

OLD SCHOOL FANTASY GAMING

MYSTIC PANGOLIN

ISSUE TWO

FEBRUARY 2016



CLOUDSTEPPING



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S&W – *Swords & Wizardry Core Rules* 4th printing 2011
SWMB – *Swords & Wizardry Monster Book 0e Reloaded*

This issue of *Mystic Pangolin* was entirely created over 30 hours
as a crazy 24HR challenge to myself which I slightly over-ran,
and was fuelled by Led Zeppelin, MC5, Thin Lizzy, Deep Purple and
an awful lot of Coca Cola.

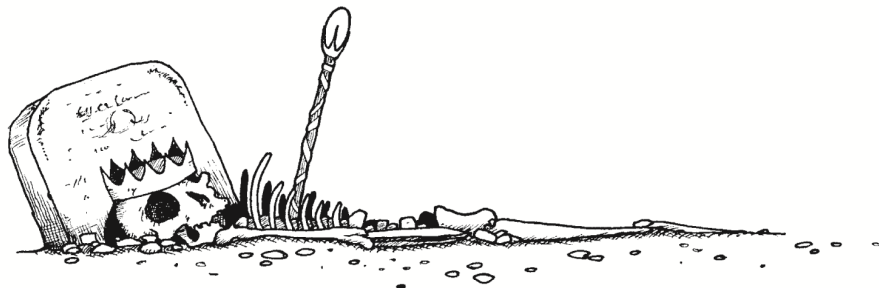
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Short, sharp lists of useful information for world-builders and GMs.

DOWN N' DIRTY DUNGEON DOZENS

TEXTILE TREASURES

All adventuring parties have at some time in their career fallen into the pattern of 'kick down the door, kill the monsters, take the treasure', or *DKL – Door, Kill, Loot*. Seemingly mundane items are overlooked as the obvious 'shiny' treasure is collected, so this *Dungeon Dozens* takes a look at one aspect of dungeon furniture which could prove very lucrative, for their monetary worth or for the boon bestowed.

1 BOLTS OF FABRIC

Lengths of raw fabric rolled over a long rod or pole, 'bolts' seem to have been named after the long straightness of an arrow, still called a 'bolt' in Middle English. There is no standard length or width of a bolt, but traditionally sail canvas was supplied in a bolt of 39 yards length. Widths range from 36" to 45" or 60" in common use, up to 108" or more. However, the more expensive or rare the fabric, the smaller the bolt. Silks are generally 'bolted' at 25", which gives 2 feet of fabric with a selvedge (or *selvage*) at each edge, as a result of the weaving process, which prevents unravelling.

Storage of bolts is generally in compartmentalised racks, with each visible 'end-on'. The racking allows for ease of selection and prevents crushing or collapse of stacked bolts. The pole around which the fabric is rolled may be the perfect place to smuggle goods – powders, jewellery and gems, rolled papers or even liquids in an appropriate container.

2 TAPESTRIES, CARPETS & RUGS

Connected by a shared purpose, these textiles developed as a means of protection against the elements, and it is only natural that humankind decorated these utilitarian pieces with often masterful designs. Fine examples include the famous Bayeux Tapestry, illustrating the events leading up to the Norman Conquest of England in 1066, which is ostensibly an historical account and a statement of legitimacy and power to an illiterate audience, but also a gift of homage to a powerful overlord. This presentation of power is shared by the carpet, which would have been a hugely expensive item in medieval times. Even now the carpet is marketed as 'luxury', and we need look no further than the laying of a red carpet to mark the pathway for a monarch, or indeed for the 'modern royalty' of film stars and celebrities.

The carpet-weaving traditions of the Near and Middle East have resulted in what we now term generically as 'Persian Rugs'. Used to create a floor surface over sand and rock in the tents of nomadic peoples, tribal motifs not only identify the origin of the carpet, but may preserve myths, images of fantastic beasts, alongside accounts of ancestry and lineage. In your game, symbolic maps could also be woven into these fabrics, or a cryptic account of the special measures needed to slay a particular beast. The most well-known legend of these rugs is perhaps the 'flying carpet' of the Sinbad tales, another famous use of a rug is described in the (probably incorrectly translated) account of Cleopatra being secretly taken to Caesar hidden in a rug, which is unrolled to great effect – see the 1963 Elizabeth Taylor *Anthony & Cleopatra*, or for an even better depiction, *Carry On Cleo*.

3 CURTAINS

Allied to tapestries, curtains also provide warmth and protection from the elements, hot or cold, but their inclusion here concentrates on their use as a *dividing screen*. A curtain can be used to divide a larger space, creating in effect a temporary wall. This might be to separate commoners from kings, or the sacred from the profane.

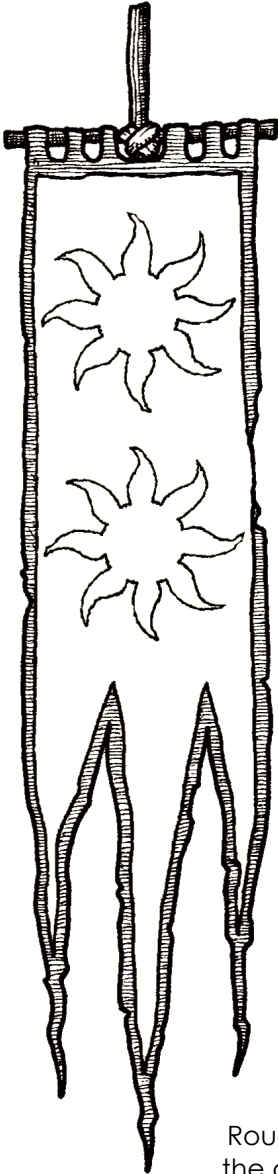
Decorated with symbols, sigils and heraldic motifs, curtains may be worth money based purely on their material worth, or their aesthetic value but those symbols and sigils might, if activated correctly, bestow any number of boons – or curses, for the undeserving. Perhaps the

division of sacred and profane might be a literal division, and the passing through of a curtain may transport the PCs to another dimension, plane or state of existence. Is this a portal to the underworld, or a spatial or temporal teleport?

4 BANNERS & FLAGS

Replete with nationalism and symbolism, the flag is a rallying point for those who share the values it represents. It is the symbol of an individual, organisation, regiment or nation and is used as a proxy for the leaders of that group. 'Planting the flag' is a widely-recognised symbolic act for the declaration of possession or victory – on a pole, a mountain top, a 'newly-discovered' land, or a battlefield won – think of the iconic US Marine Corps 'Iwo Jima' monument.

Being present at a momentous event bestows a talismanic quality to a banner or flag – the belief that luck, or victory, will follow the flag in future endeavours. A famous example from history of the talismanic banner is the French oriflamme ('golden flame'). Legend tells the oriflamme was coloured red by having been dipped in the blood of St. Denis, a 3rd Century Bishop of Paris. First appearing in 1124, the oriflamme was carried at the head of the French army until Agincourt in 1415. The noble carrying the title Comte de Vexin had the traditional role of standard bearer, and when the standard was raised it was taken to mean that no quarter would be given to enemies. This had the added effect of damaging enemy morale, as nobles were typically captured and ransomed unharmed. This use of a flag to signify no quarter appears again in the origins of the infamous pirate 'Jolly Roger', the name of which is a corruption of 'Jolie Rouge' – possibly a reference to the 'glorious red' of the oriflamme itself. That the Jolly Roger is usually now



thought of as black is a further development of this tradition, with the funereal symbolism of the colour black being attached to the earlier significance, giving us the 'Black Flag' as a symbol of ruthlessness.

Characters may have to retrieve a sacred banner from the tomb of a fallen hero, or recover it from an enemy to save face. Does the banner bestow a morale boost, or does wrapping it around a wounded hero revive and heal? Or perhaps the PCs own actions might bestow talismanic qualities on their own banner?

5 TABARDS & MANTLES

In the heat of a medieval battle with combatants pressed together in melee, clad in dull grey metal armour, friend and foe look very similar. To distinguish between armies, war bands and individuals, knights and their men-at-arms wore cloth tabards over their armour depicting their household or individual coat of arms, and the colours derived from this. These 'tabards' would share motifs and colours with the banners and flags used by these groups and would similarly aid in the rallying and morale-building of groups in the field.

The mantle is a form of stiffened cape worn by monastic priests, comparable with the cope of Western Christian bishops. Often elaborately embroidered with motifs relevant to a particular festival or season within a religion the mantle might be seen as part of the 'uniform' of higher ranked priests.

These garments may become talismanic by association, in the same way as the banners, above. However, their presence during religious ceremony may, in a fantasy game setting, have imbued them with magical properties which can be enjoyed by or transferred to subsequent wearers. It may be a tradition that such garments are interred with their owners, resulting in a discovery quest for recovery. PCs may be able to cast additional priestly spells whilst wearing the mantle of Agdeane, priest of Akstru, hallowed god of Light, while the battle tabard of Dranion calls the souls of slain warriors to rally around the new Champion of Evgaroth, woe to the invaders of Kadalon.

6 TORSE & MANTLING

The colours of the banner and tabard are duplicated in the mantling, a cover for the armoured helmet of a knight. In a coat of arms the mantling is depicted in a tattered condition, signifying the role of a

helmet in battle, and forming an aesthetic background to the armorial shield. Strict rules govern the colouring of the mantling, typically one side bears a colour, the other a metal.

The torse is the twisted wrap of fabric shown on the coat of arms which attaches the crest to the mantling. Such wraps might see service as a headband or decoration of the hats of men at arms and other followers.

7 ALTAR CLOTH

A cloth which provides covering and embellishment for the altar during religious observances, the altar cloth may be of very rich material and exhibit exquisite handiwork. Throughout the religious year a variety of cloths may be used, coloured or decorated according to the symbolism of the religion.

Their value comes from the intrinsic material worth of the materials and workmanship involved, but they also become imbued with the mystery of the rituals performed. Christian altar cloths were believed to have protective qualities bestowed by their having touched the consecrated bread during the Eucharist, and in the 5th and 6th centuries edicts were written which forbade the interment of the dead wrapped in an altar cloth. There was a wish to keep the two rituals separate, in an attempt to prevent the lessening of the sanctity of the altar cloth. In our fantasy game world perhaps this protective quality would prevent the decomposition of a body, allowing PCs to speak with dead after many centuries? Historical incidences include the relics of St Gotthard of Hildesheim wrapped in an altar silk, and the relics of St Benedict, saved from fire engulfing his church in Fleury in 974AD when the monks wrapped the altar cloth around them and fled the building.

8 ROSETTES & FAVOURS

Rosettes are worn to show allegiance to a particular cause, enabling the identification of sympathisers, and are also given as prizes for success in competition. In both cases, these items might be used to support subterfuge, either espionage or in trying to obtain unjust rewards.

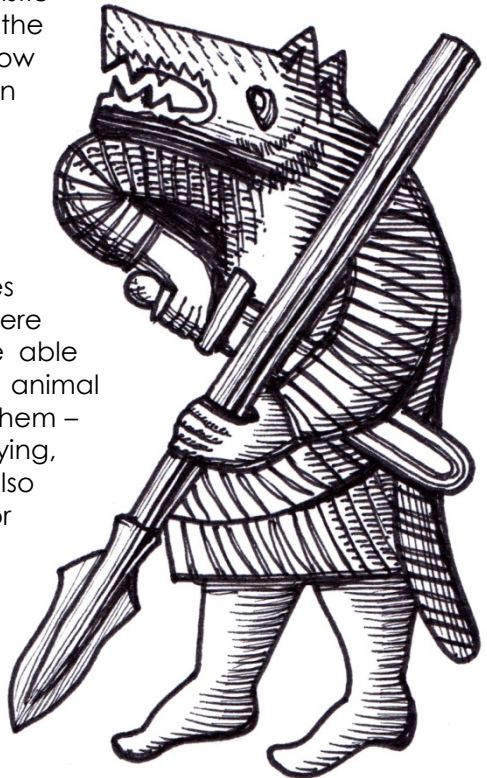
Favours are badges bestowed on a more personal level, usually by the figurehead of a movement or other public figure. This is often seen in legend as the presentation of a token – perhaps a kerchief – by a fair

lady to her 'champion' in a tourney. In more recent pop culture we see the same tradition when a rough-at-the-edges cowboy wears the garter of a different kind of lady on his arm. Favours might also be used as a *bona-fide*, a guarantee of identity or honesty and a means of identifying a messenger bearing news from a distant lord or other patron. The enemy might try desperately to secure such a token to enhance their own deception.

9 BEAR-SARK & ANIMAL COATS

At the most basic level, the wearing of the skin of a ferocious beast – a lion, or leopard, for example – infers that the wearer had the strength, bravery and skill to fight and defeat such an animal. (This is somewhat diluted in the age of gunpowder.) Examples include the lion skin carried by Hercules, or worn by standard-bearers in the armies of Rome, and the leopard skins worn by certain African tribesmen in history.

In some civilisations, shamanistic beliefs known as *animism* detail the use of animal products to bestow the qualities of that animal upon the individual. In some traditions among Native Americans wearing the skin of a creature would cause a transformation, often after breaking some societal taboo. Navajo witches who obtained this ability were labelled 'skinwalkers', and were able to exploit various different animal attributes as and when it suited them – becoming a bird to escape by flying, for example. Skinwalkers are also able to mimic any voice or animal noise. Viking warriors who wore thick bear pelts as a form of armour were said to be possessed by the ferocious spirit of the bear, making them invincible in battle. This 'bear shirt', or *bersark*, gives us our word



'berserk'. Other warriors wore wolf-skins, and were identified as Odin's own warriors - "they were as mad as hounds or wolves, bit their shields... neither fire nor iron had effect upon them". One such warrior is featured amongst the famous Lewis chessmen, biting the edge of his shield.

10 ANIMAL HIDE BLANKET

Another use of an animal skin is the wrapping of a dead body during funereal rites. Among the Lakota and other peoples of the Sioux nation, excarnation was a part of the funeral process, in which the deceased was tightly wrapped in a shroud made of buffalo hide, prior to exposure on a platform or in the high boughs of a tree in a so-called 'sky burial', when the bones would be defleshed naturally through decomposition. After a period, the bones would be retrieved and placed in rock crevices.

11 MUMMY WRAPS

The creation of a mummy in ancient Egypt was a highly ritualised process involving precise religious observance, placing of amulets and reciting of over 200 spells, known to us today as the *Book of Coming Forth by Day*, or *The Book of the Dead*. These spells ensured that all measures were taken to ensure the passing of the dead soul to the afterlife safely, and the continued prosperity of the soul there. Famous spells include the 'Weighing of the Heart' ritual. There was no 'official' canonical Book of the Dead, and it appears that individuals chose those spells which addressed their own specific concerns for inclusion in their own funerary process. Spells were collected from many earlier sources in a continuing tradition, and included texts which were written or painted on objects, not in the papyrus scrolls or books we often think of today, and which appeared in later Dynastic Egypt. These scrolls would be placed within the sarcophagus with the body, whilst spells might be inscribed into or painted on the coffins and sarcophagi.

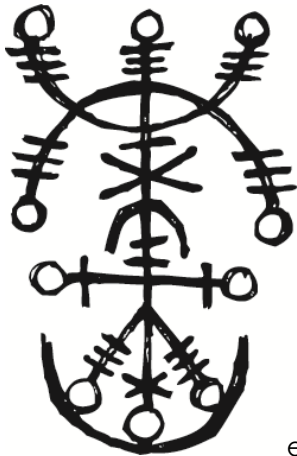
Prior to this use of papyrus, spells would typically be painted onto the shroud or mummy wrappings themselves, built up layer by layer as the wrapping process continued, and accompanied by the placing of various amulets and talismans at salient points throughout the ceremony.

The drying out of the corpse prior to mummification, coupled with the very dry atmosphere of Egyptian tombs, results in near perfect

preservation. In a similar situation in a fantasy game world, PCs might discover a vast source of lost magics, spells never heard of or lost to deep antiquity. Could these spells be learned now? Are the various components still available, or would they require dangerous questing to collect? What of the various gods whose powers might be resurrected? Would the mummy wraps bestow any qualities onto objects or individuals they were later tied around? And let's not mention the curses risked by desecrating such a burial...

12 HUMAN SKIN SUIT

Icelandic civilisation originated with Viking settlers in the later 800s AD, and since then the Icelanders have kind of *done things their own way*... One such example is the staggeringly jaw dropping 'nábrók' a pair of trousers, including feet, made from the single piece of flayed human skin. A replica can be seen in the Museum of Icelandic Sorcery and Witchcraft.



The trousers are part of an elaborate spell to ensure financial security, and rely on the original owner (*creator?*) of the skin to give permission, *prior to death*, for the sorcerer to use his skin in this way. The skin must be removed in a single piece from the waist down, and will stick to the skin as the sorcerer steps into them. A coin must be stolen from a poor widow – this is placed inside the scrotum of the flayed skin, along with a piece of paper bearing the *galdr stave* – a magic sigil – appropriate to the spell, the *nábrókarstafur*, handily shown here. This will ensure that the scrotum will attract more coins and, as long as the original coin remains in there,

it will never stop doing so. The good news is that the sorcerer can leave a legacy – the *nábrók* can be passed on to another, as long as the prospective new owner promises to slip the breeks on the second the first ~~word~~ sorcerer takes them off. Still warm.

By extension, could this work – in a game setting, of course – with other parts of the body? The arm skin of a smith might bestow smithing abilities; the head of a great thinker; the whole skin of a gymnast or acrobat. No mention of gigolos, thanks. More ideas will presumably

arise if you listen to the most excellent *Human Skin Suit* by the *Junior Manson Slags*.

Survival and preservation

One aspect of dungeons often seems to be their dampness. Molds and fungus cover surfaces, walls run with 'water' and general decay settles over ancient artefacts. None of this will treat fabrics kindly. Perhaps only fragments of certain items are found, leading to a quest to uncover the rest of a particular story or method; does cloth-of-gold rot away to leave only the precious metal strands as a purely monetary treasure; do magical or blessed items have some form of protection or immunity to decay; are the particular conditions in the find-spot perfect for preservation – are the remains charred, is there a lack of oxygen, is the find-spot desiccated – so hot and dry that decay is not present, is the pile of fabric so large and dense that those pieces in the centre are protected by the material around them?

Once the textiles have been carted back to the city, a new set of problems present themselves – do the characters want to convert the goods into coin? If so, is there a fence who will deal with this kind of loot? Can this type of material be sold in every town, or do the players need to take it to a larger, more cosmopolitan, city? Should the PCs approach other textile dealers, or set up on their own perhaps risking guild hostility? Once in circulation, will other possibly hostile groups be alerted to the sudden appearance of these long-lost items? Will they want to know where the PCs found them? Do the PCs want to follow up the mythical tales sewn into the tapestry, or follow the map woven into the rug design? Do the spells scribed onto the mummy wraps actually work? Where would you find the components? Are the PCs good enough friends with anyone to increase their wealth by making some human skin trousers?

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ALL THE FUN OF THE FAIR

A troupe of travelling traders, fairground personalities and adventure ideas, with stats for Swords and Wizardry.

A small troupe have taken to the road, using their 'particular set of skills' to earn a living by entertaining at the towns and villages they pass through. Each is a veteran of other travelling groups and has moved on for their own various reasons, sometimes amicably, sometimes not. Banding together to their mutual benefit the group own two small wagons to carry their equipment and belongings, pulled by two carthorses.

They subsist on the generosity of their audiences, asking for space to pitch camp and accepting any foodstuffs offered in friendship by the locals, but are capable of hunting small game and foraging to support themselves. They make a fair amount of money in the larger towns and cities, arranging their travels to coincide with festivals and fairs, where they sometimes team with other troupes local to increase their earning potential.

The four members are presented here with stats for Swords & Wizardry, along with brief inventory, background, intentions and character notes. An asterisk * denotes an attribute score requiring bonus adjustment (S&W 4th ed. 2011 pp6-7).

TORSEN CLUFF

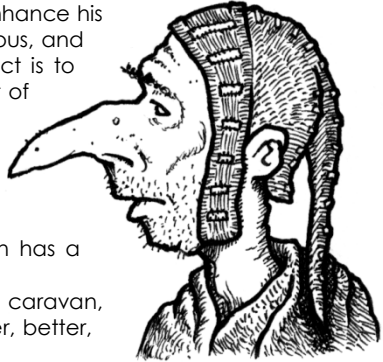
THIEF 3

STR:08; DEX:16*; CON:14*; INT:12; WIS:10; CHA:09; AL:N; LVL3; XP:3100; HD3d4; SV13; CLIMB WALLS 87; DELICATE TASKS 25; HEAR SOUNDS 4:6; HIDE IN SHADOWS 20; MV SILENTLY 30; OPEN LOCKS 20; BACKSTAB +4 TO HIT/DAM x2; SV THROW BONUS +2 VS DEVICES; READ NORMAL LANGUAGES; COMPREHEND MAPS & DOCS 80

Torsen is a juggler, tumbler and sleight-of-hand artist. Crowds delight in his feats of dexterity, tumbling, acrobatics and contortion. Whilst he is moderately accomplished in thieving skills he will not rob, steal or burgle as a matter of course. These skills are used to enhance his act, not for thieving. He is talkative and gregarious, and loves to perform for the crowd. His favourite act is to squeeze through tiny spaces to the amazement of the audience.

Background – trained by Merrill, a contortionist from back home in the west, Torsen spent time with a much larger travelling troupe, the 'Gryphon Troupe', but was constantly bullied for his small size by the strongman Rello. Torsen has a cold hatred of bullies.

Aims – save money and buy a comfortable caravan, helping the rest of the troupe to become bigger, better, renowned and very rich.



VERO

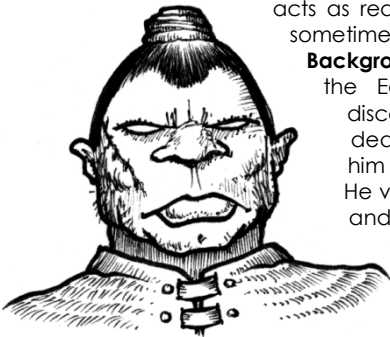
FIGHTER 3

STR:15*; DEX:11; CON:14*; INT:09; WIS:10; CHA:12; AL:N; LVL3; XP:4600; HD3d8+1; SV12;

Vero is a warrior, strong in body and mind. He is taciturn among strangers but warm and friendly with his troupe. He is quietly suspicious of warrior and fighter types, and does not wholly trust civic authorities. He uses his great strength to help with equipment and repairs around the troupe camp. He acts as security detail for the troupe and camp. He keeps his armour and weapons hidden in one of the wagons to avoid problems on the road. He takes part in some of the acts as required, usually as a stooge in comedy routines, sometimes to display great feats of strength.

Background – Coming from a nomadic warrior society in the East, Vero is happy on the road. He was discovered by the troupe lying in a ditch left for dead after angry townsfolk attacked him, blaming him for a brutal murder of which he was innocent. He vowed to work for the troupe to pay off this debt, and now considers them his family.

Aims – to protect and aid the troupe in their aims. To discover the true identity of the murderer and bring him to justice, by law or the blade.



TERESA

CLERIC 3

STR:08; DEX:16*; CON:07; INT:11; WIS:15; CHA:14; AL:L; LVL3; XP:3800; HD3d6; SV13*; SPELLS 2 x 1st LVL, typically *Cure Light Wounds*; *Purify Food & Drink*

Teresa is a priestess of Tula, a Lawful nature deity. She uses her clerical abilities for healing, in a broad herbalism / animism belief system which she observes quietly and privately. In the troupe, she performs as an acrobat, but her great skill is in target archery. As a Cleric she will only use the bow for skilful display, and not to bring harm. Teresa is open and friendly, but watchful and cautious when a situation threatens trouble. She will avoid confrontation whenever possible, preferring to simply leave and move on. She will readily offer healing to an unfortunate or innocent who is injured or ill.

Background – Teresa and her younger brother Aldo have travelled all their lives, growing up in a succession of performers' camps. Two years ago Teresa watched from hiding as an incensed mob beat Vero almost to death, then recovered his near lifeless body and used her healing skills to nurse him back to health.

Aims – to see the world, and to experience many cultures, along with her friends. Riches would be nice, but health and happiness matter more.



ALDO

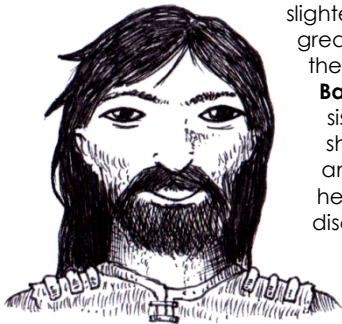
THIEF 3

STR:10; DEX:15*; CON:07; INT:11; WIS:09; CHA:12; AL:N; LVL3; XP:3000; HD3d4; SV13; CLIMB WALLS 87; DELICATE TASKS 25; HEAR SOUNDS 4:6; HIDE IN SHADOWS 20; MV SILENTLY 30; OPEN LOCKS 20; BACKSTAB +4 TO HIT/DAM x2; SV THROW BONUS +2 VS DEVICES; READ NORMAL LANGUAGES; COMPREHEND MAPS & DOCS 80

Aldo uses his thief skills to perform as an acrobat and knife thrower, not to rob, steal or burgle. He is the *de facto* leader of the troupe, or at least the public face. His decisions are taken with consideration for his friends' views, but he has made one or two impulsive choices in the past. He is enthusiastic, but given to extremes of humour – he can be excited and optimistic but can be beaten into a depression by the slightest setback. Loyal to his friends above all others, he greatly admires Vero for his quiet strength, and listens to the measured advice of his older sister, Teresa.

Background – Growing up in travelling troupes with his sister Teresa, Aldo is happy on the road. He was shocked by Vero's treatment at the hands of the mob, and uses his skills to discover information which may help find the true culprit, sharing it with Vero. He has discovered that the murderer was a soldier of rank.

Aims – to gain wealth and fame as a performing troupe, along with Torsen; to uncover the true murderer with Vero.





TERROR BIRDS

Presented here are some new monster ideas based on known extinct prehistoric birds. Whilst the Swords and Wizardry rules provide stats for the Giant Eagle and the Roc, these new monsters are suggested as a means to populate primordial settings. Whilst the *Argentavis* is certainly big enough to accept a human-sized rider, and the *Haast's Eagle* strong enough to attack an elephant, certainly neither can take a human sized rider. However, in a high fantasy setting any of the creatures presented could be adapted to allow their use as mounts.

FLIGHTLESS BIRDS

TERROR BIRDS

Large predatory carnivorous birds, native to South America in the date range 62 to 1.8 million years ago. Correctly termed the '*phorusrhacidae*', they are known as the 'terror birds', and are characterised by ineffective, tiny rudimentary 'wing limbs', and a heavy beaked head atop a muscular neck. The breastbone lacks a 'keel', the protruding bony plate to which flight muscles would attach.

Reaching from 3 to 9 feet (1-3metres) in height, the terror birds are thought to have attacked small prey using their strong legs and feet to kick and claw, grabbing prey in the beak and dashing it to the floor to break bones or pinning their quarry before dispatching it with a swift and brutal downward strike with their extremely robust beak, powered by a strongly muscled neck which could stretch to raise the head up to the creature's full height before dropping in a bone shattering fatal blow. This large beak did not have a great biting strength, so prey too large to be swallowed whole would have been torn apart using the sharp hook at the tip of the upper beak.

The terror birds flourished on the wooded grasslands of the savannah, an environment featuring a high tree density coupled with an open canopy. The birds could use their strong legs to run at great speeds, perhaps averaging 45mph (70kmh), with the 'cheetah' theory proposing possible bursts to run down prey of as much as 55mph (90kmh).

Phorusrhacos – the largest terror bird, measuring up to 10ft (3.2m) in height.

Kelenken – has the distinction of the largest skull of any bird yet discovered. Standing at up to 9ft(3m), Kelenken's skull measured 28inches (71cm).

Mesembrionis – slightly smaller, standing at about 5ft (1.5m), this is the latest of the terror birds, flourishing 10m to 1.8m years ago.

Titanis – the only terror bird known to have migrated into North America, following the emergence of the Panama isthmus, it flourished here about 3m years ago. Reached a height of about 8ft (2.5m).

TERROR BIRD: HD4; AC 6[13]; Atk 2 GOUGE (1d6); 2 CLAW (1d8); 1 BEAK STRIKE (2d8); Sv14; CL/XP 6/300

ELEPHANT BIRDS

For game purposes I have grouped the **AEPYORNIS** and **MOA** (Dinornis) under the heading '*elephant birds*', although there is no biological link between them. The name correctly only refers to the Aepyornis of Madagascar, extant into modern times, which is believed to have been given the name following confusion with Marco Polo's 1298 account of the *Rhuc* – the legendary Roc – which could carry a grown elephant. Perhaps, given its flightless state, the Aepyornis was mistakenly identified as the chick of a massive adult bird.

Resembling an ostrich or emu, the elephant bird stood about 10-12ft (3-4m) tall. A single egg had a circumference of 3.5ft (1m), with the volume of about 160 hen's eggs. Elephant birds fed on plant matter, their beaks acting like secateurs to snip through woody twigs up to one-third of an inch (8mm) diameter. They occupied a variety of habitats, from rain forest to sub-alpine, steep coastal to rough rocky uplands. Nesting occurred in cave mouths or rock shelters. Tracks indicate walking speeds of 2-3mph (3.5-5kmh), we can guess at a 'panic running' speed of perhaps 10-12mph (16-19kmh) for game purposes.

When threatened, or guarding a nest, the elephant bird can defend itself using a strong kick and clawing action, with a beak peck as a last resort.

ELEPHANT BIRD: HD4; AC 7[12]; Atk 2 KICK (1d6); 2 CLAW (1d4); 1 BEAK STRIKE (1d4); Sv14; CL/XP 3/40

PENGUIN

The **Anthropornis** is the largest known penguin species, standing at almost 6ft (1.8m). More slender than modern species, with a longer beak, the Anthropornis fed on fish and appears to have behaved in every way like a modern penguin. It did, however,

have a broader range, being comfortable in warmer climates into the temperate zone.

Behaviour presented here is based on the extant Emperor penguin. Non aggressive, these birds will attempt to flee into the safety of water, where they can stay submerged for about 20mins, diving to depths in excess of 1755ft (535m). Swimming speed averages 4-6mph.

ANTHROPORNIS: HD2; AC 8[11]; Atk 1BEAK STRIKE (1d4); Sv14; CL/XP 1/20

FLYING BIRDS

While nothing known from prehistory can come close to the elephant-carrying power of the mythical Roc, there are certainly one or two species which boasted enormous size and strength.

Haast's Eagle

This giant eagle of New Zealand was a contemporary of the Moa, in fact it was so big that the Moa was its preferred prey. With a body standing 6ft (1.8m) tall, and a wingspan of 10-12 ft (3.5m), Haast's Eagle was the apex predator in late prehistoric New Zealand. Known to exist until the dawn of the 16th century, it is very likely that this bird also preyed on humans, and is identified as the *Poukai* of Maori myth. With talons measuring 4inches (10cm) – similar to those of a tiger – and an attack speed of 50mph (80kmh) – Haast's Eagle was a swift and deadly hunter of huge prey in the forest fringes. Its wings were short in comparison to its body size, which may have helped it manoeuvre among trees but its strength was extraordinary, allowing it to grapple with the body of the moa while it used a second talon, or its beak, to despatch prey with a head blow. Prey could also be disembowelled and left to bleed to death.

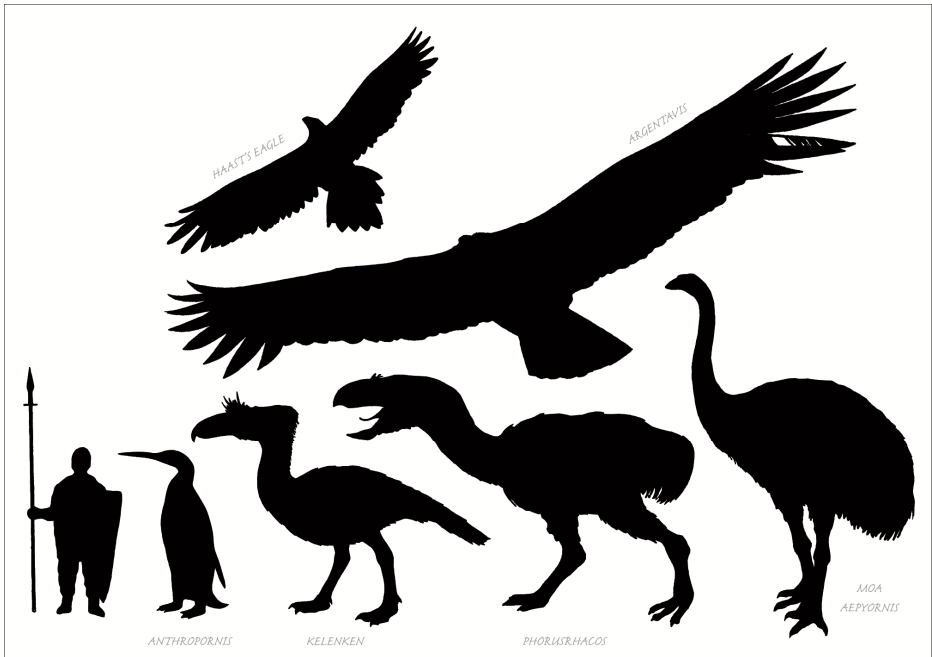
HAAST'S EAGLE: HD3; AC 7[12]; Atk 2 CLAWS (2d10); 1BEAK STRIKE (1d10); Sv14; CL/XP 4/150

Argentavis

One of the largest flying birds yet discovered, the Argentine '*magnificent silver bird*' had a wingspan of 23ft or more. Flying was largely by soaring, and habits mirrored those of the extant Andean Condor – searching for soft carrion over a wide range, perhaps the result of kills by the earth-bound terror birds. It is estimated that *Argentavis* would patrol an area of 200m² (500km²).

This giant bird would lay perhaps two eggs in a clutch, each measuring a little smaller than that of a modern ostrich and weighing about 2lbs (1kg). Although not an active hunter claws, beak and sheer size would make *Argentavis* a formidable creature, particularly when its young, or a food source, were threatened.

ARGENTAVIS: HD4; AC 8[11]; Atk 2 CLAWS (1d8) BEAK STRIKE (1d10); Sv14; CL/XP 4/200



▲ Terror Birds - Relative size

THE HAUNTING OF KILDERKIN FELL

The Haunting of Kilderkin Fell is an adventure for character levels 4-7. Statistics are provided for Swords & Wizardry, conversion to other OSR and clone systems is straightforward. The story, locations and encounters are set out in sections for the GM to interpret as fits personal playing style. Unravelling the adventure relies on the discovery of a number of clues – to prevent railroading and bottlenecking these clues can be inserted into play at a number of instances – in the description below each clue is presented along with details of relevance to the story, and with the primary discovery location supplemented by two other possible find spots – allowing the GM to help wayward players avoid being stumped. As each clue is found, discard the remaining options.

Author's note – the name *Kilderkin* wouldn't leave me alone. Readers of *MP#1* will recognise it as a type of barrel, but I always felt it belonged amongst the names of witches familiars, like those attested by the notorious Matthew Hopkins in 1644 – "*Holt, Vinegar Tom, Sacke and Sugar, Pyewackett, Peck-in-the-Crowne, Griezzel Greedigut... names which no mortall could invent*".

PREMISE

A messenger delivers a letter to the PCs, requesting their help. Lord Doric of Kilderkin Fell, an estate some days travel away in the low-lying cold marshlands, has fallen under the shroud of a strange living death, comatose in his bed, following a nocturnal fight with 'shadowy creatures'. The estates have declined in recent years, and it is now believed that nefarious deeds are afoot.

The GM should choose the identity of this potential patron – Hamelin, loyal retainer to Doric, may know the PCs from previous military service or martial deeds; Cybel, daughter of Doric, may be imploring them on the strength of their reputation. Either offers full hospitality at Kilderkin Fell – such as it is – and a financial reward if the matter can be addressed successfully.

FULL STORY

Lord Andwan and Lady Mayla of Kilderkin Fell were delivered of twins, strong and healthy both. Their prosperous estates basked in the happiness of this secured continuation of the well regarded family, residents at Kilderkin these past three centuries.

The children – Doric, strong and dark, and young Andwan, studious and fair, grew into young adulthood. Things turned sour when Doric discovered Andwan conducting curious experiments with the corpse of a dead tenant, shockingly exhumed the night before. Andwan was banished to save him from death at the hands of enraged tenants, and Lord Andwan never recovered from the shock and horror of his son's betrayal of the loyal tenants. He died within the year. Lady Mayla was grief stricken, and succumbed to a fever some months later.

Doric assumed the lordship, and under his steering the estates continued to prosper. He married and was blessed with a daughter, Cybel, but the family was again struck a blow with the death of Cybel's mother in childbirth. The family fortunes began to suffer – Doric did not remarry, and the family suffered financial losses in several blight years. Tenants began to leave the lands and Kilderkin Fell began to attract rumours of a curse. Cybel is now twenty and during her upbringing she has been trained in the management of the estates, taking on many of the duties of her father as he has grown older and less inclined to promote the family abroad.

Four months ago Cybel was woken in the night by a terrific violent furore. She discovered her father, clad in his nightclothes and robe, swinging his great sword wildly about him as he scurried around the great hall. She described 'shadow men - flying shapes which looked like men but like smoke, or a deep shadow' which flew about her father, pulling and plucking at his clothes and hair, pushing him from one to the other, before they lifted him and dashed him to the floor time and time again. She rushed to help him as the shadows flew from the room. His broken arms and ribs have healed over the weeks since, thanks to dedicated nursing from Ellen the house maid, but Doric has remained in a waking death, eyes open and glassily staring, breathing shallow and drooling.

WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON – SPOILER ALERT

Andwan, suggested by his sharing his father's name, is the older twin, and therefore heir to the estate. Doric, the vigorous athletic and martial son, reasoned to himself that he was more fitted to the role of lord of the estate, and became paranoid over the future his brother might have in store for him. Doric further believed that the senior Andwan favoured the older brother and planned to give Doric no inheritance whatsoever. This mind-set led Doric into hatching a fiendish scheme – jealous of Andwan's studious mind, he arranged the exhumation of a recently deceased tenant and framed his older brother for

necromantic experiments. This accusation was strengthened by false testimony from itinerant 'witnesses', paid handsomely by Doric.

Exiled and shamed, burning with confused hatred for his formerly close brother, Andwan watched from afar as his family fell apart. He blames the deaths of his parents squarely on Doric's shoulders. Lacking in martial skills, and without any allies in his homeland, Andwan could not simply take his birthright by force – instead he has worked over the years to increase his mastery of the magic arts, all the while plotting the ruin of Doric and Kilderkin Fell, a place he now feels no attachment for and wishes to ruin.

Along with his daughter, Temera, Andwan uses his cunning and conjuring to create the impression of a cursed haunting across the estate of Kilderkin Fell. He conjured Shadow-like spirits to attack Doric and begin the rumours of haunting. Andwan then used a form of *Magic Jar* (SWp57) spell to transport Doric's essence into a large tapestry within the manor house. Under a *Geas* (SWp55), Doric is forced to attempt a near impossible quest again and again whilst trapped in the tapestry, whilst the shell of his real body appears comatose. Andwan has had Temera murder Ellen, then set his daughter in her place to observe affairs in the manor house. Andwan has cast *Polymorph Other* (SWp62) on her, the deceit is strengthened by the pair having observed Ellen to learn her habits and mannerisms. She is careful to avoid lengthy encounters with Hamelin or Cybel, but her position as a servant rather than family member allows her opportunities to blend into the background unnoticed. The sickness among the tenants is caused by introducing excrement and small animal corpses into water supplies; unsettling areas are created using triggered *Fear* spells; crops are blighted by introducing pests and infected produce from elsewhere; the preponderance of dangerous and monstrous creatures across the estate is due to the lack of maintenance over the preceding months as tenants have fled, a self-perpetuating state.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Lord Doric Hum F8; 46yrs old. Brother of Andwan and usurper of Kilderkin Fell. Currently apparently comatose, soul trapped.

In the 'Tapestry World', Doric has the following stats –

Hum F8; HP37; AC4 [15] chain; Sv7; THAC0[19] 14; Broadsword (1d8) Dagger (1d4); STR15, DEX12, CON10, INT11, WIS10, CHA10.

Cybele Hum F1; HP12; AC7 [12] leather; Sv14; THAC0[19] 19; Dagger (1d4); STR12, DEX9, CON9, INT12, WIS10, CHA12.

Daughter of Lord Doric. 20yrs old. Enamoured of Hamelin, although the pair have kept their mutual attraction unrequited, waiting for better times. Entirely unaware of her father's actions in the past, Cybele will protect him and support the PCs fully in their attempts to uncover the truth. Should she discover the truth she will side with Hamelin in his decision to oust Doric, planning to marry him and restore the fortunes of Kilderkin Fell.

Hamelin Hum F7; HP32; AC4 [15] chain; Sv8; THAC0[19] 15; Broadsword (1d8) Dagger (1d4); STR16, DEX12, CON10, INT10, WIS9, CHA10.

Retainer to Lord Doric. Age 29. Veteran of frontier battles including Granite Pass, Afton Plain. Entirely unaware of Doric's treachery in the past, Hamelin will protect him and his daughter Cybele, and support the PCs fully in their attempts to uncover the truth. Should he discover the truth he will wrestle with his choices – side with Cybele and marry her, ousting Doric and assuming benevolent lordship of Kilderkin Fell in order to restore Cybele's fortunes, or observe his oath to support Doric against all enemies.

Andwan Hum MU13; HP32; AC 9 [10]; Sv5; THAC0[19] 14; Dagger 1d6; Spells per day (5,5,5,5,4,4,2); STR8, DEX10, CON9, INT16, WIS12, CHA12.

Older non-identical twin brother to Lord Doric. Age 46. Andwan will set himself against any PCs who attempt to help Doric. His lust for vengeance has embittered him and turned all thought to the ruination of his former family estate. Andwan stays outside the estate lands when he is not actively causing trouble or meeting with Temera, to avoid discovery. He will not risk his own life, and if his plan comes to fruition and it is discovered that Doric did indeed frame him, he will disappear into the world to reappear in the future. If Temera is harmed, or killed, he will plot an equally cold revenge against whoever was responsible.

Temera Hum MU5; HP13; AC 9 [10]; Sv11; THAC0[19] 18; Dagger 1d6; Spells per day (4,2,1); STR7, DEX10, CON9, INT15, WIS11, CHA12.

Daughter of Andwan. Age 18. Fully supportive of her father in his plans for revenge against her usurping uncle Lord Doric. Prepared to sell her life dearly in this cause, but not to the point of suicide. As the scenario begins, Temera is disguised as servant Ellen, by means of a polymorph spell. If the PCs do not uncover the truth of her father's rights as elder son, she will 'discover' evidence in the form of a lineage, and present it to Cybele in her guise as Ellen. She occasionally meets with her father Andwan, usually at the fringes of the estate, and always after dark. She uses her Invisibility spell to conceal herself when needed.

Old Tom Hermit Hum as F0; HP7; AC 9[10]; Sv15; THAC0[19] 20; Dagger 1d6; Known spells:: STR7, DEX11, CON10, INT10, WIS14, CHA6.

Age 63. Tom is one of the 'witnesses' paid by Doric to frame Andwan 27 years ago. When Doric covered up his deed by killing all those connected, Tom escaped and has lived as a tramp, then in later years as a ragged hermit. He shuns people in an attempt to stay unrecognised, but has become more visible since Doric fell into his 'coma'. He is sure Doric is reaping his just rewards. He will try to run from the PCs and will only tell his tale if threatened with violence - he has lived a hard life, and wishes to repent for his treachery and to make his peace before his end comes.

CLUES

The main clue to the usurpation is of course the order of birth of the twin brothers. Andwan is the older, and should have inherited. The PCs will have all they need to put together a convincing theory if they find the lineage papers, speak with the Hermit, and enter the Tapestry World to speak with Doric.

LINEAGE PAPERS	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. AMONGST PAPERS IN THE HIDDEN ROOM2. AMONGST PAPERS IN DORIC'S ROOM3. PRESENTED BY 'ELLEN' TO CYBELE
THE HERMIT'S TESTIMONY	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. THE HERMIT IS IN THE FOLLY2. THE HERMIT IS FOUND HIDING IN THE GROUNDS OUTSIDE THE CRYPT3. THE HERMIT APPROACHES THE PCS IN THE ESTATE GROUNDS
DORIC'S CHALLENGE	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. INSIDE THE TAPESTRY WORLD2. RECOUNTED BY DORIC IN A GARBLED STUPOR

LOCATIONS

1. ON THE ROAD TO KILDERKIN

As the party approaches the Kilderkin Fell estate they encounter signs of the blight. The land is waterlogged fen, salty marshland, but here and there are the cultivated patches of slightly elevated land upon which the twisted remains of once bounteous orchards grow. Crops in these small fields are stunted, mildewed, and topped with a fungus-like growth. Many plants have been left to go to seed, well past harvest-ready. The party will be met by Hamelin as they enter the estate, and he will accompany them to the manor house. He will detail the events so far, but he has no idea why this is happening or what the shadow men were.

Events

The road is trapped with a Fear spell (SWp54), triggered as the PCs walk into the affected area. Those failing a saving throw are filled with an irrational sense of dread, which develops into fear and on a very poor fail, becomes outright panic. Those affected will make future saves against similar traps in the area at a -1 penalty.

2. KILDERKIN FELL

The manor house of Kilderkin Hall is an L-shaped, two-storey building, with a wooden half-timbered frame set upon a stone built foundation half-wall base. It is ancient, and has been kept in fine repair until recent years, when the weather has slowly begun to take its toll. Vines have begun to encroach the walls and the plasterwork over the timbering is in need of repair. Over a broad studded wooden door is a fine carved and painted rendering of the family badge, blue stars on a yellow field.

The Ground Floor

Inside, the manor house is wood-panelled and plank-floored. Due to the lack of retainers it is a little shabby, but the welcome is warm. The Great Hall is the centre of the house, a roaring fire fills a stone fireplace on one wall while a long wooden table stretches the length of the room. On their first arrival, the PCs will meet Cybele here. A modest room inside the entrance serves as a chamber for Hamelin.

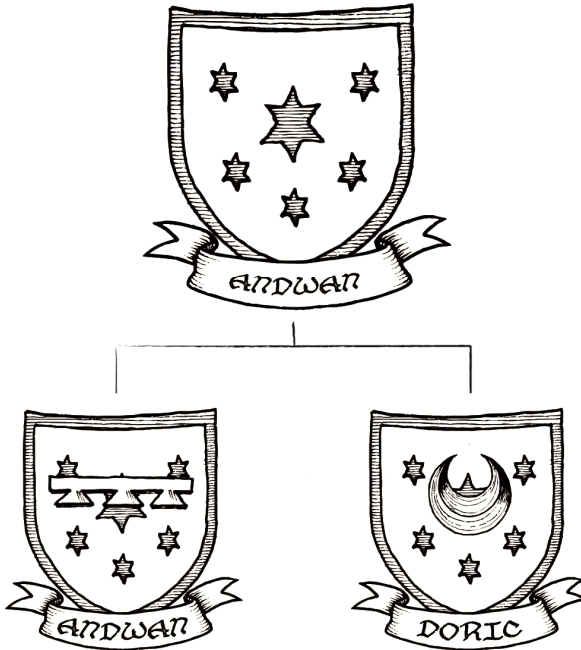
The kitchen range, not much more than a large stone room with several fires and a cold store pantry with marble shelves, and two small rooms which served as servants quarters complete the ground floor layout. A side door from the kitchen leads to the outside.

The staircase

A wooden staircase leads up from the entrance, turning on a wide landing half way up. Along the wall here is a large woven tapestry, depicting a fanciful scene of the estate – a summer scene of the rising ground behind the manor house, topped with a small ruined tower, a folly. The manor house itself can be seen in the middle ground, and a horsed rider in battle gear rides across the foreground. Cybele and Hamelin say the tapestry was made by Doric's wife, the Lady Mayla, while Doric was fighting in border disputes. The scene depicts his safe arrival home. If examined, the PCs may have the impression that the rider moves – nothing certain, but a corner-of-the-eye impression that a head was turned, or the horse's mane tossed. If the tapestry is touched by a PC, or other non-member of the household, that character will seemingly disappear, when in fact they have been transported into the Tapestry world.

The wooden panelling behind the tapestry conceals a hidden chamber, a small office occupied by the estate chamberlain in decades past. In Doric's it has been forgotten, but it is full of papers and ledgers from the history of the estate. Last used in Doric's father's time, the most recent papers relate to that period. One piece in particular will interest the PCs – prepared for a herald's visitation, a census of landed families, it shows the family arms of Andwan and his two sons, Andwan and Doric. By interpreting the heraldic symbols, the PCs can deduce that Doric is the younger of the twins. See *Cadency* box, below.

KILDERKIN FELL



CADENCY

This scrap of a lineage, discovered in papers concealed in Kilderkin Fell, clearly places each of the twins in their order of seniority within the family, and indicates their right to heredity.

Cadency is a method employed by heralds to differentiate between family members who have the right to bear the same arms. The **plain coat** is borne by the senior family member, in this case Andwan senior. His eldest son, Andwan junior, bears the plain coat with a mark of cadency – **a label of three points**. Doric also bears the plain coat with a mark of cadency – which in his case is the **crescent**, indicating his position as the second son.

The Upper Floor

Upstairs are several bedchambers, one belonging to Cybele, one to Doric, and two others prepared for the PCs.

Doric lies in a huge four poster bed, arms outside the blankets, glassy eyes staring upwards and his slack mouth drooling. Occasionally, he stirs enough to rave and ramble in mostly incoherent babblings. The odd word is legible – 'tower', 'shame' or 'mother'. Occasionally, the servant Ellen may be carrying a bowl of soup from the room, or bringing fresh cloths to take care of Doric's drooling.

The upper floor rooms are open to the roof – the house has no attic. The windows are small and the general gloominess of the place hangs heavily.

3. KILDERKIN ESTATES

The once-prosperous lands around Kilderkin Fell are now falling into disrepair. For some time a blight has affected crops, and ill health has debilitated the tenants. These entirely non-magical afflictions have been engineered by Andwan, and the slow decline in health and prosperity has led to depopulation by emigration and death.

There are only twelve tenants remaining here, in four family groups. They are all miserable and sickly and remain purely through loyalty to the family, although this has all but evaporated in the face of their hardships. One or two of the adults will quietly mention the curse, caused by 'that one's interference with our dead', but most will keep quiet on the subject.

Monstrous pests and wild animals are now beginning to take over the estate lands, and chance encounters are likely if the PCs investigate the overgrown orchards, fields and tenant settlement.

4. THE CRYPT

The family have maintained a crypt for over 300 years. This great stone building sits in a small garden enclosure, boasting a grand open archway main entrance and a smaller archway leading into the parkland beyond. The family crypt itself is square in shape fashioned from a white stone, smooth walled save for modest accent carving around the wide doorway with the family crest above. The door is of a pale wood, heavily bound in ornamental iron. The crypt has been visited regularly, not only for the intermittent interment of the family deceased but also at the time of certain festivals and more sombre anniversaries. The door is stiff and needs some encouragement to open, but is not rusted shut or jammed at all.

Inside, shallow steps lead down into a cool, dark interior. There are a number of dished braziers in which charcoal fires and incense once burned, but these have not been tended since before Doric took ill. The stonework is the same

- **WANDERING MONSTERS, Kilderkin estate**

DAY	1d10	NIGHT
1 BOAR, WILD (SWp89)	1	1 BOAR, WILD (SWp89)
	2	1-2 CENTIPEDE, GIANT (SWp89)
1-2 CENTIPEDE, GIANT (SWp89)	3	
	4	8-10 STIRGE (SWp113)
1-2 TICK, GIANT (SWp113)	5	
	6	1-3 CARRION CREEPER (SWp89)
6-8 STIRGE (SWp113)	7	
1-2 CARRION CREEPER (SWp89)	8	4-6 WOLF (SWp115)
	9	
3-4 WOLF (SWp115)	10	1 BAT, GIANT (SWp88)

modest smooth white as the exterior, and even small lights will create a good level of illumination due to the reflected glow.

A reception chamber holds several tattered banners, bearing various versions of the family arms – blue stars on a yellow field. Arched doorways lead into smaller antechambers. The older rooms, to the back of the structure, are carved into living rock, the walls pocked with small ossuary niches containing loose bones and the odd carved stone ossuary box. The newer chambers are constructed of masonry and hold shelves of sarcophagi, reflecting the changing burial rites over centuries.

Discoveries

- several of the sarcophagi, and the ossuaries, are labelled with the name 'Andwan', indicating this is an hereditary name of the family.
- the sarcophagus of Lady Mayla holds not only her own skeleton, still clad in its lace burial veil, but the recent **corpse of Ellen**, dry and on the way to mummification. She is still just recognisable to those who knew her. A single stab wound to the back of the neck attests to her cruel murder.

Events

- when the PCs are inside the crypt, an *Eversmoking Bottle* (see Magic Items) is unstopped inside the door by the unseen hand of Andwan, then the door is slammed and locked. A number of **Giant Rats** will panic - they have various small (1ft diameter) tunnels in the ground above the older rooms of the crypt through which they will attempt to flee the smoke, blindly attacking PCs in their way. There is a lever lock-release system inside the crypt, fully visible on entry should any character thoroughly examine the door, hinges and immediate entrance. Realisation of the function of this lever system may only dawn with a successful skill check as the PCs attempt to find a way out.
- the floor of one older chamber of the crypt is scattered with loose bones, which are trapped with a **Bone Construct**.

5. THE FOLLY

A ruined tower sits atop the rising ground behind the manor house. Built as a folly generations ago, it was intended to 'improve the landscape', but it has served as a beacon tower in the strife caused by the border war, and is now overgrown and seldom visited.

There are the tell-tale signs of occupation here – a recent fire, some food scraps, and crumpled but dry blankets are lying within the ruin. This is one of the hiding places of Old Tom, the hermit. He will attempt to conceal himself when he sees people approaching.

6. THE TAPESTRY WORLD

The Tapestry is an elaborate prison for Doric. Andwan has created a recurring nightmare, in which Doric as a young man must face characters from his treacherous past and battle with them, over and over again. Andwan created this as a torment for Doric's soul.

If the characters enter the Tapestry world they will recognise a younger version of Doric, who is intent on his quest – he is impelled by a Geas to enter the manor house and fight his way through attacking enemies to reach 'the prize'. He has no idea what the prize is, and appears manic and dishevelled, battle worn. He will shout and rant about his quest, with phrases like 'reach the prize', and 'treachery must be avenged', 'birthright, no honour'. The manor house itself is falling apart, floors are sagging and the windows leer like rotting teeth. The staircase leans and the stench of decay pervades everything. Doric will recognise the foes he faces, although they are all appearing as rotting revenants, shouting their names, and 'Mother!' and 'Father!', crying as he fights them. When he fights his way through the house he must face a final foe, a huge, black-shrouded rotting version of Andwan, whom he calls 'Brother', pausing before launching into battle. Each time he is slain, and reappears on

horseback outside the house, to do it all over again. If the PCs join him they can help him fight through the house, but in the final showdown Andwan will always defeat Doric before he himself takes fatal damage. This is, of course, all a phantasm, and the PCs will appear outside the house with Doric again, all damage suffered by PCs will be healed, but fatalities will not be resurrected.

In the course of this fighting, Doric's anguish becomes clear. His various outbursts should be enough to fill in the gaps of the story of his treachery. The GM should include references to jealousy, perceived favouritism, plans to besmirch Andwan, and the grisly business of exhuming the tenant's corpse.

The corpse-figures in the Tapestry world will include –

- His father, Andwan
- His mother, Mayla
- the exhumed tenant
- the servant Ellen
- the 3 false witnesses
- 2-4 estate tenants

OUTCOME

The PCs should be able to figure out the order of birth. Coupled with the testimony of the hermit they can piece together Doric's treachery. Both Hamelin and Cybele are unaware of this, and are totally innocent. The PCs may choose to bring summary justice against Doric, take him to a higher authority for trial, or leave him to his torment inside the tapestry world. Hamelin and Cybele will attempt to restore the fortunes of Kilderkin Fell, and invite the PCs to stay on to help. Andwan and Temera will disappear, perhaps to return in the future.

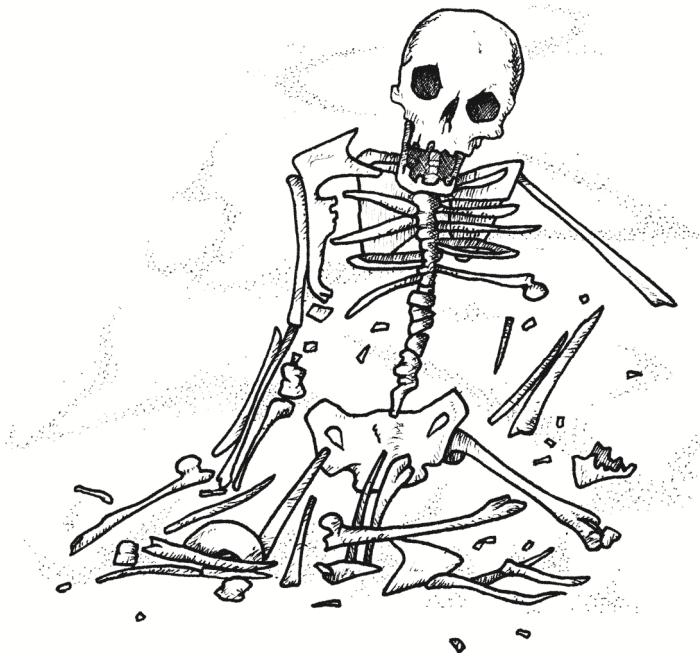
MAGIC ITEMS



EVERSMOKING BOTTLE

(from Gyax, E. G., 1979. *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons : Dungeon Master's Guide Revised* Dec 1979, p143)

This metal urn is identical to an *efreeti bottle*. It does nothing but smoke, however. The amount of smoke will be very great if the stopper is pulled out, pouring from the bottle and totally obscuring vision in a 50,000 cubic foot area in 1 round. The bottle, left unstoppered (*sic*), will fill another 10,000 cubic feet of space with smoke each round until 120,000 cubic feet of space is fogged, and this area will continue to remain so smoked until the ever-smoking bottle is stoppered. The bottle can only be resealed if a command word is known.



BONE CONSTRUCT

The 'Bone Construct' spell can be cast over a 5' x 5' area strewn with bones of any creature. The caster will give a simple command as part of the spell, a task to be undertaken by the construct, which is essentially a lesser Golem. This simple instruction could be 'kill intruders', or 'bar entry to all'. When the area is entered by any other than the caster, the bones will quickly assemble themselves into a humanoid form, the bones not necessarily taken their natural position in the creature created. The Bone Construct will use a long bone or jaw as a weapon, but will primarily attack using the sharp bones which have formed the hands and fingers. Slashing / piercing weapons do half damage to the construct, while crunching weapons cause +2 additional damage. The Bone Construct is immune to mind-affecting magic. When defeated, the unbroken bones will again join together to create a new construct. This will continue until there are not enough unbroken bones to form a human-sized construct.

BONE CONSTRUCT HD5; AC8; Atk 2 CLAW (1d6) or WEAPON (BONE CLUB 1d6); Sv14 +special; Mv10; AL N; CL/XP 4/300; Special: Immune to mind spells, limited resurrection.

PORTS OF CALL

WALRUS BAY

Ice waypost

Ports of Call appears in each issue of MP, with each article detailing a complete coastal community, including stats for Swords & Wizardry.

The weather in the far north can be a fickle thing, and those travelling the waters across the top of the world know that if the winter ice forms just a week earlier than expected then disaster can loom. Ships bringing people and livestock, or trade goods can be lost, crushed by the press of ice.

An unwritten law of the wild has emerged, an understanding that here the gods of nature are stronger than any squabble between mortals over trading or fishing territories. 'Together we stand', say the fur trappers and whale hunters, agreeing to put on hold any feuds or arguments until all return safely from the wilderness of the White North.

From this unwritten pact has emerged a tradition of 'forward hospitality'. A number of rudimentary shelters have been built at salient points along the rocky shoreline of the islands which dot the ice fields, inside which the travellers maintain a store of fuel – carried with them from the forested lands of home; flint and steel for fire lighting; a supply of smoked and salted meats and fish; and a harpoon, rope, hooks and line, and fishing nets in good repair. The rule states that a shelter must be left in a fully stocked state before the last man leaves – the next visitor may be in dire need of warmth and food, and that next visitor may be you.

Walrus Bay is named for the numbers of the tusked beasts which pull themselves onto the rock and shingle to congregate in great crowds, bellowing and rutting.

Two large stone buildings have been created, appearing to have been dug into the ground itself. This is a result of the stones used for construction having been taken from within the footprint of the building. This partially-subterranean aspect helps to conserve heat within the

structure, and to present a low profile to the strong winter winds which can blow for weeks at a time and could easily pull the roof from a more exposed building. The rooves of the buildings differ greatly - one has been formed of a mesh of imported branches, driftwood, ship wreckage, and the odd walrus or whale bone, over which canvas and sparse turves have been layered, the whole held down with strong ropes criss-crossing the roof and attached to more rocks at ground level. The second is made of a complete longship, upturned and lashed down to form a pitched roof. It is supplemented by canvas and turves but creates a solid shelter, the curved shape aiding in the deflection of the winds.

The structures require almost constant running repairs during the winter storms, and those hapless travellers unfortunate enough to have been marooned here throughout the dark months are kept very busy scavenging for materials to shore up their shelter.

Inside each is a large central fire pit, in which a small fire is constantly lit during the colder months. Travellers carry a huge amount of wood for just this purpose, loading their ships with as much as they can cram into the space between cargo and livestock on board, as the store of wood in each building can rapidly deplete. However, when travellers are stranded here for five or more months, firewood dwindles and even with strict rationing the temptation to scavenge from the structure itself is great indeed. It has been known for those marooned here for even longer periods to sacrifice their own ship for firewood, trusting in their being rescued by a friendly ship passing once the sea road is open again.

The Walrus - Walrus are a valuable source of ivory; strong skin which can be used to make waterproof clothing and containers; blubber – which can be rendered down to an oil useful for heating and lamp light, albeit smoky; and for their meat which, while apparently not being the best flavour, can at least sustain the stranded traveller.

WALRUS

Massive marine mammal resembling the elephant seal but identified by its iconic long tusks and whiskered face. Congregates on ice flows in huge numbers. Males aggressively defend territory and harem of females, who are also tusked. Largest males can be very aggressive, but all will rather escape conflict by retreating to water, where they can stay submerged for up to 30 minutes. Uses whiskers to detect sea-floor bivalves; supplements diet by eating carcasses of seal pups when usual food is scarce. Its habit of hauling itself from the water onto ice by using its tusks as 'ice picks' led to nickname of 'tuskwalker'.

Hunted for ivory tusks, really extended canine teeth, which can reach 3ft (1 metre)

in length; for blubber to make oil; for meat and skin.

The walrus will rush an enemy, attempting to BARGE them by a combination of size and weight, or GOUGE with tusks. A successful BARGE will knock a smaller enemy over, then the walrus can CRUSH attackers by sheer bulk, rolling over them. When panicked by White Bears, the ensuing rush for the safety of water can result in infants and smaller adult walrus being crushed to death.

The walrus can reach a weight of 4400lbs (2000kg), and measure Giant versions might be half as large again.

WALRUS: HD3; AC 6[13]; Atk 1 GOUGE (2d6); 1 BARGE (1d4); 1 CRUSH (4d10); Sv14; CL/XP 4/90; Special: DEX check vs BARGE, further DEX check vs CRUSH to roll out of the way.

The White Bear - The congregation of walrus attract the great White Bear, which will rush into the crowd of these awkward tusked beasts, eating those beasts crushed in the ensuing panic as the walrus try to escape this mortal enemy. The more bold walrus will stand ground against the bear, wielding the great ivory tusks borne by both male and female in defence in lengthy and bloody battles.

The White Bear has a great curiosity, and will investigate the shelters when characters are present. Hunger will lend them tenacity, and as the starving time of winter progresses the bears would brave spear tips to kill and devour any people they can find.

WHITE BEAR (as Polar Bear, SWMB p10)

HD7; AC6[13]; Atk 2 claws (1d6) 1 bite (1d10); Sv11; CL/XP 6/400; Special: Hug (add.2d6 Dam)

Trolls and giant-kin – the icelands are home to frost giants and trolls. Perhaps there is an entrance to Jotunheim hidden in the wastes near the settlement. Ettins may use the tusks of giant walrus as weapons in their attacks on the sheltering travellers. Ice trolls wander the long dark winter, lairing in ice caves and the craggy black mountains of the many islands dotting the ice field.

FROST GIANT - SW p99

ETTIN - SWMB p27

TROLL - SW p114

Wendigo - Those who resort to cannibalism – perhaps through gnawing starvation after being trapped in the shelters throughout a storm-locked winter – are said to become Wendigo, an evil spirit of ice and darkness. The Wendigo haunts the living, devouring them yet remaining hungry for more. Stranded characters may discover the shelters unprepared, strewn with gnawed corpses - and may then be visited by the Wendigo of winters past. This ferocious creature can only be slain by silver weapons. The Wendigo is discussed fully in the forthcoming *Low Down*

Dirty Skunk issue 1, from Cloudstepping Media.

Random treasures - Amongst the jumbled material shoring up the rooves and walls of the structures many interesting items have been deposited, either by chance or purposely, still awaiting retrieval by an owner not yet returned, for whatever unknown reason.

1	Pouch of 1d6 x 10 GP
2	
3	
4	
5	Pouch of hacksilver worth 1d6 x 10 GP
6	
7	
8	Necklace of glass beads and an iron amulet worth 2d10GP
9	
10	Small wooden box of ivory walrus tusk pieces, some decorated with carvings inlaid with soot. Worth 2d10GP
11	
12	Small furs – arctic fox / ermine worth 1d6 x 5 GP
13	
14	Large fur – white bear / huge white wolf worth 1d6 x 10 GP
15	
16	Very good quality armour boiled leather breastplate AC -3 (+3); weight 30lbs; worth 25GP
17	Arrow of Direction – as SW p134. Amongst quiver of normal arrows.
18	Owl of Arianrhod figurine. See information box below.
19	Runic dagger – iron dagger inscribed on blade with runes of power. Inflicts double damage.
20	Carved walrus ivory wolf – works as Figurine of Onyx Dog S&W p136 but transforms into white snow wolf. 1d10 charges remaining.

OWL OF ARIANRHOD



This carved wooden idol represents the owl aspect of the goddess Arianrhod, moon deity of womanhood, birth, death and rebirth.

Standing perhaps 12 inches tall, the figurine has a clear glass lens over one eye, the second lens is missing – lost in times past.

The surviving lens is about 2 inches across, apparently made of glass with a slight yellow tint, and is convex on each side. This creates a slight magnifying effect if the lens is looked through, but its greater power is to bestow *Darkvision* per the MU3 spell (S&Wp52). This represents the excellent night vision of the owl. The missing eye lens – should it ever be found – is made of a greenish glass, and bestows Detect Evil per the MU2 spell (S&Wp52).

This represents Arianrhod's ability to look deep into the soul and discern true intentions. The lenses are usable by any class or race, and do not affect class daily magic quotas.

A note on Darkvision – the ability of some demi-humans to 'see in the dark' is interpreted in various ways by different systems and players. Types of 'extra' vision slot into three handy groups – infravision, low light vision and darkvision. **Infravision** allows the character or creature to see the 'infra-red' end of the spectrum, those wavelengths which are emitted by 'warm' objects. It's 'heatvision' if you like, and is spoiled – often painfully – by bright visible light and very hot objects, like the flaming torches carried by human party members. To this group we can add ultravision, which allows characters to see those wavelengths at the other, 'blue' end of the visible spectrum – the ultra-violets which glow so trippily under a black light. Certain animals are known to detect these wavelengths in their vision while others, notably scorpions, fluoresce under the appropriate wavelength of light, as do particular minerals, so the ability of demi-humans to see these does make a kind of sense as a 'believable' way to differentiate them genetically from humans. **Low light vision** is the ability to be able to see 'normally' under much lower light conditions. Effectively the eyes are more sensitive to the available light. Perhaps the pupil can dilate more, or the structure of the eye can more economically make use of light to allow for effective vision when there is simply less light available. The final group, **darkvision**, is a thing apart. My own interpretation refers to the MU3 spell *Darkvision*, which allows the recipient to see in total darkness. Therefore, no reliance on light levels at all, with the inference that darkvision itself is a wholly supernatural ability. If we allow that elves exist at all, then it should also be acceptable that their vision involves some ability we cannot explain by mundane real-world physics. The magic item described in this short scenario bestows darkvision on the user, and should be treated as a conditional instance of the spell, as described in the S&W Core Rules, p52., but as ever the application of the rules and spells – and indeed the use of this particular item – is open to the interpretation and implementation of the individual player and group. That's what I think OSR is all about, but that discussion is entirely another can of worms...

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LOW DOWN DIRTY SKUNK

WHETHER YOUR OLD WEST IS
WILD OR WEIRD,
LOW DOWN DIRTY SKUNK
COULD BE JUST THE ZINE YOU'RE
LOOKIN' FOR



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in this second issue of MP, a terror bird's ton of treats =

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