

EM

ETHOS MAGAZINE

Issue 2, March 2003

INSIDE

Bring Life to Your NPCs!

Explore the Ubar Valley!

Get Roleplaying Tips!

ALSO

Celtos: Using Celtic Myths and Legends in Your Game

Product Reviews

Short Fictions

Resources for Players & DMs, Including:

3 *New Prestige Classes*

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John
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2003



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"A Dragon's Protection"
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Submissions

Ethos Magazine will accept submissions from anyone as long as they follow the appropriate guidelines at:

www.ethos.0catch.com/submissions.htm

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EDITORIAL

Hi,

Welcome to the second issue of Ethos Magazine. This issue is full of articles and resources, and will hopefully be just as good as Issue One. Thanks, once again, to everyone who helped to make this issue, and to Steven, Morgan (TempesT) and Jeff at **The d20 Magazine Rack** for their help. Also, thanks to our new staff members: Bruce Gulke and Chris Perkins, our new layout artist. If you've come from **The Magazine Rack** then you might not know about the existence of **Ethos'** own website at:

www.ethos.curvedspaces.com.

At the website you can find details on our staff, as well as contact information and access to our mailing list, so you can be informed when the next issue of Ethos is available by email. On the other hand, if you haven't visited our pages at **d20 zines**, please do. You can download all of our previous issues from there and visit our forum.

In this issue are the second installments of *StoryCraft* and *The Sojourner's Diary*, both packed with information to help with your roleplaying. Also, we have the second part of *Advanced Roleplay*, by yours truly, and *The Life of a Bard*, a piece of work looking into the life of a typical bard in D&D and at the tools of the bard's trade. This issue also presents a prelude for a series of short stories, collectively entitled *A Dragon's Protection*, which will be featured in future issues of *Ethos*.

For more information see the news section of the magazine. If you enjoy reading *Ethos*, then please join our forums at ethos.proboards2.com, and tell us. The forums are also a good place to socialise with *Ethos* staff, and keep in touch with the latest news.

That's all for this issue - see you next month,

James

Wales, UK.

James Henley, Editor.

NEWS

Ethos, Issue 3

Issue 3 of *Ethos Magazine* will be a special, themed issue. The magazine will present an entire new *Dungeons & Dragons* campaign setting, based around the city of *Crookhaven*. Most of the details of this setting will appear in the magazine, including stats for important and influential figures, maps of the most important places in the city, and ideas for adventure hooks in the city, as well as a small adventure written by James Henley. In July of this year, the *Ethos Magazine Press* will also release a free PDF sourcebook containing fuller details of *Crookhaven* and go into more detail about the area around the city. For more details and previews of *Crookhaven*, the *Corrupt City*, visit the **Ethos** website at:

www.ethos.curvedspaces.com

and **The d20 Magazine Rack** at:

www.d20zines.com

COMING SOON!

Green Ronin Publishing

Pocket Magica – February 2003
M&M GM Screen – February 2003
Avatar's Handbook – February 2003

Freedom City – February 2003
Bastards & Bloodlines – March 2003

For more details visit

www.greenronin.com

Malhavoc Press

Arcana Unearthed DM's Screen & Player's Guide - August 2003
Arcana Unearthed Malhavoc Handbook I - August 2003
The Diamond Throne Malhavoc Handbook II – August 2003

Cry Havoc Event Book – July 2003
Anger of Angels Sourcebook – July 2003
When the Sky Falls Event Book – April 2003

For more details visit

<http://www.montecook.com/mpress.html>

Mongoose Publishing

The Quintessential Barbarian – March 2003
Encyclopaedia Arcane: Dragon Magic:
Power Incarnate - March 2003
The Tribe of Shadows - March 2003
Armageddon 2089 Total War RPG:
War Machines of 2089 - March 2003
The Quintessential Bard - April 2003
Encyclopaedia Arcane:
Divination, The All-Seeing Eye - April 2003
The Slayer's Guide to Kobolds - April 2003
The Ultimate Game Designer's Companion - April 2003

The Rookie's Guide to the Undercity - April 2003
Earth 2089 - April 2003
The Quintessential Gnome - May 2003
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Power Classes III:
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Conjuration, By Bell, Book and Candle - May 2003
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The-Game-That-Cannot-Be-Mentioned - May 2003
The Fiery Trial - May 2003

For more details visit

<http://www.mongoosepublishing.com>

STORY CRAFT

NPC NECESSITIES

by Ryan Boell

Welcome to the second installment of Story Craft, NPC Necessities. We will look at how to define, remake and create Non Player Characters. While the DMG contains rules for NPCs, it leaves many important items out. NPCs can be anyone, from diabolical villains to the Player Characters' best friends. In terms of creating a memorable NPC, the DMG states, "An NPC with a hacking cough and strong opinions about the king is always more interesting than Kiale, the 2nd level commoner. Remember, NPCs aren't just game statistics, they are individuals with personalities, quirks and opinions." DMG pg 149. While this is correct, it fails to go into enough detail, and that's what this article is about.

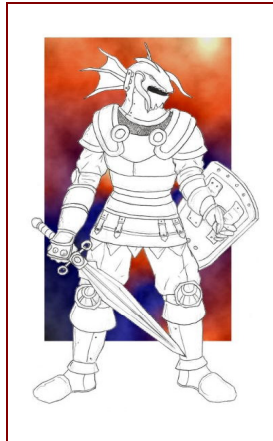
The Role of NPCs

My definition of an NPC is someone who is a plot hook, a backdrop, a friend, relative, enemy and a nuisance. They are a love interest, a member of another adventuring party or a crotchety innkeeper. They do not exist solely in terms of statistics on a character sheet; they are as real as PCs. They can cause the world to rise and fall with a single spell, and countries to collapse into an economic depression with one word. They should be thought provoking characters, as much a part of your game as the setting. NPCs are independent characters, like PCs, that help to introduce, define, and provide closure for plots. Their actions should follow their personalities and live within the confines of their character concepts, remaining consistent. Typically, an NPC fulfills several roles throughout the course of a Campaign, growing with the Player Characters and being shaped by their words and deeds. They should be both diverse and dynamic.

Creating an NPC

NPCs should not be developed in a vacuum. There are many places to

begin defining them, and even more that should probably be avoided. In an ongoing story where a new character must be introduced because of a development in the plot, it is usually easiest to take the requisites and then build the NPC into them. For example, if your PCs decide that they are going to travel into the frozen northern lands, they will probably need a guide. In this case a local or, possibly, professional traveler will be



Dragonknight, by Kywyn

required. Usually, I consider how the PCs will contact the NPC, whether it is through a church or via a town message board. Then, I think about what kind of person would maintain that kind of an eye on the source of the PCs' query. Also, I want to know what the PCs have that will serve as adequate payment if they do manage to contact the NPC they are looking for. A good start from here would be to locate a class for the NPC - which one will fit in with his or her personality the best. The DMG includes the NPC classes Adept, Expert, Commoner, Aristocrat, and Warrior. And Traps and Treachery adds Thugs. In my game, there are nomadic tribes in the northern lands, which are rather barbaric and primitive. They worship the Goddess of Chaos, and have used powerful magic to create a number of subterranean towns. So, it is safe to

say that Aristocrats and Experts will not exist there - everyone has to struggle to support themselves and they do not possess the level of technology required to maintain expert knowledge of anything. By knowing this and answering some of the questions I've posed so far, it is easy to piece together an idea of what the NPC will be like; we have created its concept.

Statistics / Attributes

It is often said that you should not create an NPC around randomly rolled Attributes; this is wrong. Role-playing games are a unique media in that, if you run out of ideas, you can always randomly generate statistics and use them as inspiration when creating characters. Once you have statistics created for the character, you can judge and describe it, filling in details and building a foundation for its personality. Alternately, if you do not have statistics, you can analyze the existing concept or description of the NPC, "You smell musk, a body clad in strips of leather scrapes against your armor as it passes you in the marketplace. You look back and see the bulky silhouette of a man carrying an awkward package disappear behind the pavilion." What are the attributes of this Non Player Character? In this example, a Guild courier from one of my players' Thieves Guilds has been making minor cameo appearances in my plots over the course of the last five games. Finally, I have found a larger part for him to play in a battle between a Fallen Paladin and a PC Monk's school of martial arts. In preparation, I want to have the statistics for all of the NPCs, as well as a compiled collection of notes so that I will be able to glance at the sheets and know every detail. Thus, I will not have to dig through my campaign source, dragging out combat and dialogue. In the past, the courier had

never given his name, nor had he spoken more than a few disjointed lines -- he is a man of action because he has no education and nothing to say.

When assigning stats, you should remember that some are important to certain classes than others (such as Strength for warriors, Intelligence for wizards, etc). But what's fun about Third Edition Dungeons and Dragons is that you can make an intellectually inferior wizard, or a weak fighter, and so forth, if you so desire. You are only limited by your imagination.

Before I walk through making an NPC, let's talk about Quickstatting. If you are a DM and you use the point system, feel free to skip this section.

Quickstatting

Quickstatting is used to determine your NPCs Attributes. The NPCs Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Wisdom, Intelligence, and Charisma begin at 8. Roll 6d6 and add the results together -- if you roll a 1, you may wish to roll that die again; I find that this works best for my own game, which has a somewhat heroic theme. Finally, you should divide and assign the points to the Attributes in a way that represents the NPCs concept.

Example: I rolled 6, 1, 3, 5, 5, and 6. I re-rolled the 1 and got a 3, which is 28 points total. The character I am working on now is a Thief. Because I have good stats, I'll place an 18 in Dexterity and Constitution, leaving me with 8 points. I will assign 4 for Strength and again for Charisma, putting the Attributes at 14. This provides no bonuses, only penalties, for Wisdom and Intelligence, but the bonuses in the other Attributes will compensate.

ABILITY NAME	ABILITY SCORE	ABILITY MODIFIER	TEMPORARY SCORE	TEMPORARY MODIFIER
STR Strength	14	+2		
DEX Dexterity	18	+4		
CON Constitution	14	+2		
INT Intelligence	8	-1		
WIS Wisdom	8	-1		
CHA Charisma	14	+2		

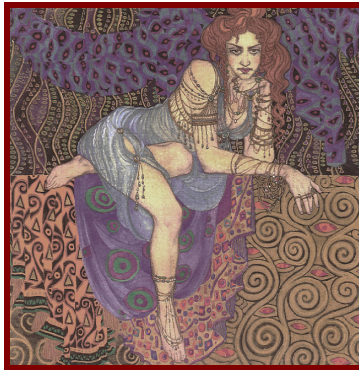
Skills / Feats / Spells

Skills are essential to NPCs. How else do you know what they can and can't do? An innkeeper will have profession - innkeeper and maybe a

few ranks in cooking. But that gets old. What about the innkeeper who has all that and has a rank in sewing? It may never come into play but it's something that's unique about him; give the NPCs stats they would have but also throw in a skill they wouldn't regularly have. A farmer might have craft - whittling. It may not be necessary, or appear in every story, but it fleshes his personality out, and could prove to be an important plot point in future stories. When it comes to Feats and Spells, things get hairy, so I won't touch on it too much. Feats are meant to be selected to help the individual out with his everyday life, and Spells only come in for Adepts, Clerics, Wizards, Sorcerers and the like. The NPCs spell selection and treasure should be unique.

Quirks and Flaws / Appearance

Along with quirks and flaws, appearance is very important. It helps set the mood and gives the PCs ideas of what they see. With regards to the physical description, NPCs should also have clothing and equipment that is visible to the PCs and illustrates exactly who and what that character is.



For example, you could use the colors of hats that various Non Player Characters wear or incorporate into their appearance (such as dyed hair, jewelry, etc.) in order to tie them together and carry off an underlying theme or motif. Additionally, every NPC should have a noteworthy flaw or a quirk -- something that makes them memorable -- which could be as simple as a catch-phrase or a specific word that is repeated whenever they are encountered. Sometimes they are hard to come up with. Recently, my friend Kesh emailed me a request for quirks and flaws for this character concept:

Hey Angel!

I have a daughter of a king and I just don't know what to do with her. All I know is that she is annoyed with all the pomp and circumstance around her, she wants to be married because it seems the only way to leave her life in the castle, aside from running away which is not something she will even consider.

Thanks a lot buddy!

Kesh

In detailing this character, the NPC wants to be married, but if she were pretty, this probably would have already happened. Therefore, I will give her an 11 Charisma. She has a smile that appears to be kind of bucktoothed and wide. She will have Disguise to walk among the commoners to escape her everyday life, Perform - Ballroom dancing, Knowledge - Heraldry, Knowledge - Weddings and as a quirk, besides the smile, she's always depressed. The king holds monthly contests to cheer his daughter up, where the winner will get her hand in marriage. However, no one has been successful yet because she knows when she opens her mouth, the contestants will see her teeth and run -- sad thing huh? I hope that helps you, Kesh!

It's easy to do stuff like that--and see? A plot hook to boot! What happens if one of the PCs tries to cheer her up and succeeds? Will there be a wedding in the future?

Angel's Iconics

What follows are two unique NPCs that you can insert into your game anywhere that they might be appropriate and they are adaptable for any game. Sun elves however have a +2 Int, and a -2 Con and can be found in the Forgotten Realms Campaign Source Book. These are straight out of the Player's Handbook. I only presented two due to the space restrictions in Asgard Magazine, where the original version of this article was published. If you all write in, I will be happy to publish two more next issue!

Angel's Iconics

Ral'Tier Junghe

Male Sun Elf; Exp 3, Sor 7; Medium Size Humanoid; Hp 32; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11; Atk +4 melee, +6 ranged; AL NG; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +6; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 18, Wis 10, Cha 18

Racial Traits

Immune to sleep, +2 bonus to enchantment spells, Low-light Vision, Proficient with longsword, shortbow, longbow, composite longbow, composite shortbow.

Languages

Common, Elven, Sylvan, Drow, and Dryad.

Feats

Craft Wondrous Item, Spell Focus (enchant/charm), Skill Focus (Craft Masks), Empower Spell

Skills (Ranks)

Profession - Fisherman 17 (13), Craft - Masks 19 (13), Craft - Decoration 10 (6) (+2 synergy bonus to Craft Masks), Listen 6 (6), Spot 6 (6), Knowledge Nature 17(13), Swim 12 (13), Profession - Merchant 17 (13), Diplomacy 14 (10)

Spells (Known)

0 - Daze, Resistance, Disrupt Undead, Detect Magic, Read Magic, Prestidigitation, Flare.

1 - Charm Person, Cause Fear, Change Self, Mage Armor.

2 - Tasha's Hideous Laughter, Blur, Detect Thoughts.

3 - Suggestion, Clairvoyance.

Spells (Per Day)

0: 6, 1: 7, 2: 7, 3: 5

Equipment

Maskmakers tools, Net, Harpoon, several masks.

Background

Though he does not know it, this simple fisherman has a unique talent. After the Drow killed his parents, a local Dryad saved him. He took residence in a small fishing village where he discovered a new hobby: maskmaking. When he carves his masks, he carves so intently that he will always accidentally end up slicing his finger or hand open in the process, which is when he declares the masks are complete. He doesn't know about his sorcerous ability, just that the masks he creates are usually imbued with some of his life.

Description

Ral'Tier's most prominent feature is his scars -- from his ragged, weathered hands to the thin line at the corner of his chin. Wrapped in an apron, knife in hand; he is most comfortable in the small workshop area of his home, or on the docks fishing. When he goes out on the town, he prefers to wear loose-fitting robes and fur-lined gloves, tall boots and an oversized hat. Most of Junghe's associates have noticed after short conversations that his breath smells like wood shavings and his pale, amber eyes do not reflect light.

Kie-Rya

Male Sun Elf; Nec 3; Medium Size Humanoid; Hp 13; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12; Atk +1 melee, +2 ranged; AL CG; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 20, Wis 10, Cha 15

Racial Traits

Immune to sleep, +2 bonus to enchantment spells, Low-light Vision, Proficient with longsword, shortbow, longbow, composite longbow, composite shortbow

Languages

Common, Elven, Sylvan, Orc, Celestial, and Abyssal.

Feats

Armor Proficiency (Light), Spell Mastery (Nec)

Special

Summon Familiar, Scribe Scroll

Skills (Ranks)

Alchemy 11 (6), Knowledge Undead 11 (6), Knowledge Arcana 11 (6), Spellcraft 11 (6), Spot 3 (3), Move Silently 5 (3), Hide 5 (3), Heal 3 (3), Concentration 7 (6)

Spells (Known)

0 - All except Illusion.

1 - Cause Fear, Mage Armor, Obscuring Mist, Detect Undead, Charm Person, Chill Touch, Ray of Enfeeblement, Summon Monster I, Identify, Shield.

2 - Ghoul Touch, Darkness, Summon Monster II, Scare. (If you have Magic of Faerun, substitute Summon Monster I and II for Summon Undead I and II.)

Spells (Per Day)

0: 4, 1: 4 (Nec +1), 2: 2 (Nec +1)

Equipment

MW Quarterstaff, spell components, backpack, spellbook, 5 daggers, ink, pen, 250 sheets of vellum

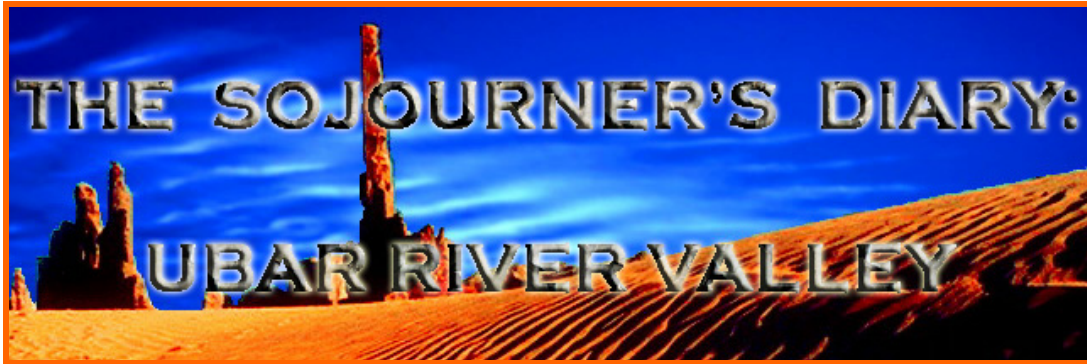
Background

Kie-Ryal has always gotten a bad reputation because of his occupation; he studies the dead and the undead to help further his knowledge of the working body. While a generally good person, he keeps to himself; avoiding contact with others for fear that anyone who gets too close will learn of his morbid fixation.

Description

He has light blond hair with sharp, angular features—think Julian Sands. At bedtime, he wears black-footed pajamas with purple stitched moons, embroidered stars, and a buttoned rear end. By day, Kie-Ryal can be found scurrying from cemetery to cemetery, wearing a dark wig, finely tailored britches, an intricately embroidered tabard, and scuffed leather greaves.

As you have seen, it is both fun and easy to create and modify NPCs, infusing them with life and adding a touch of pizzazz so that your stories will be memorable and thought provoking. And don't forget that you can always draw inspiration from pictures in magazines, cartoons, relatives, music, and books if things start to feel boring. As you can see, *Ral'Tier* makes magic items without knowing -- though so far, they have all been masks --and *Kie-Ryal* shows us his softer side at bedtime. Next issue, I will talk about *World Secrets* and how to incorporate them into your games! Until then, take 30 -- and happy adventuring!



by Clayton Bunce

In all of my journeys I have seen many fantastic and mysterious places, but have yet to see a place as inhospitable, as desolate, as hopeless as the Ubar River Valley. Once a fertile region of life, greenery and a major trade route to Zarh, the march through the Southern Ariric Desert, The Gorge, and the Wastelands of Disiri is a lonely and dangerous undertaking. The corporeal riverbed has not felt water in its banks for a hundred thousand days.

The trade barges ran south from the East-West Trade Road in Mantiffa to the Quorlorald River in Zarh. The ancient Ubaric people, long since gone, populated this region. While the Northern Ariric Desert is a harsh land, it is in the southern region that the heat can cook living creatures as if in a pot over a flame. Only a hardy people could have lived here. The blistering sun is relentless in the daytime, the winds ceaseless, and the parched air hurts the throat. After two days of traveling the center of the riverbed, which serves as the only road, I come across the ruins of Athr, and marvel at the towers of that once proud city, thrusting through the sand dunes that smother the small stone buildings.



The secret as to what the Seven Spires are and how they came to be remains safe, as even now I can see the Gorge begin to engulf the river to the south of me.

The river once rushed down this enormous chute, digging deeper and deeper and carving the soft desert floor at will. Long since dry, it is now a dangerous trough of giant boulders and gigantic slabs of rock. The walls tower perhaps a thousand feet above the riverbed. The deep canyon does provide a haven from the blazing sun and heat, however, and my two-day hike through the majestic Gorge is mercifully cooler, although eerie.

The Gorge abruptly ends at a wide shallow basin five days into my journey. This was once known as the Uskban Lake, but of course, the water is long since gone. It has evaporated, leaving behind a truly spine-chilling spectacle—thousands upon thousands of humanoid bones that fill the basin. What horrific event or ritual created this abysmal place, I do not know. Ringing the lake are 12 large stone monoliths staring over this graveyard, but I did not tarry to examine them closer.

The river continued south, then westerly, before bending to the east on a flat plain. Mountains lurk on every horizon, the Subaya ahead to the east, the Quavor to the south, and the Ubars north. The sun blisters as I trudge on. Surely my destination, the town of Ytana, cannot be far. I am low on water and food. This plain, called the Perothe, is as empty as anyplace I have ever seen—not even the undulating sands to break up the flat chalky white ground, hard and cracked. As the plain gave way to a gouged and raked landscape I came upon Ingaletor, once a river Trade Post of perhaps eight structures, all built of white bricks. The central building, with its large green dome and multiple entrances, seemed most intriguing. Perhaps it was once a church of sorts, or a monastery, but it is now an abandoned mystery. It seems out of place here in these wastelands, known as Disiri, from an old Ubaric word for 'Dying'. The ground is unforgiving, as if scorched and torn by a greater being.

It was on the ninth day that I saw grasses and finally glimpsed Ytana in the distance. Situated at the fork of the Quorlorald and the Ubar rivers, it remains an oasis, a welcome sight for weary traders and adventurers alike. The Ubar River Valley behind me, I can only imagine what secrets I may have stumbled upon in the past days. It is known that the wealth that traded on the ancient river was great, and perhaps some of that wealth lies in those long ruined towers and shrines that few men have ever seen.

The Ubar Valley in your game

This area lends itself to many possibilities in your own campaign. The descriptions were intentionally vague so as to spark your creativity. The Spires of Athr, the Monoliths of Uskban, and the Dome in Ingaletor could serve as a backdrop or destination. A search for a

missing artifact, a chase, or a manhunt could take place, or the party could simply find itself lost. External forces could flood the river, or the valley could be an exile for bandits or monsters. Be sure to take into account the effects of heat and the lack of water on the party.



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PRODUCT REVIEWS

Arcane Creations, Volume One

Type of Product	Cost	Format:	Publisher:	Website:	Score:
Visual Aid	\$5.00	Downloadable PDF	V Shane Publishing	www.vshane.com	Average ***



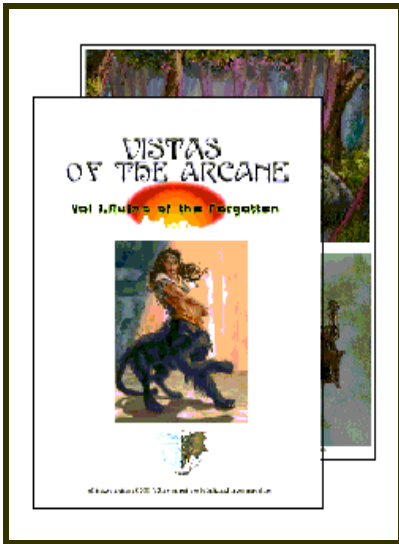
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Arcane Creations Volume One is the first in a series of publications featuring Magic Item cards, for use in Dungeons & Dragons. This installment features miscellaneous magic items from weapons and armour, to cloaks and jewelry. There are around sixty magic items altogether, plus a set of mundane item checklists at the back to help with counting arrows, drinks, rations etc. The artwork is generally excellent, but is in black & white, like the cover image. However, when viewing in Acrobat, the document seems to take years to load, especially on slow computers, so if you want to browse through the product to see which pages you wish to pick, make sure you brought a packed lunch. The first interior page of Arcane Creations details uses for the cards that are useful, but is the only piece of text in the document, leaving the consumer to their own devices.

So, how useful is Arcane Creations? I would certainly buy it as a free product, but don't really think I, myself, would fork out the cost to download it, however, I do have an exceptionally tight purse. I would probably rather draw my own than fork out to buy these cards, but these do look professional, and will simplify your game amazingly.

Vistas of the Arcane, Volume One: Ruins of the Forgotten

Type of Product	Cost	Format	Publisher	Website	Score
Visual Aid	\$7.00	Downloadable PDF	V Shane Publishing	www.vshane.com	Good ****



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The principle behind Vistas of the Arcane is to provide a source of inspiration for Dungeon Masters who are stuck for it. This, the first volume focuses on artifacts, monsters and structures from Lost and Forgotten areas. The title: Relics of the Lost instantly summons images of desert lands, pyramids, and lost temples; and we are not disappointed. This product contains:

- 8 landscapes of forgotten and lost worlds.
- 12 original monsters
- 4 relics
- 6 character portraits

The first section of the document is filled with half-page portraits of beautiful forgotten temples and other ideas, waiting to be fleshed out. This is a brilliant idea, and the portraits will no doubt inspire many DMs with their adventures.

The next section, with monsters is not quite as good. The artwork is of equal standards to the first, in full colour, however many of the monsters are from the same or similar ideas, and there are two or three that could easily be variations on creatures from the monster manual. However, these are still an excellent resource. Now follows a page of relics, four in all, in the same beautiful, colour format. Although only a few, these relics are wonderfully original and I would love to see more. Finally, the last section of character portraits is just

as good. The illustrations are just as wonderful and are presented in such a way that they could easily be cut and stuck onto a character sheet.

So, all in all, the entire product is wonderfully exciting, and the artwork is of a brilliant quality. Although, as with Arcane Creations, I don't think that I would fork out for just a 14-page document, the artwork in Vistas of the Arcane is so good that I would probably buy it just for that. It is a good product to inspire DMs and players, and would go to brilliant use as visual aids for players. The one thing that disappoints in this product is that it only covers 14 pages; I would love to see later volumes of Vistas of the Arcane with 20 plus pages.



Part One: Character Races in a Celtic Setting

By Dominique Crouzet

This is the first of several articles dealing with Celts in a d20 setting. These articles won't be about historical Celts, but will present options for creating a Celtic-flavored campaign setting using the core d20 rules.

As far as character races are concerned, Celtic legends essentially revolve around humans. While nonhuman races, such as the sidhe (pronounced shē), fomorians, and fírbolg appear in Celtic legend and myth; they do not fill the same, active, role as elves, dwarves, and orcs in typical d20 fantasy settings. Nonetheless, in a Celt-inspired campaign, we can find ways to include analogs for the dwarves, elves, gnomes, halflings, and half-orcs of a typical fantasy game.

Differences between the standard player races and their nearest Celtic counterparts are mostly cultural in nature, requiring little adjustment to game rule information. Perhaps one of the greatest differences between the Celtic races and those of the core rules is the relative scarcity of nonhuman, Celtic creatures. In most fantasy settings nonhuman races exist alongside their human counterparts and interact with them on a day-to-day basis. In a Celtic-inspired game, however, humans rarely interact with races such as the sidhe, let alone live in the same realms as them.

Player Races

The following races may be played in a Celtic Setting with little modification:

Humans

The Celtic tribes were, of course, human. As such humans can be expected to be the most common race in a Celtic setting. Celtic humans typically live in tribes and clans, with a cultural and technological level that ranges from that of the late Stone to Bronze Age to that of The Iron Age. More cultural information on the Celts will appear in future installments of this column.

Elves (Half-Sidhe)

Whereas elves are a humanoid race, the Sidhe (the Celtic counterpart of elves) are a race from the "otherworld". They are of near-divine status, descended from Danu, the Celt's great goddess. Their people are the Tuatha de Danann (pronounced thoo'a-haw day dah'-nawn), or Children of Danu, who live hidden from the eyes of men, beneath the hills and lakes of the Celt's world. Their realm, Annwyn (pronounced A-noon), touches upon both the world of men and upon the Plane of Faerie. As such, the Sidhe are "outsiders," rather than humanoid creatures, and unsuitable as a character race for a level 1 or 2 character.

In order to best approximate elven characters in a Celtic campaign I suggest creating Half-Sidhe characters. Half-Sidhe characters would be humanoid characters who are often the product of brief romantic trysts between a human and one of the "hidden" or "mound" folk, as the Sidhe are often called. As the Sidhe rarely deal with humans in any way, Half-Sidhe characters are quite rare and seldom know of their Sidhe sire (or mother). Such "half-castes" look extremely human, though they usually come close to the ideal of human beauty. In character, they tend to be individualistic, introspective, and often have a fascination with magic. Half-Sidhe characters never stay long in the realms of the Sidhe, if they were born there, and are typically raised in human society. Those born within the Plane of Faerie are usually sent into the world of men at age of 4 or 5 with no hope of ever returning to the lands of their birth. As such, all Half-Sidhe eventually become human, from a cultural perspective, but use the Elven Racial Traits, with the following exceptions:

Half-Sidhe gain a +2 to Charisma due to their comeliness and force of personality, but do not gain Elven ability modifiers and have Sidhe Blood, not Elven Blood. Half-Sidhe have a favored class of Any and gain bonus skill points as a human. Half-Sidhe age as Half-Elves and have an ECL modifier of +1.

Gnomes & Halflings ("Small Folk")

Gnomes and halflings, as presented in the core rules, are ill-suited to a Celtic game setting. With minor changes, however, they could be used to portray the "small folk". To reflect the fey nature of the "small folk" gnomes and halflings in this setting are considered to be Small Fey creatures rather than Small Humanoid creatures. This change of subtype effects how some spells and magic items work for, and against, such characters, as per the core rules.

While the "small folk" are normally found in the "otherworld" or "hidden" realms, such as the Plane of Faerie, many like to roam the mortal world and interact with humans. Their underground lairs are always located in mysterious areas, under hills and standing stones, and often connected with the "otherworld." The "small folk" are small and light of build, with large pointed ears and bright eyes. Their garb is typically green and rust in color, intertwined with plants and flowers. The "small folk" are usually noted for their good will towards the kind-of-heart and cruel jests when dealing with the wicked, as well as a strong penchant for wine and gold. They will often choose magical professions, especially bard or sorcerer, but will rarely be priests of any sort. Their favored class is sorcerer.

Half-Elves (Part-Sidhe)

The sidhe, as detailed below, are the direct descendants of the goddess Danu and, as such, are a nearly divine race of outsiders that rarely mingles with humans. Characters with sidhe bloodlines are often members of extraordinary and proud families or the descendant of a well-renowned person. Such characters are often thought to carry with them the blessings, or curses, of the gods and are destined to live uncommon lives.

Characters of with sidhe bloodlines use the Half-Elven Racial Traits, though they are considered to be of Sidhe, rather than Elven, Blood. Part-Sidhe characters use the Height and Weight charts for Half Elves but use a modified Aging Effects chart. Part-Sidhe reach middle age at 50 years of age, old age at 75 years of age, and venerable at 100 years of age. They still roll +3d20 years to determine their maximum age.

Half-Orcs (Part Fomorian)

Just as orcs do not occur within Celtic legends, neither do half-orcs. In place of the brutish race of orcs, the Celts had the race of fomorians. Likewise, just as there are some humans with sidhe ancestry, so too are there people with fomorian blood in their veins. Ugly, powerfully built, and ill-tempered, such characters are easily identified from common human stock. Men of Part-Fomorian stock may grow as tall as seven feet in height. While Part-Fomorians tend to have temperaments that range from bad to worse, they do have their good moods and sense of humor, and can be loyal allies to those they trust.

Unsurprisingly, many part-fomorian characters are kinless people who often ally themselves with evil or live in solitude, preying upon the weak, but this is not always the case. Part-Fomorian characters can be raised among humans and can be perfectly accepted by their clans at times. Part-Fomorians use the Racial Traits, Height and Weight Charts, and Ability Adjustments of Half-Orcs, though they age as humans and are of Giant Blood, rather than of Orc Blood.

The elven and dwarven races need more radical changes to be used properly in a Celtic Setting. The next section will detail these races' counterparts in a Celtic-inspired campaign.

Dwarves (Picts)

Dwarves, as an underground-dwelling race of miners and elite craftsmen, hardly fit with Celtic legends. In fact, for those who want to play dwarves in a Celtic setting, we suggest you use the Pict race, which can be played as a sub-race of dwarves.

Historically, the Picts were Scottish peoples about whom very little is known. Some historians believe they were not Celts but foreigners from the continent. They would have been shorter people than true Celts, with dark hair rather than blond or red, and a language similar to Old Norse rather than Celtic. In any case, they were mostly known for their matriarchal culture and for their custom of elaborately tattooing their bodies. The Picts described here are built upon all of this, but are otherwise designed for game purpose only, and have no historical relevance.

Picts, despite their being a sub-race of dwarves, do not live underground, living in the open mountains and hills of the Highlands. Unlike their dwarven cousins, who excel at all manner of stone and metalworking, Picts have a somewhat more primitive culture, creating Bronze Age items at best. Their works in copper, silver, and gold can be quite intricate, however. In any case, for having lived so long above ground, Picts have lost the ability to see in complete darkness and their innate knowledge of metal and stonework, which is specific to dwarves.

Personality

Picts are a physical race and love nothing more than physical exertion. They generally spend their time roaming the wilderness, training with weapons, hunting, or otherwise engaging in some manner of physical labor. Like their dwarven cousin, Picts tend to be quarrelsome, preferring fighting to all other activities. Nonetheless they are rather sociable when their trust is earned and are usually known for being extremely loyal to their kin and friends. Friendship may be difficult to obtain with the Pictish people, who tend to build trust in others or measure others' worth through contests of strength or battles of endurance rather than through diplomacy. Overall the Picts keep a simple view of things in life, enjoying life in the moment rather than in contemplation of the past or future and choosing with their hearts rather than their heads.

Physical Description

Picts are of short and stocky features, typically standing 5 feet high and averaging 150 pounds. Their skin is pale in color but their hair are usually dark brown or black, with men sporting thick beards. They reach adulthood at about age 30 and live about 200 years, though some live to almost 400 years. Picts typically adorn themselves with tattoos; almost all Pictish warriors are covered with blue symbols and designs in knotwork that show who they are and to which clan they belong. In some cases, these tattoos bear magical properties as well. Proud of this adornment and of their strength (and scars), the Picts have a tendency to wear little clothing, wearing a thick cloak or kilt of wool only when the weather is cold.

Relations

Picts are warlike people and consider those who are unable to defend their property as not deserving of it. The Picts usually raid cattle or steal crops without brutalizing those peoples they have plundered. Because of they are not averse to profiting off of others through the use of force, Picts tend to greet others with distrust and guard their possessions well. Picts tend to meet strangers with weapons drawn, for fear of being robbed or being attacked out of revenge. On the other hand Picts have no specific love or hate toward other races, except for goblinoids, whom they abhor and hunt for sport.

Pictish society is a matriarchal one, in which women traditionally hold properties and leadership positions. Male Picts are leaders only within raiding parties or short-lived armies raised to repel a common threat. As such Picts will easily accept authority and leadership from women.

Alignment

Picts are fiercely independent people and, as such, tend to be of chaotic alignments. Nonetheless lawful Picts do also exist, particularly among those who emphasize their clan's traditions of honor, loyalty, and honesty. On the other hand, most Picts are neutral with regard to good or evil, basing their treatment of others upon their whims, loyalties, and needs, rather than on sinister or altruistic motives.

Pict Lands

The Picts are not a widely spread race. In fact all the Picts of the world live in a number of clans scattered over some remote parts of the Highlands. As the highlands are usually rocky soiled, wind-swept, hills and mountains with sparse forests, Picts supplement their meager farming with raid parties against those who live in more favorable regions. In their homeland, Picts build great, fortified keeps and castles enclosed in circular walls of stone atop rocky crags and steep hills. Picts encountered in human lands are commonly mercenaries or brigands, preferring to earn their wages through prowess at arms rather than menial labor.

Religion

Picts typically worship various local demigods and spirits, or adhere to animistic, druidic faiths. Despite being a dwarven sub-race, the Picts rarely, if ever, worship the "gods of the dwarves". They commonly call upon the favor of the gods of strength, battle, or of nature when in need, though they seldom build temples or give offerings to these gods. Most Pictish priests are shamans (see **The Netbook of Classes vol-1 or 2**) or druids.

Language

Picts speak a variant of old Norse. They do not have a written language, but carve standing stones and paint their bodies with complex symbols and drawings in order to mark important events in their lives and of their clans. The intricacy of these designs, and their delicate crafting of gold, copper, and silver jewelry, shows the Picts' artistic abilities.

Names

Male names: Booth, Brander, Canute, Carr, Dag, Erland, Esbern, Hallam, Halsten, Haral, Howe, Inger, Kell, Latham, Lunt, Odell, Roald, Rutlind, Skipp, Sorley, Sparke, Stig, Storr, Tait, Tarn, Torquil

Female names: Asta, Bo, Bodil, Dagna, Erica, Helga, Hulda, Inga, Kelda, Linnea, Liv, Runa, Signy, Solveig, Thordis, Valda;

Clan names: Fiery Axe clan, Thicket Farm clan, Red Well clan, Mountain Pool clan, Willows clan, etc.

Adventurers

Picts are, by custom, raiders and warriors who spend their time fighting monsters or waging wars of plunder against their neighbors. As such, most of them are already accustomed to go "on adventures". Thus a more independent-minded pict, or one who has been outcast by his clan, will naturally choose the life of a true adventurer. This is largely how Picts have come to be regarded, by others, as a nefarious and mercenary people.

Racial Traits

Abilities: +2 Strength, +2 Constitution, -2 Charisma, -2 Intelligence. Picts have powerful bodies, but are not used to developing their intellectual capacities. Their cultural tradition of solving problem with force, rather than diplomacy, their brusque manners and their distrust of outsiders causes others to look upon them unfavorably.

Size: Medium-size creatures, Picts had no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.

Speed: 20 feet base speed.

Low-light Vision: Picts can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of poor illumination. They retain the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

Save Poison: +2 racial bonus on saving throws against poisons: Picts are hardy and resistant to toxins.

Save Magic: +2 racial bonus on saving throws against spells and spell-like effects.

Resist Cold: +4 racial bonus to Fortitude saves versus cold and ice attacks: Picts are exceptionally resistant to cold weather.

Attack Bonus: +1 racial bonus to attack rolls against goblinoids (goblins, hobgoblins, and bugbears): Picts are trained in the special combat techniques that allow them to fight their common enemies more effectively.

AC Bonus: +4 dodge bonus against giants: This bonus represents special training that Picts undergo, during which they learn tricks that previous generations developed in their battles with fomorians. Note that any time a character loses his dexterity bonus to AC (like being caught flat footed), he loses his dodge bonus as well.

Skill Bonus: +2 racial bonus on Wilderness lore checks: Picts are familiar with the wild lands in which they dwell.

Automatic languages: Pict (a variant of Old Norse). Bonus languages: Common, Giant, Goblin.

Favored class: Barbarian. A multiclass dwarf's barbarian class does not count when determining whether he suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing.

Random Starting Age

Adulthood	Brb, Rg, Sor	Bd, Fgt, Pal, Rgr	Cl, Dr, Mk, Wiz
30 years	+3d6	+5d6	+7d6

Aging Effects

Middle Age	Old	Venerable	Maximum Age
100 years	150 years	200 years	+2d% years

Random Height and Weight

Gender	Base Height	Height mod.	Base Weight	Weight mod.
Male	3'9"	+2d4	130 lb.	x (2d6) lb.
Female	3'7"	+2d4	100lb.	x (2d6) lb.

Sidhe (Outsider Elves)

As mentioned above, The Sidhe are an ancient race, the descendants of the original Tuatha De Danann, who were once seen as minor gods by the Celtic people. After defeating the giant races of Firbolgs and Fomorians in ancient, legendary, battles, the Sidhe became the stewards of the Celt's lands and fostered learning among the Celtic people. With the passing of many long years the Sidhe are now on the decline, becoming more distanced from the affairs and memories of men, as they are left to recall their past greatness in the shadowy realm of Annwyn.

Personality

The Sidhe are a dying race, in the twilight of their years. As such most Sidhe tend to be melancholy, lamenting their fall from glory and seeking solace in recollections of their past greatness. From having lived so long they also tend to be calm and take their time to do anything (at least if not pressed by circumstances). For the same reasons they grow easily bored and annoyed, rarely holding strong feelings towards of any sort towards other. The Sidhe still foster a love of art and magic, being skilled artisans and practitioners of the arcane arts.

Physical Description

The Sidhe are as tall as humans but leaner, with smooth and beautiful features. Their eyes are slender, their mouths small, and their ears slightly pointed. Their eyebrows are very thin and their complexions are pale to golden in color. They wear long golden or silver hair, and their men are always smooth-shaven. The Sidhe reach adulthood at about age 30 and are practically immortal, dying only of violent death or leaving the world on their own accord, when they have grown tired of their unending life. Sidhe wear clothes of Celtic fashion but invariably of the finest and richest quality. In fact the simplest Sidhe will be dressed as a human king, while noble Sidhe wear garb of incredible splendor. When they come to the world of humans, however, Sidhe always employ magic in order to appear like normal men or to hide themselves from sight.

Relations

The Sidhe usually consider the mortal races as inferior and feel betrayed by the "child-race" of men. Nonetheless a member of the Sidhe will, from time to time, seek the love of a human of surpassing beauty or valour. Such affairs invariably end in tragedy or sadness for the abandoned mortal paramour. In other cases, a Sidhe will harbor considerable animosity toward humans and will harass them at the first opportunity. Such an antagonistic character will typically seek to humiliate humans rather than kill them. Regardless of their feelings towards humans, the Sidhe invariably hate fomorians and will attack them on sight. This animosity usually extends to Part-Fomorians, as well as firbolgs and other giantkind. Celtic legend is replete with tales of ancient, bloody battles between the Sidhe and the giant-races of firbolgs and fomorians for control of the Celtic homelands.

Alignment

Sidhe having a tendency for indifference towards other races and tend to be of neutral alignments. An ancient people, steeped in tradition, the Sidhe tend to be lawful neutral. Those, uncommon, Sidhe who seek to harangue men for sport or out of bitterness tend toward chaotic neutral or chaotic evil alignments.

Sidhe Lands

Sidhe are an otherworldly race living in the fabled realms of Annwyn, a shadowy underworld that borders on both the Plane of Faerie and the Prime Material Plane. This plane of existence is connected to the Material Plane through magical gates located under sacred mounds where standing stones cast their shadows. Annwyn is often depicted as a gloomy underworld, its sky dark blue during the bleak day and turning to pitch black at night. The night sky is dimly illuminated by a pale sliver of moon and by the mists that blanket these lands. Here the Sidhe build mighty and marvelous magical castles of glistening colors or dark beauty. Their society is otherwise similar to the Celtic society, with noble warriors, kings, high-king, and druids. War among Sidhe clans are much more rare than those among the Celtic clans, but far deadlier. In such wars the Sidhe have been known to seek human help, promising them magic as payment for their aid.

Religion

The Sidhe revere the Celtic gods and share a common ancestry with them. The Sidhe, as godlings, and the Celtic gods are all the Children of Danu. The Sidhe look upon the Celtic gods as kings and leaders, rather than as deities. Many Sidhe pay homage to Midir, the king of the Otherworld, just as many Sidhe recognize Nuada as their godly leader.

Language

Sidhe speak their own language, which also the language of the Celtic gods. Note that while Celts essentially rely on oral traditions and have no written language, the Sidhe know how to write. Treat this language as Sylvan in game terms.

Names

Male names: Amlawdd, Ardwyad, Avaon, Bedwyr, Brys, Caswallawn, Cnychwr, Culvanawd, Dadweir, Deorthach, Dirmyg, Dyvynarth, Ergyryad, Evrawg, Fflewddwr, Garanwyn, Govnyon, Gwalhaved, Heilyn, Huabwy, Llewelyn, Maelwys, Meilyg, Nynnaw, Rhonabwy, Syvwlch, Ysgawyn

Female names: Angharad, Blodeuwedd, Eheubryd, Essyllt, Goleuddydd, Gwaeddan, Gwenwledyr, Rathtyen, Tangwen, Tegwedd.

Adventurers

Sidhe may take up adventuring out of boredom. However, the few Sidhe adventurers will rarely, if ever, team with mortal races, and would rather operate alone or among others of their kin (including Part-Sidhe and Half-Sidhe characters).

Racial Traits	+2 Charisma, +2 Dexterity, +2 Intelligence.			
Abilities:	Outsider.			
Racial Type:	Medium-size creatures, Picts had no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.			
Size:	30 feet base speed.			
Speed:	Sidhe can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of poor illumination. They retain the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.			
Low-light Vision:	+2 racial bonus on saving throws against spells and spell-like effects.			
Save Magic:	Immunity to magic sleep spells and effects.			
Resist Enchantment:	The sidhe are immune to all diseases, including magical diseases such as mummy rot and lycanthropy.			
Disease Immunity:	1/day-change self, detect magic, and light,. Sidhe must have Intelligence scores of 10 or higher in order to use these 0-level arcane spells. Caster level is equal to the Sidhe's character level.			
Spell-Like Abilities:	+1 racial bonus to attack rolls against giants. The Sidhe were legendary enemies of the firbolgs and fomorians, and were said the rest the lands of the Celts from these giants.			
Attack Bonus:	+2 racial bonus on Listen, Search, Spot, and Spellcraft checks. Furthermore, Spellcraft is always a class skill for a Sidhe. Otherwise, a Sidhe who merely passes within 5 feet of a secret or concealed door is entitled to a Search check to notice it as if she were actively looking for the door.			
Skill Bonus:	All Sidhe, regardless of class, are proficient with the longsword, shortbow, and longbow.			
Bonus Proficiencies:	Common and Sidhe (treat as Sylvan). Bonus languages: Draconic and Giant.			
Automatic languages:	Wizard. A multiclass Sidhe's wizard class does not count when determining whether he suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing.			
Favored class:				
Random Starting Age				
Adulthood	Brb, Rg, Sor	Bd, Fgt, Pal, Rgr	Cl, Dr, Mk, Wiz	
30 years	+4d6	+6d6	+10d6	
Aging Effects				
Middle Age	Old	Venerable	Maximum Age	
500 years	1000 years	2000 years	None	
Random Height and Weight				
Gender	Base Height	Height mod.	Base Weight	Weight mod.
Male	4'10"	+2d10	100 lb.	× (2d4) lb.
Female	3'5"	+2d10	80 lb.	× (2d4) lb.

Picts (NPCs examples)

Here follow a handful of Pict NPCs. Most people in pict clans will be "basic warrior peasants", with a few "basic raiders" and "battle ragers" among them. The village chief will be a female pict, probably a spellcaster (you may use the pict priest stats), while the clan's champion ("battle leader") will lead warriors in battles. On the other hand, a pict raiding party will typically consist of 1 battle leader, 1d12 battle-ragers, and a number of "basic raiders" equal to three times that of battle-ragers. Sometimes, a male "priest" will accompany them.

Pict Basic Warrior-Peasant (Warrior 2)	Pict Basic Raider (Pict Warrior 2 /Barbarian 1)
<p>The basic pict peasant must be in fact able to defend himself and his family, and is thus a warrior rather than a commoner. Likewise, the basic pict is two levels rather than only one, for he lives in a harsh environment that requires being a trained warrior to survive. The basic pict peasant leads a life of farming but occasionally goes on cattle raids to supplement an often meager living.</p> <p>Alignment: Neutral</p> <p>Combat: AC 13 (touch 11, flat-footed 13); Hit-points: 18; Initiative: +0; Melee: +4 (d8 +2, 20/x3, battle-axe); Ranged: +2 (d8+2, 20/x3, 20ft, short-spear); Speed: 20.</p> <p>Saves: Fort +3 (+5), Ref +0 (+0), Will +0 (+0). +2 to Fort saves against poison and magic; +4 to Fort saves to resist cold.</p> <p>Abilities: Str 14 (+2), Dex 11 (+0), Con 14 (+2), Int 10 (+0), Wis 10 (+0), Cha 9 (-1).</p> <p>Racial Traits: Low-light vision, bonus saving throws (see above), bonus Wilderness lore checks (counted below), +1 attack against goblinoids, +4 AC bonus against giants.</p> <p>Skills: Climb +5, Profession (farmer) +5, Wilderness lore +4.</p> <p>Feats and Powers: Cross class skill (netbook of feats): Craft (any) or Profession (farmer).</p> <p>Equipment: Leather armor, rounded shield, battleaxe, and shortspear.</p>	<p>The basic pict raider is a peasant (see above) who has been on numerous raids and joined the ranks of his people's warriors. This character still spends much of his time laboring but goes on cattle raids regularly in order to supplement his poor crops.</p> <p>Alignment: Chaotic neutral</p> <p>Basic raider: (3rd level character).</p> <p>Combat: AC 15 (touch 12, flat-footed 14); Hit-points: 28; Initiative: +1; Melee: +5 (d8 +2, 20/x3, battle-axe); Ranged: +4 (d8+2, 20/x3, 20ft, short-spear); Speed: 30.</p> <p>Saves: Fort +5 (+7), Ref +0 (+1), Will +0 (+0). +2 to Fort saves against poison and magic; +4 to Fort saves to resist cold.</p> <p>Abilities: Str 14 (+2), Dex 12 (+1), Con 14 (+2), Int 10 (+0), Wis 10 (+0), Cha 9 (-1).</p> <p>Racial Traits: Low-light vision, bonus saving throws (see above), bonus Wilderness lore checks (counted below), +1 attack against goblinoids, +4 AC bonus against giants.</p> <p>Skills: Climb +5, Jump +4, Craft (any) +5, Ride +4, Wilderness lore +4.</p> <p>Feats and Powers: Endurance, Cross class skill (netbook of feats): Craft (any) or Profession (farmer). Rage 1/day, Fast movement.</p> <p>Equipment: Leather armor, rounded shield, battleaxe, and shortspear, 1 magical tattoo of AC enhancement (see thereafter).</p> <p>Note: Rage: 6 rounds; AC 12; hit-points: 34; and melee: +7 (d8 +4, 20/x3, battle-axe).</p>

Pict Battle-Rager (Barbarian 4)	Pict Battle-Leader (Barbarian 8)
<p><i>Battle-ragers are the elite combatants of the Picts clans and spend their time warring and raiding, rather than working as a common laborer. These characters are the most quarrelsome Picts and, in battles, are always on the front line, charging like madmen in the fray. As such battle-ragers also tend to be short-lived. These characters usually go naked into combat, protected by their shield and magical tattoos alone.</i></p> <p>Alignment: Chaotic neutral</p> <p>Combat: AC 15 (touch 14, flat-footed 13); Hit-points: 45; Initiative: +2; Melee: +8 (d10+3, 20/x3, dwarven war-axe +1); Ranged: +6 (d8+2, 20/x3, 20ft, short spear); Speed: 30.</p> <p>Saves: Fort +4 (+7), Ref +1 (+3), Will +1 (+1). +2 to Fort saves against poison and magic; +4 to Fort saves to resist cold.</p> <p>Abilities: Str 15 (+2), Dex 14 (+2), Con 16 (+3), Int 10 (+0), Wis 10 (+0), Cha 9 (-1).</p> <p>Racial Traits: Low-light vision, bonus saving throws (see above), bonus Wilderness lore checks (counted below), +1 attack against goblinoids, +4 AC bonus against giants.</p> <p>Skills: Climb +7, Intimidate +2, Jump +7, Listen +5, Ride +7, Wilderness lore +7.</p> <p>Feats and Powers: Endurance, Weapon focus (dwarven war-axe). Rage 2/day, Uncanny dodge (+2 bonus to AC), Fast movement.</p> <p>Equipment: Dwarven war-axe +1, shortspear, rounded shield, 2 magical tattoos of AC enhancement (see thereafter).</p> <p>Note: Rage: 8 rounds; AC= 11; hit-points: 53; and melee: +10 (d10+5, 20/x3, dwarven war-axe +1).</p>	<p><i>Sometimes a battle rager is gifted in strength, luck, cunning, and leadership ability. Such a battle-rager may eventually become the chief warrior of a clan and a leader of men on the battlefield or on raids. He will rarely become a clan's leader, a position traditionally held by elder female Picts. Picts' battle leaders must not only be skilled in combat but must have an intimate knowledge of the surrounding lands and of hunting skills, such as tracking.</i></p> <p>Alignment: Chaotic neutral</p> <p>Combat: AC 17 (touch 17, flat-footed 15); Hit-points: 90; Initiative: +2; Melee: +15 /+10 (d10+6, 20/x3, dwarven war-axe +2); Ranged: +10 /+5 (d8+4, 20/x3, 20ft, short spear); Speed: 30.</p> <p>Saves: Fort +6 (+9), Ref +2 (+4), Will +2 (+5). +2 to Fort saves against poison and magic; +4 to Fort saves to resist cold (and cold resistance 2/- from magical tattoo).</p> <p>Abilities: Str 18 (+4), Dex 14 (+2), Con 16 (+3), Int 12 (+1), Wis 13 (+1), Cha 13 (+1).</p> <p>Racial Traits: Low-light vision, bonus saving throws (see above), bonus Wilderness lore checks (counted below), +1 attack against goblinoids, +4 AC bonus against giants.</p> <p>Skills: Climb +10, Intimidate +6, Intuit direction +6, Jump +10, Knowledge (geography) +6, Listen +6, Ride +7, Swim +10, Wilderness lore +10.</p> <p>Feats and Powers: Endurance, Iron will, Weapon focus (dwarven war-axe). Rage 3/day, Uncanny dodge (+2 bonus to AC, can't be flanked), Fast movement.</p> <p>Equipment: Dwarven war-axe +2, dagger, short-spear, bear pelt +3 to AC (used like a cloak, equivalent to an amulet of natural armor), 2 magical tattoos of AC enhancement (see thereafter) and 2 magical tattoos of damage reduction (cold).</p> <p>Note: Rage: 8 rounds; AC 13; hit-points: 106; and melee: +17/+12 (d10+8, 20/x3, dwarven war-axe +2).</p>

Pict Priest (Cleric 5/ Tattoo Mage 2*)
<p><i>This could be a female pictish leader a clan or a male spellcaster who accompanies raiding or war parties. The pict priest typically worships a god of strength, a nature god, a minor local deity, or a well-known deity known under another name and aspect. There are no developed churches among the Picts' clans, for they are served by nearly independent priests who act more as tribal shamans than ecclesiastics.</i></p> <p>Alignment: Lawful neutral</p> <p>Combat: AC 15 (touch 15, flat-footed 14); Hit-points: 45; Initiative: +1; Melee: +7 (d6+4, 20/x2, light mace +2); Ranged: +4 (d4+2, 19-20/x2, 10ft, dagger); Speed: 20.</p> <p>Saves: Fort +4 (+6), Ref +1 (+2), Will +7 (+9). +2 to Fort saves against poison and magic; +4 to Fort saves to resist cold.</p> <p>Abilities: Str 14 (+2), Dex 12 (+1), Con 15 (+2), Int 13 (+1), Wis 15 (+2), Cha 10 (+0).</p> <p>Racial Traits: Low-light vision, bonus saving throws (see above), bonus Wilderness lore checks (counted below), +1 attack against goblinoids, +4 AC bonus against giants.</p> <p>Skills: Concentration +5 (+9), Craft (tattooing) +9, Knowledge (Arcana) +9, Scry +4, Spellcraft +9, Wilderness lore +4.</p> <p>Feats and Powers: Combat casting, Scribe scroll, Transference (magic item XP cost paid by another willing character). Turn undead (3/day, at 5th level), Inscribe magical tattoos, Tattoos of unusual magical knowledge (Protection from arrow), Tattoo of permanent magic (Protection from arrow).</p> <p>Spells: Cleric (6 /4+1 /3+1 /2+1 /1+1, at 7th level, domains: Earth and Strength): 0: Detect magic ×2, Mending ×2, Purify food ×2; 1: Command, Deathwatch, Doom, Endure elements (fire), Magic weapon; 2: Augury, Bull's strength, Protection from arrows (considered already cast for being permanent), Silence; 3: Create food and water, Dispel magic, Magic vestment; 4: Divination, Spike stones.</p> <p>Equipment: Bracers of armor AC+4, light mace +2, three daggers.</p> <p>Note: See Tattoo Mage prestige class in <i>Netbook of Classes Vol-1</i> (by the same author).</p>

Pictish Magical Items

Picts are widely renowned for their painted bodies. These knotwork tattoos often have magical properties. Such magical tattoos may either be used as described in the **Relic & Rituals** supplement by Sword & Sorcery Studio, or as detailed below:

Pict Magical Tattoo

This tattoo gives a small, but permanent, enhancement to a character wearing it. This may be either: +1 bonus to AC, +1 bonus to initiative, +1 bonus to Fortitude saving throws, +1 bonus to Reflex saving throws, +1 bonus to Will saving throws, +2 bonus to Fortitude saves versus poison, damage reduction (5) against cold, or damage reduction (5) against fire.

These magical tattoos are permanent, as long as the character bearing them is alive. If he dies, the magic fades and does not come back if the character is raised or reincarnated. Tattoos with the same effect stacks do not stack, though the character may have more than one type of tattoo. A character cannot get more than one tattoo per level and may not have more tattoos than twice his constitution bonus (i.e. A character with a 17 Constitution may have up to 6 tattoos).

Caster level: 5th; Prerequisites: Inscribe Magical Tattoo (either as ability of Tattoo Mages, or special feat); Market Price: 2000 gp; Weight: none.



Welcome to the second part of **Advanced Role-Play**.

Whereas the first article went into the basics of roleplaying your character, this article deals with interactions between NPCs and PCs, as well as delving into the ills of 'meta-gaming'. Enjoy...

What is Interaction?

Interaction, simply stated, is how an individual or group communicates, or otherwise deals with, another individual or group. In the context of a roleplaying game, this interaction usually takes place between the PCs and NPCs or among the PCs. The rules for interaction are generally similar, whether PCs are interacting with others in their group or with NPCs, though there are some important, though often overlooked, differences.

Me vs. I

Before your character addresses others, it is important to establish how you view your character. Do you refer to yourself in the first person ("I am a 3rd level rogue"), the third person ("He is a 3rd level rogue"), or the third person possessive ("My guy is a third level rogue")? I'm of the opinion that it doesn't really matter, as long as you and your group are consistent in your use of pronouns. While I prefer to talk about my characters in the third person, many speak of their characters in the first person. In groups where players employ differing pronouns, some DMs find it easier for all players to use the same pronoun when describing their character's actions in order to avoid confusion.

Nature vs. Nurture

When talking with other characters and thinking of how you would react with them, you need to take into account your character's personality. One important component of your character's personality is alignment. If your character is good-aligned, he may prefer talking to other good characters and may avoid speaking with evil characters. Conversely this character may attempt to treat all creatures with respect, regardless of alignment, and base his opinions of others solely upon their actions. Such prejudices should affect the way you talk to other characters, be they player or non-player controlled. A chaotic-aligned character, for example, is likely to be hostile towards guards or authority figures while a lawful character is likely to feel ill at ease around rogues or other chaotic characters.

Similarly, your character's background should affect the way you deal with other characters. If your character is educated or from a noble family he is more likely to talk eloquently and have a more sophisticated vocabulary than the bastard son of a prostitute who's grown up begging in the streets. Likewise, a character's views of those who fall above or below their social strata should be considered. Does your lowborn fighter hold nobility in reverence, does he resent "his betters," or is he simply apathetic to such differences of social station? While his alignment may act as

a guideline for his behaviour, it doesn't dictate his every motive.

Your character's cultural or racial background will likely affect your character's manner of speech as well. The most obvious means of representing differing dialects or native languages is through the use of accents. I've commonly seen gaming groups use real-world accents to represent the accents of different fantasy races. Dwarves, for example, often acquire a Scottish burr, while elves tend to speak with the stilted accent of "Queen's English." Is the use of an accent a good idea for your game? As a DM, I tend to affect a fake accent only when NPCs have a very strong accent. Some find the use of various accents to be an effective tool for fleshing out their characters and differentiating between various groups or characters, while others tend to mix and confuse their accents so as to make all accented characters farcical figures who all wind up sounding alike.

That's why I challenge you to play 'different' characters, characters that are harder to roleplay than others, without immediately resorting to the use of an affected accent. Another good idea, instead of using a strong, but foreign, accent is to add a subtle, more familiar, accent to your voice. Examples of familiar accents might be those used in places you frequently visited, or had lived in, in the past. An accent you may have adopted in the past, but later changed, would probably come more naturally to you and be easier to use.

Interaction with NPCs

Although NPCs all fall under the control of the DM, their individuality is just as important as that of player characters. In a thriving, realistic campaign world, it is quite obvious that the player characters aren't the only ones doing the adventuring. Other adventuring parties exist in the world, looking for treasure and glory, while fighting for the good of mankind (or less noble causes). Acting as a backdrop to the epic tasks performed by the world's heroes and villains are the day-to-day events that guide the lives of the world's masses and make the world a "real" place. Dismissing NPCs as mere plot devices who exist solely to interact with PCs transforms a pen and paper RPG based upon imagination and storytelling into an adventure or wargame that is better suited to a computer game. This approach to NPCs destroys any kind of realism the rest of the players may feel. As Ryan suggests in this month's STORYCRAFT, NPCs are much more than just stats on a sheet of paper. Considering all of this, roleplaying your interactions with NPCs should be well thought out and should flow in the same way as your conversations with friends or relatives, or meet with the challenges of addressing complete strangers in real life. If you suddenly feel like you're in out of your depth at this point, please don't worry. Any bits or pieces about roleplaying you find hard now will easily improve with experience. As long as you consider the two points I'm about to present to you and keep the narrative flowing, you'll be in no trouble at all.

Point 1: Non-player characters are real people with real emotions and attitudes. If you are rude to an NPC, they are likely to be rude back. If you are rude to someone, they are likely to be angry towards you in a few weeks time when you may need their help. In a campaign setting, NPCs live real lives. They have their own jobs, responsibilities, and problems to deal with. They are not likely to leave everything and join you on quest just like that. Likewise, they will not jeopardize their well-being by dealing with those who they deem as dangerous or dishonest.

Point 2: NPCs have their own set of values for life. Not all NPCs will respond to you just because you offer money. They also have their own set of attitudes and motivations. It

is quite likely that at least someone in your game is racist, sexist or otherwise close-minded. Don't always expect to convert NPCs to your way of thinking, no matter how enlightening your insights are.

PC Interaction

Most of the time during a Dungeons & Dragons game session is spent with the player characters talking amongst themselves. This makes the interaction between these characters an integral part of roleplaying.

Happy, Happy, Joy, Joy

The most unrealistic party of adventurers, and the least interesting, is the one where all the player characters get on. All too often player groups are harmonious at the expense of realism: Where the paladin's best mate is the rogue who makes his money by pickpocketing in the streets and where the elven sorceress spends her time discussing the wonders of dwarven architecture and masonry with an equally amiable dwarven fighter. Sounds ridiculous doesn't it, but you'd be surprised by how many parties interact like this. Okay, so maybe I was exaggerating a bit, but I'm sure every party has seen its fair share of characters turning a blind eye to their fellow adventurers' foibles, even when these foibles would surely agitate other players' characters. Rather than beginning their adventuring career as an affable band of mutually accepting individuals, it is more likely that they gradually learn how to work together towards a common goal in spite of their differences.

Fight Club

A realistic, potentially destructive, occurrence within an adventuring party is a violent altercation between two of more members of the party. If this does happen, you may be tempted to intervene in order to bring peace to your game and force a resolution between your feuding players. While good-intentioned, such interventions are often unnecessary, as other PCs will often attempt to break up such a fight and work within the game to resolve differences between player characters. "Brushing aside" such differences does nothing to resolve them and often leads to long-standing grudges between player characters. If the differences cannot be resolved "in-game," then a group decision needs to be made that attempts to best preserve the group's enjoyment of your game. With regards to play-fighting within the group, I usually do not concern myself with such interactions unless it is a one-sided affair. A player who derides or abuses another character in order to entertain the other players in his group needs to be told that such actions are not appropriate to your game, especially if they are meant to upset or alienate another player in your game.

Sex and the Dungeon

Moving swiftly onto a serious issue that can arise in roleplaying: that of a sexual relationship between PCs and NPCs of the opposite (or same) sex. It is my opinion, and only my opinion, that this should rarely happen in a game of D&D; primarily because you are unlikely (unless you are deprived teenagers) to want to roleplay any sexual activity beyond 'I jump into bed with so-and-so, the half-orc barbarian' and because such interactions, if properly roleplayed, tend to make others uncomfortable. Unless your group collectively agrees that they are willing to roleplay intimate moments with other characters, it's best to resolve such interactions "off-screen."

Banter Fodder

The one type of player interaction that is all too prevalent and disruptive in my game sessions is the out-of-character, player-to-player banter that can drive a DM to madness and

a game into confused chaos. More often than not, these discussions revolve around meta-gaming issues... which brings me to the next section of this article.

The Consequences of Meta-Gaming

So, what is meta-gaming? Meta-gaming is a player's use of out-of-character game knowledge to affect his character's actions within the game. Put succinctly, meta-gaming is cheating and cheating is against the rules. Using meta-game knowledge in the game spoils the sense of realism and, ultimately, the amount of fun you get out of the game.

Players that meta-game have given up on roleplaying and on the whole concept of the roleplaying game, and swapped it for the principles behind an arcade game. They are "hacking" the game in order skew the events in their favour, failing to trust in their DM's ability to weave a challenging, yet fair, storyline for their enjoyment.

Players who engage in meta-gaming are spoiling the fun for the other players as well and for the DM. Think of yourself in the position of the Dungeon Master for a moment. You've spent around two hours writing out stats, designing encounters, and drawing maps for a game of Dungeons & Dragons. You've checked over your notes time and time again to make sure the background is correct and

that you haven't left anything out. Then you sit down with your friends to play the adventure and, every five seconds, it's 'I think we should go left because that's the way ahead that the DM would have written first, so it's most likely the right way' or 'That chest is bound to be locked, he always gives us locked chests when we reach the treasure.' How frustrating is that? Why not bear in mind your DM's efforts and trust in his ability to design an adventure suited to your party?

That's all for this month, and hopefully the whole Advanced Role-Play series. So I'll see you around...

'James once again closes his tome. Remembering to do what he failed to do last time, he reaches inside the left-hand draw of his desk, pulling out a chain and padlock. He wraps the chain around the tome, and locks it with an old brass key. Picking up the tome, he throws it out the open window, watching it fall two stories into the moat below. "My work here is done" he says to himself, stands triumphantly from his chair, and walks out of the room...'

THE LIFE OF A BARD

By James Henley

Garrick pulled out his lute from its hanging place on his backpack. Glancing around, he tried to size up the situation, looking out for hidden enemies in the brush surrounding the clearing. Seeing nothing unusual, he turned his attention back to his instrument – it was a family heirloom, belonging to his father, and his father's father before that. Strumming a chord, he checked the instrument's tuning. It was a bit flat, but it would do for now. He hardly had time to retune it now, anyway, in the middle of a battle. He watched for a moment as his comrades charged forward towards the orcs in front of him, the orcs that had tracked them all the way from Irongate. They were scowling now, and he beheld the blank stare of pure evil in their leader's face. Pausing briefly, he remembered a song in his mind; it was the Anthem of Pelor, sure to spur on his friends to their goal. Kneeling to avoid the arrows that the Orcs were firing, he strummed the opening chord. The sound lifted over the clearing, he was certain the rest of his party would hear it. Continuing with the song, he began to sing: 'One day all the darkness shall be gone...'

As a rule, bards tend to live life to the full. From an early age, many are trained specifically by mentors, or in some instances, sent to Bardic colleges to learn their trades. These artisans normally come from lower class families, where the parents have had more children than they can afford. They are left to find their own way in the world, and often end up as either thieves or rogues, or if they are lucky enough to find a mentor, becomes a bard. Of course, some bards are born with the ability to create music, and it can be argued that a certain amount of natural talent needs to be there, in order for it to be worth teaching a child. Often runaway children from rich families end up as bards, being able to accompany adventurers on the merit of their music. Often a lone fighter has found companionship in a bard or scribe, who has accompanied

them, in order to sing or write of their achievements.



In some cases, the younger children of aristocratic families – being destined to become artisans, as their older siblings inherit the family's wealth – are enrolled in Bardic colleges, teaching the ways of music, in addition to regular lessons

in chivalry and combat. Occasionally, half-elf children, abandoned in the wilderness, also find comfort in music.

Learning the trade

An aspiring bard is taught the principles of music, although the actual methods of teaching vary (depending upon the tutor and the school). They are taught the art of melody, and creating tunes which alert the senses and move peoples hearts, and are taught to use their voices to the full effect. Next, they are taught to add harmony, to add texture to the music and make it feel whole. They are shown how to use their chosen instrument to produce these sounds and chords. Finally, they are taught to add words to their tunes, and to let the lyric speak and seep deep into the mind of their audience.

When a bard's training is finished, he is abandoned to the wide world to make his fortune. Often a bard can wander from town to town, writing songs from the rumours spreading through the region, and playing in local taverns and inns. Otherwise, they might join an adventuring party, and sing of their deeds and actions.

Adventuring

The bard is in his element when he plays during battle. His inspiring music can be instrumental in the triumph of his allies, playing inspiring folksongs from his companions' homelands. Most bards are trained in the art of war with simple weapons such as shortwords and crossbows, which allow them to get involved in a skirmish if deemed necessary. Sometimes, a bard is trained primarily as a warrior, and then chooses to pursue further apprenticeship as a bard, primarily to entertain his colleagues after the battle and make a bit on the side in pubs and taverns.

A good bard can make a small fortune from performing in taverns at night and busking during the day. Those with exceptional talents can find themselves in the courts of local lords, barons and even kings. Some bards can also use their skills to get close to influential figures in order to find out court secrets and little-known truths.

In old age, a bard will normally settle down in a small village, often seeking uneventful corners of their lands, in order to escape the danger of adventuring. Some find soul mates, and start families of their own, and possibly continue to perform in a local inn. And finally, when a good bard breathes his last, it is a tragedy for those who knew him or his music. The songs themselves, especially if recorded in writing, often become family heirlooms and textbooks.

Bardic Instruments

The Lute

This is the typical Bardic instrument in D&D. It is in some ways similar to the guitar of today, in a more basic form. The actual body (or 'sound box', for those guitar players, like me) is generally considered to be in the shape of a half-pear, although other elaborate designs may be used on masterwork or even enchanted instruments. The stalk of the pear forms the fingerboard of the instruments, with frets running down it, each a semitone (the space between a white note and a black note on the piano) apart from each other in pitch. These frets are metal dividers, the width of the fingerboard, commonly made of iron or steel, or in the case of older, antique instruments, of a hardwood like mahogany or oak.

Unlike the guitar, there is no bridge on the lute (the piece of wood that is elevated above the guitar to hold the strings in place). Instead, the strings are fed straight into the body of the lute and are tied inside the sound box. The head, at the end of the fingerboard, contains the peg-box, where the strings are tied to small pegs, used to tune the instrument. The lute will normally have six strings although many four, five and eight stringed instruments can be found and would be plucked with the fingers.

The Fife

The fife is basically an early version of the piccolo, a small side-blown flute, made of wood and with holes, which are blocked by fingers to produce notes of different pitch.

The Recorder or End-Blown Flute

Up until the end of the 18th Century, when it was commonly used for orchestral music, and throughout the Baroque period (1600-1680), the Recorder that we know today was known as the Flute, with the flute known as the German Flute, or Transverse Flute. So it is likely that in a Dungeons & Dragons world, this instrument would be referred to as the Flute. It is also certain, that the flute of Dungeons & Dragons would be more similar to the flute of the 17th Century than the modern recorder. In fact, it



is probable that when the flute is referred to in old stories (such as the Pied Piper), this instrument was the end-blown flute or recorder.

The Early Recorder (Flute) consists of a 40cm (16 inch) wooden tube, with a wider, funnel-shaped end. The sound of this instrument would be fuller, and more wooden than the modern recorder, giving a richer sound. Normally eight but possibly six or twelve holes are drilled into the tube which, when blocked, produce a sound of a higher or lower pitch.

The Mandolin

The mandolin is a stringed instrument, much like the lute. It has 4 or, in some cases, 5 pairs of strings, with each string tuned to the same note. They are plucked with a plectrum. Mandolins evolved from the Lute family in Italy during the 17th -18th centuries, and the deep bowled mandolin produced particularly in Naples became a common type in the 19th century. The original instrument was the mandola (mandola is almond in Italian and describes the instrument body shape) and evolved in the 15th century from the lute. A later, smaller mandola was developed and became known as a mandolina.

The Shalm

The shalm is a double-reed woodwind musical instrument, also spelled "shawm". They can vary in sound just by changing reeds; from the smooth sound of a modern oboe to a more raucous sound. The late Middle Ages and Renaissance shawm used a broad cane reed controlled by the player's lips. With the smaller size shawms, the reed could be placed inside a pirouette, a funnel shaped protector against which the player places his lips. This pirouette not only protects the reed, but also helps avoid lip fatigue.

All shawms have several vent holes between the hole for the lowest note and the end of the bell. This section of the instrument is very long and contributes to the tone and carrying power of the instrument. A large fontanelle protects the key mechanism of the lowest note(s), and the crenellated metal band often found wrapped around the bell not only helps protect the instrument but also helps make the shawm a sturdy weapon for settling disputes among town musicians.

Shawm bands enlivened palace courtyards and market squares of sixteenth century Europe and added to the general din and confusion associated with them.

Other Suggested Instruments

The Bagpipes

It is thought that the first bagpipes were played in the Middle East in ancient times and derived from prehistoric reeded woodwind instruments. The addition of a bag to a reeded pipe allowed more pipes to be attached, which could harmonize with the melody.

The Romans may have been responsible for spreading the pipes all over Europe. Prior to the twentieth century, each

country in Europe and the Near East had its own version of bagpipe for playing their particular style of folk music.

The Panpipes

The panpipes consist of a series of small wooden whistles, graduated in size to give notes of different pitch. It is held in front of the mouth and the player blow across the open ends of the whistles.

The Lyre

This instrument is often found in Greek mythology, also played by the Assyrians, Hebrews and in Germany. It is essentially a small harp.

Sample Bard NPCs

Here is some example bard NPCs for you to insert straight into your campaign, as performers in pubs, taverns, and inns or as buskers in fairs, and marketplaces.

Otkel

Male human Com5/Brd2: CR 6; Size M (5 ft., 9 in. tall); HD 5d4 + 2d6; hp 22; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Attack +4 melee, or +4 ranged; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +7; AL NG; Str 13, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 12.

Language Spoken: Common.

Skills and feats: Alchemy +4, Appraise +1, Climb +5, Hide +3, Jump +9, Knowledge +5, Listen +5, Move silently +1, Perform +3, Profession +5, Ride +5, Spot +13, Swim +2, Use rope +6, Wilderness lore +5; Alertness, Great fortitude, Scribe scroll, Spell focus (enchantment), Track.

Possessions: Leather Tunic, Entertainer's Outfit, Masterwork Flute, 432 gp.

Bard Spells Known (3/1): 0th -- Daze, Detect Magic, Mage Hand, Prestidigitation, Resistance. 1st -- Cure Light Wounds, Protection from Evil.

Otkel grew up in a small farming village in a rural area. He worked as a labourer in the fields surrounding the village for most of his younger years. Five years before his retirement, he started taking up playing as a hobby, learning his trade from an old bard who lived in the village. When his mentor died, he left Otkel his cottage and all his possessions, including his masterwork flute. Otkel sold the cottage, but kept the instrument, using it instead of his own, poor quality flute. Now, with Otkel too frail to work, he lives off his old mentor's money and plays every Friday in the local inn to gain some more money for food and clothing.

Celia

Female half-elf Rog3/Brd9: CR 12; Size M (4 ft., 8 in. tall); HD 3d6-6 + 9d6-18; hp 23; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Attack +6/+1 melee, or +9/+4 ranged; SV Fort +2, Ref +10, Will +7; AL N; Str 6, Dex 13, Con 7, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 16.

Languages Spoken: Common, Draconic, Elven.

Skills and feats: Appraise +14, Climb +6, Craft +9, Diplomacy +10, Hide +1, Innuendo +4.5, Intimidate +10, Knowledge +14, Listen +3, Move silently +8, Open lock +7, Perform +10, Profession +5, Search +9.5, Spot +3, Swim +8, Tumble +9, Use rope +6.5; Alertness, Dodge, Exotic weapon proficiency (chain, spiked), Scribe scroll, Shield proficiency, Silent spell.

Possessions: Studded Leather Armour, Explorer's Outfit, Shortspear, Light Crossbow with 20 bolts, Masterwork Thief's Tools, Magic Fife (has the effect of the spell, Otto's Irresistible Dance), Potion of Spider Climb, Two Potions of Cure Light Wounds, 567 gp.

Bard Spells Known (3/4/4/3): 0th -- Dancing Lights, Detect Magic, Flare, Ghost Sound, Open/Close, Read Magic. 1st -- Charm Person, Grease, Protection from Good, Silent Image. 2nd -- Hold Person, Invisibility, See Invisibility, Silence. 3rd -- Charm Monster, Gaseous Form, Major Image.

Celia grew up alone on the streets of a large city, with only her poor, human mother, for support. Celia used to steal apples, and small amounts of gold, from market traders, to take back to her mother. When her old mum died, she had nothing left to keep her in the city, and chose to join an adventuring party. Six months on, her comrades deserted her during a raid on an Elven settlement. Alone, in the wood surrounding the settlement, she stumbled upon a cottage, where an old woman lived, also a half-elf, and the woman took her in. As it happened, this woman was a bard, and taught Celia her trade. Now, six years on, Celia is once again traveling the country with a party of adventurers, but this time as their bard.

Eldon

Male halfling (lightfoot) Brd3: CR 3; Size S (2 ft., 10 in. tall); HD 3d6+3; hp 15; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved initiative); Spd 20 ft.; AC 14 (+3 Dex, +1 Size); Attack +3 melee, or +6 ranged; SV Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +4; AL CN; Str 11, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 7, Wis 11, Cha 17.

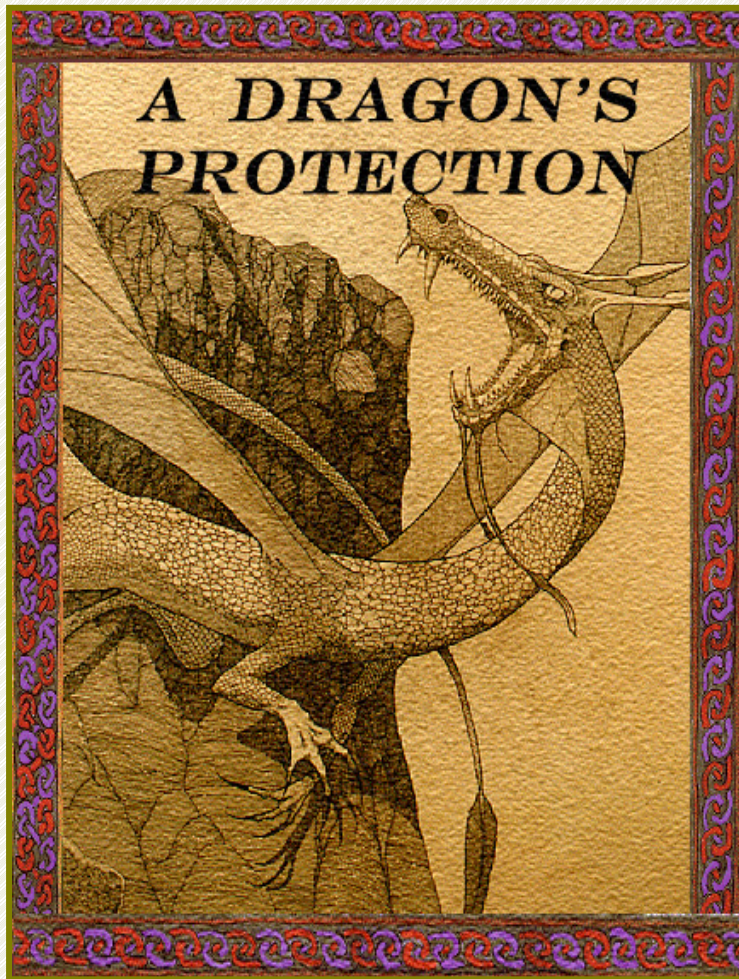
Languages Spoken: Common, Halfling.

Skills and feats: Climb +2, Gather information +7, Hide +11, Jump +2, Listen +2, Move silently +5, Scry +1, Spellcraft +3, Spot +0; Improved initiative, Weapon focus (longsword).

Possessions: Entertainer's Outfit, Panpipes, Dagger, 23 gp.

Bard Spells Known (3/2): 0th -- Dancing Lights, Daze, Detect Magic, Flare, Mage Hand, Prestidigitation. 1st -- Charm Person, Summon Monster I, Unseen Servant.

As a boy, Eldon was a bit of a rebel. At the age of ten, having set light to a carpet stall at the local market, the village elders of his tribe decided to sort him out. He was sent to live with a young man who lived outside the village. For ten years he was separated from his family and the others in his tribe. While away, he learned to play the panpipes. Twenty years later, Eldon performs in the market next to the stall that he had once burned.



A DRAGON'S PROTECTION

Prelude to A Dragon's Protection
by Alex Gilbey

It is said that, many generations ago, a brotherhood of the world's most powerful sorcerers came together under the leadership of the alchemist mage, Hrathti. They built a fortress defended by the most powerful magicks of the age and the finest warriors that alchemist's gold could buy. And there, upon the top of the highest mountain in the range at the northernmost tip of the world, the ten brothers swore in secret to bring together the world under the rule of one man. Thus was formed the Conclave of the Blood.

In the years that followed, strange things began to happen. The loremasters who kept the libraries of the world were approached by mysterious strangers who paid gold to transcribe hundreds of years' worth of yellowed parchment bearing the secrets of the ancients. Youths who were talented in magic were spirited away by groups of nameless, black-hooded men. Among the people, these mysterious acts came to be seen as a sign from the gods.

This continued until, on one dark night, a young man of the black-hoods found, in a vault which had been untouched for many a generation, a parchment bearing the coat of arms of the Duke of Shai Kha.

In ages past, Shai Kha led a great army out of the warm grasslands of his people and, for ten years, had expanded his borders and brought much of the knowledge of the surrounding lands to his people. On the fifty-seventh moon cycle of his quest, Shai Kha

brought his horde into the lands of the Western Elves. Great was his folly in believing that his barbarians could best these most skilled of the world's warriors but fight he did and, as his maimed body was carried back to his home by the remnants of his followers, this script was written by his half-brother Shackthtar:

"And it rose to the calling of its Elven masters. Great was the fear among our warriors of this beast. In our lands the legends of these beasts we know as Dragons are thought of as myths, but here they live, still, at the call of their masters. As my army fell upon the Elves, the amulet about the neck of the beast cast forth a glow of deepest blue upon their warriors and where it fell the dead rose to fight again."

The man rose from his desk and left the vault. From the courtyard came the drumming of hooves, as man and parchment left the city and headed north with all speed.



THE DARK CLOWN CIRCUS

by Herman Lau

"It's time. The party-goers have all arrived," Galen the stage magician said to his two comrades.

He was a handsome man; tall with his dark hair cut short. He was the trio's impossibilist, the escape artist and master of diversions. He was brought up in the carnival business. His father had owned his own circus. When that business fell through, Galen was happy to gain employment with the infamous Dark Clown Circus and improve his trade. This night, however, there were things to attend to grimmer than a magic show. Galen tightened the straps on his leather backpack, "Are you sure this is the right building?"

"Absolutely," Kara intoned, "I tracked the mark here just an hour ago."

Kara's muscular frame dwarfed Galen even in the shadows of their rooftop hiding spot. She had joined the Dark Clown circus as a strong-woman, but found her natural talent with animals gave her an edge as a so-called crocodile hunter. She had more reservations about harming animals than she did with harming humans, so she was uncertain about animal circus tricks at first. Kara was pleased to discover the animals were treated with the utmost respect, and most had been rescued from other circuses where they would have been mistreated. Now, Kara was their master and friend since they did not know how to survive in the wild.

The third figure stood silently. He was draped in a red outfit and had his face covered with a crimson mask, mimicking the mask of tragedy seen in many theatres. He threw the grappling hook across to the rooftop of their destination. Securing the line, he then effortlessly ran across the tightened cord like a professional tightrope walker.

"How does he do that?" Galen asked in astonishment.

"Practice, I guess," Kara started crossing the line by wrapping her legs around it, then pulling herself across.

Galen followed after her and tossed the steel hook back to the other rooftop when they had finished crossing. "O! Red is gone already," Galen said looking around for his colleague.

"I wouldn't make light of him if I were you," Kara cautioned, "The Red Masks are trained by the Lady Carmine herself."

"The assassin?" Galen asked.

"You mean the business woman," Kara corrected with a wink.

Galen nodded, "Right. Just like we're all just circus performers. The illusions don't end on the stage it seems."

They entered the inn and tavern through the top floor windows. This was a private party, but there was always room for entertainers. And that was their job, to entertain... and distract. The building only had two floors. The upper one contained the bedchambers, so it was easy to find the soiree and banquet on the first floor. "Look, there's the mayor of this town, and the head chancellor. Lots of important people here," Galen pointed from the top of the stairs.

"The bards are arriving now, the dinner must be starting," Kara scanned the large room, "You should get down there and start your act."

Galen hastened down the stairs and approached the bards and other performers, insisting that his 'death-defying' escape artist show was scheduled first. He finally succeeded in obtaining the first slot of the night. They yielded, partly because the performers would rather eat before starting their show.

Galen unpacked his manacles, chains, and other restraints. The skit started with him exclaiming how no chains could hold him; "Galen the Impossibilist". He challenged several of the audience to come forward and restrain him as best they could with the given tools. One man even removed his belt to tie Galen's legs together. Galen simply rolled his eyes.

Meanwhile, Kara searched the top quarters for her goal. In this mission for the circus, she had the simplest job. The muddled footprints led her to the right room. Her tracking skills allowed her to pick out the trail she wanted: a small girl led by two large men. She forced the door open with her shoulder and found the girl bound and asleep on the floor.

"Poor child," Kara tried to help the girl up, but she was unconscious. Kara bundled her up in the blanket from the bed and placed the child over her ample shoulders. Now she waited. As Galen escaped his bonds, struggling and shouting curses for effect, he noticed a strange change in his audience. A number of them started dancing and singing as if they were drunk. Some of the musicians started playing dissonant notes before he was even finished his act. As the music grew, more guests joined in the dancing and laughing. Galen was a little concerned about the laughing. It started in the rear ranks with the main table, where the mayor and the chancellor sat. It soon spread towards the performance area. The laughing had a hideous aspect to it, with several people falling to the floor uncontrollably.

Galen noticed Kara at the top of the stairs, signaling that she had rescued the child they had come for, the daughter of someone important supposedly. The details had been left out of their instructions. Now Galen looked to the second half of their objective, to assassinate the chancellor who had made the abduction for some purpose again unknown to Galen. Then Galen saw the figure in blood red walk from the back corner towards the door. The Red Mask indicated to Kara it was safe to leave now that the crowd was worked into a frenzy of drink and carousal. Kara sped down the stairs, carrying the child over her shoulders. She exited the tavern into cool night air, pushing over the guard who stood on the other side of the doors. The unwary man was knocked senseless by the powerful woman's rush. Galen grabbed his props and caught up with the Red Mask. "I think we haven't yet finished our business, friend," Galen said.

The Red Mask simply pointed to the main table. There was the chancellor as Galen had spotted before. However, on closer inspection, his throat was slit, and blood ran down the side of his neck. His friends at the table were laughing still, but now Galen spied the look of terror in their grinning faces.

"What did you do?" Galen had more than a hint of fear in his voice.

To Galen's astonishment, a female voice answered him, "Just taking care of a personal matter. That girl we rescued is my daughter." When she unmasked herself and Galen saw the red hair flow to her shoulders, he recognized her from last time their circus had visited the Crimson Hall, which served as the Dark Clown Circus headquarters.

"The Lady Destiny Carmine," Galen bowed his head, "Your illusions put mine to shame."

She smiled and walked toward the door as the noise from the party began changing from laughter to screaming. "You will learn, but we really best be on our way."

The Dark Clown Circus

The organization known as the Dark Clown Circus has two faces. To the common public, the Dark Clown Circus is a company of entertainers who travel the land setting up circus shows for the cities they pass. There are always several active traveling circuses, but they all answer to a common headquarters. Throughout the land, their circuses are known for their animal wrangler and escape artist shows. The other face of the Dark Clown Circus is more commonly recognized in the underworld of secret guilds. Whenever a circus sets up in a town, it also sends out a few of its parties to accomplish whatever directives have been given to them. Frequently, these missions consist of reconnaissance or appropriating certain items or funds. Occasionally the assignment includes sabotage or assassination. Though the streetwise know of some of the Dark Clown Circus' methods, its objectives often remain a mystery.

Membership

Membership is offered officially through the main headquarters, although being sponsored by an existing member goes a long way in the process. The initiation involves completing some sort of task or mission for one of the circuses. The nature of the mission often ensures the applicant is sincere by burning the bridges to his former life.

Benefits

As long as the member is doing his job within a circus party, he is entitled to his share of the profits as well as free room and board as long as he stays with the circus. Members in good standing are allowed leaves of absences to pursue their own goals. Becoming a member gives the character access to the Red Mask, Crocodile Hunter, and Impossiblist prestige classes.

Leadership

Every traveling circus has one man in charge who is assigned from the headquarters. Destiny Carmine currently runs the headquarters of the Dark Clown Circus organization (Human female, Rogue 3 / Fighter 4 / Red Mask 10; Move Silently +16, Intimidate +16 [DM's are left to decide her areas of focus in their campaigns]).

Headquarters

The Dark Clown Circus headquarters is the Crimson Hall, a modest structure on the edge of the merchant's sector of a major town. A bustling tavern serves as the main floor. All official circus business is attended to on the second floor. The darker business is planned on the top third floor. A myriad of underground passages extends from the basement. All circuses report at least once a year to the hall for updates and reassignments.

Prestige Classes

Red Mask

"And now was acknowledged the presence of the Red Death. He had come like a thief in the night. And one by one dropped the revelers in the blood-bedewed halls of their revel, and died each in the despairing posture of his fall. And the life of the ebony clock went out with that of the last of the gay. And the flames of the tripods expired. And Darkness and Decay and the Red Death held illimitable dominion over all."

Edgar Allen Poe,
The Masque of the Red Death



The ugly business of sabotage and assassination falls upon the Red Masks, the vicious enforcers of the Dark Clown Circus. The Red Mask is feared for the strange effect he has on a scene. Silent as a shadow, he appears and strides calmly towards his target. When he strikes, the revelry around him seems to increase to a frenzy. The Red Mask becomes the eye of the hurricane and leaves the stage in a state of chaos. He excels at eliminating targets in social situations, killing a man while his family and friends surround him in merrymaking.

When on a mission, the Red Mask lives up to his namesake. Adorned from head to toe in a blood red night suit, complete with a mask to hide his face. In a lavish party, such an eccentrically dressed individual does not stand out as much as one would think. Oddly, when making his way along the crowded halls and banquet rooms, the crimson color sometimes blends in better than a pure black garb would. During a masquerade ball, a Red Mask is at his deadliest. Most Red Masks start out as fighters and rogues, but all must return to the Crimson Hall to be initiated into this elite group. Some whisper that the ceremony involves joining the applicant with some otherworldly forces, which account for their mystical abilities. They are respected, and feared, even by their comrades in the circus.

Hit Dice: d8

Requirements:

To qualify to become a Red Mask, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Alignment: any non-good.

Base Attack Bonus: +5.

Move Silently: 6 ranks.

Intimidate: 6 ranks.

Sense Motive: 4 ranks.

Disable Device: 4 ranks.

Feats: improved initiative, death blow, quick draw, expertise.

Special: must petition the Dark Clown Circus for membership.

Class Skills:

The Red Mask's class skills are Bluff (Cha), Disable Device (Int), Escape Artist (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Open Lock (Dex), Perform (Cha), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis), and Tumble (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Reflex Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+0	+2	+0	Silent step, crimson blur 1/day
2	+2	+0	+3	+0	Sneak attack +1d6
3	+3	+1	+3	+1	Death attack
4	+4	+1	+4	+1	Delirium attack, crimson blur 2/day
5	+5	+1	+4	+1	Sneak attack +2d6
6	+6	+2	+5	+2	Crimson blur 3/day
7	+7	+2	+5	+2	Vicious blade 1/day
8	+8	+2	+6	+2	Sneak attack +3d6
9	+9	+3	+6	+3	Vicious blade 2/day, crimson blur 4/day
10	+10	+3	+7	+3	Red ecstasy

Class Features:

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The Red Mask is proficient with no new weapons, armor or shields.

Silent Step: The foundation of the Red Mask's training begins by being able to move about unheard. The Red Mask gains a +5 competence bonus to all Move Silently checks. In addition, he may move at his full speed without penalty when moving silently. This is an extraordinary ability.

- Crimson Blur:** While wearing his red night suit, or another costume that is predominantly (approximately 3/4 or more) red in color, the character may cast blur on himself as a sorcerer of a level equal to his Red Mask level. Using this spell-like ability is a move-equivalent action, and functions only on the Red Mask. The character's red colors appear blurred, shifting, and wavering. This distortion grants the subject one-half concealment (20% miss chance).
- Sneak Attack:** Any time the Red Mask's target would be denied a Dexterity bonus to AC (whether the target actually has a Dexterity bonus or not), or when the character flanks the target, the Red Mask's attack deals extra damage.
- Death Attack:** If the Red Mask studies his victim for 3 rounds and then makes a sneak attack with a melee weapon that successfully deals damage, the sneak attack has the additional effect of possibly either paralyzing or killing the target (character's choice). While studying the victim, the Red Mask can undertake other actions so long as his attention stays focused on the target and the target does not detect the assassin or recognize the assassin as an enemy. If the victim of such an attack fails her Fortitude saving throw (DC 10 + the Red Mask's class level + Intelligence modifier) against the kill effect, he dies. If the saving throw fails against the paralysis effect, the victim's mind and body become enervated, rendering her completely helpless and unable to act for 1d6 rounds plus 1 round per level of the Red Mask. If the victim's saving throw succeeds, the attack is just a normal sneak attack. Once the Red Mask has completed the 3 rounds of study, he must make the death attack within the next 3 rounds. If a death attack is attempted and fails (the victim makes her save) or if the Red Mask does not launch the attack within 3 rounds of completing the study, 3 new rounds of study are required before he can attempt another death attack.
- Delirium Attack:** Three times per day, a Red Mask can designate a sneak attack as a Delirium Attack. This is done as a free action before the attack is made. When a Red Mask deals damage with a sneak attack designated as a Delirium Attack, all those within 30 ft. who witness the attack must make a Will saving throw (DC 10 + half the Red Mask's character level + Charisma modifier) or become affected by the spell Tasha's Hideous Laughter for 1d3 rounds plus 1 round per Red Mask level. This spell afflicts the subjects with uncontrollable laughter. They collapse into gales of manic laughter, falling prone. The subjects can take no actions while laughing. After the spell ends, they can act normally. Creatures with Intelligence scores of 2 or lower are not affected. A creature whose type is different from the caster's receives a +4 bonus on its saving throw. Creatures of equal greater Hit Dice than the Red Mask are immune to the effects of his Delirium Attack. This is a supernatural ability.
- Vicious Blade:** The Red Mask can imbue a melee weapon with his viciousness for a number of rounds equal to half his class level plus his Charisma modifier (always at least 1 round). The weapon must remain in his hands or the enchantment ends prematurely. While imbued, the weapon resonates with destructive energy. This energy deals an extra 2d6 points of damage to the opponent and 1d6 damage to the wielder. This is a spell-like ability.
- Red Ecstasy:** Becoming the conduit for very chaotic energies, the celebrations around the Red Mask seem to enliven, while the revelers' senses become dulled. The Red Mask invokes the equivalent of a Mass Suggestion spell. However, Red Ecstasy has the following limitations: the DC for the spell is 10 + half the Red Mask's character level + Charisma modifier, the range of the spell is centered on the Red Mask's position when casting, creatures of equal greater Hit Dice than the Red Mask are immune to the effects, and the suggestion must be to dance, laugh, sing, or carouse recklessly in general. The Red Mask often targets the most popular and comely guests of a party to get others involved in the celebrations. This spell-like ability is usable once per day.

Crocodile Hunter

The crocodile hunter is a specialized naturalist who takes a very hands-on approach towards his vocation. In lands where the petty empire-building of the governing powers shows little concern for the local fauna, the crocodile hunter plies his trade for the good of the animals. Despite the name, he is not so much a hunter as a conservationist. He or She tries his best to protect or relocate endangered species that cannot fend for themselves. The crocodile hunter does not believe in the use of unnatural methods of capturing animals, such as alchemical drugs or magical means, because they can be detrimental to the well being of the creatures. Thus, he relies heavily on physical techniques that usually place the crocodile hunter in as much danger as his target. The image of a hunter wrestling barehanded with a crocodile is the source of much ridicule, but the crocodile hunter wears the title with pride.

Crocodile hunters usually work independently or in small groups of fellow hunters when necessary. Most are rangers who have become disgusted with the lack of concern over the animals, which are losing their natural habitats due to the actions of man. While misunderstood as crazed fanatics at times, the crocodile hunters are respected for the bravery and toughness. The more experienced crocodile hunters may have whole reserves of land where they bring their relocated animals to live and breed under their protection.

Hit Die: d12

Requirements:

To qualify to become a crocodile hunter, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Alignment: any non-evil.

Base Attack Bonus: +5.

Handle Animal: 7 ranks.

Animal Empathy: 4 ranks.

Knowledge (nature): 4 ranks

Feats: toughness, close-quarters fighting, lightning reflexes.

Class Skills:

The crocodile hunter's class skills are Animal Empathy (Cha), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Hide (Dex), Intuit Direction (Wis), Jump (Str), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Ride (Dex), Search (Int), Spot (Wis), Swim (Str), Use Rope (Dex), and Wilderness Lore (Wis)

Skill Points at Each Level: 6 + Int modifier.)

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Reflex Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+2	+2	+0	Toughness, animal tamer, perilous embrace
2	+1	+3	+3	+0	Venom block, wild dash
3	+2	+3	+3	+1	Wild courage, animal bluff
4	+3	+4	+4	+1	Toughness, fast climb
5	+3	+4	+4	+1	Disengage
6	+4	+5	+5	+2	Stun animal, superior lightning reflexes
7	+5	+5	+5	+2	Toughness, animal evasion
8	+6	+6	+6	+2	Improved animal bluff, eagle eyes
9	+6	+6	+6	+3	Wild haste
10	+7	+7	+7	+3	Toughness, wild luck

Class Features:

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The crocodile hunter is proficient with all simple and martial weapons, as well as the following exotic weapons: net, lasso, and mancatcher. The crocodile hunter is proficient with light armor, and medium armor.

Toughness: The crocodile hunter gains this feat for free at 1st, 4th, 7th, and 10th level.

Animal Tamer: When fighting against animals, all damage can be done as subdual damage with no penalties. This is an extraordinary ability.

Perilous Embrace: Sometimes the safest way to handle an animal is to grapple with it. The character may add his number of crocodile hunter levels to all opposed grapple checks. This bonus is halved when dealing with non-animals. This is an extraordinary ability.

Venom Block: Having been exposed to numerous poisonous animals, the crocodile hunter becomes resistant to their effects. The character gains a +5 resistance bonus to all saving throws versus poisons. This is an extraordinary ability.

Wild Dash: Often a hasty retreat is needed to avoid resorting to injuring an animal. When taking the run action, the character moves five times normal speed instead of four times normal speed. If the character makes a running jump, increase the distance or height cleared by one-fourth, but not past the maximum. This is the same as the run feat.

Wild Courage: The crocodile hunter risks grappling with boars, handling poisonous snakes, and running from wolves while performing their duties. The character becomes immune to fear (magical or otherwise). This is an extraordinary ability.

Animal Bluff: Studying the movement patterns and anatomy of different animals, the crocodile hunter gains a better understanding of their reactions and reflexes. When attempting to use the Bluff skill to feint in combat against an animal, the character suffers only a -4 penalty instead of the normal -8. This is an extraordinary ability.

Fast Climb: Scurrying up a tree like a ring-tailed lemur, a crocodile hunter can avoid enraged animals by climbing to safety. With each successful climb check, the character can move half his speed as a move-equivalent action or his full speed as a full-round action. In addition, he retains his Dexterity bonus to AC while climbing. This is an extraordinary ability.

Disengage: The crocodile hunter has become skilled enough to avoid dangerous animal assaults. The character is no longer susceptible to the improved grab ability. In other words, when a creature with the improved grab ability hits the crocodile hunter with a melee attack, it does not get to start a grapple as a free action. This is an extraordinary ability.

Stun Animal: The crocodile learns to incapacitate animals to make them easier to handle. The character must declare he is using this ability before making an attack roll (thus, a missed attack roll ruins the attempt). It forces an animal damaged by the character's unarmed attack to make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 10 + one-half the character's level + Wis modifier), in addition to dealing damage normally. If the animal fails its saving throw, it is stunned for 1 round. The character may attempt a stunning attack once per day for every three levels attained, and no more than once per round. This is an extraordinary ability.

Superior Lightning Reflexes: This ability provides an additional +2 to Reflex saves. This ability stacks with any other bonuses the character may have.

Animal Evasion: Relying on instincts and experience, the crocodile hunter has learned to avoid trampling and stampeding animals. If exposed to any animal attack that normally allows a character to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, the character takes no damage with a successful saving throw and only half damage with a failed save. Animal evasion can only be used in light armor or no armor. It is an extraordinary ability.

Improved Animal Bluff: The crocodile hunter no longer suffers any penalties when attempting to use the Bluff skill to feint in combat against an animal.

Eagle Eyes: The crocodile hunter can find even the most camouflaged animals. The character gains a +5 circumstance bonus to all Spot checks. This is an extraordinary ability.

Wild Haste: An uncanny burst of action is sometimes needed to deal with the more rabid animals. As a spell-like ability, the crocodile hunter can cast the arcane spell Haste on himself as a sorcerer of equal level. Wild Haste is usable a number of times per day equal to the character's Wisdom modifier (minimum once per day).

Wild Luck: A crocodile hunter must not only be skilled, he must be lucky as well. This extraordinary ability allows the character to reroll one roll that he has just made. The character must take the result of the reroll, even if it's worse than the original roll. Wild Luck is usable once per day.

Impossiblist

The impossiblist conjures images of mystique and wonder in the minds of his audience. Performing the most death-defying escapes from lethal traps and situations, he uses his extensive knowledge of manacles, ropes, chains, restraints, and his own body to put on his amazing show. The Impossiblist is part stage magician, part con man, and part thespian. He learns his trade through countless hours of practice and then puts his skills to use in the limelight. Some view the art of the impossible as simply a way to make a living, while others take the risks for the sheer thrill of putting oneself in danger.

Most impossiblists are rogues or bards who have a fascination with the craft of the escape artist. They must have a focused mind as well as dexterous hands, and quick feet to survive all the contrived traps and devices in which they put themselves. Often, the impossiblist himself dreams up the apparatuses and stage plots. Most NPC impossiblists will fall into one of two schools of thought. One group is composed of the flamboyant showmen who love being on stage and at the center of attention. The other is comprised of the purists who do not believe in large performances, preferring to perfect their art in secret, often for more nefarious goals. It is a little known fact that impossiblists also make noteworthy spies.

Hit Die: d6

Requirements:

To qualify to become an Impossiblist, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Escape Artist: 9 ranks.

Pick Locks: 9 ranks.

Pick Pockets: 6 ranks.

Perform (stage show): 3.

Feats: skill focus (escape artist), lightning reflexes, dodge.

Class Skills:

The impossiblist's class skills are Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (metalworking) (Int), Craft (trapmaking) (Int), Disable Device (Int), Escape Artist (Dex), Hide (Dex), Innuendo (Wis), Jump (Str), Move Silently (Dex), Open Lock (Dex), Perform (Cha), Pick Pocket (Dex), Profession (Wis), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis), Swim (Str), Tumble (Dex), and Use Rope (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Level: 8 + Int modifier.

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Reflex Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+0	+2	+0	Quick release
2	+1	+0	+3	+0	Double-jointed
3	+2	+1	+3	+1	Nimble bend, flexible dodge +1
4	+3	+1	+4	+1	Chain bind
5	+3	+1	+4	+1	Disengage
6	+4	+2	+5	+2	Mental escape 1/day, flexible dodge +2
7	+5	+2	+5	+2	Superior lightning reflexes
8	+6	+2	+6	+2	Mental escape 2/day
9	+6	+3	+6	+3	Triple-jointed, flexible dodge +3
10	+7	+3	+7	+3	Mental escape 3/day, twist of fate

Class Features:

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The impossiblist is proficient with all simple weapons, and with light armor.

Quick Release: The impossiblist learns to work quickly without sacrificing accuracy. All Escape Artist checks to escape from being bound up by ropes, manacles, or other restraints are full-round actions instead of taking one minute. Escaping a net or attempting to break free of an animate rope, command plants, control plants, or entangle spell are standard actions instead of full-round actions. This is an extraordinary ability.

Double-Jointed: Studying ways to contort his own body, the impossiblist may take 10 on any Escape Artist checks, even if he is being rushed or threatened. This is an extraordinary ability.

Nimble Bend: By bending in certain ways to make use of a suit of armor's joists and strong sections, the impossiblist no longer suffers any armor check penalties to the Escape Artist skill. This is an extraordinary ability.

Flexible Dodge: Flexibility training transfers over to the realm of combat for the impossiblist. When using the Dodge feat, he gains an additional bonus to AC versus his chosen target equal to the bonus listed. This is an extraordinary ability.

Chain Bind: The impossiblist can use a chain and a quick application of a lock (requiring a full-round action) to bind a single small, medium, or large sized creature. This should be treated as a net attack, except the Escape Artist check to escape has a DC of 25, and the burst DC is 30. A chain at least 10 feet long is required. This is an extraordinary ability.

Disengage: After escaping from binding chains and other constraints, the impossiblist can easily free himself from grapples. The character is no longer susceptible to the improved grab ability. In other words, when a creature with the improved grab ability hits the impossiblist with a melee attack, it does not get to start a grapple as a free action. This is an extraordinary ability.

Mental Escape: Freeing his mind of constraints, the impossiblist can counter magical effects that seek to hinder him. For 1 round per impossiblist level, the character can act normally regardless of magical effects that impede movement.

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(similar to the effect of the spell freedom of movement). This effect occurs automatically as soon as it applies and lasts until the time runs out. This is a spell-like ability.

Superior Lightning Reflexes: *The impossiblist attains a heightened level of reflex action. He gains an additional +2 to all Reflex saves. This stacks with any other bonuses.*

Triple-Jointed: *The character learns even more strange escapes using his body. The character may take 20 on any Escape Artist checks as long he is not in a rush and is not being threatened or distracted. The impossiblist does not require any extra time as long as these conditions are met. This is an extraordinary ability.*

Twist of Fate: *Sometimes, even the best escape is simply not good enough. In these situations, the impossiblist relies on luck to see him through. Simply dislocating joints and doing anything else it takes to escape. The character may automatically make any Escape Artist check. However, he must still make a normal Escape Artist check. The character then suffers damage equal to two times the number his check misses by. For example, if a DC of 35 is needed, and the character rolls a 20, after bonuses, on his check, he would suffer 30 $[(35-20) \times 2]$ points of damage. Twist of Fate is usable once per day and must be announced before the attempt is made. This is an extraordinary ability.*

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