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Fey!**

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Hags!**

**AMON
LORD OF WRATH!**

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Blind Tyrant**



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For use with the 4th Edition



Requires the use of the D&D Player's Handbook, Monster Manual, and Dungeon Master's Guide core rulebooks, available from Wizards of the Coast, Inc.



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FROM THE EDITOR

I'LL ADMIT; I'M A PRETTY VISCERAL GUY.

My favorite movies are the kind with plenty of dismemberments and gallons of blood. My favorite sports involve hitting things and people with clubs, sticks, swords, and my bare fists. And my favorite role-playing game is the one where you kill lots of monsters and take their stuff...come on, you know the one.

As you might suspect, when I play D&D, my favorite characters are fighters and barbarians armed with big, heavy weapons that go crunch or splat when they hit the bad guy; and I like monsters that do truckloads of damage with each hit or inflict horrific, debilitating curses, diseases, or wounds on players.

Now, with that little bit of background, you'd probably be surprised that I'd devote an entire issue of *Level Up* to fey. But, hey, I enjoy a bit of subtlety now and then, and as it turns out, fey can be just as nasty and in-your-face as a rampaging dragon or bloodthirsty demon. The difference is that when a death hag rips your head off, she does it with a panache that few other monsters can manage. You see, with fey, it's all about style; and even gut-wrenching torture and bloody dismemberments are done with an artistic flare that makes the worst atrocities somehow more atrocious.

So in this issue of *Level Up*, you won't find any articles on fairies, garden gnomes, or expansive treatises on elven magic. What you will find, however, is the dark, ugly side of the fey; and in the case of this issue's *Blackdirge's Bestiary*, the emphasis is definitely on the ugly. You'll also find a paragon-level adventure that pits your PCs against the machination of some very naughty hags, a new race of blind, sword-wielding fey that make even the drow look commonplace in comparison, and a complete, new multiclass that allows your PC to harness a bit of fey magic to wreak some serious havoc on the battlefield.

So take a walk on the wild side – the Feywild side that is – and don't be fooled by the pleasant, tranquil cover. The fey in this issue are like the gingerbread house that so tempted Hansel and Gretel; sweet and innocent on the outside, but harboring a rotten core of cruelty, evil, and ugliness. ✕

Aeryn "Blackdirge" Rudel

Editor-in-Chief

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ROADS TO ADVENTURE:

Last Call at the Blind Tyrant

AN ADVENTURE FOR 14TH-LEVEL CHARACTERS

By Adrian Pommier

Last Call at the Blind Tyrant is designed to be a challenge for five characters of 14th to 15th level. Setting-neutral, the adventure can be easily inserted into any campaign setting, or played as a quick one-shot adventure in a single session.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

In the course of their adventures, the heroes come across a fortified roadhouse – the Blind Tyrant – that has been overrun by evil fey throwing themselves a going-away party as they leave the mortal world. Over the course of the adventure, the heroes can defeat three hag sisters and their minions, rescue several captives from a fate worse than death, and learn about “the Forgetting,” a mythical catastrophe that even the fey don’t entirely believe.

BACKGROUND STORY

The Blind Tyrant has been around for years, passing from owner to owner and enjoying only moderate prosperity. Tonight, even that small success has come to a crashing end.

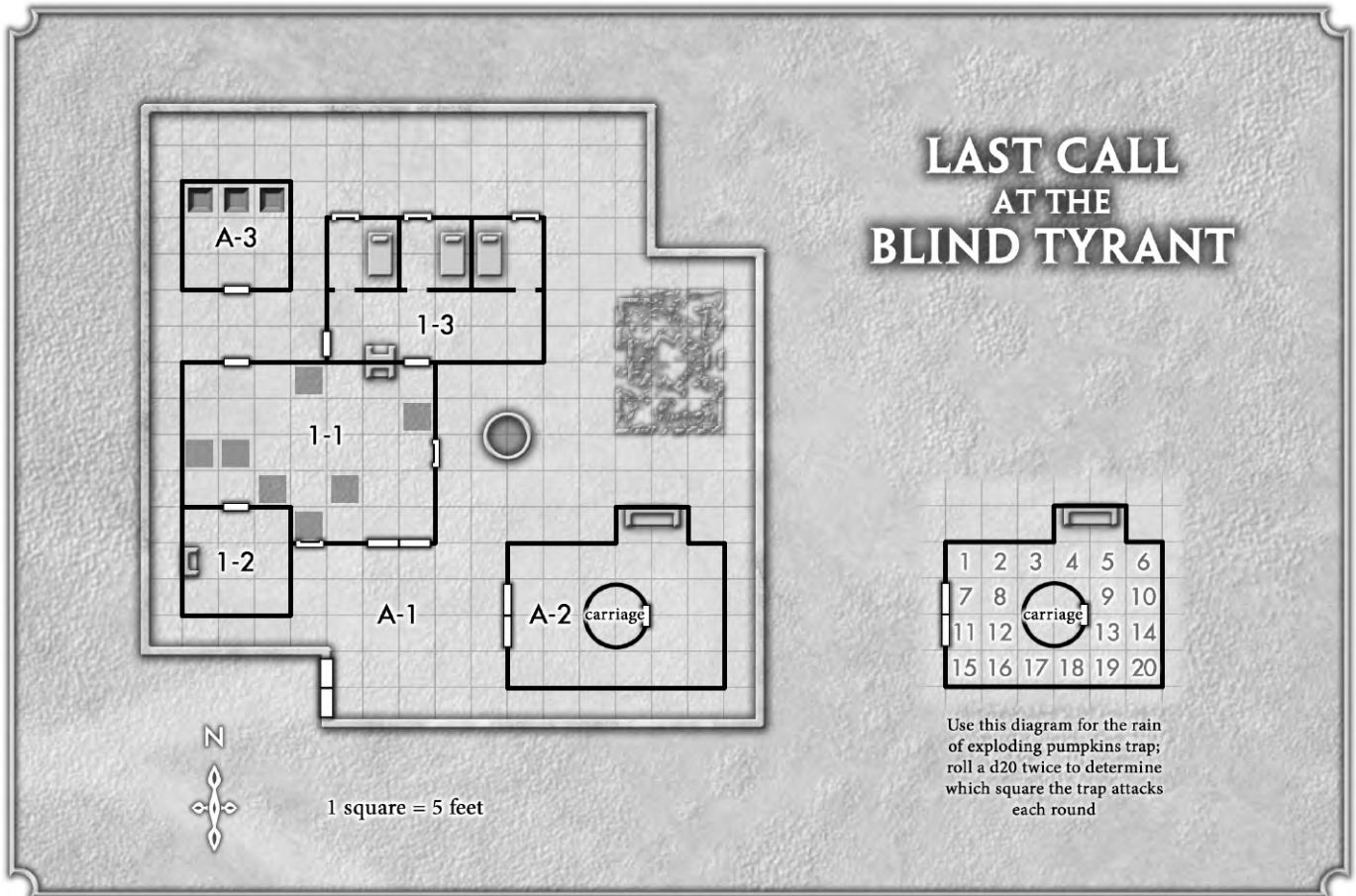
Three hags – Nakaska, Spirga, and Tooma – have come to the Blind Tyrant to throw themselves and their lackeys a farewell party. They believe that “the Forgetting” – a time when all paths to and from the Fey Realm are sealed – is upon them. The hags abducted several mortal children and handsome young men so as to “weather” the Forgetting with ample foodstuffs and breeding stock.

As the party is in full swing, the heroes arrive at the Blind Tyrant.

Playtesters: Chris Beemer, Mike Ferguson, Stephen Glicker, Seth Lipton, Bob Markee



DK809



GETTING THE PLAYERS INVOLVED

GMs can design story hooks specific to their PCs, or modify one of the story hooks listed below:

- Children and young men have been disappearing from the countryside. Divination and woodcraft leads the heroes to the roadhouse.
- The heroes are out to save a specific captive: either Prince MacGuffin or Lady D'vyss.
- The heroes are aware of “the Forgetting,” and their search for more information leads them to track down Nakaska, Spirga, and Tooma.
- The heroes are on the trail of one of the hags for crimes they’ve committed.
- The roadhouse owner’s wife escaped the slaughter, and encounters the heroes on the road, pleading with them to evict the wicked fey.

PLAYER BEGINNING

Start the adventure by reading the following:

The gates to the Blind Tyrant stand open slightly. The air is heavy with smoke and the smell of cooked meat. You’re not sure what kind of meat, and you probably don’t want to know.

The ten-foot-high palisade wall is in poor repair – it would give only the feeblest of attackers pause.

From inside, you hear muffled shouting and cheering, and then a loud crash. Closer, you hear garbled laughter. Sounds like a party.

AREA A-1: COURTYARD AND BURNED LONGHOUSE

Encounter Level 14 (XP 5,050)

SETUP

- 1 Nekraska, Frost Hag
- 3 Hagborn Guardians
- 2 Red Cap Belly Rippers
- 1 Warthorn Battlebriar

Read or paraphrase the following:

The roadhouse's courtyard is a mixture of cobblestones and hard-packed earth. The three buildings still standing – the barn and the joined taphouse and guest lodge – all show clear signs of disrepair. The buildings sag and slouch like rebuked children, and a nearby well is overgrown with ivy. Each is a single storey tall, but the taphouse has a peaked roof, maybe fifteen feet high.

Some filmy windows look out from the taphouse to the courtyard and a large well.

A mass of smoking timbers and glowing embers probably notes where the staff longhouse once stood. Next to the smoldering ruins, a trio of lumpy-bodied humanoid with pointed ears kick around a human head like it's a leather ball. A panting, haggard old she-wolf watches the three from within a small tempest of snow that surrounds only her.



3 Hagborn Guardians Level 11 Minion Soldier Medium fey humanoid XP 150

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +7; low-light vision
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 26; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 20; see also *mother's milk*

Speed 5

⚔ **Longsword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+18 vs. AC; 7 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the hagborn guardian's next turn.

🏹 **Longbow** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
Ranged 20/40; +14 vs. AC; 5 damage.

Mother's Milk

A hagborn gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and all defenses when adjacent to a hag.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Elven
Str 19 (+9) **Dex** 14 (+7) **Wis** 14 (+7)
Con 17 (+8) **Int** 11 (+5) **Cha** 8 (+4)

Equipment chainmail, heavy shield, longsword, longbow, quiver with 20 arrows

Description *This muscular humanoid looks like an ugly human with pointed ears and limp, greasy black hair. He is armed with a long, straight sword, wears steel chainmail, and carries a large round shield.*

2 Red Cap Belly Rippers Level 12 Lurker Small fey humanoid XP 700

Initiative +14 **Senses** Perception +13, low-light vision
HP 92; **Bloodied** 46

AC 26; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 22

Speed 7

⚔ **Nimble Knife** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+19 vs. AC; 1d4+10 damage, and the red cap belly ripper shifts 1 square. If, after shifting, the red cap belly ripper is flanking a target, it may make a second nimble knife attack as a free action. It does not shift after the second attack.

⚔ **Belly Ripper** (standard; recharge ☹️☹️) ♦ **Weapon**
+19 vs. AC; 3d4+10 damage, and the red cap belly ripper makes a secondary attack against the same target. **Secondary Attack:** +15 vs. Fortitude; the target takes ongoing 10 damage (save ends).

Combat Advantage

A red cap belly ripper deals an extra 3d6 damage on melee attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.

First Blood (when this creature bloodies a target with a melee attack; at-will) ♦ **Healing**

A red cap belly ripper regains hit points equal to the level of the target.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Elven
Str 16 (+9) **Dex** 20 (+11) **Wis** 14 (+8)
Con 14 (+8) **Int** 12 (+7) **Cha** 8 (+5)

Equipment leather armor, dagger

Description *These short humanoids have powerful forearms, stubby, bandy legs, and a face that is little more than a smashed, sneering lump. Each grips a long, serrated knife in one hand, and wears a crimson cap over its tangled, black hair.*

The red caps are lurking behind the corner of the tap room, using it to hide and spy on Nakaska and her sons (make their Stealth rolls). All fey are distracted by the head-ball game that's going on (-2 to Perception checks, not reflected in stats). Whenever one scores a point, it shouts (in garbled Elven), "Goooooaaaaa!"

Referring to the map, squares with an "X" are the smoldering remains of the longhouse, and are hindering terrain. Creatures that enter or begin their turn in such a square take 5 fire damage.

The windows to the taphouse (area 1-1) and guest lodge (area 1-3) are shuttered, and soot and filth foul the glass, making it impossible to see inside.

Nakaska, Frost Hag Level 14 Elite Skirmisher

Medium fey humanoid (cold) XP 2,000

Initiative +13 **Senses** Perception +16; low-light vision

Unceasing Sleet (Cold) aura 1; squares in aura are heavily obscured and creatures that enter or begin their turns in the aura take 1d6 cold damage.

HP 278; **Bloodied** 139

AC 30; **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 25

Resist lightning 10, thunder 10; **Immune** cold

Saving Throws +2

Speed 4 (ice walk), fly 10 (hover), overland flight 15

Action Points 1

⬇ **Claw** (standard; at-will)
+19 vs. AC; 2d6+7 damage.

⬇ **Fierce Gust** (standard; at-will)
+19 vs. AC; 2d6+7 damage, and Nakaska shifts 2 squares (usually up).

⬇ **Snowblind Strike** (immediate reaction, when Nakaska is hit by a melee attack; recharges when first bloodied)
+19 vs. AC; 3d8+6 damage, and the target is blinded (save ends).

⬇ **Reaving Wind** (standard; recharges ☼☼☼)
Nakaska flies up to 10 squares and makes two claw attacks at any point during that movement. It can combine the attacks on one target or attack multiple targets, and does not provoke opportunity attacks when moving away from the first target.

Change Shape (minor; at-will) ⬇ **Polymorph**
Nakaska can alter its physical form to appear as a haggard old she-wolf or a crone of any Medium humanoid race.

Stormwalker Cloak (minor; daily) ⬇ **Lightning**
Until the end of Nakaska's next turn, each time it is hit by a melee attack, the attacker takes 3d6 lightning damage.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Giant

Skills Intimidate +14, Nature +12, Stealth +16

Str 23 (+13) **Dex** 18 (+11) **Wis** 18 (+11)

Con 19 (+11) **Int** 11 (+7) **Cha** 14 (+9)

Equipment stormwalker's cloak +3

Description *This pale-skinned creature resembles an old, malnourished woman. She has black teeth beneath an oversized, pointy nose, and black talon-like nails at the end of her lean, long arms. She wears an ornate cloak with thunderbolt patterns, but little else.*

TACTICS

The hagborn guardians stay adjacent to each other and concentrate on one hero at a time. The red caps prefer to attack heroes in light or no armor and flank with each other.

Nakaska assumes her normal form as the battle begins. She flies, almost never touching the ground, and supports her hagborn children with fierce gust and reaving wind attacks against the same heroes they engage. The first round after she's bloodied she activates her *stormwalker cloak*.

Nakaska is unaffected by (can see normally through) concealment granted by rainfall, snowfall, sleet, or her own unceasing sleet aura.

All fey try to shatter the well cover if a hero ends his or her movement in a well square.

At the start of the second round of combat, roll initiative for the warthorn battlebriar. It bursts out of the barn on its turn. Although the giant plant is actually located in area A-2, it likely gets drawn into a fight in this area.

In combat it concentrates on whichever hero is closest, and considers evil fey its allies.

Treasure: Nakaska wears a *stormwalker cloak* +3.

Warthorn Battlebriar Level 15 Controller

Large natural animate (plant) XP 1,200

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +9

Grasping Thorns aura 2; enemies treat the area within the aura as difficult terrain; at the start of this creature's turn, enemies in the aura take 5 damage.

HP 149; **Bloodied** 74

AC 29; **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 25

Speed 6

⬇ **Claw** (standard; at-will)
Reach 2; +20 vs. AC; 1d8+6 damage, and the target is pulled 1 square.

⚡ **Thorn Burst** (standard; at-will)
Close burst 2; +18 vs. Reflex; 2d8+1 damage, plus the target is slowed until the end of this creature's next turn.

Threatening Reach

This creature can make opportunity attacks against all enemies within its reach (2 squares).

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** —

Str 23 (+13) **Dex** 13 (+8) **Wis** 15 (+9)

Con 21 (+12) **Int** 3 (+3) **Cha** 12 (+8)

Description *If lettuce had three-foot talons and then sired a child with an angry frog, that offspring would be this creature. You're pretty sure you don't want to eat any part of this plant-beast, even with a nice vinaigrette. Strangely, the creature wears an elaborate bit and harness, like a carriage horse.*

AREA A-2: BARN

Encounter Level 9 (XP 2,000)

Read or paraphrase the following:

The spacious barn has suffered little damage. It has stalls for beasts, a small forge, and several stacked sacks of grain.

An unusual carriage occupies the center of the barn. It looks like some madman sculpted a giant pumpkin to resemble a skull, then slapped on wheels and a carriage hitch. Through the “skull’s” teeth and eye sockets you spy several children and a few adults, all male, and all bound and gagged.

If the heroes avoided a fight in area A-1, the warthorn battlebriar is still in here.

There is a trapped door in the rear of the carriage (locked; DC 35 Thievery (open lock); Tooma has the key).

If the trap is triggered, the GM can use the graphic provided and roll 2d20 to randomly determine which two squares it attacks each round. The carriage is immune to the trap. Also note that the trap triggers wherever the carriage is, not just in the barn.

Triggering the trap or combat gets the attention of the fey in area A-1.

There are six adult men and eighteen children crammed in the pumpkin carriage. They were all kidnapped by one of the three hags that attacked the roadhouse. They know that Nakaska is in the courtyard, that Tooma is carousing in the taphouse, and that Spirga took three men off somewhere. They add that Tooma took an eladrin woman and two boys with her.

If the plot hook has the party looking for Prince MacGuffin, he’s with Spirga. If they’re looking for Lady D’vyss, she’s with Tooma.

AREA A-3: PRIVY

Encounter Level 15 (XP 6,000)

SETUP

1 Spirga, Green Hag 3 Human Captives

Read or paraphrase the following:

This structure, separate from the main building but close by, is probably a privy or outhouse. So wretched does it look, so crumbling and filthy, you have no doubt that – if it could talk – the tales it would tell would turn your hair white.

When the party can see inside, read or paraphrase the following:

This privy is built so that several people could use it at once if need be – probably a commentary on the food this roadhouse served.

Three gagged human men hang by their wrists along the north wall, each dangling over a reeking privy pit. A strange creature leers over and caresses one of them. It looks like a beautiful eladrin maid with golden hair tied back in intricate braids, but the fingernails at the throat of the man are talons, and her fang-filled mouth is splattered with dark bile.

At your entrance, she calls out in a gurgling voice, “Hold! Strike at me, and these strapping men die. None of us want that – yet. Why not instead a simple game for their lives? I ask three riddles, and for each you get right, you save one. For each you get wrong, one dies. Not the diversion I had in mind,” and here she licks her lips, “but sporting all the same.”

The privy pits on the map are only 10 feet deep. Note that any area or close attacks in here that target “creatures” also target the captives.

3 Human Captives: Level 1 Minion, helpless

Three Riddles: Spirga asks three riddles of the heroes. She doesn’t repeat a riddle back to the heroes unless they ask “pretty please.”

The party has one chance (not one chance per hero) to answer each riddle. If they answer correctly, Spirga cuts a captive down. If they are wrong, she slaughters the captive. When all three riddles have been answered (right or wrong), she attacks the heroes.

The riddles (and answers) are:

- Feed me and I grow, water me and I die. What am I?
Answer: Fire.
- I have seven children. Half of them are male. How is this possible?
Answer: They are all male, so half of them are, and so is the other half.
- What is so delicate that when you say its name it’s broken?
Answer: Silence.

TACTICS

As soon as combat begins, Spirga drops her change shape, returning to her normal form.

If combat breaks out before all peasants are freed, Spirga tries to kill any remaining men before turning on the party, using an action point to do so in the first round if necessary. She spends any other action points early in the fight to make two draining flurry attacks.

Spirga saves her ring of protection for the first hit she takes after she's bloodied where its bonus keeps her from getting hit.

If possible, she prefers to use draining flurry against female heroes and glamouring gaze against male heroes, dominating them to attack their companions. She saves deadly mire for any heroes who appear to be melee strikers, or any hero who attempts to flee her.

Treasure: Spirga wears a *ring of protection*. Each peasant saved is worth 250 bonus XP. If the adventure hook included Prince MacGuffin, he is the captive threatened by Spirga.

Spirga, Green Hag Level 15 Solo Controller Medium fey humanoid XP 6,000

Initiative +11 **Senses** Perception +16; darkvision

HP 735; **Bloodied** 367

AC 31; **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 30

Saving Throws +6

Speed 6 (swamp walk), swim 6

Action Points 2

⬇ **Claw** (standard; at-will)
+20 vs. AC; 1d10+6 damage, and the target is weakened until the end of Spirga's next turn.

⬇ **Draining Flurry** (standard; at-will)
Spirga makes two claw attacks against the same target. If both attacks hit, the target is slowed and weakened (save ends both).

✈ **Glamouring Gaze** (minor; at-will) ⬆ **Charm, Gaze, Psychic**
Ranged 10; +19 vs. Will; 2d6+7 psychic damage, and the target is dominated until the end of Spirga's next turn.

✱ **Deadly Mire** (standard; encounter)
Area burst 3 within 10; +19 vs. Fortitude; the target is immobilized (save ends). *First Failed Save:* the target is restrained (save ends, but with a -1 penalty). *Second Failed Save:* The target is restrained and takes ongoing 10 damage (save ends both, but with a -2 penalty)

Change Shape (minor; at-will) ⬆ **Polymorph**
Spirga can alter her physical form to appear as a beautiful young elf, half-elf, eladrin, or human.

Ring of Protection (immediate interrupt, when Spirga is hit by an attack; daily)
Spirga gains a +2 power bonus to a single defense score against the attack.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Elven

Skills Arcana +15, Bluff +18, Nature +16, Stealth +16

Str 21 (+12) **Dex** 18 (+11) **Wis** 19 (+11)

Con 19 (+11) **Int** 16 (+10) **Cha** 22 (+13)

Equipment *ring of protection*

Description *This ugly crone is tall and rail thin. Her skin is a sickly green, and each of her bony hands is tipped with long, ragged talons. She wears a linen shift soaked with swampy mud and what looks like old, dried blood.*

AREA 1-1: TAPHOUSE

Encounter Level 16 (XP 6,900)

SETUP

1 **Tooma, Annis**
2 **Banshrae Dartswarmer**
4 **Hagborn reavers**
1 **Satyr Rake**
2 **Human Boys**

Read or paraphrase the following:

A wild party has raged in the high-ceilinged taphouse of the Blind Tyrant. Broken tables and chairs are scattered about, one of the wooden wheel chandeliers has been torn down, and the bar has been split in half as if by a mighty axe-blow.



Two human boys are bound and gagged in the middle of the room.

If Tooma and her lackeys are still here, add the following:

Several wicked fey cavort among the ruins. A banshrae dances on the intact chandelier, while another scampers about holding a stuffed boar's head, making grunting noises. A satyr leaning on the ruined bar blearily lifts a mug to his mouth, unaware that its wine has already spilled down his front through a large crack in the mug's base. Finally, a pair of misshapen, manlike figures feed roasted chicken – feathers, beak, feet, and all – to a bloated monument of hideousness, an annis hag.

Referring to the map, shaded squares are difficult terrain due to debris. The banshrae on the chandelier is suspended 15 feet above the floor.

Note that any area or close attacks in here that target “creatures” also target the boys, who are likely at the feet of Tooma.

2 Human Boys: Level 1 Minion, helpless

Unless alerted to trouble, the fey in areas 1-1 through 1-3 all suffer a -5 inebriation penalty to Perception checks (not reflected in their stats). Also, during the first round of combat (only), each is slowed.

Satyr Rake Level 12 Skirmisher Medium fey humanoid XP 700

Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +12; low-light vision

HP 80; **Bloodied** 40

AC 26; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 24

Speed 6

⬇ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+17 vs. AC; 1d6+7 damage.

⚔ **Shortbow** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
Ranged 15/30; +17 vs. AC; 1d8+7 damage.

† **Feint** (move; at-will)
+15 vs. Reflex; the satyr rake gains combat advantage against the target (see below).

† **Harrying Attack** (standard; recharge ☉☉☉) ♦ **Weapon**
The satyr rake makes a basic attack, shifts 3 squares, and makes another basic attack.

Combat Advantage

The satyr rake deals an extra 3d6 damage against any target it has combat advantage against.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Elven

Str 12 (+7) **Dex** 18 (+10) **Wis** 12 (+7)

Con 16 (+9) **Int** 10 (+6) **Cha** 18 (+10)

Equipment leather armor, short sword, shortbow, quiver of 30 arrows

Description *A moment ago, you would have sworn that this goat-legged, horned man was blind drunk, but your intrusion seems to have – temporarily – cured him of this state. In gratitude, he tries to gut you with a short sword.*

2 Banshrae Dartswarmers Level 14 Artillery Medium fey humanoid XP 800

Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +9; low-light vision

HP 107; **Bloodied** 53

AC 26; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 25

Speed 8

⬇ **Slam** (standard; at-will)
+16 vs. AC; 1d8+5 damage.

⚔ **Blowgun Dart** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
Ranged 5/10; +19 vs. AC; 1d10+8 damage, and the target is dazed and takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends both).

⚔ **Dart Flurry** (standard; recharge ☉☉☉☉) ♦ **Weapon**
Close blast 5; +19 vs. AC; 1d10+8 damage, plus the target is dazed and takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends both)

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Telepathy 20

Str 16 (+10) **Dex** 22 (+13) **Wis** 15 (+9)

Con 17 (+10) **Int** 14 (+9) **Cha** 20 (+12)

Equipment blowgun, darts

Description *These insect-like, delicate fey look happy. Happily they dance, happily they prance, happily they try to blow darts into your face.*

4 Hagborn Reavers Level 16 Minion Soldier Medium natural humanoid XP 350

Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +10; low-light vision

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 31; **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 22; see also *mother's milk*

Speed 5

⬇ **Greatsword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+23 vs. AC; 10 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the hagborn reaver's next turn.

⚔ **Longbow** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
Ranged 20/40; +19 vs. AC; 8 damage.

Mother's Milk

A hagborn gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and all defenses when adjacent to a hag.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Elven

Str 20 (+13) **Dex** 15 (+10) **Wis** 15 (+10)

Con 18 (+12) **Int** 11 (+8) **Cha** 8 (+9)

Equipment chainmail, greatsword, longbow, quiver with 20 bolts

Description *These brutish humanoids share a familial resemblance to the annis hag they attend. In addition to poorly-roasted chicken, each carries a huge, battle-scarred greatsword.*

TACTICS

The satyr attacks heroes at the rear of the party, and the banshrae concentrate on heroes who skirt the edges of combat. Hagborn reavers try to remain adjacent to or flanking with Tooma, who engages the hero with the most Strength. She uses her action point to make a ripping claws attack the first time she uses ripping claws and one or both attacks miss.

Tooma, Annis
Large fey humanoidLevel 17 Elite Brute
XP 3,200

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +12; darkvision
Terrible Presence (Fear) aura 3; enemies within the aura suffer a -2 penalty to attack rolls against Tooma.
HP 406; **Bloodied** 203
AC 29; **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 26
Resist 5 against attacks that target AC
Saving Throws +2
Speed 8 (earth walk), burrow 6
Action Points 1

⊕ **Iron Claws** (standard; at-will)
 Reach 2; +20 vs. AC; 2d8+8 damage, and the target suffers a -2 penalty to AC until the end of Tooma's next turn.

† **Ripping Claws** (standard; at-will)
 Tooma makes two claw attacks. If both attacks hit the same target, the target is grabbed (until escape) and takes ongoing 10 damage (save ends).

† **Bite** (standard; at-will)
 Grabbed target only; +18 vs. AC; 4d8+8 damage, and the target is weakened until the end of Tooma's next turn.

† **Swat** (immediate reaction, when an enemy moves or shifts into a square adjacent to Tooma while she has a target grabbed; at-will)
 +20 vs. AC; 1d8+8 damage, and a Medium or smaller target is pushed 1 square.

Change Shape (minor; at-will) † **Polymorph**
 Tooma can alter her physical form to appear as a tall human, a comely giant, or an ogre.

Gauntlets of Destruction
 When rolling damage on melee attacks, Tooma rerolls 1s until they come up as another numeral.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Elven
Skills Athletics +21, Intimidate +13, Nature +17, Stealth +14
Str 26 (+16) **Dex** 12 (+9) **Wis** 18 (+12)
Con 23 (+14) **Int** 13 (+9) **Cha** 10 (+8)
Equipment gauntlets of destruction, key to the carriage

Description *This swollen, towering humanoid resembles an old woman – if old women typically had iron gray skin and metallic claws and teeth. She is dressed in a filthy, shredded orange dress that makes her look like a grotesque pumpkin.*

Starting on the second round of combat, the hagborn from area 1-2 and from area 1-3 start moving toward the fight. The one coming from area 1-2 wears a kitchen apron in addition to its normal equipment.

Treasure: Tooma wears *gauntlets of destruction* and carries the key to the carriage.

AREA 1-2: KITCHEN AND PANTRY

Read or paraphrase the following:

This kitchen and pantry has been overturned, all shelves emptied and their contents scattered everywhere.

A large cookfire blazes in the southwest corner. Next to it is a stewpot large enough for a human to crawl inside. Or, as it turns out, for an eladrin woman in a tasteful lavender dress to be bound, gagged, and stuffed inside. She indignantly glares at you from a soup made from wilted root vegetables, an unopened sack of flour, and soggy oatmeal cookies. Clearly she was on the menu tonight, but you've saved her.

Although one of the hagborn reavers starts in this area, his stats are included in area 1-1.

Treasure: If the adventure hook mentioned Lady D'vyss, she is the eladrin female. If it mentioned "the Forgetting," this eladrin woman knows information about it.

In a sack of flour on the floor near the door is hidden 4,000 gp – the nest egg of the Blind Tyrant's owners. Finding it requires a DC 23 Perception (search) check.

AREA 1-3: GUEST LODGE

Read or paraphrase the following:

It could not be said that this roadhouse had the finest of accommodations even before the fey showed up. The common room hasn't been scrubbed since the sun was young, and the curtains are so thoroughly stained by filth you're not sure there's actually fabric under there.

The guest rooms aren't much better. Through the ripped-off doors you see that each bed sags as though a very large, upstart child sat in them all, perhaps on her way to steal some porridge.

Although one of the hagborn reavers starts in this area, his stats are included in area 1-1.

If the heroes start fighting here first, the creatures in area 1-1 and area 1-2 move in this direction right away. In particular, Tooma tries to batter down the wall to get here faster (making a Break check).

A Large section of the dilapidated, wooden wall has the following stats: AC/Reflex 4; Fortitude 12; 35 hp; Break DC 24.

WRAPPING UP

With Nakaska, Spirga, and Tooma defeated and the captives saved, the heroes have put right this small corner of the world, if only for a while.

The Forgetting is intentionally left vague for the GM to fill in – or not – as he or she sees fit. Perhaps it's real, or perhaps the hags were mad; either is possible.

What matters is that they thought the Fey Realm would soon be isolated from the mortal world, and this drove them to commit the acts described here.

If the GM would like to pursue this event, the eladrin female in area 1-2 is a great plot device (or D'vyss) to deliver future story hooks. Perhaps the onset of the Forgetting is tied to the cutting down of an ancient tree, the stirring of a terrible dragon, or the death of a particular infant (possibly yet unborn) – or all three!

Finally, the Blind Tyrant's owner's wife could approach the heroes with an exciting opportunity to become part-owners of a half-destroyed roadhouse!

MONSTER GUEST STARS

The frost hag appears courtesy of *DCC #61: Citadel of the Corruptor*, page 34.

The red cap belly rippers appear courtesy of *Critter Cache: Fey Folk*, page 13. ✕

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PC pearls

The Knave Multiclass

By Lee Hammock

KNAVE

The courts of the Fey Realm seldom readily welcome mortals into their ranks. To most fey, mortals grow old and die just when they are getting interesting. While the fey sometimes take special notice of mortals who live their lives with great passion or ferocity, burning all the brighter for their short life, such individuals are usually seen as pets or, at best, amusements. A rare few such individuals actually manage to earn both the respect and interest of the fey, proving themselves passionate, forceful, wise, and skilled beyond what most accomplish in a mortal life time. These rare few are sometimes granted titles within one of the fey courts, becoming knaves of the court they are sworn to. Knaves are similar to squires in the mortal world, due some respect, but still near the bottom of the noble hierarchy. Becoming a knave grants the mortal access to certain powers of the Fey Realm and allows advancement to other ranks within the fey hierarchy, such as becoming a Jack or Lord of the Fey.



CREATING A KNAVE

Any mortal can become a knave if he or she can earn the respect of one of the fey courts. Doing so can involve anything from defending a fey settlement from formorian attacks, recovering a lost fey artifact in the mortal world, delivering a scathing public rebuke to a member of the rival court, or penning a play or song of such emotion that it moves a fey to tears. Technically any fey noble can name a knave, and those known for mischief and trouble making often do so just to cause waves. Once a knave has been named, the title cannot be revoked. Knaves who do turn on those who have honored them gain an enemy for their entire life and beyond.

Becoming a knave can be a reward for any service to the Fey Realm or the fey courts the DM feels is appropriate. Any titled fey can grant the title of knave. There is no specific ceremony involved in becoming a knave; however, more militant fey bestow the title in similar fashion to battlefield knighthoods with a quick oath, while more political fey prefer to bring the full weight of pomp and circumstance to bear on the occasion. Once the ceremony is complete the newly entitled knave can select the knave of the Fey Courts feat with their next available feat.

Characters of a race with an existing tie to the Fey Realm, such as eladrin, elves, and gnomes, can begin as a knave through familial connections. Also characters of other races could have performed a service for the fey courts before the beginning of the campaign, or been a changeling child raised by the fey. With a little creative effort, becoming a knave can be worked into most any situation.

Knaves look much the same as they did before taking on the title, only more exotic. Their eyes become paler or darker versions of their original color, their hair grows more extreme in its appearance, and their skin often takes on a different hue. These changes are exaggerations of existing traits, changing the knave's appearance to become something of a caricature of his true nature. Handsome rogues grow more attractive, while fearsome warriors become more wild and feral looking.

KNAVE OF THE FEY COURTS [MULTICLASS KNAVE]

Prerequisite: Cha 13

Benefit: You gain the ability to focus your link to the fey and use it to your advantage, allowing you to mislead, deceive, and disappear with ease. You qualify for the Novice Power, Acolyte Power, and Adept Power feats, treating knave as the class into which you have multiclassed. You gain a +2 feat bonus to all Bluff, Diplomacy, Insight, Intimidation, and Knowledge checks involving creatures with the fey origin.

KNAVE POWERS

Knave powers focus on moving the knave quickly around a battlefield and removing him from dangerous situations through the use of fey magic. Knave powers complement fighters, rangers, rogues, bards, and barbarians particularly well.

LEVEL 1 ENCOUNTER POWERS

Disengage

Knave Attack 1

Loosing a parting shot at your enemy, you float away to a better position.

Encounter ♦ **Arcane, Weapon**

Standard Action **Melee** or **Ranged** Weapon

Special: You may shift a number of squares equal to 1 + your Charisma modifier, ignoring difficult terrain, after the attack.

Attack: Strength or Dexterity vs. AC (melee) or Dexterity vs. AC (ranged)

Hit: 1[W] + Strength or Dexterity modifier damage and the target is slowed.

Beguiling Strike

Knave Attack 1

Weaving your weapon in a hypnotic pattern of steel, you distract your opponent as he concentrates more on your movements than the battle around him.

Encounter ♦ **Arcane, Weapon**

Standard Action **Close** burst 1

Target: Each enemy in burst

Attack: Charisma vs. Will

Hit: 1d6 + Charisma modifier psychic damage, and the target grants combat advantage to your allies until the start of your next turn.

LEVEL 1 DAILY POWERS

Threading the Needle

Knave Attack 1

By goading your enemies into reckless attacks, you cause them to lash out at each other instead of at you.

Daily ♦ **Arcane, Psychic**

Standard Action **Close** burst 1

Target: Each enemy in burst

Attack: Charisma +2 vs. Will

Hit: 2d6 + Charisma modifier psychic damage, and the target makes a melee basic attack against another target of your choice. This attack has a modifier to the attack roll and damage roll equal to your Charisma modifier.

Effect: After the attack you may shift 1 square.

Riposte

Knave Attack 1

Deflecting your enemy's attack, you wrench their weapon out of position, opening them up to further attacks by your allies.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Weapon

Immediate Interrupt **Melee** weapon

Trigger: An enemy hits you with a melee attack.

Attack: Dexterity or Strength vs. Reflex

Hit: 2[W] + Dexterity or Strength modifier damage, and the target suffers a -2 penalty to melee attacks, and the target grants combat advantage to you and your allies (save ends both).

Miss: Half damage and the target grants combat advantage until the end of its next turn.

LEVEL 2 UTILITY POWERS

Silver Tongue

Knave Utility 2

Gifted with the charisma and charm of the fey, your honeyed words find easy targets in the hearts and minds of others.

Daily ♦ Arcane

Minor Action **Personal**

Effect: You gain a +4 bonus to Bluff checks until the end of the encounter.

Faerie Fog

Knave Utility 2

You summon up a thick fog, like those that cling to the forests of the fey wild. It stays with you, hiding you from your enemies.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Zone

Minor Action **Close** burst 1

Effect: You create a zone of fog that grants concealment to everyone inside it, but you can see through this concealment normally. The zone lasts until the end of your next turn and moves with you.

LEVEL 3 ENCOUNTER POWERS

Boxing Strike

Knave Attack 3

You unleash a series of attacks against your opponents' weapons and limbs, striking with the intent to limit movement rather than injure. Your target's ability to control the terrain around it is greatly weakened by your effort.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Weapon

Standard Action **Melee** or **Ranged** weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Dexterity or Strength (melee) vs. Reflex or Dexterity vs. Reflex (ranged)

Hit: 2[W] + Dexterity or Strength modifier damage, and the target cannot make opportunity attacks until the end of your next turn.

Assault of the Obscured

Knave Attack 3

Striking from mist and shadow, you use concealment to catch your foe unawares.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Weapon

Standard Action **Melee** or **Ranged** weapon

Target: One creature which you have concealment against

Attack: Dexterity or Strength +2 vs. AC (melee) or Dexterity +2 vs. Reflex (ranged)

Hit: 2[W] + Dexterity or Strength modifier damage, and the target is stunned until the end of your next turn.

LEVEL 5 DAILY POWERS

Sliding Charge

Knave Attack 5

Leaping through the ranks of your enemies, you pass over shoulders and between legs, getting in what nicks you can as you move.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Weapon

Standard Action **Melee** weapon

Special: You may shift a number of squares equal to 1 + your Charisma modifier, and you may shift through squares occupied by enemies. You may make an attack against each enemy whose square you move through, but no more than one attack per enemy. You must end your movement in an unoccupied square.

Target: Each enemy who's square you shift through

Attack: Dexterity or Strength vs. AC

Hit: 1[W] + Dexterity or Strength modifier damage.

One Thousand Ruby Thrust

Knave Attack 5

Ignoring deceit, piercing armor, and slashing through acrobatic defenses, your attack will not be denied. This attack was developed by a fey lord centuries ago and remains a secret of the fey courts.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Weapon

Standard Action **Melee** or **Ranged** weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Dexterity or Strength vs. Reflex

Hit: 3[W] + Dexterity or Strength modifier damage.

Effect: The target may not use any immediate interrupts or immediate reactions against this power.

Miss: Half damage.

LEVEL 6 UTILITY POWERS

Glamour of Deceit

Knave Utility 6

Having created an illusory double of yourself while no one is looking, it saves you from harm when your illusion is targeted instead of you.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Illusion, Teleportation

Immediate Interrupt **Personal**

Trigger: A creature hits you with a melee attack

Effect: You teleport 2 square and leave behind an illusory duplicate of yourself. If there are no unoccupied squares in range, this ability does not activate. Make a Charisma vs. Will attack on the triggering creature. On a hit, the creature attacks your duplicate with its next attack. Your duplicate disappears at the end of your next turn, or when an enemy attacks it.

LEVEL 7 ENCOUNTER POWERS

Cloud of Blades

Knave Attack 7

Sliding quickly back and forth between the mortal world and the Fey Realm, it seems to others you are everywhere at once.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Teleportation, Weapon

Standard Action **Melee** weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Dexterity vs. Strength vs. AC

Hit: 2[W] + Dexterity or Strength modifier damage.

Effect: You gain threatening reach 2 until the end of your next turn, and you are considered to occupy all squares you threaten for determining flanking.



Otherworldly Visage Knave Attack 7

Your appearance is normally just striking, but by calling upon the power of the fey, you can become terrifying.

Encounter * Arcane, Implement, Psychic

Standard Action Close blast 3

Target: Each enemy in blast

Attack: Charisma vs. Will

Hit: 2d6 + Charisma modifier psychic damage, and the target is dazed until the end of your next turn.

LEVEL 9 DAILY POWERS

Knave's Curse Knave Attack 9

While you do not have the power to wreak vengeance as the mighty lords of the fey do, you still can cause great agony for those who would do you harm.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Psychic

Immediate Reaction Close burst 20

Trigger: You are bloodied by an enemy

Target: The triggering creature

Attack: Charisma +2 vs. Will

Hit: 3d8 + Charisma modifier psychic damage, and the target loses all its resistances and cannot spend healing surges (save ends both).

Miss: Half damage, and the target loses its resistances until the end of its next turn.

Dance of Blood Knave Attack 9

Said to be based on the intricate ceremonial dances of the Winter Court, you move through your opponents, tripping and shoving them about as you dance through untouched.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Weapon

Standard Action Melee weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Dexterity or Strength vs. AC

Hit: 1[W] + Dexterity or Strength modifier damage, and you shift into the target's square while it shifts into the square you just occupied. Make a secondary attack.

Secondary Target: One enemy you have not targeted with this power

Secondary Attack: Dexterity or Strength vs. AC

Secondary Hit: 1[W] + Dexterity or Strength modifier and you shift into the target's square while it shifts into the square you just occupied. Continue making secondary attacks against targets not affected by this power until you run out of targets or miss.

LEVEL 10 UTILITY POWERS

Beyond Mortal Reach Knave Utility 10

Your movements are full of deceit, making you appear where you are not. Your enemies think they have caught you unawares when you are merely goading them into striking at air.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Stance

Minor Action Personal

Effect: Until the stance ends, you gain a +4 bonus to all defenses against opportunity attacks, immediate reactions, and immediate interrupts.

Fey Stride Knave Utility 10

The barrier between this world and the Fey Realm parts, allowing you to step across the battlefield with a single stride.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Teleportation

Move Action Personal

Effect: You can teleport up to a number of squares equal to 6 + your Charisma modifier.

LEVEL 13 ENCOUNTER POWERS

Lure of Deceit Knave Attack 13

Feigning weakness, you suppress your fey nature and do your best to look vulnerable to lure your enemies closer. Unfortunately for them, you are merely setting them up for your escape.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Psychic, Teleportation

Standard Action Close blast 5

Attack: Charisma vs. Will

Hit: 2d8 + Charisma modifier psychic damage, and the target is pulled a number of squares equal to your Charisma modifier.

Effect: After the attack, you may teleport a number of squares equal to 3 + your Charisma modifier.

Piercing the Veil Knave Attack 13

Your weapon is shunted into the Fey Realm, bypassing everything between you and your target until it reappears just before striking.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Teleportation, Weapon

Standard Action Close burst 20

Target: One creature you can see in the burst

Effect: Your weapon teleports adjacent to the target, ignoring all concealment and cover, and makes an attack. Your weapon returns to your hand after the attack.

Attack: Dexterity or Strength vs. AC

Hit: 2[W] + Dexterity or Strength modifier damage.

LEVEL 15 DAILY POWERS

Whirlwind of Steel Knaave Attack 15

Stepping in and out of the Fey Realm, you strike your enemies and disappear before they can respond.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Teleportation, Weapon

Standard Action **Close** burst 3

Target: Each enemy in burst

Attack: Strength or Dexterity vs. AC

Hit: 3[W] + Dexterity or Strength modifier damage.

Effect: After all your attacks, you may teleport to any unoccupied square in the burst or remain in your current square.

Curse of First Blood Knaave Attack 15

When struck by an enemy you have not attacked, you invoke the ancient laws of fey hospitality to curse them and force them to obey these olden strictures.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Psychic

Immediate reaction **Close** burst 20

Trigger: You are struck by an enemy you have not yet attacked

Target: The triggering enemy

Attack: Charisma +2 vs. Will

Hit: 3d8 + Charisma psychic damage. For the rest of the encounter, when the target attacks a creature that has not yet attacked it, it suffers a -4 penalty to its attack roll and suffers 1d8 + Charisma modifier psychic damage.

Miss: Half damage.

LEVEL 16 UTILITY POWERS

Sense of All Knaave Utility 16

Pushing your senses through both the mortal world and the Fey Realm, you can sense reality around you as if it were a palpable force. Because of this, you become impossible to catch unaware.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Stance

Minor Action **Personal**

Effect: Until the stance ends, you do not grant combat advantage.

Vigor of the Fey Knaave Utility 16

When you travel back to the Fey Realm for even the merest second, you gain back some of your vitality and bring the mists of the Fey Realm back with you, wrapping yourself in its concealing wisps.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Teleportation

Minor Action **Personal**

Effect: For the rest of the encounter, when you use a power with the teleportation keyword, you gain concealment until the end of your next turn and can spend a healing surge.

Glamour of Redirection Knaave Utility 16

As your enemy unleashes an attack, you cloak the surrounding area in illusions, throwing off his aim.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Illusion

Immediate Interrupt **Personal**

Trigger: You are targeted by a power with a range of area or close

Effect: Move the area or close blast power that triggered this power a number of squares equal to your Charisma modifier.

The new position of the area or close blast must follow the limitations of the power, such as range or a close blast power having at least one square adjacent to the attacker.

LEVEL 17 ENCOUNTER POWERS

Dance of Shadows Knaave Attack 17

With a cunning strike you slip around your opponent's defenses and stand as if you were his shadow, redirecting attacks aimed at you to strike him.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Weapon

Standard Action **Melee** weapon

Target: One creature

Attack: Dexterity or Strength vs. Reflex

Hit: 2[W] + Dexterity or Strength modifier damage, and you enter the target's square. Until the end of your next turn, you remain in the target's square and move with the target unless you are moved you from the target's square. If you are targeted by an attack you may make the following immediate interrupt action.

Trigger: You are targeted by an attack while in an enemy's square due to using dance of shadows.

Target: The target of dance of shadows

Attack: Dexterity vs. Reflex

Hit: The target of dance of shadows is hit by the attack that triggered this immediate interrupt instead of you.

Mesmerism of Steel Knaave Attack 17

By weaving a hypnotic series of cuts and thrusts into your attacks, you confuse and distract your enemies, causing them to pause momentarily in confusion.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Weapon

Standard Action **Close** burst 1

Target: Each enemy in burst you can see

Attack: Dexterity or Strength vs. AC

Hit: 2[W] + Dexterity or Strength damage, and the target is dazed until the end of your next turn.

LEVEL 19 DAILY POWERS

Curse of the Unmasked Guest Knave Attack 19

An unwelcome guest never finds solace in the houses of the fey, and so those who would trespass in your territory suffer your wrath.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Psychic, Zone

Standard Action Close burst 1

Target: Each creature in burst

Attack: Charisma vs. Will

Hit: 2d8 + Charisma modifier psychic damage.

Effect: The burst creates a zone that punishes enemies who move into it that lasts until the end of your next turn. An enemy that enters the zone or starts its turn there takes 2d6 + Charisma modifier psychic damage. The zone moves with you.

Sustain Minor: The zone persists.

Miss: Half damage.

Glamour of the Unseen Ally Knave Attack 19

Terrifying your victim with visions of horrendous creatures, it is unable to pick friend from foe in the chaos that surrounds it.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Implement, Psychic

Standard Action
Ranged 5

Target: One creature

Attack: Charisma vs. Will

Hit: 3d8 + Charisma modifier psychic damage, and the target treats all its allies as enemies (save ends).

Miss: Half damage.

LEVEL 22 UTILITY POWERS

Fey Jaunt Knave Utility 22

Invoking ancient oaths of the fey courts, you rend the barrier to the Fey Realm, allowing others to travel between worlds and aside from space as you do.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Teleportation

Standard Action Personal

Effect: This power acts as the True Portal ritual (see *D&D 4E PLAYER'S HANDBOOK*), but may only be used to reach places you have been in the world or the Fey Realm. The portal remains for a number of rounds equal to your Charisma modifier.

Dance of Many Doors Knave Utility 22

The olden rites of the Summer Court allow you to shift yourself between the mortal world and the Fey Realm, existing in both worlds simultaneously. This allows you to skip between worlds as easily as walking, assuming your concentration is not interrupted.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Teleport

Move Action Personal

Effect: You may teleport a number of squares equal to 3 + your Charisma modifier.

Sustain Standard: The power persists, and you may spend another move action to teleport a number of squares equal to 3 + your Charisma modifier.

LEVEL 23 ENCOUNTER POWERS

Irresistible Taunt Knave Attack 23

Your taunts and jeers are so cutting they can force your enemies into putting safety aside in order to reach you, causing your enemies to blunder into each other.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Implement, Psychic

Standard Action Ranged 5

Target: Two creatures you can see

Attack: Charisma vs. Will

Hit: 2d8 + Charisma modifier psychic damage, and the target is pulled a number of squares equal to 1 + your Charisma modifier. If this movement places the two targets adjacent to each other, they immediately make basic melee attacks against each other with a bonus to their attack and damage rolls equal to your Charisma modifier.

Rooting the Host Knave Attack 23

With great fanfare you root your target to the ground with your weapon, distracting all those nearby with your showmanship and skill.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Weapon

Standard Action Melee or Ranged weapon

Target: One enemy

Attack: Dexterity or Strength vs. AC (melee) or Dexterity vs. AC (ranged)

Hit: 3[W] + Dexterity or Strength modifier, and the target is immobilized until the end of your next turn. Make a secondary attack.

Secondary Targets: All enemies adjacent to the target

Secondary Attack: Charisma vs. Will

Hit: 1d8 + Charisma modifier psychic damage, and the target is slowed until the end of your next turn.

LEVEL 25 DAILY POWERS

Curse of the Winter Court Knave Attack 25

Bringing pain, death, and the end of things, the Winter Court curses its enemies to die a slow, agonizing death, as their life slips away from them.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Psychic

Immediate Interrupt Close burst 20

Trigger: An enemy is healed, gains temporary hit points, or spends an action point

Target: Triggering enemy

Attack: Charisma +2 vs. Will

Hit: 4d8 + Charisma modifier psychic damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 psychic damage, cannot be healed, gain temporary hit points, or spend action points (save ends all).

Miss: Half damage, and the target cannot be healed until the end of your next turn.

Glamour of the Hidden Host Knave Attack 25

The eyes of your enemy are fooled with illusions and trickery, hiding you and your allies from him.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Psychic

Standard Action Ranged 5

Target: One creature

Attack: Charisma +2 vs. Will

Hit: 4d8 + Charisma modifier psychic damage, and you and all your allies are invisible to the target (save ends).

Miss: Half damage, and your allies are invisible to the target until the end of your next turn.

LEVEL 27 ENCOUNTER POWERS

Strike of the Errant Star Knave Attack 27

Skipping across the barrier between worlds, you strike out at targets a great distance away before returning to your position. The unexpected attack throws your enemies into disarray.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Teleportation, Weapon

Standard Action Close burst 20

Target: One, two, or three enemies in the burst

Effect: You teleport adjacent to each target, in a square of your choice, and make a melee attack. When you make the final attack, you return to your original square.

Attack: Dexterity or Strength vs. AC

Hit: 2[W] + Dexterity or Strength modifier, and the target is dazed until the end of your next turn.

Challenge of the Knave Knave Attack 27

The fey courts have a long history of duels enforced by arcane magics. Using those ancient rites, you challenge your enemy, forcing him to face you alone.

Encounter ♦ Arcane, Psychic

Standard Action Close burst 5

Primary Target: One creature in the burst

Attack: Charisma +2 vs. Will

Hit: 2d8 + Charisma modifier psychic damage, and both you and the target gain resist 20 against all damage except that dealt to each other until the end of your next turn. Make a secondary attack.

Secondary Targets: Each enemy in burst except the primary target.

Secondary Attack: Charisma vs. Will

Secondary Hit: 1d8 + Charisma modifier psychic damage, and the target is pushed a number of squares equal to 1 + your Charisma modifier.

LEVEL 29 DAILY POWERS

Curse of the Summer Court Knave Attack 29

Bringing growth, bounty, and joy, the Summer Court fights against those who bring death and decay. This curse is an example of the heights of the power of the Summer Court, bringing healing where others bring pain.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Healing, Psychic

Immediate Reaction Close burst 20

Trigger: You or an ally you can see is bloodied by an enemy

Target: The triggering enemy

Attack: Charisma +2 vs. Will

Hit: 4d8 + Charisma modifier psychic damage, and any creature struck by the target can spend a healing surge (save ends).

Duel of the Fey Realm Knave Attack 29

With a skillful weapon strike you pull your enemy into the Fey Realm with you, separating you from other combatants. Your allies cannot help you, so you had best be able to handle this enemy on your own.

Daily ♦ Arcane, Teleport, Weapon

Standard Action Melee or Ranged

Target: One creature

Attack: Strength or Dexterity vs. AC (melee) or Dexterity vs. AC (ranged)

Hit: 5[W] + Dexterity or Strength modifier damage.

Effect: You and the target are transported to the Fey Realm. You both enter the Fey Realm the same distance apart and in the same relative positions as you were when you activated this power. While in the Fey Realm, you may only target each other and only be targeted by each other; other creatures cannot target or be targeted by either of you. You and your target otherwise act normally in the Fey Realm except that you gain a +2 bonus to all your defenses. You and your target return from the Fey Realm at the end of your next turn. You return to the square you currently occupy relative to your original position, so if you moved 5 squares in the Fey Realm from your original position, you return 5 squares from where you entered the Fey Realm. If this square is occupied, you appear in the closest unoccupied square.

Sustain Minor: You and your target remain in the Fey Realm until the end of your next turn.

✕

BLACKDIRGE'S BESTIARY

THE UGLY SIDE OF FEY

By Aeryn "Blackdirge" Rudel

Hags are one of my favorite monsters. They're ugly, vicious, conniving, and usually pack enough physical and magical wallop to really ruin a PC's day. They're also one of those monsters that are firmly rooted in the mythology of the real world, taking after legendary crones like Baba Yaga and Black Annis. In addition, hags are one of those monsters that have been with the D&D game since the beginning. With that kind of history and pedigree, I was certain that when I flipped open my D&D 4E MONSTER MANUAL to the *H3*, I'd find those familiar, hideous hags in their shiny new 4E incarnations.

Nope.

What I got was a howling hag, a bog hag, and a death hag, nary an annis or sea hag in sight. Now these new hags are great monsters, but I pined for a bit of nostalgia, and I wanted my good ol' fashioned, classic D&D hags brought up to speed for my 4E game. So that's what I did, and that's what you have here in this installment of *Blackdirge's Bestiary*. I've taken the annis, the green hag, and the sea hag, slapped on a fresh coat of the new hotness, and brought our favorite foul fey up to date. In addition, I've added a new type of minion, the hagborn, which result from the...ahem...romantic interludes hags often share with comely human and elven men... right before they eat them.

— BD

ANNIS

Annis are large, foul-tempered hags that dwell in mountainous areas. They often live in caves or burrows dug with their own iron claws.

ANNIS LORE

Arcana DC 20: Annis are exceedingly cruel and violent hags, backing up their fearsome disposition with terrible strength and iron-hard skin and claws. Annis rarely associate with other hags, and seem to prefer the company of other brutish creatures, such as cyclops, ogres, and giants. They rarely gather in covens, and seem less concerned with arcane pursuits than other types of hags. Annis have a fondness for the flesh of humans, especially children, and often send minions to raid human settlements for their favorite meal.

Arcana DC 25: An annis' claws and teeth are actually composed of iron, making them as sharp as any sword. The skin of an annis is incredibly dense and hard, and can turn aside blows like plate armor.

Annis

Level 16 Elite Brute

Large fey humanoid

XP 2,800

Initiative +9**Senses** Perception +12; darkvision**Terrible Presence (Fear)** aura 3; enemies within the aura suffer a -2 penalty to attack rolls against the annis.**HP** 386; **Bloodied** 196**AC** 28; **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 25**Resist** 5 against attacks that target AC**Saving Throws** +2**Speed** 8 (earth walk), burrow 6**Action Points** 1⚔ **Iron Claws** (standard; at-will)

Reach 2; +19 vs. AC; 2d8+8 damage, and the target suffers a -2 penalty to AC until the end of the annis' next turn.

⚔ **Ripping Claws** (standard; at-will)

The annis makes two claw attacks. If both attacks hit the same target, the target is grabbed (until escape) and takes ongoing 10 damage (save ends).

⚔ **Bite** (standard; at-will)

Grabbed target only; +17 vs. AC; 4d8+8 damage, and the target is weakened until the end of the annis' next turn.

⚔ **Swat** (immediate reaction, when an enemy moves or shifts into a square adjacent to the annis while the annis has a target grabbed; at-will)

+19 vs. AC; 1d8+8 damage, and a Medium or smaller target is pushed 1 square.

Change Shape (minor; at-will) ♦ Polymorph

An annis can alter its physical form to appear as a tall human, a comely giant, or an ogre.

Alignment Chaotic evil**Languages** Common, Elven**Skills** Athletics +21, Intimidate +13, Nature +17, Stealth +14**Str** 26 (+16)**Dex** 12 (+9)**Wis** 18 (+12)**Con** 23 (+14)**Int** 13 (+9)**Cha** 10 (+8)**Description** *This towering humanoid creature resembles a hideously ugly crone with iron gray skin and sharp metallic claws and teeth. She is dressed in filthy rags stained nearly black with old, dried blood.***ANNIS TACTICS**

An annis attacks with its terrible iron claws, attempting to snatch up a target with *ripping grab* and devour it. While the annis has a target grabbed, it uses *swat* to keep its meal's allies away while it feeds, and relies on its iron-hard skin and fearsome aura to protect it from attacks.

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Annis typically bully ogres and hill giants into doing their bidding, and are usually encountered with the brutish humanoids. The only fey creatures annis associate with on a regular basis are cyclopes and occasionally formorians.

Level 16 Encounter (XP 7,000)

- 1 annis (level 16 elite brute)
- 2 cyclops hewers (level 16 brute)
- 4 ogre bludgeoners (level 16 minion)

GREEN HAG

Green hags dwell in swamps and dismal fens, and seek to waylay and kill those foolish enough to enter their swampy domains.

Green Hag

Level 12 Controller

Medium fey humanoid

XP 700

Initiative +10**Senses** Perception +15; darkvision**HP** 123; **Bloodied** 61**AC** 26; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 25**Speed** 6 (swamp walk), swim 6⚔ **Claw** (standard; at-will)

+17 vs. AC; 1d10+5 damage, and the target is weakened until the end of the green hag's next turn.

⚔ **Draining Flurry** (standard; recharge ☼☼☼)

The green hag makes two claw attacks against the same target. If both attacks hit, the target is slowed and weakened (save ends both).

✧ **Glamouring Gaze** (standard; recharge ☼☼☼) ♦ **Charm, Gaze, Psychic**

Ranged 10; +16 vs. Will; 2d6+6 psychic damage, and the target is dominated until the end of the green hag's next turn.

✧ **Deadly Mire** (standard; encounter)Area burst 3 within 10; +15 vs. Fortitude; the target is immobilized (save ends). *First Failed Save:* the target is restrained (save ends, but with a -1 penalty). *Second Failed Save:* The target is restrained and takes ongoing 10 damage (save ends both, but with a -2 penalty)**Change Shape** (minor; at-will) ♦ Polymorph

A green hag can alter its physical form to appear as a beautiful young elf, half-elf, eladrin, or human.

Alignment Evil**Languages** Common, Elven**Skills** Arcana +14, Bluff +17, Nature +15, Stealth +15**Str** 21 (+11)**Dex** 18 (+10)**Wis** 19 (+10)**Con** 19 (+10)**Int** 16 (+9)**Cha** 22 (+12)**Description** *This ugly crone is tall and rail thin. Her skin is a sickly green, and each of her bony hands is tipped with long, ragged talons. She wears a linen shift soaked with swampy mud and what looks like old, dried blood.***GREEN HAG LORE**

Arcana DC 20: Green hags are intelligent and cruel, and use their cunning to trick travelers into entering their swamps. Typically, a green hag attempts to lure a single victim, usually a handsome male human, elf or eladrin, into the swamp by disguising itself as a comely female. Once alone with its target, the green hag rips him to shreds and devours him. Green hags often form covens with other green hags or bog hags living in the same area.

Arcana DC 25: Green hags are incredibly strong, and their ragged talons can tear through armor and flesh with ease. In



addition, green hags can dominate the minds of their enemies, and even call upon the swamp itself to swallow them whole.

GREEN HAG TACTICS

A green hag begins combat by using *glamouring gaze* on the nearest melee-oriented enemy, and then commands the dominated target to attack its allies. It then uses *deadly mire* on the rest of its enemies, allowing its swampy home to suck its foes down into the muddy depths. In melee, a green hag attacks with its claws, using *draining flurry* as often as possible to further weaken its foes.

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Green hags often congregate in covens containing three or more green hags and occasionally a bog hag. Evil swamp dwelling creatures, such as chuuls, lizard-folk, and trolls often serve green hags.

Level 13 Encounter (XP 4,300)

- 3 green hags (level 12 controller)
- 2 chuuls (level 10 soldier)
- 3 trolls (level 9 brute)

SEA HAG

Hideous and evil, sea hags are the most revolting of all hags. They eagerly attack sailors on the high seas or enter coastal towns disguised as beautiful human females to drag off and devour unlucky victims.

SEA HAG LORE

Arcana DC 15: Sea hags are by far the most hideous of all hags; so hideous, in fact, their mere presence is enough to rob the strength from those daring to look upon their twisted bodies. Like most hags, sea hags enjoy killing and eating comely males, especially humans, and they regularly attack ships on the high seas to obtain their favorite meal. They also frequently disguise themselves as human women to enter coastal towns where they carouse taverns and inns looking for a besotted human male to drag off and devour.

Arcana DC 20: Sea hags can literally rob the breath from their enemies, removing their ability to breathe air. This allows the hag to dispatch its enemies by suffocating them, or to drag a living target into the ocean, keeping the unfortunate victim alive as long it is in physical contact with the hag.

Sea Hag

Level 10 Controller
Medium fey humanoid (aquatic) XP 500

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +10; darkvision
HP 105; **Bloodied** 52
AC 24; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 23
Speed 6 swim 8

† **Claw** (standard; at-will)
+14 vs. AC; 1d8+4 damage.

† **Embrace of the Deep** (standard; recharge ☉☼☽☿)
+14 vs. Reflex; 1d8+4 damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape). While grabbed, the target loses the ability to breathe air and suffers 10 damage each time the sea hag sustains the grab. If the sea hag and the target are completely submerged in water, the target gains the ability to breathe water and takes no damage as long as it is adjacent to the hag.

☞ **Foul Eye** (minor 1/round; at-will) ♦ **Gaze, Psychic**
Ranged 10; +14 vs. Will; 1d8+5 psychic damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the sea hag's next turn.

☜ **Revolting Presence** (standard; recharge ☉☼☽☿) ♦ **Fear**
Close burst 5; +14 vs. Will; the target is weakened and takes a -2 penalty on Strength based skill checks (save ends both).

Change Shape (minor; at-will) ♦ **Polymorph**
A sea hag can alter its physical form to appear as a beautiful young elf, half-elf, eladrin, or human.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common
Skills Bluff +13, Intimidate +13, Nature +15, Stealth +13
Str 19 (+8) **Dex** 16 (+7) **Wis** 20 (+9)
Con 17 (+7) **Int** 14 (+6) **Cha** 16 (+7)

Description *Almost indescribably horrible, this revolting humanoid resembles a staggeringly ugly old woman with scaly skin and limp green hair. She wears nothing but a crusting of barnacles and other seaborne detritus.*

SEA HAG TACTICS

A sea hag begins combat with *revolting presence*, moving into a position so that it can target as many enemies as possible. It then attacks with *foul eye* until an enemy moves into melee range, at which time, it attempts to grab the opponent with *embrace of the deep* and either drag the unfortunate target into the water or simply let it suffocate like a fish on dry land.

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Sea hags gather in small covens of two or more, and often make alliances with other evil, sea-dwelling monsters, such as sahuagin.

Level 10 Encounter (XP 2,600)

- 2 green hags (level 10 controller)
- 1 sahuagin priest (level 8 artillery)
- 6 sahuagin raiders (level 6 soldier)

HAGBORN

Hags are notorious for kidnapping and devouring human, elven, and eladrin men; however, they sometimes find other uses for their male captives before eating them. The spawn of these horrid, forced unions are an ugly, sterile breed of fey known as hagborn.

Hagborn Whelp

Level 6 Minion Brute
Medium fey humanoid XP 63

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +4; low-light vision
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 19; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 16; see also *mother's milk*
Speed 6

⊕ **Battleaxe** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+9 vs. AC; 6 damage.

Mother's Milk
A hagborn gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and all defenses when adjacent to a hag.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Elven
Str 18 (+10) **Dex** 14 (+5) **Wis** 13 (+4)
Con 16 (+9) **Int** 11 (+3) **Cha** 8 (+2)
Equipment leather armor, battleaxe

Description *This tall youth is ugly and ill formed. He wears leather armor and carries a battleaxe; both look like they've seen recent use.*

Hagborn Guardian

Level 11 Minion Soldier
Medium fey humanoid XP 150

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +7; low-light vision
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 26; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 20; see also *mother's milk*
Speed 5

⊕ **Longsword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+18 vs. AC; 7 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the hagborn guardian's next turn.

☞ **Longbow** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
Ranged 20/40; +14 vs. AC; 5 damage.

Mother's Milk
A hagborn gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and all defenses when adjacent to a hag.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Elven
Str 19 (+9) **Dex** 14 (+7) **Wis** 14 (+7)
Con 17 (+8) **Int** 11 (+5) **Cha** 8 (+4)
Equipment chainmail, heavy shield, longsword, longbow, quiver with 20 arrows

Description *This muscular humanoid looks like an exceedingly ugly human with pointed ears and limp, greasy black hair. He is armed with a long, straight sword, wears steel chainmail, and carries a large round shield.*

Hagborn Reaver Level 16 Minion Soldier Medium natural humanoid XP 350

Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +10; low-light vision
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 31; **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 22; see also *mother's milk*
Speed 5

- ⊕ **Greatsword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
 +23 vs. AC; 10 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the hagborn reaver's next turn.
- ⊕ **Longbow** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
 Ranged 20/40; +19 vs. AC; 8 damage.

Mother's Milk
 A hagborn gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and all defenses when adjacent to a hag.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Elven
Str 20 (+13) **Dex** 15 (+10) **Wis** 15 (+10)
Con 18 (+12) **Int** 11 (+8) **Cha** 8 (+9)

Equipment chainmail, greatsword, longbow, quiver with 20 bolts

Description *This brutish humanoid is quite ugly, and his pointed ears and greenish hair point to an obvious fey parentage. He carries a huge, battle-scarred greatsword and wears a hauberk of blackened chainmail.*

Hagborn Slayer Level 21 Minion Soldier Medium natural humanoid XP 800

Initiative +15 **Senses** Perception +13; low-light vision
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 35; **Fortitude** 32, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 27; see also *mother's milk*
Speed 5

- ⊕ **Glaive** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
 Reach 2; +28 vs. AC; 13 damage, the hagborn slayer slides the target 1 square, and the target is marked until the end of the hagborn slayer's next turn.

Mother's Milk
 A hagborn gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and all defenses when adjacent to a hag.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Elven
Str 21 (+15) **Dex** 16 (+12) **Wis** 16 (+12)
Con 19 (+14) **Int** 11 (+10) **Cha** 8 (+9)

Equipment scale armor, glaive

Description *Hugely muscular, this tall fey humanoid has a twisted, ugly face framed by a tangled mass of iron gray hair. He balances a vicious iron glaive over one muscular shoulder and wears a coat of dull, steel scales.*



HAGBORN LORE

Arcana DC 15: Hagborn are the offspring of hags and male humans, elves, or eladrin. They are ugly, brutish humanoids with dispositions matching their foul mothers. In appearance, hagborn look generally human, although they usually display some obvious fey feature inherited from their mothers, such as strange skin or hair color; yellow, red, or black eyes; or pointed ears and sharp teeth. In addition, hagborn inherit their mothers' great strength, and are always large, muscular, and exceedingly strong. Hagborn born to bog hags and sea hags can typically survive in aquatic environments as well as their mothers.

Arcana DC 20: A hag may give birth to dozens of hagborn in her lifetime, ensuring herself a steady supply of devoted slaves and bodyguards. Hagborn are sterile, and cannot produce offspring with other humanoids. Their devotion to their mothers is fanatical and complete, and there are no records to date of hagborn leaving their hag parents to pursue a life of their own.

HAGBORN TACTICS

Hagborn are skilled warriors, and are usually equipped with quality arms and armor. Generally they focus on melee, but might use ranged weapons to soften up a target before closing. Hagborn attempt to stay near their hag parents whenever possible, both to protect them and to gain the benefits of *mother's milk*.

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Hagborn are nearly always encountered with hags and their minions. They do not cooperate with any other creatures unless ordered to do so by their hag parent.

Level 7 Encounter (XP 1,478)

- 2 howling hags (level 7 controller)
- 2 gnoll claw fighters (level 6 skirmisher)
- 6 hagborn whelps (level 6 minion)

Level 11 Encounter (XP 2,800)

- 1 bog hag (level 10 controller)
- 1 feymire crocodile (level 10 elite soldier)
- 1 shambling mound (level 9 brute)
- 6 hagborn guardians (level 11 minion)

Level 14 Encounter (XP 4,800)

- 1 night hag (level 14 lurker)
- 1 nightmare (level 13 skirmisher)
- 2 vrocks (level 13 skirmisher)
- 4 hagborn reavers (level 16 minion)

Level 18 Encounter (XP 10,000)

- 1 death hag (level 18 soldier)
- 3 slaughter wights (level 18 brute)
- 5 hagborn slayers (level 21 minion)

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BEYOND THE BOOKSHELF

In *Hero's Handbook*: *Tieflings* players are given the opportunity to play a tiefling that belongs to an infernal legacy, a diabolical bloodline whose patron, called a Lord Benefactor, is one of the infamous archdukes of the Nine Hells. Each legacy, and the archduke that serves as its Lord Benefactor, is tainted by one of the great sins (such as avarice, lust, sloth, or wrath). This taint carries with it a dire curse that can affect a tiefling's personality, mannerisms, and even his physical form. In addition, tieflings that choose to serve their Lord Benefactors and embrace their infernal legacy, rather than rebel against them, can learn terrifying powers related to their patron archduke and the sin he or she is associated with.

This article peels back the myths and legends behind one of the most infamous Lord Benefactors, Amon, Lord of Wrath, and presents full stats for the archduke himself, plus some of his more powerful servants.

AMON, LORD OF WRATH

Amon is one of the powerful archdukes of the Nine Hells. He is identified with the sin of wrath, and holds sway over those who cannot control their anger and aggression. However, Amon's own mind is consumed with his patron sin, and he is an unpredictable and violent creature; so unpredictable, in fact, he has been exiled to Hell's first layer by his fellow archdevils. Whether or not this is a forced exile or simply Amon's wish to separate himself from his rivals is anyone's guess.



Amon Level 28 Solo Soldier

Large immortal humanoid (devil) XP 65,000

Initiative +24 **Senses** Perception +23; darkvision

Aura of Aggression aura 10; all allies in the aura gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls. Bloodied allies in the aura gain a +4 bonus to damage rolls.

HP 1,300; **Bloodied** 650

AC 46; **Fortitude** 42, **Reflex** 40, **Will** 39

Immune charm; **Resist** 30 fire, 20 poison

Saving Throws +5

Speed 10

Action Points 2

⚔ **Axe of Dismemberment** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Healing, Weapon**
Reach 2; +35 vs. AC; 2d10+10 damage (crit 18-20, 6d10+30 damage). On a critical hit, the target loses 2 healing surges and Amon regains 25 hit points.

⚔ **Hellfury Sword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Fire, Weapon**
Reach 2; +35 vs. AC; 2d8+10 fire damage, and ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends).

⚔ **Fearsome Bite** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Fear**
Reach 2; +33 vs. AC; 1d10+10 damage, and the target takes a -4 penalty to attack and damage rolls until the end of Amon's next turn.

⚔ **Amon's Wrath** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Fear, Fire, Weapon**
Amon makes a hellsword and an axe of dismemberment attack. If both attacks hit the same target, Amon makes a fearsome bite against the target as a free action.

⚔ **Serpent Strike** (immediate reaction, when an enemy moves or shifts into a square adjacent to Amon; at-will) ♦ **Poison**
+33 vs. AC; 1d8+10 damage, and Amon makes a secondary attack against the same target. *Secondary Attack:* +31 vs. Fortitude; the target is weakened and takes ongoing 15 poison damage (save ends).

⚔ **Wrathful Awakening** (minor 1/round; at-will) ♦ **Gaze**
Ranged 10; +33 vs. Will; the target can do nothing on its turn except attack its nearest ally with a melee basic attack, moving if necessary (save ends).

⚔ **Howl of Fury** (standard; recharge ☼☼☼) ♦ **Fear, Psychic**
Close burst 5; +31 vs. Will; targets enemies; 2d10+7 psychic damage, and the target is stunned (save ends). Allies in the burst can make a melee basic attack as a free action with a +4 power bonus to the damage roll.

Unstoppable Aggression (when first bloodied)
When first bloodied, Amon flies into a rage and gains a +4 bonus to attack and damage rolls, gains resist 10 to all damage, and gains an additional standard action each turn until the end of the encounter. However, while enraged, he suffers a -4 penalty to AC and Will defense and cannot use any powers accept melee attacks.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Supernal

Skills Athletics +29, Bluff +26, Endurance +28, Insight +23, Intimidate +26, Religion +26

Str 30 (+24) **Dex** 26 (+22) **Wis** 18 (+18)

Con 28 (+23) **Int** 24 (+21) **Cha** 24 (+21)

Equipment hellfury sword, axe of dismemberment

Description *This robust humanoid wears a kilt of beaten bronze and has the head of snarling wolf and a scaly tail that ends in an adder's head. It grips a great flaming sword in one hand and a gore-drenched battleaxe in the other.*

Amon enjoys nothing more than bloody melee combat, and eagerly battles any and all foes that dare confront him. His infernal servants, also infected with the sin of wrath, rally around their master during combat and join his berserk fury. Amon's martial skill is unmatched in the Nine Hells, and he has personally slain dozens of upstart dukes, and if legends are correct, even a few archdukes.

Amon is rage and martial skill personified; a 10-foot tall brute with a wolf's head and scarlet skin, his body is corded with lithe muscle and covered with scars from countless battles. Amon's long scaly tail is a striking adder that can inject deadly venom into his foes, and his wolf-like head is equipped with powerful jaws that can rend flesh and crack bone with ease.

Amon never enters battle without his signature weapons: a great flaming sword and a huge, gore-covered axe. He wields both weapons with unmatched skill, and can reduce even the mightiest of mortal warriors to bloody, scorched ribbons in a matter of seconds.

AMON LORE

Religion DC 15: Amon is an archduke of the Nine Hells, and he is closely associated with the great sin of wrath. He is the patron of all who embrace rage and aggression over diplomacy and reason.

Religion DC 20: Amon is less rigid than most devils, and his unpredictable rage makes him seem almost demonic in comparison to his fellows. However, Amon seeks to gain power over his rivals in the Hells, and can be just as scheming and manipulative as any devil when the need arises. Like some of his rivals, Amon has sired a line of tieflings, called a legacy, that serve as his primary conduit to the world of mortals. These tieflings often resemble Amon in outward appearance, and are just as nasty, violent, and brutish as their patron.

Religion DC 25: Amon dwells on Hell's first layer of Avernus, in an area known as Amon's Gauntlet. This area is a wasteland of sharp, obsidian-studded mountains and blasting infernal winds that can sear the flesh from those not prepared for the hellish landscape. A few settlements of tieflings loyal to Amon can be

found in the Gauntlet; these small communities often build squat, iron fortresses to protect themselves from the environment and the many monstrous predators that prowl the area. In addition to the tiefling settlements, a few groups of allied rakshasa make their home in the Gauntlet, and there are many gaping caves that burrow deep into the infernal subterrene that serve as lairs for gulvorgs, blight wargs, vargazu (wolf devils), wyverns, and other horrors.

Religion DC 30: Within the center of Amon's Gauntlet stands the Fortress of Wrath, Amon's personal abode and stronghold. From the great iron and stone edifice, Amon is said to command the armies of Hell and guard Avernus from intrusion by Hell's enemies. However, he commands in name only, and the actual command of the infernal legions falls to more stable and predictable devils. Amon does command a full legion of vargazu that act as his own personal army, and he keeps these bestial devils in small fortresses ringing his own great abode.

Religion DC 35: Many of Amon's rivals take him for little more than a rage-driven brute, and although most would tremble at the thought of facing him in direct combat, they still consider him to be little threat. This is a drastic and costly mistake. Amon has made great strides in securing mortal worshippers upon the Prime Material Plane, and is growing in power at an alarming rate. He has accomplished this great feat by adopting the persona of Avashar, a minor deity of warfare and martial skill. Temples to Avashar, overseen by faithful cultists, have appeared in a few major cities across the world, and have begun to attract followers at a steady rate. These followers have no idea that their prayers' final destination is the ears of an archdevil.

AMON'S TACTICS

Amon begins combat with *howl of fury*, blasting his enemies with raw psychic rage and spurring his allies onto more carnage. He then spends an action point and enters melee with his flaming sword and great, keen-edged axe. Amon focuses his attacks on a single target, using *Amon's wrath* to bring sword, axe, and bite to bear on the unfortunate foe. He uses *wrathful awakening* each round to sow discord among his enemies, preferring to target an enemy that is adjacent to a foe he is currently fighting in melee. When an enemy moves adjacent to Amon he strikes with his serpentine tail, injecting deadly, weakening venom. Once bloodied, Amon flies into a berserk rage that does not end until either he or his enemies are slain.

ASPECT OF AMON

Powerful tieflings of Amon's legacy sometimes conjure an aspect of Amon to aid them in battle. The ritual used to summon the aspect is particularly vile, requiring gallons of fresh blood spilled in anger and the souls of no less than three sentient beings. The aspect obeys the caster that summoned it to the best of its ability.

Amon has no control over or link to his aspect, and he cannot sense anything it senses. However, the aspect has all of his personality traits and behaves in a very similar manner to the great devil. Once the aspect has completed the task required of it – usually, aspects are summoned to turn the tide of great battles – it disappears.

Aspect of Amon Level 19 Elite Soldier
Medium immortal humanoid (devil) XP 4,800

Initiative +17 **Senses** Perception +17; darkvision

Lesser Aura of Aggression aura 5; all allies in the aura gain a +1 bonus to damage rolls and a –1 penalty to AC. Bloodied allies in the aura gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls and a –2 penalty to AC.

HP 368; **Bloodied** 184

AC 37; **Fortitude** 35, **Reflex** 32, **Will** 31

Resist 20 fire, 10 poison

Saving Throws +2

Speed 8

Action Points 1

⬇ **Battleaxe** (standard; at-will) ⬆ **Weapon**
+26 vs. AC; 1d10+8 damage (crit 19-20, 2d10+18 damage).

⬇ **Flaming Sword** (standard; at-will) ⬆ **Fire, Weapon**
+26 vs. AC; 1d8+8 fire damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

⬆ **Furious Flurry** (standard; at-will) ⬆ **Fire, Weapon**
Amon makes a flaming sword and a battleaxe attack.

⬆ **Serpent Strike** (immediate reaction, when an enemy moves or shifts into a square adjacent to the aspect of Amon; at-will) ⬆ **Poison**
+24 vs. AC; 1d6+8 damage, and Amon makes a secondary attack against the same target. *Secondary Attack:* +22 vs. Fortitude; the target takes ongoing 10 poison damage (save ends).

Relentless Aggression (when first bloodied)
When first bloodied, the aspect of Amon flies into a rage and gains a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls and resist 5 to all damage. However, while enraged, it suffers a –4 penalty to AC and Will defense and must attack the nearest creature each round, regardless of whether it is friend or foe.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Supernal

Skills Athletics +22, Bluff +19, Endurance +21, Insight +17, Intimidate +19, Religion +19

Equipment flaming sword, battleaxe

Str 26 (+17) **Dex** 22 (+15) **Wis** 16 (+12)
Con 24 (+16) **Int** 20 (+14) **Cha** 20 (+14)

ASPECT OF AMON LORE

Religion DC 20: An aspect of Amon can be summoned via a powerful ritual known to a select few tieflings in the archdevil's bloodline.

Religion DC 25: An aspect of Amon is a sentient creature, but it has no direct link to Amon himself. However, it typically acts in accordance with Amon's goals, and is capable of independent thought and action. It obeys the commands of its summoner unless they radically contradict the aims and goals of Amon.

ASPECT OF AMON TACTICS

An aspect of Amon targets a single foe and uses *furious flurry* every round until the enemy is slain, using its action point in the first round to bring a total of 4 attacks to bear on its target. When bloodied, the aspect enters a berserk fury that does not end until it is slain.

SERVANTS OF AMON



BLIGHT WARG

Blight wargs are horrific, scaly wolf-like creatures that roam Avernus, the first layer of Hell, in large packs. They have a venomous bite, and are shrouded in a cloud of poisonous vapor. Devils in service to the archdevil Amon often use blight wargs as mounts.

BLIGHT WARG LORE

Arcana or Religion DC 15: Blight wargs are vicious, predatory monsters that resemble scaly wolves. They dwell upon Avernus, the first layer of Hell, and hunt in packs. Blight wargs have a poisonous bite and are shrouded in poisonous vapor.

Arcana or Religion DC 20: It is rumored that blight wargs are the creation of the archdevil Amon, Lord of Wrath. Since they are most frequently encountered in Amon's Gauntlet, there is some strong evidence that the great devil is indeed the progenitor of the vile creatures. Many of Amon's infernal servants are known to ride blight wargs into battle.

BLIGHT WARG TACTICS

A blight warg attacks with its venomous bite, tearing a target's flesh with its powerful jaws and coating the wound in a potent, lingering poison. A blight warg attempts to flank its foes so that it can hobble a target with a well-placed bite.

Blight Warg		Level 8 Skirmisher	
Large elemental magical beast		XP 350	
Initiative +10	Senses Perception +10; darkvision		
Poisonous Aura (Poison) aura 1; enemies that enter or begin their turns in the aura take 5 poison damage.			
HP 90; Bloodied 45			
AC 22; Fortitude 21, Reflex 19, Will 17			
Resist 10 fire, 10 poison			
Speed 10			
⚔ Venomous Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison +13 vs. AC; 2d6+6 damage, and the blight warg makes a secondary attack against the same target. <i>Secondary Attack:</i> +11 vs. Fortitude; 1d6+5 poison damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).			
Combat Advantage If a blight warg has combat advantage against a target, the target is slowed until the end of the blight warg's next turn on a hit.			
Venomous Strike (while mounted by a friendly rider of 8th level or higher; at-will) ♦ Mount, Poison While mounted, the blight warg's rider's melee attacks deal an additional 1d6 poison damage.			
Alignment Evil		Languages Supernal	
Skills Endurance +13, Stealth +13			
Str 22 (+10)	Dex 18 (+8)	Wis 13 (+5)	
Con 18 (+8)	Int 5 (+1)	Cha 12 (+5)	
Description <i>This vile, wolf-like creature has scaly skin and patches of sparse green fur on its chest and neck. Its powerful jaws drip a foul, black slime, and its eyes glow a virulent green.</i>			

SCION OF AMON

Tieflings of Amon's legacy that prove themselves extraordinarily capable may be summoned to the archdevil's abode on Avernus to serve him. These tieflings are called the scions of Amon, and usually exhibit extreme martial skill and a wild, unpredictable temper.

Scion of Amon

Level 9 Elite Soldier

Medium natural humanoid, tiefling

XP 800

Initiative +9

Senses Perception +9; darkvision

HP 192; **Bloodied** 96

AC 27; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 17

Resist 14 fire

Saving Throws +2

Speed 5

Action Points 1

⚔ **Battleaxe** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+15 vs. AC (+17 against a bloodied target); 1d10+5 damage.

⚔ **Longsword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+15 vs. AC (+17 against a bloodied target); 1d8+5 damage.

‡ **Furious Assault** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
The scion of Amon makes a battleaxe and a longsword attack against a single target.

‡ **Whirlwind of Steel** (standard; recharge [E]) ♦ **Weapon**
The scion of Amon makes a battleaxe and a longsword attack against a single target and then shifts up to 3 squares, and makes a battleaxe and a longsword attack against a second target.

Wrathful Retribution (minor; recharge [E])
The scion of Amon gains a +2 power bonus to its next attack roll against an enemy that hit it since its last turn. If the attack hits and deals damage, the scion of Amon deals an extra 9 damage.

Amon's Blessing

When first bloodied, a scion of Amon gains resist 5 to all damage until the end of its next turn.

Alignment Evil

Languages Supernal

Skills Athletics +13, Bluff +6, Endurance +11, Stealth +6

Str 21 (+9)

Dex 16 (+7)

Wis 10 (+4)

Con 16 (+7)

Int 13 (+5)

Cha 14 (+6)

Equipment chainmail, longsword, battleaxe

Description *This tall, muscular tiefling has a feral, predatory appearance, with yellowish eyes, long canine teeth, and a wild mane of wolf-like hair. It carries a long, double-edged sword in one hand and a vicious axe in the other.*

SCION OF AMON TACTICS

A scion of Amon tears into its foes with *furious assault*, bringing both sword and axe to bear on the same target. It focuses its attacks on those who have damaged it previously in combat, using *wrathful retribution* as often as possible. When confronted with numerous opponents, the scion of Amon uses *whirlwind of steel* to devastate multiple foes. It typically saves its action point to use when *whirlwind of steel* recharges.

SCION OF AMON LORE

Religion DC 15: Scions of Amon are powerful tieflings of Amon's bloodline that have proved themselves capable and bloodthirsty in the great devil's service. They are often drawn into Amon's abode in the Nine Hells to serve their master.

Religion DC 20: Scions of Amon are said to resemble their diabolical patron, and often possess wolf-like visages, scarlet skin, and other bestial features. Scions are deadly melee opponents, and wield their swords and axes with lethal skill and precision. They are rumored to possess abilities that reflect Amon's own, a blessing from their patron for distinguished service in his name.

VARGAZU

Vargazu, or wolf devils, are powerful, bloodthirsty devils found primarily on Avernus, Hell's first layer. They tend to associate only with their own kind, and roam Avernus in small packs. Vargazu are associated with the archdevil Amon, and are said to resemble the great devil in form and ferocity.

Vargazu (Wolf Devil) Level 15 Soldier
Medium immortal humanoid (devil) XP 1,200

Initiative +14 **Senses** Perception +9; darkvision

HP 148; **Bloodied** 74

AC 31; **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 23

Resist 20 fire, 10 poison

Speed 12

⚔ **Keen Battleaxe** (standard; at-will) ⚔ **Healing, Weapon** +22 vs. AC; 2d10+7 damage (crit 4d10+27 damage), and the target takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends). On a critical hit, the target loses 1 healing surge and the vargazu regain 10 hit points.

⚔ **Bite** (minor 1/round; at-will)
Requires combat advantage; +20 vs. AC; 1d6+7 damage.

⚔ **Baiting Strike** (standard; recharge ⚔) ⚔ **Weapon**
The vargazu makes a melee basic attack against the target, and one ally within 5 squares (vargazu's choice) shifts 3 squares. If the ally shifts adjacent to the target, it can make a melee basic attack against the target as a free action.

⚔ **Howling Doom** (standard; recharge ⚔) ⚔ **Fear, Psychic**
Close burst 3; +18 vs. Will; 2d6+5 psychic damage, and the target suffers a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).

Wolf Pack Frenzy (while bloodied)
While bloodied, a vargazu can take an extra move action each turn, and it and all adjacent allies gain a +2 bonus on damage rolls.

Allied Shift (minor; at-will)
When a vargazu is adjacent to another vargazu it can shift 1 square.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Supernal

Skills Athletics +19, Intimidate +15, Stealth +17

Str 24 (+14) **Dex** 20 (+12) **Wis** 15 (+9)

Con 20 (+12) **Int** 16 (+10) **Cha** 17 (+10)

Equipment greataxe

Description *This tall, muscular humanoid has the head of a snarling wolf and a furry mane that extends down its broad back. It hefts a great, double-bitted axe and wears only a simple leather kilt.*

VARGAZU TACTICS

Vargazu often attack in packs numbering up to half a dozen individuals. They attack foes with their hellishly sharp greataxes, and use *allied shift* and baiting strike to set up flanking situations where they can utilize bite attacks. When seriously wounded, a vargazu flies into an infectious rage that bolsters the offensive abilities of adjacent allies as well as its own.

VARGAZU LORE

Religion DC 20: Vargazu, also known as wolf devils or the hounds of Amon, are powerful and bloodthirsty warriors found on Hell's first layer of Avernus. They are typically armed with a viciously sharp greataxe, reminiscent of the weapon wielded by the mighty devil Amon.

Religion DC 25: Vargazu are closely associated with the archdevil Amon, Lord of Wrath, and their uncanny resemblance to him leads many to believe him to be their progenitor. They roam his domain, Amon's Gauntlet, in small packs, attacking any and all creatures that enter the Gauntlet without their master's leave. Vargazu are prone to violent, berserk rages, not unlike Amon himself, and are renowned throughout the Hells as unpredictable and dangerous foes.

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Amon is unlikely to be encountered alone; he has hordes of vargazu and other foul monsters at his disposal at all times. However, once his blood is up, the great devil is one of the few archdevils likely to confront adventurers on even terms. Visitors to Amon's Gauntlet that manage to avoid the attention of Amon himself still have to deal with his servants.

Level 12 Encounter (XP 3,500)

- 2 scions of Amon (level 9 elite soldier)
- 2 blight wargs (level 8 skirmisher)
- 3 worgs (level 9 brute)

Level 15 Encounter (XP 6,400)

- 3 vargazu (level 15 soldier)
- 1 guulvorg (level 16 elite brute)

Level 20 Encounter (XP 14,000)

- 1 aspect of Amon (level 19 elite soldier)
- 3 vargazu (level 15 soldier)
- 2 guulvorgs (level 16 elite brute)

Level 30 Encounter (XP 95,250)

- Amon (level 28 solo soldier)
- 3 rakshasa dread knights (level 24 soldier)
- 2 fell wyverns (level 24 skirmisher)

✕

Azagar's Advice for Adventurers

Armored & Dangerous: Part I

By Aeryn "Blackdirge" Rudel

From the Journal of Zavius Oakshadow,
Royal Chronicler to His Majesty,
King Ivar Brighthammer

Again I have been ordered to return to the cell of the infamous hobgoblin warlord Azagar Bloodfist, at the behest of my beloved king, Ivar the Valorous. This is my third meeting with the mighty Azagar, and I must say, the time I've spent with the villainous hobgoblin has been both educational and enlightening. The fear I first experienced at the thought of being so close to one such as Azagar has all but evaporated, and I find myself unable to conjure any negative feelings for my subject beyond a mild irritation at his constant jibes at my masculinity.

In my last visit, Azagar continued his exposition on an adventurers' choice of arms, and I filled nearly a dozen pages with his crude but insightful words. King Ivar is most pleased with my progress so far, and although Azagar was once a dreadful enemy of the kingdom, I believe the king respects the hobgoblin warlord immensely. I, too,

have newfound respect for the infamous Azagar, and must admit to a grudging admiration of his skill, verve, and above all, his uncontested bravery on the field of battle. This said, I would certainly not shed a tear at the sight of Azagar dangling from the hangman's noose for his crimes.

I hope to convince Azagar to speak of something other than weapons today, despite his obvious love of the subject. I believe that I have more than enough valuable information to ensure that adventurers across our great kingdom make wise decision each and every time they enter the smithy. However, I am loathe to break the rapport I have established with my subject by prodding him overmuch. Ah well, it is my duty to plumb the depths of Azagar's military wisdom, and if I offend him, his chains are sturdy enough...I hope.

—Zavius

Where have you been, lacy-pants? It's been over two weeks since your last visit, and I have sorely missed the smell of your perfume, your femin...elven charms, and another body to talk at. Hell, I even tried having a conversation with one of my guards just to break the monotony; but they aren't much for conversation. Ain't that right, boys! Even a lowly human prison guard is too high and mighty to talk to a hobgoblin, even one that ruled half the damn world at one point!

The guards and I have come to a truce of sorts, though, Zavy. They don't spit in my ale and gruel, and I don't return the cups and bowls filled with the contents of my chamber pot. It's a good system. I don't have to scoop snot out of my stew, and they don't have to wear my dung on their nice clean tabards.

Well, doily-cuffs, I guess we should get down to business. Have a seat and I'll finish educating King Ivar's kingdom on how to choose a weapon. What? You have enough about weapons, you say? Well, may the gods forgive my impertinence for wasting your precious time, feather-wrists! I mean, how dare I seek to educate the fine, gifted warriors of this nation about their choice of arms. It's not like they lost fourteen battles in a row against my legions when they had us outnumbered two to one. It's not like my wolf-riders shot the Knight Legions to pieces because, heaven forbid, a knight learn the use of a bow. Oh, forgive me, I misremembered, all that did happen.

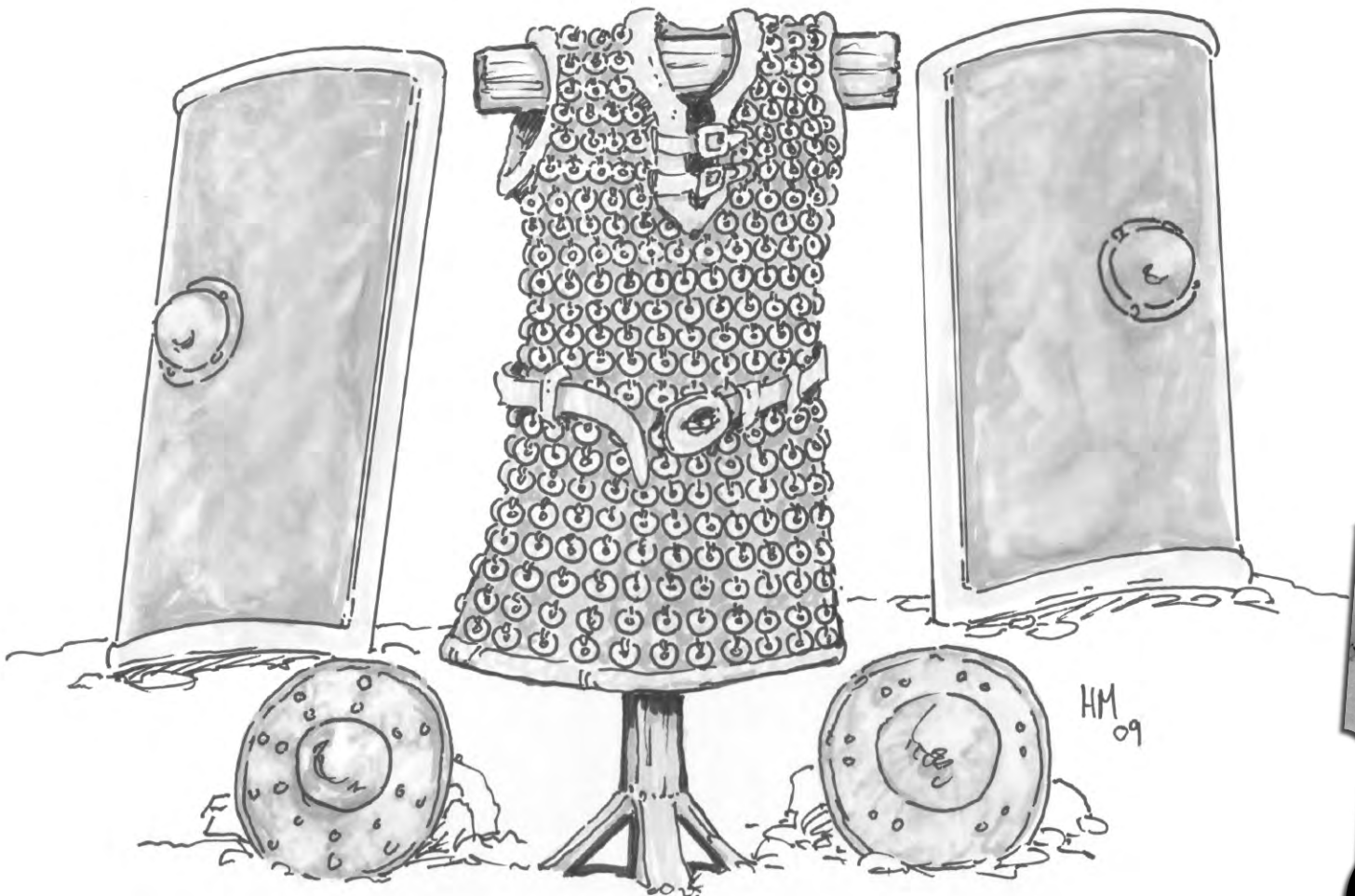
Oh, there I go again. Raising my voice and upsetting your delicate elven sensibilities. You're not going to cry or piss yourself,

Zavy, are you? I'd prefer the latter. I'd rather clean up piss than watch you sniffle. Fine, you want me to talk about something else? Then I'll talk about something else. How does armor suit you and his right honorable grace King Ivar? Oh, I have your permission to proceed? Excellent. My heart overflows with gratitude for your magnanimity.

Now, as important as it is for a warrior to choose the right weapon, his choice of armor might be the single-most important decision he makes before stepping on the battlefield. The right weapon allows you to kill your enemy efficiently, but that won't make much difference if you're gutted by the first idiot you cross blades with. Armor keeps you alive. It's as simple as that. However, not even the finest dwarven plate armor can protect you from every blow; that's why you need to make sure that your armor is appropriate for the kind of fighting you'll be doing. Wearing plate armor in the desert gets you just as dead as running naked through a pike hedge.

You may now thank whatever worthless god you worship that of Azagar is here to set you on the straight and narrow path to martial excellence...or at least survivability. We'll go through the various types of armor commonly available to any warrior, and then I'll tell you why you should or shouldn't consider it.

Alright, you can stop your pouting. Pick up your pen there, Zavy, and we'll get to it.



Armor

RingMail (Light)	Armor Bonus	Minimum Enhancement Bonus	Check	Speed	Price (gp)	Weight
Ring mail	+4	—	-1	-1	35	20 lb.
Bonering mail	+6	+4	-1	-1	Special	20 lb.
Shadowring mail	+8	+6	-1	-1	Special	20 lb.

Shield	Shield Bonus	Minimum Enhancement Bonus	Check	Speed	Price (gp)	Weight
Buckler	—	—	—	—	5	3 lb.
Tower Shield	Special	—	—	—	50	20 lb.

Ring Mail: Ring mail consists of a leather jack or hauberk sewn with metal rings. The rings are sewn close together, and provide excellent protection against weapons such as swords and axes. Ring mail is fairly heavy, but is far lighter and less restrictive than chainmail, allowing nimble wearers to derive the maximum benefit from their agility. Bonering mail is superior ring mail crafted by orcs and half-orcs from the bones of powerful monsters, such as giants, dragons, and demons. Shadowring mail is infused with the dread energy of the Shadow Realm and is favored by those with a connection to that dark place.

Buckler: A buckler is a small, round shield usually constructed entirely of steel. You can still make attacks with the hand that holds a buckler or use a two-handed weapon. Since a buckler

requires a more active style of defense, you must spend a minor action to gain the +1 shield bonus to AC and Reflex defense. The bonus lasts until the start of your next turn. Fighters, rangers, rogues, and warlocks have proficiency with the buckler.

Tower Shield: A tower shield is a large rectangular shield as tall as a man that is anchored into the ground to provide cover for a creature behind it. It requires a minor action to anchor a tower shield, which then provides superior cover for a single Medium-sized creature. An anchored tower shield can be knocked over by an enemy with a DC 15 Strength check. Picking up a tower shield requires a move action, and carrying a tower shield requires both hands and is considered to be a heavy load. Any character class can use a tower shield.

Light Armor

As you've no doubt seen among your own people's "warriors," Zavy, light armor is preferred by those that want to stay mobile and agile in their armor. Elves, and their even viler cousins the eladrin, use light armor more than any of the other races. Well, maybe except halflings. But who the hell takes a halfling warrior seriously, anyway?

Light armor falls into four categories: cloth or padded armor, leather armor, hide armor, and ring mail. Now, you can just forget about cloth and padded armor if you plan to do any serious fighting. Even the magical varieties of that stuff won't stop an earnest sneeze, let alone a determined warrior that actually knows which end of his weapon goes into his enemy. So let's move right on to leather armor.

Leather armor is a catch all that covers a number of different types of armor; however, the most common are boiled leather and studded leather. Boiled leather is created by boiling thick leather plates in water or wax, which hardens it considerably. Elven skirmishers usually wear

breastplates and greaves of boiled leather, which is strong enough to stop a glancing blow, but a solid thrust with a spear, or a flush blow with an axe will cut through boiled leather easier than you can gut an elf...in leather armor. The other type of common leather armor is studded leather, which is basically a leather jack fitted with iron or steel studs. The idea there is that the studs stop an enemy's weapon rather than the leather. In my experience, leather armor is passable battle gear for skirmishers and urban types, but pretty useless in a stand-up fight. Avoid it unless, like my esteemed chronicler here, you don't have the muscle power required to lift a sack of turnips, let alone an actual suit of battle armor.

Hide armor is the next step up from leather armor, and, honestly, it's really the same thing, just a bit less manufactured. Surprisingly enough, the crudeness of hide armor makes its slightly better at keeping your guts on the inside of your body than leather armor — but not by much. Hide armor is simply the cured or uncured hide of a thick-skinned beast that some enterprising savage decided to drape around his body. Typically the stuff is made from critters like rhinos,

elephants, and even crocodiles, but any beast with thick-enough skin will do. Hide armor is fairly easy to move in, if you can stand the smell and feel of twenty pounds of rotting flesh hanging around your neck. It is a bit more confining than leather armor, so your climbing, jumping, swimming, and sneaking ability is a little diminished. Here's the bottom line for hide armor; use it only if you absolutely must, it doesn't offer enough protection for having to look like a half-arsed barbarian and smell like an orc with skin rot.

Alright, if you must use light armor, you really have only one choice if you actually want to stop an enemy weapon and still be able take advantage of any natural agility you might possess. Ring mail is simply the best light armor you can wear if you expect to do any real fighting. Ring mail is actually pretty simple armor to make, and you see it quite a lot among poorer soldiers that can't afford chain or scale. Basically, ring mail is simply iron or steel rings sewn onto a backing of leather or even burlap. The rings butt up against one another, but aren't attached to each other like they are on chainmail. They're also a lot bigger. Now, this means that ring mail is nearly as good as chain or scale against a slashing weapon like a sword or an axe; however, because the rings are so large and the armor isn't worn with much padding, it isn't nearly as effective against thrusting and crushing weapons. So what does all this mean to the savvy warrior? Simple. Ring mail is your town armor. It's light enough to wear during a night of drinking, whoring, and even a bit of looting and pillaging, yet still sturdy enough to stand up to the weapons you'd find in the hands of most citizens and town guards. Pair it with a buckler, and you've got the makings of a right effective suit of light, mobile armor.

Shields

Before I get into heavier armors, let's talk a bit about shields. Now most fledgling warriors think that heavy armor, like plate mail, is the key to survivability on the battlefield. Unfortunately, that's simply not true; and any warrior that has survived a battle or two will tell you that it's the shield that was the difference between a wound you can brag about after the battle and lying cold and dead in a pool of your own blood and entrails.

Why is a shield so important, Zavy? Well, if you'd stop flapping those pretty little lips of yours, I'll sodding tell you why!

Alright, armor and shields are both important bits of defensive equipment, but each is based upon a fundamentally different concept of battlefield defense. For armor to do its job, your enemy has to actually hit you; and no matter how good your armor is, there's always some fool that will find a way to compromise it. A shield on the other hand is designed to keep your enemy from hitting you, which, in my opinion, is a much better option to hoping your armor will stand up to that orc and his war pick. A good shield simply makes your armor better. It adds a second layer of defense, so that if an enemy does bypass your shield, you've still got your armor to soak up the blow.

So what kind of shield is right for you? Like armor, that depends on the kind of fighting you're going to be doing. There are four basic categories of shields: bucklers, light shields, heavy shields, and tower

shields. These four categories cover a wide array of shields, ranging from those little dinner-plate-looking things that fencers use, to massive tower shields wide as a barn door and just about as heavy.

Bucklers are the lightest of shields, and they are usually made entirely of metal, have a central grip, and are about as wide as your forearm. Now obviously, you can't exactly hide behind a shield this small, so it requires a bit more of an active defense. In fact, bucklers are often called "punch bucklers" because that's the basic motion required to deflect incoming attacks. Should you use a buckler? Sure. In the right circumstances, they can be pretty handy. Paired with a suit of ring mail and a short sword, they complete a fast, mobile fighting package that's ideal for city fighting and whatnot. However, I wouldn't be caught dead on an honest field of battle with only a buckler between me and anyone with serious intentions of doing me great bodily harm.

Light shields are kind of a catch-all category for shields that are between 18 and 24 inches in diameter. They are often round, and feature a central boss – a dome of metal on the face of the shield – that's pretty handy for smashing an enemy in the face when he least expects it. Most light shields are "punch shields," meaning that they are gripped in the center and the hand fits within a space created by the central boss. Light shields are good multipurpose shields that can be paired with light or heavy armor. They're favored by cavalry, skirmishers, peltasts, and other warriors who don't want to be weighed down by anything heavier. A few enterprising and bloodthirsty fighters often fit spikes to the central boss of a light shield, so they can use the shield to give a nice little tickle to any fool who gets too close.

Now heavy shields are probably your best bet for maximum protection on the battlefield. Although large, most heavy shields feature a loop and strap that fixes the shield to your arm, thereby distributing some of the weight to the big muscles in your back. Heavy shields come in all shapes and sizes, from round shields the width of a tall goblin to rectangular shields that cover a warrior from ankle to neck. The shields we use in the legions are the latter type, and when a line of hobgoblin legionnaires lock their shields together, they're all but invulnerable from the front. You'd probably think that the best weapon to pair with a heavy shield is a great bloody axe or a longsword. Well, you'd be dead wrong. The ideal weapon is a short sword or spear. You see, stabbing weapons don't require a warrior to raise his arm or use any exaggerated movements to deliver a fatal blow. One of my legionnaires can stick his sword into any fool with a great sword without having to even move his shield. He sacrifices none of his defense to use his weapon to its utmost capability.

The last group of shields is called tower shields, and honestly, they're just about useless in all but the most specific circumstances. A tower shield is usually as tall as a tall hobgoblin and about three feet wide. It's usually anchored to the ground to provide cover for archers, crossbowmen, and spear throwers. I'll admit, they're pretty useful in a siege, but they're so heavy that they can't actually be carried by a warrior in combat, making them a poor choice for any warrior that's not content to simply hunker behind a wall like an elf and shoot arrows at honest fighters. ✕

GM



GEMS

A Sucker is Rolled Every Minute

❖ A DM's Primer on the Dirty Underworld ❖

By Harley Stroh

Growing up on the miserable streets, you learned early on that no man is free.

Every knight answers to his lord. Every lord to his king. Every king to his patriarch, and every patriarch his god.

The Thief, alone, dares to defy both man and god, answering to none – save his Godfather.

—introduction to *Crime Pays: A Godfather's Grimoire*

The Underworld; a collection of shadowy principalities ruled by black markets and cruel masters. A hidden society that rewards treachery between allies and honor among thieves, where glittering fortunes can be won by the bold, and anything can be had for a price. A culture that thrives in the shadows of every city-state, hamlet and town – anywhere that a handful of tarnished coins and a few bright jewels can trump a man's sense of duty and principle.

But the underworld is more than just a collection of grimy backdrops for sinister villains and sewer delves. For when PCs are just as likely as to break the laws as uphold them, the underworld is also home.



Crime Pays details the specifics of running a mob, but not every character aspires to be a godfather. But even those simply dwelling in the shadows can't go long without encountering the underworld's grasping tentacles. Those that aim to keep their independence need to be cunning and diplomatic, and at times, brutally violent.

The allure of the underworld is its perceived lack of rules or mores. In practice, a mob has a hierarchy that rivals that of any royal court. The chief difference lies in the structure's explicit ends. Whereas even wicked courts often pretend to strive for the greater good, the criminal underworld is far more honest. Greed is a given, life has no more sanctity than a handful of coins, and duplicity is always expected.

Whereas knights and nobles conceal their vices and sins with a whitewash of elaborate codes of conduct, the criminal element suffers under no such delusions. Whether you are a prince or a godfather, life is brutal, violent, and quick; and only the strong and cunning survive. Rather than attempting to conceal this danger lurking beneath day-to-day interactions, the criminal code is born out of the cesspool of our collective vices.

THE CRIMINAL CODE

When heroes take an active part in a city's underworld, be it as freelance thieves, guild assassins, sell-sword mercenaries, or even leading mobs and gangs of their own, they are participating in the code.

Unlike the good society, where all are presumed equal under the law, the underworld grants you only as much grudging esteem as you earn. And while leading gangs and mobs can earn a character this hard-won respect, a lone character will have to work extra hard to establish and maintain his street credibility.

Crime Pays details the specific mechanics for running a mob. Those same terms and ideas are presented here, intentionally without mechanics, to offer DMs a framework for thinking about their underworld campaigns regardless of edition or game. For instance, it is up to you whether or not to assign a hero an Infamy score, or simply to make a note that the thief is exceedingly infamous in certain cities, and that if he is ever caught, the prince and his judges will come down hard.



Streetwise is the basis of any successful criminal enterprise. The lowest urchin, begging at the city gate, learns far more about the workings of a city than the most cunning royal fop. To survive in the underworld, a PC will do well to cultivate a network of contacts, friends and allies. A copper here to a starving mother, stepping in there to defend a beggar from a beating, keeping peace at a bar when the local adventurers stop in to start a fight – all these things will earn you the gratitude of the underworld's citizens. And like a godfather granting boons to the citizens of his neighborhoods, when it comes time to collect on your favors, your past behavior determines how much information that beggar is willing to share, and whether or not that barkeep is willing to risk hiding you and your companions from the guild thieves hot on your trail.

Streetwise offers the PCs incentive to behave. Certainly any hero is powerful enough to kick the beggar aside without fear of repercussion, but when that hero returns to ask the beggar for leads on a mystery, his past behaviors are sure to come back to haunt him.

Infamy is a measure of how much attention the PC has drawn from the authorities, and determines how those authorities treat the hero if he is ever caught. Infamous scoundrels have greater bounties offered for their capture (potentially turning a neighborhood against a tyrannical PC) just as infamous scoundrels are more likely to be executed once they are captured.

Keeping a low profile requires a shift in most heroes' behaviors. While some bands of PCs wouldn't think twice about brawling within the city watch, it is sure to earn the immediate attention of the prince and his court. Murdering citizens (otherwise known as gaining XP) also draws quick retaliation. Heroes that can't learn to differentiate the city from the dungeon will quickly find themselves pariahs of the underworld, shunned and avoided for all the trouble they bring.

While the underworld is born of duplicity, **Respect** is a measure of how much you are trusted, admired, and simply respected by other leaders in the underworld. Heroes with little respect (and a reputation for duplicity) will find it hard to fence stolen goods or garner support from their fellow coves. Rogues with a high degree of respect, are known to honor their word and treat their fellow thieves well, and find it easy to make useful contacts in the underworld.

SAMPLE UNDERWORLD CAMPAIGN

The following campaign arc can be used for any campaign with a strong urban center. Underworld intrigue can serve as the sole focus of the campaign, or it can serve as running subplot that underscores the theme of the main campaign.

HEROIC TIER

As fledgling criminals surviving in the slums of the city, the heroes run afoul a tyrannical mob boss. Under the godfather's direction, the mob sweeps the slums, forcing all freelance rogues to join the mob, upon pain of death. Of course the terms offered by the mob boss are anything but fair, requiring the heroes to tithe a full 80% of any take, being made in or outside the city. Heroes face the choice of standing up to the mob boss and risking a full-scale gang war, or working to change things from the inside, rising up the ranks of trusted thieves until they can launch an attack on the wicked mob boss.

PARAGON TIER

Having triumphed over the tyrant, the heroes are now either the head of their own gang of coves or well-respected freelance thieves, feared throughout the land. Their previous success draws the notice of the prince of the city, who turns all his considerable might towards stamping out the PCs and their criminal enterprise.

Resolving this conflict is no simple matter. Assassinating the prince only ensures that the next ruler is even more tyrannical, and as a son of royalty, he certainly can't be bought off. Scheming PCs might arrange a means of blackmailing the prince into submission, staging a coup that establishes the city as a free city-state, or even distracting him with greater threats (real or imagined) from outside the city. Success depends more on thorough plotting and cunning deceptions than blades, but blood will certainly run in the streets before the night is done.

EPIC TIER

The PCs' triumph over the prince came at a great cost. Distracted by the heroes and the plots, the prince failed to give attention to his realm's borders. An invading horde of ogres, giants, hobgoblins and demonspawn overrun the city, making it their base for future assaults. The people of the city are enslaved, and put to wicked ends supporting the horde's war efforts.

The city's sole hope for freedom rests with the heroes. Whereas once the PCs' criminal underground worked at odds with the city, now it is the home of the resistance. Managing their criminal empire, the heroes must find a way to oust the horde and its demonic masters before even the PCs are made slaves to its bitter godling. ✕

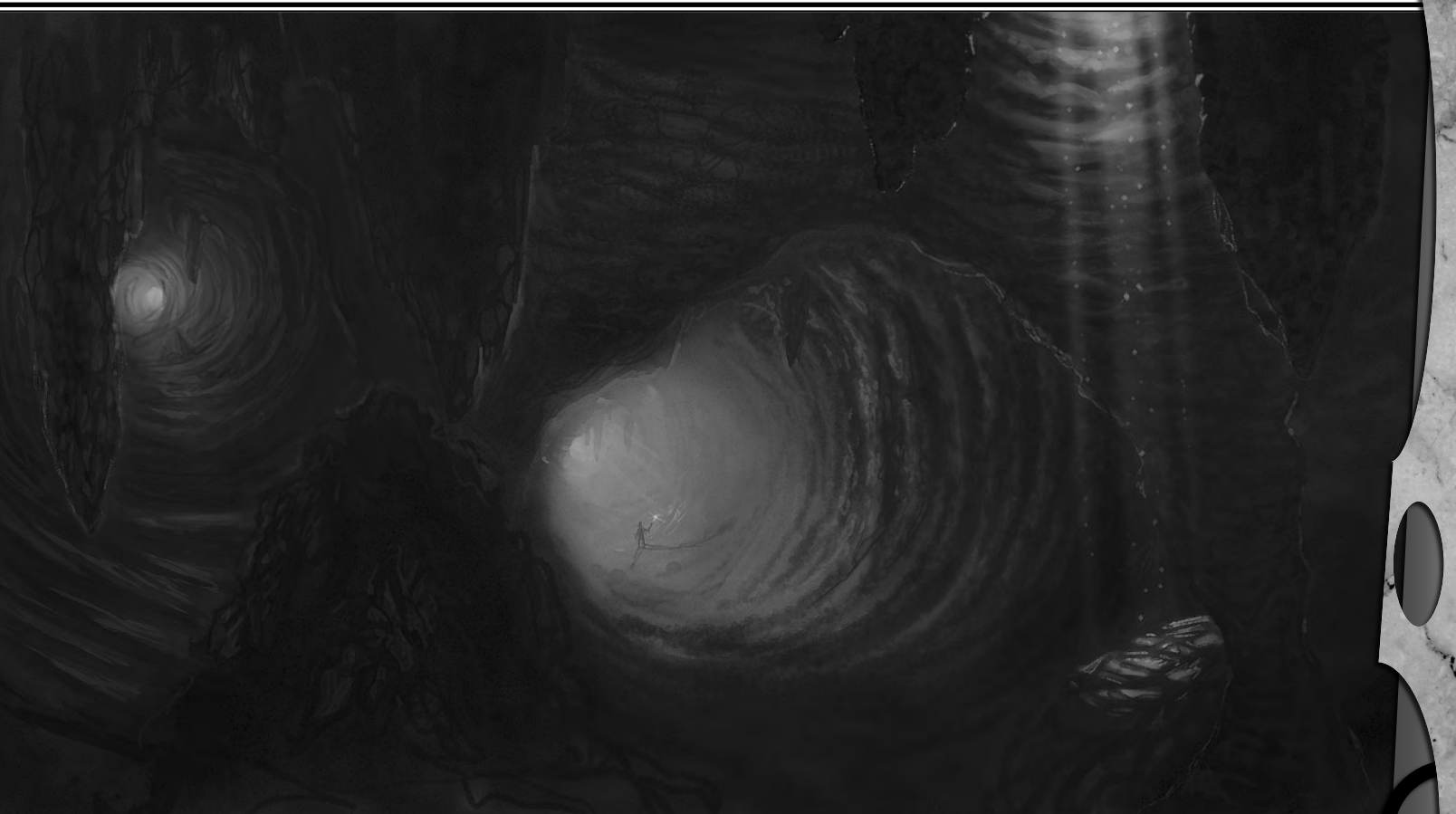
AMETHYST

EXTRAS: BEAUTY IN THE SHADOWS

By Chris Dias

Art by Nick Greenwood

Amethyst presents an image of the future where a fantasy world not unlike the ones read about in books and watched in movies invades our real world. This enchanted reality breaks down scientific laws and throws the technological progression of man into disarray. Five hundred years after this great upheaval, what remains of man's technology is huddled in bastions, sealed safely away from the disruptive elements of magic around it. Humans born in this time must choose either the chaotic and free world of enchantment or the ordered and dependable world of technology. You can have your dragons and faeries or your computers and televisions. You cannot have both.





In the outside world, civilizations are broken into many creeds and ethnic groups. Fae are no exception, but their differences are ubiquitous, branching into entire subspecies with not only unique languages and customs, but radically different physical characteristics as well. Though some races are subtle, many are extreme and jarring. Of all of the civilized fae, the tenenbri are the most rarely seen in Canam (the continent the first book of Amethyst is set in). Though they claim the land in the far south as their realm, many have taken pilgrimage to the north to seek a new life or just to escape the carnage behind them. Like all races in Amethyst, the tenenbri have their own paragon paths and anathematic offshoot race – later deviations of fae which are feral and violent.

TENEBRI

RACIAL TRAITS

Average Height: 4'5" - 5'3"

Average Weight: 50-75 lb.

Average Starting Age: 55 years.

Estimated Life Expectancy: 500 years

Ability Scores: +2 Charisma, +2 Wisdom

Size: Medium

Speed: 6 squares

Vision: Blindsight 20

Languages: Tenenbra, choice of one other

Skill Bonuses: +2 Insight, +2 Perception

Blindsight: You possess blindsight out to 20 squares. (See the D&D 4E DUNGEON MASTER'S GUIDE on "Blindsight"). You cannot read with blindsight, but you do see the written language of dragons (Pleroma); its glowing words illuminate to even those who cannot see. You gain an additional +2 to all Perception rolls that are opposed (like when locating opponents using stealth or when detecting surprise). You also reduce your penalties to attack targets in cover and concealment by 2. You do not grant combat advantage to invisible opponents or opponents that gain combat advantage through stealth. You are immune to being blinded, but if you are deafened, you suffer from the effects of being both deafened and blinded.

Any of the following conditions reduce your blindsight range to 10 squares and nullifies your racial perception and attack bonuses:

- Being on a mount
- Being bloodied
- Being in the air or on a boat
- Performing a ritual
- Sleeping

Piezo Scream: You receive *Piezo Scream* as a racial encounter power.

Piezo Scream

Racial Power

You emit a high-pitched scream to disorientate or damage your foes.

Encounter ♦ **Thunder**

Standard Action

Close burst 1

Target: All creatures in burst

Attack: Constitution +2 vs. Fortitude or Strength +2 vs. Fortitude.

Hit: Targets are dazed (save ends). Increase bonus to hit to +4 at 11th level and +6 at 21st level.

Special: When you create your character, choose Constitution or Strength for the key ability for *Piezo Scream*. This choice remains throughout your character's life.

Tenenbri are a reclusive and xenophobic race that populates the greater portion of the southern continent of Southam. Their appearance in Canam is rare, as they are not particularly popular with other fae races, especially the narros, whom they often clash against in holy war over interpretations of the Oaken Faith. This war has stretched beyond dogmatic principles to encompass an overlying ethnic dislike, though this latter point is endorsed more by the narros than the tenenbri. Both races are thought to have broken off from older fae branches because of their subterranean lifestyle, except that the narros balance their subsurface and surface life and tenenbri choose to remain in the darkness forever.

Tenenbri are astoundingly selfish most of the time, thinking only of themselves or the group they travel with. When they mate, like all fae, it is for life, and they often go to extremes to protect their loved ones. In closed tenenbri communities like the majority of their kingdom in the south, bonding outside the race is strictly prohibited. This is known to go against the tenenbri's natural inclination, an aspect the religious elite have been trying to train their people into rejecting. This effort has been successful with all tenenbri save for the ones that have escaped or live in towns too far away from the empire's influence. Since there are few humans in Southam, and the majority of non-tenenbri races there are at open war, it is an easy law to enforce.

PHYSICAL QUALITIES

Unlike the narros, the tenenbri resemble normal fae in physique. What differ are their skin, their demeanor, and their eyes. The entire tenenbri race is blind. Their eyes are glossed over with pure white. Their irises fade to near nothing, concealed under cataracts. The slightest light reflects a glint off the back of their cornea, casting a white glow in direct illumination. Their deathly pale skin feels cool to the touch. They are shorter than most fae but taller than the narros. Their long ears respond to vibrations in the air, detecting movement in total darkness. Like the damaskans, tenenbri ears are prone to twitch depending on their emotional state. Though their enhanced hearing greatly assists them, it's their connection to the ground which offers them the greatest awareness of their surroundings. Despite the fact that the tenenbri have no real vision to speak of, they still maintain a surprisingly high level of personal grooming. They refrain from flamboyant clothes, preferring simplicity and rarely employ vibrant colors.

CREATING AND PLAYING A TENENBRI

To play a tenenbri means to accept a social stigma nearly as undeserved as the bigotry towards the tilen. Many humans don't understand the prejudice reserved for the tenenbri; resentment endorsed more by the narros than other fae. The narros are known to hold a grudge and their condescension of the tenenbri is multi-faceted. It began with a religious disagreement and extended to the majority of the narros judging all tenenbri dishonorable and untrustworthy.

Where the narros take pride in their discipline and military might, tenenbri play life loose, letting their emotions carry them. As warriors, they employ stealth and trickery more than a daunting shield wall. Tenenbri prefer talking their way out of fights or finding a way for two enemies to kill each other. Their expanded senses have allowed them an impeccable awareness of people's intents. The narros consider this cheating.

Tenenbri only have one name. To verify genetic lines, syllables mark individual similarities. For example two names like Sharajaclypse and Lamaclypse, the ending Clypse denotes their genetic similarity.

TENENBRI LIFEPATH

KINETASSANA

Path: Discipline

Prerequisite: Tenenbri, Wis 14, Dex 14

BENEFITS

Snap-Draw: If you select the Quick-Draw feat, you gain a feat bonus to initiative checks equal to 2 + your Wisdom modifier. You can only withdraw a melee weapon if taking advantage of this alteration.

Propriocepting Posture: If you ready an action to make a melee attack when an enemy moves into an adjacent square, you gain a bonus to the attack roll equal to your Wisdom modifier.

Most of the tenenbri encountered north of Southam are nomadic. Some are gypsies that have gathered in a family caravan to escape their land or explore the world outside. A few are hermits, keeping to themselves and staying out of harm's way. When encountering such a recluse, passers are advised to leave them alone, for they may be a member of an exclusive order of drifting warriors, the Kinetassana.

They may be wise, even friendly, able and willing to lend their skills to the innocent, but Kinetassana prefer solitude and seldom travel shoulder-to-shoulder with others. Even when forced to accompany a party, the Kinetassana trails behind and volunteers little unless forced to.

On the surface, they appear nonchalant, almost unaware of their surroundings. They rarely brandish weapons, with a preference for light varieties they prefer to keep hidden. The weapon is exposed only for an instant, returning to its sheath moments after the strike.

Kinetassana are nearly impossible to be caught off-guard and rarely charge into combat, preferring to let enemies approach and attack. They don't play with targets during a fight. They don't dance around, jump, or tumble. They kill quickly and efficiently, and do so with hardly a sound.

TENENBRI PARAGON PATH KINSHOA MASTER

Most tenenbri prefer isolation to being in crowds. It is a natural for tenenbri to seek isolation at some point during their lives.

Those tenenbri that pursue this path of isolation eventually discover their attuned senses pick up far more around them than the normal world presents. It is the belief of many tenenbri that the fae will vanish into their environment. Some accept and embrace this ideal. The tenenbri's widespread faith in Oaken claims that the only way to truly experience god's grace is to remove all other physical senses. Their goal is to reach a heightened level of spirituality, and the key to this end is the deprivation of every other tie to the physical world. Temples in Vanaka have prayer chambers with stagnant pools that can seal themselves from external contact. Set deep in stone, these chambers carry in nothing from the outside world, and many of the faith have reported encountering visions that have either reaffirmed their faith or disillusioned them. Nearly every tenenbri seeks some moment of clarity in their lives but the current reigning hierarchy frowns on such excursions, believing it to be part of the influence of Attricana.

As a Kinshoa master, you are one such tenenbri that realized enlightenment comes from an absolute discipline to control one's body and mind. You meditate by immersing yourself in water and removing all other senses except for your ability to understand that which cannot be seen.

You can taste emotions on your lips and smell the impulses of your enemies. With such perceptions about the world, nothing comes as a surprise and you never know fear. It is said you are aware of your own death moments before your final breath. You despise deception and have left your people because the corrupted values of its government made you ill.

Prerequisite: Kinetassana

KINSHOA MASTER PATH FEATURES

laodona (11th Level): You never draw your weapon until the moment of a strike. You can use an action point as an immediate interrupt to determine initiative order before you roll your own initiative. Instead of gaining an extra action, you gain a +10 bonus to initiative. If you beat every enemy's initiative by 5 or more, you gain a surprise round. You gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls on this round, and you can score a critical hit on natural roll of 19 or 20.

Wisdom Like an Ocean (11th Level): You gain a +2 bonus to Perception and Insight checks.

Bringer of Justice (16th Level): Your first successful melee attack you make against an enemy in an encounter gains a damage bonus equal to your Wisdom modifier.

KINSHOA MASTER EXPLOITS

Precognitive Outcome Kinshoa Master Attack 11

You hear the nerves fire, the bones creak, the muscles spasm. Before the enemy even realizes his attack, you have brought up your defense.

Encounter ♦ **Martial, Weapon**

Immediate Interrupt **Melee** weapon

Trigger: An enemy hits you with a melee attack that is not a critical hit.

Effect: Spend a healing surge. You regain no hit points, but you can reduce the damage of the triggering attack by an amount equal to your healing surge value. In addition, make an attack against the triggering creature.

Target: The triggering creature

Attack: Strength vs. AC

Hit: 1[W] + Wisdom modifier damage.

Special: If you have no healing surges, you cannot use this power.

Perfection of Form Kinshoa Master Utility 12

Your body is a temple without violation or corruption. You have total control over your faculties and can resist any ailment.

Encounter ♦ **Martial**

Immediate Interrupt **Personal**

Trigger: You suffer one of the following conditions: deafened, dazed, marked, prone, slowed, stunned, or weakened.

Effect: Spend a healing surge. You regain no hit points, but you do not suffer the triggering condition.

Special: If you have no healing surges, you cannot use this power.

Awakening of Enlightenment Kinshoa Master Attack 20

You clear your mind, gain insight of your imminent death, and respond accordingly.

Daily ♦ **Martial, Weapon**

Immediate Interrupt **Melee** weapon

Trigger: An adjacent enemy scores critical hit against you or hits you with an attack that would reduce you to 0 hit point or less

Target: The triggering creature

Attack: Strength +2 vs. AC

Hit: 4[W] + Wisdom modifier damage

Miss: Half damage.

Special: If you kill the target with this attack, you suffer no damage from the triggering attack.

A Picture Tells 1,000 Words:



To receive the wisdom of a king from an age long past, the heroes must placate or defeat the spirits of his advisors.

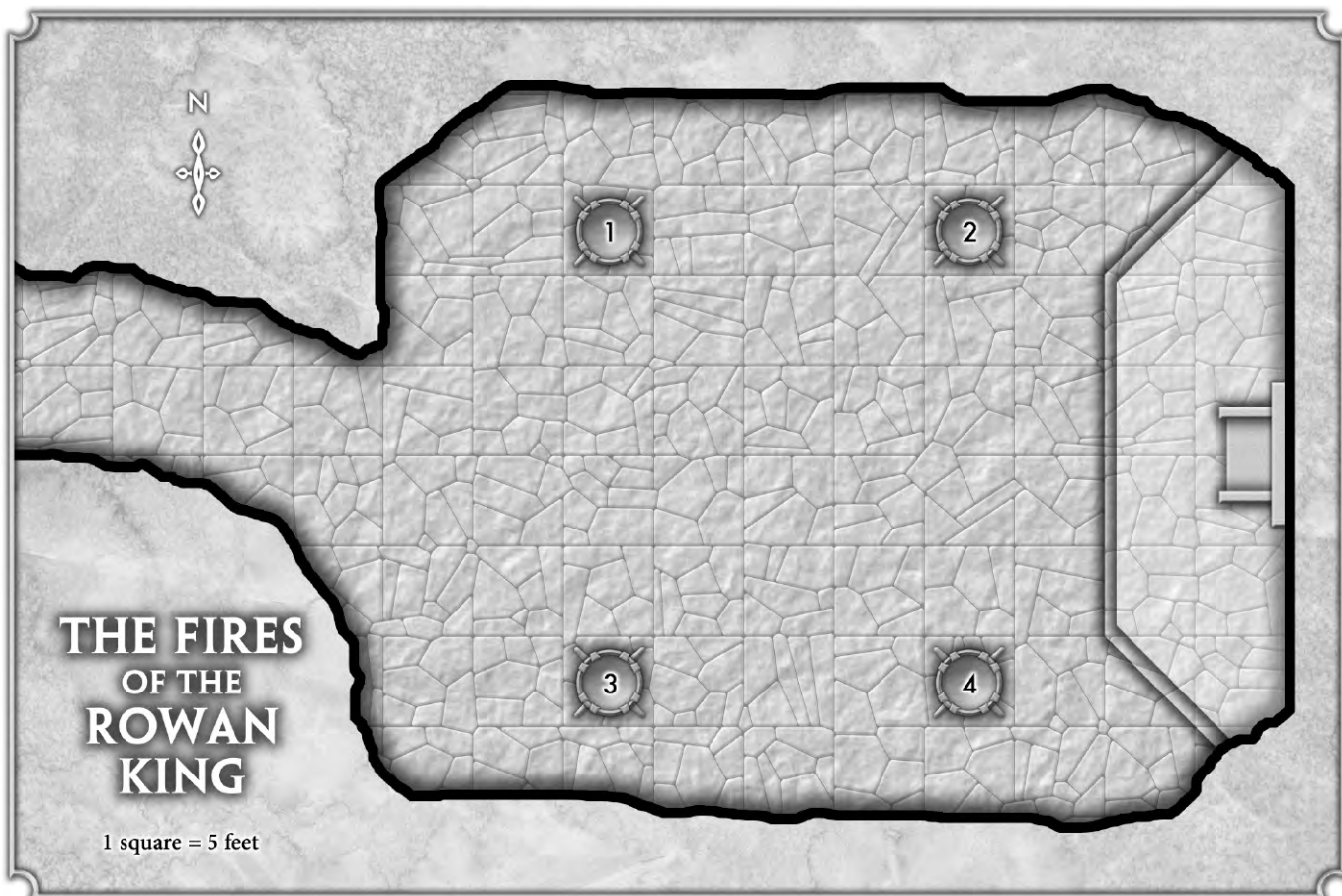
An Encounter for Characters of 6th level

By Brandes Stoddard

The Fires of the Rowan King

RPGs are full of fantastic, evocative illustrations that can do much more than visually describe a scene or setting. A good illustration can be taken out of its contextual surroundings, and admired on its own strengths; inspiring whole new vistas of creative thought. That's what this feature is all about.

In A Picture Tells 1,000 Words, we create a short encounter based on a single fantasy illustration. Each encounter is designed to be easily fitted into nearly any campaign, and can serve as a quick drop in, or even as the beginning of a grand adventure arc. It's all up to you, and we hope that each illustration and encounter inspires you to view fantasy illustrations in a whole new light.



BACKGROUND FOR THE GM

In an age long gone and nearly forgotten, the Rowan King ruled a minor fiefdom of the fey. The Rowan King was known, though, for his surpassing wisdom – shown by the fact that his domain remained small, for he never engaged his neighbors in wars to expand its borders.

The king's throne room became his tomb, and his bones rest there still, encased in armor. His advisors swore they would never leave him, and they have kept that oath, their spirits bound within magical braziers. When their spirits finally rest, the king will speak once more, and his crown and sword shall be restored. These spirits can be put to rest either through oratory or through force.

The Hook: As much as anything, the PCs might seek the throne of the Rowan King for information. When the spirits are laid to rest and the king is endowed with their wisdom, there are few questions in all of creation that he could not answer, including predictions of future behavior. Thus the PCs might seek his aid against a troublesome enemy.

A group motivated by avarice might find the tomb and decide to loot it. The crown and the sword are nearly without value when the characters enter the room. Only by working their way through the encounter can the PCs return them to their full value.

THE CHALLENGE OF HONOR

Encounter Level 6 (XP 1,200)

SETUP

This encounter is made up of four spirits that rest in the braziers of blue flame. If threatened with physical combat or forced to defend the Rowan King's bones, they manifest in physical bodies (they are not insubstantial).

Eladrin Fey Knight (Level 7 Soldier [Leader])
Eladrin Twilight Incanter (Level 8 Controller)
Halfling Prowler (Level 6 Lurker)
Satyr Rake (Level 7 Skirmisher)

Descending through a narrow tunnel from the surface or from another chamber, the PCs come to a large, open room. On the far wall, there is a throne with fanciful carvings of serpents. On the throne sits a skeleton in rusted armor with a tarnished crown and sword. In each corner of the room, a brazier burns with eldritch fire. As the PCs enter the room, faces become visible in the dancing flames. As soon as a PC draws within 10 feet of a brazier, the spirits manifest fully.

THE FOUR SPIRITS

Indra Silverhair (Eladrin Fey Knight), once a knight in service to the Rowan King. She is bound here in brazier number 1.

Danthos Erevandien (Eladrin Twilight Incanter), once a holy man in service to the Rowan King. Danthos is in brazier number 2 on the map.

Oliver Redwine (Halfling Prowler), once the Rowan King's court jester. Oliver is in the brazier marked 3 on the map.

Tavi the Wise (Satyr Rake), once the king's historian and storyteller. Tavi is in brazier number 4.

The spirits retain much of the personalities they had in life, but overlaid with millennia spent destroying those unworthy to

speaking with the King. When anyone approaches the braziers, the spirits explain that they seek demonstrations of the areas of talent or scholarship that they each championed. As with any skill challenge, players should narrate their characters' actions. Ad-hoc bonuses for clever narration are always a good idea.

For the spirits to disperse and rest in peace, the PCs need to show their worth in a number of different heroic virtues. Each spirit requires a separate skill challenge, and the PCs must complete all four skill challenges to put the spirits to rest. Change the primary skill for each of the four skill challenges based on each spirit's personality, as follows:

Indra Silverhair – Diplomacy
Danthos Erevandien – Religion
Oliver Redwine – Acrobatics
Tavi the Wise – History



The Challenge of Honor Skill Challenge

Level 6
XP 250

“Mortal, you intrude on the royal presence. By what right do you tread upon these stones?”

Complexity

2 (requires 6 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills

Acrobatics, Diplomacy, History, Religion

Other Skills

Athletics, Endurance, Insight

Success

When all four of the spirits have been laid to rest, bones within the armor rattle and clank as the Rowan King stands for the last time. The Rowan King addresses the PCs by name and thanks them for giving peace to his followers. In thanks, he offers to be a conduit for an oracular spirit, as per the Consult Oracle ritual (see D&D 4E PLAYER'S HANDBOOK); the PCs will be able to ask up to four questions.

Before departing to his own eternal rest, he encourages the PCs to take up his crown and his sword, so that they may serve a worthy master once again. These are a *diadem of acuity* and a *+2 thundering longsword*.

Failure

If the PCs fail to or decline to put the spirits to rest, they can still leave peacefully so long as they do not disturb the King's bones and regalia. If they approach the throne without setting all four spirits to rest, they manifest fully to defend the dignity of the King.

As when they are laid to rest peacefully, a spirit that is slain fades away and the King's regalia gleams more brightly. When the battle is over, the King offers his wisdom as before. He is aware of their destruction, but he is more concerned with joining them in eternal rest than avenging the long dead. If for some reason the PCs insist on attacking, the Rowan King has the stats of an angel of valor (see D&D 4E MONSTER MANUAL).

If the PCs steal the crown or the sword and depart before laying all of the spirits to rest (one way or another), they are worthless, ruined by the long march of years.

Acrobatics DC 12 (1 success, maximum 1 success)

You demonstrate your limberness and physical agility. This is the primary skill for the skill challenge against Oliver Redwine, and as such; there is no maximum number of successes for this skill in his skill challenge.

Athletics DC 12 (1 success, maximum 1 success)

You demonstrate your physical prowess. Characters can cooperate to aid a lead character using this skill. The group as a whole can only impress the spirits with one display of Athletics.

Diplomacy DC 12 (1 success, maximum 1 success)

You try to impress the spirits with your gifts of oratory and rhetoric. For other spirits, the first successful use of this skill opens up the use of Insight, as the spirits seem particularly moved by the PC's words. This is the primary skill for the skill challenge against Indra Silverhair, and as such; there is no maximum number of successes for this skill in her skill challenge.

Endurance DC 7 (1 success, maximum 1 success)

You try to impress the spirits with a display of incredible fortitude, such as thrusting your clenched fist into the blue flame of the brazier without flinching. Regardless of whether the roll succeeds or fails, this attempt costs a healing surge.

History DC 12 (1 success, maximum 1 success)

You call upon a keen knowledge of history to relate a story of the Rowan King and his loyal retainers. This is the primary skill for the skill challenge against Tavi the Wise, and as such; there is no maximum number of successes for this skill in his skill challenge.

Insight DC 12 (1 success, maximum 1 success)

Drawing an emotional reaction from one spirit, you attempt to discern why the spirits linger in the tomb. The spirits are impressed with a display of empathy. This is available only after one character has gained a success through Diplomacy, and it can only gain one success during the challenge.

Religion DC 12 (1 success, maximum 1 success)

You call upon your knowledge of the heavens and the gods that dwell within them to impress the spirits. This is the primary skill for the skill challenge against Danthos Erevandien, and as such; there is no maximum number of successes for this skill in his skill challenge.

JACK'S ULTRASHORT REVIEWS

New 4E products are constantly being released; but what should you buy? Which products are good...and which products are not so good? Well, Jack is here to help. With Jack's Ultrashort Reviews you no longer need to spend hours plowing through the web for information and reviews about new 4E releases. Jack's Ultrashort Reviews gives you the low-down on the hottest 4E releases and helps you choose which products deserve your hard-earned money.

Every product reviewed is given a star rating from ★ to ★★★★★. Needless to say, the more stars, the safer it is to buy the product.

★: For the love of God (and I do not even believe in God), do not buy this product.

★★: I wasn't impressed, but maybe other people could find it interesting.

★★★: It has some decent things, but overall, there is room for a lot of improvement.

★★★★: Good solid product.

★★★★★: Great product, a must buy. You shouldn't be playing 4E without this.

★★★★★: If you haven't bought it yet, you are a fool!

DEATH'S REACH

WIZARDS OF THE COAST

In the latest installment of the H-P-E-series, the heroes are headed to the Shadowfell to pay a visit to the Raven Queen, but when they arrive near her abode, they find it overrun by Orcus' minions. After liberating the place, the heroes meet up with RQ herself and are pointed towards Death's Reach, an ancient place in the Shadowfell, where gods cannot go, and where a horror from ancient times, the primordial Timesus, is kept captive. Someone has penetrated Death's Reach and is trying to unleash Timesus and his armies on the world.

Can you guess who?

I like that WotC tied the hooks in the adventure to the epic destinies from the PHB; although, the deadly trickster hook is mindblowingly silly: "Hey there, neighbor! I just heard that some guys are planning to attack the Raven Queen and I thought you could make something of that information." Another thing that annoys me to no end is the seemingly random monsters that have been used to populate the dungeon in the adventure. I mean, we are deep in the Shadowfell, a place that has been locked up by the gods and the key thrown away. What are aboleths, githyanki, chuuls, and rakshasas doing there? Sure, it's somewhat explained, but still...

Death's Reach definitely feels epic. I mean, there are two liches and a dracolich in the same adventure, and none of them are even remotely near being the BBEG. This epic tier stuff might need some getting used to. That's not to say that it's a bad adventure. There are some very interesting opportunities for a lot of role playing and several pages dedicated to those encounters. First and foremost with the Raven Queen, and also with the angel who is not all she claims to be. There are a couple of interesting skill challenges, some very cool encounters (the room with four traps and a skill challenge to solve a riddle could be a classic), and probably the coolest monster designed for D&D yet - the worm of ages. Overall though, *Death's Reach* is going to need a helping hand to satisfy my players and their DM.

Rating: ★★★

MONSTER MANUAL 2

WIZARDS OF THE COAST

Arguably one of the most anticipated books of 2009 (for DMs anyway), *MM2* has arrived in style and does not disappoint. In fact, it delivers in buckets. First of all, WotC "completes" the 4E monster list by bringing us all (or at least most of) the classic monsters that were lacking in the first *Monster Manual*. We get the barghest, behir, metallic dragons, golems, cockatrice, couatl, djinns, firbolg, frost giants, nasty hydras (cause the ones in the original *MM* sucked), maruts, neogis, phase spider, remorhaz, rust monster, stone giants, will-o-wisp, duergar, and the xorn; just to name a few. Sure, a few have been published in various adventures, but honestly, these classic monsters belong in a *MM*, and I am happy they were included.

Second, we get some nifty new guidelines for our combats. Solo monsters now definitely only get 8 hit points per level (X4), no matter which role they have, and they now deal considerably more damage. At the other end of the power scale, minions have also received a boost, dealing more damage and many now create an effect when killed. That's just awesome.

Thirdly, the monsters in *MM2* have a lot of new and cool abilities, like the feeding powers of the barghest; the three standard actions of the behir (great way to handle solos if you

ask me); the minion-spawning ability of pod demon; the bebilith's destruction of armor (-1 cumulative AC for the encounter, on each hit); the neldrazu's teleport-hit-teleport-with-enemy power of abduction; the djinn's ability to get AP's when critted; the total-sum hit point system of the ghost legionnaires; and finally, the eldritch giant's consume magic. These monsters and many others should provide great moments at your table, as well as great inspiration for creating your own monster powers. Nothing is ever perfect, however. The ankheg has the wrong hit points; there is a reference to a power that doesn't exist; the use of skill checks to tackle aura effects is a bit clunky; and I was disappointed with too many pages devoted to monster versions of *PHB1* and *PHB2* races. But honestly, these are very small issues. I love 4E, I love cool monsters, and any 4E DM should absolutely buy this book. Heck, the awesomeness of Demogorgon alone should be enough to sway most DMs.

Rating: ★★★★★

CRITTER CACHE: DAEMONS

GOODMAN GAMES/BLACKDIRGE PUBLISHING

Just when I thought things couldn't be better, both on the monster front and on the *Critter Cache* front (*MM2* is out and *Critter Cache: Fey Folk* was awesome), we get us some daemon-love. And let me say this immediately, daemons we need. Don't get me wrong, I love my demons and devils, but it's not always enough. The daemons are perfect to create a more dynamic relationship amongst the evil immortals. After all, a ménage-à-trois is just more fun. The lore sections are getting longer and longer, and we are also treated to 5-6 pages of pure unadulterated fluff explaining the origins of the newest arrivals on the immortal scene, as well as describing where they live. The crunch is the best I have seen from Blackdirge, with very few errors, and even those are quite negligible. There are some truly sick monsters in *CC: Daemons*, especially Typhon, a level 34 solo who has some powers that will make your players cry. But I could also mention the cacodaemon that has a breath weapon that transform people it kills into larva, the chirodaemon that is immune to falling damage and thus attacks by literally kamikaze-crashing into players, the ferrodaemons that get your own sword to attack you, and the minions that explode and daze in a close burst when they die, and so on. In other words, if you like monsters, go buy this now.

Rating: ★★★★★

Jack is the alter ego of Chris Kümmel, an avid 4E fan and reviewer, who has been reviewing pretty much every 4E product under the sun in his popular EN World blogs, Jack99's Ultrashort Reviews of All His 4E Stuff.

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JACK'S ULTRA- ULTRASHORT REVIEWS

The following reviews feature a few sentences about new 4E products in both print and PDF. To read Jack's full review on these products, simply visit his EN World blog at: www.enworld.org/forum/blogs/jack99.

CODEX VENENORUM ONE BAD EGG

To use poison or not to use poison; that is the question. The latest product from OBE breaks down the poison-creation process into easily followed steps, giving us a system to create an endless stream of poisons to use on our players (or our DM's monsters for that matter). Seriously, it's poisons galore, and if you like to use poisons and are tired of every poison inflicting simple ongoing damage, this PDF is simply a must have.

Rating: ★★★★★

EBERRON PLAYER'S GUIDE WIZARDS OF THE COAST

The *EPG* does its job. It provides enough information about the world of Eberron for a player to get a general feel of the setting and make a character that aligns with the world. How useful the book is largely depends on whether you play in Eberron.

Rating: ★★★★★

KINGDOM OF THE GHOULS WIZARDS OF THE COAST

With the last installment (E1 *-Death's Reach*) one of my complaints was that it didn't feel epic enough. Either the guys at WotC thought the same or they read my little reviews (okay, I need to learn to keep that ego in check). Either way, they have totally redeemed themselves with *KotG*.

Rating: ★★★★★

PACT OF GHOSTS ADAMANT ENTERTAINMENT

The idea of the ghost pact is great, and the powers have good flavor. The problem is the crunch. I feel like a parrot at times, but it really is the same issues over and over again. The product has good potential, however.

Rating: ★★

THE SCOURING OF GATE PASS EN PUBLISHING

The first installment of the *War of the Burning Sky* adventure path has arrived! Overall SoGP is a really good adventure (that can easily be made great) to start a 4E campaign, especially if you are not overly fond of dungeon crawls.

Rating: ★★★★★



D20 QUESTIONS: HARLEY STROH

By Aeryn "Blackdirge" Rudel

D20 Questions is a recurring feature in *Level Up* where we interview people of interest to those of us who roll 20-sided dice. This could be writers, designers, game masters, artists, or all of the above.

I recently asked Harley Stroh, staff writer for Goodman Games and prolific author of the *Dungeon Crawl Classics* and *Master Dungeons* series, to take a few minutes from his busy schedule and answer a few questions.

Level Up: You just got back from D&D Experience. It was amazing, I'm sure. So what exactly did you do at the convention?

Harley Stroh: We ran previews of our upcoming adventures, shared our newest releases, and had a chance to meet gamers from around the world. We met folks from Australia, Canada, the UK and all across the United States – an amazing, diverse bunch. But mostly, we did what we do best: run exciting 4E adventures.

LU: Goodman Games is pretty much in the thick of releasing a bunch of cool things with your name on it. You must be having a blast right now!

HS: Absolutely. Having the chance to write for Goodman Games is a lifelong dream come true and with the new edition, the door has been cast open wide. There's a world to explore and we've only just brushed the surface.

The products we've released, and the products we have coming up in the next 7 months are really exciting, to both write and play. Ultimately, we (the Goodman Games writers) are gamers – the products we release are the same adventures, settings and supplements we are hungry for in our own games.

By the time you are reading this, *Azagar's Book of Rituals* will be out. The *Book of Rituals* is easily our most ambitious 4E release to-date. Rituals are one of the neglected aspects of the game, and throw wide the window for player and DM creativity. *Azagar's Book of Rituals* is the result of a world-wide open call for 4E writers, and the 300+ published rituals are the best of the best.

From Here to There is a collection of short adventures that take place outside of the usual dungeon crawl. Too often, players can grow complacent once their characters are outside of the dungeon. *From Here to There* offers a solution to that with adventures that can take place nearly anywhere, ensuring that your players never relax.

Finally, we have *Death Dealer* coming out soon. I am huge fan of both Frank Frazetta's paintings and Image's *Death Dealer* comics, so the chance to translate the comics to an RPG form was a dream come true. Brutal, chaotic warfare, rampaging hordes of undead, and heroes set against impossible odds – *Death Dealer* trades in epic fantasy themes that would make Frazetta smile.

LU: *Mists of Madness* is a *Dungeon Crawl Classics* adventure you wrote last year, which costs only \$2.00 for the customer. It looks quite enticing; can you give a little info about the plot?

HS: I was doing research for my *Age of Cthulhu* adventure at the same time I was writing *Mists* so there is a fair bit of thematic overlap. The culmination of *Mists* isn't true to the Cthulhu-mythos, but the overlap will be obvious to anyone with a passing familiarity with Lovecraft and his peers.

LU: Where did the initial idea for this come from?

HS: A few years ago I picked up the phenomenal H.P. Lovecraft Historical Society's silent film: *Call of Cthulhu*. When I was working on *Mists*, I put the DVD on repeat and soaked in the atmosphere. From there, I mixed in a little nostalgia from *Gygax's Tomb of Horrors* and the rest wrote itself.

LU: I really think that the \$2 module is a brilliant piece of marketing, helping introduce the DCC line to new players. In



fact, my first official experience behind the screen was running Jeff LaSala's \$2 module, *The Transmuter's Last Touch*, and I've been solely running Dungeon Crawl Classics for my gaming group ever since. What made you decide *Mists of Madness* was going to be the 4E \$2 module?

HS: Joseph Goodman calls the shots. He asked for a \$2 adventure, and we jumped at the chance to write it. *Mists* was a natural fit – shorter than many of the other adventures we are publishing, but long enough to for an intense few sessions. And of course, it is set in the swamps just outside Punjar, a city close to my heart.

LU: Then we have *Curse of the Kingspire*, the second of your Master Dungeons titles. For those that don't know, what is the Master Dungeons line all about and how is it different than the Dungeon Crawl Classics line?

HS: The Master Dungeons line is all about high adventure, exotic locations, and epic deed done by great heroes (regardless of level). If the DCC modules draw their inspiration from heroes like Gray Mouser and Fafhrd, the Master Dungeons look to Elric and Beowulf. Master Dungeons take place on a grander stage than the DCCs, with a broader, more sweeping scope. When you've finished a MD adventure, the world should be a changed place.

LU: I picked up *Dragora's Dungeon* when it first came out and I totally agree with the EN World fan reviewer that said this would make a perfect sword and sorcery style Conan novel. You must have had a great time writing this one.

HS: Absolutely. I've long believed that the key to writing a good adventure, true to the heart of D&D, is to go back to the source texts – Howard, Moorcock, Tolkien, Leiber: the greats that laid the foundation for the

worlds of fantasy we enjoy today. The first two Master Dungeon modules reflect my admiration and love Howard and Moorcock, respectively.

LU: And speaking of "sword and sorcery," soon we will be seeing the release of *The Adventures of Frank Frazetta's Death Dealer: Shadows of Mirahan*. You mentioned this earlier. How were the seeds of this project sown? This module will be closely based on the comic book series of the same name produced by Image Comics, won't it?



HS: The chance to write *Shadows of Mirahan* was a dream come true, and like most of our good ideas, it came from Joseph Goodman. He and I are both big fans of Image's Frazetta line, and adapting the comics to D&D was a natural fit. I had a lot of fun living in the world created by Jay Fotos, Nat Jones and Joshua Ortega – they did a phenomenal job bringing Frazetta's visions to life. But we also worked hard to capture the raw, visceral violence of Frazetta's Death Dealer paintings, which meant coming up with some new rules that make 4E combat quick and brutal. Living up to Frank Frazetta's artwork is an impossibly high standard, but we did our best and I think we did it justice.

The biggest, unspoken key to being a great DM is experiencing life. To ensure your games crackle with realism, go out and do something exciting that doesn't involve gaming.

LU: It must feel great to be so closely connected with such pulp fantasy history and be able to bring that into the new edition.

HS: I've had a love of pulp fantasy that stretches back to my childhood. Right now, at my writing desk, Tolkien, Moorcock, and Leiber are within reach, along with an old *Gord of Greyhawk* novel and some Mike Mignola *Hellboy* collections. In many ways, the advent of 4E blew the doors open wide – suddenly adventures and settings like *Death Dealer* and Punjar seem that much more vibrant, dangerous and real. For better or worse, we had all acquired a passing mastery of 3.5 – there was very little that could instill true fear into a player any longer. But 4E wiped that slate clean, and suddenly we're in unknown territory again. Suddenly we're *adventuring* again. We don't know what's around that next mountain pass, or in the heart of that fetid swamp...but with a good sword arm and a chain hauberk, we're willing to find out.

LU: So do you have a 4th edition home game going right now?

HS: Home game, yes. Home campaign, no. I abuse my poor players by forcing them to playtest all our upcoming adventures. It's a good night when we have fewer than 2 TPKs. I've promised them the chance to play something that lasts more than 4 sessions, set in the slums of Punjar, and they leaped at the chance. Of course, little did they know this is just another chance to playtest an upcoming product...

LU: Outside of gaming and reading, what do you do for fun?

HS: I have the good fortune of living in Colorado. My backyard is the Rocky Mountains. In the summer we do a lot of rock climbing and spelunking. In the winter it is snowboarding and cross country skiing. And any time of year that I can find dry pavement, I'm skateboarding. Anything physical that leaves me knocked around a bit – my wife dreads me coming home because it is always with new bruises and scrapes.

Every Gen Con we host a seminar, "How To Write Adventure Modules that Don't Suck." I've never worked up the courage to say it, but the biggest, unspoken key to being a great DM is experiencing life. To ensure your games crackle with realism, go out and do something exciting that doesn't involve gaming.

LU: What's this I heard about a broken leg from your wild skateboarding escapades last year?



HS: We have a great skatepark in Carbondale, but every now and then it is good to get out of town to see some new terrain. I drove an hour to get to the Edwards skatepark.

I was doing slides down a twenty-foot ledge, and ended up having to run it out. But something went wrong and the bones just above my ankle folded.

There aren't a lot of thirty-something skaters to hang out with, so I ended driving myself back home to the hospital. They put titanium plates on either side of my ankle, essentially a bone sandwich.

I was up and moving again in time for snowboarding season, but with one important caveat: the doctors assured me that if I ever succeed in tweaking my ankle hard enough to tear the screws out of the bone, the resulting "spring-ing" force from the plates will make my ankle explode. It'd be interesting to see, that's for sure.

LU: Sounds like more real-life inspiration for the critical hit tables from *Death Dealer*! Thanks for your time, Harley. ✕

STORE SPOTLIGHT: YOTTAQUEST

7607 Hamilton Avenue
Cincinnati, OH 45231
513-923-1985
www.yottaquest.com

America's Favorite Game Store! In 2009, Goodman Games held a fan contest to nominate and vote for their favorite game store. YottaQuest was the first place winner. You can see for yourself what a great-looking store it is. If you're



ever in Ohio, pay it a visit. As for the rest, let's quote some of the gamers who voted:

"Fantastic well stocked store, customer friendly staff, and lots of play area. If Matt would let me move in, I would. YottaQuest IS gaming in Cincinnati."

"Congrats to YottaQuest! This place has seriously been like a second home for the past couple of years from me. I can't think of a nicer person than Matthew Fay to receive this award."



Dear Archmage Abby,

I have been in a small gaming group for a year in my new city. After a chance meeting at our local coffee shop, we decided to combine with another small group. Our larger games are great but I have one pet peeve about our new gaming buddies. One of them, a pretty good gamer, flat out refuses to even consider ever running a game. He won't discuss it or give any reasons, he just says no. In the past, we all shared GMing duty and it seemed to work out well. Is it fair to play but never GM? I would be ashamed if it were me – shouldn't he be?

Sincerely,
Fair and Barbaric

Dear FaB,

The Archmage rules for tolerance. To the serious gamer, GMing is a real responsibility and not one to be undertaken lightly. Just because he won't give his reasons doesn't mean he doesn't have reasons. The subject might be embarrassing for him to discuss; he might get shy speaking in front of groups, or lack confidence in his ability to tell a good story. How hard would it be to say, "Friends, I love gaming but I'm barely competent enough to calculate my armor class, much less keep track of a whole dungeon,"? Perhaps your friend realizes that if he got behind the screen he would become a character-destroying tyrant – or worse, a softie GM afraid of his own kill power! Cut the fellow some slack. If he is the only non-GM in your new larger group then it seems to me that your crew has plenty of masterminds to go around.

And who knows? If you don't make a fuss about it he may quietly get over whatever he needs to get over and surprise you with a campaign someday. Miracles happen!



Dear Archmage Abby,

A very old boyfriend of mine just found me on an online networking site. At first I was very excited to be back in touch. We started swapping messages and catching up. I asked if he was still running his excellent D&D game and he acted shocked – it seems he joined an extremely conservative church that condemns FRPGs. He said that my friends and I were hell bound for our love of dungeon delving and monster busting. I told him he was wrong, but now I find myself thinking about his message. Is gaming a sin?

Thanks for your help,
Nervous Paladin

Dear NP,

If gaming is a sin then storytelling is a sin, reading a novel is a sin, watching a movie or a television program is a sin, children playing "let's pretend" is a sin, writing poetry is a sin, music is a sin, theater is a sin . . . the Archmage could go on and on.

Extremists will ruin the world if you give them the chance. Make fun of them!



Confidential to Wand of Lightning: I don't believe a word of it. Someone would have gotten arrested and it would be all over cable news, not to mention the Internet. And besides – nobody that famous would play your cleric. Please – no more bogus letters, okay kids?



Need some gaming advice? Send queries to Archmage Abby!

We reserve the right to edit letters for size and content. Letters are posted anonymously, and if you do not provide us with a topical nickname for yourself one will be generated for you by rolling randomly on Table 15-9: Archmage Abby's New Names for her Darling Gamers. Sending a letter to the Archmage does not guarantee publication. All content becomes property of Goodman Games.

If you wish a confidential reply, please let us know and we will do our best to accommodate you.

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