

Winter 2008 Issue 3

CELESTIAL BODIES

WOLFGANG BAUR PRESENTS

KOBOLD

*Quarterly*TM

A tiny little magazine of Kobolds & Dragons

Ecology
of the **Lich**

Ed Greenwood
Interview

Star
& Shadow
Magic

Keith Baker
Does Noir

100% Official Content
OPEN DESIGN

US \$7.99 CAN \$10.99

0 1



0-94922-87788-8

www.koboldquarterly.com

8 Rules for Cinematic Combat / Ancestral Spirits / Ask the Kobold
Prince of Swarms / Perfect Power Attacks / 10 Dangerous Doors



Prophecy™

Heed the Warnings...

Has Arrived!

- A fantasy role-playing setting of tremendous depth; entirely unique races, bestiary, faiths, and lore!
- Fluid profession archetypes replace static classes; begin as a vagabond, evolve into a warrior, thief, or alchemist through your choices!
- Skill-based rather than level-based character development; mastering only the skills you practice!



- Attempt to stop the foretold **Absolution**, help bring it about, or find your own paths to follow!
- “D-100” percentile mechanics easily adapt to other systems; use *Prophecy* as a sourcebook!
- Play as one of the four **Prime Races**, or as a subrace struggling to survive against both the wilds and the spread of civilization!



The *First Edition Boxed Set* contains all you need to begin playing *Prophecy*:

72-page *Player Manual*, 72-page *Game Master Manual*, 224-page *Continent: Superius Reference Manual*, 11"x17" *Game Master Quick Reference Screen*, 16-page introductory adventure “*The Mourning Mound*”, four 22"x28" full color maps, and a pair of percentile dice to get you into the game!

Buy it now!

Available at fine game stores everywhere!

You Are Destined to Play

RELENTLESS PUBLISHING

www.HeedTheWarnings.com

www.Relentless-Publishing.com

Duck and Dragons?

It could only be RuneQuest...

The Quester's Guide to Duck



Welcome to the world of Duck!

For too long this misunderstood species has been waterlogged in their ponds and marshes; for too long has this loyal, honourable yet touchy race been left unstudied. Now, the Quester's researchers have finally put together a definitive guide – well, almost – to Duck. Included in this packed sourcebook:

- ♦ Duck gods and cults, life & birth, relationships with other races, tactics...
- ♦ New Duck breeds, Cultural Backgrounds & Professions, Traits and Legendary Abilities,
- ♦ New Rune Spells, Divine Magic and Cantrips
- ♦ A Duck scenario with ready-made characters!

The Lost Isles 2 Dryhaven



Exiled in the the Lost Isles...

A packed RuneQuest Sourcebook where the characters must brave the dangers of dragon-infested islands. Use it as a standalone mini-campaign or as the second part of a complete campaign thread. Included in this scenario/sourcebook:

- ♦ Maps, town backgrounds, plans
- ♦ New cults and spells, and creatures
- ♦ A complete multi-session scenario

Singleton Scenarios are designed for 1-6 players and a Games Master. Perfect for when you're short of players or looking for a more challenging game!

Find these and more at www.sceaptunegames.co.uk!

Requires the use of the RuneQuest™ Main Rulebook, available from Mongoose Publishing



contents

6 Editorial
Many Hands

9 Letters
From the Mines

10 Ecology
Ecology of the Lich
by Richard Pett
What drives a mage into madness? Immortality.

16 Arcane Spectacular
Star & Shadow Magic
by Wolfgang Baur
The secrets of Zobeck's private magic, revealed at last.

24 Princes of Hell
Arbeyach, Prince of Swarms
by Ari Marmell
Lord of Locusts, and Master of Decay.

31 Dungeon Design
Hardboiled Adventure
by Keith Baker

34 Kobold Diplomacy
Edtime Stories: Ed Greenwood
A surprisingly serious talk with the merry master of the Realms.

46 Character Design
Optimizing Power Attack
by Jonathan Drain

49 **More than Dragon's Blood**
by John E. Ling, Jr.

43 Flashing Blades
Ask the Kobold: Q&A
by Skip Williams

53 **Up the Action! Cinematic Combat**
by Benjamin Hayward

56 **10 Dangerous Doors**
by Steve Greer

58 The Free City
The Flying Traders of Sikkim
by Wolfgang Baur

KOBOLD



On the Cover
Cris Griffin gives us a flying beauty. Sure, we've got a weakness for redheads, but that sword looks.... dangerous. Just the way we like our angels.

Cartoons by Stan!
10' by 10' Toon Bolt & Quiver

**29
51**

SET YOUR COURSE FOR THE CITY OF ADVENTURE!



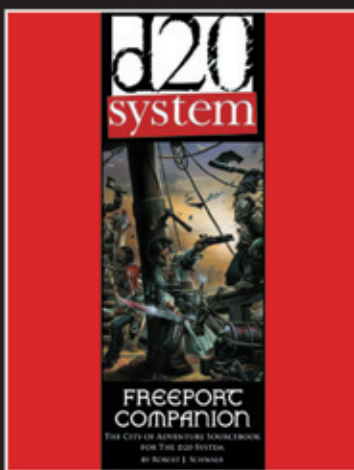
Freeport is Green Ronin's signature city setting and has been home to thousands of RPG campaigns since its launch in 2000. Classic fantasy elements, cruel-hearted pirates, and Lovecraftian horror come together in the rum-fueled metropolis known as the City of Adventure. Now a new era is beginning. *The Pirate's Guide to Freeport* is the definitive new sourcebook for the City of Adventure, set 5 years after the events of the original Freeport Trilogy. This is a pure setting book, focusing entirely on the people, places, politics, and perils of Freeport and containing no game statistics of any kind. *The Pirate's Guide to Freeport* can thus be used with any fantasy RPG, and Green Ronin will be providing companion products for popular systems like *True20* and *d20*. The City of Adventure is back and more dangerous than ever!

The Pirate's Guide to Freeport: GRR1903,
256 page hardback, ISBN 1-932442-72-3, 34.95

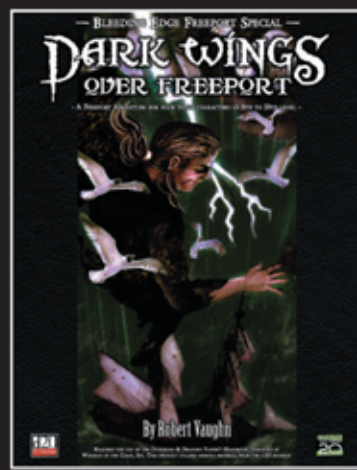
~ ALSO AVAILABLE ~



Cults of Freeport
GRR1905, 144 pages, softback,
ISBN: 1-932442-88-X, \$24.95



D20 Freeport Companion
GRR1906, 160 pages, softback,
ISBN: 978-1-934547-05-2, \$27.95



Dark Wings Over Freeport
GRR3407, 32 pages, softback,
ISBN: 978-1-934547-02-1, \$11.95



Many Hands

You may have noticed a few changes since last issue. Yes, it's only issue #3, and already we're making improvements. Kobolds are like that, always tinkering. Keeps us off the trapmaking circuit.

This particular round of improvements includes a substantially bigger page count (up to 60 from 40 last issue), a new interior look, and a new logo. I'm hoping it is more readable throughout, and I'm guessing that no one will complain about added pages.

And then there's the new cover design. The look was inspired by our move to broader newstand distribution, which requires bold cover text to attract new readers. Well, that and bold cover images. The stunning painting is by Cris Griffin, who you may remember as the cover artist for *Castle Shadowcrag*. We just said "red angel", and this is what she came back with. I expect prints will be available shortly, and I certainly hope to see more of her work.

The cover also features the work of my wife's hand. In this case, it's not the hand I wed (lovely as it is), but a hand she developed only recently. That is, she's a calligrapher, and each style of lettering that a calligrapher does is called a "hand", a little like a font. Her hand lettering for the new logo is technically a variation on uncial, with a Roman capital. My wife's hand has never looked lovelier. I'm ever more delighted I asked for richer for poorer. She was assisted in the vector graphics by Scott Okumura, who has also lent his talents to the sprucing up of the interior pages.

Tinkering with the look may become a bit of habit. All magazines do it, but when you are a quarterly, the temptation is strong.



The articles are on a tear as well: a fine kick-off piece by Richard Pett on one of the classic monsters of the genre, the ever-deadly lich. A big magic article for Zobeck fans about the stars and shadows from yours truly. And there's the interview with Ed Greenwood about the Realms, Castlemourn, and his novels.

Most of the reader-favorite departments are unchanged: Skip Williams tackles the Spellmaster from the *Advanced Player's Handbook*, and the Dungeon Design column seat is taken by Keith Baker, whose work on both game worlds and novels you probably know. He chews over the mean streets, and how to make a noir or hardboiled campaign work. He has some experience with this, and it shows.

And with every change, some things fade into memory. This is the third installment of the Princes of Hell series, and this one is spectacular, nay, it is Biblical in its nasty lord of the Hells: freelancer and amateur entomologist Ari Marmell has conjured up a son of Beelzebub, no less. However, I don't think anyone wants the Arch-devils to outstay their welcome, so the bad guys will go into retirement for a little while. I have a feeling the devils will be back.

My thanks to all those good folks who lent their hands to the work on this issue. I have to say, the magazine just keeps looking better and better. But I would say that. If you agree, please tell the world.

If you have comments on the new look or suggestions for further improvements, send your letters and email to letters@koboldquarterly.com. We're always happy to hear what kind of articles you want more of, less of, and none of. Kobolds aim to please.

We're like that.

Wolfgang Baur
Kobold in Chief

Miniature "Logan Dwarf Warlord" made by Reaper Miniatures, USA
Painted by Micro Art Studio, Poland
Runic Battle Dice Set made by Q-workshop, Poland



**STILL PLAYING WITH THE USUAL DICE ?
WANT TO TRY SOMETHING NEW?**

VISIT WWW.Q-WORKSHOP.COM

OPEN DESIGN™

KOBOLD™ Quarterly

Kobold-in-Chief: Wolfgang Baur
Circulation Director: Pierce Watters
Graphic Design: Scott Okumura
Contributing Editor: Jeff Grubb
Editorial Assistant: Scott Gable
Lord of All Feats: Sigfried Trent
Page Layout: Wolfgang Baur
Ad Manager: EP Healy

Contributing Authors: Keith Baker, Wolfgang Baur, Jonathan Drain, Stephen S. Greer, Benjamin Hayward, John E. Ling, Jr, Ari Marmell, Richard Pett, and Skip Williams

Cover Artist: Cris Griffin

Contributing Artists: Aaron Acevedo, Darren Calvert, Leonardo da Vinci, Edmund Dulac, Flammarion, Lucas Haley, Jon Hodgson, Stan!, Pat Loboyko, Hartmann Schedel
Court Calligrapher: Shelly Baur

KOBOLD QUARTERLY™ is published four times a year by OPEN DESIGN LLC. No part of this magazine may be reproduced (except for review purposes) without the prior written consent of the publisher. Material published herein may not necessarily reflect the opinions of OPEN DESIGN, its owner and patrons, or its contributors, who are not liable for opinions expressed herein. Most product names are trademarks owned by the companies that publish those products. Use of the name of any product without mention of trademark status should not be construed as a challenge to such status. OPEN DESIGN,

Free City of Zobeck, KOBOLD QUARTERLY, and the KQ logo are trademarks of OPEN DESIGN LLC.

Subscriptions: Please subscribe at koboldquarterly.com, or send a check or money order to PO Box 2811, Kirkland WA, 98083, USA. PDF subscriptions are US\$16 per year, €11 in Europe. Paper and PDF combined subscriptions are US\$36 per year in the United States, US\$40 in Canada, €36 in Europe, and US\$56 elsewhere.

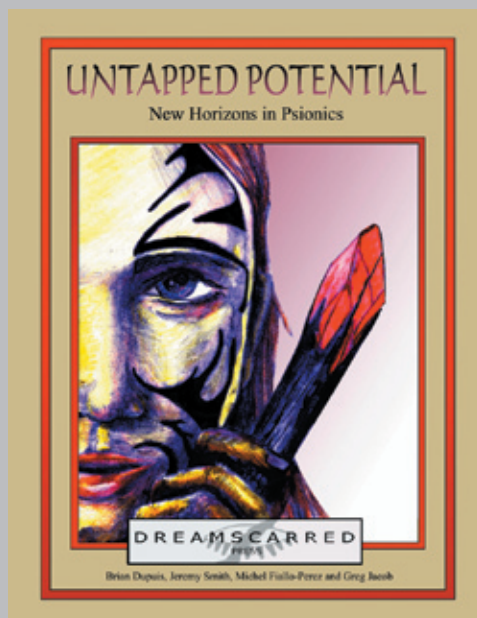
Back Issues: Visit koboldquarterly.com or paizo.com to pick up back issues of KOBOLD QUARTERLY. Single paper issues of KOBOLD QUARTERLY are \$8 plus shipping. Single PDF issues are \$6, available at paizo.com and yourgamesnow.com.

Advertising: Contact the staff at ephealy@koboldquarterly.com for current rates. All ads are subject to approval, and KQ reserves the right to reject any ad for any reason.

Open Game Content: This issue contains three items of Open content: the "Arbeyach, Prince of Swarms" article, the spell statistics and mechanical portion of the "Star & Shadow Magic" article, and the "Dangerous Doors" article. All other material is Product Identity. No other portion of this work may be reproduced in any form without permission.

Submissions and Design: Each issue of KOBOLD QUARTERLY supports Open Design, an RPG design community. Article queries are accepted from freelancers, from KQ subscribers, and from all Open Design members. To become a member, visit wolfgangbaur.com and donate to support the Open Design community.

WHAT SECRETS OF THE MIND AWAIT JUST OVER THE HORIZON?



Delve into the book that launched a tiny publishing company into the industry leader for psionic support.

With over 160 pages of new psionic material, this book has something for any player or GM using the 3.5 revision of the psionics ruleset.

Written by psionic fans for psionic fans, don't miss out on one of the most acclaimed psionic supplements available.

What are people saying about *Untapped Potential: New Horizons in Psionics*?

"easily the equal of any other psionic sourcebooks on the market"

"This will greatly aid people looking for good and solid psionics options."

"...the powers, feats, mechanics and classes presented will really increase the playability of psionics."

"...a great addition to any DM or player who enjoys psionics."

"...would be a fine addition to anyone playing in a psionic campaign."



Available in print at your hobby game store or electronically at <http://dreamscarredpress.com> and other fine PDF distributors:

From the Mines

Princes of Hell, Mailing Troubles, Paper



Second Time Around

KQ#1 impressed me even more the second time I read through it. I found nearly every article in it to be something of use to me as a DM or as a player (often both). The Clockwork Crossbow from the Zobeck article is being added to my Haa-thorian campaign even as I read the description. The article on Titivillus was about as tailor-made as it could get without me actually writing it.

I was going to fetch out the old "Politics of Hell" articles to get information on him for an upcoming campaign and you saved me the trouble.

In my opinion you've hit the nail squarely on the head. KQ looks to be a solid successor or (scion if you will) to the DRAGON. The articles I read reminded me of the DRAGON about the time I started reading it (issue #72). I hope it will become known to more fans.

I also looked on your site and read through the submission guidelines, and I did think of an idea or two for articles. I've always liked the 'Ecology of' articles and looking through the Dragondex to see what has made it in over the years I remembered some of the different takes on them. My favorite was the 'Monster Hunter's Club' series.

In closing, yes, I would be lying if I said I didn't want a print copy of KQ#2 in my hot little hands,

-Michael R.

We're always looking for articles, although the competition for the Ecology

slots is especially fierce.

Print copies of issues #1 and #2 are sold out, though the PDFs are still available. There is one big print announcement I can make: we're moving to wider print distribution, starting with this issue. So you can now purchase KQ at fine hobby stores nationwide. Ask for it by name, won't you?

And you, dear readers, will be able to say you remember when it was just a tiny little thing...

Oh, and about that "Politics of Hell" article you mention? Check out our interview subject this issue, the author of that very article.

Get Bizarre

Good job with KQ. I love what you are doing. The interview with Erik Mona was great.

I would love to see some Bazaar of the Bizarre type articles. Perhaps with a thematic thread running through it.

-Jeff Tolle

Well, KQ can only print the articles that we get from writers (ok, plus whatever I write in my long, leisurely hours lolling on a Pacific atoll, fanned by island natives).

However, we may have a set of items coming next issue, and the query box is always open. Perhaps Michael R will write a magical item article?

The Power of Cardboard

KQ#2 just arrived in my mailbox! Thank you very much again! The shipping time was awesome.

I would like to suggest that the

shipper include a piece of corrugated or other stiff board with the magazine. My normally wonderful (deliver to the door for items that don't easily fit in the mailbox) US Postal Delivery Person decided to roll the envelope into my mailbox, resulting in a bit of a bend in the middle of the magazine!

The magazine is (of course) still readable and fine, but to prevent future such (or worse) bends, I would appreciate if your shipper could pack in some harder to bend material.

I really think the printed magazine is great! It reminds me of the old days of *The Dragon*, only better!

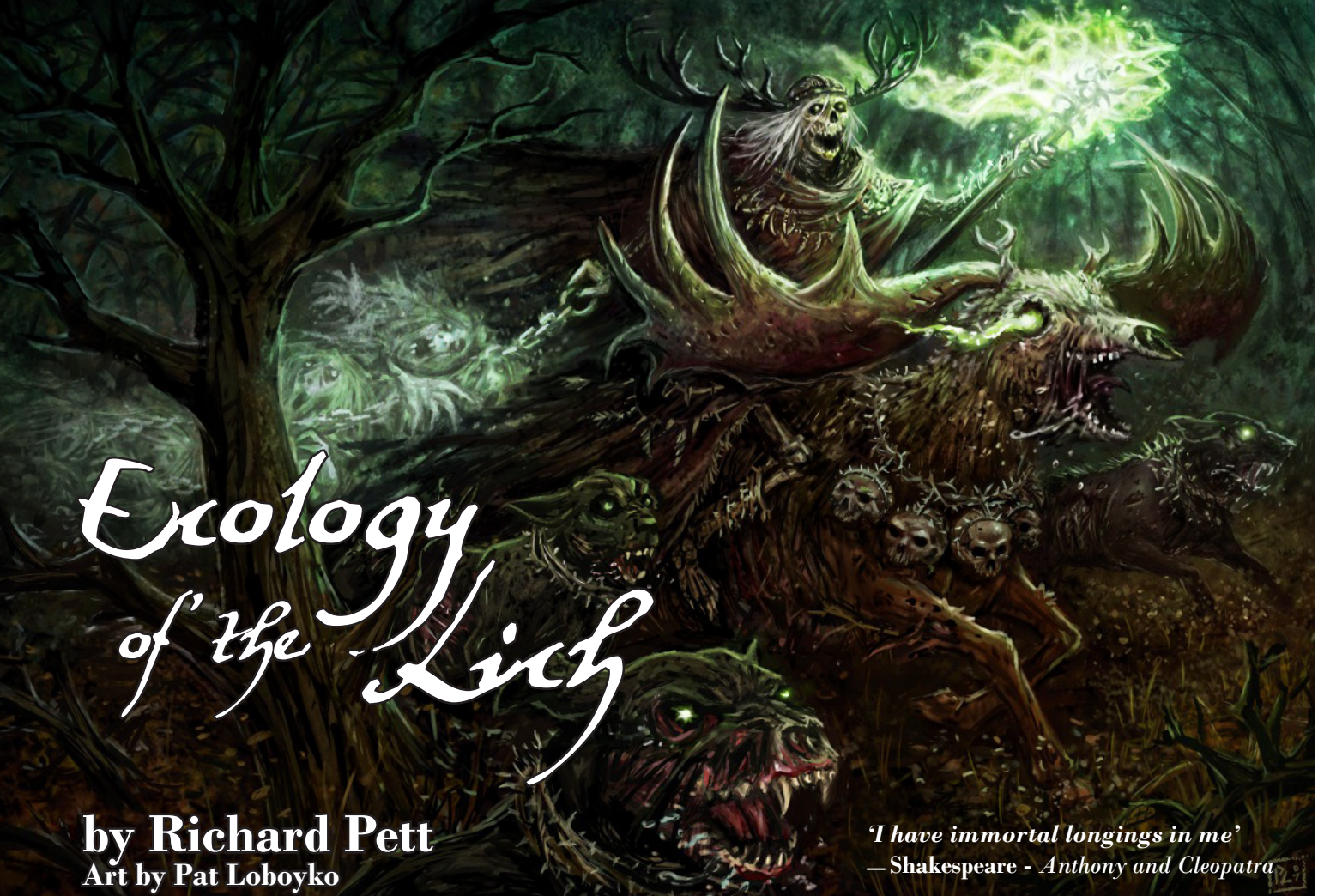
By the way, I'd love to get this bi-monthly if you can get great contributions like you did in this issue. Let's see, Paper + PDF for 4 issues per year is \$36 in the US, or \$9 each. \$9 x 6 = \$54 per year subscription (6 printed and PDF issues)? Count me in!

-Arn Parker

Sorry to hear about the bend. To discourage that behavior in Postal Persons, we've bumped the pagecount this issue, adding to its Hardness (we hope!). And we're buying a "Do Not Bend" stamp; it can't hurt.

As to bimonthly publication: We're working on it, Arn, and hope to get there someday. Right now, we're expanding slowly, but we do have big plans, including a spot at Gen Con and more. Stay tuned.

You can write to us at letters@koboldquarterly.com or send paper mail to KOBOLD QUARTERLY, PO Box 2811, Kirkland, WA 98083



Ecology of the Lich

by Richard Pett
Art by Pat Loboyko

'I have immortal longings in me'
— Shakespeare - *Anthony and Cleopatra*

'Will it be the throat or the heart?'

The phylactery is made, the container waits for just one more thing. My immortal soul.

So now comes the moment of my glory, when I become whole. Never to age, never to sicken, never to wither.

Greatness awaits me and but one cut remains – yet now I quiver, now I doubt, now I fear.

One final act for the man – one final moment before life begins anew, and forever. I have chosen...'

– Last mortal words of the Great Druid Croglin, the lich of the Mire

The sorcerer or wizard with an unnatural lifespan has been the subject of tales and fables throughout the ages; a thousand, thousand stories hint at their dark beginnings. One of the best known tales tells the story of the Cabal of Unsleep – a cabal of wizards who worked towards the single goal of immortality.

The Cabal ruled kingdoms eons ago, and all its members were tyrants of renowned cruelty. While they waged war with each other on the surface – they secretly held true as a brotherhood, using their squabbles to gain influence in other lands until, at last, no part of the world was

untouched by their icy fingers. This cabal, it is rumored, were among the first to discover the Dreadful Pact and thus were the first lichs.

However, unlife can breed insanity, and the lichs had barely achieved undeath before they began turning upon each other. The present day Knights who hunt by Sunset are descendants of an ancient holy order intent upon killing all the Cabal of Unsleep – a task they have yet to complete.

Physiology

Liches are created, not born, and their only method of reproduction is the creation of a new lich. Undead

liches do not eat, sleep, or breath, and the pattern of a lich's life generally follows a set route, commencing with the Becoming.

The Becoming

The lich monster description casually mentions that the process of becoming a lich is *unspeakably evil*, and that it can only be undertaken by a willing character. In his great work *Arcanum*, Manse Hoff describes three methods through which a lich can be created, although he hints that some three dozen methods were once catalogued in the great *Monstorum Sorcerus*. The three known to most

are the Dreadful Pact, the Hideous Sacrifice, and the Ripping.

The Dreadful Pact – in this method, the would-be-lich's soul is ripped from the body and placed into the phylactery by the self-destruction of the spell caster. The caster creates the phylactery and takes his own life, hoping that the magic that he has used to make the phylactery is strong enough to draw the soul into it.

This method is quick but has the drawback that unless the phylactery has been prepared perfectly, the soul of the caster is simply drawn away. Some surmise that souls drawn in this way do not simply pass onwards, but move to some unspeakable nether place where they spend eternity wandering in madness.

The Hideous Sacrifice – this method draws the soul into the phylactery through a variant of the *magic jar* spell. However, the lich-initiate must cast the spell at the precise moment of his death, and this requires extraordinary timing on behalf of the spellcaster.

As a consequence, this method is the one most fraught with the chance for mishap - the soul can be drawn before death, trapping the caster in his own spell; the caster can fail to complete the spell and die prematurely, or (in the worst case) the caster's soul is drawn into entirely the wrong place. In this last case, the lich might end up trapped within a nearby creature or object, such as an accomplice, building, or item.

The Ripping – the most dreadful method requires a trustworthy and willing volunteer. The ripping is spiritual warfare; the soul is driven from the body into the phylactery through force of pain inflicted on the spellcaster.

This method is the most sure of success, but it is also the longest and most painful, and requires extraordinary determination on the part of the spellcaster.

Once the transformation from lich-initiate has been withstood, three further stages remain in the life cycle of a lich: the Journey, the Fading, and the Corruption.

The Journey

Only some lich-initiates complete the Beginning and become lichs. Those that are lost are variously referred to in arcane works as *NetherLiches*, *the Lost* or simply *Fallen*. Those who do survive acquire the lich template and can look forward to eternal life – and eternal waking. The spellcaster knows well that near eternity could be a curse beyond measure, but few are truly prepared for what eternity means for their minds. A certain group of newly-made lichs go mad moments or days after their creation.

Those few who survive have gained eternity to plot and weave. If their ego is great enough, newly-formed lichs welcome undeath, and these lichs undergo a transformation almost immediately called the Glory. Glorified Liches are so overjoyed at the prospect of undeath that their abilities are enhanced, and all DCs against their special abilities are permanently increased by 2.

Once the Journey truly begins, so do the lichs prepare for and ready themselves for their great quests. These quests are known among other intelligent undead, but they are more common and indeed essential to keep the active minds of the spellcasters amused and distracted.

Each lich will pursue at least one great quest, but some have dozens of plots and plans – from simple vengeance to the discovery of the answers to ultimate questions. As the months turn into years their flesh corrupts and falls away, leaving only bleached bones and red eyes of hate.

The Fading and Great Search

In time, no matter what the distraction, age and wear takes their toll on the physical form of the lich, and the Fading begins. Subtly at first, then with increasing forcefulness, the body

and bones begin to decay, and the lich must find an alternative home for its soul.

A variation of *trap the soul* offers the lich one direct option to continue, by securing a suitably impressive gem in which to store his soul. This invariably requires the lich to search places unknown to even the wisest sages – the mere value of the gem alone is not enough to enable life to be stored within. Gems that allow lichs to live on are rare indeed, and the search for them can take centuries.

Often the moment of Corruption concludes with the lich becoming a demi-lich, although occasionally something goes wrong and the soul is lost, in a similar way to the Dreadful Pact.

The Corruption and the Demi-Lich

While the special gems a lich finds may enable it to keep its soul safe, at this stage it is a creature with little physical being. It spends most of its time wandering the planes of existence on quests beyond the comprehension of man.

Generally only physically disturbing its remains will make a demi-lich return, although any lich will also leave at least one method for its followers to summon it. So ancient is the creature by now that any followers are likely to be less than dust, but the lich still harbors a hidden need to connect to the physical world and so will find the compulsion to be drawn back almost impossible to overcome.

When even the last fragment of skull is crumbled and gone, the lich exists only through the gems that remain and has almost entirely left the physical world. Although an aura of lingering corruption and hate may remain on the gems, the lich is seldom brought back, unless through some calamitous event or powerful summoning.

...and Beyond

Liches believe a path to enlightenment and pure mind is possible to those who pursue the far path. Some

Table 1: Knowledge of the Lich

Characters with ranks in Knowledge (the Planes) or (religion) may know about the lich. Characters making a successful skill check know all the information up to and including the DC check.

DC	Result
10	A lich is a vile undead spellcaster with a life prolonged by arcane horrors.
15	The touch of a lich can paralyze; its appearance causes fright.
20	Each lich is bound to a phylactery – a magical box into which the creature has placed its life. Destroy the phylactery, and the lich can also be destroyed. A lich with an intact phylactery reappears after death and cannot be destroyed.
25	Some lichs reappear after death more quickly than others, and with centuries to plot, they are formidable foes, well prepared for any threat.
30	Even lichs die, and over eons their bones wear away. Some become demi-liches – ghostly creatures that suck souls.

say the undead being becomes pure hate and is cursed by the gods with some horrific fate as a lesson. Others say that ultimately the lich develops into a being of pure enlightenment, able to atone for its corruption at last. Still others hint that the gods will only allow this enlightenment to occur in the seconds before the end of all things...

Psychology and Society

Their paranoid nature leads lichs into solitary lives, although occasionally need or necessity can bring some together. Such alliances exist in an atmosphere of indescribable unease. They form alliances with vampires, some ghouls, and vampire spawn, generally using the ally to do their dirty work out in the worlds of men.

The life of a lich is one of long, slow decay, and to a lich, the passing of decades seems the blinking of an eye. By necessity, they occupy themselves with plots and intrigues, quests and machinations, and so they are encountered with surprising frequency, considering the appalling methods of their 'birth'.

Characters encountering a lich should do so cautiously, their enemy may have had several hundred years to plan for such an event and is quite likely to be much smarter than the PCs. Liches can be killed only by the destruction of their phylactery, and

while chances are that the phylactery is somewhere at hand, only a foolish adventurer attacks first and seeks the phylactery later.

Unless its phylactery is found and destroyed, a lich reappears 1d10 days after its destruction. This reborn lich will seek vengeance; though it may fear its enemy, it seeks to deal with them immediately.

Lich Feats

Rapid Rebirth [Monster]

This feat allows lichs to reappear much more quickly than usual. Taking the feat once allows the lich to reappear 1d10 hours after its physical death, taking the feat twice allows it to reappear in 1d10 minutes. The feat may not be taken more than twice.

Undeath Familiar [Monster]

This feat allows lichs to retain an ageless familiar: the familiar gains the undead type but can be destroyed by normal means. Other than the alterations listed above, the familiar remains unchanged.

Lich Wrought Magic

With eternity at its command, the lich does not merely seek to create idle objects and mundane equipment; even the most powerful magic seems trite to the more ancient and powerful lichs. When lichs create

magic, they create *magic*. Working in solitude for decades on a single item is but a short span when you almost have forever.

As a result, many items created by lichs are tremendously powerful, rivalling those created by the gods themselves. Dabbling in such infernal arcana is risky, however, and many lich items cause disaster to those who seek to use them. The Maw of Gales, the Black Orb of Torm, and the Darkness in the Sandstorm are three such lich-spawned items.

The Maw of Gales - This infernal cave mouth resembles the mouth of a great whale carved at the foot of the mountain. A beaten copper door of great size warns intruders to leave the occupant in peace or face the consequences.

The Maw is, in fact, an elaborate trap created by the Whorl, a lich-hierophant who spent ten centuries covering its own tracks with traps, rumor and false leads. After destroying an empire, the Whorl had so many enemies in so many countries and planes of existence that flight was the only option. It spends its whole existence on the run, never spending more than a few days in one place before moving on. It resembles a wanderer in ragged robes leaning on a bent staff.

The Maw is an advanced *censer of controlling air elementals*; when the valve is opened, elder air elementals arrive at a rate of one per day. These elementals faultlessly pursue those who broke open the doorway. They appear until the violators of the door are slain or a *wish* or *miracle* spell prevents any more appearing.

Caster Level 20th; Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, *summon monster IX*; Market Place 360,000gp

The Black Orb of Torm – this black sphere reflects no light and is cold to the touch. It was created by the Archlich Torm for her followers as weapons in the quest to discover the the Garden of Unending Beauty.

When activated, the Orb replicates an *implosion* spell cast by a 20th level wizard. Occasionally, Torm traps the orbs to turn on those who use them.

Caster Level 20th; Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, *implosion*; Market Place 9,000 gp

The Darkness in the Sandstorm - What happened with the Darkness no one knows, save the great lich Kov was somehow responsible for its creation.

The Darkness is a storm of black desert fury, a dark hole that rolls across the sands causing appalling sandstorms. Its heart is a huge *sphere of annihilation*.

Some say the Darkness contains the lich Kov itself, and is guided by his hate. They whisper that one day it may find its way across the desert and enter the Caliphate.

The Phylactery

Generally phylacteries are sealed metal boxes containing strips of parchment inscribed with magical phrases. However, the tiny box is only one option; others are available.

The Iron Mirror – a black mirror in which no reflection can be seen.

The Black Diamond – a diamond so dark it appears as night, its surface etched with runes that look like stars.

The Grey Tooth – the tooth of a great ice tiger fully two feet long and covered in curious writings.

The Great Lintel – a huge beam many feet thick, the surface must be examined closely to see the finest of runes – writings that have worn to nothing over eons.

The Mithral Valve – a vast door depicting demons devouring angels.

The Great Bell – a green copper bell covered in vile sigils and images.

Many liches study puzzle boxes – complex interlocking objects within which the phylactery is stored. These boxes are of varying complexity. Some require many Intelligence checks (DC 25 upwards), some may be opened in only one way, and the puzzles must be unwrapped in order, while others are horribly trapped.

In each case the phylactery has the same statistics – Tiny, 40 hit points, hardness 20, break DC 40.

History of the Lich

Lich. *lych*. n. Corpse (obs):-*gate*, roofed gateway of churchyard where coffin is placed to await clergyman's arrival; - *owl*, screech-owl

Liches as generic animated corpses are mentioned in Clark Ashton Smith's "Empire of the Necromancers," a short story full of marvelously disturbing and evocative imagery:

'Dead laborers made their palace-gardens to bloom with long perished flowers; liches and skeletons toiled for them in the mines, or reared superb, fantastic towers to the dying sun. ... Those that were the fairest, whom the plague and the worm had not ravaged overmuch, they took for their lemans and made to serve their necrophiliac lust.'

The idea of storing one's soul in an object to permit life after death is an image prevalent in many mythologies. Eluding death through sorcery or black magic is also a common theme in folklore.

Sample Liches

The lich's motivation is an important way for the DM to judge how to run both the lich and its followers. Here are a few samples:

The Scholar: The scholar has entered undeath to allow it to continue its research, what great quest can captivate a thousand lifetimes?

The Hater: The Hater wishes only one thing – the extermination of all things so that at last, it may find peace.

The Hermit: always whispered, never seen, there is something out there that wishes to be left undisturbed. Why do men continually seek its treasure?

The Paranoiac: The Maze they say fills the whole mountain roots – a catacomb of traps and protections, doorways to death impossible drops and endless fear. At the heart of the maze dwells the lich, its only fear

– its own death.

The Enlightened One: beyond all thought of hate, beyond the need for avarice and corruption, even a lich may find a path to enlightenment. These liches become something new, a creature of joy and peace; some even surmise that all liches wish for contentment, and that their dark souls crave only one thing – happiness. Could this lich have found it, and will anyone countenance dealings with this creature – no matter how good its intentions seem?

Rare Liches

Fell-lych: The Fell-lych, or the *Lych Born of Madness* is a lich that uses an aberration as a base creature. These beings have twisted dreams and goals that humans find hard to fathom.

The Dead Kings: The Race of Dead Kings began as a cult of storm giants, twisted by some fell magic in ages past. The Dead Kings have spread to other giants, but their ancient rulers are still fallen storm giants. They are both beautiful and appalling to behold – towering masses of pale ragged flesh with deep eyes of black fire.

The Thing at the Soul of the Mire

'I sprang to my feet, my mind paralyzed by the thing that appeared through the mist. It was something dead, yet hateful life stirred in its skull, a fire the color of blood and misery. This lich held aloft a great scythe, light dancing on its blade even in the darkness of this dreadful cloying mire. The antlers of a great stag rested on its brow like a crown – and this king of old still wore his rags of office – a cloak and robe stained with a thousand winters.'

—The final moments of Joshua Cane, Poacher

'Stay off the moors lad'

—Motto of the Severed Ram, Grimward Edge

They say the Grimward is alive – a moor with a soul. From the Shepherd's Meeting Stones in the north to

the Bleakfalls to the south, all avoid its misery – no track or road or even shepherd’s trail crosses the Grimward, and even in summer it is the color of rotting autumn leaves. The moor is alive with biting insects and strange calls, baying hounds and living mists. The weather is odd, and the mire has disappeared behind mist for months on end.

Once the moor was a great kingdom, the ruins of which still dot the landscape. What horrific event caused the land to fall into a great mire is unknown, but the little life remaining there is twisted and pitiable. A few balding, mangy wolves scratch out a life feasting on diseased sheep with white eyes. Crows are fond of the mire, but other birds avoid it.

The Thing at the Soul of the Mire is a lich, and his dabbling is responsible for the fall of the kingdom. By tampering with the spirits of nature, he robbed the land of life and sucked its soul. Packs of dead hounds bay in the night, and the moors are dotted with harmless-looking expanses of gray and russet that become mires. The bog itself is scores of yards deep.

The land grows ever more dreary as travelers approach its heart. The mire covers over 60,000 acres that are almost impossible to cross, a place of thorns and quicksand and death. At its heart lies Grimward Tor, which seems to be little more than a curious rocky spot. The tor contains the ruins of a great tower which once stood at the heart of this dead kingdom. The Soul, a druid lich of incredible age, broods at the summit of the tor, sending its hounds and flocks of birds to be its eyes and ears in the land. Perhaps it waits for some omen before it reawakens the kingdom.

Adventure Hooks

- The Mire is spreading year on year – what dark heart drives its remorseless advance? Can it be stopped?
- Strange lights are seen on the mire, will-o’-wisps have entered the towns around the moor by night,

seemingly searching for something.

□ The Soul of the Mire sends a voice to the folk of Grimward Edge warning them that unless they aid it, something terrible will happen. The townsfolk cannot side with evil, yet as the next day dawns, impossible monsters are seen on the outskirts of the town.

Other Sample Liches

Here are a few liches you may wish to hint at in your own campaign world. Perhaps their deeds are little more than stories in the books of children, or perhaps they are neighbors – rather nasty neighbors who cannot be ignored.

S’sssssaf Thay

Female Locathah Cleric 14 Lich

It has never seen the sun, never felt the rain on its brow or the wind between its fingers, yet it hates all these things, hates and fears the world above. Its children are krakens that scour the seas of men intent on recovering some vast object that, to human eyes, more closely resembles an island than something made in ancient days. Why does she seek this sinking land, and does it signify the flooding of the world?

The LichGate

Created by the minions of Belphegor, the Prince of Laziness (see *KOBOLD QUARTERLY* #2), this colossal arched gate holds the bodies of 13 bound liches and stands guard on the baron’s domain. Belphegor finds the binding of the liches to the site particularly amusing; the passing of eons has driven the liches into a madness of enforced torpidity.

The Mad King

Male human bar6/sor12 lich

The Mad King, they say, never rests. His kingdom, called the Web of Spears, is perpetually on the move, the gypsy king’s hordes spreading across the world to blacken all lands.

Great iron towers move with the army, which is more akin to a moving city than a gathering of warriors. Stories say a barbarian horde mounted on black elephants is approaching: are they his allies, or his downfall?

The Queen of Dark Whimsy

Female elf bard16 lich

The EbonWood lies on the edges of the kingdom, and tales of horror whisper through the trees from its dark heart. They say the fey within have grown depraved, that they run and consort with beasts, and their wives have birthed things that should not walk or stand.

As the PCs arrive in town a hunting party returns with a horrifically deformed animal in their net. What does the capture of the Beast of Thorns signify? The Queen of Dark Whimsy grows angrier with every passing moment it remains in human hands.

Other Possibilities

Imagine a triad run by liches, crimelords whose sway over an entire kingdom is purely for the acquisition of magic. This trio controls the gangs within the city by drugs and *suggestion* spells, perpetrating gang wars to hide their activities. What do the liches seek?

Master Cuper is a lich who hides within society as the master of the Great University of Hane. While on the surface his funding of archaeological expeditions seems benevolent, he is really seeking prodigies to uncover a type of magic only hinted at. The ancients called this new arcana “Unmaking”.

Could Master Cuper sponsor your own party this way? Must liches be villains or could the enemy they are trying to thwart be a thousand times worse than the lich itself – could the future of the world rest on the bony shoulders and deep knowledge of a lich?



Thing at the Soul of the Mire CR 19

Male Human Lich Druid 15

NE medium undead (augmented humanoid)

Init +0; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +35, Spot +25

Defense

AC 19, touch 10, flat-footed 19

(+4 bracers of armor, +5 natural)

hp 108 (15d12)

Fort +11, Ref +7, Will +18

Immune cold, electricity; polymorph and mind-affecting attacks

Offense

Spd 30 ft., 50 ft. mounted on dire elk zombie

Melee +1 vorpal wounding scythe +15/+10/+5 (2d4+4/×4 plus 1 Con) or touch +14/+9/+4 (1d8+5 negative energy plus paralysis)

Spells Known (CL 15th, +11 ranged touch)

8th (2/day) (DC 27) *earthquake, finger of death*

7th (3/day) (DC 26) *control weather, creeping doom, fire storm*

6th (4/day) (DC 25) *antilife shell, greater dispel magic, move earth, transport via plants*

5th (6/day) (DC 24) *baleful polymorph, call lightning storm, control winds, insect plague, transmute mud to rock, wall of thorns*

4th (6/day) (DC 23) *air walk, control water, dispel magic, flame strike, repel vermin, spike stones*

3rd (7/day) (DC 22) *call lightning, contagion, poison, protection from energy, quench, spike growth, wind wall*

2nd (7/day) (DC 21) *barkskin, chill metal, fire trap, flaming sphere, fog cloud, heat metal, spider climb*

1st (8/day) (DC 20) *calm animals, endure elements, entangle, faerie fire, jump, magic stone, obscuring mist, produce flame*

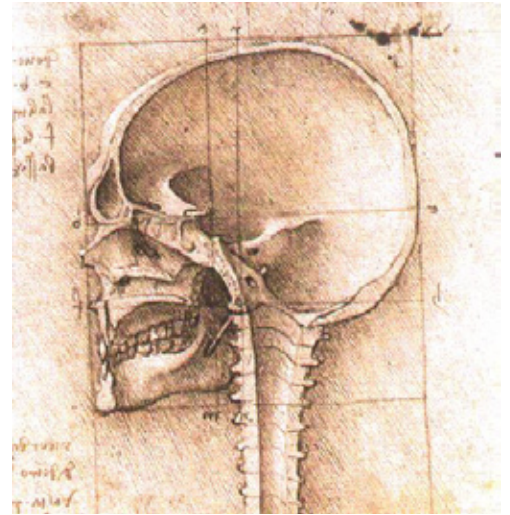
0 (6/day) (DC 19) *create water, detect magic, flare, know direction, read magic, virtue*

Tactics

Before Combat With so many eyes and ears across its vast moorland home, the Soul is almost always alerted to intruders. It will prepare its hounds, which it will send out to meet visitors soon after they step onto the great mire. It will aid the hounds by covering their attack with a great storm, called by *control weather*.

During Combat It uses its lightning spells to aid its hounds, and casts its *earthquake* spell to turn the mire into a quicksand hell. If half the hounds are slain, it will attack with *fire storm*, *finger of death* and *creeping doom* before returning into its lair, preparing *antilife shell* and from which it will cast its final attack spells before moving into attack with the scythe it calls "*harvest becomes midnight*". It takes the form of a great tendriculos if badly injured (less than half hp left).

Morale The lich's *phylactery* lies buried 100 yards below the mire, in a box of lead within a box of gold within a box of adamantite. It is confident no one can locate it and enjoys combat accordingly, certain it will always rise from the mire.



Special Abilities

Animal Companion (Ex) The Soul has a dire elk animal companion (AC 14, Spd 50 feet, hp 54, +8 horns for 1d10+3).

A Thousand Faces (Su) The Soul can change its appearance at will, as if using an *alter self* spell. This effect only works while the Soul is in its normal form.

Fear Aura (Su) The Soul is surrounded in a dreadful aura of death and evil. Creatures of less than 5HD in a 60-foot radius that look upon the Soul must make a will save (DC 20) or be affected as though by a fear spell as if cast by a 15th level sorcerer.

Nature Sense (Su) The Soul gains +2 bonus on Knowledge (Nature) and Survival checks.

Paralyzing Touch (Su) Any living creature the Soul hits must make a Fortitude save (DC 20) or be permanently paralyzed.

Resist Nature's Lure (Ex) The Soul gains +4 to saves against spell like abilities of fey.

Trackless Step (Ex) The Soul leaves no tracks.

Turn Resistance (Su) The Soul has +4 turn resistance.

Venom Immunity (Ex) The Soul is immune to all poisons.

Wild Empathy (Ex) The Soul can improve the attitude of an animal by making a wild empathy check with a +20 (results determined as a Diplomacy check).

Wild Shape (Su) Five times per day the Soul can take the form of a tendriculos. The effect lasts 15 hours or until the Soul choose to revert to its original form.

Woodland Stride (Ex) The Soul can move through any sort of undergrowth at normal speed.

Skills the Soul gains +8 bonus to Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Search, Sense Motive and Spot checks.

Statistics

Str 16, Dex 10, Con -, Int 18, Wis 28, Cha 16

Base Atk +11; Grp +14

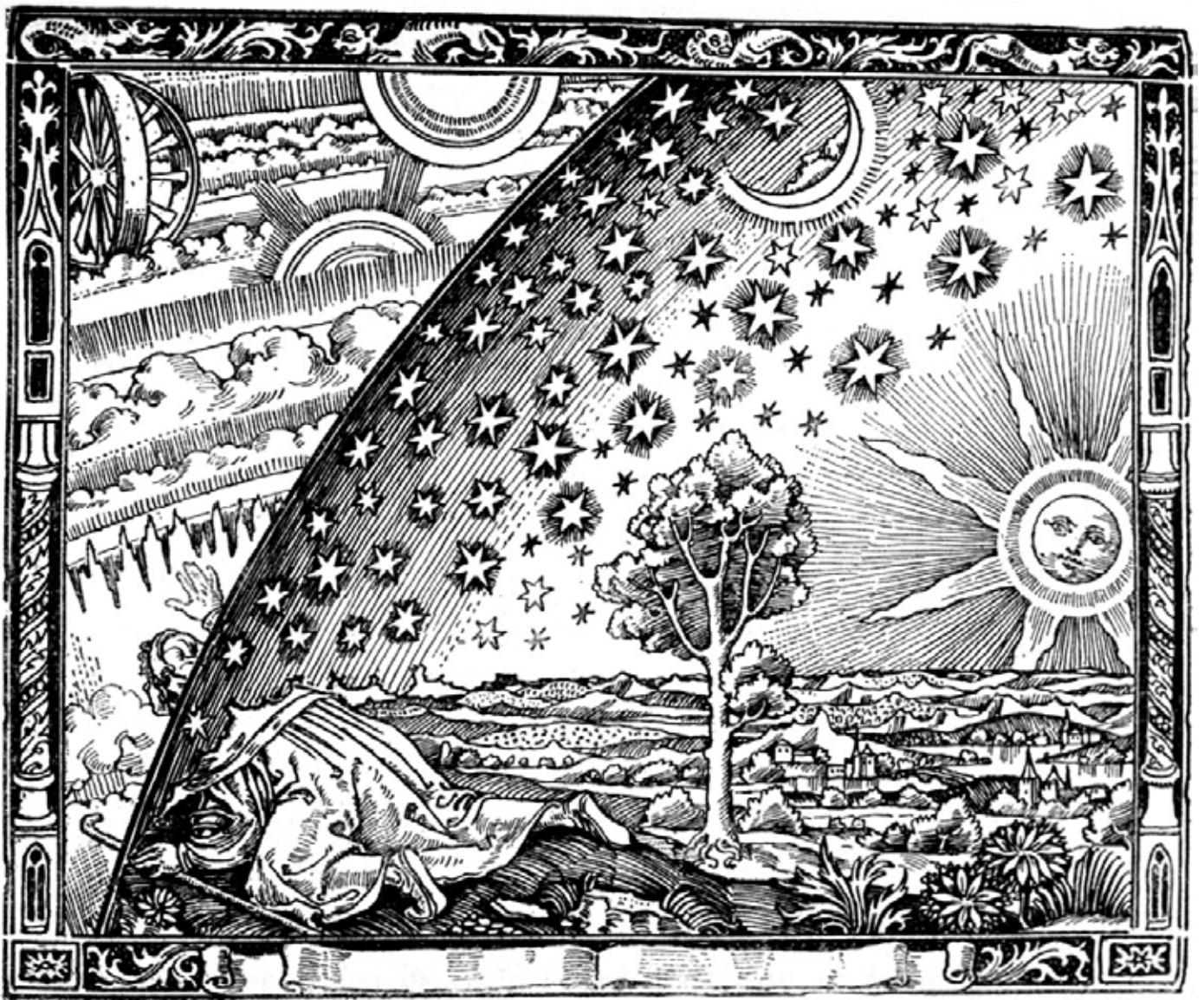
Feats Brew Potion, Craft Wondrous Items, Eschew Materials, Great Fortitude, Lightning Reflexes, Natural Spell

Skills Concentration +18, Craft (trapmaking) +22, Craft (gemcutting) +22, Craft (calligraphy) +14, Handle Animal +21, Hide +8, Knowledge (nature) +24, Listen +35, Ride +18, Sense Motive +17, Spellcraft +22, Spot +25, Survival +11

Languages Common, infernal

SQ turn reduction +4, DC 15/bludgeoning, undead traits

Other Gear *potion of displacement, potion of barkskin* +5, *scroll of repel metal or stone*.



Star & Shadow Magic

BY WOLFGANG BAUR

The school of star & shadow magic is unknown outside the Free City of Zobeck and a few elven wizards, who regard it as more a curiosity than anything else. Indeed, it is considered a quirk of Zobeck to call it a separate school at all. More properly called the school of illumination, it is closely related to illusion and tangentially related to creation, conjuration, and necromancy, but it stands alone from all of them.

The Nature of Illumination

Star & shadow magic uses the power of the planes of Negative Energy and Positive Energy to generate spell effects, in the same manner that elementalists use the various elemental planes to generate their magic. Its spells power force effects, light and shadow spells, and limited forms of divination and magical compulsion.

But all this misses the point. The school of Illumination is a mystery, as much as are Summoning, Divina-

tion, and Abjuration. Its practitioners believe that its wellsprings of power come from an understanding of the stars, their alignments, and the power they give an arcanist over every living creature.

The star & shadow spells are all listed as belonging to the Illumination school, but the traditional school names are provided in parentheses for those players and DMs who wish to add these spells to the standard magic system without a new school.

Spell common to the practitioners of the Illumination school are listed below in the school spell list. New spells are marked with an asterisk; all others can be found in the SRD, and those marked with a double dagger (‡) are from *Deities & Demi-Gods*.

Day and Night Casting

Starshadow magic is popular among adventurers because of its power in the dark, where adventurers do most of their work, for good or ill.

Illumination matters to the caster of star & shadow magic. Whenever a spell from this school is cast at night or in darkness, the DC for its saving throw is affected as shown in Table 1: Starshadow Illumination. The illumination at the caster's location determines the effect, not that at a target. See the PHB, page 164, for illumination types.

Illumination Spell DC

Amount of Light	DC Change
Darkness	+2
Shadowy Illumination	+1
Bright Illumination	0
Twilight or Deep Forest	-1
Daylight	-2

Black Hand

Illumination (Necromancy)

Level: Sor/Wiz 4, Shadowsworn 4

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 Standard action

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: Until discharged

You gather the powers of darkness into your fist and strike with a paralyzing and shadowy chill. Black and purple flames encase your hand.

With a successful touch attack, you deal 1d3 points of Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution drain to an enemy. These points are added to your own totals as an enhancement bonus for 1 round per your caster level. If the victim makes a Fortitude save (DC 14), he loses (and you gain) just 1 point of Constitution.

Black Well

Illumination (Conjuration (Creation))

Level: Sor/Wiz 6, Shadowsworn 4

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 full action

Range: Long (100 ft. +10 ft./level)

Effect: One black orb 5' diameter

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: None; see text

Spell Resistance: No

You summon a black mass of seething energies that attracts creatures nearby and devours the life force of those it touches.

When the spell takes effect, creatures within 90 feet of the *black well* are pulled toward it horizontally a total number of squares equal to your level. Flying creatures must descend 10 feet each round when they are within 90 feet of the well.

Creatures pulled into the *black well's* square suffer 1d8 points of negative energy damage per caster level. Creatures within 10 feet of it may make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + illumination modifier + spell level + caster ability bonus) to take either half or no damage from proximity to the spell.

Only one creature may be pulled into the well each round (allies are unaffected). Other creatures pulled toward it are held next to it, and excess "pull" is deducted from their movement on their turn. The caster is never drawn toward the *black well*, and may stand near it without ill effect.

For example, a 12th level sorcerer casts a *black well*. It appears among a party of adventurers centered 40 feet from the dwarf, 30 feet from two humans, and adjacent to a half-elf. The caster has 12 squares to spend moving foes and moves the half-elf into the well immediately to take damage as described. The two humans are both moved 6 squares adjacent to the well and must make Fortitude saves. The dwarf is unaffected because no pull remains to spend.

Compelling Fate

Illumination (Divination)

Level: Sor/Wiz 3, Shadowsworn 3

Components: S, M

Casting Time: 1 Standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./two levels)

Target: One creature

Duration: 1 round

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: No

You view your own actions or those of a single creature through the influences of the stars, and read what is written there.

If the target creature fails its saving throw, you can predict that creature's actions — its movement, whether it will attack, how well it can defend, and even who it might target with a spell that round.

As a result, you can act on this knowledge, with these effects:

- The creature is automatically flat-footed against you.
- For each square the creature moves, you can move one square in response (up to your normal movement). This requires using your move action for that round out of sequence.
- You can warn others that they will be a target of the affected creature's spell or attack; they gain a +2 circumstance bonus to saving throw or AC as a result of this warning.
- You gain a +4 circumstance bonus to your AC and any saving throw required against the creature.

The material component of this spell is a sprinkling of fine-ground mithral dust worth 200 gp.

Compelling Question

Illumination [Language-Dependent, Mind-Affecting] (Enchantment)

Level: Sor/Wiz 1, Shadowsworn 1

Components: V

Casting Time: 1 Standard action

Range: Close (25 feet + 5 feet/two levels)

Target: One creature

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes



You ask another creature one simple question that it can answer with a single word. On the target's next turn, as a free action, it answers you as truthfully as possible.

The DM may assign modifiers to the saving throw based on how important the target considers the information. Asking someone whether she is the king's murderer, for example, involves a closely guarded secret that provides a +2 circumstance bonus. An assassin (see **KOBOLD QUARTERLY #2**) always gains a +4 competence bonus for this saving throw.

Douse

Illumination (Transmutation)

Level: Drd 1, Shadowsworn 0, Sor/Wiz 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 Standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./two levels)

Area: One light/level in a 40-ft. radius

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Ref. negates (object)

Spell Resistance: Yes (object)

You douse one small source of natural light, such as a candle, lantern, or torch. A caster of 2nd level or higher can extinguish multiple fires at the same time, as long as they are all within the spell's area. Larger fires such as hearth fires, campfires, bonfires, and magical fires are unaffected.

Flickering Fate

Illumination (Divination)

Level: Sor/Wiz 4, Shadowsworn 4

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 Standard action

Range: Personal or close (25 ft. + 5 feet/two levels)

Target: You or one creature

Duration: 1 round

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: No

You or the creature you choose see the flickering shadows of a few seconds into the future during combat.

When the spell is cast, all creatures within range must declare their actions for the round before the subject of the spell decides his course of action. All creatures are entitled to a

School of Illumination Spells

Cantrips

Dancing Lights

Daze

Douse*

Flare

Read Magic

Shadow Bite*

Shadow Blindness*

Silhouette*

1st Level

Color Spray

Compelling Question*

Doom

Floating Disk

Lengthen Shadows*

Magic Missile

Orb of Light, Lesser*

Resist Energy

Shadow Hands*

Shield

Sleep

Unseen Servant

2nd Level

Blindness/Deafness

Blur

Darkness

Glitterdust

Light Warding*

Scorching Ray

Shadow Jump*

Silence

Slither*

Starbolt*

Touch of Madness

3rd Level

Arcane Sight

Arcane Sight

Armor of Darkness

Blacklight‡

Blink

Compelling Fate*

Daylight

Deep Slumber

Fear

Orb of Light*

Resilient Sphere
Terror*

4th Level

Black Hand*

Deeper Darkness

Flickering Fate*

Leeching Lanthorn*

Net of Comets*

Orb of Light*

Scrying

5th Level

Bolt of Glory ‡

Dream

Prying Eyes

Shadow Walk

Wall of Force

6th Level

Black Well*

Heavy Burden*

Prismatic Fist*

Repulsion
Starfall*

7th Level

Forcecage

Insanity

Power Word Blind

Prying Eyes, Greater

Prismatic Spray

Reverse Gravity

Scrying, Greater

Starry Vision*

8th Level

Incendiary Cloud

Summon Star*

Sunburst

Telekinetic Sphere

9th Level

Astral Projection

Foresight

Star's Heart*

Will saving throw; those who succeed need not follow the course of action they declared. Those who fail must take their action exactly as declared.

The subject of this spell gains a +4 insight bonus to attack rolls, Armor Class, and saving throws against any creature that failed its saving throw against *flickering fate*.

Heavy Burden

Illumination (Transmutation)

Level: Sor/Wiz 6

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Target: One creature per two levels

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: None; see text

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell makes target creatures' limbs feel remarkably heavy, making them drop all held items and slowing their movement by 20 feet (40 feet for flying movement). If this movement penalty reduces its movement to zero, it can no longer take move actions, use items, or cast spells with material components, but it can defend flat-footed.

At the end of the spell duration, the affected creature must make a Fortitude save or be exhausted. Creatures that make save successfully are fatigued.

Arcane Material Component: A lodestone (100 gp).

Leeching Lanthorn

Illumination (Enchantment/Charm)

Level: Sor/Wiz 4, Shadowsworn 3

Components: V, S, F

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Effect: One 20 foot radius circle

Duration: 1 round/level or until lantern destroyed

Saving Throw: Fort negates

Spell Resistance: No

You light the lantern and suddenly all shadows freeze in place. The room's reflections harden, and the air around you hums with power.

By lighting a ritually-prepared lantern you generate an area where one ability is drawn out of all others creatures around you and channeled through the lantern into you. At the time of the spell's casting, you choose Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution; that choice cannot be altered for the spell's duration.



All creatures within the lantern's light (including allies) must make a Fortitude save when the spell is cast and each round they remain in the area. If the save succeeds, they are unaffected by the *lanthorn* thereafter; if the save fails, they lose (and you gain) 1d4 points of the relevant ability. You retain these points for the duration of the spell plus 10 rounds.

If the lantern is destroyed, the spell ends immediately and you lose all leeches ability points (and all hit points gained from any improved Constitution bonus are immediately deducted). Creatures whose abilities were leeches do not regain those points except through the passage of time or the use of *restoration* spells.

Arcane Focus: An inscribed and carefully prepared silver lantern fueled with pure oil and shadowstuff (400 gp). Such a lantern always has hardness 4 and 30 hp.

Lengthen Shadows

Illumination (Transmutation) [Darkness, Shadow]

Level: Sor/Wiz 1, Shadowsworn 0

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 Standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./two levels)

Area: 40-foot-radius emanation

Duration: 1 round/level (D)

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

You channel darkness and shadows into your surroundings; the area affected becomes gloomier, murkier, and more difficult to see in, without actually becoming too dark to impede movement or combat. Low-light vision or darkvision is required to see at all; all Spot and Search checks within the area suffer a -2 penalty for the duration of the spell.

Light Warding

Illumination (Abjuration)

Level: Sor/Wiz 2, Shadowsworn 1

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Effect: One 5 ft square per level

Duration: 1 day/level or until discharged

Saving Throw: Reflex negates

Spell Resistance: No

You draw an invisible line as a barrier and warding against one or more types of creatures; when these creatures cross that line, the warding releases a powerful flare of light, visible for miles.

The types of creatures affected must be set when the spell is cast: you can choose any of the standard monster types (aberration, humanoid, dragon, etc) or subtypes (Fire, Law, Incorporeal), plus one additional type or subtype per 4 caster levels. Only creatures of the chosen type trigger the spell. Creatures with the Shadow or Dark subtype must make a Will save to cross through the warded square, even after the spell has been triggered.

When the appropriate creature type or subtype enters a square where the spell is present, the *light warding* releases a burst of pure light. Creatures in any of the spell squares must make an immediate Reflex saving throw or be blinded for 1d4 hours. The DC of this save increases by 2 for every 60 feet of darkvision that the target has, and by 1 for creatures with low-light vision.

Material component: A quartz lens ground to a fine sheen and backed with silver (50 gp).

Net of Comets

Illumination (Evocation)

Level: Sor/Wiz 4

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Effect: 40-ft.-radius spread

Duration: Concentration plus 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Reflex neg; see text

Spell Resistance: Yes

You create a net of shining starstuff, thrumming with celestial energies and shot through with a luminescent trail of stars. This net covers a large

IN ASTROLOGOS.



spread and sheds light equal to a *daylight* spell.

Anyone in the effect's area when the spell is cast must make a Reflex save. If this save succeeds, the creature is burned by the comet's energies for 1 point of positive energy damage per level of the caster, but not prevented from moving.

If the save fails, the creature is burned for 3 points of positive energy damage per level of the caster. A Will save is required in each following round; if the save fails, the creature is fascinated and takes another 3 points of positive energy damage per level of the caster. If the save succeeds, the creature can move out of the shining *net of comets* and suffers no damage that round.

Undead suffer double damage from a *net of comets*.

If at least 5 feet of the net are between you and an opponent, it provides concealment. If you have at least 20 feet of net between you, it provides cover.

Material Component: A meteor fragment.

Orb of Light

Illumination (Conjuration (Creation))

Level: Sor/Wiz 4, Shadowsworn 3

Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Close (25 ft. +5 ft/2 levels)
Effect: One orb of light
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Fort partial; see text
Spell Resistance: No

An orb of pure light the size of your hand shoots from your fingertips at a target.

If you succeed with a ranged touch attack, the orb causes 1d6 points of positive energy damage per caster level (maximum 15d6). Undead suffer 1d8 points of damage per caster level (maximum 15d8).

A creature struck by the orb is also blinded for 1 round. A successful Fortitude save prevents the blinding effect but not the damage.

Orb of Light, Lesser

Illumination (Conjuration (Creation))
Level: Sor/Wiz 1, Shadowsworn 1
Effect: One orb of light

Your hand glows from within and your bones are outlined against your flesh as you complete the spell. From your glowing fingers a bit of the sun flies across the room.

A smallish orb of light leaves your fingertips and shoots to a target.

If you succeed on a ranged touch attack, the orb causes 1d8 points of positive energy damage.

For every two caster levels you have beyond 1st, you inflict 1d8 more points of damage. That is, your *lesser orb* causes 2d8 points at 3rd level, 3d8 at 5th, and so on, to the maximum of 5d8 at 9th level or higher.

Prismatic Fist

Illumination (Evocation)
Level: Sor/Wiz 6
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: 60 ft.
Target: One creature/round
Duration: Concentration up to 6 rounds
Saving Throw: See text
Spell Resistance: Yes
You generate a red and an orange

prismatic ray in a 60' line the round that the spell is cast, and then yellow, green, and further rays in following rounds, up to violet if you concentrate for six rounds after the first. You may target different creatures with the rays each round, but only one new color is generated each round. The ray effects are as described for *prismatic spray*.

Shadow Bite

Illumination (Illusion)
Level: Shadowsworn 0, Sor/Wiz 0
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 Standard action
Range: Close (25 feet + 5 feet/two levels)
Target: One humanoid creature
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Fortitude negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

You create a momentary needle of cold, sharp pain in a target creature. This causes no damage, but it may break a spellcaster's concentration (DC 13). Using a move action, on the subject's next action he stands up or falls prone (whichever the DM seems most appropriate). There is a 50% chance the subject will drop a held item.

Shadow Blindness

Illumination (Transmutation)
Level: Shadowsworn 0, Sor/Wiz 0
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Touch
Target: Creature touched
Duration: 1 round
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

You stop one creature's darkvision from working; instead, the victim has normal human sight and cannot see in complete darkness for the duration of the spell.

Shadow Hands

Illumination (Evocation) [Cold]
Level: Sor/Wiz 1, Asn 1, Shadowsworn 1
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: 10 feet
Area: Semicircular wave of shadow 10 ft. in radius, centered on your hands
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Reflex half
Spell Resistance: Yes
A freezing blast of shadow leaps from your hands in a fan pattern. Any creature caught in the shadows takes 1d6 points of cold damage per your caster level (maximum 5d6).

Shadow Jump

Illumination (Conjuration (Teleportation, Shadow))
Level: Shadowsworn 2, Sor/Wiz 2
Components: V
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: Instantaneous
You may move from one shadow directly to another within medium range (100 feet + 10 feet/level) and within line of sight, without passing through the intervening space.

After making a *shadow jump*, you can't take any other actions until your next turn. You can bring along any object you are able to carry. You cannot bring creatures along with you, other than your familiar.

Silhouette

Illumination (Illusion)
Level: Shadowsworn 0, Sor/Wiz 0
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 Standard action
Range: Touch
Area: Wall up to 100 square feet
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes
You make a shadow play against a screen or wall. The screen or wall can encompass up to 100 square feet and can show as many people or animals as your Intelligence score.

The shadow figures do not make any sound, but they can dance, run, move, cast spells, kiss, fight, and so forth. Most of the figures are general types such as a rabbit or a dwarf, but a number of forms equal to the

Feeling shackled
by the upcoming
edition release?



Think
again.

DARK VISTAS ARE ON THE HORIZON.

Sinister Adventures for the fantasy roleplaying system you know and love... whatever it may be.

caster's Intelligence modifier can be recognized as particular individuals, such as "Prince Banda" or "Silverlock the Elf."

Slither

Illumination (Transmutation)

Level: Sor/Wiz 2, Shadowsworn 2

Components: V, M

Casting Time: 1 Standard action

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: 1 round

You momentarily become a shadow, able to slide under a door, through a keyhole, or any other tiny opening. All of your equipment is transformed with you, and you can move up to your full running speed during the spell's duration.

If you return to your normal size while in a space too small for you (such as a mouse hole, sewer pipe, or the like), you suffer 3d6 points of damage while creating a space just big enough to fit into. You can cast spells without somatic components, speak, and breathe while in such a space.

If the duration ends within a keyhole or door, it breaks and you take damage equal to its hardness.

Material Component: Ashes from a wooden statue of you, made into ink and used to draw your portrait (50 gp).

Starbolt

Illumination (Evocation) [Force]

Level: Sor/Wiz 2

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Effect: Scattered bolts in 20 ft cube

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Fortitude partial; see text

Spell Resistance: No

You unleash a 20-foot cube of bright force bolts that fall from the heavens and illuminate their targets as they tear into foes, punching through both flesh

and armor.

You cast one such bolt at 1st level, and one additional bolt for each two additional levels; thus, you command two bolts at 3rd level, three at 5th, and so on.

The bolts generate 1d6+1 points of damage, and can be targeted separately at any number of creatures in the area. In addition, a creature hit by a *starbolt* must make a Fortitude save or be dazed for the remainder of the round.

Starfall

Illumination (Evocation) [Force]

Level: Sor/Wiz 6, Shadowsworn 4

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 Standard action

Range: Close (25 feet + 5 feet/two levels)

Target: One creature/level

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Reflex halves

Spell Resistance: Yes

With a thunderous crack, white lances of starfire explode in a shower of raw energy all around you.

You release a number of powerful force bolts from your body equal to your level, each striking a creature within line of sight. No more than 3 bolts can strike a single target.

Creatures struck take 3d12 damage unless they make a Reflex save. Those that fail are also blinded and knocked prone.

Star's Heart

Illumination (Transmutation)

Level: Sor/Wiz 9

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Area: Up to one 10-ft. cube per two levels

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: None; see text

Spell Resistance: No

All the weight of armor, weapons, and even bodies grows enormous and insupportable; only you can walk freely.

This spell increases gravity tenfold in an area, causing all creatures other than the caster in the area to drop all held objects and fall prone and helpless. If some solid object (such as the ground) is encountered in when flying or levitating creatures fall, objects and creatures strike it in the same manner as they would during a normal downward fall, but take triple normal falling damage.

Any standing creature other than the caster in the area of the *star's heart* must make a Strength check of DC 20 each round or fall prone from a standing position.

Once prone, creatures remain there, crushed by their own weight and suffering 3d12 bludgeoning damage each round until they make a successful DC 25 Strength or Dexterity check. Affected creatures may take free or swift actions, but may not move or take standard actions.

Creatures under the influence of a *freedom of movement* spell gain a +8 circumstance bonus to Strength or Dexterity checks required by a *star's heart* spell.

At the end of the spell duration, affected creatures must make a Fortitude save or be exhausted. Creatures that make save successfully are fatigued.

Material Component: An ioun stone.

Starry Vision

Illumination (Divination)

Level: Sor/Wiz 7, Shadowsworn 5

Components: S, M

Casting Time: 1 Standard action

Range: Close (25 feet + 5 feet/two levels)

Area: 4 squares/level

Duration: 1 round/2 levels

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

You see the fate of all creatures nearby in a square area up to the spell maximum. You can act on this knowledge, with these effects:

- All creatures in the area of effect are flat-footed against you for the spell's duration.
 - You may move during any creature's turn in a round. This expends a move action.
 - You gain a +8 insight bonus to your AC and any saving throw required by the actions of a creature within the area of the spell.
 - As a swift action, you can warn one other creature which has not yet acted in a round whether its spell or attack will fail (the players may roll ahead of time). If the warned creature wishes, it may choose to take another action when they act. It cannot take the same action as it planned initially.
- For purposes of this spell, all attack actions are considered equivalent to one another, and all spellcasting actions are equivalent to one another.
- The material component of this spell is a sprinkling of fine-ground diamond dust worth 500 gp, which is thrown into the air.

Summon Star

Illumination (Conjuration (Summoning))
Level: Sor/Wiz 8, Clr7
Components: V, S, F
Casting Time: 1 round
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Effect: One summoned creature
Duration: 1 round/level (D)
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No
 You summon a star from the heavens to do your bidding. This creature is a glowing humanoid with long white hair, birdlike talons as well as hands, and a staff made of pure force. All creatures that view the star (other than the caster) must make a DC 20 Will save or be fascinated for the duration of the spell.

The star is otherwise equivalent to an avoral of maximum hit points (91 hp) whose *lightning bolt* ability deals force damage.

The arcane focus required for this spell is a sunrod, which is consumed if the star dies.

Terror

Illumination (Necromancy) [Fear, Mind-Affecting]
Level: Sor/Wiz 3, Shadowsworn 3
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 Standard action
Range: Medium (100 ft + 10 feet/level)
Target: One living creature
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: Will partial (see text)
Spell Resistance: Yes
You wave a withered eagle's claw in two quick arcane passes, and combine all the world's dangers into a sense of unrelenting fear from the heavens.

An invisible ray of terror (requiring a ranged touch attack) causes one living creature to become panicked. Even if the save succeeds, the creature is shaken for 1 round.

Material Component: An eagle's claw.



Bringing you the past and the future



Colonial Gothic is a supernatural historical horror roleplaying game set during the dawn of the American Revolution.
Price \$24.99.
Out Now!



Strap your blaster pistol, grab your space suit, and get ready to journey into the future as imagined by the greatest writers of the Golden Age of Science Fiction.
Price \$24.99
The Future Begins February 2008!



Games so good they sneak up on you!™
www.rogue-games.net

Arbeyach,

the Prince of Swarms

By Ari Marmell
Art by Aaron Acevedo

“For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt.”

—Exodus 10:15

Long have mortals misunderstood the fiends that plague them from the depths of the planes. To the demons of the Abyss, they ascribe motives of violence and destruction; from the devils of the Nine Hells, they expect foul temptations, the slow corruption of body and soul. Yet chaos can be a seductive thing, making fabulous promises it keeps only on whim. Death, destruction, decay: These things can be rigid, orderly, predictable — and oh so inevitable.

𐌆𐌿𐌸
𐌸𐌿𐌸
𐌸𐌿𐌸
𐌸
𐌸𐌿𐌸
𐌸𐌿𐌸
𐌸𐌿𐌸
𐌸𐌿𐌸

This, then, is the domain of Arbeyach, the Prince of Swarms. He offers nothing, promises nothing, for he knows nothing of lust, nothing of negotiation. He is the slow creep of decay; the worm and the locust that feeds on life and death alike, leaving nothing behind but ash.

Arbeyach encourages the slow spread of famine, the tottering decline of tradition-bound bureaucracy, the law and order that stamp out all voices that dare speak against the customs of the hive.

History of Prince Arbeyach

In the endless night before the dawning of the first day, the fiends arose across the Lower Planes. Some emerged from the underworld, emissaries of Great Evil yet to come. Some came from realms beyond the gods, beyond imagination, and styled themselves as the Kings of Damnation. Others hailed from the Heavens themselves, angels brought low by rigid pride and righteous anger.

Of these latter, perhaps the most infamous is Beelzebub, Lord of Lies and Lord of Flies. He strode the deepest pits before the birth of mortal man, accompanied by the buzzing vermin for which he is named. And thus was Beelzebub present to witness one of the first mortal souls' arrival in the depths of Hell, drawn below by the vile deeds of its wicked life.

Beelzebub spat forth a cloud of vermin, that they might consume the soulstuff before him, allowing him to absorb its power in turn. Yet as his vermin swarmed across the soul, taking in its power, so too did they absorb its essence. The swarm and the soulstuff melded, merged, and became something new: part devil, part vermin, part mortal soul.

A unique being of terrible power, with a scheming intelligence nearly the equal of his "father," the thing that called itself Arbeyach rose swiftly in the hierarchy of Hell.

For a time, Arbeyach flourished within the Hellish ranks. He performed the duties of obliterating

mortals who had dared to thwart the designs of Hell; and he destroyed both demons of the Abyss and angels of the upper realms.

Yet even here, amidst the most inhuman of evils, he found no place. The self-styled Prince of Swarms held little interest in the souls of mortals. His ambition was destruction, not corruption, and consumption rather than conversion. He viewed the Material Planes not as a source of souls, but as a feeding ground, as chaos to be wiped clean and set to order.

Other devils looked on Arbeyach with hatred and disgust. He was outside the normal progression of diabolic forms; his birth was neither entirely of Hell nor of Earth. And most frightening, the rigid-minded Arbeyach was a twisted mirror, an omen of what they could become if ever they allowed their lawful, ordered natures to grow too structured, too unyielding.

As the eons passed, his interests and ambitions deviated further from the Hellish lords surrounding him. He grew ever more unyielding, ever more alien. Those below and those above him finally moved to expel the Prince of Swarms from power, and to this day none can say whether Arbeyach allowed himself to be deposed.

Today, Arbeyach's position within the diabolical hierarchy is a confused, complicated thing. For the nonce, he serves as lieutenant to Bel, dividing his time between the First Hell and the several hives he keeps spread between dominions on other layers.

Yet he swears no true fealty to any Arch-Duke. Throughout the years he has served first one, then another, as their offers—and his own labyrinthine schemes—dictated. He watches, ever patient, as devil wars with devil, as well as with demons, angels, and mortal. He exults in the resulting death and slow decay that eats away at the edges of every world. All decay nourishes his hideous strength.

Arbeyach is patient, watchful, and his swarms always ready to serve evil ends.

Allies and Enemies

Most devils despise the Prince of Swarms, and the feeling is quite mutual. Nevertheless, Arbeyach has served each of the Arch-Dukes of Hell, save for two. Asmodeus need not rely on such a questionable resource. Beelzebub, his mistrustful sire. The petty hatred between Arbeyach and his peers pales in comparison to the utter loathing between Arbeyach and Beelzebub.

Arbeyach resents the Lord of Flies encroaching on his sphere of influence, and Beelzebub considers his part in Arbeyach's creation a mark of shame. Without blatantly violating any of Asmodeus' dictates, the two make every effort to destroy one another. So far, only Arbeyach's lack of a centralized domain for Beelzebub to invade and destroy has saved him from his father's wrath.

Arbeyach has some allies. Currently, Arbeyach serves Bel, aiding the beleaguered warlord by destroying or intimidating foes the Arch-Duke himself lacks the manpower to confront. Bel despises this reliance on a lieutenant, and worries about the price Arbeyach may demand for his aid.

Various insectile devils and other insectoid creatures make up the bulk of Arbeyach's soldiers. Although they dislike one another personally, Arbeyach often cooperates with Duke Bune. Duke Bune relocates, manipulates, and speaks to the bodies of the dead; Arbeyach's carrion insect swarms are useful allies, and because they both hold an interest in death and decay, they often find their goals coinciding.

Similarly, Arbeyach sometimes communes with banished Astaroth, a devil exiled from the Nine Hells. Astaroth seeks the expansion of organized and ritualized corruption, and Arbeyach's interest in corruption makes the two quite a pair of plotters. The current plan is rumored to involve corrupting grain with an infernal poison that only Arbeyach's followers can heal.



Arbeyach in the Real World

While Arbeyach does not exist in real-world mythology, he was inspired by Judeo-Christian tradition. During the Exodus, one of the plagues leveled upon Egypt was an impossible swarm of locusts—or *arbeh*, in Hebrew—that devoured all herbs and grains of the nation. It is that word, *arbeh*, that inspired the moniker “Arbeyach.”

The Cult of Arbeyach

Within civilized communities, Arbeyach has no full-fledged cults, only a few sporadic petitioners. Among wilder tribes of humanoids, some sects revere him as an insect totem, following his teachings of scavenging, destruction, and consumption.

Within civilization, those who turn to Arbeyach fit into three groups:

- Those who use the letter of the law for their own gain, and to harm others. This is particularly true of leaders who improperly confiscate property, waste precious resources for their own luxury, or ignite wars for their own profit.
- Those who seek to maintain tradition for tradition's sake, even when doing so is detrimental to the greater good.
- Those orderly-minded (but often mad) individuals who revere insects, decay, or death and destruction for their own sake, without greater purpose.

Arbeyach's rites usually involve the consumption of a sacrifice—ideally by insects, though by fire if necessary—or the destruction of symbols of culture and other faiths, such as flags and holy icons. The sacrifice is usually a living one, but the corpse of someone already dead is appropriate if its sacrifice causes a great deal of public pain. For example, desecrating the grave of a beloved noble or a religious leader is common to Arbeyach cultists.

Arbeyach's sign is a circle with an abstract pattern of

lines across one side. It represents the sun or the moon eclipsed by the shadow of something with insectoid mandibles.

Those few who revere Arbeyach have access to the Death, Law, and Swarm domains.

Swarm Domain

Rebuke, command, or bolster vermin as an evil cleric rebukes undead three times per day + your Charisma modifier. This granted power is a supernatural ability.

Swarm Domain Spells

1. *Spider Climb*: Walk on walls and ceilings.
2. *Summon Swarm*: Summons spiders. (As a Swarm Domain spell, *summon swarm* can not call rats or bats.)
3. *Poison*: Touch deals 1d10 Con damage, repeats in 1 min.
4. *Giant Vermin*: Turns centipedes, scorpions, or spiders into giant vermin.
5. *Insect Plague*: Locust swarms attack creatures.
6. *Summon Monster VI*: Calls extraplanar creature to fight for you. (Evil outsiders and fiendish vermin only.)
7. *Creeping Doom*: Swarms of centipedes attack at your command.
8. *Horrid Wilting*: Deals 1d6/level damage within 30 ft.
9. *Gate*: Connects two lower planes for travel or summoning.

Portraying Arbeyach

As the patron of insects, Arbeyach embodies consumption and decay. He does not cajole, he does not tempt, and he negotiates only from a position of weakness. While other devils entice mortals with wealth or sensual favors, Arbeyach plays on their fear of swarming, scuttling vermin, and the decay that awaits after death. In the end, he whispers, his servants will devour all mortal flesh, and all mortal work will fall into ruin. Despair and horror are his favorite tools.

He rarely bothers with mortal servitors, preferring the company of his insects and the solitude to scheme his rigid, alien schemes. Arbeyach desires power, but only to gain greater opportunities to take, to consume, and to destroy. Ultimately, Arbeyach seeks nothing less than the slow consumption of everything, sating his own endless hunger and leaving a perfectly ordered—and perfectly empty—multiverse behind.

Even among the lawful denizens of the Hells, Arbeyach is an exceptionally rigid individual. He finds disorder painful, and disobedience enrages him. He finds even the most lawful of mortals repulsively disordered, and considers the bureaucracy of Hell too chaotic. His lairs and his minions follow the model of an insect's hive, with each and every member possessing a specific function.

The Prince of Swarms is well known for labyrinthine, intricate schemes designed to increase his own power, and he is almost pathologically incapable of diverging from

LE Large outsider (evil, extraplanar, lawful)

Init +9 or +0; **Senses** see in darkness, tremorsense 60 ft.;

Listen +21, Spot +21

Aura decay (200 ft)

Defense

AC 39, touch 14, flat-footed 34 (-1 size, +5 Dex, +25 natural)

Miss Chance 20% cloak of swarms

hp 337 (27d8+216); regeneration 3

Fort +25, **Ref** +20, **Will** +21

DR 15/good and silver; **Immune** fire, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10;

SR 32

Offense

Spd 40 ft., burrow 20 ft., climb 40 ft., fly 80 ft. (good)

Melee 2 claws +34 (2d6+7 + 2d6 aura + poison/19-20)

Space 10 ft. **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks aura of decay, cloak of swarms, poison, rebuke vermin, summon spawn, touch of rot

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 27th, +14 ranged touch)

At will *blasphemy* (DC 26), *detect chaos*, *detect good*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *magic circle against chaos*, *magic circle against good*, *see invisibility*, *summon swarm* (spiders only), *unholy aura* (DC 27)

5/day *giant vermin*, *insect plague*, *summon monster IX* (fiendish vermin only)

3/day *creeping doom*, *greater dispel magic*, *shapechange* (vermin only)

Tactics

Before Combat Arbeyach prepares plans for all events, and uses his million-eyed swarms to prepare. His cloak of swarms and all At Will abilities are active against anyone who does not teleport to him.

During Combat Arbeyach favors *creeping doom* and summoned swarms, monsters, and minions over direct melee. In hand-to-hand he uses his poison touch as a flyby attack.

Morale Arbeyach fights with complete conviction until slain.

Statistics

Str 25, **Dex** 21, **Con** 26, **Int** 23, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 28

Base Atk +27; **Grp** +38

Feats Ability Focus (poison), Combat Reflexes, Flyby Attack, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (claw), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Quicken Spell-Like Ability x2 (*creeping doom*, *insect plague*), Weapon Focus (claw)

Skills Balance +31, Climb +15, Concentration +32, Diplomacy +11, Escape Artist +29, Handle Animal +33, Hide +25, Intimidate +33, Jump +13, Knowledge (arcana, dungeoneering, nature, planes) +31, Listen +28, Move Silently +29, Ride +8, Sense Motive +28, Spellcraft +32, Spot +28, Survival +28, Tumble +29, Use Magic Device +18 (+20 scrolls)

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Infernal

SQ devil traits, outsider traits

Special Abilities

Aura of Decay (Su) All injuries dealt to living creatures in the aura cause 2d6 additional hp damage. Arbeyach can grant or remove immunity to any creatures in the area at will. (He and his cloak of swarms are always immune.) The hardness of all nonmagical objects in the area is reduced by 2 (minimum 0). If this aura is dispelled, Arbeyach can restore it as a swift action.

Cloak of Swarms (Su) As a swift action, Arbeyach can emit a cloud of flying, stinging insects from his mouth, his eyes, and the tears in his skin. This cloud surrounds him to a depth of 5 feet. The cloak means all attacks against him suffer a 20% miss chance, Arbeyach can see in all directions (through the insects' eyes), and he is immune to flanking.

Any living creature in a space occupied by this cloud suffers the following effects: 3d6 damage, DC 31 Fort save or be nauseated for

those plans. He tries to develop as many contingencies as possible, often numbering in the hundreds or thousands, because he knows his own weakness: he is often paralyzed in the face of the unexpected. His rigid mind does not react well, or swiftly, to surprise.

Arbeyach is normally as cold and unemotional as the insects he commands, but he reacts to the unexpected, or to betrayal, with a violent fury. At these times, he rages more like a slaving demon of the Abyss than a devil.

Appearance and Powers

From a distance, Arbeyach resembles an old man, gaunt, awkward, and nearly eight feet tall. He is unwashed, disheveled; his hair is grey and stringy, and he is clad in ragged pants and a tattered overcoat that reaches his ankles. Closer inspection reveals, however, that not only his overcoat, but portions of his flesh (mostly in the torso and upper legs) hang in strips, revealing innards swarming with uncountable insects.

The Prince of Swarms boasts power over insects and the spread of decay. All vermin obey him, and all wounds he inflicts (and even those merely inflicted near him) are especially deadly. He is a harbinger of death, the end of things. The finality of his appearances makes even devils far more potent than him hesitate, and fear his arrival.

The greatest victim of his rigid and traditionalist mind may be Arbeyach himself. Over many eons, he has refused to change and refused to accept the strength of mortal souls. His intellect and power are static and stunted. Time and habit have weakened a creature once nearly on par with the Arch-Dukes, so that now he is scarcely greater than the pit fiends.

Though still a power in Hell, Arbeyach is far less than once he was, and the time must soon come where the devil who most despises change must change. If he fails to molt and shed his carapace of familiar habits, his many foes will merely wait for an opportune moment to destroy him forever.

1 round, and DC 31 Fort injury poison for initial and secondary damage 1d6 Dex. The swarm is immune to weapon damage. If the swarm suffers 40 hp damage in a single attack, spell, or effect, it dissipates; otherwise, it lasts for 10 rounds. Arbeyach can exhale another 1d4+1 rounds later.

Poison (Ex) Arbeyach can change his choice of poison—Strength damage or Constitution damage—as a swift action.

Rebuke Vermin (Su) Arbeyach can rebuke/command vermin as an evil cleric rebukes undead. His effective rebuking level is equal to his Hit Dice. Arbeyach gains a synergy bonus from Knowledge (nature), rather than Knowledge (religion). He can command up to five times his effective rebuking level-worth of Hit Dice (normally 135) of vermin at a time.

Slow Reaction (Ex) In a surprise round in which he cannot act, Arbeyach's Initiative modifier drops to 0 for that combat.

Touch of Rot (Ex) Anyone who suffers ability damage from Arbeyach's poisons emits the faintest stench of decomposition. All uncontrolled vermin attack that character on sight and in preference to all others. In addition, the rot imposes a -2 penalty to all further saving throws against poison. These effects remain even after the poison's ability damage has been healed, and requires a *remove curse* to eliminate.

Skills Arbeyach has a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks. He can always take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

Spawn of Arbeyach

Poorly concealed behind a mask of flesh, the thing resembles an insect that has learned to walk upright. Although humanoid, its arms and legs are long and segmented, and its mouth stretched wide to exude dripping mandibles. Barbed stingers sprout between its fingers, and though the pupils appear human, the irises of its eyes are segmented like an insect's.

SPAWN OF ARBEYACH

CR 5

Always LE Medium aberration (extraplanar)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; **Listen** +7, **Spot** +7

Languages Infernal, Spawn of Arbeyach

AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18 (+1 Dex, +8 natural)

hp 59 (7d8+28 HD); **DR** 2/—

Immune nausea, sickening

Fort +8 (+10 against poisons), **Ref** +3, **Will** +7; +2 against mind-affecting effects and poisons

Weakness vermin susceptibilities

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares), climb 15 ft.

Melee 2 stings +8 (1d4+2 plus poison) and bite +2 (1d6+1)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +5; **Grp** +7

Atk Options poison (DC 17, 1d6 Str/1d6 Str), swarming cough

Special Actions rebuke vermin 4/day (+1, 2d6+6, 7th)

Str 15, **Dex** 13, **Con** 19, **Int** 10, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 12

SA poison, rebuke vermin, swarming cough

SQ partial vermin traits

Feats Alertness, Great Fortitude^B, Iron Will^B, Stealthy, Weapon Focus (sting)

Skills Climb +18, Hide +8, Listen +7, Move Silently +8, Spot +7

Advancement 8–14 HD (Medium); 15–21 HD (Large)

Partial Vermin Traits (Ex) Spawn of Arbeyach share some of the standard vermin resistances, gaining a +2 racial bonus to saves against mind-affecting effects and poisons (included above). They are susceptible to any effect that normally targets only vermin.

Rebuke Vermin (Su) Spawn of Arbeyach can rebuke/command vermin as an evil cleric rebukes undead. Their effective rebuking level is equal to their Hit Dice. They can command up to four times their effective rebuking level-worth of Hit Dice (normally 28) of vermin at a time.

Swarming Cough (Su) As a standard action, a spawn can belch forth a locust swarm (see MM). The swarm is completely under the spawn's mental control, and remains for 1 minute or until destroyed. A Spawn of Arbeyach can use this ability once every 1d4 rounds, and can never have more total swarms in existence than half its Hit Dice. The locusts do not attack the Spawn of Arbeyach, and it may fight from within the swarm.

Skills Spawn of Arbeyach have a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks. A spawn can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

Although they are named for the diabolic Prince of Swarms, no proof exists that Arbeyach created these creatures. Still, their insectoid form and hive-minded thought processes are considered proof enough by most sages and adventurers. Many of Arbeyach's minions in Hell include versions of these "spawn."

Play Your Favorite RPG Solo!

Create dynamic adventures off-the-cuff, whether you're going solo, with a group without a GM or for GMs to create a full adventure as you go!

Are you a busy GM looking for a break from world creation? Or maybe you'd like to play but find yourself without a group. Mythic Role-Playing is your table-top "virtual intelligence," designed to create full adventures as you play them!

Mythic adventures are meant to be played off-the-cuff, using only a few minutes of preparation and a handful of logic-based rules. Mythic can be played with or without a GM. The same mechanics in Mythic that allow a GM to run an adventure without preparation also allows a group of players to do without the GM entirely.

Mythic Role Playing is a stand-alone game,
or it can be used as a supplement with your favorite system

A Popular GOLD PICK
product at RPGNow.com

AVAILABLE IN PDF AND IN PRINT

Mythic Game
Master Emulator
Mythic GM Emulation rules,
without the universal rpg.
For use as a supplement
with other games.

Create dynamic role-playing
adventures without preparation

For use as a stand-alone game or
as a supplement for other systems

Mythic Variations
New directions for your Mythic
adventures with variant rules, play
suggestions and more!

AVAILABLE ONLINE AT WWW.WORDMILLGAMES.COM

Strategies and Tactics

Spawn of Arbeyach fight, scavenge, and retreat like the insects they resemble. They operate in numbers, and combat techniques rely on overwhelming force. They try to swiftly overcome foes, and are quick to retreat if they appear to be overmatched. They never hesitate to attack even a more powerful foe if doing so is necessary to protect the hive.

The spawn have little sense of negotiation. They attack all who invade their territory, who get in the way of their scavenging, or simply if they're hungry—and the locust-like spawn of Arbeyach are always hungry.

Spawn of Arbeyach usually initiate combat by unleashing a swarm of locusts, unless they greatly outnumber the foe. They use their poison, if at all possible, to completely incapacitate weaker foes first.

Ecology

Spawn of Arbeyach are scavengers and predators, feasting on whatever creatures—sentient or not, living or dead—they find within their territory. They seem to have a particular taste for, and fascination with, civilized communities, due mostly to the fact that towns and cities present so many supplies, and so much prey, in a central location.

Environment: Spawn of Arbeyach prefer temperate forest, plains, and jungle environs, but they can be found in greater or lesser numbers in any environment except the coldest wastes.

Typical Physical Characteristics: Spawn of Arbeyach are roughly humanoid, with many insectoid qualities including a reflective carapace and oddly jointed limbs. Their faces, arms, and legs are covered with flesh, but it looks artificial, stretching and tearing to reveal more insect-like traits beneath. Their human-like mouths must distend to allow their mandibles to protrude.

Most spawn of Arbeyach stand between 4 and 6 feet tall, and they weigh between 85 and 160 pounds.

Alignment: Due to their hive-focus and complete disdain for others, spawn of Arbeyach are always lawful evil.

Society

Spawn dwell in hive communities, made up of a combination of natural growth and artificial architecture. The hives are usually built in isolated, easily defensible locales, and visitors often must climb (or fly) to reach them.

Most hives are home to a dozen to roughly 100 individuals. Spawn operate in hunting parties of three to nine. A lone spawn is found only as a scout, and even then only rarely.

Table 2: Spawn of Arbeyach Lore

Characters with ranks in Knowledge (Dungeoneering) or (the Planes) may know about the Spawn of Arbeyach. Characters making a successful skill check know all the information up to and including the DC check.

DC Result

15 This is a spawn of Arbeyach, an insectoid aberration with a hive mentality and utter disdain for other forms of life. They fight with the stingers between their fingers, and their horrific bite.

20 The spawn were created by Arbeyach himself, the diabolic Prince of Swarms. Their stingers are poisonous, and they can cough up swarms of locusts that obey them.

25 The spawn of Arbeyach have some vermin immunities, but are prey to magic that normally affects only vermin. They can command all vermin, not only those they vomit forth.

Typical Treasure

The spawn of Arbeyach value magic items, and collect those they find most useful. They do not have any interest in coins, gems, or art objects, but collect them anyway for use as bait. The spawn have standard treasure for their Challenge Rating.



10x10 Toon

by Stan!



Copyright ©2007 Stan!

www.stanmc.com

Still searching for high-quality adventure?

You haven't checked *everywhere*

'till you've looked in *the cellar*.

Downloadable adventures, maps, music, demos, tiles & tokens.
Use the code "night-kobold" to get 10% off your first purchase.



12 to Midnight's

Midnight Cellar

<http://shop.12tomidnight.com>

Hardboiled Adventures



Make Your Noir Campaigns Work

by Keith Baker

When I was a boy, I heard a voice in my dreams calling me to battle the forces of darkness. When I could lift a sword, I made my way to the Temple of the Sun and trained to fight fiends and monsters. But I was touched by a force more powerful than the sun itself... love.

Lilith was married to the bishop, and her tales made me question my faith. I never doubted her stories, not even when I drew my blade across the bishop's throat. It was only then that I found out that Lilith was sleeping with another priest, that I was just a tool to be used and discarded. I escaped to Lankar, but I'm still wanted for murder in my homeland.

Today, I'm a sword for hire on the streets of Lankar. Love cost me my faith and my honor. But I still have my pride, and any job I take, I'm going to see it through. I've sworn never to enter another Church of the Sun, never to return to Alaria, never to listen to a damned dream, and above all else, never to let love lead me astray again...

And Lilith just walked through my door.

In the past, your players have done their share of dungeon crawls. They've slaughtered armies of orcs, defeated dragons and lich kings, and received accolades from king and peasant alike. But you're tired of traditional fantasy. You feel like something harder and darker... less *Lord of the Rings* and more *Thieves' World* or *Sin City*. Perhaps you're in the market for some hardboiled fantasy.

"Hardboiled" is a genre of crime fiction, the realm of Sam Spade, Philip Marlowe, and the Continental Op. In a hardboiled world, little is what it seems, and corruption and violence are the norm. First and foremost, this sort of campaign needs to close collaboration between player and DM. A hardboiled adventure is a shift from the "kick in the door and take the treasure" model, and if your players don't want to explore a different tone and style of play, you're not going to be able to force it on them. So consider the following subjects, and discuss them with each player.

Everyone Has A Past

Hardboiled heroes are flawed individuals. They may be remarkable people with exceptional skills, but they are scarred by loss and failure.

The story that opens this article is the background for Lucas Caine, a 1st-level fighter. Mechanically, he's not actually a fallen paladin; that's simply part of his backstory. He's lost his faith in divinity and love, and all he trusts now is his sword.

Lucas still has the spirit of a hero, but it's wrapped in bitter cynicism; it's in adventuring that he will potentially find comfort and possibly redemption.

When you're setting up a hardboiled campaign, work with each player to develop their backstory. This helps both of you. It gives you hooks to use in developing adventures. For example, Lucas has a strong motivation to take part in any adventure that involves corrupt or evil priests, especially clerics of his old religion. Bounty hunters could

come after him for the murder of the bishop. And, of course, his old lover could appear, begging him to help her. Does she have an explanation for the past? And even if she does, can he trust her again?

Just as it helps you create stories, it helps a player get into the mood of the game and sets his expectations. This isn't about creating the perfect shining knight; this is crafting a character who lives in an imperfect world. By challenging the player to think about his flaws, to consider why he's on the mean streets, and whether he spends his evenings drinking alone or in the halfling bordello, you help prepare him for the adventures that lie ahead.

Discuss the following things with each player.

What was your greatest mistake? "None" is not an acceptable answer; in this sort of story, no one is perfect. This could be the murder of an innocent man or an early career as muscle for a criminal gang. It could be some-

thing as simple as trusting the wrong person, failing to listen when a friend was in need, or giving in to greed with disastrous consequences.

Aside from creating story hooks for the DM, the goal is to learn what the character regrets and why. Does he want vengeance or redemption, and is either one actually possible?

Where do your talents come from? If the PC is a wizard, how did he first come to learn magic? If he studied at an academy, why isn't he still there? If he had a mentor, what became of her?

As before, the goal is to add depth to the character and learn his reasons for adventuring. The classic hardboiled detective is a former cop who became a private eye because of insubordination, betrayal by a partner, or another fall from grace. If he's a fighter, was he once a city guardsman? A soldier in the army? A mugger? How did he go from there to become an adventurer?

What's your motivation? While hardboiled heroes are typically flawed individuals, they stand out in a grimy world because some positive force drives them – something beyond mere greed. Professional pride, a sense of honor, a desire to see justice done in a world where the forces of the law won't provide it... something that keeps him from becoming as soiled as the world around him.

Vices. The classic detective is a hard-drinking man, but the PC might prefer gambling, paid companionship, or brawling to release her tensions. Explore this. If the PC likes to drink, does she prefer hard dwarf whiskey or fine wines? Does she like to carouse with dozens, or drink alone to numb her pain?

Sex and Love. The gaming table isn't always a place for a serious discussion of sex. Not every group can handle mature issues. However, sex, love, and lust are all powerful forces in hardboiled and noir tales. Even something as simple as knowing that Belgan the dwarf has a weakness for redheads is useful – because when

that tiefling walks through the door with trouble in her eyes, you know to make her a redhead.

So see where you can go with this. What does the character find attractive? Does he have casual affairs, or is he only interested in serious relationships? Does he have a love of his life, and if so, what became of her? Some hardboiled characters are after more than money; done right, a character arc about saving a damsel from the mean streets can feed neatly into a character's history.

Big Risks, Trivial Rewards

In RPGs, PCs typically acquire vast amounts of wealth, digging up treasures from ancient ruins or stealing the hoards of defeated wyrms. In hardboiled tales, money is usually tight; rent, gambling debts, and drinking money are actual concerns. The protagonist has it tough, but because of his professional pride he only works for a fair wage. Unlike the police, he won't take a bribe, and while he may consort with criminals he doesn't stoop to their level; he takes honest pay for honest work.

In most fantasy campaigns, the hardboiled approach to money means throwing out any preconceived notions of fair reward. A platinum piece is just as impressive to a 10th-level character as it is to a 5th-level character; the PC may be tougher, but experience doesn't magically bring wealth. The world around the PCs also reflects this; NPCs will be more susceptible to bribery, and a wealthy aristocrat may be more dangerous than a fighter of the same level, because his money lets him pull political and legal strings.

Perhaps the adventurers will fight a dragon, but he won't be sitting on a pile of gold. Instead, he will be running a thieves' guild, and all his wealth is spread throughout his operations. He has access to a fortune if he needs it, but an adventurer can't just show up and take it from him. This may mean that the PCs have less magic items, or it may mean that

they can't afford to buy magic items but still obtain a few over the course of their adventures.

While the adventurers may not receive vast amounts of gold or ancient magic, there are other rewards to be found. Favors are vitally important; if you help the First Blade of the Assassin's Guild, his friendship may be far more valuable than a +1 *shortsword*. Reliable sources of information and trustworthy allies are both rare commodities, treasures gold cannot buy.

The Ugly World

In *The Big Sleep*, Captain Gregory describes himself as "As honest as you can expect a man to be in a world where it's out of style." That is the hard reality of a hardboiled campaign. It is a world where greed and lust are ascendant, while honor and integrity are distant rumors. If the City Watch isn't actively corrupt, it often has its hands tied. Characters will spend a lot of time mingling with disreputable characters, and while there may be honor among thieves, it is never a sure thing.

The backdrop of an adventure is just as important as the individual characters the PCs meet. Whether it is set in Los Angeles or Sanctuary, the flavor of the city is important. What is the dominant industry that supports the town? Who are the major moguls? Every critical NPC should have secrets of her own, hidden agendas that will shape any adventure she takes part in.

While a DM should consider all of the questions presented above for PCs, another excellent guide to city themes is Ed Greenwood's article "On the Streets Where Heroes Live" (*Editor: see KQ #2*). Before the campaign begins, sketch out the goals of the major players within the city. Are two crime lords competing for control of the brothel industry or distribution of illegal potions? Is the local reeve trying to expose the excesses of the local lords – something that will end in brutal retaliation?

The goals could also include com-

munities or groups in addition to powerful individuals. What are race relations like? Is there an elf underclass, freed from slavery but still considered inferior to humanity? Is the orc street gang as bad as they say, or are the orcs scapegoats imported by a mogul to distract the people from his true agenda? Are there any truly devout clerics in the town, or is religion just an excuse to milk the faithful for tithes?

Moving from the big picture down to the table view, players should see just how grim the world is in the everyday details. Life is cheap, and bad things can happen to good people. The trusted barkeep who provided the PCs with information is killed in a pointless brawl. Adventurers may deal with the rich and powerful, but they should also see the squalid side of things – the parts of the city where people will kill for copper.

In combat itself, things shouldn't be pretty. A hardboiled DM won't just say "You hit him for eight hit points and he falls to the ground." A hardboiled DM will describe how a villain's hands clench around the blade as he tries to pull it from his chest, how the blood spreads across his hands as he spasms. Killing someone with a sword is an ugly business, and people don't usually fall to the ground without a sound.

Make death scenes big. Think up some last pleas and curses ahead of time. Bring out the girlfriend or children of the thug to scream at the PCs. And when players are seriously injured, consider the nature of the injury, and the scars it will leave behind. It's an ugly, dangerous world, and the players should never forget it.

The Role of Alignment

The alignment system doesn't always work in a hardboiled scenario. Player characters should ideally be better than those around them... but they may still be forced to do terrible things. Likewise, in a scenario where trust is a critical concern, detect evil shouldn't result in PCs being unwill-

ing to work with a vital contact.

The simplest answer is to remove alignment from the campaign; however, as it's integrally tied to many magical effects, this isn't always easy to do. A second option is to use alignment as a general guideline of behavior, but to say that "faint" alignment auras have no effect; they cannot be picked up with detect spells and don't make a person a valid target for things like holy weapons.

This means that a *holy word* spell is a powerful tool against undead, outsiders, and evil clerics, but it has little effect on a normal creature with 10 or fewer levels or hit dice. You could also take this a step further and say that normal creatures never produce alignment auras – so a holy sword has no additional power when used on a mugger or a swindler.

Hit the Books

While these ideas should give you something to work with, the best thing you can do is to read the stories yourself. Raymond Chandler, Mickey Spillane, and Dashiell Hammett are all titans in the genre, but there are more recent alternatives.

Frank Miller's *Sin City* brings the hardboiled style to the graphic novel, while Stephen Brust and Glenn Cook make the jump from present day into fantasy. The atmosphere is the most important thing to look for; everything else can be adapted. *The Maltese Falcon* is the story of a group of amoral people fighting for possession of a priceless treasure; but change the black bird into the preserved eye of a mighty archlich, and you have a valid adventure with a big fantasy element at its heart.

So pour yourself another shot of mead, strap on your sword, and head for the streets. There is an arrow with your name on it and a woman you wronged waiting at the tavern. If you survive the day, you may be able to put right that terrible mistake you made. But first, you'll have to survive.



OPEN GAME LICENSE Version 1.0a
The following text is the property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and is Copyright 2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc ("Wizards"). All Rights Reserved.

1. Definitions: (a) "Contributors" means the copyright and/or trademark owners who have contributed Open Game Content; (b) "Derivative Material" means copyrighted material including derivative works and translations (including into other computer languages), potation, modification, correction, addition, extension, upgrade, improvement, compilation, abridgment or other form in which an existing work may be recast, transformed or adapted; (c) "Distribute" means to reproduce, license, rent, lease, sell, broadcast, publicly display, transmit or otherwise distribute; (d) "Open Game Content" means the game mechanic and includes the methods, procedures, processes and routines to the extent such content does not embody the Product Identity and is an enhancement over the prior art and any additional content clearly identified as Open Game Content by the Contributor, and means any work covered by this License, including translations and derivative works under copyright law, but specifically excludes Product Identity. (e) "Product Identity" means product and product line names, logos and identifying marks including trade dress; artifacts; creatures characters; stories, storylines, plots, thematic elements, dialogue, incidents, language, artwork, symbols, designs, depictions, likenesses, formats, poses, concepts, themes and graphic, photographic and other visual or audio representations; names and descriptions of characters, spells, enchantments, personalities, teams, personas, likenesses and special abilities; places, locations, environments, creatures, equipment, magical or supernatural abilities or effects, logos, symbols, or graphic designs; and any other trademark or registered trademark clearly identified as Product Identity by the owner of the Product Identity, and which specifically excludes the Open Game Content; (f) "Trademark" means the logos, names, mark, sign, motto, designs that are used by a Contributor to identify itself or its products or the associated products contributed to the Open Game License by the Contributor (g) "Use", "Used" or "Using" means to use, distribute, copy, edit, format, modify, translate and otherwise create Derivative Material of Open Game Content. (h) "You" or "Your" means the licensee in terms of this agreement.

2. The License: This License applies to any Open Game Content that contains a notice indicating that the Open Game Content may only be Used under and in terms of this License. You must affix such a notice to any Open Game Content that you Use. No terms may be added to or subtracted from this License except as described by the License itself. No other terms or conditions may be applied to any Open Game Content distributed using this License.

3. Offer and Acceptance: By Using the Open Game Content You indicate Your acceptance of the terms of this License.

4. Grant and Consideration: In consideration for agreeing to use this License, the Contributors grant You a perpetual, worldwide, royaltyfree, non-exclusive license with the exact terms of this license to Use, the Open Game Content.

5. Representation of Authority to Contribute: If You are contributing original material as Open Game Content, You represent that Your Contributions are Your original creation and/or You have sufficient rights to grant the rights conveyed by this License.

6. Notice of License Copyright: You must update the COPYRIGHT NOTICE portion of this License to include the exact text of the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any Open Game Content You are copying, modifying or distributing, and You must add the title, the copyright date, and the copyright holder's name to the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any original Open Game Content you Distribute.

7. Use of Product Identity: You agree not to Use any Product Identity, including as an indication as to compatibility, except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of each element of that Product Identity. You agree not to indicate compatibility or co-adaptability with any Trademark or Registered Trademark in conjunction with a work containing Open Game Content except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of such Trademark or Registered Trademark. The use of any Product Identity in Open Game Content does not constitute a challenge to the ownership of that Product Identity. The owner of any Product Identity used in Open Game Content shall retain all rights, title and interest in and to that Product Identity.

8. Identification: If you distribute Open Game Content You must clearly indicate which portions of the work that you are distributing are Open Game Content.

9. Updating the License: Wizards or its designated Agents may publish updated versions of this License. You may use any authorized version of this License to copy, modify and distribute any Open Game Content originally distributed under any version of this License.

10. Copy of this License: You MUST include a copy of this License with every copy of the Open Game Content You Distribute.

11. Use of Contributor Credits: You may not market or advertise the Open Game Content using the name of any Contributor unless You have written permission from the Contributor to do so.

12. Inability to Comply: If it is impossible for You to comply with any of the terms of this License with respect to some or all of the Open Game Content due to statute, judicial order, or governmental regulation then You may not Use any Open Game Material so affected.

13. Termination: This License will terminate automatically if You fail to comply with all terms herein and fail to cure such breach within 30 days of becoming aware of the breach. All sublicenses shall survive the termination of this License.

14. Reformation: If any provision of this License is held to be unenforceable, such provision shall be reformed only to the extent necessary to make it enforceable.

15. COPYRIGHT NOTICE
Open Game License v 1.0a Copyright 2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
System Reference Document Copyright 2000-2003, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.; Authors Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Rich Baker, Andy Collins, David Noonan, Rich Redman, Bruce R. Cordell, based on original material by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson.

The Book of Roguish Luck, Copyright 2005 Wolfgang Baur. All rights reserved.

The Complete Book of Eldritch Might, Copyright 2004 Monte J. Cook. All rights reserved.

Monte Cook's Arcana Evolved Copyright 2005 Monte J. Cook. All rights reserved.

The Assassin's Handbook Copyright 2002 Green Ronin Publishing. All rights reserved.

Kobold Quarterly issue 3, Copyright 2008, Wolfgang Baur, www.wolfgangbaur.com. All rights reserved.

Edtime Stories



The Northern Realms with Ed Greenwood

By the Open Design Inquisitors

Ed Greenwood is a worldbuilder par excellence, with a hugely successful setting, novels, and even adventures written in his world. You may have heard of it: the Realms.

KOBOLD QUARTERLY: How did you get started in this crazy business?

Ed Greenwood: Years and years ago, as a voracious young reader and writer, I started spinning fantasy short stories set in my own world, mainly starring a fat, crafty, aging merchant called Mirt, in adventures up and down the Sword Coast.

By 1967, I knew it was called “the Forgotten Realms,” and why (we here in real-world Earth had “forgotten” how to reach it, though travel between the two worlds and many other fantasy settings had once been common).

I was interested in roleplaying when it first appeared, but the appearance of the AD&D books really hooked me, and I started reading “The Dragon” magazine, eventually becoming a subscriber with issue #19.

When TSR published the *Divine Right* game, I wrote an article covering some obvious mistakes: unfinished sentences in the printed rules, differences in army counters between the rules and the punch-out counter sheet. These were happily accepted, and published with other articles on the game in issue #34.

In the meantime, I’d become excited by the Dragon’s Bestiary column,

which promised that published monsters would be official. So I wrote up “the Curst,” sent it in, and got published (in issue #30). Whee! I promptly wrote “The Crawling Claw,” mailed it, and 16 days later the published issue (#32) came back to me with the monster printed in it!

“Wow, they must be desperate for monsters!” I thought, and set to work. I drew the rather crude illustrations for those first two monsters at postage stamp size, to make sure there would be room for all the text; they didn’t look quite so clumsy in their original incarnations, before being blown up to larger size.

A steady stream of articles followed; I impressed Kim Mohan with my gates article (published in #37), because it was the first submission to DRAGON he’d ever seen that included footnotes.

What is your typical work day like? What do you do to stay inspired?

I do have a public library “day job” with varying shifts that make it hard to think of any work day as “typical,” but for the last few years, I have been so busy with various writing and design projects that I’m constantly racing to tackle whatever’s most imminent, with short breaks to handle “must deal with *Right Now*” moments with the other projects.

Three things keep me inspired: shifting from project to project, each with its own challenges and plots and issues

to think over; going to conventions to meet fellow gamers and answering their Realmslore queries as daily as I can manage, at Candlekeep (www.candlekeep.com) and elsewhere; and working with other writers, from students taking their first tentative steps into storytelling, to friends established in the field that I chat about particular books with.

I come back from a typical convention physically exhausted, but creatively recharged, and eager to get back to the old keyboard.

What advice would you give to someone developing their craft as a writer? A game designer? Developer?

Because of the way I got into these creative fields, and how long ago it was (when conditions were very different), I can’t say a lot that’s useful about how to break in. Regarding just *being* a writer, designer, or editor: never stop developing your craft. Keep reading all sorts of fiction (*Read, read, read!*), game adventures, and rules sets.

Look up from that reading often to stay aware of the changing tastes and market forces in fiction writing, gaming, and publishing, and so set what you’re reading in context of “what’s happening.” Play games of all sorts, and not just with your friends or established gaming partners. One of the most eye-opening experiences a game designer can have is to attend a distant convention and watch what

other people do with his or her rules.

Not everyone interprets rules the same way, and all gamers bend rules to make the game better suit their tastes. A game designer can learn a lot from what's been changed, and how much of game play is determined by his or her own GMing style, as opposed to what's printed in the rules.

Never stop learning, and never think you've "arrived," mastered it, and are done —because that means you will be: done, finished, and left behind. Gaming and fiction writing are service industries: it's what the reader or player wants that matters, not your "genius" in deciding what to give them.

Over the years the world's most popular roleplaying game has gone through many rules changes and some changes to the story or background. What makes the game quint-essentially draconic, dungeon-based roleplaying? What keeps it from being just another fantasy RPG?

It is a fun, fast-paced game of adventuring through cooperation — the limited-expertise character classes force characters to work together to enjoy sustained success. Whenever rules triumph too far over roleplaying (acting and imagining), and attempts at detailed combat or simulation triumph over simplicity and fast pacing, the game suffers. Gamers seeking those things should probably use a different rules system.

The commercial needs of game companies involve adding ever-more rules and setting lore, but gamers should consider them suggestions and use just what they like (except in tournament situations). The "grand old man" of fantasy roleplaying games should always have simple rules that encourage fast-paced play, lots of roleplaying, and cooperation among a team of adventuring heroes at its heart. Drifts away from these things just don't work as well.

I'm curious about 4E's plans for the Realms. The points of light, ditching the cosmic wheel, and moving FR into the future when what we know (including Elminster) is gone. What's your take on this?

At the time I'm making this reply, I am somewhat limited in what I can say by the non-disclosure agreements I've signed with Wizards of the Coast, and even more limited by what I just don't know yet.

Since the start of the published Realms, there have been ongoing discussions about its future: events, large and small, that happen in novels and game products that "change" the setting, building its imaginary history (much of which, for those interested, was recently summarized in the *Grand History of the Realms* tome).

I have usually been involved in those discussions, and for the past few years have been part of meetings and talk leading to something called "the Spellplague," and what the Realms looks like after its arrival. There's a lot of buzz among gamers about this right now, and no wonder. Change is always both exciting and upsetting, and those who care deeply about the Realms care deeply about what happens to it. But there is very little useful that I can say, other than these tidbits: in real life, and in any imaginary world trying to seem real, change happens. Constantly.

I can't tell you a lot of the details of the changes planned for the Realms because many details haven't been decided yet, and because I'm frantically trying to write three novels first, so I can clear my mental decks and get to work on the new Realms.

Many gamers play the mental "If I ran WotC" game. When I do it, I can say that left to my druthers, I wouldn't have made any timeshifting changes in the Realms until I'd detailed a lot more of its geographical surface. That includes the other continents, all the gaps around the Heartlands where we have maps but not much else, in-depth noble family histories, legal codes, and religious observances.

However, I don't run WotC, and it would probably be a running disaster if I tried! I would never finish detailing this little corner and that little corner; the more I paint over and fill in, the harder it gets for new gamers and writers to feel at home to tell new stories.

So my take right now is: wait and see. Must finish novels ... must finish novels ...

What is your view on the Nine Hells because of the 4E changes, and what's your view of the arch-devils in KQ1 and KQ2?

Longtime readers of DRAGON know that I have a fondness for the Hells (articles in issues #75-76, and #91). I also wrote a long, never-published article that detailed talismans, diabolic symbols, summoning rituals, and the reasons for there being no Lucifer in the Hells: he and his consort (Batna, I believe) had offspring, their son Lucifuge, without the permission of Asmodeus.

His response was to slay all three and gave Lucifer's layer to his most hated rival, Baalzebul, as a warning to all other archdevils. This is why the Lord of Flies, out of all the archdevils, rules *two* layers.

I'd established that Asmodeus had earlier decreed that archdevils were not to have children without his permission, as only unique archdevils can produce unique archdevils. Such creatures are the most serious challenges to the "Asmodeus on top" status quo. (The article was killed because TSR feared that mischief-makers would chalk up the symbols I included on churches all over America, and *really* get them in trouble).

So I am very interested in what becomes of the Hells, but have no idea what 4E will do to the Hells. I have always preferred the Hells to be so darned dangerous that most mortal adventurers never get beyond the uppermost layer. Even that is roamed by outcast (unique) devils and monsters and "ruled" only in the immediate vicinity of the paltry forces commanded by whichever archdevil nominally rules it, anyway.

The archdevils that have thus far appeared in KOBOLD QUARTERLY are just fine, because they are interesting and readily deployable characters who can feature in a campaign, and they don't rule layers. Any number of archdevils can serve Asmodeus at his court, and go elsewhere at his bidding. They can act as retainers to (or allies of) the other layer-ruling archdevils, or they can lurk around as outcasts.

No rank in Hell precludes any unique devil from operating on their own behalf, both in the Hells and on

any other plane. An archdevil who is nominally an unattached ally of other archdevils still serves Asmodeus, and usually does so as a spy and messenger for him throughout the Hells.

After 20 years of novels and game books, how far has the published Realms changed from your original campaign world?

The Realms has seen some wholesale changes, such as the replacement of my original Moonshae Isles with a pre-existing campaign setting Doug Niles had dreamed up, and the insertion of quasi-real-world areas such as Kara-Tur and Maztica. It has also seen a lot of lore development, such as detailing the drow, adding the Imaskari, and lots of specifics about earlier, fallen kingdoms.

Until some of the wilderland areas “went missing” in the maps between the 2E and 3E versions of the Realms, the central areas (from Evermeet to the Spine of the World to Sossal to Raurin, and down to the Utter East, doubling back via Chult, Nimbral, and Lantan to Evermeet again) are basically the same as my original map.

We have piled up a lot of detail and made a lot of characters come alive, but things haven’t really changed much from my original concepts. It’s been coloring in detail, not wrenching change.

What is your favorite piece of the Realms added by someone else?

Which addition do you like least?

This is a tough one. My pet hates are adding real-world people (like the Dalai Lama) to the Realms, and adding areas that are too close to real-world places, because they inevitably get in the way of “in the Realms” roleplaying. Gamers start to think of real-world Roman tactics or how things worked in past Chinese dynasties, rather than discovering how things work in the Realms. Adding material too close to real-world settings or legends in the Realms is a mistake.

Nor can I choose a single favorite addition. I deeply admire the way Steven Schend brought kingdoms to life (especially Tethyr), and Elaine Cunningham seemingly read my mind to present readers with a Waterdeep that was *just* as I imagined it. I prize the many “elegantly explaining away contradictions” pieces of Realmslore crafted by Eric Boyd and George Krashos, and I’m gratified by the way Brian “Garen Thal” Cortijo understands Cormyr inside and out. I often revisit the striking city of Menzoberranzan that Bob Salvatore gave us all, in the classic novel *Homeland*.

I read that the Realms were originally a bawdier place—for instance, the

change to “festhalls” on a larger map. Do you lose any creative integrity when a project moves from the personal realm to production? Did you discuss the changes with Jeff Grubb?

Jeff and I talked constantly as I unfolded the Realms into TSR’s hands, and we forged a deep friendship, because early on we both concluded we could trust each other. I knew that TSR needed to make changes to have the Realms be what they’d bought it to be: the home setting for the 2E game.

They changed it to incorporate wide styles of play (pirate adventuring, aerial adventuring, underdark adventuring) and new avenues of gaming in computer games, but I also knew that Jeff loved and respected the Realms. If you both love a sandbox you are now sharing, neither of you wants to wreck it.

So from the first I have accepted that the published Realms would vary from my original. One of the main reasons I agreed to sell the Realms is because I gained something valuable as well: for the first time ever, my own created world could surprise me. Other creative hands put characters, events, and even places there for me to stumble on.

I think of my original Realms as a lady I’ve grown up with, see every day, and know very well—and the published Realms as what she looks like when she puts on elegant clothes, per-

Coming Next Issue

Dragons and Hot Elf Babes! Yes, it’s time for the staples of fantasy, those beauties we all drool over: dragons! Also, hot elf chicks. And the long-awaited “Sex and D&D” expose. Seriously. It’s all coming in April.

A Hope of Angels

by Tim Connors

If you think angels are always friendly, think again. It’s time to make the heavens ring! Angels as figures of awe, justice, and even fear — especially for player characters on the grey side of the alignment chart.

Gnomes for 4th Edition

by David Schwartz

Looks like gnomes are not in the PHB for the new edition. Why let that stop you? We reinvent gnomes for a new generation and a new style of fantasy.

Plus maybe, but not probably, articles about bardic instruments, an artist interview, dragons, RST naming rules, an ecology we’re still trying to pin down, and something about why knights bothered to ride horses. Or maybe not.



TALISMAN



*F*ight the minions of dark gods. Depraved souls who think that ending the universe will make things better. They own chemical plants that spew toxins to push fragile ecosystems over the edge. They run pharmaceutical companies so that they can addict a generation to mind-altering drugs. They murder innocent people in broad daylight to spread fear, produce reality television to play on our natural greed, and design advertising to promote low self-esteem. And most people never realize.

It's not all bad. For every one of them, there's one of us. I represent the light gods who believe this universe is worthy of redemption. I'm a warrior, a hunter. I track them as they go about their sordid business and when they make their move, when they think they've won, well that's when I take it all away from them: their smug smiles, their deranged hopes, their lives.

I finish my prayers and load the .44 Magnum. I have the power of a god in my hands, and I'm here to set things right.



SUZERAIN



**A Universe
In Gaming**

<http://talisman-studios.com>

fume, makeup, and an elegant public manner, and goes out to a high society event on a Friday night to leave people gasping. So I get to see her in the raw, so to speak, but I get to ogle and enjoy just like everyone else, too.

Speaking of bawdy, your writing is peppered with a lustier view of fantasy than most. Tell us about the rampant hedonism in your work.

This is where I'm supposed to go: Heh-heh. So (ahem) "heh-heh."

To state things more seriously than I usually do: I have been dedicated from the very first to thoroughly detailing a fantasy world (and I do mean thoroughly). Sex is one of the basics of existence. Whether gamers feature it in their games is entirely a matter of personal taste, but I mention it because it underlies many feuds, crises of crown succession in kingdoms, and rivalries in everyday life. It's a force for creating adventures: Rescue the princess! Save that virgin before she is sacrificed or turned to a horrible monster!

In a sourcebook that gamers pay good money for, sex is a strand that should always be there. Some will rightly argue that love is this strong motivator, but deep love can be passive, unspoken, unrequited, or long-range, whereas lust requires contact. And contact is where conflicts begin.

However, sex need never be in the foreground, and if you look at my fiction and game material, it hasn't been. I have never taken gamers inside the bedchambers of festhalls, or done much more in fiction than nudity, leering comments, kisses, and caresses. Some Realms writers have done detailed sex scenes, but I rarely do in my Realms work. Titillation, yes, and joking about it or raising the possibility—because I want to make my characters realistic. That involves presenting readers with all of human nature.

Like it or not, human nature is er, closely entwined with matters sexual. A magazine staffer once nixed an article on the grounds that I couldn't say that Lancelot and Guinevere were "lovers" (since she was married to King Arthur at the time, that would imply behavior that is illegal in some states). I consider that attitude ridiculous. Avoiding men-

tion of sex is always silly, and repression always leads to bad consequences.

Sex is a large part of life in the Realms, a world in which death is always lurking close by, as adventurers know only too well. Anyone who has been in dangerous situations for long periods will tell you that facing death spurs most humans to frantic pursuit of sex (again, human nature).

In the Realms, brothels are largely for men, and separate clubs cater to female clientele and to specific tastes. Friendships and contacts are made there, and people hire help for shady adventuring work. It is where illicit deals are made there, as well as being places where sex is bought and sold. Veteran adventurers frequent brothels even if they have no interest in buying sex, because it's where you can buy information, hire local spies, and find experts of various sorts.

Not to include brothels would be like thoroughly describing modern real-world America without mentioning fast food restaurants or gas stations. It can certainly be done, but why stint on the reality?

Peter Archer, the former head of book publishing at Wizards, jokingly promised to someday publish a book called *Edtime Stories*, so I'd write short stories feature the Simbul making love to Elminster in midair all across the Realms, Storm bedding Harpers in her farmhouse, Malaugrym shapechanging wildly during sex, Alustriel's orgies, dragonback sex, and so on. It was meant as a joke and I took it as one—because I would never want to write such stories unless the sex was central to their plots. Arranging such plots would involve pushing things too far for most Realms readers. (*Editor: We're ready to preorder this book, but we can't seem to find it on Amazon. Get crackin', WotC.*)

On the other hand, *sensual* writing that makes the reader feel they are there by describing smells, tastes, what characters feel as they touch things, that is something that should always feature in good fantasy fiction, everywhere and all the time. I want to taste the meals Volo wolfs down and then sneers at, smell the chill morning mist in the forest glades and the comforting

woodsmoke of the hearthfire. If misfortune befalls me, even feel the icy pain of a swordthrust.

The Realms setting is so magic rich—what led you to create it that way? Did you think it would affect the stories that could be told in the setting?

Yes, indeed. When reading the original game rules, I couldn't understand why anyone would trouble to create curse items, or how wizards could survive to any level of competence without being enslaved or killed by more powerful wizards, unless magic was busting out all over.

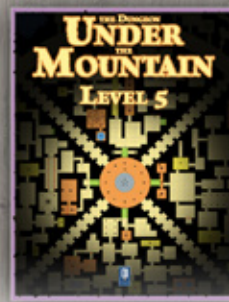
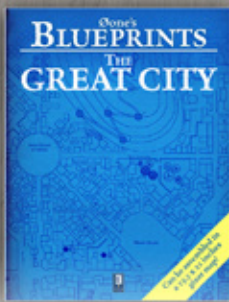
In those days, with limited game rules and material, many gamers memorized everything. They knew what spell, magic item, or monster they were facing by the DM's description. So I set out to bring the roleplaying back by snowing everyone under with a profusion of new and variant spells, items, and monsters. I've created literally hundreds of each because I wanted a Realms awash in magic, so no player could memorize everything.

For years I have created and employed spellcasting, mantles, mythals, truenames, table magic, and other ways of wielding magic aside from the standard casting methods, to encourage players to roleplay by constantly hitting them with the unfamiliar. I even made it one of the tasks of the Chosen of Mystra to plant scrolls, spellbooks, and magic items in dungeons for adventurers to find, rather than everything having been scoured out years ago.

The same folks who dislike the Chosen (because they "do everything, instead of the PCs being the heroes") also mistakenly assume that every last farmer, wandering orc, and dairy-maid in the Realms knows and can use magic. They claim the Realms is therefore some munchkin-rife setting where everyone flies around blasting each other, all day long.

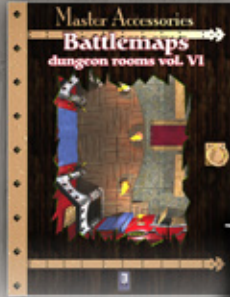
Arcane magic in the Realms is "the Art," and few folk have the talent for it. There are centuries of magical research, experimentation, lore, and deception built up in the Realms—but the sword, cudgel, and plough still dominate most places and win most daily arguments.

I am a storyteller first and foremost,



MAPS

Old fashioned maps, color maps, mammoth dungeons...



BATTELMAPS

gorgeous top-down perspective battlemaps, large maps, customizable battlemaps and fantasy locations



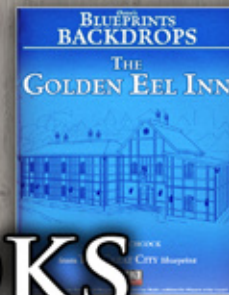
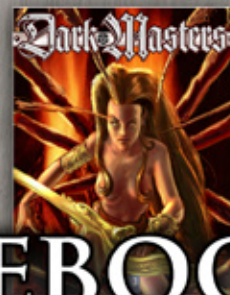
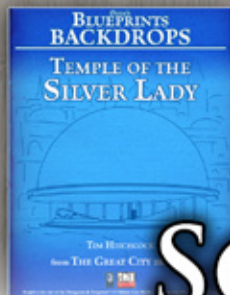
TILES

6x8 tiles, castle building tileset, tile making tools



ADVENTURES

D20 adventures, OSRIC classic adventures, campaigns and single, fully detailed rooms



SOURCEBOOKS

Urban backdrops with customizable maps, d20 fantasy sourcebooks

and magic provides more interesting spurs to tell interesting stories. The mistake is to lazily tell stories about ever-larger powers and effects, and so start an “arms race” of Realms Shaking Events each trying to outdo the last.

Sometimes Zhentarim and Red Wizards pick their noses, stumble on stairs, and are just as small and petty as those who have no magic at all.

WotC is promising that you will be involved in the RPGA's new Realms campaign starting next year. What will your level of involvement be? What are your expectations for the campaign?

As of this writing, I simply don't know yet. I am a Charter Lifetime Member of the RPGA and have written and played in tournaments aplenty. Over the years various computer systems have lost my points many times.

If it matters, I was ranked a 12th level judge and a 9th level player, won Best Player at an AD&D Open in the days when that counted for RPGA points, and reached the finals of the RPGA Open several times. Usually I had to bow out because of scheduling conflicts with TSR events I was running.

Last I heard, I'm officially still empowered to write certs, although I understand certs are no longer used. I recently returned from Australia, where I admired some superb, dedicated play set in Perrenland. Although the competitive side of RPGs has never appealed to me, I enjoy watching veteran roleplayers adventure together as old friends at convention after convention.

With all of that said, I am so blamed busy right now that I don't know just what I'll have time to do. I certainly want to be involved, and I know how to metaplot a long-term Realms campaign that can incorporate years' worth of adventures written by other folks.

What, if anything, would you love to add to the Realms?

We've never gotten around to properly detailing the faiths of the Realms: their prayers, their daily do's and don'ts, their internal aims and politics, their professed beliefs and strivings, and even their marriage and burial ceremonies.

From 1E onwards, I've been trying to make clerics more than just fighters who can heal fellow party members, and all too often blackmail them because of that healing. We've seen plenty of gods and avatars, but I'd prefer to see gods only as manifestations, ghostly voices that speak out of radiances around altars. I'd keep the gods awe-inspiring, but put the focus on the leading high priests.

Tell me about CASTLEMOURN. What's planned for it, and where is it at now? A player's guide and a campaign setting book have been published, and a story was serialized in GAME TRADE magazine. At least one big CASTLEMOURN adventure is lurking in the pre-publication shadows, but I can't say when you'll see more.

I had great fun crafting the setting, and Margaret Weis Productions did a beautiful job with it. CASTLEMOURN is a mountain-locked crescent of kingdoms facing a bay with an arc of iron-rich islands; stormy seas in all directions largely isolate it. It could be part of any fantasy world, including the Realms or any homebrew campaign. A great magical war some centuries back ended in disaster, a “Fall of the Castles.” Magic is feared and mistrusted, but folk who find the grand magic and items of yesteryear in monster-haunted ruins can become very powerful.

The important thing isn't the tiny pantheon of gods or the backstory, however: it's the lands themselves. I designed them to be as interesting as possible, to (like the Realms) be the home of a long-lasting campaign, or even a series of campaigns.

I would love to *really* detail all of those countries, but that takes two things none of us ever has enough of: time and money. That is, prying some creative time free from my other commitments, and strong ongoing CASTLEMOURN sales. None of which should discourage anyone from looking at the book, and using it as, yep, a campaign setting—even if we never publish another word. If you leaf through it and read the country descriptions and see the adventure ideas, you'll know exactly what I mean.

Nor is CASTLEMOURN the only

setting up my sleeve. Watch for something called Embersea.

You're a novelist and a game designer. How do you relate the two?

I bounce off both sorts of creation: game design and fiction writing. I do shorter fiction as well as novels, and my short stories are often different from my usual fantasy fare. It might be horror, Arthurian fantasy, superhero or pulp adventure tales for anthologies.

Writing novels earns me enough to keep eating, so I can play in the game sandbox (which earns me enough to, er, buy the occasional game). Doing one re-energizes me for the other, and the groundwork that a game designer does ensures that I never cut corners with fiction: I always know the coinage and prevalent weather of my invented locales, as well as the nearest drinking water and how good the local gossip grapevine is.

I love doing both, and never want to stop doing either or have to choose between them. As a library person for over 30 years now, I have always felt at home in the world of publishing. My fiction successes plus game industry participation have given me a nice overview of the everchanging landscape of North American publishing and entertainment. At heart, I'm both a storyteller and a world-builder, which are really two doors into the same house.

Okay, we understand you have to go write some novels. We'll bite: What all are you writing now?

I am polishing up *Archwizard*, the second book in my Falconfar trilogy (the first, *Dark Lord*, was published in the fall of 2007). I write Realms novels for Wizards, have a Niflheim series going for Tor Books, and am busy shaping the new game face of the Realms. About a dozen smaller projects swirl around me constantly, a new replacement popping up as I finish each one. Most of these are things that must remain mysterious for now, because I haven't yet received permission to go public about them.

There's one constant in my life: it's never dull being Ed Greenwood, because I never have time to sit down and get bored. Be well, and *onwaaaard!* Ω

DWARVEN SWEATSHOPPE

IF IT FITS 'T DWARVEN, IT'S CRAP
IF IT AIN'T DWARVEN, IT'S CRAP



www.dwarvensweatshoppe.com

Think you know everything about your favorite spells?



Think again.

BEHIND THE SPELLS: COMPENDIUM

Enjoy the Fiction...

Use the Rules...

Game on.



WWW.TRICKYOWLBEAR.COM

An OGL compilation
of the popular PDF series
with bonus material.

Coming in 2008.

Ask the Kobold

Mastering the Spellmaster

by Skip Williams

Skip Williams is a co-author of 3rd Edition and the author of the world's longest-running rules advice column. We are delighted to offer his wisdom in our pages.

If you have a question for the kobold, send it to tsrsage@aol.com.

I'm curious about the spellmaster from the Advanced Player's Manual from Green Ronin. I'm wondering if a spellmaster would be effective as a group's primary spellcaster.

Wisdom seems to govern a spellmaster's spells. Does that mean a spellmaster gets bonus spell slots for having a high Wisdom score?

No, the class description says spellmasters don't gain extra spells from high Wisdom scores—see page 31 in the *Advanced Player's Manual*.

Keep in mind, however, that a spellmaster doesn't have to use a slot to cast a spell. If you have some time and take a risk, you can power a spell without using a slot.

The way to wring the most from a spellmaster is to load up on defensive spells (best cast without using slots), then power and hold a few spells, which you can then cast normally. Until you hit 5th level, you can hold only one spell at a time, so it is best to pack some scrolls or wands.

Does the spellmaster still use her Intelligence modifier for Spellcraft checks even though her spellcasting is linked to Wisdom? To add a new spell to her catalog of available spells, a spellmaster must make Spellcraft checks. Shouldn't those be Wisdom checks?

Spellcraft is the skill all characters

use to identify spells and to unravel their secrets. Spellcraft is an Intelligence skill, and a spellmaster uses her Intelligence modifier for Spellcraft checks, just as any other character must do. In short, a spellmaster uses Wisdom to cast a spell, but acquiring and learning the spell in the first place tests the character's Intelligence.

I'm confused about how the spellmaster casts a spell. Can you explain the steps?

Okay, consider Jinjur, a 1st-level spellmaster with a Wisdom score of 14. Jinjur has not used any of her spell slots today. When she and some allies enter a dungeon and kick in a door, they discover a nest of monstrous spiders and Jinjur decides use *heat lightning* (a 1st-level spell from the *Advanced Player's Manual*) against them.

Jinjur is aware of *heat lightning*, and she's in a bit of a hurry, so she decides to cast the spell using a spell slot.

To power the spell, Jinjur must make a DC 11 sense magic check (the DC for a slotted spell is 10 + spell level). Jinjur needs 1d4–2 rounds (minimum 1 round) to power the spell. (The base time to power a 1st-level spell is 1d4 rounds, minus the spellmaster's Wisdom modifier, as shown on page 31 in the *Advanced Player's Manual*.) If the roll on the d4 is a "4" Jinjur needs two rounds to power the spell. She must use a standard action (which does not provoke an attack of opportunity) each of those two rounds.

It's not clear from the class description, but you can finish gathering

power and cast a spell as part of the same action, if the spell has a casting time of one standard action or less. If you use this trick, you can't do anything to speed up the spell casting during that final round because you must use a standard action to gather power.

Back to our example: Jinjur chooses to cast *heat lightning* on round one and begins gathering power for the spell, using a standard action. On round two, Jinjur uses another standard action to finish the spell, and she can cast it at the same time. Though gathering energy for the spell does not provoke an attack of opportunity, casting the spell does.

Jinjur could instead use a full-round action on round one to gather two rounds worth of power. This would allow her to cast the spell on round one (as part of the full-round action) or wait until round two, when she can cast the spell as a standard action—more about this in a later question.

If Jinjur decides to cast *heat lightning* without using a spell slot, the sense magic DC is 17 (15 + twice the spell's level). It takes one minute to gather power for the spell (1d2–2 minutes in Jinjur's case, minimum one minute). Jinjur must use a standard action each round of each minute to gather power for the spell. The action does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

Can a spellmaster have a gap between rounds gathering magic?



CAPTURE LOST KOBOLDS!

Back issues of *Kobold Quarterly* are available to right-thinking Humanoids, Giants, and Outsiders of all subtypes.

ISSUE 1  Ecology of the Derro Prince of Hell Erik Mona Interview Steam & Sorcery AVAILABLE IN PDF!	ISSUE 2  Ecology of the Barghest Baron of Hell Wayne Reynolds Interview Creating Better Characters AVAILABLE IN PDF!	ISSUE 3  Ecology of the Lich Perfect Power Attacks Ed Greenwood Interview Star & Shadow Magic AVAILABLE IN PRINT!
---	---	--

PDF Back Issues

\$6 at paizo.com.

Print Back Issues

\$8 + shipping*

Issue 1+2 SOLD OUT

Issue 3 x ____ + shipping = \$ _____

Total = \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

ZIP Code: _____ Country: _____

Remit funds by PayPal to: koboldquarterly@gmail.com.

Send check or money order to: *Kobold Quarterly*
PO Box 2811
Kirkland, WA 98083, U.S.A.

*Shipping is \$3 (US), \$4 (Canada), and \$6 (everywhere else).

Kobold Quarterly and *Open Design* are trademarks of Wolfgang Baur. All rights reserved. © 2007. Don't make us gnaw your ankles in rage.

That is, could he sense magic prepare for one round, then go dungeon-crawling and gather that last bit of magic just before he needs it to use in combat?

The spellmaster must use a standard action each round to gather power for a spell (see previous answer). You don't need to gather magic on consecutive rounds, and there are no limits on what you can do while you've stopped gathering power.

If you lose consciousness before you've gathered all the power you need, however, you lose your gathered power (but not a spell slot you used, if any). In that case, you must start over and gather power from the start after you have regained consciousness.

In the previous example, Jinjur must gather magic on two rounds (using a standard action each time). The spellmaster could, for example, gather magic one round, shoot a crossbow the next round, and gather magic on the third round to completely power the spell.

It is possible for a spellmaster to gather power for any spell until there is only one round of power left to collect, then finish the spell when needed. Remember that a spellmaster can gather power for only one spell at a time. If you try this and later decide you would rather cast a different spell, you lose all the power you have gathered, but you don't lose the spell slot you've used for the spell (assuming you've used a slot at all).

If the delay between starting and finishing the spell has been long, say 5 minutes or more, the DM might require the spellmaster to make a sense magic check (with the same DC as the check to start the spell) when the spellmaster starts gathering power again. This would represent the difficulty the character encounters when picking up the incomplete task after an absence or distraction.

If a spellmaster holds a spell with the hold spell ability, does she require a standard action to release or cast it? Or can it be released as an immediate or swift action?

The spellmaster uses the standard casting time for the spell and can use a metamagic feat to speed the casting.

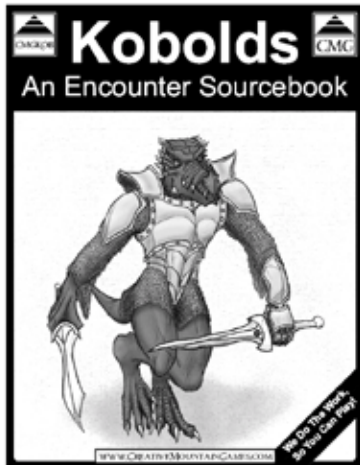
If she does so, she must use the spell's higher metamagic level to determine how long it takes to gather power for the spell (see APH, page 32). If Jinjur from our prior example decides to power up a quickened *heat lightning* spell she must treat it as a 5th-level spell (because the Quicken Spell feat increases the spell's level by +4 for purposes of casting the spell).

Because Jinjur is only 1st level, she doesn't have a 5th-level spell slot and so she must power the spell without using a slot. The sense magic DC is 25 (15 + twice the spell's level) and beyond Jinjur's reach without a Wisdom boost or some other bonus to the check.

For purposes of our example, however, Jinjur would need 1d8–2 minutes to gather power for the spell (minimum one minute). After she finishes gathering power, Jinjur is free to cast it as a quickened spell, that is, as a free action.



Kobolds



What do a barbarian, druid, rogue and assassin have in common? Here they are all kobolds and ready to drop into your game on your unsuspecting players!

Go Get `Em!

WWW.CREATIVEMOUNTAINGAMES.COM

HIGH PSIONICS

EXPLORE THE OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO PSIONIC CHARACTERS...

UNLEASH THOSE THINGS THAT EVEN THE MOST POWERFUL MANIFESTER FEAR...

THE CHOICE IS YOURS.



AVAILABLE ELECTRONICALLY FROM
WWW.DREAMSCARREDPRESS.COM
AND OTHER FINE PDF DISTRIBUTORS:

OPTIMIZING POWER ATTACK

THE MATHEMATICS OF COMBAT

BY JONATHAN DRAIN



Fighters make unwieldy swings with with Power Attack, rangers loose volleys from their leafy hiding places with Rapid Shot, and monks train to unleash a Flurry of Blows with fists as fast as lightning.

Under the bonnet, however, these three abilities work in a similar manner, allowing a combatant to take an attack penalty in the hopes of dealing more damage per round overall. This article examines the odds underlying each of these options, shows you how to give your PC an edge in combat, and provides some general trends for the math-averse.

Power Attack

In some groups, this feat is taken by fighters only as a stepping-stone to something like the Cleave feat and used rarely, if used at all. However, other groups rely on it heavily, and it is a good way to squeeze a little extra juice out of your damage output.

Power Attack is always a gamble. You deal extra damage if you hit, but increase the likelihood that you won't hit at all. Unless the situation is desperate or you are feeling lucky, your chances are best if you perform some basic calculations ahead of time – don't worry, the mathematics is quite straightforward, and I will explain it as we go.

We need to know two main figures. The first is your chance to hit a target of a certain Armor Class, which will range from 5% (you only hit this AC on a natural 20) to 95% (you

can't miss this except on a natural 1). The second number is your average damage on a successful hit. Multiplying these values gives you an "average damage per round" figure. By decreasing your hit-chance and increasing your per-hit damage by an equivalent amount, we can compare the results and come to an optimum balance.

Don't feel like you are cheating by using this method. Figuring out an opponent's weaknesses in a fight is a valuable element of combat, and this can be something for you to work into your character.

The Method

To optimize your power attack you need to know just two things: your percentage chance to hit, and your average damage with the weapon.

1. Calculate your chance to hit. For each number on the d20 that you will successfully hit a given AC, your chance is worth 0.05, or 5% if you prefer. If you've got time to prepare or have a clever spreadsheet drawn up, you can do this once for each value from 5% to 95%, but if you're limited you might simply take a sample set of common values (for example, natural rolls of 20, 15, 10 and 5).

2. Calculate your average damage per successful hit. This is more straightforward, since it will usually remain constant against all opponents. The average damage of a regular die is the half the maximum plus 0.5 - for example, 1d8 averages

to 4.5, while 1d8+1 averages to 5.5, one higher. 2d6 tidily averages to 7.

3. Multiply the two to find your average damage per round. You'll need to do this once for each "chance to hit" value you've got.

4. Power Attack for one point. Subtract 0.05 from your to-hit chance and add 1 point to the damage per hit, as if you'd Power Attacked for one point. Multiply the two and record the value, hoping for a higher "average damage per round" than before. Remember that in the game's 3.5 revision, if you're wielding a two-handed weapon you add double the attack penalty, while a light weapon doesn't benefit from Power Attack damage at all.

5. Power Attack for more points. Repeat step 4 until you reach the limit of your Base Attack Bonus. Which value resulted in the highest average damage per round? That's your optimum hit chance.

There is a downside to this. This method can take quite some time if you are calculating for the full range of hit chance and have a particularly high base attack. If you are intent on doing this for a large set of values, fire up some office software to crunch the numbers. This is especially handy when your statistics later improve due to class abilities and magic items.

Using the results in combat is quite straightforward, even when you do not know your opponent's Armor Class. In the first round, you can attempt to discern your opponent's

AC by watching what attacks hit. As the fight progresses, you can get a progressively better idea of his AC, and using the results you've worked out in advance, you can apply your Power Attack even more effectively.

Example

Gorlarg is a 5th-level fighter with 16 Strength and a +1 *longsword*, giving him +9 to attack and 1d8+4 damage. He expects to fight a troll, which he knows has an AC of 16.

Gorlarg's player calculates his to-hit chance here as 70%, since he can hit on a roll of 7 or higher, and his average damage per successful hit as 8.5 (4.5+4). He multiplies the two (0.7 x 8.5) to get 5.95 - this is his average damage per round against AC 16.

Gorlarg's player calculates the effect of Power Attack for one point. His attack hits 65% of the time and deals 9.5 points of damage; multiplying the two (0.65 x 9.5) gives an average damage per round of 6.175 - slightly higher than before!

With a base attack of five, he then calculates four more times for penalties of up to -5, or -0.25. He finds that the optimal value is three points of Power Attack: -3 to attack and +3 to damage gives him an average of 6.325 (0.55 x 11.5). He uses this to his advantage later when Gorlarg finally fights the troll.

Although an increase of only one point of damage per three rounds may seem like a small amount, the value of Power Attack varies considerably depending on your opponent. If you are finding the mathematics taxing, skip to the "general trends" for some more straightforward, practical advice.

General Trends

If all this math seems like too much work, consider these five handy guidelines.

1. Power attack becomes less effective as your natural damage output increases. The higher your

normal damage, the more you're risking whenever you take a hit penalty. Power Attack thus becomes progressively weaker at high levels, as your regular damage dwarfs any benefit from the feat.

2. Power Attack becomes more effective as your target becomes easier to hit. The higher your chance to hit, the less you're risking when you use Power Attack. Always use it on high-HP, low-AC creatures like oozes — at least, the ones that don't dissolve your weapons.

3. Power Attack works better on single attacks, especially as a charge. On a full attack, you risk your lower iterative attacks missing completely. It's even worse with Two-Weapon Fighting, since you take an attack penalty (see point 2) and lose the damage bonus on a light off-hand weapon.

On the other hand, it's great on a charge — the +2 bonus to hit is converted directly into two points of damage, or four points if your weapon is two-handed.

4. Power Attack is more effective against opponents who are immune to critical hits. This is because critical hits increase overall damage output (see point 1). A keen scimitar's 15-20 threat range can improve average damage by up to 30%, and you can lose that by taking an attack penalty. Power Attack is thus more useful against opponents immune to critical hits, especially elementals who have a lot of hit points.

5. In a few circumstance, you should always Power Attack. If you cannot hit an opponent except on a natural 20, then you have nothing to lose by maximizing your Power Attack penalty. Remember that Power Attack damage is multiplied on a critical, so a lucky hit this way can be lethal. Conversely, if you cannot miss except on a natural 1, you should power attack at least until you can

still hit on a natural roll of 2 or 3. Once again, this is powerful against oozes.

Advanced Factors

The Power Attack curve is not always as simple as it seems. If you are serious about maximizing your power output, several other factors affect your overall damage and things like multiple attacks per round can add to the algorithm. Thankfully, they are relatively simple to factor in.

Critical hits: Unless your opponent is immune to critical hits, critical hits can boost your average damage output, since you are deal bonus damage a small amount of the time. If you miss on a natural 1 and deal double on a natural 20, you are effectively striking successfully on one extra number.

Simply add 0.05 (or 5%) to your hit-chance for each number you threaten – add 10% if your weapon deals triple damage on a critical hit, or 15% for quadruple. Ignore the usual 95% limit here. However, ignore numbers which you can't hit on. For example, if you can't hit on a natural 18, treat it as a number you can't threaten a critical on either.

Multiple iterative attacks: If you have multiple attacks from a high Base Attack Bonus, add the hit chances together, with each hit having a 0.25 (25%) lower chance due to the -5 attack penalty.

The total in this case can exceed 1.0 (100%), although no individual attack can exceed the usual 0.95 (95%) limit (aside from critical hits, as above). For example, if you have attacks at +10/+5 and your first attack hits AC 21 half the time, your overall to-hit chance is 75%.

Two-Weapon Fighting: Remember that light weapons do not benefit from Power Attack. Since your off-hand weapon is usually a light weapon, it suffers the attack penalty without gaining any benefit from the

damage.

Bonus damage: Bonus damage is applied to damage as normal. Bonus dice of damage, however are not multiplied on a critical hit, and this can complicate things considerably if you need to calculate both critical hits and your Flaming weapon. If you really need the accuracy here, you can calculate the normal and bonus damage separately and add the two, but be warned that this takes considerable extra effort.

Damage reduction: This one is quite simple. Damage reduction which you can't overcome is essentially imposing a penalty to the damage you deal - simply deduct the damage reduction from your "average damage per successful hit".

Rapid Shot and Flurry of Blows

Much simpler than Power Attack, the Rapid Shot feat and the monk's Flurry of Blows ability function identically, at least until 5th level when the monk's penalty begins to lower. In either case, you're effectively dealing twice as much damage per round in exchange for a meager -2 attack penalty, equivalent to about -10% overall.

Statistically, this makes it a wise choice in almost all circumstances. The exception is if the opponent can only be hit on a natural 18 or higher. If you can only hit on an 18, a -2 penalty makes you one-third as likely to hit for the chance of striking only twice. If you can hit only on a 17 or 19 you only half your chance, but you also half your chance of confirming a critical hit - on a longbow, this is triple damage.

Rapid Shot is still worth using at higher levels when your Base Attack Bonus grants more attacks, although it provides a smaller percentage of your total damage since it's only one of many attacks.

Monks, on the other hand, only have the luxury of an iterative attack for one level before the Flurry of Blows penalty is removed completely, so a monk of 9th level or higher has no reason not to flurry when he can.



GAMER • BLING

You don't need it... but you know you want it.

Detailed reviews of the best accessories that role-playing has to offer today.

*"Truly, a pimptastic site of phat gamer loot."
- Wolfgang Baur*

Know what you're getting into... before you spend your filthy lucre.

*"Smart writing and a keen eye for detail. It's a fun read."
- gaygamer.net*

www.gamer-bling.com

GAMER • BLING

"COMMITMENT? DARLING, I LOVE THEM ALL!"

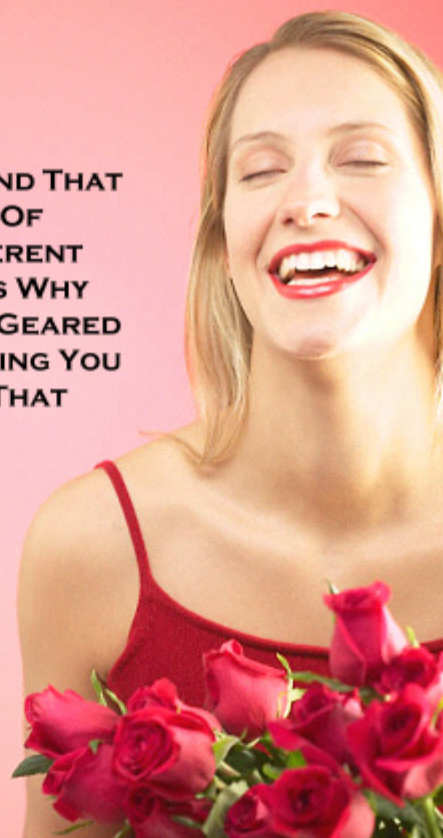
AT TOP FASHION GAMES, WE UNDERSTAND THAT OUR CUSTOMERS HAVE A WIDE VARIETY OF PREFERENCES WHEN IT COMES TO DIFFERENT GAME EDITIONS AND PLATFORMS. THAT'S WHY MANY OF OUR FANTASY PRODUCTS ARE GEARED TO BE MORE "UNIVERSAL", THUS ALLOWING YOU TO PICK THE GAME SYSTEM OR EDITION THAT YOU PREFER MOST.

CHECK OUT THE WIDE VARIETY OF SYSTEM GENERIC PRODUCTS FROM TOP FASHION GAMES AT RPGNOW.COM. LOOK FOR US UNDER THE DARK QUEST GAMES FAMILY OF COMPANIES.



**TOP
FASHION
GAMES**

WWW.DARKQUEST.COM



More than Dragon's Blood

New Ancestral Spirits for Sorcerers

by John E. Ling, Jr.



Many sorcerers claim their innate powers come from the dragon roosting in their family tree. Enough of them brag about their draconic ancestor to influence those who have no idea where their powers come from. Soon rumors spread, and an entire populace believes all sorcerers gain their powers from dragons.

Like most gossip, the rumors are half right. Some sorcerers owe their magic spark to draconic ancestry, but just as many gain their birthright from other creatures with a magical essence: fey, demons, and celestials.

Most of these sorcerous ancestors are long dead, and their spirits gone to their final resting place. In a few cases, the resting place proves not so final. Some sorcerers have discovered an ancient ritual that binds their ancestor's spirit to them, aiding them significantly throughout their life.

Spirits at the Start

The ancestral spirit is a variant rule you can use for your sorcerer in place of a familiar. When you select your first level of sorcerer, you must choose between a familiar or an ancestral spirit. This decision is irreversible.

The ritual requires 100 gp worth of rare herbs and incense, as well as 24 hours of uninterrupted concentration. When the sorcerer completes the ritual, he gains all the benefits appropriate to his level. If you later select another class that grants a

familiar, such as wizard, you gain that ability as normal, but your sorcerer levels no longer stack to determine the benefits of the familiar.

The ancestor's spirit has a profound effect on the sorcerer, physically and mentally. As soon as the ritual is complete, the sorcerer's appearance changes in a slight but noticeable way to take on aspects of the ancestor. His skin might take on a subtle hue, the pupils of his eyes might change from a typical circle to a more slit-like shape, or his hair might seem to blow in a breeze even when the air is still, and so on.

While a sorcerer can cover up these physical alterations in the short term, the ancestral spirit will not be denied. A sorcerer who covers his elongated fingernails with gloves might wake up one morning to find his skin color turned a bright red. For this reason, most sorcerers with an ancestral spirit learn to live with, and even embrace, these physical changes.

A sorcerer's link to his ancestral spirit is supernatural in nature, and antimagic areas suppress the effects. The sorcerer loses all ancestor benefits while in the area, though they return the moment the sorcerer exits the antimagic zone.

The sorcerer and his ancestor need not share the same alignment. A sorcerer who is multiclassed into a class with an alignment restriction – such as monk or paladin – does not suffer any ill-effects of having an ancestor with a different alignment. However,

the ancestor's spirit remains true to its nature. A chaotic evil ancestor – such as a black dragon – will tempt the sorcerer, whispering dark secrets. Only truly strong-willed heroes can bond with an ancestral spirit whose alignment opposes his and remain unchanged by the experience. The DM may decide that frequent temptations take their toll.

The exact benefits provided by the bond with the ancestral spirit are determined based on the base creature's abilities in life, though they all follow a specific pattern.

Alertness (Ex): As long as the sorcerer's link to his ancestral spirit is in place, he gains the Alertness feat.

Skill Boost (Ex): The ancestral spirit

Ancestral Spirit Benefits

Sorcerer Level	Benefit
1-4	Alertness, skill boost, speak language
5-8	Whispered lore +2
9-12	Ancestral resistance
13-16	Whispered lore +4
17-20	Improved Divination

grants the sorcerer a +3 bonus to a specific skill, much like a familiar grants a bonus to its master. The exact skill is determined by the racial skills the ancestor possessed in life.

Speak Language (Ex): The ancestral spirit's near constant presence grants the sorcerer the ability to speak, read,

and write any one language associated with the ancestor's creature type. This is a bonus language and does not count against the number of languages a character may learn at first level due to a high Intelligence. An antimagic field or similar ability does not suppress this ability, unlike the other benefits.

Whispered Lore (Su): Beginning at 5th level, the ancestral spirit aids the sorcerer by boosting the sorcerer's own knowledge with that of the ancestor.

The sorcerer gains a +2 circumstance bonus on all Knowledge (arcana) checks, as well as on a Knowledge skill determined by the ancestor's creature type. Ancestors whose type falls under Knowledge (arcana), such as dragons, grant a bonus to an additional Knowledge skill as appropriate for the creature (see the sample draconic ancestors below).

At 13th level, these bonuses increase to +4.

Ancestral Resistance (Su): At 9th level, the ancestral spirit infuses the sorcerer with a small piece of its essence. This materializes as either resistance 10 to a particular type of energy or as DR 5 to a specific substance, as determined by the ancestor's creature type.

Divination Boost (Su): By 17th level, the bond between the draconic ancestor and sorcerer is powerful enough for the ancestor to provide the sorcerer a small boost in his caster level. The sorcerer gains a +1 to his caster level to determine all the effects of any spell in the divination school. In addition, any saves against these spells has the DC increased by +2. This increase stacks with all other bonuses, including those granted by the Spell Focus and Greater Spell Focus feats.

Draconic Ancestor

Dragons are the most common ancestral spirit. Sorcerers who have such an ancestor gain the Draconic language at first level as a bonus

DRACONIC ANCESTOR BENEFITS

<i>Color</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Whispered Lore</i>	<i>Resistance</i>
Black	Swim	Knowledge (nature)	Acid 10
Blue	Bluff	Knowledge (the planes)	Electricity 10
Brass	Gather Info.	Knowledge (the planes)	Fire 10
Bronze	Survival	Knowledge (nature)	Electricity 10
Copper	Jump	Knowledge (geography)	Acid 10
Gold	Heal	Knowledge (local)	Fire 10
Green	Hide	Knowledge (local)	Acid 10
Red	Appraise	Knowledge (geography)	Fire 10
Silver	Disguise	Knowledge (architecture and engineering)	Cold 10
White	Move Silently	Knowledge (architecture and engineering)	Cold 10

language. The other benefits of the class feature are determined by the dragon's color in life.

Suggested appearance changes: The sorcerer's skin takes on a slight hint of the dragon's scale coloration, and his skin may become dry and scaly. At the player's option, the PC's eyes take on a more cat-like pupil or his hair color alters to match that of the dragon.

Fey Ancestor

Bonus Language: Fey, such as nymphs and dryads, grant their sorcerer ancestor the Sylvan language.

Skill Boost: A fey ancestor grants the sorcerer a +3 bonus to the Move Silently skill.

Whispered Lore: A sorcerer gains the appropriate bonuses to the Knowledge (nature) skill.

Ancestral Resistance: Sorcerers bound with a fey ancestor gain DR 5/cold iron at 9th level.

Suggested appearance changes: The sorcerer's skin may turn brown and slightly cracked, like bark. His hair is commonly brown in the winter, green in the spring and summer, and various shades of red and yellow during the autumn months. At the player's option, he loses all facial hair and his fingers and toes become elongated.

Demonic Ancestor

Bonus Language: Sorcerers gain the Abyssal language from their ancestor.

Skill Boost: The demonic ancestor grants the sorcerer a +3 bonus on Listen checks.

Whispered Lore: Sorcerers gain the appropriate bonuses to the Knowledge (the planes) skill.

Ancestral Resistance: The sorcerer gains resistance 10 to electricity as a result of his connection with the demonic ancestor.

Suggested appearance changes: Small horns may appear on the sorcerer's head, and his skin takes on blistered appearance. At the player's option, his eyes burn red.

Devil Ancestor

Bonus Language: Sorcerers with a devil ancestor gain the Infernal language.

Skill Boost: Devils grant the sorcerer a +3 bonus to Sense Motive.

Whispered Lore: Sorcerers gain the appropriate bonuses to the Knowledge (the planes) skill.

Ancestral Resistance: The sorcerer gains resistance 10 to fire.

Suggested appearance changes: The sorcerer could grow a prehensile tail, or could sprout horns upon his head. His skin might take on a red hue, or his eyes might glow as though reflecting a fire.

Archon Ancestor

Bonus Language: Sorcerers with a celestial ancestor gain the Celestial language.

Skill Boost: An archon ancestor grants a +3 bonus to the sorcerer's Spot skill.

Whispered Lore: Sorcerers with an archon ancestor gain bonuses from this class feature to the Knowledge (the planes) skill.

Ancestral Resistance: The sorcerer gains resistance 10 to electricity.

Suggested appearance changes: The sorcerer's eyes might glow brightly, like a lantern archon. Perhaps his hair rustles slightly in an ever-present breeze nobody else can feel.

Angelic Ancestor

Bonus Language: Sorcerers gain the Celestial language if they have an angelic ancestor.

Skill Boost: An angelic ancestor grants a +3 bonus to Diplomacy checks.

Whispered Lore: This benefit grants the sorcerer a bonus to Knowledge (the planes) checks.

Ancestral Resistance: Sorcerers with an angelic ancestor gain resistance 10 to cold.

Suggested appearance changes: The sorcerer's hair takes on a feathery appearance, perhaps even turning pure white in color. At the player's option, the PC's eyes are golden, silver, or purple, and his voice becomes more resonant, almost musical.

Elemental Ancestor

Whispered Lore: Sorcerers with an elemental ancestor gain a bonus to Knowledge (the planes) checks.

All other class abilities are determined by the type of elemental ancestor, as outlined in the Elemental Ancestor Benefits table.

Suggested appearance changes: An elemental ancestor offers a plethora

Elemental Ancestor Benefits

Type	Language	Skill Boost	Resistance
Air	Auran	+3 bonus to Listen	Electricity 10
Earth	Terran	+3 bonus to Spot	Acid 10
Fire	Ignan	+3 bonus to Listen	Fire 10
Water	Aquan	+3 bonus to Spot	Cold 10

of options; the sorcerer's skin color and hair might change – pale for air, ruddy for earth, red for fire, blue for water. His hair changes to take on the appearance of his element – wind-blown for air, hard and unmoving for earth, spiked for fire, or wavy for water.

Build Your Own Spirit

Many other creatures can make interesting ancestral spirits. For example, the naga, mephits, lycanthropes, and hags all have magical natures that could rub off on the sorcerer. The following guidelines can help you determine the appropriate abilities based on the ancestor's creature type.

Bonus Language: What languages are listed for the creature? If there is only one, the choice is easy; if multiple languages are available, choose the most iconic.

If the creature speaks only Common, choose a language that fits the creature's theme. For example, if the creature lives underground, Undercommon is a good choice; Sylvan is a good fit for forest creatures.

Try to avoid "dead" languages, as well as secret languages such as druidic. Typically, neither is an appropriate choice for a character who otherwise

would be barred from them.

Skill Boost: Does the creature have any racial bonuses to skills? If so, you should select one of those. If not, select a skill for which the creature has ranks, preferably the skill in which it has the most ranks.

Whispered Lore: Creature types are all associated with a Knowledge skill. This class feature grants its bonus to that skill. However, constructs, dragons, and magical beasts are already associated with Knowledge (arcana) – you will need to select a different Knowledge skill. Assign either a Knowledge skill that fits the flavor and theme of the creature, or assign one based on game balance.

Ancestral Resistance: Does the ancestral creature have immunity to an energy type? If so, that is the best candidate for this ability. If not, dig a little deeper to find an appropriate match. If the creature has high resistance to an energy type, you could go with that. Alternatively, if the creature has DR to material such as adamantine, alchemical silver, or cold iron that makes a fair ability for your sorcerer without overpowering him.

Most of all, use these ancestral tweaks to make your sorcerer work the way you want him to. Ω

Bolt & Quiver



Copyright ©2007 Stan!

by Stan!


www.boltandquiver.com

YOUR GAMES NOW



*Action-packed fun for
1 player and 1 GM in*
1 ON 1 ADVENTURES


1 on 1 Adventures #3
The Forbidden Hills
By Suzi Yee



An adventure designed for 1 GM and 1 player (Level 5-7 Barbarian or Ranger)

This module includes 20 adventure-packed pages, complete with detailed maps and descriptions, featuring a ready-made adventure. It has been crafted for one player and one GM to enjoy the endless gaming genre has adventures available to their world with minimal preparation time. With some minor editing, The Forbidden Hills is suitable for use with a traditional four player party.

If you enjoy this module, look for future releases in the One on One Adventures line from Expeditional Retreat Press.

Expeditional Retreat Press 

1 on 1 Adventures #2
The Star of Olindor
By Matthew J. Hanson




An adventure designed for 1 GM and 1 player (Level 6-8 Rogue)

This module includes 20 adventure-packed pages, complete with detailed maps and descriptions, featuring a ready-made adventure. It has been crafted for one player and one GM to enjoy the endless gaming genre has adventures available to their world with minimal preparation time. With some minor editing, The Star of Olindor is suitable for use with a traditional four player party.

If you enjoy this module, look for future releases in the One on One Adventures line from Expeditional Retreat Press.

Expeditional Retreat Press 


1 on 1 Adventures #7
Eyes of the Dragon
By Matthew Carson



An adventure designed for 1 GM and 1 player (Level 7-9 monk)

This module includes 20 adventure-packed pages, complete with detailed maps and descriptions, featuring a ready-made adventure. It has been crafted for one player and one GM to enjoy the endless gaming genre has adventures available to their world with minimal preparation time. With some minor editing, Eyes of the Dragon is suitable for use with a traditional four player party.

If you enjoy this module, look for future releases in the One on One Adventures line from Expeditional Retreat Press.

Expeditional Retreat Press 

**SHOP EXPEDITIONAL RETREAT
PRESS AT THE CO-OP!**

www.yourgamesnow.com

Eight Ways to up the Action!

Easy Variants for Cinematic Combat

by Benjamin Hayward
Art by Darren Calvert



Everyone talks about cinematic action, but few gamers really do anything like it at their game table. What's the problem?

Falling into a rut with RPG combats is all too easy, because the rules don't always reward taking risks. When fights turn into trading blows and you think action is moving your miniature to flank, you need to increase the excitement of your game. The following eight tips and variant rules give players a reason to try fancy maneuvers or sleek moves -- and you'll find that most of them are just itching for the chance.

1 - Use Improvised Weapons!

Maybe a bar fight breaks out and you want to hit a guy with a bar stool. Or your character doesn't have a ranged weapon, but you'd like to throw a few stones down the cavern. Why bother to improvise when your character takes a -4 penalty on the attack roll? Improvised weapons shouldn't be good, but they should at least be handy!

Drop the Penalty: With your DM's permission, your campaign can ignore the non-proficiency attack penalty on basic improvised weapons by treating such items as their weapon equivalents. For instance, an ale mug can do the damage of a gauntlet. A sharpened stick can do the damage of a dagger (without the increased threat range). A rock wielded in one hand can do the damage of a club. All of these weapons use the Simple Weapon Proficiency.

Even items that are not very aerodynamic can have a 10' range increment. Treat anything you swing in two hands -- such as a barstool or a smashed door -- as a greatclub with the Martial Weapon Proficiency. They're not great weapons, but they are just cool enough to give them a try.

An added bonus of these items is that you can treat them as nonlethal damage. In that case, improvised weapons make it much less likely that a street fight or bar brawl will lead to a bounty on the party and murder charges by the town watch.

2 - Chase Down Your Foes!

You're being pursued by the town guards. Your arch-nemesis cut his losses and runs. How can you up the action in one of these chase scenes when everyone runs at the same speed? Well, to start...

Roll for Initiative! In a chase, all characters act simultaneously, but initiative determines whether the fleeing characters have the advantage. Each pursuer a fleeing character beats in initiative has a slower start.

A pursuer can catch up by beating the fleeing character on an opposed Run check in the first round. Otherwise the pursuer falls behind that character for the rest of the race.

The Run Check: In a chase, foes make opposed Run checks. A Run check is really a Strength check, but it adds a character's size modifier to attack rolls (smaller creatures can take corners faster). Characters with a base speed over 30 feet gain a +5 bonus for every additional 5 feet base speed. Characters with a lower base speed take a -5 penalty for every 5 feet slower (so, a -10 penalty for characters with a 20 ft base speed). Characters with the Run feat gain a +5 bonus to the check. Each opposed check represents one round of movement.

Run checks determine who can attack. Each round after the first, a pursuer can make one attack against any fleeing character his Run check beats. Trip attempts and grapple check made while running do not provoke an attack of opportunity from a running target. Remember that a

running character adds add his Dexterity bonus to AC only if he has the Run feat.

If a pursuer's Run check is beaten by a fleeing character's check two rounds in a row, he falls behind that character and can never catch up.

Falling Behind: A pursuer who falls behind one character can still make attacks against other fleeing characters. Even in a two-person chase, he is not completely out of the race -- he is just trailing behind. A fleeing character can take a standard action instead of making a Run check -- such as mounting a horse or casting a spell -- but he suffers an automatic attack of opportunity from all pursuers who have not fallen behind.

A fleeing character whose opponents have all fallen behind can try to escape for good by making a Hide check opposed by the pursuers' Spot checks (a standard action). As another option, he can keep running ahead of his pursuers for a number of rounds equal to his Constitution score; after that, he must make Constitution checks each round to keep running (per the SRD).

In either case, all pursuers catch up to any character who takes a standard action instead of making a Run check.

3 - Climb the Giants

You don't duel a dragon by standing in front of it; you leap on its back in order to stab your sword through its tough hide -- but why would you bother? Clearly a house rule is in order.

If a PC can climb on the back of a creature at least two size categories larger, he gains +2 on attack rolls, the creature is considered flat-footed against your attacks, and your critical threats are automatically confirmed. That's how you take out a massive beast -- by stabbing your sword through its skull.

To enter a creature's square, you must make a DC 25 Tumble check to avoid an attack of opportunity, and then make Climb checks opposed by the creature's Strength checks to climb it. If you make a successful Jump check to reach the creature's back from above, a DC 15 Tumble check allows you to move through its threatened area.

In either case, you must make Balance checks opposed by the creature's Strength checks on both your turn and your opponent's turn to keep your footing. While clinging to a creature, you cannot take a full-attack action, and if you are knocked off, you fall prone in an adjacent square.

Combating a great brute in this way might be worth the risk, and it certainly gets the creature's attention!

4 - Distract your Foes

Dueling is not all about attacking and parrying. Use your movements to take advantage of your opponent in different ways. You can use the Bluff skill to feint in combat and the Intimidate skill to demoralize an opponent you are facing down, but, as standard actions, these are rarely viable options.

Instead, try making either check as a move action by taking a -10 penalty on your roll. This way, you can catch your opponent flat-footed immediately before striking, or your opponent becomes shaken as you attack – all part of a single combat round. For higher-level play, you can try either as a swift action by taking a -20 penalty on your opposed check. Note: If you have the Improved Feint feat, you may feint as a move action without penalty and as a swift action at only a -10.

5 - Leap in for the Attack

You can charge and jump, but these are always separate actions. What if you wanted to leap over the bar table to land an attack on an opponent or completely clear the front line warriors to strike at the wizard in back – don't these sound like charges?

Normally you can't charge through difficult terrain, low-obstacles, or creatures to get a +2 to attack, but now you can if you can jump over them! Succeeding in the appropriate high-jump or long-jump takes you right to your target as part of a reckless attack when you normally couldn't complete a charge. If you try to leap over an opponent, though, remem-

ber that creatures also threaten the 5-foot space immediately above them.

6 - Run on Walls

If they can do it in the movies, you should be able to do it the game, but what would you roll to run up a wall before leaping to grab for a ledge? Balance of course! This might be a trained-only use of the Balance skill, but with a few ranks, you can run along the surface of a wall just as you run along tree branches.

To accomplish this, roll the distance you run with the Balance skill the same way you roll for the distance with the Jump skill. Moving horizontally along a wall with a running start has a DC equal to the distance in feet you want to clear.

If you want to run up a wall with a running start, you make it up the wall a distance equal to 1/4 your Balance check result. Without a running start, double the DC. If you have at least one rank in the Jump skill, you can then attempt a standing-jump through the air starting from where you made it to after running along or up the wall.

7 - More Big Successes

Critical hits always excite people at the gaming table, but rolling a natural 20 on a skill check is a bit of a downer. You did well, but big whoop, it's no critical hit. When a 20 comes up on a skill check, you deserve a chance to confirm it for a critical success.

If you roll and confirm a natural 20, your PC accomplishes the task as if you rolled a 30. That big bonus is exciting for skill checks like Jump or Knowledge, but for most skills, beating the DC by that much isn't worth a lot.

For other skills, instead of treating the die roll as a 30, treat the result as if you had rolled with a -10 penalty and succeeded. If you can confirm your critical skill check after rolling a 20, the bonus should be as sweet as double damage.

As an example, your feint attempt becomes a move action rather than a standard action, you automatically gain accelerated movement for a Balance, Climb, Swim, or Tumble check, or maybe your DM will let you execute a full-attack action after a leaping charge as if you had the Pounce special ability.

8 - Describe Everything

Dice are only 10% of good action. The real action takes place in your mind, and

your description matters. Don't say "I attack" before you roll the die. The action word in the rules is fine some of the time. But it's a bit of a cop-out.

Instead, say something like, "Since Mathias is distracting the orc, I aim for its heart with my elven blade!" Not only will you picture more action, other players around the table will be more interested too. Instead of "I cast *magic missile*" try "I wave my hands and throw a small, bright star at the orc!" If combat is only as exciting as the dice in front of you, add your own spin to your actions. You'll be surprised by the difference it makes in a weekly game.

For DMs: Cinematic action works only if you reward players who add to dramatic, action-packed moments with their own descriptions. If a player's actions improve the atmosphere around the table, give him a +2 on his d20 rolls once or twice, or add a bonus to damage equal to his character's level to a flashy attack. Reward the players behind the screen, and at the end of the session, tell the players you did it. Let them know you appreciate what they're doing.

Next, you're in charge of the sessions, and that means you're in charge of the action. In many ways, you're more responsible than the players. Don't say, "You kill the orc." Even for a minion, give the player's action a big punchline. Try "Your arrow pierces the orc's jaw, stopping his charge and knocking his legs out from under him."

Likewise, if the characters are involved in a chase, describe the area they are rushing through each round. Describe an obstacle for each opposed Run check: "You chase the thief out of the alley and into the market. Vendors shout and leap out of your way as you dodge by them. Roll Run checks." The time you spend on description shouldn't be more than a sentence or two, but it matters.

When you describe the action of a scene, speaking a little faster, your players will hang on your every word. They'll imagine the action you describe rather than just looking at the miniatures.

Summary

Cinematic action is the result of taking a little extra time to reward DMs and players who want to fight and chase outside the standard attack/damage rolls. Try it with your game group next time, and write to KQ to tell us how it went.

Tangent Games

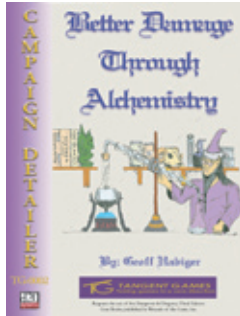
Check out our complete product line at our website or at ENWorld.org, RPGNow.com, and at DriveThruRPG.com.



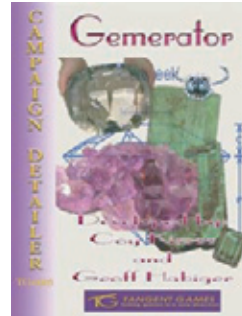
The Divine Order:
Jute - Faith of Creation



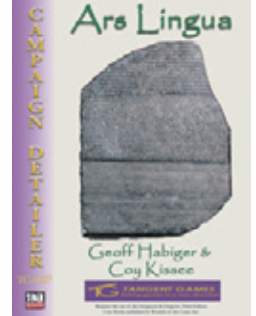
Brixbrix's Field Guide
to the Creatures of Ados



Better Damage
Through Alchemy



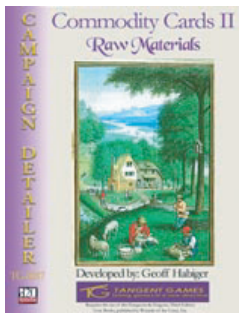
Generator



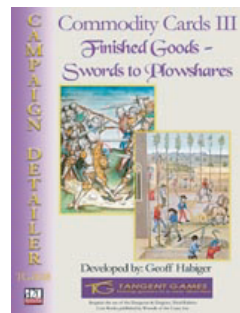
Ars Lingua



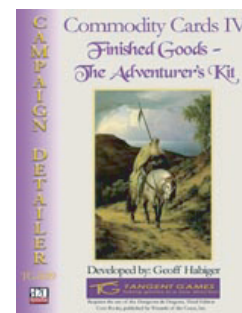
Commodity Cards I
Food & Drink



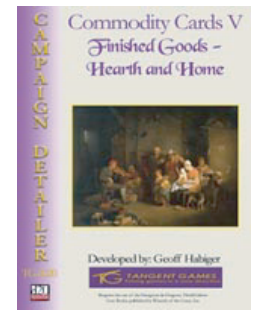
Commodity Cards II
Raw Materials



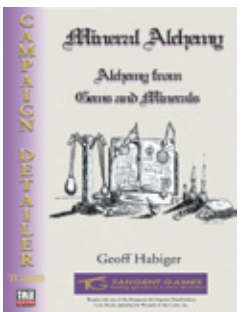
Commodity Cards III
Finished Goods
Swords to Plowshares



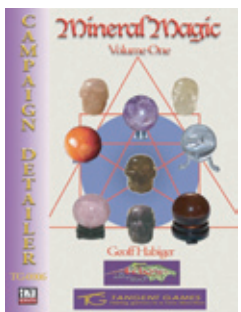
Commodity Cards IV
Finished Goods
The Adventurer's Kit



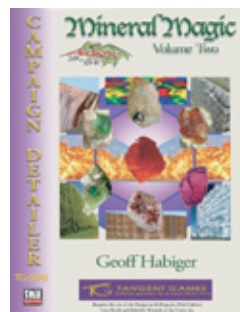
Commodity Cards V
Finished Goods
Hearth and Home



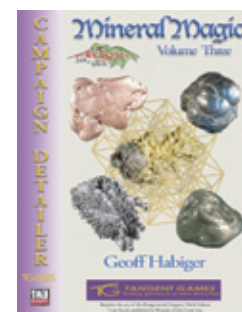
Mineral Alchemy:
Alchemy from Gems
and Minerals



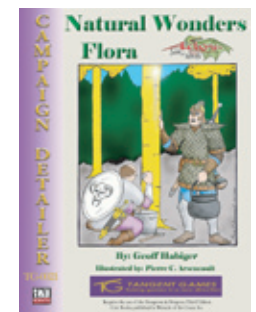
Mineral Magic
Volume One



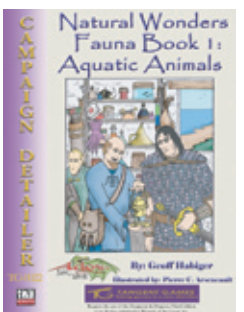
Mineral Magic
Volume Two



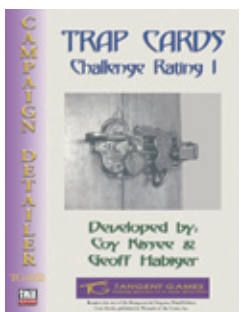
Mineral Magic
Volume Three



Natural Wonders
Flora



Natural Wonders
Fauna Book 1:
Aquatic Animals



Trap Cards
Challenge Rating 1



Creating role-playing games for those times
when your players head off on a tangent.

www.tangent-games.com

Coming soon from Tangent Games:
Children of the Planes by Chris & Christina McCoy. Art by John Ryan Byrd
Monster Spotlight: Shura by Geoff Habiger. Art by Mike Wagner

Dangerous Doors

by Stephen S. Greer

Much of the mystery and excitement that comes with a good adventure is finding out what lurks on the other side of the next door—the warped wooden one stuck in its frame with chattering sounds coming from beyond, the big iron one with the dragon face in relief with no apparent lock or handle that’s menacingly warm to the touch. However, sometimes it’s not what lies beyond the mysterious portal up ahead that can spell doom for the unwary. Occasionally it’s the door itself!

The following is a description of several door traps you can use to rattle, confuse, and inspire fear in your players the next time you announce, “You come to a door...”

Hot Door Handle (EL 1)

This simple trap fits a small metal box full of hot coals onto an iron door handle. Because it is in direct contact with the coals it becomes extremely hot. Anyone who touches the handle without gloves or other protective gear takes 1d6 points of fire damage.

Strong Wooden Door: 2 in. thick; hp 20; hardness 5; Break DC 23; Open Lock DC 25

Hot Door Handle: CR 1; mechanical, touch trigger; manual reset; burn (1d6, fire); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20; Cost to build: 5 gp.

Mancatcher (EL 2)

In dungeons or other locales inhabited by clever humanoids or monsters wary of intruders into their domiciles, adventuring parties might happen on a door meant to capture or delay them while alerting the dungeon occupants which can arrive a few rounds later to deal with the pesky trespassers while one of them still struggles to get free.

The mancatcher uses a slender manacle, like a handcuff recessed in the door’s frame. Anyone who applies pressure to the door’s handle, lock or latch activates the trap, which springs out and fastens around the culprit’s wrist. It also sounds a bell, chime, or gong at a tactical location such as a nearby guardroom.

This trap is designed for Medium creatures only and is ineffective against larger or smaller creatures. You may modify it for larger or smaller creatures, but it is only good against one specific size category.

Mancatcher: CR 2; mechanical, touch trigger; manual reset; Atk +10 melee touch (manacle, hp 5, hardness 10, DC 35 Escape Artist or DC 28 Strength check to break free); alarm in adjacent room; Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 20, Cost to build: 1,950 gp.

Firebreathing Door (EL 3)

A firebreathing door is a heavy stone door with a demonic face sculpted in relief on its surface. The fanged maw is open with a lit torch in a sconce within its mouth. A metal nozzle extends an inch out of its “throat”.

When trespassers step on the 10-ft.-by-10-ft. pressure plate in front of the door, oil in a pressurized reservoir within the door sprays in a 30 ft. line of flame as the torch ignites it. As long as pressure remains on the trigger plate the door continues to “breathe” fire. After 5 rounds (or 5 uses), the oil reservoir must be refilled and pressurized from the other side. The torches must be replaced frequently.

Firebreathing Door: CR 3; mechanical; touch trigger; automatic reset; line of fire (4d6, fire, DC 20 Reflex half); multiple targets (all creatures in a 30 ft. line); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20; Cost to build: 1,750 gp.



Monstrous Door (EL 4)

One of the simplest and most effective door traps often isn’t a door at all. The dungeon-dwelling mimic is a clever disguise artist that poses as a simple wooden door in an open archway in a high traffic area. It can murmur words in Common to simulate conversation coming from the other side to lure would-be prey closer.

Curious or unwary adventurers approaching the predatory door may make Spot checks opposed by the mimic’s Disguise check—DC 23 on average or 33 if it has time to take 20. Of course, once prey is close enough to notice something is amiss it is often too late to do anything but react to the sudden life threatening danger they find themselves in.

Mimic: hp 52; MM 186

Earth Elemental Door (EL 5)

This trap is a conspicuous obstacle that apparently must be moved aside to pass through. On casual inspection it looks like a large boulder, rough-hewn block of stone, or a few neatly stacked blocks of stone depending on the surroundings.

In fact, the blocks are an earth elemental guarding the passage. The elemental attacks trespassers who approach within 5 ft. or attempt to move it (which provokes an Attack of Opportunity). A DC 20 Knowledge (the planes) check may alert adventurers to avoid being pounded to an earthen pulp. This version uses a large earth elemental.

Large Earth Elemental (1): hp 60; MM 98

Hand of Doom (EL 6)

This large false door is made of magically treated stone and resembles a massive hand carved out of marble, with its palm facing out, the whole set within a shallow alcove. At the center of the palm a fake internal lock invites the foolish and unwary to take a crack at opening it.

The door is an animated object that grabs and crushes anything that touches it (its initiative is always 20). It squeezes victims for 10 rounds, and then releases them. Most are nothing but a bloody skin sack full of crushed bones and organs when the hand is done with them, but a few victims wriggle free or are tough enough to survive.

Large Animated Marble Hand (CR 6): hp 70; Hardness 16; MM 14

Rogues' Bane (EL 7)

Crafted by sadistic engineers not content with merely keeping trespassers out, this trap is meant to maim its victims. The door shows exquisite craftsmanship in its construction and is made of rare woods with decorative bronze banding. Two masterwork falchions are concealed in recessed slots on opposite sides of the decorative doorframe. Touching the door handle releases the blades, which spring out like scissors. Victims suffer horrible bleeding wounds if lucky, or a severed hand if not.

Twin Falchions: CR 7; mechanical; touch trigger; automatic reset; Atk +18 melee (4d4+16 18-20/x2 plus dismemberment on a critical hit); Search DC 24; Disable Device DC 28. Cost to build: 6,250 gp. The falchions attack as a single weapon.

Bone Door (EL 8)

Combining necromantic artifice and the art of trapmaking, this door is a favorite among priests of undeath, liches, necromancers, and the depraved wretches who favor such evil devices to deal with trespassers. Creating a bone door is quite tedious, and requires placing an animated skeleton in a specially prepared door mold,

then pouring in a high quality mortar. This slurry eventually hardens to the consistency of stone. Later, the stonework is decorated, fitted with a locking mechanism and hinges, and then mounted.

The skeleton's arms and head are free of the stone confining the rest of its folded extremities, and they jut out like a necromantic fossil. Each bone door's skeleton has different instructions, though most attack trespassers. Thus, a bone door has two parts: a masterfully constructed stonework door and a large embedded skeleton. In combat, the stonework provides the skeleton with improved cover, though it negates any Dexterity bonus to AC and imposes a -8 penalty on its Reflex saves.

The sample bone door uses a stone giant skeleton to grapple would-be trespassers and crush them to pieces. The EL takes into account its high AC and grapple bonuses.

The cost to construct a bone door varies but is never less than 1,825 gp.

Large Stone Door: 1 ft. thick; hardness 8; 180 hp; Break DC 35; Open Lock DC 30.

Stone Giant Skeleton CR 6

MM 124, 225

NE Large undead

Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft.;

Listen +0, Spot +0

Language understands Giant

AC 30, touch 17, flat-footed 30

hp 91 (14 HD) DR 5/bludgeoning

Immune cold

Fort +4 Ref -4 Will +9

Speed 0 ft.

Melee 2 claws +14 (1d6+8)

Space 10 ft. Reach 10 ft.

Base Atk +7; Grp +19

Abilities Str 27, Dex 17, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1

Feats Improved Initiative

Exploding Door (EL 9)

This strong wooden door appears to have a normal latch and internal lock; however, these are merely for show. A DC 25 Search check may alert cautious PCs that the mechanical parts don't function as expected.

Words etched into the surface of the door in Draconic state, "This door is not a door. Turn the latch and it is no more."

Turning the latch opens a hole that allows air to react with chemicals filling empty spaces within it. The alchemical mixture creates a concussive explosion. True to the warning etched into it, the door blows to pieces when the trap is triggered, affecting creatures or objects within a 20-ft. radius. The trap doubles as an alarm for nearby dungeon denizens, since the explosion can be heard several hundred feet away.

Strong Wooden Door: 2 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 23

Exploding Door: CR 9; mechanical; touch trigger; no reset; alchemical explosion (10d6, sonic, DC 25 Reflex half); multiple targets (20-ft. radius centered on door); Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 25; Cost to build: 22,700 gp.

Acid Spewing Door (EL 10)

This 8 inch thick stone door (hardness 8, hp 120, Break DC 28, Open Lock DC 35) is banded with iron and decorated with writhing bas relief snakes. One of the snakes – a large cobra poised to strike – extends a bit further out than the others. The large doorknob that protrudes from the cobra's thick coils is made of ivory and clear cut glass with an "S"-shaped keyhole shaped at its center.

Opening the door without the correct key (by picking the lock, turning the knob without the key, or simply trying to force it open) triggers the release of 10 gallons of acid through the cobra's mouth. The acid reservoir is under intense pressure, causing it to spray everything in a 15 ft. cone once the trap is sprung.

Once triggered, the reservoir must be refilled and the trap re-activated.

Acid Spewing Door: CR 10; mechanical; touch trigger; manual reset; acid spray (10d6, acid, DC 30 Reflex half); multiple targets (creatures in a 15 ft. cone); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28; Cost: 15,400 gp. ☞

the Flying Traders of Sikkim

From Desert to Mountains.... and Back Again

by Wolfgang Baur

Art by Edmund Dulac

Zobeck is a city of trade and merchants and practical people, but even the dour-est money-changer on the Street of Silver Fish opens his purse once or twice in a lifetime. That day is usually when the Flying Traders of Sikkim come to town.

The flying cities of Sikkim were once the marvel of the ages, built with the djinn and allied with servants of the Usmalli Sultan. When that alliance broke, the city folk were forced to become merchants, dealers, and mercenaries, selling the magic of their flying home as if it were another ale in the market. There's a sense that the best days are gone for Sikkim. But they are outlaws now, for they refuse to acknowledge the Sultan's rule over all enlightened people.

The flying cities still travel the world, enormous round islands up to a half-mile across with names that resonate in every port from the desert gardens of Siwal to the icy fastness of Trollheim. Only three cities remain active, where once there were dozens: fast Farokhan, stately golden Ushu, and the veiled women of Attimahl.

One in particular is missed, the lost sorcerer-city of Ulduvai. Certain magical compasses are said to point always toward this city of wonders (see J3 *Crucible of Chaos*). The cities wander the world, but when they dock at Zobeck, they are almost home.

The Flying Cities

Zobeck's mastery of sorcery, divination, and steam makes it a kindred spirit for the far-flying Sikkimese traders, and their shared respect for

profitable dealing gives the two cultures something to talk about.

On the street, they are opposites. The dress of the flying cities is loud, shimmering, and colorful, while the Zobeck citizens wear drab woolens or rich lace, but never in scarlet, orange and lime all at once. Likewise, the Sikkimese worship elemental forces, while the Zobeckians revere the traditional pantheon of War, Sun, and other gods.

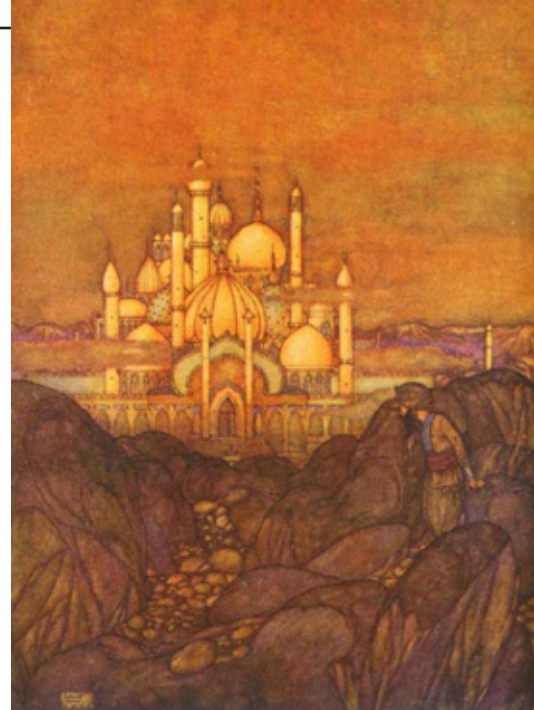
But the two share enough to trade: Zobeck's griffons fetch a high price from any flying city, and the clockwork mastery of the city commands great respect from the rather cramped artisans of the flying set. Spices, salt, and knowledge from distant Sikkim fetch a high price.

Sorcerers and Collegium

Stories of swindling or even robbing the Sikkim traders are more bragadocio than reality: the flying cities are well defended by aerial spirits, invisible and ever-vigilant, and they are warded by lightning magic and storm glyphs.

All three of the surviving cities use huge sails and vast quantities of amber, brass, and silver to power their magic, but they can readily pay for these materials with the profits of the spice trade, their elemental engines, and with the knowledge they bring from far corners of the world to the Arcane Collegium.

A few Masters of the Collegium have traveled to Sikkim, seeing distant lands for themselves, learning to fly carpets and bargain with djinn, efreet, and elementals. Few seek a second trip, though, as life aboard



the Flying Cities seems to sap arcane vitality in some fashion.

The Clockwork Caliph

The flying cities have a regular seasonal route: Zobeck, the magocracy of Allain, the snows of distant Trollheim in the summer months, back south along the Ruthenin plains, and to the garden city of Siwal by late autumn, when the heat fades and the harvest comes in. In winter, they retreat to hidden Sikkim, a high desert plateau or refuge.

The flying traders refer to the rulers of the lands they visit by fanciful titles: the Lord Mayor and City Praetors of Zobeck are always called the Clockwork Caliphs, and the trolls are the Odorous Effendi. A few trolls are said to have gone to the Usmani Sultanate and found themselves welcome there.

Adventurers and pilgrims seeking to visit the oracles of Siwal (or to visit the city's dancers, said to be the most seductive in the world) pay a fare of little more than 300 gp for a pleasant four-week journey. Likewise, Usmanli gnomes seeking alchemical instruction often visit Zobeck's collegium to perfect their alchemical fire techniques. Both sides profit, as it should be.

I leave you with a blessing on the flying cities, and 1,000 years of health and prosperity to you, effendi.



**ONLY
\$2.95**

LORD, KNOW THY SUBJECTS!

Peasant House has all you need to bring a realistic village atmosphere to your game! Best of all - it is an Any Edition product which means it is compatible with any RPG system.

Just click this Ad to check it out!

ALFA PUBLISHING GROUP
PRESENTS

MEDIEVAL LANDSCAPES

Peasant House



JOSHUA RAYNACK

What's Inside

Peasant Life

What is the lot of a peasant? Equipment, diet, clothes, houses, and hazards, are all detailed within this product.

Adventure Ideas

15 adventure seeds to help bring characters into the peasant world.

PLUS MUCH MORE!

ALFA Publishing Group



Are you Game?



GEN CON AUSTRALIA

A Different Kind Of Animal

Gen Con™ heads Down Under! All the gaming you've come to expect in a location famous for its exotic wildlife and tourist destinations. It's four days filled with Board Games, Card Games, Miniature War Games, Role Playing Games and LARPs, plus conferences, exhibitors, tournaments, workshops and more. So join us on the **3rd to 6th July 2008** at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre, Brisbane, Australia for the "Best Four Days in Gaming"™.

Gen Con™ Australia: This time it's not just your character that's going on an adventure.

www.genconoz.com

