can they use it to get back out? Who else knows about this?
- ♣ The Party is hired to infiltrate the Ghal by a rival trading company to retrieve a hijacked shipment - posing as employees; they may need additional help - from the Copper Keepers, perhaps?
- ♣ A relationship with an

important member of The Consortium leads the Party to investigate a band of rogue pirates that threaten every company in the city.

- ♣ Traveling through, the Party is a witness to the murder of a Monk of the Circumscribers - they either get caught up in the case, or are accused of the crime.
- ♣ The Party is invited to participate in gladiator-style games at the Lascivio Arena.

If you have an idea for the Sojourner's Diary, please email it to Clayton at: scorpio099@go.com.



Cartography: Clayton Bunce

James Henley is the editor of Ethos Magazine, with the drive and layout skills to put it together. He is also a brilliant DM and Role-Player (even if I say so myself - James).

advanced role-play, part one

A look further into the art of role-playing by James Henley

Ok, so you, the player, have reached a point in your D&D career. You've been playing for a year and are still the baby/kid role-player of your group. Your DM says it's time to move on. Time to reach out and grab adolescence by the hand. It's time to introduce description, narrative, and to go beyond to call of duty to make your role-playing sessions fun.

You've read the players handbook, memorized it from cover to cover. You can play D&D, but can you really PLAY it? The answer: no, you can't. You know how to say: '<insert character name> says: "two pints, please, mate", '<insert character name> charges the Orc' or even 'insert character name draws his sword and charges the Orc', if you're in a good mood. Well, now its time to go up a level, it's time to become an 'advanced role-player'.

The Two Types of Role-Player

There are two types of role-player in my mind, just as there are two types of writer, as a good role-player is only continuing the ongoing story of his character's life. There is the analytical role-player and the organic role-player. The analytical role-player prepares in advance and writes down all he needs about his character. He writes a comprehensive background, a list of contacts, and he decides exactly how his character will react in any situation. When the situation happens, he

consults his notes and behaves as he has decided he will do in that situation. Easy.

The organic role-player on the other hand, likes to face problems as they come. As his character progresses, he writes background to go with it, and builds up contacts over time. When a situation presents itself, he reacts in a way he feels is appropriate. He keeps little or no notes.

So, which is the best type? (That's what you're waiting for me to write isn't it). Well, I believe the best role-player takes the ideas from both principles and meets them in the middle. He keeps notes on contacts, background etc. but also leaves some things to chance, and sees how his character develops over time. This is the kind of role-player you should aim to be.

Before the Game

Before the game, the first thing you will need to do is make some notes about your character, his life, friends and family.

So, how do you make good notes? The key is to write only what you need. Write enough background to be able to tell an NPC your life story in around half a minute, and learn the first few sentences so that you do not interrupt the game, while searching for your notes. Check with your DM before writing your character's background, and check it with him afterwards. Work out your relationships with the other characters, you

should ask your DM about this, he will probably have some quite definite ideas about how you know each other. Keep notes of contacts and where and when you last met them as well, this will come in handy for recalling events; and write down any significant events that happen during your campaign. After you have written this all down, you will be ready to continue playing.

Playing the Game

OK, you sit down at the gaming table, open your rucksack, briefcase, carrier bag or whatever and you begin to chat to your fellow players. After the small talk has gone on a while, the DM, in his swivel chair (every DM should have one), signals the beginning of the game. He talks over what happened last week, last month or whenever you last met, he talks about the monsters you have defeated, and as your head starts to inflate, you here the words you have been dreading:

'Okay, what do you do now?'

'Umm...'

Yep, the dreaded silence, when the DM realises that everyone fell asleep at the point when last month you took on that dragon, who was peeing in the river that ran into the small town of... what was it again? That's what this section deals with.

Keeping the narrative running is the hardest part of

rope-playing, following on and reacting to what the DM has just told you can be hard, and with experience should become easier, but here's a few pointers to get you started.

Try to begin anything you do with '<insert character name> does... ' unless of course you are in the middle of a conversation.

Use description, '<insert character name> strides down the street, drawing his sword. As he draws to within twenty metres of the gnomish necromancer, he turns and calls to his comrades 'I'll draw his attention, you whittle him down with missile fire' instead of '<insert character name> walks up to the gnome bloke and attacks. Where's that blasted d20 gone?' or worse 'I charge him'. When it comes down to, the latter expression is something you expect to hear when playing a tabletop war-game, and not an RPG. The Warhammer club is next door my friend, I think you got the wrong address'.

Try to remember everyone's names. It really spoils the game if, in mid-flow, you suddenly ask 'what was his name again?'. If you have a problem remembering names, then have an A5 sheet ready with names on, in front of you on the table. If you forget someone's name then whisper to the person next to you, or check your notes before saying your piece.

Don't be daft! Think about what you are going to do before you say it. Don't act on the spur of the moment, unless your character is prone to do this.

Always follow your character description. Don't suddenly become a different person because you feel like it or you can't be bothered. If your character always sort out other people's mistakes, then

if one time you don't, it will remove the sense of continuity. Instead of being an adventure, your games become a few friends having a laugh.

Now you've worked out how to continue the narrative, you can play a pretty exciting game. You've almost completed the course now. But below are some quick points on basic actions in D&D and some sample descriptions for you to draw on, for when you have Role-Player's block and just can't come up with anything.

Moving

When moving around in D&D, it is easy to just say '<insert character name> moves to the other end of the hall' over and over again. Try to describe how you are moving as opposed to just doing it. This shows your body language, which will also convey your feelings to the rest of the group, which conveys the feeling of reality, that this is real, not just a game. Here are some quick examples:

Aggressive: '<insert character name> strides to the other end of the hallway, his face looking dead serious, body hunched ready to react.'

Calculating: '<insert character name> steps carefully across the room, his eyes scanning for any sign of trouble.'

Scared / Apprehension: '<insert character name> staggers down the stairs, his body hunched over, eyes anticipating something about to happen.'

Confident: '<insert character name> swaggers into the common room of the inn, a grin on his lips and a glint in his eye.'

Interaction

This means speaking with NPCs and other characters. When entering a conversation it is good to use some description, but to keep a conversation going try to limit it to once every fifth thing you say, or something like that. Use fill-in sentences to keep the narrative flowing:

'Where you going now? I've just started talking to you,' he cries.'

'Ah, yep last night was good;' He mumbles.

'Bah, humbug,' he groans 'Christmas is far too expensive!'

Attack Moves

It is often hard to vary attack moves, especially full-round attacks using the same weapon again and again. Try looking up the word 'attack' in a thesaurus for ideas or write out some phrases beforehand if you get stuck.

'<insert character name> pulls back on his bow and let it go, another arrow flying through the air.'

'<insert character name> strikes at the Orc with his hammer.'

That's it. I'm done. Hopefully, you are now a fully-fledged advanced role-player, and may you're descriptions be exciting and brilliant, and you're narratives, well... half-descent. So long.

'James closes his tome triumphantly, his goal reached. He stands up and walks out of the room. Content that his mission is completed. For now...'

Dimitrii Pavlov is a talented writer from Georgia, USA. This inspired article is in response to an article on the net, damning role-playing as if it were devil-worship.

father ramos' treatise

In response to those who damn role-playing by Dimitrii Pavlov

Warning: Some readers may find parts of this article disturbing or offensive.

Having read Father Ramos' "treatise" or whatever it is supposed to be, I found myself shaking my head in a sort of "Lord, what fools these mortals be" manner. Then I remembered that I'm mortal, and felt sort of ashamed that I came from the same species that such a vicious bigot belongs to.

Now I will grant you this -- Having read the White Wolf site's information on this Demon game, I will agree that that is pretty messed up. However, it is but a small example of the world of role-playing games, yet Father Ramos uses this minute sample as the basis for his argument against role-playing as a whole. This logical fallacy is called "Hasty Generalization", which is self-explanatory. Standard Dungeons and Dragons, for example, seems to orient players towards playing Good (or Neutral) characters, or "at worst" playing an evil character who is forced to at least act nonevil out of compliance with the group as a whole. And while games strictly for "evil" characters do exist, these are, again, not the majority of the hobby, and you cannot base an argument of any sort on a small minority of samples (like saying all businessmen are corrupt, all rich people are lazy, all Mexicans are

construction workers, etc.) (No offense on that last one, but it's a relatively common stereotype where I'm from and I was just using it as another unjust example of categorizing people, activities, or anything else).

Those who are "driven" by role-playing to criminal acts (or those rare cases of suicide mentioned above) are not done so by role-playing, just as Columbine did not happen because of "Quake", or whatever that rumor going around said. Perpetrators of those kinds of crimes are already psychologically unbalanced -- games and role-playing do not make them so. Traditional role-playing does not foster "drugs, fornication, homosexuality...paganism" and certainly not Catholicism, which brings up another point.

I don't know how many people here have studied European History, especially the pre-Enlightenment era, but this happens to be an area of great interest to me -- the politics, culture, technology, and the like draw me in -- but failure (or in most cases, refusal) to understand or, barring that, at least to tolerate other peoples' religions and cultures has caused more wars and bloodshed than any other cause in the history of the world. During the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), a war that erupted over the tension between Protestantism (Lutheranism) and

Catholicism, over one-third of the population of the Germanic regions died. The Puritan Revolution of 1652-1660 (I think those are the dates), the Crusades for Jerusalem, Hitler's Holocaust, the World Trade Center attacks. All these were caused by religious discrimination, intolerance, persecution, or any combination thereof. And here we have yet another example, an ignorant zealot equating Catholicism with paganism and heresy -- perhaps he should remember that Catholicism was founded by Saint Peter -- and taking a low shot at Methodists (I go to a Methodist church, and there's a pretty intense rivalry between Methodists and the more "fundamental" denominations). The man's blatant derision at one of the most influential and important political and cultural institutions to ever exist (derision that it once deserved... back in the days of the Great Schism... but no longer does, despite the *gasp* homosexual deviancy of a vast minority of its clergymen, who must have been involved in role-playing games, ecstasy, and White Wolf Game Studios Publishing) shows his ignorance on more matters than just that of role-playing activities.

Now for a bit of quick rebuffs of certain of "Father" Ramos' paragraphs:

Let's start with the first paragraph, that including the

allegedly true tales of the SMU students, among others, in which this "holy man" advocates lying in no unclear terms. Now, I make no claim to know everything about Christianity, but last time I checked "Thou Shalt Not Lie" was on "God's List of Major Screw-ups One Might Want To Avoid". Good call, "Father".

Moving on to the third paragraph, featuring "neither am I too proud to use the Devil's own tactics against him." Once more, we have a self-declared "holy man" advocating very explicitly declared sin in the name of, supposedly, saving people from damnation. If you want to talk about logical fallacies, this is a big one. Let's say I'm sitting around with my heathenist, devil-worshipping, Catholic friends, when Father Ramos pops up and starts trying to bring me into the light by lying, discriminating, and generally acting like a genocidal bigot. If a person comes to me preaching the Word of God while breaking about half the "rules" of a religion, I'm not going to respond very well to the religion (if it produces people who flagrantly and frequently violate it in misguided efforts to win converts), and I will certainly not respond well to the "messenger" himself.

Regarding the fifth paragraph, all I have to say is that "If God intended for you to act like a demon, he would have made you a demon, Jenny" is hilarious in any context. On a slightly more serious note, I doubt that God makes Demons, because that would be like fighting a war and giving soldiers to the other side, or the U.S. sending blueprints for atomic weapons to fundamental terrorist cells.

Next, the final paragraph under "Warning Signs", which begins "Demon differs in that its characters do not...". Specifically, I address "White Wolf attempts to foster the real cultivation of [demonic powers] in its players." If you can read that statement and not immediately conclude that Father Ramos is a nutcase for alleging that a company seeks to turn its consumers into demons, then you can go... I don't know, have a wild homosexual orgy or something Catholic like that.

Let's skip down to Paragraph 2 of "The True Problem", beginning "Additionally, role-playing games teach that violence is an acceptable and even admirable way of solving problems". To this I would like to respond thusly: Neville Chamberlin, possibly the most hated person in modern British history and the Prime Minister of Britain in the mid 1930s, sought to "appease" Adolf Hitler, believing that doing so would ensure that there would be no World War II. He, along with other pansy politicians of other nations, decided to just give Germany parts of Czechoslovakia, among other territory, because Hitler said that Germany deserved it, and promised that if they gave it to him he wouldn't cause any trouble. This must have made great sense at the time, because hey, if you can't trust a Raving Maniacal Racist Psychopathic Murderous Fascist Dictator, who can you trust, eh? Well, Chamberlain's strategy didn't work, and if it hadn't been for violence, the number of Jews who died in the Holocaust would have been far, far larger than the historical figure, and Europe would consist of about five or six countries (Britain, Russia, Sweden, Norway, Germany,

and maybe Italy). Violence does not solve everything, but it does solve some things, and knowing the time, place, and degree to use it is a critical part of maintaining world balance (if not peace, which won't be attained while humans as we know them still exist).

Phew, that was pretty big response, wasn't it? Now, I'm not going to expound on the many benefits of role-playing beyond the ways in which it appeals to me personally.

D&D (which is the only role-playing I do) features wonderful information, drawings, and settings of a medieval world. The weapons, architecture, cultures, and the like are interesting to simply read about, and even more wonderful when you can put that knowledge into effect. Unfortunately, I was born approximately 650 years too late -- by my own admission (and several others') I belong in the Middle Ages, due to my interest in all aspects of that time period. I cannot now go back to that time and experience it first hand, and while I understand that role-playing does not allow me to do that, it allows me to interact with a fantasy environment that is modeled on the time period that holds so much of my interest, and gives me a chance to portray different characters the way I might have been had I lived in that setting and time period (with the addition of magic. But I rarely play spell casters, so that's sort of an extension of my subconscious that "They didn't exist then, so I wouldn't have been one, so I'm not going to represent one in this game".) I treat my characters as not really an extension of myself (they certainly are not), but possibilities for what I

"might have been" (though when bad things happen to "what I might have been", like getting crunched into a "might have been panc ake", I don't care that much, since I view it as the opportunity to move on to another possibility.

But that's just me. I'm sure we all have our reasons, our own personal idiosyncrasies that draw us into interaction with others surrounding an unreal environment. And, as Furqan has pointed out, there are extremists who take such things way too far, and they need some sort of psychiatric help to convince them that they are not a Queen of the Amazons or Kaax the Vampire Lord or whatever. On that note, of course, there are also extremists in the spheres of religion, politics, environmental groups (*ahem* www.earthliberationfront.com *cough*), etc. Remember -- John Hinckley, Jr., the man who shot Ronald Reagan, thought that a character from the movie *Taxi Driver* (Jodie Foster) would fall in love with him, or something, if he assassinated the president. Not the actor. The character. Not all lunatics are spawned of a single source. Just remember, all: Everything in Moderation.



Artwork: John O'Connor

Steven Creech is the Chairman of the d20 Magazine Rack (www.d20zines.com) and editor of d20 Zine!. He graciously agreed to answer our questions on the d20 publishing industry.

speaking of ezines...

An interview with Steven Creech of the d20 Magazine Rack with James Henley.

James:

Hi Steve. First of all, thank you for agreeing to answer my questions. Ethos Magazine is very happy to have your words written on our pages.

Steven:

It is my pleasure, James.

James:

When was it that you set up the d20 Magazine Rack and how much work did you have to put in to get it online?

Steven:

Actually, the site itself was set up in June of 2001 and is owned by Morgan (Tempest) Grover, who is the Executive Director for the site. Morgan issued a request for help in July of that year, which is when I came aboard. Due to his excessive work schedule, I stepped in and took the lead on running and maintaining the site within just a few months and actively began making changes to improve the site and bring more traffic to it. Ever since then, I've pretty much been the captain in regards to how the site is run and maintained with Morgan occasionally providing input or suggestions. I've been

the driving force behind much of what you see or have seen in the past.

We've gone through four major site re-designs since the site first went live in order to adapt to our growing needs with the most recent being in January of this year. It has been a bit of hard work and quite honestly a labour of love. Before Jeff Fuller, our webmaster, joined the team, I was averaging about four to six hours a day actively doing website maintenance and posting new content such as reviews, news and general announcements. Before changing our site to utilize the PostNuke php program with this last change, I was coding much of the site manually using HTML. Now, thankfully, it is much easier and only requires an average of one and two hours of my time on a daily basis.

James:

Was d20Zine! already alive and well when you began the Magazine Rack? How did you generate hits and submissions for them?

Steven:

d20Zine! came about shortly after I took over the reins of the d20 Magazine Rack. I had looked at a lot of different electronic magazines but felt that most were not giving gamers much in terms of crunchy stuff they could use at the table. There are several really good zines out there, but nothing that really meets what I am looking for in a d20-related periodical. So I decided to create and publish one.

Developing content for any magazine can be a challenge and d20Zine! is no different. If you have watched the gaming news recently, both Asgard and Stygian zines were delayed due to lack of content. One way I was able to get around this problem with the first issue was using some of my connections in the industry. I asked Steve Peterson (of Second World Simulations) if he would mind contributing an article or two to the zines. Steve came through with two great ones and along with content provided by my writing partner, Kevin Ruesch, and myself we had the beginnings of the

magazine. From there I posted an open call for submissions and got some good responses. It was necessary to get trademark permission from a couple of companies, but the end product was well worth it. Another great addition that adds to the content of the magazine are the entries we receive for our contests. This is a great way to showcase some really strong talent out there. In fact, because of contest submissions, we have had publishers contact a couple of entrants and subsequently contract them for freelance work.

James:

And then, recently, the Magazine Rack has expanded. Did you approach the publishers of the new 'zines like Deep Magic and Legion's Realm or did they approach you?

Steven:

One of the original intents of the d20 Magazine rack was to provide a number of different zines that people could download and read at their leisure. The concept was much like that of the corner newsstand where people can get not only a newspaper but also just about any magazine they want to. When we initially tried this approach just after the site was started, we had several people express a desire to publish a zine but within a very short

time failed to come through due to differing circumstances. Tempest's Lore was the only one that began from the beginning. When I took over the reins and control of the site, one of the steps I made was to attempt to bring the site back to the original mission of serving as the corner newsstand.

I initially approached Deep Magic and Fictional Reality, while I believe both Legions Realm Monthly and Romancing Cathay (the source behind Revisiting the Three Kingdoms and Claw Mark) contacted us based on an open call we made for magazines to host. I thought both Deep Magic and Fictional Reality could offer a strong cornerstone to our selection and complement the base we had already established with d20Zine! and Tempest's Lore. Deep Magic has a substantial following of fans and by acting as a mirror site, it allows them access to their favourite zine in case the Amberlin site has sever problems. Legions Realm has proven to be a strong zine with the number of downloads improving steadily nearly every week. It is certainly making its own mark in the world. Both of the Cathay zines appeal to a very select group of fans

but we have been seeing an increase in interest in those magazines also, so I am hopeful they will continue to grow and do well.

James:

What, do you think, is the balance of a good ezine? How should the amount of articles balance with D&D resources and regular columns?

Steven:

Ideally, a good zine should have at least two or three regular feature columns. The subject of those columns could vary in content to a certain extent but should still stay within a defined set of parameters. For example, one of the feature articles that will be coming to d20Zine! in the near future will focus on mapping and adventure hooks for using that map in a campaign. While feature articles don't necessarily have to contain resource information suitable for D&D, it's a good idea to have at least one feature article do so. The remaining parts of the zine should maintain a balance of material that features player and GM resources along with material that is simply entertaining to read, such as short fiction, interviews or comics.

James:

And what about good illustrations? I'm a

great believer in presentation being very important, almost as important as the articles themselves (although there is no substitute for a really good piece of writing). How does having good images affect the quality of an ezine?

Steven:

There is no doubt that good artwork only helps a product, but there are exceptions to consider. One of the big criticisms of electronic publications is the use of graphics and art and the effect it has on a printer cartridge. I try to keep that in mind for every issue d20Zine!, especially as it continues to grow more popular. While I love good artwork, there should be a specific need for it to be present when it is included into a pdf-style book or magazine. If the subject of the article calls for artwork (such as maps), then by all means include it. However, if the quality of the writing isn't there, then no amount of artwork or graphical borders is going to help it in the long run. The main key is in the presentation and layout of the magazine. As long as that is sharp and professional in appearance, then the extra graphics aren't quite so important.

James:

Which is do you think is better: a 'journal'

style 'zine like Deep Magic or a Magazine-style like Asgard or d20Zine! ?

Steven:

I don't think that either style is necessarily better than the other. They each have their own advantages and disadvantages. For reading pure fiction, I like Deep Magic's style. But for reading rules-related material, the magazine style seen in d20Zine! and others is more practical in my opinion.

James:

How much actual editing and copy reading do you have to do in order to put your e-zine out? Talk us through the editing and publication procedure you use.

Steven:

Basically the process is one where the article is submitted to me in a finished format for consideration. I will then read through it and if there is anything that is in need of obvious correction, contact the author and let him or her know. If no obvious revisions are needed, the article goes to our Chief Editor for assignment to a staff editor. The staff editor will read through the article and double check it for such things as d20 compliance (correct skill points, feats, etc.), proper grammar and spelling, content editing, and open gaming license compliance /

compatibility. Once the article has been edited, it comes back to me for final reading and is then added to the list of articles ready for inclusion and layout into the next issue.

James:

How much of the layout of the publication do you decide upon? Do you ask people to write on certain subjects or just let them send in finished articles?

Steven:

The actual layout design is entirely in the hands of our graphic layout artist, Todd Schumacher. The only layout matters that I dictate are the order of the articles and any special notations or requests. The rest is in Todd's hands, especially since he has consistently proven himself more than capable of performing the task quickly and efficiently.

The majority of our articles come to us in fully finished form. However, there are times when I ask for specific subjects or articles, such as with the monthly contests. Almost all material submitted for contests sees publication in an issue of d20Zine!. There are also many occasions where people will contact me with an idea for an article and then develop it based upon the feedback I give them.

James:

Also, how much do you discuss with your Staff Editors?

Steven:

We do have a staff of five or six editors with Anna Dobritt serving as our Chief Editor. Anna is in charge of assigning submissions to editors and then making sure they come back before a specific deadline. She's done a wonderful job serving in her capacity as Chief Editor. I do interact with the editorial staff somewhat, but primarily my discussions go through Anna, who then sees that any concerns I have are carried out. We have a very good editorial staff who do a marvellous job with editing and correcting any submissions we receive for the magazine.

James:

Which, do you think, is the best 'zine at d20 Magazine Rack, besides d20Zine! ?

Steven:

Each zine has its own individual strengths that make it unique in its own right but I would have to lean towards TempesT's Lore and Legions Realm Monthly as being the best outside of d20Zine!

James:

How would you describe the d20 Magazine Rack, as a resources site or as a site with a strong community around it?

Steven:

In reality, it is both a resource and a community site. We have people visiting the site daily who are only there to read the articles and reviews and there are people who enjoy interaction in the forum. Likewise, the presence of downloadable features such as the various zines and other material makes it a good resource site for information and tools. I like to think of it as a good resource site that openly encourages c o m m u n i t y participation.

James:

What is your attitude towards D & D resources sites like ENWorld and D&D Adventures?

Steven:

I think they are great. EN World has set the standard by which nearly every other site measures itself against in terms of community following and a source of news. There are many quality D&D/d20 sites out there that continually contribute positive things to the industry and to the fanbase. Mortality.net, GamingReport.com, Pen & Paper.net, Ogre's Cave.com, and Gamewyrd.com are all sites that have new content on a daily (or near-daily) basis. I think the sheer number of fans that the hobby has will ensure that there will always be resources available for

gamers to utilize and that there is a strong demand for quality sites dedicated to gamers.

James:

Finally, you wrote in the editorial of the fall issue of d20Zine! the following:

On a personal level, my writing career has taken off like a rocket. Not only am I doing work for Bastion Press on a regular basis, but also some writing for Dark Quest Games, contributing to a book by Green Ronin Publishing, and am currently negotiating with another top name d20 publisher to take on a very important role with them.

What is it like to work for big d20 publishers like Green Ronin and Bastion Press? And also, at this point in time can you tell us any more about the projects you are working on? Do you want to plug any of them quickly here?

Steven:

Working for Bastion Press has been a very positive experience. Jim Butler, the company president, is very easy to work with and has given both Kevin and myself substantial latitude and control on the projects where we have been lead developers. I think Bastion Press does a good job in setting a certain standard of quality that is missing from some of the other publishers. They are the only company that prints their books using the best paper

stock available and in full colour. In my opinion, it really adds to their books. I've written five books for Bastion (four of which were in collaboration with Kevin) in the time span of just a single year, so anytime you produce that much work for a single publisher it's a good feeling because you know they appreciate and enjoy what you produce. When we were approached by Jim to write a book on poisons late last June, it marked a turning point in what we were doing. "Pale Designs: A Poisoner's Handbook" is our first print publication and has received, for the most part, high praise among reviewers and gamers. It was incredibly demanding due to the short timeframe we had to complete it (9 weeks), but it was also quite satisfying.

"Denizens of Freeport" only contains two characters that I submitted (I only had time to write up the two), but they are also characters that are not quite what you would expect. Green Ronin likes to push the bubble a bit on providing more original takes on races and characters, so I was confident that the two I did create would be accepted. Green Ronin is also a publisher with a solid reputation for generating quality product and also

treating their freelancers fairly and responsibly. You always know exactly where you stand when you are dealing with a company like that. Chris Pramas, the head of the company, has said on more than one occasion that he strives to treat any freelancer authors exactly how he wants to be treated. If asked, I would never hesitate for even a second to say "yes" at doing more work for them.

My current projects include finishing up the book for Dark Quest on familiars. That book has been delayed because of both personal health reasons and also the unexpected need to add additional length to the book since it will also be published under the Natural 20 banner. Also on the immediate burner is another book for Bastion Press tentatively titled "Torn Asunder: Critical Hits", which will present a more expanded set of rules for critical hits, wounding and healing that is set for a release sometime around Origins or Gen Con. I will also be contributing to the Oathbound book, "Arena" which is also tentatively set for a Gen Con release.

Immediately after those books are completed will be a big one for Mystic Eye Games called "Dark Walkers". This will be a

book for their **Hunt: Rise of Evil** setting on effectively playing evil characters. However, it will be written for easy use in any d20 setting and not just **Rise of Evil**. Kevin and I are really looking forward to doing that one as it will tackle a subject head-on that others have really only skirted or covered briefly. It is going to be a lot of fun to develop and should see a release date in the fall. On the horizon is another secret project with Mystic Eye Games that could lead to an ongoing contract for more work. I also fully expect to continue doing books for Bastion Press along with writing for other publishers. I've spoken directly to a few and had them express a genuine interest in having Kevin and I do some work for them. This year is certainly going to be a very busy one for us.

James:

Thanks for taking the time to answer my questions, Steve. I'm looking forward to the next issue of d20Zine!

Steven:

It was my pleasure. I wish you the best of luck with Ethos Magazine.

Chris Morris is an experienced modeller and miniatures expert. As well as Dungeons & Dragons, he is interested in Games Workshop and Live Action Role-Play.

d&d models for beginners ... and halflings

Using miniatures in D&D by Chris Morris

D&D is a very versatile game. You can rest assured, that how ever insane, stupid, or completely psychotic an idea you may have, your DM probably has a role for it. Though there are some aspects of D&D that can be very hard to describe by ear...

"So what you're saying is that were in a room about 24 ft by 40 ft with a 20 ft wide corridor in the north wall that's about 10ft from the east wall, there is a table in the middle of the room with 4 chairs around it and playing cards on it. My character is between two orcs 20ft into the room with an ogre charring at me from 30 ft away down the hall. Jozan is 15 ft away to the left, Tordek is 30 ft to the behind, Lidda is to the North West 25 ft away. Harold the local sheriff is coming down the corridor behind the ogre ... oh and the ceiling is coming down over our heads!"

Ok so it's difficult enough to remember the description of the room itself but how can anyone remember where anyone is. "Lets try a map" says the DM in a moment of intense intelligence, and draws a quick map... "Right so where are we?"

"You're there (points on map), and everyone else is here, here, and here (also points on map)." Confused? Well I am. If this happens you or your D&D group then you have two options:

#1: Use little pieces of paper

to represent things (like chariots, monsters etc). But then you can always get confused ... "err is that an ork ... or is it a chair?"

#2: Models (and finally the entire point of the scene above becomes clear). The holy grail of ideas!

So now you know they're excellent, you now what to know why, right? No? Well, tough! Models are useful for two main reasons:

#1: They make everything easier! Pure and simple! If you have models you can actually see where everyone / thing is! And everything looks like it's meant to, but only if you use the right type of model, wimpy green plastic army men are no good for anything, least of all orcs. Orcs don't use rifles!

#2: They can be customised and converted to suit the role you want them to play (if you're good enough that is).

Now you know they're superb, and why, you need to know where you get them from, well there are hundreds of companies out there and they all make good models, but in my opinion there is only one reasonably accessible manufacturer - Games Workshop (www.games-workshop.com). Yes the makers of Warhammer, Warhammer 40,000 etc. They make high quality models for converting and general modelling. They are also

mostly multipart models, which makes converting them to produce unique models easier, than with single-piece models.

Personally I'd say they're good for experienced modellers, but not really for people new to the modelling scene. Though they do produce single-part models, mainly metal but some are plastic. For Dungeons & Dragons I suggest the Empire free company boxed set for human peasants (well axe welding ones anyway : p). Here is a rough list of what other models they produce:

Humans - Yes, like normal humans. Mounted, not mounted; heavy armour, light armour - anything you want.

Orks & Goblins - Standard Orks & Gobbos, and some strange things called Snotlings (even smaller gobos!)

Elves - Of all kinds, High Elves, Dark Elves (a.k.a. Drow) and Wood Elves. Mounted, not mounted, heavy armour, and also light armoured 'Sword-dancer' Wood Elves (good for druids).

Dwarfs - NOBODY TOSSES A DWARF unless they're two inches high that is! Standard Dwarfs, come with beer, and cool war machines! You can get Warriors, with a choice of weapons, or engineers, Rune-smiths (who make good clerics), and Engineers.

Chaos - These are mostly

humans, and would take the shape of the evil and occult characters in your world. Also includes demons, Beastmen (a mix of human and beast) and Chaos warriors (humans in cool armour), marauders (lightly armoured warriors, although those who are unmounted do look like American Footballers).

Tomb Kings – Skeletons, mummies, most undead. Just recently been remodelled, look ok, not great but hay.

Vampire Counts – Vampires, vampires, and more vampires! Also includes zombies, some skeletons, ghouls, banshees, and vampire bats (The vampires armies book also presents some great background material for vampires in D&D, with bloodlines and other details fluffy details).

Lizardmen – These are primitive lizard men. Good for troglodytes, and perhaps kobolds. There are also many other cool inventions and even dinosaurs, that the Lizardmen

harness to their cause.

Skaven – Rat people, ok they look good but I can't think of a D&D use for them.

Ok that's enough about GW. For other good models manufacturers, I suggest you visit New Wave Games (www.newwavegames.com). They are an online web retailer who deal with many products. Personally I can't really say much about them because I haven't really come into contact with them, but I have been assured (by me - James) that they are excellent, very high quality models that are not as pricey as GW, as well as selling Games Workshop models at big discounts. If you want more help on New Wave Games models I suggest you visit the www.coolminiornot.com message boards. They also contain information about general modelling, painting, and sales on "Ebay". The entire idea of Cool Mini or Not" is to get your models viewed, and rated by other users - it's an excellent system that's really helpful to new

modellers. Also try The Warp (www.thewarp.net) they have lots of information, tips, and tutorials on painting, modelling and some D&D stuff.

If you want to go official Wizards of the Coast stuff, then Chainmail is for you! Here's a link for you: www.wizards.com/chainmail. On this site there is free downloadable terrain buildings and a store finder (US only) there are wizards stores out there but I have never seen any, then I live in the UK and they are only US (I think). There are lots of other companies out there that make models but there the only ones that I can think of at the moment. But if you want my opinion, the Wizards of the Coast miniatures aren't as high quality as other models.

Well there we go! That's the basics, well the basic basics. If you have any questions just post it up on our board and I should see it, if not e-mail me at chrisjm@hotmail.com. Good luck and happy modelling.

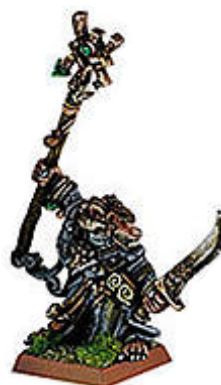
Sample Games Workshop Products



High-Elf



Dark-Elf Repeater Crossbow



Skaven



A Mighty Chaos Champion



Dark-Elf (Drow)



The Vampire Counts Army Book - Full of good background material and information and vampire bloodlines.



A Dwarf Lord - One of many Dwarf models, all clad in heavy armour and ready for battle.

Open Game
Content

resources

Gaming Resources for use in Dungeons & Dragons Third Edition

prestige class: Crying freeman

Directly inspired by the film (and the manga), 'The Crying Freeman'. Crying Freeman prestige class by Dominique Crouzet.

"The Society of the Sons of the Dragon is very old. Fourteen centuries ago, during an age of terror and oppression, 108 monks mounted a revolt against a tyrant. They were all killed but five. These five founded the Society of the Dragon, and then became the guardians of the common people struggling against injustice and oppression. They have one killer: the Freeman. Legend has it, that the Dragon's breath is in him, and he cannot die. His body changes, he could be from any land, any color, any race, but he is always the "Dragon", always the same man, a super killer. Part fact, part wishful thinking: who knows?"

Detective Netah (Crying Freeman film)

The Crying Freeman is the executioner of a mysterious organization known as the "Sons of the Dragon". Some say they are fanatics and criminals, while others pretend they are the champions of the oppressed. But in any case their killer is a single man, rumored to be very powerful, so they would need no other. In fact, for difficult missions the Crying Freeman will be aided by others, but there is nonetheless there is only one Crying Freeman at any time.

Another important thing about him, is that the Crying Freeman, contrary to what his name would suggest, is not free, but is rather the slave of the Society of the Sons of the Dragon. Hence, he has no other choice than obey them and kill whomever he is ordered to. As such, the Crying

Freeman uses a different weapon for each mission, but these weapons being magically treated cannot lead back to him. In fact, such weapons are left on the site of the murder act as a warning against whoever would go against the interests of this mysterious society. Otherwise, as bound by his code, the Crying Freeman will kill any witness who saw his face when he was murdering someone. Lastly, if the Crying Freeman was to betray the Society (eg. refusing to slay someone he was ordered to), the Society would do anything in its power to assassinate him.

Nobody chooses to become the Crying Freeman; the new Freeman is always chosen by the "Dragon". In fact, the Society of the Sons of the

Dragons often constrain (with powerful magic) some unwilling characters who learned something about them, to commit some murder on their behalf. These are usually hopeless missions that result in the death of these unfortunate characters. But sometimes, one of them is chosen to be the Freeman by the Dragon. He thus gets "his blessing" when doing the mission, surviving, and is so designated to the Society as the new Freeman. The Society then conditions and trains him to be their new killing slave. One thing must be noted though: for some unknown reason, the Dragon always chooses some sort of artist and sensible person to be the next Freeman. Then, when having to murder against their will, such persons have been often seen crying while doing so, hence their name.

Requirements

To qualify as a Crying Freeman, the character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: Any non-evil.

Base Attack Bonus: +4

Craft (artistic) or Perform: 8 ranks.

Special: Must have been chosen by the "Dragon".

Class Skills

The Crying Freeman's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are: Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Disguise (Cha), Escape artist (Dex),

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1 st	+1	+0	+2	+0	Acrobatics (+2) ; Dragon's blessing (+1) ; Bound to the organization
2 nd	+2	+0	+3	+0	Sneak attack (+1d6)
3 rd	+3	+1	+3	+1	Uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC)
4 th	+4	+1	+4	+1	Acrobatics (+4) ; Dragon's blessing (+2) ;
5 th	+5	+1	+4	+1	Sneak attack (+2d6)
6 th	+6	+2	+5	+2	Uncanny dodge (can't be flanked)
7 th	+7	+2	+5	+2	Acrobatics (+6) ; Dragon's blessing (+3) ;
8 th	+8	+2	+6	+2	Sneak attack (+3d6)
9 th	+9	+3	+6	+3	Uncanny dodge (+1 against traps)
10 th	+10	+3	+7	+3	Acrobatics (+8) ; Dragon's blessing (+4) ;

Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Listen (Wis), Move silently (Dex), Open locks (Dex), Spot (Wis), and Tumble (Dex).

Skill points at each level: 4 (four) + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the Crying Freeman prestige class.

Hit Die: 1d8

Weapon & Armor Proficiency:

The Crying Freeman is proficient with all simple and martial weapons. He does not gain any proficiencies in armors or shields.

Acrobatics (ex): At 1st level, the Crying Freeman gains a +2 competence bonus on Balance, Jump, and Tumble checks. Then, this bonus increases to +4 at 4th level, +6 at 7th level, and +8 at 10th level. In addition, the Crying Freeman can always choose to take 10 on a Balance, Jump, or Tumble check, even when circumstances would normally prevent him from doing so.

Dragon's Blessing (su):

When becoming the new Crying Freeman, the character gains a large magical tattoo of a dragon, covering all his upper back and torso. This tattoo provides him with an AC bonus equal to his *Charisma* modifier (if any) plus the relevant bonus (+1 at 1st level, +2 at 4th level, +3 at 7th level, and +4 at 10th level) at all times.

In addition, when in combat with those whom he has been ordered to kill, the Crying Freeman is shielded from missile weapons as if by a *Protection from Arrows* spell. The duration of this protection lasts until that particular fight ends. The protection is of 10/+1 at 1st level, 10/+2 at 4th level, 10/+3 at 7th level, and 10/+4 at 10th level.

Note that *Dragon's Blessing* is only

effective when the Crying Freeman doesn't wear any armor (it is similar to the monk class in this regard).

Sneak Attack: At 2nd level, the Crying Freeman gets the Sneak Attack ability as for rogues, which improves to +2d6 at 5th level, and +3d6 at 8th level. If the Crying Freeman already had Sneak Attack from a previous class, it stacks with it.

Uncanny Dodge: At 3rd level and above, the Crying Freeman retains his Dexterity bonus to AC (if any) if caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker. At 6th level, the Crying Freeman can no longer be flanked (but, a character with Sneak Attack at least four levels higher can still flank him). At 9th level, the Crying Freeman gains a +1 bonus to Reflex saves made to avoid traps and a +1 dodge bonus to AC against attacks from traps.

Bound to the Organization:

The Crying Freeman rarely becomes such an assassin willingly. Instead he has been conditioned magically by the Society of the Sons of the Dragons to become their killer. As such, whenever he gets from them the order to kill someone, he must obey them, unless a Will saving throw at DC20 (quartermasters of the Society) or DC30 (master of the Society) is made. However, the Crying Freeman

cannot be ordered to commit suicide that way.

Ex Crying Freeman

If the Crying Freeman would betray the Society of the Sons of the Dragons (typically in succeeding to refuse to kill someone as ordered by the organization, and then leaving it), the Society would put him to a death sentence. However, the Crying Freeman would not lose his special abilities, except for the *Protection from Arrows* spell-like ability, as this

one only works when attacking those he has been ordered to kill. The character may however no longer get levels in the Crying Freeman prestige class.

Current Crying Freeman

Yo Hinomura was a simple potter, until one day he witnessed a murder ordered by the Society of the Sons of the Dragon. He was kidnapped, and subsequently magically conditioned to commit a murder. But then, as he survived that mission, the organization understood he had been blessed by the "Dragon". So, he was given his magical tattoo and trained to become an efficient killer. Yo, however, resents having to kill, and typically cries when doing so. If confronted with a woman who would please him particularly, he could even come to betray the organization.

Yo Hinomura: male human Expert 6 / Crying Freeman 8; medium-sized humanoid; hp 70, Init +6, Speed 30, AC 18 (touch 18, flat-footed 16); Atk +15/+9/+4 melee (ninja-to 1d6+3, 19-20/x2) or +17/+11/+6 melee (dagger 1d4+5, 17-20/x2); AL CG; SQ none; Saves: Fort +9, Ref +10, Will +9; Abilities: Str 15 (+2), Dex 15 (+2), Con 13 (+1), Int 12 (+1), Wis 14 (+2), Cha 12 (+1).

Skills: Alchemy +7, Appraise +7, Balance +13, Bluff +7, Climb +9, Concentration +7, Craft (pottery) +10, Disguise +5, Diplomacy +7, Hide +10, Jump +13, Knowledge (nature) +7, Listen +11, Move silently +10, Profession (artisan) +11, Spot +11, and Tumble +13.

Feats and Specials: Acrobatics, Dragon's Blessing, Sneak attack (+3d6), Uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC and can't be flanked), Alertness, Ambidexterity, Exotic weapon: ninja-to, Improved critical (dagger), Improved initiative, Mobility.

Possessions: Dagger +3, Ninja-to +1, Ring AC+2, potions of Cure moderate wounds, invisibility, speed, fly

Note: The Crying Freeman prestige class was checked with both the D20 CCE and the ClassCalc, and appears to be balanced (not overpowered) according to them. (In fact, it even appears that it could be a little stronger. So, you may increase Fortitude saves if you prefer more powerful prestige classes in your campaign).



prestige class: **Carteomancer**

Carteomancer Prestige Class by Ryan Boell.

Some see the future in cards. Some see the past in the runes. Some conjure help from gates and some make others see what they want to see by suggestion. These people have a unique ability to use the cards to their utmost advantage. Whether on vellum, stone, parchment or bone, they can tap into the raw energies of the cards.

Hit Dice: 1d4

Requirements

To qualify as a carteomancer, a character must fulfill the following criteria:

- **Feat:** Point Blank
- **Skill Scry:** 5 ranks
- **Skill Fortune telling (Carteomancy):** 9 ranks
- **Spells:** Any 3rd level Divination Spell or any 3rd level Conjuraton spell or any 3rd level Illusion spell

Class skills

Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Intuit Direction (Wis), Know (all skills) (Int), Profession (Wis), Scry (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Spellcraft (Int)
Skill pints at each level: 4 + Int Modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the carteomancer.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Carteomancers are proficient with simple weapons. They are not proficient with armor or shields and therefore if they where any armor, their spells have a chance of failing

Spells per Day: When a carteomancer goes up in level, he gains new spells per day as if he had gained levels in its original spell casting class. She does not, however, gain metamagic feats or any other special abilities of the spell casting class, except an increased effective spell level.

Fate's Friend: At 2nd level, 4th level, 5th level, 7th level, 9th level and 10th level, the carteomancer gets his choice from the following feats: Spell Focus, Greater Spell Focus, Empower Spell, Extend Spell, Height en Spell, Maximize Spell, Delay Spell, Repeat Spell (These Metamagic feats can only be used when using the cards), Point blank Shot, Far Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot and Weapon Specialization (Only to be used for the cards).

Skill Focus: At 3rd, 6th and 9th level the Carteomancer gains a skill focus in any of the skills she has that is not a cross class skill.

Scribe Card: At 1st level the carteomancer gains the ability to scribe a spell into a card, like scribing a scroll. Effectively, the carteomancer gains the Scribe Scroll Feat using an alternative medium. The Scribe Scroll prices still apply. Except in instances where the Carteomancer scribes Summon Monster, Any Divination or

Exotic Weapon Proficiency: At 1st level the carteomancer gains the Exotic Weapon Feat with throwing cards (see below).

Unfettered Card: At 3rd level, the carteomancer learns the ability to make it so other people can trigger the spells imbued into the cards. Effectively, the carteomancer gains the Brew Potion Feat using an alternative medium. The Brew Potion prices still apply. Except in instances where the Carteomancer scribes Summon Monster, Any Divination or Illusion Spell into the cards.

Ambidexterity: At 3rd level the carteomancer can now throw two cards and not be hindered by the fighting restrictions. This is ONLY for throwing cards

Divination: At 4th level the carteomancer gains the ability to use the cards three times a day and use the Divination spell.

Throw Enspelled Card: - At 5th level, the carteomancer may throw a card that has been imbued with a spell, rather than simply casting from them. The carteomancer makes a ranged touch-attack against a target. If the result is a hit, the spell scribed on the card takes effect as normal, centered on the target. If the result is a miss, treat the card as a Grenade-like Weapon (see page 138 of the PHB) to determine the center of the spell's area of effect. If the spell is a non area-of-effect spell and misses, the spell fizzles.

SPECIAL NOTE: If the mage specializes, when they become a Cartomancer, they can specialize **four** times. They can only specialize in any fur schools. If they chose to do this, all other schools are cast at 2 levels lower than the actual level. A 5th level mage will cast a abjuration spell at 3rd level.

Weapon	Size	Cost	Damage	Critical	Range	Weight	Type
Enspelled Card	Tiny	35 gp	1d4	19-20 x2	30	-	slashing

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day
1 st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Scribe Card, Exotic Weapon (Throwing Cards)	+1 to spell casting level
2 nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Fate's Friend	+1 to spell casting level
3 rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	Ambidexterity	+1 to spell casting level
4 th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Unfettered Card, Skill Focus	+1 to spell casting level
5 th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Fates Friend, Divination 1/day	+1 to spell casting level
6 th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Fate's Friend, Throw Enspelled Card	+1 to spell casting level
7 th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Divination 2/day, Skill Focus	+1 to spell casting level
8 th	+4	+2	+2	+6	Fate's Friend	+1 to spell casting level
9 th	+4	+3	+3	+6	Fate's Friend, Divination 3/dav	+1 to spell casting level
10 th	+5	+3	+3	+7	Skill Focus	+1 to spell casting level
					Fate's Friend, Divination 4/day	+1 to spell casting level

core class: investigator

Investigator Core Class by Ryan Boell.

Delving into the secrets of the underworld and solving the mysteries that befall mankind, they are the detectives, the seekers, the investigators. They hire their services out to any who need help and have a problem with a bad rep, information needed, a missing person or a mystery. Usually employed by the local law officials, these guys are called in when the local government need something done besides bullying.

Adventures: Ideally, an investigator is out not really adventuring but out gathering information or on a assignment. They are sometimes sent out with assignments as spies, bounty hunters, reconnaissance or just to solve a mystery that needs to be solved.

Characteristics: Investigators have some combat training and are quick on their feet and light with their mind, but many people don't seem to care for their attitudes or occupation. That deals with them poking a round and asking questions.

Alignment: They usually are Lawful or neutral. Rarely do you hear of an investigator that is chaotic or evil.

Religion: They usually follow the god of Knowledge, Law or Justice.

Background: They are usually employed by the local clergy or the local law officials. Sometimes investigators have the direct heir to kings, advisors and burgers.

Races: Investigators come from all races, although gnome and halving investigators are kind of rare to see.

Other Classes: Investigators usually get along with any other class but sometimes they only put up with rogues just to get the job done and they sometimes have problems with paladins and their laws.

Abilities: A high Constitution will help the investigator be hardy and resilient, a high Strength with hell him overcome the odds and his assignments, a high Dexterity helps him with being able to evade attacks and a high Intelligence helps him think things through.

Alignment: Any Lawful

Hit Die: d6

Class Skills

Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disable Device (Int), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Innuendo (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Open Lock (Dex), Profession (Wis), Read Lips (Int), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis)

Skill Points at 1st Level: (6 + Int Modifier) x 4

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 6 + Level.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the Investigator.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency:

Investigators are proficient with simple weapons and mainly prefer the bows. Investigators are not proficient with armor and therefore cant where anything besides leather armor. They have an innate '6th sense' about incoming attacks from having to deal with so many attempts ont heir lives and therefore add their Int Modifier to their AC along with their Dex Bonus.

ALL SPELL LIKE ABILITIES MEET A MINIMUM OF CLASS LEVEL.

Meaning, a 7th level monk will have the following spell like abilities: **Detect Magic, Detect Chaos/Evil, Discernable Alignment, Knock and Discern Lies.** These can only be used up to SEVEN times a day. Not each.

Track: An Investigator gets track as per the feat on page 85 of the Players Handbook

Bonus Feat: At 1st, 5th, 10th, 15th and 20th level investigators get a choice from the following feats. In order to take some of these, you MUST meet the requirements of the particular Feat. Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Endurance, Expertise, Great Fortitude, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Quick Draw, Run, Toughness, Weapn Focus.

Detect Magic: The Investigator can cast this spell as many times equal to his level. Example a 5th level investigator can cast Detect Magic 5 times a day. (As per the spell in the Players Handbook)

Unarmed Attack: An investigator

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+0	+2	+0	Track, Bonus Feat, Detect Magic
2	+1	+0	+3	+0	Unarmed Attack, Evasion
3	+2	+1	+3	+1	Uncanny Dodge, Undetectble Alignment
4	+3	+1	+4	+1	Detect Chaos/Evil
5	+3	+1	+4	+1	Bonus Feat, Knock
6	+4	+2	+5	+2	Uncanny Dodge (cant be flanked)
7	+5	+2	+5	+2	Discearn Lies
8	+6/+1	+2	+6	+2	Improved Trip, Pass Without Trace
9	+6/+1	+3	+6	+3	Detect Thoughts
10	+7/+2	+3	+7	+3	Still Mind, Bonus Feat
11	+8/+3	+3	+7	+3	Uncanny Dodge (+1 against sneak attack)
12	+9/+4	+4	+8	+4	Delay Poison
13	+10/+5	+4	+8	+4	
14	+14/+9/+4	+4	+9	+4	Uncanny Dodge (+2 against sneak attack)
15	+15/+10/+5	+5	+9	+5	Bonus Feat
16	+16/+11/+6/+1	+5	+10	+5	Detect Traps
17	+17/+12/+7/+2	+5	+10	+5	Uncanny Dodge (+3 against sneak attack)
18	+18/+13/+8/+3	+6	+11	+6	Mind Blank
19	+19/+14/+9/+4	+6	+11	+6	Foresight
20	+20/+15/+10/+5	+6	+12	+6	Uncanny Dodge (+4 against sneak attack), Bonus Feat

fighting unarmed gains the benefit of the Improved Unarmed Strike feat and thus does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

Evasion: If exposed to any attack that allows a reflex save for half damage, the Investigator will take no damage if he passes the save.

Uncanny Dodge: At 3rd level and above, the Investigator can never be caught flat-footed and still retains his dexterity bonus to AC. At 6th level, the Investigator can no longer be flanked. He can act to opponents on either side of him before they get their flank damage. This also denies anyone else from using flank to get a Sneak Attack. At 11th level, the Investigator gains an intuitive sense that alerts him to the presence of other people, giving him a +1 AC bonus when someone is trying to attack him from behind. At 14th level it becomes +2, at 17th level it becomes +3 and at 20th level it becomes a +4.

Undetectable Alignment: The Investigator can cast this spell as many times equal to his level. Example a 5th level investigator can cast Undetectable Alignment 5 times a day. (As per the spell in the Players

Handbook)

Detect Chaos/Evil: The Investigator can cast this spell as many times equal to his level. Example a 5th level investigator can cast Detect Chaos/Evil 5 times a day. (As per the spell in the Players Handbook)

Knock: The Investigator can cast this spell as many times equal to his level. Example a 5th level investigator can cast Knock 5 times a day. (As per the spell in the Players Handbook)

Discearn Lies: The Investigator can cast this spell as many times equal to his level. Example a 5th level investigator can cast Discearn Lies 5 times a day. (As per the spell in the Players Handbook)

Improved Trip: At 8th level, the investigator gains the Improved Trip Feat as per page 83 of the Players Handbook.

Pass Without Trace: The Investigator no longer leaves his footprints behind.

Detect Lies: The Investigator can cast this spell as many times equal to his level. Example a 5th level investigator can cast Discearn Lies 5

times a day. (As per the spell in the Players Handbook)

Still Mind: At 10th level, the investigator gains the ability to quiet and calm his mind giving him a +2 bonus against Enchantment spells.

Delay Poison: The Investigator can cast this spell as many times equal to his level. Example a 5th level investigator can cast Delay Poison 5 times a day. (As per the spell in the Players Handbook)

Detect Traps: The Investigator can cast this spell as many times equal to his level. Example a 5th level investigator can cast Detect Traps 5 times a day. (As per the spell in the Players Handbook)

Mind Blank: The Investigator can cast this spell as many times equal to his level. Example a 5th level investigator can cast Mind Blank 5 times a day. (As per the spell in the Players Handbook)

Foresight: The Investigator can cast this spell as many times equal to his level. Example a 5th level investigator can cast Foresight 5 times a day. (As per the spell in the Players Handbook)



Artwork: John Bingham

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