

The Silven Trumpeter

The Official Magazine of Silven Crossroads

Silven Trumpeter 08 - March 2004 Issue
<http://www.silven.com>

Confessions of a Lejendary Mind

We introduce you to a new column by Dale Holmstrom that focuses on the LA Game RPG.
page 34

Sean Holland Visits the Persian Empire

This month Through the Lens of History takes a peek into ancient Persia.
page 21

Bradford's Speculations

Bradford dwells on miniature prices.
page 51

COVER STORY

Carl Batchelor gives you the low down on the top RPGs of 2004
page 6



Sound off!

Got an urge to send a note to our editor? Would you like to volunteer as a writer? Have comments about an article?

Write to Dana at :
adriayna@yahoo.com

From the Editor

In great literature, the hero is someone who stands out-someone who transcends his inner struggles and flaws, overcomes incredible odds, and gains the loyalty and respect of his peers. The inverse of that, however, is the tragic hero-the individual who continually struggles to overcome her problems, but is ousted in the end by a tragic character flaw.

Players tend to shy away from those characters with a tragic flaw-after all, who really wants to play a Willy Loman or Oedipus type figure in the end? I recently began running a D&D game again after a six-month hiatus from the hotseat and at character creation required each character to have a character flaw. Not something that would turn the PC into a tragic hero, but rather something that would make the character not only less than perfect but also more interesting. These same sorts of flaws are present in the character development of many CRPG games-no character is perfect, as none should be. Perfection is not a prerequisite for being a hero.

What exactly is a hero in an RPG game? A perfect individual who can do no wrong? The unlikely candidate that ends up saving the village in the end? I think that there are as many types of heroes as there are characters. What makes a character heroic however, is not the plot the DM puts them through, nor the battles they fight-but rather how they approach said encounters, the bravery and ingenuity they have to overcome them, and the respect they can gain from others. It is the challenge of the game designer or DM to maintain that delicate balance in a game between letting the PCs gain their victories with ease, allowing "perfect" characters to be created, or the more realistic flawed heroes that struggle and earn their respect. No PC wants to feel that she is continually struggling uphill, but how much reward is it if a DM simply hands his players a victory?

The key is ultimately to maintain a balance. A balance between a perfect character and an unplayable one, a balance between victory and defeat, and a balance between, reward and challenge.

This month our ezine features an interesting balance of articles. Our cover story by Carl Batchelor is an in-depth look at what 2003 produced and what 2004 holds in store for the CRPG industry. Our Q&A with Gary Gygax focuses on some common RPG pitfalls and Eytan Bernstein takes us through his second article on Pantheon Creation. We are also unveiling a new Legendary Adventures column by Dale Holmstrom.

Best Regards,

Dana Driscoll

Dana Driscoll

Editor In Chief
Silven Crossroads E-zine



Contents Page

D&D / d20

The Feat Factory : Project VI41
by Lance Kepner

d20 Speculations : Miniature Pricing51
by Bradford Ferguson

d20 Villain : Niaia, Witch of the Fen43
by Steven Russell

d20 Review : Chaositech48
by Steven Russell

d20 Review : Lords of the Nights46
by Bradford Ferguson

Quillion's Quill38
by Steve Russell

CRPG

A Giant Leap Year Forward for CRPGs6
by Carl Batchelor

Interviews

Chatting with Gary Gygax4
by Gary Gygax and Kosala Ubayasekara

Fiction

Rebels in the Dungeon : Part III17
by Raymond Huling

Cherry Boys10
by Edward J. Kopp

Humor

RPG Wars13
by Kou and Ali

The Adventures of Starlanko the Magnificent ...24
by Matthew J. Hanson

Two and a Half Dice Games40
by Lance Kepner

The Fodder Canon57
by Dana Driscoll and Lance Kepner

Legal

Open Gaming Licence59

Publishers Notes and Legal Info60

Gaming Advice

Antipodean Adventures14
by Shane Cubis

Through the Lens of History21
by Sean Holland

Faith Based Initiative26
by Eytan Bernstein

Polyglot31
by Dana Driscoll

Confessions of a Legendary Mind.....34
by Dale Holmstrom

Gaming Aids

Cartographer's Corner54
by Kosala Ubayasekara

Chatting with Gary Gygax

by Kosala Ubayasekara
& Gary Gygax

Welcome to our regular monthly debate and informational piece done in collaboration with Mr. Gary Gygax, the original creative mind behind the Dungeons and Dragons role-playing game. For our eleventh Q&A, we take a look at some good advice for newbie gamers.

Q1) Now at one point or other we were all novice gamers. Of course, this may not apply to you since you practically invented the genre. But most newbie players always have one or two questions about the game that get you dissolving in peals of laughter. My most memorable such event was when I was introducing a new player to my D&D group. And the first question he had was "Do I get to play a dungeon or a dragon?" Since you must have gamed with many people, let's kick off this Q&A with your most memorable newbie question.

Well, "practically" is not quite the word. I did invent the game form as a formal exercise by writing the first draft of the D&D game in 1972 and the expanded one in 1973. I was a newbie DM, and all that played those initial games in 1972 were likewise total novices. If there were any amusing misapprehensions, I don't recall them. However...

Not long ago a teenage boy was asking about playing a paper RPG. When I explained, he nodded, relating what I said to Diablo. Then he asked, "How do you save your character?" Somehow I refrained from both laughter and snide remarks about such a crutch. Instead, I said the players had to face the hazard of losing their characters, so thought, planning, care, and occasional running away were the best means of assuring longevity. It was not surprising to me that he shook his head, clearly not understanding those concepts.

Q2) Seriously though, what is your top three snippets of wisdom to a person entering the role-playing genre for the first time to make sure that he or she gets started on the right foot?

First, remember that the "game" in role-playing game is the principle operative word. You are not acting out a story by role-playing. Along with the other players, your game persona is interacting with the Game Master's environment to create a story with an outcome dependent on what the group does.

Second, to do the first properly, you need to suspend disbelief, know the potential of your in-game character, and develop that character as if he or she were an actual person--having a name, description, history, motives for being who they are, goals, likes and dislikes. Thus formed, assume the role of the imagined person and act accordingly in play.

Third, listen attentively to what the Game Master says. That person is the arbiter of all that the player characters in the adventuring party do not control. That means he serves as your character's physical senses as well as playing all other roles in the game--other people, creatures, nature, virtually everything in the environment. What is spoken by the GM is always important. By listening carefully, you should be able to determine what is critical for success.

About the Authors

Gary Gygax is credited as being the founding father of the Dungeons and Dragons role-playing game and is a well known figure and writer in the industry. Now working mostly on his new roleplaying product line, Lejendary Adventures, he is a household name among role-playing enthusiasts.

Kosala is a serial entrepreneur residing in Stockholm, Sweden. Aside from being the founder of Silven Crossroads, Kosala holds an advisory board position in a privately held Swedish company and works part time in the Swedish public sector on a volunteer basis.

Contact the Authors

Kosala can be contacted at kosala@silven.com. Mr Gygax's email is not printed here for privacy reasons.

About the Artist

Interior black and white artwork for this article is done by Veli-Matti Joutsen. Mr Joutsen is a self taught artist living in Finland, who has been drawing and illustrating since early childhood.

Contact the Artist

Contact Veli-Matti at freelancer@surfeu.fi



artwork copyright Veli-Matti Joutsen

Q3) At some point most long-term gaming groups have to deal with the situation of introducing a new player or a novice player to their already established team. What kind of things can the group do to make the transition of the novice player into the group as painless as possible?

It is best if the Game Master introduces the novice or new player to the group, informing the regulars of that person's gaming background so they will be able to assist with information or share similar experiences according to the degree of knowledge the added player has.

Politeness is paramount, in my opinion. Just as in any situation, the new player will feel more confident if given a friendly welcome by the established group. Being accepted thus, that one will then be motivated to perform naturally and participate more fully in the game.

If the players introduce their characters to the newcomer, relate information and ask questions in character, this will assist the uninitiated player to become a part of the adventuring team. Comradely behavior from other PCs certainly equates to the same sort acceptance in actuality. I have found that game characters becoming fellows usually occurs before the actual players form personal associations.

Sharing of refreshments with a newcomer certainly goes a long way towards making such a person feel welcome. Of course, an experienced gamer coming to a new group will know that this cuts both ways, and he will come well stocked with drinks and snacks to share with the group.

Q4) Most groups also have to, at one point or another, deal with the disruptive player. The one that insists on killing the key NPC for no reason, or nitpicks every little rules detail with the DM. Do you have any tips on how a group can handle this kind of player without destroying the groups cohesion?

A truly disruptive player is the GM's problem first and foremost. In such a case it is up to him to manage the matter quickly and firmly. If it continues after a friendly reproof delivered for whatever offensive behavior has been evidenced, the Game Master should deliver a rebuke and a warning. In some cases it is possible that punitive actions, perhaps even termination, taken upon the disruptive player's character will serve to redress things. If those steps fail, the GM needs to speak to the offending person privately, informing him of exactly what the problem or problems are, demand that such behavior cease, the alternative being exclusion from the group.

The other players can assist the Game Master by letting the offending party know that they do not appreciate his actions, that he is spoiling the game for them. Players should not otherwise become involved, for the management of the group is the purview of the GM. If that one allows things to get out of hand, then the remainder of the group should speak to the GM, and ask that he remove the offender, for otherwise they will be forced to find a new group.

The worst problem of this sort is when two or more players behave disruptively so as to split the group into two factions. In such circumstances, the GM must decide which group is the one he finds offensive, sit down with all the players, explain his position, and ask the offensive party to either change their behavior to meet his standards or else stop coming to game sessions.

It is better to have fun with a group of only one or two players than it is to be annoyed with a gaming group of larger size.

Q5) What is your advice to newbie players gaming at conventions? Are open games at conventions good starting points for newbie players or is the smaller more private gaming environment of a friend's living room the best starting point?

In general either place is suitable. The absolute newbie is pretty unlikely to attend a game convention, but if he does, open games are not where he should go for initiation. The place to learn is in the various demo games run at conventions. The GMs running those events expect to have many uninitiated participants, are prepared to go slowly and explain a lot. As a matter of fact, I watched my youngest son Alex, then age 16, sit down and do just that for a lad of around 10 years of age. The boy spent about an hour learning, then came back next day to play.

The very best way to get started in gaming is with a peer group of friends wherever they meet to play--at a dining table, the living room, a basement recreation room, or some public facility. That's the way I introduced hundreds of newbies to RPGing, some age peers, most far younger than I, but being a kid at heart helped;) As the group playing was generally young, there was plenty of camaraderie there, and I am an amiable GM when dealing with novices.

Comment on this article online at this URL:

▶ <http://www.silven.com/articles.asp?case=show&id=86>

→ 2004 : A Giant Leap Year Forward for CRPGs

By Carl Batchelor

Looking back at 2003's selection of games, I see a disappointing similarity with 2002's CRPGs. This time last year I wrote a similar article for this E-zine, and in it I remarked how disappointed I was in 2002's selection of CRPGs. While magazines raved about a new "RPG Renaissance" thanks to the successful release of games like *Neverwinter Nights*, *Dungeon Siege*, *Morrowind*, and *Freedom Force*, I firmly believed that no such thing existed. While the gaming world was busy playing CRPGs that were all cut from the same dusty old cloth, I was pining away for the revival of the classic CRPG. I had hoped 2003 would be the first year that this downward spiral reversed itself, but looking back I realize that this past year was even worse than the previous one. In response to this, I've decided to not only examine last year's CRPG lineup, but use this article as a chance to sound off on what games I think will be big in 2004 and where the industry is headed.

The year of 2003 started off badly though, thanks in part to the disappointing *Harbinger*, a game that early previews had convinced me to buy. What I thought was an outer space themed *Diablo* turned out to be nothing more than a bland and unsatisfying romp through featureless "mazes" killing even more bland and unsatisfying aliens.

Much to my dismay, the rest of the year didn't get any better. Most of the major releases for 2003 were nothing more than lackluster expansion packs to mediocre games. *Morrowind* tried to recapture my waning interest with its snow-filled expansion *Bloodmoon*, but the new armor and quests that reviewers kept raving about were no more interesting to me than the new styles of trees found throughout the recently added land mass. Even the once mighty Bioware took a seat on the expansion pack gravy train, releasing expansions for thirty dollars that would have made more sense as free downloads. While

Hordes of the Underdark did have a rather robust and challenging quest that actually caused my half-orc monk to die twice, I won't even bother making any remarks about *Dungeon Siege*'s laughably inept attempt at making an expansion. Even though many people thought the consoles had a good year, the only games that managed to impress me were the Xbox's *Knights of the Old Republic* and *Final Fantasy X-2* on the PS2. While *KOTOR* was, without a doubt, one of the best CRPGs I played in the past five years, it takes more than one game to make it a "Good year".

A lot of this disappointment would have to be blamed on the pushing back till summer of 2004 two of my two most eagerly awaited RPGs, *Fable* and *Sudeki*. While I understand and accept the fact that the ambitious "Project Ego" has yet to be finished, I'm amazed that a relatively shallow console RPG like *Sudeki* is still being held back.

Even if these two games had been released, 2003 would have still been a very disappointing year. Especially for the PC platform, which was closer to losing its relevance and popularity to the consoles last year than it has ever been. The only two CRPGs worth noting that came out this year for the PC platform would be Troika's *Temple of Elemental Evil* and Piranha Byte's *Gothic 2*. While initially released in typical bug-infested form, the post-patch *TOEE* game was nothing short of legendary. With a return to the classic turn-based CRPG gameplay of the 80's and a notoriously difficult quest laid out before anyone brave enough to buy the game, *TOEE* was every golden age gamer's dream come true. While the game was a tad short and the last boss fight was a bit anticlimactic, the game seemed even better than it already was when you take into account that most of the CRPGs released on the PC this year were as shallow as my bathroom sink. That is, except for *Gothic 2*, which deservedly won *PC Gamer's* coveted RPG of the Year award. Boasting a world three times as large as the first game, *Gothic 2* harkened back to the same classic CRPG gameplay we once took for granted.

Carl Batchelor is our Author of the Month!



Each month, the Editor-in-Chief of the Silver Trumpeter chooses one writer as the "Writer of the Month." The "Writer of the Month" has his or her bio and accomplishments highlighted in the Silver Trumpeter and also receives a small gift of appreciation for their continued hard work.



This first month's honor goes to Carl Batchelor, a long-time member of the Silver Crossroads community. For well over one year, Carl has contributed significantly to Silver Crossroads, to both the Silver Trumpeter and CRPG sections of the site. Congrats Carl!

~Dana Driscoll, Editor-in-Chief

For Carl, gaming is more than a hobby, it is a way of life. Starting out with an Atari 2600 in 1982, he has owned (and in most cases, still does own) every console gaming platform. That is, except for the Neo Geo and the Jaguar, both of which were far out of the price range of his teenage allowance. Known throughout his childhood as his area's best gamer, his friends knew whose house to come to when they wanted to try out the latest game or discover how to beat said game. Carl was also an arcade rat who spent more time in his local arcade than he did at home. He has won a few tournaments, the proudest of which being the time he beat the Taito arcade game *Cadash* in a half an hour with one quarter. It was at this time that Carl knew that what was a hobby for some was a destiny for him.

Though he enjoyed console gaming, he was just as enthralled by PC gaming. Starting out with a Commodore 64 and SSI's famous "Goldbox Games," he moved on to the PC platform after playing *Wolfenstein* at his cousin's house in 1993. Between then and now, he has owned four PCs and countless games, most of which are CRPGs.

Gaming isn't his only love, however. Carl has always enjoyed writing. It was only when he revealed his work to his high school creative writing teacher and impressed her so much she began using his book as a teaching aide that he knew what his true talents were. Combining both his love of games and his love of writing, Carl joined the Internet in 1996 and began looking for a place that would allow him to get into the gaming industry that he dreamt about being a part of.

Continued ...

If there is one CRPG every veteran PC gamer can agree is the "new" *Ultima*, it is *Gothic*. Often compared to Lord British's games, *Gothic* seems to revel in its non-linearity and immense difficulty. Unlike most modern CRPGs that walk the middle path of approachability in an effort to pull at the purse strings of the mainstream gamers, *Gothic* goes out of its way to be as old school as possible. With a detailed faction system, a massive world to explore, intelligent enemies, and townspeople that remember how you treat them later on in the game, *Gothic* seems out of place amongst the shallow and arcade-like CRPGs that are sold alongside of it on the shelf.

From my viewpoint, it didn't seem like any CRPG designer or publisher wanted to take any risks this year. Other than *TOEE*, *Gothic 2* and a buggy Xbox port of *KOTOR*, there was absolutely nothing worth buying within the PC RPG genre, and even the most optimistic gamers have to admit to feeling worried about where the genre was going. With the recent cancellation of *Baldur's Gate 3* and *Fallout 3*, not to mention the so-called "bastardization" of *Deus Ex 2* taking the wind out of Warren Spector's sails, the future for PC RPGs was looking rather grim. So grim that the only thing that would get us out of this rut is a good year of solid CRPGs to beef up our libraries. Unfortunately, Good CRPG years come around about as often as Leap years. Well, guess how many days February has this year?

A Look Ahead: 2004

All kidding aside, 2004 looks to be big all across the board. The PS2, Xbox, and the PC are all getting major games this year and all indicators point to this year as being the first time in a while that we'll all be broke trying to keep up with the releases.

Perhaps most surprising of all is the Xbox. With only two authentic CRPGs available for Microsoft's big black box, many gamers have written the system off and consider it to be an RPG wasteland. Not so this year, especially when you consider that two of this year's most anticipated CRPGs are coming out on the Xbox

and will never see the light of day on the rival PS2.

First of all, the Xbox is receiving *Jade Empire*, Bioware's first fully independent CRPG. Based on what China would have been if all of its legends had been historical truths, this graphically stunning CRPG combines authentic martial arts combat with the already proven *Knights of the Old Republic* engine to create an RPG that is destined to be Bioware's biggest hit yet. After watching nearly an hour of footage from the game, I feel comfortable saying that if Bioware keeps this up they will be responsible for single-handedly putting the Xbox overtop of the PS2 in the CRPG wars. The combat in the game, which is actually real time, is deep enough to allow the player to improvise her fighting techniques on the spot. One movie I saw had a player being thrown into a table, only to get up and grab two slabs of wood from the broken table beneath him and proceed to enter a new style of martial arts that allowed him to use the splintered wood as crude bludgeoning weapons. With the camera angle constantly changing and the slow motion effect being applied at "just the right moment," the battle I saw in the demo looked more like a Jackie Chan movie and less like the video game it truly was. What I've seen so far has been enough to convince me that Bioware has something special in store for gamers with *Jade Empire*. This isn't just *KOTOR* with karate—this is a whole new experience.

Ask any Xbox role-player and they'll probably tell you that the real trump card being pulled from Microsoft's deck is *Fable*. Having been delayed for years, *Fable* has fallen off of the tongues of most gamers. Though anyone who has followed the game's development realizes how truly earth shattering this game's effect on the game industry will be. Not since Bethesda's overachieving *Daggerfall* has a CRPG promised to do so much. Imagine having complete freedom to finally be as evil as you want to be and even having to deal with local "heroes" who seek out the bounty on your head. On the other side of the gold piece, think of how great it would be to attract those same heroic warriors through your valorous deeds. With all of this and the

Starting out by writing reader editorials for sites like The Gaming Intelligence Agency and RPGfan, he eventually ended up as a game reviewer for the ill-fated "RPG Source" website. After that site left the web, Carl found an advertisement for Silven on the *Neverwinter Nights* Vault and the rest is history.

Carl now works as a senior salesman and merchandiser for a small east-coast based department store, earning enough money to keep his habit going but also having the nights off to, among other things, think of new character-types to beat *Daggerfall* with. When not gaming or writing about gaming, Carl is hard at work on two different novels, both of which he has been thinking of getting published. Hopefully, with the help of *Silven*, that is one dream that will come true.

Contact the Author

the_last_kai@hotmail.com

ability to get married, make a name for yourself, and even age as you play an almost totally non-linear game, it's hard to imagine this as being only a console RPG. With arguably the finest graphics seen on a console game up to this point, *Fable* just might be the game that does for the Xbox what *Final Fantasy VII* did for the first Playstation. Mark my words, *Fable* will deliver on its promises.

Not to be outdone, the PS2 has a few surprises in store for hungry console-owning CRPG gamers as well. Coming up in the fall is Tri-Ace's new *Star Ocean: Till The End of Time*.

With the second *Star Ocean* having gained critical acclaim and eventually becoming the most sought

There's no doubting it, *Beyond Divinity* is going to be one heck of a ground breaking CRPG.

after and talked about Playstation 1 RPG of all time, it doesn't take a genius to see where the sequel is headed. Early reviews being written by gamers who have played the import version suggest that this game is light years ahead of the previous *Star Ocean* title and will not only pull in hardcore fans of the series, but also CRPG newbies as well. With futuristic-themed CRPGs still being a rare commodity, a game like *Star Ocean 3* will be filling a huge gap in the genre. Of all the Playstation 2 CRPGs being released this year, none is probably as hotly anticipated as this.

A lot of the CRPGs slated for release in 2004 for the PS2 are either being pushed back so far that they might not make the Q4 deadline or are still just a "rumor". The PS2 might very well get a remake of the first *Phantasy Star* game by the end of year as well as sequels to *Wild Arms* and *Shadow Hearts*. There have even been rumors about *Suikoden 4* and *Final Fantasy XII*, though it is unlikely that either game will be seen before 2005. Still, with SquareEnix's action RPG hybrid *Drakengard*, from Software's under-appreciated FPS/RPG *Shadow Tower: Abyss* and *Everquest* spin-off *Champions of Norrath* guaranteed to make their release dates, things aren't looking too bad for the

PS2. Even if we don't get everything, the PS2 will still have one of its best years in 2004.

Even Nintendo's Gamecube is getting into the act this year with the release of their first new Square title since the Super Nintendo classic *Super Mario RPG*. While *Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles* has failed to impress me so far, I'm willing to withhold passing judgment on it until I've played it for myself. More of an action game with a heavy emphasis on puzzles and mini-games, *Crystal Chronicles* might not be the hit SquareEnix is hoping it will be.

Thankfully, Namco's famous "Tales" series of games will be making its debut on the Gamecube in 2004 with *Tales of Symphonia*. Taking the series into 3D for the first time, Namco has promised the same kind of fast-paced combat and street-fighter like special moves that gamers loved so much about the previous games in the series. Although the Gamecube may be floundering, at least there are still a couple RPGs worth buying for it..

Last but not least, we have the PC. What If I told you the PC would be the big winner this year, and that it would be thanks in part to the release of an *Ultima 7* inspired CRPG that will for once and all solidify Europe's domination of the PC CRPG market? What if I told you that this game was going to introduce so many new elements to CRPG gameplay that it would mark the beginning of a new era? What if I told you that this game is Larian Studios' *Beyond Divinity*?

There's no doubting it, *Beyond Divinity* is going to be one heck of a ground breaking CRPG. With American companies having dropped the proverbial ball, it seems that European companies have picked it up and slammed-dunked it. Not only will *Beyond Divinity* sport a re-tooled and bug-free engine this time around,

but it will also attempt to create a "Random Quest Generator" that could become the most imitated gameplay addition in a CRPG since *Ultima 4's* Cause-and-effect alignment system. Furthermore, *Beyond Divinity* starts out with your peace-loving character being permanently "bonded" to the soul of one of your black hearted enemies...and then throws you into another dimension where you are forced to work with this hateful beast in order to escape. The premise is so original that I'm shocked no one has thought of it before. Even the skill system is revolutionary in the way that you can actually create your own skills by modifying certain attributes of the generic ones. Although details have been sketchy, there is no doubt that character customization in *Beyond Divinity* will reach heights never before seen by any other CRPG. Even the artificial intelligence is said to have been reprogrammed, giving monsters the same spells and skills as your own and giving them the ability to hide and teleport away from you if their odds of survival dip too low.

Besides *Beyond Divinity*, the PC will be getting a boatload of new FPS/RPG hybrids to gobble up what little free time you have left. With the *Half-Life 2* engine powering the new *Vampire Bloodlines* game, most CRPG'ers will probably be forced to do a major system upgrade this year, not to mention finding a part time job to pay for it. *Vampire Bloodlines* may turn off those among you who do not like first person shooters, but if there is one game that will "sell" people on the idea of adding these two distinctly different genres together it is Bethesda's *Call of Cthulu*.

Unlike other FPS/RPG hybrids that simply throw a ton of mindless zombies or robots at you, *Call of Cthulu: Dark corners of the Earth* focuses more on the internal struggle between your character and his wavering sanity. In a revolutionary move, the designers of the game have completely removed any numerical indicator of your character's health or state of mind.

Instead, as you become more and more injured, your on-screen experience will change. You might find yourself unable to hold your gun steady, unable to walk more than a few feet without falling down, or find your vision blurred by a mixture of sweat and blood. Even your decreasing sanity will have an effect on gameplay, causing your view of the game to change depending on what your character is going through. Imagine climbing up to the top of a building and while trying to walk up a fire escape you are stricken with a severe case of vertigo. Early buzz on this game has been favorable, and with Bethesda's marketing muscle fully behind it, this may be the kind of FPS/RPG that this genre needed all along.

Not so fast though, it doesn't end there! The PC might have missed out on getting *Fallout 3*, but we'll be seeing the next best thing when Silver Style releases their new CRPG *The Fall: Last days of Gaia*. Inspired by Tim Cain's famous masterpiece, this post-apocalyptic RPG has already gained a huge amount of support from the notoriously picky *Fallout* crowd. Combining the same type of non-linear questing we enjoyed in *Fallout* with a standard six-person CRPG party, this is one game that may surprise a lot of people when it comes out this year. Even the ending of the game is non-linear, allowing your victorious heroes to roam the wasteland long after they have conquered it, uncovering new secrets, NPCs, weapons, and quests—so many post-end game quests that the designers doubt anyone will ever find them all. Perhaps the most interesting thing about this game that I've noticed during my time at their official boards is how closely Silver Style works with their fans. Carsten Strehse, the man behind this CRPG, has continually asked the fans to not only write up side quests and NPCs for the game, but has also accepted new skill suggestions as well. This kind of fan-to-designer interaction is simply unheard of in today's market and is proof positive that Silver Style intends to pick up where "fan friendly" Black Isle left off.

So, once again, I warn you: 2004 will be the year of the RPG and you'll be so deep in debt by December that you'll probably have to forego buying any Christmas presents. With gamers finally getting some truly genre re-defining CRPGs like *Fable*, *Beyond Divinity*, *Cthulu*, and *The Fall*, there isn't much more we could wish for. All of these games are also highly likely to make their 2004 release dates, so it looks like the hobby could be making a huge comeback. Mark my words, this year will be huge.

Comment on this article online at this URL:

▶ <http://www.silven.com/articles.asp?case=show&id=83>

Tentative Release Dates

PS2:

Drakengard – 03/03/04

Phantasy Star Generations – Q1 '04 (Rumor)

Wild Arms: Alter Code F – Q1 '04 (Rumor)

Wild Arms: Another Code F – Q1 '04 (Rumor)

Star Ocean 3 – August '04

Shadow Tower: Abyss – Sometime in '04

Gamecube:

Tales of Symphonia – 07/13/04

Phantasy Star Online Episode 3 - 03/03/04

Xbox:

Fable – 06/16/04

Sudeki - 06/23/04

True Fantasy Live Online – Summer '04

PC:

Vampire: Bloodlines – 11/15/04

Beyond Divinity – 04/13/04

The Fall: Last Days of Gaia – Q1 '04

Call of Cthulu – 09/01/04

Black 9 (All platforms) September '04



Cherry Boys

by Edward J. Kopp

"Look alive you two Cherry Boys. Do you smell that?"

The Boatswain inhaled deeply, his face creased and leathery from years of the ocean spray. His eyes closed and a beatific smile crossed his craggy face, scaring the two young deck hands for a second, as they were not expecting this harsh and almost brutal man to be capable of such an expression.

"That, my fine young apes, is the smell of Debauchery."

"Smells funny to me Boats," replied the boy with tell-tale signs of Infernal Blood.

"And why'd joo keep callin' us Cherry Boys?" chimed in his companion, a tall, lithe young girl with light hazel eyes and sun bleached blonde hair, picked up as a deck hand up in Ostan Bay.

"Because that is what you are. We all are Cherry Boys our first time. That funny smell is your first hint at the decadence and pleasure that's waiting for us," growled the Boats. "We're almost within sight of Sebomai, City of Sin, my little apes."

At the mention of the most famous port of call in all the known lands both deck hands perked up, blood rushed through their bodies as stories of the revelry and debauchery that Sebomai is famed for sprang to mind. There had been stories galore amongst their shipmates for the past weeks, regaling them with tales of nights on liberty in the City of Canals. Feasts, festivals, street parties, and citywide carnivals, all stories that sounded too good to be true. Now they were about to hit the beach there for the first time.

With a knowing grin the Boats chuckled, "It's ALL true. Every story you've ever heard about Sebomai is true. Every time I've been here has been more incredible than the last."

"C'mon Boats, not another sea story. I'm tired of being the butt of all your jokes. Not all that stuff can be true; the Mother Church wouldn't allow it. Would they...?" The boy with the tainted blood trailed off as he considered that it all just might be true.

"Listen here you two. I'm gonna tell you about my first time, when you're ol' Boats here was a Cherry Boy just like you. Listen and learn. It will definitely save you the few Imperials in your pockets and may even save your life."

"Now start laying out the lines so we can tie up and hit the beach as soon as we're pier side," ordered the Boats, giving his Bosun's Flail a quick snap, reminding them just who they were talking to. The two deck apes sprang to action, getting the lines ready as Boats sat down on a bollard, packing his pipe for a smoke, the hustle and bustle of the crew preparing for port all around him.

"I lied about my age too, when I signed on to my first ship." As Boats lit his pipe, a blue gray smoke enshrouding his head; he didn't fail to notice the sudden look the girl gave him. "I ran away and never looked back. My first ship was a hog scow of an old wreck, The Deliverance, but she carried cargo to markets out of Koronis, skipping along the coast to Sabomai. I jumped at the chance to get out of the confines of that uppity city with its moralizing preachers and head out to see the world.

"That first time is always the best. Don't get me wrong, every visit is the best. But that first time is special. I thought my shipmates were telling me sea stories too. When another young ape like me asked what that smell was as we entered the harbor it brought jeers and insults, cries of 'Cherry Boy' made our ears turn red with embarrassment. At only fifteen

About the Author

Edward Kopp, staff writer and assistant editor for Silven Trumpeter, polished his gaming skills in his teens with a large network of friends in the Battle Creek, Michigan area. After his entry to the US Navy in 1987, he continued to expand his expertise with the many gamers he met in the military until his discharge in 1993. His many years in the gaming community have contributed not only to his GMing skills, but also to his current writing projects as well. Current projects include a totally improvised Arcana Unearthed campaign, judging rounds of his favorite RPGA Living Campaign: Living Arcanis, and working on a new setting for publication based off of cutting edge archeological and geological information; code name : Little Monster.

Contact the Author

You can contact Ed at ejkopp@msn.com

years I was desperate to be thought of as a man, not a Cherry Boy."

"Whadaya think o' that girl?"

The young girl kept her head down and avoided his look.

"Lay those lines out NEATLY!" barked the Boatswain. "If I trip on some fouled up line two misbegotten afterbirths of a seacow couldn't lay out properly there'll be a trip to the mast right quick. And lashes applied in full. I guarantee."

As Boats directed the two deck apes with the stem of his pipe he got back to his story. "Where was I... Oh yeah. So there we were, feeling our honors challenged, coming up on this port of mythic reputation. The city came into view and there I was rubber necking like the greenhorn I was. After living in Koronis, forced to conform to someone else's code of so-called Honor, I was straining at the lines to get ashore and see it all for myself.

"As the city came into view, the Brazier billowing out the smoke of that sweet incense was the first thing I noticed. It was almost eerie, a blue-gray haze

reaching into every district with tendrils sneaking off into every corner. Then it hit me. The most amazing thing about this city is there are no straight lines, corners or angles, even the Brazier is a graceful spiral. Everything is a delicate arch or curve. After the precise layout of Koronis, every street at perfect crosses with each other, the wide meandering canals were utterly inhuman to me at first. Ships by the hundreds were every where, of all sizes and all different home ports. A large island apart from the city was our destination. All ships dock at Porto Sebomai."

"Ever seen a gnome boy?"

"Uh... No Boats. I don't think so," the boy replied as he finished laying out the last of the lines.

"You'd know if you had son. You can't mistake 'em for nuthin else. They're crawlin all over Sebomai. Never trust a gnome. Nasty bastards," the Boatswain said as he spit over the rail. "Pteww."

"I've never seen so many in one place in all my life. Anyway, gnomes do most of the loading and unloading there. They have some sort of Longshoreman Guild. It's the law in Sebomai, ship's crews are not allowed to take the job of a native, gnome or not, and they need the jobs. So once the gangplank is down it was liberty call.

"My shipmates, Hagan, Josep, Dal and I disembarked as soon as our Boats blew liberty, rushing over the brow in our canvas whites, our hair freshly tarred. Immediately the frenzied level of activity overwhelmed us. Ships were mooring up and down the pier as far as I could see, sailors pouring off of them, some jumping over the sides into the clear blue lagoon. I thought I saw female figures below the water, I later found out I had.

"Gnomes were everywhere. They were loading and unloading ships like mad. Cargo was headed every which direction, overseen by bald, dark skinned members of the slave race the Aazaadeh from southern Myzira. It was difficult to tell the men from

the women till you got a little closer. They both wear skirts and neither wears a shirt, only a leather harness and a light cloak at best. Though making no attempt to appear in public wearing decent clothes, they are efficient at their tasks as pier masters and everything was moving at an amazing pace.

"I didn't realize that our reactions marked us as 'Cherry Boys' to every one of those sneaky bastard gnomes who probably memorized our faces and sold the descriptions to every con artist in the city. A mob of laughing, pleading and shouting gnome children surrounded us. They swarmed us like gulls, screeching cries and shrieking laughter began to make me feel confused and I broke through the street vermin, pushing, shoving and dragging my shipmates with me. The black, malice filled eyes of those hateful little wharf rats told me to git while the gittin was good. We broke away, our pockets and purses intact to our mutual surprise. I dragged my shipmates away and headed for the other side of the island where the gondolas that would take us into the city were tied.

"Crossing over the island takes you down the main street lined with dozens of bars, taverns, hotels and shops. Leaning out of windows and doorways were hundreds of beautiful women. Each one smiling and gesturing to you shouting promises of love, passion and just plain ol' fornication. A Cherry Boy discount came along with many of the offers. The women laughed cheerfully, finding our embarrassment highly amusing. Every where you looked there were sailors with women on their arms and sailors with drinks in their hands. The broad streets were filled with revelry just after 8 bells and it wasn't even a holiday. The carnival atmosphere for just an ordinary day overwhelmed my then youthful sensibilities. The intensity of the celebrants, the call of vendors selling their wares, and the ever present incense all combined to put me a little off my stride, so I didn't notice a few of those gnome scamps making off with one of my shipmates purse until it was to late.

"Purse strings cut, one fourth of our Imperials at

stake, we gave chase. Instantly we were the main attraction along the boulevard as we yelled out our fury after the thieves. Sailors, vendors and bargirls called out jeers and shouts of encouragement as the sneaky little bastards took off down a side alley. How foolish and oblivious of us to follow. Heading down a strange alley may not have been the brightest thing I've ever done, but our honors had been challenged by mere children, albeit gnomes our age. I barreled after them, running two blocks off the main street when I spied one of them climbing a wall and leaping to the rooftops, disappearing. I started up that wall after him. By the time I got to the roof he and the other thieves were gone.

"Having no chance of catching them now, I turned back to my companions to let them know what had happened when I noticed four unpleasant looking Aazaadeh thugs hiding behind some crates and barrels stacked in the alley. I intuitively knew black eyed Aazaadeh hiding in a secluded alley wasn't a good thing. I called out to my shipmates, warning them of the imminent threat. Having heard the stories of human sacrifice by the old Myzira Hegemony, I was scared for our souls, believing them in danger of being fed to some Infernal beast by demonic worshipping cultists. What I didn't realize was that those four evil cultists that I imagined wanted to feed our blood to their diabolical demon god were actually young toughs, not so different from ourselves, looking only to remove the rest of our Imperials from our possessions.

"Their chance at surprise now ruined by my shouted warning, they came out of hiding armed with cudgels, saps and clubs. I leapt down from the rooftop, landing next to my comrades. The numbers being even and no lethal weaponry yet drawn, we were good sailors who couldn't turn down this opportunity to vent our frustration over the robbery. This was it. Either we took a stand right then, or Sebomai, City of Sin would claim four more Cherry Boys.

"My shipmates and I stood at the ready. Three better friends I'll never have. There was Hagan. You think

your taint is a problem boy? You should have seen Hagan. Great big red boils all over his body, covering his back, arms, chest and face. When they burst under their own pressure, putrid yellow puss would shoot out with surprising force. Some times they grew so fast you could see them come to head and burst right before your eyes. What patchy hair he had looked like straw and stuck out in different directions. His nose and ears were tremendous. I have never to this day seen another nose like his. To top it off, he was a walleye; you could never tell where he was looking. It was hard to look him in the face, but I never met a better top rigger. He was a great shipmate no matter what he looked like.

"Then there was Josep. He'd had prior experience as a canton in his hometown somewhere in Coldmarch. Though not an imposing guy, kind of slight and bookish actually, he'd had real fighting experience, not just fending off supposed cultists, but defending his home from bandits and goblin raids. Though armed with only a shillelagh I knew he had the grip of an ogre. I'd seen him defend against a belligerent drunken knight swinging his long sword, all the while Josep deflected every strike with that shillelagh until the drunkard gave up in an alcoholic stupor. He seemed to resolve many problems that way, rarely hurting anyone. He was very devoted to the Mother Church as I recall, always making sure to visit the temples whenever we were in port.

"The last member, besides myself of course, was Dal Makelvitch. All we ever knew about Dal was that he was from Cyrex and glad to not be there any more. Besides the dagger he always carried in his belt, I knew he kept a marling spike to fight with. He was tall, lanky, shaved his head and had scars he wouldn't brag about. Even the crustiest old salt didn't mess with Makelvitch very often or very hard.

"I stood besides my shipmates armed with my fists and my wits. I'd grown up on the streets of Koronis and I'd been in a tussle or two. Each group quickly sized the other up and it seemed a pretty even match,

but they had the home turf advantage. We squared off, they wanting our Imperials, we fighting now for Pride, Honor and Manhood.

"We spread out, making the thugs approach us one on one. Makelvitch pulled a long marling spike from his waistband while Josep brought the shillelagh over his shoulder down into his hand with a sharp crack. Hagan looked frenzied in a way I had never seen before, as if he were suffering from a berserk's fury and his already disfigured face stretched into grotesque mockeries of itself. His skin turned red and veins popped out of his neck as three huge boils started to grow along the side of his face.

"Our foes held short clubs useful for subduing the unsuspecting. Since we were forewarned and prepared they hesitated, which sent Hagan launching into the Aazaadian in front of him with sweeping, open-handed blows. With the break in tension, we all rushed forward to engage our separate adversaries. I swung for my target's jaw hoping to put his lights out immediately so I could help my friends. He proved trickier than that and dropped under my swing and slashed out with a dagger he had been hiding along his leg. I felt the steel bite and hot blood run down my side.

"The sight of blood changed everything. This was no longer a simple brawl among young toughs, it was now a matter of lives breath or spending the rest of our short lives bleeding out our wounds. Dal pulled his dagger from the sheath in the small of his back and whipped it straight into the face of the robber swinging with a backhand for my neck. The next thing I saw was a handle spring from nowhere into the bastard's eye and down he fell.

"I turned as I grabbed the dagger from twitching fingers that had blooded me and shifted to help my friend Hagan, who was also unarmed. I saw him beating his foe about the neck and shoulders as they staggered back and forth exchanging blows. I leaped behind the thug's back and slipped the six inches of steel into his side, slowing him down considerably.

Hagan easily caught him upside the head, knocking him off his feet with a violence I didn't know he had.

"Josep handily defeated the Aavaadian he engaged by disarming him and raining blows down on him till he yielded. Dal stood over the dead body of the last assailant; a marling spike sized hole in the neck was the cause of death. We ripped the light cloak of one of the dead and used it to bind the long slash along my side, stanching the light blood flow. We all survived to have many more fights and I got this here scar along my ribs as souvenir."

Pulling up his shirt, Boats traced a long jagged scar, faint from age made a white line across his hard body, twisted and muscled like gnarly old hemp. A quick glance showed many more such scars, some not as well healed others, some deep pock marks as if someone gouged out a pound of his flesh.

"Oh... Those two..." pointing out the two deep indentations in his left shoulder and side. "That's what happens when you're on the wrong end of a flintlock with out a healer nearby. Hurt worse than getting Valdr's trident shoved up my arse, I'll tell you that. It's not something you want to experience for yourself, and as a matter of fact, it was right here in Sebomai, City of Sin that I was shot my first time. Not my first visits mind you, but I discovered how quick to duel the Sebomai are. They call themselves the 'Passion of the Empire'; well one of their passions is dueling. I was drunk and insulted a high lord who promptly challenged and shot me. End of story."

"So there we were, bloodied and victorious, coming out of that near death trap of an alley, whooping it up amongst ourselves. Our boasts loud so the crowds that had cheered us on would get the whole story. The end of the ally was filled with traffic going back and forth. Not a soul glanced at us as we strutted out onto the thoroughfare. Our boasts died on our lips as the mass of sailors, merchants and visitors streamed past us, on

the way to the docks, eager to reach the temples in a more respectable part of town. We stood in shocked dismay. In my home of Koronis such a spectacle would have brought cries for the guard and a quick and timely response. Having already begun to prepare a convincing story to tell the authorities, the tale of daring-do died on my lips. We were naught but Cherry Boys, and we had done nothing spectacular in the city of Spectacle.

"Though no victory parade or ladies on our arms listening to our tales of bravery, we were still puffed up with the pride of beating a foe in a fair match. Having been victorious in battle, we felt all the manlier, we were on top of the big wide world. With little discussion we went directly to the pier and hired a gondola to take us to the Temple District, known for having the finest bordellos affordable to merchants, seamen, and adventurers."

About the Author

Alicia (Lynxara) writes the webcomic Fantasy Wars and the RPG Wars comic strips for the Silven Trumpeter. She graduated from Roanoke College in Salem, Virginia in 2002 with a major in Religion & Philosophy and is currently a graduate student at Radford University in Radford, Virginia. When not changed to her word processor, her hobbies include anime, video games, and of course, role-playing.

About the Artist

Elizabeth Ellis (KouAidou) draws the webcomic Fantasy Wars and the RPG Wars comic strips for the Silven Trumpeter. She graduated from the University of Maryland with a major in Japanese in 2003 and is currently at large. When not shackled to her art supplies, her hobbies include anime, translating,



Comment on this article online at this URL:
 ▶ <http://www.silven.com/articles.asp?case=show&id=85>

by Kou and Ali



Antipodean Adventures

by Shane Cubis

The Rum Rebellion

G'day all. This month I am going to discuss the only time an Australian governor or government has been overthrown by military officers. Such an event occurred on the 26th January, 1808, exactly twenty years after Captain Phillip landed at Sydney Cove, and for reasons which will become apparent, was called The Rum Rebellion. It involved the officers of the New South Wales Corps, and the governor of the colony – Captain William Bligh.

There were around 150 soldiers on the First Fleet who became the Marine Corps in Phillip's colony. They were later replaced by a group of British soldiers and renamed the New South Wales Corps. The job of the Corps was basically to help the governor run the colony, but they answered to a senior officer rather than to the governor himself. This would prove to be an important distinction in later events. The NSW Corps was but together by Major Francis Grose, back in England. He had to work hard to find recruits, as serving halfway across the world in a penal colony must have held little attraction. There were two reasons to join: firstly it promised quick promotion opportunities, and secondly, Major Grose would intimate that there were possibilities of making extra money on the side (mostly through farming and trade). The first NSW Corps detachment arrived in Australia in June 1790.

One of the woes which beset the fledgling colony was a shortage of currency. Most of the coins in circulation were large, heavy copper pennies. This made paying wages and buying goods difficult, as so many of these coins were required for any transaction. As a result, barter became a regular method of trade. There were some banknotes issued from the Governor in the hands

of the officers of the NSW Corps. These were supposed to be the source of wages for the soldiers in their command. Instead, the officers would often keep the notes, and simply pay the men in goods (flour, sugar, tea etc). One of the most common methods of payment was in rum.

One of the woes which beset the fledgling colony was a shortage of currency.

Alcohol was very common in the colony since it tended to be a harsh and depressing place. Merchants were aware of this predilection, and would usually load up their ships with a large amount of rum. In 1792, an American captain forced Grose to buy 33,750 liters of rum as part of a package including food desperately needed by the colony. With so much of the alcohol around, drunkenness became a rapidly escalating problem in New South Wales. Convicts, who were released from government work at three o'clock each day, were allowed to work as laborers for the free settlers. They would often insist on being paid in rum. Men were literally drinking their wages. The NSW Corps was unofficially renamed the New South Wales Rum Corps. The officers had money, rum and power.

John Macarthur was an officer in the NSW Corps. An ambitious man, he rose quickly through the ranks to be made Inspector of Government Works, and given the responsibility of paying officers in the Corps. He was granted 100 acres of land in 1793 by Major Grose, where he set up a farm named after his wife Elizabeth. Here he would experiment with cross-breeding sheep from which to get fine wool, and in doing so lay the groundwork for Australia to develop a strong primary industry economy over the course of the next century.

About the Author

Shane Cubis is a young, fit, Australian plagiarist with an affinity for Spider-Man. He has recently succumbed to internet peer pressure and now secretly refers to himself as a 'gamer.' He wrote and starred in an award-winning short film, "Dream Date" (also starring Aussie cricketer Brett Lee), has had an article published in 'Knights of the Dinner Table,' as well as regular articles in such publications as 'Tertangala,' 'The Northern Leader,' and 'Beanz Baxter.'

He has an Honors degree in History/Politics, and is currently studying to be a primary (grade) school teacher. On Saturdays he calls bingo - a job his nana got him five years ago. His favorite book is 'Catch 22,' his favorite band is TISM, and his favorite movie is 'Back to the Future.'

Contact the Author

rubikcubis@bigpond.com

By 1805 he had been granted 5000 acres of land to develop his experiments using Spanish merino sheep. If his farming proved successful, he was to be granted another 5000 acres. A few canny business decisions and trading alliances later, and Macarthur was the second most powerful man in the colony, and one of the most wealthy. At this stage it is probably important to note that Macarthur was part owner of a ship named the *Parramatta*.

Macarthur quarreled with every governor of the colony, especially over the privileges he thought he and his fellow property owners should receive. He was more than willing to duel over an argument, and felt himself above the mass of New South Wales' population (including and especially ex-convicts).

William Bligh was a man who never really understood how to deal with people. He was a patrician who sought to be obeyed without question and without argument. Possessed of a vile temper and an inconsistent approach to discipline. His stint on the *Bounty* really speaks for itself, and he did not do much better here in Australia. Although he had good intentions, including believing that agriculture (to produce food for the colony) was more important than trade and wool, both of which

were used to line the pockets of the wealthy landowners like Macarthur. As such, he had the support of smaller farm owners, but they did not have as much power and influence as the enemies he made with a number of perceived insults.

The Rum Rebellion was sparked by the following incident: the *Parramatta* was seized for harboring an escaped convict on a voyage out of Sydney. The captain was fined, and the crew were not allowed to return to shore. For his part, Macarthur disowned the ship, which meant that the crew were also not supplied with food. In desperation, they snuck ashore to buy supplies. Upon hearing of this, Bligh had Macarthur arrested for forcing them to act illegally.

He was granted bail, but Macarthur was understandably outraged at this slap in the face. He wrote to the senior officers of the NSW Rum Corps, voicing his complaints against the governor. There was a great deal of support for Macarthur's views, and all came to head when, at the end of his first day of trial, he was thrown into gaol and refused bail.

Major George Johnston, a senior officer in the Corps, undermined Bligh's order and released Macarthur from prison. Almost immediately, Macarthur gathered signatures on a letter asking Johnston to arrest Bligh. This meant that the Corps would be overthrowing the appointed ruler of the colony and thus committing treason.

That evening, Johnston led 400 soldiers and a gaggle of interested settlers to Government House, which they quickly took over. Bligh allegedly ran and hid under the bed of a servant where he was dragged out by some of the soldiers. He was immediately placed under house arrest. The NSW Rum Corps had seized control of the colony.

This situation lasted for a reasonable length of time, due mainly to the slow means of communication with the Mother Country. England did not even learn of the rebellion for months. When it did learn, it was still slow

to react. Johnston was charged with treason, but did not reinstate Bligh as governor. Bligh was shipped back to England, and after an interim rule by the higher-ups of the Rum Corps, **Lachlan Macquarie** was made governor.

Johnston avoided the death penalty, but was discharged from the army. He devoted the rest of his life to botany. Macarthur was not allowed to return to New South Wales for many years. In the meantime, his farm and affairs were managed by his able and devoted wife, Elizabeth. When Macarthur did return, he got straight into opposing the plans and designs of the new governor.

Adventure Ideas

1) Bligh must be warned of the rebellion. The PCs are convicts or other 'disreputable' folk who overhear the plans of the NSW Rum Corps. They must try to get word to Bligh, in the face of his arrogance and dismissal of them as beneath him. There should be some personal reason that they do not wish the Rebellion to go ahead. Perhaps it interferes with a plan of theirs, or maybe they fear they will be implicated if it all goes poorly.

2) It has been decided that Macarthur must be 'dealt with.' The PCs have been appointed to do the job, under the guise of a hunting trip. Macarthur seems suspicious, so they will have to tread warily. They have been ordered to use the utmost discretion, and ensure that none of his supporters find out.

Campaign Ideas

The PCs could easily play a role as members of the NSW Rum Corps. They could either be corrupt officers, striving to gain more power and influence in the colony under Macarthur (or trying to undermine him), or they could be simple grunts, following orders and being paid in rum.

On the other hand, the party could be loyal to Bligh. Loyal to a fault, in fact. Perhaps they are family members, childhood friends, or have been assigned to 'look after him' by some higher-up. In any event,

The Early Governors of New South Wales

▶ Captain Arthur Phillip: 1788 – 1792

Major Francis Grose: 1792 – 1794

▶ Captain William Paterson (Administrator):
December 1794 – September 1795

▶ Captain John Hunter: 1795 – 1800

▶ Captain Philip King: 1800 – 1805

▶ Captain William Bligh: 1806 – 1808

▶ Captain George Johnston (Administrator):
January – July 1808

▶ Lt. Colonel Joseph Foveaux (Administrator): July
1808 – January 1809

▶ Lt. Colonel William Paterson (Administrator):
January 1809 – January 1810

▶ Captain Lachlan Macquarie: 1810 – 1821

they must guard Bligh against opposing powers in the colony, assassination attempts, and the results of his own harsh, unthinking tongue. This could be an interesting and potentially infuriating campaign for the PCs: an incompetent mentor that they are forced to mollycoddle.

Other Genres

Fantasy: It is easy to envisage a clan of orcs being paid in rum. Perhaps they work for human colonists, but are undervalued, violent drunkards. The PCs are sent to the colony to restore order and ensure that the orcs are treated as equal citizens.

Science Fiction: Powerful landowners in a remote colony of the Empire of Cubisia-6 are trying to gain a monopoly on labor and trade. They are willing to do anything to protect their interests, including 'accidental' death to any envoys from the capital. Enter the PCs, fresh-faced and ready to negotiate terms.

Horror: Governor Bligh and John Macarthur are rival death priests, each wishing to claim the best land of the highly spiritually charged area around Sydney. They use politics, power and the people around them as pawns in their religious war. Are those convict laborers, or zombies working with the merinos?

Next up in *Antipodean Adventures*: we look at the musicians, artists and other bardic types in the history of Australia!

Comment on this article online at this URL:

▶ <http://www.silven.com/articles.asp?case=show&id=84>

FRP Games

Silven Crossroads recommended online retailer

Looking for RPG products? Silven Crossroads recommends our affiliate partner, FRP Games, as our on-line retailer of choice. With a vast assortment of gaming related products for many different systems, worldwide shipping and the most competitive pricing on the web, there is no better place to do your gaming shopping.



Dungeons & Dragons - Miniatures:
Dragoneye Expansion Packs (Set of 3)

Retail Price : ~~\$29.95~~

Your price : \$23.85



Classic Play : Book of
Adventuring (d20)

Retail Price : ~~\$34.95~~

Your price : \$27.95

<http://www.frpgames.com/index.php?ref=sil>



Rebels in the Dungeon - Part III

by Raymond Huling

the strand. As he ran towards and away from the grasping waves, he caught sight of her; he slowed to a walk, paused, then ran up to her.

"Salaamalayk"-she grinned at him; a poor boy, he seemed to have been dressed in a slitted sack; a fisherman's son. "What are you doing out here, my young friend? Are you and your father out fishing?"

"Yes...he's sorting out the nets right now."

"You can't do that yet?" He shook his head; she admired his thick and almost indigo hair. She found him a handsome boy and told him so.

He replied quite well, "You have the whitest skin I've ever seen...they say angels have skin like that."

"Do you believe in angels?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"Nothing lives in the sky."

"Birds do."

"I've never seen eggs in the sky."

She laughed,"Well; you've almost got it right, but angels don't live there anyway...they live underground, only very, very deep."

"Is it..." The boy fell to his thoughts; he searched the swells of the tide through half-closed eyes. "That's hadal."

The woman cocked her head, still smiling, "Who taught you that word?"

"A fisherman used it for the sea, and my mother told me it's good for underground, too...my dad knows it, but he says haddle."

Contact the Author

Contact Ray at jessemock@hotmail.com

Your father can read?"

"We all can. We have a slate and chalk."

"Your mother and the fisherman say it right, but didn't your mother teach you about angels?"

"I don't believe any of that; it doesn't add up."

She liked this immensely. "You see that there?" She nodded up the beach, above the high-tide line, just a couple of dozen feet from them-a great sword still in its sheath had been thrust in the sand. Even partially buried and standing crooked, it stood almost as tall as the boy's father; he'd never seen anything like it.

A hollering came from beyond the rocks.

"Go help your father and learn your words...and remember-"She gestured at the weapon, raised a few fingers at it. "That is the net of an angel."

Five years earlier.

He shivered awake, finding himself procumbent on a cold wedge of stone; he couldn't draw himself up-he'd been bound hands and feet. He panicked; he jerked his head away from the slab, tearing his skin. His brow had been split; the blood had congealed down his face like a glue. At once, an intolerable ache bloomed behind his eyes. It felt as though his skull had been packed full of rocks, which now ground against one another. He gagged and spit and pulled against the cords wound about his wrists and ankles. Someone had taken him.

We saw in the first part of Rebels the young magician Qamus fix a deal with the Skullards, a quintet of mysteriously powerful women. Before the completion of this exchange, we saw the boy and his companions, a troop of bodyguards and assassins, suffer terribly at the will of a demon that had possessed one of their number and who followed him back to their meeting ground. The Skullards defeated this creature and took their payment.

In the second part, in a city in the south, the boy's first guard, an enormously ugly northron, congressed briefly with a favorite prostitute, an indulgence before a trip into the desert. The old soldier also reckoned that the man he had bought had been charged to learn about Qamus. The boy had hired a band of nomads to guide him and his company across the sands. A couple of weeks out of the city, Qamus commanded a betrayal. One of his men, a drug-addled wanderer, spent the night prior to the ambush telling tales to the porters, depriving them of sleep, making them all the easier to kill them in the morning.

Six years earlier...

A woman with hair dark as basalt stood on a gray beach, listening to the rote. The sky hung white behind the horizon; as she stepped into the water, she kept her eyes on the splitting of this bright sheet of clouded air by the black bourn of the sea. She felt the foam cling to and tug at her sark, soaking it blacker, and she smiled as her shift, in its turns, clung to her calves.

A voice rose off to her right-a boy appeared from behind a breaker of pitted red boulders that lay down

What would happen to his father? The pain that would swell his heart-the boy couldn't bear it. What could his father's hard hands do against the loss of his son? He'll never find me...my mother won't know what to do. He pitied her and beat his fists against his trap. She'd run away from her own family; she had nothing but him, and now he'd been stolen. They can't do this to her. He became frantic, pulled desperately at the bonds, abrading himself against their leather; tears poured from his eyes and pooled beneath his chin. He sagged down and began to cry for real. Memories of his home overwhelmed him; he swooned into nightmares in which he saw his parents butchered and then burned to death and then somehow tortured alive again. All at his fault.

Then he became the subject of his dreams; they tied him up and whipped him with ice-a great freezing weal ridged his back. He awoke to find someone dousing him with bucket after bucket of frigid water. Words of protest rose up in his throat and choked him; every little muscle he had clenched and spasmed; cramps seized his body from the arch of his foot to his jaw. All sadness vanished from him as fear blew into his skin like a white fire. In his short years, he'd almost died six or seven times from sickness, from falling, from a pack of dogs, but this terror came to him entirely new. They caused him to suffer a pain both ordered and incomprehensible; they meant to do this to him. He heard them moving behind them, and he refused to look.

After a time, it came to an end, but the chill remained. He trembled as an animal does, and this shamed him further. He could not find any sense or reason or rationality in this place-what significance could it possibly have? He chose to surrender; he pissed under himself and out onto the rock, and, at that moment he felt the depth of his imprisonment. The pedestal to which he'd been strapped seemed to him the whittled nub of a long bone, of which he formed the last live nerve; he imagined himself to communicate along its length back to the heart of the world-what a little strangery his wetting amounted to,

meaningless. He couldn't abide by such a thing; anger embraced him at last. He tore so hard at his cuff that he struck himself in the face when he broke its clasp. The others came off more easily, and because he'd had a couple of hours to work at it, he wielded a fair garrote by the time one of his tormentors returned.

He bowled the man over from behind, then looped his makeshift weapon around the man's neck; he put him out quite quickly. Only a few seconds granted him to act, his movements attested to a perfect confidence. In almost a single gesture, he had drawn the man's knife out of its sheath and lengthwise through an artery. Blood curled around the man's head as he awoke, filling the boy's nostrils with the blunt, familiar smell of a slaughter. The man didn't make it to his knees; the boy watched the stuff spread on the floor and clot the man's hair.

He got himself loose for eight days. He stole and stabbed and slipped away, growing ever less desperate and all the more comfortable with his profound rage and the freedom to express it that he enjoyed. His cage began to suit him; a whole city underground, it seemed a pile of endless pits, a tangle of corridors balled like breeding snakes. Not a thought of his family entered his mind until they caught him. He'd wound up scrabbling among the pendentives of an enormous hall during a feast; their hollows had been cobwebbed with strands of some hypogeal abomination's gut. Later, he would learn that they'd been strung so in order to represent the threads of light drawn down from the stars by the turning of the earth, but, on that day, they served him only as a means to seek out some advantage over the thousands of red-robed men and women beneath him.

The webwork had collapsed beneath his weight, of course, swinging him down precipitously into a table-setting, a platter of meat, through candles and carafes of wine. This hardly stunned his enemies at all and him little more. One of them, an old woman with sunken eyes, tore at him. His dagger came up to split her mouth on a reflex; he stabbed everywhere he

could, then gouged and bit, and finally fulminated and swore until they beat him quiet.

He awoke in a small apartment, on a bed close to the floor. His face had swollen to a frightening extent and stung and burned in places when he touched it; breathing hurt, too. The colors of the curtains and bedspreads hazed gray from their rich reds as he looked at them, driving him dizzy. As he began to haul himself up nonetheless, he heard a woman's voice singing in another room.

One week earlier.

"She became my preceptor."

Qamus rode beside the 'aqid of the bedouin, Hakim, a brooding, thick-limbed pillar of a man, who had insisted the boy take to the horses. "One of the language must go forth as such...your servants, let them walk with the servants of our steeds; they speak the same speech anyway."

"The first time that I saw her, she wore an angiya, the traditional dress of our people to the east..."

"I know it."

"Well; I didn't, but it comforted me all the same and it impressed me-that and her jewels and her manner. I'd never seen a woman like her; indeed, I haven't since."

"You don't owe her anything." Qamus tilted his head at the 'aqid; this declaration surprised him, which he hadn't considered this man able to do. This development both amused and threatened him-he considered it dangerous to his plans. "I know where you will take the story; she gave you the writing and sorcery or the sorcery and then the writing. It makes no difference," he drew up his horse and turned to look at the boy. "They would have corrupted you

completely; you escaped at a good moment, and your sacrifice may have greater worth than you know. These people of the north, we would overrun them, if not for their witches, their braukaldahr-but you have lived among these wizards who treat with demons, you have even studied with them and learned from them."

Qamus shook his head. The sun had begun to set; they had only moments before darkness, and their faces glowed bright as embers.

"Don't you see your mistake, my friend?...the brogældor do not guard the north-people; they are the north-people, their might does not escape them."

"How did you get free?"

Qamus sat pensive for several minutes, smiling to himself only very little, still as a gnomon before the night. Hakim respected this reverie with his own silent patience.

"Do you know-"he said at last, stirring slightly. "That I have killed more brogældor than any man alive?" Hakim looked askance at the boy's admission of his crimes; it had been said that the witches of the north sought him for the vengeance of just such things. "You would put out your eyes if you knew what they could do, friend Hakim...tie together end to end every hair from every woman in all of creation and this line will not take your plumb as deep as they have gone. And I killed them and I escaped them..."

The boy sighed and dismounted, "They decided to spare me for their own use, rather than consume me in a sacrifice, but, in the days of my training, as I grew in strength and stature, what happens to so many happened to me-"a grin crossed the boy's face "-I fell in love."

Twenty minutes from now.

Ghlaf had felt his stomach turn when the boy called the ghuls from the sand; they'd crawled out as if from eggs, squirmed loose like earwigs wrapped in clothes of skin-but worse because they were commanded; they milled and clamoured and waited at the boy's word. They disgusted even his soldier's sensibilities, hask and hard as they were. A demon had possessed each of the ghuls, had sealed up the wounds of these corpses and rendered their hides thick enough to stand a knife in, but this supernaturalness meant nothing to Ghlaf; such a thing could not concern him. But, their utter lack of connection to any human dignity did. On some of their bodies, feces held bits of rag fast; sand fleas crawled desperate and starving.

He could brook none of it. The boy, on the other hand, seemed glib; he moved among them and held them to his will. As the flame of the fight waned, they stood to their rim, paced fast to a line and to that line only. Sedis had even dropped one of the ghazu, the bedouin fighting-men across their bounds. He and Qamus had watched her do it from far off; a stab under the chin, one in the midriff, and then she'd kicked him back, caught him by the wrist, and hacked through his upper arm. The slaving ghuls didn't touch the limb when she threw it among them, nor did they lick at the beads of the blood that pelted their bruise-mottled skin.

The boy had walked with a hang-dog air from their throng, and not one so much as brushed his sleeve as they pressed to reach the meal he'd finally allowed them. A meal part of which the akeed whom Qamus had just spoken to would form, a man maybe yet alive and paralyzed by the point of the fey-woman's sugar-stick of knife.

Ghlaf measured himself at that age against the young lord-could he have acted so cruelly at fifteen? Perhaps against an enemy or a villain, but to a man who merely hitched his plans? No, but for this boy it seemed condign.

A crack as if from the full splitting of a live oak turned him around-it came close to taking the breath from him in a shiver of his spine. Back on their trail, some fifty feet off the ground, the vault of the morning sky showed a seam. It widened to a black mandorla from which a virescent mist poured, roiling as it struck the road. "Harra Kemis!" his fist wrapping his sword-hilt like a burl, he whirled toward the wreckage of the camp.

But Qamus had cote him already, no look of fear but of disappointment at him. He waved Ghlaf away and sprang down from the dunes to the track, now overhung by a seething darkness. Ghlaf watched him stop short of the vapors and, of all things, strip off his robe. The rest of the boy's company hid from the ghuls: they'd dropped their flesh; they'd begun to wail and ramp. A wash of heat broke over Ghlaf, nettling his skin with blisters-a condition such as he hadn't known since his childhood. He lost his legs, no longer able to tell if the horizon lurched wildly or if he did.

Then, outlined clearly against the spill of green gushing from the black hole in the sky, he fixed his eyes on Qamus' back, brown and narrow and straight as a pale. Bare from the waist up, he stepped into the clouds, and they went white. Ghlaf felt his agonies withdrawn from him as if they'd been a single splinter. Staggering, he watched the boy stride away from the decrecent circle of void, pulling his garments close about him again. The task had been done just like that

His breast heaved still, as Qamus approached him, "they have found us....they know we have come." "This killing has been for nothing, then, Harra." Ghlaf awaited no apology; he wanted another answer. He stood and reached for the boy; he spread the folds of his robe, his hands like burrs on the boy's smooth chest. There, above his heart, had been tattooed a large skull, abstracted almost into a whorl. "The Skullards have no men and I've seen you bathe: you had no mark when we left Palmyra...how can it be, Harra Kemis?"

"The demons that follow me-that follow us-"Qamus licked his fingers. "They do not see...they do not see deep." He pushed his fingertips across the image and held them up, blackened for Ghlaf; he'd left streaks in the paint. "They like our skins; this helps me with that beast."

Ghlaf withdrew his hands and laughed. "What cold courage you have got. But, as they say, a cool rede worth good weir'and, even if you counsel only yourself, we have bound ourselves to a strong fate by following you."

Qamus smiled and smoothed his robe.

"Now."

The ghuls understood Simo as one of their own, a reaction that pleased her greatly. One of them even went so far as to tear away her dress where it had been spattered with blood; the strip of cloth went past its small teeth in a flash. She slapped the vulturine thing back into place, laughing, then shoved her way through the pack. Qamus stood on the other side.

The butchery had done the fey a world of good; before the attack, she'd been near to collapse from the stress of travel in the riverless desert. She patted the stains from her hands with her hair, gumming the strands with sand and bile. She nodded back at the half-collapsed tent from which she'd come, "I left him behind there; you should have a few minutes with him before he dies. His horse is there, too; Ghlaf killed it. I saw him stab it right in the eye." At this, she bit her lip, an infantile tic that she managed with grace. "He has a charming style; he fits in a battle like a tool designed for it."

Flitting from Qamus, she found her way to her mate, the wanderer who had guided the company to the edge of the desert, but whose duplicity in the matter of this ambush against the bedouin worried him. He sat right in the sand, with his arms resting on his knees; she took back from him her recurved knife,

which hung loose in his hand. From his cheek, she kissed away all his tears, their moisture continuing the work of the blood to revive her.

Qamus knelt by Hakim, who shuddered from the pain of the translucent blade that transfixed his spine by way of his stomach. Spit both ran from the corner of his mouth and rattled in his throat.

"You have led us close enough to the Hellwide Scarp for us to find it ourselves-this has been our destination all along, not the cities of the farther plains. I lied to you because I am trying to ensure that the broagældor do not discern my purposes; we will know shortly if I have done this well. You have wondered at the power of the great northern wizards; in my time among them, I did learn all of their secrets, and, as I said, I found my love. They take children for their work; they fuel their fires with the sacrifice of them-except that sometimes they see some value in one child or another and so they take him and make him one of their own. They did this to me, and they did this to a young girl whom I came to know--she intrigued them. They'd never been able to make her cry, and though they could beat and torture her body, her mind and heart remained closed to them." Qamus looked away out at the dunes, "actually, Hakim, they tried to steal away her soul, but she knew what to do. She gave it to them, and they did not survive. She holds some very harsh mysteries in her." Hakim spasmed briefly, his eyes went wild; Qamus made no move to help or steady him, but followed the man's gaze when the moment passed. Hakim had seen the ghuls.

"Yes; I will leave you to them. I need them to devour every trace of our passing and they will suck the very blood off of the sand. Ghlaf would say that they will gobble up all to the last wrack." The man's breathing had become quite shallow, "let me tell you the secret of the broagældor; one way to it lies within these creatures that will soon feed on you and your men." Qamus gestured at the shifting figures. "Inside each one of them is a tiny grain of nothingness; it galls them; it hungers them; in a way, they have grown

into being around it. They are pearls, Hakim and when they have chewed you to pieces and swallowed you down, then the rags of your flesh will meet with this speck at their very center, and it will absorb them into itself and destroy them utterly. It is a terrible fate but the broagældor, they know all this and what do they do? Do they fear these beings or seek them out to destroy them? No; they are looking for a place, that is their quest. If one such grain can do so much-" he ran his fingers through the sand "-they think of it as the anthesis of entelechy, the blooming of life itself; they call it the Finishing and I will give it to him on condition of her release."

Hakim had died, but the statement had been made. Qamus stood, brushed the dust from his robes, and walked away.

Comment on this article online at this URL:

► <http://www.silven.com/articles.asp?case=show&id=89>

Through the Lens of History: Using History for Better Gaming

by Sean Holland

Vision 4: Lands of the Great King - The Persian Empire

The lens returns to the ancient world and the vast and successful Empire of Persia. The first Persian Empire lasted two hundred years and, at its height, it spread from Egypt to the border of India, from the Caucasus to the Persia Gulf. It endured due to its ability to successfully rule over diverse peoples without facing continuous revolts.

Later empires would emerge in the same region and claim their succession from the Persian Empire to bolster their claim to legitimacy, down even to the Shah of Iran in the 20th century. The Shah claimed to be the direct heir of 2,500 years of Persian, not Islamic, tradition (this was one of the things that alienated him from the dedicated Moslem believers who would overthrow his reign in 1979).

Ancient Persia eventually fell before the military genius of Alexander the Great, who took the same titles as the Persian emperor and intended to meld Hellenistic culture with Persian government. Alexander's death ended that dream and his empire was carved up among his generals, but that is another vision.

Part I - The History

The Persians were part of the ancient peoples who spoke languages similar to modern Iranian and that probably originated in Central Asia as nomadic herders. By the tenth century BCE, the Persians had settled in the Iranian highlands. Initially the Persians were under the control of the powerful kingdom of Elam. This state of affairs lasted until the mid-seventh century when the Assyrian Empire weakened Elamite power enough for the Persians to achieve autonomy.

Persia emerged as a regional power under Cyrus (or Kyros) II "the Great" (also known as "the Shepherd"). Cyrus became king in 559 BCE and when his Kingdom was attacked by the Median King, Astyages, Cyrus convinced the Median troops to turn against their ruler. He then proclaimed himself king of Media and using the joint resources of Persia and Media, went on to conquer Assyria, Babylon and Lydia. Cyrus took the titles of "great king" and "king of kings" to show his status as ruler of a multi-national empire. Cyrus' career ended in 530 BCE when he was killed while fighting to subdue a revolt on the eastern frontier.

After conquering Babylon, Cyrus freed the Jews who had been taken into captivity and allowed them to return to Palestine and to their traditional worship, even providing funds to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. This was part of Cyrus' strategy for controlling his Empire. Unlike the Assyrians who moved populations and forced them to follow the Assyrian state religion, the Persian Empire did not care what gods you worshiped as long as you obeyed the emperor and paid your taxes. The Persians even left some existing governments in place as long as the conquered people obeyed the laws of the empire. However, a satrap appointed directly by the emperor over saw each region. The *satrap* insured that his region acted as part of the empire, providing taxes and troops as needed.

Cyrus was succeeded by his son Cambyses (Kambyses), who added Egypt to the Persian empire. It was a great victory over the Pharaoh Amasis who had attempted to lead an alliance, including Athens, against Persia. On his return from Egypt in 522 BCE, Cambyses fell from his horse and died. The circumstances of his death were suspicious. Cambyses was succeeded by his brother Bardiya but he was assassinated in a palace coup by Darius (Dareios), an

About the Author

Sean Holland is a gamer with 26 years of experience. He currently DMs one D&D campaign and plays in two others. He has a BA in History (minor in Philosophy) from the University of Portland, Oregon, and is working on a MA in History at the University of Georgia. He does writing and play-testing for the game industry. If you look at any of AEG's recent One Word series of books for the d20 system you will find his name in there somewhere and he has had other writings published over the years as well.

Contact the Author

Contact Sean at knightofillies@netscape.net

ambitious aristocrat. Though Darius had the support of many of the noble families, the coup plunged the empire into over a year of civil war and revolt that was efficiently suppressed by Darius and his allies.

For all of Darius' usurpation of power, he proved to be a successful emperor. Darius expanded the empire into Asia and northwest India and into Europe by conquering parts of Thrace. Darius mounted the first Persian expedition into Greece after Athens supported a revolt, soon crushed, by the Ionian Greek city-states in Asia Minor (modern Turkey) against their Persian overlords. Darius' expedition was defeated at the battle of Marathon (490 BCE). However, a revolt in Egypt kept Darius from returning to punish the Greeks for their insolence.

While in Egypt, Darius died of natural causes and his son, Xerxes, became king. Xerxes made sure of the solidity of his position and began raising an army to invade Greece. Xerxes' army was one of the largest the Ancient world had ever seen, likely between one hundred and one hundred and fifty thousand soldiers and over four thousand ships. Xerxes chose to personally command the expedition. It was to end in failure.

Delayed by the Spartans and their allies at Thermopylae, the Persian army captured and sacked Athens before the Persian fleet suffered defeat at the battle of Salamis (480 BCE). As the year was ending,

Xerxes left the bulk of his army to deal with the Greeks while he traveled south to suppress a rebellion in Babylon. However, Xerxes' general, Tigranes, was unable to defeat the Greeks even with superior numbers; he lost both the battle and his life at the battle of Plataia (479 BCE).

Such defeats only stopped the expansion of the empire, they never seriously threatened its survival. Continued Greek, primarily Athenian, adventures against the Empire led to the Peace of Kallias (449 BCE) in which the Greeks agreed not to war against the great king and the Persians abandoned any claims on the Greek cities.

The Persian Empire survived until the fourth century BCE, when Alexander the Great and his superb Macedonian army defeated the forces of the Persian Emperor Darius III. Over the course of four years (333-330 BCE) Alexander conquered the Persian Empire. But Alexander had every intention of adapting the Persian Empire to his own use, proclaiming himself great king and even retaining *satraps* who surrendered to him in his service. Alexander's death ended his grand experiment as his empire was divided up among his generals, the *Daidochi*. It would be several hundred years before another group of nomadic horsemen, the Parthians, would seize upon the Persian name to give their rule over the same area an aura of tradition and legitimacy.

The Persian Empire was divided up into administrative units called *satrapies*, each ruled by a *satrap*. From the time of Darius I twenty of these regions comprised the empire. *Satrapies* were composed of both subject states and lands ruled directly by Persian nobles. The *satraps* oversaw taxation –keeping for themselves that which did not go to the emperor's coffers– and maintaining the satrapal military. Since each *satrap* was such a power in his own region the emperor watched them very carefully. The great king maintained a system of inspectors known as the *King's Eye* and the *King's Ear* (as well as spies), who watched for signs of disloyalty and impending rebellion. Persian

Supplemental d20 Material:

While the equipment of the Persian army varied by nationality, the Immortals were equipped with standardized equipment: long spear and short composite bow with padded armor and a light shield. (In a standard D&D game it would be wise to increase their armor to chain mail.) In some periods, the Immortals were armed with battle axes as well. A standard tactic would be for part of the unit to use their spears to fend off attacks while the rest of the unit used their bows.

New Feats

Immortal [General]

You are a member of the king's military elite, you fight and die without hesitation in the service of your king.

Prerequisites: Level 5th, being recognized for your military talents while in service to the king, Chr 10.

Benefit: You are afforded respect from your status, you receive a +1 circumstance bonus to Diplomacy and Intimidate checks. While fighting under the king's gaze or direction, you receive a +4 morale bonus to saves against fear, a +1 morale bonus to

nobles were often given land in conquered regions with the right of direct appeal to the emperor as a further check on satrapal power. For all of the great king's efforts, there were often revolts. Egypt with its long tradition of self rule, was particularly prone to rebellion.

The Greeks portrayed the Persian Empire as an autocracy, but the Persian king's power was restricted by both tradition and local custom. The great king ruled as king in Babylon and pharaoh in Egypt, respecting local traditions. The empire exercised tolerance in dealing with its subject peoples, allowing

Fortitude and Will saves and a +1 morale bonus to damage.

Special: This feat also comes with the restriction that you are subject to the orders of the king, as such it is more suited to NPCs. The DM has final decision of what actions are considered to be under the king's direction.

Persian Noble [General]

You are a member of the ruling aristocracy of multi-cultural Empire, you have been trained to deal with many different types of people.

Prerequisites: Growing up in an Imperial Persian-type culture and being a member of the aristocracy, Intelligence 10, Charisma 10.

Benefit: Diplomacy and Ride (horse) are always class skills for you and you are proficient with both the short bow and the short composite bow. You gain a +1 bonus to Diplomacy and Intimidate checks. Lastly, you may choose an additional language known at 1st level from the languages spoken in the Empire.

Special: Usually this feat can only be chosen at 1st level.

them as much freedom as possible as long as they obeyed the laws and duties of the empire. The great king further had to manage the Persian aristocracy and their ambitions.

The Persian region was the only part of the empire exempt from taxes. The empire relied upon the Persian people to provide administrators and the loyal core of the army. Traditionally every Persian boy was taught the skills of a warrior, to ride, to use a bow and to speak the truth to aid in their service to the empire. These customs dated from the time when the Persians were still a nomadic people, though success and luxury

slowly eroded such traditions, the empire continued to rely upon the Persian aristocracy for the backbone of the empire's army. In addition to Persian aristocracy scattered throughout the empire the Persian military was drawn from the from its subject nations, nation provided troops depending on their own skills. The Phoenicians, for example, provided naval forces as their wealth was based on coastal and sea borne trading.

The Persian armies were ideally organized into divisions of 10,000 men (which the Greeks called a *myriad*), divided down into ten units of a 1,000, then into units of hundreds and lastly tens. Units rarely matched up to this neat scheme and were usually under-strength. The only unit that was always kept at 10,000 men was the emperor's elite, the Immortals, comprised of Persian soldiers of proven skill and ability, including 1,000 spear-bearers who followed the king's chariot in official processions.



The Persian Empire issued standardized coins to facilitate trade, imposed universal laws, maintained roads and suppressed bandits. All of this made the empire extremely wealthy. But

communication and coordination remained a problem; news could travel no faster than a horse and rider. The Royal Road, a network of roadways, which radiated out from Susa facilitated communication. Susa was the administrative capital of the empire as well as the center of a network of messengers, spies and merchants.

Persians were great admirers of the garden, a place of shade and greenery, cool water and relaxation after a day riding the high Iranian plateau. In fact, our word paradise is from the Persian word for garden, *Pairida'za*. Ordered ranks of trees of a variety of types to provide sweet scents through the year, streams and pools of cool water and walls to keep out the winds, were all characteristics of the Persian garden. Gardening was considered to be fine art and Cyrus

The Persian Empire issued standardized coins to facilitate trade, imposed universal laws, maintained roads and suppressed bandits

himself boasted to visitors of having designed and worked upon his own garden, having even planted some of the trees himself.

Keeping the vast Persian Empire together was always a challenge for the great king. Nationalist tensions and personal ambitious were always seeking to pull it apart. Cyrus' choice to allow each subject kingdom their own religion and traditions solved many problems but it also prevented the empire from being able to coalesce into a greater whole; each subject kingdom was a separate part just waiting to be free to pursue its own destiny again. But for all of the internal forces attempting to pull the empire apart, it was military conquest that destroyed the Persian Empire, the same way it had been forged.

Part II- Breaking it apart and putting it back together

The Persian Empire provides an excellent model for a fantasy empire that allows its subject races to maintain their own traditions and religions. In a fantasy world, it would be an empire that could have dwarves, elves, humans and orcs under its umbrella without any problem (from the point of view of the empire, some of the subject races might not be too pleased with the enforced peace). The empire may not be able to force traditional enemies to become friends but it can enforce peace among them.

A Persian styled empire can be an interesting counterpoint to a traditional all conquering 'evil empire.' Perhaps the characters' homeland is trapped between the two empires, how much power over their home are the characters willing to trade to keep the evil empire from overrunning them? Or will they try to

go it alone? Will the Persiansque Empire decide that it is better to fight in the characters' homeland to save the empire itself from the ravages of war?

Within an empire modelled upon Persia there are many sorts of political games that can be played. The characters may be potential rebels (or freedom fighters), or agents of the great king sent to suppress rebellion and ferret out treason. An ambitious campaign would be to play a *satrap*, trying to balance personal goals against the needs of the empire and of your satrapal subjects. Alternately a campaign could be structured around a young aristocrat attempting to make a name for him or herself within the empire.



The Adventures of Starlanko the Magnificent

The Perilous Quest to Mandregal's Tower Part I: Where The Tower is Ransacked

by Matthew J. Hanson

Starlanko the Magnificent, his long time associate Redreck the Fierce, and his new found companion Callan the Scholar If You Need More Syllables were surrounded by ogres. On the bright side one was already dead, killed by spells from Starlanko and Callan. On the cloudier side, the others in the short term prevented Starlanko from getting some much-desired sleep, in the middle term prevented him from recovering valuable magical spells from the tower formerly occupied by Madregal, and in the long term might just prevent him from being alive. It was, in Starlanko the Magnificent's humble opinion, most inconvenient.

"Why don't they attack?" Starlanko asked, but when neither the other wizard nor the warrior answered his question, he did so himself. "Perhaps they wish to surrender." Then he spoke louder addressing the ogres, "Very well we accept your surrender."

There was some grunting from all around them, but none of the ogres laid down their weapons, waved a white flag, or made any other sign of surrender.

"As near as I can make out," said Callan, "our little display of magic surprised them."

"You speak ogre, Callan the Scholar If You Need More Syllables?"

"A little, Mr. the Magnificent. I'm not entirely familiar with this dialect."

"Which one is the leader?" Starlanko asked.

"There, I think." Callan pointed to an especially large ogre with an especially high number of scars.

"If they found our first bit of magic impressive..." Starlanko waved his arms and said a brief incantation. A large bird composed of flame sprang from his staff. It approached the lead ogre, spread its wings, and gave forth an ear-piercing screech.

The ogres on either side of the leader backed away and waited for their commander's response. He shifted his gait several times, then let out a forceful cry and swung his massive club at the fiery bird.

The club passed through with no effect. The ogre swung twice more, and still nothing happened. Then he stuck his hand into the bird, and he laughed. It was a dark laugh not unlike a mill grinding. His horrid laughter was soon taken up by the mob.

While the ogres were dealing with the illusion, Starlanko the Magnificent cast a series of spells both on himself and on Redreck to bolster their defenses and enhance Redreck's attack. Callan noticed and followed suit.

The chief ogre turned its gaze again to the three humans and advanced. Redreck charged forward to meet the ogre. The brute's club clanged off Redreck's shield, but the fighter followed through and slashed the ogre's stomach. It drew blood, but was still only a flesh wound. Starlanko and Callan both let forth volleys of magical energy that also stuck the leader, but it was not enough. The other ogres were now upon them. Many of the blows were deflected by some unseen magical force, but not all.

As the battle progressed, the blows took their toll. To make matters worse, not only were the wizards finding it more difficult to cast their spells due to the large bipeds trying to squash them to goo, they also felt

About the Author

Matthew J. Hanson is an aspiring writer, as well as a long time gamer. He normally lives in Minnesota, but is currently finishing his senior year of college in Beloit Wisconsin. Recently, his 10-minute play *Who is Ruth* was selected as the winner for the American College Theatre Region III winner, for their 10-minute play competition, and it will be advancing to the national competition in April. If you would like to learn more about Matthew J. Hanson, please feel free to visit his website at www.matthewjhanson.com.

Contact the Author

Matthew can be contacted at matthew@matthewjhanson.com

the drain of their magic reserves, and would soon be scraping the bottom of the proverbial barrel. Between them Starlanko and Callan had slain three ogres, but was not even half the attacking force.

It was not until Starlanko found that the extra-large extra-scarred ogre was now attacking him, that he noticed Redreck was down.

"You know what Callan?"

"What, Starlanko the Magnificent?"

"I was rather hoping to not die today."

"Perhaps we shall be rescued by a knight in shining armor."

Just then they heard several *thucks*, the sound of something sharp penetrating flesh. Each of the ogres had a spike made of pure force sticking into its chest.

"Get away," they heard a voice say from the shadows.

The two wizards did not need to be told twice. Before he retreated Starlanko levitated Redreck, and pulled him along. The ogres still tried to take swings at them, but found it significantly more difficult. One brush against Starlanko and barely connected.

No sooner had they cleared the area then it was consumed by a fiery explosion. The ogres, dead and dying, still hung from midair spiked against nothing. All except for one, who emerged from the flame, a bloody hole in his chest where the spike had been.

"Don't you get it? We're the heroes." Starlanko held his staff in both hands, swung it up, hitting the ogre in the jaw. The ogre fell, and made a very satisfying thump.

But before the ogre hit the ground Starlanko was at Redreck's side. "I think he'll make it," Callan said. He was busy bandaging Redreck's wounds.

"Oh, for Leolus's sake," Starlanko muttered. He pulled a potion from his belt and poured it down Redreck's throat. Redreck's wounds magically closed, and a few seconds later he sat up with a cough.

Having disposed of all the ogres, and ensured Redreck's safety, Starlanko moved to the third and final item on his mental checklist. He surveyed the dark landscape as best he could. A figure stood in the shadow of a gnarled tree. He had not moved since the end of battle. Starlanko approached.

"I believe we owe you a great deal of thanks, stranger. Allow me to introduce myself, I am Starlanko the Magnificent." He tipped his hat. "And these are my traveling companions, Redreck the Fierce and Callan the Scholar."

The stranger drew near. Starlanko recognized the gray-cloaked figure from the night before in the common room of the Black Dog Tavern. "A pleasure to meet you. I am called Bargle," he said. He lowered his hood to reveal a young face. His hair was black and neatly trimmed, as was his beard. His eyes were an almost unnatural shade of green, and there was something about Bargle's voice that reminded Starlanko of a block of ice sliding across a frozen lake. "Just Bargle will do, thank you."

"Ah yes, of course. Tell me Bargle, not that I wish to look a gift horse in the mouth, but may I ask why you

are traveling so late in such dangerous territory?"

"I could ask you the same thing, but I suspect we both know the answer already. Our goals are similar, yours and mine, so we might as well work together, mightn't we?"

"And just what are your goals, Mr. Bargle?" Callan asked.

"Closer still I think to yours than to his," Bargle replied, tipping his head towards Starlanko. "But my motives are not quite as amorous."

"You wrap your words in riddle. I can not tell if you know a great deal, or you wish to feign knowing in hopes that I will give something away," Callan said.

"However much he knows," Starlanko said, "I suggest we find out in the morning. It is late, we are all tired, and I for one am just a tiny bruised from a twig that a small child rapped against my knuckles. I don't want to pitch camps so close to a baked ogre, but I suggest we find someplace soon, and call it a night."

In less than half an hour they had found a better local and pitched a small camp. Because they were well into dangerous lands they each took a watch. Starlanko took the first. Several minutes into the watch, a large raven landed next to Starlanko and dropped a sheet of parchment from its beak.

I do not trust this Bargle. Starlanko read. I intend to sleep very lightly and suggest you do the same. Keep a careful eye on him, and watch what you say in his presence. Be careful, for I fear his ears are sharp. Do not mention this note.

No sooner had Starlanko finished reading it, then the letters glowed red, the entire letter burst into flame, and it was gone.

Starlanko awoke the next morning to the butt of a staff nudging his ribcage. "You should get up. I'll make breakfast if you want some time to meditate," Callan

said.

"In a minute, in a minute," Starlanko said. "Why does the sky look so strange?"

"That's what I like to call sunrise. I'm sure you've heard of it. Like sunset, only in reverse."

Starlanko found the smell of grilled sausage and potatoes mildly distracting, but was able to focus enough to ready his mind for a day of spellcasting. Bargle was already awake, and pouring over some book. Redreck, in typical fashion, awakened just in time to eat breakfast.

After eating they packed up their camp, and continued towards Mandregal's Tower. The terrain was generally more difficult, but there were lucky enough to avoid any confrontations with the more dangerous inhabitants of the region. A little after lunch, they ran into a half-bird half-bear creature, but they drove it away with little enough effort. Most of the conversation consisted of Starlanko the Magnificent talking to, and often about, himself.

As they traveled Starlanko paid more attention to the sky. He noticed that they were being followed not only by a large black raven, but by a mottled brown hawk.

When they reached the tower that evening, Starlanko's stomach was on the brink of mutiny. He had, several hours ago, asked to stop riding to sup, but Callan insisted on continuing. The other two parties abstained. Starlanko had nibbled on some hardtack while riding, but it was not enough.

The tower itself looked as though it had once been impressive. It towered (aptly enough) five stories tall, crafted from a single piece of stone, magically shaped, as powerful wizards like to do. Now it was covered with decades of dirt. Vines ran up the sides, and weeds sprouted from nooks and crannies.

Comment on this article online at this URL:

► <http://www.silven.com/articles.asp?case=show&id=91>



Faith Based Initiative: Pantheons Creation 101 : Party II

by Eytan Bernstein

Framework Rationale

The rationale in this framework is fairly simple. There is one major god for each alignment and one being that seems to tie them all together. How the Dark Tree plays out will depend on the unfolding of events. The main gods also have underling deities, known as *Aspect gods*. These are demigods that embody some part of the dogma or portfolio of a given god. They most commonly come in threes, but can be any number. It is regretful that they are not more developed, but that will come with time. For now, the article will focus on the nine and the Darkness that binds them.

Pantheon Background

No one knows how the gods came to be. After the fall of the supreme being many of the existing gods took their current positions. Positions were generally agreed upon by those gods based on power and seniority. The fall left room for some other gods as the supreme being had been the primary deity prior to its demise. Not even the gods know how they came to be. Their minds are far beyond those of mortals, but for some reason, they cannot remember who or what created them. They remember their roles and relations to other gods, but cannot go beyond this. They constantly seek mortal aid in questing to other planes to determine their origins. Planar beings seemed tight-lipped about the subject as if releasing the secret would cause great harm to the planar multiverse. Some suspect that Siyamak Tamal has some hand in blocking the memories of the gods, but none can prove it. Also, none are willing to risk what might happen should they attack the rotting tree at the bowels of the earth.

In essence, the gods are in a constant state of mental regression as their deific consciousness is always seeking the answer to the one question that continues to elude them. Even Synnove cannot shed light on this secret; even Pelias cannot find its answers at

Last month's article covered the archetypes of RPG pantheons. It delineated a variety of different models that can be used to construct a pantheon for any game setting. One of those models is the alignment based system. This half of the article will deal with the construction of a specific pantheon for a fantasy-style game. It will not only give an example of a pantheon, but also go into the rationale behind each god and how the gods fill certain roles in an overall framework. Finally, it will discuss how this pantheon could be expanded what could be done to improve it.

The *Alignment Model* is one of the most common ways to construct a pantheon. It is founded on the principle that a different god represents each major

In essence, the gods are in a constant state of mental regression as their deific consciousness is always seeking the answer to the one question that continues to elude them.

spectrum of morality in a given world. Those gods are embodiments of that part of the spectrum and all of their powers and manifestations should fall under this jurisdiction. These gods are not limited entirely by alignment. Their alignment delineates likely areas of dominance, but they have a personality and quirks all their own. When reading the entries of the gods, keep in mind the following: *this is only a basic framework of and introduction to a pantheon. It is not currently an official set for any particular setting though it has been tested in some campaigns.*

About the Author

Eytan Bernstein is a High School social studies teacher on Long Island. He enjoys RPGs, writing fantasy fiction, movies, and making up unique words. He has previously been published as a poet and is also an accomplished pianist/songwriter. He hopes to someday make it as a game designer/fantasy writer.

Contact the Author

Manablast@aol.com

the bottom of the sea. The gods are aware (having been present at) the events of the Supreme Being's ascension and fall, but for some reason, cannot seem to recall how they were originally created. The Nine gods of the Pantheon – one for each moral alignment are – Pelias, Barad Barak, Dareh, Synnove, Tiras, Vega, Hama, Hel'demius and Inhomra.

There is also the insipid presence of the Dark Tree – Siyamak Tamal. Its role in the machinations of the gods has yet to be determined, though clearly it has much power and is hiding a great secret. Its tendrils and roots run deep into the earth and exert their influence over many – especially Dareh, god of death.

The Gods Themselves:

Pelias – Greater God of Water

Place of Residence: Supposedly lives in an undersea palace.

Names: Lord of the Seas

Areas of dominance: Bodies of Water, Sea Travel, Earthquakes, Men

Practitioners – Clerics, rarely Rangers and Druids

Alignment: Chaotic Good

Worshippers: Sailors, Athletes, Artists, Almost everyone

Domains: Chaos, Good, Water, Travel, Protection

Favored Weapon – A Trident

Symbol - A transparent glass circle etched with waves, filled with slightly phosphorescent blue water.

Avatar/Image – An unbelievably handsome and well muscled human male of 8 feet with blue skin wearing blue sea dragon scale armor and carrying a trident. He sometimes has a lower body like a merman.

History: One of the three brothers that rule as triumvirate of the world, Pelias' primary

concern is the safety of man. He rules over the oceans and other bodies of water and is seen as a life giver among most of the earth. He is concerned with preventing contact between the inhabitants of the underworld at all costs. He was one of the few supporters of the Supreme Being before it fell. It put the task of man's protection on his head. None of the other gods know of his connection with the Supreme being, or that he holds the last remnants of its power in case a major threat to the world arises. He is naïve in many ways in that he wishes to protect men, but also to enlighten them. His wife finds this naïveté charming, but tries to remind him that men cannot evolve if they are shielded from the hazards of the world(s) around them. He is on poor terms with both Barad and Dareh his brothers, but is on good terms with most of the rest of the main pantheon. When the duties were divided among the remaining gods after the change in the world, he received the water, Barad received the air, and Dareh received the earth (or underworld).

Dogma: Protect men as well as the other races for their lives are what makes the world have meaning. Venerate the beauty of bodies of water and keep them clean and pristine. Protect men from the harsh influences of the underworld's denizens. Teach men how to travel the sea and build ships for this is the first step in their evolution.

Rationale: The triad of gods that rule the world are rather Olympian in structure, though not in personality. Unlike the Greek pantheon, the most popular and powerful deity is that of water, whereas air is probably the most aloof. Dareh, the death and earth god is fairly similar to Hades, though perhaps more sinister. This construction follows the idea that water is what allows for life on earth and is thus the most dominant – though this is an arbitrary judgment and people certainly could not live without air or earth. In constructing your own pantheon, you may wish to consider whether or not a traditional sky god is truly necessary. There is no reason the water god could not be the most dominant deity; after all, water is the element that is perceived to grant life. In creating this, I wanted to use a traditional Olympian structure, without relying on virtual clones for my gods. Thus, the roles of the air and water gods are reversed.

Barad Barak – Greater God of Air

Place of Residence: Supposedly resides in a sky castle.

Names: Lord of Storms, The Four Winds, The Lord of Hail & Lightning

Areas of Dominance: Wind, Weather, Winged Creatures, Storms

Practitioners: Clerics, Rangers, rarely Druids

Alignment: Chaotic Neutral (Good tendencies)

Worshippers: Bards, Warriors, Scholars

Domains: Chaos, Creation, Air, Travel, Animal

Favored Weapon – A Longsword.

Symbol: A blue sky with a few clouds with a dark horizon looming in the distance. The clouds seem to move – a trick the priesthood learned from gnomish inventors.

For all of you gamers out there ...

This month we open up a brand new section on the Silven Crossroads website. We heard your requests, we listened to your recommendations and yes ... we diversified!

Our new section caters to all of you gamers out there that use a non-d20 based system. In our opening month we take a look at The Time of Judgement from White Wolf and RPGs from Dream Pod 9.

While you are there don't forget to drop our section head, Nash J. Devita, a note and let him know what else you would like to see there.

Visit the Other RPGs section using this link:

<http://www.silven.com/otherrpgs.asp>

Avatar/Image: A tall well muscled white haired man with a kindly face and an awful temper. He is usually bare-chested and carries a longsword in the shape of a lightning bolt.

History: Barad Barak was best friends with his younger brother Pelias until the cataclysmic event. Pelias then became righteous and separatist, leaving Barad without any apparent cause. Barad suspects that his brother is under some outside influence, but knows not what. He is an arrogant god who enjoys the loyalty of his followers. He is close to them, but is also easily angered. For this reason, he attempts to keep his realms as peaceful as possible, knowing that if things got extremely hectic, his temper could destroy the world. He is benevolent to his followers and grants many requests, but also is extremely demanding and expects constant praise and loyalty. He created griffons and hippogriffs to serve as mounts and taught the people how to tame them. He despises his eldest brother Dareh and seeks to destroy the realm of the underworld at all costs. He feels that it is a cancer growing in the bowels of the world.

Dogma: Teach the people how to build technology for travel. Teach how to domesticate flying beasts. Venerate the wind and weather and care for winged beasts like they were people. Never allow a winged beast to be slain. Watch over the earth as it is where the next ultimate battle will take place. Worship Barad constantly as he provides for your safety and the peace of the realm.

Rationale: The sky god is aloof because he protects the sky. While he has domain over the world's wind, he prefers to concentrate his efforts on the people that live in his kingdoms. He provides a counterbalance to the passion of Pelias and the hatred of Dareh. Barad Barak is also interesting because he represents a force that can change rapidly. His extremely chaotic nature is only tempered by his consort. Thus, if you wanted to shape things up, he could easily get angry and become much more active. This is an important thing to consider. You should include at least some gods in

your pantheon that are mutable enough to allow for changes in behavior and world events.

Dareh – Greater God of the Earth

Place of Residence: Supposedly Resides in a bone castle at the bottom of the underworld's lowest layer.

Names – Wealthy One, Lord of the Dead,

Areas of Dominance – The Dead, Death, Earth, Undead, Wealth

Practitioners – Clerics, Blackguards, rarely evil Rangers and Druids

Alignment: Lawful Evil

Worshippers: Necromancers, Liches, Tyrants, Warlords, Greedy Merchants

Domains: Death, Destruction, Law, Evil, Earth

Favored Weapon – A black metal scythe

Symbol – A Black circular band that looks like a human spinal column.

Avatar/Image – A skeletal man in black robes that absorb all light, holding a black scythe in his left hand. His eye points burn with dark fire.

History: Dareh was not always dark. He was the eldest brother among the three rulers of the world and most looked to him for guidance due to his great wisdom. When the world fell into chaos during the wars, a demonic entity known as Siyamak Tamal – The Dark Tree – infested him with its roots, causing him to go insane. Due to his insanity, he chose dominion over the underworld. Slowly, he wrested some degree of control over his mind away from the tree. It now grows as a separate entity in a cave near his palace. Some have taken to worshipping the tree itself. Dareh is now utterly ruthless and incredibly insane. Some of the rot of the tree still remains in his brain, preventing him from destroying Siyamak. He has undead minions that

he selects from the most perverse in his death realm. All undead in the world are in some way related to his power. He despises all things beautiful and alive, yet at the same time craves them. He is known to reach stone hands up into the world and kidnap beautiful maids and handsome young warriors to torment them and turn them into dark minions. This always infuriates Pelias. Pelias is seething, waiting for the right opportunity to strike out at Dareh and his even more destructive son, Hel'demius.

Dogma: Spread tyranny and malcontent wherever you go. Maintain the mystery that is the underworld. Lie and cloak reality in corruption and deceit for that is when Dareh has the most power. Seek any opportunity to corrupt and spoil the inhabitants of the world. Keep it in your mind that the ultimate goal is to destroy and enslave. Seek riches out whenever you can for they allow you to achieve your goals. Create hordes of undead to corrupt the world and terrorize men.

Rationale: Dareh is truly mad, which is extremely disturbing coupled with his evil intentions. He is not content to be a neutral death god. Due to the infestation of the Dark Tree in his mind, he has turned to all of the dark pursuits and thus serves as the greatest villain god for the world. He is the perfect counterpart to Pelias in that their beliefs about man, salvation and hope are diametrically opposed. Dareh is the most psychologically complex of the gods. I wanted to avoid making a god that was pure evil for its own sake as a Lord of death. Other more minor gods can focus on absolute evil. He had to be driven absolutely mad to become what he is now. His presence in the pantheon provides a constant focal point for the activities of the other deities.

Synnove – Intermediate Goddess of the Sun

Place of Residence: Resides in the sky castle of Barad Barak, but spends most of her time in the sky, lighting the world.

Names: Sun Gift, The Light of our Heart, The Burning Tear

Areas of Dominance: Light, Sun, Holy Magic, Paladins

Practitioners: Clerics, Paladins

Alignment: Lawful Good

Worshippers: Paladins, Monks, Scholars, Adventurers, Mystics

Domains: Good, Law, Sun, War

Symbol: A stylized sunburst with a variant of continual flame cast upon it that makes it look like a smoldering sun.

Favored Weapon: A Falchion

Avatar/Image: An unspeakably beautiful woman dressed in plate armor of pure sunlight.

History: Synnove has always been the sun goddess. Prior to the fall of the Supreme Being, she was not acknowledged as a goddess, simply a force. But after the fall, she took a more active role in the pantheon of the gods as peacekeeper and mediator. She is the wife of Barad Barak, but divides her loyalties between the earth and the sky. She keeps relations open between the gods, even occasionally conversing with Dareh who is very jealous of his brother for having such a wife. She hates Dareh, but suffers his presence as a necessity; they must have a death god. She hates Hel'demius and feels he has little right to exist.

Dogma – Act as a mediator between different religions if they cannot come to an agreement on their own. Spread light, learning, wisdom, and

enlightenment wherever you go. Destroy the undead at all costs, never let any live if it is possible. Serve as a moral example to all and help all, but especially the poor, needy, young, and old.

Rationale: Synnove was an excellent opportunity to bridge the worship of the sun with the D&D interest in paladins. The paladins of the goddess have a sharp edge, reminiscent of the blinding brightness of the sun and are thus, unwavering opponents of evil. She is a good counterpart to Barad as she has succeeded in channeling his impulsiveness into great focus. Also, I wanted to make the most commonly worshipped god of Paladins a goddess. This is not due to any particular bias, but rather, it just seemed to be a more interesting choice. It also provides for a very strong female voice in the pantheon. Knights are traditionally male and are a focus of masculinity, thus a female goddess of Paladins provides an interesting twist.

Tiras - Intermediate Goddess of Agriculture

Place of Residence: She spends time in the undersea palace of Pelias, but spends most of her days blessing the fields of the earth.

Names: The Glistening Dew, The Harvest Mother, The Great Mother, The 1st Mother

Areas of Dominance: Fertility, Agriculture, Childbirth, Families, Women, Farmers

Practitioners: Clerics, Druids, Rangers, rarely Paladins

Worshippers: Women, Farmers, Druids, Midwives, New Mothers

Alignment: Neutral Good

Domains: Earth, Good, Plant, Protection

Favored Weapon : A sickle

Symbol: A beautiful young maiden holding a stock of

bright yellow corn painted on an ivory cameo.

Avatar/Image: A voluptuous dark haired naked woman whose only covering is her long and wild raven hair.

History: Tiras is the very earth itself. When the land is wounded, it is a direct affront to her. She blesses each season's crops and is responsible for feeding most of the world. She is also responsible for blessing childbirth and most women pray to her to have children. She is a devoted wife to Pelias. She feels he is somewhat naïve, but supports him nonetheless. She is the oldest of the gods and some whisper that she was around when the world was created, though where they ascertain this, no one knows. She hates the undead and Dareh more than anyone else and seeks to purge the world of his corruptive influence. She feels his cold hands when he reaches up through her belly into the land. She also feels the rotting roots of Siyamak Tamal, but can do nothing as that alien intelligence is unreachable to her.

Dogma: Teach people to cultivate the land and grow crops for the future. Nurture flowers, plants, and wildlife so that the world remains beautiful. Protect the wild lands as all forms of life are valuable. Balance the need for agriculture with that of conservation. Help women give birth and bless families to give the people a sense of security. Fight the corruptive influences of the minions of Dareh, Hel'demius & Siyamak and help to keep the people from their treachery.

Rationale: Tiras is a classic fertility goddess with many similarities to Demeter. She provides a foil to the destructive and corruptive influences of all the dark gods and like Pelias, she is a staunch protector of man. She is in many ways the stronger member of the relationship, but does not have the same domineering quality that Hera has with Zeus. Tiras is probably the least innovative of the gods in this pantheon. It would be interesting to establish unusual cults such as those of Demeter and the Eleusinian mysteries in order to spice things up because as of now, she is a pretty standard fertility goddess.

Vega - Intermediate god of magic

Place of Residence: Unknown

Names: Falling Star, Shining One, Dark Star

Areas of Dominance: Magic, Knowledge, Heavenly Bodies, Secrets, Oaths

Practitioners: Clerics, Rangers

Worshippers: Mages, Loremasters, Fortunetellers, Scholars, Adventurers, Bards

Alignment: Neutral

Domains: Knowledge, Luck, Magic, Trickery

Symbol: A dark silvery crescent shaped dragon moon dotted with 3 stars.

Favored Weapon: A Silver dagger

Avatar/Image: A radiance of silver darkness filled with winking stars. Sometimes he appears as a strikingly handsome young man dressed in a Robe of Stars with eyes of silver darkness and winking stars.

History: Vega is the most secretive and elusive of all the main deities. All worship him for his obvious power, but few feel close to his presence. He is not related to the other gods by birth other than to his twin brother Hama and so most only speculate as to where he came from. Some wonder if he knows about the origins of the gods but he remains tight-lipped. All oaths, sworn fealty, knighthoods, and pacts are sworn on his name. He is the most commonly worshipped god by wizards and sorcerers. He does not inhabit any particular domain and no one knows where he resides most of the time. He is said to keep a record of all spells, books and songs. He grants great power to his worshippers, but is often vague in prophecies. He is often said to be romantically linked with Synnove, an odd match at that. He is also the god most commonly worshipped by dragons.

Dogma: Spread knowledge to those capable of handling it. Guard secrets for when they are needed and keep them from those who would destroy. Use magic to maintain a balance. Like the light of the moon and stars, you shall illuminate the mortal world with knowledge. All knowledge is sacred, even that which is dangerous. Preserve such knowledge, but make sure it does not go into the wrong hands.

Rationale: Vega is an anomaly among the gods for he is not involved in many direct affairs. His name holds great weight in oaths and bonds, but he remains a distant entity. He has an interesting relationship with his brother Hama – in some ways a counterpart and in others, simply the other half of a coin. He has many of the aspects of the trickster god of many pantheons. Vega is interesting because of the large variety of things he represents and because he is so inhuman in his divine direction. He has thus far been the most popularly worshipped deity as he holds interests to a large variety of character types.

Comment on this article online at this URL:

► <http://www.silven.com/articles.asp?case=show&id=90>

Patterns are developing as we see each deity and their relationships. What will begin to emerge is an elemental or primal connection that each god has to both their material portfolio and their alignment. Each corresponds to both a moral framework and a physical one. It is not necessary to structure a pantheon this way, but it is far more interesting of gods have a variety of different characteristics. Gods must be like living entities in their variety and thus, their creators must imbue them with quirks and personality. I would suggest avoiding too many deities such as Tiras unless you are going to make their actual priesthoods more interesting. In every pantheon, some of the gods seem more generic than others, but it is best (if creating a relatively small pantheon) to make each god count.

Next month, I will explore the second half of the pantheon. This will include Hama – the god of law and invention and Vega's twin (and counterpart). You will see Hel'demius, the god of pure destruction and rage – a necessary sort of force in any pantheon. Someone has to herald rage and war. The last god will be Inhomra, the elusive and tricky goddess of thieves and shadows. She has concocted a grand illusion to hide something and the rest of the gods would like to know what. You will also see Siyamak Tamal, the dark tree who is the glue that binds the predicament of the gods together. The article will then conclude with an analysis of where the pantheon can go from here and how it could be improved. It is the hope of the author that the thinking behind this pantheon (and set of articles) might help people when they choose to begin the construction of their own. This pantheon is still in the working stages and many improvements will come. I intend on creating many other pantheons and hope to try more complex models than simply one based on Alignment. But for now, we are off to see the rest of the gods and how they fit in to the world and structure as a whole.

Polyglot : Incorporating Real-World Languages & Language Techniques Into Your Games

A monthly column by Dana Driscoll

By Dana Driscoll

Welcome to Polyglot, your source for linguistic RPG insight. This month we delve into the wealth of knowledge the world's languages provide to add depth and complexity to a campaign. As some of my past articles have demonstrated, language plays a central but often overlooked role in most tabletop games. It is through language that a game begins, continues, and ends. It is through language that information is conveyed, actions are described, and PCs and NPCs interact. Language can serve a DM or player in other ways as well. This article will have two focuses using real world language—for both a player and a DM.

Real-world languages are an excellent way to add depth and life to your campaign. This section will detail three separate methods for using real-world languages in a campaign. First, you can use them to help create place-names, PC, or NPC names to give a certain region, town, character, or country a certain "feel." Second, using accents for PCs/NPCs or groups of PCs/NPCs can help add a more character. Third, using unknown languages or writing systems can have a multitude of uses with minimal preparatory effort on the part of the DM.

Names:

Names are often some of the last things to think about when preparing for a session or creating a character. DMs can often come up with names on the spot, or resort to a list of pre-generated fantasy names for their use. Players may create a character's history and personality without giving a name any consideration. With a bit of preparation time, however, one can

use words from other languages for names to give a certain feel.

Lets look at a couple of example word lists to see how this works from three real-world languages.

Example 1: Japanese

Atsumori, Arata, Baiko, Denbe, Doi, Eiji, Fukusaburu, Genpaku, Haruki, Hokichi, Letshige, Izumo, Jurobei, Kaji, Masamichi, Noboru, Shihi, Taikan, Washi, Yosai, Asako, Chika, Eri, Fumi, Hanae, Izumi, Kaori, Masako, Nanami, Omitsu, Rika, Sakurako, Sen, Takako, Umeka, Yori, Asahara, Doi, Choshi, Komon, Zuikouin, Miwaku, Kurokami, Ken, Chou, Yuushou, Akebono, Shito, Danseitaki, Kasei, Saru, Rinjin, Junjo, Yashi.

Example 2: Inuit

Adlet, Agloolik, Akna, Keelut, Qiqirn, Nootaikok, Aulanerk, Pukkeenegak, Tootega, Tornarsuk, Sila Inua, Aumanil, Tekkeitstertok, Tarquiup, Nerrivik, Aumanil, Siku, Aput, Qaniit, Pujurak, Apirlaat, Iluitsuq, Sinaaq, Iliq.

Example 3: Arabic

Abdul-Hakim, Afeef, Ahmad, Aliyy, Alim, Ayman, Baha al Din, Basim, Bishr, Diya al Din, Dhul Fiqar, Fareed, Fawzi, Fudail, Ghiyath, Hamal, Humam, Imad al Din, Ishaq, Jibril, Kadeer, Kalid, Lahab, Marzuq, Nawaf, Qaraja, Riyad, Sa'id, Shafiq, Suhayl, Thabit, Ubayy, Wadi, Yasir, Zakiy, Johara, Khulud, Lamyah, Najeeba, Noor, Rasha, Safiyyah, Sakeena, Thana, Zakiyyah.

Taking a list like the above and pulling out PC, NPC or place names, you can create a unique feel to a region of the world. For example, "Bob the Savage" from "The Cold Lands" doesn't have quite the same feel as "Keelut of Tarquiup."

About the Author

Dana has a variety of different interests, some of the most important being reading, writing, learning, and playing D&D. She is currently a graduate student working on her PhD in linguistics at State University of New York: Stony Brook, with her undergraduate work in Literature, Writing, and Women's Studies.

Contact the Author

Contact Dana at adriayna@yahoo.com

About the Artist

Interior black and white artwork for this article is done by Veli-Matti Joutsen. Mr Joutsen is a self taught artist living in Finland, who has been drawing and illustrating since early childhood.

Contact the Artist

Contact Veli-Matti at freelancer@surfeu.fi

How does one pick a language to use? It depends on what you are using the language for. The best advice is to try two different methods—first, if you can find a similar group of people to what you are portraying, the language may fit. With the Inuit or Arabic examples, certain regions of the world may be better suited to these languages. Inuit could represent a low-technology tribe that lives in a frigid climate, while Arabic could be used for a desert people. In these cases, the real-world languages can be used to reflect similar fantasy peoples. This method plays on the expectations and knowledge that players may already have about languages. If there isn't anything that fits the race or region, simply start surveying multiple languages till you find one that gives the "feel" you are looking for in your game.

The key is to use languages as a jump-start to developing PCs, NPCs, and regions to a higher degree. Language and naming is only a start—after picking a language, one can begin to think on multiple levels about the PC. What cultural assumptions or terms does the culture have in their language that can't be represented in other languages, for example.

Below is an example an original english text translated into French and German by Bablefish:

English:

In the seventh month in the seventh year, my people angered the gods. The gods, in their passion, flung the sun itself down from the sky. It created a blast that destroyed every living thing for as far as the eye could see. The stars grew black and the ground shook with anger, and all those who survived took to the caves in fear and in prayer. My people lived in hiding and afraid, for seven years, before we discovered a way to please the gods once more. During that time, we constructed a sacred statue that would please the gods and end our suffering. We emerged from the caves and lifted the statue to the sky. We knew the gods were pleased when we saw the sun and stars restored to their former glory. We had redeemed ourselves.

French:

En le septième mois par la septième année, mes personnes ont irrité les dieux. Les dieux, dans leur passion, ont jeté le soleil lui-même vers le bas du ciel. Il a créé un souffle pour lequel a détruit chaque chose vivante dans la mesure où l'oeil a pu voir. Les étoiles ont accru le noir et la terre a secoué avec colère, et tout ceux qui a survécu ont pris aux cavernes dans la crainte et dans la prière. Mes personnes ont vécu en se cachant et effrayé, pendant sept années, avant que nous ayons découvert une manière svp aux dieux une fois de plus. Pendant ce temps, nous avons construit une statue sacrée qui satisferait les dieux et finissons notre douleur. Nous avons émergé des cavernes et avons soulevé la statue au ciel. Nous avons su que les dieux étaient heureux quand nous avons vu le soleil et les étoiles reconstitués à leur ancienne gloire. Nous nous étions rachetés.

Accents are an excellent way to add depth to a PC or to signify a special or unique NPC, although not all gamers have the innate ability to portray different types of accent for effect.

Information from all three of these languages came from the Internet. You can simply type in the name of the language you are searching for and a wealth of information will be at your fingertips. If you are unsure about what is out there, a full list of links about the world's languages can be found at Open Directory Project here: http://dmoz.org/Science/Social_Sciences/Language_and_Linguistics/Natural_Languages/.

Accents

Accents are an excellent way to add depth to a PC or to signify a special or unique NPC, although not all gamers have the innate ability to portray different types of accent for effect. If you are interested in using accents for your own game, the best thing to do is to either find sources (television, movies, radio) where that accent is being used or find people who have an accent and listen to how they pronounce words. Even mimicking a simple "commoner" accent (found in many movies that are placed in the medieval period) is sure to add effect.

If you aren't familiar enough with an accent to mimic a real one, then try making up one of your own. Perhaps a Medusa lengthens her "s" and "z" sounds and adds additional "s" and "z" sounds into her speech. A fraud scholar or antique dealer will enunciate every sound and will attempt to pronounce long or complex words without knowing their meanings or pronunciations. Using your mouth in new ways will also give rise to interesting sounding speech. For example, keeping your tongue pressed to the bottom of your mouth when

you talk will give you the effect of PC or NPC who has had too much to drink or has a speech or mental disorder.

Besides accents, using other speech techniques can also help your PCs or NPCs take on a life of their own. The following is a list to help you get started:

- Whispy voice for a non-aggressive or mousy individual
- Talking too fast and repeating everything for emphasis
- Squeaky voice for a small or timid individual
- Drags on the ends of words when annoyed or bored
- Enunciates everything

Your local library is an excellent source for information on accents and types of voices. Look under the "voice acting" heading, and you can find a wealth of materials.



German:

Im 7. Monat im 7. Jahr, verärgerten meine Leute die Götter. Die Götter, in ihrer Neigung, schleuderten die Sonne selbst unten vom Himmel. Er verursachte einen Knall, den jede lebende Sache zerstörte für, insoweit das Auge sehen konnte. Die Sterne wuchsen Schwarzes und der Boden rüttelte mit Zorn, und alles nahmen die, die überlebten, zu den Höhlen in der Furcht und im Gebet. Meine Leute lebten beim Verstecken und ängstlich, für sieben Jahre, bevor wir eine Weise bitte zu den Göttern noch einmal entdeckten. Während dieser Zeit konstruierten wir eine heilige Statue, die den Göttern gefallen würde und beenden unseren Suffering. Wir tauchten von den Höhlen auf und hoben die Statue zum Himmel an. Wir wußten, daß die Götter erfreut waren, als wir die Sonne und die Sterne sahen, die zu ihrem ehemaligen Ruhm wieder hergestellt wurden. Wir hatten uns zurückgekauft.

Unknown Languages

DM: You walk into the ancient library's hidden vault chamber. There, covered by layers of dust, sits a lone, crumbling pedestal. Upon the pedestal rests a single scroll.

PC: I walk up to the scroll and read it.

DM: As you clear away the dust and open the scroll, here is what you see {hands player a sheet of rolled-up paper that contains an unknown script}

Throughout a campaign, unknown languages often play a central role. For example, the PCs try to interact with the denizens of a strange land, only to find out that they can't understand each other. The PCs are doing reconnaissance and do not understand what their charges are saying. Or, the PCs may even stumble upon documents where the language is so old that it

is nearly impossible to translate its contents. Each of these cases are prime examples of unknown languages taking center stage along the PCs ongoing quest.

The easiest way to utilize the concept of an unknown language is to use a real foreign language to construct what it is that the piece of writing or speech is to say, making sure that none of the players knows the language you will be using. The Internet is a great resource for this type of preparation. Altavista provides a service known as "Bablefish" a translator that will translate a text from a large number of languages to other languages. You can find it here: <http://babelfish.h.altavista.com/> It is not without its errors, but is a great assistance to a DM who otherwise would need to spend hours translating a text.

If you don't have access to the Internet when preparing, a few font manipulations can give the effect of a language. For example, the "Symbol" font available on most word processing programs will change an ordinary piece of English text into symbols. The only problem with this method is that only the orthography has changed, the content, syntax, and spellings are otherwise completely unchanged. Using an actual language and the Bablefish translator instead will give a nearly indecipherable message.

Making multiple copies—one in the unknown language and one in a familiar language for your reference (or to eventually give to the players when they decipher it). You can use this technique for maps, books, journals, wanted posters, even spoken dialogue.

Conclusion

There are many ways that one can begin to use real languages in his or her games. This article has only touched the surface of the possibilities for use within games, giving both a DM and a player several distinct choices for adding more flavor. Next month's Polyglot article will begin to detail the process of language creation for those who want to take their settings even a step further with a constructed language.

CRPG

INsights

Dungeon Siege : Legends of Aranna, bonus adventure

Want more Dungeon Siege goodness? And you are running Windows XP on that great gaming machine you call your PC? Well, you are in luck! Microsoft Games Studios and Microsoft Windows XP bring you a new adventure for Dungeon Siege: Legends of Aranna, the great RPG developed by Mad Doc Software and Gas Powered Games.

This XP Extra continues the story of Legends of Aranna, as players are called upon to defend the village from an attack by the Hassat race of mutated great cats. Players must repair the rift between the Hassat and the Humans, or die trying, in this new level available exclusively for Windows XP users. The 40 MB file can be downloaded from the link listed below.

Get the bonus adventure here

<http://www.microsoft.com/games/dungeonsiegeloa/xpextra.asp>

Comment on this article online at this URL:

▶ <http://www.silven.com/articles.asp?case=show&id=88>

“Confessions of a Legendary Mind”

Reviews, Rules, Commentary, and other Artifacts Concerning
 Legendary Adventures

By Dale Holmstrom

Greetings! I'd like to welcome you to my first monthly column for the Silven Trumpeter. As an "old school" gamer I hope I can deliver articles that are thorough, displaying competent interactivity from my many experiences in RPG's and life. After the official extinction of RuneQuest, I searched for an RPG that would deliver the enthusiasm I once had when playing Advanced D&D, while having psuedo-realistic combat, magic, and competency based advancement used in RuneQuest based systems. I found what I was looking for in the Legendary Adventures Role-playing System. The following is just one of the ideas I have for adding a little "zing" into your next LA game.

Optional Archery Rules for Legendary Adventures

"It (an English longbow) was passed back and forth, and they (the Mongol warriors) ran their hands over the polished surface of yew, voicing shrill surprise at the lack of horn and metal. It was clear they considered it a very poor thing. Then, one of them raised the bow and began to bend it. This proved so difficult that he threw all his strength into the effort. The confident smile faded from his greasy features, to be replaced by reluctant wonder."

From "The Black Rose" By Thomas Costain

My fascination and interest in archery was kindled as a child. My grandfather; a medieval historian and lover of Victorian authors, introduced me into the worlds of Kipling, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Costain and Tolkien. Tales of heroic men wielding powerful bows of yew against tremendous odds would lead me to bow hunting, and in time, the forgotten art of bowery and fletching.

In 1996, I quit using the cold, modern mechanical device called a "compound bow" for my hunting forays. Instead, I began to research crafting bows the old way. The old way isn't always the easiest way, but it does imbue patience and greatly aids in ridding a RPer of pizza and soda belly (ok, for me it's a beer belly---or should it be Bass Ale belly). After felling a tree, splitting it up into usable sections, using hatchet, drawknife, rasp, and finally scraper, one might have made a bow. My long hours in the workshop finally (bow number six finally held up, but was crude, to say the least) paid off. I eventually began to craft long bows that were durable and easy on the hand. I have successfully taken game with them and can attest to their lethality. Since then, I have delved into building a variety of bow styles, including a composite Hungarian horse bow, Neolithic flat bows, and Cherokee war bows. For all of those hours in the workshop, I consider myself but a mere amateur when viewing surviving relics of English, American Indian, and Turkish bows.

What perplexes me is that, for all the extensive time and research most creative purveyors of fantasy invest into creating quasi-realistic movies, literature, and games, little effort is spent portraying realism in archery. If you paint and collect miniatures, look

About the Author

Dale Holmstrom began a lifelong passion for RPG's and war games in a friend's dingy basement in 1978. Recently, he has contributed to the upcoming D20 Medieval Fantasy supplement EARTH1066, and has playtested several war games. His other hobbies include hunting, Bowery, gardening, mini-painting, reading, and PC gaming. He is currently finishing his Bachelor Degree in History and plans to become a Professor.

He currently resides in Saint Louis, Missouri USA with Theresa, his lovely wife of 11 years, and their cat Tiberius.

Contact the Author

eccentrinx@earthlink.net

at your average chainmail bra babe toting a bow. Can you take a string and place it end to end on the gargantuan bow she's hauling? The feats of Legolas in the current movie trilogy makes most real archers cringe, wondering if anyone gave Orlando Bloom archery lessons. Of course Legolas pales in comparison to the gross inaccuracies displayed in Kevin Costner's *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*, or the *Hercules* TV franchise.

With all of this in mind, I offer the following optional rules for the *Legendary Adventures* system. I hope they keep in spirit of what Gary Gygax has created: an RPG that is simple, but with complex undertones that all may enjoy.

Bow Styles

There are three main bow styles that display design relevant to available resources and environment. They are the simple bow, the Recurve bow, and the composite recurved bow. Unlike the *LA Rules*, no laminated (composed of wooden veneers glued together) bows are represented. This is due to the unavailability of strong bonding glues in a medieval setting, the lamination is a 19th century product, and the relative indifference in performance to the included bow styles.



Simple Bow

The simple bow is crafted using a one piece of wood, typically a wedge-shaped section from a bole of a tree called a *stave*, or a relatively large tree limb. It is straight in profile, but vary greatly in shape and back/front designs dependent upon the tension/compression capabilities of wood used. Simple bow designs are prevalent in woodlands and jungle regions due to the large amounts of tall, straight trees, and the many varieties of usable wood.

Examples of simple bow designs in our world range from American eastern Woodland Flat bows to the yew bows of the Northern Europeans. These bows range from forty inches to over six feet long.



Recurve Bow

The recurve bow is crafted using one or multiple pieces of wood, usually having some sort of simple backing such as rawhide or silk. In profile, the bow tips curve back, and bow shape is usually relatively flat and wide to prevent wood denigration during extended use. The Recurve may be found anywhere where there are wood sources. Examples of Recurve bows range from the Mercenary Cretan bow of the Roman period and the Ancient Egyptian bow. These bows range from fifty to sixty five inches long.



Composite Recurved Bow

These bows are made using a wooden core of multiple pieces, a backing of sinew bundles soaked in glue, and a belly of horn, baleen, or bone. Bark, silk, gut, or other materials may cover the entire bow. Bow tips are heavily recurved, and may even touch each other when unstrung due to the drying and elasticity of the sinew bundles. Limb shape is typically flat, with a back slightly arched due to the coverage of the sinew bundles. Typically the composite recurved bow is found in desert, steppe or other arid regions. Examples of this bow are found in Middle-East Asian cultures and the short horn bows used on the American plains. They range from thirty-six to sixty-five inches tall. Their size and power make them ideal bows for horse riding.

Bow Types

There are two main bow types: the hunting bow and the war bow. The difference of these two types is the poundage drawn. Bows are measured by the force/pounds is required to pull the drawstring back to full *draw* (at the crease of the lips or behind the ear). For *LA* game purposes, the differentiation of types is based upon the Archery and Physique Abilities. Only simple and composite bow styles may be war bow types. Just as any tool, these bows are designed for specific applications such as climate, tactics, and materials available.

Hunting Type Bows

Hunting bows are just how they are named: utilized for hunting game. Hunting bows are designed to be easily drawn and held at full draw for accuracy. A typical hunting bow draws between forty and seventy pounds.

In game terms any Avatar can use a hunting bow and can apply any Archery Ability bonuses when loosing arrows from one. An Avatar *may not* apply Physique bonuses when using a hunting bow.

Hunting Simple Bow Cost \$300

Harm Base: 1-20 Range: 45-150-300
Speed Penalty: 1 Precision Bonus: 15/10/0

Hunting Recurve Bow Cost \$500

Harm Base: 1-20 Range: 60-150-300
Speed Penalty: 1 Precision Bonus: 10/5/0

Hunting Composite Bow Cost \$1200

Harm Base: 1-20 Range: 75-150-300
Speed Penalty: 1 Precision Bonus: 10/5/0

War Type Bows

War bows are made to defeat the enemy by range and penetration. Accuracy is a secondary factor of war bow design due to massing of bowmen in an army to deliver decisive concentrated artillery onto the enemy. A war bow will typically draw between ninety to one hundred-eighty pounds, although a few highly trained humanoids and alfar have used two hundred pound plus bows. It takes years of training and physical prowess to accurately pull and loose a war bow.

In game terms, war bows are rated by the minimum Archery and Physique Abilities needed to use them. Avatars may use their maximum Archery Bonuses for

any bow, but are restricted to any Physique bonuses dependent on the bows' rating.



Simple War Bow

NOTE: Due to the design of the bow, Avatars that are less than 60 inches tall may not utilize them. There is also a +50 penalty when using a Simple War Bow on horseback.

Simple War Bow 30/30 Cost \$400

Harm Base: 2-20 Range: 60-240-600

Speed Penalty: 1 Precision Bonus: 15/5/0

Simple War Bow 60/60 Cost \$750

Harm Base: 2-20 Range: 75-360-750

Speed Penalty: 1 Precision Bonus: 10/5/0

Simple War Bow 90/90 Cost \$1000

Harm Base: 3-20 Range: 90-400-900

Speed Penalty: 1 Precision Bonus: 5/5/0

Simple War Bow 100+/100+ Cost \$2000

Harm Base: 4-20 Range: 120-450-950

Speed Penalty: 1 Precision Bonus: 5/5/0



Composite Recurved War Bow

Any Avatar that has required Archery and Physique Abilities may use a composite recurved war bow. No penalties are accrued when using this bow from horse back.

Composite Recurved War Bow 30/30 Cost \$1500

Harm Base: 1-20 Range: 90-300-600

Speed Penalty: 1 Precision Bonus: 10/5/0

Composite Recurved War Bow 60/60 Cost \$2500

Harm Base: 2-20 Range: 120-400-800

Speed Penalty: 1 Precision Bonus: 5/5/0

Composite Recurved War Bow 90/90 Cost \$4000

Harm Base: 2-20 Range: 150-450-1000

Speed Penalty: 1 Precision Bonus: 5/0/0

Composite Recurved War Bow 100+/100+ Cost \$7500

Harm Base: 3-20 Range: 150-500-1200

Speed Penalty: 1 Precision Bonus: 0/0/0

Arrow Types and Harm Bonuses

In addition to the damage inflicted by the penetrative qualities of a bow, penetration can be enhanced and/or hindered by arrowhead design. There are three main types of arrowhead designs.

Hunting Arrowhead Cost (per 12) \$100

Harm Class: Penetration Unarmored/Cloth Harm Bonus +2, Leather/Mail Harm Bonus 0, Plate/other Harm Bonus -2

Armor Penetrating Arrowhead Cost (per 12) \$200

Harm Class: Penetration Unarmored/Cloth Harm Bonus 0 Leather/Mail Harm Bonus +2, Plate/Other Bonus +1

Blunt Arrowhead Cost (per 12) \$50

Harm Class: Shock Unarmored/Cloth Harm Bonus 0, Leather/Mail Bonus 0, Plate/other Bonus 0*

* Same effect as Shock weapons on plate armor

A Note for Lejend Masters

Due to the hydropscopic nature of wood and other natural materials used in construction, extended use of recurve and composite recurved bows will have degraded ranges and higher chances for breakage in humid/damp climates. This may range from strings becoming limp to horn delamination from wooden cores. Conversely, simple bows that are subjected to extended use in arid climates may experience bow breakage at higher rates due to wood drying. This is why you see differences of bow design in ancient cultures of our history. A Mongol didn't have access and environmental conditions for the longbow; neither the Englishman to craft Composite bows. Have fun with your avatars and give experience for those that look after their equipment.

Cost for the bows are only considered if the bowyer has readily available resources to craft the bow type and style. Bows that are outside the environments made tend to be very expensive.

Notes on the Optional Rules

I'm sure many will wonder why the composite and recurve bows are given lower precision bonuses. They were given these values due to the very fact that the shorter a bow is, the harder it is to handle accurately. Longer bows tend to be more stable in the hand, which confers greater accuracy.

Another question may arise concerning ranges given for weapons. I came to these conclusions from personal experience and "The Bowyer's Bible Volume One" in which most bows—even those of heavy poundage attain virtually the same flight profile within 40 yards. Only very strong bows have longer range profiles. The extreme ranges for Composite Recurved War Bows also stems from historical accounts in Turkey by European

Observers during the Eighteenth Century. One British Observer noted that one of the Sultan's archers could loose an arrow over a half mile!

Some may ask why the Physique Ability was included for using war bows. The Archery Ability alone covers a wide variety of abilities, but doesn't address the physical aspect of using the bow. Historical and archeological evidence concerning men who used the English war bow shows that they were tall and heavily muscled. The fact that a person has the strength and ability to draw such a bow confers the harm bonus for physique.

Well, that's all for this month, fine readers. Those that have been inspired to make their own bows can access information, and a lot of helpful advice from www.stickbow.com Next month I'm taking a look at extra "ouchies" your valiant Avatars may encounter when entering the arena of combat.

Vision Entertainment Products

<http://www.silven.com/promotional/vision.asp>



The Book of the Unliving Hard Cover

Author: Steven Brown
(Stand Alone Game System compatible with other Foundation Books)

Physical Description: 320 pages, black-and-white, full-color cover with full-color illustration and metallic ink, perfect bound, high-quality printing, 13 chapters each with full page illustration, plus lots of interior illustration by professional freelancers.

Contents: Contains basic rules, character creation, and horror aspects of the Secret World, the modern day setting. Includes ghouls, revenants, vampires, Frankenstein monsters, ghosts, the Underworld, and the earthly secret world. Includes guidelines for legendmaking, roleplaying, storytelling, gamemasterless options, communal characters, dream control, and much more. Fully compatible with other foundation.

Dear mortal,

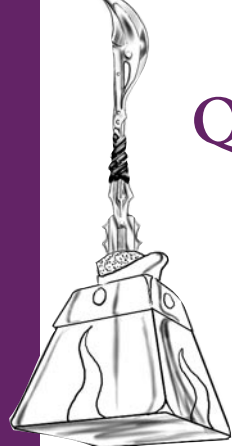
Join we who have gone beyond death, for every night is Samhain and our dark celebrations begin anew. This night is young and there is much mortal pain left for our pleasure . . . and not all of our victims are as willing as you. Ghuls have emerged from their graveyard catacombs. Whirling widdershin around bonfires, their yowls and moans lament the blackest form of immortality. Solomari alchemists hawk elixirs, while Ghaddar fleshmongers trade living bodies to dead souls seeking undeath. Human-looking Faitour are feasting on recent burials and talk of the last pilgrimage to the Underworld through the Labyrinth of Iblis. Other ghuls are rounding up the most uncontrollable of their own mindless kin for slaughter.

Come and be with us, but remember . . . the night has its price. Join the darkest of the immortals with The Everlasting: Book of the Unliving, but beware sundown and the horror it brings.

» This product and several other Vision Entertainment products are available to members of Silven Crossroads at discounted prices. Visit the link above and find out how you can make use of the discount today!

Comment on this article online at this URL:

▶ <http://www.silven.com/lejudary.asp?case=show&id=240>



Quillion's Quill: The Kithmourn Prestige Class

by Steve Russell

Welcome to the first edition of "Quillion's Quill". Each month this column will present d20 material that I have developed to help lend specificity and actual mechanics to the details of my homebrew campaign setting *Questspire the City of Adventurers*. These upcoming articles will include core classes, skill uses, feats, spells, prestige classes and magical items. These designs have all appeared in the Silven.com forums and can be discussed in further detail there.

This month I am presenting a variation of the generic assassin prestige class. The Kithmourn is designed for a high fantasy/high powered world where *Raise Dead*, *Resurrection*, *Reincarnation*, *Speak with Dead* and *True Resurrection* are quite common. In this type of world simply killing your target is not enough. This prestige class is primarily for NPC assassins and it is extremely difficult for a PC to enter. At the bottom I have included information for scaling and adapting this material into your own game.

The Kithmourn Prestige Class

Assassins of the Mournful Order of Kinslayers

"The Kithmourn are an assassins guild of highest order; they are best known for they sending gifts of mourning to those who are slain by their members and letters of condolence to their targets kin. I can only assume they do not send such condolences when an assassination is to be known as natural or accidental death. Their most famous assassination was Morgoth Hellspawn, High priest of the Demon-god Ahriman. The assassination caused a seven day battle to erupt within the church when Morgoth's soul did not reach Ahriman.

Gaining membership into that vile secret society? Well, first you have to go kill your brother and then get yourself hanged for it. Next they bring you back. Living or unliving seems to depend on their mood. Then a time spent training and traveling as an actor or simply as a spy for the order. How long? That depends on how good you are. Finally, you will be given an assignment and the Kithmourn don't care if you survive it, because they usually just cast reincarnation if you succeed. If you fail well lets just say your membership is revoked." ---An Excerpt from Not-So-Secret Societies by Corst Quicktongue, written shortly before his assassination by the Kithmourn.

The Mournful Order of Kinslayers serves as the primary assassins guild in the region of Questspire. They are closely allied with the Noble House of Ashenfall, yet they also have close ties to the Sentan Wizards Guild (a order of eunch wizards). They primarily see their work as form of artistic expression, though they feel that their employers do not appreciate their art unless they pay the proper fees. (2,500gp x the Challenge Rating of the Target)

After the leaders of the order have located a potential candidate, a cleric of the order returns the character to life and offers the character membership or death. If they accept they are trained until such time as the Grandmaster of Kinslayers declares they are an Assassin of the Mournful Order of Kinslayers.

When addressing each other in private or in code the proper form of address would be "The Mournful" then their surname followed by: "Kinslayer" Example: Steffon Russoff would be called "The Mournful Russoff Kinslayer." Upon reaching 10th level the character is simply referred to as "Grandmaster of Kinslayers."

About the Author

Steven Russell is a would-be-game designer, long time Gamemaster from Dayton, Ohio. He is supported and betrayed by his fanatical gaming companions known as "The Group". They are currently exploring his homebrew campaign setting: Questspire. Other current projects include a Wheel of Time d20 netbook and and a Epic Level Campaign Setting code named Heaven's Battlefield. His favorite saying is "A hundred thousand lemmings can't be wrong!"

Steven would like to dedicate this article to Duane Russell. *The greatest man I have ever known; I am graced to call him father.*

Contact the Author

Star_weave@hotmail.com

Hit Die: d6

Requirements:

To qualify to become a Kithmourn, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Skills: Diplomacy 5 ranks, Disguise 10 ranks, Bluff 10 ranks, Forgery 5 ranks, Knowledge: Arcana 5 ranks, Sleight of Hand 5 ranks,

Feats: Quick Draw, Thespian*, Weapon focus (any)

Special: Must be animated, raised or resurrected after the character has died by execution for the murder of a blood relative. In addition they must join and be trained by the Mournful Order of the Kinslayers

Class Skills:

The Kithmourn's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disable Device (Int), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (any) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Open Lock (Dex), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Spot (Wis), Swim (Str), Tumble (Dex), Use Magic Device (Cha), and Use Rope (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Level: 6 + Int modifier.

Table: The Kithmourn

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1st	+0	+0	+2	+0	Sneak attack +1d6, death attack, poison use
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+0	Just Another Face in the Crowd
3rd	+2	+1	+3	+1	Sneak attack +2d6
4th	+3	+1	+4	+1	I Come Unarmed
5th	+3	+1	+4	+1	Sneak attack +3d6
6th	+4	+2	+5	+2	Tears of the Crocodile
7th	+5	+2	+5	+2	Sneak attack +4d6
8th	+6	+2	+6	+2	A Thousand Faces
9th	+6	+3	+6	+3	Sneak attack +5d6
10th	+7	+3	+7	+3	Even Demons Mourn

Class Features

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

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Kithmourns gain no proficiency with any weapon or armor.

Sneak Attack (Ex): This is exactly like the rogue ability of the same name. The extra damage dealt increases by +1d6 every other level (2nd, 4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th). If a kithmourn gets a sneak attack bonus from another source the bonuses on damage stack.

Death Attack (Ex): If an kithmourn studies her victim for 3 rounds and then makes a sneak attack with a melee weapon that successfully deals damage, the sneak attack has the additional effect of possibly either paralyzing or killing the target (kithmourn's choice). While studying the victim, the kithmourn can undertake other actions so long as her attention

stays focused on the target and the target does not detect the kithmourn or recognize the kithmourn as an enemy. If the victim of such an attack fails a Fortitude save (DC 10 + the kithmourn's class level + the kithmourn's Int modifier) against the kill effect, she dies. If the saving throw fails against the paralysis effect, the victim is rendered helpless and unable to act for 1d6 rounds plus 1 round per level of the kithmourn. If the victim's saving throw succeeds, the attack is just a normal sneak attack. Once the kithmourn has completed the 3 rounds of study, she must make the death attack within the next 3 rounds. If a death attack is attempted and fails (the victim makes her save) or if the kithmourn does not launch the attack within 3 rounds of completing the study, 3 new rounds of study are required before she can attempt another death attack.

Scaling the Kithmourn Prestige Class

Not every setting runs at the same level of power or the same style. *Questspire the City of Adventures* (The world of the Mournful Order of Kinslayers.) is a high fantasy/high power setting so you may need to scale and adapt the Kithmourn Prestige Class to fit your setting. Below are some ways to do so.

Non-Magical World: A world without magic is radically different and prestige classes such as this become difficult to use but not impossible. The *special requirement* changes to a faked death. *Just another face in the crowd* gains an Int Modifier bonus to disguise. *I come unarmed* gives a Sleight of Hand +4 bonus to concealing a weapon, *Tears of the Crocodile Gives* an Int modifier to Bluff. *A Thousand Faces* cuts the time of donning a disguise in half. *Even Demons Mourn* is transformed to a +1 or +2 Bonus to The Death Attack DC.

Standard: If you are playing in a standard d20 setting with no more power than the core books, I suggest the following: *Just another face in the crowd* duration is reduced to 10 minutes per class level; *I come unarmed* is limited to once per day, *Tears of the Crocodile* is limited to only function when the character is aware of the divination and is considered a free action. For *Even Demons Mourn* the Will save is changed to (DC 19+Cha modifier).

Epic Fantasy: If you are playing Epic Fantasy with even more earth shattering power than *Questspire*, I suggest the following: change the fort saves to good, *Just another face in the Crowd* no functions gains additional uses per day equal to a character's Int Modifier. *Tears of the Crocodile* no longer requires an opposed check. *Even Demons Mourn* can also be used on any corpse a number of time per day equal to one plus the character's Int modifier.

Poison Use (Ex): Kithmourns are trained in the use of poison and never risk accidentally poisoning themselves when applying poison to a blade.

Just Another Face in the Crowd (Su): At 2nd level, once per day for one hour per class level, no one can give an accurate description of a kithmourn or even recognize him if he were to see him again unless they succeed at a spot check opposed by the Kithmourn's disguise check. This effect is considered a glammer.

I Come Unarmed (Sp): At 4th level, a kithmourn gains the ability to use *Instant Summons* as a free action with any weapon he has weapon focus in a number of times per day equal to one plus his Int Modifier. The weapon must still be prepared beforehand as per *instant summons*.

Tears of the Crocodile (Su): At 6th level, a Kithmourn can fool any form a divination as per the non-detection that could expose her disguise (i.e. detect lies, detect evil, true seeing etc.) She gives a false reading of her choice if the opponent fails a caster level check opposed by the Kithmourn's bluff check even if she is unaware of the divination, Use of this ability is not considered an action. (You can use it when it is not your turn.)

A Thousand Faces (Su): At 8th level, a kithmourn gains the ability to change her appearance at will, as if using the *alter self* spell, but only while in her normal form.

Even Demons Mourn (Sp): At 10th level, a kithmourn can *Trap the Soul* (Will save 20+ Kithmourn's Int Modifier) a character she has successfully death attacked as a free action. This action does not provoke an attack of opportunity

*Non-standard feats
THESPIAN [GENERAL]

"You must live acting. For only acting is more real than life." An Except from Kithmourn by Darion Grayframe
reputed Grandmaster of Kinslayers
You are a consummate actor.
Benefit: You get a +2 bonus on all Bluff checks and Disguise checks.

Two and a Half Dice Games

By Lance Kepner

We've all been there. Sitting at the gaming table, someone else holding the DM's attention or being run through a personal tract of the story. Nothing to do and bored out of your mind, you pick up your dice and start fiddling with it. Maybe you roll it, or maybe you toss it, or maybe you have a divine epiphany and begin to play your own little dice game. Congratulations! You've just crossed the threshold. But for those of you out there who don't have such an epiphany, I am here to instruct you on the secrets of the other side. That's right, go get the kids and sit around the monitor and read together, because learning is fun! This time I will instruct you on two games, *Stacking* and *High Rollers*.

For each game you need a complete set of polyhedron dice – seven in all: d4,d6,d8,d10,d10,d12,d20 and a heavy blunt object of your choosing. For those of you out there who don't know, and you know who you are, the d means die and the number represents the number of sides that die has. Ok, now on to the games.

Stacking

In this game the player--that's you--tries to stack all seven of the dice on top of one another in any order. The person who can do this fastest is the winner. Since this is a single player game (unless you want to challenge your neighbor) you

are always a winner if you can stack your dice up without them falling down.

While it seems easy, try it and you will soon see that only a patient and steady hand can achieve the apogee of dice stacking perfection. Here are some simple beginner tips to get you started:

- Don't start with the d4. In fact the d4 is best saved for last.
- Try starting with a heavy and bigger dice on the bottom, like a d20 or d12.
- Sometimes it even helps to start with a firm base like the d6.
- Don't let the dog eat the dice; you can't win if you don't have all 7 dice stacked.
- Watch out for the DM's gaze attack, it instantly disqualifies you.
- Other players may attempt to shake the table; this is where that heavy blunt object comes in.
- Every time you successfully stack the dice and it lasts for more than 1 minute, go ahead and give yourself 1000 experience points, but don't let the DM see.
- Most importantly- have fun!

High Rollers

In this game you can throw away the heavy blunt object because you wont be needing it. All you need is seven dice. Who would have thought that so much fun could be had with such simple things.

continued on page 53 ...

Feat Factory Project VI - New Age Design

by Lance Kepner

By this time anyone who has read the previous

Feat Factory articles should have a giant sized grasp on feats and feat related material. If you haven't been keeping up on the articles, for shame! Go read them here if you haven't already... you know who you are.

When designing feats, I have always said you need a concept in mind-the framework from which to build the feat. In this article I would like to discuss a different approach to designing feats. Most of the previous feats presented in past Feat Factory articles are what you could term classical feats, rather the standardized vision of feats. Some of the past articles did touch on the more liberal aspects of feat design, such as Feat Factory IV - Architecture where we discussed variant feats, and recently Feat Factory C - Arcane Styles where we discussed Arcane Style feats. But in this article I would like to diverge even further from the standard 'classical' viewpoint.

There are sometimes things that a character wants to accomplish either in their back-story or personality that are not covered in the general game mechanics. While there are background feats and even personality feats, sometimes even they cannot provide that edge the character wants to differentiate them. So I have developed some feats that I term 'Infamous' feats. This category of feats is reserved for 1st level characters only like background and personality feats. Infamous feats are just as their name implies, any character that takes one is infamous, in their local area, for a reason. But while the power level of infamous feats is generally way above what is considered the norm for feats, there are significant drawbacks that offset the power level. And without further ado-a brush with infamy!

Elementality [Infamous]

Some strange or elusive kinship to elementals exists within your body.

Prerequisites: 1st level character

Benefit: You gain immunity to any one of the following energy types: acid, cold, fire, and electricity.

Special: When you gain this feat you must choose the opposing element (fire < > cold, acid < > electricity). You now take three times the damage from attacks of that element. You may not take this feat numerous times.

Martial Gift [Infamous]

Either through tutelage or natural talent you are exceptional with weapons. This, however, leaves you more prone to magic attacks.

Prerequisites: 1st level character

Benefit: You gain a +2 (unnamed) bonus to all attacks and damage with any manufactured weapon you wield.

Special: You take 1.5x the amount of damage from all magic sources that would deal you damage. This multiplier only affects damaging spells. You may not take this feat numerous times.

Fleet of Foot [Infamous]

Your natural ability to move quickly aids you in battle, but you are not as tough and mentally strong.

Prerequisites: 1st level character

Benefit: You gain a +2 dodge bonus to AC and reflex saves. You lose this bonus any time you would be denied your dexterity to AC.

Special: You take a -2 penalty to fortitude and will saves. You may not take this feat numerous times.

Fleet of Foot

Illustration by Florin Badita

About the Author

Lance Kepner is the head of the Project Crossroads world building project found in the Silven Crossroads forum as well as author of numerous articles in the d20 section.

Contact the Author

lance@stationaryorbit.com

About the Artist

Florin Badita is an architecture student and hobby artist living and working in Italy.

Contact the Artist

You can contact the artist through his gallery on Elfwood at <http://elfwood.lysator.liu.se/loth/f/1/florin/florin.html>



Arcane/Divine Gift [Infamous]

Born with the natural gift of magic, you are exceptional at its use. This focus, however, limits your ability to cast many spells.

Prerequisites: 1st level character

Benefit: You cast all spells at +1 caster level. This bonus also applies to caster level checks.

Special: All spells per day, from all spellcasting classes you possess, are reduced by 1/4th. This penalty is applied before bonus spells granted by high ability scores. For example a wizard at first level has a base number of spells per day of 4. One fourth of four is 1, so that wizard's new spells per day is three plus any bonus spells per day granted by his ability score. You may not take this feat numerous times.

Know-It-All [Infamous]

Your pursuit of knowledge in all things gives you great insight but also limits your focus.

Prerequisites: 1st level character

Benefit: You gain 1 free rank in all Knowledge skills.

Special: Any Knowledge skill you possess cannot have more ranks than your character level. You may not take this feat numerous times.

Magic Resistant [Infamous]

You were born with a natural resistance to magic but an easily bruised body.

Prerequisites: 1st level character

Benefit: You gain Spell Resistance of 5 + character level.

Special: You take 1.5x damage from all melee weapon attacks against you. These attacks may be from natural or manufactured weapons. You cannot take this feat if you already possess spell resistance as a racial or class feature. You may not take this feat numerous times.

Your force of will is amazingly strong, but your other abilities suffer.

Prerequisites: 1st level character

Benefit: You gain a +4 bonus to will saves.

Special: You suffer a -2 penalty to fortitude and reflex saves. You may not take this feat numerous times.

I hope these feats give you a good idea of how to create infamous feats for your character or players. Be crazy, and attempt things even the best DM would scoff at. Just remember to include a substantial drawback that will impact that character as much as the feat will benefit them. As always feel free to email me at lance@stationaryorbit.com with any ideas, comments, or questions. Also feel free to post a comment below, and join the wonderful community here at Silven Crossroads. Until next time

From The Town



Crier

First bestiary for Arcana Unearthed Debuts Today

February 26, 2004 (Renton, Wash.) - Dozens of new creatures from the minds of Monte Cook and Mike Mearls await your discovery in Legacy of the Dragons, a new d20 System bestiary for Monte Cook's Arcana Unearthed on sale today in electronic edition from Malhavoc Press.

This monster supplement provides new adversaries and allies alike. From akashic seeker to zetetic, Legacy of the Dragons has what you need to add some teeth to your campaign! In its pages, you'll find: 50 new monsters, from CR 1/4 to CR 20, each complete with its own encounter; 15 new and exciting NPC personalities from the lands of the Diamond Throne; new feats, magic items, spells, weapons, diseases, and more, all inspired by the monsters in this book; and quick and easy guidelines for converting all these creatures to the standard d20 System rules.

Legacy of the Dragons comes as a 160-page illustrated PDF file with a streamlined page design to minimize file size for faster downloading and conserve ink for quicker printing. The book features the black-and-white artwork of Ed Bouelle, Kev Crossley, Jennifer Meyer, Tyler Walpole, and Sam Wood and a cover illustration also from Sam Wood. This electronic edition, regularly priced at \$14, is available now from online retailers* for the sale price of only \$11.

Fans can sample the book's art, table of contents, and other previews free at the Malhavoc Press website.

<http://www.montecook.com>

Comment on this article online at this URL:

▶ <http://www.silven.com/adnd.asp?case=show&id=222>



VILLAIN : NIAI, WITCH OF THE FEN

by Stephen Twining

This d20 villain is ready to add as-is to your d20 campaign. You can find more villains on our site at <http://www.silven.com/adnd.asp>.

Description

The Mere-Witch and The Dead Dryad's Oak. Beyond the Northern Forest, deep in the moorlands of the Varren Kuush, lies the misshapen and decomposing frame of a dead dryad oak. Engulfed by a stagnant and viscous mere, the branches of the lifeless tree shelter the stained canopies and bowed, wooden supports of the Mere-Witch's arboreal lair.

Tales of the half elven Niaï, known in local folklore as the Mere-Witch, the Witch of the Fen, and the Bog Haunt, depict a sinister arcanist who haunts the lowland moors and bogs, luring unsuspecting and enchanted victims to their doom in the mere. The foreboding and murky water of the mere forms an effective moat around the massive, rotting oak tree, while indistinct forms and glimmering lights move beneath the darkened surface. Hempen rope ladders and walkways hang from the dead branches of the tree, while others descend into the unsounded depths of the mere. The moss covered and skeletal remains of the Witch of the Fen's numerous victims rise out of the horrid mere, pierced on, and supported by, rotting stakes and wooded pikes. Spectral and phantasmic lights and droning, disembodied voices call across the mere, into the distant moors and bogs, while the distressing chants and incantations of the half elf enchantress echo from the branches of the dead dryad oak.

As a pariah in the culture of humans, the emergence of the half elven female's latent abilities in the arcane arts precipitated her departure from the townships and baronies of humans. Vanishing into the wilderness, Niaï honed her innate, and, indeed, illusionary and supernatural skills, developing an affinity for the world of the earthly and mundane. However, without the guidance of mentor, her unbridled enthusiasm in the pursuit of arcane power led to a tendency toward the unsavory. Niaï has been associated with the deaths and disappearances of many travelers of the Varren Kuush. It is believed that Niaï herself may have murdered the dryad whose broken tree she now inhabits, and may have also created the sickly, standing mere by redirecting the flow of a nearby wellspring.

Niaï bears the graceful features of her elven blood, though her distinctly human appearance, and awareness of human cultural conventions, may deceive some. Her dark, and certainly elvish, hair, is tied into flaring tails which drape over her pale complexion. Niaï wears a dark green arcane cloak, bound with bone and string, over the earthen tones of her common garb and the elf's legging are wrapped tight to her calves.

Age: 139 years
 Height: 4' 3"
 Weight: 79 lb.
 Hair: Jet Black
 Eyes: One blue, one hazel

Personality

Mad Alchemist. During her self-imposed exile in the mere, Niaï has become quite powerful in the alchemic arts, and increasingly, more experimental. Compelled by a desire for more potent elixirs and toxins, and emboldened by her burgeoning sorcery, the half elf haunts the moors and the woodland trails beyond, abducting victims for her more hazardous experiments. As potential prey is often scarce, Niaï has turned to self-experimentation, often with disastrous consequences. Frequent ingestion of questionable solutions and inebriating, yet near fatal, potions, has generated degrees of dementia and paranoia in the personality of the solitary sorceress and recurring hallucinations diminish Niaï capacity to distinguish reality from vision. To that end, Niaï often slinks about the branches of the dead dryad oak or on the shores of the darkened mere, under the veil of invisibility, listening intently to the sounds, and misperceived sounds, of the moors. Niaï is distrustful of all beings, except her familiar, the marsh hawk Coe, and will seize any opportunity to spirit away potential victims and prey to her dismal mere. Through Coe, and her own arcane ability to speak with animals, Niaï maintains a vigilant watch over the fens and moors of the Varren Kuush.

Tactics

Ghost Sound. Employing her prowess in the arcane arts, Niaï beckons her mesmerized victims into the mere with ghost sound, dancing lights, silent image, and whispering wind. A formidable enchantress, the half elf uses metamagic to enlarge spells such as

charm person, sleep and daze to confuse, coerce, and impel travelers and lost souls to her arboreal laboratory.

A marsh hawk called Coe, the familiar of the Mere Witch, enhances Niai's ability to surveil her environment, as well as her hunt for humanoid prey. Charging the magical beast with the touch spells, Niai uses Coe to deliver her devastating and terrifying arcane powers. Scare, cause fear, bestow curse, and contagion deter those that seek to put an end to her nefarious experimentation.

Niai's propensity for poison cultivation and preparation allows the half elf to treat ranged missiles and melee weapons with toxins and crippling solutions, for additional, debilitating damage. The witch delights in the firing of ranged weapons, saturated with poisons, at those lost and struggling in the mere.

Additionally, the half elf's lowlight vision and Blind Fight capability enable the witch to engage foes in conditions of poor or little illumination, while waterbreathing positions Niai effectively for surprise attacks and ambushes. These frightening aspects of the witch's abilities make the half elf witch a dangerous and unpredictable opponent.

Poison, Extraordinary Effect

Greenblood Oil, Injury DC 11, Initial Damage: 1 Con, Secondary Damage: 1d2 Con

Blue Whinnis, Injury DC 14, Initial Damage: 1 Con, Secondary Damage: unconsciousness

Dark Reaver Powder, Ingested DC 18, Initial Damage: 2d6 Con, Secondary Damage: 1d6 Con + 1d6 Str



5% chance to expose her to a poison whenever she applies it to a weapon or otherwise readies it for use. Additionally, a character who rolls a 1 on an attack roll with a poisoned weapon must make a Reflex saving throw (DC 15) or accidentally poison herself with the weapon. The application of poison is a Move-Equivalent Action and draws an Attack of Opportunity, if appropriate (see protocol regarding Cover included here).

The Tree

Arboreal Refuge. The slowly decomposing oak, drowning in the unnatural mere, serves as sanctuary, alchemist laboratory, and stronghold for the reclusive Witch of the Fen. Rising over 125 feet out of the mere and with a diameter of nearly equal measure, the tree's lifeless and skeletal boughs and branches host Niai's crude timber and rope dwelling. Consisting of three individual chambers connected by rope walks and fortuitously positioned branches, the canopied structure is suspended in the arms of the tree 30 feet above the surface of the mere.

The three chambers of the witch's lair, each measuring approximately 10 feet by 20 feet, encircle the great trunk of the oak. Two of the three chambers act as Niai's living quarters and storage, while the third provides adequate accommodations for Niai's alchemic interests.

Niai's living quarters contain her personal effects and meager treasure, and the stores include perishable and dried goods. The alchemist laboratory contains the witch's trove of potions, elixirs, potions, herbs, roots, and various vials of arcane

enablers and catalysts.

Coe tends to perch in the branches of the dead dryad oak and keeps a nest in the uppermost reaches of the tree.

While there are not any true windows on the structure, a dozen vertical arrowslits within the walls of the three chambers provide Niai with an excellent arial perspective and a favorable Combat Modifier. For the purposes of ranged combat, the dozen arrowslits provide a Degree of Cover equal to 9/10 Cover.

Outside the actual chambers of Niai's dwelling, the tree and its branches can provide a Degree of Cover equal to 3/4 Cover or 1/2 Cover for the witch. Cover provides a Cover AC bonus equal to +10 with 9/10 Cover, +7 with 3/4 Cover, and +4 with 1/2 Cover. Cover provides a Cover Reflex Save Bonus equal to +4 with 9/10 Cover*, +3 with 3/4 Cover, and +2 with 1/2 Cover (*half damage if save is failed; no damage if save is successful). Additionally, an attacker can't execute an Attack of Opportunity against a character with one-half or better cover.

Campaign Uses

The Lure. One or more mesmerized PCs have been drawn into the lair of Mere-Witch, compelled by the enchantress' charms and confusing illusions. The party must venture through the treacherous wilds of the Varren Kuush moors and confront the witch, before their companion(s) perish in Niai's deranged experiments.

The Rescue. Similarly, Niai has recently executed raids in a small township on the edges of the moors in her quest for vessels to experiment upon. The party has been employed by a n affluent merchant whose son has been abducted by the witch, promising land rights and fabulous wealth to those who facilitate the safe return of his child.

The Cleansing. Or, Niai's illicit trade in toxic and potentially harmful elixirs has attracted the attention of local clerics who seek to rid the moors of the Witch of the Fen for the safety of all in the Varren Kuush.

Niai: Female half-elf Witch7; CR 5; Medium-size humanoid (elf); HD 7d4 + 4; hp 22; Initiative +2; Spd 30 ft; AC 12 (touch 12, flatfoot 10); Atk +1 melee (1d6 +1/x2, +1 sickle), or +2 ranged (1d8 + special/19=20/x2, crossbow, light); SQ Empathic link with familiar, half-elf traits, marsh hawk familiar, share spells with familiar, touch (via familiar); AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +6; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Alchemy +11, Craft +9, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Spellcraft +8; Brew Potion, Blind Fight, Enlarge Spell (metamagic), Alertness (familiar)

Half-Elf Traits: Immunity to sleep spells and similar effects; +2 racial bonus against Enchantment spells; low-light vision (ability to see twice as far as humans in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, or similar conditions of poor illumination); +1 racial bonus on Listen, Search, and Spot checks; Elven blood.

Possessions: +1 *sickle*, crossbow, light, *screaming bolt* (2), bolts (37), dagger, alchemist kit, *cloak of resistance +1*, *potion of waterbreathing*, *potion of love*, *potion of invisibility*, *oil of timelessness*, *oil of sneaking*, *oil of swimming*, Poisons: dark reaver powder (1 dose), greenblood oil (2 doses), blue whinnis (2 doses), 2 pp, 52 gp, 23 sp, 15 cp.

Witch Spells Known: (7/6/4/3): 0 - *dancing lights*, *daze*, *detect poison*, *ghost sound*, *light*, *mending*, *read magic*; 1st - *cause fear*, *change self*, *charm person*, *cure light wounds*, *silent image*, *sleep*; 2nd - *invisibility*, *scare*, *speak with animals*, *whispering wind*; 3rd - *bestow curse*, *contagion*, *waterbreathing*.

"Coe": Female marsh hawk familiar; CR 1/3; Tiny magical beast; HD 1d8 (effective 7d8); hp 11; Init +3; Spd 10 ft., fly 60 ft. (average); AC 19 (touch 19, flat-footed 16); Atk +6 melee (1d4 -2); Face/Reach 2 1/2 ft. by 2 1/2 ft. / 0 ft. .; SQ Alertness, improved evasion, share spells, empathic link, touch, speak with

master, speak with animals of its type; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 6, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 9, Wis 14, Cha 6.

Familiar Benefits: Niai has a march hawk familiar, known as Coe. Coe grants her master Alertness. Niai may also share spells with Coe and the two are bound by an empathic link. Niai may also cast spells with a target of "You" on Coe, instead of herself. Empathic Link: Supernatural ability; Niai shares an empathic link with Coe, which may extend out to a distance of one mile. Share Spells: Niai may have any spell she casts on herself also affect Coe. Additionally, Niai may cast a spell with a target of "You" on Coe, instead of herself. Touch: Coe can deliver touch spells for Niai.

Skills and Feats: Listen +6, Spot + 6 (+8 in daylight conditions); Weapon Finesse (claws).

Improved Evasion: If Coe is subject to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw, she takes no damage on a successful saving throw, and half damage even if the saving throw fails.

Speak With Master: Coe and Niai can communicate verbally as if they were using a common language. Other creatures do not understand this communication without magical assistance.

Speak With Animals of Its Type: Coe can communicate with animals of approximately the same type as herself.

(Supplements: Witch Spellcaster Variant Class: The witch spellcaster variant class, as delineated in the Dungeon Master's Guide (p.26), employs an amalgam of wizard, druid, and cleric spells. The select list includes charms, cure spells, divination, form changing, illusions, and natural spells. The witch utilizes the sorcerer Spells Per Day matrix and spells are based on Charisma, with regard to DC and bonus spells.)

Comment on this article online at this URL:

► <http://www.silven.com/adnd.asp?case=show&id=86>



Bradford Ferguson reviews *Lords of the Night*

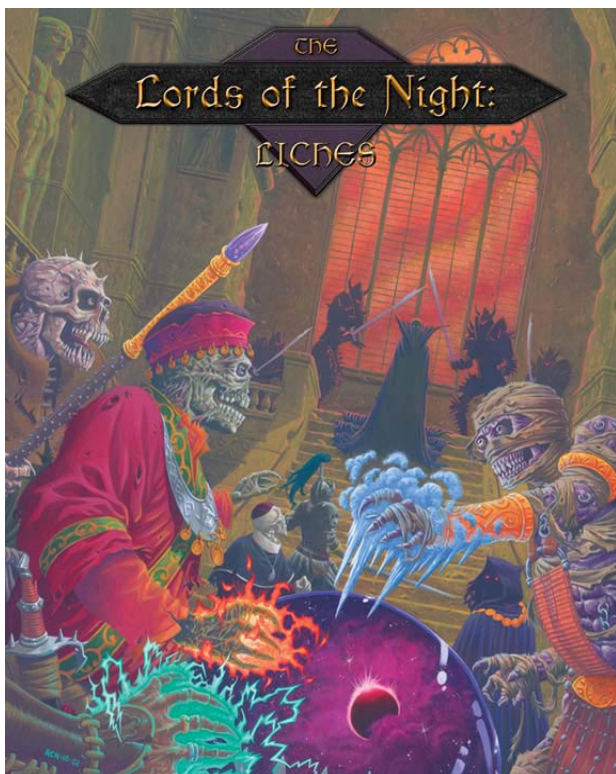
"*Lords of the Night: Liches*"

Authors: Stuart 'Karis' Renton

Publisher: Bottled Imp Games

Reviewed by: *Bradford Ferguson*

Review date: 01/18/2004



Reviewer's Bias: I received a review copy of this product.

From the Back Cover

"For millennia, vampires believed they were the lords of the night. But they were wrong. Older than mountains with goals both alien and unfathomable, the *Lords of the Night: Liches* opens the vault on the most terrifying of the undead."

Presentation

Lords of the Night: Liches is a 128-page "perfect bound" softcover book with a black and white interior. The cover and interior art is fantastic and is dominated by pieces from Ralph Horsley and Scott Purdy. The art really helps set the mood and is some of the best art I have seen in the d20 industry outside of the books from Wizards of the Coast. The art is frequent as there is a piece of art for every 2.5 pages. There is a nice map by Edward Bouelle. The font of the text is non-standard, but it just takes a little getting used to.

What You Get

For the curious, the descent into Lichdom according to *Liches* does not occur overnight, nor do wizards go directly from wizard to full-fledged Arcane Lich after one necromantic ritual. I liked this aspect to the material because there are six Lich States ranging from the "Foot in the Door" Death Touched to the mentally deranged Spectral Lich. The six Lich States are - Death Touched, Living Dead, Sunken Lich, Necrotic Lich, Skeletal Lich, and Spectral Lich. For example, the Death Touched are mundane spellcasters who give up part of their essence and life (constitution) to gain Arcane powers. Arcane is essentially uber-magic for those who have forsaken their mortality during their studies.

If you look at the mundane lich from the *Monster Manual v.3.5*, you will see that the monster derives most of its powers from special qualities. It really does not have any cool abilities. What *Lords of the Night: Liches* does is strip away some of these special qualities at the lower Lich states and gives them Arcane abilities. Arcane magic can be used to counter or suppress mundane magic (and it can do more than that depending on the power of the Arcane Lich).

Now for some controversy... Arcane Liches do not have to be evil, though they slowly become insane and do more evil things as they lose grip on their minds. *Lords of the Night: Liches* gives a full cover story for this new type of Lich, though you do not have to adopt

About the Author

Bradford Ferguson is the Head of the Silver Crossroads D&D/d20 Section. He has been writing d20 articles and reviews, and he has been speculating about the d20 industry since the inception of Silver Crossroads.

Review snapshot

CLASS: Supplemental Ruleset (Liches)

STR: 14 (*Physical*). Sturdy "perfect bound" soft cover.

DEX: 13 (*Organization*). Well organized, though mundane spells sprinkled about the text. Index, but no table of contents.

CON: 16 (*Quantity of the Content*). 6 Lich States, 7 Lich Orders. Lots of flavorful cursory material. I would have liked an example Lich.

INT: 17 (*Quality of Content*). Stuart "Karis" Renton has a real talent for writing. Great flavor and mechanics enforce that flavor.

WIS: 14 (*Options & Adaptability*). Lots of options. There are several new sub-systems, so I envision it would take a little extra to implement as a DM.

CHA: 16 (*Look & Feel*). Interior B&W artwork is fantastic. Among the best.

How we rate our reviews

Scoring definitions.

18 = Superior. Best of the best.

16 = Very Good. Part of a Baker's Dozen.

14 = Good. Most gamers would like this.

12 = Fair. Some gamers would like this.

10 = Average. Most gamers would be indifferent.

8 = Subpar. Flawed, but not without promise.

6 = Bad. Most gamers would dislike this.

4 = Very Bad. Among the Dirty Dozen.

2 = Inferior. Worst of the worst.

it for your campaign. Beyond mortal comprehension, a Great War is occurring between the delusional Liches who believe they came from the realm of Creation and the Servants of the Void who seek to corrupt and destroy everything. Kethak, the City of Lost Souls, is very well detailed. The Conclave, the lich council, provides an organization to drive campaign plots. Even if you want to make your own story up for this new type of Lich, the book is still very useful with all the new mechanics and types.

There are seven Lich Types or Lich Orders - Artificer (makers of golems and magic items), Darke (spymasters), Dirge (master necromancers - animation & creation), Frost (elementalists), Mors (skilled at hiding from and turning undead), Prime (masters of Arcane defense over mundane magic), and Umbral (shadow puppeteers). There are Arcane Feats that are limited to Arcane Liches, and there are many different Arcane powers (Arcana) to choose from. Finally, the various insanities presented make each Lich unique like Grandiose Delusion where they believe that they are indestructible and consequently keep taking ever greater risks. The insanities provide a good role-playing element without needing to impose many rules.

Is It Good?

I found several things to be striking about *Lords of the Night: Liches* beyond its eye-grabbing artwork. The flavor text throughout the book is excellent and it constantly had me either coming up with new ideas for my campaign or wanting to implement something into my campaign. Occasionally the evilness and madness of some of the background and stories would send shivers down my spine.

As I review more and more d20 material, I become harder and harder to impress. I am not yet a D&D grognard - at least I hope not. I found that Stuart "Karis" Renton did a really good job with writing and design. Only the best designers are able to merge flavor with mechanics as Karis did with this book. The initial flavor sets the tone and the mechanics enforce that flavor. One thing I really like is that each Lich State and Lich Type has a different appearance, mindset, and role to play. Additionally, the number of options is simply staggering. If you are playing an evil campaign or a campaign that allows for characters that can be mentally corrupted, you have a lot of options to choose from. Your character can start the maddening path to lichdom from as low as 1st-level (contrary to another review on the Internet), but he/she will need a high intelligence and must have started studies as a

sorcerer or wizard. There are the 7 Orders to choose from and you also can decide which Arcana powers that your character will have.

For the DM - there are 42 combinations of Lich State and Lich Type to throw at your players, so you could use the book as a cornerstone to a campaign if you make Liches the world-shakers in your campaign. No Lich need be the same as there are many different Arcana to choose from - keep your players guessing.

I wished that there was an example Lich provided that showed me how to build a Lich because there are several sub-systems I must be cognizant of while I build the Lich. I worry a little that it may be difficult to build the first Lich. There were a few minor things that I was unclear on, but the author is active in his forums on the [Bottled Imp Games website](#) and he should be posting a FAQ soon.

Conclusion

I had heard good buzz about the previous book from Bottled Imp Games - *Lords of the Night: Vampires*, so I got my hands on *Lords of the Night: Liches* to see what all the fuss was about. I am glad I did because the art and writing were superb. I would definitely recommend this book to anyone who is wanting to introduce corrupting powers into their games. I think the best RPG experiences are when players get really tough choices - the dark temptation of Arcane Magic would be an interesting dilemma for a wizard PC. Or if you do not wish to allow the PCs to be able to become liches, then you can at least match up interesting Liches against the PCs. Regardless, the book is definitely worth the read.

Cost: The book is a 128-page softcover with a B&W interior that retails for \$22. This represents a cost of roughly 17 cents per page, which is roughly over the average in the d20 industry. However, the superior artwork and the excellent writing compensate for the higher cost.

CLASS: Supplemental Ruleset (Liches)

STR: 14 (*Physical*). Sturdy "perfect bound" soft cover. **DEX: 13** (*Organization*). Well organized, though mundane spells sprinkled about the text. Index, but no table of contents.

CON: 16 (*Quantity of the Content*). 6 Lich States, 7 Lich Orders. Lots of flavorful cursory material. I would have liked an example Lich.

INT: 17 (*Quality of Content*). Stuart "Karis" Renton has a real talent for writing. Great flavor and mechanics enforce that flavor.

WIS: 14 (*Options & Adaptability*). Lots of options. There are several new sub-systems, so I envision it would take a little extra to implement as a DM.

CHA: 16 (*Look & Feel*). Interior B&W artwork is fantastic. Among the best.

Where to buy

Through our collaboration with top internet retailer FRP Games, you can purchase *Lords of the Night* at a discount price by following this link

http://www.frpgames.com/cart.php?m=product_detail&p=3334&ref=sil

Comment on this article online at this URL:

► <http://www.silven.com/adnd.asp?case=show&id=201>



Steven Russell reviews Chaositech

"Chaositech" (electronic edition)

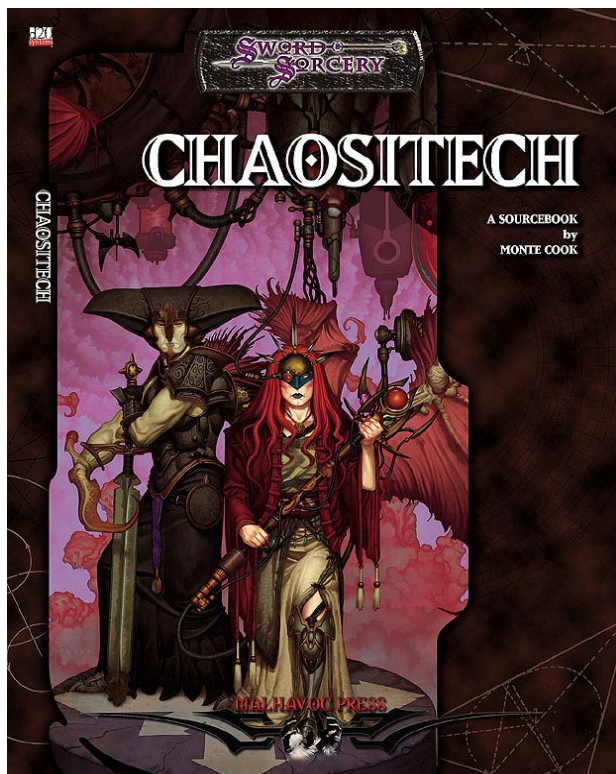
Author: Monte Cook

Publisher: Malhavoc Press

Review written by: Steven Russell (aka Quillion)

Review edited by: Bradford Ferguson

Review date: 1/18/2003



Reviewer's Bias: I was drooling when my editor dangled this one under my nose, I was busy with other projects at the time but I took this just because it was Monte Cook. I had seen a disturbing trend in the last couple of releases from Malhavoc Press and with those in the works. These products were not done by Monte Cook. I hope Monte Cook is not getting buried in the administration of Malhavoc press, and continues to be, in my opinion, the foremost designer of d20 material.

Presentation

Chaositech is an captivating sourcebook to help introduce psuedo-science to your fantasy adventures in the tradition of "Expedition to the Barrier Peaks" and "Tales of the Comet". Yet the author goes to a great deal of effort to not let the aspects of fantasy be destroyed by science fiction. *Chaositech* may evoke feelings of science-fiction but that is where it stops because the use of the illogic consistent with Chaositech quickly grounds you in fantasy. The content of this book is highly influenced by the Monte Cook's Ptolus campaign so it has the distinctive evocative feel and sense of wonder that I have come to expect and enjoy in Malhavoc products. *Chaositech* is a rules dominated sourcebook dominated by Chaositech items, with additional rules materials such as feats, prestige classes, spells and monsters. Yet the flavor of chaos runs wild (pun intended) throughout the ideas of *Chaositech*. It promised to be different from any product I had read before and it did a fair job of that.

As before I recommend you read Monte Cook's introduction especially with this product. If you skip over it, I think you will find the book tougher going than it needs to be. In order to help understand this review there are two questions that must be addressed before you go very far in this source book

The Artwork in this product is probably the best I have seen in a Malhavoc product. Toren "MacBin" Atkinson's work is probably the weakest of the book and his work was still on par with what I want in a RPG product. Kieran Yanner's artwork (featured to the right, from *Chaositech*) is the strongest and it far exceeds his work on other products such as *Diamond Throne* as *Chaositech* is more suited to his style. It would have been nice if all the little pictures of one item every few pages were taken out and a number of splash pages were added (like the D&D PHB equipment section.) containing every item in the book. The thousand words a picture would have brought to each item would have been worth it.

About the Author

Steven Russell is a regular contributor to the d20 section of Silven Crossroads and a veritable one-man laboratory of custom d20 constructions, most of which you will find on the Silven Crossroads forums.

Review snapshot

CLASS: Rules Supplement

STR: NA (Physical). Electronic edition.

DEX: 16 (Organization). (Organization). A good flow of information excellent tables, lack of guidelines.

CON: 16 (Quantity of the Content). Lots of Chaositech items, more than are likely to see use in two or three of my adventures - just short of enough for a campaign designed around Chaositech.

INT: 16 (Quality of Content). Evocative but with questions of player character balance and minor mechanical problems .

WIS: 18 (Options & Adaptability). You can drop this system in any standard D&D fantasy campaign, especially in the new Eberron setting plus its 3.5 compatible.

CHA: 16 (Look & Feel). RK post cover. Interior is black and white, Kieran Yanner's work shines.

How we rate our reviews

Scoring definitions.

18 = Superior. Best of the best.

16 = Very Good. Part of a Baker's Dozen.

14 = Good. Most gamers would like this.

12 = Fair. Some gamers would like this.

10 = Average. Most gamers would be indifferent.

8 = Subpar. Flawed, but not without promise.

6 = Bad. Most gamers would dislike this.

4 = Very Bad. Among the Dirty Dozen.

2 = Inferior. Worst of the worst.

What is Chaos?

For the purposes of this product, Chaos is the primordial, reality-warping power of destruction; its very nature is dangerous to distinct forms of order such as life. There are dreadful and dire agents of Chaos, who seek to spread this force across all of existence. This is a staple of fantasy very much in the Cthulhu mythos.



What is Chaositech?

When any new form of power is discovered, those who attempt to harness it will follow it. The menacing force of Chaos can be harnessed by those with the dark and forbidden knowledge of Chaositech. Chaositech is illogical tools and vessels of chaos that bring an excellent mix of science fantasy to the usual steam-driven genre of technology. Chaositech could be accepted for magic easily. It would not pass for technology as it truly does violate the laws of physics. I truly like the fact that Monte used no scientific vocabulary or treatments of physics in the portrayals of Chaositech powers.

Crunchy!

There are two different forms that Chaositech takes - "Bones of Steel" and the "Betrayal of Flesh." "Bones of Steel" are tools and vessels of chaos and can easily be mistaken for magic items. They can be weapons, armor, mines, bombs, miscellaneous devices, chaos attunements, engines of demonic essence, magic attunements, and malefic hauntings. "Betrayals of the Flesh" are the results of strange procedures and dangerous operations that make your character one with the vessels and tools of Chaositech. Betrayals can be body implants, replacements, mind implants, new flesh grafts, biocrystals, healing fluids, and miscellaneous implants.

Yet remember that chaos warps reality and prolonged exposure to chaos can bring about the "Blessings of Mutation." There are ten pages of tables that do an impressive job of creating a good variety of weird mutations.

I do have a problem with their being no rules or guidelines for creating new Chaositech items or guidelines for how the author came up with his pricing. I have ideas of my own - especially from my readings of the Technomage series - yet I have no methods to guide me other than comparison to help insure it will be balanced within the new sub-system.

A Sourcebook for All Levels of Play?

This product is often referred to as a general sourcebook for all levels of play and while this is true. Monte seems to have specifically designed *Chaositech* with the Dungeon Master in mind. Chaositech is itself an adversary to be overcome. Yet the author has also made it possible that one or two player characters can become seduced by the power of Chaositech.

To Be or Not to Be?

Chaositech is a stand-alone source of game abilities. Chaositech devices offer the capability to do things normally only magic would be capable of (flying, bolts of energy, etc.), but they are not considered magical. According to Monte Cook, they are the product of the

handling of primordial forces of Chaos which warp reality. Now I would call that magic but Monte Cook says otherwise. It is the fundamental difference in using personified by the idea of using picnics as just another type of magic or not. Chaositech offers the GM no option to do both and I think it is the fundamental weakness of this product.

Chaositech can make the ridiculous occur. These things should never work yet they still do. I have a problem with the author's definition of what is and what is not magic, it may not be arcane or divine but if it's not science then it's magic. Yet since Mr. Cook was attempting to make something completely different I can see why he wanted it not to be magic but I think he should have left the option open for those of us still gun-shy from "non-magic" options that have been introduced in the past.

Balance?

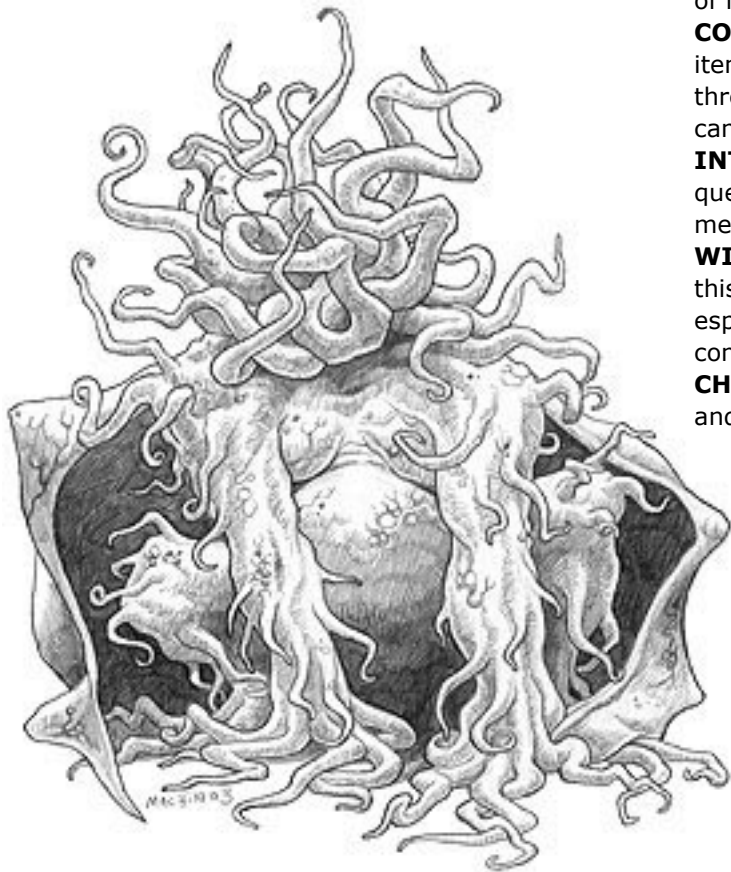
The system seems to be well balanced yet I still would not recommend letting a player use this system until a DM has developed a mastery of this new optional system. As the majority of the balance issues seem to be dealt with by drawbacks and as any power gamer will tell you, "a drawback is only good as long as you cannot turn your weakness into a strength." Through each degree of mutation you also lose experience points and can easily lose levels from this, I am still leery as it is dangerously close to moving away from the equipment and class-based structure of abilities in the d20 system.

Flavor! Yummm!

I especially like the ideas of cults and agents of chaos presented within this product. I especially like that notion if you have "steampunk" technology in your game or the sorcery-tech of Eberron. Chaositech becomes the opposite and villainous counterpart to these proponents of Law. Agents of Chaos support Chaositech, while the Lords of Order support the steam and sorcery. This brings about a great arms race fueled by philosophy. These two forces can clash on a spiritual, philosophical, metaphysical, and

physical level, and the PCs can get caught in the middle of a cold or hot war.

This idea eventually gave me the way to bridge my own personal issue with Chaositech. I compared this to the struggle in the Babylon 5 "The Passing of the Techno-mages" book series by Jeanne Cavelos. The techno-mages are given a technology of war and destruction by dark agents of chaos and the techno-mages are let loose until they are called upon. Yet when the time comes, the techno-mages rebel against their design. In my world Chaositech will try to hide itself as magic. Its practitioners are accepted by neither the forces of light or darkness. This helped bring to my game the idea that Chaositech does not have to be a tool of evil.



In Conclusion

Then I realized what I was doing when I was looking at Babylon 5 for inspiration. The real crowning achievement of Monte Cook's work with *Chaositech* was his ultimate success in mixing science fiction into fantasy without losing the genre in the transition. I had a few mechanical issues with parts of the book (clerical versions of Dominate person, Hold effects with fortitude saves - magical effects but its not magic,) but overall these were minor compared to my intention of using this within my own campaign world. Excellent book!

CLASS: Rules Supplement

STR: NA (Physical). Electronic edition.

DEX: 16 (Organization). (Organization). A good flow of information excellent tables, lack of guidelines.

CON: 16 (Quantity of the Content). Lots of Chaositech items, more than are likely to see use in two or three of my adventures - just short of enough for a campaign designed around Chaositech.

INT: 16 (Quality of Content). Evocative but with questions of player character balance and minor mechanical problems .

WIS: 18 (Options & Adaptability). You can drop this system in any standard D&D fantasy campaign, especially in the new Eberron setting plus its 3.5 compatible.

CHA: 16 (Look & Feel). RK post cover. Interior is black and white, Kieran Yanner's work shines.

Comment on this article online at this URL:

▶ <http://www.silven.com/adnd.asp?case=show&id=203>

HOT DOWNLOAD



Player: "I go open the chest"

DM: "The wooden lid of the chest throws of tendrils of dust as you lift it open.. Reaching inside the chest, you find a square leather purse filled with gold pieces, a silver-plated dagger with runes engraved in the blade with a ruby in the hilt, and a thick black silk cloak. Oh..and three potions."

While many adventurers see potions as mundane, almost insignificant, magical items, these magical liquids often mean the difference between survival and demise. Part of the reason for the deprecation of the value of potions is because neither players nor a DM pays them much attention. What do they look like? What do they taste like? This article is an attempt to breathe life back into those magical baubles and brews-by providing a DM with a descriptive potion list for the 3.5 edition rule set as well as a simple guide to creating new potion descriptions.

Download the entire PDF article here:

<http://www.silven.com/adnd.asp?case=show&id=220>

d20 Speculations : D&D Miniatures Price Increase

by Bradford Ferguson

This article will discuss the recent price increase of the D&D Miniatures line that Wizards of the Coast produces. I will talk about the recent decision by the WOTC executives and the factors that went into that decision. I will also discuss the main costs that WOTC faces when it produces the D&D Miniatures packs.

The Press Releases

The initial press release from Wizards of the Coast (WOTC) read, " ... This March, Wizards of the Coast, Inc., a subsidiary of Hasbro, Inc. (NYSE: HAS), will release the latest expansion in its line of Dungeons & Dragons Miniatures. The Archfiends™ set features 60 monsters, villains, and a horde of other outsiders taken straight from a wide variety of popular D&D rulebooks. Like all D&D Miniatures, Archfiends are ready for battle right out of the box, and can be used to play a stand-alone game, or as exciting supplements to already-existing campaigns.

...

Each Archfiends expansion pack contains 8 randomly selected, pre-painted, fully assembled, collectible miniatures with double-sided statistic cards for use with the D&D roleplaying game or for fast-paced head-to-head combat. Archfiends includes a popular selection of monsters and villains taken straight from such D&D accessory titles as the Monster Manual™, Forgotten Realms® Campaign Setting, Miniatures Handbook, Psionics Handbook, Savage Species and characters from our New York Times bestselling novel lines. Archfiends expansion packs will retail for MSRP **\$9.99...**"

WOTC sent out a correction several days later that "corrected" the price on the expansion pack to **\$12.99**.

Before I go further... Whenever a retailer makes a price ending with 99 cents, you should just round up to the next dollar. Retailers do this so that the price looks smaller to the consumer. The price is smaller than \$13.00, but the difference is negligible. It is a trick that retailers play so that you think you are paying "twelve something" for an item when you are really paying thirteen. Wal-Mart has taken this idea a step farther with its supposed "Falling Prices." While no prices have ever fallen in front of me while shopping at Wal-Mart (which I do not do often), the odd prices they display - like "\$1.27" - are eye-catching at first. Pricing tactics such as these are nothing new, so I digress. Think of the Archfiends price increase as from \$10 to \$13.

Demand & Prices

Now, I'm not here to either apologize for or argue against WOTC's decision to raise the price by 30 percent, but I will attempt to explain why WOTC did it. First of all, Wizards of the Coast (wholly owned by Hasbro Inc.) is a business. Businesses are interested in making the most amount of money possible while investing or spending the least amount of money possible. WOTC knows that the price increase will cause fewer units of Archfiends (and future) expansion packs to be sold. They know their sales will go down. Undoubtedly, WOTC estimated how much sales will decrease - they likely used the customer feedback cards that came with each of the previous expansion pack releases (Harbinger & Dragoneye).

About the Author

"Bradford Ferguson is the Head of the Silven Crossroads D&D/d20 Section. He has been writing d20 articles and reviews, and he has been speculating about the d20 industry since the inception of Silven Crossroads. Bradford currently plays in a Forgotten Realms campaign and is planning to run a Darwin's World 2 Post-Apocalyptic game. When not gaming, he is a trader at one of the financial markets in Chicago."

Contact the Author

ferggm@hotmail.com

For ease of discussion, let us temporarily assume that WOTC's costs are fixed when they produce the miniatures. The term fixed costs means that it costs them nothing to produce an additional box of miniatures. Variable or per-unit costs usually come into play, but they complicate the issue. Anyhow, by law of percentages, in order to make the same amount of money as they did when the MSRP was \$10, WOTC will need to sell 77% as many boxes as they did previously (see mathematical work below). Conversely, WOTC can afford to have a 23% drop in sales provided costs are fixed. If Wizards is to make money from the price increase, they will need to sell **more than** 77% of the former number, or they will need the sales to drop by a percentage **less than** 23%. The relationship between prices and demand is called the **price elasticity** in economic circles.

Random Collectibles

WOTC did a very interesting thing when they decided to make the D&D Miniatures packs randomized so that randomly selected miniatures come in each pack. By doing this, Wizards made D&D Miniatures a collectible product. Gamers are generally a different type of creature compared to other people. Gamers are more likely to collect things and they have a hard time getting rid of things unless they have to get rid of things to make space or they have to sell off their collections in order to put them in better financial

shape. This generalization is true for hardcore gamers, at a minimum. Making something collectible also strikes a nerve with some collectors who must obtain the entire set. Once the collector is able to collect the whole set, the manufacturer releases another set that the collector feels obligated to collect. Collecting things can be addictive.

So why does this all matter? By making a product that is collectible and possibly addictive (see footnote 2), the price elasticity of the product decreases and becomes more inelastic. Translation: when something is not collectible, people simply buy what they need (can get by with); when something is collectible, people buy more than they need or they tend to ignore the price of a product. If you are trying to get a specific figure, it does not matter as much whether the pack that might contain the miniature is \$10 or whether it is say... \$13. Call it the **"I MUST HAVE THE BLACK DRAGON FIGURE!" Factor**. The collector consumers help keep prices up.

Not all consumers are driven by a desire to collect every figure (or specific figures). The more casual consumer is driven solely by the utility that they derive from the product. Every consumer is going to perceive a slightly different value for a product. This is because each person is unique and has different opinions about the product, values free time differently, and intends to use the product in differing manners. Some people may think that D&D Miniatures are poorly painted, but they might also think that the miniatures are much cheaper to buy and don't require painting. Other people may think that D&D Miniatures are of an average quality compared to other miniatures. People can use them for pen and paper games, or for skirmish wargames, or they may simply get use from collecting the figures. Simply put, there is a wide range of consumers and each consumer is willing to pay X dollars for the product. WOTC has done research to help determine how many people will buy the product at X price.

Factoring in the Costs

Some opponents of the price increase argue that the move is exploitive and cite how the miniatures are made in China and that the quality of the painting is average at best - meaning they think the miniatures are cheap in cost and of a cheap quality. Being made in China doesn't necessarily result in low costs. There are several different costs that factor into the bottom line of a product.

Design:

First of all, the company needs to decide what product to sell. In the case of D&D Miniatures, someone (or a group of people) had to decide what miniatures comprise each set. They need either researchers or game designers to figure this out. "Should we include an ogre magi miniature or an ogre warrior, or no ogre at all?"

Next, you need artists to come up with concept art for each figure. The concept art helps shape the form that the final miniature will take. Once the concept art is approved, the artists must come up with a final mold for each figure and a coloring schematic for the painting of each miniature.

Game designers come up with game statistics and special game abilities for each unit. They have to foresee how the product will be used and if it is used in the skirmish game, then the entire system needs to work and everything needs to fit in that system. Each miniature comes with a card, so you need a graphic designer to lay out the concept art and statistics on each card.

Manufacturing:

D&D Miniatures are made of a bendable, plastic compound. Each miniature requires a separate mold to shape the plastic and each requires a specific painting process. Someone has to design the molds and the

company must outlay capital to either purchase or rent all the machinery in the assembly line. People are needed to work the machinery and to manage the factory. People are even needed to design the whole manufacturing process.

That sounds like a whole lot of work. Hasbro may already be set up in China, so that they may be familiar with the processes and may have equipment and labor that does not require training. It is possible that WOTC "outsources" the manufacturing of the miniatures to an outside firm, but I think that Hasbro (the parent company of WOTC) handles the manufacture and Wizards must simply communicate with them to get the product made.

Marketing/Distribution:

Now that Wizards has the product made, they have to figure out how they are going to market it (though they will likely do this before the product is made). This step would involve an executive or marketing team formulating a marketing plan. Do they advertise at conventions, and how? Print Ads? Radio? TV? Do they need to hire people to promote the product?

Advertising is the next step. I doubt that WOTC uses the radio or TV for advertising because they are simply too expensive and the audience is too broad (with the possible exception of the SCI-FI channel). WOTC mainly advertises at conventions and through magazines such as Dragon. I'm not a subscriber to collectible card game magazines such as Scrye, but it would be a good guess that Wizards advertises for Wiz Kids and D&D Miniatures in magazines such as these. Due to Wizards' intimate relationship with Dragon Magazine - WOTC is their biggest customer and supporter - Wizards likely receives a healthy discount to advertising, if they don't get a certain amount of free advertising slots in each Dragon issue. However, Wizards probably does not receive special treatment from other magazines.

Finally, Wizards has to ship the product to the distributors whereupon they sell it for between 40-

50% of the MSRP. Ideally, WOTC will make the product well in advance so that it can use the cheapest forms of transportation. If they allow themselves enough time, they will move it from Asia to California or Washington on an ocean freighter, then they will move it by rail or truck to get it to the distributor. When possible, it is best to avoid shipping something via airplane as this is much more expensive.

Conclusion

So why did WOTC choose to raise the price from \$10 to \$13 instead of a more conservative price of maybe \$12? Only their secret marketing research will have the answers to that. I personally think that an increase to \$12 would have been much easier for consumers to swallow than the increase to \$13. There is a psychology to the whole price increase as well. Thirteen seems like they are gouging the customers, while twelve feels more reasonable to me. However, there is also the psychology of raising prices over and over and that would really irritate customers. WOTC probably thought that a single price increase was more desirable, even if it appeared that they were gouging the public - which they are.

But WOTC must make money in order to stay in business. After all, it is kind of like stocks - if the public is willing to pay the price, then it is the right price to charge (unless the product is a living necessity such as electricity in California). Do I support the price change? Not really, but I can see why WOTC did it. Will I still buy D&D Miniatures? I will if they are made to a consistently higher quality than the previous two expansions, if not I will be very indifferent. They reached my individual price point.

... continued from the endbar on page 40

In this game you try to roll all the dice together, at once and not individually, until you get the highest number on each die. Once a die has rolled the highest number you set it aside. The goal is to have each and every die set aside on its highest number, not allowing you to roll any more dice. Each time you roll the dice, you must set aside at least one *high roller*. If you cannot set aside a *high roller*, you lose. It sounds easy, but it is actually quite hard.

So help you here are some simple hints:

- Roll all the dice that are not set aside together, it helps if they bounce off each other.
- When a die is a '*High Roller*' set it aside.
- When you have each die on its highest number, you win!
- If you don't have at least one '*High Roller*' each time you roll, you lose. Sorry, try again.

Some people like to play this game with a variant rule. While this is more complicated than standard *High Rollers*, it is somewhat more rewarding.

Super High Rollers

In this version you have three playing fields. The first is the area within which you roll the dice called the *Field*. To the left of that area is your *High Roller* area. To the right of The Field is your *Out of Game* area.

You begin by rolling all your dice at once in the field placing any *High Rollers* in the *High Roller* area each time you roll. Where this game differs from *High Rollers* is right here. You get a free roll for every *High Roller* in your *High Roller* Area. But there is a catch. Once you use a free roll, you move that die over into *Out of Game* area. It sounds complex, but try it! I bet you'll like it.

Well, there you have it. Two and a half fun dice games to pass the time while waiting at the table. Sure beats stuffing your face with Doritos.

Comment on this article here:

Comment on this article online at this URL:

▶ <http://www.silven.com/adnd.asp?case=show&id=212>

by Kosala Ubayasekara

The Keystone Tomb

Cartographers Index : Map ID 10

The Keystone Tomb is an ideal map to use as an interim staging area for your campaign. It can be used as a central level of a larger tomb, a planar destination, a prison or any number of other things.

To give you some ideas to get your imagination, consider the following:

As a tomb

Your players are exploring a vast underground temple and enter this tomb by climbing down the stairs to the west of the map. This huge level has the smell of stale air, and yet some torches still cast waning light into the dirty floor.

In this even the tomb could be occupied by undead with the central area a resting chamber for a powerful undead lord.

As a planar destination

The players are whisked to this location by planar forces and appear below the stairs to the West. But the stairs lead straight into the wall and offer no way out.

The large pit in the central area is the gate back, but to use it the players must leap into it and risk the long, dark fall to the gate.

In this even the various rooms can be staging grounds for planar puzzles or traps or inhabited by other creatures that were brought here and did not find the way out.

As a prison

The players enter this level through the stairs in the West wall. The central chamber holds a prisoner, chained to the two center columns.

The players will have to battle guards as they make their way forward and facilitate a jail break!

As a gateway to the underworld

The pit in the center is a hole leading into the depths of hell itself. Some beasts from the nether depths have found this way into the mortal world and are terrorizing the land. It is up to the party of adventurers to descend into the depths and seal it forever. But will they find a way out?

About the Author

Kosala is the founder and site admin of Silven Crossroads and a gamer since the age of 10. When not working on Silven related stuff he is an entrepreneur, politician, pool player and student.

Kosala comes from Sri Lanka but now resides in Stockholm, Sweden.

Contact the Authors

Kosala can be contacted at kosala@silven.com

About the Artist

The artwork in this section is done by the author.



About this section

The Cartographer's Corner is your source for free, high quality color maps.

Each map that follows is a full page, in color and contains numbered areas so that a DM can easily make notes and keep track of what he or she wants where.

On this page we will present some adventure hook ideas that go with each map. These are usable in any fantasy based RPG and are presented only to give your imagination a kick start. We are very interested in hearing your feedback about how you use our maps. Head over to our forums and tell us.

<http://www.silven.com/forums.asp?case=threads&forumgroupid=1&forumssubsectionid=56>

Cartographers Index : Map ID 10
The Keystone Tomb



Map Legend

- lit light sources
- ▮ stairs up
- ▮ stairs down

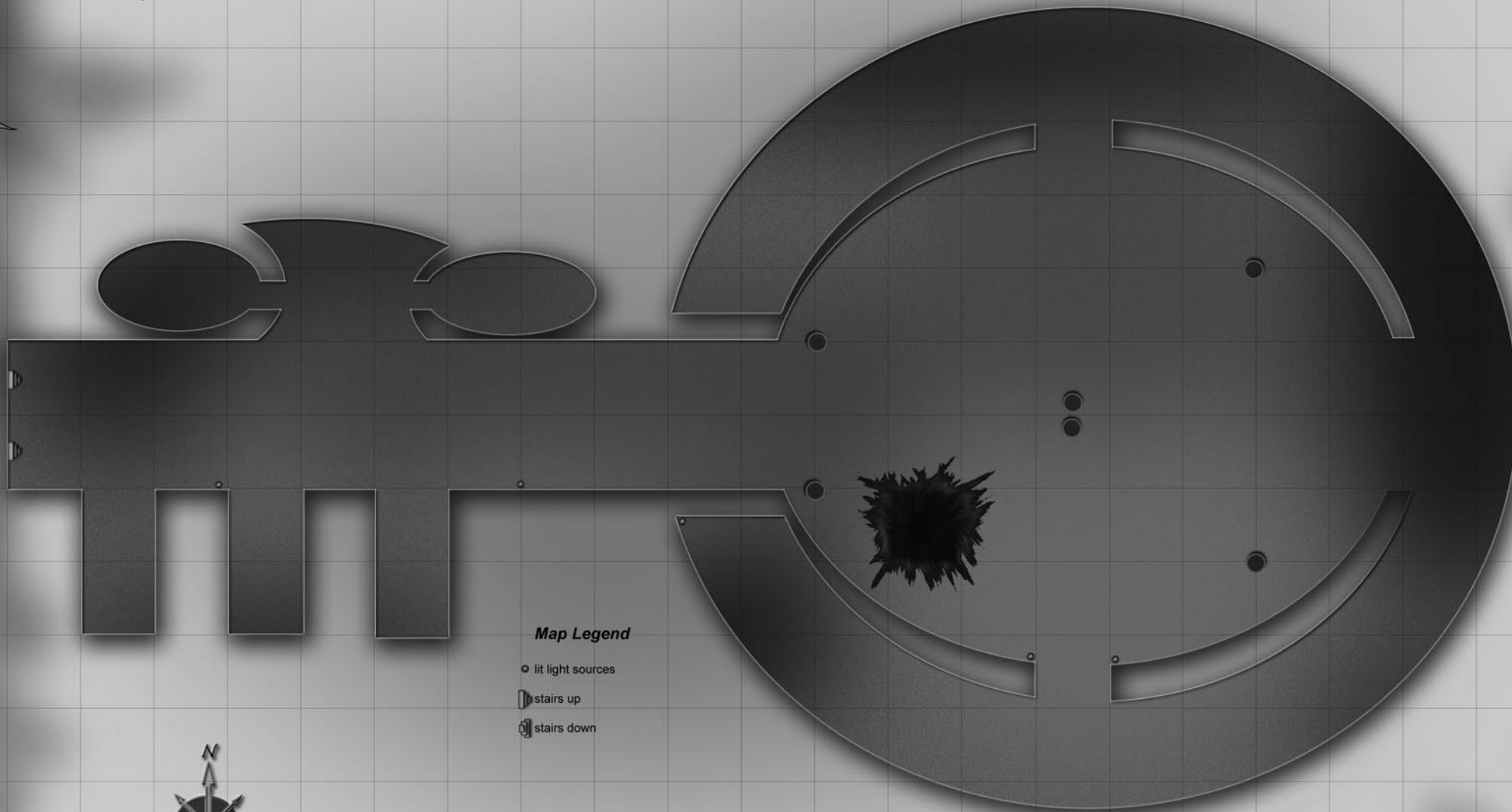


0 25 50 75 metres
0 80 160 240 feet

silven  roads

Map Copyright Silven Crossroads. Copying, Printing and Modifying is allowed for personal, non-commercial purposes only.

Cartographers Index : Map ID 10
The Keystone Tomb



Map Legend

- lit light sources
- ▮ stairs up
- ▮ stairs down



0 25 50 75 metres
0 80 160 240 feet

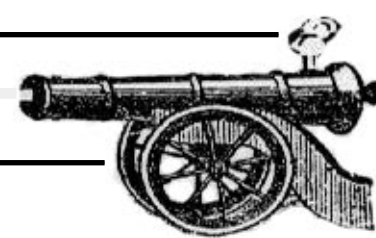
silven  roads

Map Copyright Silven Crossroads. Copying, Printing and Modifying is allowed for personal, non-commercial purposes only.



the fodder cannon

Serving the City of Silven for over 1,000 Scribes!



The Good Old Days

An editorial by Dak Tamble

Ah the good 'ol days. Back when people were who they said they were. Why you could look at a man or woman and tell if they were a fighter, a druid, a sorcerer or even a rogue. But not today. No sir. Today everyone looks different.

Why just the other day I saw a fighter with no armor. Naturally thinking it was a wizard or sorcerer I approached the man and asked if he could teleport me over to Warkeld to pickup a package, and that I would of course pay him for his services. The man turned and looked at me and said, 'What? U Tink Me Sum Kindov Wizerd? Me Dun't like Ga-nomes.'

Had I known the man's aversion to the little folk earlier, I would have kept my distance, but after all I am a people person. It turns out that Grook, as he called himself, at least I think that was his name, or rather a sneeze; in any case, as I was saying, that Grook was a new type of fighter that didn't believe in armor, but had superior mobility.

So naturally I assumed him to be a monk. Wrong again. And had this been a lone occasion I would have passed it off as happenstance, but damned if it hasn't happened to me but five more times in a week.

I can't figure it out. It seems that either the traders have opened new routes into the land of idiocy or people just aren't the same eleven adventurers I had come to know and love.

I mean what ever shall I do. A bard who doesn't know what class someone is. The other day I saw a ranger who didn't cast spells, and a cleric who didn't wear heavy mail! What in the world is this world coming to?

If we don't know what someone is by looking at them, how are we supposed to live? Just yesterday I had a conversation with a half-orc that understood the word palindrome, and proceeded to recite the entire lexicon of such entities.

I yearn for the good old days when fighters were fighters and mages were mages. Nowadays there are more classes out there than elf subraces. And any elf will tell you that's quite a feat.

Local Caves Sealed, Goblins Picket

It has been almost three weeks since the Mayor of Silven has ordered the sealing of the northern Goblin Caves. Only now have the hordes of goblins stormed the city, proceeding in an orderly fashion to city hall, to picket the changes.

Most of the picket signs were smatterings of what could only be assumed to be mud and goblin feces. Some of the more intelligent signs read:

'Give Us Land Please, or GULP!'

'Save Our Cave!'

'Maglubiyet 3:16'

'Where are our women?'

'Fireball a tall human for Pelor'

And many more. One particularly scruffy looking goblin was carrying a sign that supposedly read 'Nader for President in '04' but he was subsequently beaten and tossed down the well.

It is unknown what the goblins demands are at this time, but local citizens have urged the city to appease them, if only to alleviate the smell.

From the Community:

Adventurer Speaks Out, New Look for Monsters

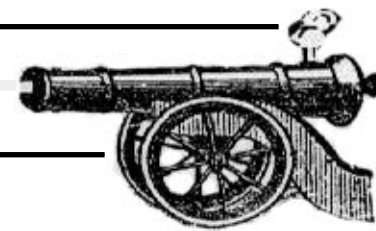
My name is Duke and I just want to speak to the Silven community about an issue I have been noticing lately on my adventures.

It used to be that back in the day if a monster would attack, I would have to visualize the monster in my head and plan according to what I saw. Sometimes it would be scary, other times silly. But lately, I haven't had to visualize the monsters at all. I can actually see them!

Most of them have black bases and are pretty scary looking. Some are big and some are small, but they all frighten me. I mean I've never faced such awesome intimidation before. To actually see your opponent is terrifying.

I mean what next? Will there be actual terrain and grass, and walls to the dungeons instead of imagination or crudely drawn black lines? I mean this has to stop now or no one will adventure when faced with such realism!

The Fodder Cannon is a monthly humor section by Lance Kepner and Dana Driscoll. Readers are encouraged to contribute their own amusing shorts. Send to adriayna@yahoo.com.



Public Poll:

What is your favorite thing about Spring?

Orph Maloney, Wizard Extraordinaire

“You haven’t experienced spring until you’ve been to the Plane of Spring.”

Dak Tamble, Bard Wonder

“Sunshine, flowers and lollipops.”

Strange dwarven male

“Where’s the baby?”

Elf subrace #2823, haughty elf

“This will be my 4595th spring.”

Classifieds:

Still Lookin’ Fer Wife. Now this here is my third time running this here ad. And this time ah mean it! I’m lookin’ fer a wife! Whats not to lose! Ya get to cook, clean, give me silver for ale, and rub my feet! Hurry! This be your last chance.

Wanted: Barrels. Barton Beersblood is in need of barrels for brewing ale. Will pay in gold or ale. Contact the Rusty Bolt Inn for more information.

Lost: Half-Goblin Nephew. Lost last month, somewhere near the northern goblin caves. Kinda ugly. Answers to “Hey you” or “Guk” when called. If you have any information, contact Smee at 100 Brewbelly St.

Obituaries:

Finvin, Rat Familiar: Run over by a wagon last week. Was a good friend and loyal companion to its owner always.

Garris Mivgramion, Apprentice Wizard: Unexpectedly fell dead sometime last week. Cause of death is yet to be determined.

Sliyink Snaeck, Local Thug: He was everyone’s pain in the side—always there asking for coins and offering nothing in return. Cause of death unknown—goblins may be involved.

THIS LICENSE IS APPROVED FOR GENERAL USE.
PERMISSION TO DISTRIBUTE THIS LICENSE IS MADE BY
WIZARDS OF THE COAST!

OPEN GAME LICENSE Version 1.0a

The following text is the property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and is Copyright 2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc ("Wizards"). All Rights Reserved.

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

2. The License: This License applies to any Open Game Content that contains a notice indicating that the Open Game Content may only be Used under and in terms of this License. You must affix such a notice to any Open Game Content

that you Use. No terms may be added to or subtracted from this License except as described by the License itself. No other terms or conditions may be applied to any Open Game Content distributed using this License.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is the OGL?

The Open Gaming Licence is a licence developed by Wizards of the Coast to extend their D&D game content to other publishers. See <http://www.opengamingfoundation.org> for more details.

When does this licence apply?

This licence applies only to articles that clearly designate that this licence is to be used. This licence does not apply in any other case. This licence never supercedes the Silver Crossroads Legal Notice found on the next page. If conflicts arise the Silver Crossroads Legal Notice takes precedence.

What is to be considered open game content?

Unless specifically noted, all text based content in articles clearly designated as using this licence are to be considered open game content. No artwork found in those articles are open game content.

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

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

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

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

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

15 COPYRIGHT NOTICE

Open Game License v 1.0 Copyright 2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc. All Rights Reserved. All Artwork copyright of the Artist, unless otherwise noted in or near the image(s).

Silven Crossroads Legal Notice

Trademarks and Copyright

Silven Crossroads and the Silven Crossroads logo are trademarks ©2003 Kosala Ubayasekara. All Rights Reserved.

All text and artwork are copyright their respective authors and creators as noted in the text, images, or to the right of this page.

Distribution

This document may be distributed in its entirety on any website for non-commercial purposes.

In the event of this occurring, the owner of the website must refer to our free syndication guidelines at: <http://www.silven.com/syndication.asp>

Usage of this document

No changes of any kind are to be made in this document including, but not limited to, editing or changing the text or images, saving and distributing parts of this document without the whole, and copying and pasting portions or excerpts of any content found herein on any site or document.

Printing

You may print out pages and content in this document for your own personal, non-commercial use only.

Silven Trumpeter Magazine

The Silven Trumpeter is a monthly publication produced by the Silven Crossroads community (<http://www.silven.com>). Articles and fiction appearing in the Silven Trumpeter are drawn from the various content areas of the Silven Crossroads site. Because of this, if you are interested in having a piece of writing published in the Silven Trumpeter, it must first be submitted for inclusion in a specific content area on the site. For more information, please contact the editor at adriayna@yahoo.com

Publisher

Silven Crossroads. attn: Kosala Ubayasekara
kosala@silven.com
 c/o Lidström; Skyttevägen 17, 1tr; 19258 Sollentuna; Sweden.

Editor in Chief

Dana Driscoll

Assistant Editor

Edward Kopp

Contributing Authors

Gary Gygax, Sean Holland, Shane Cubis, Kosala Ubayasekara, Edward Kopp, Raymond Huling, Aaron Todd, Eytan Bernstein, Scott Fitz, Dana Driscoll, Bradford Ferguson, Angus McBlane, Lance Kepner, Matt Haught, Carl Batchelor, Steven Russel, Matt Haught, Matthew J. Hanson, Pike Stephenson, Dale Holmstrom

Cover Art

Veli-Matti Joutsen
<http://www.silven.com/gallery/vmjoutsen>

Interior Artists

Kou and Ali
<http://www.fantasywars.org/>

Florin Badita

<http://elfwood.lysator.liu.se/loth/f/l/florin/florin.html>

Vshane SF/F Fantasy Studio

<http://www.vshane.com/>

Veli-Matti Joutsen

<http://www.silven.com/gallery/vmjoutsen>

Andi Lee Seymour

[http://elfwood.lysator.liu.se/\(random\)/loth/a/n/andilee/andilee.html](http://elfwood.lysator.liu.se/(random)/loth/a/n/andilee/andilee.html)

Layout, and Design

Kosala Ubayasekara

Printing Tips

Printing out the entire e-zine can be very demanding on your printer and use a lot of ink. If you are careful about the amount of ink you use in printing then we advise you not to print the entire e-zine.

Article pages and excerpts that we assume will be printed the most have been purposefully illustrated using light colors to conserve printer ink reserves. Printing out only the pages that you need will make it easier for you manage your ink usage. Each article also links to an online version where a text-only version of the article can be found.

Its recommended that you print the maps on glossy paper if you can. Glossy paper is available from most stationery or office supply stores and is more expensive than regular printing paper, but the quality difference in the print is worth it.

Next issue
 April 01,
 2004