

# KNOCKSPELL

Summer 2009

THE MAGAZINE OF OLD-SCHOOL FANTASY GAMING

## THE ANTI-PALADIN

page 18

## THE CITY OF VULTURES

A fantasy city by Gabor Lux,  
page 31

**Plus:**

### Labyrinth Tomb of the Minotaur Lord

by R. Lawrence Blake

### The Font of Glee

by Jason Sholtis

MULLEN

...and many more features from Old-School gamers like you!

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**KNOCKSPELL**  
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**Editor's Note**

*by Matt Finch*

I always seem to start the editor's note by saying, "a lot has happened." Well, it's true, so ... A lot has happened in Old School gaming since the Spring Issue of Knockspell. The *Swords & Wizardry Core Rules* (retro-clone of the 0e edition 1974-1977) won an ENnie Award at GenCon; many Old School gamers gathered at the North Texas RPG Con (NTRPGcon) with such gaming celebrities as Frank Mentzer, Rob Kuntz, Paul Jaquays, Tim Kask, Dennis Sustare, and others; and my magic user, Wethimyr, reached second level. Dan Proctor of Goblinoid Games has published a new printing of *Labyrinth Lord* (retro-clone of Moldvay Basic, the 1981 red book) with all-new art, and at least one issue of *Fight On!* has come out. James Raggi, blogmaster of Lamentations of the Flame Princess, has started publishing adventures in small booklet form, notably *Death Frost Doom*, which sold out at Noble Knight games — Noble Knight, by the way, is an excellent internet source for out of print gaming materials.

We've got a major announcement in this issue, if you haven't already seen it on the internet. Center Stage Miniatures will be running a contest for *Knockspell* readers. If you've ever dreamed of seeing one of your fiendishly cool new monsters sculpted in metal as a miniature, now you've got the chance! (Details on page 34.)

Just a note to anyone who's new to the magazine; most of the stats included in the magazine use the *Swords & Wizardry* (1974 edition retro-clone) format, which can be used without any changes in First Edition (or the OSRIC retro-clone of 1e) and Second Edition. They're also so close to the stats of Moldvay Basic and its retro-clones *Labyrinth Lord* and *Basic Fantasy Roleplaying Game* that they can be used on the fly with these games. Some of the material is also specific to OSRIC, First Edition, *Labyrinth Lord*, etc., but all these games are so similar that any referee should be able to handle it without his/her head exploding. Basically, if you play any edition before third, you'll be able to figure out the stat blocks.

— *Matt Finch*

# OUTNUMBERED BUT TOUGH

## Musings of a Girl Gamer

by 'Spike'


“Do you know how lucky you are?” the owner of one particular game store asked my husband as he was ringing up a purchase. The man was rather surprised that the bag of metal miniature World War II tanks was not for my husband, but for me. He went on to tell us that most of his customers have given him instructions that if the Missus should call, to tell her, “I’ve not seen him in weeks.” It seems that women who tolerate the habits of gamer-guys are a rare breed, and women who game right along with their guys are even rarer.

But I am not the kind of girl who comes along just to be sure he isn’t having too much fun either. It is a hobby I have come to love, ever since we were dating and I got my first look at dice that had more (or less) than six sides. At the time I was pretty skeptical about why he had so many different ones. I have since grown wiser. One can never have too many dice, sheets of graph paper, bits of packaging material that sort-of look like buildings, or books about weapons and armor. The fact that we both share most of our gaming material probably saves this household a few hundred dollars a year...which to nobody’s surprise gets rolled right back into next year’s gaming-clutter budget.

While we both are gamers, my husband has spent most of his time collecting historical games and models, while I prefer the fantasy genre. He has been painting miniatures for at least

thirty years and has amassed a large collection of minis for almost every period in history. I, on the other hand, have decided to specialize. I paint orcs. For whatever reason, just about every game that includes orcs demands somewhere between more-than-enough and too-darn-many in order to be played correctly. Occasionally, a household border dispute occurs when the battle of Waterloo is interrupted by a company of orc spearmen who have lost their way, but for the trade-off, both of us always have somebody close by to paint and game with.

As for role playing and in-character flirtation, I freely admit guilt. But in my defense, it has always been with one of my husband’s characters. Yes I am aware that too much of that sort of thing can turn a great game into a soap opera, but to further my defense, I will let my record speak for itself. Only one PC has ever reached significant-other status. Two others never made it past the holding-hands stage, and all of the rest ran into the sorts of issues that arise when one is a human wizard and the other is a half-orc barbarian.

To be honest, it is I who am the lucky one. I have a fun outlet for my creativity, a solid circle of like-minded friends who treat me like one of the guys, and a spouse who is willing to put up with my eccentricities...including too-darn-many orcs. 

# FROM KUROTH'S QUILL # 03

by Allan T. Grohe Jr. (grodog)

“From Kuroth’s Quill” is my regular *Knockspell* design column covering the elements of adventure design (and more specifically dungeon design, given my interest in that topic). I will also wander through the design of spells and magic items; monsters, traps, tricks, and treasures; PC and NPC classes; planes and pantheons; and likely other topics as well. In the articles, I hope to provide practical examples that will be useful in campaign play, to show theory in action.

*travel and truenames, with tesseracts and teleportation; the mastery of the magical traits that define planar portals, including how to ‘wrack them to your own purposes; fissuring the gatetrace of a fleeing archmage to follow and slay him within his own sanctum — these are the foundations upon which a demonologist builds her empire. For without gates there are no summonings.*

— *The Witch of Perrenland, The Demonomicon*

## The Theory and Use of Gates in Campaign Dungeons, Part 1: Setting the Stage

*Prerequisite to the summoning and binding of demons and their ilk is a deep understanding of gates and of the planes themselves. How gates inter-relate with planar*

## A Quick Preface

If you have a copy of Ed Greenwood’s “Theory and Use of Gates” — first published in **The Dragon #37** (May 1980) and reprinted in **Best of Dragon Magazine Volume 2** (November 1981 and February 1986) — read that before my article that follows. You don’t need to read Greenwood’s treatise first, but it sets the stage for this article quite handily, hence my recommendation.

## To A Lesser Degree, Teleporters: An Introduction

As background history, The World of Greyhawk and Forgotten Realms are replete with *gates* and related portals, where they serve as underpinnings that showcase the importance of *gates* in those campaigns, and in **D&D** as a whole. Castle Greyhawk is infamous for its portals to other planets and strange demi-planes — including **EX1 Dungeonland** and **EX2 Beyond the Magic Mirror** (leading to Lewis Carroll’s Alice in Wonderland); **WG6 Isle of the Ape** (King Kong’s Skull Island); the planets from Edgar Rice Burroughs’ Mars and Venus series; Jack Vance’s Tschai from the *Planet of Adventure* books; and Oz and Melniboné among many other locales. Castle Greyhawk also features much intra- and inter-level *teleportation* as well, perhaps most-famously to Rob Kuntz’s **Bottle City** on level 2 of the dungeons. The Forgotten Realms is similarly populated with a network of worlds-spanning portals, including a multitude within, to, and from Undermountain. The Forgotten Realms use of *gates* pushed them the closest to approaching the level of ubiquity that they hold within Farmer’s *World of Tiers* novels, but even in the ‘Realms, *gates* remain, for the most part, the purview of high-level adventurers, and little is done to explain the processes behind their creation, usage, maintenance, or destruction.

I see magical portals as a spectrum that range from *rope trick* to *blink*, through *dimension door*, *teleport*, and *plane shift*, to *phase door* and *maze*. They reach their pinnacle with *gate*. Thus, in my corner of the multiverse, even low-level PCs have access to *gate*-related magics, although no spells and few magic items directly deal with the structure of *gates* and related transportation portals.

*Gates* present several logistical challenges to a Dungeon Master, in spite of the wonderful havoc they wreak on players (in particular the mappers), and the resultant glee that they bring to a Dungeon Master’s dark heart: *teleporters* can separate parties within a dungeon or even scatter PCs across the planes; they may deposit a party into extraordinarily hostile environments for which they are completely unprepared; and they are often viewed a tools of DM fiat, in that PCs have little to no ability to control their own destiny when it comes to *gates* and *teleporters*: PCs are either all-in, or all-out, with few tools to help them decide whether to take the plunge (assuming that they have any

choice in the matter at all, of course). In addition, *gates*, planar travel, and — to a lesser degree, *teleporters* — are often deemed the exclusive purview of high-level characters; in part I think this is because *gate* is, in fact, one of the highest-level spells in the game, but more so because few resources exist within **D&D** to help DMs and players come to terms with these semi-obscure elements of play. In the eyes of some, to play in campaigns with a strong Moorcockian- or Philip-Jose-Farmerian flavor, is, perhaps, to step beyond the pale of even high-fantasy **D&D** into a “Monty Haul” campaign, or even into another rpg altogether. Part of the intent for this article is to provide a toolkit to fill that gap — to enable *gate*-loving DMs and players to use *gates* in their games, and to challenge the perception that *teleporters* and planar travel fall solely within the purview of high-level characters.

## Dissecting Gates, From the Outside In

To begin at the beginning, in **D&D** a *gate* is a magical portal that whisks the PCs that enter it to another location. In general, PCs won’t know the destination of a *gate* unless they have discovered some information about its creators and/or its current users because in-game there are few, if any, resources available to assist PCs with divining the nature of any magical portal. Generous DMs may provide magic-users with some intelligence about a *gate* via *detect balance*, *-evil* or *-good*, *detect magic*, *augury*, *identify*, *know alignment*, *divination*, or *true seeing*, and they can always turn to the ubiquitous last resorts of desperate information seekers — bardic lore, sagely consultation, *commune contact other plane*, *legend lore*. Perhaps even spells like *locate object*, *glasse*, *project image*, and other scrying magics/devices, may allow PCs to “see beyond” to the other side of a *gate*. What intelligence such magics will provide, if any, rests solely on the DM’s judgment, and the players’ creativity. But even assuming the DM allows such spells to work in some manner, what information about a *gate* should be provided to the players in response to such magics?

Most *gates* are presumed to operate continuously, and are reliably safe to use: they are basically **Star Trek** transporters without the occasional melt-down due to signal lock failure. These basic assumptions hold true across most editions and settings in the game, but they’re relatively useless if a DMs want to run a multi-planar, worlds-spanning campaign within which *gates* play a central role. Consider these scenarios:

- If *gates* can lead to *variable* destinations (a la Farmer, Greenwood’s article, and “From Kuroth’s Quill” #1), is there some way other than trial-and-error for PCs to recognize such gates?
- If a gate can be trapped, can PCs detect it, and attempt to remove it, and if so, how? — will a thief’s Find and Remove Traps ability function on *gates*? What detail will a clerical *Find Traps* provide? would *dispel magic* to remove a magical trap on the *gate* interfere with its functionality?
- When knights return from Faerie or other realms of myths and folklore, they often age heavily during the transition — or their age remains constant but time has advanced quickly in their absence (often a century or more); if PCs knew of such risks when choosing to traverse a *gate*, they might avoid



it; if instead, however, they have tools to try to minimize such negative effects, the possibility of success (and failure!) raises the tension and the stakes in the game — especially, if they are perhaps “forced” to choose to pursue a foe beyond the *gate*, or to rescue a friend who fell through, or whatever.

As the usage of *gates* and similar transporters become more common in a campaign world, specialized magics will be developed to help manage them — not just to determine whether they are working properly, but to divine their destination(s), the arcane rules that govern when they activate, and most especially to identify the nefarious traps that have been created to safeguard their operation and usage. Providing PCs with *gate*-related tools gives them a fighting chance in the face of such now-more-common challenges, and these tools make *gates* an easier pill to swallow, when introducing them as a new element within a campaign.

In order to make such tools useful in a game, I’ve broken down the functionality of permanent *gates* and *teleporters*, along with some related states (trapped or not, for example) into the two sets of properties: *outer traits* and *inner attributes*. Depending upon how much emphasis you want *gates* to occupy in your campaign, you may want to combine some of these traits, ignore others, or even collapse them all into two values (all of the inner and outer properties rolled-up into one master trait, and one master attribute). Like the myriad of the planes that *gates* are but entry points into, you should customize these rules to suit your own preferences, and as well as the level of detail that your players enjoy: if none of your players with magic-users employ *detect magic* to look for schools of magic or strengths of auras, then this sub-system as I’ve defined it is probably too much detail for them as-written. Don’t let that stop you from using *gates* — just modify it and move on!

The *outer traits* of a *gate* can be divined via the new spell, *detect gate* (which will be described in the next installment). Outer traits include:

- **Intensity:** a measure of the strength of a *gate*’s magical aura and planar connections; detection levels are: none/inactive, dim, faint, moderate, strong, very strong, intense, and overwhelming; *gates* rated at strong or stronger are more-easily detected; in general, an active *gate* will read with an intensity one or two levels higher than its inactive state
- **Recency:** a measure of when an inactive *gate* was last used; detection levels are: fresh (used within 1 round/level; detects at +50%), recent (within 1 turn/level; detects at +25%), waning (within 1 hour/level, detects at base), dwindled (within 1 day; detects at -25%), stale (within 1 day/level; detects at -50%), lapsed (within 1 week/level; detects at -75%), atrophied (within 1 month/level; detects at -125%), eroded (within 1 year/level; detects at -200%)
- **Ethos:** a measure of the alignment components of a *gate*’s destination(s) (if any); detects as: none, law, chaos, good, evil, neutrality (no detection modifiers)

Inspired DMs should consider tweaking the increments for recency (and perhaps intensity), based on how common *gates* will be in a campaign, or how strong you envision their magics to be, and how lingering they are: if you are playing in Farmer’s World of Tiers, “fresh” may measure turns or even hours per

level, for example, with the rest of the values adjusting upward from there (concluding with “eroded” denoting decades or centuries per level).

The *inner attributes* of a *gate* are only available to the new spell, *identify gate* (again, you will unfortunately have to wait for the next installment for details); *detect gate* is not sufficient to pierce the veil of a *gate*’s inner workings. The attributes are:

- **Activation method(s):** general details about how the *gate* is activated — by walking through, by command phrase, by proximity of some sort of key or item, by ritual, etc.; specific details beyond walking through the gate often require research via consultation with a sage or bard, *legend lore* or *contact other plane*, or similar efforts to glean the full information
- **Destination(s):** the caster discovers how many destinations to which the *gate* leads; if the *gate* can access more than one plane, planes will be identified from most- to least-commonly traveled destinations
- **Periodicity:** determines if the *gate* is always on, or periodic; a second check will determine the frequency of the *gate*’s operative periods — every other round, once per day, upon command, during the new moon, etc.; a third check will determine the duration for the *gate*’s activity cycle — always on during the full moon, one use during a full moon, for one hour after the third person to walk through during a full moon, etc.
- **Sweetness:** a measure of the discomfort that passage through a *gate* causes, based on a 14 Constitution; adjust upward or downward from Con 14 using *detect gate*’s intensity scale to determine PC impact, if any: none (no effect; the gate is “sweet”), faint (mild dizziness), moderate (dislocation), strong (mild nausea), very strong (nausea), intense (strong pain), overwhelming (unconsciousness); each level of effect is cumulative, and exact effects are left to the DM to adjudicate
- **Symmetry:** does the *gate* shift travellers’ physical positions during transit, or do they arrive in the same positions relative to one another, to the gate itself, etc.
- **Temporality:** does the *gate* shift travelers forward or backward in time, or have a discernable lag during transit time
- **Transit options:** is the gate one-way or two-way?
- **Traps:** the caster identifies one trap on the gate, if any, along with the trap’s level of threat (use *detect gate*’s intensity scale)
- **Usage restrictions:** identifies whether or not the *gate* restricts usage in some manner, such as by home plane, race, sex, alignment, class, level, eye color, family lineage, etc. ; the first check provides a yes/no response, while subsequent checks provide one restriction per check

Like the *outer traits*, the *inner attributes* can be modified as required by the DM: perhaps you don’t want PCs to know if a *gate* is one-way or two-way; if that’s not desirable for a campaign, then drop the transit options attribute. You may also consider moving one or more of the *inner attributes* into the list of *outer traits*, which would make them available to the *detect gate* spell. Similarly, the lists of traits and attributes are not exhaustive, so if feel free to create additional ones as needed.


## Gaming Bibliography

Ed Greenwood's "The Theory and Use of Gates" provides an excellent overview of *gates*-related fiction released through the late 1970s. Other than Greenwood's piece and Sepulchrave's works, I do not reference fiction otherwise in this bibliography. Instead, I focus narrowly on useful sources about planar architecture and *gates*, rather than on content describing the people, places, and things found *within* any specific plane: this is one reason why I don't list most **Planescape** titles in the bibliography, for example (that I can't stand Planescape's cant is another...). **The Dragon Archive** details a cornucopia of such content specific to various planes, including the Nine Hells (issues #75, #76, #91), Gladsheim (#90), Hades (#113), and the Demiplane of Shadow (#213), in addition two planar adventures (in issues #67 and #90). In addition, a wide variety of **Planescape** and d20 products have provided support content detailing specific planes as well, such as Necromancer Games' **City of Brass**, most of Mongoose's line of planar books, and Monte Cook's **Beyond Countless Doorways**. If I've missed any interesting or worthwhile books about gates and the structure of the planes, do please let me know — I'm always on the lookout for these kinds of resources!

Without further ado, here is my list of preferred sources about *gates* and planar theory, including many formative articles about the origins of D&D's "great wheel" multiverse from **The Dragon**:

- Peter Adkison, **The Primal Order**, Wizards of the Coast (1992)
- Bruce Cordell, **A Guide to the Ethereal Plane**, Wizards of the Coast (1998)
- Bruce Cordell and Gwendolyn F. M. Kestrel, **Planar Handbook**, Wizards of the Coast (2004)
- Jameson Ferris, "Tales of Wyre" (Story Hour) and "Eadric et. al. (The Paladin and his Friends)" (Rogues Gallery) in Sepulchrave's "Wyre" threads on **EN World** at <http://www.enworld.org/forum/tags/wyre.html> (2002 to date)
- Ed Greenwood, "From the City of Brass... ..to Dead Orc Pass... In One Small Step: The Theory and Use of Gates" in **The Dragon #37** (May 1980)
- Gary Gyax, "The Inner Planes" in **Dragon #73** (May 1983)
  - "Planes" in **The Dragon #8** (July 1977)
  - "Playing On the Other Planes of Existence" in **The Dragon #32** (December 1979)
  - "Protection Circles and the Like..." in **Dragon #56** (December 1981)
- Jeff Grubb, Bruce R. Cordell, and David Noonan, **Manual of the Planes**, Wizards of the Coast (2001)
- Michael Hammes, "A Dozen Planar Traits", Ronin Arts (2004).
- Gareth Hanrahan, **Classic Play: Book of the Planes**, Mongoose Publishing (2004)
- Dave Howell, **Chessboards: The Planes of Possibility**, Wizards of the Coast (1994)
- Steven Kienle with Gary Gyax, "Elementary Ideas for Elemental Adventuring" in **Dragon #47** (March 1981)

- Lenard Lakofka, "The Inner Planes" in **Dragon #42** (October 1980)
- Mike Mearls, **Legends & Lairs: Portals & Planes**, Fantasy Flight Games (2003)
- Phil Reed, "A Dozen Planar Traits"
- Roger E. Moore with Gary Gyax, "The Astral Plane" in **Dragon #67** (November 1982)
- Roger E. Moore, "Gates in the World of Greyhawk" originally in the Greyhawk AOL folder, later available on wizards.com, and now archived on Canonfire at <http://www.canonfire.com/cfhtml/modules.php?name=Downloads&do=getit&lid=11> (March 1995)
- Carl Schnurr, **Mythic Places** and **More Mythic Places** for **Ars Magica**, White Wolf (1991)
- David C. Sutherland III with Gary Gyax, **Q1 Queen of the Demonweb Pits**, TSR (1980)

Other likely sources for planar inspiration include the rpgs *Stormbringer/Elric*, *Everway*, *Amber Diceless Roleplaying*, and *Ars Magica*. 

**ERRATA:** In "From Kuroth's Quill #2: Dungeon Strangitude: Variations on Dungeon Dressing and Setting the Tone" the table for random door dungeon dressing lost some percentages during layout, and should have read:

- 31-40 Door is trapped (DM to provide details)
- 41-47 Door is of special construction (roll 2d6):

So, just pencil those numbers in and you'll be fine!

# Less stats, more story



[www.ageoffable.net](http://www.ageoffable.net)

# PULP HEROES AND THE COLORS OF MAGIC:

## 'Swords & Sorcery' Style Magic and Damage Rules for Swords & Wizardry

by *Akrasia*

**T**he literary genre of swords and sorcery portrays a world where heroes swagger head and shoulders above their fellow mortals; men fear them, women swoon before them. These are rogues, adventurers, and barbarians who can fell a man with the single blow of a haunch of meat and drink down countless flagons of ale to celebrate the victory. It is a world where the eyes of serpent-sorcerers glint with madness, their minds corrupted and destroyed by knowledge of forbidden lore. "This two-part article offers a set of modifications to the Swords & Wizardry game (0e) to give it a much stronger swords and sorcery flavor than the original game." Get rid of the nasty hobbitses and bring on the ale and serpent-cultists!

The first part of the article is about pulp heroes and damage. Pulp heroes are tough, and this damage system offers one way to toughen up a Swords & Wizardry character without throwing off the rest of the game. But physical damage isn't the only risk in a swords and sorcery game; just looking upon the horrors of pulp fiction can be enough to reduce brave heroes into wailing madmen. So damage to a hero's sanity is also covered in the first part of the article.

The second part of the article is about magic in the style of swords and sorcery fiction, introducing an alternate class to replace both magic-users and clerics. The Magician is a practitioner of white magic, grey magic, or black magic.

### Pulp Heroes: Damage and Combat

The protagonists of classic swords and sorcery tales are a remarkable lot. They are a cut above the common stock of humanity, physically and mentally superior to most people – although perhaps sometimes less prudent. Even this occasional lack of prudence, however, is compensated with superior luck and drive. Characters such as Conan, Kull, Fafhrd, and the Gray Mouser are capable of overcoming foes and surviving challenges that would easily defeat most common men. Classic swords and sorcery tales focus on highly exceptional and powerful individuals, not the 'little guys' of the world. Even as neophytes, most swords and sorcery characters are exceptionally tough and capable.

To reflect this aspect of the swords and sorcery genre, it is recommended that first-level player characters start with the maximum number of hit points possible for their class, plus five additional hit points (modified by their constitution scores, as appropriate). Hit points should be rolled normally after first level.

Only player characters and *important* non-player characters (namely, noteworthy allies and antagonists) should use this

system for determining hit points. The Game Master should roll normally for the hit points of regular non-player characters, as well as most monsters.

Player characters' hit points represent only superficial damage (i.e., exhaustion, light bruises, minor scrapes, and so forth). Because of this, *all* lost hit points may be recovered by sleeping without interruption for eight full hours. Resting (not sleeping), or sleeping for less than eight hours, will enable a player character to recover one hit point per full hour of rest or sleep.

Cure Wounds spells and potions of Healing do *not* heal hit points, but only lost points of Constitution (as explained below). However, a draught of 'strong drink' (ale, wine, liquor) can 'invigorate' a character, enabling him/her to recover immediately 1d4 hit points. Game Masters may also want to allow alchemists to sell 'Elixirs of Invigoration' for 200 to 300 gold pieces. Drinking such an elixir might enable a player character to recover instantly 1d6 + 2 hit points. Only *one* such draught, whether of strong drink or an elixir, will have this effect per day.

Once a player character's hit points have been depleted, any further damage is done to the character's *constitution* score. Damage to a character's constitution score represents 'serious' damage. Every time a character takes damage to his/her constitution, he/she must make a saving throw (versus 'death' if using a system other than S&W) or fall unconscious. In addition, a character that has taken damage to his/her constitution suffers a -2 penalty to all actions (including attack rolls and saving throws). If a character's constitution score is reduced to 0 or lower that character is dead.

Characters who have suffered damage to their constitution and have fallen unconscious regain consciousness after eight hours of rest. If that character's constitution is still reduced, he/she continues to have 0 hit points and suffers the -2 penalty to all actions until he/she can rest and recover. Characters subsequently can recover one constitution point for every two days of complete rest (i.e., no travelling or adventuring). The care of a doctor or other non-magical healer can improve the rate of healing to one constitution point per day of rest. A character cannot recover any hit points until *all* constitution points have been recovered.

Game Masters should assume that *most* non-player characters and monsters are dead or unconscious when they reach 0 hit points or lower. Only player characters and *special* non-player characters – important figures in the world, whether allies or antagonists of the player characters – should use the complete rules outlined above.

## Wisdom and Sanity

Witnessing unspeakable supernatural horrors – always a professional risk for the protagonists in a ‘swords and sorcery’ adventure – can drive a mortal man or woman mad. Deliberately delving into ancient eldritch secrets for the purposes of unleashing unnatural forces or contacting demonic intelligences radically increases this risk. Insane sorcerers and men whose minds have been broken by ancient evils are standard staples in ‘swords and sorcery’ tales.

In order to simulate this aspect of the ‘swords and sorcery’ genre, these rules treat a character’s Wisdom score as a measurement of his/her sanity. A character with a Wisdom score of 18 has a firm grasp of the nature of reality, considerable self-discipline, and remarkable strength of will. In contrast, a character with a Wisdom score of 3 is barely lucid, easily confuses reality with fantasy, and is on the border of lapsing into madness. Characters with Wisdom scores of 2 or lower are utterly insane, and must be treated as non-player characters. (If this Wisdom loss is temporary, as explained below, the character is under the control of the Game Master until he/she regains his/her sanity.)

If a character witnesses an unspeakable horror, the Game Master may require the player to make a saving throw (versus ‘spells,’ if using a system other than S&W). The saving throw should be modified by the severity of the horror in question. If the character fails his or her saving throw, he or she loses points of temporary Wisdom. The exact amount should be determined by rolling 1d6. If a ‘6’ is rolled, the character also *permanently* loses one point of Wisdom (i.e., one permanent point of Wisdom and five temporary points of Wisdom). Temporarily lost points of Wisdom may be regained at a rate of one point per day of complete rest. The spell ‘Restoration’ (which is treated as a 6<sup>th</sup> level spell of ‘white magic’ in this system) will restore instantly temporarily lost Wisdom points, but will *not* restore any permanently lost Wisdom points.

Characters may also lose Wisdom by casting spells that are characterized as ‘black magic’ in nature. This is explained below.

## The Magician Class: White Magic, Grey Magic, and Black Magic

The magic-user and cleric classes are replaced with the magician class. Magicians may be benevolent witches, reclusive shamans, eccentric sages, enigmatic priests, malevolent necromancers, or megalomaniacal sorcerers – their exact nature depends on their background, goals, spells, and sanity.

There is no longer any division between ‘cleric’ and ‘magic-user’ spells. Instead, spells are categorized as ‘white,’ ‘grey,’ or ‘black’ (as explained below). Magicians may learn and cast *any* kind of spell. Magicians who focus on white magic tend to be called wizards, savants, or thaumaturges. Magicians who focus on grey magic often are called enchanters, mages, or illusionists. Magicians who focus on black magic tend to be called sorcerers, warlocks, or necromancers. Magicians of any focus who are associated with a cult or religious order might be called priests, seers, or acolytes.

The Prime Attribute of Magicians is Intelligence. Magicians with an Intelligence of 13 or greater receive a bonus of 5% to all experience points earned. Magicians with an Intelligence of 15 or greater can prepare an additional first-level spell.

Magicians use the ‘magic-user’ experience chart, spell chart (ignoring spells above level 6), and saving throws. Like magic-users, they typically eschew armor, although they may wear leather armor without interfering with their spell casting, and are not trained in the use of shields.

Magicians may use any weapon, although they receive a -1 to all damage rolls (but always do a minimum of ‘1’ point of damage), unless they are using daggers, darts, quarterstaves, or slings. (If using the ‘Class-Based Damage’ system that I presented in *Knockspell #1*, magicians use the ‘cleric’ damage table, and do *not* suffer any penalty to their damage rolls.) Since magicians normally need at least one hand free in order to cast their spells, they rarely will use two-handed weapons (except for quarterstaves, which are easily held in one hand when necessary).

Magicians use the ‘cleric’ attack chart when using one-handed weapons (including slings, throwing daggers, and darts) or quarterstaves. They use the ‘magic-user’ attack chart when using any other kind of weapon (including missile weapons other than slings, throwing daggers, and darts).

Magicians use a d6 (no modifier) as their hit die. (Thus, using the damage rules outlined above, first level magicians start with 11 hit points, prior to any constitution modifiers.) They receive one hit point per level after level nine.

First-level magicians start with a spellbook that contains three first-level spells (player’s choice) and one second-level spell (player’s choice). All other spells must be found, learned from a tutor (usually for a steep fee), or purchased (also usually for a steep fee).

Magicians can prepare a number of spells as determined by their level (see the magic-user spell chart; as noted earlier, magicians with an Intelligence score of 15 or greater may prepare an additional first-level spell). A magician may change the spells that he/she has prepared with eight uninterrupted hours of study (the magician’s spellbook must be available).

Magicians may cast any spell that they have prepared any number of times – however, as explained below, they suffer *exhaustion* (loss of hit points) every time that they cast a spell, which limits how many spells they can cast before resting.

Magicians can write their own scrolls, copying the spells from their spellbooks, at the cost of 200 gold pieces per spell level for supplies (special ink and parchment). It takes one full day per spell level of careful work to copy a scroll (one has to be very careful when dealing with the mystical powers!). Thus writing a scroll of a fourth-level spell would cost 800 gold pieces and take four full days of work. Spells cast from scrolls, whether prepared by the magician or found, cause exhaustion – and, if the spell is classified as ‘black magic,’ corruption – just as if the magician had cast the spell normally. Scrolls increase the range of spells available to a magician; they do *not* reduce the physical costs of casting spells. (Exhaustion and corruption are explained below.)

## Magician Summary

**Prime Attribute:** Intelligence, 13+ (5% experience)

**Hit Dice:** 1d6 (Gains 1 hp/level after 9th level)

**Saving Throws:** As Magic-User

**Experience Chart:** As Magic-User

**Armour/Shield Permitted:** Leather only



**Weapons Permitted:** Any, but does less damage with certain weapons (see description above)

**Attack Charts:** Cleric (if using one-handed weapon or quarterstaff) or Magic-User (all other weapons)

**Spells Prepared:** As Magic-User

**Spell Casting:** Any number of times per day, but spells cost exhaustion (hit points), and possibly corruption (if a 'black magic' spell is cast)

## Spells

There is no division between 'clerical' and 'magic-user' spells – all spells can be learned by magicians in the same way that magic-users do (i.e., by recording them in spellbooks, and 'preparing' them to be cast later). If a spell has both a 'cleric' and a 'magic-user' version, use the 'magic-user' version.

No spells above level 6 exist, although powerful but costly 'rituals' may be created by the Game Master in order to simulate the powers of higher-level spells – including especially the summoning of vile demons!

There is no 'read magic' spell. Instead, all magicians know the ancient eldritch language in which all magic is written.

Spells are divided into *White Magic* (spells that promote or maintain life, protect against harm, and generally are 'in tune' with the natural laws and forces of the universe), *Grey Magic* (spells that typically involve the manipulation and/or alteration of objects and/or minds), and *Black Magic* (spells that typically are destructive and/or 'contrary to nature,' say, by being necromantic in character or by drawing on forces beyond this universe).

### White Magic

*First Level:* Cure Light Wounds (applies *only* to lost constitution points, not hit points), Detect Evil, Detect Magic, Light, Protection from Evil, Purify Food and Drink, Read Languages, Shield.

*Second Level:* Bless, Continual Light, Detect Invisibility, Find Traps, Speak with Animals, Strength. [Excruciating Cauterization] [Force of Forbidment]

*Third Level:* Cure Disease, Dispel Magic, Prayer, Protection from Evil (10 ft radius), Protection from Normal Missiles, Remove Curse, Water Breathing. [Word of Ioun]

*Fourth Level:* Create Water, Cure Serious Wounds (applies *only* to lost constitution points, not hit points), Neutralize Poison, Plant Growth, Protection from Evil (10 ft radius), Remove Curse, Speak with Plants.

*Fifth Level:* Animal Growth, Create Food, Dispel Evil, Insect Plague.

*Sixth Level:* Anti-Magic Shell, Control Weather, Conjure Animals, Legend Lore, Restoration.

### Grey Magic

*First Level:* Charm Person, Hold Portal, Sleep

*Second Level:* ESP, Invisibility, Knock, Levitate, Magic Mouth, Mirror Image, Phantasmal Force, Pyrotechnics, Silence (15 ft radius), Snake Charm, Web, Wizard Lock.

*Third Level:* Clairaudience, Clairvoyance, Darkvision, Fly, Haste, Hold Person, Invisibility (10 ft radius), Rope Trick,

Slow, Suggestion. [Ball of Ice] [Filigree] [Omar's Mistake] [Red Bull] [Rejection] [Strange Waters]

*Fourth Level:* Charm Monster, Confusion, Dimension Door, Fear, Hallucinatory Terrain, Massmorph, Polymorph Other, Polymorph Self, Sticks to Snakes, Wall of Fire, Wall of Ice. [Hylogenesis] [Imperfect Suspension] [Infuse] [Seven Gates]

*Fifth Level:* Feeblemind, Hold Monster, Magic Jar, Passwall, Quest, Telekinesis, Teleport, Transmute Rock to Mud, Wall of Iron, Wall of Stone. [Crystallogenesis] [Magpie]

*Sixth Level:* Animate Object, Enchant Item, Geas, Lower water, Move Earth, Part Water, Project Image, Repulsion, Speak with Monsters, Stone to Flesh, Word of Recall. [Twilight of Thieves]

### Black Magic

*First Level:* Magic Missile.

*Second Level:* Darkness (15 ft radius), Stinking Cloud. [Strangulations] [Tarnu's Collaring Coiffure]

*Third Level:* Fireball, Lightning Bolt, Monster Summoning I, Speak with Dead. [Tarantella]

*Fourth Level:* Ice Storm, Monster Summoning II, Wizard Eye. [Beast of Chaos] [Deadly Bliss]

*Fifth Level:* Animate Dead, Cloudkill, Commune, Conjure Elemental, Contact Other Plane, Finger of Death, Monster Summoning III. [Deadly Dissolvative] [Most Horrible Absorption] [Six Mouths of Horror]

*Sixth Level:* Death Spell, Disintegrate, Invisible Stalker, Monster Summoning IV. [Cohesive Cocoon]

### Spell Notes

In addition to all 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> level spells (except for 'Restoration,' which I have made a 6<sup>th</sup> level spell), I have removed the spells 'raise dead' and 'reincarnation,' as they seem inappropriate for a 'swords and sorcery' flavored magic system. To ameliorate the consequences of 'permanent death,' the modified rules concerning hit points and damage presented earlier should make character death somewhat less frequent.

The 'Extension' spells (I-III) do not belong to a particular color (white/grey/black). Rather, they belong to the same color as the spell they are used to 'extend.' So using Extension I to extend the duration of a 'fly' spell means that the magician in question has cast *two* 'grey magic' spells (and thus would suffer 12 points of exhaustion damage, as explained below).

Remember that the 'cure wounds' spells only heal lost *constitution* points – not hit points!

Spells in square brackets are taken from Matt Finch's 'Eldritch Weirdness: Books Three to One.' The referee may substitute other spells in place of these, of course.

### Spell Casting: Exhaustion, Corruption, and Sanity

When magicians cast 'white magic' spells they suffer exhaustion damage equal to one hit point plus one hit point per level of the spell cast (so a magician who casts a third level white magic spell would suffer four points of damage).

When magicians cast 'grey magic' spells they suffer exhaustion damage equal to twice the level of the spell cast (so a magician who casts a third level grey magic spell would suffer six points of damage).

When magicians cast 'black magic' spells they suffer exhaustion damage identical to that caused by 'grey magic' spells (twice the spell level). In addition, magicians casting 'black magic' spells must make a saving throw (versus 'spells' if using a system other than S&W) in order to avoid *corruption*. If the magician fails this saving throw, he/she is corrupted slightly and suffers a loss of temporary *Wisdom* points equal to the spell level (e.g., 3 points of temporary *Wisdom* for a third-level spell). Temporarily lost points of *Wisdom* can be recovered at a rate of one point per complete day of rest and meditation (no other action possible). The spell 'Restoration' will restore instantly all temporarily lost *Wisdom* points.

Furthermore, if a magician casting a 'black magic' spell fails his/her saving throw by rolling a '1,' then that magician loses one point of *Wisdom* *permanently* (so if a magician fails his/her saving throw casting a third-level black magic spell by rolling a '1,' he/she would lose one *permanent* point of *Wisdom* and two temporary points of *Wisdom*). The spell 'Restoration' will *not* restore any permanently lost *Wisdom* points.

# CHARIOT RACING

by John Vogel

**C**hariot racing is as old as the fall of Troy, and persisted until after the fall of the Western Roman Empire. In Rome and Byzantium, powerful factions hired several charioteers who raced under a "team" banner, sometimes working together in a single race, sometimes racing independently in different events. Successful charioteers could become rich and famous; unsuccessful ones often died in these violent and dangerous events. The rules below are for a Roman-type arena event, but could be easily used for the less formal, more ancient versions as well.

These rules are designed for *Swords & Wizardry* and *0e*, but they work without modification in *1e*, *OSRIC*, and other similar systems.

A chariot race is well in keeping with the atmosphere of any evil empire, and is usually played out before the Annual Banquet, as a celebration of the peace of the Imperium, or after the Emperor has won a war, in celebration of his power. Chariot races can be held at any point at the discretion of the game master.

## Objective

The object of the game is to be the first to complete three laps around the circus. Surviving the race is also a plus.

## Equipment Needed


Dice, a circus maximus board (see picture), and pieces of some type representing charioteers. Make a circus maximus in the pattern shown.

A magician whose permanent *wisdom* score is lowered to 2 becomes *insane*, and possibly the thrall of an extra-planar demonic force. He/she henceforth is a non-player character!

## Further Information

Readers interested in my other variant rules and ideas for the *Swords & Wizardry* game (which generally can be used with other 'old school' games, such as *0e*, *Basic*, *1e*, and so forth) are encouraged to check out my articles in the magazines *Knockspell* and *Fight On!*, as well as my game blog, *Akratic Wizardry* (<http://akraticwizardry.blogspot.com/>). I hope eventually to compile all of my S&W rules into a single supplement – most likely also entitled *Akratic Wizardry* – in the near future.

## Acknowledgements

My thanks (in alphabetical order) to Eldrad, hawklord, Kapten, Lord Vreeg, Luke Fleeman, MachFront, Mythmere, Narf the Mouse, Spinachcat, Steve, and ZenDog, for their helpful comments on an earlier version of this article (and my apologies if I forgot anyone!). My thanks as well to my players: Jo-Anne, Marcus, and Peeter. 

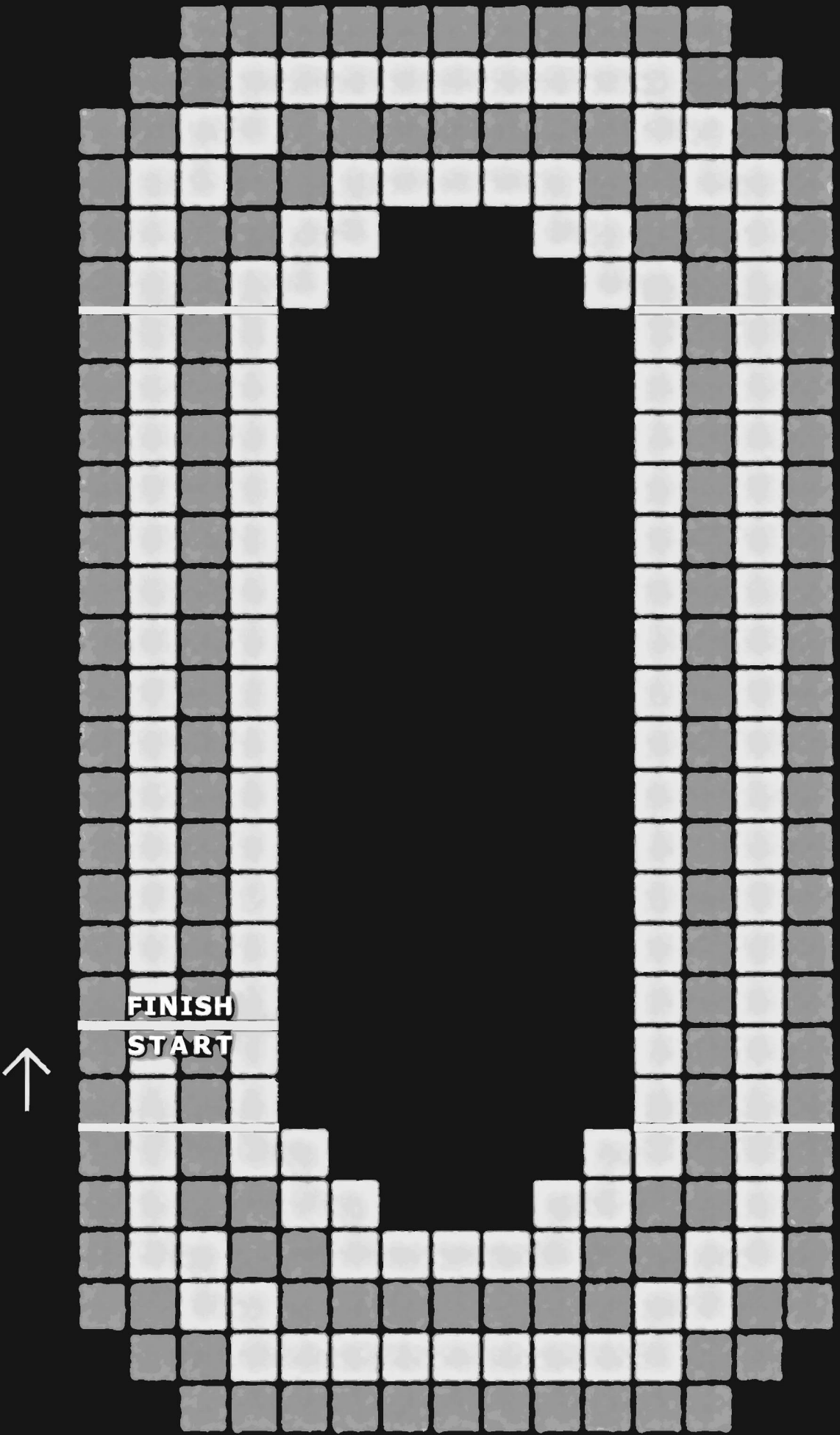
The board should be made large enough so that each square is 1 inch by 1 inch. The easiest thing to do is find free dungeon tiles on the web, print them, and cut them out to build the board above. The colors are not important, and serve only to illustrate the positions of the lanes.

You will also need four pieces to mark chariots, painted in different colors. Possibilities include miniature chariots, ordinary D&D miniatures, or simply four chess knights, each painted a different color.

## Rules of the Race

In a normal chariot race, no charioteer is permitted to wear armor, nor carry any weapon other than an ordinary whip (small knives are carried to cut a driver free from the reigns of a wrecked chariot, but they are useless as weapons). Each chariot starts in one of the four lanes immediately behind the starting line (the line surrounded by the words "START" and "FINISH"). Poll position (i.e. which lane each chariot starts in) is determined randomly. The innermost lane is the most advantageous. All chariots move in the direction of the green arrow marked on the board.

No magic item, spell, or spell like ability is allowed in the race. The crowd wants to see a good race, not the effects of horseshoes of speed on a chariot. It is assumed that the Emperor is wise to such tomfoolery, and might even have wizards or similar observers stationed around the arena. These might cast *Hold*



**FINISH**

**START**



Person on any charioteer cheating in this way if the Emperor is only mildly annoyed, or fireballs if he is more than mildly annoyed (reaction roll).

## Initiative and Movement

All players roll initiative at the beginning of each round. The highest rolling charioteer can move first, or defer until another charioteer completes his turn before moving.

Each turn, each chariot must, at a minimum, move forward at its maximum speed in its own lane (the lanes are marked in alternating colors of light and dark brown on the board). Backward moves are not allowed, and chariots can only change lanes as listed below under Free Actions. Diagonal moves are not allowed. The maximum speeds are: Heavy chariot=15 spaces. Light chariot=18 spaces. The only exception to this is that a chariot which is blocked by another chariot directly in front of it must stop movement, unless it can use a change lanes actions to get around the obstacle. No chariot can move through another chariot, the wall of the circus, or the spina (the dark, center area).

Charioteers unfortunate enough to be dismounted can be run over by other chariots, in which case the dismounted figure then takes 4d6 automatic damage.

## Free Actions

In addition to the mandatory forward movement, each charioteer can take one free action each turn from the list below. These actions can be undertaken at any point during the move, and the remaining move completed afterwards (example: Marcus, in a heavy chariot, can move three spaces forward, change lanes, and then move his remaining 12 spaces to complete the turn):

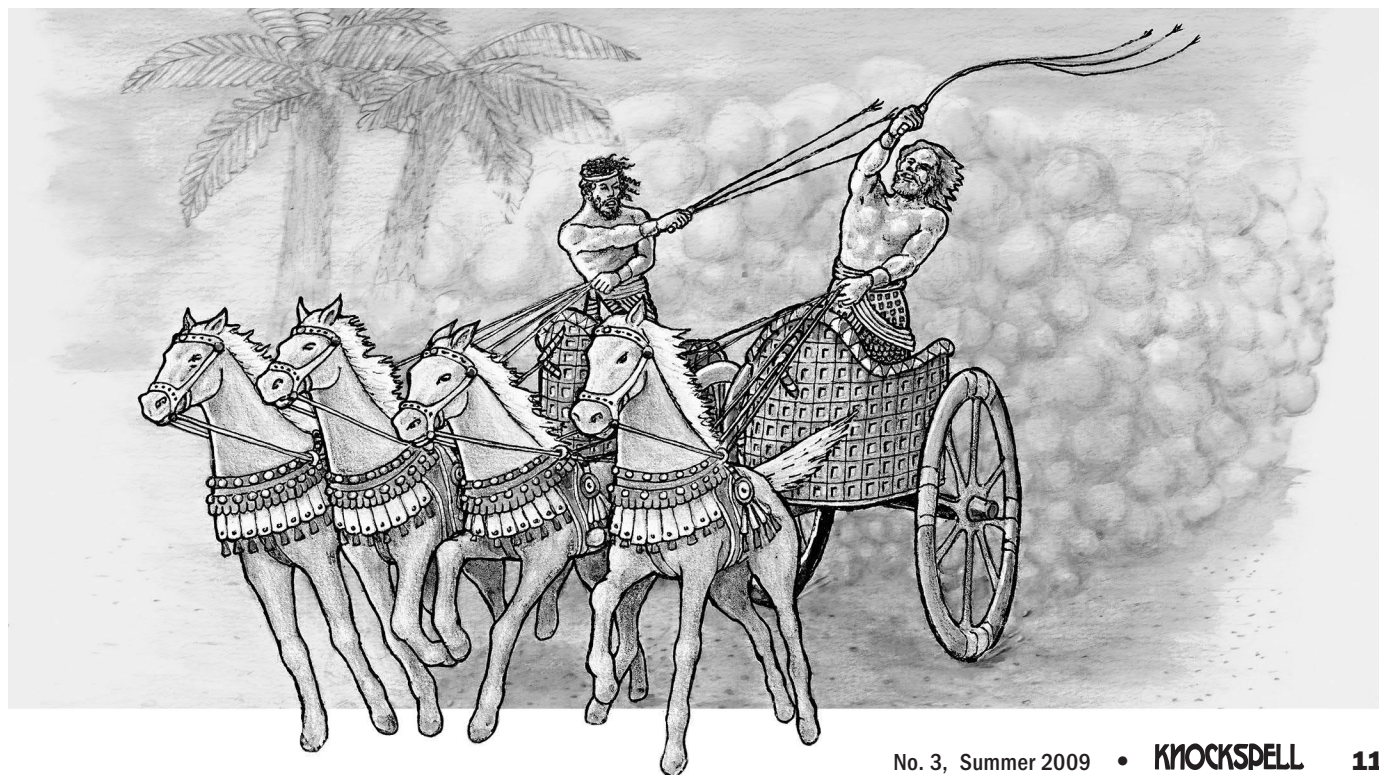
- 1. Change Lanes:** Move laterally one lane. The chariot can move to any square in a lane bordering its present lane that is adjacent to its present square (vertically or horizontally

only, never diagonally) as long as that square is not occupied by another chariot.

- 2. Scythe Attack:** This action can be made by heavy chariots only. The driver can attempt to use the sharpened blades attached to the hub of his chariot's wheels to destroy the wheel of another chariot. The attacker and defender both make a charioteering check (see below under Risky Actions). The attack is successful if the attacker succeeds at the check and the defender fails. If the attack is successful, roll 1d20 on the table below for the result. Add +2 if the defender is driving a light chariot:

### Chariot Damage Table (D20)

1-4	<b>Wheels Locked:</b> Both chariots may be damaged. Roll again on this table for each chariot.
5-8	<b>Driver stunned:</b> The defending chariot can take no action in the next round except normal forward movement.
9-12	<b>Chariot Out of Control:</b> The defending chariot moves randomly one space in a random direction. Nominate each of the four surrounding sides as 1-4, and roll 1d4 to see where it lands. If this would cause the chariot to move into another chariot, the walls of the circus, or the spina, see Crashes, below. The defending chariot can take no action next round except normal forward movement.
13-16	<b>Wheel Damaged:</b> The chariot takes no immediate damage, but place a marker on it indicating that the spokes on its wheel are partially cut through. At the beginning of each of the chariot's succeeding turns, roll 1d6. On a roll of 6, the wheel is destroyed and the chariot wrecks, as below.
17+	<b>Defending Chariot Wrecked:</b> The chariot wrecks. The driver remains tied to the reins, and is pulled along by his horses at maximum speed each turn, taking an automatic 1d8 hit points of damage per turn, until he can cut himself free of the reins by rolling a saving throw (+1 if dexterity 13+), roll this before the chariot moves each turn.



**3. Whip Horses:** The driver whips greater speed out of his horses. The chariot gains a bonus of 1d6 spaces to normal forward movement. ALL OF THIS ADDITIONAL MOVEMENT MUST BE TAKEN (which may not be a good thing, if it puts him over maximum speed in the turnaround, or causes him to crash into another chariot).

**4. Whip Opponent:** Make an ordinary whip attack against one opponent. In addition to normal damage (1d2 + strength bonus), a successfully whipped opponent must roll a saving throw (+1 if constitution 13+), or be temporarily blinded by blood flowing into his eyes, in which case he can take no action in the next turn, other than normal forward movement.

## Risky Actions

This is where the race becomes strategic. Additional free actions can be taken any number of times, as a risky action. However, as the name says, this is risky. Each risky action requires a charioteering check (a saving throw made at +1 if dexterity 13+, +1 if strength 13+, and -1 per each risky action previously performed this turn). After the round has been completed, the count for risky actions starts over again.

A successful roll means that another action (from the free actions list) can be performed normally. A failed roll means the chariot wrecks, as result 17+ on the Chariot Damage Table.

## The Turnaround

Centrifugal force makes the turnaround (the curved area between the two red lines at each end of the track) the most dangerous place in the circus. If a chariot is moving at over maximum speed (as a result of whipping horses) at any point while it is in the turnaround, the driver must make an immediate charioteering check (a saving throw, +1 if dexterity 13+, +1 if strength 13+)



at -1 for the 4th (outermost) lane, -2 for the 3rd lane, -3 for the 2nd lane, and -4 for the 1st (innermost) lane.

This check is always made at the end of the turn, even if the driver has already exited the turnaround. A failed check means the chariot wrecks, as result 17+ on the Chariot Damage Table.

## Crashes

If a chariot crashes into another chariot, the walls of the circus, or the spina, roll on the Chariot Damage table, above.

A chariot which crashes into the wall of the circus or the spina remains in its own space, and further movement is allowed (if any remains), unless the results of the Chariot Damage Table say otherwise.

If a chariot crashes into another chariot, both are moved one space randomly, as per a result of 9-12 on the Chariot Damage Table, above, in addition to other results.

Note that multiple crashes can occur if several chariots are bunched up, and a crash causes one chariot to move into another.

## Winning the Game

Victory goes to the chariot which moves into the space past the finish line first, after three laps have been completed, or to the remaining chariot if all others have been eliminated.

## Charioteers


Each NPC charioteer is level 1d8 (usually a fighter), and has 3d6+1 each for strength, dexterity and constitution.

## Gambling

Each charioteer will have 1d12 x 1,000 gp, bet on him. +1d4 x 1,000 gp for the highest level charioteer, +1d4 x 1,000 gp for the charioteer with the highest strength, and +1d4 x 1,000 gp for the charioteer with the highest dexterity. Odds can be figured from the gold pieces bet. Player characters may bet the odds with their own gold pieces, or may make side bets among themselves as desired. To keep things simple, the odds are not re-figured unless any single player character bets more than 2,000 gp on a single race.

There is a 10% chance that any race is a famous race. In this case, charioteers will be level 1d6+4, with 3d6+2 each for strength, dexterity and constitution (maximum 18 in each). PCs of less than 5th level cannot drive in such a race. In a famous race, ten times the normal bets are made, and the odds are re-figured for PCs only if they bet more than 20,000 gp on a single race.

## Throwing the Race

The crowds attending chariot races are extremely good at detecting whether a charioteer is trying to throw a race, and unless the trick is extremely well executed the charioteer is likely to be torn apart by an infuriated crowd. 

# BLAME IT ON THE PLAYERS

an Editorial by Tim Kask

*It all started going bad with the publishing of AD&D, The Player's Handbook. Here come the rules lawyers, the nitpickers and the homegrown experts. The fun started to leach away within months. Now there were dicta, dogma and regulations; gone were the days of guidelines. And who was to blame for this sorry, disreputable state of affairs? The players...*

The above is how I ended the last piece; I heard that it sparked some controversy, as well as a few snarky blog remarks. I never bothered looking for the majority of them, so I don't know firsthand what the particular objections might be. But I stand by final 14 words of Who Sucked the Fun out of RPG'ing.

When the game was being developed, and then first came out, it was the early part of the '70's, an era of exploring new boundaries in society, challenging authority for its own sake, tossing off the shackles of conformity and like-minded au courant noble ideals, that were the inevitable outcome of the late '60's conscious drive to alter the zeitgeist.

Viet Nam was beginning to wind down and come to its spluttering and futile end, and there were still violent clashes between demonstrators (some of whom were students) and police. This was a period of time when games were designed (way under the radar) about campus takeover's, civil unrest and disobedience.

Later, games of this nature came out of the underground of gaming with such titles as JUNTA. (Dev. By Vincent Tsao, published in '78 by Creative Workshop Games.) Now it was OK to tell "the Man" to p\*\*\* off.

D&D, as originally constructed, was all about "doing your own thing". EGG explained, quite gleefully, on several occasions, that he envisioned a type of joyous anarchy among the various DM's as each went their own way, following their own Muse. D&D was published as "Rules for Fantastic Medieval Wargames Campaigns Playable with Paper and Pencil and Miniature Figures" a miniatures rules set unlike any miniatures rules set ever produced. When he first told me about it, prior to GenCon '74, he hemmed and hawed and tried to explain this novel concept in terms another gamer could relate to without having been exposed to it yet. It was tough to put into words what exactly it was, and wasn't.

When I went to my first GenCon in 1974, I played in two different adventures DM'ed by two different guys. Most of us playing PC's had never heard of the game, let alone played in one. It was tough to explain as we tried to get going, and we made some tremendous blunders we never would have made had we understood a little better what we were actually doing.

(A couple of years later, while working at TSR, I was tasked with talking to a lady writer trying to get a handle on this growing phenomenon. I came up with a thumbnail description that I still use today: One guy outlines a story, and together with him, the players map out the details.)

What we began to see were two distressing (to us, anyway) trends; one was that the game was purportedly getting into stuff like rape tables, and sex changing, and changing sexual orientations, and really weird Satanic and demonic stuff; the other was that the early DM's did not have the reading backgrounds that we took for granted, and therefore lacked that most important tool we thought everyone had, that overlooked element that can't be taught, a creative imagination. We were all natural born story tellers, and we had just assumed that others could do it too. We learned that was not the case, and tried to help with the Supplements.

The supplements were a whole slew of ideas from which we hoped the DM's would pick and choose as they saw fit to incorporate into their campaigns. Alas, we got that one wrong. No matter what I said in the Forewords to each, players and DM's saw each one as new dicta and dogma. (d&d?)

That unfortunate interpretation was making a shambles of an already loose and flowing game system.

As the game became more widely known, people wanted to play it at cons. For one thing, it's a good way to sample without a steep investment; on the other hand if you got teased about it by your boardgaming or miniatures buddies, you could always say you were "just trying" that "game with fairies and elves in it". This led to cries for orthodoxy, thereby leveling the playing field at tournaments. (We had begun to notice this tournament inequity when we tried to line up enough DM's to run more than one round of adventuring. Shoot, we didn't do things the same way within the company.)

## Editor's Note:

Before I get another round of "Don't publish edition wars" letters: Yes, I fully understand that about half the readers of this magazine play AD&D, not Original D&D. Tim's last editorial in Knockspell #1 caused a minor furor, and this one will create even more. But as far as I'm concerned, even if I disagree with them I'd still rather hear the real opinions of The Dragon Magazine's first editor than just stick my fingers in my ears and go blahblahblahnot-listeningblahblahblah ... wouldn't you? I'm all about old-school renaissance, but I think a renaissance is characterized by diverse voices and healthy debate. Who's with me? No? Well, that's what letters to the editor are for: you can send them to [mythmere@yahoo.com](mailto:mythmere@yahoo.com)!

It has always struck me as odd that in a period of change and rebellion, of challenging established ways and defying authority for its own sake, the gaming public never embraced the anarchy of the OD&D philosophy. Instead, they asked for regimentation and a canon of orthodoxy. Gary and I had a couple of conversations about this oddity but never reached a consensus agreement as to why it was that way.

Why was it that RPG'ers just couldn't function without an extensive framework of rules to prop them up? I saw it firsthand in March of '09 at GaryCon when I ran a couple of adventures and told the players they could use a favorite PC, pick whatever spells they wanted to use and arm themselves with just about anything short of an Artifact, or just make one up. Some couldn't do; they rolled for everything. Some rolled to see if they knew a given spell. What they were missing was that we were there to have fun, not compete for most loot, most kills, or whatever. As far as I was concerned, convention games should be just for fun.

If everything was the same, then subjective tournaments and contests could be held, even though they were in violation of the spirit of the game themselves.

When the game became regimented, it was no longer OD&D, as regimentation was anathema to the spirit of the old days. Thus was born AD&D, to quantify, to regiment, to take away much of the flavor of the old style gaming. It didn't matter to us at LG that Gary did something one way, but maybe Rob did it differently, or that my take on it was different than both of theirs. It bothered everyone else, apparently. So, excise the anarchy and stuff the rest into a mold, and a whole lot of the fun was leached out of the game.

Subsequent editions (2, 3, 3.5, and 4) have further diminished the opportunity for individuality to matter as it once did. Now there are tables and charts for everything under the sun. I'm amazed at the lack of spontaneity that the plethora of charts


and tables has dictated. What next? A chart to see if the PC's become constipated?

There are individuals who have seemingly made it their life's work to weed out every ambiguity, every option, every interpretation and every bit of room for imagination and individuality.

The current holders of the trademark have managed to turn the game into a video-game-on-paper, first person chopper game (as opposed to first person shooter).

For me, RPG'ing is about fun, about different ways to do it, about different insights, about ingenuity and about creativity. Bitd, if I told my players that the door they just discovered behind the false wall has a very complicated looking locking system, they'd have set about interrogating me for details and trying different ideas. Now they would go to a table that sends them to a chart which sends them to another table which determines their chances of opening it. Oh, wait! One of the characters has a "Skill" with locks; another has a "Talent" for fine manipulation, ad nauseum, ad infinitum.

So, this brings me back to where I started from; how did we get to this sorry state of rules, dicta and dogma ruling all? It was the players, our customers, that told us what they wanted to buy in to; more regimentation, more regulation, more standardization. Well, in my view, when you stuff all of that into the game, something has to give. Unfortunately, individuality, imagination and fun seem to have been squeezed out, or at least seriously diminished.

In June I'm invited to Texas (I'm writing this in May) to run some "old school" games with just the 3LBB (the three little brown books) and the supplements GH, BM and EW (Greyhawk, Blackmoor and Eldritch Wizardry, respectively). I am giving them a pre-generated character (they do get to choose which) with a sheet for stats, HP, armor, weapons, etc. I put the Saving Throws on them, so all they will need is their character sheet and a handful of dice. I'll let you know how it went. 

## When Ink Hits the Paper: Preparing your artwork for print

With three Knockspell magazines under our belts, we have been noticing a trend of many suppliers of art that should be addressed if the publication (and by extension your artwork) is to continue improving itself, and to become what all contributors would like to see it become. So, here's a few tips (read; "requirements"?) to help ensure your artwork reproduces as true as possible to *your* original creation;

- **Line art** (for purposes of our conversation these would be pen-and-ink drawings) should be scanned at a minimum of 300 dpi grayscale, at 100% of the final reproduction size. If you're not sure what the final reproduction size will be, then scan at 100% of the original art size.
- **Continuous tone images** (photography, watercolor paintings, pencil sketches, etc.) should be scanned at a minimum of 300 dpi grayscale/RGB as appropriate, at 100% of the final reproduction size.
- **Submit all art in the following formats;**
  - Art without text should be supplied as either (in order of preference); (uncompressed) TIF, EPS, or PNG24. Native Photoshop® files can also be submitted, but these will be converted to flattened TIF's

in the final layout. Uncompressed JPG's (quality set to Maximum) can be supplied if none of the other options are available.

- Art with text (like many of your ads and maps) should be supplied as either (in order of preference); EPS, native Adobe Illustrator®, or native Adobe Photoshop®. When submitting art that contains actual text, convert the text to paths (in Illustrator and InDesign, choose **Create Outlines**) to eliminate potential missing font errors at output time. **DO NOT RASTERIZE THE TEXT IF IT CAN BE AVOIDED.** Also, if supplying an Illustrator file, make sure to embed all linked files.

All this said, send whatever format you have, and we'll do our level-best to make sure your artwork prints as good as possible. Need a file recreated? Let the editor know, and he'll pass along the info to me, and I'll get back to you about your specific needs.

### Grayscale vs. RGB vs. CMYK

Art that is to be reproduced as grayscale (black-and-white) gains no benefit from having the extra digital color information in it, so saving as RGB only increases the file size needlessly. Therefore, black-and-white images should be supplied as grayscale. If your art is to appear in color, then supply it as an RGB file, and a CMYK file for printing will be created for you during production.

Forward questions to Kramer at; [jim.kramer@jdkds.com](mailto:jim.kramer@jdkds.com).

# SWORDS & WIZARDRY:

## Silver ENnie Award Winner

**A**s most readers of our humble-yet-lovable magazine already know at this point, the Swords & Wizardry Core Rules book won a silver ENnie Award at GenCon this year. Since the game's author wasn't able to make it to the convention, Michael Shorten (known to many as "Chgowiz") accepted the award on behalf of Mythmere Games. He had to come up with a speech on his way to the podium: as he wrote in his blog, "We both had a 'Yea, right, when pigs fly' attitude about winning, and look what happened."

The Swords & Wizardry Core Rules came together from the efforts of a number of brilliant and quirky individuals: artists, editors, and playtesters; and Jesse Rothacher ("Verhaden") wrestled all the materials into a great looking book. In no

particular order, the artists include Jeff Preston, Pete Mullen, Chad Thorson, Matt Finch, Ed Kann, and Michael Shorten. Editors included Marv Breig, Jason Cone, Allan T. Grohe, Jr., Jerry Mapes, and Jesse Rothacher. Additional proofreading and suggestions came from Russell Cone ("Grim"), Jim Bobb, Eric Norred, and many members of the Swords & Wizardry forums. A list of playtesters would be unfeasibly long, but great thanks are due to everyone who started games and gave feedback on the game's early versions.

Thanks are also due to everyone who took the time to vote for Swords & Wizardry. Our community of out-of-print and free-form gamers really, really came through to send a message to the rest of the gaming world about our style of RPG play.

## About the Authors

A casual gamer of the most serious sort, **Russell Cone** bides his time between game sessions either working with slave-like fervor at a job he would gladly perform for free, enjoying family life, or wandering aimlessly through the cosmos of his own imagination. Enamored with polyhedral gameplay of the fantasy sort from an early age, he was naturally drawn to Swords & Wizardry and the retro-revival.

**Mike Davison** lives in Villa Rica, Georgia. He started his role-playing addiction sometime around Christmas of 1982 when (at the age of 12) he received his Moldvay boxed set from Santa Claus (aka: his mom). He is a contributing author on the newly revised OSRIC system (1e retro clone game).

At eight years of age, **Joshua James Gervais** purchased his first D&D box set at a paint store and has been role playing for the last twenty years. He lives in St. Johnsbury, VT.

**Allan Grohe** is known online as *grodog*, where he publishes a website featuring Greyhawk D&D content, as well as his non-gaming writing (poetry, personal essays, and literary scholarship), and the usual fan ephemera. He lives in Wichita, Kansas, with his lovely wife Heather, their two boys Ethan and Henry, and their two cats Percy and Jasper (true-names Percy Beeblebrox and Trapdoor Jasper).

**Jon Hershberger** began playing D&D in the late 1970's and received a shiny new set of AD&D hardbacks for his birthday in 1980. He began DMing in earnest about a year later, launching his first campaign with twelve of his closest high school friends sitting around his parent's dining room table. In 2006, Jon worked with Goodman Games to convert one of their Dungeon Crawl Classics (DCC) from D&D 3.5 to AD&D and a special Gen Con release of *The Iron Crypt of the Heretics* was produced for fans of the early editions. The following year, Jon teamed up with Goodman author Harley Stroh as they converted two other DCCs to AD&D, wrote a bridging adventure, and released Goodman's 2007 Gen Con Special Release *Saga of the Witch Queen*. In early 2009, Jon and

long-time Greyhawk fan Allan "Grodog" Grohe teamed up to form a new publishing company, Black Blade Publishing, to release adventures and other gaming products for First Edition AD&D and the other early editions of D&D as well as their modern simulacra such as OSRIC, *Labyrinth Lord*, and *Swords & Wizardry*.

**Scot Hoover** is best known on the Internet as "Kellri." He has published several free netbooks for OSRIC/1E, which are absolutely state-of-the-art. *Knockspell Magazine* highly recommends that every referee take a look at them!

**Nathan Irving** frequents various online forums as *Nellisir*. He lives in Ithaca, New York, with his wife, daughter, two cats, and two dogs, and is currently a graduate student at Cornell University studying Landscape Architecture. He has been working on the same campaign setting for more than twenty years, and is slowly blogging the current version at *Secrets of the Shadowend* (<http://secretsoftheshadowend.blogspot.com/>).

**Gabor Lux** is a Junior Research Fellow at Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Centre for Regional Studies. His interests include industrial transformation in Central Europe, with an emphasis on Old Industrial Regions; development and industrial policies as well as urban studies. He lives in Pécs, Hungary.

**Salvatore Macri** hails from Montreal, Quebec. Receiving the Basic box-set as a gift in 1980 sealed his fate and he's been a devoted fan of Classic D&D ever since. When not working on RPG related material, he can usually be found making the rounds of the various OOP and Classic gaming message boards.

**Andrew Trent** (*The Venomous Pao*) has been playing and running role-playing games since the dawn of the 80s when his sainted mother indulged him with the magical Moldvay basic set. Andrew is a contributor to the *Swords & Wizardry Monster Book* and the author of the *Against Atlantis!* series of adventures for *Mazes & Minotaurs*.



# BLACK ARMOR, BLACK HEART

## Anti-Paladin NPC Class for OSRIC/1e

by Scot Hoover (Kellri)

*"I have killed men and women, old and young...  
23,884 Turks and Bulgarians without counting  
those whom we burned alive in their homes or whose  
heads were not chopped off by our soldiers..."*

– Vlad Tepes 'The Impaler'

*"Believe me, if I started killing there  
would be none of you left"*

– Charles Manson

*"I was born with the devil in me. I could not help the  
fact that I was a murderer, no more than the poet can  
help the inspiration to sing. I was born with the evil  
one standing as my sponsor beside the bed where I was  
ushered into the world, and he has been with me since."*

– Dr H.H Holmes

*"Every man to his own tastes. Mine is for corpses."*

– Henri Blot

## Class Description

**Minimum Scores:** STR 13, CON 11, WIS 13

**Hit Die Type:** d10 (max 9)

**Alignment:** Chaotic Evil (CE) only

**Experience Bonus:** Str 16+

**Armor/Shield Permitted:** Any

**Weapons Permitted:** Any

**Magic Items Permitted:** As paladin

**Weapon Proficiencies:** 3 + 1 every 2 levels

**Penalty to-hit for non-proficiency:** -2

**Weapon Specialization:** Optional rule – as fighter

**Attack:** as paladin

**Saving Throws:** as paladin

Anti-paladins are the champions of Chaotic Evil, champions of their patron Demon Lords. No act of cruelty or vileness is beyond their capacity. Senseless violence, blind depravity, and pernicious corruption are their preferred methods. Anti-paladins are masters of terror, feared for their ability to spread chaos and anarchy as much as for their terrible acts of slaughter. Infamous crimes such as spreading plague, poisoning wells, and mass executions are all trademarks of the anti-paladin. Few civilized societies will knowingly tolerate an anti-paladin in their midst, and even fewer actually condone their presence and activities. As a result, anti-paladins are proficient at operating secretly as the member of underground cults, meanwhile disguising themselves as members of some profession – usually a fighter or a thief. As their appetite for destruction grows more

uncontrollable, higher-level anti-paladins will generally seek out wilderness or wasteland areas where they can establish a permanent base. From these fortresses, anti-paladin Lords will lead rapacious bands of reavers on unholy missions of rape, pillage and slaughter in the lands of those who are lawful and good.

Anti-paladins generally have the same restrictions as paladins. They may never possess more than 10 magic items, and only one suit of magical armor and one magical shield. They are also required to tithe at least 10% of their wealth to their secret cults and supply a living sacrifice to their demonic masters at least once per level. Unlike paladins, anti-paladins have no restrictions against associating with compatriots of different alignments.

Indeed, in the cause of Chaos, they may actively seek to infiltrate and corrupt Lawful or Good groups or communities. An anti-paladin who changes his alignment willingly or unwillingly from Chaotic Evil will be instantly slain by his infernal master, and his soul will instantly be forfeit to the flames of the Abyss.

Upon their deaths, certain high-level anti-paladins may be transformed into a *Death Knight* (1% chance/level) – a particularly powerful form of undead, as a reward for their faithful service.



## Patron Demonic Lords

Anti-paladins are mortal servants of the Demon Lords. Each anti-paladin will have but one patron Lord to whom he has traded his mortal soul and sworn lifelong fealty. In return for this fateful bargain, the anti-paladin will receive certain material and magical boons. Some of the more common Demon Lords that can be selected as a patron are listed below with their associated boons, preferences and requirements. The GM should feel free to alter these or create additional demonic patrons as necessary to suit the campaign.

### The Lord of Slaughter (Demogorgon)

**Description:** Anti-paladins who serve Demogorgon are marked by their bloodlust and utter disregard for life. They revel in senseless violence and will seek out combat just for a chance to inflict more pain and suffering. The anti-paladins of Demogorgon lead or belong to a variety of cults, but in civilized lands they are known as the Death Dealers. They favor wickedly spiked and barbed weapons and armors, the latter painted in garish blood red and black.

**Boons:** Gain +2 hit points per level. Like berserkers, they are fearless in battle and may attack twice per round or once with a +2 to-hit.

**Sacrifice:** Sacrificial combat with one or more foes whose total HD is equal to or greater than the anti-paladin's.

**Preferred Armor:** None except for helmet & greaves

**Preferred Weapons:** Footman's flail

**Special:** Flaming oil

### The Lord of the Tomb (Orcus)

**Description:** The anti-paladins of Orcus are remarkable for their unhealthy resemblance to, and familiarity with, the undead; particularly ghouls. Anti-paladins of Orcus may belong to a secret order known as the *Eaters of the Dead*, a particularly vile cult that practices extreme forms of cannibalism and demonic necromancy as well as graverobbing and ritual desecration.

**Boons:** Anti-Paladins of Orcus are immune to the paralysis of ghouls. At 3<sup>rd</sup>-lvl and higher they gain the ability to **control undead** as an evil-aligned cleric, two levels lower than the anti-paladin's level, once per week.

**Sacrifice:** Only human sacrifices are accepted and must have a total HD equal to or greater than the anti-paladin's.

**Preferred Armor:** Any

**Preferred Weapons:** Mace & Morningstar

**Special:** Poisoned weapons

### The Lord of Pestilence (Gresil)

**Description:** Anti-paladins of Gresil are known as the *Riders of the 7 Plagues* or the *Unclean Horsemen*, and it is their mission to spread disease and affliction wherever they go, either subtly or through more shocking means. The anti-paladins of Gresil

are universally filthy, often tying strips of plague shrouds or diseased rags about their armor, which is often painted in their favored putrid greens and purples.

**Boons:** Anti-paladins of Gresil are immune to disease (although not magical 'diseases' such as lycanthropy or mummy rot). Anti-paladins can **cause disease** (as the reverse cleric spell *Cure Disease*) by touch, once per week. Anti-paladins of higher than 5<sup>th</sup> level may do so twice per week, and those higher than 10<sup>th</sup> level thrice per week.

**Sacrifice:** Human or demi-human sacrifices are accepted and must have a total HD equal to or greater than the anti-paladin's.

**Preferred Armor:** Any

**Preferred Weapon:** 2-handed sword

**Special:** Slimes & diseases

### The Mistress of Perversion (Ardat)

**Description:** The anti-paladins of Ardat belong to an exclusively female cult known as the *Daughters of Perdition*. They often operate undercover as high-placed mistresses or courtesans – a position which allows them to engage in all manner of lewd debauchery. In combat, they are graceful and deadly, their armor decorated with flowing silk, and their faces hidden behind veils.

**Boons:** Anti-paladins of Ardat are immune to charm and beguiling spells. At 3<sup>rd</sup> level, once per day the anti-paladin may **beguile**, as the 2<sup>nd</sup>-level cleric spell. Anti-paladins of higher than 5<sup>th</sup> level may do so twice per week, and those higher than 10<sup>th</sup> level thrice per week.

**Sacrifice:** Human or demi-human sacrifices are accepted and must be of the opposite sex and have a total HD equal to or greater than the Anti-paladin's.

**Preferred Armor:** Studded leather

**Preferred Weapon:** Whip & bardiche

**Special:** Poisoned weapons & Acid

### The Maiden of Pain (Loviatar)

**Description:** The Anti-paladins of Loviatar belong to the mostly female *Cult of the Heartless Shrew*. Their trademark is the killing of innocents and inciting genocidal purges. In combat these anti-paladins often wear silver or white – colors easily marred by the bloodstains of their victims.

**Boons:** May **curse** their opponents (as the reverse of the 1<sup>st</sup>-lvl cleric spell  *Bless*) once per day. At 3<sup>rd</sup>-level they gain the ability to cast the 1<sup>st</sup>-level Illusionist spell **hypnosis**, two levels lower than the anti-paladin's level, once per day.

**Sacrifice:** Any group sentient sacrifices are accepted and must have a total HD equal to three times the Anti-paladin's level.

**Preferred Armor:** Scalemail

**Preferred Weapon:** Warhammer & military fork

**Special:** Acid & Flaming Oil

## The Beast Lord (Baphomet)

**Description:** Anti-paladins of Baphomet are feared for their insane bloodlust and propensity for cannibalism – traits they share with the minotaurs whom they lead in battle. They can be found in uncivilized, chaotic lands where they are known as the *Beastlords*. These anti-paladins often go into battle painted or tattooed with demonic symbols and wearing trophies of past victims (ears, fingers, and shrunken heads are common).

**Boons:** They are fearless in battle and may attack with a +2 to-hit or damage for up to 3 turns, once per day. When attracting henchmen, they may always opt for a minotaur in lieu of any other creature.

**Sacrifice:** Any single human, humanoid or monster sacrifices slain in personal combat are accepted and must have a total HD equal to one and a half times the anti-paladin's level.

**Preferred Armor:** Chainmail & horned great helm

**Preferred Weapon:** Battleaxe & club

**Special:** Poisoned weapons

### Anti-Paladin Class Abilities

**Detect Good:** An Anti-paladin may detect good up to 60ft, at will, provided he or she concentrates on doing so.

**Aura of Evil 10' radius:** An anti-paladin radiates an aura equivalent to the reverse of the cleric spell *Protection from Evil 10' Radius*.

**Inflict Pain:** Once per day, the anti-paladin can, by touch, cause one point of damage per level. Anti-paladins typically use this ability while torturing or interrogating prisoners.

**Summon Nightmare Steed (4<sup>th</sup>-level):** At fourth level, the anti-paladin may summon a Nightmare Steed, a demonic war-horse with enhanced hit points, intelligence and movement speed. Such a steed may be called only once every ten years, and usually requires the completion of a quest to actually find the Steed. For further details, see the paladin's *Summon Warhorse* ability (OSRIC p.18).

**Backstab:** Anti-paladins have the ability to backstab as a Thief of the same level.

**Clerical Spellcasting (9<sup>th</sup>-level):** Anti-paladins gain the ability to cast certain cleric spells at 9<sup>th</sup> level as a paladin. Because

of their alignment, they may only be granted reversed spells or spells with the capability of doing harm. They do not receive any additional spells for high wisdom scores as clerics do. They may not use clerical scrolls or other clerical magic items unless these are also usable by Fighters.

**Henchmen (9<sup>th</sup>-level):** Anti-paladins may employ hirelings as do other classes. Beginning at 9<sup>th</sup>-level they will attract 1d20 henchmen. These henchmen may not necessarily be human, and may even be monsters, demons or undead. Consult the anti-paladin Henchman Table to determine exact types.

**Strongholds:** Anti-paladins may construct a castle or a hide-out, but will not attract any henchmen followers until 9<sup>th</sup>-level (see above).

**Poison Usage:** Like Assassins, Anti-paladins are not inherently more skilled at using or formulating poisons than any other character class capable of using poison, but generally have more opportunities to gain knowledge of poisons and their effects. In addition, certain of the demonic cults, such as those of Ardat and Orcus, prefer to use poisoned weapons and will generally have more specialized knowledge about them than cults which do not.

**Bonus Attacks:** As paladins (OSRIC p.18)

## Anti-Paladin Magic Items

**NOTE:** All of these magic items continually radiate evil magic.

**Bone Mace** – A bone mace is wielded by favored servants of Orcus. It is a *mace +3* that *causes paralysis* as a ghoul 3 times/day.

**Sword of Ineffable Evil** – Forged in the furnaces of the Abyss and quenched in the blood of a devil, this longsword radiates chaotic evil and has a wickedly sharp saw-edge along both edges of its pitch-black blade. In the hands of an Anti-paladin, this is a magical *longsword +4* that continually radiates *Protection from Good* in a 30ft radius. The bearer may use it to *Commune* with a demonic patron (as the 5<sup>th</sup>-level Cleric spell) once per week.

**Poison Scabbard** – A scabbard that imparts poison to a blade if previously fed with the blood of a venomous monster such as a giant cobra or a mantichore. Each feeding will supply enough of that same creature's poison for 1d4 applications to the weapon. Poison scabbards are most often sized for daggers, shortswords or longswords, and (rarely) two-handed swords.

**Saddle of Slavery** – a saddle that burrows into the flesh of a normal riding beast. The owner of the saddle may then telepathically communicate his or her wishes, which will be followed as well as the creature understands. The saddle exacts a high toll on such normal beasts however, which have a 50% chance per week of expiring.

**Vestments of Demonflesh** – This human-sized suit is made of the black leathery hide of a babau stitched with the hair of a marilith. It is held together by an array of straps and buckles. Once worn, the skin weaves itself into the wearer's own skin and cannot be removed. Alone, it provides an AC of 7 and may



be worn under heavier armors. If the wearer is killed, the vestments may be removed as normal.

**The Mark of Kain** – This cursed chaotic evil amulet initially grants the wearer +0 to AC. For each 10 murders the wearer commits, the bonus increases by +1, to a maximum of +4. Thereafter, if the wearer does not commit at least 10 murders a month, the bonus will go down to +0. If after one month the wearer again does not commit at least 10 murders, they must Save vs. Death or die – their soul forfeit to the Abyss.

**Damnation's Flail** – This +4 *footman's flail* was forged in the Abyss and continually radiates evil in a 10' radius. It was intended for a demonic champion, and requires at least a STR of 17 to wield effectively. Against good or lawful foes it has a +5 to-hit and damage.

**The Blood-drinker's Cup** – This cup is made of the skull pan of a succubus chased with silver. When filled with the still-warm blood of an enemy (human, demi-human or humanoid) and drunk the cup imparts the equivalent of a *bleed* spell as cast by a 14<sup>th</sup>-level cleric. The cup may only be used 3 times per week.

**The Winged Cloak of the Fallen Ones** – This is a leathery black cloak with silver buckles along the front. When commanded, the cloak will sprout a pair of bat-like wings that allow the wearer to *fly* (as the 3<sup>rd</sup>-level magic-user spell) for 12 turns. The wings may only be used once per day.

### Anti-Paladin Level Advancement

Level	Base XP Required	Hit Dice (d10)	Notes	Cleric Spell Level				
				Casting Lvl	1	2	3	4
1	0	1		-	-	-	-	-
2	2,550	2		-	-	-	-	-
3	5,500	3		-	-	-	-	-
4	12,500	4	Nightmare Steed	-	-	-	-	-
5	25,000	5		-	-	-	-	-
6	45,000	6		-	-	-	-	-
7	95,000	7		-	-	-	-	-
8	175,000	8		-	-	-	-	-
9	325,000	9	Attract Henchmen	1	1	-	-	-
10	600,000	9+3*		2	2	-	-	-
11	1,000,000	9+6*		3	2	1	-	-
12	1,350,000	9+9*		4	2	2	-	-
13	1,700,000	9+12*		5	2	2	1	-
14	2,050,000	9+15*		6	3	2	1	-
15	2,400,000	9+18*		7	3	2	1	1
16	2,750,000	9+21*		8†	3	3	2	1
17	3,100,000	9+24*		8†	3	3	3	1
18	3,450,000	9+27*		8†	3	3	3	1
19	3,800,000	9+30*		8†	3	3	3	2
20‡	4,150,000	9+33*		8†	3	3	3	3

\* Constitution-based hp adjustments no longer apply

† 8th is the ceiling spell casting level for anti-paladins

‡ Each level gained thereafter requires 350,000 additional experience points and gains 3hp.

### Anti-Paladin Level Advancement

Die Roll	Follower Type
01-12	Fighter
13-20	Thief
21-30	Assassin
31-36	Cleric
37-40	Magic-User
41-48	Illusionist
49-54	Goblin
55-58	Orc
59-60	Hobgoblin
61-62	Gnoll
63	Ogre/Minotaur
64	Troll/Ettin
65	GIANT <sup>1</sup>
66-89	UNDEAD <sup>2</sup>
90-91	DEMON <sup>1,2</sup>
92-99	MULTI-CLASSED NPC
00	MONSTER (GM's Choice)


Types listed in BOLD are general types. The specific creature should be determined by the GM.

1 If the anti-paladin already has a follower of this type, ignore this result and roll again.

2 These are only gained as followers when the anti-paladin has built a stronghold, which they are confined to thereafter.




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# THE FONT OF GLEE

an Adventure by Jason Sholtis

## Introduction:

This short scenario is designed to be used as the inaugural adventure for a party of 4-6 freshly-minted 1<sup>st</sup> level characters (and some henchmen/hirelings) on their way to a dangerous yet lucrative wilderness area where they plan to begin their careers. The Floon Valley is an area where civilization has only begun to encroach upon the wilderness, for its huge pleistocene and shaggy pre-human hominids have begun to migrate away in search of colder climates.

As mankind continues to explore the area, strange and terrible discoveries are being made in the newly exposed lands, including several entrances into the Unfathomable Underworld.

Game mechanics and stats indicated employ the Swords and Wizardry Core rules, but can be readily adapted to any 0e or basic role playing system. The level of detail in the entries below varies, but care has been taken to keep specifics to a minimum and to provide the referee with springboards to elaborate upon freely.

## Referee's background:

Several months ago a wicked sorcerer, Yutephon the Farseeing, escaped into the Floon Valley following the destruction of his secret domicile in more civilized lands. Full of lust for vengeance but nearly penniless and deprived of his cherished spell books lost in the raid on his sanctum, Yutephon seized a small hideout, a cave complex beneath a giant hollow tree in the forest, in an area known to travelers as the Two Taverns. There, he set to work restoring his powers, researching new magic and fomenting his plans for revenge. In particular, he developed a unique spell of summoning which allowed him to call forth the minor horrors now known as wood-devils (see *New Monsters and Terrors* at the end of this adventure).

Once unleashed to terrorize the surrounding countryside, the wood-devils inexorably began regain some measure of autonomy. Yutephon, so charmed by the creative care and diabolical cunning his minions displayed in wreaking havoc, made the fatal error of releasing their wills one iota too much.



One evening, having tucked Yutephon into his cozy bed after an exhausting day of study, the wood devils slew and devoured their master. This act had peculiar effects on a number of the creatures, subtly increasing their alien intellects and engendering incomprehensible ambitions.

## Beginning the Adventure

The characters have answered a call to begin their careers in the Verdant Valley of Floon (or any home-brewed realm of dangerous wilderness littered with ruins and dungeons), where they are invited to offer their modest talents in the service of the Scarlet Lord, Tuthandres. An aging fighting man set to the considerable task of keeping his fledgling realm safe from the monsters and perils of a strange and little-known territory, the Scarlet Lord continues to promote settlement in this realm, despite his inability to completely pacify the surrounding wilderness. To this end, he advertises widely for adventurer types, for countless are the dangers to be discovered (and smashed!) in these unknown lands.

To the south, old civilizations flourish, most of the major mysteries have been plumbed, and many threats to humankind, natural and otherwise, have been successfully dealt with, at least for the time being. To be sure, strange sites and supernatural horrors remain, but here, in the recently unfrozen North, risk and reward coexist in unmatched quantities.

But first the characters must get there. This adventure occurs on what would have been the last night of this north-bound sojourn, a day's march from their ultimate destination.

## The Two Taverns:

About a day's march south of the Scarlet Citadel, two establishments vie for business among the many travelers en route to or from the valley.

The Flying Ham is a modest, typically appointed inn of the usual sort, slightly shabbier than average. Twenty years of continuous operation in the wilderness has left the Ham (as it is known) in a slight state of disrepair. Despite these aesthetic shortcomings, the proprietor, Ogwen Een, prides himself in attention to the needs of his guests and provides an atmosphere of homey comfort. Prices are reasonable, and the food, prepared by Ogwen's long-suffering wife Uwe, is delightfully rustic fare. Ogwen inherited the inn when his parents died within a short time of each other some years ago, and his younger siblings sought their fortunes in the civilized south: all save one.

Across the road and a short distance north, another house of hospitality beckons: the Gilded Lily, owned and operated by Ogwen's younger brother Aalgrum Een. Aalgrum, angry that his older brother inherited the Ham, built the Gilded Lily using his still-considerable share of the inheritance, and has spared no expense to bring an altogether different option to the traveling public. The Gilded Lily, especially if approached after nightfall, shines with magically illuminated splendor, the swords & sorcery equivalent of a Las Vegas casino, beckoning to the weary traveler in need of seedier fare than that available at the Ham. Indeed, every conceivable vice can be indulged within the Gilded Lily's reinforced doors, the details of which I leave to the discretion and good taste of the referee. A small private force of bouncers

(mercenaries of considerable size and strength) maintains security within. Duels are frequent, but rarely get out of hand. In fact, they are something of an attraction.

The brothers Een haven't spoken in years, though they often communicate via intermediaries, and remain locked in a death struggle for supremacy in their chosen field of battle: the food and lodging industry.

The ultimate weapon in this war of hospitality is a little known local beverage called Gleewater, the sparkling effusion of an enchanted spring in the forest nearby, called the Font of Glee. Water from this source delivers a uniquely stimulating euphoria (and occasionally more than bargained for: see the Gleewater Special Effects Table at the end of this adventure) to the imbiber and can be quite addictive. The so-afflicted often deny this condition, attributing their daily consumption to an understandably passionate enthusiasm for their beverage of choice.

Both establishments offered the waters of Glee for years as a uniquely local delicacy and attracted loyal customers willing to make a long and perilous journey to just to savor a flagon or two. For a period of some months, however, the Font of Glee has been inaccessible, savagely defended by a territorial gaggle of wood-devils that has moved into the area. Both of the brothers Een petitioned the Scarlet Lord Tuthandres for assistance, but judging the matter to be of low priority, he has been thus far unwilling to dedicate manpower to the task of eradicating the infestation. He has, however, ruled that if any outside agency can accomplish this task, they, or their employers, can claim exclusive rights to the spring. In his Solomon-like wisdom, Tuthandres is deliberately trying to up the ante further between the brothers, his rationale something about bringing the feud to a head, hoping Ogwen and Aalgrum will recognize the folly of their ways and join forces to solve their problem. Nothing, however, could be further from the brothers' minds than reconciling their differences.

Adventurers entering either establishment will find themselves at once petitioned to undertake the challenge of ridding the countryside of the wood-devils and their mischief. When the subject of the Font and its waters is brought up, audible groans of longing emanate from a few of the patrons; others are momentarily lost in a wistfully nostalgic reverie. Ogwen of the Ham offers a 200gp bounty to each player character engaged, and can be talked into a profit-sharing plan if the players start a bidding war. Aalgrum of the Gilded Lily offers 250gp per character, and will go as high as 300 if pressed, but will not agree to any sort of profit share. Either potential employer will provide the characters with a hand-scrawled diagram of the area, indicating the path to the font through the Eenwood, northwest of the Two Taverns. If the referee wishes to further complicate matters, it would be relatively simple to outfit a competing party of adventurers hired by the other brother, composed of some of the NPC patrons on the tables below.

## A Typical Bill of Fare at the Two Taverns:

### *Flying Ham:*

*Prepared by Madame Een from old family recipes:*

**Braised Mutton** in wine, dwarf onion, and subterranean fungus sauce served over roasted snow tubers with a mug of rich, piquant homebrewed ale.

### **Gilded Lily:**

*Prepared by Brillion Frinz, former chef to the royal family of Kalakroon (until his scandalous exile):*

**Filet of tunnel prawn** tossed lightly in a brandy and veal-stock reduction, presented vertically on a layer of swamp cabbage slaw with toasted morel shavings and a wilderberry vinaigrette, accompanied by a tastefully chosen bottle from their unsurpassed (for a wilderness region) wine cellar

**Note:** Displeased diners can count on a colorful reaction from Frinz should they send any orders back to the kitchen.

### **Random Flying Ham Patron Table:**

The Ham boasts a lively family-friendly pub atmosphere. Lights are extinguished and the barroom cleared by 10 pm.

#### **Roll 1d12 as many times as feels appropriate:**

1. Julk Joliwell: an elderly bachelor farmer and passionate devotee of Gleewater, blind in one eye after a run-in with the wood-devils. He killed one with his pitchfork before they blinded his eye with a stick, shaved his entire body, covered him in cow dung, and tied him to the top of the highest pine tree in the forest.
2. A table full of surly dwarfs wearing outlandish foreign costume (many-feathered felt hats and puffy checked pantaloons). They speak dwarfish in hushed tones, and carry steel lockboxes with them everywhere they go. They communicate with sign language, pretending to be unable to understand the common tongue.
3. Two severe-looking priestesses (1st level clerics), HD 1; HP: 6, 5 AC: 4 [15]; Atk light mace (1d4+1) from the Universal Temple on a mission of utmost importance to the faith. They bear a coded communiqué to be delivered to higher-ups in the south.
4. Sir Tagonus (1st level fighter) HD 1; HP 8; AC: 3 [16]; Atk 1 sword or lance, a Red Knight of the Citadel, returning from family leave, slightly drunk and highly critical of the Scarlet Lord
5. Flargut HD 1; HP 7; AC 5 [14]; Atk 1 spiked club or 6 excellent throwing rocks, the forest-ape who walks, talks, and dresses like a man.
6. Trenua, the chaste forest maiden, eager to discuss her (imagined?) encounters with unicorns.
7. Gargan (3rd level magic-user), HD 1; HP 4 AC 9 [10]; Atk 1 staff (1d6); Special: charm person, detect magic, web, a magician from the south. He has six retainers (burly warriors-for-hire). Could provide arcane services for the right party, at the right price.
8. Branyard and Biliam Balke (HP: 6, 5), slightly depressed but steady, these twin brothers are failed farmers and former Gleewater addicts down to their last few coppers. They would make excellent and willing men-at-arms. However, if one brother is killed the other will be too distraught to be of any further use.
9. Bachelor farmer Rondus Glamros comes for dinner every night then stays on, watchful for any potential brides.
10. 1d6 Red Knights enjoying complementary food and beverages between local patrols. They have the giant corpse of a catoblepas in a wagon behind the stable, having slain it in Farmer Dreen's oat field and removed it at Dreen's insistence. They have no idea what to do with it. If overheard, they passionately refute the criticisms of Sir Tagonus, above.
11. A man, who gives every indication of being somehow ensorcelled, bursts through the doors claiming to have just arrived from tomorrow. He knows something of dark portent, too terrible to tell. If treated roughly, he reveals his foreknowledge: tomorrow at this time, the forest will be absolutely overrun by those damn wood-devils!
12. A woman arrives claiming to be a long lost relative of Ogwen's. She is in reality a dangerous impostor positioning herself to profit from a restored flow of the Font's waters.

### **Random Gilded Lily patron table:**

The Gilded Lily's common room is busy most times of the day or night. They offer full services 24 hours a day and maintain a live-in staff to cater to the whims of their patrons.

#### **Roll 1d12 as often as required:**

1. Chud Gastrium (1st level fighter, HP 7; AC 6 [13], a fighter on his way back home in the south after an especially terrifying foray into the Unfathomable Underworld. Very jumpy and skittish, suffering from some sort of post-delving stress disorder.
2. Trader Flam, a rich fabrics and textiles merchant traveling with a colorful entourage of vain, shallow, beautiful urbanites from the south. Openly effete and oozing sophistication, it's a wonder a local hunter hasn't started a brawl with them yet.
3. Mistocles (2nd level cleric, HP 10; AC 4[15]) an aspirant to the Universal Temple in Floon. Available for adventuring.
4. Sarabella (7th level fighter, HP 35; AC 3 [16] +1 chainmail), a former associate of Yutephon, has just returned from an exploration of his ruined hide-out in Floon. Her search for his whereabouts has led her here, where she has taken up temporary residence while plotting her next move. Players whose characters run afoul of her had best ready blank sheets and d6's.
5. Quinton Thew (2nd level fighter, HP 10; AC 4[15] short sword, short bow), a boisterous local hunter and trapper, wonders aloud why no one has yet assaulted the entourage of Trader Flam. A Gilded Lily regular.
6. Extremely drunk woodsman and his exceptionally mighty bride gear up to perform their weekly ritual: no holds barred spouse-on-spouse brawling. Wagering is encouraged by the regulars.

7. Stax the Bowman (1st level fighter, HP 6; AC 7 [12] long bow, dagger), a proficient hunter and temporarily dry Gleewater addict, an affable regular with little interest in adventures. Gold, on the other hand, he finds quite intriguing.
8. Garesh Greywhiskers, a gnome from the extreme south, sent by widely renowned Gnomish distillery to secure the “recipe” for Gleewater. A very poorly timed mission. Bitterly disappointed and extremely well funded, he could attempt to hire his own party once he hears of the Scarlet Lord’s proclamation.
9. 1d6 silk-clad dancing girls enjoying some free time. Harassment of any kind elicits instant expulsion with unnecessary roughness from the bouncers.
10. Musician Ymak Serenus, afraid to go home because she saw something big and scary outside the window of her shanty in the Eenwood last night.
11. Armed miscreants: 6 bandits (HP 5,4,3,3,2,2,1; AC 7 [12] short sword, short bow) share a table, eyeball everyone’s purses, and whisper to one another.
12. Dantanyan (HP 4; AC 9[10] dagger), estranged husband of one of the dancing girls, claims she must be under magical influence to behave in such a manner. He seethes with pent-up aggression.

## En route to the Font:

Travel to the Font is relatively straightforward and there is little chance of the party becoming lost, though the temperate rain-forest called the Eenwood is dense with foliage. The marked trail on the map is a rough footpath, just wide enough to permit easy passage for keg-laden donkeys. It should take the player characters about 4 hours of hiking to reach the site of the Font.

The arrival of the wood-devils in this area of forest has disrupted the natural order of things. Many animals and monsters typically uninterested in human affairs have become increasingly agitated, themselves falling prey to the malicious pranks of the wood-devils, making random encounters more likely. The wood-devils, in their perpetual quest for cheap laughs at anyone’s expense, have also taken time to cultivate a number of lethal plants in the area. Roll 1d12 (or just go ahead and choose the juiciest) on the following table once per hour (re-rolling duplicate results or referee’s choice) while the characters travel to the Font.

## Forest Encounters:

1. Rustling noises some distance way, followed by weird howl of exasperation
2. Flocks of birds raise hell overhead, squawking in protest as they leave the area, vowing to never return





3. 1d4 outraged forest apes (HP 7, 5,4,3; AC 5 [14] see NEW MONSTERS AND TERRORS, below) attack immediately
4. 1d2 crazed black bears (HP 19,15; AC 4[15], atk: 2 claws, bite 1d3/1d3,1d6 ) sloppily painted blue, looking to vent frustrations
5. Highly irritable skunk will not leave path
6. Naked man (Hogar the vagrant, HP 2), released by wood-devils having been thoroughly psychologically tortured, begs for assistance. He was caught trying to fill a wineskin from the Font
7. 1d6 incensed jungle deer snort their disapproval before disappearing into the underbrush
8. Intestinally-challenged giant forest viper with visibly protruding lump in midsection: recently swallowed wood-devil cackles hideously from within
9. 1d4 wood-devils (HP 4,2,2,1; AC 7 [12]; Atk 1 bite 1d4) caught setting snare trap, flees immediately into deep woods, laughing hysterically
10. 1d4 briarmen (HP 4, 3, 2, 1; AC 7 [14] Atk: thorny embrace 1d4 +special: see NEW MONSTERS AND TERRORS, below)
11. Whip-reeds: planted near the path, the reeds will give living beings passing within 5 feet a good lashing for 1d4 damage per round in range.
12. Stench cabbages: cultivated to make sections of the path nearly impassible. Getting within 10 feet of the bloated purple growths causes them to fire off their gas-weapon: saving throw at +2 or pass out for 1d4 minutes, then save again unless removed from range by conscious cohorts. Failing to save four times in a row indicates death for that character.

## Trap Areas:

### A: Simple Snares:

These are set to trap both humans venturing off the path and hapless forest creatures (which will do for food in a pinch). Attached to bent trees, the ensnared are swept from their feet and left dangling head down about ten feet in the air. Roll 1d6 for each character passing through the area indicated. A roll of 1 or 2 indicates the character has been snared. A roll of 6 indicates the trap has already snared something else.

### Snare victims table (roll 1d6):

1. A dead squirrel
2. A boot
3. A wood ape
4. A desperate glee-addicted human, too weak from dehydration to speak
5. A chortling wood-devil
6. A still-struggling deer

### B: Shallow Pit (filled with hornet nests):

This brush-covered pit is only about six feet deep and the soft hornets nests absorb some of the impact, doing only 1d2-1 points of damage to anyone falling in. The hornets attack in one round, stinging repeatedly for 1 hp each round thereafter until warded off.

### C: Standing Stone Deadfall:

An idiot trap, really. A huge flat stone is held aloft by a precariously positioned log, itself attached to a plainly visible rope held by 4 poorly concealed wood-devils a short distance away, giving themselves away with peals of premature laughter. A half-spilled sack of gold (200gp) lies below the stone, calling out to passing fools. The devils enjoy the implied insult as much as the possibility of smashing someone under the stone.

## Encounter Areas:

### D. The Font of Glee:

The path terminates in a shaded clearing and as the characters approach they notice a strange mixture of odors, an invigorating freshness with subtle undertones of something nauseatingly rancid. The Font itself is a natural spring, trickling from a rocky outcrop in a loamy embankment covered with primordial vegetation. The waters form a small shallow pool before being absorbed into its gravel bottom. The spring emanates the pleasant, if slightly unnatural, fragrance. A gaggle of wood-devils contribute the offensive stench component to the combination mentioned above. They are in the midst of a wild Gleewater binge, some flopping lazily in the spring, others whirling about like dervishes, still others bleating out savage mockeries of well-known popular songs, national anthems, and hymns. When cognizant of the presence of interlopers, their revels immediately cease and the wood-devils leap to combat. Hindered by intoxication, they attack at a -1 penalty.

**Wood-devils:** (8) HP 4, 3, 3, 2, 2, 2, 1, 1

If sufficiently impressed by the party's prowess, remaining wood-devils flee to their hideout beneath the hollow tree, alerting their fellows.

Once the wood-devils have been dealt with the characters may examine the Font. To their consternation, very little can be determined beyond doubt. It appears the Font is some kind of *natural* magical phenomena, despite that seeming contradiction. If the characters opt to sample its waters, have each roll a saving throw. Those who fail must roll on the Gleewater Special Effects Table at the end of this adventure. Characters that make their save feel stimulated and inappropriately jolly for the rest of the day.

The main trail ends at the Font, but alert player characters ought to notice that a narrow path has recently been beaten into the bush at the north end of the clearing, meandering off into the deepening forest.

### E. The Hollow Tree:

A colossal tree stump, some 15 feet in diameter and 20 feet in height, dominates this area of thick forest, the faint path winding towards its weed-obscured roots. A natural-looking aperture on

the stump's west side, 7 feet high and 5 feet wide at the base, offers itself to the adventurers as an obvious starting point. On the inside, in the hollow above the doorway, twin guardians coil restfully until alerted to the presence of any trespassers by their keen senses. Forewarned, they take the fight to the enemy, posturing threateningly just inside the doorway, hissing and frothing a warning from their hideously working mouth parts, fangs glistening with venom.

**Attack-trained giant centipedes (small, non-lethal) (2):**  
HP 2, 2; AC 9 [10] Atk: bite 1d2, non-lethal poison, +4 save

In the center of the hollow, a 10 foot shaft embedded with sturdy-looking ladder rungs descends into the darkness. On the floor near the back of the room, food and water dishes for the centipedes appear to be immaculately clean and fresh. And just what is that chopped food preparation?

## The Wood-devil Warrens:

The shaft leads down approximately 30 feet, ending in a landing with a single passageway leading south. The passage, rough-hewn from the bedrock, slopes downward somewhat precipitously until it ends with a stout, if poorly crafted, wooden door.

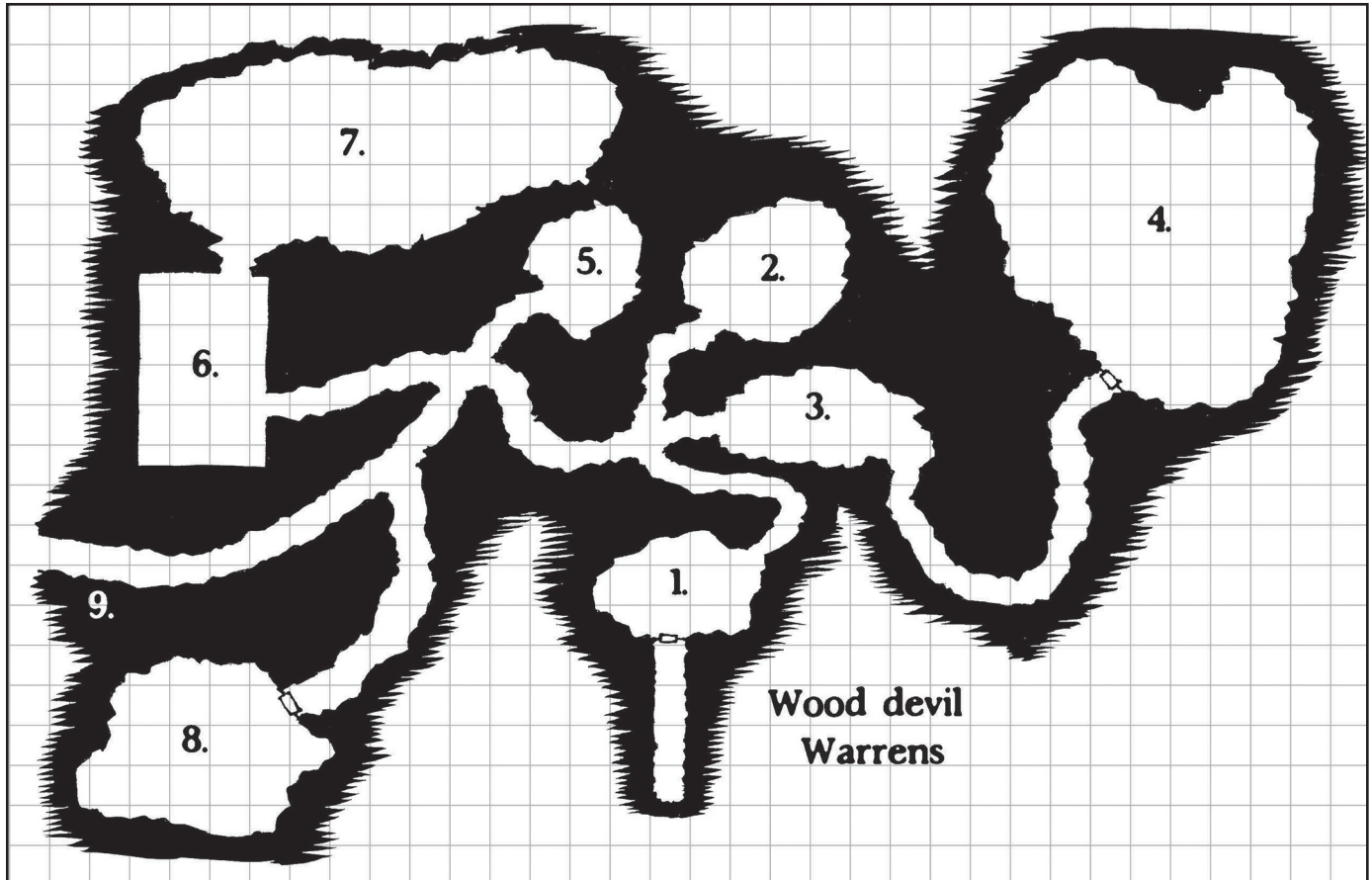
### Area 1. The Main Hive:

A natural grotto that once served Yutephon as an antechamber and meeting room underwent a radical transformation at the hands

of the wood devils. They destroyed such sparse furnishings as there were utterly, leaving the surface of the room covered almost completely with finely shredded paper and wood shavings, like the substrate in a fever-dream gerbil cage. The powerful odor of alien urine slaps the adventurers in the face, defying them to take more than a shallow breath. Only empty wax-spattered sconces on the walls remain intact. The 6 wood-devils currently occupying the room rest under visible heaps of bedding if the adventurers have been stealthy. Otherwise, they rush off to gather the rest of their fellows in areas 3 and 4 to organize some kind of resistance.

**Wood-devils: (6) HP 4, 4, 2, 2, 2, 1**

A careful search of the bedding yields some surprising results. Pages of Yutephon's personal log and some of his spell research can be cobbled together. If detect magic is used in this room, the fragments are readily visible due to Yutephon's obsessive employment of ensorcelled inks. Though incomplete, the sorcerer's notes hint at several interesting breakthroughs in harnessing arcane energies. At the referee's discretion, future spell researches undertaken by PC magic-users could enjoy up to a 50% reduction in cost and time after careful reconstruction and study of these documents. If successfully auctioned off to the right buyers, well folks, the sky's the limit. As above, only intensive study (probably only in concert with an excellent library of some kind) will reveal the true value of Yutephon's theorems.



### Area 2. The Distillery:

This cavern has been outfitted with a variety of bottles, jars, and beakers, connected by an elaborate jumble of tubes and pipes. Long since abandoned, this equipment remains as evidence of Yutephon's perhaps fatal interest in the waters of the Font. A small keg of highly condensed Gleewater brandy still holds 1d4 doses of the experimental beverage, long since written off by the wood-devils as too much of a good thing. Any character inclined to imbibe must roll a saving throw or go stark raving insane for 1d8 hours. If the character successfully saves, he still must roll on the GLEEWATER SPECIAL EFFECTS table below.

### Area 3. The Pantry:

A trio of wood-devils, back from a successful hunt in the forest, chuckle smugly to themselves as they compare their catches. The lifeless bodies of countless forest creatures hang from the ceiling, aging to perfection while producing a stench of such unsurpassed obscenity that the characters must roll a saving throw or be sickened, suffering a -1 penalty to all rolls for the rest of the day.

**Wood-devils (3):** HP 3, 2, 1

### Area 4. Yutephon's Laboratory:

This vast cavern once served as the sorcerer's workroom, and indeed the very pentangle that he used to summon forth the wood-devils from whatever haunted-forest hell they came from occupies the northwest corner. Since they assassinated their captor, the three smartest wood-devils (those who partook of Yutephon's brains on that fateful night) have made use of the alchemical equipment in this room to concoct their reality-defying reproduction formula (see Area 8. The Broodmare, below). Though finding the whole scheme frightfully amusing and a bit of a lark, truth be told, the devils have somehow almost succeeded in creating a new generation of their kind, subtly infused with earthly material to more readily adapt to and (hopefully) overrun their new environment. The wood-devil triumvirate are currently present in the room, unless summoned off by trouble elsewhere, trying once again to open a cosmic portal to their home by mimicking the deceased sorcerer's words and gestures, standing on one another's shoulders while wearing Yutephon's tattered cape. The uppermost devil wields a wand of magic missiles (3 charges).

**World's smartest wood-devils (3):** HP 4, 4, 4

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#### Area 5. Giant Centipede Pen:

Two wood-devils tend to the care and feeding of the 4 attack-trained giant centipedes in this cavern. A smaller than average wood-devil with the face of a deer skull wears an apron and hefts a meat cleaver over a work table, hacking away at a small pile of squirrels, rats, cats, snakes, and bugs rendering them all into a chip-chopped hash to be fed to the attack-trained centipedes. When the characters make their entry, the wood-devils step back into the room, gesticulating madly to their pets to attack.

**Attack-trained giant centipedes (small, non-lethal) (4):**  
HP 2, 2, 2, 2; AC 9 [10]

**Wood-devils (2):** HP 3, 3

#### Area 6. Shaft Room:

A pair of blue-skinned dwarfs from an unknown mountain range far away to the north, under the influence of a powerful spell of mind-control, carry out a mining operation at the behest of the late sorcerer. Yutephon planned to create a personal entrance into the terrifying Underworld from this dwarf-refined cavern. The wood-devils have maintained the operation, finding hilarious the idea of using this entrance to coax terrors from below onto the unsuspecting surface world. Unfortunately, the devils are thoroughly unskilled in dwarf-husbandry, and 4 of the original 6 abducted miners have perished of disease and malnutrition, their skeletons desiccating in their beds. The surviving dwarfs will obey orders to attack any intruders with their mining implements.

**Blue-skinned dwarfs:** HP 8, 8 ac: 4 [15] ATK: pick, hammer  
1d4+1

The inky abyss in the center of this room is 15 feet across and 100 feet deep. It is equipped with two sets of wall-mounted ladder rungs and a bucket and pulley system suspended from the ceiling for transporting debris from the shaft. Deep ruts in the floor leading from the shaft disappear into the darkness of Area 7. If somehow released from the sorcerer's charm spell, or alternately, with their dying breaths, the dwarfs will tell of the terrible noises from below of *something* that was attracted by their activities and has begun to dig *up*. They plead with the player characters to seal up the pit before *it* breaks through. If players decide to listen in silence they too can hear it, seemingly distant but chilling nonetheless, the sharp, regular scrapes from the unknown.

#### Area 7. Debris Storage Area:

The dwarfs use this cavern to store rubble removed from the shaft via a small, wheeled cart. Dwarfs being dwarfs (blue-skinned or otherwise), when, during normal mining operations, they would discover a gem or mineral of some value or interest, they would add it to their stash in a hollow behind a boulder stored in this room. The dwarfs' cache is impressive: A careful search

will also reveal an ancient, enchanted short sword (+1, +2 against magic-users) of alien design, embedded in a large fragment of meteoric rock set aside from the rest of the debris. Skillfully employed hammer and chisel can free the blade readily.

#### Area 8. The Broodmare:

The entrance to this chamber has been sealed up with brick and mortar and a stoutly barred (from the outside) wooden door. The occupant of this room represents the wood-devils' only hope for a long-term infestation of this world, their attempt at (semi-) natural reproduction by some unknowable means. A wood-devil swollen to gross immensity toddles toward the adventurers, its abdomen distended almost beyond belief. Barely able to ambulate, the gurgling, wheezing creature insane with constantly gnawing hunger, attempts to eat anything that enters this chamber. The bones of countless woodland creatures, and not a few human skulls, litter the floor. The first hit on the broodmare triggers a ghastly eruption: the half-formed bodies of nearly 100 wood-devil larvae explode from its abdomen, wriggling and cackling madly before growing still in a rapidly widening pool of fetid ichor.

**Wood-devil broodmare (1):** HP 1; AC 8 [11]; Atk 1 savage bite (1d8); Special: explodes on first hit

#### Area 9. Evacuation Passage:

Originally excavated by the goblin bandits, this narrow, rough passageway travels for approximately one mile, coming up to the surface in a gradual slope. The exit is covered by foliage, but can be cleared readily. The wood-devils make little use of it but keep it guarded using their trained centipedes.

**Attack-trained giant centipedes (small, non-lethal) (2):**  
HP 2, 2; AC 9 [10]

## Aftermath:

Outcomes will vary widely, being largely the result of player/referee interactions, but I provide here a few notes on the many possible results.

- Ogwen will generally be more amenable to compromise and reconciliatory gestures than his brother if players attempt to "set things aright" with the Eens.
- If players opt to make some kind of an arrangement with the Gnome (Gareth Greywhiskers, above), they earn the eternal enmity of the Een clan and an unfavorable reputation with the locals.
- If players fail to destroy the broodmare the region will soon be teeming with wood-devils for which the player characters shall be blamed.
- No matter whom the player characters represent, the locals will be extraordinarily grateful to them for restoring the flow of Gleewater.

### Gleewater special effects table:

Roll 1d12 (all effects last for 8 hours):

1. Mild stupefaction (-1 intelligence)
2. Total stupefaction (-3 intelligence)
3. Dose of the giggles (annoys others)
4. Mind-blowing insight gained (+3 wisdom)
5. Fleeting glimpse of the future (+1 wisdom)
6. Crackpot insight seems brilliant (-1 wisdom)
7. Rendered mute but delighted (amuses others)
8. Grossly inflated sense of own importance (annoys others)
9. Full-blown hallucinations (requires physical restraint in most cases)
10. See through veil of reality: paranoid freak-out (referee's discretion)
11. Penetrating self-examination with uncontrollable sobbing (annoys others)
12. Berserk frenzy of destruction (referee's discretion)

**Note:** large quantities of alcohol (or any sufficiently sedating substance) will usually mitigate the effects above.

## New Monsters and Terrors:

### Briarmen:

**Armor Class:** 7 [14]

**Hit Dice:** 1d4 hp

**Attacks:** thorny embrace 1d4 damage

**Special:** flesh-eating seedlings, 1hp initial damage, 1hp additional damage per hour left untreated

**Move:** 6

**Challenge Level/XP:** A/10

Briarmen begin life as simple barbed brambles in dark forests and other nightmare zones. When pollinated and ready to go to seed, they detach from their root systems and walk, in the rough shape of a man, searching for a living host for their ravenous, flesh-eating seedlings. Once they seize a living creature in their thorny embrace, they emit a barrage of seeds that immediately begin to burrow tendrils into the flesh of the host. Once exposed, victims must vigorously scrub with alcohol and/or set flame to their bodies to be rid of the seedlings. Failure to do so results in a slow death beyond description. If permitted to grow on the corpse, 1d20 adult plants will result from a single such exposure.

### Forest Apes:

**Armor Class:** 5 [14]

**Hit Dice:** 1+1

**Attacks:** bludgeon/bite 1d6/1d4

**Saving Throw:** 17

**Special:** none

**Move:** 9

**Challenge Level/XP:** 1/15

Their common name something of a misnomer, forest apes are actually a species of arboreal hominid, hirsute but fully bipedal and some 3-4 feet in height. Like most hominids, forest apes are only slightly less intelligent than the average human and have developed a fairly complex language of apish hoots and hollers. They deeply envy and consequently resent their hairless cousins. Forest apes are difficult to detect in wooded environments and are unusually adept (+1) with hurled missiles (rocks and chunks of wood, most commonly).

### Wood-Devils:

**Armor Class:** 7 [12]

**Hit Dice:** 1d4hp


**Attacks:** bite 1d4

**Saving Throw:** 16

**Special:** limited flight (wing assisted leaps)

**Move:** 9

**Challenge Level/XP:** A/5

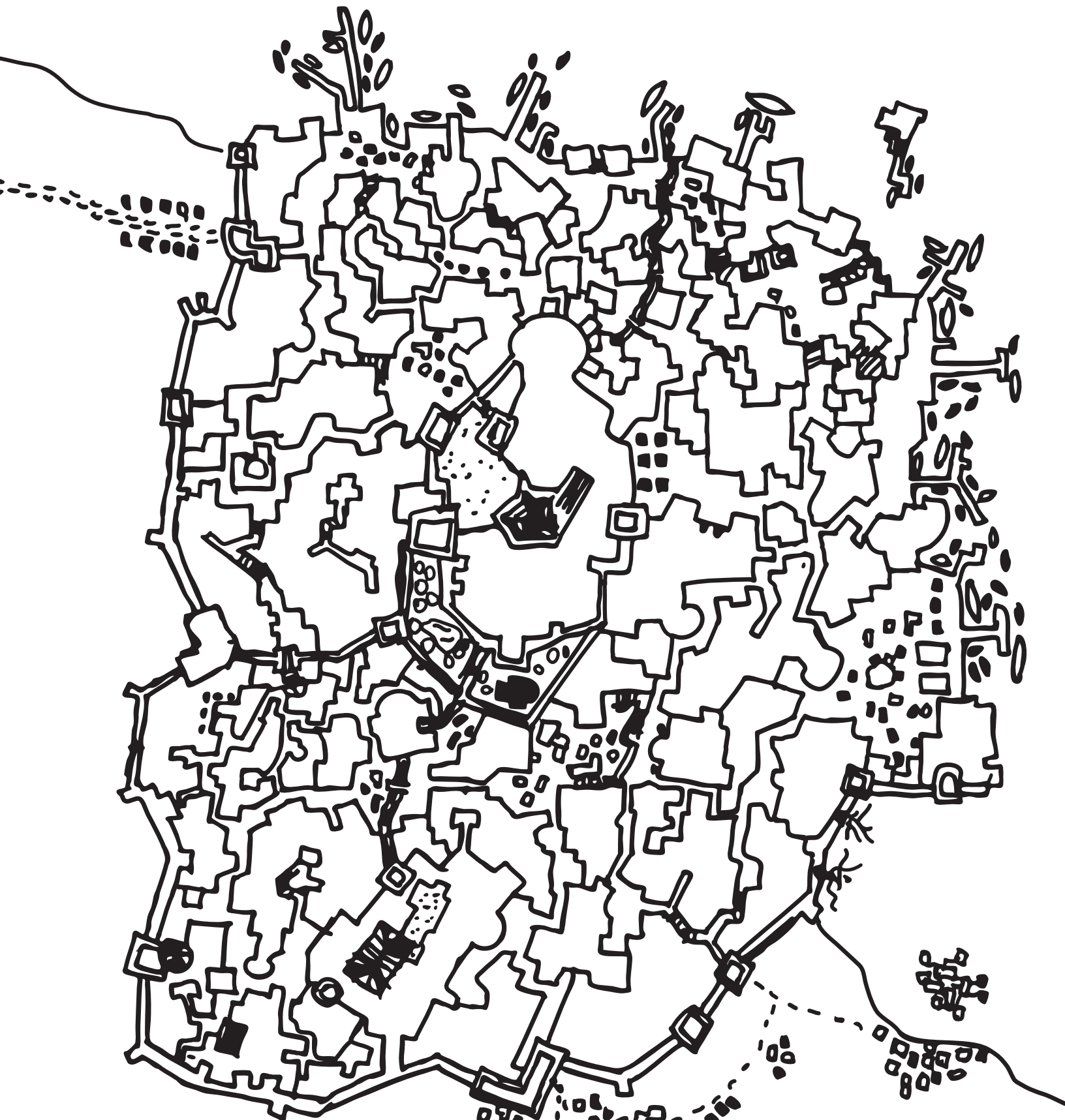
These malevolent creatures infest haunted forests and jungles to the perpetual chagrin of the other inhabitants. Given to all manner of wicked chicanery, including lethal tricks and sadistic practical jokes, wood-devils more than earn their name, even if they don't originate on the infernal planes (a subject of some dispute). These creatures average between 2-4 feet in height, and vary widely in general appearance: bat-like, weasel-like, monkey-like, etc., but always grey-blue in coloration with vestigial wings and horns of varied size and shape. Wood-devil language is composed of high-pitched tittering, indistinguishable from their near-continuous, malicious laughter. 

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# THE CITY OF DULTURES

by Gabor Lux

Playtesters: Akos Barta, Andras Aron Salamon and David Sojtori

Dedicated to Muhammad Abd-al-Rahman Barker



## The City

In the arid lands of Thasan, there rises the City of Vultures, a metropolis whose original name is now forgotten to all – forgotten even to the ancient slaves who are keepers to Mirvander Khan’s library. Open and proud sins among the city’s inhabitants have aroused anger and contempt among the more orthodox nomads of the southern coast, who, under the banners of their new god, have sworn to conquer crumbling wall and gilt spire, and push the faithless into the sea. There is open war against the city, although not an intensive one: distance and terrain conspire to keep the foes apart, so larger clashes are not common.

Under the wings of the vultures that circle lazily above its towers, the city shows signs of rot and decay. Even the rich palaces are crumbling, stuccoes fall and statues are as worn stumps. The streets, redolent with sweet musk, rot and filth are populated by an ill folk, evil of visage and wretched. In contrast, the people of the palaces are marked with calculating indolence and the world-weariness of inherited status. The dwellers worship a lot of demigods native and specific to the city; either unambiguously evil, or indifferent to human suffering. The city is ruled by a grand master of mirages and lies, Mirvander Khan (11<sup>th</sup> level Illusionist). The khan is an evil man befitting his domain, and in his throne room, his safety is protected by a golden cage and trained tigers.

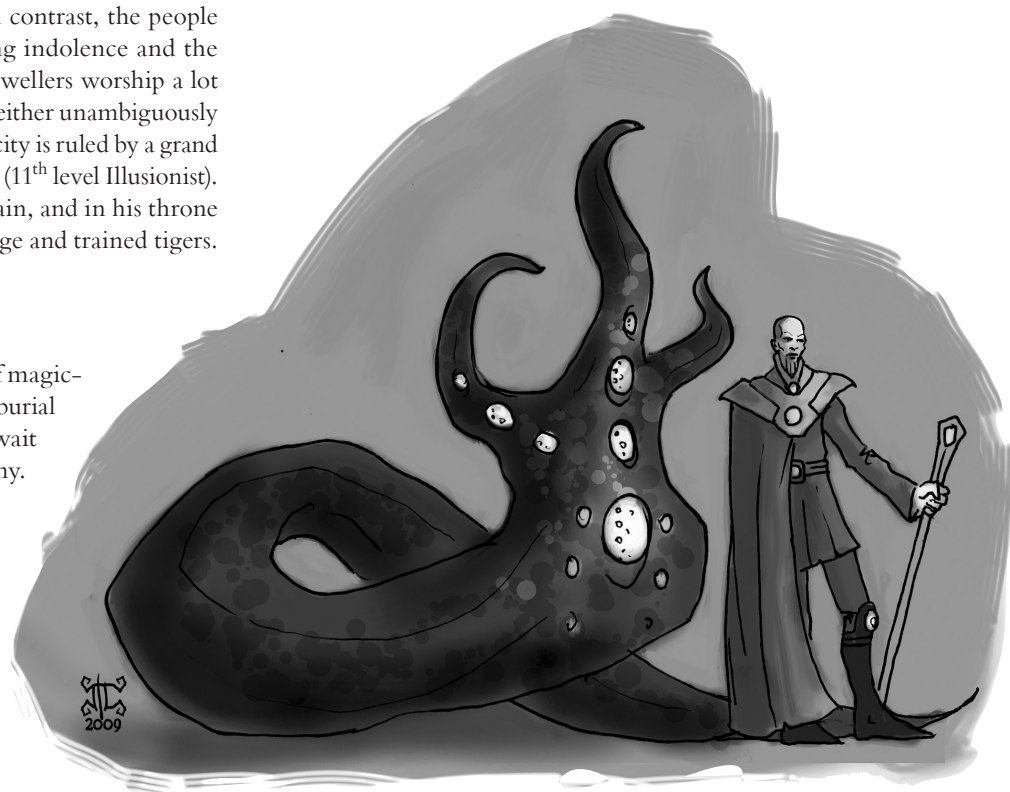
## The Gods

**Béthim Khanum:** a female priesthood of magic-users has risen to protect the bronze-domed burial palace (1.) of this former imperatrix and await her glorious return at the fore of a dead army.

**The Worshippers of the Columns** are ascetics often seen whirling around the tall, primordial columns scattered over the city, and battering their heads against the stone until they fall unconscious. Prophesying in inarticulate screams, they sometimes lead the mob to do terrible deeds.

**Ishab-Lambar,** the new god of the southern nomads, was once tolerated in the city despite his moral certitude, but his worship was outlawed after Mirvander Khan had an ominous dream. Two nights and one day did the hunt for the worshippers last, and then finally was the faith eradicated. Yet ever since, more and more of the lower craftsmen have secretly thronged to its side, establishing the city’s first self-help organisation, **the White Hand.**

**The Worshippers of Jeng,** who perform obeisance before a curtain-shrouded idol. The temple (2.) is heavy with scented vapours and the smell of ash, while cultists with curved swords watch for those not of the faith. The worshippers are duplicitous, “letting the veil of Jeng fall before their nature”.



**Karttekeza**, the idealistic peacock-riding god in fact resides in the Citadel of the She-Sultan south of the city, but he has many followers among the fighting classes, and is popular for both valour and poetry.

**Kéttki** is a common good luck charm resembling a cross between a pangolin and a hedgehog, and his small idols are found in various forms over the city. Some of the more devoted worshippers have been known to flay themselves on the barbed spines, but this behaviour is atypical. No clergy or temple.

**Kwárü Khan:** a former ruler who has degenerated into a black, wormlike horror with the powers of a demigod. At night, the Khan's form prowls the back alleys of the city, whispering horrid secrets to those who walk outside on the darkest nights. What he has to say is often incomprehensible or allegorical to several degrees. None are brave enough to worship him.

**Mezeng**, a secretive clerical sect, is known for its charity, and feeding the poor with mezexin, a purplish pudding-like matter recovered from a foreign world. Thanks to the efficacy of polymorphic cloning, mezexin is both nutritious and easily produced. It eventually becomes a part of human cells and vice versa.

**Ozolba**, the zombie god, is not technically outlawed in the City of Vultures, but his worship must take place in secrecy, since **the Followers of Dókh** are hostile to any philosophy that does not properly dispose of the dead.

**Sürü Miklári:** the veiled priests of the rat god worship in a dank under-cellar (3.) closed off from the world by copper grilles in the company of the "little brothers", thousands of rats. Rat's stench and sweet perfumes mingle with the smell of milk, brought in a multitude of clay bowls by the worshipping poor.

**Swahul the Prophet** is a skeleton kept in a sealed iron casket, who prophesies through the metal sheath by mental transference. The temple of Swahul (4.) is covered in arrays of flowers, and the gardens are known for a multitude of birds singing among the splendid, colourful frescoes depicting the dead.

**Yezud** the spider god has left his temple outside the city gates (5.), and the worshippers have also departed for parts unknown. The gates are sealed, and only



the warnings are left in place: whoever enters shall nevermore leave the sanctum.

**The Temple of the Delightful Scent** is not tied to any known deity; the only sacral object in the domed hall (6.) is the slowly evaporating block of camphor-like resin, prepared from a mixture of spices and the fats of subaquatic creatures by diligent hands. Every morning when the gates are thrown open, there is a new quantity releasing its aroma. All, from flies to men, are drawn inexorably to the smell, which is most pleasant and has no apparent ill effect.

## The Societies

**Deston:** a secret society dedicated to weird harmonies, organised on the principles of terrorist cells. They employ oddly shaped metal tuning forks to produce their otherworldly tones, which are banned due to their danger to one's life, but sought obsessively by those who have partaken of it. The ranks of Deston reach from the most contemptible pariahs to the highest reaches of society. The head of the organisation, and the only man to know the entire cell structure, is Mirvander Khan.

**The Followers of Dókh** are a pariah-caste; it is their task to throw the dead to the vultures, and take away the bones once they have been stripped of meat. The followers use brass chains to bind the dead (and those declared legally dead) to the interior walls of roofless towers found all over the city. They constantly wear cowed robes, as well as an indigo strangling cord around the neck. On their orgiastic rites, they are known to asphyxiate themselves or each other in their frenzy.

**The Followers of Hachur Khan** are dedicated to the service of the former child-king, cast off from the throne by the severe Mirvander Khan and put to everlasting torment. The constantly regenerating, mind-wiped body of Hachur

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Khan is torn every day by vultures, only to regrow by the next morning. His remaining followers have, however, secretly stolen into the tower where the body is kept and recovered pieces of flesh which have now grown into a new race of men, beautiful of form and devoid of sin or intellect. The Followers of Hachur Khan are all high-ranking traditionalist aristocrats or their henchmen.

**The Merchants of Death:** these usurers are doing business with Oolar's time, a spell that can prolong life indefinitely as long as it is recast again and again. They live around **the Courts of Abulghazi Khan**.

**Oom the Many** is a society of illusionists, who have also infiltrated and taken over **the Seekers of the Starry Sky**. On their missions or gatherings, every member wears the face of Oom, the founder of the order. Therefore, Oom may be anyone: a novice or a master of illusions.

**The Society for Optimised Objectivism**, a conspiracy overseeing **the Market of Uugen**, is dedicated to upholding absolutely free market forces within their sphere of influence. They worship an ancient star vampire residing in a crystal globe; the "high priestess", An-Raydn, enjoys good relations with the Supreme High Bursator of Fedafuce, the venerable Grenspanios (now living in a distant city state).

**The Seekers of the Starry Sky** is a philosophy in vogue among the well-born and the affluent. In truth, the wisdom of the stars is a mirage created by illusionists, and the society is guided by **Oom the Many** towards unknown purposes.

**Warriors of the Tiger:** this military brotherhood, based on strong familial ties but open to valorous outsiders who have proven themselves, is sworn to serve the Khan at all costs. Their faces are recognisable by painted scars, although they often employ face-covering iron masks to strike terror into their foes. Women in the family are not expected to take up arms, but it is considered honourable to do so, and a normal occurrence. Once a year, they walk the city with their trained tigers, killing freely those they come across or whose house they break into. The brotherhood resides in **the Fortress of the Tiger**, the former summer palace of Yanar Khanum.

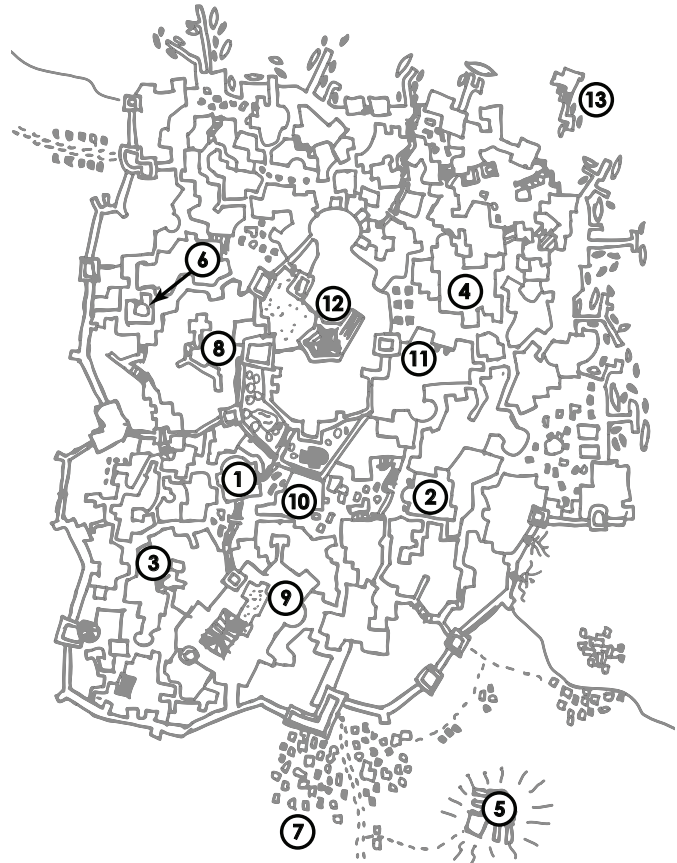
**The White Hand**, ostensibly a self-help organisation, is a network secretly dedicated to the worship of **Ishab-Lambar**. The network provides beneficial micro-credit to upstanding members (mostly craftsmen and lesser merchants) and those it seeks to convert; on the side, it carries out secret assassinations against those judged to be sinful. The White Hand has been infiltrated by some opportunistic thieves, who use it for a front and a source of income.

## The Customs

**Jewel Teeth:** the aristocracy is distinguished from street scum by the partial or full replacement of teeth with sharpened gemstones. The pointed, glinting teeth lend their wearers a bestial appearance, and some enhance it with jewel talons mounted on brass sheaths worn over the fingers. As Mirvander Khan does not follow this custom, it has become a distinguishing sign of the

conservative traditionalists, who are almost without exception cruel for cruelty's sake (as opposed to simple pragmatism, more typical of the Khan's followers).

**Burial Rites:** in the City of Vultures, the dead are carried by **the Followers of Dókh** to roofless towers, where vultures feast on their bodies. The cleaned bones are then carried away and crushed unless a generous bribe is paid; the skulls of nobles are allowed to be taken back by their family as a matter of fact, and it is a typical custom among aristocrats to keep them as a part of the family treasures.



## Key

1. The Burial Palace of Béthim Khanum
2. The Temple of Jeng
3. The Temple of Sürü Miklári
4. The Temple of Swahul
5. The Temple of Yezud
6. The Temple of the Delightful Scent
7. The City of Beggars
8. The Courts of Abulghazi Khan
9. The Fortress of the Tiger
10. The Market of Uugen
11. The Mouth of Mirvander Khan
12. The Palace
13. The Tower of Monodoios

## The Places

**The City of Beggars (7.)** lies outside the southern gates. This stinking shantytown of tents, huts and improvised lean-tos, is a refuge for pariahs and diseased animals; murder, the basest vices, and unthinking brutality are all commonplace, and accidental or intentionally set fires are not unprecedented. The inhabitants here, existing in a half-human state, are in mutual hatred with the city folks, as well as the fishing village on the seacoast.

**The Courts of Abulghazi Khan (8.):** these isolated streets and courts have no apparent connection to the rest of the street system. Here, there is a perpetual full moon at night, and the pale sphere looks much closer than elsewhere. In the houses live ancient people who have outlived all: the “shareholders” and other beneficiaries of the Oolar’s time spell, now administered by **the Merchants of Death**.


**The Fortress of the Tiger (9.)**, which was originally built as the summer palace of Yanar Khanum, is by ancient rights the home of **the Warriors of the Tiger**, the military brotherhood sworn to Mirvander Khan’s protection. The walls of the fortress are as vertical stone cliffs, and its splendour is much unlike the teeming slums that lie beneath.

**The Greater Abyss of Khotek Kemri** is a yawning chasm opening from a cellar in the slums, exhaling cold vapours like a sigh from the underworld. If talked to, the abyss, which is known to but a few, responds; sometimes with an answer, sometimes with a curse, a spell or a strange compulsion: for every visitor, there will be a different response.

**The Market of Uugen (10.)**, a series of interconnected streets and courts, is found in the slums. Everything is on sale – hairy worms in crystal boxes, dried flowers that bring madness, children and dogs sold from cages and bar-covered houses, prophecies and mind-wiped slaves. Let the customer beware: while the wares are genuine, the hearts of the sellers are not; and he who is not cautious may become merchandise instead of buyer.

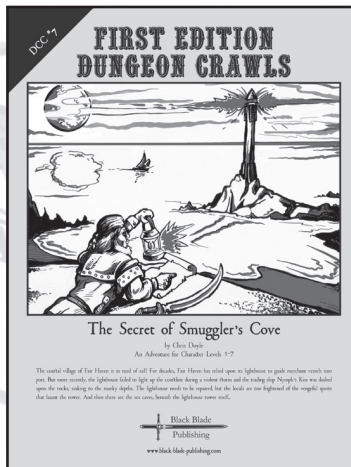
**The Mouth of Mirvander Khan (11.)** is a monstrous stone idol standing by the eastern gates of **the Palace**. The crumbling terror rests its clawed paw on a stone block, and, if the current Khan is so willing, its throat will speak to the city (and will obey none other). Thus far, Mirvander Khan has never taken advantage of the opportunity.

**The Palace (12.):** an immense complex rising from the city like a mountain of stone. Its gardens are islands of calm and beauty in the tumult of sin; the northern palace towering above the harbour a network of antique living quarters. The highest point in the Palace is the ceramic-studded central tower. Way up, on a landing platform supported by beams of steel, there rest glittering metal birds that can sail the skies.

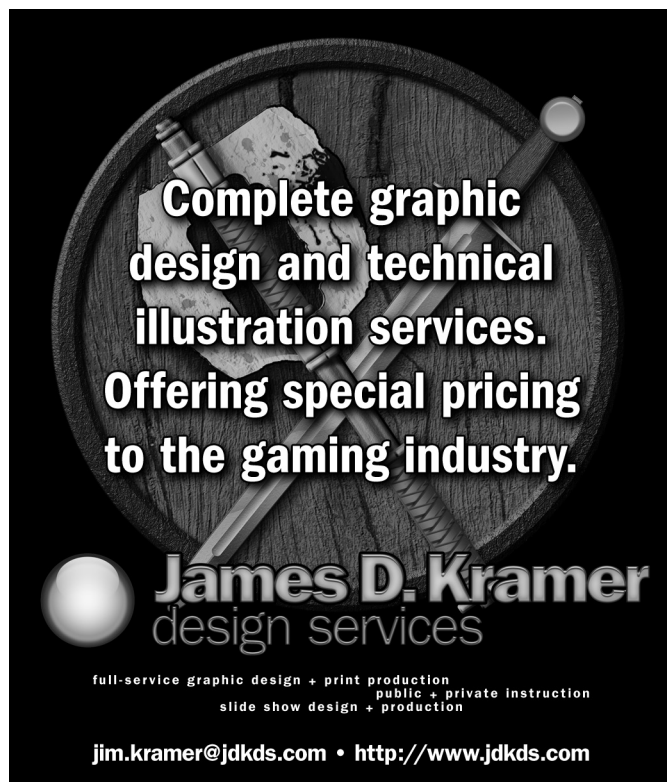
**The Tower of Monodoios (13.)** is a half-ruined tower jutting from the waters of the harbour, and is the nest of the bandit leader known as the Fisherman Lord, his thieves, and their extended, interrelated families, which is the strongest criminal organisation in the city. 

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# RANDOM WILDERNESS EVENTS (p20)

by Joshua James Gervais

**T**he dungeon isn't the only place where the strange and mysterious can be found. The wilderness has its share of weirdness as well. This table is intended as a springboard for Refs to build wilderness adventures. It was written with an eye towards giving high-level characters with strongholds and the like interesting challenges in their territory, but can be used for characters of any level.

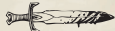
- 1:** The blood moon causes all animals to go into a killing frenzy for three consecutive nights.
- 2:** A natural disaster such as an earthquake or wildfire opens an opening into a long-forgotten underground structure.
- 3:** An ancient tree awakens, becoming a Treant.
- 4:** A new settlement is founded without the approval of an important person (a ruler, local druids, or possibly the PCs if it's in their territory).
- 5:** A dragon is roused from a century long slumber and seeks to regain its stolen hoard.
- 6:** An undead beast that resembles a bear or boar rampages through the wilderness.
- 7:** A new corpse of trees springs up overnight.
- 8:** Animals in one section of the wilderness mysteriously grow to monstrous sizes.
- 9:** A section of the wilderness—plants, animals, and the like — are inexplicably turned to stone.

- 10:** A corpse of trees begins to slowly travel towards a settlement — moving a short distance each night.
- 11:** A tree that bears magical fruit is discovered. The effect of the magic changes from beneficial to baneful when the fruit spoils.
- 12:** A falling star lands in the wilderness.
- 13:** A long lost expedition returns out of the wilderness not knowing that they have been gone for decades.
- 14:** One by one, animals in the wilderness begin to speak the common tongue, but become no more intelligent.
- 15:** Unfamiliar bodies from a foreign land are found hung from the tree line.
- 16:** Ominous, unmoving storm clouds form over the wilderness, but there is no storm.
- 17:** A strange creature made out of the parts of several animals native to the wilderness begins to attack nearby settlements.
- 18:** Over night the wilderness is transformed from summer to winter (or vice versa).
- 19:** A band of feral children appear in a settlement and claim to speak on behalf of the “King of the Wilds.”
- 20:** A road appears going into the heart of the wilderness. Its true destination is unknown. 

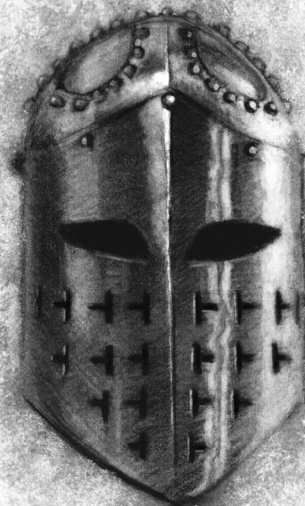
## Your Monster in Metal! Contest Details

Center Stage Miniatures has licensed the right to produce Swords & Wizardry miniatures, and they are running a contest for Knockspell Magazine readers! Write up the best new monster and Center Stage will sculpt it and put it into their Swords & Wizardry line. Here are the rules: (1) it has to be a monster; (2) it has to be roughly human-sized; (3) the description has to be in Swords & Wizardry format; (4) the winner has to sign a contract allowing Center Stage to produce the minis for as long as they want to. There's not a money prize, but it isn't every day you get to see one of your own creations immortalized in metal.

How to enter the contest: send your monster description, in Swords & Wizardry format, to [centerstagehobbies@yahoo.com](mailto:centerstagehobbies@yahoo.com), attention Matt Solarz, who is the president of Center Stage Miniatures. Center Stage will judge the entries, and the winning entry will be sculpted and sold in the Swords & Wizardry line of miniatures, as well as being published in the magazine. The monster description will also be printed on the packaging for the miniature, with your name as author.

The first contest runs from September 1, 2009 until December 31, 2009. Fire up your creativity and make some monsters! 

## ASTONISHING SWORDSMEN & SORCERERS



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# RANDOM RUIN GENERATOR

by Robert Lionheart

*Adventurers unearth a moldy map revealing a city lost for a thousand ages....*

*Bandits set camp in the crumbling wreckage of a dead warrior's great hall...*

*Seadogs spot an enemy's armada beached in the shallows, flying rotted sails...*

*Wanderers stumble upon a marvelous temple buried by the jealousy of a spurned goddess... Scavengers loot the carcass of a forgotten village, fallen to a hideous plague...*

Exploring ruins is a favorite aspect of fantasy adventuring, but not all ruins are dungeons. Sometimes they are just an intriguing spot on the map, or bumped into while trekking through the wilderness. These tables help the referee to flesh out these encounters with three simple dice rolls. First, what was this place? Second, how badly damaged is it? And third, what is here now? After tossing the dice, mix it up with your imagination and dare your players to explore!

## What was this Place?

The first 3D6 roll determines the general nature of the structure, as it existed before whatever tumbled the buildings into ruin. The referee should determine the previous purpose of the structure. Ruins are a great way to introduce elements of your setting's past history and inspire mysteries. Why is the keep of a Dwarf lord within an ancient Elven forest? This shrine is obviously the work of Man, so why the altars to the foul Orc gods?

### 3. Bizarre Magical Creation

This ruin was originally built with magic or lost technology. Is it real or a dream of a madman? Let your visions run wild with palaces of bone, skull fortresses, floating crystal towers, living tree houses, and invisible castles!

### 4. Inhuman Construction

This ruin was constructed by a non-humanoid race. It may have been designed for an anatomy that was neither bipedal, nor upright. Travel through such a ruin might be quite difficult, disorienting and dangerous. Examples include a hive abandoned by giant bees, a mountain riddled into honeycombs by rock eating oozes, a coral reef teleported onto land, or a crashed alien starship.

### 5. Architectural Feat

These ruins are often huge, impressive and awe-inspiring public works that took decades, maybe centuries, to construct and devoured the lives of thousands of forgotten Men. Such feats could be a sprawling monolith commemorating an ancient event (or future one!), a gigantic statue of a God, Man or Monster, an aqueduct with spiraling fountains, a bridge across a massive chasm, or even a pyramid observatory built to solve the mysteries of the heavens. The secret to this unique

construction might have been lost to past ages. Its rediscovery could be worth a great fortune to the right patron.

### 6-8. Walls of Stone

In an uncertain world, Men and Dwarves build stone walls to keep out invaders. When all else falls to sword and flame, the silent bricks remain. What stories would they tell? What were the walls built to keep out? Or what did they keep imprisoned within? The referee chooses the length, height and breath of these walls from a simple hedgerow of rocks, or a forbidding spiked palisade to a nation-spanning barricade such as Hadrian's Wall or the towering Great Wall of China.

### 9-12. Single Dwelling

This single structure stands alone in the wilderness. There may have been many more buildings nearby in the past, but this one is all that remains. Unless the referee has a specific type of dwelling in mind, roll D20 below. The chart is skewed toward multi-room ruins to encourage exploration and player interest.

d20	Size	Type	Examples
1-3	Small	Common	hermit hut, peasant hovel, cottage, windmill, farm
4-6	Small	Unusual	mausoleum, signal tower, shrine, workshop
7-11	Medium	Common	road house, noble manor, stables, temple, keep, merchant storehouse, barracks, large farm
12-14	Medium	Unusual	wizard's tower, monastery, moathouse, sage's library
15-17	Large	Common	castle, fortress, citadel
18-20	Large	Unusual	seasonal vacation palace, opulent castle, university

### 13-15. Many Structures

The referee can roll 1D6, 2D6 or 3D6 for the number of ruins in the area. One ruin per D6 rolled should be a centerpiece ruin. Roll D20 on the Dwelling chart to determine the nature of these key ruins. The remainder could simply be small common dwellings.

### 16. Village

Villages far from major cities and towns can vanish due to marauder attacks, disease, famine or natural disasters. Some villages were built by those who sought to live outside the social order, such as cultists of forbidden gods, fallen noble families, demi-human outcasts, army deserters turned bandits, incestuous families of raving cannibals and other unwanted folk. If something went wrong in such a village, it would perish as mysteriously as it lived. A village consists of 1D6 x 10 ruins. Most dwellings will be small, although a few medium sized buildings and maybe one large structure will be present.

## 17. Town

Towns are vital to the health of nations and often located at crossroads of commerce. If one goes missing, people notice. Whatever caused a town to be abandoned must have been an important and terrible event in the region's history. A town has 3D6 x 10 ruins. Almost every town will have been walled with keeps at the gates. Quite often, a town rose up around a noble's castle or major temple as the focal point for security and wealth.

## 18. Metropolis

The juggernaut of all ruins is the Lost City. An entire campaign could be centered around the excavation, exploration and conquering of a ruined metropolis. A city will have 3D6 x 100 ruins. Depending on the vision of the referee, such a ruin could have several Architectural Feats, Bizarre Magical Creations and maybe even a few Inhuman Constructions. Just imagine how many dungeons are underneath!!!

## How badly damaged is it?

The referee may roll 3D6 once for the entire ruin, or roll separately for each structure within the ruined area. This chart is skewed toward creating stable ruins to be explored.

### 3-5. Magically altered

Strange and wondrous sorcery may have unpredictable effects that last long beyond the spell caster. Also, the blessings, curses and whims of Gods can manifest in unusual ways. What was the purpose behind these alterations? How do these changes affect those exploring within?

#### 3. Caught in a Time Warp

The structure builds itself upward and crumbles back to dust as the hours, days, moon phases or other events cause time to move differently around this site. How does this temporal dislocation affect those trapped inside?

#### 4. Transformed

The original building materials have changed into something else, simply odd or maybe unexplainably bizarre. Wood structures might have become living trees or petrified stone. Rock walls might turn into clear crystal, solid fogs, or even pure gold!

#### 5. Illusionary Condition

Roll 1D6. On 1-3, the structure appears to be pristine when it actually decayed. On 4-6, the building appears to be crumbling when it is in fact pristine.

### 6-8. Significant decay

Ruins that have suffered significant decay are mostly remnants. Often they are burnt, charred or eroded beyond any chance of repair or even recognition. Most are skeletal frames, broken walls or just piles of debris. However, more solid vestiges such as a shrine's altar, a home's hearth or a blacksmith's anvil are sometimes still intact. Don't forget the treasure chest hidden under the ashes!

### 6. Pile of Rubble

This structure crumbled to the ground, burying whatever lay beneath. Not much more than jumbled stones in the

high grass or shards of charred wood. Of course, shoving aside the debris just might reveal steps leading down into a secret dungeon!

### 7. Skeletal Remains

The structure is only a ribcage of ragged support beams, leaving the interior exposed. The ceiling has fallen away and the exterior walls are mostly rubble.

### 8. Half Standing

Half the structure suffered the brunt of the erosion damage, leaving the other half relatively stable. The partial structure might have protected a few of the interior areas from the ravaging elements.

### 9-12. Relatively stable

Because this is a fantasy game, the majority of ruins will be relatively stable and mostly intact. Wood structures were abandoned no more than a few decades ago, depending on the climate. Stone buildings may have been left alone for centuries. Most will be missing exterior doors and windows and some may have partially collapsed roofs. The local flora and fauna will be present, especially bugs, weeds and rodents.

### 9. Danger of Collapse

This structure has one last hurrah before it collapses into remnants. These buildings must be explored with care.

### 10-11. Broken

The building has only half of its original stability, but it is repairable with work. Some interior areas might be intact with minor damage from age and weather.

### 12. Stronger Than It Looks

Although weather beaten, the structure withstood the test of time with cosmetic damage to the exterior. Most interior areas are surprisingly intact, except for perishables.

### 13-15. Needs excavating

Some ruins are difficult to explore because of challenging terrain. Many are choked with debris as the ceilings and walls crumbled inward, leaving treacherous uneven piles across the floor. Others have suffered Nature's wrath in more unusual ways. Reclaiming such a ruin requires greater effort.

### 13. Overgrowth

The structure is covered with thick moss or entangling vines or the structure might be overrun entirely by nature with thickets growing throughout. The overgrowth itself might be quite alive (and maybe dangerous!) or long dead, such as dusty cobwebs.

### 14. Icky Weirdness

The structure is partially or entirely covered in grotesque molds, oozes, slimes, colonies of maggots, worms, termites or just sticky webs. While disgusting, their presence might forewarn the presence of particular monsters or just act as a red herring.

### 15. Sunken or Submerged

The ground around the structure has collapsed and now the ruin is partially or completely covered by earth or sand, rockslide, volcanic ash or even swamp. If it is a castle in a swamp, check for possible ruined castles sunken beneath!

### 16-18. Strange phenomena

Mother Nature uses entropy, weather and worms to bring down man's achievements. However, sometimes the damage to a ruin is harder to explain. Even magic might not fully explain what has occurred.

#### 16. Ground Zero

The damage is greatest in one location and spreads outward in concentric rings, or maybe the worst damage is localized, like the stomp of a tremendous giant or impact crash of an alien asteroid or dying dragon whose corpse plowed a path of destruction.

#### 17. Hidden Decay

The structure appears intact from casual inspection of the exterior, but in reality, the building is a house of cards on the verge of total collapse. Just looking at it causes structural damage!

#### 18. Oddly Perfect

Not only are the structures intact, but they appear to be currently occupied, maybe even with warm fireplaces and fresh food in the pantry. Where did everybody go?

## What is here now?

Players will expect monsters hiding in the ruins. Roll 3D6 to discover the truth. These tables are skewed to promote exploration more than combat, but keep your Wandering Monsters ready.

### 3-5. Magical phenomena

Although sorcerous effects may have similar origins as magical alterations, they are often more reactive to the actions of explorers. What would stone imbued with magic spells look like? How would the enchantments reveal themselves? What happens if the rune circles or ley lines are disturbed?

#### 3. Null Magic Zone

Any magic cast within the ruins and the nearby area automatically fails. Even magic items may temporarily lose their powers. No enchanted, undead or magical monsters can exist here. Do campers awaken to find their potions drained to the last drop?

#### 4. Wild Magic Zone

All arcane magic cast in the area reacts in strange, random and potentially dangerous ways. Even divine magic may be adversely affected. What happens to magical items? Does your elixir of healing become an elixir of invisibility instead?

#### 5. Arcane Mark

One or more locations or objects within the ruin glow with powerful energies. Depending on the strength of the magic, the arcane radiance might be obvious without detection spells. What weird effect might this magic cause? Can the ruin itself cast spells?

### 6-8. Intruders

Ruins draw attention. Often, such attention leads to deadly conflicts between scavengers. The sounds of battle might even be how your adventurers first discover the location.

#### 6. Disputed Territory

Two (or more) factions are already fighting over the ruins. Roll 1D6 for each faction: (1-2) humans or

demi-humans, (3-4) monstrous humanoids, (5-6) monsters. How will they react to the new arrivals?

#### 7. Looters

Humans (or humanoids) are looting the area. How successful they might have been in their scavenging depends on the referee. The looters may be transient or determined to settle the area, especially if the ruins are intact.

#### 8. Corpses

The remains of many dead lay scattered throughout the ruin. Roll 1D6 for decomposition: (1-2) freshly murdered; (3-4) rotting and reeking; (5-6) nothing but bones. Who were they? How did they die? Is their killer hiding somewhere in the ruin?

### 9-12. All quiet

Ruins exist to be explored. While they should be approached with caution, they are usually not as infested with traps and monsters as dungeon chambers. Instead, they make good camp grounds and possible bases for future operations. Thus, ruins are commonly empty of obvious snarling threats when the adventurers first arrive. Wandering Monsters are rolled as normal, possibly setting up the players as the defenders instead of the invaders.

#### 9. I'll Be Back

One or more creatures have recently camped at the ruins, leaving evidence of their passing such as gnawed bones, bloody remains, or steaming piles of poop. Roll for the previous creature on the appropriate Wandering Monster table or choose a foe best suited to your adventure.

#### 10-11. Nothing...Yet

No creature has recently visited the ruins. Extensive searches might reveal the passing of some creatures in the undetermined past.

#### 12. Avoided

Natural creatures avoid the ruins and the surrounding acreage. If Wandering Monsters appear, they will only be aberrant, enchanted or supernatural foes. What is wrong with this place?

### 13-15. Lair

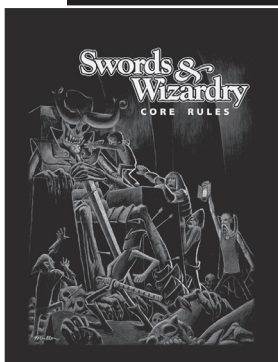
Sometimes, your adventurers are not the first beings to realize the potential of the ruins. Most Wandering Monsters in the area should be the same species as those in the lair, or related to them in some manner (prey, allies, predators, etc).

#### 13. Natural Creatures

Natural creatures such as lions, tigers and bears have made lairs here. At the referee's discretion, natural creatures may include giant animals and insect monstrosities. Their sharp senses will quickly alert them to danger, but natural creatures will usually evacuate if vigorously threatened.

#### 14. Humanoids

Humans, demi-humans or monstrous humanoids have claimed the ruins as their own. They might be settlers seeking a new home, bandits claiming a new hideout or travelers seeking shelter. Most will have guards and lookouts. Some may post warnings reminding strangers not to trespass (like bloody heads stuck on poles).



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### 15. Monster

Something terrible has settled into the ruin. Maybe a tribe of monsters, or maybe a hideous NPC villain. Roll 1D6. On 1-4, the monster will fit the local ecology, such a green dragons in a forest. On a 5-6, the monster will be strange and foreign to this region.

### 16-18. Haunting

What if the dead inhabitants choose to stay? Commoners are a superstitious lot and believe all ruins are haunted by the dead and the damned. Sometimes, they are quite correct.

#### 16. Haunted

Instead of monstrous undead, the ruin is haunted by apparitions and poltergeists. These spirits may be playful, troublesome, mischievous or angry. They will be most active at night, particularly during the witching hour.

#### 17. (Un)Death Trap

Whatever dies in these ruins rises back up as undead guardians. The ruins are populated with undead versions of the previous residents and local wandering monsters. The transformation might be instant, or maybe the next night or maybe once the corpse is fully decayed. Are these undead bound the ruins? Or can they follow the adventurers?

#### 18. I See Dead People

Some ghosts refuse to believe they died. Instead, these spirits of the past see the ruins as they once were and continue on with their existence. Maybe constantly living out their final day?

## Examples of Ruins

My favorite part of writing these charts is combining dice rolls with daydreams. Here are five examples I cooked up in 10 minutes. I hope you enjoy creating your own!

### A Love Beyond Death

Dice Rolls = Single Dwelling (small, unusual), Hidden Decay, I'll Be Back

An ancient shrine stands dedicated to beautiful woman, her lifelike statue sculpted with great talent. One touch by mortal hands and it crumbles. Her past lover (and murderer), now a cursed wraith, visits every midnight and wails in ghostly agony. What will he do tonight?

### Bridge to Nowhere

Dice Rolls = Architectural Feat, Illusionary Condition, Avoided

A gorgeous bridge of sweeping grandeur connects this cliff to that yonder fair isle. The structure spans over treacherous churning waters and appears to be solid iron, wrought with inlaid copper. Too bad the real iron rusted to dust centuries ago, leaving nothing but a pretty illusion behind. Your warhorses buck warily as you approach...

### Smoldering Fort

Dice Rolls = Many Structures (medium, common), Pile of Rubble, Corpses (reeking & rotting)

Four makeshift barracks lay in smoking ruins, charred to the ground and two dozen goblins lay slain by whoever assaulted their camp. Hey, why are they all missing their hands?


### Dead Mentors Grant No Spells

Dice Rolls = Single Dwelling (Medium, Unusual), Skeletal Remains, Looters

An angry wizard and his worried apprentices comb through the broken tower of the mage's former master who booted him out decades ago. Surely within this shell of stone there must be some remnant of that old fool's magic? And we are not interested in sharing! Begone interlopers!

### Nothing to See Here

Dice Rolls = Walls of Stone, Half Standing, Nothing...Yet

A long time ago, the mighty city-state of Gax-Arno was home to the greatest philosophers in the world. Today, no remnant of the fabled city exists on the surface, except for the northern and western walls. Their keeps and gates are long gone, but those towering walls hold firm. 

# Labyrinth Tomb of the Minotaur Lord

## An unabashedly hack 'n' slash labyrinth crawl for levels 3-5

by R. Lawrence Blake

For use with the *Labyrinth Lord*™ rules, *Swords & Wizardry Core Rules*, and other BASIC RPG systems.

### Introduction:

Decades ago, in the land of Dathire, the chaotic magic-user Wruulyn and his son Banezyth went in search of the Conjuror's Key, an evil artifact sought out by power hungry conquerors and bloodthirsty demons. While fighting a tribe of hill giants near the Ruins of Mor, Banezyth was slain. Desperate and grief-stricken, Wruulyn cast a reincarnation spell which brought his son's soul back to life – but within the body of a grotesque minotaur. As vain as he was evil, the reborn Banezyth went insane when he perceived his newly monstrous appearance and attacked his father in a blind rage. Disgusted, the powerful and chaotic magic-user slew his minotaur-son. Shortly thereafter, Wruulyn built a giant labyrinth tomb to encase himself and his son's minotaur body within.

Rumors passed down through the years that Wruulyn actually found the Conjuror's Key before entombing himself, and the key is now lost within the dark, twisted halls of his labyrinth. Moreover, the legend of Banezyth has become a religion of sorts to minotaurs throughout the Known Lands. As the years passed, scores of these dreaded creatures have ventured into the area seeking the tomb.

Adventurers in the area will hear from many sources that if the Conjuror's Key lies within the tomb, its dark and evil effects will be felt throughout the cryptic passages of the labyrinth. Wherever the key is found, demons and the undead will be attracted to its call. Nevertheless, the possibilities of looting the long-dead magic-user's treasure will certainly beckon even the most timid adventurer, even though reaching the tomb is likely to be a journey fraught with perils.

### GM notes:

Wruulyn certainly did find the Conjuror's Key, and ultimately used this evil item to bring down his son. Using the Key's power to cast *Trap the Soul*, Banezyth was promptly sucked into the Key's gem (see *NEW ITEMS* section for details), which is where his soul remains to this very day.

Because the Conjuror's Key attracts otherworldly beings, such as demons, elementals, and undead, Wruulyn placed a magical protection around the labyrinth tomb to make the outer wall impenetrable to creatures of a summoned or magical nature (such as ethereal or astral) as well as to certain spells. Inside the labyrinth, however, such creatures can roam freely (with the exception of areas 5, 16, and 17 — which were also placed under Wruulyn's magical protections).

The Key's power is relatively minor, but due to embellishments of the tale, and its attraction of dangerous creatures, it has become a vanity piece for treasure-seekers.

The minotaurs found within the labyrinth look at the legend of Banezyth with pride. To them, Banezyth represents both the humanoid and animal sides of their kind, and those that serve as guardians to his tomb will fight vigorously and to the death.

### Objective:

The main objective for the players is to locate the Conjuror's Key and (of course) loot the tomb. However, procuring such an evil artifact is likely to be the beginning of a series of potential headaches (or adventures, depending on one's outlook) for the character who possesses it. Once outside of the tomb's protective magic, the Key will begin to attract deadly creatures, and evil treasure-seekers will also be following its trail. Moreover, its magical properties are harmful to non-chaotic creatures. The party may choose to quickly sell it to an evil overlord of some kind (provided their alignments would allow it), or rid themselves of it by offering it to high-level lawful spellcasters, who would certainly feel obligated to destroy the artifact.

Either way, while the Key is in the party's possession outside of the tomb, they will be in constant danger. Unless other arrangements have been made regarding the Key, it may be best for all concerned to leave to artifact where it lies ... once the tomb has been looted, of course.

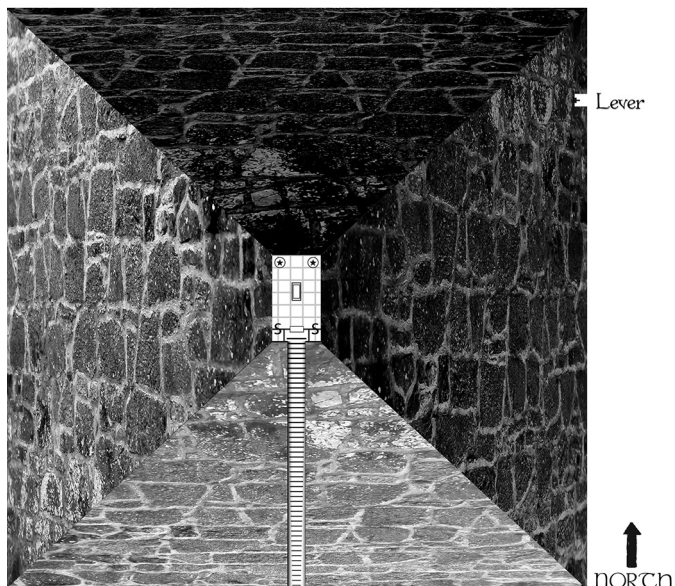
### Beginning the Adventure:

How the characters end up at the tomb is up to the GM. Possibilities might include:

- The party is serving as mercenaries to a lawful cleric who has made it his life's mission to locate and destroy evil magical items.
- The growing population of minotaurs is becoming a deadly problem within the lands, and the adventurers are sent to investigate and secure the area.
- The simple call to sack a tomb potentially full of treasure. The party hears of the legend of Wruulyn and his son, and answers the call of gold and glory.



## The Temple



## The Temple:

The party climbs the stairs to a 12' tall, unlocked wooden door that opens into a 40' x 60' stone room. A statue of a bull stands in the northwest corner and a statue of a human is located in the northeast corner. Attached to the floor in the center of the room is a stone coffin with a bull's face carved into its lid.

If the coffin lid is lifted without first pulling the lever found in the outside alcove, the south wall slides open to reveal the temple guardians — 2 Iron Statues (AL: N, MV: 30' (10'), AC: 4, HD: 4, ATT: 2, DMG: 1d8, 1d8, SV: F4, ML: 11, XP: 190). These iron statues have the semblance of giant minotaurs. If the lever has been pulled, the coffin lid will open without incident, revealing a winding stone staircase leading into darkness.

The sliding doors leading to the temple guardians can be found with a successful secret doors check.

## The Labyrinth:

Unless otherwise noted, the labyrinth ceiling is 15ft high. Except for a few magically lit areas, the tomb is completely dark. A few walls within the labyrinth have been blasted through by an Ethereal Doppelganger using a Horn of Blasting (see AREA 8).

1. The stairs lead to a stone room with passages to the south, east and west. A large (12ft) statue of a minotaur stands in the center. It has the name "Banezyth, Minotaur Lord" inscribed on its base. On the wall through the eastern passage is a small

## Approaching the Labyrinth Tomb:

The tomb is neither "lost" nor hidden, and it is relatively easy to find despite its lonely locale within the Known Lands. It lies 20 miles west of the Ruins of Mor, in the hills just north of the Dathire swamplands.

The outside of the giant tomb is a square stone structure, roughly 470' x 470'. The south side has an ascending set of steps, leading 200' up to a temple door at the pyramid-like top. Plant life has grown thickly up the sides of the walls.

On the east wall, behind the brush, is an easily-found alcove (a +1 bonus to find concealed doors). The alcove is 10' x 10' and there is an iron lever attached to the west wall. This lever requires a 15+ Strength to pull. Pulling the lever will make it safe to open the coffin within the temple area (see TEMPLE).

## The Labyrinth Tomb

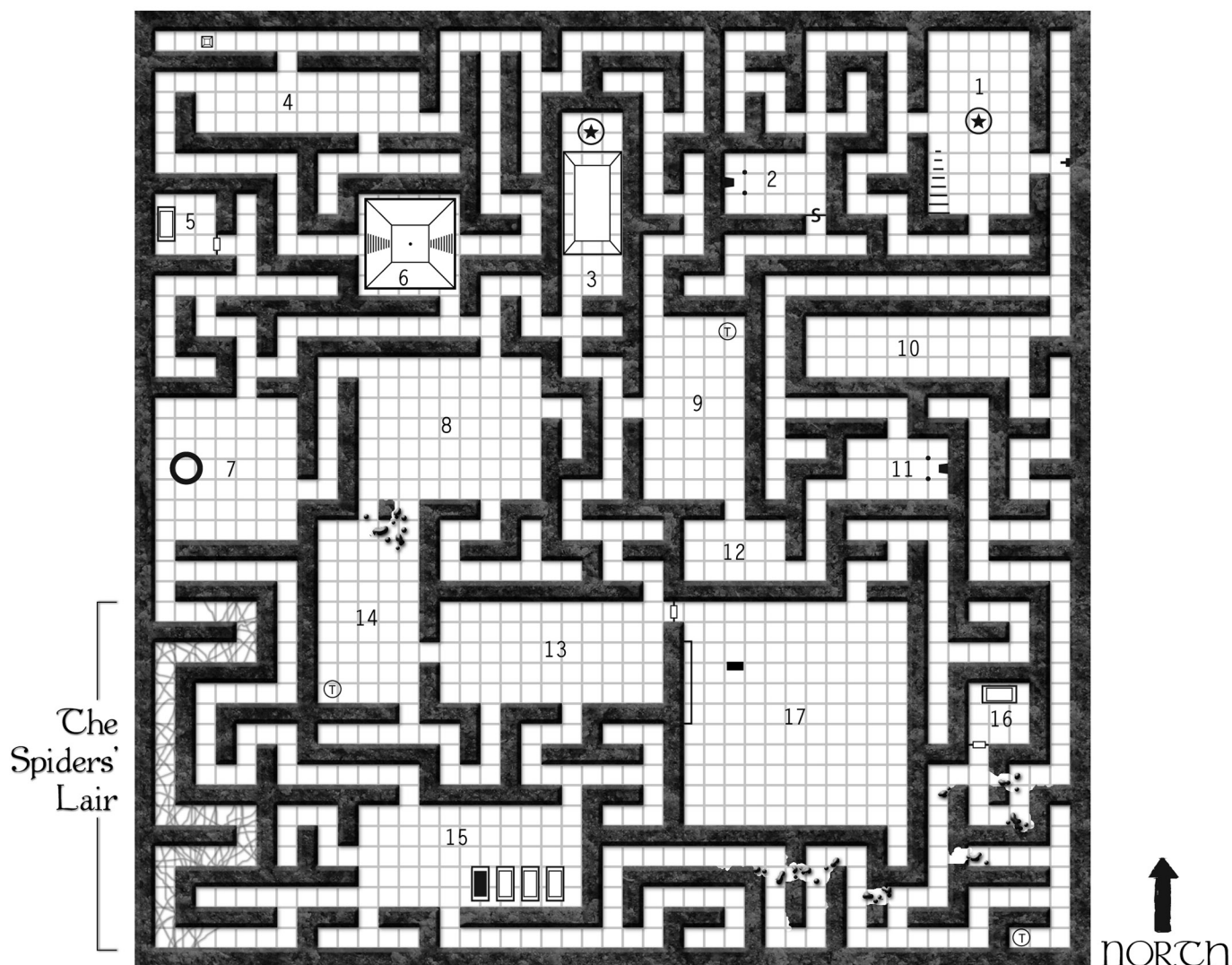
### Wandering Monsters

Roll d10 during each rest period.

1-4	No encounter
5	1 Ethereal Doppelganger (See NEW MONSTER section, AL: C, MV: 120' (40')/240' (80'), AC:4, HD: 5, HP: 30, ATT: 2, DMG: 1d12/1d12, SV: F5, ML: 9, XP: 350)
6	2 Shadows (AL: C, MV: 90' (30'), AC:7, HD: 2+2, HP: 14, 12, ATT: 1, DMG: 1d4 + special, SV: F2, ML: 12, XP: 83)
7	1-2 Crab Spiders (AL: N, MV: 120' (40'), AC:7, HD: 2, HP: 13, ATT: 1, DMG: 1d8 + poison, SV: F1, ML: 7, XP: 38)
8	1-4 Giant Rats (AL: N, MV: 120' (40'), AC:7, HD: 1d4, HP: 4 each, ATT: 1, DMG: 1d3 + disease, SV: F1, ML: 8, XP: 6)
9-10	1 Minotaur (AL: C, MV: 120' (40'), AC:6, HD: 6, HP: 32, ATT: 2 or 1, DMG: 1d6/1d6, SV: F6, ML: 12, XP: 820)



# The Labyrinth



lever similar to the one found in the outside alcove. Pulling this lever will make it safe to emerge from the stairway's coffin without triggering the temple guard's sliding doors, and it will reset the outside lever as well.

2. A 5ft stone podium with an inlaid golden plaque on top is affixed to the floor against the west wall. Illuminating the room, on either side of the podium, are two iron racks, each holding a torch cast with a permanent continual light. The plaque is covered in dust, but once this is wiped away, the characters are able to see their reflections in the empty plaque. Any character that stares into the plaque will see his or her reflection transform into the face of a bull. If the character does not immediately look away, he must save vs. spells or be polymorphed into a minotaur.

The character will take on instincts, alignment, preferences, etc. of a minotaur and will attack the party as trespassers of the Minotaur Lord's tomb. A dispel magic spell will reverse the effect.

If one of the continual light torches is taken out of its holder, this triggers a trap door to the south to open. 4 ghouls (AL: C, MV: 90' (30'), AC:6, HD: 2 (turn as 3), HP: 14, 12, 12, 9, ATT: 3, DMG: 1-3/1-3/1-3 + special, SV: F2, ML: 9, XP: 47) emerge from the passage and attack.

The pedestal is immobile and any successful attempt at breaking the structure to remove it will render its magical properties useless.

3. A the end of the room stands a giant stone idol with a bull head. Before the idol is a large fire pit approximately 30ft x 50ft. A tiny ledge and numerous finger-sized holes line both the east and west walls for use to those attempting to carefully edge their way to the idol. The ledge stands out about 8 inches and characters must use the holes to steady themselves if they want to make it across.

Trying to edge along the side of the pit poses potential dangers. For every 10ft a character moves, roll the percentile dice.

1-40	Nothing happens.
41-60	Stone crumbles and breaks away from finger holes in the wall where the character is grabbing. Make a Dexterity check or fall.
61-70	Dart trap. 1-4 darts shoot out of the holes (hits as a 4 HD monster). If hit, make Dexterity check at +2 or fall.
71-80	A few of the holes are lairs for an Insect Swarm (AL: N, MV: 30' (10')/60' (20'), AC:7, HD: 3, HP: 18, ATT: 1, DMG: 2, SV: F0, ML: 11, XP: 65) which will attack the character. Each round, the character must make a Dexterity check or fall. Due to the heat and smoke, the insects will only attack for two rounds before they disperse.
81-00	A piece of the ledge crumbles under the character's feet. The character must make a Strength check or fall.

Characters who fall into the 15' pit will take 1-6 hps of damage plus an additional 3-18 hps of fire damage per round until they can climb out or be rescued.

In the base of the bull-headed statue is a visible trap door with an iron handle. It takes a combined strength of 36 to open the door. Behind the door is a small alcove about 3' deep. Within it are 2,000 sps, 4 gems worth 200 gps each, 1 scroll of restoration, and oil of etherealness.

- Through the north passage, a thunderous rolling, grinding sound can be heard. A 10' diameter bronze ball rolls from one side to the other continuously in the u-shaped hall. 30' to the west is a 4' deep open pit. Those who try to make it to the pit must make a Dexterity check. Success gets them to the pit safely; failure causes 3-18 hps of damage from the crushing orb. Another Dexterity check must be made to get back from the pit to the main area.

Within the pit is a lever. When pulled, it prevents the block in AREA 6 from falling when the scepter is removed (see AREA 6).

- The door to this room is magically locked. The key to this door (and to the door for AREA 16) can be found in the AREA 7 water well. Within is an old wood coffin with the name WRUULYN written on its side. Wruulyn's remains are within; now a fragile skeleton in tattered black burial robes. He holds in one hand an iron spike affixed to a fist-sized blue gem. This item is a replica of the Conjuror's Key and is to be used in conjunction with the actual relic to open the door to AREA 17. If detected, the item radiates a small amount of magic. This key is worth 500 gps.
- In the center of this room is a large 30ft deep pit with 2 ladders leading down along its east and west walls. Centered at the bottom of the pit, sticking up out of a small hole in the stone floor is a red gem-topped scepter. If the lever from AREA 4 was pulled, the scepter can be removed safely and easily. If the lever had not been pulled, it takes a combined strength of 15 to remove it, causing a large stone block to fall from above. Anyone within the pit when the block falls must save vs. petrify or suffer 4-24 hps of damage. With a successful saving throw, a character takes half damage. The stone block is hidden within the ceiling and can be detected with a roll to locate either traps or secret doors.

While the 2'-long scepter is trap bait (worth 50 gps), it could also be confused for the Conjuror's Key.

- Within this 70ft x 70ft room is what appears to be a stone water-well. The well stands about 3' high and its opening is 10ft in diameter and 20ft deep. It leads into a 15ft x 15ft chamber. Affixed along the well chamber's western wall are 10 pairs of shackles, and hanging from three of them are skeletons wearing torn and weathered clothing. This well is also the lair to 4 carnivorous beetles (AL: N, MV: 150' (50'), AC: 3, HD: 3+1, HP: 21, 19, 15, 10, ATT: 1, DMG: 2d6, SV: F1, ML: 9, XP: 65). Any amount of noise will bring one or two beetles up from the well to investigate for food.

One of the skeletons has an old leather pouch, which contains 50 sps, 85 gps, and the key to unlock AREAS 5 and 16. The key radiates a small amount of magic.

- Within this large room, a humanoid wrapped in purple and white clothing sits in front of the eastern passage, playing a tune on a small snake-charmer's horn. A round basket sits on the floor in front of him. The humanoid is actually an Ethereal Doppelganger (see NEW MONSTER section. AL: C, MV: 120' (40')/240' (80'), AC: 4, HD: 5, HP: 33, ATT: 2, DMG: 1d12/1d12, SV: F5, ML: 9, XP: 350), which has chosen an appearance resembling a cross between an orc and an elf. This creature came to the labyrinth tomb in search of the Conjuror's Key, but was trapped by the tomb's magical protections against ethereal and astral creatures.

While the doppelganger is in its ethereal form, the tomb's protective magic prevents it from entering areas 5, 16, and 17, but it can otherwise move freely through the walls of the labyrinth.

The creature will continue to play until the party attempts to speak with it, at which point it will turn around, smile, and begin playing a tune for them, dancing around madly but never taking his eyes from them. The horn is actually a Horn of Blasting, and at any given moment the Ethereal Doppelganger will turn his tune into an attack, blasting the party. He will then become ethereal and disappear (but will secretly follow the party in ethereal form, waiting to attack by surprise once the party has the Conjuror's Key).

This horn blast will alert 1-2 Minotaurs, who will arrive in 2-5 rounds.

Within the basket is a spitting cobra (AL: N, MV: 90' (30'), AC:7, HD: 1, ATT: 1, DMG: 1-3+poison, SV: F1, ML: 7, XP: 13). If the basket's top is lifted, the cobra will attack. Also in the basket is the doppelganger's treasure: 75 sps, 100 gps, and 1 gem worth 150 gps.

Regarding the Horn of Blasting's use within the labyrinth: As the Ethereal Doppelganger has discovered, the Horn can affect any of the walls except for the tomb's perimeter wall and the walls surrounding areas 5, 16, and 17. It takes two full blasts to knock down a 10ft square portion of the wall. There is not a danger of the tomb collapsing from these holes. However, each time the characters use the horn it slightly compromises the structure, raining

rocks and debris from the ceiling. Anyone within the area must save vs. petrify or take 2-12 hps of damage.

Also, as noted above, each blast will alert 1-2 minotaurs who will arrive to investigate within 2-5 rounds.

9. Nothing seems to be in this room except a glowing blue circle on the floor in the northeast corner. The circle is a teleportal that teleports characters to two possible locations within the labyrinth. Characters who stand in the circle have a 50/50% chance of being teleported to the circle in AREA 14 or to the dead end at the very southeast corner of the labyrinth. For the next two turns, other characters can follow to the same destination without fail. After two turns, however, the teleportal's destination will become a random 50/50% chance again.

Any person or object that is only partially in the circle (for example, one leg in and one out) will simply not be teleported. A dispel magic will negate the teleportal, turning the glowing blue circle into a simple charcoal line.

10. The western wall is a painted display of the Minotaur Lord standing heroically, wielding a battle axe. The minotaur depicted in this painting is shown with four arms. Characters will immediately hear a rumbling/running sound. A minotaur (AL: C, MV: 120' (40'), AC:6, HD: 6, HP: 28, ATT: 2 or 1, DMG: 1d6/1d6, SV: F6, ML: 12, XP: 820) wearing a ring of invisibility will suddenly become visible as it charges to hit the leading character with a +4 to hit and double the damage (on this first charge attack only).
11. This room contains a pedestal and two torches identical to the arrangement in AREA 2, except there is a glass mirror in place of a reflective golden plaque. The torches are lit by continual light spells, and a layer of dust covers the mirror. The mirror is actually a Mirror of Life Trapping with four non-spatial extradimensional compartments instead of the normal twenty. If the dust is wiped away, any character looking must make a save vs. spells or be sucked into the mirror. With three minotaurs already trapped in the mirror, a character who fails the save will take up the last of the mirror's compartments.

The only way to free a trapped character is to break the mirror; however, this will also release the 3 minotaurs (HP: 35, 30, 26), who will attack the party.

12. The characters see the skeleton of a minotaur, suspended in the air in the southwest corner of this room. Beside it, floating motionlessly, is a giant axe. The minotaur is suspended within a gelatinous cube (AL: N, MV: 60' (20'), AC:8, HD: 4, HP: 22, ATT: 1, DMG: 2d4+special, SV: F2, ML: 12, XP: 245). The axe is a battle axe + 3.
13. Two large minotaurs (AL: C, MV: 120' (40'), AC:6, HD: 6, HP: 34, 31, ATT: 2 or 1, DMG: 1d6/1d6, SV: F6, ML: 12, XP: 820) guard the eastern door. If the minotaurs are slain, they will be replaced by two others after one day.

The eastern door is magically locked, requiring both the Conjuror's Key and the blue gem key found in AREA 5 (see AREA 17 for details).

14. Another glowing teleport-circle like the one found in AREA 9 is located in the southwest corner of this room. Characters have a 50/50% chance of teleporting to either AREA 9 or to the dead end at the very southeast corner of the labyrinth. See the circle's description in AREA 9 for details.

15. This room has a musky and filthy smell to it. Four stone coffins line the southeastern half of the wall. The first is open, while the other three remain closed. A wraith (AL: C, MV: 120' (40')/240' (80'), AC:3, HD: 4, HP: 21, ATT: 1, DMG: 1d6, energy drain, SV: F4, ML: 12, XP: 300) is guarding the area, hovering near the open coffin. Coffins 2 and 3 each contain ghouls (AL: C, MV: 90' (30'), AC:6, HD: 2 (turn as 3), HP: 15, 12, ATT: 3, DMG: 1-3/1-3/1-3 + special, SV: F2, ML: 9, XP: 47) that will spring forth and attack if any of the coffins are opened. Coffin four contains 1,500 sps, 4,000 gps, plate armor + 2, shield + 1, Helm of Comprehend Languages and Read Magic, and a scroll of cure serious wounds.

16. The door to this room is magically locked, and must be opened with the key from AREA 7. Within it is a wooden coffin (like the one in AREA 5) with the name "Banezyth" written on its side. Opening the coffin triggers a gas trap. Those within the area must save vs poison or die in 1d4+2 rounds. Within the coffin, in lieu of a corpse, is another gem key - this one is an iron spike attached to a large amber-colored gem. This is the Conjuror's Key (see NEW ITEMS), and radiates magic very strongly. It may be used in conjunction with the blue gem key from AREA 5 to open the door to AREA 17.

If the party takes the key, the GM should note which character takes possession of it. As mentioned in the item's description, the Key may cause harmful penalties to those of non-Chaotic alignment.

**Black Widow Lair.** Along the farthest southwestern passage of the labyrinth is the lair of 3 giant black widow spiders (AL: N, MV: 60' (20')/120' (40'), AC: 6, HD: 3, HP: 21, 18, 17, ATT: 1, DMG: 2d6+poison, SV: F2, ML: 8, XP: 80). Their webbing fills nearly 300ft of the winding stone hall. Up to 4 minotaur skeletons, 3 humanoid corpses, and a few dead giant rats and insects can be found stuck in the webbing.

The webbing is difficult to walk through, and for every 10ft traveled there is a 70% chance to get stuck. This will immediately alert the spiders to come and attack. A simple fire will wipe out the webs, which will burn for 3-6 rounds, causing the spiders 1-4 hps of damage per round.

Treasure is scattered throughout the lair. This includes 90 cps, 65 gps, 2 pieces of jewelry worth 300 gps each, and a spear+2.

17. The door leading to this room is magically locked and requires both the Conjuror's Key (from AREA 16) and the blue gem key (from AREA 5) to open it. The door has two round keyholes, one above the door handle and one below it. The spike of the blue gem key goes into the top keyhole, and the Conjuror's Key is placed into the bottom

one: a clicking noise will be heard and the door will unlock. At this point, if the character using the Conjuror's Key is not of Chaotic alignment, the Key will drain 1-3 points of his strength.

Without the Conjuror's Key, a Knock spell used along with the blue gem key in the top keyhole will safely unlock the door.

If any other method is used to try and open the door (wrong key, wrong keyhole, break in, etc) the character must save vs spells or be magically struck by severe pain equal to that of a Symbol of Pain spell (-4 to attack and -2 on DEX) for 2d10 turns. This will happen any time someone attempts to open the door without the proper keys. Note that to be affected by the pain, the character must physically be in contact with the door (or whatever item he tries to put into it). Items such as the Horn of Blasting, while it will not work to break through the door, will not trigger the magical trap.

Once inside the room, the party will see a large wooden chest and a huge figure sitting on a long four-foot tall stone bench against the west wall. The figure is a bull-headed, skeletal monstrosity with four arms; it is ten feet tall and dressed in tattered royal clothing. The skeletal minotaur looks calmly over at the party, and extends one of its large boney hands in a motion for the characters to place something into it. This is a bone golem (AL: N (Chaotic if taken over by Banezyth - see below), MV: 120' (40'), AC: 2, HD: 8, HP: 48, ATT: 4, DMG: see description below, SV: F4, ML: 12, XP: 2060).

The golem wants the Conjuror's Key. If any other item is placed into its hands, it will immediately discard it against the eastern wall (possibly damaging it). If attacked, the golem will attack the character in possession of the Conjuror's Key with all four arms for 1-6 hps of damage per hit. If all four attacks hit, the golem has grappled the character and will do an additional 4-24 hps of damage per round until either the golem is destroyed or the character rolls a successful Strength check at -2 to break free. A grappled character cannot attack.

If the characters give the Key to the golem, or if the creature obtained it through combat, it will clutch the Key to its chest as its eyes begin to glow a bright amber color. At this time, Banezyth, who is trapped within the artifact's gem, has taken control of the golem, and will try to speak with the party, announcing that he is in fact the legendary Minotaur Lord.

Banezyth will question the party in hopes that they have the knowledge to free him from the Key's gem, and if they can do so he will certainly reward them. In the unlikely event that a character has access to a wish and

frees Banezyth, he will allow them to leave his labyrinth with their lives and any found treasure.

More than likely, the characters will not be able to fulfill Banezyth's request. This will frustrate the Minotaur Lord who will eventually grow weary of the conversation, telling the characters to drop whatever treasure they stole and leave his labyrinth immediately. Refusing to leave will swiftly lead to combat.

Given the chance, Banezyth will open the unlocked large chest and pull out a battle axe +2 and a war hammer +3 from within for use in combat. He will also use the powers of the Conjuror's Key to best possible advantage, such as animating any dead characters to fight on his behalf. The Key also grants him +2 to hit against Lawful characters.



If the possessed golem's body is destroyed, Banezyth will no longer have power over it, and will remain trapped within the Key's gem.

In addition to the magic weapons, the chest contains 1,500 sps, 4,000 gps, 10 pieces of jewelry worth 100 gps each, a scroll (ward against elementals), a ring of regeneration, a Wand of Cold (18 charges), a cloak of protection +3, a longsword +2, elven boots, and a necklace of adaptation.

## New Monster

### Ethereal Doppelganger

**No. Encountered:** 1 (1-4)

**Alignment:** C

**Movement:** 120' (40') Fly 240' (80')

**Armor Class:** 4

**Hit Dice:** 5

**Attacks:** 2

**Damage/Attack:** 1d12/1d12 (or weapon type)

**Save:** F5

**Morale:** 9

**Hoard Class:** None (VI)

**EXP:** 350

Ethereal Doppelgangers (no actual relation to the normal doppelganger) are creatures from the ethereal plane. They have an attraction to areas used for evil sorcery and conjuring, and have been known to "haunt" places such as tombs, crypts and graveyards.

These creatures can take the form of animals or humanoids of up to 8' tall. They make this transformation while in the ethereal plane, and then solidify themselves into the material plane. They can do this at will, but it takes a full round for them to switch from ethereal to solid and vice versa.

While in the ethereal plane, Ethereal Doppelgangers are invisible, able to fly, and can move through solid objects.

No matter what shape the doppelganger takes, it will generally attack by wielding negative energy, causing 1d12 hp of damage per blow. Ethereal Doppelgangers can only be hurt by magical weapons and are unaffected by sleep and charm spells. While they are in physical form, hold spells will work against them, but only until the creature switches to its ethereal form.

A favorite attack of the Ethereal Doppelganger is to disappear in its ethereal form and then reform behind its opponent to strike. This gains the creature a surprise on a 1-4 on 1d6.

If they reside in the physical plane for extended periods of time, Ethereal Doppelgangers will sometimes store small amounts of treasure.

## New Item

### Conjurer's Key

This evil artifact was used by chaotic conquerors, both fighters and spell casters, as a "good luck" item. Although the artifact's power is relatively minor as such things go, the Key's ability to attract undead and beings from otherworldly planes is a matter of interest to evil treasure-seekers, despite the possible dangers

involved. The item appears as a 12-inch iron spike affixed to a fist-sized amber colored gem.

For the possessor of Chaotic alignment, the Key offers the following:

- +2 to hit when attacking Lawful beings
- Knock 5/day
- Detect Secret/Concealed Doors 3/day
- Detect Good, 20' range 3/day
- Animate Dead 1/day
- True Seeing 1/week


Trap the Soul — as the spell, however a successful saving throw will not destroy the gem. The Key's amber gem can only hold one being at a time until they are released by means of a wish or if the artifact is somehow destroyed. If any magically animated creature (skeleton, golem, animate statue, etc) comes in contact with the Key, the being trapped in the gem is able to take possession of the creature. The being can move, speak, and even attack through the animated creature, but is unable to cast spells. They may, however, use all of the Conjurer's Key's powers, but only while in control of an animated creature. This effect is broken if the animated creature either loses contact with the key or is destroyed.

In the possession of a Lawful being, the Key causes a -2 penalty on to hit and saving throws against Chaotic beings. Lawful characters can still use the Key's spell-like abilities, but each time it is used the Key drains 1-3 points of Strength from the character. If a character's strength is drained to 0, he dies and returns as a shadow, under the command of whoever possesses the Key. A character's strength can be restored with a Remove Curse spell.

Neutral aligned characters suffer no penalties from possession of the Key, but like Lawful characters, they will lose strength points whenever a spell-like ability is used.

Once outside the tomb, whoever takes possession of the Key has a 20% chance per day of attracting otherworldly beings. Roll 1d10:

1-2	1d4 Shadows
3-4	Elemental
5-6	Invisible Stalker (or 1d4 Ethereal Doppelgangers)
7-8	Spectre
9	Djinni
10	Efreeti

These beings gravitate to the Key and seek to take possession of it. 

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# THE PLANES: PLAYGROUNDS OF THE RICH AND POWERFUL

...or, One DM's House Rules for Planar Travel in a High Level Campaign across the Planar Expanse

by Jon Hershberger

## Preface

I have the good fortune of being the current Dungeon Master for a group of veteran players that have gamed together off and on for many years. I gamed with some of these guys in high school, nearly 30 years ago, and while we've played other game systems and dabbled with other genres, we always come back to our favorite game: First Edition AD&D.

Since we've played AD&D with a fairly consistent rules system over the years, we have a pretty solid grasp of the core rules. And having the good luck of starting to play during the Golden Age of Dungeons & Dragons, many in our group played through a majority of the classic TSR adventures released during that Golden Age, whether technically for AD&D or another of the early versions of the game. (I should note here that while I was an active player in several campaigns during the Golden Age, I was also a very engaged DM and probably spent more time behind the DM screen than in front of it. Ironically, I did not get to play through or run a number of the classic TSR adventures from this period, so compared to most of my peers, my experience with the classic TSR modules is spotty and incomplete.)

As we sat down and brainstormed what would eventually be our current campaign, one theme that emerged was that few of us had actually experienced an extended campaign that reached well into the "high levels". Oh sure, a few characters reached the low double digit levels over the years, and many of the guys, having played through the G-series, the D-series and the Q1 adventures at some point, had characters which had seen those low teen levels. But by and large, most of us had not played in a long-term, high level campaign. So naturally having characters that had the potential to reach into the high levels became one of the objectives for our fledgling campaign. I think sharing all of this is important because it reveals that I have no real experience running an extended campaign that involves high level play or substantial planar travel.

As some of the players' current characters approached the point in their respective classes where planar travel started to become a real option, the players began asking how the planes and planar travel itself would work in our campaign. As I had no real practical idea how any of this might "work" in my campaign, I did what many students do: I hit the books. I poured over the relevant passages from the DMG and the PHB, I surveyed the Dragon Archive for articles that dealt with planar travel, planar creatures, and the characteristics and natures of

the various planes themselves. I dug out my never-before-used AD&D Manual of the Planes and started leafing through the material therein, even with the knowledge that the MotP is less than highly regarded in many old school circles. I even started pulling out my minty, still-in-shrinkwrap Planescape material. Truth be told though, I found the introductory material in the MotP unnecessarily complex – the notion of multiple Ethereal Planes (to go along with the infinite number of alternate prime material planes) and the concept of the Border Ethereal to name two such examples – and found myself being drawn back to the concise outline of the planes presented in the DMG and PHB. In the end, I listened to my heart and decided to start with the barest of overviews on the planes that EGG provided for us in the DMG and PHB. I'll build what I need for my games from that starting point.

Here, then, is a working set of house rules for expanding and fleshing out the 'travel' or journey aspect of planar travel. The basic concept for these house rules came from my reading of Jeff Grubb's "Plane Speaking" article from Dragon #120, which outlined some guidelines for dealing with the material component of the fifth level clerical spell *plane shift*: tuning forks, and from my reading of Larry Granato's "Plenty of Planar-encounter Possibilities" article from Dragon #213. My hope is that these supplemental planar travel rules will return some of the wonder, mystery and whimsy to our game, characteristics that at times seem to have been lost over the years. A side benefit of these rules is that the DM will be able to bleed off excess wealth that sometimes creeps into long-term campaigns.

## Adaptation to Swords & Wizardry and other early edition games

While this article was specifically written with a focus on the fifth level clerical spell *plane shift* from AD&D, the concepts herein may be adapted for use with Swords & Wizardry or other early edition games that don't expressly have a *plane shift* spell available. For instance, the concepts described below could just as easily apply to the seventh level clerical spell *astral spell* or the ninth level magic user spell *astral spell* from Swords & Wizardry since both of those spells cause the caster to project himself into the astral plane. Additionally, the concepts outlined here could also apply to the seventh level magic user spell *phase door* from Swords & Wizardry since this spell causes the caster to enter the

ethereal realm as a means of entering and passing through the *phase door*. [Editorial note: the spell description for *phase door* was inadvertently omitted from the Swords & Wizardry core rules. Matt Finch made the spell description available to this author so I'll include that description here for ease of reference: **Phase Door (Arcane)**; Level 7; Range: 10ft from caster; Duration: Seven uses; Description: The phase door is an invisible portal about 7 feet high, 10ft wide, and 10ft deep, accessible only to the caster. A barrage of dispel magic spells can close the passage, but only if the combined level of the dispelling casters is twice that of the portal's creator.] Furthermore, the concepts presented here could be applied to new magic items fabricated or new spells researched by high level spell casters which possess the power to unlock the barriers to planar travel.

## Nuts and bolts of planar travel

Here is the general model for how planar travel will 'work' when using *plane shift* and other similar spells, as well as for magical items that provide for planar travel (obviously subject to change by the DM). When *plane shift* (or other like spell) is cast, there is a base 35% chance of a planar encounter or planar mishap of some kind occurring, meaning that 65% of the time the caster would arrive at the desired destination just as intended and without having any kind of planar encounter or mishap take place. The base 35% chance can be reduced by any combination of the following:

- (a) By acquiring an improved tuning fork for the destination plane
- (b) By conducting research on planar travel generally and/or conducting research on the destination plane specifically
- (c) By the caster being higher level than is required for casting *plane shift*
- (d) By returning to the same destination plane multiple times

### Basic tuning forks

Basic throw-away tuning forks will suffice for casting *plane shift*. These are considered basic spell components and as such will be nominally priced (1 to 25gp per tuning fork). These basic tuning forks can be used once and only once in the casting of *plane shift*. They will be considered consumed or fouled in the casting and must be replaced if the caster is to make a return trip to the plane to which that tuning fork was attuned.

### Improved tuning forks

Improved tuning forks are made from much higher quality ores, and the craftsmanship is significantly superior to that of basic tuning forks. These tuning forks are permanent in nature – meaning that they are not consumed or fouled in the casting of *plane shift* – and can be used to cast *plane shift* to the specified plane, for all intents and purposes, an infinite number of times. Improved tuning forks range in price from 1,000gp to 15,000gp (grades of improvement are in 1,000gp increments only). For every 1,000gp spent on a given tuning fork, there is

a 1% reduction in the chance of a planar encounter or planar mishap occurring when *plane shift* is cast. Thus, the base 35% chance of a planar encounter or planar mishap occurring can be reduced by up to (but no more than) 15% by the caster using an improved tuning fork.

## Planar research

While the magical power to actually cast such spells and traveling to and between the various planes in the multi-verse on a regular basis is perhaps available to the spell caster, the knowledge to travel the planes does not come to the spell caster automatically. By conducting research on planar travel generally and/or on the destination plane specifically, the spell caster can become more knowledgeable about both planar travel and specific planes, and therefore more proficient at traveling the planes. Planar research is a costly endeavor, and spell casters should be prepared to spend at least 1,000gp per week conducting either general planar research or more focused research specific to a given plane.

Spell casters will gain tangible benefits for conducting planar research. For every 1,000gp spent on planar research, the spell caster is afforded a 1% reduction in the chance of a planar encounter or planar mishap occurring when *plane shift* is cast, subject to the following two limitations. First, the maximum benefit available to any spell caster for conducting general planar research is 5%. Second, the maximum benefit available to any spell caster for conducting plane specific research is 5%. Thus, the maximum benefit a spell caster can secure for any specific destination plane is 10% (5% for general research + 5% for specific research).

Note also that for every 1,000gp spent on planar research, the spell caster can attribute 500gp (or 50% of the cost of research) to research materials purchased and count those expenditures toward the stocking of a wizard's arcane library or a cleric's theological archive. (See spell research and magic item fabrication rules for more discussion on the topic, and cost, of research.)

## Spell caster level

Being a higher level spell caster should have some benefits beyond the obvious, so the planar travel model takes this into account. For every level above that which is required by the spell being cast, the spell caster gains a 1% reduction in the chance of a planar encounter or planar mishap occurring when *plane shift* is cast. So, in the case of the 5th level clerical spell *plane shift*, the cleric is required to be at least 9th level to be able to cast *plane shift* (without penalty) and gains a 1% reduction in the chance of a planar encounter or planar mishap for every level above 9th level. Thus, a 16th level cleric casting *plane shift* gains the benefit of a 7% reduction in the probability of a planar encounter or planar mishap.

## Return trips

Spell casters will be reap rewards for making multiple trips to a given plane via planar travel. For every subsequent visit (beyond the initial one) to a specific plane, up to a maximum of five (5) subsequent visits, the spell caster gains a 1% reduction in the chance of a planar encounter or planar mishap.



## Cumulative adjustments and absolute probabilities

Under no circumstance will the chance of a planar encounter or planar mishap occurring when *plane shift* is cast be reduced or reducible below 1%. No combination of the four activities described above will result in a complete and absolute elimination of 100% of the risk of a planar travel.

## Prime Material Plane treatment

I'm not entirely certain how I want to apply these concepts and principles to traveling to the Prime Material from other planes. On the one hand, it may be the easiest to simply apply them uniformly to any planar travel, regardless of the origin or destination. On the other hand, doing so ignores the caster's likely familiarity with the Prime Material. I may just have the base % be 15%, reduce the risk probability at a faster rate (such as, making the adjustment for return trips max out at 5% after the first or second return trip to the Prime Material), and eliminate the research adjustments, thereby accounting for the familiarity of the Prime Material.



## Outer Planes vs. Inner Planes

I'm not certain whether these concepts and principles should apply uniformly to the Inner and Outer Planes or whether they should apply differently, depending upon the destination. Tempting though that latter notion may be, I'll probably just have the model apply uniformly and leave it at that. But, one could certainly rationalize a different application depending on the destination.

## Planar Encounters and Planar Mishaps

As a point of comparative reference, Appendix C of the (First Edition) *Dungeon Masters Guide* suggests checking for encounters (when conducting planar travel) at the beginning, the mid-point, and the end of the journey, with encounters occurring 5% of the time.<sup>1</sup> That approach may be acceptable, or it may be presenting more risk than you're willing to subject your players to on a regular basis. Whatever the frequency of checking you decide upon, once an encounter or mishap is determined to occur, consult the following tables for the specifics of what your characters are going to get to deal with on their inter-planar journey.

**Table A: Encounter or Mishap**

1d6	Result
1 - 3	A planar encounter is about to occur. Consult Table B-1.
4 - 6	A planar mishap is about to occur. Consult Table B-2.

**Table B-1: Planar Encounters**

2d12	Result
If traveling the Astral Plane Consult DMG, Appendix C, page 181 – Astral Encounter Table.	
If traveling the Ethereal Plane Consult DMG, Appendix C, page 181 – Ethereal Encounter Table.	
2	Basilisk or Cockatrice
3	B' older (a/k/a Eye Killer)
4	Characters: party of high level NPCs
5	Couatl
6	Death Knight riding a Nightmare
7	Demon (select randomly or choose from minor, major, or prince)
8	Devil (select randomly or choose from lesser, greater or arch)
9	Djinni or Jann
10	Dragon (select randomly or choose as appropriate)
11	Efreeti (choose between lesser, major, or elder)
12	Elemental (select randomly or choose as appropriate)
13	Giant (choose between storm or cloud)
14	Githyanky assault team
15	Gorgon
16	Ki-rin
17	Lich
18	Modron assault team

<sup>1</sup> Gary Gygax, *Official Advanced Dungeons & Dragons® Dungeon Masters Guide*, rev. ed. (U.S.A.: TSR, Inc., 1979), 181.

2d12	Result
19	Night Hag
20	Phase Creature or Shadow Creature
21	Team of Slaad 'missionaries'
22	Rakshasa
23	Titan (choose between lesser, major, or elder)
24	Vampire

**Table B-2: Planar Mishaps**

1d12	Result
1	Slows planar travel, necessitating additional check(s) for encounter(s). <sup>1</sup>
2	Intra-planar misdirection: caster is disoriented and lost for 1-10 days, then arrives at a randomly determined (or DM chosen) location on 'current' plane. <sup>2</sup>
3	Planar misdirection: caster is disoriented and lost for 2-20 days, then arrives on desired plane but at a randomly determined (or DM chosen) location. <sup>3</sup>
4	Planar misdirection: caster is disoriented and lost for 2-20 days, then arrives on a randomly determined (or DM chosen) plane. <sup>4</sup>
5	Planar misdirection: caster becomes disoriented during casting, then arrives on one of the following energy/other planes: the Positive Material Plane, the Negative Material Plane, or the Plane of Shadows.
6	Planar misdirection: caster becomes disoriented during casting, then arrives at a randomly chosen (or DM chosen) location where another high level, plane traveling spell caster is attempting planar travel, spoiling the 'other' caster's spell. Roll for initiative!
7	Planar 'black hole' appears: 50% of the time it will draw PCs (or their magical gear) into the void and 50% of the time it will project planar debris across the planar expanse. PCs sucked into the void suffer damage of 10d6 and end up on another plane. Debris disgorged from the planar void has a 5% chance of striking a PC, doing 3d6 of damage. 5% of the debris disgorged is a valuable or magical item. <sup>5</sup>

1d12	Result
8	Temporal, planar, energy or magical displacement affects the traveler(s). Temporal displacement alters the timeline with regard to the planar travel (forward or backward in time). Planar displacement alters the destination plane for the traveler(s). Energy displacement drains (or recharges) magic items with charges and tech items if possessed. Items fully drained crumble to dust while overcharged items detonate causing 10d6 damage. Magical displacement causes magical properties of items possessed to become altered, potentially permanently. <sup>6</sup>
9	Planar fatigue: too much planar travel causes the caster/traveler to become fatigued from over use. Rest of 1d4 days required. <sup>7</sup>
10	A tear in the planar fabric is caused, drawing really nasty creatures to location of the caster. Refer to Table B-1 Planar Encounters. <sup>8</sup>
11	A dud: the spell cast simply lacks sufficient magical energy to function, leaving the caster at his location at the time of the failed casting.
12	Death to the caster and anyone traveling with him! Fate can be cruel at times, and this is one of those times. Due to trans-planar dynamics and/or physical stresses placed upon the caster at the time of casting, the spell caster dies unceremoniously (saving throw optional).

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Table Footnotes:

1. Gary Gygax, *Official Advanced Dungeons & Dragons® Dungeon Masters Guide*, rev. ed. (U.S.A.: TSR, Inc., 1979), 181.
2. Larry Granato, *Dragon Magazine #213*, "Plenty of Planar-encounter Possibilities", 43-48.
3. Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 181.
4. *ibid.*
5. Grant, 45.
6. *ibid.*
7. *ibid.*
8. *ibid.*



# NEW TRICKS AND TRAPS

## Altar of Clues

by Philip West

**A**n altar, with bas-relief carvings showing several unremarkable-looking people graven around the altar's sides. A particular item has to be placed onto the top of the altar to make it function. Possibly this is an ordinary item the adventurers might be carrying, but more likely there's an indentation on the altar, and a specific key-type object fits into it: a brass glyph-shape or a half-sphere that has been hidden elsewhere in the dungeon would be good candidates. It's possible wax might be poured into the shape, too, fooling the altar into thinking it's been activated. When the proper object is fitted into the altar's top, the figures in the bas-relief begin to move. There is activity on all four sides of the altar, and something important might be

missed if the adventurers aren't placed all around it. The figures in at least one of the bas-reliefs will be seen in an identifiable location – maybe there's a statue, maybe there's a sigil carved into the wall – and can be seen opening a secret door, bypassing a trap, or fighting some sort of hidden monster. More than one side of the altar might reveal such a clue. If the players are alert, they will gain some useful information. It's also possible that after revealing its information, the altar's magic begins a countdown toward filling the room with poisonous gas. One of the bas-reliefs, if the players noticed it, showed the way to prevent this from happening.

## Pivoting Door


by Rob Ragas

At the end of a corridor, there is a stone door the same width as the corridor. The door is thick, at least 6 inches and it pivots about its central axis on a hard metal pole. The door is such a tight fit on top and bottom, that it requires a Major Test, (e.g. bending bars and lifting portcullis) to move the door about its axis, and even then a great scraping noise is produced as it grinds against both floor and ceiling.

If the door is opened completely, this will cause two massive ceiling blocks, which the door was supporting, to collapse on either side of the door. Any character pushing on the door must successfully pass two saving throws (one for each ceiling block) vs. Breath Weapon, or be crushed by one, or both, of the massive stone ceiling blocks. The first saving throw is at -2, and the second is without a modifier. Characters within 5 feet of either side of the door, must also succeed at two saving throws, but these rolls are without modifiers. Each falling block inflicts 3d6 damage.

If the door is opened only partially, say about 45 degrees, then there is only a 50% chance that each block will collapse. Any angle greater than 45 degrees will cause a collapse 80% of the time. A partially opened door is sufficient for non-armored characters, or leather or studded leather armored characters at best, to pass single file. More heavily-armored characters may not pass.

Any character being particularly observant, may see the ceiling shift as the door is slowly opened. Any character actually participating in opening the door, is highly unlikely to notice the ceiling shift, as it takes all of their effort to move the door. Up to two characters may add their strength's Major Test percentage when attempting to open the door. No character may

make more than one attempt per every two turns. Of course, once the trap is sprung, the door is wedge opened permanently, and there is a minor obstacle at this location. 



## NEW MAGIC ITEMS

### Lantern of Indiscernible Illumination

by Lord Kilgore

This item appears to be a normal lantern. If supplied with oil and lit, however, it casts no light that the unaided eye can see. Despite this lack of light, the lantern will consume oil at a normal rate. The use of infravision detects nothing, and no heat is created while it is burning.

Usually, this lantern will be found with or near 1d4 pair of delicate spectacles with clear glass lenses. Only those wearing these spectacles can perceive the special light of this lantern. Though invisible to those not wearing the spectacles, the light otherwise has the intensity and range of that cast by a normal lantern.

Research may reveal the manner in which additional pairs of spectacles may be created. The procedure must begin with a pair of fine, glass-lensed spectacles of 100gp minimum value. These must be placed within the light of the lit lantern for one full week in otherwise absolute darkness. Any visible light of any kind will spoil the effect and it must be begun anew. Keep in mind that someone will need to keep the lantern supplied with oil during this time.

10% of these lanterns will also reveal invisible creatures and items that pass within the magical light.

## Truth-Telling Pig

by Rob Hewlett ("Bulette")

**T**he Truth Telling Pig, or "Le Porc de la Vérité" is a rare magic item found only in very rural farming communities.

It is rumored that the first such "Pig of Truth" was created by a wizard in sore need of rest and recuperation, following an epic battle. Penniless, the wizard is said to have magicked a farmer's pig in trade for being allowed to stay and convalesce in the care of the farmer's wife. Ironically, some say that it was the pig that led to the wizard's demise, as the farmer was ultimately able to prove the wizard's adulterous behavior to the local village elders and militia. These pigs are highly sought after as breeding of them has proven they're able to pass their magical ability on to their litter, although this seems to be rare and possibly attributable to how well the pigs are cared for prior to their becoming pregnant.

How it works: Anyone who lays a hand on the pig and speaks can be determined to be telling the truth or to be lying based on the appearance of the pig's spots: If the person is lying, the spots on the pig will begin to coalesce and arrange themselves in such a pattern that the unmistakable word "Liar" will be seen upon it. Similarly, truth tellers will reveal the word "True" in the spots on the pig. No saving throw is allowed for the person(s) in contact with the pig.

If more than one person touches the pig simultaneously, or if one person holds hands or otherwise touches another person who touches the pig, results will be similar (ie. "True" or "Liars" will manifest), but if one or more people tell the truth but one lies, or vice versa, no spots on the pig will rearrange, and the result will be inconclusive.

Those seeking to somehow assume the truth-telling abilities of the pigs through consumption of them take a great risk in doing so:

### Roll 1d6:

1	No Effect
2	Consumer can only tell lies forever after.
3	Consumer must answer any direct questions and always truthfully.
4	Consumer alternately tells the truth and then lies, every other sentence.
5	Consumer can speak the truth, but always loudly snorts afterward.
6	Consumer gains the ability to Detect Lie (as per the spell) once per day.

## Lancet of Dian Cecht

by Peter Fitzpatrick

**T**his is a sturdy spear, about 7 feet in length, archaic in design with a thick octagonal shaft of some dense, dark reddish-brown wood. It has a broad, razor-sharp bronze head enamelled in spiralling geometric patterns. The facets of the shaft are carved with runic inscriptions in Ogham (prayers of healing and restoration, for those able to read the secret druidic script) and are studded with bronze rivets, each one cast in the semblance of a different human face. It is heavier than a normal spear of its size, weighing 20 pounds.

The magic that imbues the spear makes it handier than its weight would suggest, and it is regarded as a +2 weapon for "to-hit" purposes (but not for damage).

Five times a day, if the blade inflicts at least 1 hit-point of damage, it also bestows a *Cure Serious Wounds* (2d6+2) on the target. The wielder has no control over this effect; if the spear has any charges left for the day, and it inflicts any damage at all, it will bestow the healing magic along with its damage. If the target is a demon or an undead creature (or some other monster with a close connection to the Negative Material Plane) the CSW will actually *inflict* damage, rather than healing it.

Once a month, if the name of Dian Cecht is invoked and the blade thrust deep into a corpse not more than five days dead, it will bestow *Raise Dead* on it (subject to the beneficiary's usual constitution limitations). This effect is not limited to human(oid) creatures as is the spell, but will work on anything besides undead and their ilk. If the spear is thrust deeply into a demonic or undead creature (i.e. if a natural 20 is rolled, or if the attack does maximum damage) then it works on them as if the spell *Power Word Kill* had been used except that there is no hit-point limit, and a saving throw applies. Of course, even if the saving throw is successful, they still take the damage inflicted by the spearhead.

## Enoch Kris' Spectacles of Comprehensive Reading


by James D. Kramer

**E**noch Kris was at one time a librarian in the great library of Carastrid. To assist the noble clientele of the Library, Kris had constructed many pairs of these powerful reading glasses. The primary ability of these glasses allowed the wearer to read any mortal language. They also provide the wearer the ability to *read magic* as the magic user spell of the same name.

A potential side effect from prolonged or repeated use of the Spectacles is rumored to be a total dependence on the glasses; the powerful magics having rendered the mortal eyes of the wearer virtually blind without them.

## Plemintine's Plates of Perpetual Crushing (cursed)

by James D. Kramer

**T**his suit of plate mail armor does in fact offer +2 protection. However, if the wearer is hit with an attack that causes more than 4 hit points of damage, the curse is activated. This curse causes the plate mail to begin crushing the body of the person wearing it, for 1d3 damage per round until the wearer is dead. The wearer's body will rupture and explode from various places as the pressure of their blood builds up beneath the armor. The only ways to halt the crushing curse is through either a *remove curse* spell (which destroys all enchantments of the armor), or *transmute metal-to-wood* spell (which will destroy the armor utterly). 

# BEGINNER'S BESTIARY

by Andrew Trent

The vast majority of monsters found in the Swords & Wizardry Core Rules and in the Swords & Wizardry Monster Book are of Challenge Level 1 and higher. This leaves the lower challenge levels - A & B - a little barren. This article presents a handful of creatures to help flesh out those groups, and to give your lower-level parties something to fight other than kobolds and giant rats.

## Challenge Level A

Though they represent the weakest of all monsters, the Challenge Level A beasts can still pose a significant threat when encountered in large enough groups, or when not taken seriously by an arrogant young adventurer. Here are three new foes in this class to confound your players.

### Dart-tongue Turtle

With its deep green skin, bright red eye rings, and black and yellow shell, the dart-tongue turtle is the result of experiments by a mad mage whose name is lost to history. These wolf-sized reptiles typically make their homes in the shallow ponds of heavily forested areas, though a small number have been captured to live in the moats of various castles and keeps.

Dart-tongue turtles may bite with their beaks, but more often than not they shoot strange, needle-like darts from a hollow tube that runs the length of their tongues. These darts have a maximum range of 30ft. For some reason — perhaps instilled in them by their ancient creator — dart-tongue Turtles bear a strong hostility towards dwarves, and will always attack them first when the bearded folk are present in a party of mixed races. If multiple dwarves are present, the one with the longest beard will draw the initial volley of the Dart-tongued turtles' missiles.

**Dart-tongue Turtle:** HD 1d4; AC 3 [16]; Atk 1 bite (1d4) or 2 darts (1d3); Move 6 (Swim 12); Save 18; CL/XP A/5; Special: None

### Varaant

Varaant are hairless, albino swine, usually found in dungeons where they are raised as a food source by underground-dwelling humanoids. In addition to being kept as livestock, varaant are sometimes used as guard animals because of their nigh-flawless, scent-based tracking abilities.

**Varaant:** HD 1d4; AC 8 [11]; Atk 1 bite (1d6); Move 12; Save 18; CL/XP A/5; Special: None

### Neb'Enakhet

Neb'Enakhet are sacred, mummified cats placed in the tombs of merchants, bureaucrats, non-noble landowners and others who themselves may not be worthy of (or able to afford) mummification. Neb'Enakhet are very intelligent, and will often work together using complex tactics to drive off would-be tomb robbers. In addition to direct attacks, a group of 4 or more Neb'Enakhet may howl and keen together, setting up a hellish, cacophonous call from beyond the grave that acts as a Fear spell.

**Neb'Enakhet:** HD 1d4; AC 7 [12]; Atk 1 bite (1d4) and 2 claws (1d2); Move 9; Save 18; CL/XP A/5; Special: Undead, Fearful Howl

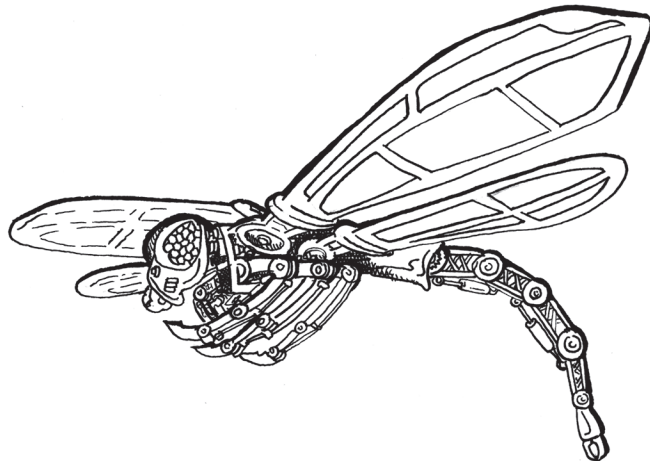
## Challenge Level B

Challenge Level B opponents form the basis of many a well-known beginning adventure. Below are a trio of monsters designed with an eye towards shaking things up a little.

### Clockwork Dragonfly

Clockwork Dragonflies are 3ft long mechanical replicas of their namesake insect, created by high-level Magic-users to serve as spies and guardians. Their creators can see through their multifaceted eyes, hear through their tiny ears, and even cause them to speak at a distance of up to 3 miles. There are rumors of clockwork dragonflies being used to communicate with their creators even after the magic-user has died.

**Clockwork Dragonfly:** HD 1d6; AC 6 [13]; Atk 1 static electricity "sting" (1d4); Move 1 (Fly 18); Save 18; CL/XP B/10; Special: Fly



## Murac

Murac are nocturnal, bat-like humanoids that make their homes in deep caves and sunken ruins. Murac have stunted, weak wings that allow them a very limited amount of flight. Like the bats they resemble, these creatures possess a complex echolocation ability, which allows them to operate effectively in total darkness. Exceptionally intense sounds may stun individual Murac (saving throw). Murac typically wield axes with bat-shaped heads that they throw with great accuracy (+1 to hit).

**Murac:** HD 1d4; AC 8 [11]; Atk 1 bite (1d3) or 1 axe (1d4); Move 9 (Fly 3); Save 18; CL/XP B/10; Special: Fly, Echolocation, +1 to hit with special axe


## Iaeru

Iaeru are diminutive flame elementals that find their way into our plane of existence through “cracks” in the aether that may

form in ancient braziers used for divine or arcane purposes. Like their larger and much more dangerous kin, a successful strike by an Iaeru can ignite flammable materials if the material fails a saving throw. Such saving throws, determined by the DM, are made with a +4 bonus due to the relatively weak nature of Iaeru.

**Iaeru:** HD 1d4; AC 7 [12]; Atk 1 strike (1d4); Move 9; Save 18; CL/XP B/10; Special: Ignite materials

## Closing Notes

Having low hit dice doesn't mean that monsters have to be boring. The Swords & Wizardry Monster Book made great strides on this front, with its Glass Butterflies, Zombie Ravens and the like. Add to these ranks the nasties above, and pretty soon your players will be begging to make it to 3rd level so they can face off against boring old Bugbears and good old-fashioned Ghouls. 

# NEW MONSTERS

## Sword-wraith

by *Arminath (Jim Bobb)*

**Armor Class:** 2 [17]

**Hit Dice:** 7

**Attacks:** 2 weapon (1d6 + magical bonus)

**Saving Throw:** 9

**Special:** Immunities, Aura

**Move:** 9

**Challenge Level/XP:** 9 / 1,100

Sword-wraiths are spirits of powerful, evil fighting-men that cannot find rest after death. Because of their powerful will, after their deaths their spirits inhabit a magical weapon they died fighting with. The Referee should determine the type of weapon and its magical abilities randomly (so there are mace-wraiths, dagger-wraiths, etc), but it will always be a melee weapon. In combat, the sword-wraith will use any special abilities of the weapon it inhabits to the best of its ability. In addition, the sword-wraith projects an aura in a 10ft radius around itself that causes up to 3 unattended weapons of its attacker to animate and attack the sword-wraith's enemies. Animated weapons attack as 3 HD creatures, AC 8[11] and 10hp. As undead creatures, sword-wraiths are immune to charms and sleep spells, but they can be turned by clerics.

## Scorpadillo, Giant

by *Lord Kilgore*

These tough creatures seem to be the twisted creation of a demented sorcerer from ages past. Combining the armored body of a huge armadillo with the poisonous sting of a giant scorpion's tail, these beasts are equally at home in labyrinths or in the wilderness. They are naturally aggressive and do not hesitate to attack.

Anyone stung by the tail of a giant scorpadillo must save vs. poison or immediately go into convulsions and die in 1d6 turns. The underside of the giant scorpadillo is armor class 7 [12], but the creature is low to the ground and attacks against it are difficult at best. If the party finds a way to strike at the vulnerable underbelly, the giant scorpadillo will often curl up into a ball to avoid them. This maneuver leaves the tail free to continue attacking anyone within five feet.

*Greater Giant Scorpadillo:* These larger cousins add two giant scorpion pincers to the already-fearsome giant scorpadillo.

**Scorpadillo, Giant:** HD 2; AC 4 [15] (underbelly AC 7 [12]); Atk: 1 bite (1d4), sting (1+poison); Move 12; Save 11; CL/XP 4/120; Special: Lethal Poison Sting

**Scorpadillo, Greater:** HD 4; AC 4 [15] (underbelly AC 7 [12]); Atk: 1 bite (1d4), 2 pincers (1d6), sting (1+poison); Move 12; Save 10; CL/XP 6/400; Special: Lethal Poison Sting



# ELEMENTAL HALFBREEDS: THE JIN

by Nellisir

The jin are related to genies, but composed of mixtures of elemental substance. All jin live in family groups or small tribes, traveling desolate areas exposed to the elements. They are often summoned to act as guards, or serve in other ways suited to their nature. All jin speak Common, and can speak to other elemental creatures.

## Shaitan

Shaitans are elemental beings of air and fire. They appear as eight-foot tall humanoids with dark gray skin, long black hair, and cinder-red eyes; they smell of ash and smoke, and leave a sooty residue on anything they handle or touch. Male shaitans are clean-shaven. All shaitans prefer to go bare-chested, and wear only a simple loincloth or breeches. They do not carry weapons, as they can create a falchion of cinders and coals at will. They commonly work as soldiers, guards, and slave-takers for the efreeti, or assassins and guards for corrupt djinn.

Shaitans are violent, malicious, and spiteful. They enjoy melee and eschew ranged combat as cowardly and weak. They accept summonings for the chance to do battle, but lose patience quickly with summoners who don't require violence in their service. In return, they expect the summoner to accompany them to their own homes and fight for them.

Shaitans fight with giant falchions they create from the smoke and ash of their own bodies. They can create or dismiss the weapon at will, and it collapses into coals if the shaitan is killed. They can also create a choking cloud of ash and soot around themselves; creatures caught in the cloud must make a saving throw every round they remain in the cloud or take 1d4 points of damage. Finally, shaitans can become invisible for a brief period every day.

**Shaitan:** HD 5; AC 5[14]; Atk 1 sword (1d8+3) or fist (1d6+1); Move 12 (Fly 12); Save 12; CL/XP 7/600; Special choking cloud

## Marja

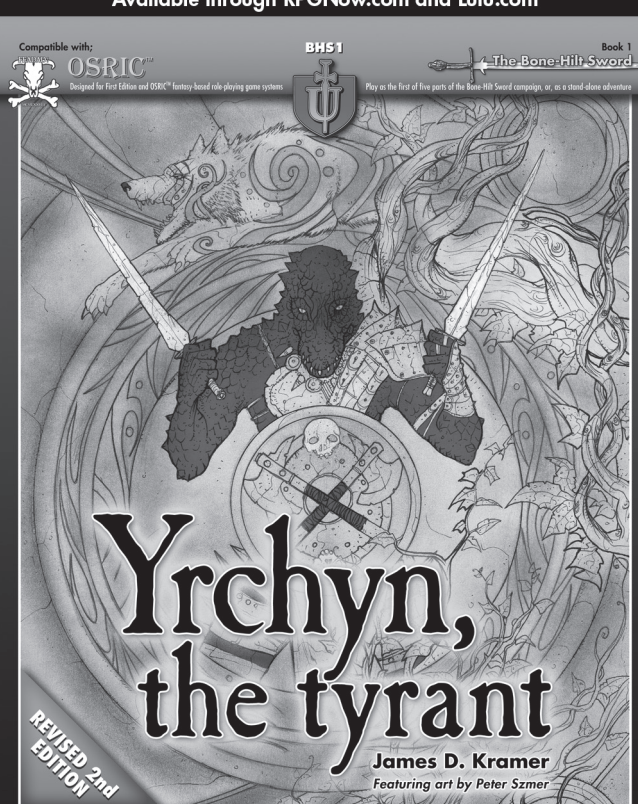
Marja (mar-JAH) are grossly obese elemental beings of earth and water that stand nearly seven feet tall; they have leathery skin, dull hair, and dirty brown eyes. Their features are thick and unintelligent, and their mouths are unnaturally large. Marja smell of wet earth and mud, and leave a muddy slick on anything they touch with their bare skin. Male and female marja refuse to wear anything more confining than a loincloth. They do not carry weapons, but attack with their prodigious fists, or

change into their mud form and drag opponents in with their pseudopods (see below).

Marja are lazy, greedy, and ignorant, believing indolence and sloth to be the right of the strong, and activity and effort the responsibility of the weak. They despise most physical and mental activity and do as little as is required of them, preferring to spend their time lounging in warm mud pools and eating. They are sometimes summoned for use as guards, but cannot be trusted with anything more complex than a stationary post on a lightly traveled gate or passage. Their loathing of effort, however, does not extend to melee, and most marja are more than willing to raise themselves from relaxation to crush a skull or grapple and drown an intruder.

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Marja can turn themselves into a pool of mud at will. In this form they manifest two pseudopods to smash and grapple opponents, seeking to drag them into the mud and drown them. Marja can also cast *transmute rock to mud* as the wizard spell, and can move and attack in water or mud without penalty.

**Marja:** HD 4; AC 5[14]; Atk 2 fists or pseudopods (1d8+1); Move 9 (swim 18); Save 13; CL/XP 6/400; Special pool of mud; transmute rock to mud

## Nemfiri

Nemfiri are elemental beings of air and water, and at nine feet tall, they are the tallest of the jin. They are exceptionally slender, with long faces and thin features. Their skin is bluish-white, and damp to the touch – they smell of mist and fog. All nemfiri shave their heads, leaving only a long topknot of silver hair. Male nemfiri are clean-shaven. Nemfiri prefer to wear flowing robes and elegant jewelry of silver or platinum. They do not carry weapons, and avoid melee combat. If necessary, they can manifest a longbow from their elemental substance to serve as a weapon.

Nemfiri are sophisticated, cultured, and urbane. They work as entertainers and spies, or as minor functionaries in the courts of more powerful elemental beings. Unable to learn magic themselves, they are nonetheless founts of knowledge regarding elemental lore.

Nemfiri can create a longbow and arrows from their bodies; they can create and dismiss the weapon at will, and it sublimates into mist and vapor if the jin is killed. Nemfiri can also become invisible, create minor illusions (including concealing their identity), and plant a *suggestion* (as the spell) in another's mind. Finally, they can turn themselves into a cloud of mist and fog; they inflict no damage in this form, but obscure vision (as invisibility, but -2 penalty instead of -4), and cannot be harmed except by magic weapons and spells.

**Nemfiri:** HD 5; AC 5[14]; Atk 2 arrows (1d6); Move 18 (Fly 24); Save 12; CL/XP 7/600; Special magical powers, cloud of mist and fog

## Sembana

Sembana (SEM-ba-na) are elemental beings of earth and fire, with copper-colored skin, black hair, and golden eyes. They have broad shoulders and thick muscles. They smell of hot metal and oil, and leave an oily residue on anything they handle. Male sembana grow thick, dark beards, and both sexes keep their hair trimmed. Sembana are the only jin to routinely wear armor,



usually chain mail of the highest quality. Guardian sembana carry heavy two-handed axes or mauls; other sembana go unarmed, using their bodies as weapons in combat.

Sembana are dour and unfriendly, concerned only with their crafts and endeavors. They may be engaged as armorers, blacksmiths, or weaponsmiths, or as elite guardsmen and bodyguards. Sembana are sometimes encountered on their way to investigate unusual volcanic activity or metals.

Sembana can unerringly detect rare metals, gems, and minerals, and sense the location of any item they have ever held or seen. They can render themselves invisible for brief periods of time, or cause metal objects to heat up (1 hp damage the first round; 1d4 the second round; 2d4 the third round, then reverse. Characters holding metal objects can drop them after the first point of damage.) Sembana can also transform their skin into iron; they have a movement rate of 6 in this form, and cannot fly, but take no damage from non-magical weapons.

**Sembana:** HD 6; AC 3[16]; Atk 1 weapon (1d10) or 2 fists (1d6+1); Move 12 (Fly 9); Save 11; CL/XP 8/800; Special magical powers, ironskin





# THE TOWER OF MOUTHS

## or, The Doom of Mordraas Kor

By Matt Finch

### A Swords & Wizardry adventure for 4-8 characters level 2-4.

**T**his adventure centers around a tower that is assumed to be located in a city, but the adventure can also be used in a remote wilderness location if desired. It is designed to be the first step in the discovery of a heretofore unknown and unlooted megadungeon if the referee chooses to develop the excavations below the tower, but the module itself focuses only on the two lower levels of the tower itself. This is an area that would have to be cleared before the dungeons are a safe candidate for repeated expeditions. It is also possible that the characters might try to hold onto the tower as a base of operations once they have cleared it; whether this would succeed or whether other forces in the city (such as heavy taxes, seizure by the governing authorities, etc) is a matter for the referee to decide. The adventure was written as a possible resource for use with Gabor Lux's *City of Vultures*, also appearing in this issue.

### Player Information

A week or so ago, the city suffered a mild tremor in the vicinity of a wizard's tower known as the Tower of Mouths, the stronghold of one Mordraas Kor. The tower is a grim octagon of dark stone, with huge faces carved into the sides. Each face is open-mouthed, as if howling, and it is from these faces that the tower derives its name. Of late, since the earthquake, the tower has seemed entirely abandoned. The great brass gate is padlocked, and no one has been seen to enter or exit. Was the earthquake related in some way to the tower? It is very possible that the entire wealth of Mordraas Kor is there for the taking, sitting in an empty tower, waiting for nothing but a group of brave thieves to gather it up and revel in their fortune. Of course, the strongholds of wizards are not to be taken lightly, even when abandoned, but the rewards for plundering them are mighty indeed ...

### Referee Information

It is Mordraas Kor himself who caused the tremors beneath the city, and he is indeed dead from the events surrounding the quake.

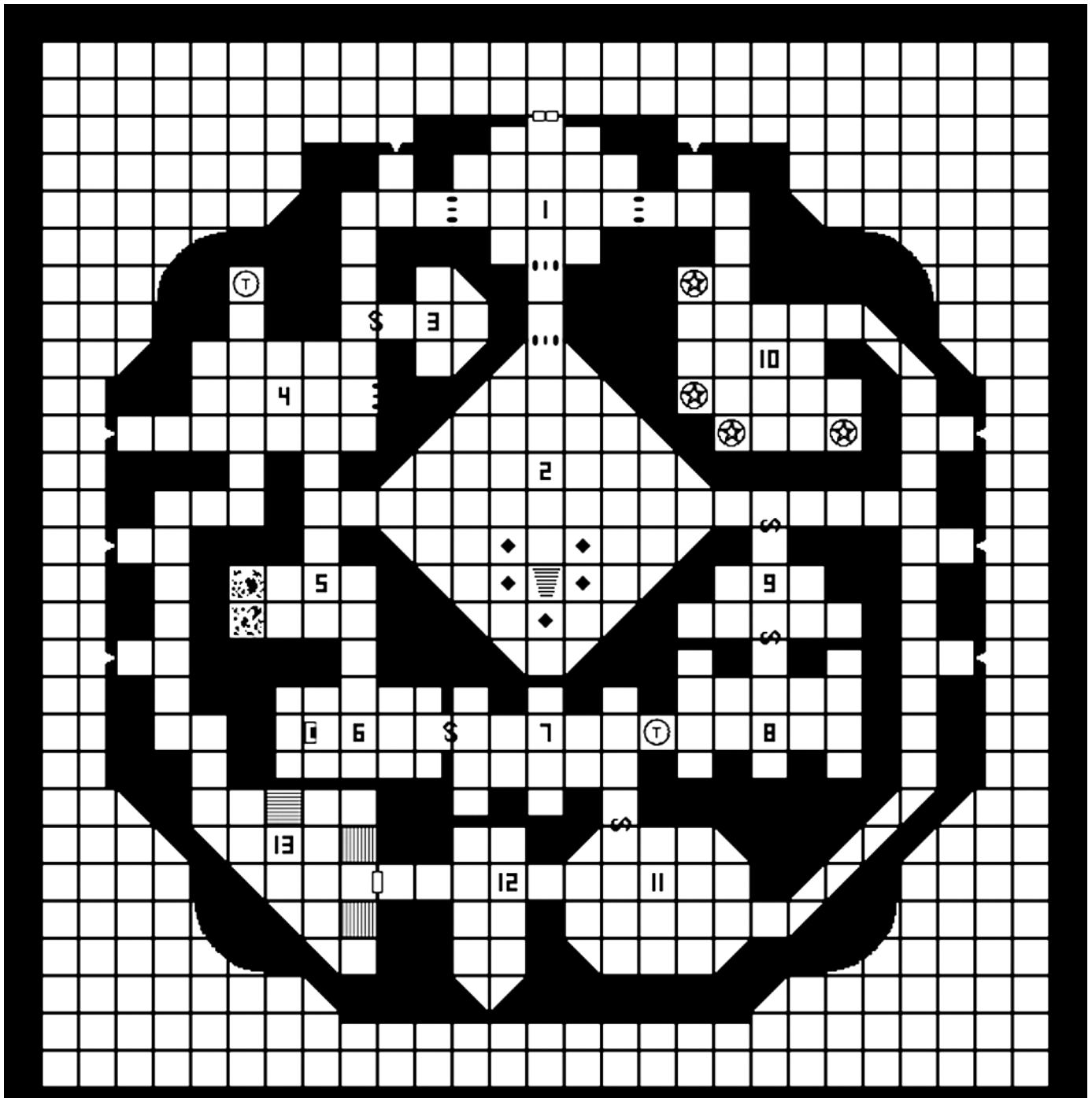
The wizard had foolishly summoned a powerful earth-being to excavate new rooms and passages in his already extensive underground complex below the tower. Unfortunately, the summoned being turned out to be considerably more powerful than Mordraas Kor's wards and magic circles. It slew the sorcerer, and when it departed from the material plane of existence its passage caused a small but powerful earthquake in the tower's stone foundation. The damage to the tower and the dungeons below was minimal, but its force may have caused some cave-ins

or structural weakness in a few areas of the dungeon. The stairs to the dungeons were blocked with rubble, and the ripples of the quake were felt throughout the city. Note that the precise extent of the dungeons is left to you, as the referee – this aspect of the tower can be left out entirely if you wish.

The two upper levels of the tower – unless you choose to stock them with monsters – are filled with an incredibly lethal, corrosive gas, released when the earthquake damaged some of Mordraas Kor's alchemical devices. If the players want to investigate the upper levels, they will have to find a way of venting the gas without killing hundreds of city dwellers in the surrounding area. If the players achieve this task safely, the upper levels will be empty unless they are inhabited by some sort of monster immune to the effects of the gas. Maps of the upper levels are provided for convenience, but they are not numbered or keyed since they are presumed to be devoid of life.

### Ground Level

- 1. Outside Gate and Entrance.** The huge gate into the tower is made of brass, and is secured by a mighty chain with a padlock. Inside the tower, once the players find a way to get in past the lock, the entry chamber has three exits barred by portcullises. These are all warped by the earth-being's escape, and can be broken away easily. When anyone enters the chamber, several mouth-shaped carvings in the wall suddenly open to spit tiny wisps of flame. Originally, the mouths would have filled the room with a howling inferno; their malfunctioning is due to the earth-being's effect on the tower's magical defenses and devices. The floor of this room is covered in mud, with wheel-tracks made by wagons and carts, for it is the only entrance to the tower. All supplies came through this area and were generally unloaded in location 2.
- 2. Central Chamber.** This huge chamber contains the rubble-filled stairwell into the dungeons below the tower. The stairwell is ringed with carven pillars connected by iron chains (to keep people from falling down the stairs). The room's stone floor is laced with cracks and fissures from the earthquake, and shows signs of passage by carts and wagons – although this was apparently as far as such outside traffic came into the tower.
- 3. Secret Chamber.** This secret chamber contains three faucets in the far wall. These tap into the various pipes in the tower's interior walls, and were used for alchemical purposes. Each faucet releases gas into the room. The gas











## LEVEL ONE (Ground)

from faucet A is pink (heals 1 hp), from faucet B it is blue (causes sneezing for 1d6 turns), and from faucet C it is green (does nothing). If more than one tap is opened at the same time, allowing the gases to mix, the following effects derive from the combinations:

- **Faucet A and Faucet B:** poisonous gas
- **Faucet A and Faucet C:** increases strength, granting +1 to hit and damage for 24 hours
- **Faucet B and Faucet C:** explodes for 1d6 points of damage (no saving throw), but the chemical reaction

## Map Key

	Statue		Portcullis
	Secret Door		Teleporter
	Door		Arrowslit
	Stair Down		Rubble

from the explosion toughens the skin, causing a benefit of -3[+3] to armor class for 1 week.

- **Faucet A and B and C (all three):** explosion for 3d6 points of damage (saving throw for half damage).
4. **Guard Room with Teleport Corridor.** There are several racks of weapons on the walls of this room, containing 15 swords, 30 spears, 3 heavy crossbows, 200 crossbow bolts, and 10 shields. The floor is strewn deeply with rushes, and like much of the tower it is cracked and slightly buckled.
- The “T” symbol denotes the presence of a teleportal leading to the corresponding “T” symbol between rooms 7 and 8. This is a one-way portal. The floor of the short corridor leading to the teleportal is cracked and buckled, but the last ten feet of the corridor (the location of the teleportal) is completely untouched by the effects of the earthquake.
5. **Castellan’s Office.** This room contains some nice carpets, a wooden desk, and a chair. A large metal pipe runs along the ceiling from north to south. The pipe leaks occasionally from structural damage, making the room smell distinctly of roses. Each turn there is a 4 in 6 chance for the smell to suddenly become much stronger. There is a leather folder beside the desk, with a sheaf of papers scattered around it. Most of the papers are accounts of food delivered and paid for. However, one page is devoted to the delivery of numerous strange substances: large bottles of newt eyes, pickled bat wings, barrels of various chemicals, and so forth. The most recent entries are mostly metals and rare earths. The topmost page is signed “Mordraas Kor,” and reads simply, “All servants are to maintain utter silence tomorrow, and the gates will remain closed. No one shall enter the second level of the tower. See to it.” The second sheet of paper has “Osmiar” scrawled at the bottom, and reads, “Order a large platter of figs to go with the apprentice lunch tomorrow. I will retrieve them from the kitchen myself; Mordraas does not want the servants in the second level tomorrow.”
6. **Kitchen.** This room contains a free-standing fireplace, several countertops, and other kitchen implements. The fireplace has no chimney. Smoke simply disappears when the fire is lit; this is one of the tower’s magical devices that still functions. Several pipes run along the ceiling, and one of them drips material into a cauldron below, from a small faucet. The material dripping into the cauldron (originally a fortified type of water) has been contaminated by leaks in various other pipes deep within the tower’s walls, adulterated with liquids intended for alchemical manufacture. The liquid collected in the cauldron has formed into an ooze similar to a black pudding, but weaker.

**Weak Black Pudding (20hp):** HD 5; AC 6[13]; Atk 1 attack (3d8); Move 6; Save 12; CL/XP 6/400; Special: Acidic surface, immune to cold, divides when hit with lightning.

7. **Secret Pantries.** This room contains six deep alcoves, which all contain barrels, boxes, and sacks of ordinary kitchen supplies such as flour, herbs, potatoes, etc. Most of it is still edible, since the tower has only been abandoned for a week. One of the alcoves contains a gem-encrusted silver samovar and three crystal tea-glasses. The samovar is worth 1000gp, and the glasses are worth 50gp each.
8. **Guarded Supply Room.** This room contains giant iron cauldrons, large drying racks, big glass tubes, and other cumbersome equipment used in larger scale alchemical projects (total value of 250gp, but it will take a long time and a lot of effort to remove it all from the tower). When Mordraas Kor needed one of these items, he would have servants haul it up to his working chambers. The chamber is guarded by three spider-like mechanisms; they have metal legs, but their bodies are crystalline globes half-filled with a greenish liquid (a non-lethal poison they inject with the bite and front legs).

**3 Spider Mechanisms (HP 14, 8, 4):** HD 2; AC 5[14]; Atk 1 bite (1d4+poison), 2 front leg-needles (poison); Move 12; Save 12; CL/XP 4/120; Special: Poison bite and poison front legs (poison causes target to be slowed on first failed save, and become paralyzed on second failed save, with duration of 1 full turn).

9. **Minor Treasure Room.** This secret room contains a smooth but lumpy rock on a pedestal, and two treasure chests. The rock is the Harmoam, an intelligent and malign meteorite that accidentally fell to earth rather than entering an orbit in the skies, as it had intended. It is extremely annoyed at its predicament, but has become resigned to eternal life on the surface of the world, surrounded by lesser creatures. The Harmoam can communicate with telepathy at a range of 5ft (and also at distances *greater* than 400 miles to an outer limit of 1000 miles, but this is unlikely to come into play).

The Harmoam will grant a wish to any character who can somehow manage to return it to the higher regions of the sky, which is the only place in which its natural powers of levitation can battle the forces of gravity. If returned to the skies it will continue its plans, along with others of its kind, to destroy all life on the planet below.

The treasure chests are both trapped with poisoned needles (on the latch), and are locked. The first contains 100sp and 3000cp. The second contains a 150gp gem, 350gp, and 3200sp.

10. **Damaged Magical-Defense Room.** This room contains four stone statues, 8ft tall, of a wizard (the same wizard) carrying a staff. His face is cruel, and the stone eyes follow the movement of the characters. In two of the statues, the wizard is petting a mastiff. The floor is badly cracked. If any “unauthorized” person should try to cross the room from the southern corridor to the north, all four of the wizard-statues will point their staffs toward the corridor exits. Two of the statues, which were damaged by the quake, will then break into pieces, but the staffs of the

other two emit a flash of greenish light. One staff summons monsters (6 stirges) from thin air. The other staff causes the two mastiff statues to animate and attack.

**2 Stone Mastiffs:** HD 2; AC 4[15]; Atk 1 bite (1d6+1); Move 14; Save 16; CL/XP 4/60; Special: None.

**6 Stirges (HP 6, 6, 5, 3, 2, 2):** HD 1+1; AC 7[12]; Atk 1 proboscis (1d3); Move 3 (Fly 18); Save 17; CL/XP 1/15; Special: blood drain (1d4), +2 to hit bonus.

Each stone staff (4) is tipped with a black gem worth 75gp.

- 11.** Audience Room. Contains table and chairs, and some information that could be used to blackmail an important person in the city. Details of the blackmail material and the potential target are left to the referee, since the information could spark an entire adventure if the players follow up on it.
- 12.** Guard Chamber. Contains three dead guards, poisoned by Osmiar. They wear leather armor and have longswords on their belts, along with a total of 15sp. The floor swarms with cockroaches that have occupied the deep cracks in the floor.
- 13.** Room of Magical Stairs. Each stairway in this room goes to a different level of the tower, passing magically through the upper levels. Each stairway seems to be twenty feet long, with a landing at the middle. Only the southernmost stair leads to the level directly above; the other two lead to the lethal, gas-filled top levels. The stair on the north wall leads to level 4, and the northernmost stair on the east wall leads to level 3. Anyone climbing one of these two stairways will be warned of the gas by a strange smell. If the adventurers continue upward, anyone breathing the gas higher up must make a saving throw or die. Anyone reaching the poisoned upper levels must make a saving throw each round, and take 1d8 points of damage per round (no saving throw) merely from skin contact with the gas.

## Second Level

- 14.** Room of Stairs. Although the stairs in area 13 lead to other levels when they are taken upwards from area 13, if they are taken downward from this room, they lead into area 13 as if they were normal stairs.
- 15.** Common Room of Mordraas Kor's Assistants. The southern door of this room is trapped with a scything blade (from the ceiling), but if it is triggered the blade will jam before it extends more than a foot from its hole. After ten minutes, the spring-tension will break through the obstacle and the blade will scythe downward (3d6 damage if anyone is unlucky enough to still be in the doorway). The trap can be bypassed with the password "Mordraas Kor." The room contains three well-stuffed armchairs, and three

small tables. A pipe and a pouch sit on one of the tables, and another is topped with two flagons of soured ale.

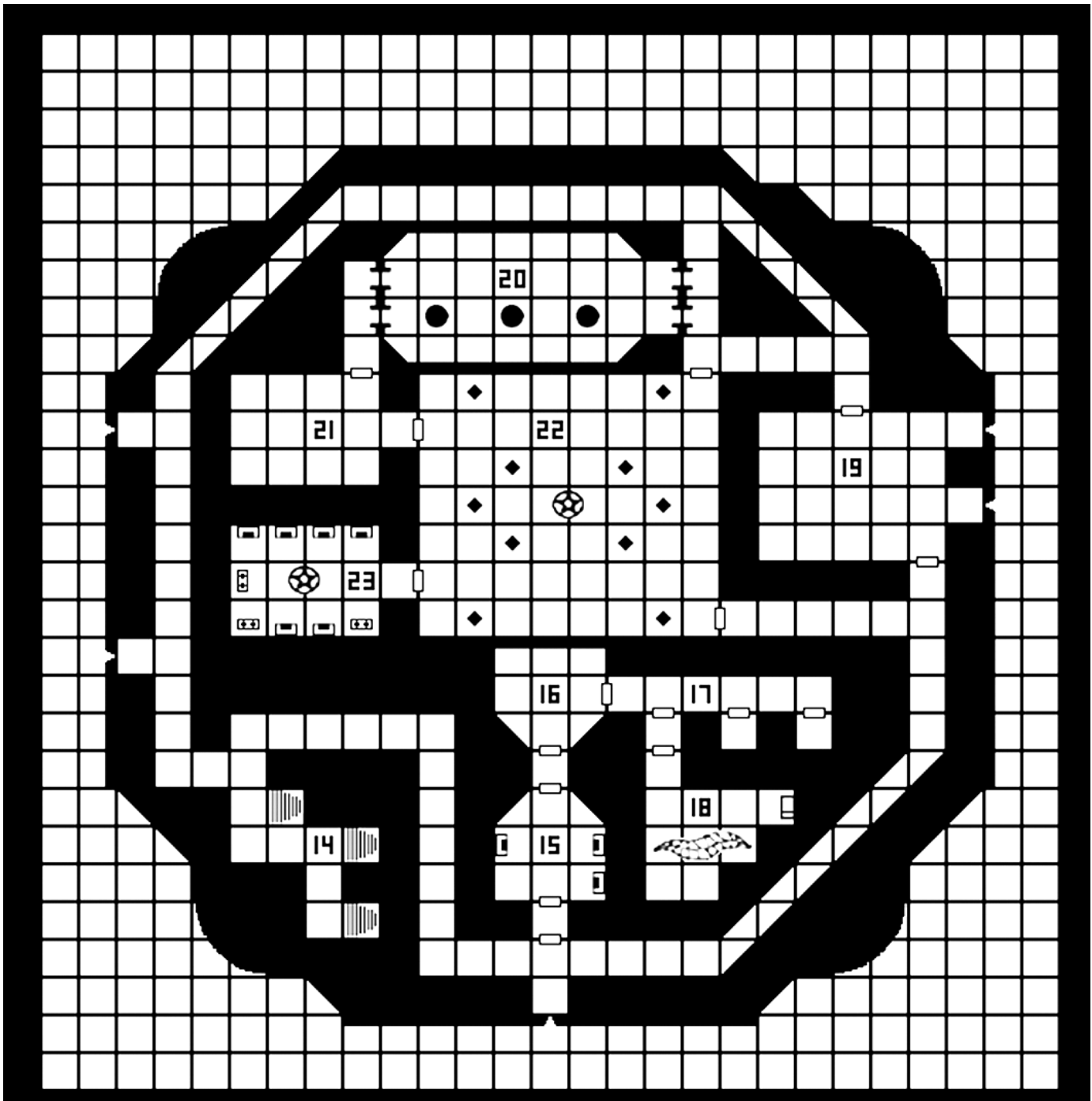
- 16.** Assistants' Studying Room. Contains information about the summoning. Three desks are positioned in this room, one larger than the others. A large book with the word "RAGANTHU" written upon it is on one of the desks, locked with an iron hasp. The lock contains a poison needle trap. The spellbook contains the following spells: Charm Person, Protection from Evil, Read Magic

Folded inside the spellbook is a piece of parchment reading, "Treat Osmiar with caution; he is too much cared for by Mordraas, and cares little in return for any of us."

- 17.** Hallway and Assistants' Sleeping Chambers. This corridor has three doors on the southern wall. The first is unlabeled. The middle door has a bronze plaque reading "OSMIAR," and the easternmost door has a similar plaque reading, "RAGANTHU." The door marked "Raganthu" appears to have been fastened shut with some sort of incredibly powerful glue, and will have to be broken open. Each of the small chambers contains a bed; Osmiar's chamber contains nothing else but a half-empty bottle of poison under the bed. Raganthu's chamber contains a man's corpse, dressed in long red robes. The man appears to have been clawing at the fastened door when he died (the traitorous Osmiar used an alchemical glue to fasten the door, shortly before the summoning of the earth-being). The key to open Raganthu's spellbook (room 16) is fastened to the inside of the robes the corpse wears.
- 18.** Larmaoul's Chambers. A bronze plaque on the door reads: "LARMAOUL." The room contains a bed, and there are several ornately woven rugs on the cracked floor. A deep crack breaks the floor from east to west in the middle of the room. Larmaoul, the chief apprentice of Mordraas Kor, is still alive in the bottom of the twenty-foot deep fissure, although he has been driven mad by a week during which he has somehow survived without food or water. His spellbook and 200gp are to be found in a locked steel box under the bed. Although he will converse with the characters, most of what he says is gibberish. However, he will often return to the same repeated refrains: the first is, "It is too powerful a name, Master. I told you. Did I not tell you?" The second repeated phrase is, "Osmiar has sabotaged the wards! Let me out! Osmiar has sabotaged the wards! You must hear me!" Larmaoul carries a key to the steel box.

**Larmaoul (non-hostile, insane NPC):** MU 6; HD 6d6-6; HP 17; AC 9 [10]; Atk Bite (1hp); Move: 12; Save 11; CL/XP 4/120; Special: Spells, none memorized.

Larmaoul's spellbook contains the following spells: Level One: Charm Person, Detect Magic, Light, Read Languages, Read Magic. Level Two: Continual Light, ESP, Levitate, Mirror Image, Stinking Cloud, Web. Third










## LEVEL TWO

Level: Clairaudience, Dispel Magic, Water Breathing.  
Fourth Level: Monster Summoning II.

19. Alchemy Room. The western wall of this room contains shelves that reach almost to the ceiling. Apparently the shelves were once filled with small cages; a few remain on the shelves, but most of them are scattered on the floor, probably shaken off by the tremor. Numerous albino giant rats scamper around the room, and there are also several rat skeletons on the floor. Alchemical experiments have given the rats permanent effects of certain potions.

## Map Key

	Statue		Giant Piston
	Archway		Pillar
	Door		Arrowslit
	Stair Down		

Other things in the room: two vats are suspended from the ceiling; copper tubing runs from these into some of the cages. Vat #1 contains five doses of invisibility potion, but there is also some poisonous sediment at the bottom. Vat #2 contains three doses of healing potion, and the sediment at the bottom can be mixed with water to make six more healing potions.

A barrel in one corner is broken open, and contains a bit of rat food at the bottom, fouled with dried rat droppings.

**Giant Invisible Lab Rats (2):** HD 1; HP 4, 4; AC 7 [12]; Atk Bite (1d4); Move: 12; Save 17; CL/XP 2/30; Special: Invisible, remain invisible even after attacking.

**Giant Self-Healing Lab Rat (1):** HD 1; HP 3; AC 7 [12]; Atk Bite (1d4); Move: 12; Save 17; CL/XP 2/30; Special: Heals completely if not killed in one combat round.

**Giant Hasted Lab Rats (2):** HD 1; HP 3, 3; AC 7 [12]; Atk 2 Bites (1d4); Move: 12; Save 17; CL/XP 2/30; Special: 2 attacks per round (against same opponent only).

**20. Pumping Station.** Three large iron pistons move up and down in this room. Each is connected to a metal pipe that disappears into the stone of the ceiling. These pumps are one of the primary mechanisms for moving alchemical liquids into their various taps and spigots. If the pumps are all stopped, all of the liquids and gases in the tower will cease to work (including the one fouling the upper levels with poison gas), but the power driving the pumps will keep going, causing the pumps to explode one round after the last one is stopped (10d6 damage, saving throw applies). The players might be warned of this by the action of the pumps; when the first pump is stopped, the others will work faster and begin making labored sounds. When only one pump is operating, it will move at a blurring speed and begin giving off wisps of smoke.

**21. Writing Room.** This room contains a very ornately carved writing desk covered with papers and candle-wax. One sheet of parchment bears one word in large letters: "Gorthorog." This is the name of the earth-being that Mordraas Kor summoned with disastrous results. If the name is spoken twice, it has the effect of calling the being forth from the strange dimensions it inhabits – its being will flow into area 22 near its statue. The being takes a full turn (10 minutes) to completely materialize, and if anyone orders or asks it to return home during this time it will do so, for it has no desire to be in the material planes. The creature has the intelligence of a genius, although it appears like a flow of cold magma with tentacles. Faces form in the liquid stone of its body, and anyone who meets the eyes of one of the faces must make a saving throw or be paralyzed for 1d4 rounds. Since he is not bound to the material plane by an accidental summoning, each round Gorthorog has a 10% chance to decide to return home. Anyone held in his tentacles will be taken along (dying in the process), and

there will be a second earthquake. Even the strength of the second earthquake would not be enough to collapse the tower, but it would be extremely unstable afterwards.

**Gorthorog:** HD 20; HP 80; AC 0[19]; Atk 5 tentacles (1d10 each); Move 12; Save 3; CL/XP 22/8000; Special: Tentacles can grab and immobilize (saving throw), moves through stone, immune to cutting or stabbing weapons, paralysis.

**22. Summoning Room.** Each door into this room is enchanted with a magic mouth, which appears and speaks when anyone approaches the door. The mouth simply says, "Trespasser beware. Enter the summoning chambers of Mordraas Kor and doom shall be upon you." This room is the site of the summoning disaster, and the traitor Osmiar is still here, in his badly altered form. The room's most obvious feature is a largely melted stone statue in the middle of the room, now resembling a tall glob of stone with five broken tentacles protruding from the slagged form. A human ankle protrudes from the southern wall of the chamber, wearing a pointy-toed slipper. This is the only part of Mordraas Kor that wasn't entirely pulled into the earth-being's realm for devouring. It can be pulled from the wall, leaving a hole about a foot deep. The slipper is one of a pair of slippers of silent movement, but worn alone it is useless. Osmiar is a skeletally thin person, dribbling saliva from the corner of his mouth and scratching at the stone walls, obviously insane. He will disregard anyone entering the room unless they approach the stone statue of Gorthorog in the middle of the room, in which case he will shriek in terror and attack. In the course of the earth-being's departure, Osmiar was warped by the powerful effects of the dimensional magic. The right side of his body was transformed into living, moving stone. Gems sparkle where they are embedded in this side of his body. Each half of his body has an independent life; if the flesh side is killed, the stone half will continue fighting, and vice versa. Both sides of the body fight at the same time, as if they were different creatures. There are 12 gems in Osmiar's right half, worth 50gp each.


**Left Half of Osmiar the Traitor (flesh):** MU 5; HD 7d6-7; HP 20; AC 9[10]; Atk 1 fist (1hp); Move 9; Save 9; CL/XP 9/1100; Special: Spells (4/3/2/1).

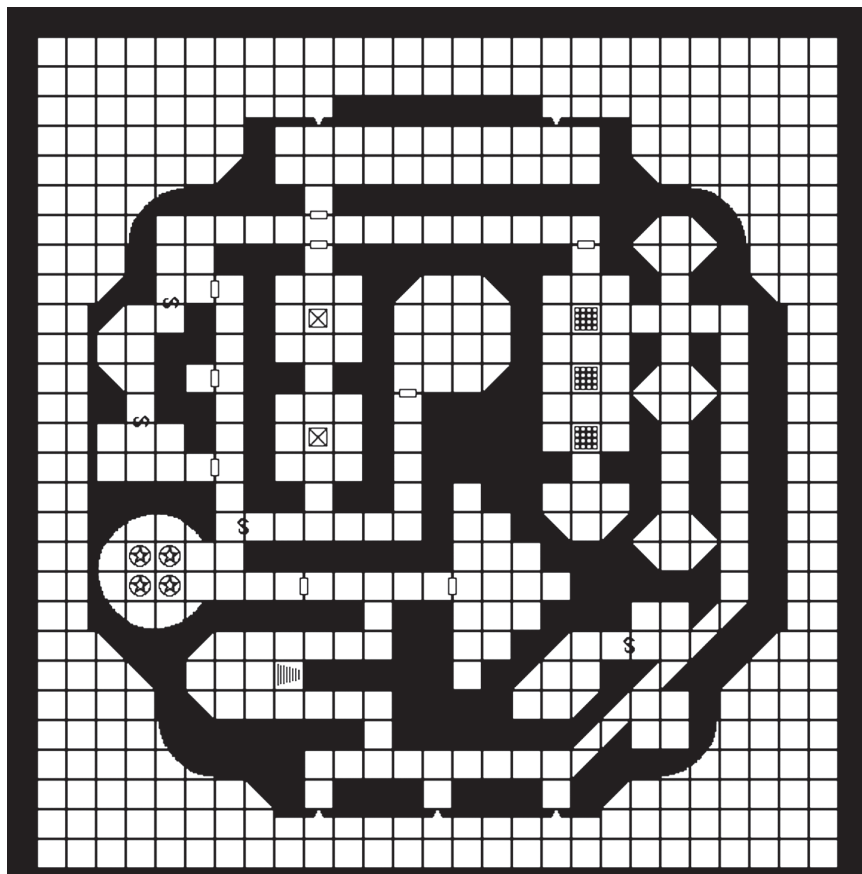
- **Spells level 1:** Charm Person, Protection from Evil, Sleep, (no fourth spell; already cast)
- **Spells level 2:** Mirror Image, Web
- **Spells level 3:** Slow

**Right Half of Osmiar the Traitor (stone):** HD 5; HP 20; AC 2[17]; Atk 1 fist (2d6); Move 9; Save 12; CL/XP 5/240; Special: immune to cutting or piercing weapons.

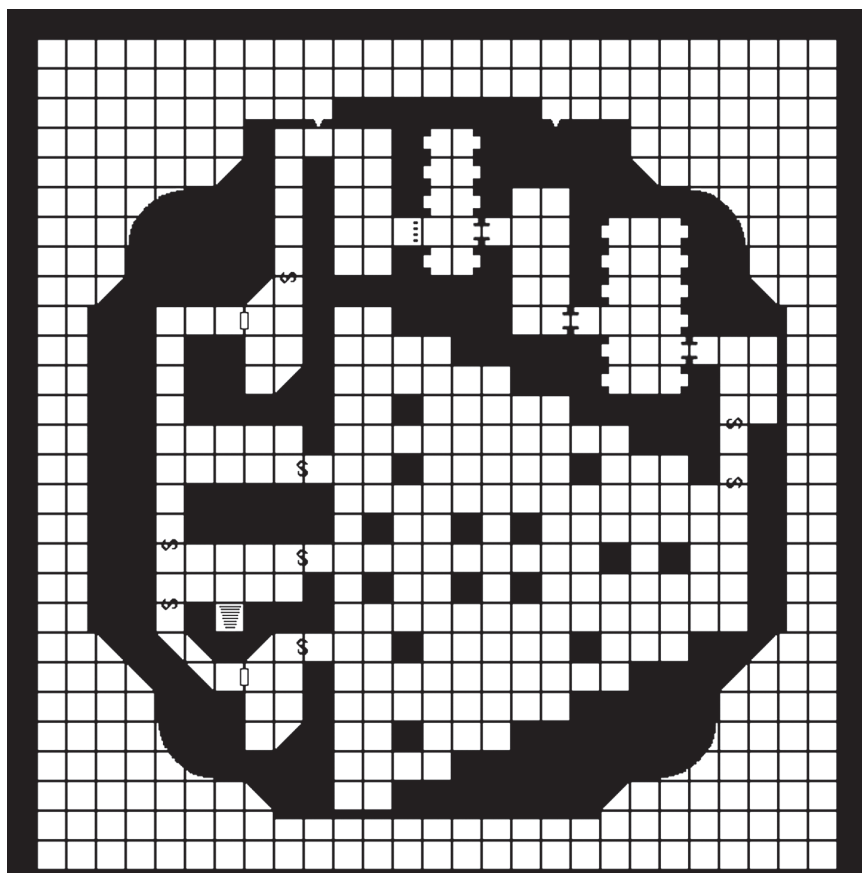
**23. Workroom.** Contains fireplaces, worktables, and the statue venting gases into the upper levels. There is a statue in the middle of the room depicting a short, squat, being with jeweled eyes, its head tilted back to open a gigantic mouth. Several metal pipes are attached to the figure's base, and extend along the floor to disappear into the walls. A steady wisp of green smoke rises from the statue's mouth and is sucked into an overhead grate in the ceiling. This statue is the source of the gas that now fills the upper two levels; the "smoke" is not only lethally poisonous (saving throw). The statue animates if it is touched; its short arms are of almost no use in combat, but its ability to breathe poison gas is deadly. It can break loose from its pipes, but it can only hold three gas-exhalations before it has to return to the pipes and suck more gas into its mouth. If the pumps in area 20 have been stopped, the statue will not be able to breathe poison gas, and will not animate. Note: if the statue detaches itself from the pipes to move around, the pipes still give off the poison gas – only now it begins to fill this level instead of the ones above. The statue's jewelled eyes are worth 500gp each.

**Squat Evil Little Statue:** HD 4; AC 3[16]; Atk 2 little arms (1d2 each); Move 3; Save 13; CL/XP 7/600; Special: Breathes poison gas at one person directly in front of it (save or die).

Osmiar's spellbook is stashed under a flagstone inside one of the fireplaces. 



LEVEL THREE



LEVEL FOUR

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# KNOCKSPELL

THE MAGAZINE OF OLD-SCHOOL FANTASY GAMING

## PRESS RELEASE

### Black Blade Publishing to become Exclusive Publisher of the Swords & Wizardry Core Rules and Knockspell Magazine

**September 30, 2009 – Mythmere Games**, developer and publisher of the ENnie-award winning *Swords & Wizardry* fantasy role-playing game, is pleased to announce an exclusive agreement with **Black Blade Publishing** to publish the *Swords & Wizardry Core Rules* and *Knockspell* magazine, and to lead the charge to get *Swords & Wizardry* into retail distribution. The first release under this agreement will be a softcover version of the 124-page *Swords & Wizardry Core Rulebook* and *Knockspell #3*.

Working with **Studio 2 Publishing** as its distribution partner, Black Blade Publishing expects the *Swords & Wizardry Core Rulebook* to start hitting the shelves of brick and mortar game stores by February of 2010. In addition, the in-print version of the *Swords & Wizardry Core Rulebook* will be available for purchase directly from Black Blade Publishing ([www.black-blade-publishing.com](http://www.black-blade-publishing.com)) or through select retailers as early as mid-October, 2009.

Electronic copies of the *Swords & Wizardry Core Rulebook* will be available immediately directly from Black Blade Publishing, and will be available very soon directly from Studio 2 Publishing, DrivethruRPG, RPGNow and YourGamesNow.

Print versions of *Knockspell #3* are available for purchase directly from Black Blade Publishing, and issue #4 may be distributed to stores around February of 2010, at the same time as the core rules.

Electronic copies of *Knockspell #3* are now available immediately from Black Blade Publishing, and will be available very soon directly from Studio 2 Publishing, DrivethruRPG, RPGNow or YourGamesNow.

“The *Swords & Wizardry* fantasy role-playing game is about a lot more than a return to the way these games used to be played. *Swords & Wizardry* unapologetically throws off 30 years of re-imagining and so-called ‘fixing’ of the original rules, returning to the wonder and mystery of “free-form” fantasy gaming without complicated rules and long rulebooks. Black Blade Publishing is very excited to be publishing the key *Swords & Wizardry* titles from Mythmere Games. The quality of new products being introduced in the old school gaming community is amazing, and we are really excited to be a part of it.” — Jon Hershberger, co-founder of Black Blade Publishing

Founded in 2008 by Matthew J. Finch, **Mythmere Games** is best known for the *Swords & Wizardry* fantasy role-playing game, the award-winning retro-clone of the original 1974 edition of the world’s most popular fantasy game. For additional information, visit [www.swordsandwizardry.com](http://www.swordsandwizardry.com).

Formed in 2009 by Jon Hershberger and Allan Grohe, Black Blade Publishing will begin publishing the *Swords & Wizardry Core Rulebook* in October 2009 under license from **Mythmere Games**. For additional information, visit [www.black-blade-publishing.com](http://www.black-blade-publishing.com).

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