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Kobold Quarterly

A tiny little journal of
Kobolds & Dragons

Issue 1
Summer 2007



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Ecology of
the Derro

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Kobold Quarterly

Summer 2007

Vol. 1, Issue 1

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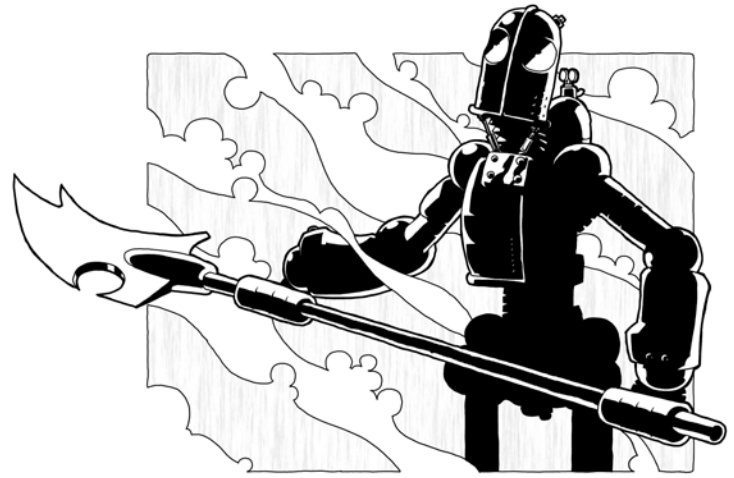
by Wolfgang Baur



On the Cover

Our mascot and all-time favorite creature, Jiro the Grey Wurm, a kobold drawn by Darren Calvert.

SMALL BUT FIERCE



I realize that launching this magazine as DRAGON Magazine's print era ends is — how to put it? It's a bit of a kick to the nuts to go from a 100% color, lavishly-illustrated, fine-tuned machine to a one-man show with a lot of black and white art and a do-it-yourself ethos.

On the other hand, it's kind of liberating. Make no mistake, this is a homebrewed magazine, and (the current issues's table of contents notwithstanding) it will lean on the best that readers and patrons can offer. KOBOLD QUARTERLY will be as good as people want it to be, and as good as I can make it editorially.

So far, I've heard from some great top-shelf freelancers that they will contribute: Ed Greenwood, Nicholas Logue, and many others will (hopefully) soon replace my byline in the table of contents. I'm happy to edit this magazine; I promise that the article mix for this first issue is an aberration. There's literally no way for me to write and edit the whole thing. Not without giving up sleep entirely.

My guiding principle is that KOBOLD QUARTERLY should not only offer something valuable to the D&D gaming world, it should do it with attitude. That's the meaning behind the "small but fierce" credo: kobolds may not have the big marketing dollars or the massive staff of a multinational corporation, but we're also free to do as we please.

That was the inspiration. It takes more than inspiration to get by. I'm an old industry warhorse, as these things are measured, and I've been thinking about what shape a magazine takes. Half of it is what readers demand and what freelancers are inspired to write. That half is in your control.

The other half bubbles up through the black art of editing. That means choosing wisely, shepherding resources but knowing when to splurge, getting the right artist for an article,

keeping a balance of crunch and fluff, player and DM focus. That editorial voice will take time to discover; it depends on what regular authors it attracts, what readers like and dislike, and what works.

You can help mold the KOBOLD QUARTERLY style to suit yourself, just by sending your critique to koboldquarterly@gmail.com with the subject line "Email to the Editor". I don't know whether I'll run a letters column, but the magazine will reflect what you want, and what you'd like to see disappear. The only way I'll know is if you tell me.

Based on your feedback, every issue will publish a mix of solid features, a few surprises, a few laughs. This isn't just a DM's magazine or just a player magazine; it will bring a balance of in-depth game content, inspirational setting ideas, and material for both sides of the DM screen.

I realize that attracting readers and subscribers takes time, and that readership must be earned. I'm working to earn that trust from the readers, and in a year's time I hope to prove just how powerful a community of kobolds can be. Help me by emailing me what you do like and what you hate about the issue, and what you'd like to see in the future. I'll see if I can make it happen. For more information on writing and queries, see the Kobold FAQ on the last page.

Will this kobold survive? Yes! If word of mouth on the first issue is good, it could easily go to 6 issues a year. The toughest time for any new magazine is the first year, and most magazines fail. All the fierceness in the world won't help this kobold thrive if gamers don't rally to it. Please tell your friends about KOBOLD QUARTERLY. With your support, I hope to make it a great little voice for independent gamers everywhere. Thanks for joining me on this ride. I promise, it won't be dull.

Wolfgang Baur

Kobold in Chief

Ecology of the DERRO

Behold their
glorious
madness!

By Wolfgang Baur

The net fell without a sound, and the svirfneblin caught under it struggled for a moment, screaming, then fell silent. A steady rain of blue tears fell from one eye, but the three spike-haired creatures surrounding the net showed no sign of sympathy. "Are there more of them?" said one.

"I don't see them. This one is enough." The derro pulled at the net to tighten it just as an acid-filled dart flew by. It struck the captive, who twitched and lay still. "Bastard! Find him!" roared the derro, veins bulging against his pale skin. "They must learn despair!" His voice echoed from the cavern walls. The others scattered to obey.

The hidden svirfneblin saved his companion from a slow, lingering death. It was all he could do.

The derro are the only permanently insane species to live in the underdark. Ropers, scourges, aboleth, and the various aberrations are alien but not insane; their thoughts are ordered, if entirely foreign. The fishfolk are prone to insanity but not all of them suffer its lash. Even the endless despair of driders and the insatiable hunger of the ghouls are understandable, powerful versions of normal feelings.

The derro are different. They survive not in spite of but because of their particularly passionate embrace of madness, and they thrive on it. Saner species fear the strange little dwarves because they seem to believe themselves subject only to forces no one else can see. Each derro believes that he and his race are the masters of the underdark. Other races

believe that this is part of their megalomania; derro believe their superiority is just a fact, and act accordingly, as if they already ruled the underworld.

History of the Derro

In the dark caverns where the River Styx presses close to the surface world, time rolls slowly and history is an illusion. Without day and night, without seasons, time passes marked only by the cycles of sleep, birth, and death. Entire species slip into the worship of dark gods, into the contemplation of the dark and empty voids around them, and despair. This is what happened to the derro.

Long ago, the derro were the bastard offspring of humans and dwarves, no more loved than half-elves are, but toler-

ated by human society. Dwarven society shunned them as abominations and pushed them down into the darkness. Most perished quickly; they were eaten by ghouls, gobbled by purple worms, or they simply starved to death. The drow, aboleth, and duergar enslaved the survivors. They became a distinct dwarven race, scarred by their servitude.

Over centuries, the derro's resentment of their pitiful lot led them to the worship the ancient elemental gods and to enter into pacts with demon lords of madness and revenge. Among the drow, this distasteful gutter cultism was not considered especially dangerous, or even terribly unusual. They treated the derro as favored idiot children, too foolish to worship a proper demon goddess like their own.

Among the aboleth, they were treated with pride as proper acolytes of gods behind most creatures understanding. The duergar simply worked them until they died in place.

The derro slowly grew in numbers and found a place as bullies, slave overseers, and torturers. Each year a few gave in to their deviant appetites and were slain if they raised a hand against their masters. Over the years, the underdark races came to view that as “just the way derro are.” Even the madly violent ones were allowed to live.

Gradually, the derro turned from madness as a refuge from pain, to madness as a source of strength. Legends tell that some escaped from their masters and built a small settlement of their own, where their madness resonated more strongly the more of them gathered. The strength and skill they had learned from the duergar, the forbidden lore they had taken from the aboleths, and the tolerance for bitter suffering they had learned from the drow all came together as they toiled to create a metamagical planar resonating device called “the ship of night”, a piece of engineering combining dwarvish craft, stolen aboleth lore, and the evil of drow.

Through the use of its projectors and lenses, the derro called forth their gods, creatures from beyond the veil, and took a terrible vengeance on their former masters. Then, legends say, the gods retreated from the world. The derro vengeance was complete, but their gods had abandoned them in the cold and dark. The gods gave the derro freedom from slavery in exchange for this summoning, at the price of their minds. No derro was ever sane again.

Ever since, the derro have followed a path of cult frenzies, slaughters and slow torture to please their demon gods, to bring them back, to show themselves worthy of the rulership of the underdark, their destiny and gift. Torture and madness and despair are the derro’s pleading worship.

Other races don’t fear the derro because of their military or arcane power. They fear that the derro madness hold

deep and forbidden truths, knowledge that destroys other races outright. They fear that the derro gods might come back and teach their mad little servants new tricks. Certainly derro seem able to draw on reserves of strength and strange arcane lore that other races lack.

Derro Knowledge and Craft

Derro are famous for their knowledge of secret lore, their poisons, and their mastery of many underdark elements and resources that others do not care to discover, such as the proper care of oozes or the divinations to be read from thooqua entrails. The wisest savants often have ranks in a wide range of disparate skills, from Knowledge (Dungeoneering) to Craft (Stone), Profession (Worm Farmer), and Knowledge (Arcane). If you use Knowledge (Forbidden Lore) in your game, all derro savants have at least 3 ranks in that skill.

The body of derro knowledge does not come from books or scrolls. Instead, half of it is imparted to those who become the derro savants by the tearing of the veil, and the other half is learned through oral repetition. Some claim that the derro wisdom comes from creatures beyond the veil who speak to the derro; indeed, careful listening does reveal that savants often mutter to themselves for days and hours at a time, with pauses in their conversations as if something were answering them. No one else hears the answers given, and this condition is usu-

ally ascribed to their insanity.

Derro Anatomy and Appearance

Derro are short, stocky creatures with flat white eyes and spiky hair often glued into spikes using bat guano; this gives them both a strangely wild appearance and a peculiar smell. Many adult derro have cataracts that should completely obscure their vision, yet their milky eyes can see.

Derro insanity is the defining feature of the race, but it is not present at birth. Derro children are all clear-eyed and normal, but they are scarred and driven insane by their parents quite deliberately, usually at the age of 4, when their speech and motion are fully-formed. The ritual used goes by many names, again as a matter of preference from tribe to tribe and even year to year; sometimes they call it Staring into the Abyss, sometimes it is the Heartless Fire or the First Drink of True Knowledge.

In every case, the derro child is led away from the tribe into darkness and given a potion brewed by the group’s leader from centipede venom and hallucinogenic fungi. The result is vomiting and visions, and in many cases the end of the derro child’s life: roughly one in twelve is “taken by the gods”. The derro do not mourn these losses; they consider them a blessing by the gods of madness on the child, and the parents comfort themselves with the knowledge that their child is spared a long life of struggle and want.

Knowledge of the Derro

Characters with ranks in Knowledge (Nature) can learn more about the derro. When a character makes a successful skill check, reveal the following lore, including the information from lower DCs.

Table: Derro Lore

DC Result

10 Derro are monstrous humanoids, the warped crossbreeds of human and dwarf, who live below the earth.

14 Derro worship gods of madness and despair, and yet they are powerful sorcerers and clever fighters. They often use poisoned weapons and magic to trap victims for ritual torture.

18 Derro are insane, prone to terrible rages and unprovoked violence. They use repeating crossbows, nets, and spells to catch their victims.

22 Derro are easily swayed by power; Bluffs work well against them, and they adopt new leaders and new gods frequently. They use incantation magic.

Their madness makes attempts to get information from them simply by asking suspect. They often wander into complex delusional fantasies of personal power and megalomaniacal tirades of the injustices visited on them and their clan by outside forces.

Derro are short-lived, perhaps because of the filth and madness that they consider normal. Few reach the age of 40, considered the mark of decrepitude and the blessings of elder gods by the derro. Persistent tale that derro elders are sacrificed in powerful blood rituals have never been confirmed.

Derro Magic

Derro magic is most common among the savants, their cultish sorcerers, wizards, diabolists, and warlocks. Many if not most of them follow schools of divination, elementalism, illusion, clockwork magic, and evocation; relatively few are transmuters, necromancers, star and shadow mages, or enchanters.

Most derro understand at least a few incantations and can chant them with a leader to generate form of group magic. These incantations include Parting the Veil, Scuttling Wisdom, The Black Road, and Calling Forth the Dweller.

Parting the Veil

Enchantment

Effective Level: 4th

Skill Check: Knowledge (Forbidden Lore or Arcana) DC 20, 5 successes

Failure: Death

Components: V, S, M, F, XP

Casting Time: 60 minutes

Range: Touch

Target: One creature

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Will (special)

Spell Resistance: No

This incantation open a channel between the mind of the caster, the mind of the target, and powerful, semi-divine extra-planar entities who reveal a momentary glimpse of the dimensions normally invisible to corporeal creatures of the material plane. As a result, the target's eyes turn milky white, and the

affected creature gains 1 rank in Knowledge (Forbidden Lore) – if it doesn't die of the shock.

To part the veil, the caster uses both symbols drawn on the target's face and eyelids, as well as chants and supplications to the elder elemental gods and the derro Mother of Madness.

If the incantation succeeds, the target learns to see normally through multiple dimensions and becomes an adult derro, doomed to both madness and secret knowledge.

Failure: If the caster fails two consecutive Knowledge (Forbidden Lore) checks, the Parting of the Veil adds one to the caster's ranks in Forbidden Lore and reveals far too much to the target. The target must make an immediate Will save in the face of this knowledge or die, their brain unable to correlate this alien knowledge with their own.

Material Component: Using a paste of bat dung, derro savant blood, and rare, fluorescent minerals, the caster inscribes lines and spirals around the eyes of the target.

Focus: An open grave, a cavern filled with centipedes, and other memento mori are used to bring the target close to the veil between planes.

XP Component: 200 XP.

Backlash: After Parting the Veil, the caster is fatigued.

Campaign Use: This incantation is purely a tool to reveal starry wisdom to the derro children and ensure their eventual insanity. However, the derro are ecumenical in their madness, and will gladly offer to share their wisdom with anyone who professes any interest in learning it.

Derro Equipment

Derro gear is rarely well-kept, but some of it is surprisingly well-made and inventive.

Clothing and Armor: Derro wear good armor and clothes, but care for them sporadically. The strangest garment common among the derro is their love of bone-inlaid helmets with openings for hair, ears, and eyes. The eye and ear openings make sense from a practi-

cal point of view, but the derro insist that their hair must also have a way to reach the air (and thus create a point of vulnerability) for their leader's voices to reach them.

Derro studded leather armor is often dyed and decorated much more elaborately than most: some suits are simply black with white spots, others have swirls in shades of brown, black, and grey.

Cave Dragonscale Shields: These size Small masterwork dragonscale shields weigh 4 lbs, provide a +2 bonus to Armor Class, have a 10% arcane failure chance, and grant a -1 armor check penalty. Only derro seem to make them; gluing cave dragon scales to a heavy metal frame requires a special technique. They sell for 250 gp or more when they are available.

Messenger Bats: Some derro have a strange affinity for small cave creatures, typically bats (though sometimes also cave scorpions, rats, or centipedes). Their trained messenger bats do go where they are told, and carry small messages in tiny scroll cases attached to their hind legs. Because they resemble all other cave bats, they are usually a safe way to transmit messages quickly; the bats cover 32 miles per 8 hours flying. Messenger bats usually sell for 25 gp.

Poison Net: The derro have learned how to weave a complex type of netting using a combination of monstrous spider silk and fibres from a dried mushroom they. They coat these nets with contact poison such as weeping poison or dragon bile (Fort DC 26, Initial 3d6 Str, Secondary 0, 1,500 gp), and use it to make it easier to capture living victims for ritual torture and sacrifice to their dark gods. Any creature caught in a poison net must make a poison saving throw during each attempt to escape the net. Creatures that help a victim out of such a net must make also make such a saving throw. The poison net is almost identical to a normal net, weighing slightly less (5 lbs) because of its construction. They are never sold to outsiders.

Weeping Poison: Brewed from a com-

bination of mineral toxin and vermin venom, derro bluetear or weeping poison is a powerful injected poison that is made only by derro elders and alchemists. It is named for the copious tears that its paralyzed victims shed, both when they are captured and when the derro begin their vile tortures. The poison is Fort DC 17, Initial 2 Dex, Secondary 1d6+3 Dex and paralysis, 750 gp.

Society of the Derro

Derro society is a place of extreme violence and free-form dictatorship; they recognize no law but the law of brute strength and power, and they often fall victim to leadership cults, wherein a particularly powerful derro (or just as often, a powerful outsider, undead, dragon, or other creature) becomes the undisputed and frequently worshipped leader of the clan.

The non-derro leaders include cave dragons, undead such as liches or powerful ghouls, and demons of various stripes. In every case, the derro submit entirely and unthinkingly to their new overlords until the day they turn on them and attempt to tear them apart: that day is usually the first day that the new overlord disappoints the derro, failing to provide food, victims to torture, or other forms of entertainment.

Derro and Cave Dragons: Both the derro and cave dragons love darkness and blind-fighting, and the two get along well, as long as the derro show themselves as submissive, fawning, and generally obsequious creatures — which they are usually quite willing to do. They frequently form alliances, with derro providing information and support to a cave dragon in exchange for dragon bile poison and cave dragon scales.

Derro and Drow: Derro serve as torturers and bullies to the drow, flaying, crushing, and breaking those whom the drow themselves do not wish to bother with (or those who they fear to destroy, if they are taking political or religious risks). Drow treat derro are mildly retarded, violent imbeciles, and kill any

so bold as to raise a hand to a female drow priestess or a powerful noble.

What derro benefit because they gain the opportunity to torture many prisoners and they take payments in cash and foodstuffs. Derro also enjoy drow fungal wines, which they are too impatient or too demented to brew themselves.

Derro and Ghouls: Derro are foolish enough to sometimes follow the powerful darakhul ghouls who promise eternal life. The ghouls rarely make derro into ghouls, because their madness continues as undead, but the two do co-exist fairly well.

Cults and Religion

The derro worship a ridiculous number of minor, piddling gods, who can best be described as bitter and meddling — because none of them except Mother Madness retain the derros' attention for long. Most of these gods are evil and all of them chaotic and deeply insane. These derro cults are constantly changes; in the past, they have worshipped the Goddess of Night and Magic, elder elemental gods of the deep underdark, and the Demon Eater, as well as goddesses of redemptive suffering, bat gods, and great worm gods.

Perhaps because of their shallow, flitting piety, few derro have much of a connection with the divine; their religious passions are powerful but shallow, and they change their minds about gods as quickly as they do about leaders. Each season brings a new twisted god to their altars, and the old one is shoved aside at the least sign of failing to heed the derros' wishes.

Bandegreb, the Torture God

Bandegreb love inflicting pain, relishing the abuse of his power against the weak and helpless. His evil is complete; he hides his misdeeds under cloaks of darkness, but derro always attribute any strange echoes and screams in the underdark to "Bandegreb finding a new victim." Worship consists entirely of finding and torturing living things; everything else is secondary.

Domains: Chaos, Darkness, Destruc-

tion, Evil

Addrikah, the Mother of Madness

Addrikah is a strange elderly derro who babbles constantly; her voice is said to "spill wisdom", but her hymns are nonsense and her voice seems to hear only itself. She is revered as the derro savior, who saved all derro from slavery through the gift of madness. She is also the derro's connection to much more alien gods, as an oracle and interpreter, but to other races she seems completely cracked.

Despite her age, Addrikah is said to crush skulls with her tiny hands, sucking out the juices within and then somehow transforming brain matter into gemstones and ioun stones. Her worship and legends are disjointed, even by derro standards.

Domains: Chaos, Evil, Madness, Strength

Tikalekka, the Lord of Vermin

The god of centipedes, spiders, cave crickets, and all things verminous resembles a mass of chitinous fibers held together by swarms of beetles and roaches. The mass has poisonous fangs, a variable number of limbs, and complex mandibles rather than hands. His voice is the buzz of decay.

Poison, nets, and the Black Road are all his domain, and he is a powerful trickster. He is also completely insane, but (in derro legend at least) he is not evil, merely concerned for the safety of his followers, who are scorned by all living things.

Domains: Animal, Earth, Madness, Trickery

Derro Tactics and Combat

In combat, derro make little use of the Black Road and other incantations; instead, they rely on the information they gain from the elder gods to craft their battle strategy and they make heavy use of false retreats. In this tactic, after a quick exchange of blows they fall back in a "panic" toward a prepared area that has already been rigged with poisoned nets or a crossfire of poisoned bolts.



***This fall...
the fey bare their teeth in***

***The Faerie Ring:
Under a Poison Moon***

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There they suddenly turn to make their stand, capturing as many foes alive as they can.

In larger fights when they need to seize and hold an objective, they often use their understanding of vermin and animal handling skills to capture and train the largest carrion beetle they can find. They use this beast as a fighting platform for overrunning positions, and they use their acid to melt the doors or obstacles that would otherwise require powerful magic or siege engines.

Advanced Derro Netter

Ulthor

CR 10

Male Derro Fighter 7

CE Small Monstrous Humanoid

Init +8 (+4 Dex, +4 Imp Init); Senses Listen +2, Spot -3

Languages Derro, Undercommon

AC 21, touch 14, flat-footed 18 (+6 breastplate, +4 Dex, +1 size, +2 cave dragonscale shield)

hp 81 (10d10+30 HD)

SR 15

Fort +10 **Ref** +9 **Will** +8

Speed 15 ft. (3 squares)

Melee +17/+12 heavy flail (1d8+8/x3)

Ranged+14 mwrk net (entangle touch+poison DC 16)

Base Atk +10; **Grp** +10

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3) at will - *darkness*, *ghostsound*; 1/day - *daze*, *sound burst*.

Special Atk sneak attack +1d6 and spell-like abilities

Abilities Str 18, Dex 18, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 5, Cha 16

SQ spell resistance 15, derro traits, poison use, vulnerability to sunlight and madness

Feats Blindfight, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Sunder, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Quick Draw

Skills Bluff +12, Handle Animal +10, Hide +9, Listen +2, Move Silently +7, Ride +13

Possessions +1 *breastplate*, +2 *heavy flail*, 10 gp, 7 sp

Sneak Attack (Ex): Any time Ulthor's opponent is denied his Dexterity bonus to AC, or if a he flanks his opponent, he deals an extra 1d6 points of damage.

Derro Traits: As a small size humanoid, Ulthor gains a +4 racial bonus to Hide and Move Silently.

Sneak Attack (Ex): Any time Ulthor's opponent is denied his Dexterity bonus to AC, or if a he flanks his opponent, he deals an extra d6 points of damage.

Vulnerability to Sunlight (Ex): Ulthor takes 1 point of Con damage for every hour he is exposed to sunlight, and he dies if his Con score reaches 0. Lost Con points are recovered at the rate of 1 per every 24-hour period spent underground or otherwise sheltered from the sun.

Madness (Ex): Ulthor uses his Charisma modifier on Will saves instead of his Wisdom modifier, and immunity to confusion and insanity effects. Ulthor cannot be restored to sanity by any means short of a *miracle* or *wish* spell.

Underdark Encounters

157 Top Creatures of the Underdark

by Wolfgang Baur with Mark Gedak



The classic underdark modules D1 to D3 introduced gamers to the drow, the svirfneblin, and a variety of creatures from the common to the exotic. Most are available in v3.5 sources, and many new terrors of the deep earth have been created since the original adventures were written.

This index compiles the best of the best, including both 1st Edition creatures and recent ones. Most of the abbreviations are familiar, but if not, we'll post the list online.

CR 1/2 or less

Bat	MM
Beetle, Fire	MM
Brain Rat	ToH1
Dwarf, Deep	MM
Jermlaine	MM2
Shadow Goblin	FC

CR 1

Darkmantle	MM
Drow	MM
Duergar	MM, XPH
Fungus, Shrieker	MM
Ghoul	MM
Grimlock	MM
Ixitxachtl	MM2
Pedipalp	ToH1
Soot Goblin	MGU
Svirfneblin	MM
Troglodyte	MM

CR 2

Bainligor	Dra 227, FC
Beetle, Scarab	Dun 70
Bugbear	MM
Cacogen	Minions
Cave Fisher	ToH1
Cave Moray	ToH1
Choker	MM
Dark Creepers	ToH1
Lizard, riding	RCS
Kuo toa	MM
Mole, Giant	FC
Necrophidius	FF
Phaerlock	U
Rothe, Deep	RCS
Skulk	FF
Skum	MM
Thoqqua	MM

CR 3

Bat, Mobat	ToH1
Derro	MM
Fungus, Violet	MM
Gelatinous Cube	MM
Giant, Phaerlin	MoF
Ghast	MM
Grell	MM2
Gutslinger	MGU
Lizard, pack	RCS
Lurker Above	ToH1
Lycanthrope, wererat	MM
Neogi	MMII/LoM
Nothic	MH
Pech	ToH1
Rust Monster	MM
Shadow Fey	CS
Solifugid	ToH1

CR 4

Aballin	MF
Bat, Doombat	ToH1
Beetle, Stag	MM
Dark Stalkers	ToH
Gargoyles	MM
Lich Hound	EG
Lycanthrope, Werebat	MF
Otyugh	MM
Mimic	MM
Phycomid	ToH1, Dra 337
Spider, Harpoon	MM3, Dun 98
Swarm, Centipede	MM
Undead Ooze	CC

CR 5

Beetle, Carrion	EG
Carrion moth	ToH1
Cave Moth	DC
Cloaker	MM
Deathcap Mycolid	EG
Foulwing	CSQ

Gibbering Mouter	MM
Ibrandlin	MF
Ineffable Horror	U
Naga, Crown	CC2
Ochre Jelly	MM
Wraith	MM

CR 6

Giant Slug	ToH1
Hook Horror	MM2
Stone Roper	ToH1
Varrangoin	FF
Worm that Walks	CoC

CR 7

Aboleth	MM
Barrow Writher	CC3
Bulette	MM
Cloaker Lord	MR
Dracolisk, any	OH1
Drider	MM
Gloura	U, Dra 227
Spectre	MM

CR 8

Barrow Worm	CC
Bone Collective	EG
Crimson Ooze	CC3
Fire Lizard	ToH
Ghoul-Troll	FC
Landwyrn, Underdark	Draco
Lurker Above	CSQ
Otyugh, Lifeleech	MM3
Salt Mummy	MM3
Shadow, greater	MM
Troll	MM
Troll, Cave	MM3
Yochlol	FC1

CR 9

Chwidencha	FF
Desmodu	MM2
Naga, Hollow	CC2
Roper, Prismatic	MM3

CR 10

Avolakia	MII
Bat, Sporebat	FF
Beetle, Knell	MM3
Flayed Man	FC

Great Race of Yith	CoC
Scarab Beetle	FF

CR 11

Bone Naga	MM2
Golem, Crystal	CC
Maur	U
Naga, Bone	MM2
Wraith, Dread	MM

CR 12

Black Pudding	MM
Bonepowder Ghoul	EG
Purple Worm	MM
Roper	MM

CR 13+

Whispering Moth	FC 13
Neothelid	XPH 15
Moonbeast	MM2 16
Dhole	CoC 17
Maulgoth	FF 17
Vermin Lord	MM3 17
Crawling Head	FF 20

Templates /Variable

Cave Creature	AB
Centipede	MM
Demon, any	Any
Devil, any	Any
Dracolich	Drac
Dragon, Albino	FC
Dragon, Cave	EG
Dragon, Deep	MF
Dragon, Gem	MM2
Dragon, Shadow	Draco
Dread Ghoul	AB
Dread Ghast	AB
Earth Elemental	MM
Lich	MM
Myconid	MM2
Necropolitan	LM
Phaerimm	MF
Psurlon	MMII
Rylkar	MMV
Skeleton	MM
Spider	MM
Vampire	MM
Xorn	MM
Zombie	MM

Titivillus, the Scribe of Hell

Grinding the blood of sorcerers into the ink of the damned

By Wolfgang Baur

In the great war between the infernal and the demonic, devils are outnumbered, have fewer resources, and defend vast planar territory. Yet they manage to defeat demons time after time. Their secrets are several: training, logistics, discipline and superior coordination between troops, brigades and legions.

Demons don't do paperwork. Devils track everything, and therein lies the difference between the creatures of demonkind and the creatures of the Nine Hells. The devil responsible for all pacts, soul-stealing contracts, and documents signed in blood is Titivillus, the devil who also creates errors in sacred scrolls and who encourages nodding scribes to drift to sleep and ruin a fresh page of vellum.

History of Baron Titivillus

Titivillus began, as so many devils do, as a small time cheat and imp, poking at scribes, turning ink to acid, cultivating silverfish and bookworms to destroy knowledge and learning, and generally devouring the sacred scrolls of others. He annoyed a valkyrie enough that she pursued him, cursing him up one side of Yggdrasil and down the other – and



chased him into the Well of Knowledge at its base, where Nidhogg guards the waters that Odin once drank from.

Seeking to avoid the valkyrie's wrath, young Titivillus the Imp dunked himself in the well, holding his breath and waiting for the Father of the Linnorm to chase off the the valkyrie.

It worked. Titivillus lived, and he even swallowed some of the waters of the well.

Suddenly having grown much smarter, Titivillus learned to make his love of writing, of contracts, oaths, and blood inks invaluable to his superiors. He updated hell's contracts, he brought more souls to Mammon, and he was soon the Lord Major of Scribes, then the minor Baron of Bargains, and finally the Arch-baron of Contracts and Scribe of Hell. When Asmodeus or Mephistopheles calls for someone to record the discussions of the arch-dukes of hell,

the small, wispy-bearded Titivillus is the one they call.

This is a position of enormous power. At first, Titivillus was tempted to abuse his authority by changing the words that his superiors spoke, twisting them to the advantage of Mammon, or to his own betterment. Hearing the huge and terrible plots of the Princes of Hell, though, made him cautious. The Leviathan, the sorceries of the Witch King Mephistopheles, the dangers of Dis and the lies of Belial and Beelzebub were all too complex and daunting for him to take any risks right away. He asked questions about his predecessors, and the stories were not good: almost all of them died for fabrications, fabulations, and alterations of the text they wrote and archived for the Princes of Hell.

Titivillus caution served him well. He wrote down the records faithfully, but the urge to manipulate and cor-

rupt them somehow was too strong to ignore. But he needed someone between him and the words he so desperately wanted to rewrite, so he twisted a few lemures and some of the bearded devil scribes to suit his purposes, cross-breeding them, infusing their blood with sorcery and marking them with great magic, teaching them to write, to lie in writing, and to play tricks on anyone working magic through promises, script, or accounts.

Soon the ink devils were everywhere, keeping Hell's accounts in better shape (though still riddled with fraud), keeping Hell's histories (though still rewriting them to suit his own view of things), and even altering Hell's laws. Other devils didn't want to waste their time on reports, and were delighted to force the ink devils to write better and faster.

Confident of their skill, Titivillus set his ink devils to making copies of the arch-duke's minutes, and finding ways to circulate those in ways that worked to his advantage. The ink devils were his foils, serving their master somewhat faithfully, just as their master served his. Titivillus never told them to corrupt the minutes, but it was in their nature. The original records kept in Hell's Great Library were inviolate; the Baron of Scribes took them seriously and never dared to change them. But all other records he could touch were changed, to glorify Mammon, to glorify his ink devils, and to gather to himself all the knowledge of hell.

Over centuries, small changes to the official records have made Titivillus a greater and greater lord among the devils of Hell, without his ever having lifted a claw in anger, or even having murdered a rival. Instead, evidence always appears that slanders his foes and exonerates him. The great princes of hell are always deeply suspicious of their rivals, the other archdukes, the lesser dukes below them. They never turn to think of their secretary and his scratching pen as a threat; and Titivillus makes sure that no written report that reaches them ever offers any reason for suspicion or doubt.

Allies and Enemies

To all outward appearances, Titivillus is the most powerful servant of the Arch-Duke Mammon, though in the infernal chain of command his immediate superior is Duke Berith (the Duke of False Coins and the Master of Accounts). In fact, Titivillus is at least as powerful as Duke Berith, and some believe he rivals Mammon himself. However, this is not reflected in the public or even the confidential lists of Hell's feudal order. Titivillus is a sort of hidden arch-duke, and that is the way he prefers to operate.

Titivillus's great rival is Baron Harut, the patron devil of lawyers, false teaching, and contracts. Both Harut and Titivillus claim authority over all contracts, Harut as a matter of law, Titivillus as a function of the act of writing.

In practice, there is room for both to practice their perversions of text, but the two try to destroy each other's servants, reputations, and power at every opportunity. The similarity between their two spheres of influence simply makes the rivalry more ferocious; both see the other as horrible intruders on their territory, enemies that must be repelled for fear of a terrible loss of prestige.

Titivillus's allies include the Duke Gressil, master of corruption, impurity, sorcerers, and warlocks, who trusts the Baron of Scribes to help him in subverting arcane casters into diabolism and black magic. They have long shared the souls gained by offering diabolic spells, bound devils, and blood magic to the power-hungry.

Titivillus in the Real World

Titivillus first appears in 1285, in the book *Tractatus de Penitentia*, by John of Wales. He is the demon patron of scribes, responsible for tormenting monastic copyists and accountkeepers of all kinds: anyone with a quill is fair game. He's a fairly minor devil, as these things go, but he is known to the writerly types in later years: typesetters presumably fall under his purview as well. You may even find some of his handwork in this magazine.

Appearance and Powers

Titivillus is a Baron who is unlike most of the princes of Hell, in that he does not appear wealthy, powerful, or even outwardly malignant. He has two forms; one is a powerful white hellcat marked with tightly-written blasphemous texts that resemble stripes on his fur. His second form is a male human with dark walnut skin, small satyr-like horns, and a simple scribe's robe. This robe seems grey from a distance, but is actually a white woven garment marked with tiny letters, describing his history and deeds in Infernal.

His powers include astounding skill at persuasion and forgery, as well as a complete recollection of anything he has ever seen written. His physical prowess is nothing compared to the raw arcane might of Asmodeus or Mephistopheles, but his political power is much greater than his title might lead one to suppose. It is a subtle, hidden form of power, the ability to add or remove the word "not" from a document, the ability to denounce his rivals in text without ever touching quill to paper, and the power to smear reputations and create evidence to support his plans and destroy his rivals. In many ways, Baron Titivillus is a better match for Beelezebub than for his master Mammon — but that's the secret of his strength.

Baron Titivillus CR 24

Always LE Medium Outsider [Evil, Extraplanar, Lawful]

Init +14; **Senses** Listen +26, Spot +26; 120' darkvision

Aura fear, trust

Languages Common, Celestial, Draconic, Infernal, telepathy 120'

AC 41, touch 20, flat-footed 31 (+10 Dex, +15 natural, +6 armor)

hp 379 (34d8+231 HD)

Immune fire and poison

Resist acid 10 and cold 10

Fort +25, **Ref** +28, **Will** +24

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares), fly 60 ft. (good)

Melee 2 claws +43/+38/+33/+28 (2d12+4)

Ranged hellfire bolt +43 (4d10)

Base Atk +33; **Grp** +37

Abilities Str 18, Dex 30, Con 24, Int 26, Wis 22, Cha 17

SA spell-like abilities, devil's mark, meld with text, hellfire bolts

SQ outsider traits, devil traits, see in



darkness,
telepathy
devils, DR

120', summon ink
15/silver and chaotic

Feats Blinding Speed, Deceptive, Deflect Arrows, Empower Spell, Exceptional Deflection, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Maximize Spell, Quicken Spell-like Ability, Scribe Scroll [b], Weapon Finesse

Skills Appraise +17, Balance +12, Bluff +33, Concentration +37, Decipher Script +44, Diplomacy +41, Disable Device +31, Disguise +35 (+39 acting), Escape Artist +30, Forgery +46, Gather Information +32, Hide +30, Intimidate +7, Jump +10, Knowledge (arcana) +38, Knowledge (history) +30, Knowledge (local) +30, Knowledge (religion) +30, Knowledge (the planes) +38, Listen +26, Move Silently +33, Sense Motive +42, Sleight of Hand +34, Spellcraft +42, Spot +26, Survival +6, Tumble +20, Use Rope +10

Devil's Mark (Ex): Titivillus can throw ink from his fingertips as a ranged touch attack. If he hits, the creature takes no damage but gains a devil's mark, a black, red, or purple tattoo in the shape of Mammon's personal seal. Any devil's magic performed against the marked creature gains a +4 equipment bonus due to the mark; this includes touch spells, innate spell-like or supernatural abilities (which increase their save DC by 4), and magic drawn from an item by a devil.

The mark can be removed by a *remove curse* cast by a 17th level caster, followed immediately by an *erase* spell with a caster check against a 20th level caster. The mark detects as faintly evil and often shifts its position on the body. Paladins, witchfinders, and clerics of an inquisition may consider such a mark proof that a character has made a pact with a devil.

Hellfire Bolt (Su): Titivillus can throw eldritch bolts of force from his hands as a ranged attack with a 120-foot range increment. They cause 4d10 damage.

Meld with Text (Su): Titivillus can enter

any book, scroll, or other written material and remain hidden there as long as he wishes. If the text is damaged or destroyed, he is ejected from it without suffering damage.

Trust Aura (Su): Titivillus can radiate a 25-foot-radius trust aura as a free action. Affected creatures must succeed on a DC 29 Will save or be inclined to listen to him speak; as long as he talks, Titivillus is effectively treated as if protected by a *sanctuary* spell (caster level 20th). This effect ends immediately if Titivillus attacks a foe physically. Devils are not immune to this aura. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Fear Aura (Su): Titivillus can radiate a 25-foot-radius fear aura as a free action. Affected creatures must succeed on a DC 29 Will save or be affected as though by a *fear* spell (caster level 20th). A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the aura for 24 hours. Other devils are immune to the aura. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Summon Devil (Sp): Titivillus can summon 1d4 bone devils with a 50% chance of success, or 3d8 ink devils with a 100% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 8th-level spell.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *arcane mark*, *erase*, *explosive runes*, *invisibility* (self only), *order's wrath*, *suggestion*, *veil*. 3/day—*dominate*, *mirage*, *arcane*, *modify memory*, *symbol of pain*, *symbol of persuasion*. 1/day—*mage's disjunction*, *unholy word*. Caster level 20th. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Telepathy (Su): Titivillus can communicate telepathically with any creature with a language to a range of 120 feet.

Ink Devils

"That's not the way it was!" said the bearded devil.

"That's what the records show. Pay the fine, or answer to the arch-duke!"

"Not if I catch you first," said the bearded devil, lifting his trident.

These lesser devils are black as ink, with grey, ink-stained claws and shining white teeth, eyebrows, and red eyes. They keep the books of Mammon's gold and mark the souls of sinners in each of the layers of hell; they weigh the gains and losses in the struggle against chaos and against the angels. The scratching of their hundred thousand quills is the sound of Hell conspiring, and taking through guile what it cannot win through

force.

Ink Devil

CR 3

Always LE Small Outsider [Evil, Extraplanar, Lawful]

Init +5; **Senses** Listen -1, Spot -1; 120' darkvision

Aura fear

Languages Common, Celestial, Draconic, Infernal, telepathy 120'

AC 18, touch 16, flat-footed 13 (+1 size, +5 Dex, +2 natural)

hp 22 (4d8+4 HD)

Immune fire and poison

Resist acid 10 and cold 10

Fort +5, **Ref** +9, **Will** +3

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee bite +9 (1d6+1) and 2 claws +4 (1d4)

Base Atk +4; **Grp** +1

Abilities Str 12, Dex 20, Con 12, Int 20, Wis 8, Cha 12

SA spell-like abilities, devil's mark, corrupt scroll, disrupt concentration

SQ outsider traits, devil traits, see in darkness, telepathy 120', summon ink devils

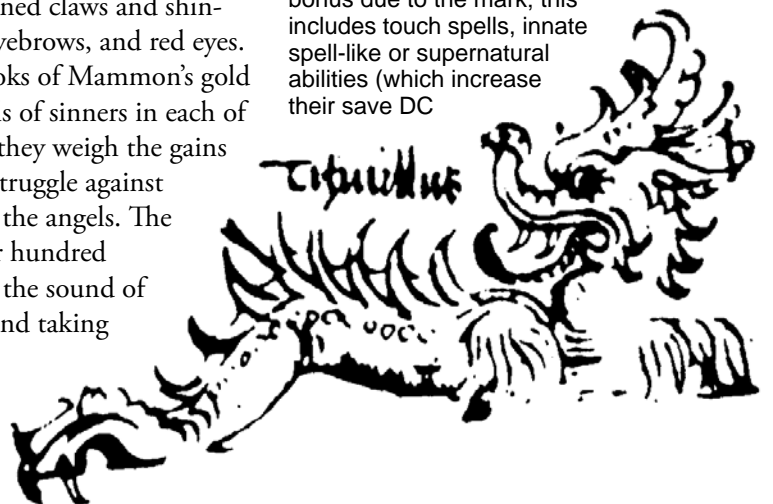
Feats Deceitful, Scribe Scroll [b], Weapon Finesse

Skills Appraise +12, Bluff +16, Craft (Book) +12, Decipher Script +20, Diplomacy +12, Disable Device +12, Disguise +10, Escape Artist +6, Forgery +22, Hide +16, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Knowledge (history) +6, Knowledge (local) +6, Knowledge (religion) +6, Knowledge (the planes) +7, Move Silently +12, Sense Motive +14, Use Magic Device +8 (+10 scrolls)

Advancement by class level

Level Adjustment +4

Devil's Mark (Ex): Ink devils can throw ink from their fingertips as a ranged touch attack. If it hits, the affected creature takes no damage but gains a devil's mark, a black, red, or purple tattoo in the shape of an arch-duke's personal seal (most often Mammon, but sometimes, Beelzebub, Asmodeus, Dispatar or the others). Any devil's magic performed against the marked creature gains a +4 equipment bonus due to the mark; this includes touch spells, innate spell-like or supernatural abilities (which increase their save DC



by 4), and magic drawn from a scroll or other item by a devil.

The mark can be removed only by a *remove curse* cast by a 7th level caster, followed immediately by an *erase* spell that must make a caster check against a 4th level caster.

In addition, the mark detects as faintly evil and often shifts its position on the body. Paladins, witchfinders, and clerics of an inquisition may consider such a mark proof that a character has made a pact with a devil.

Corrupt Scroll (Su): An ink devil can corrupt the magic within any scroll by touch; any such corrupted scroll requires a DC 16 caster level check to use successfully. If the level check fails, the scroll's spell affected the caster (if it is a ranged spell) or affects the nearest devil (if it is a personal spell).

Disrupt Concentration (Ex): Their sharp, shrill tongues and sharper claws make ink devils more distracting than their own combat prowess might indicate. As a swift action, an ink devil can force a single foe to make a DC 15 Concentration check or suffer spell failure for a spell cast that round. This is a sonic effect. The check is Charisma based and includes a +2 racial bonus.

Telepathy (Su): Ink devils can communicate telepathically with any creature with a language to a range of 120 feet.

Fear Aura (Su): Ink devils can radiate a 5'-radius fear aura as a free action. Affected creatures must succeed on a DC 13 Will save or be affected as by a *fear* spell (CL 4). With a successful save, a creature cannot be affected by the same devil's aura for 24 hours. Other devils are immune. The save DC is Cha-based.

Summon Devil (Sp): Once per day an ink devil can attempt to summon 1d4+1 lemures with a 40% chance of success, or another ink devil with a 25% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 2nd-level spell.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *arcane mark*, *erase*, *invisibility* (self only). 1/day—*explosive runes*. Caster level 4th. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Skills All ink devils gain a +8 racial bonus to Bluff, Decipher Script, Forgery, and Sense Motive skills.

Strategies and Tactics

Ink devils are talkers and cowards; they prefer to chat and whine and plead to any form of combat. When they are forced to fight, they prefer to hide behind other devils. They force lesser devils like lemures and others of their own kind to fight for them while they use teleport and invisibility, and their disrupt concentration ability to harry opposing spellcasters.

They often give strangers a false gift, letters of credit, charter, or scholarly papers inscribed with *explosive runes* to start off a combat. In their favorite twist, the *explosive runes* are added to a sacred scroll, sutra, or other churchly writing.

An ink devil's natural weapons, as well as any weapons it wields, are treated as evil-aligned and lawful-aligned for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Ecology

Ink devils are among the lowest ranks of hell, abused and tormented by all the major devils. They work long and hard grinding ink powders, formulating text and writing it out, as well as writing fair copies of accounts, invoices, reports, bills, contracts, histories, works of praise to the archdevils, and pamphlets of slander and pure flattery. They are not part of any mortal ecology.

Environment: Ink devils live in libraries and scriptoria in the hells and related planes. They serve any planar lord who wishes their help, and their speed and keen vision make them excellent accountants, recordkeepers, translators, and notetakers. They cannot be trusted, so even when found among the celestial planes their work is always confirmed by a second reader.

Typical Physical Characteristics: Ink devils are roughly humanoid, with a small, pursed mouth and long, thin, bony fingers. Their nails resemble quills. Their heads are often bald or fringed with hair in the style of a monastic haircut, and they have

two small horns, no larger than the tip of a thumb. Their skin tends toward dark tones, either walnut, indigo, or black as india ink. They often wear robes and red hats.

They speak Common, Celestial, Draconic, Infernal, and Abyssal. Ink devils are sorcerers and wizards. Their racial preferred class is monk.

Alignment: Ink devils are always Lawful Evil. They work hard for their own benefit, obey their superiors no matter how vile their orders, and seek to cause suffering to others. Their alliances are purely opportunistic; they have no mercy for other living things.

Society

Ink devils are rarely seen outside the Hells and a few specialized locations where scrolls, books, and other records are common.

Ink Devil Lore

Characters with ranks in Knowledge (the Planes) can learn more about ink devils. When a character makes a successful skill check, reveal the following lore, including the information from lower DCs.

Knowledge (the Planes)

DC Result

14 Ink devils are small, nasty creatures always seeking to destroy magical scrolls, corrupt holy writings, and tamper with contracts to increase strife and evil in the world.

18 The screeching tones of ink devils can disrupt spellcasting through infernal harmonics.

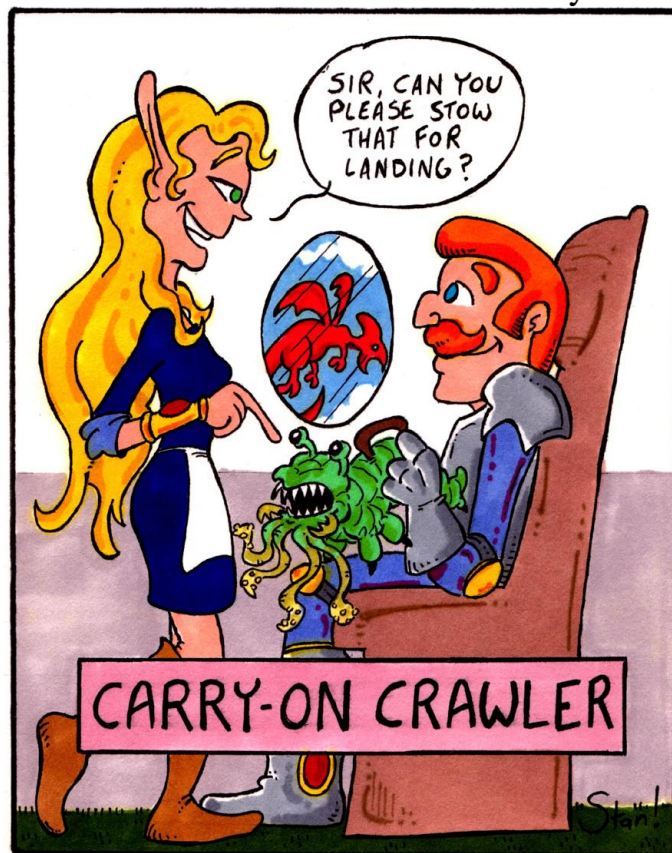
22 Ink devil can mark their foes with a permanent infernal stain, a sort of tattoo that shows allegiance to the forces of Hell.

Typical Treasure

Ink devil treasures include double standard scrolls and many written documents. These often include pacts and contracts for souls as well as various vile scrolls.

10'x10' Toon

by Stan!



It's Not (always) About the Gold

Eight great non-monetary rewards



By Wolfgang Baur



Money is a perfectly good way to reward adventurers for the risks they take, and players love to hear the description of a dragon's hoard with heaps of shining gold and gems. But sometimes it can feel a little bit like getting the fantasy equivalent of a gift card to Wal-Mart.

DM: "So that's the dragon hoard. You can get anything on the Equipment list at the major city. Or you can spend time and feats and XP making some magic stuff."

Players: "Wow, that's some special treasure right there."

Yes, players want treasure, magic, and experience points, but it's better if the treasure feel like more than a paycheck. Heroic rewards should be big, resonant, and filled with Raw Legendary Power!

To deliver that, you can turn the Magical Items section in the DMG into a shopping list, but this leads to two problems. Game balance falls apart, and awarding only charged or one-shot items takes some of the glow off magic in general.

Handing out bigger magic and money is not the way to provide legendary treasure: non-monetary treasures are. You can think about non-monetary treasures in two groups: intangible rewards such as lore and direct character boosts, and social recognition and status rewards.

The Intangible: Knowledge & Skills

So how do you hand out non-physical treasures? It's not quite as simple as asking for a Search roll, but it's similar. Treasures that include lore, skills, and magical abilities are granted by special circumstances, so make sure that the party can learn the treasure exists. Maybe the PCs know how to shatter a soul gem for its power, how to ask for an angel's blessing (or haggle for power from a devil), or even how to bathe in dragon's heartblood. The blood may detect as magical, it may require a skill check such as Knowledge (Arcane or Nature), Spellcraft, or even Survival.

If you want to make these treasures easier to find, have an NPC mention them before the adventure begins, mention them in a player handout, or simply have an NPC help himself to the treasure if the party doesn't. Players will catch on to the intangible rewards very quickly.

Lore

The standard knowledge check is a fine way to pick up some information about a campaign's bigger issues, foes, or history, but sometimes characters are looking for particular answers to particular questions. In these cases, the best treasure possible is a leatherbound books of ancient lore that help their characters understand your villain's weaknesses, or that explain more esoteric topics in your

cosmology or magic system.

While the book appears to be a tangible treasure (and can be sold for cash), the real value is in its information in its pages. I'd say that the book is more memorable if it is named (such as the *Necronomicon* of Abdul Alhazred), unique, and dangerous. Dangerous could mean simply trapped, but a book that slowly possesses its reader is better.

Having the same treasure (information) in a character-based way is a better treasure. Instead of a book, imagine that the character is granted a *commune* spell once per week --- and this means that the character has a direct line to the DM. The character gains insight into what your world is about, and you gain a platform to explain all that backstory that usually just sits on a hard drive somewhere. Information treasures are typically valued by arcanists, divine casters, and especially bards.

Skills

Skills are the trickiest of all, because the value of skill ranks as treasure really varies among classes. Giving a rogue some skills isn't a big deal. Extra skill ranks for a barbarian or a sorcerer are more likely to be appreciated. I don't recommend giving skill ranks in the core skills of your campaign, the ones that players invest in because they know that Spot or Heal or Gather Information will be useful in many adventures. Instead, I recommend giving ranks in skills that

you know will be useful in a few special cases, skills such as Knowledge (Local), Profession (Miner), or Use Rope.

Hit Points

There's nothing in the rules that says you can't improve a character's hit points permanently, but I'd proceed with extreme caution: this is the kind of treasure you might award once in a campaign. If you do it more often, it's likely to unbalance your game. I'd limit the increase to one level's worth, rolled randomly, or a flat 3 points (as a bonus Toughness feat).

I recommend this treasure for the characters who have rolled a 1 on their hit points once too often. How can you guarantee it will go to the low-Constitution halfling wizard rather than the massive hit point pile of the barbarian? Place it in a form that targets the class you want; for example, a scroll for the mage, or a set of lucky charms for the superstitious rogue.

Ability Scores

Sure, characters get bumps every 4th level, but why not grant a +1 bonus as a treasure sometime? The main objection is that ability scores are the foundation of the whole character, affecting everything that character does in mechanical terms. But that's also why they are a great treasure: it helps every time someone makes an attack, save, or skill check.

If the character is already doing well, they probably don't need the boost. I'd reserve these sorts of bumps to encourage players who aren't doing well, who are frustrated with their failures – and I'd make them earn it, with a minor quest, a special deed for a mentor or patron, or a particularly spectacular or funny action that makes the game more fun for everyone.

Social Treasure and Recognition

Titles, fiefdoms, servants, and followers are all aspects of power, but they are social power rather than mechanical power in the game. Many players love this stuff, but not many DMs hand it out, for good reason. For one, there's the

maintenance factor: all those servants and responsibilities can eat into the hacking and slaying and adventuring time. For another, some of these things should cost the PCs feats (like Leadership) or money (as in cartloads of gold) to acquire. If the prince is just handing out titles, everyone will want a piece of the kingdom, right?

In a way, yes. Social treasure does have consequences for your campaign down the road: they often lead to even more "settling down" than adventurers already do. If you're well-known in the Red City, why leave? So adventures stay near their homelands, and the temptation as a DM is just to build the campaign around a single locale, since the adventurers (like many parties) are homebodies rather than rovers.

Despite all this, social treasures are worthwhile because they expand the scope of your campaign from the fundamental "kill and loot" stage to a more complex but more rewarding "run the world" stage. Many players find that class abilities by themselves are great for killing monsters, but that the game is more fun if there's a deeper purpose to the use of the class mechanics. Which is a long-winded way of saying, crunch will only get you so far. You need flavor treasures or your campaign will go bust eventually.

Access to Power

Used as the crowning reward of a big story arc, or even in measured doses for a single adventure, entering the inner circle is a bigger thrill than cash. Don't believe me? Consider a 10th level party: would they rather have another 10,000 gp to divide among themselves when they've already looted 70,000 gp on their most recent delve, or would they rather be invited to join the rich and powerful nobles and NPCs? Don't underestimate the power of celebrity, even in an RPG.

Unless your players are more mercenary than mine, I suspect they would rather hang out with the celebrities than have a little extra cash. The bard would give much to bend the ear of the king,

the fighter wouldn't mind being the King's Champion, and the little gnome arcanist rubs his hands with glee at the thought of being appointed Sorcerer-in-Chief. It's good to hang with the elite.

The Downside of Recognition

Some players may claim that being declared High Priest of Mithras or Baron of Zobeck is not really a treasure at all, but a burden and a responsibility. They're right, to a point: titles do come with expectations and obligations as well as perks and power. Players who don't enjoy a leadership role are more likely to prefer a quiet country fiefdom to a cutthroat urban guild war. But most of all: characters can abdicate a title.

If a PC just wants to abuse a title, it's theirs to screw up; after all, you wouldn't tell a player when or how to use a charged item, would you? Don't pressure your players to "do the right thing" with a title: on the contrary, you should let them run a position into the ground if they want, ignoring all the unrest, unhappiness, murders, heresy, or whatever is going on in their fiefdom or area of honorary interest. Many medieval nobles did exactly this, and PCs should be able to as well. If it is truly noxious, you can always run a peasant revolt adventure.

Sinecure/Honorary Posts

One step beyond access to the powerful are the honorary posts and patronage jobs that come with serious perks. Sinecures are positions that require little or no actual work or responsibility: for example, the title of Sorcerer-in-Chief may come with a manor in the city, servants, and free run of the Royal Library, or the title of Chief Huntsman comes with land – a duchy overrun by hobgoblins – and with access to the Royal Stables and access to the princess's private chapel.

Recognition

When NPCs and powerful forces in the campaign recognize the PC as a valuable, powerful figure who improves the image of the guild or kingdom just by

his presence. While it's basically a patronage position which may come with an easy salary. What's not to like?

From the DM's perspective, you are also giving the PC a sense of responsibility and ownership in the people who gave him the title. If the Minister of the Treasury comes begging for help from strangers, they'll ask "what's in it for me?". If he asks the King's Champion, the answer is more likely to be "Who needs killing?". Honorary posts make great hooks for future adventures – and if the party succeeds in those, their names and fame grow even further, creating a virtuous cycle of deeds and recognition that can quickly lead to even more important titles such as a grant of nobility.

Noble Titles and Arms

The typical example is a knighthood, so a character is part of the defenders of the realm (and must be addressed as "Sir" or "Lady" by all NPCs – nothing to be sneered at). But he or she can only be knighted once, doesn't mean that he can't move up the ladder quickly. A character who is knighted at 3rd level

might soon become a baron, earl, count, and so forth, and eventually marry into royalty – a good time to retire the character. You might even want to give the character a free level of Aristocrat if the deeds were truly spectacular and the character is clearly settling into a role as a member of the nobles of the realms.

That level of Aristocrat provides d8 hit points, 4 skill points, and a +2 on the character's Will save, so you may think a free level is excessive. While Aristocrat levels are slightly underpowered compared to normal classes, there are ways to make the bump work, by adding restrictions on where the skill points are spent. As an alternative, I'd recommend granting one or two ranks in Knowledge (nobility and royalty) to the newly-titled. It's a skill that doesn't get a lot of use, but that can justify a little knowledge of the inner workings of the kingdom.

At the same time, if you want to give a character to have the feel of nobility without all the duties that it entails give him the right to bear a coat of arms. Knights and others of noble blood were the only ones allowed to carry heraldic

devices on their shields (footsoldiers and others traditionally carried the arms of their commander, their city, or their principality). If other characters remark on it (or recognize the character because they've heard of his heraldic devices), so much the better. In time, some villains and their agents will recognize it as well, making the character a bit of a target. This sort of recognition is especially great for paladins and knights, classes made for high visibility on the battlefield.

Conclusion

When you hand out experience and gold, don't forget to also increase the visibility and status of the party over time, especially for those who seek knowledge, recognition, and even entry to the corridors of power.

When the goals shift beyond cash, the players have more for their PCs to defend, and they are more likely to explore the wider campaign. For players who don't value social or intangible treasures, it's always easy to hand out a little extra gold.



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MORDENKAINEN'S APPRENTICE

An Interview with Designer and Paizo Publisher Erik Mona
By Wolfgang Baur

Erik Mona is the author of *Expedition to the Ruins of Greyhawk* and, after many years as editor-in-chief of *DRAGON Magazine*, he is now the publisher at Paizo. Our kobold interview captured him near the Paizo offices; he was questioned and released unharmed.

Kobold Quarterly: How did you get started in this crazy business?

Erik Mona: I was an active D&D player from grade school. I first learned to play D&D from my cousin when I was in 2nd grade or something like that. And then when I was in third grade, there was a *Dungeons & Dragons* afterschool class.

Did you get credit for this?

Well, no, it was an extracurricular thing, and it was only for 4th, 5th, and 6th graders. But I had the Basic Set, I already had the Advanced books, I had already read all that stuff, and I considered myself a smart kid. (*Italian food is ordered, Seattle style. This means it came with salmon.*)

I had to petition the school to get into class a year early, and I remember...

You were a D&D prodigy!

Exactly, and this is the most pathetic part: I remember being disappointed because I was looking forward to being in a class with all these upper classmen, and once I got in, on the first day, we were playing *Palace of the Silver Princess*. That was the first adventure I ever legitimately played, and someone got the bright idea, one of the 5th grade upperclassmen, thought it would be funny to shoot *magic missiles* at the giant rat's balls. Everyone just howled with laughter, and I remember as a 3rd grader being just thoroughly disappointed at the immaturity of my elders in that class.

The story has a happy ending, because by week 10 we'd learned enough about how

to play that we split off into little groups and ran our own adventures. I decided that the best adventure to run for 4th, 5th and 6th graders would be the *Assassin's Knot*.

You know, the one where you just wander around solving a mystery—

That's not the one I would pick...

The 4th, 5th, and 6th graders viewed everything as a dungeon whether you were actually in a dungeon or not. There was a blacksmith in town with a big magic hammer, in only the way that 1st Edition blacksmiths had. They decided that since the blacksmith was a half-orc, they'd take him down, and they attacked him. They shot a *magic missile* at his balls, naturally. He soaked up that damage, because he was about 5th level, and he took his magic hammer and exacted his bitter revenge.

Was that the end of that campaign?

It was certainly the end of the balls of the character who shot the *magic missile*.

From there, I played D&D just like anyone from junior high to high school; when 2nd Edition was coming out I was in junior high. I went to college, and my game group disintegrated at that point. We had played together for years and years, and that was enormously difficult for me because I didn't have anyone at college to play with, at least at first. So I got involved with the RPGA.

I never really wanted to go to conventions, but it was better than nothing. And I ended up going. The first convention I went to was a disaster, it was terrible. The adventures were horribly written, and I was left very embittered about the whole process.

However! I had entered a drawing at that convention and won an actual dagger as part of a special Living City event. So I thought "Oh what the hell! I'll go back one more time and give it a try, with this new special magic item that I got."

That second convention was one of the



best D&D experiences of my life. I met people who played the game the same way I did, who were exciting, and who were really nice people even outside of D&D. That was the beginning of really close friendships and about 10 years of active play in the RPGA.

I always wanted to work in magazines, so that's what I went to college for. When I got out of college, the *Polyhedron* magazine position came up, and that's what brought me out to Wizards of the Coast in 1999 and that eventually has led to me being publisher of Paizo.

Your love of the classic 1st Edition adventures and D&D history really comes across in your writing. Are there any Easter eggs you'd like to share?

Yes, of course! Let me answer that in a very roundabout way. I was just editing an article for the latest issue of *Dragon*, called the "Demonomicon of Iggwilv: Demogorgon", where James Jacobs has written this big long history. As I was editing it and proofreading it, every paragraph I was thinking, "Oh is this a development from something I did back then," or "This comes from that obscure 2nd Edition source" and it was like seeing the secret map of *Dungeons & Dragons* come alive.

Before Iggwilv was a framing device for *Dragon* articles, she was a minor character in *Lost Caverns of Tsojcanth*, and the mother of Iuz. Actually, not that minor a character

but you had to be a Greyhawk fan to know how she tied into the whole story.

The magazines have raised her prominence. Exactly, and it brought a lot of attention to Greyhawk, which was my intention from the beginning. She is in *Expedition to the Ruins of Greyhawk*, and you also brought her into your Savage Tide adventure. When you bring a character like that out 30 years after she was introduced, you don't need to do as much foreshadowing. That work has already been done by Gary Gygax and by people far more prominent than myself. It's fun to build on the existing Greyhawk continuity, because people have cared about it for a very long time. There's an emotional connection to those characters before that adventure takes place.

There's a ton of easter eggs in the *Expedition to the Ruins of Greyhawk* adventure. Some of the Age of Worms adventure path characters make an appearance. Khellek the Seeker is in there, and so is Tyra the Thieves Guild representative. Incidentally, those characters came originally from the back of comic book ads that Bill Willingham drew. The three rival adventurers in the Age of Worms campaign are the three cartoon characters who explore the castle from the back of Marvel comics from the 80s.

So you need to know the ads from Marvel comics in the early-to-mid 80s?

So if you're trying to figure out where I get my ideas, that's my secret map.

Also, in the level of the dungeon that I co-designed with James Jacobs, the treasure chamber of the Company of Seven, which was Zagig Yragerne's original adventuring group. You've got the Circle of Eight, which was Gygax's group, and you've got the elder statesmen to that group, Zagyg and Murlynd and Keoghtom. We had to fill out the ranks of that group as well, because it had not been previously established who exactly the Company of Seven were. So we established that in the *Expedition to the Ruins of Greyhawk*, and people may be a little surprised at some of the choices we made.

One of the biggest questions about the *World of Greyhawk* since the *From the Ashes* era in the early 90s is when Rary betrays the Circle of Eight. Rary kills Otiluke, he kills Tenser, and Lord Robilar is with him. Lord Robilar is hanging out with Rary in the desert, and not only is that unlikely based on Lord Robilar's character in the books, but it seems really unlikely based on the character of Rob Kuntz, who played Robilar. It's always grated on Rob, because he was not a part of the design team of the *From*

the Ashes era, so nobody ever consulted with him. My impression is that the folks who were driving the setting prior to Carl Sargent didn't really know that much about the setting. Before the internet, you had to do a lot of research and doing that is what made me fall in love with the setting.

With Gary Gygax and the guys working in the 1st edition era, all these puzzle pieces come together and you can start to see a big picture. It's questionable whether that big picture really existed because in the early days, it was a translation of Gary's home campaign. His game wasn't always exactly what wound up in the published setting.

In any event, this Lord Robilar didn't make sense. Why would he betray the Circle of Eight? He was Mordenkainen's best friend, and Rob contended he would never betray him. So I treated *Expedition to Castle Greyhawk* as if it were the last product I would write that has anything to do with Greyhawk whatsoever. I wanted to resolve the Robilar problem. When you think about Castle Greyhawk as it originally existed in Gary's basement, Lord Robilar was *the* adventurer in Castle Greyhawk.

Often times, he was the only adventurer and Gary would run an adventure just for him. I wanted to incorporate him into the adventure and I think the way I did will surprise people and bring some resolution to that issue. My philosophy has long been that when you close a door and answer a question, you best answer it by raising several more questions.

The Greyhawk storylines evolve over decades. Tell me, what one thing do all good adventures have in common?

All good adventures understand that the player characters are the main characters of the story, and that the ultimate decisions about how the flow of the narrative goes (if indeed there is a narrative), that needs to be up to the players.

About Age of Worms, you need to solve a completely different adventure to go back and complete the first one on the path. Sometimes you're planning arcs reaching back into the history of the game, and sometimes you're planning arcs looking forward.

You're talking about "Whispering Cairn." It all started with the image of an arch, which to me conjures images of the *Tomb of Horrors* (PDF) and the sort of magical arches that were inherent to that adventure. The image of adventurers standing at the threshold of a mysterious arch is just very *Dungeons & Dragons*.

In a lot of adventures, when a designer gets to the edge of the map or runs out of ideas, he'll say "This corridor collapsed and you can't get past it. It looks like a dead end." But in almost every campaign that I've ever played in that's a big flashing sign for players who say "I'm going to dig it out!" 99% of the time, there's nothing to dig up, that's just where the designer's creativity ended, or where the graph paper ended.

And so I thought, let's do something for those characters who are going to dig that thing out, but they're not able to go through just yet, so that suggests a world larger than just the adventure. With this adventure you had to leave the dungeon to solve the dungeon. It wasn't just start at point A, end at point Z.

Loot every room and you're guaranteed to solve all problems.

I wanted to start off the Age of Worms campaign with a true dungeon crawl, in the 1st Edition sense. There are deadly traps in there. In some sense I think you can get away with deadly, almost unfair traps easier at 1st level than you can later on.

Because the characters are fragile.

Not only that, but there's not as much investment in the characters by the players. So a couple encounters in "Whispering Cairn" are significantly more deadly than what a character could deal with. And there's a reason for that.

One of the things that eats a lot of characters in "The Whispering Cairn" is a swarm of acid beetles that boil up out of an elevator shaft. That swarm killed a character in our playtest; it's killed hundreds of characters. If you read the Age of the Wyrms Obituaries thread on paizo.com, you'll see that beetle swarm has delivered a nice crotch blow to a wide spectrum of D&D players, and I did that very intentionally.

There certainly are ways of dealing with the swarm at 1st level. Maybe your wizard should be packing *burning hands*. Bring your flask of oil and be prepared is the message. By having an encounter that people are frequently unprepared for, and by having a character killed very early in the first adventure, that immediately shows people they need to be on guard. I wanted to make this a very 1st Edition style dungeon, which means that you could die – at any time.

With 3rd Edition and the challenge rating system, there's an assumption built in of a social contract between the player, the DM, and the rules of the game, that the players are never going to have anything thrown at them that's too difficult.

I hate that whole concept.

So do I! It's all going to be basically what they need to encounter over about 4 encounters. Then you sleep, then you go on—and it's so boring! And it's so unlike what going into an ancient haunted tomb *should* be like, which is that you should be relatively afraid. That's why 10' poles used to be such a key item in an adventurer's arsenal, and why they really aren't so much anymore.

Putting a deadly encounter in the beginning rewards the players who know how to play, and who are prepared, and it puts everybody else on notice that they need to think about what they are doing, or they're going to die. I think D&D is at its best when there's a deadly encounter, when the players are standing up around the table, they're so excited that they don't know what's going to happen, so that when one of them rolls that 20 and confirms that crit on the big bad end guy, everyone just explodes with excitement.

Because there's real sense that there's something at stake, as opposed to “Hey, let us collect our next round of experience and a neatly-organized set of treasure that's level-appropriate.”

Exactly, and so it's really tricky. You don't

want to just put a CR 9 encounter in a 1st level adventure because you don't want to be unfair, you want the players to have an opportunity to succeed. They can't feel as though the deck is stacked against them all the time. But anyone going into “The Whispering Cairn” thinking that it's going to be purely a level-appropriate walk in the park is disabused of that notion the moment those beetles come boiling out of that elevator shaft, and that was intentional.

I'm happy to agree with that philosophy, and I will ramp up the CR for *PATHFINDER* encounters appropriately.

The encounters that people remember and talk about are the ones with a genuine threat that their character might perish. When Wizards of the Coast was figuring out how to design for 3rd Edition, some designers said “Yeah, this encounter just drains resources from the characters, and the PC victory is a foregone conclusion, but maybe the wizard will fart out a couple of *magic missiles* — and then the last encounter is going to be really fun, because then they're going to have no resources!”

I'm not certain how much I love that design philosophy. There need to be encounters that players can defeat, and I don't think all encounters can't be so difficult that

you need to leave the dungeon and rest after each fight. But there is an art to it, and it's got to be cinematic and interesting. Because if you're just throwing 1d3 gnolls at the party every four rooms to drain resources, nobody's really having fun.

Greyhawk's Circle of Eight is less prominent now than in 2nd Edition, but they're still one of the classic groups. Is there a Circle member that you find especially interesting, or that you identify with?

Well, I like most of them. Part of what makes Greyhawk so exciting for me is that it is hardwired into the D&D rules system. When a player encounters a character like Tenser, for example, he has heard of *Tenser's floating disk* before Tenser himself comes on the stage. The rules foreshadow certain NPCs, and that's really cool. To some, that's a liability. They say “Well, we're selling *Forgotten Realms* products, why do we have spell names with Tenser in them and what does that mean for a character in the Realms?” Which is a big question. My philosophy is that I don't really care, because I'm not running a Realms campaign, I'm running a Greyhawk campaign.

I like the conjuring power of the names of the Circle of Eight. I personally love that *Dungeons & Dragons* has been with me since

Coming Next Issue

Belphegor, Baron of Hell

by Tim Hitchcock

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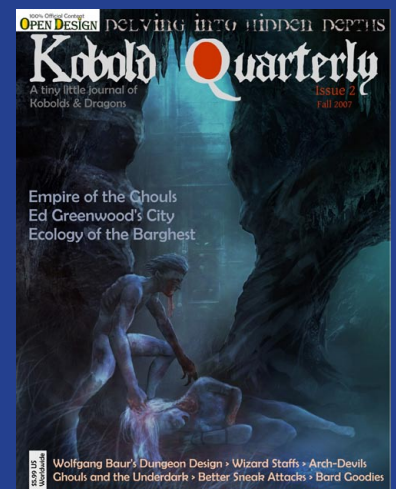
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What makes Zobeck tick? We reveal a few finely-wrought details of this rare form of magic.

Plus quite likely articles by Ed Greenwood and Keith Baker — if only they don't escape from our the mines! Seriously, if we knew which big-name submissions would arrive at our ore smelter for the Fall issue, we'd tell you. But it's a mystery.



second grade, my whole life. There is a powerful nostalgia to names like Mordenkainen, like Tenser, right down the list.

As far as identifying with the characters, I try not to. I view Mordenkainen as Gary Gyga's character, just as I view Robilar as Rob Kuntz's character, and so on. Even though these things are owned by a corporation, and there's no question about the ownership of these characters, but just out of respect it seems to me that you should consider how the people who played these characters originally envisioned them before you make them betray each other and blow each other up.

I like Mordenkainen because he is the ur-character. He's Gary Gyga's character and you can't have a more D&D character than that. He is also a microcosm of the Greyhawk setting itself.

Greyhawk never struck me as all about good vs. evil as much as about neutrality trapped between good and evil. If you look at the motivations for characters in 1st Edition adventures, very rarely was it "You need to save the kingdom because the princess has been kidnapped." It was more like "there's a lot of money in these Lost Caverns of Tsojanth!"

Just go loot the tomb!

Thankfully, most of the tombs you looted were tombs to evil gods and demons, so no one could really complain — but when you think about it a *Dungeons & Dragons* adventurer is at heart a murderous tomb-robber. I'm not 100% sure that philosophy squares particularly well with the Good alignment.

Mordenkainen is the shadowy puppet master of the Circle of Eight, an organization dedicated to neutrality; it is not dedicated to making sure evil wins or good wins. If you read very closely into the subtext of things like the Circle of Eight writeup that Gary Holian and I did for *Living Greyhawk Journal* #0, or the stuff I put into the *Expedition to the Ruins of Greyhawk* related to Mordenkainen, and even from the early Gary Gyga articles in *DRAGON* #20 — one sentence in that article says that Mordenkainen has been out of town for several months or even years, giving succor to an evil associate in the west. And that's never really been expanded upon. But the hero of the Greyhawk setting, as people often think of him, because he's the poster boy—

Yeah, it's easy to equate him with...

With being a good guy, but he's not a good guy. As part of my effort to understand Greyhawk and what Gyga was trying to do with it before he was ousted, I read his

novels. In *Artifact of Evil* there's a section in the mindset of Mordenkainen. Mordenkainen is sitting there thinking about how luz is doing this, and the druids of the cabal of Heirophants are doing this, and they're all racing him for the parts of this evil artifact. He's thinking "Now why in the world would all of these other powers want to be going after the same thing that I'm going after?" And the chapter ends "Oh, it must be because they are jealous of me."

That basically solidified the picture for me: Mordenkainen is highly manipulative, highly intelligent, and he's all about hubris. He thinks he understands how the universe works, and the concept of balance, and so he's going to put his thumb on the scales. That conforms to his personal idea of how the universe works, but would it conform to everybody's? It wouldn't. He would be an antagonist more than a protagonist, which is good because the player characters are the protagonists.

Characters like the Circle of Eight all too often say "Ho, adventurer, I shall give you a task and you shall go do this for me!". Well, you're 20th level, why don't you go do it yourself? The answer is that the Circle of Eight thinks you're going to die, and they're just using you to get what they want. There are divisions within the organization, and Tenser ultimately leaves them because he's too much of a good guy. Jallarzi Sallivarian is a good guy too, and she struggles against what isn't always a goodly organization.

If you're looking at the neutrality of the Circle of Eight, then you can wonder why would Rary betray them? Is it just because there's some magical crown buried in the sand, the pat answer given in the product? Or might there be more to it? Might he be rebelling against some evil that Mordenkainen is doing?

The beauty of Greyhawk is that even when the answer is given in the book, if it's shallow it's clearly not correct. Fandom has taken the setting further than the published products, and has come up with clever answers...

Absolutely, when Greyhawk fandom started on the Internet, people would say "Where do you go to find this piece of information?" and people would say "That's in the Marklands, or in Andre Norton's novel *Quag Keep*, or in some highly obscure source."

Now the answer is go to canonfire.com, the main group of online Greyhawk geniuses. Ask them, and they'll have the answers for you. More often than not, they'll point to some utterly fan-created thing that has

nothing to do with the setting as a whole.

I don't know what Wizards of the Coast's plans are for Greyhawk. I hope that they expand it and treat it respectfully. My expectations are not that that's necessarily what's going to happen, because everyone's got different tastes and they've got their own newer settings that everyone's enamored with.

But fandom's going to keep it going—

Fandom's going to keep it going forever! You cannot kill Greyhawk. Greyhawk's so tied up with how 30-year *Dungeons & Dragons* fans think of the game itself that it's very difficult to disentangle. A lot of people are more interested in the setting than they are in the game. They don't have time to play anymore, but they'll still argue about whether the Small War and the Short War are the same thing or two different conflicts.

What if someone said "Here's the Greyhawk license, have fun"?

One of the first things I would do is figure out how to involve Gary Gyga and Rob Kuntz, who I've worked with before on Maure Castle and Dungeon. One of the big pities about DUNGEON and DRAGON going away is that we had been talking to Rob about official levels of Castle Greyhawk, based on the original levels back in the 70s that he ran.

Oh, you're gonna make me cry.

He was on board to do that. But the magazines will be transferring over to a digital thing. Whether whoever edits it has the same interest in Greyhawk that I do, or the same willingness to work with the older guys, I don't know. Their expertise is not in 3rd Edition rules design, but they can hand over outlines for adventures that read exactly like 1st Edition adventures, because they're the guys who did it the first time. I don't know if the editorial forces that control the online DRAGON and DUNGEON are interested, but I very definitely was.

One of the heartbreaks of this whole affair is that we won't get official Castle Greyhawk levels from Gyga and Kuntz. Gary's doing his own Castle Greyhawk product with Troll Lords, and Rob's publishing some stuff of his own. For me, it would be nice to invite those guys to participate, because Greyhawk fandom is factionalized based on business decisions made by people who weren't even gamers, back in the 80s.

Carl Sargent did some good work.

Carl's a great writer, and had a lot of good ideas. I think a lot of the things that he gets blamed for are actually things that Zeb Cook did in the *Greyhawk Wars* boxed set or that Internet lore says were Jeff Grubb's

idea originally. If you're looking to pin the blame, there's lots of blame to go around.

Really, the guys who were working on it during the 2nd Edition era were doing what they thought was in the best interests of the brand, and trying to tell a neat story, but they didn't quite anticipate – because there was no Internet – that their tastes might have been slightly different than the fans. **It was the first time that people blew up a setting that way. We've seen it so much more often since, but...**

There's also a certain level of respect involved. For guys like me, when Gygax left TSR around 1986, the spigot of products in the style we enjoyed pretty much ended. It wasn't that it was just Gygax, other people were writing those style of products too.

Suddenly it became much more story-oriented, and it was as if the people in charge said that the 1st Edition approach was somehow primitive, and that 2nd edition and even late 1st edition products brought a real creative bloom and a progression. And nobody wants to go back. Yet I can see how everybody loves the smell of their own farts. Everybody thinks what they are doing is awesome. As a creative person, I think it's in your best interest to be excited about what you're doing.

I'm not saying that those people made bad decisions, or were wrong. They thought they were right at the time, but as a gamer, that stuff did not appeal to me in the same way that older stuff did. And it has become *very* clear to me that I am far from alone. Even people who weren't alive in the 1st Edition era liked the 1st Edition style. Part of that is because, from the perspective of an adventurer, the game was about adventures in 1st Edition. You had a handful of rule-books and stuff, but the game was about modules.

You've seen and written so many adventures. Are there particular ingredients you look for in an encounter? If you break it down to the atomic level of an adventure, the encounter level, what ingredients do you look for? And do those feed into any larger philosophy of how you structure it, some aesthetic philosophy—

The grand unification theory of adventure design. Let me take you the long way around to answer that question.

One of the most valuable things for me professionally was the 10 years I spent in the RPGA, travelling all around the country, playing with hundreds of different people. It became very clear to me that although I understand what I get out of the game, lots

of people have different ideas about what they get from the game or what they enjoy. Those things are sometimes mutually exclusive, and sometimes they are just shades of the same idea.

With some people, you get the introduction in a tavern, and for four hours they talk in character. They play little practical jokes on one another, they interact with the staff of the bar who are probably not even statted up in the adventure...

They never leave the tavern.

Yes. In fact, I played with people in 2nd Edition who considered it kind of a failure to even pull their dice out of their bags. That's one extreme.

On the other extreme, I've played with people who don't tolerate any kind of role-playing at all, who are totally focused on the objective, who just want to go go go, kind of the D&D wargame. It's all about the tactics. For some people, that's D&D. That's the other extreme.

Both of those groups can be having fun in their own way, but they are fundamentally playing *Dungeons & Dragons* differently. Designing a good adventure involves understanding that there's a wide variety of tastes among the players going into that adventure. To boil it down to a specific encounter,

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encounters should be complex enough to provide some a tactical challenge. You don't want an encounter where you just walk into a room and oh hey there's an orc or kobold in the room.

In the *Palace of the Silver Princess* they're not just in a library, but they've got a table that's turned over, and they've got crossbows trained on the door. When your PCs come in, you're shot immediately, and there's a tactical challenge of trying to come around the table. That's very simple, but it does engage the tactics engine in your brain. And that's also a great example because you've put the encounter in a library. So the player who's interested in the background of the world, and who's very interested in how his character interacts with that...

Let's just call him the bard.

Let's do so. Or we can call him the DM's best friend, because he is the channel through which exposition is funneled to the rest of the party. That guy, maybe he's not so excited about fighting the kobolds, but when the kobolds are dead he says "Oh my god! Look at all these books in this room!" and he examines the books. Combining the combat, the roleplaying challenge, and the scenery, you're giving a wide variety of player types – and motivation types – things

to do within the same encounter. And that's very important.

An adventure needs to have something for the bard to do, and something for the barbarian, even if it's "You've got to go to a really nice restaurant where you have to wear nice clothes." That gives the barbarian player the opportunity to say "Grrro! I hardly fit in this stupid suit!" – which is exactly why that player wanted to play a barbarian. Well, maybe he wanted the higher hit dice. But you need to give a little something for everybody.

I also like to set players at cross purposes. In *Expedition to the Ruins of Greyhawk* I wrote a huge city section. That section exists to set adventure hooks to send them to the castle. There's an item that if you're associated with the thieves guild, they want you to go and steal it. Whereas a temple wants you to go and reclaim it for them. In my experience when you get into the city, players like nothing more than to each do something different. It's one of the reasons why when my game was an eight-player table, everything took forever. Everyone's an individual and wants to do their own damn thing. **A three-player table runs very fast.**

Luckily my game is now down to six. But when that thief is out talking to a thieves

guild contact, give him a reason to want this magic item. When the cleric's talking to his people, give him a reason to want it. When the magic item comes, the players have something to talk about and some conflict.

You don't want such a conflict that the players are killing each other, because that will destroy your campaign. It's a fine line to balance, but I do like the idea of giving players different motives for doing the same thing. And mutually exclusive motives.

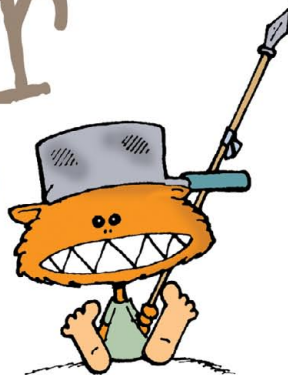
It certainly takes the burden off the DM if the players are providing all the conflict.

And roleplaying with each other. The thief wants to do this with the metal orb. The cleric wants to do this with it. As the DM, I can sit back and let them talk in character about whatever they want to do. If I'm not fully prepared for that night I work up stat blocks for the next three encounters.

What do you do when you're launching a project or wrapping one up?

I spend a lot of time in my notebooks. I keep graph paper notebooks that I use for work and carry with me at all times. If I'm having a dream that has a cool idea in it, I'll wake up and write down the idea. I tend to plan pretty meticulously, to say here's the encounters I need to have, here's the characters I need to have.

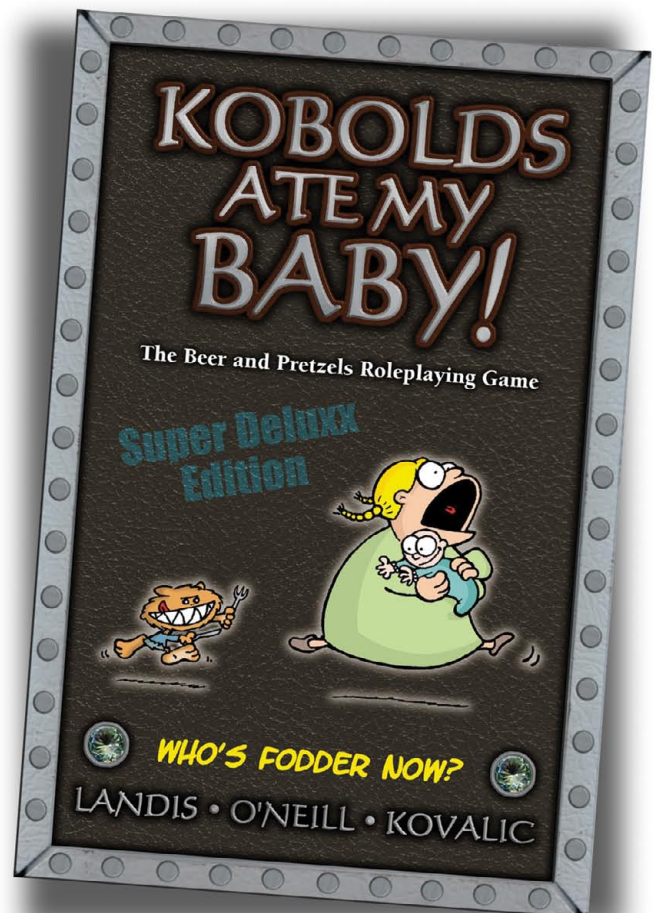
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In fact I probably spend too much time doing this, because the actual writing happens in this orgasm of activity right near my deadline. I don't necessarily recommend that way of working, but when I'm done, there's a lot of interconnections between the different parts. I'm not just starting at the beginning and getting to the end and saying, "Ok, I'm gonna send it in." I constantly do printouts while writing and re-proof it. I'm an editor as well as a writer, so I want that thing to be meticulous when it's done.

The first few paragraphs and first few pages have been written and rewritten so many times, and re-edited. The first bit is always the worst, because you're just getting into it. I'll go back into it and say "Oh, I should have said this, and maybe I could say that 50 more pages later." Most of the best ideas are born written in red ink on the margins of early drafts.

I do the same thing. I print stuff out, I mark it up. Depending on how often I do that, I feel a different degree of polish. It's surprising how few people seem to do it that way. Because Paizo gets so many manuscripts that clearly have never been proofread. At least I hope they've never been proofread because they are in such bad shape. These are by established writers, not by slush pile people. These are by known game industry writers, and I don't really blame them. The game industry doesn't pay enough that you want to do nine drafts unless you're an utter perfectionist loser like me.

It is kind of shocking. Clearly the way I work is not the way everybody works. Part of your job as a writer is to make your editor's life easier. If you can turn over a manuscript that doesn't need to be rewritten...

That makes your editor's job a lot easier. And it makes you more likely to get another project.

Let's talk about inspiration and literary sources for a minute. Do you find those things helpful for plots or description or what is it you get from revisiting Leigh Brackett or your favorite author?

The thing that I draw most inspiration from is names. Not stealing names and using them, but thinking about why Jack Vance's names work, and why just a random selection of consonants with apostrophes in them don't work.

In a lot of tournament adventures you'll see a character with a name like Rosie, a really mundane Earth name. Looking at the names used by Robert Howard or Jack Vance....

Some of them are like Earth names— Exactly! Monte Cook will take earth names and change a couple of consonants. There's a sense of familiarity, and yet it's not familiar.

My conventions for naming are, it should sound fantastic, so it shouldn't be something like Jean-Phillipe, that immediately says "Oh it's French!" There probably isn't France in your world, so I would avoid names that obviously sound French, that just immediately jars me out the fantasy.

It should sound fantastic. It should be spelled like it sounds. And lastly, and this is the most important one, the name itself should give you some idea of what that character is like. Doing that is tough. But the players are juggling hundreds of names, so they're not going to remember a guy whose name is Aaron. But if the guy's name is Balabar Smenck, that name has "bastard" written all over it.

That's the rules that I take from Vance and Howard.

What's an average day for a Paizo publisher?

Meetings, meetings, meetings. I have 2 to 3 lunch meetings a week, so I don't really take lunch anymore. I get in around 10, so we start a little late, which is nice. Get in around 10, leave around 6:30. I work pretty much every day I'm not hanging out with my girlfriend,. But that's all right, that's why I moved out here.

What can you tell us about the new PATH-FINDER setting?

I'm designing it right now. With the help of the staff, but I'm taking the first crack, painting the broad brushstrokes about what I want the setting to be. What I want is something akin to the fiction that inspired the D&D game in the first place, very much a Robert E. Howard thing, with room for HP Lovecraft influence, for Clark Ashton Smith influence, for Leigh Brackett.

If people like the stuff I've done before, under the auspices of official D&D, what we're doing now that we're unfettered from that is very exciting for me personally. This new campaign setting is going to blow people's socks off.

There is a dark edge to this kind of fantasy, a sense that beyond the walls of civilization there's real danger, and I like that very much. There's not going to be "These guys are exclusively good, these guys are exclusively evil, pick a side." There's more shades of grey.

Greyhawk as a setting has developed as the audience for Greyhawk has aged, and so you've got something that is relatively complex, that has history. There's reasons why

this subrace of humanity is next to this subrace of humanity; there are migrations. It's the puzzle thing; you get snippets because you reveal the setting in the context of individual adventures. We're shooting for a sense of a greater picture.

And there's probably going to be demi-humans in it too.

But you'd be okay without them?

I'd be thrilled without them, but that's not a wise financial decision, frankly. Just as there are people who prefer to be tacticians and there's people who prefer to be roleplayers, some people prefer to be elves and dwarves, so there will be elves and dwarves.

How has your professional life changed now that you're a publisher vs. being editor-in-chief vs. an editor?

At every step of the way, I felt like I was twice as busy as the step before, and that I couldn't possibly get busier. And at every step of the way, I found out that was a lie. I spend a lot more time than I might prefer dealing with administrative stuff right now.

The end result is Paizo produces stuff that I would like to buy as a gamer. So I'm willing to do all that because it allows the great staff that we have to focus their full creative energies on the stuff they do, and I do creative stuff on my own time. Which is fine, because if I was a banker, I would be going home and writing about *Dungeons & Dragons* anyway.

Any advice for the aspiring freelancer?

Honestly, I think the PDF route is a really good way to teach yourself the discipline you need to publish in the industry. Companies like Wizards of the Coast or Paizo do have avenues for new writers to get involved. You need to have really great creative ideas (probably the most important thing), you need to be a good writer (also very important), you need to know how to market yourself – go to Gen Con is probably the best advice there, to meet all the decision-makers. You are much better off if they know who you are, even if they've never read a thing you've written. If you can say "I was at that seminar you ran and you probably don't remember me," just having some connection is really important.

Be aware of what is being published by other people. One of the smartest things these days would be to have a blog where you talk about gaming and game-related stuff because the cross-pollination of Livejournal means that Wolfgang Baur, Erik Mona, or someone will probably read your blog, and that isn't gonna hurt either.

The easiest way to get in was to write

for DRAGON and DUNGEON. It remains to be seen how that will be replaced, both by Paizo – because we have some ideas – and by Wizards of the Coast, who will no doubt need freelancers to participate in their online thing. The details right now are a little shaky which just leaves everyone in limbo.

It didn't work on me when Roger Moore said it to me, but the best advice for someone who wants to make a living at gaming is "Don't." It's really difficult to make money in this business. Even publishers of game companies probably make a lot less money than people would think. That's my obligatory "The pool's crowded kid, ya don't need ta go swimmin'", but honestly, that's not going to stop someone who's really driven.

Having that level of drive and ambition is really important. You have to be persistent and not get discouraged. Because there's a lot of discouraging stuff that will happen between being a 3rd grader in a D&D class and being a publisher of an RPG company. You just gotta roll with it.

What do you want to tell *Kobold Quarterly*?

I've seen a lot of despair and gnashing of teeth since the announcement of the magazines going away. I think that's warranted, frankly. These magazines have been a part of our lives for a long time, and I don't want to diminish the emotions involved in that. But there's some really cool stuff coming up. Not having to conform to the orthodoxy of official *Dungeons & Dragons* content allows us to do some much more exciting things than we were previously able to do.

A question about Iggwilv: hot or not?

Both. Seriously both! If you read the Gyax books, she's got the old crone visage, and the beautiful white-haired temptress visage. Iggwilv's powerful enough that she can look like whatever she wants to look like.

Someone asked about PLANET STORIES, saying "Why should I care?"

If they are a *Dungeons & Dragons* fan, they should care because we are reprinting a lot of the books that inspired Gary Gyax when he was doing AD&D. Appendix N of the 1st Edition *Dungeon Master's Guide* is the roadmap for the genre that inspired D&D.

We call it Planet Stories because that was a pulp magazine of the 40s and 50s that published the two genres that we've latched onto: sword & sorcery in the Conan vein, and science fantasy in the Edgar Rice Burroughs tradition. The snooty intelligentsia of sci fi looked down their nose at that and considered it inferior to hard sci fi or paranormal romance or whatever. But I know that people care deeply about this genre and

really like it. It has been diluted over the last 70 years, frankly. Your average gaming tie-in novel is a photocopy of a photocopy of a photocopy. It probably has more characterization, it probably is more modern, but it might be missing the zeal and excitement and spirit.

In the last few years, I've had very few literary experiences as exciting as reading C.L. Moore's Jirel of Joiry stories. Here we have a woman writing in the 1930s in *Weird Tales*, alongside Robert E. Howard and H.P. Lovecraft. In my view, her writing is in many ways superior to the writing of those two men.

The science fiction/fantasy literary canon is broadening to include stuff like Howard and Lovecraft, stuff that used to make people hold their noses and say "Oh, they're just trash fiction." Most D&D players love H.P. Lovecraft, they love Robert Howard. Something about those stories evokes a really visceral reaction. Even though, in a modern sense, they're somewhat dated.

I think the lack of characterization of the main characters allows the reader to imagine themselves having those adventures. That might be what makes those adventures popular. We're picking great stories that deserve to be part of that literary tradition, but have fallen out of print. It's a real joy to go through paperbacks from the 70s back to the 30s. It's a bit of a dream job for me.

The first book is not from the 60s or the 30s, it's a Gary Gyax book from the 90s called *The Anubis Murders*. It was a tie-in to the *Dangerous Journeys* game, and it was an overlooked book. This book is set in a quasi-ancient world of Earth. The main character is an Egyptian wizard priest...

Gyax has a thing for Egypt.

Yeah, so have I, and so have many of the readers. Launching with a Gyax title ties the books to Paizo's roots in the gaming tradition. The introduction I wrote is about Appendix N, and about how for a lot of us who grew up in the 70s and 80s, *Dungeons & Dragons* was our first exposure with this type of fiction. So we start with Gyax.

We're also doing *Black God's Kiss*, which collects all of CL Moore's Jirel of Joiry stories for the first time ever, and *Elak of Atlantis*, Henry Kuttner's attempt to fill the gap of sword & sorcery fiction in pulp magazines of the 30s after Howard's suicide. Elak fights with a rapier, and his Atlantis is an ancient kingdom in the same way as Hyborea. It's a little more high magic than Conan, but readers of D&D books will see a lot they recognize in the Kuttner stories.

I first came upon Elak of Atlantis when reading essays about the sword & sorcery genres. Almost all of them would say it started with Robert E. Howard and then there were the Elak of Atlantis stories. I did some research and discovered that since they originally appeared in the 30s, the Elak of Atlantis stories have only been reprinted in about four anthologies from 1965 to about 1971. Prior to the Internet, it would have been a life's journey to find them. Griffon Press reprinted the Elak stories in 1985.

Small edition?

An edition of 500, and they sell for \$400 apiece. Planet Stories will give you all those stories for \$12.99, bring them back out for people to look at. Kuttner's a fine writer.

After that is one of my favorites, Leigh Brackett's *Secret of Sinharat* and *People of the Talisman*. Two stories featuring Eric John Stark, who was statted up the Giants in the Earth column in DRAGON back in the day (*Ed. Issue #28*). He is a wild child outlaw from Mercury who goes to Mars and has adventures there. Great book.

In January we'll publish CL Moore's Northwest Smith stories, including the very first story she ever published, "Shambleau." We'll also publish Brackett's Skaith books.

I've signed 18 books for this line, so we're doing it at least through next year. All of them will have introductions by known authors that put them into historical context and explain why these books are important or why they're good.

Why they're fun?

You don't really need an introduction to tell you why a book like the *Secret of Sinharat* is fun, because it's a hell of a book. It was a shock to me that the caliber of stories that we acquired were available. Mostly just you can't keep everything in print. But I'm going to try to keep some of this stuff.

It's fun to launch a new campaign setting, to transition the company from a magazine company to a game company, it's fun to have a hand in Titanic Games board game line, but the Planet Stories novel line is what gets me most excited when I go to work in the morning. It's the genre I've been reading almost exclusively for over a year in getting ready for the launch, and Planet Stories is going to be great.

I hope that convinces your readers to check it out. But even if it doesn't, I'm going to have a very handsome collection of excellent books.





The Kobold FAQ

Writer's Guidelines, Submissions and Imponderables

Is Kobold Quarterly for DMs or for players?

Yes, it is. Seriously, I'm trying to print material for both audiences.

When will a paper edition be available?

I'd love to offer one from the very start, but the sheer difficulty involved in distributing through the magazine channels is daunting. For now, you can pick up a paper copy at lulu.com.

What's the OPEN DESIGN connection?

The goal is not just to replace one magazine with an identical twin; it's to do things differently, and do some things better.

The OPEN DESIGN community offers suggestions, feedback, and critique to adventures and settings I write. The patrons offer topics and direction. I want to give that community a creative outlet, so this magazine will feature some of their work every issue. It's robust work, peer-reviewed by other gamers.

Why is a kobold fierce, exactly?

I chose the kobold as a mascot because the little buggers dislike being stepped on by big corporate types who have to answer to shareholders. I want to offer a wider range of gaming material than minis-based tactical stuff. Gamers are a creative lot.

Kobolds only do well when they band together. They may be small, but they are numerous and fight hard. That seems like a good approach. KQ is the little guy, with all that implies, good and bad.

How can I submit a query for an article?

I'm taking queries only from Open Design patrons and published freelancers, because with just four issues and about eight articles each, I have very limited editorial bandwidth. If the circulation reaches 1,000 subscribers (O joyous day, devoutly to be wished!), I'll open the queries up to all subscribers.

I'm an artist. How do I submit work?

You can submit your work for publication any time, but there's no guarantee of acceptance and we generally pay only for assigned, commissioned pieces. That said, you do retain most rights to your work (we buy first print rights and all electronic rights).

What kind of article should I query?

The kind you want to read. I'm not trying to be glib; the best proposals are ones that authors care about.

Alternately, you can query for a standard feature such as the Flashing Blades section on combat and feats, or a monster for the Bestiary page.

Send your query with the subject line "Query" and a short description of your proposed article to the mines at koboldquarterly@gmail.com.

Will you publish material for my favorite WotC settings?

No, kobolds are penniless monsters with lousy treasure hoards, and we cannot afford the licensing fees required.

The positive side of this is that all the material in *Kobold Quarterly* is useful to

all gamers; we never publish world-specific material other items related to the Free City of Zobeck.

What's Zobeck, anyway?

It's my default setting for the Open Design adventures. You can learn more about it as a patron of Open Design, or by reading the overview in this issue.

Do you publish fiction or poetry?

There's been loose talk about appointing a Kobold Poet Laureate. The world may not be ready for his genius.

There's no plans to publish fiction just yet. It's a small magazine, and I want to pack it full of gaming goodness.

What about adventures?

KQ may publish an adventure in a future issue if a good one comes along, and circulation justifies it. To do it right would require at least 12 pages and professional maps.

Right now, I don't have an adventure in hand to publish, so it's purely theoretical. Chances are, the first adventure will be short, under 10,000 words, to fit through our kobold-sized editorial filters.

I love or hate this magazine. Where do I write to praise your genius or complain about your inscrutable failings?

All email to the editor should include "Kobold Letters" in the subject line, and should be sent to the deep salt mines at koboldquarterly@gmail.com.



The Ups & Downs of Tripping

Knock ‘em Down and Keep ‘em There

by Sigfried Trent

Tripping is a potentially devastating combat maneuver, but you need to understand all the mechanics to use it effectively. In d20 games, tripping involves grabbing or hooking an opponent in some way and then yanking them to the ground. Tripping is a special attack, so you can perform a trip whenever you could perform an attack.

How does tripping work?

A trip attack has two steps. First you must make a touch attack made against an opponent within your range or reach. Unless you are armed with a tripping weapon, the trip attack provokes an attack of opportunity from your target. If you succeed with the touch attack you may make an opposed trip check against your opponent.

The trip check is typically an opposed Strength check, though the defender may use Dexterity instead. This roll has a few special modifiers. Each creature gets a +4 bonus for each category over Medium size, or a -4 penalty for each size category below Medium. Defenders with more than two limbs supporting them, or which are especially stable (such as a dwarf) receive a +4 bonus.

If the defender loses the trip check, they fall prone in the space they occupy. If the defender wins, they may in turn immediately make a trip check against the attacker, this time with the roles reversed.

Who can you trip?

You can trip any opponent using limbs for locomotion and up to one size category larger than you. When you trip

a winged flying creature, they become stalled and must land or fall. If they cannot land in one round, they fall 150' and suffer falling damage. Skip Williams' "All About Movement, Part V" (on wizards.com) explains the details.

You may also trip a mounted opponent, but your odds may be poor; they may use a Ride check in place of their Strength or Dexterity check. If the trip succeeds, the rider falls off their mount.

You cannot trip a creature which is already prone, stalled, or which is somehow suspended.

What can you trip with?

By default a trip is an unarmed attack. The rules do not specify if you can use your foot to trip someone but it is probably reasonable in most situations. Kicking is a valid unarmed attack, and using your foot to trip someone is a common martial arts technique in real life. Creatures with natural attacks can use them to make trip attacks, but they are treated as unarmed attacks and provoke an attack of opportunity. The same is true for characters "armed" unarmed attacks like a monk's or those with the Improved Unarmed Attack feat.

Some weapons can be used to make a trip attack. A weapon must specify in its description that it can be used to trip someone. Tripping weapons either feature a hook of some kind or a flexible part that can wrap around someone's limbs. When making a trip attack with a weapon, you do not provoke an attack of opportunity. In addition, if you fail your trip roll and the defender successfully trips you back, you may drop your weapon instead of falling prone. Bolas,

spiked chains, flails, guisarmes, halberds, gnome hooked hammers, kamas, scythes, sickles, and whips may all be used to make trip attacks.

It is a common misconception that if you use more than one weapon in a full attack sequence you suffer the penalties for two weapon fighting. This is not true. You only suffer two weapon fighting penalties when you are taking an "extra" attack with an off hand weapon.

This is important for tripping because you can use a special tripping weapon in one hand, and a damaging weapon in the other or you can make an unarmed trip attack, and then use a weapon for a follow up attack, all without invoking any two weapon fighting penalties.

How can you use tripping effectively?

The touch attack component of trip is one of its most attractive features. This means attacks with significant penalties or attacks against well armored opponents are still very likely to hit. This can be especially useful to make the most out of a full attack, where your bonus attacks have a rather low attack bonus.

Unlike normal attacks, the trip check has only a few modifiers and they tend to be smaller than armor class or base attack bonuses. The outcome of a trip roll generally depends on the luck of the dice more than other special attacks. For this reason, tripping can be a decent option for someone who is outclassed in terms of attack and armor class.

To trip foes consistently, stack the deck in your favor as much as possible. The two variables at work are size and strength. Any bonus that increases them will improve your odds. Fortu-

nately low-level spells such as *bull's strength* and *enlarge person* offer significant bonuses in both departments. Priests with the Strength domain are especially effective because both their domain spells and domain powers can aid you significantly.

The Improved Trip feat is by far your best option. It requires Combat Expertise and 13 Intelligence, but it can turn tripping into one of the most powerful attacks in the game. It eliminates the attack of opportunity tripping provokes, and it gives you a +4 bonus to your trip check. Most significantly, if your trip succeeds you may make a free follow up attack on your opponent at the same attack bonus as the trip attempt. A successful trip puts you at a strategic advantage, and it no longer slows down your ability to deal damage. The follow up attack is especially strong because your opponent is now prone.

How do you take advantage of tripped foes?

Since tripping does no damage, it offers a purely tactical advantage in combat. A prone foe suffers three disadvantages. They suffer a -4 AC penalty against melee attacks and a -4 penalty to their own melee attacks. They can make ranged attacks only with a crossbow or a shuriken. Being prone provides a +4 AC bonus against incoming ranged attacks.

A prone character who tries to stand up takes a move action and provokes an attack of opportunity. A prone character

can only move by crawling 5' which also provokes an attack of opportunity. Your opponent can choose to stay prone and fight from the ground with the penalties, or stand up or crawl away and provoke an attack of opportunity. Standing or crawling takes a move action so they cannot make a full attack that round. Either way, your foe is at a significant disadvantage with a limited ability to escape.

Having reach further expands your advantage over your opponent. Normally creatures can take a 5' step to avoid reach disadvantages, but a tripped opponent can't do that until they stand up. They have almost no way to close with you without an attack of opportunity.

Tripping combines well with both Combat Expertise and Power Attack. While both lower your chance to make the initial touch attack, most touch attacks are easy to make. The trip check is unaffected by the attack penalties and if you succeed the AC penalty your opponent suffers from being prone make further attacks easier to land, offsetting the penalty for using these feats. With Improved Trip this makes for an awesome offensive or defensive tactic.

How do you defend against tripping?

Your best defense is to make yourself ineligible for a trip attack. Spells like *levitate* or *fly* make you impossible to trip (since you don't require limbs for locomotion). Anything that would

increase your size more than two steps greater than your opponent would also make you immune. If neither of these is an option, to maximize your Strength or Dexterity to increase your odds of winning the trip check.

Once you are tripped you are faced with some difficult options: stay there and get clobbered, or stand up and risk an attack of opportunity. As a spell-caster, your best bet is to stay put. You can cast spells while prone and the AC penalty probably won't make much difference against a strong melee opponent. If your AC is good enough, getting up is probably a good idea. If faced with an opponent with the Improved Trip feat you are best off staying put. Getting up exposes you to extra attacks and chances are good you will be knocked back down on your foe's next action – without slowing down their attack sequence.

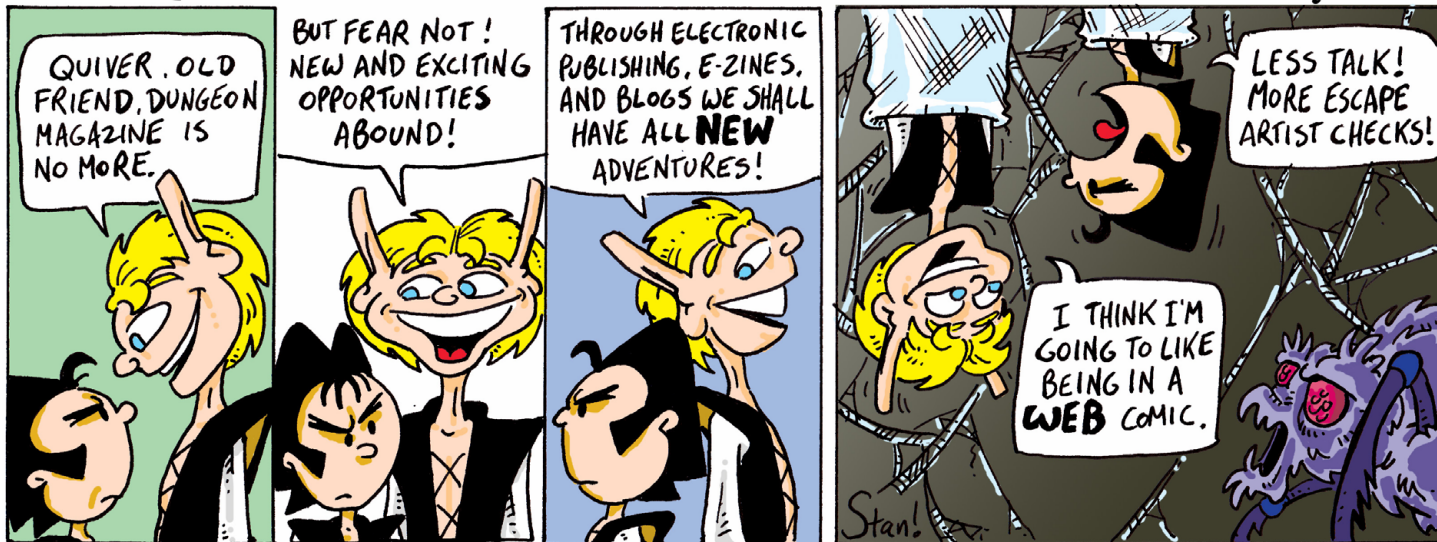
Note that if you are tripped you can still trip others. The attack penalty isn't so bad when making touch attacks, with no penalty to the trip check, and you can't be tripped defensively if you are already prone. Counter-tripping may be the best revenge.

A character with a very high Tumble skill can stand as a free action with a DC of 35, making it easy for them to stand up without any attacks of opportunity or using a move action. This is a strong defense against tripping but is difficult for all but the best tumblers to pull off.

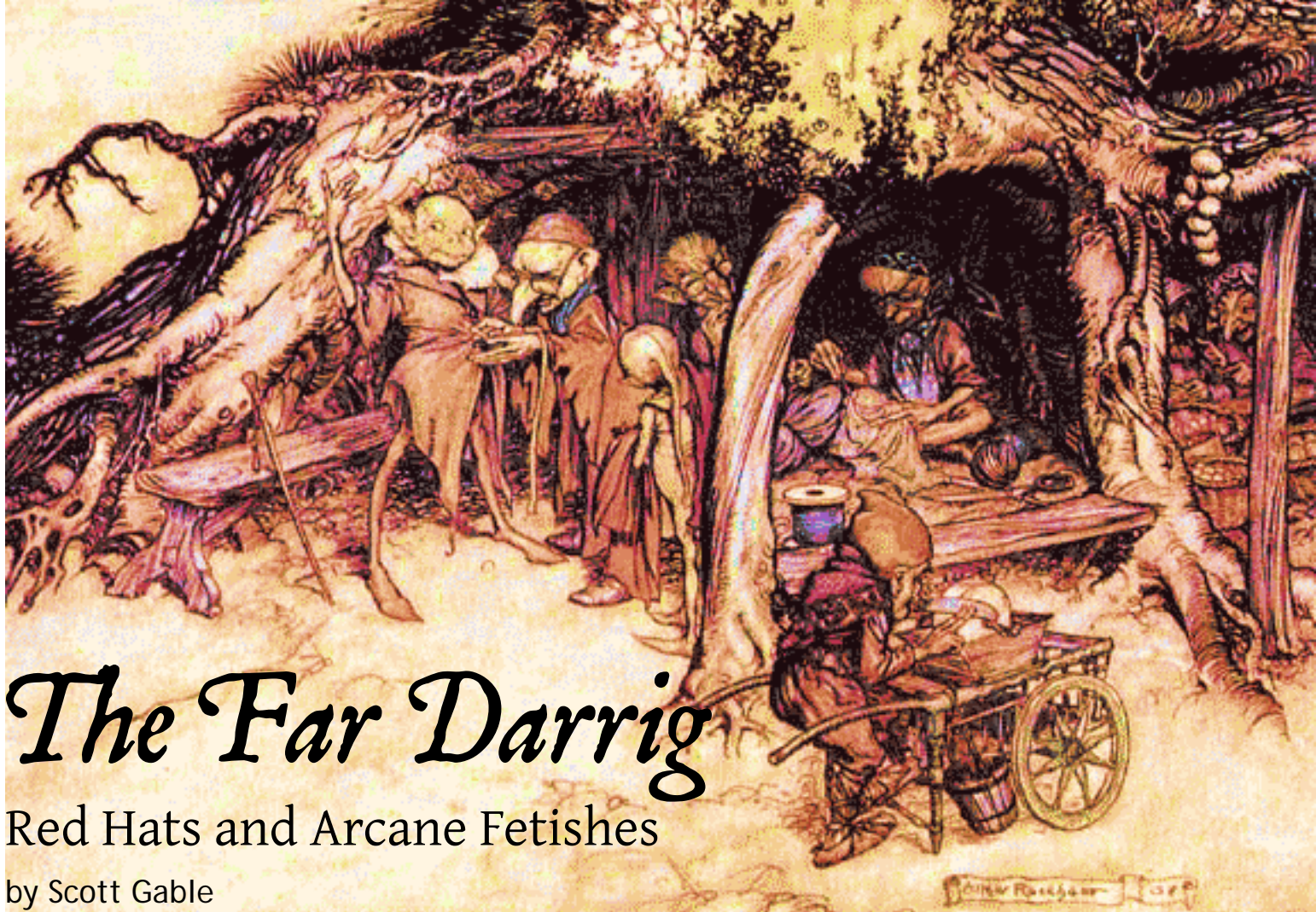


by Stan!

Bolt & Quiver



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The Far Darrig

Red Hats and Arcane Fetishes

by Scott Gable

“They’re as real as you.”—Findle the far darrig in defense of his illusions

With their penchant for illusions and tendency to harass travelers, far darrig are best described as tricksters; however, unlike most tricksters they are not malicious miscreants. Quite the opposite; they take their actions very seriously. To understand their motivation, one must first understand their strange beliefs. According to the far darrig, all of reality is little more than an illusion—a thing to be molded and shaped.

Why all that we know should be an illusion and what lies beyond it, if anything, are heatedly debated topics among the far darrig. While there are many opinions, most far darrig trust in the sanctity of the illusion. They treat their daily interaction with the illusion as a deeply devotional and artistically expressive act. Some believe that with proper training and sufficient understanding, they can ultimately disbelieve

this existence and escape the cycle of life and death to whatever lies beyond. That the far darrig’s intentions are not malicious but are artistic and devotional gives little comfort to travelers who have experienced these infuriating creatures first hand.

Far Darrig Elder (Paragon 5) CR 5

Often LN Small Fey

Init +7; **Senses** Listen +4, Spot +4; low-light vision

Languages Common, Sylvan

AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 11 (+1 size, +3 Dex)

hp 35 (5d6+15 HD)

Fort +4, **Ref** +4, **Will** +10

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee Club +0 (1d4-3)

Ranged Club +6 (1d4-3)

Base Atk +2; **Grp** -5

Abilities Str 4, Dex 16, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 22

SA Magic hat, spells

SQ DR 5/cold iron, low-light vision, SR 15

Weakness Magic hat (see below)

Feats Improved Initiative, Spell Focus (Illusion)

Skills Bluff +9, Concentration +6, Disguise +9, Hide +10, Knowledge (arcane) +3, Knowledge (local) +3, Knowledge (nature) +3, Knowledge (the planes) +3, Listen +4, Move Silently +7, Perform +7, Sense Motive +4, Sleight of Hand +6, Spellcraft +5, Spot +4, Survival +3

Advancement by class level

Spells A far darrig casts spells as a 3rd-level sorcerer except that their spells known consist of all spells from the illusion school appropriate for their level and they automatically know them.

Spells known (6/7; save DC 18 + spell level)

0—ghost sound

1st—color spray, disguise self, magic aura, magic mouth, silent image, ventriloquism

Far Darrig Paragon

Level BAB Fort Ref Will Special

1 st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Con +2	+1	sorcerer
2 nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	DR 5/cold iron		
3 rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	Cha +2	+1	sorcerer
4 th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Cha +2	+1	sorcerer
5 th	+2	+1	+1	+4	SR 10+HD		

Hit Dice and skill points as fey. Class skills as above.

Far Darrig as Characters

Far darrig characters have the following racial traits.

- -4 Strength, +2 Dexterity, +2 Constitution, +2 Charisma
- Small size: +1 bonus to Armor Class, +1 bonus on attack rolls, +4 bonus on Hide checks, -4 penalty on grapple checks, lifting and carrying limits $\frac{3}{4}$ those of Medium characters.
- A far darrig's base land speed is 20 feet.
- Low-light vision
- +4 racial bonus on saving throws against illusions

Instinct for Illusions (Ex): A far darrig's effective caster level is +1 for spells of the illusion school.

Magic Hat (Su): A far darrig's hat allows the far darrig to access various supernatural abilities as they advance in level. The benefits are cumulative. Caster level is equal to $\frac{1}{2}$ Hit Dice and all DCs are based on Charisma.

1st 1/day—By reaching into the hat, the far darrig can pull out a creature. This ability functions as *shades* emulating *summon nature's ally I* and similar to a *bag of tricks*. At every odd character level of the far darrig, the hat can emulate a correspondingly more powerful spell culminating in *shades* emulating *summon nature's ally VIII* at character level 15.

2nd 1/day—By jumping into the hat, the far darrig (and hat) become invisible. This functions as *invisibility*, but the duration is 1 hour for every 2 character levels.

9th 1/day—The hat acts as a portal to the Plane of Shadow. The far darrig may jump into the hat to enter the Plane of Shadow; the hat goes with him. He may also 1/day use the hat to return to the Material plane.

Alternately, the far darrig can make a touch attack with the hat on a single target. If the target fails a Will save (DC 23), it is transported to the Plane of Shadow. The hat can be readied against a charge.

Automatic Languages: Common, Sylvan. Bonus Languages: Elven, Gnome, Terran.

Favored Class: sorcerer or phantasm (new class, see below).

Level Adjustment: +1

Magic Hat as Arcane Fetish

The red hat of the far darrig is more than simply a tradition—it is the key to their magic. It has been ingrained within far darrig culture for so long that they depend on it and cannot perform their illusions without it. It acts as an arcane focus for their power; the hat is power-

less for all others and does not radiate magic. However, if lost or destroyed, the far darrig loses all supernatural and spell-like abilities and cannot cast illusion-based spells even if obtained from class levels. The far darrig must perform a month-long ritual to create a new hat before he regains his abilities and spells. As long as the far darrig possesses the hat, its powers work.

A far darrig without a hat is ignored or “disbelieved” by his tribe until the new hat is completed, so a far darrig goes to great lengths to protect his hat. Despite the red hats, far darrig are very unlike their blood-thirsty cousins the redcaps, and the far darrig do not color their hats using blood.

It is rumored that the far darrig can perform rituals to increase the power of their hats and that certain rogue far darrig have experimented with necromantic powers—a magic school that the far darrig normally shun.

Environment

Far darrig typically live tribally in heavily forested areas in small villages. Their thatched-roof huts are completely illusory. In fact, aside from those tools deemed essential, it is rare to find anything of physical substance in a far darrig village. That is not to say that they live dull lives – the illusion of vibrant wealth is ever-present.

Typical Physical Characteristics

But for the pale-red cast to their skin and the ever-present red, floppy hat on their heads, far darrig appear very much like lean gnomes. Their name actually means “red man,” and this serves as a colloquial name for these fey. Their resemblance to gnomes may be more than merely cosmetic, as some scholars believe that present day gnomes are distantly related to the far darrig and related fey—such as redcaps and cluracan.

Far darrig rarely carry more than a walking stick when they go wandering. They enjoy exploring for its own sake and to further their understanding of the Illusion, but take little interest in collecting physical baubles. Equivalent

illusions can be created anytime by a far darrig with sufficient skill.

Far darrig can be affable, but it's rare to know one very well. Even if you can convince one to stop harassing you with illusions long enough to chat, their view of the world can become quite disconcerting.

They occasionally dabble as rogues, druids, or clerics of the Trickery domain, but their preferred classes are sorcerer and phantasm.

Alignment

Far darrig are typically Lawful Neutral. While their lawful bent may seem odd given their trickery, the far darrig are very methodical and deliberate, with a reason for everything they do. With regard to their reactions to others, it's difficult to spare much love or hate for illusions; to them, every PC is just an illusion they haven't disbelieved yet.

Society

The far darrig's tribal culture centers around clusters of villages. Within each village, the hierarchy reflects age and requires displays of respect; everyone shares in the village work. The village elders form a council to make major decisions. All villagers are treated as family, and when not exploring, days are typically spent playing illusory games.

Few far darrig even try to understand why one would be interested in magic not dealing with illusions.

Strategies and Tactics

Far darrig rarely use lethal force when interacting with the world and other creatures. They seek to understand the illusion of the world through interaction; however, sometimes understanding only comes with drastic actions.

When exploring, far darrig spend much of their time invisible. This allows them to better control each encounter or experiment. Being seen might unduly bias the results. They have a wide variety of favorite tricks and tactics; a few are listed here.

1st level spells: *Ventriloquism* creates a call for help from the bottom of a well

that is the home of a testy water elemental. *Magic mouths* in a bedroll recite dirty limericks are irksome. Several *magic mouths* leading the party in circles with the directions to a figment treasure can stall the party for hours.

A *silent image* can be a defense, a large dragon standing sentinel on a cliff top, or they can be a lure, such as an image of a jeweled necklace dangling on a branch over a ravine.

2nd level spells: *Invisibility* affects objects and invisible doors are annoying. While having a colleague suddenly disappear due to *invisibility* can be disconcerting to the rest of the party, in combination with *silence*, it becomes somewhat terrifying.

3rd level spells: The shock of watching a companion die horribly can be terrible, but it's maddening when it is a *major image*. Likewise, several *major image* combatants can shift the tide of a battle.

4th level spells: *Illusory wall* is an easy way to split parties up.

5th level spells: *Persistent image* has lead more than one party to overhear plans to assassinate the king

6th level spells: Waking up to a party of silent trolls in your camp can make for a rough day until you realize that they are your colleagues affected by a *veil* and a *silence* spell.

Along the same lines, seeing a small girl brutally tear through a well-armed party is disturbing. It is really a bulette under a *veil*.

7th level spells: Seeing a small, ghostly army amass near a small city due to *screen* can have long-lasting effects on city planning.

Far darrig will often split large parties up to make things more interesting. They place weaker, easy-to-find illusions on top of more powerful illusions to catch people off guard. Though *true seeing* is a potent weapon against far darrig, if they catch you with a *silence*, you may not have the opportunity to use it.

If things go even slightly awry, far darrig feel no shame about retreating. At the end of the day, all far darrig are different, and while one may pursue more subtle trickery, the next will be more interested in gruesome images and big explosions.

Phantasm

The phantasm class is unique to the far darrig. It focuses on the mastery of illusion and warping perceptions, and casts spells per day as a sorcerer of the same level.

Spell list

0—*ghost sound*

1st—*color spray, disguise self, magic aura, magic mouth, silent image, ventriloquism*

2nd—*blur, hypnotic pattern, illusory script, invisibility, minor image, mirror image, misdirection, phantom trap, silence*

3rd—*displacement, invisibility sphere, major image*

4th—*hallucinatory terrain, illusory wall, greater invisibility, phantasmal killer, rainbow pattern, shadow conjuration, zone of silence*

5th—*dream, false vision, mirage arcana, mislead, nightmare, per-*

sistent image, seeming, shadow evocation, shadow walk

6th—*permanent image, programmed image, project image, veil*

7th—*mass invisibility, greater shadow conjuration, screen, simulacrum*

8th—*scintillating pattern, greater shadow evocation*

9th—*shades, weird*

Weapons and Armor Proficiencies: A phantasm is proficient with simple weapons but is not proficient with any armor or shields.

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Eschew Materials
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Detect illusion
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	Force of personality
4th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Tenacious illusion (CL +1)
5th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Spell Focus (Illusion)
6th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Ingrained metamagic, Force of personality (AC)
7th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Mad eye 1/day
8th	+4	+2	+2	+6	Master of illusion
9th	+4	+3	+3	+6	Uncertainty field (10 feet)
10th	+5	+3	+3	+7	Sense illusions
11th	+5	+3	+3	+7	
12th	+6/+1	+4	+4	+8	Master of illusion
13th	+6/+1	+4	+4	+8	Uncertainty field (15 feet)
14th	+7/+2	+4	+4	+9	Mad eye 2/day
15th	+7/+2	+5	+5	+9	Tenacious illusion (CL +2)
16th	+8/+3	+5	+5	+10	Master of illusion
17th	+8/+3	+5	+5	+10	Uncertainty field (20 feet)
18th	+9/+4	+6	+6	+11	Immunity to illusions
19th	+9/+4	+6	+6	+11	
20th	+10/+5	+6	+6	+12	See illusions

Spells: A phantasm casts arcane spells of the illusion school; indeed, their spell list consists of the entire illusion school.

A phantasm knows all of the spells available at a certain level when they gain access to that level. Phantasms cast spells like sorcerers.

Eschew Materials: At 1st level, a phantasm gains Eschew Materials as a bonus feat.

Detect Illusion: At 2nd level, a phantasm can detect illusions at will. This ability functions identically to *detect magic* but only detects illusion spells.

Force of Personality: At 3rd level, a phantasm can apply their charisma modifier to their Will save. At 6th level, a phantasm can apply their charisma modifier to their AC. This bonus applies to both touch and flat-footed AC.

Tenacious Illusion: At 4th level, a phantasm's effective caster level for illusion spells increases by +1. At 15th level, this bonus becomes a +2.

Spell Focus (Illusion): At 5th level, a phantasm gains Spell Focus (Illusion) as a bonus feat, or Greater Spell Focus (Illusion) if they already have the first.

Ingrained Metamagic: At 6th level, a phantasm reduces the cost of metamagic spells by one spell slot. Additionally, the phantasm does not suffer from an increased casting time.

Mad Eye: At 7th level, a phantasm gains a gaze attack. For 1 round, any living foe within a 15 foot radius of the phantasm that meets the its gaze must succeed on a Will save (DC 10 +1/2 CL + Cha modifier) or be dazed for 1 round. This effect is not limited by target's HD.

At 14th level, a phantasm can use this ability 2/day.

Master of Illusion: At 8th level, a phantasm chooses one metamagic feat to permanently enhance their illusions: Silent Spell, Still Spell, or Extend Spell. The feat's effects are added, for free, to every spell the phantasm casts. At 12th level, the phantasm can choose a second metamagic feat.

At 16th level, the phantasm applies all three metamagic feats to their spells, so a 16th-level phantasm's illusions are all automatically silent, still, and extended without increased spell level or casting time.

Sense Illusions: At 10th level, a phantasm automatically knows if there are illusions present within 60 feet.

Uncertainty Field: At 9th level, a phantasm radiates an aura of uncertain and shifting imagery in a 10 foot radius.

Foes in this area must make a Will save (DC 10 +1/2 CL + Cha modifier) or the phantasm is treated as effectively invisible. Affected creatures do not make another save unless they leave and re-enter the field.

Those who fail the save must make a second Will save (DC 10 +1/2 CL + Cha modifier) or see all of their colleagues as the phantasm. These phan-

tasms perform the actions his colleagues perform. If no other foes are present, the subject sees one illusory phantasm in the opposite direction of the invisible real phantasm, doing whatever the phantasm does. The fake phantasm disappears once the target leaves the field.

At 13th level, the radius of the field extends to 15 feet. At 17th level, it extends to 20 feet.

If foes enter the uncertainty field while the phantasm is invisible, they make only the secondary save. The phantasm can dismiss the field as a free action.

Immunity to Illusions: At 18th level, a phantasm is immune to all spells from the illusion school.

See Illusions: At 20th level, a phantasm can discern any illusion on sight. This includes the ability to see invisibility.



Dark Providence

"The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time." Genesis 6:5

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Steam & Sorcery

A visit to the Free City of Zobeck

by Wolfgang Baur

Zobeck is a city without peer, a place of adventure that is free of feudal rulers and rich in magic. From its steam gates to the squabbles of the Arcane Collegium, its citizens see themselves as separate from lesser metropolises, and superior to them. Not since Castle Stross and the griffon towers were seized in the Great Revolt has any citizen of Zobeck knelt to swear fealty to an overlord. They are proud people.

But proud of what, exactly—what makes Zobeck different from any other city? The citizens are always happy to tell you.

Steam and Clockworks

The two main things that make Zobeckers feel superior to their neighbors are the steam power of the aeolipile and the clockwork gearing they developed to harness that power.

Steam power is only used for large mechanical systems, like the raising and lowering of the Puffing Bridge, one of the first such devices. It is also used as a defensive measure at the Steam Gates of

the city and of the collegium, for windlasses at the docks, and at some of the smithies and ironworks, where steam powers triphammers. Steam aeolipiles are powerful, but with the exception of a single dwarven steamwagon, they are much too large to be moved around the city.

The more mobile and interesting difference in the city is the presence of clockworks, machines based on everwound springs, memory registers, hydraulic and gravity-driven limbs; the more advanced even have emotive gears. Typical examples include clockwork scullions (whose silence as servants is guaranteed), autoscribes, spider thieves, clockwork steeds, brass men, sorting beasts, golden songbirds, and even nimblewatchmen, a form of guardian clockwork.

The many styles of clockwork devices makes them popular status items, but they are expensive. They are frequently stolen and ransomed back to their owners. Anyone with skill in making and repairing such items has a lifetime's employment in the Free City.

Zobeck's Kobolds

The Free City is home to at least 2,200 kobolds, though only a few hundred are ever present in the city at one time. They are the city's miners, diggers in the Vilgau silver mines to the north of the city, and the Tromburg iron mines to the north and east. When they come to the city, they have money to spend and a willingness to drink their wages away from sunset to midnight or later. Drunken kobold miners pick fights, and they especially hate gnomes, none of whom live in the city walls for fear of assault. Why does the city tolerate such evil, disruptive creatures?

Half the answer is that few creatures are as willing to work dark, wet, tiny mines for as little pay as kobolds are. The iron, silver, and lead they pull from the earth is valuable for Zobeck's smithies and foundries. But that is only half an answer.

Small but strong, the kobolds of Zobeck walk the city streets in large groups every night, visiting the various taverns to spend their coin. Most of them are miners from the silver and



iron mines around the city, but almost as many live and work in the kobold ghetto, on the southeast side of the city. Their ghetto is home to hundreds of the best metallurgists, assayers, alchemists, and locksmiths of Zobeck. The kobolds' talent for sorcery means that they have an apprentice in the Collegium. Their small, nimble fingers make them valuable in all the fine work required to build clockwork scullions, clockwork toys, or deadly clockwork traps and weaponry, such as the Zobeck self-winding crossbow.

The Clockwork Crossbow

The self-winding or clockwork crossbow is a remarkable device that uses a compressed everwound spring to power a small chain drive that is released when the weapon is fired, and that stops moving when the weapon is again ready to fire. The result is a very distinctive noise when a clockwork crossbow fires, the usual thunk and zip followed by a few seconds of grinding rattle. Its speedy reloading and single-handed reload allows creatures to make iterative attacks with it; thus, a 6th level fighter firing a clockwork crossbow attacks once using +6 his base attack and once at +1. Its damage is the usual 1d10 piercing, it uses standard heavy bolts, and it costs 2,000 gp.

The Arcane Collegium

While Zobeck is mad about mechanical devices, many people distrust clicking and ticking things in favor of the reliable results that a powerful wizard or alchemist brings to the city. After all, the wizard Black Marcenzo was one of the heroes of the revolt that gave the city its freedom and various liberties from the surrounding provinces. The Arcane Collegium continues that tradition of defending and educating the citizens.

The master mages of the Collegium include Guildmaster Orlando the Clockwork Mage, Master Necromancer Konrad von Eberfeld, Master Illusionist Ariella Scarpetti, and Master Diviner Rudwin Whitstone. The positions of Master Summoner and Master of Stars and Shadows are both currently vacant

and seeking instructors (any PC with access to shadow or star spells and 5 arcane class levels qualifies). The prior instructor of Summonings was Sariel of Morgau; he retired almost a year ago and left the city.

The Collegium itself is collection of seven stone buildings and three courtyards is almost a small college; four major arcanists and many lesser ones call it home, with quarters on the premises. Its buildings are all two stories tall, with a mix of grey and yellow stucco and red tile rooftops.

The exceptions are a grey stone building (the Summoner's Hall) and a black stone tower, stained with soot and partially obscured by many small, puffing chimneys. Both it and the grey building with its bell tower are twice the height of the buildings surrounding them. All of the buildings have tarnished silver runes are inscribed along the eaves, gates, and windows of all the buildings, and owls, ravens, hawks, a small dragonette and even a flying monkey perch along the gutters and battlements of its spires and towers.

The creatures are the various familiars of the members. Any attack or spell-casting against a familiar immediately brings down the wrath of all nearby arcanists and the prompt arrival of the city guards.

While two Zobeck schools of magic are unusual, most are fairly common. The Collegium recognizes clockwork,

divination, elementalism, enchantment, illusions, necromancy, stars & shadows, and summoning as the eight proper schools of arcane study. The study of alchemy is considered a lesser craft, rather than a full school. Pacts are a recognized school but considered corrupt. Spirit magic, including shamanism, is considered a lesser form of the true schools.

The arcanists' count among their number 24 apprentices, two journeymen (Alexy Leonovic, a 3rd level wizard and Frida Brogianna, a 4th level bard), and a large group of servants and staff. These servants and staff include tutors, librarians, scribes, alchemists, a cook, maids, a porter, grooms, and a falconer and griffon-keeper. Seven clockwork scullions make the lowest rung of the Collegium, and were made and named by its current master, Orlando: Secundus, Quartus, Quintus, Sextus, Septimus, Octavus, Decimus. In total, 60 people work at the Collegium every day.

Characters might visit the Collegium for many reasons, including:

- To get an item identified.
- To learn spells and metamagic feats.
- To investigate a spider thief, an item of rogue clockwork magic suspected to have its lair on the grounds.
- To pursue an apprentice accused of enchanting a young flowerseller in the market.
- To gather information from the Collegium's famous library.



Zobeck

Small city; Population 9,800

GP Limit 1,200 gp

Races 90% human, 7% kobold, 3% dwarf

Notable Figures

Killian Gluck Lord Mayor (male human aristocrat 5/expert 4)

Radovar Streck, City Consul (male human expert 3)

Kekolina, City Consul (female kobold rogue 6/cleric 2)

Sir Fryderyk Sieboski, Commander, Order of the Undying Sun (human Pal6)

Ursl Schramm, Guildmaster of the Steamworker's Guild (dwarf F6/Ex4)

Horvart Edelstein, captain of the guard (male human F8)

Lucca Angeli, high priestess of the Golden Goddess (female human Clr11)

Konrad von Eberfeld, necromancer of the Collegium (Wiz6/Ftr1/eldritch knight 4)

Orlando, guildmaster of the Arcane Collegium (wizard 12/expert2)

Theodorus, mouse king

Volstaff, Lord Greymark, master merchant

