

Tempes's Lore

Issue #5 November



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TEMPEST'S LORE

Vol. 1, Iss. 5, November 2002

Tempest's Lore is a monthly zine which strives to provide articles that can be used in nearly any campaign. Articles include new NPC's, monsters, magic spells and items, previews and reviews, featured articles, and much more. Original short stories from young writers and original artwork also complements the zine. Tempest's Lore can be found at the d20 Magazine Rack (www.d20zines.com).

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Howling Winds

By Robert M. Adams

When Tempest first approached me to write the headlining article for this month's issue, I envisioned myself sitting at my computer suffering through the next couple of days staring at a blank screen and wishing that I could think of something to write. Why this in fact did happen it was not because of the topic that we will get to momentarily, instead it was the familiar feeling of procrastination. We all know about this motivation-killer don't we? Of course we do, we simply call it writer's block or lack of creative genius. It is with procrastination in mind that I write this month's Howling Winds.

What is the first thing we Dungeon Masters do when the players rush through encounters? That's right; we procrastinate and hope that we can slow them down with some cleverly designed traps, snares, and minions. If that doesn't work, what then - genocide? It seems that this all-too-familiar trend tends to kill games rather quickly when the Dungeon Master feels that he is unprepared for what the players are going to encounter. What can we do to alleviate this problem? Glad you asked. There are several options that one may take when faced with players who want to rush through what you have planned for them.

One, let them. You heard me correctly. The players are there to have a good time and so are you so why not let them foolishly rush into your cleverly designed dungeon? They will either reap the benefits or sow the consequences, either way you and your players have fun. It is okay to let them stumble around for a while.

Two, make the combats more, and I hesitate to use the word, 'realistic'. This is when you make sure that your players relish every swing of the blade and every

pit fall that they encounter. The trick here is to make every encounter last as long as possible before moving on to the next one. Play up the villains and minions; they have to have some kind of motivation for existing. Play on that and make sure that the players know they are actually fighting something rather than just cardboard cutouts. This will increase the enjoyment of your players and yourself tremendously and add to the flavor of the world.

One more question remains. How do I create villains to make combat more fun? Simple, develop a background. Example: Sally the wraith is sad because she lost her mortality while foolishly trying to defend her husband from a band of goblins and she later found out he was cheating on her with the seamstress, Eliza. Now this makes for a much more interesting, albeit silly, minion for your players to defeat.

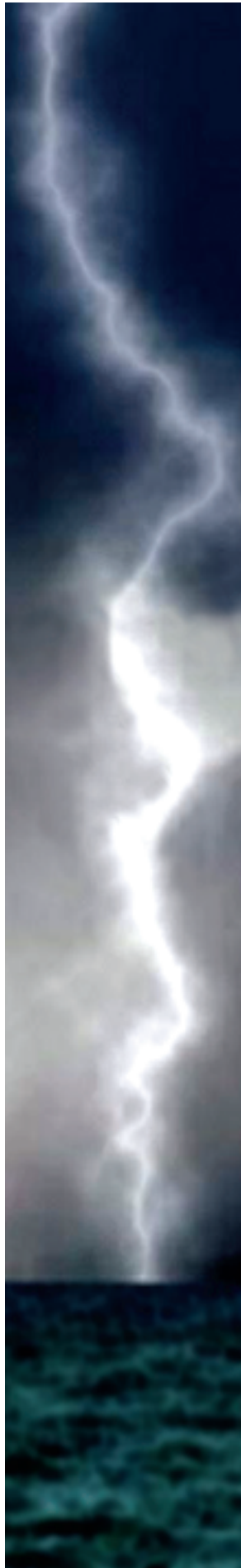
I feel that it is much more fun to defeat an opponent in battle that matches my prowess than it is to swath through a hoard of minions. Don't get me wrong, swathing is fun and soothing and leads to fun and excitement and gives a hero something to brag about in taverns at night, but it needs to be interspersed with combats that actually matter. Take the above example and remember not to procrastinate in combat situations. Make each encounter fun and enjoyable for the players by increasing the 'realism' of your fantasy game world. ◇

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News on the Rack: October

Every month you will see this column here in TL. News on the Rack is a recap of all the important news and happenings at the d20 Magazine Rack. New releases, updates, downloads, general happenings and more. If you missed anything while you were off on vacation, this is the place to catch up — second to the site of course! First up this month is our 3 new zines. Legions Realm looks to be permanent, while Fictional Reality and Deep Magic are both on a trial basis, so if you want to see them stay, be sure to drop by the forums and let us know! Our readers' support really matters here. We have also had a staff promotion, tons of new reviews, and a special issue of d20zine.

New Zine: Legions Realm

Legions Realm Monthly is an E-Zine for gamers by gamers. RPG's, Original Fiction and Art, Artist and Designer Interviews, d20 Materials and Reviews are just a taste of what we offer the consummate gamer. LRM publishes on a monthly basis in PDF format and is always looking for gamers who would like to become a creative part of the LEGION. You can download the latest issue on the d20 Magazine Rack website.

New Zine: Fictional Reality

Fictional Reality is an electronic magazine devoted to bringing you some of the best in gaming. Within its pages you will find reviews, interviews, original fiction, and other articles of interest that pertains to the role-playing community and gaming in general. You can download the latest issue on the d20 Magazine Rack website.

New Zine: Deep Magic

Deep Magic is an electronic magazine devoted to high fantasy and science fiction. Published by Amberlin, this magazine is devoted to promoting written and illustrated material for all ages that is

creative, well written, and clean (free of vulgarity, sex scenes, graphic violence, etc.) with no exceptions. Deep Magic is a safe place for minds to wander. Deep Magic is a forum for published and unpublished authors and illustrators to showcase their work, share their visions, and explore the horizons of imagination. You can download the latest issue on the d20 Magazine Rack website.

Staff Promotion: Anna M Dobritt

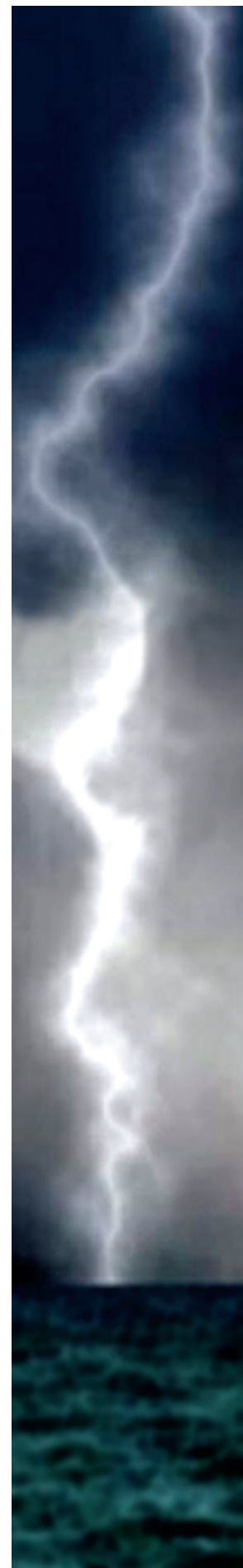
Also on the list of important news is the announcement that Anna Dobritt has been promoted to the position of Chief Editor for the d20 Magazine Rack. Anna will be delegating all assignments to the various editors as articles for the zines roll in. Because of her promotion, we are now in need of two more editors. If you have previous editing experience and wouldn't mind volunteering a few hours a month to help us out, please contact Steve at ghost.wind@verizon.net or TempestT at TempestT@d20zines.com.

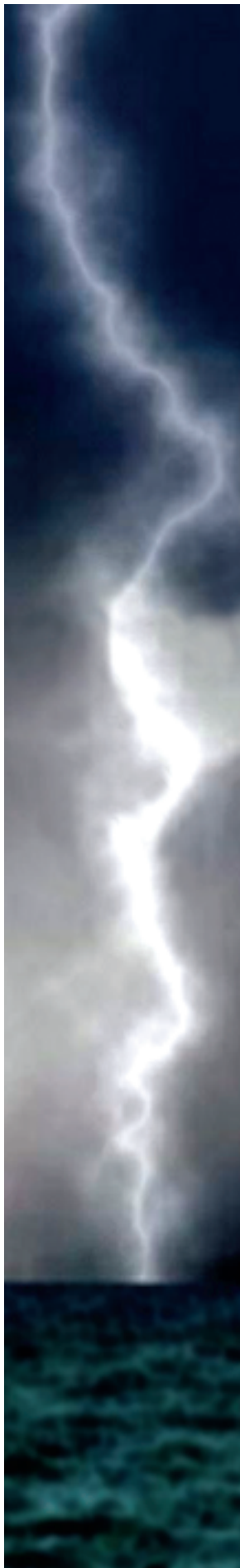
New Releases: d20zine! SE

The Special Edition of d20zine! is packed full of world settings that were originally sent to WotC. To end things in this issue is a full scale world setting ready to be played, and of course built upon even more to your own liking. Todd Schumacher did the layout for this issue, and did an amazing job, be sure to congratulate him!

New Releases: d20zine! Issue 2 / Fall

This Fall issue features several product reviews, new material submitted by readers, and contest entries from our August and September contests! Once again our graphic layout artist, Todd Schumacher, has done an excellent job. We're looking for feedback from any of the three issues published so far. Your letters will be included in the next issue in December.

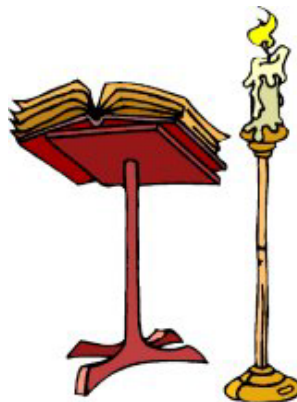




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The Grimoire is a list of user-contributed spells. You can add your own spellcraft to the book or rate and comment on spells already there. At the minute every spell in the Grimoire is 100% open gaming content under the d20 system.

Are you ready for the Grimoire? You have studied and prepared, haven't you?

News on the Rack: October (continued)

New Reviews: Critics Corner

October has been a pretty packed month for reviews over in the Critics Corner, be sure to stop by and see what's up. We have reviews for the following: Norse Gods, Depths of Despair, The Assassin's Handbook, Sidewinder: Wild West Adventure, The Planes: Feurring 'Gateway To Hell', Legacy of Ahkirat, and Chain of Being.

Other News: Of Companies and Reviews

As most everybody is now familiar with, Avalanche Press has contacted reviewers regarding their products. I am not going to go into a long spiel here, and if you want to find out more about this, then simply

visit our forum, or EN World's forum. I would like to mention, however, that the d20 Magazine Rack will no longer be supporting this company with our reviews. We have reason to believe that one of our reviews may have caused a problem. However, the d20 Magazine Rack will continue its reviews the way they always have been, and most importantly, they will be honest to the writer's opinion. To find out more information on our reviews, how they are handled, and our take on the subject, please visit our Announcement page at the website. Steve has done a great job further explaining where we stand, and how things are handled at our site.

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TempeST's Guide to the Depths Below

By TempeST

VENGEANCE OF THE MIND: PART II

For the second installment of this series, we are going to take an in-depth look at each of the 4 main Illith-Jhaz-Tam guilds. Each group has a general breakdown of its membership, as well as a short note about its leader, and secondary leader. The Illith-Jhaz prestige class is also introduced, along with some new feats. Also, in use of the OGC, the Assassin core class can be found in this article. This class is derived from The Assassins Handbook. The entry in this article is a bit trimmed down and altered some text so that it fits better within this article, but everything needed to run the class is here. For those of you who like this class, I urge you to go grab a copy of The Assassins Handbook, and read the review found on our site at d20zines.com.

ILLITH-JHAZ-TAM GROUPS

Illith-Jhaz-Tam: Duvaur

The Duvaur is the largest group of the Illith-Jhaz-Tam guild. With over 300 members split between fighters, assassins, sorcerers, and psionicists, the Grey Children are often used for large-scale attacks and highly dangerous missions. The leader of this group is Torgar Korlada, a powerful Sorcerer / Illith-Jhaz. Second in command is a thin beardless duergar known simply as Twigger.

The Duvaur is the most tactical group of the guild. With so many members, and abilities they are able to run the group as a full army, with spies, warriors, spellcasters, healers, archers, and powerful leaders.

Because the duergar are a naturally evil race, assassins are not uncommon,

and actually held in high standing. This class is not just taught to anybody, but those with the right skills are able to join easily enough. Fighters are as common as stone in the duergar society, and with several different paths to choose from, several varieties are available. Spellcasters and clerics tend to be few and far between, although they do exist and are often not hard to find.

The Duvaur is a skilled group and use these skills to their fullest potential. When possible they will send in spies to gather what information they can. In some instances they will use assassins to take out powerful enemies, both making their target easier, and lowering their enemies' moral. Spellcasters often choose protective spells for their comrades over offensive spells. Since they seldom are involved with the fighting, spells such as *protection from evil*, *invisibility*, *bull's strength* and others come in handy on their fellow fighters. Archers, or more typically dwarves armed with crossbows, stand at a distance and pick off oncoming foes before they ever make it to the battle. With such varied strengths available to them, this group is one of the most powerful.

Breakdown:

Current Members: 326

Alignment: Lawful Evil

These numbers are based on the dwarves' primary core class.

Fighters: 158 Barbarians: 26

Sorcerers: 9 Rogues: 58

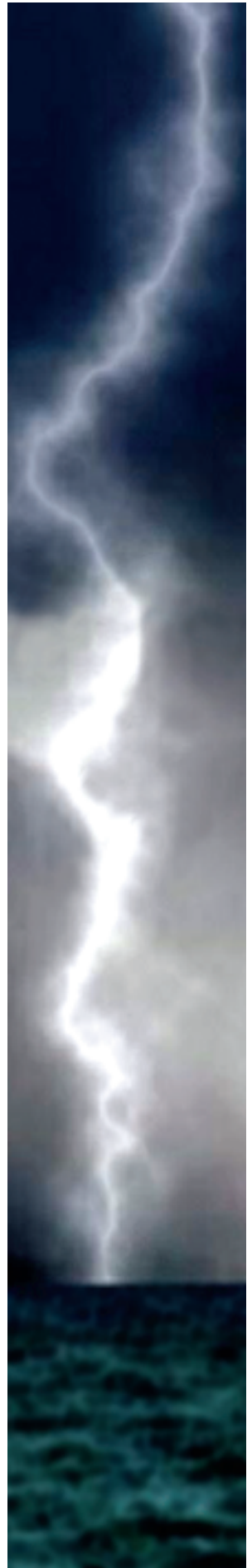
Clerics: 21 Monks: 3

*Assassins: 31 Wizards: 15

Other: 5

Many of these dwarves may have taken up multi-classing and/or prestige classes. Currently over 100 members have training in the Illith-Jhaz prestige class.

* The assassins mentioned here are not the prestige class noted in the DMG but are instead the core class as written in The Assassins Handbook published by



Green Ronin. This sourcebook is not needed, since the needed info can be found in this article, but may add more depth and understanding to the characters.

Head Slayer: Brottloda, female dwarf (duergar) Sor14 / Illith-Jhaz 5: CR 19; Size M (4 ft., 2 in. tall); HD 14d4+14 + 5d6+5; hp 70; Init +3 (+3 Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 13 (+3 Dex); Attack +10/+1 melee, or +14/+5 ranged; SV Fort +7, Ref +9, Will +13; AL CN; Str 9, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 9, Cha 14.

Languages Spoken: Common, Dwarven.

Skills: Concentration +20, Craft +16, Escape artist +7, Hide +5, Listen +3, Move silently +7, Spot +2;

Feats: Alertness, Combat casting, Craft wondrous item, Enlarge spell, Extend spell, Heighten spell, Silent Spell.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7/7/6/6): 0th — *dancing lights, detect magic, ghost sound, light, mage hand, mending, ray of frost, read magic, resistance*. 1st — *chill touch, identify, magic missile, shield, spider climb*. 2nd — *blur, invisibility, knock, mirror image, summon monster II*. 3rd — *flame arrow, fly, haste, hold person*. 4th — *charm monster, improved invisibility, polymorph other, wall of fire*.

Illith-Jahz Spells: (5/3/2)

Secondary Slayer: Rurendd, male dwarf (duergar) Asn16: CR 17; Size M (4 ft., 4 in. tall); HD 16d6+48; hp 112; Init +8 (+4 Dex, +4 Imp. Init.); Spd 20 ft.; AC 14 (+4 Dex); Attack +12/+7/+2 melee, or +16/+11/+6 ranged; SV Fort +8, Ref +14, Will +4; AL NE; Str 10, Dex 19, Con 16, Int 18, Wis 9, Cha 15.

Languages Spoken: Common, Dwarven, Giant, Orc, Undercommon.

Skills: Alchemy +12, Bluff +11, Climb +10, Disguise +8, Escape Artist +8, Gather Information +8, Hide +9, Move Silently +8, Listen +9, Spot +6, Use Rope +8, Intimidate +4.

Feats: Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Point

Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Far Shot, Improved Critical (short bow), Improved Initiative, Quick Draw, Weapon Focus (short bow), Weapon Focus (shorts word)

Assassin Spells: (3/3/2/2)

Illith-Jhaz-Tam: Dormark Shea Narkan (Dwarves)

This small group is made up of just over 100 powerful mountain dwarves. The main purpose of this group is to demolish. All of the members are fighters and barbarians, with a few skilled in the monk class. No powerful spells, no deity miracles, just plain skilled combat. All members are required to take at-least one level in the Illith Jhaz class, to protect their minds from assault, both magical and mental.

“The Anvils of Vengeance” as they call themselves are an organized, tactical group that fights in strong stances and unbreakable formations. They know how to fight in close quarters, as well as when they are pressed back to back. Dwarves are known for their battle formations, and this group is no exception.

Breakdown:

Current Members: 124

Alignment: Lawful Neutral

These numbers are based on the dwarves' primary core class.

Fighters: 67

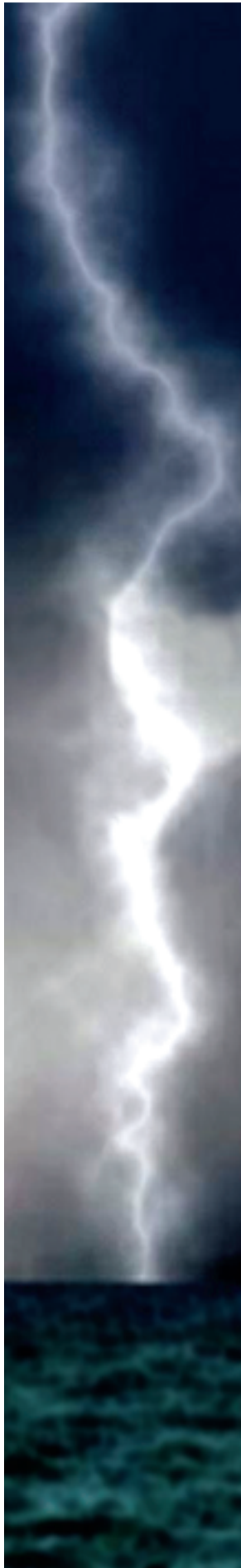
Many of these dwarves have taken up multi-classing and/or prestige classes. Currently every member has training in the Illith-Jhaz prestige class.

Barbarians: 33

Monks: 24

Head Slayer: Thorur, male dwarf Mnk 12 / Illith-Jhaz 4: CR 16; Size M (4 ft., 0 in. tall); HD 12d8+48 + 4d6+16; hp 137; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 45 ft.; AC 14 (+1 Dex, +1 Wis, +2 Mnk); Attack +11/+3 melee, or +8/+5/+2 monk, or +13/+5 ranged; SV Fort +14, Ref +11, Will +15; AL LG; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 18, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 7.

Languages Spoken: Common, Dwarven.



Skills: Appraise +10, Climb +2, Craft +17, Forgery +2, Hide +1, Listen +5, Move silently +1, Perform +15, Profession +15, Spot +4.

Feats: Alertness, Blind-fight, Combat reflexes, Deflect arrows, Improved trip, Improved unarmed strike, Iron will, Stunning fist, Toughness.

Illith-Jhaz Spells: (3/2/1)

Secondary Slayer: Bolil, female dwarf (hill) Ftr10 / Illith-Jhaz 2: CR 12; Size M (4 ft., 0 in. tall); HD 10d10+20 + 2d6+4; hp 78; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved initiative); Spd 20 ft.; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Attack +13/+7 melee, or +12/+6 ranged; SV Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +8; AL LN; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 9, Wis 16, Cha 9.

Languages Spoken: Common, Dwarven.

Skills: Appraise +3, Craft +1, Hide +1, Listen +5, Move silently +1, Ride +10, Spot +5, Knowledge [illithids] +3;

Feats: Alertness, Blind-fight, Cleave, Combat reflexes, Dodge, Improved critical (great axe), Improved initiative, Point blank shot, Power attack, Toughness.

Illith-Jhaz Spells: (1)

Illith-Jhaz-Tam: Ien-Urd (Deep Gnomes)

The Wounded Moles are one of the most interesting, if not disgusting, groups within the guild. Very few of the menteal will deal with this group, and those that do seldom have a choice. These gnomes smell of rotting flesh, dried blood, and natural uncleanness.

The Ien-Urd is a strict group to join, and entering their ranks is no small feat. Any gnome wishing to join must defeat an illithid single handedly, and armed with nothing more than a common dagger. Those that survive must then vow to never clean themselves of their trophy, which is both the creature's blood, and the tentacles that the gnomes attach along their belts. From here on the initiated gnome is out to kill any illithid that it comes across.

This group is made up of a variety of

Monks, Rogues, and Rangers who pride themselves with the task of eliminating the illithids, no matter the cost. They seldom work as one large group, preferring to branch off into smaller groups of 5-8 individuals.

Breakdown:

Current Members: 83

Alignment: Chaotic Good

These numbers are based on the gnomes' primary core class.

Rangers: 33

Many of these gnomes may have taken up multi-classing and/or prestige classes.

Monks: 26

Fighters: 24

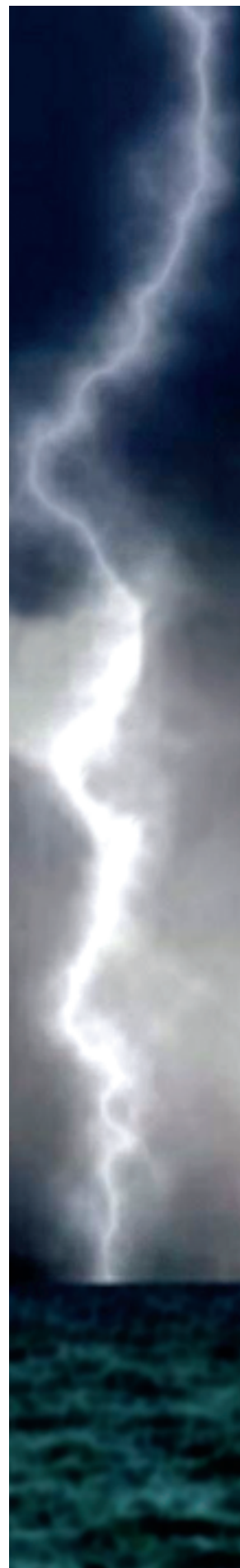
Head Slayer: Fonkin, male gnome (svirfneblin) Mnk15: CR 16; Size S (3 ft., 6 in. tall); HD 15d8+15; hp 88; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved initiative); Spd 55 ft.; AC 25 (+2 Dex, +5 Wis, +3 Mnk, +1 Size, +4 Natural); Attack +11/+6/+1 melee, or +11/+8/+5/+2 monk, or +14/+9/+4 ranged; SV Fort +12, Ref +13, Will +16; AL LN; Str 8, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 20, Cha 10.

Languages Spoken: Celestial, Common, Dwarven, Elven, Giant, Gnome, Goblin, Halfling, Ignan, Infernal, Orc, Terran, Undercommon.

Skills: Alchemy +2.5, Disable device +7.5, Heal +8, Hide +22, Knowledge +3.5, Listen +5, Move silently +2, Profession +15, Speak language +8, Spellcraft +8, Spot +5, Swim +17;

Feats: Blind-fight, Combat reflexes, Deflect arrows, Improved initiative, Improved trip, Improved unarmed strike, Leadership, Run, Stunning fist, Weapon focus (nunchaku).

Second Slayer: Zook, male gnome (svirfneblin) Rgr12, CR 13; Size S (3 ft., 7 in. tall); HD 12d10; hp 79; Init +4 (+4 Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 19 (+4 Dex, +1 Size, +4 Natural); Attack +15/+10/+5 melee, or +17/+12/+7 ranged; SV Fort +12, Ref +10, Will +8; AL LN; Str 14, Dex 18, Con 11,



Int 17, Wis 14, Cha 7.

Languages Spoken: Common, Dwarven, Elven, Gnome, Goblin, Orc, Terran, Undercommon.

Skills: Alchemy +10, Craft +18, Diplomacy +3, Escape artist +6, Gather information +2, Hide +10, Innuendo +6, Intimidate -1, Knowledge (arcana) +3.5, Listen +2, Move silently +19, Pick pocket +6, Sense motive +8.5, Speak language +1, Spellcraft +8, Spot +2, Wilderness lore +12;

Feats: Dodge, Expertise, Great fortitude, Quick draw, Skill focus (wilderness lore), Track.

Ranger Spells: (2/2/1)

Illith-Jhaz-Tam: Zau-Olortyrr (Drow)

The drow, masters of the underdark, evil incarnate, whatever you may want to call them, they know how to kill. This group of drow represents evil in its most hideous of ways. They don't simply kill illithids; they torture them, dismember them, and sacrifice them. They use sharp barbed swords with paralyzing poisons, bladed whips, and spider companions to rid themselves of the mind corrupting illithids.

The Children of Tattooed Venom consist of over 200 members, each who carry with them a guild given white tattoo that covers their entire chest. This tattoo represents a mind flayers face split down the center. For every illithid a member of this group kills, a small teardrop shaped tattoo is added to their forearm. This often can represent a drow's rank within the guild, due to the fact that the drow with the most kills is the leader, and any ties result in the two (or however many) dark elves fighting to the death. This will always guarantee the strongest as the leader.

Breakdown:

Current Members: 233

Alignment: Chaotic Evil

These numbers are based on the elves primary core class.

Rangers: 35 Fighters: 41

Sorcerers: 19 Rogues: 26

Clerics: 17

Barbarians: 24

*Assassins: 37

Wizards: 22

Other: 12

Many of these elves may have taken up multi-classing and/or prestige classes. Currently over 125 members have training in the Illith-Jhaz prestige class.

* The assassins mentioned here are not the prestige class noted in the DMG but are instead the core class as written in The Assassins Handbook published by Green Ronin. This sourcebook is not needed, since the needed info can be found in this article, but may add more depth and understanding to the characters.

Head Slayer: Xanalia, female elf (drow) Bbn17: CR 18; Size M (5 ft., 2 in. tall); HD 17d12; hp 129; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved initiative); Spd 40 ft.; AC 13 (+3 Dex); Attack +20/+15/+10/+5 melee, or +20/+15/+10/+5 ranged; SV Fort +10, Ref +8, Will +7; AL CE; Str 16, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 13.

Languages Spoken: Common, Elven, Gnome, Undercommon.

Skills: Bluff +7, Climb +19, Concentration +4, Hide +3, Intuit direction +7, Listen +22, Move silently +3, Ride +15, Search +3, Spot +2, Swim +22, Use rope +8;

Feats: Combat reflexes, Dodge, Improved initiative, Iron will, Quick draw, Toughness.

Secondary Slayer: Himoust, male elf (drow) Mnk9 / Assassin 5: CR 15; Size M (4 ft., 10 in. tall); HD 9d8+9 + 5d6+5; hp 94; Init +3 (+3 Dex); Spd 60 ft.; AC 16 (+3 Dex, +2 Wis, +1 Mnk); Attack +12/+4 melee, or +9/+6 monk, or +12/+4 ranged; SV Fort +8, Ref +13, Will +9; AL LE; Str 16, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 13, Wis 15, Cha 6.

Languages Spoken: Common, Elven, Gnoll, Undercommon.

Skills: Alchemy +9, Bluff + 7, Disguise +7, Hide +7, Climb +8, Escape Artist +8, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (religion) +4, Listen +4, Move silently +3,

Ride +7.5, Search +3.5, Sense motive +4.5, Spellcraft +7, Spot +8, Tumble +14, Wilderness lore +5;

Feats: Blind-fight, Deflect arrows, Dodge, Improved trip, Improved unarmed strike, Run, [Stunning fist], Track, Mobility, Spring Attack.

Assassin Spells: (2)

THE ASSASSIN (ASA) CORE CLASS

Game Rule Information

Assassins have the following game statistics.

Abilities: Dexterity is crucial to many of the assassin's skills, while strength may be equally important for close range assassinations. Charisma improves the assassin's ability to bluff, gather information, influence others, and talking their way out of situations. Intelligence is important when casting spells, creating poisons, and forging documents.

Alignment: Any nongood

Hit Die: d6

Starting Gold: 5d4 x 10

Class Skills

The assassin's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Alchemy (Int), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Innuendo (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (Int), Spot (Wis), Swim (Str), and Use Rope (Dex).

Skill Points at 1st Level: (4 + Int modifier) x 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the assassin.

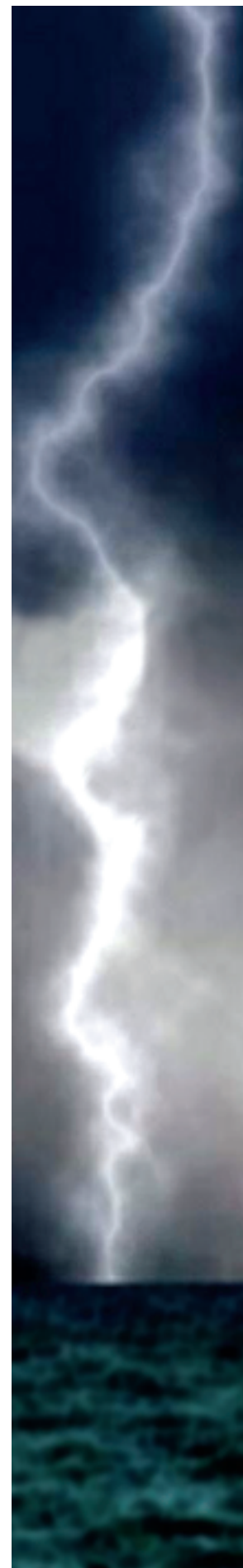
Weapon and Armor Proficiency: An assassin is proficient with all simple and martial weapons, light armor, medium armor, and shields.

Bonus Feats: At 1st level, the assassin gets a bonus feat in addition to the feat that any 1st level character gets and the bonus feat granted to humans. The assassin gains a bonus feat at 4th level, 8th, 12th, 16th, and 20th. These bonus feats must come from the following list: Ambidexterity, Blind Fight, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Dodge*, Mobility, Spring Attack, Death from Above*, Deep Cover*, Eavesdrop*, Exotic Weapon Proficiency, Expertise, Improved Disarm, Improved Trip, Whirlwind Attack, Glib Tongue*, Improved Critical, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Far Shot, Precise Shot, Prone Shot*, Rapid Shot, Shot on the Run, Poison Use*, Extend Poison*, Empower Poison*, Maximize Poison*, Quicken Poison*, Poison Focus*, Quick Draw, Quick Change*, Stone-cold Killer*, Two Weapon Fighting, Improved Two Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus, Weapon Panache*.

Notes: All feats marked with an * can be found in The Assassins Handbook.

Bonus Languages: An assassin may substitute any language in place of one normally available to him because of his race. The assassin can even choose a secret language such as druidic. Additionally, all assassins know a secret sign language that combines hand signals and subtle motions. This language is available only to assassins, and is never taught to anyone else.

Killing Blow: At second level, an assassin gains the ability to make a coupe de grace attack as a standard action once per day. This ability may be used when the assassin's target would be denied his dexterity bonus to AC, or when the assassin flanks the target, just like a rogue's sneak attack ability. During a



surprise round, a killing blow may be made as a partial action. The assassin may make an additional killing blow attack every four levels thereafter.

Unlike a coupe de grace attack against a helpless victim, the assassin must roll to attack normally. If his attack hits, he scores a critical hit. If the defender survives the damage, he still must make a Fort save (DC 10 + damage dealt) or die.

Delivering a killing blow provokes an attack of opportunity from threatening foes that are not flatfooted. You cannot deliver a killing blow to creatures that are immune to critical hits, such as golems.

At 14th level the assassin masters this ability, and makes such attacks at a +2 attack bonus, and no longer provokes an attack of opportunity.

Sneak Attack: Same as the Rogue ability.

Spells: Beginning at 4th level the assassin gains the ability to cast a small assortment of spells. To cast a spell, the assassin must have an intelligence of 10 + the spells level. The DC for saving throws against an assassin spell is 10 + the spell's level + the assassin's Intelligence modifier. Assassins must prepare their spells, but know all spells of each level, just like a divine spellcaster.

Starting at 4th level the assassin's caster level is one-half his class level.

Assassin Spell List:

1st Level: *change self, detect poison, distraction**, *fast escape**, *forget**, *ghost sound, obscuring mist, precise vision***, *shadow hands**, *sneaky feet***, *spider climb*.

2nd Level: *alter self, blur, darkness, death knell, false witness**, *fog cloud, part crowd**, *pass without trace, shadow selves***, *static veil***, *undetected alignment*.

3rd Level: *deeper darkness, ghost blade**, *invisibility, keen edge, misdirection, non-detection, phantom steed, poison food or water**, *shadow bolt**, *smoke form**, *silence*.

4th Level: *dimension door, choking shadows**, *decent into darkness***, *force armor**, *freedom of movement, gaseous form, improved invisibility, martyr's death**, *modify memory, poison, poison blade**, *shadow blade**, *steal identity**, *void armor**.

Notes: Spells marked with * can be found in The Assassins Handbook, spells marked with ** can be found in the Pocket Grimoire Arcane.

ASSASSIN TABLE

| Class Level | Attack Bonus | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Special | SPELLS | | | |
|------------------|----------------|-----------|----------|-----------|-------------------------|--------|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 1 st | +0 | +0 | +2 | +0 | Bonus Feat, Bonus Lang. | — | — | — | — |
| 2 nd | +1 | +0 | +3 | +0 | Killing Blow 1/day | — | — | — | — |
| 3 rd | +2 | +1 | +3 | +1 | Sneak Attack +1d6 | — | — | — | — |
| 4 th | +3 | +1 | +4 | +1 | Bonus Feat | 0 | — | — | — |
| 5 th | +3 | +1 | +4 | +1 | | 0 | — | — | — |
| 6 th | +4 | +2 | +5 | +2 | Killing Blow 2/day | 1 | — | — | — |
| 7 th | +5 | +2 | +5 | +2 | | 1 | — | — | — |
| 8 th | +6 / +1 | +2 | +6 | +2 | Bonus Feat | 1 | 0 | — | — |
| 9 th | +6 / +1 | +3 | +6 | +3 | Sneak Attack +2d6 | 1 | 0 | — | — |
| 10 th | +7 / +2 | +3 | +7 | +3 | Killing Blow 3/day | 1 | 1 | — | — |
| 11 th | +8 / +3 | +3 | +7 | +3 | | 1 | 1 | 0 | — |
| 12 th | +9 / +4 | +4 | +8 | +4 | Bonus Feat | 1 | 1 | 1 | — |
| 13 th | +9 / +4 | +4 | +8 | +4 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | — |
| 14 th | +10 / +5 | +4 | +9 | +4 | Killing Blow 4/day | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 15 th | +11 / +6 / +1 | +5 | +9 | +5 | Sneak Attack +3d6 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 16 th | +12 / +7 / +2 | +5 | +10 | +5 | Bonus Feat | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| 17 th | +12 / +7 / +2 | +5 | +10 | +5 | | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| 18 th | +13 / +8 / +3 | +6 | +11 | +6 | Killing Blow 5/day | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| 19 th | +14 / +9 / +4 | +6 | +11 | +6 | | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| 20 th | +15 / +10 / +5 | +6 | +12 | +6 | Bonus Feat | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |

The Illith-Jhaz Prestige Class

There are many known professions that target a specific creature or subject as their chosen enemy. Troll hunters and mage slayers, those that target the undead, and others who are hired to kill anything, and everything. The Illith-Jhaz target mind flayers as their preferred enemy. They know all of the mind flayers' secrets, critical hit areas, techniques, and how to avoid those nasty mind influencing psionics. Although their mind shield ability works on any creature's psionic or magical ability, all of the other techniques are designed with the illithids in mind.

Most Illith-Jhaz have some sort of fighting background before taking this class, however there are exceptions. Wizards, sorcerer, bards, rogues, and even druids have been known to take this class. Without a doubt anyone who truly despises the mind flayers can follow the Illith-Jhaz path.

Hit Dice: d6

Requirements:

To qualify to become an Illith-Jhaz, a character must fulfill all of the following requirements.

Base Attack Bonus: +6

Feats: Bust Loose, Blind-Fight

Special: The character must have been the target of an illithids Mind Blast ability.

Class Skills:

The Illith-Jhaz class skills (and the key ability for each) are Concentration (Con), Escape Artist (Dex), Knowledge [illithids](Int), Jump (Str), Climb (Str), and Gather Information (Cha).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2+Int mod.

Class Features:

All of the following are class features of the Illith-Jhaz prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The Illith-Jhaz does not gain or lose any weapon or armor proficiencies.

Mind Shield: All Illith-Jhaz gain a +2 competence bonus to any mind influencing spell, psionic, or effect. This increases to +4 at 4th level

Static Shock: The Illith-Jhaz has a small affinity to electricity. Any time that they are grappled they may let loose a powerful jolt

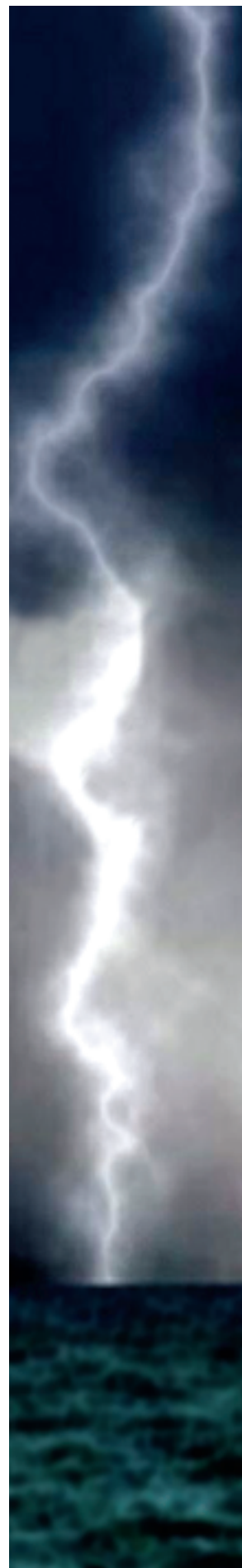
of electricity that causes their foe to make a Fort save (DC 10 + constitution bonus + Illith-Jhaz level) or lose their hold. This ability may be used a number of times equal to their Illith-Jhaz level / day. Up to a total of 5/day at 5th level.

Illith-Sha: At second level the Illith-Jhaz gains a +1 bonus to both their initiative and their to-hit attack vs. mind flayers. This increases to +2 at level 4, and +3 at level 5.

Tentacle Rip: If the Illith-Jhaz becomes the victim of an illithid's tentacle attack, they may opt to allow the tentacle to hit (automatic) as well as not fight the grapple check, also allowing the mind flayer to successfully use its Improved Grab ability. If this is chosen, they may use this ability as a free action once it is their turn. If the Illith-Jhaz ever is in a situation in which all 4 of the mind flayers tentacles are a hold of his head, then he can make an Escape Artist check. If successful the victim successfully pulls away, ripping 1d4 of the tentacles off of the illithid itself. For each tentacle that is ripped off, the mind flayer suffers 1d4+1 points of damage. In addition, the mind flayer may no longer use its improved grab ability, or its Extract ability. This will eventually cause the mind flayer to starve to death, unless it finds a way to reattach the tentacle.

Thick Skull: The Illith-Jhaz has an exceptionally thick skull. Extracting the brain takes an additional number of rounds equal to the Illith-Jhaz Constitution bonus. Thus, extracting the brain of a character with a Constitution of 14 takes 3 full rounds (1 full round for the original grapple, and +2 additional rounds for the characters Con. bonus).

Brain Shock: Any illithid that attempts to extract the brain of an Illith-Jhaz with this ability is in for a surprise. An Illith-Jhaz's brain has undergone such strenuous tasks, that it has essentially found a way to protect itself further. At any instance in which the brain senses the tug of an Extract ability, it will send a stunning vibration through the character's skull straight into the mind flayer's brain. The mind flayer must succeed in a Fort save (DC20 + Intelligence Mod) or be stunned



for 1d4 rounds, and thrown back 5'. The Illith-Jhaz may use this ability 1/day.

Spells: Beginning at 2nd level the Illith-Jhaz gains the ability to cast a small assortment of spells. To cast a spell, the Illith-Jhaz must have an intelligence of 10 + the spells level. The DC for saving throws against an Illith-Jhaz spell is 10 + the spell's level + the Illith-Jhaz Intelligence modifier. The Illith-Jhaz must prepare their spells, but know all spells of each level, just like a divine spellcaster. Starting at 2nd level the Illith-Jhaz caster

level is one-less his Illith-Jhaz class level.

Illith-Jhaz Spell List:

1st Level: *obscuring mist, true strike, hypnotism, mage armor, change self, cause fear, expeditious retreat, spider climb, jump.*

2nd Level: *protection from arrows, fog cloud, glitterdust, detect thoughts, darkness, bull's strength, cat's grace, rope trick*

3rd Level: *dispel magic, nondetection, suggestion, gaseous form, haste, keen edge, slow*

| Illith-Jhaz Table | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|--------------|-----------|----------|-----------|---------------------------|--------|---|---|
| Class Level | Attack Bonus | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Special | Spells | | |
| | | | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1 st | +0 | +0 | +0 | +1 | Mind Shield, Static Shock | 0 | — | — |
| 2 nd | +1 | +1 | +1 | +2 | Illith-Sha | 1 | 0 | — |
| 3 rd | +2 | +1 | +1 | +3 | Tentacle Rip | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 4 th | +3 | +2 | +2 | +4 | Thick Skull | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5 th | +4 | +2 | +2 | +5 | Brain Shock | 4 | 3 | 2 |

New Skill:

Knowledge [illithids]

You have made an indepth study of the illithid race. Any skill based throw you may need to make concerning illithids, you may choose to use ½ this skill bonus (rounded up) instead. For example if you a +10 bonus in this skill, you may choose to use ½ of that, +5, instead of your +3 bonus to bluff when dealing with an illithid. You know what to listen for (Listen skill), look for (Spot or Search skills), how to hide from them (Hide), and how to trick them (Bluff) among other things. Also, for every 4 ranks obtained, you gain a +1 to hit when attacking illithids.

New Feats:

Iron Grip [General]

Your grip is as strong as iron.

Prerequisite: Str 14+

Benefit: You gain a +4 competence bonus vs. being disarmed of a weapon.

Bust Loose [General]

Your strength aids you in escaping.

Prerequisite: Str 12+

Benefit: You add your strength bonus to Escape Artist checks. This stacks with all other bonuses.

Steel Tentacles [General]

Your tentacles are as strong as steel.

Prerequisite: 1 or more tentacles, Str 14+

Benefit: You are able to tighten the muscles in a tentacle to such a point, that they become as hard as steel. Any creature trying to break loose of a hold / grapple from a tentacle suffers a -4 to their roll (whether it is an Escape Artist, or opposing grapple check).

Tentacle Claw [General]

Your tentacles are so strong; they are able to puncture the skin.

Prerequisite: 1 or more tentacles, Steel Tentacles, Str 16+

Benefit: Any attack with a tentacle causes additional 1d2 points of damage. Your tentacles now have a better grip, adding an additional +1 to grapple checks.

Slap Happy [General]

You are able to strike with your tentacles so fast, it throws opponents off guard.

Prerequisite: Improved Initiative, Dex 14+

Benefit: For each successful tentacle attack in unison, the following one gains a +1 to hit bonus. Thus, if a creature with 4 tentacles, and a +4 to hit bonus hits with it's first attack, the second attack has a +5. If this attack is successful, the 3rd tentacle has a +6, etc. At anytime a tentacle misses, the attack ends, and this feat may not be used again vs. that enemy.

◇

Grimoire Arcana

By Timothy Crumrine

"Downward, Tarra, drive it downward!" Crow urged as his blades flashed in a mesmerizing dance. Tarra grimaced as she brought her blade up against Crow's and began to force the play of parry and thrust slowly toward the floor. When the elf's swords were low, he suddenly brought one up over her guard and at her throat. With quick speed, she grabbed his wrist, twisting enough to slide under his arm and kicked hard on the back of his knee. Crow fell with a curse, hurling his swords away from his body to prevent injury.

Rising again, he shook his head. "That was a good trick, young one. Gutter fighting and just plain dirty. I'm proud of you." He grinned and gathered his swords, sliding them back into their sheaths at his back. Tarra removed the wire facemask and helm from her head and shook away the sweat from her hair. In the past three years, her hair had grown in length so that now she wore it in a short braided tail. The weight of her practice armor and sword had toned her body to resemble a hunting cat, and she walked with elf-like balance and grace. Arasaun walked up to her from where he had been observing them and handed her an earthenware cup and a towel. Sipping the water within, she handed her sword to Arasaun and began to towel off her face. The removal of her armor as always left her with the momentary feeling of weightlessness, and she began to towel off her arms and legs.

"Well?" she asked Crow as she stacked the armor together and took back her blade from Arasaun. He cocked his head to one side as he formulated his answer.

"All right, I'll admit it, you are capable enough to defend yourself," he said. "But you are nowhere near being able to best me, Tarra," He added seriously. "And

there's always another who's faster with a blade, or has a bow and a hiding place, or any number of magical trinkets," he cautioned. "Remember that."

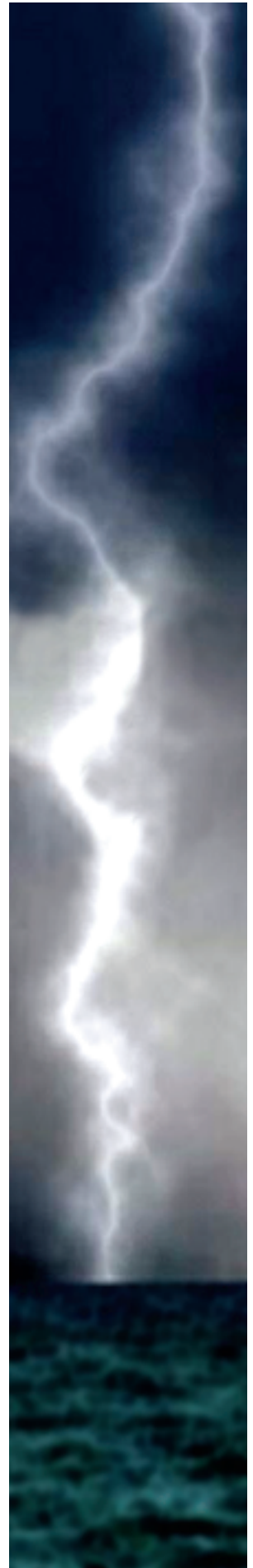
"Your bath is ready, little one," Arasaun said as he took the bundle from her grasp. "Go bathe, so this one can as well." He gave a theatrical sniff in Crow's direction. "Please!" he added urgently. As the young woman left, Crow leaned toward Arasaun.

"Do you think she suspects?" he whispered. Arasaun grinned fiendishly.

"I doubt it, though she has surprised me more than once," Arasaun replied.

Tarra's bath was long and thoroughly enjoyable. She sat soaking in the marble tub, submerged up to her face, and let the hot water relax the soreness from her muscles. For three years she had studied and practiced, all for the time when she could go and see the lands she had read so much about, and it now looked like the end was in sight. After three years of watching the sun set on the horizon of the mountains, she was going to be able to see it from somewhere else. Rising from the tub, water cascading from her body, she reached for a large felt towel at her left. Drying took some time. Felt, though the most common of absorbent materials available, still did not want to remove the water from a body and it took her some time before she donned her tunic and leggings. Dragging a shell comb through her hair, she went to the chamber where she had left the elves. There was no one in the small room, so she turned and retraced her path to the library, which was the main room of the cavern. At the stone table the two sat, quietly engaged in conversation. Tarra approached them and laid a hand on Arasaun's shoulder to gain his attention. As she did so, her fingers passed through his shoulder like mist and both the elves faded from view.

"Surprise!" a group of voices rang out from various corners of the cavern. Spinning, Tarra saw Arasaun bring in a cake with small beeswax candles on it



from where she had just entered. Crow and Kyla, her paladin friend, stepped out from behind bookcases, and finally, in her typical fashion, the elven artisan Zal was rappelling from the ceiling on a wire cable feeding from her artificial arm. In addition, two other women stood off to the side of the room. One was a human dressed in chainmail and cloak with long brown hair. The other was hooded and cloaked with no trace of her features visible.

"My birthday isn't until three days from now, guys," she protested weakly. The others gathered around the table and took seats. Arasaun set the cake before her.

"It wouldn't be much of a surprise if it was on your birthday, would it?" Zal teased. Tarra closed her eyes for a moment and held her hair back. With a sharp exhale she blew out the flames of the candles to a thunderous applause. As Arasaun cut the cake, the others rushed over to a spot against one wall. Puzzled, Tarra joined them.

"Aren't we eating the cake?" she asked, confused at their actions. Crow gave a wicked grin and twisted the ring on his hand. Ripples like an oasis mirage warped across their view, then cleared to reveal a small pile of boxes, with a large item in the back draped in cloth. In eagerness, Zal grabbed a largish box and thrust it into Tarra's grasp.

"Open mine first!" she urged. Tarra removed the twine from the box and opened it. Within lay a small crossbow, made to be used with one hand. An unusual iron and brass box was fastened on the top of the bow completely covering the firing groove. Tarra looked at it with a raised eyebrow.

"What is it?" she asked cautiously. One could never be too careful when dealing with an item from Zal. It could be capable of doing almost anything, from sitting inert and not working, to leveling a room and anyone unlucky enough to be in it. Zal looked at her with exasperation.

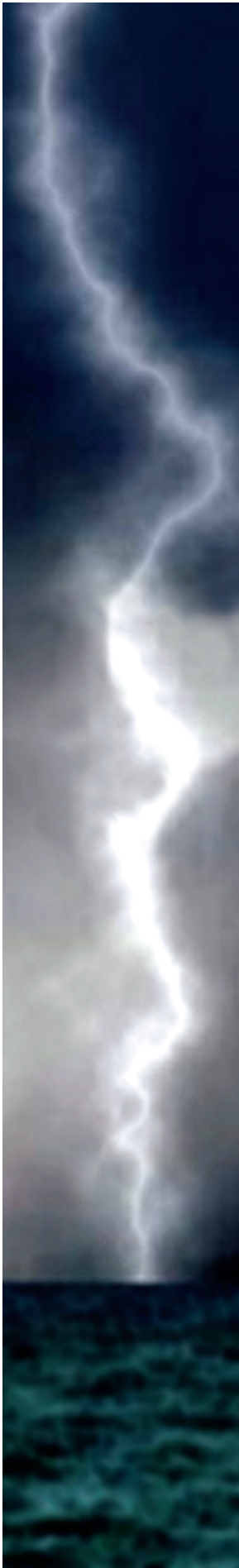
"It's a crossbow," she said, taking it

from the box and sliding back a small lever on the side. The mechanism moved easily and a faint clicking was heard. Pointing the weapon away from them all, she squeezed the trigger. A short quarrel embedded itself in the sand a few feet away and another soft click was heard from the bow. She aimed the weapon a few feet to the left and again squeezed the trigger, causing another bolt to hit the sand. Three more times she fired the bow, all without reloading, before handing it back to Tarra. "Repeating crossbow!" she grinned. "Holds twenty bolts in the box at a time. A built in air cartridge powers the cocking mechanism and is good for twenty shots, so it's easier to keep track if you don't reload between uses. The catch release for a new ammo box and cartridge is here on the back."

"I hope it works better than that 'Improved Defense' sheath you gave me," Kyla remarked darkly. "The thing's release button wedged into the locked position and I couldn't get my sword out of it for two weeks."

"It did what it was supposed to do!" Zal replied hotly. "Your sword was fully protected from rust, water, acid, fire, and theft. How was I supposed to know that the switch would jam under constant use?" Kyla waved away her explanation with resignation. Turning to the other parcels, she handed Tarra a smaller one.

"Try mine, it works," Kyla said with a wink. Inside was a satchel with a shoulder strap made of durable tan leather. As Tarra took it out, she saw under it several sheaves of parchment in a leather scroll case and a set of metal tipped pens and ink. A small, sharp knife and a set of traditional quills were within, as well as a large block of sealing wax and a signet press. "A scholar should never be without a scribe's kit," Kyla whispered with a knowing look, then was momentarily knocked back by Tarra's fierce hug. Awkwardly patting the girl's back she gasped out "Air, air, I need air!" After a



few hasty breaths, she looked again at Tarra. "You're welcome," she grimaced, massaging her throat. "I also wanted to introduce you to some people." She gestured to the two individuals who had been hanging back from the group. "This is Anna Nelvenor." She said gesturing to the brown haired woman who gave a warm smile and an inclination of her head. "And this is Iljrene, the woman who met me in that clearing so long ago." Kyla gestured to the robed figure who drew back her hood, shaking out a cascade of silvery white hair revealing the black skin and features of a Drow elf. Mischief sparkled in her large ruby red eyes and she gave a wry grin at the reaction she received from Tarra. Other reactions were not so friendly however.

"Dark elf!" Zal spat in venom. "Shilverath jalkara shiie!" Drawing a dagger from her belt the Artisan leapt to her feet and would have thrown herself at the Drow if Kyla and Anna had not drawn steel and stood before her. The tension was high in the cavern as Zal coldly faced the naked blades of the two women.

"What is going on here?!" Arasaun demanded approaching with a frosting smeared knife in his hand. Iljrene gave him the barest glance before returning her gaze to Zal.

"Dy'haalairythora nesh jalkara queranon arastia," the dark elf said in a grim tone, though Tarra could still see traces of amusement in the form of an uplifted eyebrow. Zal's eyes narrowed at her use of the Elven tongue.

"Zal!" Arasaun said, a hint of his draconic growl creeping into his voice. "You are ruining Tarra's party. Iljrene is no threat to you or anyone here. All of you put away your weapons now!" Kyla and Anna sheathed their blades. Zal hesitated for a moment then also complied, but as she moved her artificial arm away from the hilt, something flew from the wrist at the Drow. Faster than Tarra could register Iljrene moved. A clash of steel sounded

and Iljrene was suddenly standing behind Zal with the Artisan's arm twisted behind her back. A slim bladed longsword of dark metal was held away from them all in her other hand. There was no trace of humor in her eyes any longer as she spoke.

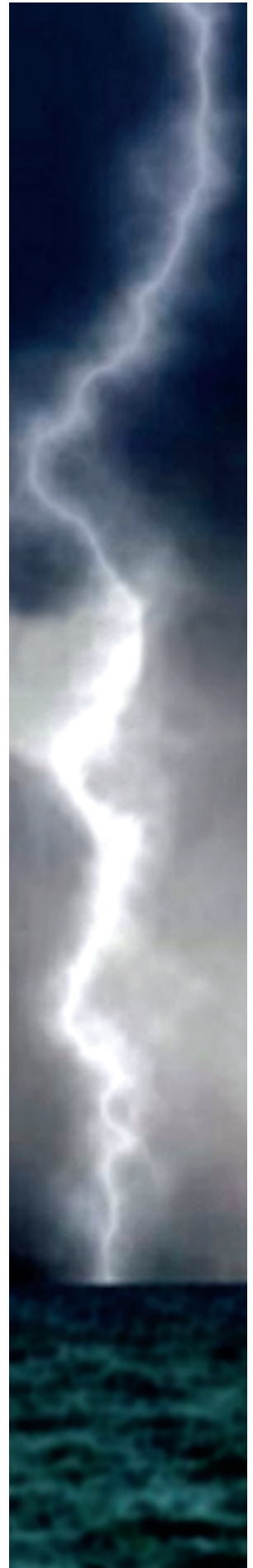
"Darkmoon sheds no blood of those I would call a friend, Zal," she stated, releasing the elf with a push and standing with her blade resting point down in the sand. The blade was faintly glowing with a pale white light, which seemed to come more strongly from the symbol of a black crescent moon on the blade near the crosspiece. Zal rubbed her wrist and turned away. Arasaun moved forward to block her path.

"She is a friend, Zal, just as you are my friend. I look beyond her appearance and reputation just as I do with you." Zal winced slightly at that statement. With a final dark look over her shoulder, Zal looked up at Arasaun with rigid eyes.

"Because you are my friend, Arasaun, I will let this rest." She turned to the pile of gifts and pulled out three identical sized ones. Turning to Tarra, she thrust them into her arms. "These are the spare magazines for your bow. If you need others, let me know. You will have to forgive me for not staying, I have no appetite for cake any longer." She bent down and retrieved the small steel bar, sharpened at one end, which had been deflected by Iljrene and left the cavern quickly. For several minutes, there was an awkward silence, and no one knew what to say. Iljrene sheathed her blade under her cloak once more. Crow started at the sound and commented.

"Cake ready yet, Arasaun?" This brought the elf out of whatever thoughts were going through his mind just then. He retreated to the table as the woman Anna came forward with another gift from the pile.

"This is from me, and also from Onyx, another of our group who could not make it here today. We hope you will find it useful." Tarra took the gift slowly, not quite



over the emotion of what had just happened, and began to unwrap it. Within the box where a pair of boots of soft leather colored brown with green trim. "We at first thought you were a giant halfling, but Arasaun assured us that you would probably need them on the roads." Tarra looked down at her bare feet half buried in the sand and laughed, the sound carrying through the chamber and dispelling a great deal of the gloom that had remained. Tarra sat down and pulled the boots on. They felt warm and light as if she were walking on air, and though they seemed loose when she first donned them, they now felt as if they were a second skin on her feet. Feeling slightly embarrassed; she took a few steps in her new footwear. When she turned back to the group, Iljrene was standing in front with a small jewelry coffer in her hands.

"And now for my gift, Tarra," she said. "Though normally we wait a trial period for this event, all three of us, Anna, Onyx and myself, have heard of you from Kyla, Arasaun, and Crow. We all feel that, should you wish it, you are welcome." The Drow held out the coffer to her. Confused Tarra took it and opened the lid. Within was a small pendant on a chain. The pendant was engraved with the image of two arms with bracers clasping wrists. Each bracer had a heart on it and behind the two arms was a sword, point up.

"It's beautiful, Iljrene, but what is it?" She asked, taking the jewelry out of its container. Iljrene smiled at her and withdrew a matching medallion from within her cloak. Kyla and Anna also drew out pendants from their armor.

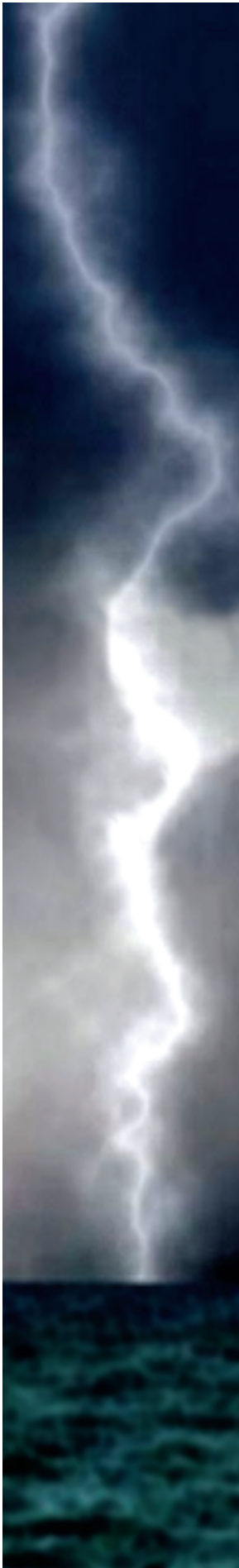
"That is the mark of a Steelsister, a member of the Sisterhood of Steel. Above all, it is a pledge of friendship to your fellow Sisters. A promise that you will be there if they need you, just as they will be there for you. Second, but just as important, it is a duty to help defend those who cannot defend themselves, and to preserve knowledge for the future. The choice is

yours, Tarra; no one will think less of you if you choose to decline. We will all still be your friends." Iljrene looked at her solemnly. "But also know this. The last pledge of every Steelsister is that we all, no matter what befalls us, will attempt to stop Eldine and those like him from flourishing in our world, and that is a dangerous life." Tarra looked at each woman in turn, searching their faces for some sign of what she should do, but they all only held steady gazes. Her eyes flickered to Crow. The old elf shook his head wearily.

"Don't be looking to me, young one," he said. "It's not my choice. Look within yourself for an answer." Tarra turned and looked at Arasaun's back as he finished serving the cake and remembered the day almost three years ago when he left to save his father from Eldine's clutches. What could she do to stop the Necromancer? Arasaun was an ancient dragon and a skilled sorcerer and he almost died in that battle. He would have if not for Crow and Kyla, and herself for that matter. Arasaun's friends saved him. His friends....

"I would be honored to join you all, Iljrene," she said, placing the pendant around her neck. The room's occupants all began smiling. Arasaun came forward with the cake and soon all were relishing the pleasant taste of choco paste over buttercake. As the plates were gathered, Kyla's having to be almost pried from her hand, Arasaun looked at Tarra and gave a hesitant smile.

"Well, little one, I guess its time that I gave you my gift." He walked over to the large shrouded item that was all that remained. "Actually, it comes from both Crow and myself, as we both contributed to it." Tarra could tell the elf was nervous; he had never been at such a loss for words before. "Well, I guess this is the time." He pulled the tarp off of the form and stepped back. Tarra's eyes widened at the sight beneath the cloth. A suit of armor plates



and chainmail was on a stand with a sheathed sword clutched in the gauntlets. The breastplate was shining silver and was worked in the image of a sylvan forest. Ivy and leafwork was engraved on almost every surface of the other silvery plates. The chainmail was crafted of a darker metal, and with links so small, the whole seemed like fine cloth. Crow came up behind her and laid a hand on her shoulder.

"Beautiful, isn't it?" he asked. Tarra was still breathless and didn't reply. "It belonged to my mother," he continued. "Forged during the Wars by my grandfather's own hand for her." Tarra looked up at the old elf with tears in her eyes. She opened her mouth to say something but he shook his head. "No, Tarra, you should wear it. It has been centuries since a woman with my mother's spirit last wore it. I want you to have it; I want it to protect you. I'm sure my mother would want the same thing." Tarra slowly walked over to the armor and ran a hand down the paladron. The metal felt warm to the touch, as if somehow alive. She gently removed the gauntlet of one arm and slid it onto her own. The mail moved like it was a part of her, warm and responsive. And the weight was like air, she hardly felt as if she were wearing anything at all. She reached down and gently pulled the sword from its sheath. The blade was an ancient Elven design and was the same as when she saw it three years ago, belted at the side of Arasaun before he left to face Eldine.

"Arasaun! I can't! It's..." she turned to him, the words not coming to her. He smiled at her gently.

"No, Tarra, it is not mine. Though I would not mind you possessing my Serpent Blade, it would make you ill to wield one of a still living Mage. This is Ar'Quisst, the sword of my father." He took the blade from her hand and turned the hilt so she could see the plaque on the grip. Engraved on the bronze was a sigil

resembling a taloned hand cradling a heart. "This was the first blade, of which all the others were fashioned in likeness. When I freed my father's spirit his last request was that I give Ar'Quisst to someone worthy." He turned the blade over and presented the hilt to her hand. "And I have." Her hand closed around the hilt and she lifted the blade. Bringing it up in front of her face, she saluted Arasaun with tears cascading down her cheeks. The other women flocked around her and began to clothe her in her new armor. Soon Tarra stood before them in the arms and armor of the ancient Elven kingdom with her scribe kit at her side and her bow at her waist. Across her back was Ar'Quisst and Kyla had tied back her hair into a topknot with silken cord. Crow stepped forward and adjusted one of the straps.

"I'm sorry, young one, but the elves do not tend to wear helms. So be sure to watch out for your head." Tarra laughed and stretched in the armor.

"It feels so natural," she said, "Like I'm not wearing anything at all." Crow looked at her with a grin.

"Really?" he said, "Nothing at all?" he teased. Tarra blushed slightly, but she had gotten used to his humor by now.

"No, really. It feels almost weightless, and I swear that I can feel the air on my skin even though it's covered.

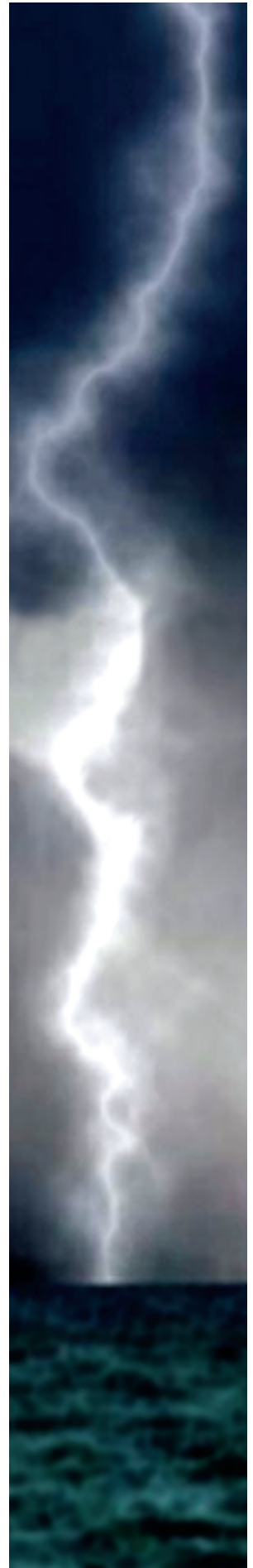
"Oh that!" he chuckled. "That's because it's Shean'Shee Magi." Tarra looked puzzled.

"Living Magic?" she said, "What's that?" Crow didn't answer her; instead, he turned to Arasaun and bellowed.

"Ho, Arasaun!" he called. The elf looked up. "Lecture time!" He looked at Crow and then at Tarra.

"Crow said this was Shean'Shee Magi. I wanted to know what that is, that's all." Arasaun smiled and sat down.

"Get comfortable, everyone, this is going to take awhile," Kyla groaned as she sat. "Is there anymore cake left?" After the



chuckles had died down Arasaun began.

"I suppose that I should start at the beginning," he said.

"No how about the middle and we'll run and catch up." Crow muttered. Arasaun gave him an annoyed look and continued.

"This is the oldest account of where the elven magic of Shean'Shee is mentioned." Arasaun said as a tome drifted from a shelf and into his hand. "And is where most scholars believe it originated from."

"You weren't there? You mean there's something in the Elven people's history you didn't personally see?" Kyla asked with comical wide eyes.

"All right, that's enough! Tarra wanted to learn this, keep quiet and maybe you'll learn something too." Arasaun said sharply. And so he began.

Shean'Shee Magi **The Living Magic**

"Magic is all around us. It is in the air we breathe, in the wind we feel. It is in our blood and in our minds. It beats with the pulse of the earth. It is of us and part of us and it shapes who we are." These words, spoken by an ancient elven sage to the first human mages to encounter elves, give voice to the harmony of magic within the elven existence. The elven nature of life and balance intertwines with the arcane energies of the world at several points. As humans bend the ways of magic to their desires and dwarves lock it into solid runecraft and stonework, elves prefer to work within the free dance of the energies. Sometimes guiding with gentle touch, sometimes allowing the winds of magic free reign, an Elven arcanist sculpts the spell from the art around them. Little wonder, therefore, that the elves would craft items of magic that lived and breathed as do the plants and animals and would be more than just a cold shell

around the elf. The art of *Shean'Shee Magi* or The Living Magic is an ancient, difficult, and wondrous craft that brings to life an arcane item that symbiotically aids the wearer in their life. Armor, weapons, and the tools of an adventurer are the most common, as these are the items most often lost in the depths of a tomb or labyrinth. Armor that feels like a second skin and has no encumbrance, weapons that seem like extensions of the wielder's limbs and cause no fatigue to use, bracers that feed a wearer for weeks from gem-like collections of honey set within, are all part of the *Shean'Shee* art and uniquely Elven. Listed below are some of the more common enchantments of this art, but there are always more to be seen. As each leaf and snowflake are different, so too are the ways the elves guide their magic. After the name of each enchantment is listed the additional bonus that is added to the value of the magic item. This bonus is only used to determine the GP of an item; it is not added to any rolls made by the character.

Armor Enchantments:

Sylvan Breath: +1 Enchantment Bonus

A suit of armor enchanted with this ability allows the wearer to feel sensations across the armor as if it were their skin. Breezes, cold, and heat can be felt normally, and gauntlets, if any, allow for touch sensitive enough for picking locks or finding traps. The wearer gains a +1 bonus rank in Search by having this enchantment, and a +1 rank in Disarm Device and Open Lock for gauntlets having this enchantment. Detrimental feelings of pain or burning are not transmitted to the wearer.

Cat's Grace: +2 Enchantment Bonus

A suit of armor with this enchantment does not affect the wearer's encumbrance. It feels weightless in the same way that a person does not notice the weight of their

arms or long hair. Movement is ranked at 30 for medium and 20 for small, and there is no chance for arcane spell failure. The armor still weighs the same as a normal suit would for purposes of carrying limits, and armor will still give penalties to Move Silently if applicable.

Life Spark: +1 Enchantment Bonus

Armor with *Life Spark* is somewhat alive and feels warm to the touch. Damage done to the armor heals at a rate of 1 Hit Point per day. In addition, provided the wearer is of the same size as the person the armor was created for, the armor will mold itself to perfectly fit the wearer in 1d4 hours, and thereafter halves all donning times when the character suits up. This will even change to match the wearers gender, narrowing waists and expanding hips and breastplates for a female wearer, and reversing for a male. Most characters will feel discomfort in the armor until the changes are made; so fighting in it before it is ready is not wise.

Nature's Stillness: +1 Enchantment Bonus

This enchantment muffles the sounds of the armor as it moves. Rather than removing the sounds entirely, it instead disperses them and dulls them to the point where they become unnoticed background noise. As anyone can tell you, the complete absence of noise will cause just as much alarm among those listening as a cacophony of metal. Therefore, this enchantment adds +3 Ranks to a Move Silently skill. It will not completely negate the noise of heavier armor, but it will help.

Weapon Enchantments:

Cat's Claw: +1 Enchantment Bonus

A weapon with this enchantment seems as if it were a natural extension of the arm. There is no noticeable weight to wielding it, even if it is a normally heavy weapon like a greatsword. Characters gain a +2 to their Initiative rolls when using these weapons in addition to any other

bonuses from magic or Feats. In addition, a penalty of -2 is applied to anyone attempting a Disarm maneuver against this weapon.

Spirit Whisper: +2 Enchantment Bonus

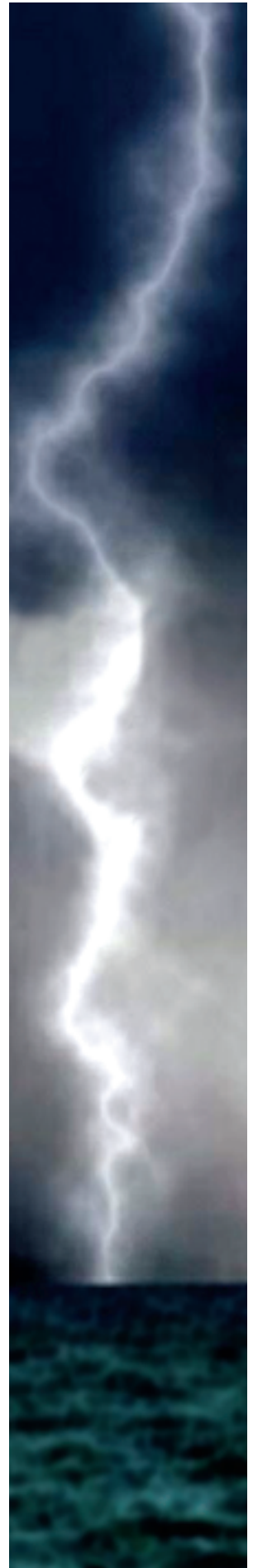
This enchantment is a bane to all non-corporeal undead. The life within the blade rebels against their corruption and seeks out those of unrest, striking to bring them peace. Any non-corporeal undead attacked with this weapon will receive damage as if they were a normal opponent. Immunities such as '+1 or better to hit' are overridden with this enchantment. However, the tradeoff is that the weapon only does the standard weapon damage with no bonuses for strength, Feats, or magic allowed. This enchantment will also work on vampires in their mist forms, or other similar states for various undead.

Eternal Forest: +1 Enchantment Bonus

As each person in life grows and changes, there are things about them that become traits, habits, or quirks. These things mark the people as themselves, and are often linked to the person when they are seen. So too with this enchantment. The weapon will begin to develop its own unique shape and quirks. A longsword may become single edged and curved like a katana, causing a whistling when swung. A dagger may grow a knuckle guard to protect the fingers of its wielder. Images of defeated opponents may become etched on the blade. As each weapon grows it becomes uniquely different. The result of such is that any damage done to the weapon is repaired at a rate of 1 Hit Point a day. If a weapon is rendered unusable, it can grow back into functionality using the times listed for the weaponsmithing skill as a reference.

Fey Slumber: +3 Enchantment Bonus

One of the most widely known of the *Shean'Shee Magi*, on a damage inducing hit, this enchantment has a chance to put



to sleep any creature that fails its Fortitude save. Commonly used by elves to defend against unwanted visitors to their homelands, elven scouting parties normally carry quivers of arrows with these enchantments. The sleep caused by these weapons wears off in 1d4 hours, but during that time, the victim is unable to be woken by any normal means. Only the application of a *dispel magic* DC 10 will awaken the victim before the enchantment wears off. Called 'elf shot' by humans, and dishonest by dwarves, this enchantment is thought to be one of the first ever created.

Misc. Enchantments:

The following enchantments are normally found on trinkets or jewelry of the elves, but can also be placed on weapons and armor if desired. Doing so will not alter the enchantment, however it may seem odd in some cases. The GP value is used when calculating a miscellaneous magical item and the enchantment bonus is used when making a weapon or armor.

Nature's Riches: 1000 GP, +1

Enchantment Bonus

This enchantment on a bracelet, armor, ring, or other setting causes a small faceted amber gem to grow within it. The gem slowly increases in size over the span of a week changing color from clear to deep honey gold. At the end of a week's time, the gem can be removed easily and is valued at 20 GP. Each week the cycle repeats itself, so an individual would have an income of 100 GP a month. Normally used by elven merchants or travelers for a source of ready cash, these gems are perfect for setting in rings, pendants, or as decoration on small furnishings.

Nature's Bounty: 1000 GP or +1

Enchantment Bonus per Gem

Normally produced on earrings, or sets of seven in bracers, this enchantment causes protrusions that look like large

round amber gems to grow over the course of a week's time. Each gem contains enough honey to nourish an individual for a single day. A pair of earrings could give nourishment for two days, but a full bracer could feed an individual indefinitely. As each gem is used, a new one begins to grow, ready to be used again in another seven days. There have been examples of these gems being set in armor or in weapons, normally in pairs or sets of three. However, in order to use this ability the character must keep a hand on the weapon or wear the armor for a period of several hours every day, a practice that would be viewed as peculiar to most around them.

Moonlit Night: 1000 GP or +1

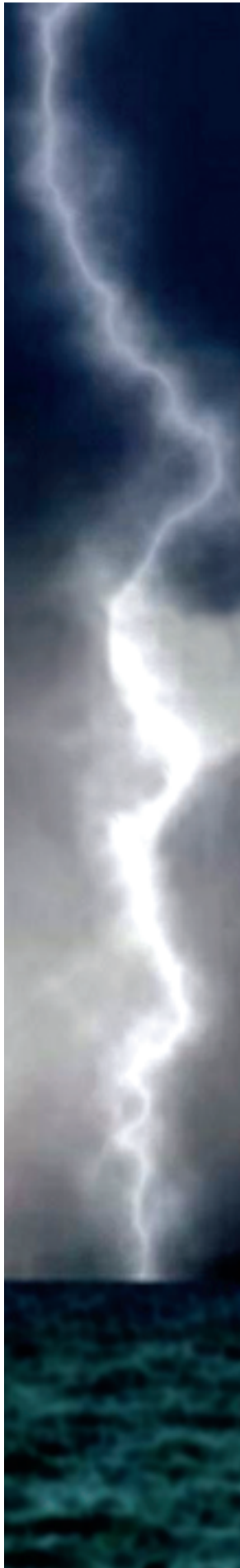
Enchantment Bonus

Items with this enchantment give the wearer a bonus to detect individuals who are hiding in shadows. Normally these items are designed with some image of an eye or with a moonstone set within it. The wearer will see into shadows as if they were in the path of a full moon's light. This gives a -2 penalty to any Hide in Shadows attempt someone makes against the wearer. In addition, this enchantment gives a character low light vision if the ability is not already possessed.

Chameleon's Mantle: 2000 GP or +2

Enchantment Bonus

Items with this enchantment are a boon to nobles and ambassadors of the elven nation. Usually placed on simple yet elegant tunics or gowns, this enchantment will alter the appearance of the clothing into an example of the fashion it is surrounded by. The materials the altered attire is made out of are the same as the original tunic or gown, so most are fashioned from fine silks and trimmed in gold or silver threads. The semblance that the attire takes will be tasteful, but always less grand than the host's attire. Ambassadors use items like this as a fail-safe to make sure they do not insult their hosts. This enchantment has been found



on ceremonial weapons and armor as well as clothing, and seems to work the same if placed on such. Another use has been seen where the enchantment is placed on a pendant or ring that alters the clothing worn, but as before, the materials remain the same.



These are just some ideas to start the imaginations of a GM. The elven people have no doubt come up with several other *Shean'Shee Magi* in their long history, and most magics in the DMG could be altered to fit the structure of living magic. It would be little wonder if the elven people first taught man the lesser versions of their craft that would become the standard enchantments found in the DMG. Enjoy and revel in creation.



"So that is a little of what we elves call Shean'Shee Magi, little one," Arasaun said as he closed the tome he was holding. The group stirred back to life and stretched. A small snore sounded from Kyla as their standing forms revealed her. Tarra looked at the paladin in amusement. Anna gently pushed her toe into Kyla's shoulder causing her prone form to twitch.

"Umm," She groaned. "S'not my watch yet." The girl turned over and felt around blindly. Blinking sleepily, her brain finally alerted her to her surroundings and she stopped looking for her nonexistent blanket. The laughter of the group caused a faint pink to appear in her cheeks as she stood. "Not like I was the only one who slept through a lesson I didn't ask for," she grumbled. Iljrene's bell like laughter sounded out in agreement and Kyla's display was soon forgotten.

As the guests left, they bid a merry birthday to Tarra once again and exited the cavern. Only Tarra, Crow, and Arasaun remained within the book-filled room. Crow turned to Tarra with a sad expression on his normally happy face.

"Guess its time for me to go as well, young one," he began. "I've been away

from family too long lately, and I think there is little more I can do for you now." Tarra gazed at the old elf's face as tears collected in her eyes. "No, young one," he chided as her mouth opened to say something. "No words, no tears. I have enjoyed the time we have spent together these last years. Arasaun was right. You are a treasure to be around. I'm not leaving forever, Tarra, just for a while." Crow traced a gentle finger down her cheek and softly embraced her. "Be well, young one," he whispered. "And be safe."

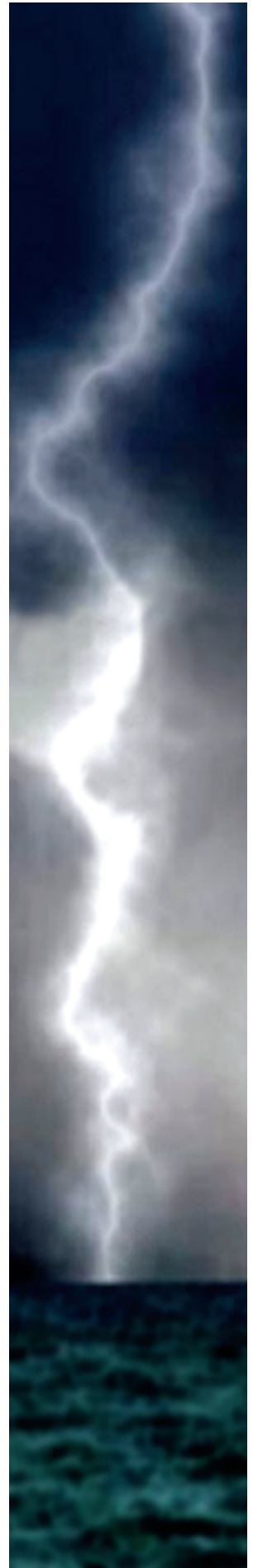
"Be well, Crow." Tarra replied as she felt wetness on her cheeks. Crow released her and looked at Arasaun. After so many years together, there was no need for words between them. They nodded to each other, conveying more than a speech in that simple gesture and Crow turned and left them in silence. Arasaun looked at the table covered in dishes and moved to gather them. Tarra took her gaze from the tunnel Crow had gone down in time to see Arasaun wipe a finger across one eye, and said nothing.

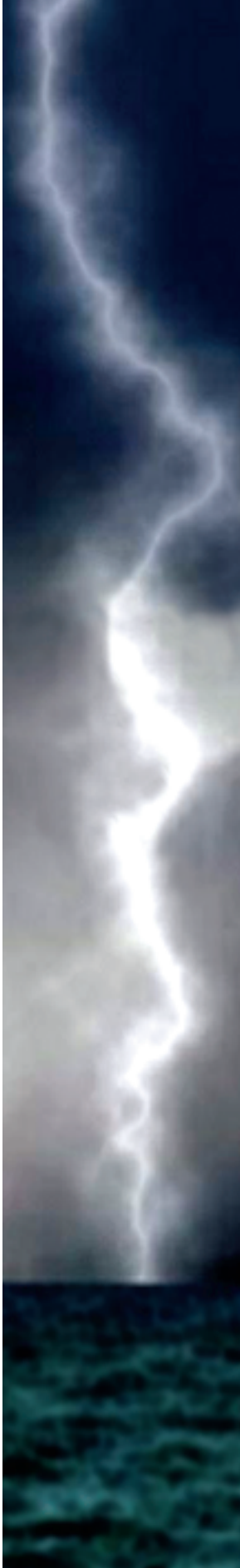
"There is little here to do now, Tarra," Arasaun said after the dishes had been stacked. "Why don't you go home? I'm sure that your family would enjoy having you to themselves for a while. Preparations for our trip will take a few days more before they are complete." Tarra nodded and gathered her things.

"Thank you for the party, Arasaun," she said gently, not wanting to intrude into his sorrow any further. The elf smiled at her.

"It's all right, little one." He gave an incline to his head at the doorway. "It's always hard for me when friends leave, but I know that we will see each other again." He embraced the girl. "Enjoy your time with your family, Tarra."

Tarra left the mountain, reveling in the winds playing across her form as she traveled the dirt paths. As she neared her home, she saw the miller's son, Sal, looking at her approach from the yard of the mill where he lived and worked. The boy's eyes widened at her new appearance.





"Tarra!" he blurted out as she came near. "You look like an adventurer!" Since that day three years ago, Sal and she had a slowly growing understanding. After her return from Arasaun's cave he had apologized, albeit reluctantly, for not believing her tales. Over time, he had also admitted his jealousy of her relationship with Arasaun, and Tarra had offered to teach the boy to read. Three years had passed, and now, while they were never close friends, at least they were no longer foes. Sal marveled at the armor she wore and she felt a flush of pride in her new attire. Sal looked wistful after a few moments. "You're really going to do it, aren't you?" he said. "You're going to see what's out there." He looked at the setting sun and then back at the mill behind him. "Can't say that I don't wish I was going too, but with that new gear system you helped me come up with Pa says we're making twice as much flour as before. The other villages are coming in to have us grind it now!" he said proudly. "He says he's proud of me, Tarra!" Sal's eyes shined with the treasure of that statement. "He says that with me knowing letters and numbers and with the money coming in, Pa wants me to open up my own mill and go to the city to trade for us!" He beamed and then looked sheepish. "Guess that's not as exciting as you though."

"No, it's wonderful, Sal!" Tarra said happily. "You'll do wonderfully, I'm happy for you." The boy looked at the ground and kicked his toe in the earth.

"So you'll be leaving tomorrow then, huh?" He said this as a statement, with no question in his voice.

"No, not for a few days at least," she answered. Sal's head came up and he looked puzzled.

"Really? Your friend said she was planning an early start." Now it was Tarra's turn to look puzzled. "The adventurer who came this morning looking for you?" Sal looked at her face and worry crept onto his features. "She's at your family's house waiting for you. Everyone thought she was

one of your friends, she talked like she knew you." Tarra turned suddenly and sprinted for her home. Fading behind her was Sal's voice. "Be careful, Tarra!"

She ran through the village circle, dodging the few people outside without pausing for apology, and beyond to her family's farm. There was a light in the main room as she ran past the gate and to the door. Zal's dagger was in her hand as she went through the portal and into the room to discover...

Her family was sitting quietly around the fire and looking at her entrance in alarm. A moment later, the family recognized this armored warrior as their daughter and sister and calmed down somewhat. Now the excitement was about Tarra's new appearance. Her brothers and sister clustered around her, touching her new armor with curious hands. Her parents seemed both happy and sad at the same time, knowing their daughter was crossing the doorway of adulthood. In fact, everyone was so engrossed with Tarra that it was several minutes before she noticed the other individual in the room. Clad in brown leather armor with sturdy breeches and boots she didn't draw much notice until you saw her eyes. Intense green eyes flashed through the darkened room, calmly taking in everything around her. Her auburn hair was bound in a tight bun at the top of her head and held in place with carved ivory rods. The woman stood and walked toward Tarra and her siblings. Tarra was surprised to notice the woman, obviously an adult, stood several inches shorter than her.

"Hello, Tarra," she said with a half smile on her lips. "Welcome home." She reached into the neck of her armor. "And much as I hate to do this," she sighed as she removed a pendant from its resting place within. "Tarra, the Sisterhood needs you." She sadly smiled again. "We leave on the morn tomorrow, Sister. Welcome to the adventurer's life." ◇

On The Rise

by Glenn Kurkosky

This month we meet with Linus Persson-Jonkman who possesses a darker take on some of fantasies explorations. Linus also graced us with the use of his image "The Assassin" for the cover of this issue. Since cover art is never a commodity to be overlooked, and we are always looking for more artists (new issues of Tempest's Lore coming out monthly and all) if some of your readers out there would like to submit an image for our zine you can e-mail it to ghk@lvcm.com and I will receive it. If you are a budding artist with several images to your credit (whether published previously or not — we want to make room for any and all up-and-coming artists to showcase their talents) and would be interested in being interviewed for an upcoming issue, you can also contact me at the same e-mail address. Now, on to our artist!



Volume 1, Issue 5, November 2002

INTRODUCING LINUS PERSSON-JONKMAN

STATISTICS

Age: 27 — ODB ;)

Residence: Angelhom, Sweden

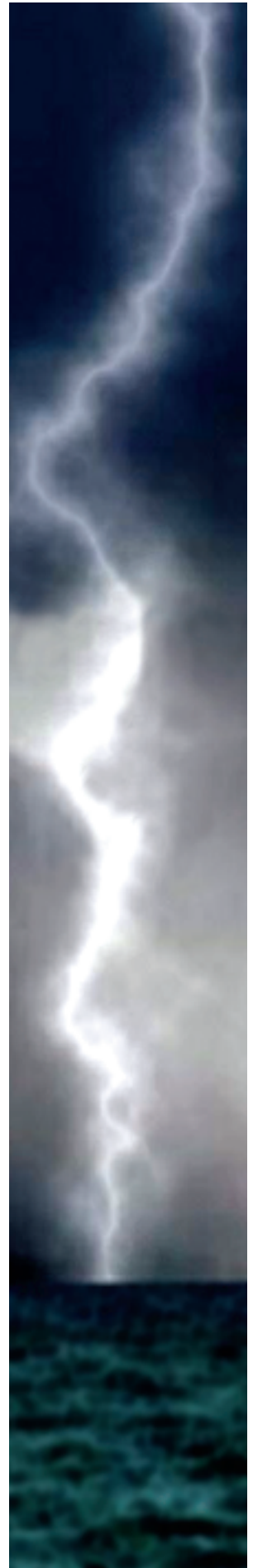
Marital Status: Yeah I do have someone, you don't have to be lonely, just because your as bitter as me ;) ...

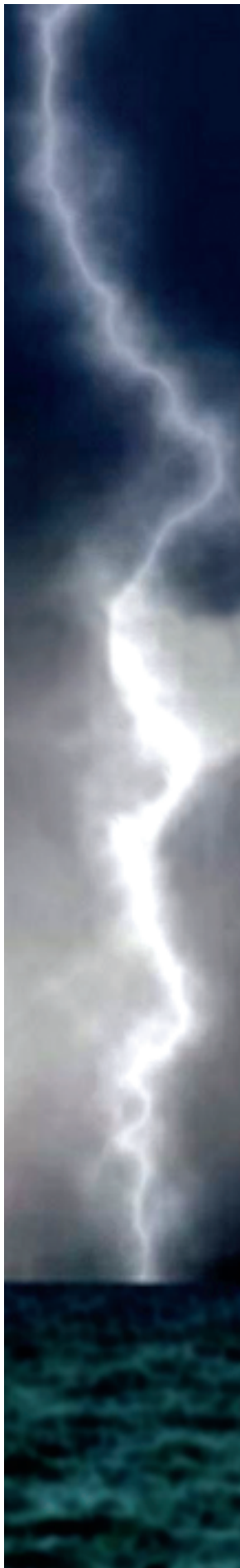
Personal Quote: "After rain, comes the thunderstorms, and then you die from frostbite"

Favorite book or author: Ahhh..I dont read many books, but when I do...Clive Barker is the preferred author.

Hobbies?:

Got too many of those. Its a good thing I suppose. but lets see. I'm obsessed with pretty much anything related to martial arts and the cartoon character Elektra from Marvels universe. Art has always been a large part of my life. I have been drawing or painting or writing since I can remember. Design is one of my main passions, and I keep buying stuff just from the look of them rather than the function of them (I am talking mp3:players, smartphones, laptops, you know what im saying. I see lots and lots of movies every month so I guess its fair to say thats another passion as well, favourite movie being "Shogun Assassin" <----- masterpiece!. What else?. Eh well I have been into bodybuilding for the last 6 years as well. Hmmm...Yeah..and Im hardcore gamer too.. bring me someone who can beat me in soulcalibur and I will commit seppukku in shame ;)





TEMPEST'S LORE



When did you begin drawing?:

Always been there with a pencil or brush in my hand, always always. Remember a period I had in school where I practically didn't sleep at all for several months cause I spent all my nights painting and writing a dark bible. Yeah, I was pretty messed up then already...

What mediums do you prefer to work in?:

Oil is to me the the ultimate media. I can find nothing with the strength and contrast of oils. Ive tried pretty much all the other medias, and they all have their pros and cons. But no other media can beat the strength of oil in my opinion. Then again as I said, I use different medias for different motives.



Education/Training?:

I am self-taught. I once tried to get into an art school but they pretty much let me know that my art was not suitable for their precious school;)



What artists inspire you?:

Ah there is just too many people out there with such amazing powers of visualizing their ideas. Some of them only shines when they do certain types of work. Let me name some favourites like:

- Frank Miller, when he did Elektra / daredevil (drool)
- Biz (Abc warriors is still some of the best inking ive ever seen)
- Giger (You dont get as good and as twisted as him without some serious lobotomy)
- Royo (I do respect his enormous knowledge for the oil medium as well as the retro feel in his work)



Website?:

Well since I decided to publish my work I have several. The main one, I would consider to be my Epilogue site at: <http://linusp1975.epilogue.net> but, IF you go there, you have to comment my work, or I am afraid i will have to stab you with a rusty screwdriver...;) Other sites like linusp1975.deviantart.com and linusp1975.artattack.to also host my work.

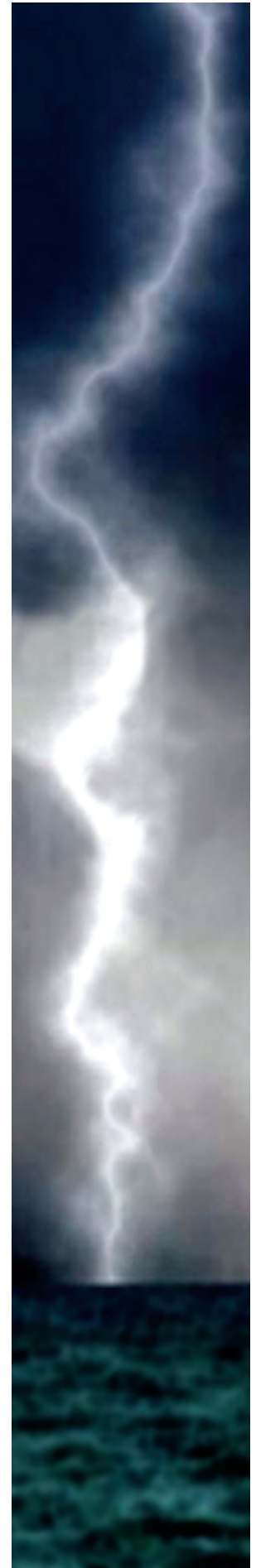
How did you come to be an artist?:

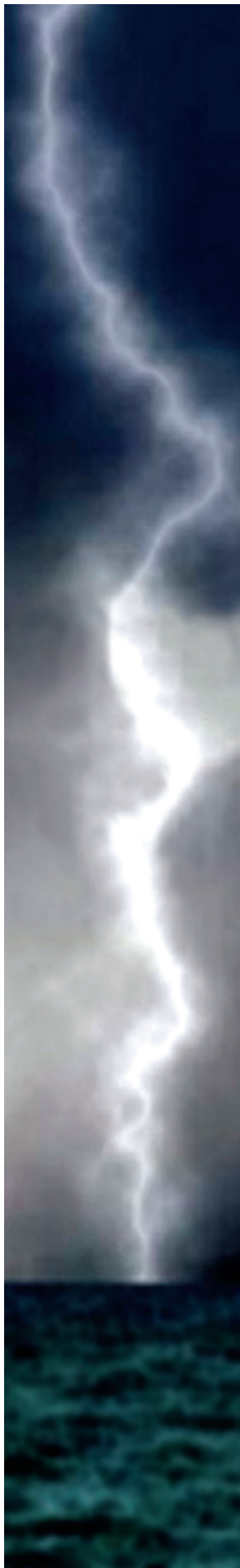
Eh, well I guess thats just an idea that strikes you somewhere in your life. I think anybody who consider themselves to be artists would say the same. Its like a calling

you have. You just know that no matter what you do, your sole purpose is to capture your ideas and fantasies in text or form.

How would you describe your work?:

Perverted.... Nah, I guess Id like to state that my "true" work, the pieces I made for ME and nobody else was the "mecha" series. And I think they do a much better job at describing my work. But one thing that signifies my style (I think) is that each and everyone of my paintings has a story behind them. i know exactly what the picture is about. my art is not shallow in that way I s'pose...





What most influences your work?:

I have periods in my life where the inspiration just comes to me. It is a very powerful instinct. At these periods I am in agony when I am not painting. At other times I couldn't draw a straight line if my life depended on it. But when I do paint I get my inspiration from movies, books and things that trigger my imagination. Clive Barker is one of my biggest triggers I guess. His imagination is as brilliant as it is original. Giger is an inspiration as well.



Where do you find your inspiration?:

Hmm let me fill in some inspiration besides from what i just mentioned: Pretty much any Richard Cunningham video, Hellraiser(those cenobites appeal to me), and the roleplaying game Cult (master piece).

What is your greatest success in your artistic career?:

My greatest success is in front of me. Keep your eyes peeled, thats all I can say...



Do you presently take commissions for artwork?:

I take commissions if the assignment inspires me, or the idea appeals to me. Things that inspire me could include: A: Money, B:Shitloads of money, C: A real.....nah I am kidding, I am not in any way a bitch for money. My drive is my inspiration, and I don't even think I could work just for the sake of money. It just wouldn't work...No matter the size of the engine, I won't work without fuel. ✧

Of Steel and Sweat

By Rob [BarTndr] Wojczyk

When it comes to D&D (or any fantasy game), there is a lot of luster in the magic and the mystery, but is there anything as pure as the steel wielded by the strongest members of a group? This month, we've been looking at the men of battle - the fighter and the barbarian (and to lesser degrees, the ranger and paladin classes should get at least a passing mention). Are there any characters that we enjoy playing more than the enormous and strong who can do feats that are not magical, but still outside our own grasp. Sure, anyone who watches wrestling sees people going through tables and diving off ladders, but this eaves much to be desired. Then there are the more nimble aspects of the martial sciences, things that the likes of Jackie Chan and other martial artists perform. These are things that we in our own world can probably more easily identify with than the casting of a fireball - for we've never seen it done in a 'real' sense. However, pick up a broomstick, and I bet you can easily see yourself wielding a broadsword and fighting off some goblin or orc foe.

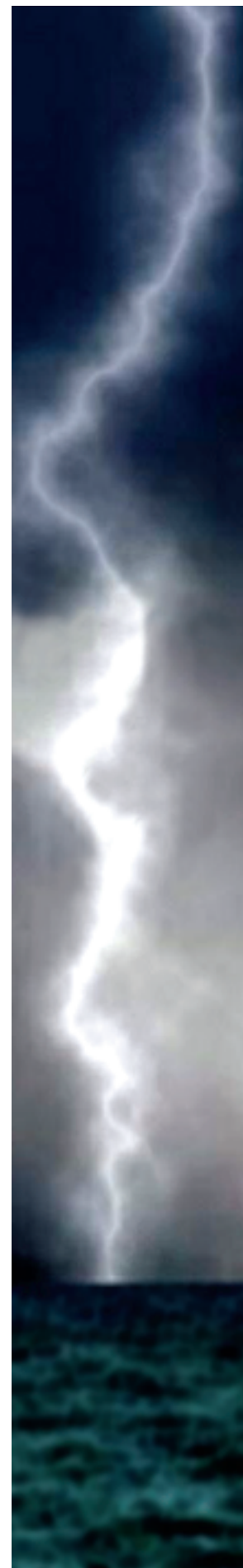
So what makes these characters the way they are? As most readers of *Tempest's Lore* know, I've a bit of a penchant for the melodramatic background. So what better way to celebrate the fighter code than to throw out a few backgrounds I have done for characters to show just how easy it is to create a small insight into the character you will play, as well as define him beyond being a simple "barbarian." Now a little disclaimer is required, as these characters are right out of the campaigns from which they were devised. In all three cases, these were characters created for *Forgotten Realms* campaigns, and there are references to content (basically locations of nations and cities) that are © Wizards of the Coast.

The first two are actually quite similar. The first is Kirr Rye, a half-orc born in the Vilhon Reach. The second is also a half-orc, born in the Western Heartlands, ironically also named Kirr. Both are surnamed after their respective villages (since no one wants a half-orc to carry on their family name and no one cares about them, it stands to reason that the only last name they will have would be their home town). Moreover, I admit I liked the name after its first use, and opted to use it a second time - there's nothing wrong with recycling good names. The biggest difference in these two backgrounds is the way they are written. The first one is more from the perspective of an educated person who has studied the life of this particular individual up to the point where the campaign begins. On the second one, I used some poetic license to write it as if you were having a tankard of ale with the barbarian himself. It's not easy to read - unless you're under the age of 12 - but it has a lot of color to it, and after reading it, you will probably feel like you know the man.

The third background is a nobly birthed paladin. When you think that playing a paladin is going to be some difficulty simply due to their attitudes and restrictions, you've only just begun. When you also take into account what brought them to the point where your play will begin, and what made them be the way they are, that adds an additional layer of challenge.

*"Therefore, without much further fanfare,
I give you the stories of Kirr Rye,
Kirr Thywall, and Krystoff Dafeo."*

The bastard half-Orc Kirr Rye was born to a maiden named Sara Rye in the village of Lon Kyrralee in the land of Turmish, in the Vilhon Reach. The village was located at the base of the Khloven Mountain - part of a range the Orc raiders used as a base



from which to make attacks on settlements. During one such attack, Sara survived, but had been involuntarily seeded by an Orc aggressor.

After bearing Kirr, she raised him adequately, though never with the nurturing nature that other children received. To add to this, she had named him only so that he would be identified with the town.

In the village, life was hard for the young half-orc. At the farm he worked, he did tasks more akin to beast than men. The other children took great joy in excluding him from activities; save the beating, they would give him if their moods were so. As he got older, the other children realized his racial difference, and compensated by pooling their efforts when directed at him.

Also in the village was an old half-orc, a former adventurer, who'd come to be by the same manner. Kirr would go to the man's hut and listen to his stories of combat, and learn whatever the man would teach. Sometimes, the lessons did not make much sense to Kirr as he was not by far the smartest among the village's young. It was only under the old barbarian's watchful eye that Kirr got to 'play' with the other children - and it was usually some form of combat game. The older man would give the children wooden swords with which to play, and inevitably, they would all attack Kirr. By the time of his twelfth summer, Kirr could wield a wooden axe the barbarian had given him and best any one of the others - and in many cases groups of the others. It was here he finally, and begrudgingly, gained some measure of the other children's respect.

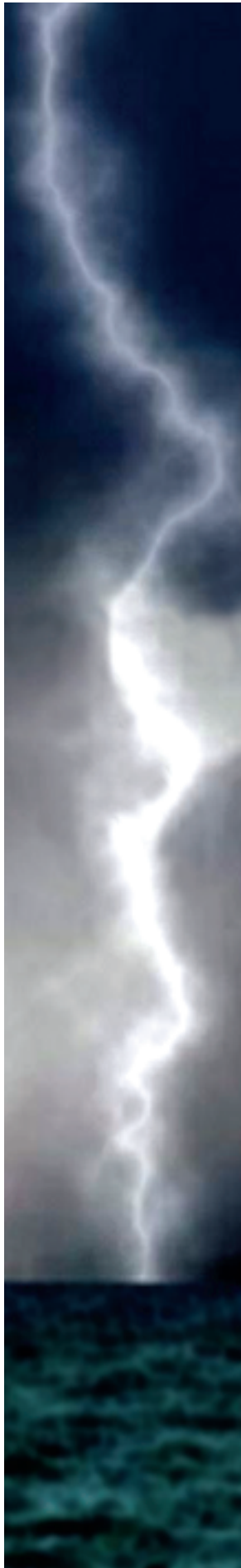
By his fourteenth year, he was deemed fit to serve with the militia, and fought alongside his mentor to assist in repelling several Orc incursions. As had been the

case when he observed these battles in his youth, the Orcs gravitated towards the half-orcs, attacking them with more savagery than the human defenders.

While he was gaining some respect from his human village mates, he still hungered for the acceptance (albeit low) that his mentor received. He decided the only way to gain this was by taking to the road and accomplishing some task that would set him above his current station. His mentor, who had many nights told him stories and horrors of the road and the ways of Tempus, understood only too well what drove him as he had also taken this path. He gave Kirr directions to a town to the south and the name of a man who could help him find a group with which to join. He also gave him the double axe Kirr now wields. "The blood of many evils has flowed across this blade. Do not dishonor them, it, or me."

Kirr traveled to the town, quickly joined a band, and was rapidly experiencing many successes. Battles were fierce, treasures plenty, and life was good. Somehow, he ended up on a quest to retrieve a cursed stag, or something to that effect; he really had not paid that much attention to the details. In a large room, and after the betrayal of an unscrupulous thief, their party met its fate in a fierce battle. While the others in the group pressed on (and the thief, having done his damage, escaped), Kirr stayed fast to battle a group of Goblins. When he came to, he was bound and gagged, and subjected to several days of being prodded by spears from passing Goblins.

Then, on the third day, some humans broke in the door. The first to enter, a large human warrior, looked around the room and exited without a second thought. Then a healer came in, and unbound him. He felt honor bound to repay this debt....



Here is story of Kirr Thywall.

Kirr Thywall

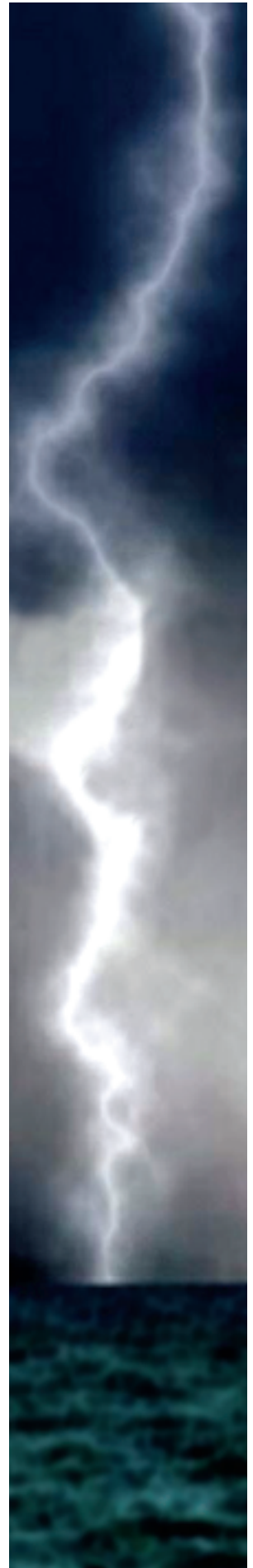
Hmm, you want know story of Kirr? Me no think good story, but begin in village Thywall in Western Heartlands. When me small, me think me was human like other childs. But me soon find grow faster, think maybe me older, play with older childs. Soon find same again, so me think they elves. One day I break something, and human man call me "Damn half-breed bastard." Me ask half what? "Orc," he say. At time me not know much of Orc. Some stories of mean, bad man-beasts. But find that why many no like me. When lot childs around, no one want play with half-orc. Or worse, they team up to beat up half-orc. Find some humans like to be near, the little ones who come and hope orc get beat instead of them. But as I grow I get bigger, stonger, and soon childs no more mess with me... now they man-sized do. In village some other half-orcs. Since me never see me, not know how I look, just thought look like other childs. But see difference in big ones, where some have funny head, big teeth. Look in pond – me have head and teeth too – me really half-orc! So me try to talk to other half-orc in village. Some act like they human, act like no like me. So I no like them. Humans no like them either. No one like them, no one care when I take stuff from them. Other half-orc no care what human think, just live own lives. I meet some who travel with sellers. And some who live in village. One was 'venturer. He nice, though funny. He teach games to childs, and help childs beat up half-orc, but then talk to half-orc tell what did wrong. Soon, me better then human childs. Human mans no like and want fight with old man half-orc, old man make loud yell and break tables. Human mans leave him alone.

One time travel with old man half-orc. Go someplace with short ones. Funny tiny human and a grey bearded one. Me like bearded dwarf man, he like drink funny water. Tiny human, half man, he O.K. to half-orc too, tell funny jokes. But, half-orc find things missing after talk to half man, but old half-orc give them back. Only human with them was old grey man, a magic man. He do tricks but not for fun, did one to goblins shoot them they no think funny trick. Me get to shoot at goblin with bow, miss every time. No good with bow then, much better now. So we go to cave, old man half-orc say wait outside, keep horses safe. Next day come back, no dwarf man, me guess he choose to live there. Later learn he dead, drink funny water and remember him.

Me go with old man half-orc few more time, practice lot. He bring inside cave and castle few times, just little ways to show things, after they done. He say someday I be 'venturer, be first one into place like that. Dangerous though, no need to rush.

When day come old man tell me he no more 'venturer, he too old and no want go more, he also tell me that me must go someplace else too. He say me too old to be around, time me become 'venturer for me. Tell me find little ones to help, and magic man. He give some coin, say for watching horses. And he give big pretty axe. He say he find axe one time – take from big strong orc king. He have for many long time, and now give me. So me got coin and axe and now 'venturer me ask. He say me have coin and axe, and now look 'venture.

So me walk where sun rise – to Dales. Me heard much 'venture there. We go close with old man half-orc some times to Dales. Seemed like right way. Me on own, so me choose it go Dales. No one no agree.



And the story of Krystoff Dafoe.

Heir the Younger

When Krystoff Dafoe was born into the family of Lord Kyran Dafoe, his family celebrated the Lord's third son, and fourth child. Krystoff was junior to Wilhelm by five years, and Alexander by three. His sister Katerina was older by just the one year. The Lord watched over a tract of lands in Cormyr, west of the city of Arabel.

Born into comfort and nobility, Krystoff was quick to realize being third in line for the family's title left him few choices in life. He could choose to just cling to the family name and be given a free ride by an older brother, join a church, or he could choose to take on a more dangerous path and earn himself a life of his own and make his own name.

Growing up, he had a tendency to spend much time watching his father Kyran presiding over court, and watching the honor guards in their daily rituals. Though most were just veteran fighters, Kyran had managed to attract a couple knights to his side, men whose abilities went beyond the mere blade. It was from these men that Krystoff learned many of life's lessons. He did some time as a squire, against his father's wishes, and trained in the ways of these men.

When he was fifteen, the family was struck a blow when Alexander fell in battle at Arabel fighting alongside Myrmeen Lhal against Orcs. Though Wilhelm was the oldest, it was known that Alexander was closest to their father. Kyran grieved the loss of his son, and wanted to take measures to prevent a repeat of the tragedy. However, the weight of the crown prevented any such measures to pass, other than the accelerated training of Wilhelm by these same knights. Since Krystoff was already at their side, he was trained as well so that Wilhelm would have a practice partner. No one seemed to take Krystoff's studies very seriously, except for him and one of these knights, the noble Sir Gavin Keldish.

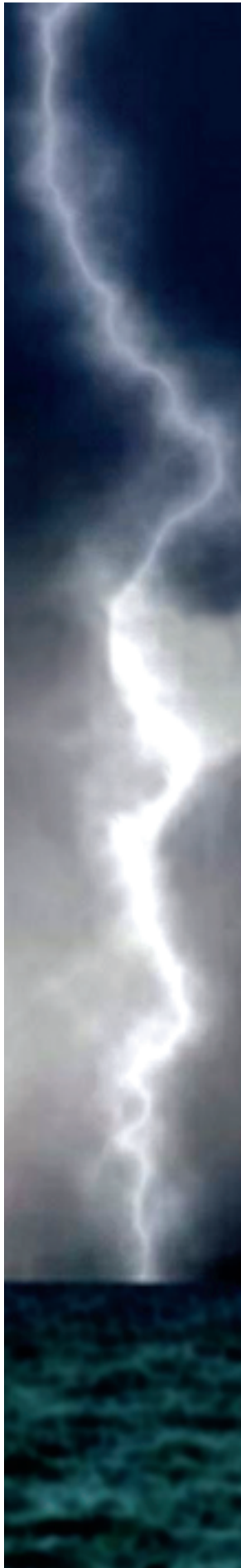
By the time, he was seventeen, Krystoff had gotten quite proficient with his martial skills, and Sir Gavin was quite impressed by the other skills Krystoff had developed. During the summer, and unknown to his father, Krystoff and Sir Gavin traveled to Suzail where he was introduced to, and inducted into, the knightly order known as the Vigilant Eyes of the Deity, an order sponsored by Helm. He was given a probationary title, and an opportunity to prove his worthiness to belong to such a prestigious organization.

With a newfound vigor, Krystoff and Sir Gavin headed back home. While they traveled, Krystoff and Sir Gavin escorted some refugees, and Sir Gavin was surprised at how Krystoff acted around them. Honorable, yet humble, he didn't belittle them or discount their importance in the world. He even took the time to get to know a few of the children, and assisted when an animal was out of sorts. Together, Sir Gavin and he turned back a goblin raid. In addition, Krystoff even called upon his newfound patron to heal the wounds of one of the others who'd helped fight off the goblins.

When they arrived back in the courtrooms of Kyran, they were coldly greeted, as Kyran had not agreed with his son's choice of vocation. He'd hoped Krystoff would become a scribe or priest and stay safely within the walls of the castle, an insurance policy against the loss of his eldest son. When Kyran began to take his anger out onto Sir Gavin, Krystoff interceded and told him it had been his choice all along, that Sir Gavin had just been his guide.

Krystoff had displayed nobility, honor, and courage, the tenets of his new knightly order. Kyran and Wilhelm were both completely caught off guard when, upon Kyran's calming, Sir Gavin bestowed full title in the order, by knighting him on the spot. No more was he just the third son of a noble, he was now Sir Krystoff Dafoe. He had begun to make his own name.

His father did finally come around to the



idea, though it was easy to tell it still bothered him to have his youngest son in harm's way. And in a ceremony on his nineteenth birthday, just before he planned to journey and find his own place in the world, Kyran made the strongest confirmation of any affections for this son when he gave him the bastard sword that he had given Alexander several years before.

"Like your brother Alexander, you have sought to make a place for yourself in this world. To Wilhelm I will give my title and my lands. For you all I can give is the sword I had given your brother before you; something that I hope will help you protect yourself from the evils out in the world."

Within a week, Krystoff was leaving. He shook hands with his father and brother, hugged his mother and sister, and saluted his mentor Sir Gavin. Sir Gavin instructed him to head east, towards the Dales, as an old tradition within the order was to send a new recruit to the place of one's origin. Sir Gavin had been born in the city of Feather Falls, in Featherdale.

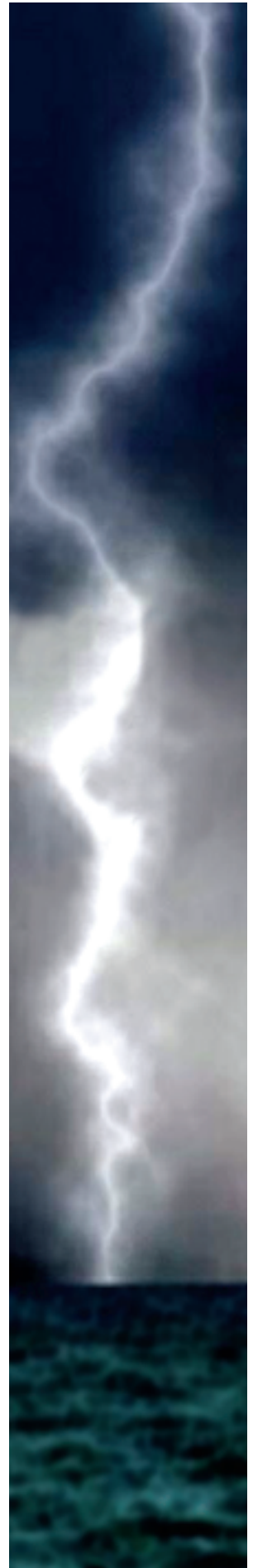
And he rode down the trail into the unknown. At Arabel, he met a Paladin of Torm who asked his aid in guarding a family of nobles from their home in Immersea south along the Way of the Manticore road, and to their destination in Kulta in Sembia. Upon completion of this mission, Krystoff continued to head northwest away from the inland sea and towards the Dales. This was how he came to be in Archenbridge, in the Archendale.

One thing you'll notice is that with backgrounds, you've got a lot of leeway to 'create' cities, towns, people, events, and such. Your DM will need to be able to 'authorize' some of the events and places you place into the campaign, but so long as you don't go overboard, you probably won't get any drastic change requests from them. And consider your character's level – no need to say your level one fighter who is beginning at zero experience points has killed a dragon. Whereas a son of a

noble might have been present at the last portion of a slaying, gaining no real experience or knowledge, but partaking in the festivities and perhaps they impacted him in some way (a sincere hatred or respect for dragon-kin).

There is a lot that you can write into the character's background, and I usually try to get at least some aspect of their youth so that any emotional scars can be rationalized, and some insight into who it was that brought them to being adventurers. They can be humorous, serious, or just informational. Using some logic of the campaign setting is also useful. A half-orc child is not likely to be made to feel welcome and equal by human children (if we as children couldn't handle the 'fat' kid or the kid with glasses, then a poor gray-skinned child with tusks is in for untold grief). At the same time, the 'first born' sons had the benefit of their father's favor, and had no need to try and go out into the world, while the rest looked forward to little or nothing in the way of an inheritance, and thus had to make for themselves. In addition, mentioning the climate and the extended family is a good thing; as your DM can use the names you have created (and have an emotional tie to) to draw upon plot hooks. If the DM were to tell you six months into a campaign, "Oh, by the way you have a sister and she's been kidnapped" you might not react the same as if you had created this sister in the background, established that there was a good relationship, and the DM has some peasant bring your knight the news of the damsel's plight. Isn't it a little ironic if the DM creates an NPC its sort of taken as either scenery or something to kill, but when the name is something of your own creation there is a higher importance in responding to the situation.

So, enjoy the full cycle of the characters, those masters of the metal (or even the weak mages) and embellish yourself in their history. You never know just how your DM will reward you for your efforts. ✧



Making Combat Fun

By Robert M. Adams

Insofar as to meet with the OGL guidelines, I will make a very real attempt at not using any material from any published D20 source, either current or out of print. This is largely because I do not wish to be taken out and flogged, but there are also other legal reasons, less painful, but no less serious.

Often I have been asked by people new to Game Mastering, "How can I make my game stand above the others?" My response, after I grit my teeth together to keep from saying something obvious like "by running an interesting and exciting game," is usually, "to improve your theatrical and storytelling skills by examining real life situations and placing them in the game." There are many ways to do this, and in this article I shall be going over just one of those ways; combat. Yes, combat. I know some of you are already thinking charts and calculations, but that is not really what combat is truly about, is it? If you said, "no," then you would be correct. Combat is about making heroes ... or corpses, or corpses into heroes, which is where the villain comes in. By the way, if you are looking at villains, check out my other articles. Yeah, I know, shameless self-promotion; but hey, why else would I be giving out trade secrets? Moreover, despite what you might think, it is not about turning heroes into corpses. Although this can be fun, you eventually wind up playing with yourself, and we all know how much fun that is – right, Jack? Hey, sometimes the players have to win if you want to keep your game around more than a couple of nights. I digress, so back to the topic.

The first thing that you need to do when running your combat is to make it more realistic. I am not saying to go out and buy lots of armor from someone in the SCA, or go outside and run around with pitchforks and garbage can lids; what I am saying is to look at some of the more cinematic films out there. *Looks around for the OGL Nazis*: such as the Matrix or Conan. Yes, I know that these movies are not 'realistic' per se, but they are much more enjoyable to watch than say, Oprah - my apologies to anyone out there who watches Oprah. Please take note that I am not apologizing for my comment, just for your watching it. However, I wish to say that this is not an attack on Oprah's character, just the sad attempt of a gamer to crack a joke at someone else's expense. Ok, with that in mind, let's look at some of the more classical fight scenes and examine why they worked so well.

As far as fight scenes go, the ones that stand out the most for me are the hero's big battle with the antagonist. One of my favorite scenes where the hero fights the villain at the end of the movie is not Dungeons and Dragons, but instead I liked the battle scene from Disney's *The Three Musketeers* when D'Artagnan is fighting his father's murderer. This scene sticks out because it has excellent swordplay and footwork, but also because of the deep hatred these two men have for one another.

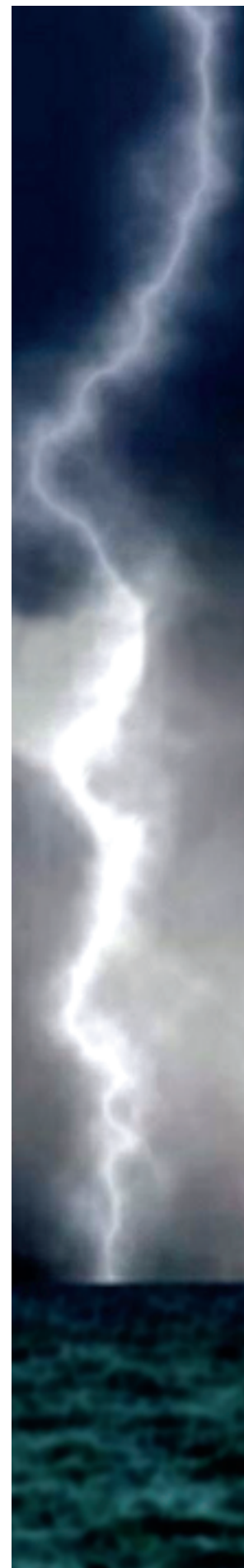
In a D&D, combat scene you want to relish moments like these when the player gets the upper hand on the villain. Also, during the combat, you should include descriptive phrases like, "The goblin makes a mad dash towards Fallick with his arms raised high over his head holding a wicked-sharp looking wooden spear with a murderous

fiery-red glow in his eyes. He thrusts his spear and pierces Fallick's gut," instead of "The goblin charges at the barbarian with his spear and hits." Of course, you should avoid being too descriptive unless you are writing a book or an article and need to fill up space, so avoid saying something too wordy like, "The goblin misses his well-aimed thrust, but Fallick is able to counter the attack with his Holy Longsword of Mighty Cleaving & Flaming Burst Devastation + 70 and slices off the uppermost portion of the ill-fated goblin's head and watches it slowly fall towards the ground and land in a puddle of blood and guts and then watches as the severed body joins the mass on the cobbled footpath that he vanquished his foe upon. As the second goblin charges at the Fallick, he jumps up and makes a three-quarters double back flip with a half gainer into the air and..." You get the point; just don't be too descriptive. While this works well in some places, it doesn't work well in games, and gamers quickly grow tired of long diatribes given by longwinded DM's who have nothing better to do than to provide a player with as much detail as he can. I try to find a nice balance, somewhere between Shakespeare and comic books. Of course, if they want more detail, I suggest giving them the whole kit and caboodle, and then watching them squirm and make comments like "Alright, make sure that you describe the withered flowers on the beaten path as the sun slowly descends to earth." It makes me think of happy things.

All right, now that you know how to be descriptive in your combat, let's look at the particulars of how to use this guideline. I really like to use descriptions when someone scores a very good hit, has a horrible failure, or succeeds at a wondrous feat. This enables me to make those

moments stand out more in the player's mind during that session, and it allows the player to remember the awesome action later in the campaign, and even later in their life. For example, let us say that Maximum Soulstealer is fighting Jangle the Thief with his serrated longsword, while poor Jangle only has his dagger. Jangle has to hold off the villain until his party, who is currently eating breakfast at a local Inn, arrives to save him. Initiative is rolled and Jangle goes first. Jangle decides to hold his action and waits to see what Soulstealer does. Soulstealer is next and takes a swing at Jangle with his longsword. Jangle then decides he has had enough and declares that he attacks defensively. Since Jangle took a held action, he will go before Soulstealer and makes his attack roll with his dagger and scores a 20! Now he has a threat so he rolls to confirm the critical and succeeds! The player then rolls damage and gets maximum damage, which are 6 in this case. Since Soulstealer has a maximum Hit Points of 10 and I use the 'clobbered' variant, I make Fortitude roll for Soulstealer and get a 3, yuck! I then make Soulstealer's attack and miss. Hiding my disappointment, but glad that the player is having fun, I then announce the outcome of the battle as follows, "Soulstealer attempts to take off Jangle's head but Jangle expects the strike and is able to dodge the attack and then thrusts his dagger into Soulstealer who gasps in amazement that the little thief was able to get through his defenses." This is an example of a good success and a bad failure.

The second way to make combat more fun is DO NOT RUSH THROUGH IT! Savor every swing and parry and make sure that the players never think that they are invincible. Adventuring is about risks, and as soon as a player thinks his



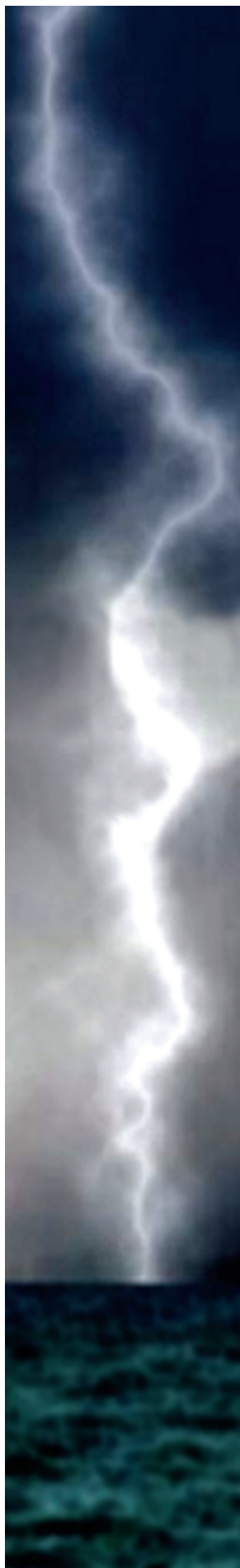
character is impervious to all attacks, it ceases to be fun for both the player and the DM. Make each action actually count, and make the players think about their actions carefully before they act. Also, make sure that they understand what they are doing by using descriptive words, and flavor each action with a little excitement and drama.

The third way to improve your combats is **DO NOT LET PLAYERS THINK TOO LONG ABOUT WHAT THEY ARE GOING TO DO**. At one time, my players got so bad at taking too long on their actions that I actually bought an egg timer and set it for 30 seconds each time a new player's turn was up. These made the players think of their actions quickly or ahead of their turn and actually kept the out-of-game tactics out of the game completely, which I liked. One thing that really gets me in a game is when the players want to discuss battle tactics like it is a miniature game. Do not let the players do this. The game is about actually experiencing their characters so make sure they are able to experience the full effect. When it comes to their turn, tell them that they have X amount of time to make their action and then it is the next player's turn. If they do not complete said action on time, then they forfeit their action for that turn. I know it sounds harsh but it really cuts down on the cheese and makes the combat more realistic. If your players have a problem with this then explain to them how long a lieutenant was expected to live in a hot LZ in Vietnam, 2.3 seconds. If they still have a problem with it, then explain to them your open-door policy, and show them the open door.

Finally, if no rule exists for a particular action a player wishes to attempt use common sense. For instance, I had a

player who once wanted to jump on her horse that an orc was stealing, and attempt to backstab the orc. I thought about it for a little while and then had her make a jump check (which counted as her move), then had her make her attack, followed by a balance check of DC 15. She succeeded in all of the attempts and was able to backstab and kill the orc before he was able to steal her horse. In another situation, I a player wanted to jump out of the caravel he was in onto an erratically swinging rope. In this case, I had the player make a running jump check and a strength roll to keep hold of the rope. On the second turn, I allowed him to make a climb check to ascend the rope. If you use common sense when faced with a difficult situation, you can then look up the official 'rule' after the game is over, and this will keep things moving and make your players remember your game instead of looking up rules.

In closing, if you keep these things in mind, your combats will run much more smoothly and efficiently, and you and your players will have a much more fun experience when combat occurs, instead of dreading the calculations. Remember to keep actual player's turns short - I suggest about thirty seconds per player. This will get your combat running smoothly, and will discourage miniature-style tactics, such as counting squares for a spell. Use common sense when presented with a situation not presented in the books or that you currently do not know the 'official' rule for. If a player doesn't like your ruling, remind them of the open-door policy. Above all, be descriptive in your combat; remember to utilize the cinematics used by filmmakers like sound effects, footwork, swordplay, and magic. If you follow these rules, then you are on your way to being able to make combat fun for both you and your players. ✧



Adventure on the High Seas

By: Robert M. Adams

The Story

It was a beautiful day; the sun was just rising over the clear blue waters off the tropical island where they moored. Dolphins played near the shore, jumping out of the water and splashing a logger head turtle that was desperately trying to finish covering up her nest before the tide came in. A small jaguar cub watched the dolphins from the security of a large bush licking her paws and waiting as her mother hid in the thick underbrush close behind. Above, a flock of ten blue macaws circled over the white sandy beaches over an undisturbed Blackwood forest back towards a gigantic mountain that loomed in the distance, smoke rings concealed its upper levels and a small billow of smoke threatened eruption.

Sounds of cannon and musket fire rang out over the horizon like a murderous thunderstorm. A carefully placed grapeshot round slammed into the rigging of the smaller ship, tearing the main sail and splitting the mast and thrashing several members of the crew. Returning fire, the smaller ship fired an explosive round but it missed, rocketing into the distance, slamming near the mother turtle on the beach, finishing the job of covering her eggs and burying her in the process. She quickly dug her way out and made for the water line.

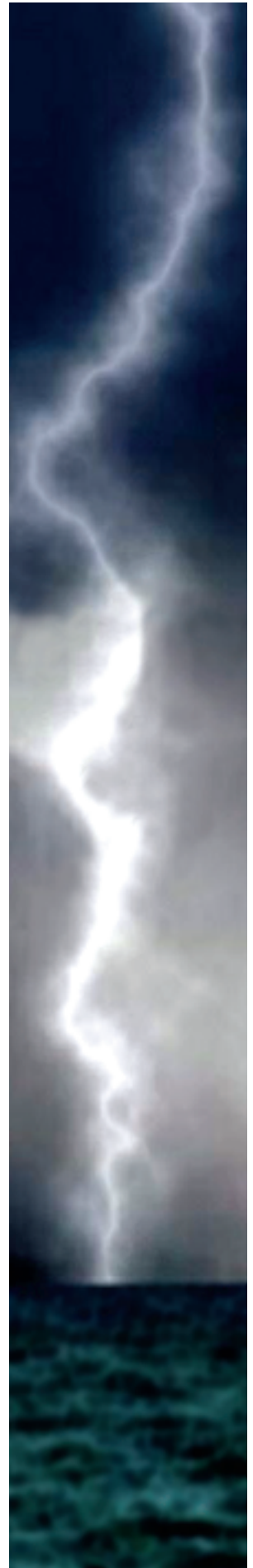
The young man at the wheel of the larger ship yelled a command. Quickly, a line of musket men was formed on the poop deck. "Ready, Aim, Fire!" the command was followed by the practiced shots of several riflemen. Death screamed out the barrels towards its intended victims. The smoke from the rifles cleared, the silenced screams of the men on the other ship showed that most rounds had hit their targets.

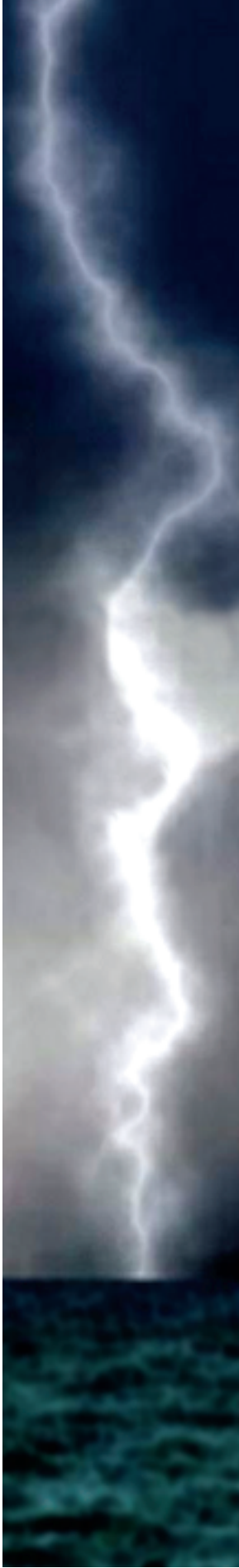
Ropes and grapples scraped alongside the wood planks and cannon holds as the two ships violently crashed into one another. Steeling for balance both crews braced for the collision. The broadsides had begun and quickly cutlass and rapiers were out of their scabbards. Two men faced off on the deck of the burning ship; one older and he had a twinkle in his eye; the other one was young, he was cold and calculating an expert at baiting his opponent to attack.

Suddenly, thunderous roars followed by a billow of fire and smoke that plumed into the sky like some fiendish dragon from the abyss signified the defeat of the enemy vessel. They had hit her powder room and there was no escaping death. Horror crossed the men's faces as they jumped into the water to escape the explosion but felt their skin afire as they plummeted towards the waiting sharks.

The two master swordsmen faced off on the wheel deck of the larger ship. "You sunk my ship, old man! For that not only shall I take what be in yer hold but I shall take your head as well!" the villainous pirate scowled. An impetuous swing of his rapier missed the older man who was able to easily parry with his cutlass and main-gauche. "Not if that is all ye got!" Angered, the younger attempted a dash that quickly ended his career as the older man took advantage of the fact that his opponent's defenses were down. "You are finished, Delgado!" a practiced thrust and the fight was over.

The red blood of the other captain stained his deck as well as his heart. "Why? Do they always have to be so damned impatient?" He cursed. "I was looking for a good fight." Suppressed cheers of victory soon followed from the victorious ship as those on board hurried to put out the fires and start repairs on the badly damaged rigging. This was the way it was today for the crew of the cutter Delineator. This was the way it always was on the high seas.





The Delineator was badly crippled in the attack and the crew needed a miracle to get her sailing. Capt. Honore d'Estaing Thornwald was just that miracle; four voyages to the spice islands of Iothan for the Queen and three letters of marque set him apart from other sea dogs of his age. Forty-nine years old and complete with a field promotion to captain and his own ship, Thornwald was no one to be harried even when the tables were decidedly turned in his direction. Even with all his promotions and citations he was not satisfied — he needed the sea and she needed him.

“Should we put in at that cove?” Alvares, the first mate of the Delineator said.

“Yes, bring her over by those corals but not too close mind ye or we will surely end up like them,” replied the captain pointing over his shoulder at the smoldering and sinking ship in the distance. During the rest of the day skilled carpenters replaced damaged planks, riggers reworked the badly damaged rigging, and the crew steely watched the horizon for more pirates.

That evening the food was served as cold as the hearts of the men that sat at the table. “We’ve been out here for nearly six months, Alvares, and he has brought nothing but pirates.” A large boatswain complained to the first mate. “Relax, my friend, the captain means well but his heart is set in that phony treasure out there.” gesturing out the port towards the island. “It will be the end of us all.” An older man interjected “We should take the ship at the morrow!” “Yeah!” the sounds of agreement were heard from most of those at the table. “There are many loyal to him. It will not be an easy fight,” warned Alvares. “So be it,” replied the boatswain. With that the captain’s fate was sealed for he had brought naught to the crew but suffering and death and they would follow him no more.

ADVENTURE AND BETRAYAL: MUTINY!

This is a three-part adventure set on the high seas during an uprising aboard the Privateer Delineator, a large cutter owned by the famous Capt. Honore d'Estaing Thornwald, a well-seasoned sea dog. The adventure is for 4-6 characters of levels 3-5 but may be scaled depending on your preferences. Some ideas for scaling the adventure are listed in ‘scaling the adventure’ at the end of the module.

Overview

‘Seeking adventures willing to sail for adventure and gold on the high seas!’ was what he promised. Heartache, death, and pirates are what he delivered and the crew is fed up. Secretly, after being attacked a fifth time by pirates the crew of the Delineator meets in the galley and discusses plans for taking over the ship from the Captain. The leader of the group is the first mate, a noble Don Julio de Peralta Alvares a young man who is on his second commission but knows of the captain’s plans. He knows they seek the legendary treasure of the Rylans, a reclusive and almost ghostly native island race that lives on these islands in the Thaman Sea. Neither he nor the captain has told the crew what they sought and the young Alvares used this as a leverage to get the crew to consider replacing the captain for he knew that they would grow tired and weary of the constant attacks and use this as a means for gaining his own ‘field promotion’.

The party should consist of sailors and seasoned pirates, some sample characters have been provided at the end of this module as well. The adventure starts off in the cargo hold. Let the party role-play exactly how they plan on attacking the captain and his loyalists and what they plan on doing with him after they catch him. The person playing Alvares will try to persuade the crew from killing the captain but will not be against making him walk the plank so long as they actually bring him back up. He will remind the crew

of the status of the legendary captain and the consequences of murdering the man. He will also warn the party of the dangers of these waters and explain that he has never traveled them before but the captain has and use this as an argument for keeping the captain alive and well.

There are a total of fifty crewmembers on this ship not including the players, the captain, or Alvares. There loyalties are split right down the middle; half of the crew is loyal to the captain and the other half are willing to go along with mutiny. Out of the half that is loyal to the captain most are able sailors or mercenaries themselves. Out of the half that is willing to consider the mutiny, most will have to be convinced. A player can try to intimidate, bluff, or use diplomacy at any time to convince any crewmember except the Captain, his boatswain, musketeers or his mistress of the need to rebel. Intimidate, Diplomacy, or Bluff (DC 12) because their loyalties waver it will not be that hard. Firearms for this adventure will count as a martial weapon, thus any character with the martial weapons proficiency will be able to use firearms.

I. Cargo Hold

The game begins with the players, Alvares, three riggers, one musketeer, and two common crewmen in the cargo hold fervently discussing plans for mutiny. There is much debate as to exactly how plans are going to be laid out as the small group is vastly outnumbered when in walks Talvin, one of the captain's boatswain mates who announces his intention to defect along with some of the crew. Let the players discuss exactly how they wish to proceed. If they get a successful Gather Information check (DC 15) they will discover that the captain is currently alone in his quarters but is guarded by two musketeers who stand watch in front of his cabin door. Let the players use the layout of the ship to figure out how they will lay the ambush or whatever tactics they come up with. As they are doing this you are free to play

any of the npcs to help or hinder the party as one of the common crew loyal to the captain is currently in the meeting. The players may make a Sense Motive check (DC 20) to spot the spy but they must be suspecting him to even make the attempt. Once the group breaks up then proceed to scene two.

II. Well Laid Plans

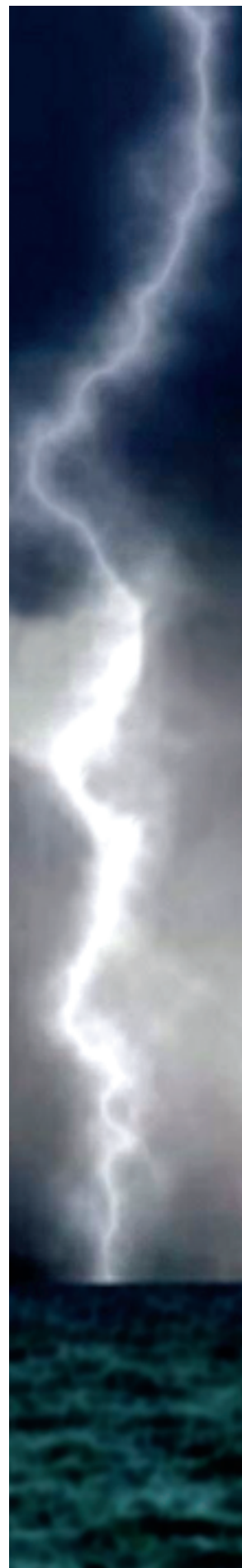
Once the meeting is over the crewmember who is loyal to the captain will head straight for his cabin and inform him of the treachery. The captain will then be able to prepare for battle. If the pcs were able to discover the ruse in the previous scene then the captain will either be in his cabin 70% chance or in his study 30% chance unaware of the plot. If he is in his study he will be with two of his loyal boatswain three riggers and five common crewmembers. If the captain is in his chambers then everyone at the meeting plus ten common crew members will show at his cabin and demand entrance from the musketeers who will fight the group and shout warnings to the captain and crew of "MUTINY!" The captain will accuse Alvares of treachery and the fight will begin. The captain will try to flee to the main deck to gather reinforcements. The captain should be able to flee to the main deck while the party is fending off the musketeers. When the captain reaches the deck Elaineavald, his mistress and ten of his own common crew join him.

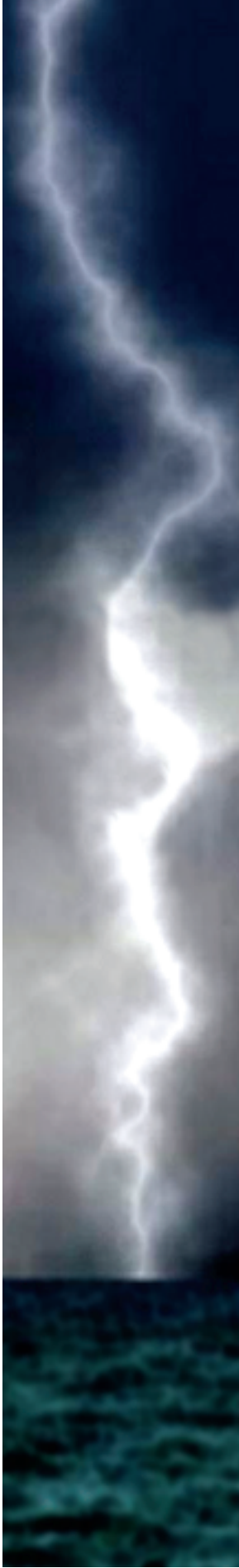
III. Chaos at Sea

In five rounds the entire crew will show up and join in the fight in one side or the other. Eventually, the barbarian will also show and lend aid to Alvares against the captains men. Make constitution checks (DC 15) per round to see if the rest of the crew wakes up if at night otherwise the crew shows up in entirety three rounds after the fight begins at the captains cabin.

CREW LOYAL TO THE CAPTAIN

Captain Honore d'Estaing Thornwald;
Human Aristocrat 2/Bard 5/Master of
the Foil 2





CR 9; Size M; HD 2d8+5d6, Hp 40; Init +6; Spd 30 ft; AC 17; AL CG; Sp Fail: 15% Attacks: +9 melee, or +7 ranged
Damage: +2 Sonic Rapier of Cleaving 1d6+2 (+1d6 Sonic); Masterwork Wheel Lock Pistol 1d10; Masterwork Light Crossbow 1d8
Saves: Fort +2, Ref +8, Will +6
Abilities: Str 15, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 18
Special Abilities: Bardic Music 5/day, Bardic Knowledge +6, Evasion, Uncanny Dodge (Dex bonus to AC), Feint +2
Skills: Appraise 5, Bluff 10, Diplomacy 12, Gather Information 10, Intimidate 8, Listen 6, Intuit Direction 5, Move Silently 7, Profession (Sailor) 4, Sense Motive 5, Use Rope 7, Tumble 8
Feats: Expertise, Dodge, Mobility, Improved Initiative, Improved Disarm, Weapon Focus (Rapier)
Possessions: Aristocrats Clothing, 50 ft. silk rope, Blue Macaw "Ganrian", *necklace of protection +2*, scroll case [*Cure light wounds x2, protection from arrows, invisibility*], masterwork studded leather, powder horn, bullets 10, bolts 20, 3200 gp, 2 gems (ruby 200 gp, emerald 160 gp).
Spells Per Day: (0) 3, (1) 3, (2) 1
Spells Known: (0): 6 *dancing lights, detect magic, ghost sound, light, mending, prestidigitation*, (1): 4 *charm person, cure light wounds, silent image, sleep*, (2): 3 *blur, cat's grace, mirror image*

Crew, Musketeers (5); Human Fighter 2

CR 2; Size M; HD 2d10+4; Hp 22; Init +2; Spd 30 ft; AC 16; AL NG
Attacks: +4 melee, or +5 ranged
Damage: Masterwork Rapier 1d6+1; Masterwork Musket 1d12
Saves: SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +0
Abilities: Str 12, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 11
Skills: Craft: Gunsmithing 4, Jump 4, Profession: Sailor 2, Swim 4
Feats: Point Blank Shot, Quick Reload, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot
Possessions: Studded leather, powder horn, bullet satchel (20), masterwork musket, masterwork rapier, dagger, 10sp, 20 cp.

Crew, Boatswain Mates (2); Human Warrior 4

CR 2; Size M; HD 4d8, Hp 16; Init 0; Spd 30 ft; AC 14; AL CG
Attacks: +7 melee, or +6 ranged
Damage: Masterwork Scimitar 1d6+2; Masterwork Light Crossbow 1d8
Saves: Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +2
Abilities: Str 14, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 12
Skills: Climb 7, Intimidate 5, Jump 3, Swim 4
Feats: Power Attack, Cleave, Expertise
Possessions: Travelers clothes. Studded leather, 20 bolts, masterwork dagger, 1 potion *cure light wounds*, 3 gp, 10 sp, 4 cp.

Crew, Riggers (5); Human Expert 3

CR 2; Size M; HD 3d6+3, Hp 15; Init +0; Spd 30 ft; AC 14; AL CG
Attacks: +2 melee, or +2 ranged
Damage: short sword 1d6; light crossbow 1d8
Saves: Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +4
Abilities: Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 9
Skills: Balance 7, Climb 6, Craft: Rigging 7, Jump 4, Profession: Sailor 4, Tumble 5, Use Rope 7, Swim 3
Feats: Skill Focus (Rope Use), Lightning Reflexes, Dodge
Possessions: Travelers clothes, 50 ft. hemp rope, leather, short sword, dagger, 5 sp.

Crew, Sailors (12); Human Commoner 1

CR 1/2; Size I; HD 1d4+1, Hp 3; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; AC 11; AL LN
Attacks: +1 melee, or +1 ranged
Damage: daggers 1d4+1; spear 1d6+1
Saves: Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0
Abilities: Str 12, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 9
Skills: Climb 4, Profession (Sailor) 2, Spot 2
Feats: Dodge, Mobility
Possessions: Travelers clothes, dagger or spear. 1 sp, 2 cp.

Elainevald Maxirine; Half-Elf Sorcerer (2)

CR 2; Size M; HD 2d4+2 Hp 7; Init +7; Spd 30 ft; AC 13; AL NE

Attacks: +0 melee, or +4 ranged

Damage: long sword +0; +4 light crossbow

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +4

Abilities: Str 9, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 15

Skills: Concentration +4, Knowledge (Arcane) 2, Spellcraft 5

Special Abilities: 60' Lowlight vision, Immunity to *sleep*, +2 vs. *enchantment* spells and magic.

Feats: Improved Initiative

Possessions: Fine clothing, spell component bag, scroll case [scroll: *magic missile* x2, *resistance*], potion of *haste*, 30 gp, 20 sp, 2 gems 1 moss agate at 14gp, and 1 tiger's eye at 300gp.

Spells Known: (0): 5, *resistance*, *ray of frost*, *flare*, *daze*, *disrupt undead* (1): 2 *shield*, *burning hands*

Spells Per Day: (0) 6, (1) 5

CREW LOYAL TO ALVARES

Don Julio de Peralta Alvares; Human Fighter 6/Master of the Foil 3

CR 9; Size M; HD 6d10+12+3d10+6, Hp 60; Init +8; Spd 30 ft; AC 20; AL NG

Attacks: +15/10 melee, or +13/+8/+13 two handed, or +13/+8 ranged

Damage: +1 Rapier of Dancing 1d6+3, or Flintlock Pistol 1d10

Saves: Fort +9, Ref +13, Will +5

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 20, Con 14, Int 18, Wis 12, Cha 16

Special Abilities: Evasion, Feint +2, Uncanny Dodge (Dex to AC)

Skills: Balance 15, Climb 12, Bluff 12, Escape Artist 15, Gather Information 7, Hide 10, Jump 7, Knowledge (Nobility) 9, Profession (Sailor) 6, Rope Use 10, Tumble 15

Feats: Dodge, Mobility, Ambidexterity, Two Weapon Fighting, Improved Initiative, Improved Critical (Rapier), Improved Disarm, Expertise, Weapon Finesse (Rapier), Weapon Focus (Rapier), Lightning Reflexes

Possessions: Swashbucklers clothing, 50 ft silk rope, 10 bullets, powder horn, potion of *cure moderate wounds*, *potion of cats grace*, 2 rapiers, 5 dagger, flintlock pistol,

bag of caltrops, +1 *ring of deflection*, 1500 gp, 140 sp, gems (3 diamonds at 300 each).

Crew, Musketeers (2); Human Fighter 2

CR 2; Size M; HD 2d10+4; Hp 22; Init +2; Spd 30 ft; AC 16; AL NG

Attacks: +4 melee, or +5 ranged

Damage: Masterwork Rapier 1d6+1; Masterwork Musket 1d12

Saves: SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +0

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 11

Skills: Craft: Gunsmithing 4, Jump 4, Profession: Sailor 2, Swim 4

Feats: Point Blank Shot, Quick Reload, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot

Possessions: Studded leather, powder horn, bullet satchel (20), masterwork musket, masterwork rapier, dagger, 10sp, 20 cp.

Crew, Boatswain Mates (1); Human Warrior 4

CR 2; Size M; HD 4d8, Hp 16; Init 0; Spd 30 ft; AC 14; AL CG

Attacks: +7 melee, or +6 ranged

Damage: Masterwork Scimitar 1d6+2; Masterwork Light Crossbow 1d8

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +2

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 12

Skills: Climb 7, Intimidate 5, Jump 3, Swim 4

Feats: Power Attack, Cleave, Expertise

Possessions: Travelers clothes. Studded leather, 20 bolts, masterwork dagger, 1 *potion cure light wounds*, 3 gp, 10 sp, 4 cp.

Crew, Riggers (2); Human Expert 3

CR 2; Size M; HD 3d6+3, Hp 15; Init +0; Spd 30 ft; AC 14; AL CG

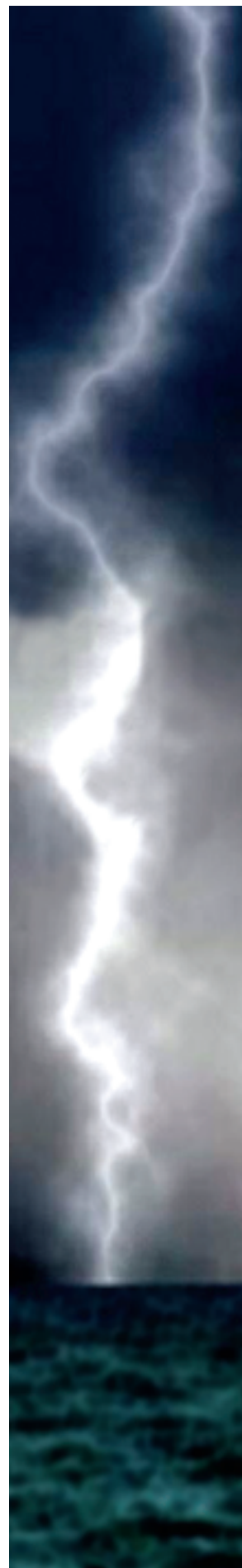
Attacks: +2 melee, or +2 ranged

Damage: short sword 1d6; light crossbow 1d8

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +4

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 9

Skills: Balance 7, Climb 6, Craft: Rigging 7, Jump 4, Profession: Sailor 4, Tumble 5, Use Rope 7, Swim 3



Feats: Skill Focus (Rope Use), Lightning Reflexes, Dodge
 Possessions: Travelers clothes, 50 ft. hemp rope, leather, short sword, dagger, 5 sp.

Crew, Sailors (16); Human Commoner 1
 CR 1/2; Size M; HD 1d4+1, Hp 3; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; AC 11; AL LN
 Attacks: +1 melee, or +1 ranged
 Damage: daggers 1d4+1; spear 1d6+1
 Saves: Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0
 Abilities: Str 12, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 9
 Skills: Climb 4, Profession (Sailor) 2, Spot 2
 Feats: Dodge, Mobility
 Possessions: Travelers clothes, dagger or spear. 1 sp, 2 cp.

Cavik Marfang; Half Orc Barbarian 4
 CR 4; Size M; HD 4d12+9 Hp 36; Init +1; Spd 40 ft; AC 15; AL CN
 Attacks: +7 melee, or +5 ranged
 Damage: +1 Orc Double Battle Axe 1d8+3/1d8+3; Throwing Axe 1d6+2
 Saves: Fort +7, Ref +1, Will -1
 Abilities: Str 16, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 9
 Special Abilities: Rage 2/day, Fast Movement, Uncanny Dodge
 Skills: Climb 9, Intimidate 4, Intuit Direction 4, Jump 7, Listen 2, Swim 4, Wilderness Lore +2
 Feats: Power Attack, Cleave
 Possessions: Adventurers Outfit, 30 gp.

Crew, Scouts (3); Human Rogue 2
 CR 2; Size M; HD 2d6 Hp 8; Init 7; Spd 30 ft; AC 18; AL NE
 Attacks: +4 melee, +4 ranged
 Damage: Masterwork Rapier 1d6, or light crossbow 1d8
 Saves: Fort +0, Ref +6, Will +1
 Abilities: Str 10, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 12
 Special Abilities: Sneak Attack +1d6, Evasion
 Skills: Appraise 5, Balance 8, Bluff 6, Climb 5, Decipher Script 2, Diplomacy 3, Disable Device 5, Disguise 4, Escape Artist 5, Gather Information 3, Hide 5,

Innuendo 3, Intimidate 3, Intuit Direction 3
 Feats: Dodge, Mobility
 Possessions: Travelers clothing, thieves tools, bag of caltrops, bandoleer (3 daggers), 50 ft silk rope, sap, 1 alchemist fire, 1 *potion cure light wounds*, 30 gp, 3 sp, 5 cp, 3 gems: obsidian shards 40 gp

NEW FEATS:

Quick Loading

You are able to load your weapons faster.
 Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +3, proficiency with weapon used
 Benefit: You can reload a small or light weapon as a free action. You can reload a large or heavy weapon as a move equivalent action that provokes an attack of opportunity.

Master of the Foil

Terence glanced downward as he just barely missed meeting the business end of Firedrake's flamberge. He countered but thrust too low and his rapier was pushed harmlessly away. Cursing, he repositioned himself and flanked his assailant. "You should have not spoken to my sister in such a manner Terrance! I cannot tolerate the insult to my family nor myself! Make recompense or pay the consequences for her honor!" Terence's response was as quick as his sword "Why, Marshal, what makes you think that I wish to make recompense to such a lovely young tart? Besides, we all know where she hasn't been, do we not?" Terence whirled around and behind his assailant and tagged him across his left shoulder. "See what you get for your pains, my friend? Come, let's stop this foolishness and go and have a drink!" From out of nowhere a large crate came hurling toward his head but his finely honed combat skills warned him of the attack as it came and he was able to easily tumble under it. His main gauche was out with a quick flick of his wrist just in time to block another of the man's attacks. He knew exactly where the next attack was going to come from. Patiently, he waited for his opponent to make his first and consequently last mistake.

A master with rapiers, the cutlass, and a

saber the Master of the Foil is as nimble and deadly as a poised viper but as precise as a tiger. In a world of armored knights and men-at-arms the master of the foil is a paradox of precise skill honed with agility and lightning fast reflexes to make an expert swordsman. The Master of the foil is an expert in controlling his opponent in battle, getting him to do exactly what he wants.

Hit Dice: d6

Requirements:

Base Attack Bonus: +5

Feats: Dodge, Mobility, Expertise, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (Rapier, Cutlass, or Foil)

Class Skills:

The master of foil class skills (and the key ability for each) are Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Profession (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis), Swim (Str), and Tumble (Dex)

Skill Points at Each Level: 5+Int mod.

Class Features:

All of the following are class features of the statue prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The master of foil has proficiency in all simple weapons, rapier, cutlass, and the foil, and

in all light armors.

Evasion: As per the rogue ability of the same name.

Feint: The Master of the Foil learns how to control a duel. Because of this he may make a bluff attempt against an opponent in combat as a free action. In addition he receives a bonus to bluffing his opponent in battle. The Master rolls his Bluff vs. his opponents Sense Motive. If an opponent has successfully seen through the ruse then that opponent cannot be bluffed again for the duration of the combat.

Improved Disarm: At level one, the master of foil gains the Improved Disarm feat.

Uncanny Dodge: At 3rd level and above the master of foil retains his dexterity bonus to AC regardless of being caught flat footed or being struck by an invisible attacker. He still loses dexterity bonus if immobilized. At level 6 the master of foil can no longer be flanked. As per the rogue ability of the same name.

Lightning Reflexes: At level three, the master of foil gains the Lightning Reflex feat.

Spring Attack: At level five, the master of foil gains the Spring Attack feat.

Whirlwind Attack: At level eight, the master of foil gains the Whirlwind Attack feat.

Improved Critical: At level ten, the master of foil gains the Improved Critical feat.



| Master of the Foil | | | | | |
|--------------------|-------------|-----------|----------|-----------|---|
| Level | Base Attack | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Abilities |
| 1 | +0 | +0 | +2 | +1 | Evasion, Feint, Improved Disarm |
| 2 | +1 | +0 | +3 | +1 | Feint +2 |
| 3 | +2 | +1 | +3 | +2 | Uncanny Dodge (Dex to AC), Lightning Reflexes |
| 4 | +3 | +1 | +4 | +2 | Feint +4 |
| 5 | +3 | +2 | +4 | +3 | Spring Attack |
| 6 | +4 | +2 | +5 | +3 | Uncanny Dodge (Can't be Flanked) |
| 7 | +5 | +3 | +6 | +4 | Feint +6 |
| 8 | +6/+1 | +3 | +6 | +4 | Whirlwind Attack |
| 9 | +7/+2 | +4 | +7 | +5 | Feint +8 |
| 10 | +8/+3 | +4 | +7 | +5 | Improved Critical |



Forest Battle

Written By: Eric Gilley

Thoughts raced through Kiris' mind as the warning bell rang loudly in the town plaza. As she donned her armor, a suit of studded leather that'd seen its fair share of years, she couldn't help but wonder at the reason Liren's warriors were being called to arms. There really weren't any large bands of robbers in the area and never had been yet the warning bell rang with an urgency that spoke of eminent danger. Having donned her armor, Kiris belted her short sword to her side and a quiver of arrows to her back. Then she grabbed her short bow and strung it with the speed and grace that only an elf could possess.

Other warriors did likewise, and followed Kiris at her heels, running for the town square. Kiris, of course, out distanced her fellows-at-arms reaching the plaza many minutes before them. The guards on duty were already waiting there listening to the captain giving battle orders. Thirty or forty men were to stay and guard the town's meager wall while the rest marched into the woods. With the men staying at the walls, Kiris figured that the battle group would consist of little more than one hundred people, though these people would be the most seasoned that could be found. Kiris was one of these, for she'd been helping with the guards for a score of years, and her combat prowess was at the very least equal to the captain's, who prided himself for having trained her and promoted her to one of his field sergeants.

The captain, a tall human of large build with blue eyes and black hair, motioned her to join him. He related the rumors of battle, and told her that this was nothing more than a scouting mission. Kiris had

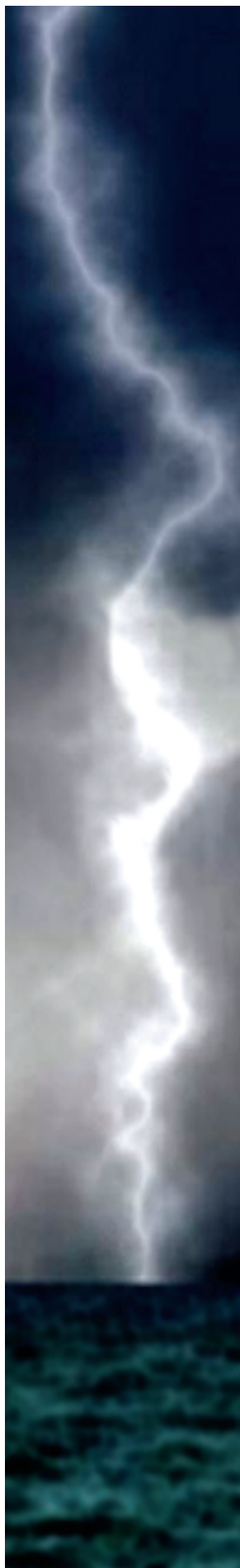
other ideas. She could see the worry in his eyes and hear it in his voice. Liren was in desperate trouble. She would probably head a team of archers into the forest to waylay any forces seeking to flank the main group. She'd done something of the sorts before, but it had been a mere game.

"Kiris," Boren, the captain, said. "Scouts report that there is a significantly large group of orcs coming in from the forest. You're my best archer and fighter, so I need you to be there to lead an ambush while I take care of the larger force coming in from the front. Take ten fighters and a score of archers and make sure that not a single orc survives the fray."

"Yes sir," Kiris said. "I will show them no mercy."

Boren nodded and related the approximate location of the orcs. Kiris needn't have been told twice to take the best fighters she could find, so she started selecting her thirty men and women. The ten fighters were some of the longest serving veterans in the small force of guards, and this time they knew they would be tested to their limits. Kiris' archers were made up of some thirteen humans and seven elves, which were among the best archers. One in particular, a blond elf that stood a hand shorter than Kiris named Elwyn, was cruel to orcs and the ilk, and Kiris needed that kind of mind with her today. Several others offered to join, but when she looked to Boren for confirmation, he shook his head, frowning.

Kiris bade everyone grab waterskins being issued by the squires, and then set off for the woods. She raced with all her stamina and heard her men behind her doing likewise to keep up with her. She was aware of a certain glade that would cover her troops well that was in the direct path of the pillage-minded orcs. If she could make that clearing even a few



minutes before the orcs reached it, she would be able to position her troops strategically enough to not let any orcs escape. She glanced back to make sure her men were there. The other elves were running at her side and the humans lagged behind only a few short strides. They would reach the clearing within a few minutes.



They waited in their places only a short time before they could hear the crash of orcs cutting a path through the woods. Kiris lay concealed on the branch of an old oak tree. The limb was wider than she was, and she could see from which direction the orcs were approaching. From her vantage point, she could see her small force scattered about the clearing, the ten fighters ready to burst forth from the bushes, and the archers, who already had their arrows nocked. They were ready.

The orcs were a hundred strong. Their ragged lines approached the center of the ambush warily as they had ten or twelve times before that day. They'd not found anything in the others so their guard was slackened greatly since they'd started. Their leader, as cowardice goes with orcs, entered the clearing last. He was a great beast of a thing, standing two heads taller than his troops and wielding a great sword in one hand while hefting a double-headed battle-axe in the left.

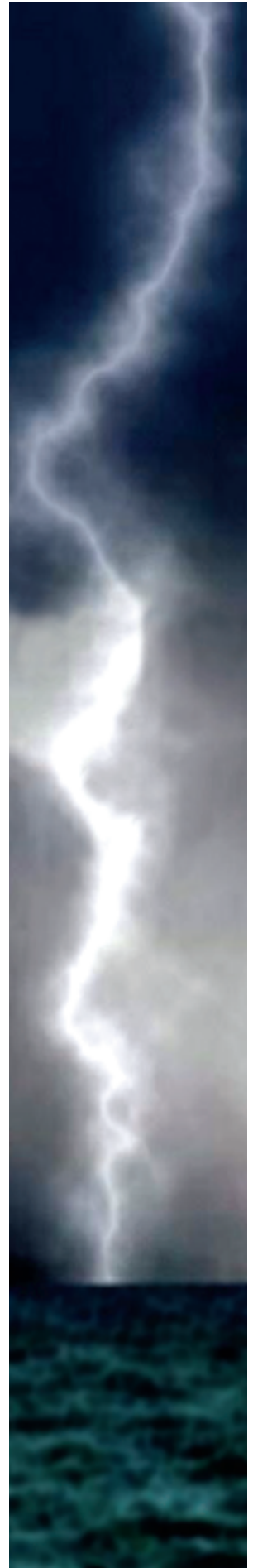
The hail of arrows came as a complete surprise to the advancing host. Several fell pierced by four or five arrows, but the reaction wasn't as Kiris had planned. Instead of turning and running screaming into the forest, they made a formation of orcs with large shields on the outskirts of them. Kiris cursed, aiming a shot to go over the shield wall. Her archers did the same, and the onslaught continued, even

if the effect of the arrows was less.

The hail of arrows subsided as the archers' quivers became depleted. Kiris leapt from her tree and rushed the orcish hoard as did her troops. Oryx, a slender elf, was at her side, as was Elwyn, as she rushed the stricken orcs, whose numbers had dropped by half. The astonished invaders held their ground, though, more afraid of their leader than the advancing warriors. Kiris, Oryx and Elwyn reached the line first. They hacked into the ranks savagely, cutting a swath near to the center of the disgusting things. Elwyn would have liked to toy with them for a little longer, but he knew that if he did, the others would be on him like wolves. Oryx fought back to back with Kiris, protecting her flank as she cut through the orcs.

Kiris suffered a minor cut to her arm as she came into combat with a large beast. It stung more than it should have. Poison, she realized as she looked upon the grinning, tooth-filled maw of the creature. She blocked its next attack and swung low spilling his innards across the ground. Her next attack beheaded the thing and it toppled. Behind her, Oryx fell under the press of orcs, and she realized she would be next. She turned abruptly, catching a spear with her free hand as it tried to pierce her heart and thrust it aside, following the haft with her sword and striking home in the orc's chest. She kicked the body off her sword and split the next orc's head open, not quite killing it. The foul thing struck back with its own sword, thrusting at her mid section. She dodged just enough to make the blow nonfatal, but the sword left a nasty cut across her ribs that stung like fire and bled freely. Her sword came up under his chin, sliding home in its miniscule brain.

Kiris could hear her companions fighting around her, but couldn't find them through the press, until she realized that



the battle had passed her up. She tore some cloth from her tunic and made quick work of bandaging her side and headed back into the fray. She nearly tripped over poor Oryx, who'd fallen to the spearman Kiris had just killed. His wound was fatal, she realized, and he would die soon. She bent over him, pulling out her dagger and looking into his pain-filled eyes. He nodded and turned his face from her. Kiris raised the dagger and closed her eyes as she stuck the blade through her friend's heart, giving him a swift death instead of letting him suffer.

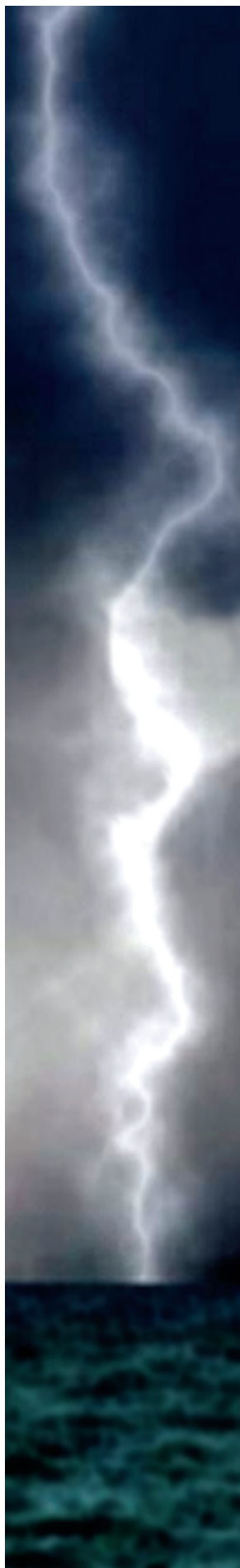
The grief struck then. Everything around her became a red haze as she tore herself from the ground and flew back into the battle. Orcs fell quickly away from her as she slew them with grim abandon, taking several hits but grimacing the pain away. She came out of the haze when she saw their leader grinning at her and urging her forward. She failed to notice that several of her comrades had fallen to the foul things' sword and axe. She didn't care. She rushed it with her short sword and dagger. It tried a cross swipe with its sword catching nothing but air as Kiris ducked, rolled to the right and came up hacking. She scored two hits on his mailed hide before it recovered and swung again. He came across again with a cross swipe with its sword but the axe followed this time and forced Kiris to leap backwards after ducking the first blow. It was still grinning when it came in with an overhead chop with the axe. Kiris dodged to the left, but was caught with the flat of the axe sending her sprawling ten feet from the monster. Dazed and battle-weary, she lay there, unable to move. She did hear what was going on. The monster was running at her. No, she thought, the footsteps are too light to be that monster.

She heard a great howl of pain a

moment later, which brought her out of her daze. She looked up to see an unarmed elf standing in front of the orcs' leader. The thing gazed in horror at its broken and mutilated hand. The elf tossed the great sword aside with little interest in its quality or wielding it. He was a proud looking thing, this elf. He wore a suit of gilded chain mail and a crimson-scaled glove on his left hand. His short, golden hair waved in the wind, and the broadsword on his back shined in the noon sunlight. He seemed like the avatar of a great god standing there in front of her. He glanced back at her and smiled seeing that she was not seriously injured, and turned back, grim faced, toward the humongous orc.

The thing had taken advantage of the elf's glance and swung with the huge axe. The elf, though, proved quicker with a lightning jab to the orc's chest, knocking the wind from its lungs. He stepped back, letting the orc fall to its knees and regain its breath. Kiris couldn't believe that he was letting the thing get its air back, and was even more astonished when he didn't hinder the thing from regaining its feet, though she did see the expression of horror on the foul beast's face as it realized that it couldn't run. It swung again with the axe thinking that it could at least hurt the elf before it died. In a lightning motion, the elf drew his sword with a single hand and deflected the blow with enough force to send the axe flying from the orc's hand. The orc was undaunted, though, as it clubbed with its ruined hand, oblivious, now, to any pain it had once felt.

The elf took the hit, and another after it, but still stood as the monster pulled away from its third hit. It lunged back in with its left hand trying to grasp the elf's throat. Kiris yelled at him, but it was wasted, for the elf ducked and slashed



upward with the sword, cleanly severing the arm of the foul beast. He was quick to come back with a two-handed swipe, sending the orc's head flying away from its body with an expression of agony and terror distorting its already horrid features.

Kiris struggled to her feet to thank the elf for his help, but before she could even sit upright he was there, offering his right hand, the one not wearing a glove, to her. She accepted his hand, and groaned as she stood. Her wounds were not serious, but were many, and they all pained her. She looked around the battlefield, and decided that they'd won. They had hardly lost five men and an elf, yet had killed more than fifty orcs in melee combat.

She turned back to the elf to thank him and saw something about him that she hadn't noticed before. His eyes. They were a light lavender color that smiled sweetly yet gauged everything they saw with intelligence and experience. He's no ordinary elf, she decided. He was indeed no ordinary elf, for he'd withstood three hideous blows from that monster that would have felled many men with only one. His face was badly bruised, though, but that seemed to be the only thing he had to show for the battle, for his brow was not covered with sweat and blood as hers was.

"Thank you," she stammered. "I'd have not lived if you hadn't saved me."

"I know," He said, and that was all.

He turned from her then and walked over to the corpse of the dead orc. He held out his hand over the thing, and it faded away, as did its companions. Then he, too, faded from view, uttering something that Kiris could not hear. Her troops looked around in confusion and to their dead comrades, who had also faded from view. Then, Oryx came out of the brush, holding his head, and grimacing in

pain. No one had died, rather the one's that would have all came out of the trees sporting similar wounds to Oryx's.

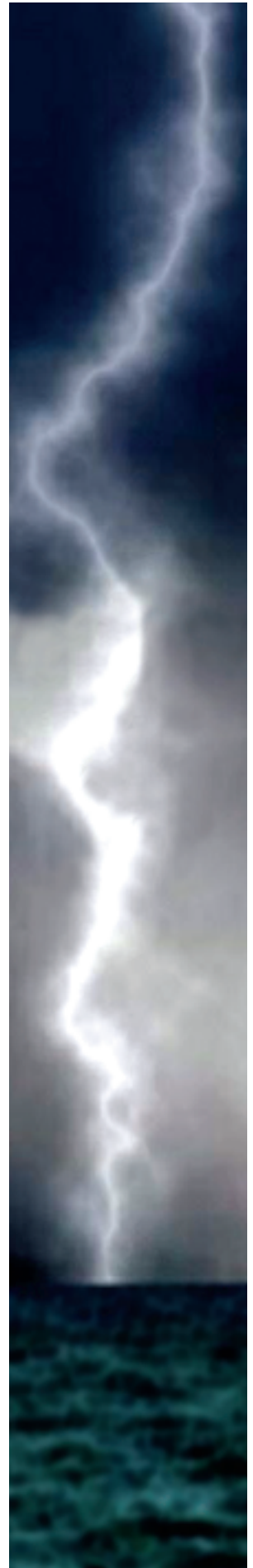
They headed back to town slowly, all aware of the fact that they were still battle-weary and wounded. They looked to her for counsel, and she gave it. "We'll say that we destroyed the force with only minor injuries, and then we buried the corpses so that they might enrich the soil." She'd told them, and they'd heartily agreed with her, though they didn't know what to make of the mysterious warrior. Was he real, or was he just another illusion. They would never know.



The elf leaned back against the tree as the party of elves strode by, his invisibility spell hiding him from their eyes. He was surprised at how well his ruse had worked, and impressed with the skill that Kiris was already showing. He thought to himself of how much less skill he'd had at her age, and knew that it was brought on by the fact that he'd led a calmer lifestyle in his forsaken home.

Will she become more powerful than I, Perius wondered. Surely. These were the thoughts that plagued him as he stalked the party of men and elves, a rare thing to be seen in any land, and marveled at how they all admired Kiris and worried for her wounds. They were not fatal, for the only dangerous wound was the one on her side that she'd tended. After the priests at the monastery healed her, though, there'd be no scar to show that the hurt had ever existed.

Perius stalked them until they were within sight of the walls and concentrated on a ring on his finger and of his home in the Starry Wood nearly two hundred miles away, and was gone from Liren's forest.



The Good, The Bad, The Ugly*

By Rob [BarTndr] Wojczyk

*Not to be confused with the Clint Eastwood Western of a similar name

While sitting back in contemplation of 'great games' recently, I recalled an offer I had to play in an 'evil' one-shot campaign. At the time, the thought didn't appeal to me, because there really was little plot other than to kill, maim, destroy and ravage. However, during this moment of inspiration, I cross-pollinated that thought with an idea that a DM was using in a game I had been in.

You see, in this recently ended game, our players each had a character in one world (Greyhawk in this case). We were happily going along performing some epic task, when one week the DM tells us to draw up new first level characters. They too were to start out in the Greyhawk world – and unknown to us several years earlier than the characters we were running. One session the 'higher' level characters came upon a portal and fools that we are/were - we entered it. The DM calmly said for us to take out the new characters, and the break point was established.

We played the new characters for a couple weeks, all the while wondering what had happened to the old ones. We were thrown various tasks of intrigue in which none of us as players could figure out the connection, there ended up being one in the end. Finally, the lower level characters were passed into the plane of Toril (Forgotten Realms), and we picked up with the higher-level characters in the plane of Shadow.

Long story short, the interweaving of the two parties was quite interesting to see

blossom, and made for interesting play. So what devious little idea did I dredge forth from this that you can use on your poor unsuspecting players you may ask?

Start off with a mostly 'good' group, no one inherently evil. Even let the players know that for these characters you want more of a 'do gooder' mentality. They can get the whole karma of a troop that goes adventuring, slaying undead, and in general thwarting the plans of some villain or villains that they feel they are superior to. Let this go on for a couple good sessions, and make sure some notable events occur (such as recovery of some stolen or discovered item/relic, or destruction of a power center of some sort – like a thief's guild or coven).

Now, have them make up another set of characters, somewhat less honorable than the first group. You can offer up a range of adventurers' motivations (from out to make a name at all costs, out to make a buck at all costs, or 'I just like to kill things'). Be sure to try and get some Lawful and Chaotic Evil's in there too, just for color. These similar alignments may seem to co-exist, but where there is a method to the madness for a Lawful Evil, it is more a 'what ever works' for the Chaotic Evil. Again, stress their motivations – this will be the one thread on the evil side that will separate them from one-dimensional killing machines. You might have a Neutral Evil who is out to make himself some gold, but will not kill women or children. You might have a half orc who refuses to kill anyone with Orc blood. As the DM, you can go so far as to offer in other half-breeds such as Goblin, Bugbear, Gnoll, whatever your players might want. This party would be viewed as excelling at what they do – they just are not anyone's first choice. For that matter, no one would choose them on purpose, and that's what makes them attractive to their new employer. You see, this poor keep owner

had 'discovered' this artifact that he placed in a stronghold, and wouldn't you know it but this group of wandering adventurers decide to come into his home and take the item away. Their mission – or at least the long term one – is to find and deal with this group. Of course, the short-term mission could be to recover the object, and perhaps leave a message behind for any other potential party that might try to re-recover the item.

Therefore, they play their 'dirty half-dozen' characters for a while. They can get a little wild, cause bar fights, do assassinations, and in general live up to their low standards.

And then the DM switches back to good guys, and the players are faced with the fact that what they recovered at some recent point was again lost. Maybe they try again to get it back, maybe not. They SHOULD NOT act like they know about the other group – and I would advise warning them that you will – WILL – penalize them experience points should they take any actions as if they know of or expect actions from the other group. For example, if the Good group is in Anyville on their way to Another-ton, and must pass through the Dark Wood, and the bad guy happened to set a trap in the dark wood, then the players should not suddenly decide to take the round about route just to avoid the woods. They should role-play the same happy go lucky group they were before – although the DM can give them foreboding news of the waste laid on the village where the item they had once recovered had been kept. They should play as if there is a faint cloud over them – but not act like they have full knowledge of the situation.

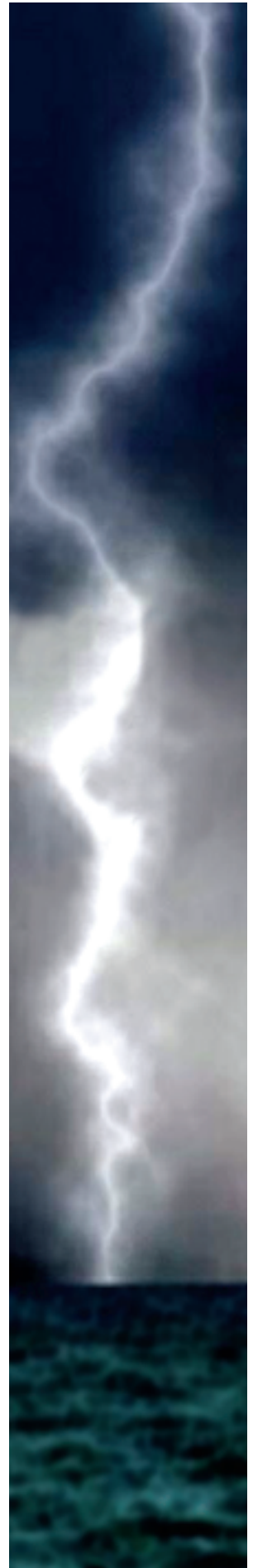
And continue to swap them out back and forth. Who knows maybe the 'good' group will return to the village and ask who did this horrible deed of a survivor and have

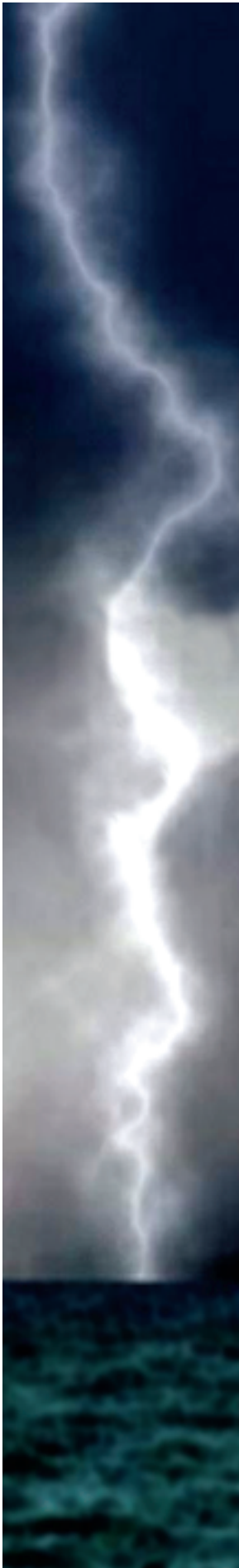
the other group described out to them. The funny part is both groups could be looking for each other, and through happenstance never actually be in the same place at the same time. Since they do not know how the other acts or thinks, the possibility exists that neither group should be acting like they are being hunted, even if both are.

With a vague trail (and the evil party is likely to leave a easier to follow trail as they will probably get into bar fights and such) can always lead on to another town, where the good miss an opportunity when the local noble asks for help with an Ogre problem. And the bad guys, well, they know of numbers and vague disposition (probably better than the good will know), but since they have their own motivations, they might take side trips and just wander and 'hope' to run into those other guys.

You might even have them pass by one another in a city – without realizing it is the other group. This can be done by constantly adding NPC groups who 'look like' the opposite group in number, but are not them. The good group will tend to follow and ask questions, the bad will probably thug and intimidate, but in the end they'll find it's 'the wrong guys'.

And at some point when you think the players are strung along enough, flip a coin. Heads for good, tails bad. Whatever comes up is the group the players will play when both groups come together for real. Since you've seen how the players play their characters, you will be able to locate them and use the same course of action as the players would. And I will bet the players will often offer suggestion (and maybe even snippets of in character material) for the encounter. But make sure that while they may get to experience both characters at once, they only control one (otherwise they could put one at a disadvantage just to get beyond the





encounter). You will likely have players who have a stronger attachment to one character over the other (only natural) and then there will be one guy who likes his good guy, and not his bad guy, so he decides to have his controlled character attack the opposing character of the guy next to him on the couch.

In the end, one or both parties could be decimated. They might get so messed up that neither group could be an effective traveling party on their own. But isn't that part of the fun seeing what happens. And what does happen? Well, perhaps as the fight is winding down, said villain comes out, announces he no longer needs his 'cheap thugs' and decides to have his usual toughs eliminate all concerned. This scenario works if you've managed to lose a lot of the characters from the good and bad sides to where most of the players are down to just one character on one side or the other. Those with two could present the first targets for the villain, or the DM could pull out that coin and flip to see which one the player will take and have the other one flee. Another way to end this if it's dragging along is to have the local guard show up with a desire to take the bad group into custody. Since the guards don't know what's going on, everyone gets thrown in a cell, and just let the players pick which characters they want to use. Getting the mix of the good and bad is another excellent role play opportunity, as these once 'motivated' characters are now more likely out to just save their necks, and could either run or worse at the first opportunity. Who knows, maybe that guy with the 'I just like to kill things' attitude could be calmed down so that while he still enjoys his work, he puts a positive purpose and spin behind it.

One other way to do something along these lines is to be running two games with two completely different groups of players. Say each is running on alternate Saturdays, or one on Tuesdays and on

Thursdays, whatever way it's being done. Each is its own group, with little or no knowledge of the other. And then just have one session where both groups are in attendance, and let them go at each other. They could be a good versus evil, or just two competing adventuring bands. If they seem to hook up well together (and thwart your plan for a huge throw down) enter said villain with toughs and let the sparks fly. One thing to be sure of with this kind of encounter is to make sure you schedule it so that you can all sit around afterwards and have an unwinding time. Many players are pretty strong with their characters, and people may take an instant dislike to one another based on that character. Once done, have everyone sit down and chat and have some pizza and maybe a couple beers (and that's Root Beer's for the under 21 crowd). Odds are you know all these people from gaming, and the probability that the two groups will intermix will always exist as players drop from one game due to scheduling conflicts. And honestly, the fighting should be the figs on the table, not the two geeks on the couch.

If you use a multiple DM system, this 'convergence' of two groups can be done just as easily (or perhaps even easier) and with your 'co-DM's' taking care of their specific parts allow you to be more impartial in your referee duties.

So sometimes you can take what looked like a 'poor' idea and a 'good' idea, and create an even better one. And with some of what's described above (and the many ways you can implement it) you are bound to create one of those gaming situations that will go down in the lore of your players collective histories. Maybe not as good as the prospect of someone bringing the waitress staff from Hooters to a game – in their work clothes – but as far as what is possible to attain, it should bring some challenge and zest to you and your players gaming experience. ◇

World Development

By Jack D. Graham

Article 3 The Solar System

In the last article we looked at the campaign world's cosmos. In this article we will work on constructing the physical setting in which the world exists. The possible variations of setting in which a campaign world exists is limited to two options, either the campaign world is part of a solar system or it is not. If it is part of a solar system, what kind of solar system is it – Standard: five to ten planets revolving around a single sun. Copernican: five to ten planets, the sun, and any moons, revolving around the planet. Binary: the planets involved in a complex revolution around a binary star system. Other: Anything else which is a solar system, but is not one of the above options, fits in this category – including the campaign world that is actually a moon revolving around a stellar giant like Jupiter, and near enough to a great red giant sun. This would create some interesting day/night cycles. And the number of alternatives that are available if the campaign world is not part of a solar system is again limited only by the creator's imagination.

The Solar System

What exists outside of the world? We do not need an accurate accounting of all the stars that exist throughout the universe — only those that are visible from the world's surface. For most worlds set in the prime material plane this consists of their solar system and primary constellations, though some campaign settings may have other descriptions as well.

A world set in the material plane:

Listed below are a series of questions that can be used in developing a complete planetary system for any world set in the material plane. Many questions are to be utilized as a starting point rather than a finish. After answering each question you should also answer the question: Does this have any significance or affect the campaign setting?

Outside the solar system:

What are the major constellations? Now many cultures will have different names for the same star clusters so you can establish what the night sky looks like without having to worry about the names not fitting a particular setting – they can be changed. Constellations are normally named for shapes, mythic people, animals, and symbols. There are innumerable possibilities for constellations.

Which constellations are in the Zodiac? For clarification on this one – the zodiac are the constellations that are along the path of the sun, each month (or so) the sun rises in a different constellation.

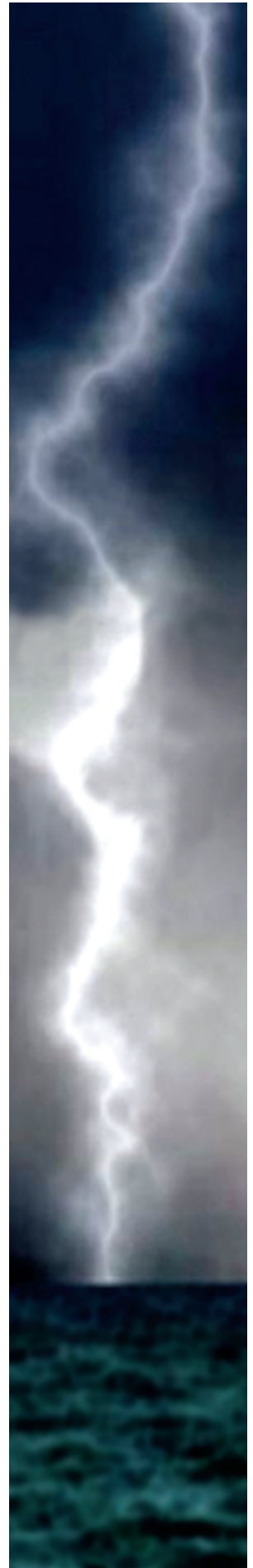
Is there a Northern Star? If not, what is substituted? This is important for navigators in the northern hemisphere of the planet. How do they find north by the stars.

Is there a Southern Star? If not, what is substituted? This is important for the same reasons as the northern star for those in the southern hemisphere in finding direction at night.

Are there any Nebula or other celestial structures visible? Clouds of stardust can form huge shapes that are visible in the night sky. Such clouds are generally named after what they most resemble.

Inside the Solar System:

What type of sun does the solar system have? The most common sun



type is a medium yellow sun very much like the one earth revolves around, but there are other options if you want to have a different sky. Some solar options are a red giant, a white dwarf, binary star system, small red, and med orange.

How does this affect the planet? If you use a different colored sun, most of the time the only difference will be in the appearance of the sun – but there may be some other variations. Plants and animals will adapt to the different light, turning darker for red and orange suns and lighter for white.

How many planets are there? Our solar system has 8 planets (four solid and four gas giants) and an asteroid belt. I recommend not going over ten planets for a solar system, or fewer than four. Remember also that some planets may not be able to be seen from the campaign world without magic.

How many planets orbit closer to the sun than the campaign world? Not really important, but nice to know for future reference.

What are the planet's names, length of year, distinguishing features, number of moons, and other important game information? (Include the campaign world in list.)

| Example chart: | | | | |
|----------------|----------|---------------|-------|--|
| Name | Year | Features | Moons | Notes |
| Bob | 88 day | Barren rock | 0 | None |
| Mary | 295 days | Cloud covered | 0 | Has an odd orbit |
| John | 365 days | Water planet | 1 | Campaign World |
| Elena | 620 days | Has rings | 3 | Vanity / Beauty |
| Frank | 15 years | Blood Red | 12 | Known as the life giver/ taker |
| Sara | 27 years | Blue green | 15 | Actually orbits the sun backwards from other planets |
| Scott | 53 years | Giant eye | 7 | The watcher |
| Richard | 84 years | Bright Blue | 4 | None |
| Guy | 97 years | White | 1 | Ice / cold |

Are there any other important solar features? This includes major comets, asteroids, and any other interplanetary objects.

Example of a Solar System: **I suggest getting a book on astronomy, one that includes detailed descriptions of our solar system. Barring that just about any combination of planetary possibilities is possible.**

A world not set in the material plane:

For those campaign settings not set within the prime material plane, the first question is if there is a solar system. If there is, then answer the above questions. If the world is not part of a standard solar system, then what is there? Again after answering each question listed below you should also answer the question: Does this have any significance or affect the campaign setting?

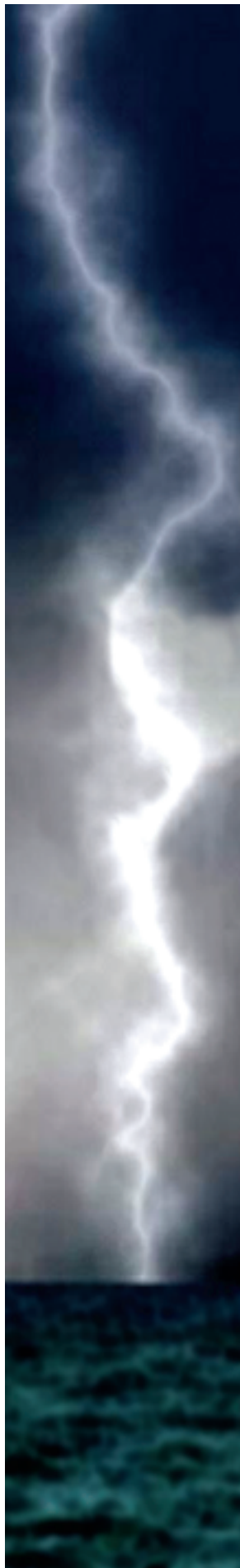
What is the source of light? If the world has a sun, what type of sun is it? Does the world rotate around the sun – or the sun around the world? If it does not have a sun, what is the light source and how does it work?

What is the length of a day? (Noon to noon) Most of the time the day is a standard 24 hours, but anything is possible – including a world where the sun(s) never set or never rise on a part of the world.

What is the length of a year – if they have it? How do they track the passage of time? Are there seasons? How many? How do they work?

Are there Stars? If there is nighttime, what do the inhabitants see in the sky? How can they utilize what they see for navigation?

What is there outside the world setting? We need to know if there are any other possible campaign settings that share the same plane location as the campaign world, especially if someone from the campaign world may discover the other worlds. If there were other possible settings, how would a character travel from one to the other? Examples: A campaign world floating within the elemental plane of air may not be the only one that is there;



there is a sister planet directly opposite the sun; the world could be one setting that is directly connected to other world settings. Are there any other aspects such as accessing other worlds or planes? What is there underneath the world? Is there an underground world that interacts with the surface world?

Example: Pint does not have a standard solar system. Pint is the only campaign world within its own pseudo-plane. Pint does not have an outer space. A sun, of sorts, sits directly above the center of the plane and pulses with a 24-hour cycle, so the brightest part of the day is 12 hours from the darkest. Pint does not have any stars in the sky – only the singular light source – which gives Pint 6 hours of bright light, 6 of dim to dusk light, 6 of darkness, and 6 more of dusk to dim light. This light cycle is well suited for low light vision. There are no real seasons; it seems to always be late summer. There is an underground but the disc is a maximum of 5 miles deep.

WORLD OF DELVIN

Delvin exists as an inverted sphere within the Elemental Plane of Earth and so has no solar system. In the center of the sphere that is Delvin, there is a kind of sun, a combination of matter and gates to the planes of Fire, Radiance, and the Prime Material plane. This “sun” has a cycle where it will become a bright yellow-white sun for seven hundred fifty hours (thirty-one and a quarter days) then suddenly dims to a reddish moonlight glow for seven hundred fifty hours. Delvin has had enough contact with worlds from the prime material plane that it utilizes a year system – using six light cycles as a year.

Like all ecological systems there, is a rhythm to the plant life cycles. It is this cycle that the Delvins utilize to establish a calendar of sorts.

Light Cycle:

0 - 150 hours - First Light
 150 - 300 hours - Floods
 300 - 450 hours - Flowers — the flowers bloom during this time

450 - 600 hours - Summer time
 600 - 750 hours - Harvest time

Dark Cycle:

0 - 150 hours - First Darkness
 150 - 300 hours - Leaf Fall
 300 - 450 hours - Night Blooms
 450 - 600 hours - Deep Night
 600 - 750 hours - First Snow

This calendar cycle names varies slightly because some areas have different ecologies, but the time frames are normally very close. It takes six light and dark cycles to equal a year, but there is no one standard for when the year starts so there is no standard calendar; your age, or the age of anything, is based off the cycle in which you or it was born.

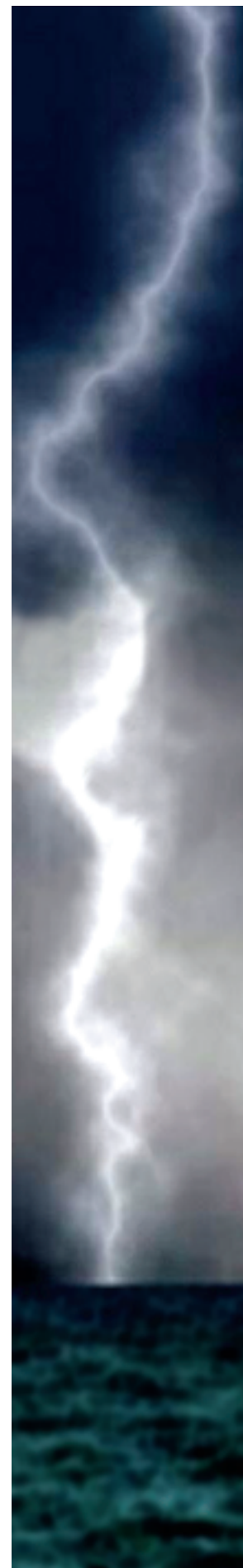
The strength of the gravity of Delvin is comparable to what we consider to be normal, but it is important to remember that Delvin is the inside of a sphere and the gravity pulls outwards keeping everyone on the surface.

All travel and navigation on Delvin is done with maps and landmarks as there are no stars, the sun is always directly above, and the magnetic fields are transient. This makes having accurate maps very important for traveling.

At least five other “worlds” are known to exist that are accessible through the tunnels and passages beneath Delvin, but none of them are close and traveling through the underground is very dangerous. All known entrances to the worlds deep under Delvin are heavily guarded. The only other travel to other worlds is through magical gates to the other elemental and the prime material planes. There are a few permanent gates and major cities have developed around these gates, both for trade possibilities as well as for protection.

Comments welcome.

Jack D. Graham
 Designer_Jack@Hotmail.com



Creature Cards • Set III

by Tempest and Heph

Card 1: Minotaur Fighter. This is a basic minotaur fighter. Very simple, pretty much everything is designed around the MM version.

Card 2: Isen Druid / Tundrin. The Isen is a form of arctic dwarf that was introduced in the Hammer & Helm sourcebook from Green Ronin. The Tundrin is a PrC that was also introduced in the same sourcebook. All Isen's gain a +4 racial bonus to Wilderness Lore checks, as well as stonecunning, and 60' darkvision. They also carry the [Cold] subtype in their description. The needed Tundrin abilities are listed below, although they are not heavily detailed.

- **Body of Ice:** +2 circumstance bonus on Intimidate checks do to the noticeable cold aura emanating off of the tundrin.
- **Ice Armor:** 1/day/level the tundrin can cast Ice Armor as a sorcerer of double the tundrins level.
- **Elemental Form:** 1/day for a number of rounds equal to the class level + Con mod, the tundrin can transform into a huge water elemental. Follow the rules of a Polymorph spell.
- **Ice Hammer:** The tundrin can summon a battlehammer of magical ice as a standard action. This weapon functions as a +1 icy burst dwarven battlehammer. The ice hammer disappears if it leaves the tundrins grasp.
- **Ice Shard:** This is a ranged touch attack that deals 1d6 cold damage and is used as an attack action. These shards have a range increment of 10' and a maximum range of 10' times the tundrins Con bonus.

MINOTAUR FIGHTER (FRONT)

| | CR4 | CR9 | CR14 | CR19 |
|-------|----------------|---------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Cls | - | F5 | F10 | F15 |
| HD | 6d8+12 | 6d8+5d10+13 | 6d8+10d10+48 | 6d8+15d10+63 |
| HP | 39 | 74 | 119 | 149 |
| Init. | +0 | +4 | +4 | +4 |
| Spd. | 30' | 30' | 30' | 30' |
| AC | 14 | 17 | 19 | 24 |
| Att1 | GreatAxe +9/+4 | GA +16/+11/+6 | GA +22/+17/+12/+7 | GA +27/+22/+17/+12 |
| D1 | 2d8+4 | 2d8+7 | 2d8+7 | 2d8+7 |
| Att2 | Gore +4 | G +7 | G +10/+4 | G +12/+6 |
| D2 | d8+2 | d8+3 | d8+3 | d8+3 |
| Sv. | +6/+5/+5 | +10/+6/+6 | +13/+9/+9 | +15/+12/+12 |

Feats: Great Fortitude, Power Attack, Imp. Init., Cleave, Quick Draw, Run, Weapon Specialization (Greataxe), Imp. Bull Rush, Sunder, Great Cleave, Weapon Focus (Greataxe), Blind Fight, Imp. Critical, Leadership, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes **Size:** Large
Skills (basic): Intimidate +5, Jump +8 / +10 / +11, Listen +8, Search +6,

CONTINUED ON BACK

MINOTAUR FIGHTER (BACK)

Spot +8, Swim +4 / +6 / +10, Climb +5 / +10

Face / Reach: 5' x 5' / 10'

Specials: Charge, Scent, Natural Cunning

Abilities: Str 19 / 20, Dex 10, Con 15 / 16, Int 9/10, Wis 10/11, Cha 8

Source: MM, PHB

Source: Core Rulebook I & III

Notes: _____

ISEN DRUID / TUNDRIN (FRONT)

| | CR3 | CR6 | CR10 | CR15 |
|-------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Cls. | Druid 3 | Druid 6 | D9/Tun.1 | D11/T4 |
| HD | 3d8+6 | 6d8+12 | 10d8+30 | 15d8+45 |
| HP | 24 | 39 | 73 | 108 |
| Init. | +1 | +1 | +1 | +1 |
| Spd. | 20' | 20' | 20' | 20' |
| AC | 13 | 16 | 18 | 21 |
| Att1 | QtrStaff | GQtrStaff | QtrStaff | QtrStaff |
| D1 | d6+3/d6+3 | d6+3/d6+3 | d6+3/d6+3 | d6+3/d6+3 |
| Sv. | +8/+2/+5 | +10/+3/+7 | +14/+6/+8 | +17/+8/+10 |

Feats: Toughness, Great Fortitude, Combat Casting, Ambidexterity, Two-Weapon Fighting, Imp. Two-Weapon Fighting, Dodge **Size:** Medium
Skills (class): Concentration +10, Animal Empathy +10, Intuit Direction +10, Wilderness Lore +11, Climb +2, Jump +2
 Face / Reach: 5' x 5' / 5'

CONTINUED ON BACK

ISEN DRUID / TUNDRIN (BACK)

Specials: Darkvision 60', Cold Subtype, Stonecunning, Racial Traits, Druid Spells, Body of Ice, Ice Armor, Elemental Form, Ice Hammer, Ice Shard

Spells: 4/3/2, 5/4/4/2, 6/5/5/3, 6/6/6/4/3

Abilities: Str 16 / 17, Dex 13, Con 17 / 18, Int 9, Wis 14/15, Cha 7

Source: PHB, Hammer & Helm

Notes: _____

Note: These cards are the same size as Magic cards. If printed on a sticky-back label they could be affixed to unused common cards.

FOLD LINE



Whispers of the South

Our Readers Speak Out

Regards! I am fairly new to the DM scene, and came across the magazine rack a few days ago. As always my curiosity got the best of me, and I downloaded Issue 1 & 2 of TL, among other things. I just wanted to e-mail you and let you know what a wonderful job you are doing so far! Not just with the layout but with everything. Issue 1 has quite a few grammar errors that were missed in editing, and the basic order of articles is a bit odd. But nothing major. The transition from issue #1 to #2 is excellent, kudos on this! The grammar articles are amazingly small, and the zine itself runs very smooth! The layout is great and the articles are getting better and better. Tempest's Guide was nicely done, I've always enjoyed the underdark, so I am looking forward to more. Survivors of the Storm had some pretty interesting NPC's. Being fairly new I tend to use pre-generated NPC's over designing my own. Rob Wojczk's article "Role with it" was invaluable to me as a new DM. I plan on trying to get my group to role play a bit more now that we are pretty set with the rules. Grimoir Arcana was also nicely written and is among my favorite. Tim's writing style is fabulous, and the way the story flows is excellent. Great job on everything, and keep up the good work!!

Jason Hights
JH1429@bizco.com

Jason, thanks for the encouragement! All of us put what we can into every issue, and the TL team is doing a wonderful job. Be sure to stick around, as Rob Wojczk is always sending along great article, and Rob Adams has a very nice article in this issue about combat. I think you will enjoy these. As always Tim has a wonderful

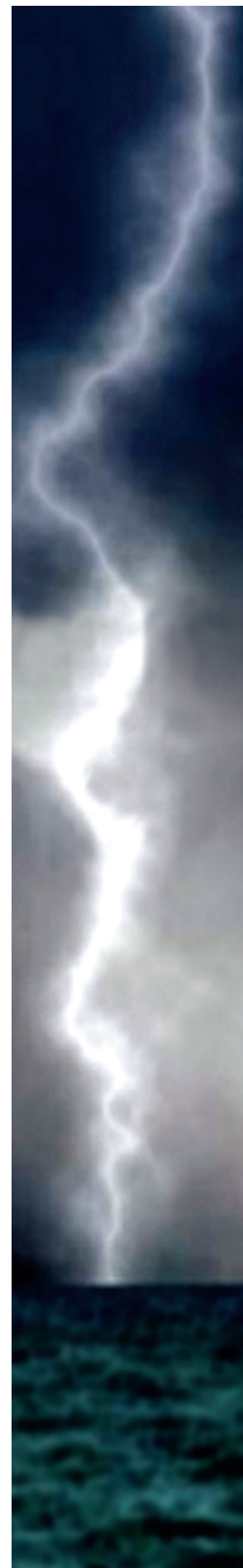
article this month. We are planning to release the first 4 out-of-print articles in our downloads page, so stay tuned for those. They will get people back up and familiar with the ongoing story if you never read the old issues ~Tempest.

I'm writing in to congratulate everybody on the fine job you are doing. Especially with the layout. The transition the zine has incurred from a document in issue 1, to the newly released issue 4. Every issue seems to have a smoother layout and appearance than before. Now all you need to do is add in a bit more color, title headlines, and color and this will truly look like a magazine! I know this is a bit hard to do while at the same time keeping the zine easily printable. The border and graphics buttons work out very well with this so far. Are you able to give article headlines color, and have them still print out as a basic black font? I don't want to get rid of the graphics for printing, while at the same time hide the graphics for a headline. Also are you able to give background images and colors for pages, and make it so they do not print out as well? These are only small nitpicks, and truly do not make a difference, just idea's for making it more magazine like, and still printable. I have no knowledge in PDF programs, besides opening them up and reading them with acrobat.

Carl Mahjong
Badland24@yahoo.com

Carl, I'm handing this one over to our layout editor, Glenn. He should be able to answer this much easier than I can! ~Tempest

LOL, thanks Tempest! Thank you for the comments Carl. Color itself is not an issue to add to the PDF files, but to have them default to printing in black would only be an option on the reader side of the house



as it would depend on your printer specifications. If you simply send a colored portion to the printer you will get a grayscale representation of the color it is replacing. As to image suppressing the soft background images, I'm afraid that it would (at present) also suppress the darker legible text over it, so there are no plans at present to add any background images to articles. As Adobe Acrobat advances in features, I am sure we will find more uses for it in our future issues of *Tempest's Lore*. Thanks again Carl!
~Glenn aka Heph

again finding use for them. I also have been making quite a few of my own, I'll send some for future articles! I am happy to see a steady growing of new columns in the zine. I am really looking forward to the world development article. I have been putting off working on my own, due to all the work (yes I am lazy) so hopefully they will encourage me a bit more! The editing staff is doing a tremendous job as well. All around you are doing a great job, keep up the good work!

Doug Woods

I downloaded issue 3 just a few days ago and finally finished reading through it. This is the best issue so far! The content is great, and full of crunchy bits. "Biography of a Madman" is excellent and really helpful article for creating villains. And the creature cards are great; keep them around by all means! With so many unused cards laying around, I am once

Glad to hear you liked issue #3! This was one of my favorite articles to work on, with some much room to design. The articles were great by everybody. Several new articles made their way in this month, which really helped boost the zine forward. With so much happening you should see some new stuff pretty much every month!
~Tempest

REALITY CHECK

BY ANDREW BABB

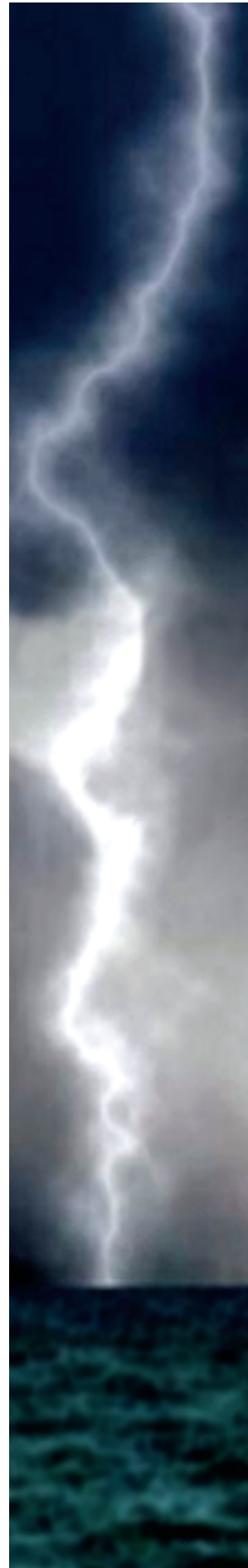
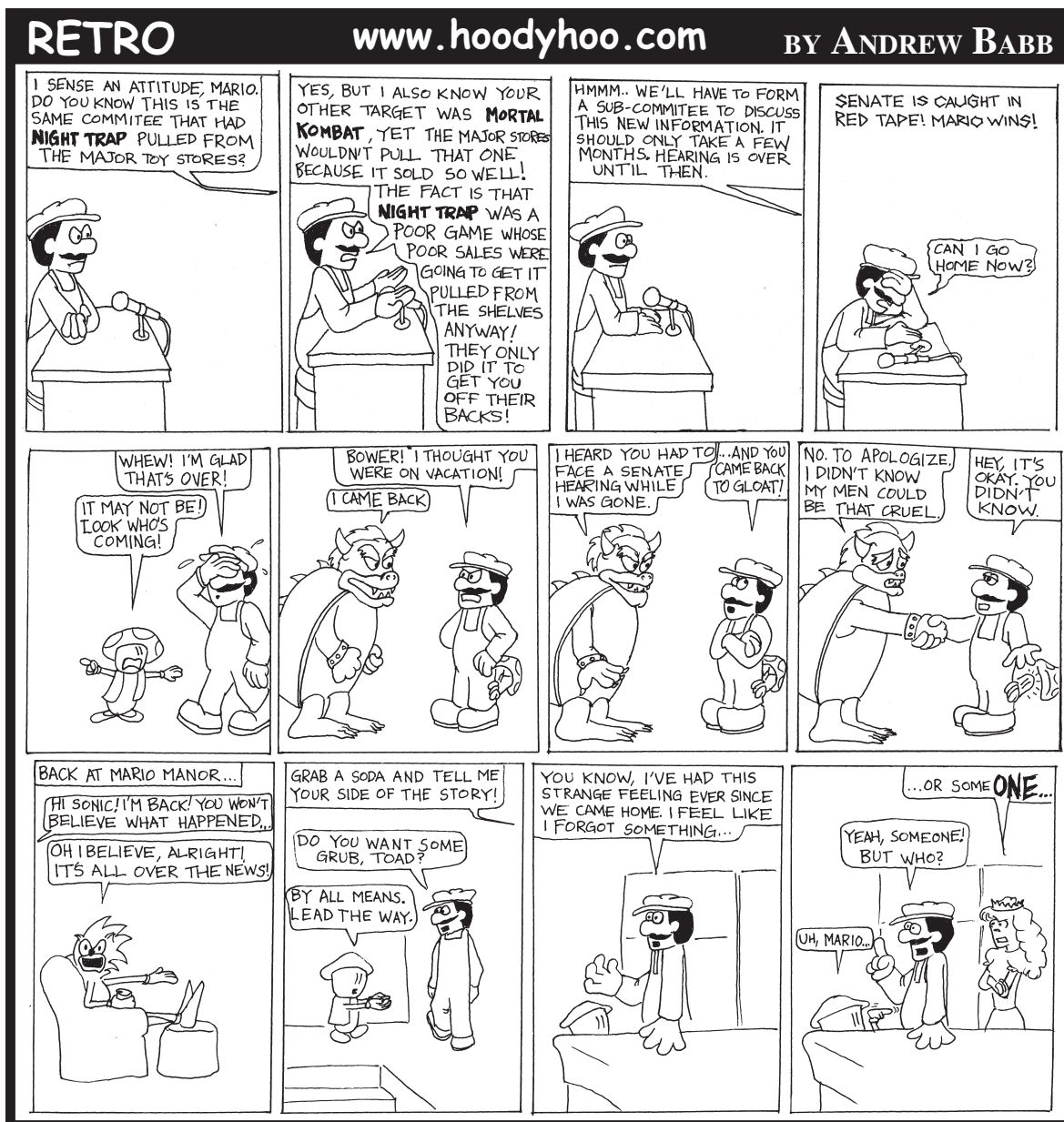
THE SAGA OF "FARSCAPE"



Next Month

By Tempest

As always we are returning next month with another packed issue. This time around we will be looking into the secrets of technomancy, and machines. Robot critters will run rampant, and androids will be hunting them. Futuristic warfare rages, and post-apocalyptic battles never end. We have another artist interview, returning articles, and more. Be sure to keep in touch, and let us know your thoughts. Every month we try introducing new aspects to the zine, and we love to hear your comments.



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