

Sinopa Omnibus

Volume One



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Dedicated To

Miguel, John B., John C.,

Ricky, Chris A. Kynan, Doc

and Justin

**This book is also dedicated
to the memory of Dr. Donald Turner.**

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From the Author:

I love to write, to create fantastical worlds and to dream up stories for people to enjoy. It is a great pleasure to present the product of my imagination for others to enjoy. To me there is a sense of participation as if I'm somehow a part of the games that people play around their table with their good friends. In some small way maybe I am. I hope so.

Each month I enjoy crafting a new character, creature or monster and having an artist breathe life into it. Stories blossom about these fantastic people, monsters and beasts in the games in which they appear and memories are made.

Ol' Jack has given a great fright to players in Texas. D'Inn betrayed yet another client in Kentucky. Abuela warmed the hearts of players in Puerto Rico. Christina found a new master to complete her training in the arts of wizardry around a table of good friends. Cupid broke hearts in games around Valentines' Day and everyone wanted an Incarnate Cat for a pet or familiar. These moments are what make writing for role playing games special to me.

The material here is presented in the order in which it was released. Each entry is graced by a full page illustration of the month's subject character, contains its own story, provides stats for using in the 5th edition ruleset of Daven & Gary's game. You'll find treasure information as well as notes to game masters about integrating or using the character at your table.

As of this writing I am coming to the end of my second year of publishing. It has been an amazing experience made possible by many wonderful people without whom I could never have created my books. So to James, Brian, Phoenix, Rebecca, James, Zack, Avery, Bubba, Ryan, Christian, Anthony, Shane, the Immortal John Collins, Carlos and Henrietta, Kelsy, Jake, Alexia, Nick, Josh, Jarrod, Joshua, Michael, Bill, James, Michael S., Mickie, David, Mike, Kynan, Daniel, Susan and Chris (who so often fought orcs at my side) I thank you all for your insights, friendship and support.

For you dear reader, thank you for letting me share my adventures, ideas and stories with you. I hope you enjoy this book for years to come and that it serves you well.

For Patricia, who so diligently points out the silly mistakes I make and guides me to them for correction. Thank you for going above and beyond, for being the mother to three of the best friends I've ever had and for keeping Scott safe and healthy. May the joy in your life only grow with each passing day.

This book is dedicated, in part, to the memory of Dr. Turner, who so often supported my Kickstarter campaigns and provided thoughtful feedback of the content I had produced. I never met Dr. Turner face to face and now I'm sorry I will never have the chance to do so. This book carries a dedication to him so that folks will know that he was a gamer of keen insight and that he encouraged me to challenge myself in my creative efforts. Thank you Don

~ W.S. "Sam" Quinton



The ale had a bite to it. I set down my mug and took stock of old man before me.

“Two silver, old man. If it be true and of good use, I’ll return and pay you another three silver.” I waved two fingers at the bar maid, and she hurried to fill two more pints.

“An’ if you’re dead and rotting in the ground then I only get two silver for the telling.” He shook his balding head at me. “Nay young’un, pay me properly or be off with ye’. It be a cursed thing I ‘av to tell you and no good will come to me if you can’t lay Ol’ Jack to rest.”

“If you’re information is good then I’ll survive just fine and Ol’ Jack won’t be around to harm anyone any longer.” I slipped the copper coins to the bar maid and pushed another ale to my guest. “I’ve slain many a monster, Ol’ Jack will be the next. But to have my best chance against him, I need to hear what you know.”

His hands shook as he lifted his ale for a long pull. When he lowered his mug and sat there, staring into his cup with old, haunted eyes. “Slain many you say? Ol’ Jack is no mere monster, boy. Once, years ago, he was just a man same as you. Now, well now he’s the terror of the night.”

His eyes locked with mine. “I’ve lived a long time by staying out of Ol’ Jack’s way. Five silver, or I’ll not tell you a thing.”

Bollocks.

I fished the five silver pieces from my pocket and stacked the coins in front of me. “Start talking.” I told him. He eyed my coin then sagged in his seat.

“You ‘ave to understand, this was a long time ago.” He began.

“It was the spring and the floods had been bad. My younger brothers and I were clearing the bottom field of tree limbs and other rubbish while my father and our older brother were plowing the high fields.

“It was muddy, miserable work. The bugs were biting and we went barefoot to spare our boots.” He paused for another drink, and fixed his gaze into his cup.

“Back then, there was this fella what had a farm upriver from our place. Jacob Highson was his name. Old man Highson had a pretty daughter, Heather was her name. She had yellow hair and big blue eyes.” His weathered face cracked into a smile at the memory. “Old man Highson was pretty particular about people courting his daughter. “You had better have good manners and be ready to put your back to work by his side if you were going to even get a word in with her.

“I was a bit smitten by the girl. She was pretty and she had a smile that was as bright as stars. So when we got that lower field cleared, I snuck off one day to the Highson place. Old man Highson didn’t have any sons, and just the one daughter so he did a full day of work every day rain or shine. His misses and Heather would tend the chickens and pin up the sheep, and do the milking, but he was out there plowing and planting from before the sun and wasn’t coming in ‘till the stars shone.

“So I went out and found him in the fields. Spent the day lending a hand, and talking a bit. So it went, once each week when I could get away, I’d go out to the Highson place and lend a hand.

“I was tired and worked to high stink, but when we would get done Highson would spare me some water, tell me I done a good job and send me on home. Heather would smile at me from the window. I think she was happy her daddy was home before sundown.

My brothers and I got our family place planted and ready well before the spring moved into summer. I spent the rest of that next week helping Old man Highson and we got his place planted and most of the repair work done on the riverside fences. Things looked good for strong crops, but then...” His voice drifted off and I saw tears pooling in his eyes and running down the furrows of his cheeks. He took another long pull of his ale and I waved the barmaid over for another.

“Then the storm came. It rained for days, harder than I ever seen before or since. The river swept up over my family’s bottom land and buried the field in mud and debris. But it was worse for the Highsons.

“The river left its bank and washed out their bottom land, just like ours, but the river cut into the hills and they came tumbling down into the flood and the house came down with it. The three of them went into the water and the flood took them.

“When the rains stopped we went out to check the bottom land. It was flooded deep and splintered beams floated in those muddy waters. There, in the water was Ol’ man Highson, floating dead next to a bloated cow and a handful of dead chickens. Not sure what happened to him but his head was torn clean off.

“We never did find his misses, nor Heather neither. My father and I buried him on his land. He had been a good man. Worked hard, loved his family, and hadn’t been cross with me at all. I never set foot on the Highson place after that, which is good.

“The next year, Billy Smithson set out to rebuild the Highson place. He had his eye on the flat land up from where the house used to be, and had taken a liking to fishing in the bend of the river that the flood had cut out from Highson’s lower fields. So Billy went out there with his younger brothers, a couple of his cousins and some friends of his and they raised up a small house for him. I’m told it was nice.

“When they finished with it, Billy took up living in the place that same day.” The old man looked up at me and shook his head. “Poor Billy didn’t have much sense to begin with, but if he had known what was coming even he wouldn’t have been so bold.”

“A week after Billy took up in his new place his father and mother came by to visit. To look in on him, you know. It was Billy’s daddy what found him, his head cut off and nowhere to be found.

“Billy’s brothers and sisters, his cousins and friends, their family, really just about everyone about went looking. Folks wanted to find out who had killed ‘im.

“They never found Billy’s head, but they found Old man Highson’s grave. It was empty and Billy’s blood was splattered on the stone we placed as a marker.

“Over the years people seen things. Claimed they saw Old man Highson’s body walking ‘round with an unholy glow where his head ought to be. Folks were scared for a good while, but about ten years after Billy died, well that Bosen boy decided to fix up Billy’s place and moved in. Well, he didn’t last a night now did he!?” The old man’s eyes came alive, tears flowed freely down his cheeks.

“The folks started calling him Ol’ Jack soon after. Every few years some fella would come by an ask about the place. Folks would try to warn ‘em off but they never listen. Soon the new fella’ would be dead and people would chalk another one up to ‘Ol’ Jack’.

“Highson worked his fields tirelessly and now that he’s dead he’s still at it. Likely ‘nough he’s out there looking for his family and those that try to settle are just tresspassin’ on the wrong man’s place. Folks what tried to put ‘im down don’t come back. There’s been those what came to bring the divine down on Ol’ Jack and they get found dead and headless just like the rest.

“If you value your head young’un, you leave Jacob Highson alone. Leave his farm to him and pray that one day he lays down and stays dead. Ain’t nothing good that comes from tangling with that man. Dead or not, that’s his place and he means to keep it.”

I finished my ale and handed the old man his silver. The dead walk the land on Highson’s farm, and it must be laid to rest. Those who came before me have failed, but through faith I shall prevail.

~ From the journal of Angus Featherton, Paladin
Found dead and decapitated on Highson Farm

Ol' Jack

Medium Undead, Humanoid, Neutral Evil
Unique Monster

Armor Class: 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points: 154 (16D8 + 90)

Speed: 30

Str	Dex	Con	Wis	Int	Cha
18	16	20	12	12	8

Saving Throws: Dexterity +8, Wisdom +6
Charisma +3

Skills: Perception +5, Stealth +8

Damage Resistance: non-magical bludgeoning,
piercing and slashing attacks.

Immunities: Necrotic damage, decapitation

Senses: Darkvision 120 feet, Passive perception 15

Languages: Understands all spoken languages but
is incapable of speech.

Challenge Rating: 13 (10,000 XP)

Actions:

Unarmed Attack: Melee weapon attack: +8 to hit
Reach: 5ft One Target
Hit: 12 (1d8+4) Bludgeoning
+ (1d8) Necrotic

Farm implement: Melee weapon attack: +10 to hit
Reach: 5ft One Target
Hit: 8 (1d8+4) damage type varies
by implement used.

Multi-Attack: Ol' Jack may make two attacks per
round. Both such attacks must be
against the same target and must
utilize a farm implement.

Legendary Actions:

Each night, Ol' Jack can make up to three (3)
legendary actions, choosing to use any of those
options listed below. No more than one legendary
action may be made during a turn, and each legendary
action may be used more than once each night to the
maximum of three use (in total) each night.

- 1) Screaming ball of flame ~ At the end of a round,
Ol' Jack may throw the pumpkin that replaces his
missing head. This attack targets an individual
target, erupting in greenish flames that engulf the
victim dealing 8d6 of necrotic damage. The target
may attempt a Dexterity save with a DC equal to
Ol' Jack's attack roll or better to negate the damage
Ol' Jack makes his ranged attack roll at a +8. At
the beginning of the following round, the flaming
pumpkin reappears atop Ol' Jack's shoulders.
- 2) Summon Mists ~ At the beginning of a round,
before initiative starts, Ol' Jack can summon a
thick blanket of fog as per a Fog Cloud spell cast
at fifth (5th) level. This fog has an effect radius of
100 feet, can be summoned up to 120 feet away,
and persists until dawn or until a wind of moderate
or stronger force disperses it.
- 3) Manifest weapon ~ At the end of a round, Ol' Jack
may summon forth a suitable farm implement for
use as a weapon. Ol' Jack favors sickles, scythes,
and pitchforks to dispatch trespassers on Highson's
farm. These tools exist until dawn.

Weaknesses:

- 1) Ol' Jack is searching tirelessly for his lost family.
When the monster encounters any woman with
blonde hair, he ignores them unless they attack him.
If such a combatant does attack, the monster must
succeed at a Wisdom Saving throw (DC: 18) or it
will not be able to attack that target that round. The
monster may attempt this saving throw each round
it is attacked.
- 2) Ol' Jack suffers double damage from holy water.

Lair: Highson's Farm

Ol' Jack only manifests on Highson's Farm and only at night. During the day the monster does not exist on the physical plane. Each night Ol' Jack wanders the farm, searching for his lost head and his missing family. Ol' Jack has no recollection of any living being beyond his long dead wife and child. This monster ruthlessly slays any living sentient being he finds on Highson's Farm, with a singular curious exception.

While manifested on Highson's Farm, Ol' Jack has advantage on any saving throws to resist the effects of any Channel Divinity ability.

Until such time as Ol' Jack's curse is lifted, the monster will reappear each night to haunt the farm. If the monster is destroyed, but the curse not lifted, it reappears on the farm on the next night of the full moon.

Story Hook:

Ol' Jack is cursed to wander the Highson Farm until he has recovered his missing head and the bodies of his long dead family. If he is defeated/destroyed, he will reappear on the night of the next full moon and continue to haunt the farm.

In order to lift the curse, the bones of his wife and daughter, as well as his own missing skull, must be buried on the farm. Searching the bottom land near the river on a certain farm may reveal those bones buried under years of churned soil. The ghosts of Heather Highson and her mother haunt that field, appearing on nights of the full moon.

A paladin recently claimed to have vanquished Ol' Jack and took up residence on Highson Farm to prove his victory. A fresh grave was found holding his decapitated corpse shortly thereafter. People are talking about leaving the region, citing that the area is cursed. Ridding the region of Ol' Jack would make the adventurers renowned heroes in the area and they would be allowed to claim Highson Farm as their own. Can they rise to the occasion?

Treasures:

Jacob Highson was a devoted family man and hard working farmer. What little wealth he had was hidden away on the farm and later found by Billy Smithson. Billy used those few coins to help pay for materials for the building of his house, which still sits (in ruins) on the Highson Farm. The following treasures may be recovered once Ol' Jack's curse is lifted:

Wedding Rings ~ Both Jacob and his wife Susan wore plain silver wedding bands. Each bore a simple inscription in elvish on the inside of the band. The elvish script reads "Mel Uireb" which in the common tongue means "Eternal Love". As simple wedding bands these are worth 10 gold pieces each, though they may carry special meaning for anyone who earns them as treasure.

Loot from victims ~ Over the sixty years that Ol' Jack has haunted Highson Farm, a number of would-be heroes have attempted to vanquish the monster. Though much of that loot has been found over the decades, items may be found after a thorough search of the farm.

These treasures are found in unmarked graves scattered about the farm. Ol' Jack buried his victims where they fell. Roll 1d12 to determine the number of graves on the farm. Roll once per grave against each percentage chance, if the percentile roll is lower than the chance indicated then the item is found.

Treasures discovered in each:

- ~ Coin ~ 1d4 x 10 gold coins, 2d5 x 10 silver coins
- ~ 50% chance of +1 enchanted armor
GM's choice of type
- ~ 40% chance of +1 dagger
- ~ 20% chance of Handy Haversack
- ~ 10% chance of +2 weapon, GM's choice of type
- ~ 5% chance of Ring of Free Action
- ~ 2% chance of Mace of Disruption

Example Skill Test Results:

Investigation (Intelligence)

Task Difficulty	DC
Very easy	5
“The old Highson Farm is haunted. Ol’ Jack kills those that are on that farm. Don’t set foot there or you’ll be dead by dawn.”	
Easy	10
“You’re safe in the daytime, but come nightfall Ol’ Jack will get you. Sometimes folks go out in the day to look for family they aint’ seen in a while and hope they don’t find them.”	
Medium	15
“Ol’ Jack hates men folk. Only people who ever seen Ol’ Jack and lived to tell of it were women-folk.”	
Hard	20
“Some people go out there and are never found. Most that die out there are found in fresh graves. There’s been some adventuring types that went out to put Ol’ Jack down but they never came back. Somewhere out there may be some treasures worth looking for, if only a person could find ‘em.”	
Very Hard	25
“A few years ago, that paladin fella’, Angus Featherton went after Ol’ Jack. His priestess friend came running from the Highson Farm and was never the same. Folk’s say she left the church and has turned to drink, wasting away in taverns and living as a shameful example of a fallen hero.	
Nearly Impossible	30
“Billy Smithson’s sister, Amber says she saw Ol’ Jack. Says the monster walked right past her as she was caught out on the farm after nightfall. Don’t know why he didn’t kill her too. Never known her to lie either. When folks accused her of telling tales, she went out to the farm again and walked out at dawn. Some folks thought that maybe Ol’ Jack wouldn’t kill women, so Sarah Benly went out to fix up the house as her own. She was dead the next day. No telling what kept Ol’ Jack from killing Amber, but she never set foot back out there again.”	

Perception (Wisdom)

Task Difficulty	DC
Very Easy	5
“The rolling fog obscures your view this night. A strange green glowing orb is visible in the distance.”	
Easy	10
“The rotting farm house looms in the darkness. A strangely dark shape atop the hilltop, shrouded in inky darkness and surrounded by moonlight.	
Medium	15
“The soil here has been recently turned. The loose earth is inches higher than the surrounding ground and roughly six feet long. It reminds you of a freshly covered grave.”	
Hard	20
“There are three strange lumps in the fallow field. This place has a strangely still quality to it. Insects are quiet, the birds in the nearby brush are silent, your footsteps are the only sound that carries on the breeze. There is a single finger bone protruding from the dirt of one of these old, unmarked graves.	
Very Hard	25
“A strange odor assails your senses. Old death, rotting vegetation and the pungent tinge of brimstone are carried to you on the breeze. You face jerks into the wind as your instincts direct your eyes into dark night.	
“The stench grows stronger as the strange flickering light in the fog grows larger, approaching with the steady pace of inevitable death.”	
Nearly Impossible	30
“Searching through the mud yields reveals what you seek. The brittle bones have long been hidden from the world, lying in the muck among the ruined artifacts of their lives. Fragments of broken cups, rusty knives and rotting cloth litters the bones as if trying to comfort the dead with some memory of their lost lives. The two skeletons came to rest here with their arms reaching to one another and died mere inches apart.”	



Alexia
Veldhuisen '18

Tales of D’Inn depict him in many different ways. To some he is a formidable mercenary, while to others he is a treasonous bastard whose loyalty can be bought away for the right price. Those later tales ring with the tone of truth.

“I hear you are available for hire. I’m looking for someone who knows the end of a blade and where to stick it.” The human magician gloated as he pitched his offer to the battle-scarred goblin across the table. “You would be serving as one of my elite goblin warriors. The other goblins would answer to you, and through you they would obey my commands. I offer you the sum of one silver coin each week, plus rations and one share in fifty of the spoils of my campaign.”

He chuckled, then drank deeply of his wine. “No other goblin has had such a wondrous offer, of this I can assure you.”

D’Inn finished the cheap ale before him, and grimaced at the taste. He had become accustomed to finer fair. He stood and pushed his stool in before walking around to the stand next to his would-be patron. “You is talking nothing good.” The common tongue rolled out easily, in spite of the ale. “I is no mere goblin out of the warren. I is D’Inn! I am hero of many battles, victor over many powerful warriors, survivor of every battle I ever fought! One silver coin a week you say? Bah! D’Inn is given three gold each day by she who wants you dead. Here you give me three hundred gold now, and hires me for five gold a day after. Then I kill for you. What say you?”

The magician sputtered at the sum mentioned, staring at the goblin warrior awaiting his answer. “Three hundred, now?!?! I haven’t...ERKTG!!!”

His response was quickly cut short as D’Inn’s dagger plunged into his neck. “No money, I no kill for you. Her money fine, I kill for her. You die now.” With that the goblin veteran plunged his dagger into the magician’s chest with a powerful stroke, burying the blade to the hilt and snuffing out the life of the magician known as Renaldo the Unholy.

The clientele in the Crusty Raven pointedly didn’t notice the murder of the notorious warlock. D’Inn calmly wiped his dagger on the already bloody robes of his victim and began to rifle through the dead man’s pockets. No one would miss Renaldo, but his treasures soon had a welcome home.

“Hmm, he was telling the truth.” D’Inn murmured as he hefted the dead man’s coin purse. There wasn’t much coin to be had there. The gold rings adorning Renaldo’s fingers held the promise of a fine price, so D’Inn pulled them free with a toothy grin.

“Excuse me.” A woman’s voice glided into D’Inn’s ears.

The goblin stopped his looting and looked up at the elf woman approaching him. His brows narrowed and his bladder threatened to betray him. D’Inn doesn’t like elves, they are too dangerous at sword range and even more so within bow range. To D’Inn’s mind, elven bow range was far too long for his liking. Now an elf woman was approaching him, baring her teeth in what the common tongue calls a ‘smile’.

“Go away.” D’Inn replied. “I kills him fairly and squarely. My loot. Get your own kill.”

The elf woman stopped in her tracks. “Oh, no sir. I have no intent to rob you. Far from it, in fact.” Her voice held a soft quality to it that reminded D’Inn of fine drink. She took a chair from a nearby table and sat herself a long three paces from D’Inn.

“What you want, elf girl?” D’Inn asked. He planted his feet, stuck out his chest and lay his hand on the hilt of his sword. “If him friend of yours, you can have him after I take what I like.”

Around the Crusty Raven, patrons were leaving coin on their tables before walking for the door. The tavern was emptying out. People were wanting nothing to do with a dead man, or the goblin and elf woman talking over the corpse.

“I heard you say your name is ‘D’Inn’, is that correct?” The elf woman said, her voice chiming like delicate music. “I am called Celeste, and I understand your services can be had for the right price.”

D’Inn picked up Renaldo’s satchel and slung it over his shoulder. “I am D’Inn. She who wanted this one dead pays me three gold each day to serve her. You pay D’Inn three hundred gold now and five gold each day and D’Inn will kill for you.”

Celeste smiled, exposing her perfect teeth once again. “Oh goblin, I think I like you. I have your money and you shall yet have more. She who you once killed for, shall now feel the sting of your blade and the fire of my hate.” She stood and glided to the table where D’Inn stood unflinching. Celeste produced a small bit of folded black silk, and opened it upon the table. She reached into the hole which appeared and began stacking coins on the table in front of D’Inn.

When Celeste had counted out three hundred gold coins, she folded the black silk once again and it disappeared into the folds of her robes. “We have a deal D’Inn. I expect you to honor it.”

D’Inn opened Renaldo’s satchel and began dumping the gold into it. “Mistress Celeste, we do. I am D’Inn and I will kill for you.”

“Excellent.” Celeste purred.

Renaldo the Unholy’s dead eyes were the only witness to their pact.

True to his word, such as it is, D’Inn led Celeste and the dozen sell-swords accompanying her, to the hideout of his former patron. There, D’Inn poisoned Demona the Tiefling Sorceress, slipping a powerful toxin Celeste had given him into her wine. As Demona lay choking and dying on the cold stone of the cavern she had taken as her lair, D’Inn loped off her head and carried it back to Celeste and her men.

“Well done, D’Inn!” Celeste exclaimed. “I see a long and very profitable relationship for our future.”

So it was, that D’Inn entered the service of Celeste, the witch of the Great Glacial Expanse. He served her well, striking down her enemies and bringing back their heads as proof.

It was D’Inn who slew Celeste. Drowning her in her bath, and bringing her head to his new master, Lord Oakson of the Haunted Wood. For two years, Lord Oakson employed D’Inn among his company. He never let the goblin into his confidence as Celeste had done, for fear he would meet the same end as his most potent rival. He paid D’Inn well, until that day when Lord Oakson’s keep in the Haunted Wood came under siege by the forces of Lord Bridgeknee.

As the siege began, D’Inn poisoned the food supplies, rendering the keep’s defenders at the mercy of Bridgeknee’s army. D’Inn was paid his weight in gold for that betrayal, and banished for all time from Bridgeknee’s domain.

So then did D’Inn, veteran of many battles, seek out new lands in which to ply his trade. Selling his service to those who could pay him, and betraying them to those who would pay him more.

A formidable swordsman, his death has never been established as fact. Accept him into your service at your own risk.

From the tome, “History of the Dark Fey Wars”, written by the noted elven scholar Tirien Lunas.

D'Inn, Goblin Veteran

Small Humanoid (Goblinoid) Lawful Evil
Unique Monstrous Non-Player Character

Armor Class: 17 (Enchanted Leather Armor)

Hit Points: 58

Speed: 30

Str	Dex	Con	Wis	Int	Cha
16	18	14	13	11	10

Saving Throws: Strength (+6) Dexterity (+7)

Skills: Athletics (+6), Stealth (+7) Perception (+4)
Survival (+4)

Senses: Darkvision 60 feet, Passive perception 15

Languages: Common and Goblin

Challenge Rating: 4 (1,100 XP)

Nimble Escape: D'Inn can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on each of his turns.

ACTIONS:

Longsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, Reach 5ft., One target
Hit 9 {1d8 + 3 (Str) + 2 (fighting style)}
Slashing damage

Dagger. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, Reach 5ft. One Target
Hit 7 {1d4 + 3 (Str) + 2 (fighting style)}
Piercing Damage

Short Bow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 to hit
Range 80 / 320, One Target
Hit 7 (1d6 + 4), Piercing Damage

Extra Attack: Through long years of combat experience, D'Inn has honed his abilities. Whenever he takes the attack action on his turn, he may make two attacks.

Action Surge: D'Inn may, on his turn, take an additional action in addition to his normal actions and any bonus actions. He may not use this ability again until after completing a short or long rest.

Second Wind. Once, during his turn, D'Inn may use a bonus action to regain 1d10 + 6 Hit Points. D'Inn may not use this ability again until after he has completed a short or long rest.

Duelist fighting style. Adds +2 damage bonus when using a weapon in one and leaving the other hand free. This damage value is already factored into his stats.

Champion. D'Inn's weapon attacks score a critical hit on attack rolls of 19 or 20.

Weaknesses

Greed:

While D'Inn is no coward, he is certainly no fool either. He can be, and has been, persuaded to change sides for a sufficiently large bribe. The bribe must be more than his current boss is paying him and must be paid up front. Once his loyalty has been bought, D'Inn will betray any information he may be privy to.

It is for this reason that many of D'Inn's prior employers are dead. New clients very often use D'Inn's knowledge against his prior patrons. He has a reputation as a capable fighter and as a traitor of the highest order among those with whom he has served alongside in the past.

In combat, unless immediately pressed by a foe, D'Inn will take a moment to loot small, particularly valuable items. He has a fondness for jewelry and loose coin. Once, when working for a group of bandits, a merchant threw down a pouch of silver coins as he fled. D'Inn stopped to recover the silver and killed two other bandits who were with him, when they tried to claim a portion of the spoils.

Gear:

Enchanted, Ornate Leather Armor (Rare)

D’Inn’s armor provides an additional +2 armor class bonus. Unless it is completely destroyed, this armor repairs itself completely after a long rest. The armor is sized for a small humanoid wearer.

Longsword, dagger, Short bow, Quiver with 20 arrows, Backpack, a set of manacles and the key (for when he is ordered to take prisoners), belt, three pouches sized for potion vials, three Potions of Healing (2d4 + 2), whetstone, tinderbox and a water skin.

A miniature donkey, called “Jennie”

Pack Saddle, two man tent, bedroll, two weeks of food provisions, two extra water skins, bottle of fine gnomish whiskey (Bottled in the small village of Tinzie), spare longsword, two additional quivers holding 20 arrows each, two bars of soap, a thick and fluffy robe (D’Inn likes to wear it after he bathes).

Coin Purse: 15 gold, 15 silver, 20 copper coins

D’Inn’s Treasure

Over the years, D’Inn has accrued a sizable treasure through his working as a mercenary and periodically betraying his clients for better paying patrons. D’Inn intends to one day use this wealth to open a tavern of his own in a large city. He means to retire in comfort while selling spirits and growing old.

If captured or threatened to reveal where his treasure may be hidden, D’Inn resists for all he is worth, yielding the truth of where he has hidden his treasure only if he is convinced that it is the only way for him to save his own life.

D’Inn’s treasure lies buried in an iron chest, on a small island in nearby lake. D’Inn has piled stones atop the site to make it easy for him to find it, while making it look like a stone cairn for anyone else. The chest is buried four feet deep, as it would be very difficult for D’Inn to excavate it if it were buried any deeper.

D’Inn’s treasure horde consists of the following: 400 gold coins, 600 silver coins, and a gold ring fitted with a dark ruby (worth 200 gold).

If D’Inn is encountered on his way back from a raid or from looting, he will have additional treasure on his person. Use the table below to determine what those treasures may be:

Treasures:

~ Coin ~ 5d6 silver and 5d6 gold

Roll a percentile dice once against each percentile chance below. If the percentile result is lower than the percentage it is rolled against, then the item(s) are in D’Inn’s possession or packed away on ‘Jennie’

~ 50% chance of looted jewelry worth 2d4 x 10 gold

~ 40% chance of a looted bottle of ale

~ 30% chance of a looted bottle of wine

~ 20% chance of a looted bottle of hard spirits

~ 10% chance of a looted potion of healing

~ 5% chance of a looted fine gold necklace (200gp)

~ 1% chance of a looted ring of warmth

Story Hooks

D’Inn is relaxing in an inn the player characters frequent, drinking the place’s best ale and sitting alone in the corner. Between patron’s, D’Inn offers his services as a sell-sword to the group for “five gold each day plus food and drink”. Can the group trust the goblin to fight alongside them?

The daughter of Celeste, the witch of the Great Glacial Expanse, has discovered D’Inn’s roll in her mother’s death and seeks his life with a fury rarely seen in a mortal being. She counts any companion of D’Inn’s as an accomplice to her mother’s murder. Can the player characters convince the enraged witch of their innocence before she kills them all?

D’Inn is working for a group of bandits which waylay the player characters. What is D’Inn willing to give up to convince the player characters to spare his life?

Example Skill Test Results:

History (Intelligence)

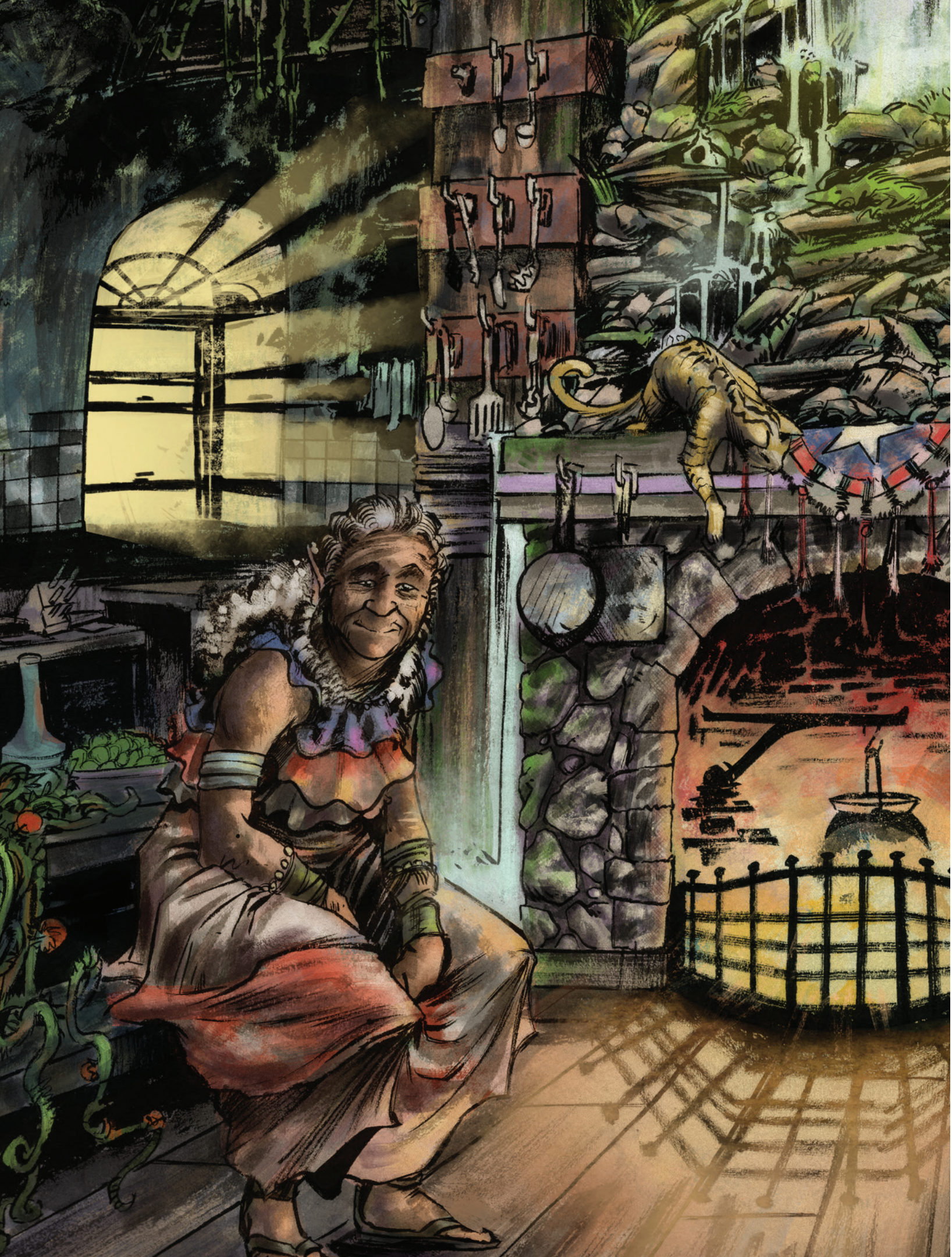
Task Difficulty	DC
Very easy	5
D’Inn? Never heard of him.	
Easy	10
Renaldo the unholy, he died in the streets. A powerful warlock murdered by a common thief.	
Moderate	15
Celeste, the witch. Oh there is a name to conjure by. They say she was a beautiful Elvin woman and every bit as ruthless with her enemies as she was lovely.	
Hard	20
Henry Oakson, the lord of what are now knows as the Haunted Woods. Rebuilt an old elven fortress after destroying the undead that haunted it. When the witch Celeste came and asked if he would cede the fortress to the descendants of the former elven lords, he tried to murder her. She escaped and their forces warred for two years until she drowned in her bathtub.	
Very Hard	25
Lord Bridgeknee, the first: he employed D’Inn the traitor, to help make short work of the siege against Lord Oakson. Legend says he paid the goblin with a large bar of gold then forbid him ever setting foot within his lands again. Lord Bridgeknee was ill-regarded as he often sided with the forces of the Goblin King during the Dark Fey wars.	

Insight (Wisdom)

Task Difficulty	DC
Very Easy	5
He’s a goblin, you can’t trust him.	
Easy	10
This goblin is unusually controlled. There is something odd about this one.	
Moderate	15
D’Inn seems to be possessed of a mercenary sense of practicality. I think I can do business with one.	
Hard	20
Make no mistake, you can only trust this one until someone else makes him a better offer.	
He does seem rather fond of his little donkey though. Takes time to keep it brushed and feed. She is well cared for. If there is anything that means more to D’Inn than gold, it is his Jennie.	

Arcana (Intelligence)

Task Difficulty	DC
Very Easy	5
D’Inn’s armor bears curious runic embellishments.	
Easy	10
The runes etched into the leather appear to be Elvin symbols of magical significance.	
Moderate	15
This armor is enchanted.	
Hard	20
This armor was created for an Elf child and was meant to be worn as a measure of protection when traveling in dangerous woodlands.	
Very Hard	25
This rune, this one here, you see how it has a bit of flourish and inner radiance? The elf wizard Thalein was well known for incorporating this rune on items he enchanted for his children. I imagine he may want this back.	



The cottage had been built in the manner of human construction. The walls were formed of fitted stone with a generous application of mortar that served to keep the draft out. Smoke curled up from the chimney, carrying the scent of spices and baking bread on the wind. Window boxes held fall herbs waiting to be plucked and put to good use. Round river stones, worn smooth with the passage of time, formed a walk that lead to the cottage's only door.

The garden had been recently pruned. Plants sulked, barren of their edibles but for a few lingering tomatoes that were too stubborn to ripen with the rest. Hon-eyesuckle vines, barren of their flowers and fading to brown, clung to the low stone wall that encircled the cottage. Chickens clucked and moved about the yard, oblivious to the world beyond. From somewhere above, a cat mewed as it prowled around the cedar shingled rooftop.

From within the cottage I heard Abuela singing.

*Noche de paz, noche de amor
Todo duerme en derredor
Entre los astros que esparcen su luz*

Her song ended abruptly. A smile escaped me as I could imagine her in my mind's eye, her left ear twitching as she had, undoubtedly, heard my feet upon the old worn stones.

"Salvator? Is that you, youngling?" Her voice brought a warm joy to my heart.

"Aye, Abuela, it is I. I did not mean to disturb your song. Tania said you wished to see me, so I came as soon as I could." It was true. Tania had come to my home just that morning and mentioned that Abuela needed my help with something. What it was she would need me for, my dear cousin wasn't certain of.

"Come in Salvator. Don't linger in the yard like a stranger." The cottage door drifted open, seemingly of its own accord. I had a moment of nostalgia as I recalled Abuelo telling me of his efforts to enchant the door. The charm he had worked into the wood still held decades after his death. In that moment I missed him all over again. When you're an elf you learn that the humans you love never live long enough.

"Thank you, Abuela." I stepped over the threshold and felt the tingle of another of Abuelo's charms. He had learned more of enchantment and spell craft in his scant few decades than many elves learn in centuries. The small strip of hammered copper embedded in the door frame shone with motes of power flickering along the metal.

"I'm making lunch. Are you hungry?" She asked.

I laughed in spite of myself. "Do griffon's fly? You know me, Abuela, I'm always hungry. It must be the human in me." I walked into the warm kitchen and was caressed by aromas that made my mouth water.

"Don't be rude, Salvator." She shook her finger at me while she smiled through her words. "Your Abuelo was a kind man. Did he love to eat? Yes. Did he get fat like a dwarf as he aged? Yes. But he knew such joy from a good meal and a warm home. 'It is the simple things that are best' he would say. You would do well to remember that, Salvator."

"Yes, of course Abuela. Tania said you had need of me. How can I help? Do you need some help decorating for the holiday? I'm certain I can get some nice strawberry preserves from Sophia or Glynnii if you like." I helped myself to a biscuit. It was still warm and tasted of honey and butter.

"No, no. Something much more important." Abuela set a pair of plates on the small kitchen table and swiftly created a lovely lunch. "The holidays are coming and I'm afraid I need to ask you to retrieve your cousin. Dakath went out 'exploring' in the Iron Mountains and hasn't returned. Would you fetch him, so we can all be together for the holiday?"

Oh.

"Abuela, Dakath is almost grown. I'm sure he'll make it back. He's probably just out with his friends, drinking with the dwarves or cavorting with that witch he fancies." I reached for another biscuit and found her hand atop mine.

“Salvator, you know Dakath doesn’t have your skill or knowledge of the wild. He’s headstrong and shortsighted. Alondra is going to be worried if he doesn’t make it home for the holidays. At her age, she doesn’t need that sadness upon her.” Abuela’s face almost hid the sadness in her soul. My aunt Alondra is Abuela’s oldest daughter, a half-elf, and wouldn’t live another decade. Dakath is her youngest son. Abuela would outlive Alondra by centuries, barring any kind of tragedy. She was as strong as dwarven steel, but the thought of outliving Alondra weighed heavily upon her.

“Okay, Abuela. I’ll go find Dakath.” I savored a bit of the biscuit and enjoyed the smile that lit up her elven features. “You do know, he’s probably just courting that witch though. It’s likely nothing. I’ll go find him and bring him back.”

“Thank you, Salvator.” Abuela’s smile held the same warmth and wonder it did when I was but a child.

“Enjoying the biscuit?”

“As always. These are an old favorite of mine. No one else makes them like you.” I winked at her. “I may have to take a handful with me when I go searching for Dakath. Wouldn’t want to get hungry.”

“Salvator, you should know, Dakath was looking at an old map your Abuelo had locked away. It marked an old ruin in the mountains, one I hope Dakath had the sense to avoid.” Abuela’s eyes gave me a guarded expression. “If he’s gone there, it will be the kind of trouble that can get him killed.”

“Abuela,” I sighed. “What ruin? Where do you think he has gone?”

“I hope that he hasn’t gone to the ruins of *La Torre de la Cascada de Sangre*, for his own sake.” Abuela poured a cup of tea for me.

I sipped at the brew, enjoying the floral scent and the sweetness of the blend. “Surely not. That is just a legend. A story Abuelo used to tell, to frighten us into behaving.” I nibbled the last of my biscuit. “It’s a myth, right?”

Abuela looked me in the eye, her voice firm.

“Salvator, your Abuelo and I explored many places in our youth. That place is, unfortunately, very real. I know you heard the stories, but they weren’t told to scare you into behaving. You were told those tales so that you would stay away and not get hurt in that place.”

“Abuela, I’m grown, and I can protect myself.” I assured her.

“My brother Esteban said the same thing. His bones are somewhere in that cursed tower.” Abuela stared into me. “I mean no insult Salvator, but Esteban was a far more skilled swordsman than you are. If Dakath has gone into that place, he may be dead. Please, please see if you can find him. If he is there, bring him home. Don’t linger there, only death will welcome you if you do.”

Abuela never spoke of her brother. If not for her sister I would never even have known Esteban had existed. That she invoked his name now worried me. I rose and kissed her on the forehead. “There is nothing to worry about, Abuela. You’ll see. Dakath will be chasing that witch about and complaining about some nonsense or other.”

The look on her face told me she wasn’t convinced. “I’ll gather my friends to go with me. Just to be safe.” I assured her. “We’ll bring back Dakath, and who knows, maybe the witch will come too.” My smile was answered with a wry shaking of her head.

“I hope you are right, Salvatore.” Abuela took my plate and placed an almond cookie on it for me. “I’ll pack some things for your friends. You eat too much dried meats when you go on the road. It isn’t good for your digestion.”

“Extra biscuits, perhaps?” I said, hopefully.

She smiled at me. “Of course. I swear there is still much of that same little boy who would sneak into my kitchen within you.”

La Torre de la Cascada de Sangre, The Blood Falls Tower. My Abuelo had told tales, horrible stories of the walking dead that preyed upon the living. He had said such monsters haunted the accursed tower. My friends and I spent days climbing into the mountain passes to find a ruin I was hoping didn't really exist.

I was sadly disappointed.

The tower was plated in iron, held fast to stone blocks by some feat of engineering I did not comprehend. The years had rusted the iron so that red streaks stained the stone downhill from the ruin. I found the witch's severed head being picked at my carrion birds and riddled with worms.

"A bad sign for your cousin, I think." Dilyan's voice was a barely audible whisper. The halfling watched the mountainside for trouble. "I don't see the rest of the body."

"Nor do I." I replied.

"Wasn't cut off, looks like something ripped her head from her neck." Horick's coarse voice was likewise quiet. His normally boisterous tone, notably subdued. "Whatever did this was strong."

"This place has known magic." Simon stared at the tower. "The scent of it is everywhere. Dark, potent sorcery and recently cast."

"Faith preserve and protect us." Father Thomas spoke plainly. His faith a bulwark against fear, his voice traveled further than I would have liked. "We shall find this cousin of yours, my friend, and bring him home."

We scaled the cliffs and stormed Blood Falls Tower....

Dilyan, Horick, Simon, Father Thomas and I rescued my cousin Dakath and hurried away from that forsaken place. Heed the tales and legends. Stay away from that unholy tower and the monsters who call it home. It was by the narrowest of chances that we escaped at all, and only through divine providence that Dakath survived.

You have been warned.

Smoke curled up from the chimney, carrying the scent of spices and baking bread on the wind. Window boxes held fall herbs waiting to be plucked and put to good use. Round river stones, worn smooth with the passage of time, formed a walk that led to the cottage's only door. The sound of Abuela's voice carried out over the clucking of chickens and the soft breeze that whispered in my ears.

Dakath kept close to my side, while Dilyan, Horick and Simon trailed behind. Father Thomas was honoring my family with a blessing upon the garden as I lifted my hand to knock on the heavy wooden door. Abuela opened the door before my hand fell. Her face softening from worry to delight, only to be replaced with an expression of stern annoyance.

"DAKATH! How dare you worry your mother and I! How many times have I told you to stay out of those mountains?!?!" My Abuela's voice rose as she slipped off one of her slippers and proceeded to beat Dakath about the head and shoulders with the soft footwear. Having experienced this attack personally, I can tell you it stings quite a bit! "DON'T GO IN THE MOUNTAINS, DAKATH! DON'T GO LOOKING FOR THAT TOWER, DAKATH! FEED THE CHICKENS, DAKATH!" Does any of that sound familiar?!?!?"

My cousin slumped his shoulders, bore the beating with wincing, and wisely said nothing until Abuela's arm tired. "I'm so sorry Abuela," Dakath began but was interrupted by another flurry of blows from the slipper.

"I had to send poor Salvator and his friends to get you!" Abuela scolded. "You apologize to them!" Abuela turned to me and her face softened. "Salvator, I thank you and your friends for helping Dakath. There is tembleque on the table for you. You may open a bottle of the honeysuckle wine too."

Dakath raised his head, dropping his guard upon hearing of the treats.

“NO! Not you Dakath! You go outside and FEED THOSE CHICKENS! Then clean up and go see your poor mother.” With that, Abuela pushed Dakath out of the house and into the yard. She waved Father Thomas in with an offer of food and drink. To his credit, Dakath wisely chose not to argue. As I took my first taste of the tembleque I could see him through the window, feeding Abuela’s chickens in the yard.

Across the table from me I heard Father Thomas proclaim, “This is certainly a food worthy of the divine,” as he savored tembleque for the first time. Abuela patted my head then brought more for my friends and I.

To them it was a hero’s welcome, to me it was home.

From, “Memories of Abuela” by Salvator Silverlight

Game Master Notes:

Abuela is a grandmother, whether your character’s grandmother or a nice lady whom you know. Her home is comfortable and rife with subtle magic. Old even by elf standards, she married a human and had four children. From her children came a number of grandchildren to bless her later days. She dreads the days when her children will pass from the world, but faces this tragedy with a courage seldom seen among even the bravest knights.

A widow, Abuela had been married to powerful human magician. Her late husband, referred to simply as “Abuelo” by her grandchildren, passed a few years ago. Her home bears a number of discreet enchantments, some that help make her home quite safe and others which bring her comfort in her later years. Her own children and grandchildren know to wait for Abuela to invite them inside before attempting to cross into her home. Breaking this tradition is said to bring down “Abuelo’s Wrath” and the entire family respect the tradition without question.

As a young woman, Abuela went on many adventures and honed her skills at magic. Her powers serve her well both as a means of defense and in everyday life. Her garden produces wonderful vegetables and her livestock grow fat and happy each year. The wolves in the area leave her and her animals alone in all but the leanest of times.

Having been a fixture in the community for more than a century, Abuela is a treasure trove of information on local history, rumors and sage advice. She is also fond of matchmaking, so bachelors beware! You may find yourself invited to a luncheon only to be introduced to one of her granddaughters or the niece or nephew of a neighbor. It is easy to find attraction in such meetings as Abuela likes to entertain over servings of her famous tembleque, a coconut pudding which she serves dusted with cinnamon “to help your digestion”. The desert is said to be the stuff of legends.

Many of Abuela’s grandchildren visit her regularly. Of her grandsons, Salvator is often called upon to perform strenuous tasks such as tracking down lost sheep, or finding his wayward cousin. Abuela favors Salvator greatly, treating him to his favorite biscuits and sweet treats whenever she has a task in mind for him.

“Abuela”

Given Name: Maritza Ilphelilo
Medium Humanoid, Elf Lawful Good
Unique Non-player Character / Companion

Armor Class: 13 (18 with Barkskin)
Hit Points: 50 (10d8)
Speed: 30

Str	Dex	Con	Wis	Int	Cha
10	16	10	20	16	16

Saving Throws: Wisdom and Charisma
Skills: Medicine +9, Nature +7, Perception +9
Damage Resistance: none
Senses: Darkvision 60ft, Passive perception 18
Languages: Common, Druidic, Dwarf, Elf, Spanish
Challenge Rating: 8 (3900XP)

Spellcasting: Abuela is a tenth level druid. Her spellcasting is Wisdom (Spell save DC: 17 +9 to hit with spell attacks). Most days she has the following druid spells prepared:

Cantrips: Druidcraft, Guidance, Mending, Produce Flame, Shillelagh

First level: Animal Friendship, Cure wounds, Purify Food and Drink, Speak with Animals

Second Level: Animal Messenger, Barkskin, Pass without trace, Spider Climb

Third Level: Call Lighting, Conjure Animals, Plant Growth, Speak with Plants

Fourth Level: Conjure minor elementals, Conjure woodland beings, Divination, Dominate Animal

Fifth Level: Greater Restoration, Scrying, Tree Stride.

Actions:

Quarterstaff: Melee weapon attack: +7 to hit
Reach: 5ft One Target
Hit: 4 (1d8) Bludgeoning

Wild Shape: Abuela favors taking the form of a giant eagle to travel for long distances. When doing so, she packs her cloths in small bag and carries it in her talons. Having lived among humans for years, she has taken to landing and dressing in secret as doing so publicly alarms prudish people.

Story Hooks:

- 1) One of Abuela’s grandchildren has gone missing! Search out the missing child (probably a fully grown adult) and bring her/him home safely. Sometimes this is as simple as reminding a person that her Abuela wishes to see her, while other times it may require rescuing an adventurous character from a dungeon crawling with undead creatures and monsters of the foulest sorts.
- 2) Salvatore been gone for over a year, journeying afar to plumb the depths of a legendary dungeon. Take a letter to Salvatore informing him he needs to return home for his sister’s wedding. Can you locate the adventurous Salvatore in time for him to make it to the wedding?
- 3) A land dispute between two rival families has the community up in arms. Open conflict is imminent unless someone can discover who really owns the land in question. Abuela has been friends of both families for as long as anyone can remember but when representatives from both families arrive at her home, she isn’t there. Can you locate the old elven druid in the woodlands near her home?
- 4) Abuela’s late husband was a wizard of certain power and was said to know powerful spells. No one is certain what became of his spell books after his death. Would Abuela be willing to share her late husband’s secrets?

Abuela's Home:

Visiting Abuela is always a treat. Her home is warm, comfortable and frequently smells of delicious foods. Family is always welcome, and guests are treated with great respect.

The house holds several unique features. Products of elf ingenuity and her late human husband's magical arts. A waterfall provides cool, clear water throughout the year as it flows down the chimney stones and is collected in a basin. Water from the waterfall that touches the floor vanishes, leaving the floor unharmed and safe to traverse.

This home saw the birth of all four of Abuela's half elf children. They grew up here, and visit as often as they can. Late in their years, Abuela's children are making fewer trips to visit their mother, but their own children see her frequently.

Visiting Abuela is good for you. You should take the time to visit with your family, your elders and those who love you. Take an evening to enjoy her stories, learn of your family history and marvel at the tales of her late husband's loving gestures that won her heart.

Abuela's Cat:

Abuela keeps a pet cat which she simply calls Tibs. Tibs is an old tomcat that loves to keep Abuela company and explores the house every day, wary for some unknown intrusion.

Tibs is a common house cat in every sense. His long exposure to living with a druid has made him remarkably well behaved. His only weakness is that he simply can't pass up tembleque. If any is left unguarded, Tibs will take the opportunity to sneak in eat as much as he can. Abuela will leave him small amounts as she knows the cat loves his dessert. For Tibs, this is never enough.

Treasures:

Equipment:

When visiting Abuela, if you should need any mundane non-magical item, valued at twenty-five gold pieces or less, there is a 75% Abuela has it and is willing to loan it to you. Be sure to return it when you are done using it!

In her years of adventure Abuela earned and lost a few fortunes. She possesses significant wealth which she rarely uses other than to help those less fortunate. If you ask what her greatest treasure is, she would smile and tell you of the letters her late husband would write to her and leave laying where she would find them.

She keeps a cache of coin in the chicken coop totaling:

3000 gold
6000 silver

In her house she keeps a small unlocked chest that holds a number of pretty stones (worth about 20 gold) and 100 platinum coins which were minted by the old Elven Empire a thousand years ago. These she keeps as heirlooms as her mother gave them to her as a dowry, a gift she never had to use.

Wedding Rings:

Abuela keeps hers and her late husband's wedding rings. She is intending to pass them down to her favorite grandson, Salvatore, but may offer them for a reward should one of her grandchildren be in deadly peril.

Both are Rings of Protection and grant a +1 Bonus to Armor Class and Saving throws. In order to attune these rings the wearers must marry each other.

Potions:

Married to a powerful magician for decades, Abuela has a number of potions stored in her home. There is a 75% chance she can find a particular, common potion by searching her pantry, and a 40% chance she can find a particular, uncommon potion she is looking for by searching her late husband's things.

Example Skill Test Results:

History (Intelligence)

Task Difficulty **DC**

Very easy **5**

Your mother would be so proud of you. She always wanted to make a difference in the world, and here you are, making the world a safer place for all good folks.

Easy **10**

Oh, yes. I remember, your Abuelo once mentioned that. He said the key to making a good healing potion was to include fresh mint.

Moderate **15**

That girl, oh I hope things go well for her. Her grandmother, she was possessed by a demon you know. Granted her magical powers while it devoured her very soul. Spiteful woman, she carried an enchanted dagger with everywhere.

Hard **20**

It was seventy years ago and yet it seems like it may have been just yesterday. Heroes came seeking out my husband and I. They had heard the rumors, those horrible tales of the tower that bleeds. They offered a hefty sum for information but we advised that they give up their foolhardy quest. They were seeking some sacred relic or other, said to have been kept in the tower in ancient times. They found only death.

Very Hard **25**

The truth is a hard burden to bear. Yes, we went to that accursed tower seeking it to. That your Abuela and I survived is a more a matter of luck than skill. Our friends were not so fortunate. You see, there are liches within the tower. Two, to be precise. Husband and wife in life and now damned together in undeath. Do not underestimate the danger that lies in wait for you!

Insight (Wisdom)

Task Difficulty **DC**

Very Easy **5**

You look hungry. I'll get the preserves.

Easy **10**

You can't fool my old eyes. I know you still have eyes for Elanor. You should tell her before someone else wins her hand.

Moderate **15**

Those two are too stubborn for their own good. They argue over a piece of land that holds nothing of value. They just like to prod one another!

Hard **20**

You have a thirst for adventure, an appetite to see what lies over the next horizon. Fate calls to you. Be wary of her intentions.

Arcana (Intelligence)

Task Difficulty **DC**

Very Easy **5**

These runes are dwarf made.

Easy **10**

The berries lose their potency quickly. Best to take the branch off the tree and pluck the berries once you're ready to add them to your potion.

Moderate **15**

Liches are undead abominations. They forsake their natural death to exist in an unnatural state, forever trapped in undeath, denied both the joys of life and the peace of death.

Hard **20**

You may have possession of this blade, but it does not yet belong to you. This is sword of Phirlt, which he called "Giant's Fate". Phirlt was never well known for his eloquence. This sword requires a quest of you before you may awaken its full potential. Listen well and it may even tell you what that mission may be.



$\nabla \times \mathbf{A} = \mathbf{a} \mathbf{a} \mathbf{a}$ $\iint \nabla \cdot \mathbf{v} \, d\mathbf{a}$ $\int \mathbf{v} \cdot \mathbf{a} \, ds$

$+a_2 + \dots + a_n = \sum_{k=1}^n a_k$ $\lim_{x \rightarrow 0} \frac{f(x) - f(0)}{x} = f'(0)$ $\frac{d}{dx} \ln x = \frac{1}{x}$

$f'(a) = \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{f(a+h) - f(a)}{h}$ $\frac{d}{dx} \ln x = \frac{1}{x}$ $\frac{d}{dx} \ln x = \frac{1}{x}$

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$\vec{c} = \vec{a} \vec{c}$ $\begin{vmatrix} a_1 & -1 & -a_2 \\ 1 & 1 & 1 \\ a_3 & -a_4 & -a_5 \end{vmatrix}$ $\frac{d}{dx} \ln x = \frac{1}{x}$



I was a child, perhaps six summers old, when I first witnessed true magic. The wizard used a single word, a simple gesture and a wisp of power to repair a broken chain link. It was amazing to behold.

I told my mother that same night that I wanted to be a wizard when I grew up. She smiled and patted my head and set me to cutting sprouts for dinner.

Throughout the summer I would see the wizard on those occasions where my parents took me in to the village with them. He was a tall man, thin, with faint beginnings of a beard. He seemed nice, like anyone else in the village, and I thought he was amazing. It is remarkable how such a small bit of spell craft can make such a great impression on a young mind.

It was at the fall festival, that same year I had first seen him fix the chain, that I wandered over and tugged on his robes.

“I want to do magic when I grow up.” I proclaimed. I must have looked so silly, standing there tugging on his robe with my mouth covered in blackberry jam.

He looked down at me and smiled in a kind way. “When I was very little, maybe just a bit younger than you are now, I said the same thing.” He winked and produced a kerchief from his sleeve.

“Really?” I said. My little heart was thumping from excitement. If he had wanted to be a wizard when he was young, surely I could do it too. I was, after all, a very big girl of six summers!

My father came to retrieve me, apologizing to the wizard for fear I may have interrupted something important.

“She’s no trouble at all.” He said, handing his kerchief to my father. “Though I think she got more jam on her cheeks than she did in her mouth.”

Papa set to wiping my face. “She talks about magic often.” He said. “Grand dreams of great things she will do once she learns spells. I tell her it has to be much more work than it seems, else the world would be filled with wizards.”

“Well if one is to have dreams at all, shouldn’t they be grand?” The wizard replied.

“Maybe.” Papa said.

I was cleaned up and Papa sent me to find my mother. He and the wizard were talking and ambling over to Mr. Pulbee’s ale stand. I did as I was told, and found my mother. She took me to play games with the other children and I had a great time at the festival.

That night, I dreamed of magic.

As you might imagine, my dreams of great magic were filled with childish whimsy. I remember dreaming of changing rocks into apples and of changing the color of my dress with the wave of my hand and a litany of spell words. My mind treated me to visions of brilliant colors, puffs of smoke, and sparkling lights. Even today, I still have such dreams.

That year the winter was cold and the snow piled deep. We spent much of our days huddled in the house while Papa tended to the livestock. Momma kept the fire going and baked breads to fill our bellies. As the weeks wore on, the snow piled deeper and the cold sucked at the heat from our home.

It was after nightfall one evening when there was a knock at our door. My father answered, discovering the wizard smiling at him. “Terrible weather this. Thought I would look in on you. May I come in?”

My Papa wasn’t one to turn a man out into the cold night. Particularly a man whom he had enjoyed a drink, or several, with during the festival just a few months prior. So the wizard was allowed inside.

He produced a bottle of wine and a wheel of cheese from the pack he carried and gave both to my mother. “Where I come from, it is the custom to give gifts to one’s host. Thank you for letting me visit with you.”

It was a fine visit. I ate cheese and sat by the fire, listening to my parents chat with the wizard. The three of them laughed at old jokes, swapped stories, and had quite the pleasant evening.

I'm not certain when the wizard left that night. I had fallen asleep sitting near the fire. The warmth and a full belly had driven me down into blissful sleep. I woke the next morning, tucked in my bed, with Momma stirring me to help her with the breakfast.

It was over that same breakfast that my parents told me I would soon begin my studies as the wizard's apprentice.

Throughout that winter the wizard would visit two nights every week. He brought with him scrolls and ink, a slate board and chalk, and began teaching me the first of many mysteries. He taught me to read.

By springtime I could read several words and was able to write my own name. Momma and Papa were very proud of me. I practiced each night, writing words on the slate board with chalk and comparing my results to the scrolls that were left from the previous visit.

At the end of my seventh summer, the wizard gave me a book and told me I was to read a story from it each night to my parents. It was the first book I ever owned and one I keep with me to this day. That night I sat by the fire and read the first story, *Emily sees a goblin*. It was a tale for children, but I was so proud when I finished reading it. Momma had tears in her eyes and said I told a beautiful tale. Papa kissed the top of my head and told me I was the smartest little girl in the world.

My parents and I would sit each night and I would read to them. Twice each week, the wizard would come for a lesson, listen to me read, and answer my questions when a word or concept stumped me. When I finished the first book, he told me to keep it and to read each story again. So I passed the nights of my seventh summer reading stories to the delight of my parents. Each night I went to bed happy, and dreamed of the happenings of the stories I had read.

When I reached ten summers of age my apprenticeship began. I had learned to read the common tongue and was learning the language of the dragons and that of the elves. My studies into magic began with cleaning my teacher's laboratory.

I know it is tradition to call one's teacher 'master', but my teacher wouldn't have it. He would say, "I am only master of myself, just as you are only master of yourself. You are my apprentice and I am your teacher. There is too much studying to do, too much magic to discover, for either of us to worry over pompous titles like 'master'."

While I would clean, my teacher would talk about magic, its uses and the responsibilities that come with being a practitioner of the arcane arts. "The best magic is that which helps make someone's life better." He told me. There were many lessons like that, where we discussed the wonder of magic and how it can be put to use for the betterment of all.

I learned how to conduct experiments, how to research new knowledge by consulting the works of others, and that a clean laboratory is a sign of a careful wizard. We walked through forests and recorded our observations about nature, discussed the principles of alchemical transformation, brewed potions and distilled whiskey. I learned how to create inks for use in recording spells and how to read magical scripts.

My studies revealed ever more wonder to me and I felt that no amount of study or learning would satisfy my curiosity. Once the laboratory was clean and my other tasks completed, I would read aloud to my teacher. He would stop me and ask me to explain something I had read, testing to see if I comprehended the significance. I learned a little every day.

I cast my first spell when I was fourteen summers old.

While other girls were swooning over boys and gossiping as to which would make the best husband, I was weaving magic with my will and carefully practiced incantations. Don't get me wrong, my Papa told me Tommy Smithson had come calling asking if he could court me. But teacher told me that only maidens of virtue can ride a unicorn and that is something I really hope to do one day, so marrying anyone is right out!

It was the last summer, my fifteenth, when the word came of the monstrous army of the dead. Magicians, wizards of the darkest sort, were scouring the land. They killed people then animated the corpses for their blasphemous army. It was that winter when people started disappearing.

Momma and Papa planned to leave with the spring. “No point in fighting a losing battle if we can get away before they get here.” Papa said. He and Momma were both worried.

My teacher took to walking me back home each afternoon. “With madmen on the march, it would be foolish for either of us to go anywhere alone.” He told me.

He was with me when we found the house ransacked. Momma and Papa were gone. There blood was everywhere.

Teacher took me back to his home. I cried and cursed, begging him to help me save them. But when we arrived I saw my Momma and Papa, their throats slit and all life gone from them. Their corpses lumbered around teacher’s home. A dozen other corpses lurched and stomped about. They pounded at the door and reeked of corpse rot.

I screamed. I couldn’t help it. The monsters turned on us, zombies one and all, and came for us. I cried and shook with rage and sadness.

“Cover your eyes.” My teacher told me.

I did as I was told, crying and waiting for death to reach out and take me as it had my parents.

“Ignis Magicae Creo Sine Vec!” The incantation dripped with power. My teacher’s voice carrying a tone I had never heard from him before, anger. There was a flash of heat and the stench of brimstone, then I heard the crackling of flames catching in the grass.

I looked and saw charred corpses littering the ground. A large blackened circle charred to the soil not three paces from us. The zombies, the corpses of my parents lay broken and lifeless, inanimate on the blasted ground.

We packed everything he said we would need and took to the mountain paths to escape. We fled, for if the stories were true then one wizard and his apprentice were surely no match for the horrors that were approaching.

For months we fled, surviving on foods gathered in the wild and by our wits. We slept in caves or high in trees to conceal us from any casual observation. Towns and villages were avoided, though in truth the only ones we encountered were devoid of life.

We took a woodsman’s advice and skirted around a haunted forest. “Taking risks with your life is something you must never do.” Teacher said. “Be wise and thoughtful in all things.”

When we reached the ocean we turned north. It was two weeks before we found the city and harbor. Teacher secured passage for us and we were to set sail for a distant shore he knew of from his studies, a land known for its wizards and far removed from the horrors behind us.

The dead rose in the night. My teacher hurried me to the ship, but went back to help a woman and child he saw fleeing the monsters that preyed on the living. I watched as he reached them and saw them vanish in puffs of smoke.

My teacher was surrounded before he could escape. The sailors held me fast, preventing me from rushing foolishly to his side. There was a flash of scarlet flame and my teacher and the monstrous undead all about him were engulfed in the conflagration. The docks caught fire and the captain put the ship to sea to prevent his ship from going up in flames. We heard the screams from the dying city for nearly an hour as we fled.

The captain was true to his word and deposited me here, just as my teacher had intended. A land known for its wizards, though I know none of them myself. I have command of some minor magics and I’m well versed in theory and laboratory processes. I’m looking for someone to continue my education, so I may become a wizard in my own right.

I’m a good apprentice. Will you teach me?

Game Master Notes:

Christina is an apprentice level character. She will seek to apprentice herself to a wizard player character, asking insightful questions and growing in knowledge and power over time.

If a player character takes her on as an apprentice, that character can task for her such mundane chores as caring for a familiar, cleaning, fetching items or menial tasks suitable to be given to an apprentice wizard. In exchange, Christina expects the character to teach her the skills and abilities of a wizard. During each downtime period, the player character must spend a minimum of one third of the time providing direct instruction. This duty adds a period of one hour to complete a long rest for the player character who is teaching her. If the player character does not live up to this obligation, Christina departs and does not return to that character's service.

During adventures, Christina can serve a number of useful roles. She can stand as guard over camp while the group plumbs the depths of a dungeon, tend to wounded comrades, and (in a pinch) supplement the group's capabilities with her own meager spell casting abilities. If she accompanies the player group on an adventure she asks many questions, investigates curiosities and tries to make herself useful.

After two years time has passed with the player character providing instruction, Christina becomes a first level wizard. Whether she stays with the group as a persistent companion depends on how she was treated. If she does stay, her teacher no longer is bound to provide instruction. She gains experience equal to one fifth the amount the party members earn. Her level advancement takes place normally.

She comes into play with the gear listed here which includes items her former teacher had her carry as they made to flee. This equipment is hers and she will not give it away, though she may use it to aid her new teacher and his adventuring companions.

“Christina”

Given name: Christina Miller
Medium Humanoid, Human Lawful Good
Unique Non-Player Character / Companion

Armor Class: 11
Hit Points: 6 **Hit Die:** 1d6
Speed: 30

Str	Dex	Con	Wis	Int	Cha
10	12	10	14	18	16

Saving Throws: Intelligence + 5 Wisdom + 3
Skills: Investigation +5 Perception +3
Senses: Passive perception 12
Languages: Common, Draconic, Elvish
Challenge Rating: 1/2 (100 XP)

Spellcasting: Christina is a zero level wizard, an apprentice with command of a few cantrips. Her spell casting attribute is Intelligence (Spell Save DC: 13 and is +5 to hit with spell attacks).

Cantrips: Fire Bolt, Light and Mending

Actions:

Quarterstaff: Melee weapon attack: +1 to hit
Reach: 5ft One Target
Hit: 4 (1d8) bludgeoning

Weakness:

Christina has an intense reaction to animated dead and undead. When she sees an undead creature Christina must attempt a Wisdom Saving throw with a DC equal to 8 + the hit die of the undead monster. If she succeeds, she lashes out and attempts to destroy it with whatever means she may have at her disposal. If she fails she flees and suffers the *Frightened* condition.

Story Hooks:

1) Christina is asked who her first teacher was. Her mood turns sad as she responds with watery eyes, "His name was Peter, son of Borlin, student of Wendell the Sage. He died trying to save people from the undead."

Relevant skills (Intelligence)

History or Investigation

Task Difficulty

DC

Very Easy

5

Wendell the Sage, I've heard that name before.

Easy

10

Wendell the Sage was a powerful magician. Decades ago, he disappeared after slaying a dragon.

Moderate

15

Wendell the Sage, defeated the dragon Cthatherax. The sage is said to have sneaked into the dragon's lair with a handful of trusted comrades and there they slew the dragon. Wendell survived and his comrades lauded his actions and credited him for the dragon's defeat.

Hard

20

While many claim Wendell died a few years after the defeat of Cthatherax, this is simply not true. The old wizard doled out shares of the dragon's hoard to his comrades then used his wealth and magic to build a fortified home in the dragon's lair. There he went on to train a number of gifted magicians. It is said he yet lives and continues to teach those whom he deems worthy.

Very Hard

25

The dragon Cthatherax had slain many famed heroes before being struck down by Wendell and his friends. The dragon's hoard was said to be vast beyond a miser's greed and laden with enchanted treasures of many sorts.

Nearly Impossible

30

Wendell's comrades swore that he claimed the dragon's hoard of magic rings as part of his share.

2) Inside Christina's spell book lies a note written in invisible ink. Clearly visible by those who can see the invisible, the note is from Peter, her teacher, and tells of an enchanted glade where she might find the unicorn Michellius, a divine creature who may bless the worthy.

3) Borlin, Peter's father, learns of Christina's claim of being Peter's apprentice and seeks her out for information on his son's whereabouts. Heartbroken, Borlin offers to pay handsome reward for the return of his son's body for proper burial.

4) A young man becomes infatuated with Christina and seeks to court her. He is handsome and comes from a respected family, but she spurns him. His father feels this is an insult against his family's honor and challenges Christina's mentor to a duel. Refusal brings losing the respect of those in the community, defeat brings death and killing the patriarch will make the player characters unwelcome outcasts for living memory. What are the player characters to do?

5) While the player character's explore a ruin, Christina is kidnapped by bandits as she was left behind to watch camp. While the bandits aren't individually very powerful, there are several of them. Seeing the folly in fighting against such odds Christina surrendered without a fight but managed to leave signs of the direction the bandits took her. Now she waits patiently for a rescue she is certain will come. Can the player characters rescue her before she comes to harm?

6) One evening as the party sleeps under the stars, Christina is left on watch. A score of zombies lurch out of the darkness toward the camp. Does she panic and flee? Or does she lash out like an enraged battle magus, sending Fire Bolts sizzling into the night?

Treasures:

Christina was carrying several valuables as she and her teacher, Peter fled for the ship. These she keeps to herself, but may utilize her treasures if she feels the situation calls for it.

Potions of Healing (common): 6

These potions heal 2d4+2 points of damage each. Curiously, each tastes of strawberries.

Wand of Magic Detection (Uncommon)

Carved from the heartwood of an ancient red oak, this wand is polished to a high sheen.

Spell and magic resource books:

Christina was carrying her teacher's spellbooks, the books on basic magical principles her teacher had her study from, as well as her own spell book when she escaped. (Game master's choice of spells)

She also carries an enchanted children's book, the same one her teacher gave her as a child, it appears to be a normal book of about one inch in thickness and six by nine inches on its sides. When opened it proves to contain thousands of pages holding hundreds of children's stories written in the common tongue. If the command phrase "For elvish eyes" is spoken aloud by the reader, the text changes to the elvish script and language. By saying "for all eyes" in elvish the script reverts to the common script and language.

Folio of herbal and alchemical formula:

A thin tome of faded parchment, this book holds the herbal and alchemical formula for potions of healing such as the ones Christina carries. The ingredients for each potion cost thirty gold coins in most cities.

Christina is near destitute and carries only a modest amount of coin.

1 Gold
19 Silver

Example Skill Test Results:

Arcana (Intelligence)

Task Difficulty **DC**

Very easy **5**

Then I flick the finger to symbolize the intent of my will to send the arcane energies into the target. I may need to work on my aim.

Easy **10**

Yes! The wand is in fact magical! It's properties are still unclear but I believe the tip being sharpened means that is the end to point at your enemy.

Moderate **15**

The presence of iron filings littering the area near the body, along with the presence of the broken vial, suggests to me that the magician had been attempting to cast a protection spell when he was killed.

Hard **20**

From my studies of master's notes, I believe this is the work of a warlock. The stench of brimstone around the burn wounds is telling evidence but combined with the pattern of the wound being burned into the sigil of a particular greater devil... well just say that we're looking for a warlock and be done with it. Okay?

Very Hard **25**

It wasn't several magicians casting lightning bolts at these poor souls. It was ONE magician who used a spell that caused the lightning to arc back and forth between each of them. It was over in a flash. They likely didn't have time to feel the pain as their lives were snuffed out in a cascade of white hot death.



In all my journeys I have witnessed a great many things. I have known warriors who possessed dizzying skill at arms, poets whose words are carved in stone for the ages, priests with such strength of faith that the gods themselves listen to their prayers and masters of the magical arts who could bend the universe to their will. Of all the powers I have beheld, all the wonders and miracles that have been revealed to me, none compare to the power of love.

The wise man says, "Heroes will rise against evil and sacrifice all to win the day and live to enjoy the legend of their deeds. But for love a man shall destroy himself, and willingly so, in a mad quest of the heart."

I was visiting the court, in celebration of our victory over the wretched troll who had killed and eaten so many innocents. The king had placed a reward for any who would slay the beast and my friends and I had ridden forth and slain the monster. There at court I first beheld her. Her grace and beauty outshone the fine jewels which graced her crown, neck and fingers. I loved her from the moment I saw her, my soul wept for the betrayal of my own heart. I beheld the queen and knew I wanted her as my own wife.

In my mind I knew it was folly. I struggled to hide my sinful affection, scarcely daring to look upon the queen. The king bestowed upon me and my company of friends great wealth and offered us his friendship. We were welcome at court, treated as heroes and none seemed wise to my suffering.

My heart ached each time I would chance to see the queen. I fought my traitorous tongue, keeping my love hidden from even my closest confidants. I stayed away from court as often as I could, riding out to seek adventure at every opportunity. My deeds grew with the telling and as the year passed many a lovely maiden was introduced to me. Their families were kind to me and the dowries were certainly impressive, but my heart belonged to another.

The king's love for me and my fellows grew and we were granted lands and title for our heroics. My dear friend Sabrothe the Sorcerer became betrothed to the king and queen's only child, the lovely princess Angelica. It was a great honor that Sabrothe chose me to stand at his side during the wedding.

If only I had been a lesser friend, if only he had chosen another to bear the honor I may not have succumbed.

No! 'Tis no fault of Sabrothe's! He was fine friend, a boon companion who had stood at my side countless times. We had spilled blood together, buried too many friends together, witnessed truly horrific evil and banished the memories in drink together. No, it is no fault of Sabrothe the Sorcerer for what happened.

The day of the wedding came and I prepared myself in my finest. At my side I wore my sword of office as the newly elevated Baron of Caleen and Keeper of the Eastern Watch. I stood proudly, carefully concealing the heartache of seeing the queen on the arm of my dear friend and patron, the king. My heart betrayed me but I stood firm, my smile was my only shield I could present to the world.

The wedding was beautiful. Sabrothe swore his love to his bride and she swore hers to him. The high priest blessed the happy couple and they were declared wedded. The king grasped Sabrothe's shoulders and declared, "For you might and love of my daughter I know that one day you will rule at her side and that my kingdom and my people will be kept safe in your hands."

There was a banquet, and wine flowed. Musicians played and revelers danced. Sabrothe and his bride glided across the floor, the perfect image of grace.

The king appeared next to me. The queen, wife of my friend and the most beloved woman in my world stood smiling at his side.

"Baron! The title serves you well. We must find a suitable bride to be your Baroness my friend." My heart bled as the queen stood there, arm in arm with her husband. "I need a moment of relief I'm afraid. Would you honor my wife with a dance? I'll return in but a moment."

I could not refuse my king, my friend, and my treacherous heart screamed at me to take the queen's hand and dance the world away. The king made his way to the privy while I took my love's hands and took to the dance floor.

The music played and my feet found the rhythm. Around the room revelers cleared the floor leaving only Sabrothe, his bride, the queen and I to dance.

I became lost in her beauty. The sapphire color of her eyes was a wonder to me. Her smile was bright as she beheld the princess's joy. "They are lovely together, don't you think?"

"They are the second most beautiful thing in the room my queen." My tongue betrayed me in response.

She turned her gaze upon me and smiled as if I had spoken a witty quip. "Oh, sir! You are such a flatterer. One day a woman will win your heart and you will make her most happy indeed."

Perhaps it was my weak will. Maybe the wine had gone to my head. I don't know why my will broke, but it did. I smiled at my love and spoke, "I have eyes for only one woman. It is my pleasure to dance with her at last."

Her eyes went wide and her feet stopped. I felt her hands loosen from my own and grasped her delicate fingers with my own scarred hands. She looked up at me and I lost my mind. I kissed her, my lips pressed to hers and all about me the room erupted in a collective gasp of shock.

I released her hands and pulled her into my kiss. Her hands pressed against my chest and my heart broke as she pushed against me, struggling in vain to escape me.

I released her and heard the rasp of steel being drawn from scabbards as the guards reacted. Their faces were marred with confusion and fear, my reputation as warrior was frightful.

"HOW DARE YOU!?!?" The king screamed. I turned and saw him striding toward me, guards rushing to his side.

The queen hurried to Sabrothe's side. My dear friend who had been at my side for so many years, stared at me in shock. Rage filled me as my heart bled out. I screamed out my pain and rage. "Out of my way, Sabrothe!" I cried.

My dear friend was no coward. "You must be still my friend. What curse has befallen you? What magic has bewitched your mind? Lay down your sword. I will help you, but you must stop this madness."

Magic fell upon me from Sabrothe's words. I shook off his sorcery and lost myself to madness. The sword at my side came free and months of passion and heartache colored my words. "I'll not be denied!"

I turned my sword upon my oldest, dearest friend. The blade found his throat, spraying his life's blood across his finery and that treasonous steel. I tore the sword free and stepped toward my beloved queen. The princess's anguished cry ringing in my ears.

The queen recoiled in horror and my heart sank. Guards fell upon me, the king appearing before me and barring my path from the queen. My feet slipped in the growing pool of Sabrothe's blood and I fell. The guards pummeled me into merciful unconsciousness.

~ Confession of Baron Tobias, Keeper of the Eastern Watch. Hanged for the murder of prince Sabrothe and the attempted kidnapping of the queen.

"Saracythious, my lovely, I'm rather proud of this bit of sin-craft. Tobias had placed many a diabolic cultist to the sword and had foiled the machinations of many of the servants of Hell. It is well met that his soul is tormented in guilt over the slaying of his truest friend. I would so wished to have captured Sabrothe's soul as well. Alas, he rose beyond our reach.

"More wine my darling. Tonight we celebrate the fall of a righteous man and the damnation of his soul."

~ The devil Cupid to his paramour the erinyes Sarachythious the Bloody

Cupid

Small Fiend (devil) lawful Evil
Legendary, Unique Monster

Armor Class: 15 (Unarmored)

Hit Points: 80 (16d6+16)

Speed: 30 ft., fly 60ft.

Str	Dex	Con	Wis	Int	Cha
10	20	12	10	16	20

Saving Throws: Dex + 9, Con + 5, Wis + 4, Cha + 9

Skills: Deception +9, Persuasion +9, Stealth +9

Damage Resistance: Bludgeoning, Cold, Piercing, Slashing and from nonmagical weapons that aren't silvered.

Senses: Truesight 120 ft., Passive Perception 10

Languages: Common, Dwarfish, Elvish, Infernal, Telepathy 120ft

Challenge Rating: 12 (8,400 XP)

Bow of Deadly Sin, Lust:

Cupid's bow is a magical weapon and deals an extra 13 (3d8 psychic damage) on a hit (this is included in the attack information). The bow magically produces its own arrows which appear whenever the bow string is drawn.

Magic Resistance: As a greater devil, Cupid has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Invisibility: Cupid may become invisible at will. This legendary devil may remain invisible for as long as he likes but becomes visible if he loses consciousness.

Legendary Actions:

Cupid's Curse:

Once per day, Cupid may telepathically whisper into the mind of a sentient target. This is a charm effect that clouds the mind of the target, causing them to fall hopelessly in love with a target of Cupid's choice. The victim of this ability must have seen the target of Cupid's choice. (Game masters: It is recommended that Cupid ONLY target NPCs as the subject of the character's infatuation). The victim may attempt a Wisdom Saving Throw (DC: 17) to resist this charm. On a failed saving throw the victim is Charmed and hopelessly in love with the target.

This effect may be removed by a Remove Curse, Wish spell, or through the selfless sacrifice of someone who genuinely loves the victim. Such a character must die by their own choosing to break the curse in order to remove the effect. When this happens, the character under the influence of Cupid's power must succeed at a Wisdom Saving throw (DC:17) or suffer from indefinite insanity over the loss of someone who truly loved him.

Weaknesses:

True Name ~ Cupid's true name is recorded in certain diabolic tomes. Use of this devil's true name combined with powerful summoning magic, can bind Cupid to servitude.

Holy Water ~ Deals 2d6 damage to Cupid.

Actions:

Multiattack. Cupid may make two ranged attacks

Bow of Deadly Sin, Lust (short bow).

Ranged Weapon Attack: +9 to hit,

Range 80 / 320, One target.

Hit. 21 (1d6 + 5) Piercing + (3d8) psychic damage

Story Hooks:

1) A local hero suddenly abducts the daughter of a benevolent noble. The hero was charmed by Cupid and kidnapped the woman out of misdirected 'love'. Can you rescue the woman? Will you be forced to kill a renowned hero because of diabolical machinations? Will characters discover Cupid's Curse and, if so, can they find a way to free the hero?

2) A tome of magic yields Cupid's true name. When summoned and bound Cupid cannot act directly against his master. The devil does take every opportunity of curse people into loving his new "master", causing calamity at every turn. How will the summoner deal with suitors who erupt into conflict with each other? Can love spawned by true evil be anything other than cursed?

3) Cupid's lover, the erinyes Sarachythious the Bloody, is sent to dispatch the adventurers. If she is defeated on the prime material plane she returns to Hell where Cupid decides to visit his attentions to those who struck down his lover. Cupid plagues the characters, causing NPCs to fall in 'love' with them at every opportunity. Each day a new NPC professes their love for one of the party members. Soon suitors begin to fight amongst themselves and the player character's life becomes mired in conflict. How will the group deal with Cupid's cursed victims and how will it affect their lives and reputations in the future?

Treasures:

Cupid has accrued a collection of mementos over the ages. These he has taken from wedded and engaged couples whom he has brought ruin upon.

Plain gold rings ~ There are 20 pairs of gold rings, each pair is kept in plain box. Along with each pair of rings is small, crudely painted images of the couple whose love was ruined by the devil. Each ring in this collection is worth 25 gold pieces.

Mithral rings ~ A pair of rings once worn by minor dwarven nobles. Cupid meddled in their lives, driving events that eventually led to their deaths. Each ring is worth 500 gold pieces to those who know the history behind them.

Sabrothe's Ring ~ A unique magical ring created long ago by human hands. The ring was once worn by the heroic Sabrothe the Sorcerer. The ring is inscribed in an ancient, dead language. Deciphering the script yields the message "power tempered by wisdom". The wearer of the ring has advantage on any saving throw to resist becoming Frightened. Sabrothe's Ring functions as a Ring of Mind Shielding.

Wine ~ Cupid often steals wine from weddings and festive parties he has ruined. At any time he had 1d10 expensive vintages worth 1d6 x 10 gold per bottle. The fact that Cupid enjoys wine is evident by the empty bottles that are often found scattered about his lair in Hell.

Coin ~ Cupid has no real use for coin other than the pleasure he derives from knowing that by stealing money from people he brings further hardship to them. Over the years he has stolen many dowries, causing strife to betrothed couples, embarrassing families, bringing punishment upon wrongfully accused innocents and foiling marriage plans. Much of the finery from these dowries has been destroyed, but the coin remains, littering Cupid's lair in precious metals.

His hoard consists of:

35 Platinum coins

1100 Gold coins

7000 Silver coins

Game Master Notes:

Cupid is a monster who revels in bringing misery. His favored way of doing so is to corrupt that most beautiful of emotions, love, by twisting the hearts and minds of people. He manipulates emotions, placing his victims in inappropriate positions where they suffer for their cursed affection. Over the centuries Cupid has brought nations to war over scandals that arouse from his plans and curses. Star-crossed lovers have slain themselves when driven to despair from his machinations. Spouses have betrayed one another and heroes have fallen into villainy, all through Cupid's curses and lies.

Cupid is best used to create social conflicts. The devil favors flying about while invisible, watching his prey and plotting their downfall. When he acts it is usually indirectly, targeting people for whom a love interest would be most tragic and would lead to horrible consequences. Cupid rarely fights, preferring to escape to cause more mischief and suffering rather than to engage in battle. When pressed the small devil uses his bow to terrible effect. The arrows produced by Cupid's bow have strange, heart-shaped arrowheads which drip blood.

It is recommended that Cupid not target player characters directly, but instead target NPCs with whom a relationship with a player character would be unseemly or cause severe consequences. This is a role-playing intensive monster who plagues characters, causing lasting harm that is a terrific challenge to set right.

Example Skill Test Results:

Deception (Charisma)

Task Difficulty

DC

Very easy

5

She loves you, not him! Her marriage is a farce, a contrivance of her family to tie the fortunes of two great dynasties together. She should be your queen, and not forced to hang on the arm of a man who doesn't deserve her.

Easy

10

I'll pay you twenty silver if you can tell me, truthfully, that you don't long for her touch.

Moderate

15

No one will know. What is one minor indiscretion compared to the passion you both feel right now?

Hard

20

Your dreams serve you well. You will see the day when he will love only you and will be free to tell the world. You only need help him by removing her. A little hemlock in the wine? Some mandrake in her soup? Subtlety is key.

Very Hard

25

He doesn't mean it. He wouldn't send you away! He loves you almost as much as you love him! If whatever curse is making him say these things to you cannot be broken in life, then there is always an eternity together in death. They will raise a tomb to your love for one another and people will weep at the tragedy of your lives cut so short.

All that remains is to get past his guards...



AE
19

“Misty? Here kitty. I have a treat for you.” The old woman cooed.

A beautiful grey cat stretched and rose from her favorite pillow to inspect the bowl her person had presented. Her nose picked up a familiar and welcome scent. Her person had brought her a bowl of cream. A small bowl to be certain, but a bowl of cream none the less.

She lowered her head toward the tasty bowl and gave the cream a flick of her tongue. It was wonderful! The cat looked up at her person and saw a pleased smile spread across the old woman’s face.

“MEOW.” Misty declared.

“Now, now. You don’t need any more than that. You’ll ruin your dinner and give yourself a bad stomach.” The old woman shook her head, her smile betraying her love for the majestic beast before she tottered in to the kitchen to attend to some matter, no doubt critical to her service to the majestic feline.

“MEOW.” Misty repeated.

“No, Misty, you cheeky kitty. Now enjoy your cream and be happy to have it.” A clanging of pots spoke of a meal being prepared for later.

“Meow.” Misty, muttered. The bowl was small and her person had been lazy in her duty to attend to her needs. She flicked her tail in disapproval and returned to her favorite pillow to keep an eye on the intruder who dared to sit on her favorite chair.

“Gram,” the intruder called out. “Do you need any help in there?”

Misty’s person replied, “No, I’m fine dear. I’ll be back in a moment. Would you care for a biscuit and honey?”

The intruder smiled suspiciously. “Yes, indeed! Thank you Gram.”

Misty wasn’t fooled. The intruder was obviously there for some fell purpose. She had arrived less than an hour ago, interrupting Misty’s morning nap, in fact, and had settled down onto Misty’s favorite chair as if she had every right to be there.

Misty’s person had taken up the ball of yarn that Misty had left in the chair. The ball of yarn she had been playing with that very morning. The same ball of yarn that now sat in the knitting basket, with the long and pointy knitting needles that hurt when they poked the paws. When Misty had protested the moving of the ball and the intruder sitting in her chair, the person had gone and retrieved a small bowl of cream in a weak effort to appease Misty’s displeasure. A *SMALL* bowl.

“Thank you, Gram.” the intruder uttered through her smile. Misty watched in horror as a crumb from the biscuit fell and landed on her chair.

“Meow.” Misty protested. Her person looked at her with a disapproving gaze.

“Done with your cream, already?” She asked.

“Meow.” Misty replied.

“Well then, go have it then. Don’t let it spoil.” the old woman told her.

“Meow.” Misty lamented as she turned back to the small bowl and began to lap at the cream. Her ears perked up as she listened to what her person and the intruder spoke of.

“Gram, I’m sorry I haven’t been by in so long. I hope you’ve been well.” The intruder’s voice was delicately intoned, her words carefully measured.

“*She’s up to something.*” Misty thought.

“Oh Joan dear, I’ve been fine. Misty and I are right as rain.” The old woman took a biscuit for herself, spread some blackberry jam on it and spoke fondly to the woman trespassing in Misty’s home. “Maritza sent young Dakath over to help me in the garden last week. Poor boy had gotten lost up in the mountains a few months ago. I think he’s still shaken up a bit over it.”

“I heard about that. Seems he and that witch-girl had run off to the mountains “looking for adventure”. Ha! If he wanted to elope he should have stayed closer to home.” The intruder, Joan took another bite of biscuit. “These are heavenly, Gram.”

“Meow.” Misty hissed at that.

The old woman turned at her. “Oh? You don’t like my biscuits? You certainly eat well enough, Misty. It’s not polite to complain.”

“MEOW.” Misty snapped at the insolence.

“Maybe she’s bored.” Joan interjected. “Maybe if she had some kittens to care for..”

“HISS!” Misty growled at Joan.

The old woman chuckled. “I’m afraid that old girl and I wouldn’t know what to do with kittens.”

“Old? Who was she calling *old*?!” Misty thought. Responding to such a crass comment was beneath her feline dignity. She relaxed her bristling fur and returned to the comfort of her bowl of cream. It was fresh and delicious.

“Too bad. She is such a lovely cat. I’m sure she would produce beautiful kittens.” Joan said sweetly.

A low growl escaped Misty’s throat before she could lap up her next bit of cream. Her person wisely understood it was time to change the topic.

“Misty, don’t worry dear. We’ll not be having other cats around here.” The old woman’s smile was reassuring. “Enjoy your cream.”

Well, she is certainly a clever little thing.” Joan, laughed. “I did bring a peace offering for her. Can I give it to her?”

The old woman nodded as she took a sip of her tea.

“Misty. Misty. I have something for you kitty.” The intruder, Joan, fished about in her satchel for a moment and drew forth a small sprig of catnip.

The old woman took the catnip from Joan and placed it on Misty’s favorite pillow.

Misty licked her face clean of errant cream, then prowled over to her pillow to sniff at the plant. The catnip teased her nose with a promise of ever more interesting scents as she rubbed her nose into the pillow, breaking off a piece of catnip that demanded her attention.

“Oh, she’ll be busy for a good long while now,” the old woman laughed. “I don’t let her have catnip much, she gets so cranky after she sleeps it off. I swear, it’s like she has a bad head from too much wine after she’s played with the stuff.”

The two women smiled cordially, sharing gossip and pleasant conversation while Misty enjoyed her catnip, purring all the while.

Incarnate Cat

Tiny Celestial Beast (Neutral Good)

Armor Class: 14 (Unarmored)

Hit Points: 7 (3d4)

Speed: 40 ft., climb 30 ft.

Str	Dex	Con	Wis	Int	Cha
3	18	10	12	8	12

Saving Throws: Dex + 6, Wis + 3

Skills: Perception +3, Persuasion +3, Stealth +6

Damage Immunities: Poison

Senses: Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 11

Languages: Common, Dwarfish, Elvish, Feline, Infernal, Telepathy 120ft (Limited to their chosen person)

Challenge Rating: 1 (200 XP)

Magic Resistance: The Incarnate Cat has advantage on all saving throws to resist charm, sleep and mind control.

Actions:

Meow, The Incarnate Cat may wake up any sentient creature by emitting this delicate sound. As often as once each round, the Incarnate Cat can “Meow” at a target sentient creature. If that creature is asleep, either through magical or natural means, that creature must attempt a saving throw against the DC of whatever effect rendered the creature asleep. For those who have fallen asleep due to natural fatigue, the saving throw DC is 12. On a successful saving throw, the subject wakes up. On a failed saving throw, the creature continues to sleep. The Incarnate Cat may target a creature as often as it likes.

Claws, Melee Weapon Attack: +2 to hit, reach 5ft. One target. Hit: 1 point of slashing damage

Weaknesses:

Catnip, When an Incarnate Cat detects the scent of catnip it must roll a saving throw DC 12 or seek it out. The Incarnate Cat is at disadvantage on this saving throw. Once the Incarnate Cat has located the Catnip, it will play with it, to the exclusion of all other activities. This persists for one hour at which time the Incarnate Cat will abandon the Catnip and slink off to sleep off the intoxicating effect the plant has on it. The Incarnate Cat will sleep for 1d4 hours after such exposure. Trying to remove the Catnip from the Incarnate Cat is ill-advised as the beast will claw anyone who attempts to take away its catnip.

Magic, An Incarnate Cat can be held at bay by a protection from a good spell or effect. The Incarnate Cat rolls its saving throw normally against such effects.

An Incarnate Cat's Lair

The lair of an Incarnate Cat is most often the home of a goodly person. Such a person is chosen by the Incarnate Cat and is allowed to dwell within the lair in exchange for food, servicing the lair and providing amusement for the Incarnate Cat when it chooses.

Regional Effects:

The lair is subtly transformed by the presence of this celestial creature, taking on the following traits:

~ Favored furniture becomes adorned with hair shed from the Incarnate Cat. There is no way known to dwarf, elf or man by which to remove such hair.

~ All vermin leave the lair and may not be compelled to enter.

~ All creatures, other than the Incarnate Cat and its chosen person, are at disadvantage on stealth and deception rolls.

Story Hooks:

1) A beautiful Incarnate Cat wanders into the camp of a band of adventurers. It has a simple leather collar with the name 'Peaches' etched into the leather. The cat meows and pats at the adventurers then wanders away. If no one follows the animal it returns a few minutes later, mewing at the player characters and wandering away. The beast repeats this several times in an effort to get the adventurers to follow it.

The Incarnate Cat leads the adventurers on a mile long journey to a small home. The home has been ransacked. A fire in the chimney has burned down to coals and none of the home's occupants are anywhere to be found.

2) An old sorcerer holds information necessary to the success of a quest the player characters have taken on. His Incarnate Cat has taken a serious dislike to one of the party members, hissing and clawing at the character and interrupting any attempt to convince the sorcerer to provide the needed lore.

The sorcerer agrees to part with the information when, and only when, the player character can befriend his cat.

Treasures:

Incarnate Cats rarely acquire anything that most player characters would consider 'treasure'. They cherish comfort, good food and entertaining toys. There are occasions where an Incarnate Cat may hide a valuable item that it considers a 'toy'. Such items are typically small, often shiny and are of a shape the beast can carry in its mouth (rings, bits of cloth, dead bird, etc.)

Game Master Notes:

Incarnate Cats are a fun pets for players whose characters have established a home or stronghold. These beasts can be rather demanding if taken on the road, insisting on being carried or riding comfortably along with their person. Incarnate Cats consider their person to be theirs first and foremost and so are prone to interrupting when the person shows attention or (gasp) affection to another creature.

It is important to remember that the Incarnate Cat has a limited form of telepathic communication with its person. This manifests in such a way as the person has an intuitive understanding of what the cat is trying to convey. Examples below:

~ ***Mrrow***, "I'm bored. Play with me."

~ ***Meeeeooooow***, "Pay attention to me."

~ ***Meoww***, "Feed me."

~ ***Mee-ow***, "Give it to me."

~ ***MRRRRRR***, "I don't like it."

~ ***MRRROOOOWWW***, "I'm going to hurt you."

~ ***MEOW***, "I'm not happy with this."

The Incarnate Cat cannot convey complex amounts of information. Most often this ability is used to convey its needs to its person. It should be noted that Incarnate Cats will NOT share a person. If two of them wish to claim the same person, the younger will cede its claim to the older and leave, never to return.

The Thorn in the Soul

In the inky depths of the planes dwell those beings of chaos and corruption which reach out across the myriad levels of the universe with an unnatural hunger. Great Old Ones, the Elder Things, Those Who Dwell Between and Within, regardless of the names ascribed to them no mortal can commune with these ancient evil powers and survive with their sanity intact. These alien things extend the tentacles of their minds to reach into the mortal world, looking for an ally who will feed their hunger.

Such mortal vessels are gifted with extraordinary powers of magic and with forbidden knowledge so that they might fulfill their patron's ambitions. These servants of chaos work to fulfill the desires of their alien masters and the world suffers for it.

There exist many rites, profane rituals, which permit those mad servants of the Great Old Ones to bring their masters out of the planar depths to feast upon the worlds of the living. Those lunatics who seek to undo the world are, fortunately, rarely powerful enough to manage such magic. Unfortunately, there are those exceptional madmen whose magic is up to the task. These men and women command energies of horrific potency and are often the recipients of knowledge that should never be allowed to plague the mortal world.

Among those forbidden rites are the means by which relics of terrific potency may be created. Items enchanted to empower the patron's bound servant so that he may better serve the will of his master. Such is the way the cursed dagger known as *The Thorn in the Soul*, came to exist in our world.

Imbued with the power to corrupt its wielder, this cursed blade gradually bestows new powers in exchange for horrific acts performed by its wielder. As its wielder grows in power the weapon makes greater, more repugnant demands of him, rewarding the most evil of acts with frightening new abilities.

The weapon's blade is clouded with the shadowy visages of those who lost their lives to this weapon. These disembodied souls mouth silent screams throughout eternity as they drift along the blade's silvered surface.

The Thorn in the Soul slowly awakens its abilities as the wielder commits specific acts in order to earn new powers. Each horrific act holds potent symbolic power and brings the warlock's patron a step closer to the moral world.

As the warlock grows in power the blade draws ever more power from the patron to fuel its faithful servant. In order to access these new powers and abilities the warlock must further attune the weapon by completing specific tasks and further damning himself in the process.



Dagger

Weight: One Pound Damage: 1d4 Piercing
Traits: Finest, Light, Silvered, Thrown (20/60)

First Attunement

Requirement: Warlock Pact of the Blade
Attunement: The wielder must perform a ritual to transform the Thorn in the Soul into a pact weapon.

Awakened power: +1 bonus to your spell attack modifier while holding this weapon.

Second Attunement:

Requirement: 5th Level Warlock
Attunement: The warlock must erect a shrine to his patron. This is permanent structure that must contain an altar with the patron's image or name engraved upon it. The warlock must sacrifice 500 gold worth of rare oils and herbs to purify the altar for the patron.

Awakened power: Thorn in the Soul manifests a +2 bonus on all attack and damage rolls.

Third Attunement:

Requirement: 7th Level Warlock
Attunement: The wielder must kill a holy person using only the dagger and his own magic. Doing so awakens a portion of the patrons power within the blade.

Clerics, Druids and Paladins qualify as holy people, as do saintly people and divine/angelic beings.

Awakened power: Thorn in the Soul deals an additional +1d4 piercing damage on a successful hit.

Fourth Attunement:

Requirement: 9th Level Warlock
Attunement: The wielder must kill a devil using only the dagger and his own magic. The blade of this weapon must then be smeared with the ichor left behind from the devil's corpse.

Awakened power: The wielder may command the burst into flames as a bonus action. The Thorn in the Soul now deals and additional +2d4 fire damage on a successful hit.

Fifth Attunement:

Requirement: 11th Level Warlock
Attunement: To unlock the fifth power, the wielder must commit the unforgivable sin of killing a unicorn. The wielder must do so using only his own magic and Thorn in the Soul.

Awakened power: The wielder becomes immune to all forms of disease.

Sixth Attunement:

Requirement: 13th Level Warlock
Attunement: To unlock the sixth power, the wielder must summon an extra-dimensional servant of his patron and present it with a worthy sacrifice. What may be considered "worthy" is largely up to the patron. If accepted the sacrifice will be delivered to the wielder's patron and is never seen again.

Awakened Power: Whenever Thorn in the Soul deals damage to a living being the wielder instantly recovers one (1) hit point. The wielder's hit points may not be raised beyond their normal maximum by this effect.

Seventh Attunement:

Requirement: 15th Level Warlock
Attunement: To unlock this final attunement the wielder must submerge the weapon in the waters of the River Styx. The wielder permanently loses one point from his constitution score when this attunement is performed.

Awakened power: Thorn in the Soul deals an additional +2d4 necrotic damage on a successful hit. Any living creature which suffers this necrotic damage must succeed at a Wisdom saving throw against the wielders Spell Save DC or become Frightened.

“By that all is holy, what happened here?” Guard Captain Tharen whispered.

The man beside him stared out at the broken bodies that littered the muddy road. The corpses were stiff with rigor, their faces contorted in absolute horror. The air stank of rot and brimstone.

“Nothing ‘holy’ that is certain, Tharen.” Cain the hunter replied. “He’s a day ahead of us, no more.”

“We should perform the sacred rites for these poor souls.” Reverend Hollis offered. “Theirs was a terrible passing. It is only good that we grant them some peace.”

Captain Tharen furrowed his brow, his expression pensive. He cast his gaze between the imposing figure of Cain and his friend Hollis. His guardsmen were clearly shaken by the scene. The corpses piled upon the crossroads was an evil omen of things to come.

“Reverend Hollis,” Tharen said in formal tone. “take command of the men and see to the burial of these victims. Cain and I will pursue the monster responsible for this sin against the gods and bring him down before he can claim any more innocent lives.

“Tharen! Are you mad?!?” Hollis gasped. “That *thing* killed forty people! What will you do? How will the two of you hope to survive?”

“You forget yourself, Reverend.” Tharen replied, clasping his hand upon his friend’s shoulder. “These people were subjects of the realm and I am charged with their safety. Now they are dead and my duty to avenge them is clear. His magic may have been sufficient to slay defenseless villagers but I far from defenseless. My steel will taste his blood and he **WILL** pay for his crimes!”

Cain the hunter remained still, his eyes noting the wounds on the corpses. Some bodies were battered as if by repeated hammer blows while others bore scorch marks and charred flesh. “His magic is powerful, we would do well to attack him in force.”

“I’ll not let him get further away.” Tharen replied. “If we can’t catch up to him who knows what horrors he may unleash.”

“Blessings of light be upon you both. We’ll lay these poor souls to rest and hurry as best we can to catch up with you afterwards.” Reverend Hollis said. “May the divine protect you both.”

“Thank you my friend.” Tharen replied.

“We will not survive this.” Cain muttered.

For two days Tharen and Cain tracked their quarry, stopping only briefly to rest and eat of meager rations. On the morning of the third day the rain came upon them as they spied a wisp of smoke rising from a campfire ahead.

Cain held up his hand and knelt in the high grass.

Tharen knelt down behind the hunter and whispered, “Is it him?”

Cain nodded slowly, eyes fixed on the dying fire. His hands moved deftly as he strung his bow. The rain pattering on the grass and their armor was the only sound to be heard.

“Asleep?” Tharen asked.

An orb of darkness blossomed from the campfire, engulfing an area ten paces across in a dome of impenetrable ebon night.

“I don’t think so.” Cain muttered as he rose and loosed an arrow into the dome of darkness. The hunter nocked another arrow, his eyes straining as he tried to find his target.

“COWARD!” Tharen yelled. He rose with a rasp of steel as his sword cleared its scabbard. “MURDERER! JUSTICE IS UPON YOU! COME OUT AND FACE US! AT LEAST DIE WITH SOME DIGNITY YOU MONSTER!”

A wispy bolt of lighting erupted from the darkness and struck Tharen in the chest. Sparks arched and burned, causing a shout of pain to escape the guard captain's throat.

Cain loosed his arrow, his aim sending it back along the path of the spell. His efforts were frustrated by no sound of impact, no grunt of pain, only silence and the sound of rain.

Tharen straightened, steam drifting off his armor and the stench of burned hair cleaning to him. "IS THAT ALL, MONSTER!?!? YOU'LL FIND WE'RE MADE OF STERNER STUFF!"

Cain's vision went white and thunder roared as a bolt of lighting shot forth from the darkness. The full force of the bolt struck Tharen, throwing him back like a leaf in the wind and charring his armor. The guard captain crashed limply in the damp grass.

Cain dropped his bow and dove into the tall grasses, rubbing at his eyes in effort to clear his vision.

"STERNER STUFF, INDEED!" A voice called out. "GO ON. GET UP, NOW. COME IN AND FACE ME. SHOW SOME COURAGE BEFORE YOU DIE!"

Steel rattled as Tharen drew a small vial from his pouch. He pulled the cork with his teeth and poured out the thick contents over his burnt lips. The effects were immediate, burns faded and his strength began to return. The guard captain let out a weak, madness-tinged laugh. "Oh, I'm coming for you monster." he said weakly as he cast his hand about, feeling for his lost sword.

The orb of ebon darkness blossomed again, oozing another ten paces closer to the downed men.

"YOU BOAST OF FIGHTING HONORABLY WHILE SNEAKING UP ON A MAN'S CAMP, YET YOU CALL ME A MONSTER. HYPOCRITE! YOUR BLOOD WILL FEED THIS LAND AND YOUR SOUL WILL BE YET ANOTHER MORSEL FOR THE MASTER IN THE TEMPEST!" The voice rang out over the pattering of the raindrops splatting on the armored men.

Cain's vision was clouded with the colored swatches of retinal flares. The madman's voice was growing closer far too quickly for his liking. The hunter thrust his rough hands into the mud and let much of what little magic he possessed flow out of him. "Hear me my friends. This one must not pass." His whisper came carried out from the hunter like a gentle breeze, flowing over the grasses and flowers about him.

Darkness flowed over grasses, flowers and thistles that swayed in the breeze of Cain's words, and stopped. The muffled sound of impact, that of someone falling in the mud, sounded over the rain..

"WHAT IS THIS? CHARLATAN! YOU DARE TEST YOUR POWER AGAINST MINE?!" The voice roared out.

Cain pulled his fingers out of the mud and traced the old elven sigil over his forehead. "*Bui coe a skui n-*" His whispered incantation floated off into the sky, a gentle breeze blowing the suddenly dry mud away. His vision cleared and Cain saw that the orb of darkness was nearly upon him.

The hunter scurried over to Tharen's fallen sword, sparing a glance toward the orb of darkness as another muffled thud sounded out over the rain.

"I'LL CARVE YOUR HEART OUT, PRETENDER TO POWER!!" Naked rage polluted the madman's voice as he struggled to gain ground.

"We must flee." Cain said as he shoved Tharen's sword into his grasping hands.

"NO!" The guard captain snapped. "I'll not run from this foe. He dies here."

Tharen gained his feet, sword in hand. Darkness flowed over them as Cain's sword cleared its scabbard. Within that inky darkness the two men swept their blades before them, hitting nothing.

Wrapped in the his blanket of the night Irklaen, disciple of the Master in the Tempest, prophet of the eternal night and harbinger of death, stalked the two mortal men who had sought to murder him. The barest exercise of will brought Thorn in the Soul to his hand

The silvered blade pierced Tharen's armor, drawing blood and eliciting a shocked curse of pain from the guard captain. Fear flooded Tharen's mind. Stark terror seized him and he stumbled back, frantic to escape the darkness and his terrible foe.

Cain's sword swept low, narrowly missing Irklaen's thigh.

"ENOUGH OF YOU!!" Irklaen snapped. "BY THE MASTER'S WILL!"

Four bolts of crackling energy streaked from the tip the bloodied dagger. Each struck a hammering blow upon Cain, the hunter of wizard's, cultists and fiends.

Cain spun forward, his steel flashing a full pace from where Irklaen now stood.

A second barrage of crackling energy struck home, knocking Cain's sword from his hand and sending the man sprawling into the rain-soaked grass. Irklaen, never on to take risks with a dangerous foe, hammered at Cain's body with spells.

Alone in the darkness Tharen struggled to escape. His sword was lost to him and all about was inky black. The guard captain never saw Irklaen approach, only heard his laughter as lifted his accursed blade.

Reverend Hollis let his tears run freely, forever lost in the rain. They had tracked Guard Captain Tharen and Cain the Hunter by following signs they had deliberately left behind. Now his eyes beheld their corpses, left to rot among trampled grasses and wildflowers.

Tharen's face was forever frozen in mask of absolute terror. Dozens of stab wounds marred his bloated corpse. Cain lay broken, as if trampled by a dozen horses. His corpse surround by blooming flowers as if nature sought to embrace him. The fiend had cut out the hunter's heart. It was nowhere to be seen.

"Reverend," one of the guardsmen spoke up. "Shall we pursue this monster? The captain must be avenged."

Hollis wiped the rain and the tears from his face, then turned to face the men Tharen had left in his care. There was uncertainty clearly etched across their features. Anger and a desire for revenge fought against their fear of the monster that had bested their captain. Cain's words came back to him, a whispered echo on the winds. "*We will not survive this.*"

"Your bravery serves you well, my son. No. We will bear our heroes home for a proper burial. Once they have been put to rest we will summon the Order of the Dawn's Light and together we will hunt down and destroy this evil. Let us pray." Reverend Hollis made the sign of the faith and the men took a knee to hear his benediction.

"Yes," he thought. "We need more men to finish this murdering madman."

While Hollis prayed over the body of his fallen friend and that of Cain the Hunter, Irklaen sat a league away. In his hands he spun his weapon, smiling bemusedly at the look of horror on the face of Tharen's soul as it drifted across the silvered blade. A bloodied sack at his feet held what he was certain would be a fine offering for his master.

Excerpted from "Magicians and Madmen" written by the noted elven scholar Tirien Lunas.

Our KickStarter Backers

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Brother Tom
Nicholas Kenney
Randy Smith
Lawrence Greer
Be Kind
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Mitch Wineman
Green sweater studios
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Rajeev 'Xutaag' Ram
Critical 20
Swaffletime

Artist Credits

Brian Lee

Fantastic Freelancer™

My name is Brian Lee, aka Bleed (Brian Lee Drawings). I grew up with two older brothers in a pretty rural part of Richmond, KY. My parents only allowed a very short amount of TV and video games, so drawing became one of my main sources of entertainment.

I had never been a good student in class. I would rather doodle in my notebooks than pay attention to the teachers. I graduated high school in 2006 and it was hard to find a school for artists in my area. I enrolled at Spencerian College and got my Associates Degree in Graphic Design. I was able to get a few freelance gigs designing logos for local businesses but it was not the real artistic outlet I was looking for.

In 2012 I moved to New Jersey after I was accepted into The Kubert School of Cartoon and Graphic Art. The Kubert School is notorious for being one of the hardest schools for artist. 8 hours a day, 5 days a week you will be drawing. That does not include the sleepless nights doing homework for your 10 classes you have every week. They strongly recommend that you do not have a job while attending because of the workload, but I had to for rent and food. It was the hardest 3 years of my life, but I got out alive and graduated in May of 2015. Now here I am, ready to work on what I love to do.

Work for Sinopa Publishing LLC includes art for:

Tale of the Wizard's Eye

Tarot Adventures, Book One: The Draw of Glenfallow

Tarot Adventures, Book Two: Comet over Echo Rock
October 2018 (debut) Drip release "Ol' Jack"

You can learn more about Brian here:

<http://sinopapublishing.sinopapublishing.com/p/biography-of-freelance-artist-brian-lee.html>

Alexia Veldhuisen

Fantastic Freelancer™

Alexia Veldhuisen was born and raised in Amsterdam. For many years she worked at Gojoker Strips & Comics, the best comic shop in town.

Pursuing her life long dream of becoming a comic book artist, she moved to the US. She is a graduate of the world-renowned comic book program The Kubert School, where she was awarded the Dave Simons Memorial Scholarship for her achievements in inking.

Next to comic art, traditional and digital painting, she enjoys coffee, video games and "normal" books. She dreams of telling her own stories and secretly being a master samurai.

In addition to designing the Sinopa Publishing Logo, her work can be found in the following titles by Sinopa Publishing:

Tarot Adventures, Book Two: Comet over Echo Rock
47 Furious Tails, Issue One (and counting)
November 2018 Drip release "D'Inn"

You can learn more about Alexia here:

<http://sinopapublishing.sinopapublishing.com/p/blog-page.html>

Anthony Ojeda

Fantastic Freelancer™

My name is Anthony Ojeda, I'm an Illustrator and Cartoonist. I'm a graduate of the Kubert School and am a full time Illustrator, Cartoonist, and Storyboard Artist. I love ink, steak, whiskey, and Ratrods! Oh, and drawing, I love that too!

I have experience writing, editing, producing the artwork for, and publishing my own short story along with creative teams such as Dare2Draw and MasMediaStudio. From behind the scenes to up in the front row, I've enjoyed experiencing the working world of both sides. Storyboards, conceptual artwork, and editorial artwork are just as prevalent in my world as spot illustration, comic book artwork, and promotional artwork

You can find more art by Tony

On deviantart

On Instagram: [_Tonyojeda](#)

On Twitter: [@thepainterdude](#)

His work can be found in the following titles from Sinopa Publishing:

Tarot Adventures, Book One: The Draw of Glenfallow
December 2018 Drip release "Abuela"

Anthony's is scheduled to illustrate the coming book Tarot Adventures, Death comes to Glenfallow, where he will be creating cover art as well as interior illustrations that tap into his love of horror for this fierce book.

You can learn more about Anthony here:

<http://sinopapublishing.sinopapublishing.com/p/biography-of-freelance-artists-anthony.html>

Edwin Abreu Ruiz

Fantastic Freelancer™

As a child, Edwin Abreu Ruiz expressed his passion for art with drawings and designs to make family and friends laugh at his hometown at Isabela, PR. He continued to train his skills in the art world at the Puerto Rico School of Plastic Arts at the old San Juan, where he completed his baccalaureate in 2005. With a career of over 15 years in the advertising industry, Edwin stands today as an Art Director at SajoMcCann Puerto Rico. Among his achievements lie several awards in illustrations and creative concepts. In his free time he's inspired by writing fantasy stories and illustrating his characters. Edwin considers himself self-taught, and he's very confident that "There is always time in life to create and learn."

Rebecca Elisbet Coulthart

Fantastic Freelancer™

Rebecca is a freelance artist who attended The Kubert School and graduated from County College of Morris with an Associates in Fine Art. She is a digital artist who tends to lean towards cartooning and horror with an interest in character design and storytelling. She eventually hopes to work on creator-owned comics.

Work for Sinopa Publishing LLC includes:

Tale of the Wizard's Eye

Tarot Adventures, Book One: The Draw of Glenfallow
February 2019 Drip release "Cupid"

You can learn more about Rebecca here:

<http://sinopapublishing.sinopapublishing.com/p/biography-of-freelance-artist-rebecca.html>

Lotus Blair

Fantastic Freelancer™

I'm Lotus Blair.

I'm a self-taught artist from Jeffersonville, Kentucky. I work in traditional media (watercolor, ink, and colored pencils), as well as digital media. My digital works utilize software such as GIMP, Paint Tool SAI, and Krita. My artistic focus lies in character design and illustration. I also enjoy experimenting with surreal and abstract styles in my sketchbooks.

I've been practicing my arts my entire life. As a child I began with animal illustrations. In middle school I was introduced to manga, comics, and anime; which lead to the endless cycle of creating original characters, role playing, and creating stories to accompany my art. In high school I realized that I wanted to pursue a career as an artist, whether in animation, writing, or illustrating comics. Entering college, I found my passion in character design and comic book art.

As I continue to hone my skills, I've also begun studying video game design and programming. I continue these studies at Maysville Community and Technical College, and will enhance my skill set through advanced classes focusing on character design, comic creation, and concept Art.

Her work can found in the following titles by Sinopa Publishing:

March 2019 Drip release (Incarnate Cat)

Lotus has a bright future ahead of her and we look forward to many years of Lotus Blair illustrations in books by Sinopa Publishing.

You can learn more about Lotus here:

<http://sinopapublishing.sinopapublishing.com/p/biography-of-freelance-artist-lotus.html>

Christian Martinez

Fantastic Freelancer™

My name is Christian Martinez. I grew up in Hudson Valley, New York. As a child I loved cartoons and fantasy stories, so I always loved trying to draw the things I saw in books and on TV. When I was in school I did the best I could, but I became infamous for handing in tests lined with sketches and doodles all around the papers. By the time I was in high school I had decided that art is what I wanted to do with my life. All my electoral classes were art related and by senior year I was in the National Art Honor Society. That year I was accepted to Pratt and spent the next two years at their Utica New York campus.

After realizing Pratt was not the school for me, I took a year off and worked retail and odd jobs. One weekend, while looking for potential schools, I received an email from Deviantart from a place called The Kubert School. I had never heard of them before but as I researched the school, I was amazed. A school that teaches art through Comic book art and illustration? This was a dream come true! I begged my parents to let me apply (they were VERY skeptical) and after I convinced them I sent in my application and portfolio.

I spent the next 3 years at the Kubert school, honing my skills drastically and meeting some amazing artists and friends along the way. I am happy to report that in May 2017 I officially graduated from the Kubert School.

Currently I still reside in Hudson Valley, doing what I love and trying to make a living out of it.

His work can be found in the following titles by Sinopa Publishing:

Tarot Adventures, Book One: The Draw of Glenfallow
Tarot Adventures, Book Two: Comet over Echo Rock
Whispers of Persephone (which he illustrated)

You can learn more about Christian here:

<http://sinopapublishing.sinopapublishing.com/p/biography-of-freelance-artist-christian.html>

Nick Caponi

Fantastic Freelancer™

My name is Nicholas “Nick” Caponi. I am a freelance artist based in Bryam, New Jersey.

Growing up, I watched shows like Xena: Warrior Princess, Spiderman, Batman: The Animated series and would draw those characters. I have always been interested in superheroes and fantasy characters. It wasn't until I was around 7 years old, when I picked up my very first comic book (Catwoman #1 (1993) by Chuck Dixon and Jim Balent), which inspired me to pursue art as a career. From that day forward, I drew constantly throughout my middle and high school years. After graduating High School in 2013, I enrolled in the fall semester at the Joe Kubert School of Cartoon and Graphic Art in Dover, NJ and graduated in 2016. It was truly an amazing, life changing experience.

Professionally, I've worked on various graphic design firms. About a year after I graduated I realized I wanted to pursue my dream career in comics and illustration, specifically in comic book coloring. During that time, I created a webcomic called “Sandie.” which details the life of (newly retired) Satan's daughter as she takes on her role as the new ruler of Hell.

His work can be found in the following titles by Sinopa Publishing:

Tarot Adventures, Book Two: Comet over Echo Rock
April 2019 Drip release (Elf)
He also created the page border art for this book!

He is slated to be the principle illustrator and cover artist on a project scheduled for 2020 release.

You can learn more about Nick here:

http://sinopapublishing.sinopapublishing.com/p/biography-of-freelance-artist-nick_2.html

Patricia Lee

Editor

Hello to all readers of Sinopa Publishing from Patricia Lee. My family of three sons; James, Robert (Rory), and Brian Lee, have known Sam Quinton for many years and have many common interests. Their love of drama and the sequential arts has created other worlds that can come to life through the imagination of storytelling and graphics using the specific talents of these individuals. I am proud to be a part of this endeavor and hope you read their work for many enjoyable hours and years to come.

Why do I get a small part in all this?

I have a unique set of skills – besides being their mom – that has allowed me to participate and relate to this work. I am the EDITOR. I get to read everything first, make comments, highlight errors, and give opinions. The pen is mightier than the sword and I like that power. So, if you find a mistake in English grammar or spelling, blame me. And, if you find yourself amazed at the artwork, also blame me. (After all, where do you think they get it?) Finally, if you find yourself immersed in this world and who cares about spelling, blame Sam. This comes from his imagination and style of storytelling. I'd like to thank Sam for including me and thank the readers for their loyalty.

Never stop reading, learning, and doing what you love.

~ Patricia Lee

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