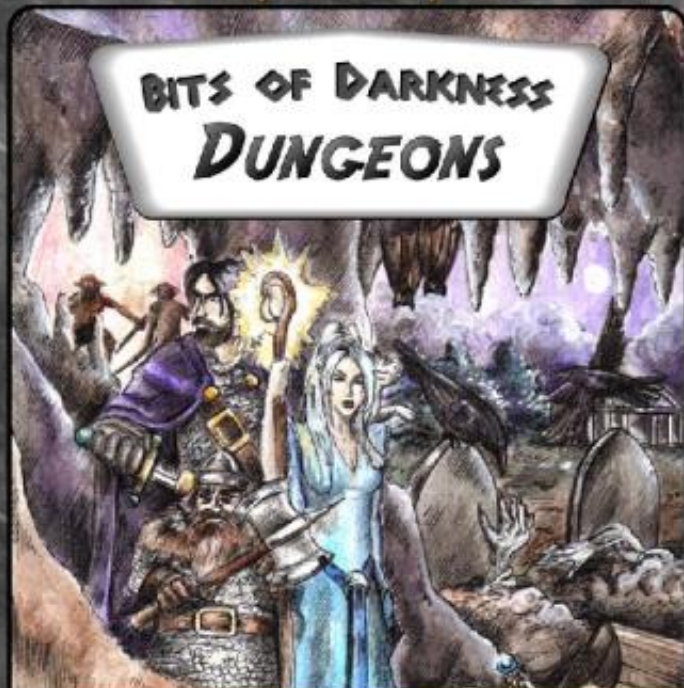
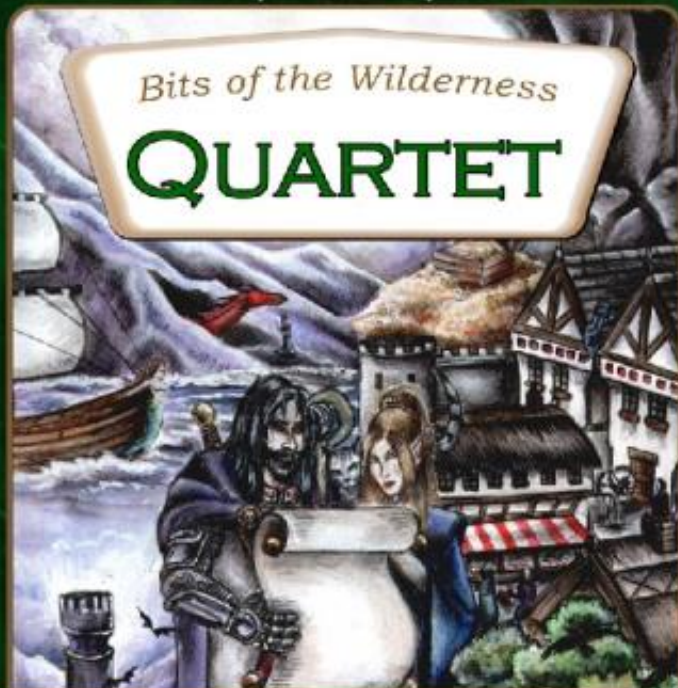


BITS OF DARKNESS DUNGEONS



Bits of the Wilderness QUARTET



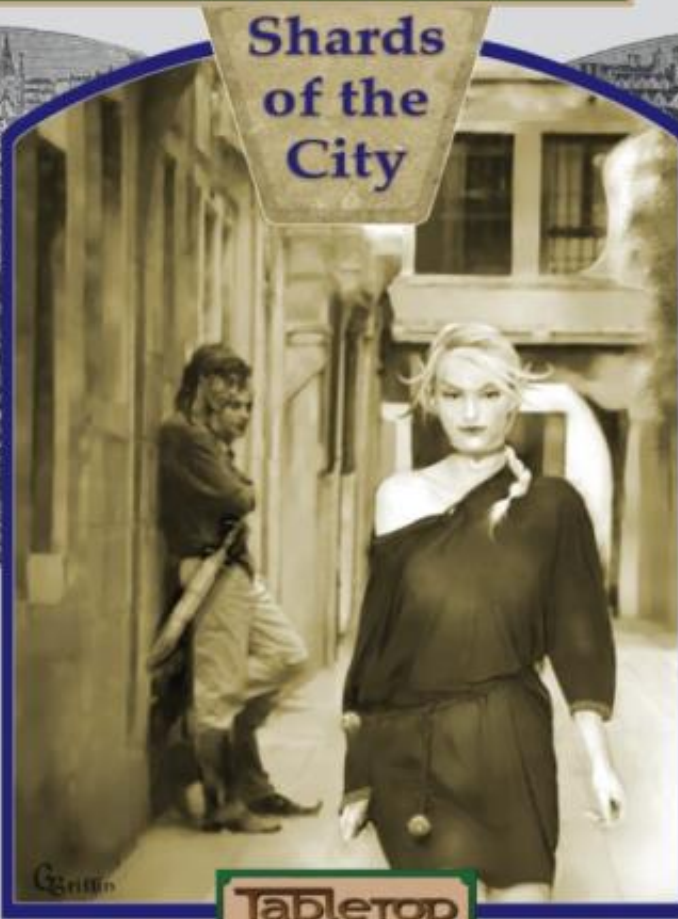
Tabletop Adventures Fantasy Sampler

Bits of Magicka: Mystic Writings



Tabletop
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Shards of the City



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13 FANTASY PRODUCTS

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We hope you find this material inspiring, and invite you to pick up the full products for more great content. Enjoy yourself, and we wish you great gaming!

The good people of Tabletop Adventures
and the Overlord

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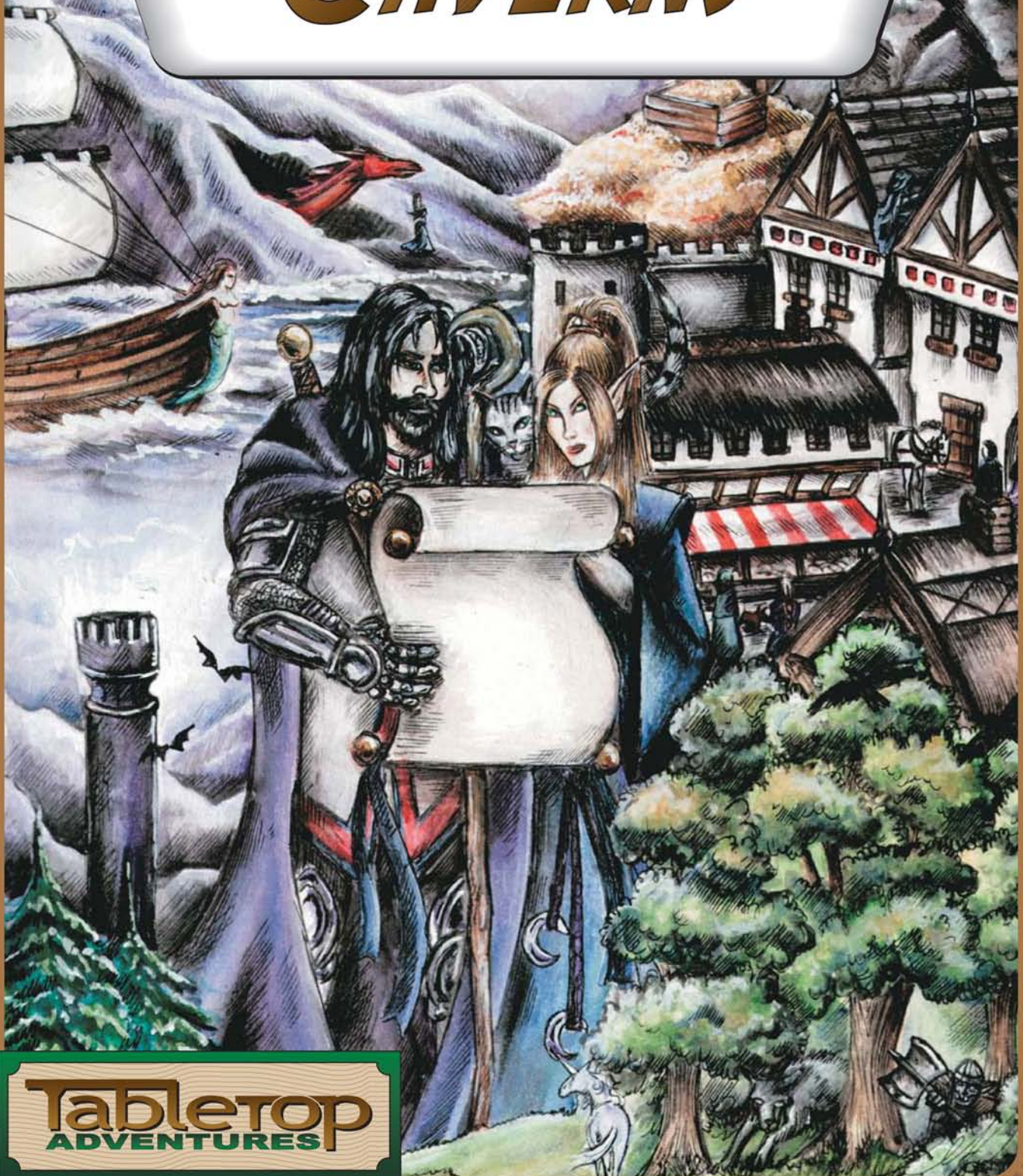


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Tabletop Adventures presents

BITS OF DARKNESS *CAVERNS*



Tabletop
ADVENTURES



Written by:

Daniel Brakhage
Mark Potter
Vicki Potter
Nicholas Brakhage

Edited by:

Vicki Potter
Elizabeth Brakhage

Border Art by

Daniel Brakhage

Layout by:

Edward Wedig
www.docbrown.net

Cover Art

“Surrounded by Adventure” by

Gillian Pearce
www.hellionsart.com

Interior Art created by

Jesus and Javier Carmona
www.CarmonaArt.com

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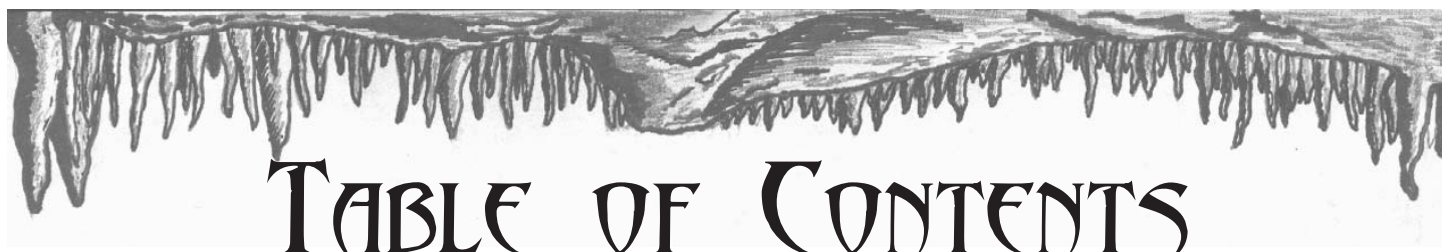


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As you look over the lip of the drop you can see the bottom about 40 feet below, and from there it seems that a passageway continues in the direction you have been going. There are plenty of small stalagmites and a column at the top of the drop to which you could anchor a rope. The sides of the drop vary from four to five feet apart, and they are both wet with water seeping from the walls.

[The characters need to have rope to get down this drop safely (Climb check DC5). If they try without rope they will need to make a Climb check at DC25 to descend successfully. Falling will cause 1D6 points of damage per 10 feet fallen.]

Other Settings

11. POTENTIAL CAVE-IN – As you enter this area you see that part of the wall on the right has collapsed. Rocks and rubble are piled here and vary in size from particles like sand to boulders as big as your chest. The smell of dust is heavy in the air; it seems to be a bit hazy in your light.

[Note: If any character speaks normally, drops anything loudly, or makes a similar amount of noise, there will be a slight trickle of sand and dust from the ceiling. If a shout is raised or battle is joined here, there will be a cave-in in 1-3 rounds. If this occurs, read the following:] **The noise has caused a steady stream of detritus and pebbles to fall from the ceiling. This stream increases to a torrent and with a steady rumble the roof of the cavern begins collapsing upon you. It is very difficult to avoid the cave-in because rock is falling everywhere. Only the very lucky and the very quick have a chance at all.** [The heroes and monsters must each make a Reflex save at DC20 to avoid injury. Anyone failing the roll takes 2d8 points of damage plus 1d4 additional points for every 5 full points by which they miss their save. The GM must decide if this area has completely collapsed or if it is still navigable.]

12. THE UNDERGROUND RIVER – You hear the sound of rushing water up ahead. As you approach the noise rises in a crescendo that is almost deafening and requires members of your party to shout in order to be heard. The air is filled with a cool and refreshing mist, and smells clear and clean. When you get to the source of the noise you discover an underground river that bursts from the wall five feet to your left and disappears down a tunnel to your right about 10 feet past the path that you have been following. The river is about fifteen feet across. Spanning this underground

river is a bridge of stone that appears to have been worn from the rock rather than built by hands. It is about a foot thick at the center, approximately two and a half feet wide and lies only an arms length over the rushing water. The bridge is wet with moisture, making the rock slippery, and the air is thick with the spray of the waters. [Crossing this bridge is somewhat treacherous because of the slick surface but anyone who Takes 20 can cross it without incident. If the adventurers are in a hurry they can cross successfully with a Reflex save at DC 10 for one-quarter movement, DC 15 at half movement or DC 20 at full movement.

If the Reflex save is missed by:	The result will be:
1-2	fall on the bridge
3-5	hanging from the bridge
more than 5	fall in the water (no damage)

Any character hanging from the bridge must make a Climb check at DC15 to pull back up onto the bridge. (A result of no progress means the hero is still hanging; a failure means a fall into the river.) Others could move to help but must make a Reflex save if they hurry (see above). If an adventurer falls into the water, he or she must make a Reflex save at DC15 to avoid being carried into the tunnel. The GM may require a Swim check for a person in the river to do anything other than just be carried along. The river's captive may be deposited later on some dark underground beach, carried to the lower depths of the cavern, or even carried back to the surface. Searching for a missing party member could become an adventure in itself.]

13. A DANGEROUS CROSSING – There is so much shale and fallen rock here that you cannot even see the actual floor of the cavern. Although the ceiling looks steady now, there was obviously a substantial cave-in here at one time. This is not a place where you would want to make a great deal of noise! The shadows of the piles of rock are long and deep and they seem to move in the flickering of the lights you bring. Recesses in the walls could hide anything up to the size of a man, or slightly larger. There is an eerie silence over the whole scene as your party surveys the area. The still air carries in it a faint smell of dust and dryness. Crossing this area will be extremely hazardous and will require a good deal of mutual assistance to navigate it safely. The rocks vary in size from as large as your head to as small as acorns and it is impossible to take a step without everything shifting. As you are looking at the rubble you hear the sharp "clack-clack" of a rock that has apparently





fallen. Whether it fell from the ceiling or just shifted off a pile you do not know. [Speed here is reduced to one-quarter and even with that a Reflex save at DC 10 is required to avoid injury. Additional modifications: Moving one-half speed, DC+5; Combat, DC+5. Injury is 1d3 points of damage for every 5 points by which the Reflex save is missed. Yes, this is potentially a skull-fracturing, arm-breaking area. All Spot checks are at -10 when a character is moving because of the amount of attention it takes to navigate safely. One must stop in place to make checks normally. Moving makes so much noise that all Listen checks are at -10 unless everyone in the party remains still.]

14. A SHOWER OF WATER – As you enter a huge chamber you can hear a steady sound of rain hitting water. The heavy moisture of the room is so noticeable it feels almost like a physical blow when you enter. As you get more light into the room you notice that the roof of the chamber towers over 200 feet high. In the middle of the roof of the chamber hangs a cone-shaped rock formation. It is narrow where it nestles into the roof of the chamber, and widens to about six feet at the lower end. The center of the cone is open and from the middle of it a steady rain falls straight to the cavern floor. There the water has collected into a clear pool that does not look deep, but is a good 20 feet across. From there the water runs in a stream toward the opposite end of the chamber. Twenty-foot-tall stalagmites are crowded around the pool. The water showers down only in the area that is directly below the formation on the cavern's ceiling. [The water is clear but heavy with minerals. It will wash off dirt and grime and refresh, but it is cold, and has tiny particles of minerals in it.]

15. STEPPED SHELVES – From the side of this chamber, about 30 feet above the cavern floor, a steady stream of water flows. It pours down over a series of stepped rock shelves that are irregularly spaced but relatively close together, with only a foot to a foot and a half difference in height from one to the next. The cascade empties into a pool at the side of the cavern which is 3 feet deep and 15 feet across. The water must flow out through the wall of the cavern lower down because the pool does not seem to be getting bigger or deeper. The rock shelves look a lot like a circular stairway leading up to the opening where the water enters the room. [These formations are known as trays. They look

substantial but are really quite fragile. If an adventurer tries to climb the trays, he or she must make a Reflex save at DC20 to ascend without breaking any of the trays. (Armor Check Penalty applies.) The second climber will face DC22; the third DC24, and so on. If a tray (or trays) breaks, the unlucky climber falls into the lake, which is not deep enough to break the fall. Standard damage is 1D6 per 10 feet fallen.] (This was not included with the ascents because it would be so difficult for a party to make its way up this formation.)

16. UNDERGROUND GEYSER – Here the passageway opens up to twice its normal width and in the middle of the passageway sits a massive, stunted stalagmite. It is only about five feet high but has a diameter of nearly ten feet, and is five feet wide across the top. As you approach the stalagmite you hear a gurgling sound, then a loud hiss, and a stream of water shoots from the top of the stalagmite. The geyser hits the ceiling 25 feet above with enough force that the water is atomized into a fine mist which settles down onto the whole area. The stream itself lasts for only two seconds, drops back to a low bubbling and then subsides. Any stalactites have been blasted away from the center of the ceiling here but around the edges of the open area they have grown long, several joining with stalagmites to form columns. [This type of geoform is called a bathtub. The massive stalagmite has a 5-foot pool in its top that is fed through a pressure tube from deep in the earth. This one is very active; the eruption repeats every 3 or 4 minutes.]

17. CAVE LIZARD – There is a hint of a fishy smell in the air reminding you of the waterfront. As you walk on you think you hear something very faint in the area ahead. [If the heroes pause to listen:] You hear a light scratching, and a crunching noise. [When the party enters the next area, this is what they see:] Your light reflects off milky stone and shimmers in reflections on water as a pebble clatters across the stone. Something white and slick slides rapidly across the floor. A pale lizard-like creature nearly as long as a man clambers up the rim of a large crater filled with water. It pauses at the brink with its head turned as if looking at you, but its eyes are white and empty. What seems like an eternity to you is actually only a fraction of a second and in a flash, the lizard disappears into the pool and is gone. [If the party investigates, they will see no trace of the creature in the water but





21. A fissure has opened here and deep cracks run up the walls on either side. The air is hot and foul as a reddish smoke rises from the crevice. [If the characters enter the room and approach the fissure:] **The heat rises dramatically as you approach the fissure. While it doesn't burn, it is uncomfortable and causes you to sweat. The smell is even worse here; you feel the smoke claw at your lungs as a cough builds deep in your chests.** [Any one who enters must make a Fortitude save at DC10 or begin coughing uncontrollably, giving a -4 to all rolls. If the save is missed by five or more, the victim loses consciousness and begins to lose 1 point of Constitution every minute he or she remains in the room. If Constitution reaches zero, the unlucky person dies. Otherwise the loss of points is not permanent and will be recovered at 1 point per 3 hours, 48 hours maximum.]

22. In this chamber, as your light touches the walls and the stalagmites, you notice that there is a demarcation line about seven feet above the cavern floor. Everything below that line seems to be a reddish brown in color, while colors above it are generally lighter hues with more variation. All the geological formations below the line are covered with puffed out, bulbous cloud-shaped forms, whereas above the line the cavern and stalagmite walls are straight. [This room used to be under water to the demarcation line. The reddish hue is due to the iron content of the water. The puffy, cloud-like formations are characteristic of underwater geofom development, as the minerals seep out of the water and collect around magnetic centers on the rock surface.]

23. As you walk along the passageway, you begin to hear the sound of rushing water. The sound becomes quite loud before you find its source, a five-foot-wide crack in the floor running from one side of the passageway to the other. You can tell quite plainly that the noise is coming from down inside the crevice. When you lower a light all you can see is the sheer drop down the sides of the crack. The moisture of the torrent is billowing up out of the crack. The water could be just out of range of your light, or a hundred feet down.

24. As you walk down the passageway you notice a small rivulet of water running down the right side of the passageway. Every now and then the rivulet widens into a bowl-shaped pool six to eight

inches in diameter. In these depressions you can see white pearls, some times 15 or 20 in a bowl. They vary in size from 1/8 to 1/2 inch in diameter. [These are known as cave pearls and are formed by calcite in the water. They can be crushed into powder by a hammer or the pommel of a sword. Most are not cemented into the bowls and can become a slipping hazard if knocked out of the bowl and onto the floor of the passageway, making footing treacherous and falls common. They have very little value, and are generally not perfectly round.]

25. In this room the floor has numerous clumps of short, sharp, leaf-like reddish-brown stalagmites. There are 20 to 30 flat spines in every group. [This is called death coral and it can be dangerous, as the name implies. If a character or monster falls on them, they are sharp enough and stiff enough to cause 1-3 points of damage each even through most armor. Falling into the midst of them, a normal-sized person could slice himself on 5 to 14 of them (1d10 +4). They are brittle, and if kicked from the flat side they will become detached from the cave floor and fall flat. It is possible to move through the room at a normal speed if it is done with care. In combat, however, anyone who falls will need to make a Reflex save at DC15 to avoid falling on one of the spiny clumps.]

26. As you enter this chamber the smell of rotten eggs assails your nostrils. Against the right hand wall of the chamber you can see, when illuminated, a pool of yellowish, very liquid mud. The pool of mud is boiling and large bubbles are breaking the surface constantly. This seems to be where the smell is coming from. As you approach the pool the fumes get more intense. [This is a sulfur pool and the fumes can be very dangerous in an enclosed environment such as this! If the characters linger in this room or approach the pool too closely they will need to make a Fortitude save at DC13; any who fail fall unconscious. If an unconscious character is not removed from the chamber quickly, they will suffocate and die in a number of rounds equal to the victim's Constitution.]

27. As you enter this new room you cannot help but be amazed at its sheer size. Towering stalagmites shoot out of the ground, searching for the ceiling lost in the shadows above. Your path here will necessarily be convoluted, and the formations make it difficult to keep your comrades in sight much less spot any possible enemies. [With a Listen check of DC 15 read the following:] **As you weave**





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CAVERNS

19

As you are walking along the passageway, you notice that the way ahead seems to be impeded by a milky white stone that looks as though it flowed out of a spot high up on the right-hand side of the passageway. The creamy stone has filled up the tunnel except for a two-foot by three-foot opening in the upper left corner of the passageway. The white billowed stone is quite hard, but in many areas it is still wet as the liquid that has been forming the stone over the last many years continues to seep from the corner above. The incline of the stone is about thirty degrees. [Characters can climb to the opening and then clamber down the other side of the flowstone and continue on their way but can pass the opening only one at a time and may have to take off accoutrements before crawling through. This is an excellent place for an ambush or encounter while the group is split up.]

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CAVERNS

20

To the side of the room you are traversing you can see what seem to be stone reeds growing from the ceiling. They grow in clumps of three and four and are each hollow. They range from a foot to three feet long and some continue to drip very slowly. [The formations are very brittle and will shatter if pried from place. In modern parlance these formations are known as soda straws.]

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CAVERNS

21

A fissure has opened here and deep cracks run up the walls on either side. The air is hot and foul as a reddish smoke rises from the crevice. [If the characters enter the room and approach the fissure:] The heat rises dramatically as you approach the fissure. While it doesn't burn, it is uncomfortable and causes you to sweat. The smell is even worse here; you feel the smoke claw at your lungs as a cough builds deep in your chests. [Any one who enters must make a Fortitude save at DC10 or begin coughing uncontrollably, giving a -4 to all rolls. If the save is missed by five or more, the victim loses consciousness and begins to lose 1 point of Constitution every minute he or she remains in the room. If Constitution reaches zero, the unlucky person dies. Otherwise the loss of points is not permanent and will be recovered at 1 point per 3 hours, 48 hours maximum.]

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CAVERNS

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CAVERNS

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CAVERNS

24

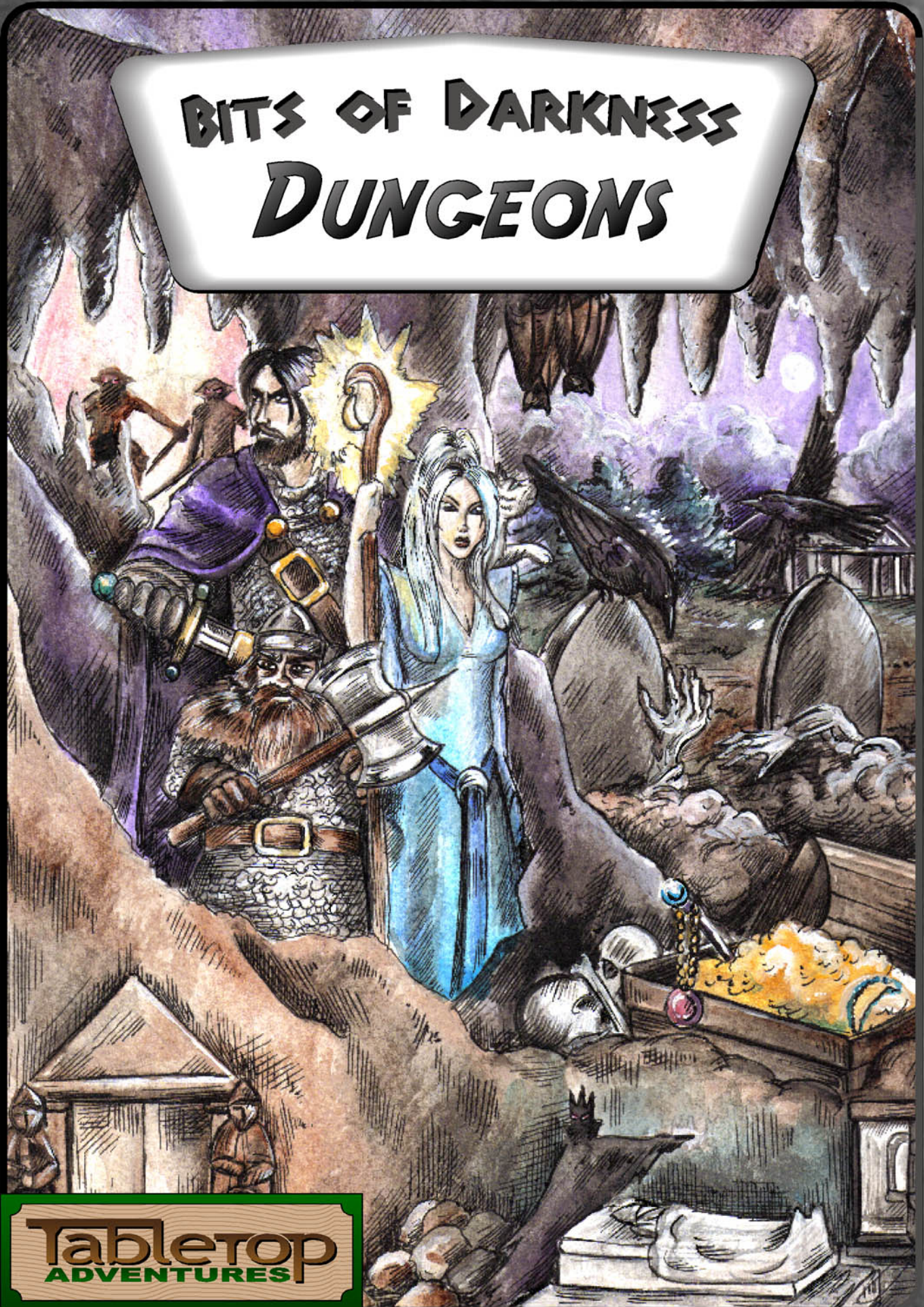
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BITS OF DARKNESS *DUNGEONS*



Tabletop
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Bits of Darkness: TM Dungeons

Writers:

Daniel Brakhage
Mark Potter
Vicki Potter
Randy Eliason

Editors:

Vicki Potter
Elizabeth Brakhage

Cover Art:

“Surrounded by Adventure”
Gillian Pearce
www.hellionsart.com

Cover Layout:

Edward Wedig
www.docbrown.net

Interior Art:

Jesus and Javier Carmona
www.CarmonaArt.com

Some clipart by: ©2006 Jupiterimages Corporation

Border Art:

Daniel Brakhage

Layout:

Marcella Ganow

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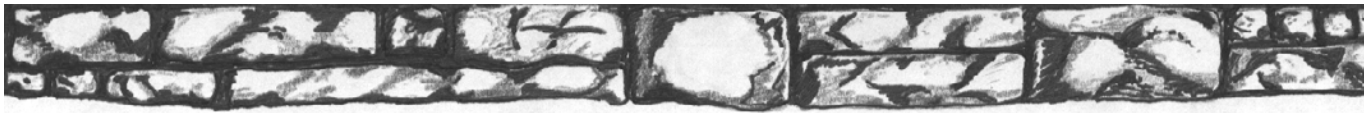
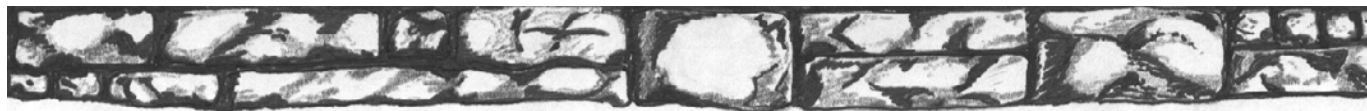


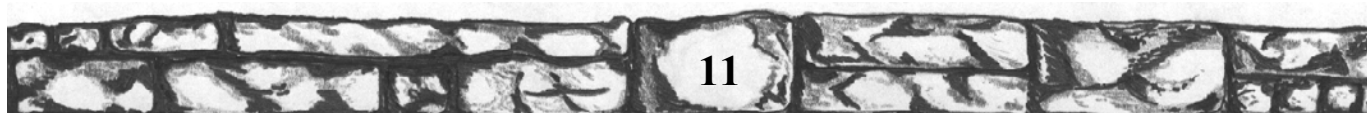
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- 40 On the wall of the stone hallway you see a stick figure drawn on the wall with a chalky substance. The figure is of a winged and taloned creature with a stick figure of a man in his mouth. Under the rough picture is an arrow pointing to the left.
- 41 You see something small stuck in a crack in the wall of the hallway, about four feet off the ground. It is a scrap of parchment, folded over several times. When opened it reads in hastily scrawled Elvish, "This way out."
- 42 Some sort of oily liquid is dripping from the center of the ceiling in this area of the hallway. There is a shallow trough worn down the middle of the hallway, and the fluid trickles along it for about fifteen feet before disappearing into a crack in the floor.
- 43 You come to a "T" intersection and see a steel-headed javelin, longer than a man is tall, standing out of the end wall. The head is deeply embedded into the stone, nearly the length of a foot. The back of the javelin is fletched with two-inch-high wooden fletches. There is a groove in the back end of the javelin. It seems to have come from straight up the leg of the "T". *[You may have a ballista cocked and ready at the other end of the hall, or behind a door with a hole in it at the other end of the hall with a trigger point in the hall somewhere, or the ballista could have been taken away long ago. To dislodge the ballista javelin would require a successful Strength check at DC 25.]*
- 44 As you look into [enter] the room, you are astonished to see the entire floor of the room is done in mosaic tile, depicting the sun, clouds and birds on the wing. When you look up, you see that the ceiling has also been done in mosaic, but with a forest motif. *[The party may very well spend some time here, arguing about the safest way to cross the room. This could be nothing, or the room could have a magical effect in it which reverses gravity.]*
- 45 At an intersection of corridors, your flickering light reveals a charcoal mark upon the wall. It appears to have been made by either a stick plucked from a fire or from the burned out stub of a torch. The smeared mark is about five feet from the floor and forms an arrow that points back the way that you have come. There is no indication as to who could have made it.
- 46 Before you, at the edge of your light, something lies upon the stones of the floor. As you approach you discover the scattered pieces of a skeleton. Parts are still encased in rusting plate armor, though the breastplate seems to have had its leather straps bitten through or ripped to remove it from the body. Not all of the ribs and limbs are present but the skull rests against the wall, still grinning in its helmet. A bony hand is curled around a piece of chalk. Something has been written on the floor but not all of the letters can be made out. It seems to say: "In the gods nam*** go ba*k befo** *****" *[The stars represent letters that cannot be made out by the adventurers. The writing ends in a smear where something wiped across it.]*
- 47 You come across a backpack that appears to have been ripped open by a clawed hand and teeth. Its worthless contents have been scattered around, torn, and trampled. There are scraps of cloth, a broken flask and some straps of leather but nothing of value. There is also nothing to indicate who the former owner was nor who (or what) the vandal may have been.
- 48 An area about one-third of the way across the room is blackened, with streaks spreading unevenly from the center. In the black area, and scattered around the room, are small shards and bits of clay pottery, which are also more or less blackened and scorched-looking.
- 49 You see a small lump lying on the floor near the wall. It is a bit larger than a man's hand spread wide, oddly shaped, and covered with a thick layer of dust. There is also a long, narrow tail (or something) trailing off from it. *[If someone picks up the item:] As you pick it up, dust puffs off of it, but it rapidly assumes a familiar shape. It is a waterskin [or wineskin], and the 'tail' is its braided strap, pulled loose from one end. The skin is stiff, and as you look it over you can see it is already split on the bottom.*





04 *Behind the Door*

The door you are trying to open does not even budge. [GM may require a check to tell that the door is not locked, but it should be easy to determine.] **The door is not locked, but it seems to be barred from the inside.** [A Spot check against DC 12 will reveal:] **Often if a door is barred near the center, the top or bottom may move in a little bit when forced, but here the door seems to be blocked along its entire length.** [A single push at DC 20 will jar the door about 1"—not enough to clear the door frame, but enough to show it is obstructed rather than tightly barred. Subsequent pushes will open the door an additional 1" per push. A sustained shove (rather than a series of individual pushes) will open the door six inches on a check at DC20. Both of these will be effective up to a total of 12".] **Now that you have opened the door a little way you can see that there are the many pieces of furniture and boxes set against the door. They are piled precariously and if they can be toppled by something the door would open more easily.**

[Once the adventurers get into the room they find the remains of a party that is long dead. They are in various positions of death. For some reason they barricaded themselves in this room and remained here until they died.]

The body of a woman, long dead, leans against the wall in the corner. Her hands clutch at a piece of brittle parchment. Laid out as if for a state funeral are the bodies of two other adventurers, now only skeletons. Their clothes are moldy rags and their equipment has rusted badly.

[If the players look at the parchment:] **In common it says: "We are now too weak to fight our way out. We can still hear the beast in the hall occasionally anyway; none of us are willing to face it again. The others have asked that I write our names here so that we may be remembered by anyone brave and powerful enough to slay our tormenter and claim its hoard. We are Talric of the Sword, Inarra the Enchantress, and Trax the Mighty. Srandal, Faruth, and Carbin all fell in the first onslaught of the beast before we even**

knew. How can anything so big move so quietly?" [The GM can decide if they had anything of value which the mold and rust might not have destroyed.]

05 *A Shadowy Passage*

A shadowy passage descends into the darkness below. The stairs are cracked and worn while the walls appear cold and uninviting. A chill draft emanates from the depths and the air that it brings up speaks of decay and death. Shadows play along the wall as if they were alive and dancing at the edge of the flickering light that you bring. A silvery wisp of spider web sways slowly in the moving air, but (since the web has been broken and never repaired) the spider itself is probably gone. It is hard to imagine that treasure, or anything good, might rest in the depths that lie before you.

For an irrational moment you have a powerful urge to leave—a strong feeling that you and your light are not wanted here and that something horrible lies in the darkness. You look at your companions but are unable to tell if they felt it too. In any event, the strength of the feeling has passed.

06 *The Hunter*

Here a stairwell rises up from the level on which you stand. The stairs look worn, even ancient, as do the walls which rise along the sides. Mortar crumbles from between some of the stones and there are a few cracks almost big enough to put your finger into. There is not a noticeable breeze here and you are unsure if this is a way out or if it just leads to another section of the dungeon. An old iron torch sconce sits empty and rusting at about head level on your right and, judging by the webs crisscrossing the metalwork, a spider is using it for a home. You notice a tiny movement there; a fly is struggling in the web and a small black spider moves rapidly forward to attack. For a second you feel a sense of kinship with the fly in the spider's trap! Then your hand strays to your weapon, and you remind yourself that you are the hunter here.



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Dungeons

43

You come to a “T” intersection and see a steel-headed javelin, longer than a man is tall, standing out of the end wall. The head is deeply embedded into the stone, nearly the length of a foot. The back of the javelin is fletched with two-inch-high wooden fletches. There is a groove in the back end of the javelin. It seems to have come from straight up the leg of the “T”. *[You may have a ballista cocked and ready at the other end of the hall, or behind a door with a hole in it at the other end of the hall with a trigger point in the hall somewhere, or the ballista could have been taken away long ago. To dislodge the ballista javelin would require a successful Strength check at DC 25.]*

Dungeons

44

As you look into [enter] the room, you are astonished to see the entire floor of the room is done in mosaic tile, depicting the sun, clouds and birds on the wing. When you look up, you see that the ceiling has also been done in mosaic, but with a forest motif. *[The party may very well spend some time here, arguing about the safest way to cross the room. This could be nothing , or the room could have a magical effect in it which reverses gravity.]*

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Dungeons

45

At an intersection of corridors, your flickering light reveals a charcoal mark upon the wall. It appears to have been made by either a stick plucked from a fire or from the burned out stub of a torch. The smeared mark is about five feet from the floor and forms an arrow that points back the way that you have come. There is no indication as to who could have made it.

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Dungeons

46

Before you, at the edge of your light, something lies upon the stones of the floor. As you approach you discover the scattered pieces of a skeleton. Parts are still encased in rusting plate armor, though the breastplate seems to have had its leather straps bitten through or ripped to remove it from the body. Not all of the ribs and limbs are present but the skull rests against the wall, still grinning in its helmet. A bony hand is curled around a piece of chalk. Something has been written on the floor but not all of the letters can be made out. It seems to say: "In the gods nam*** go ba*k befo** *****" *[The stars represent letters that cannot be made out by the adventurers. The writing ends in a smear where something wiped across it.]*

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Dungeons

47

You come across a backpack that appears to have been ripped open by a clawed hand and teeth. Its worthless contents have been scattered around, torn, and trampled. There are scraps of cloth, a broken flask and some straps of leather but nothing of value. There is also nothing to indicate who the former owner was nor who (or what) the vandal may have been.

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Dungeons

48

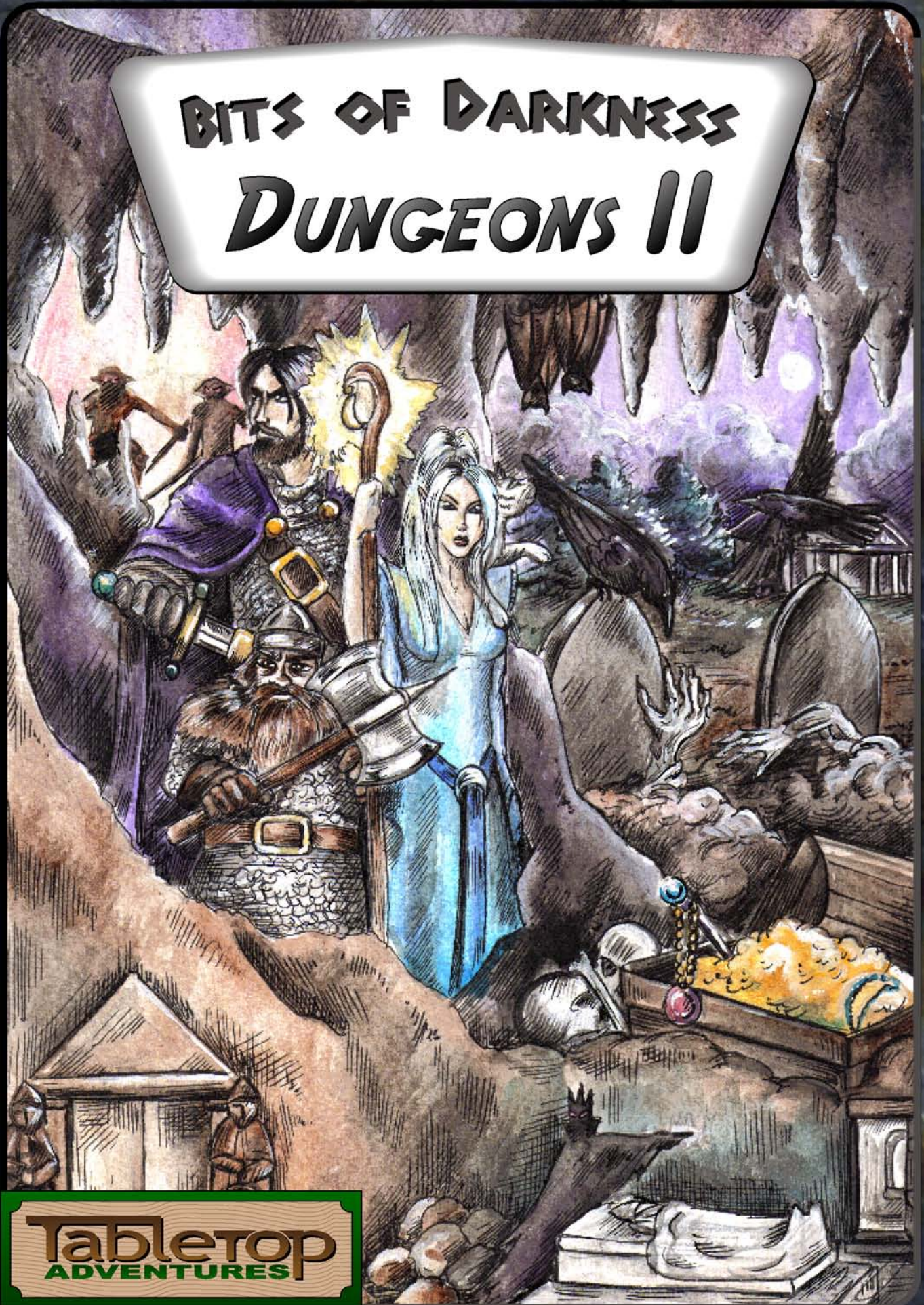
An area about one-third of the way across the room is blackened, with streaks spreading unevenly from the center. In the black area, and scattered around the room, are small shards and bits of clay pottery, which are also more or less blackened and scorched-looking.

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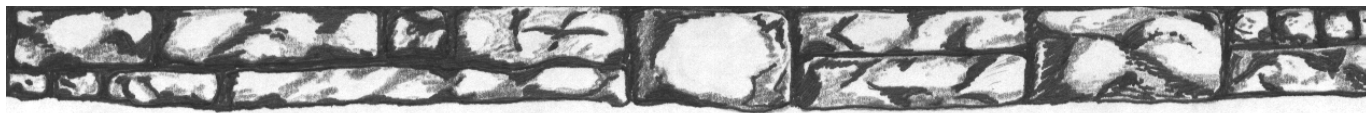
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BITS OF DARKNESS *DUNGEONS II*



Tabletop
ADVENTURES



Bits of Darkness:™ *Dungeons II*

Writers:

Matthew Paisie
K. H. Keeler
James Keck
Christopher Heard
Martin Ralya
John Walsh
Chris Cox
Jim Yee
Marcella Ganow
Daniel Brakhage

Project Manager:

Mark Potter

Editors:

Jen Schoonover
Vicki Potter
Elizabeth Brakhage

Cover Art:

Gillian Pearce
www.hellionsart.com

Cover Layout:

Edward Wedig
www.docbrown.net

Interior Art:

Jesus and Javier Carmona
www.CarmonaArt.com

Some clipart by: ©2006 Jupiterimages Corporation

Border Art:

Daniel Brakhage

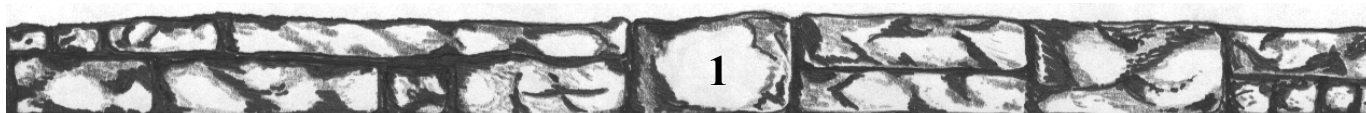
Layout:

Marcella Ganow

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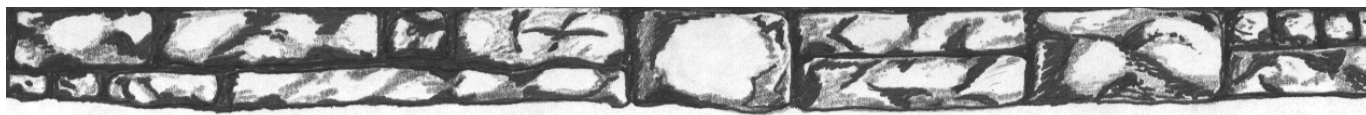
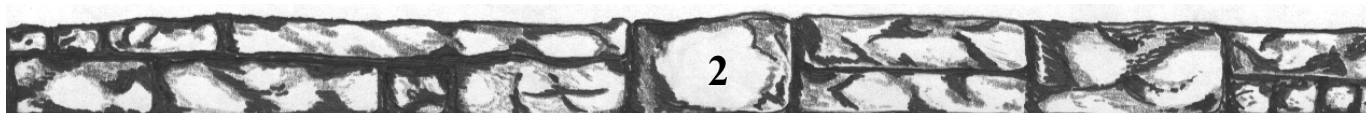


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Dungeon Bricks: Room Kits

01 Cell Block

Overview:

This is a set of cells, rooms and two oubliettes for the long-term storage of prisoners.

Prelude:

The door at the end of the passage is closed. It is reinforced heavy wood, and appears just a little shorter than seems normal. The heavy iron hinges are on this side. A heavy bar lies across the door. In addition, there is a massive old lock built into the door. Its edges are rusty. A small slit runs across part of the door at about eye level, just large enough to look through and scan the area beyond. It is dark inside and you hear and see nothing on the other side of the door, but it smells of stale air and decay.

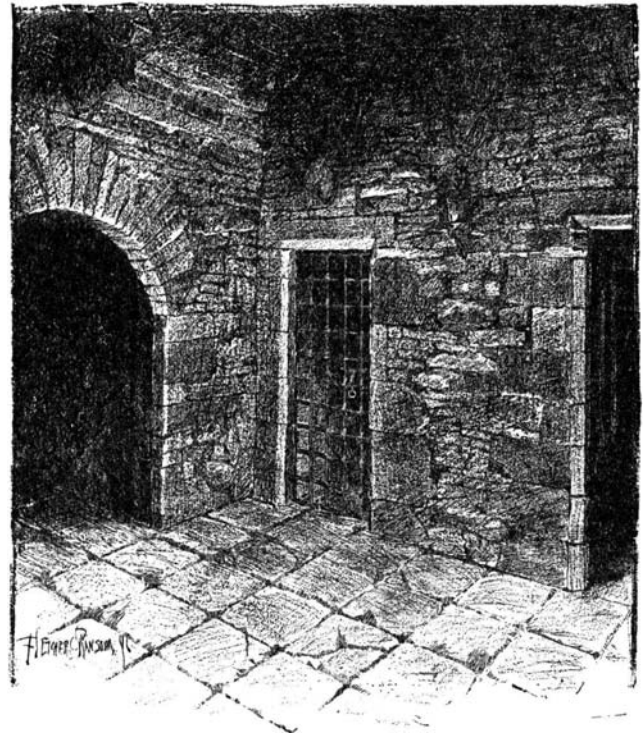
Physical Description:

[When the door is opened:] Looking ahead, you see narrow doors on both sides under the low ceiling. Each door is held shut by a solid wooden bar held firmly in place by thick iron fittings. In each door is a large iron lock with a keyhole and a small window blocked with three thick vertical iron bars. The doors do not go quite to the floor: a space, not tall enough for a rat to walk without ducking, lies below them. Between each of the doors is a secure metal holder for a torch, but there are no torches visible. To your right and slightly behind you, on the wall beside the door you came in, is a ring of large keys hanging on a peg [one for each cell]. The air is fetid, reeking of dirt and decay. A thick layer of grime covers the floor of the hall.

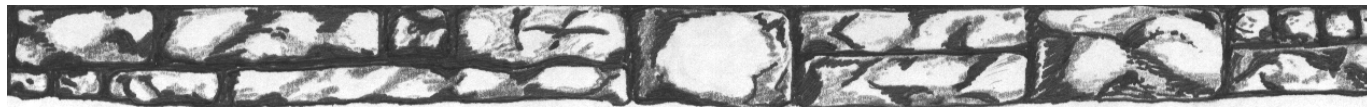
The passage [between the cells] expands slightly after the last cell, ending with three doors—left, right and center. In the wider area you pass beside two grills set in the floor. A strong grid of heavy dark iron bands forms an open lid for narrow holes in the floor. Each lid is locked with a substantial padlock around a thick loop of iron set into the floor. The holes going down into the ground do not seem as wide as a big man's shoulders. Each hole is smooth and slick and descends into darkness. Nothing moves in either hole. You do not smell water. [If you shine lights

down, the floor is about 20 feet down. These are oubliettes, pits where prisoners have to be let down on a rope or ladder and release is rare. The second one has a human body in it, mummified.]

The heavy wooden door to the right opens to show a little room with no other exit. It is dark and the air is clammy. The floor, walls and ceiling are plain stone. One of two hooks on the opposite walls holds an unlit lantern. The room has a single chair leaning awkwardly in one corner. Three pairs of iron rings are riveted into the left wall up near the ceiling. A row of pokers and pincers of several sizes lean against the wall to your right, opposite the chains. A tall brazier with a scattering of half-burned charcoal stands nearby, a small shovel and pincers lying in its [cold] ashes. There are dark stains on the walls and floor and a lingering fetid [burnt] smell.



The door to the left is a heavy iron grate, barred and locked. [The key is on the ring at the far end of the hall.] Inside, the room is bare stone, three paces by two paces. Chains hang from the walls. Two skeletons [or prisoners] dangle from the chains. [Most of the skeletons' bones have fallen to the floor



below. If there are prisoners there instead, they are emaciated and blink incomprehendingly in the light.] **Another two skeletons [bodies] are curled up in a corner. There is a wooden bucket that held [holds] slop. A second bucket is clean and empty [water]. Little can be told about the dead; their garments are rotted and fall apart, their flesh is mostly gone. There are gnaw-marks on them, suggesting rats.**

The heavy wooden center door is thick and tight fitting. Its lock is old and rusty. [It can be picked with difficulty; force will break it rather easily.] Inside, the room is two paces by two paces and smells strongly of rot. Three bodies lie along the far wall, neatly laid out, with a cloak spread over them. They seem partly mummified with shrunken and dried features; their skin wrinkled and yellowed. They appear to be human adventurers, to judge by their tunics and boots. Even as corpses they are painfully thin. The fourth body [prisoner] is curled up, tightly wrapped in a cloak in the corner beside the door. Its [his] posture and expression express great suffering. [If alive: He is breathing shallowly, but does not respond to your presence.]

Setting Details:

There can be any number of cells along the passage before it reaches the area with the oubliettes and three other rooms. If the set of cells is in use, some of the prisoners could still be alive.

Special Setting Considerations:

Below this area, there must be at least twenty feet of available space to fit the oubliettes.

Treasure:

There is no treasure here except possibly the torture implements or the chains and manacles themselves.

02 Throne Room

Overview:

This is an underground audience chamber for a ruler.

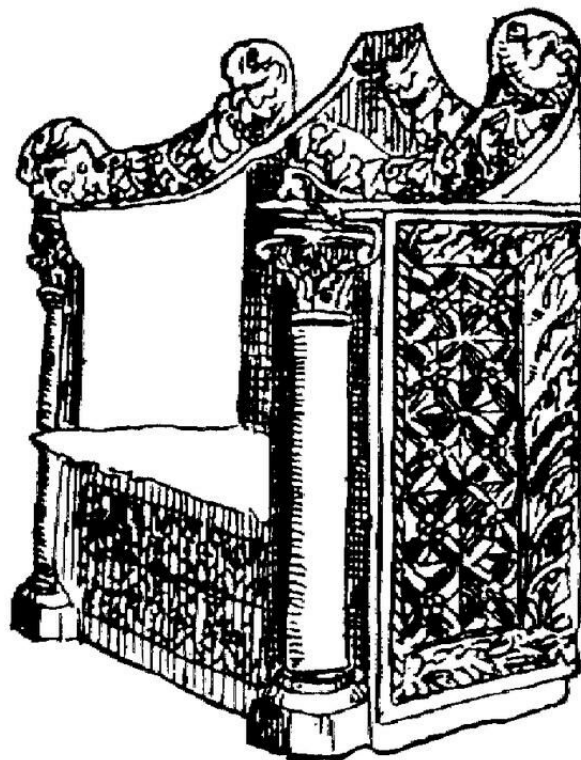
Prelude:

The hall becomes very spacious and ends at a pair of oversized doors. They are a very dark wood covered with metallic decorations expertly forged of heavy bronze. The decorations are complex: battle scenes, wild lands and great storms all seem to be depicted. Copper rings as long across as your

forearm hang on each door. [If someone pulls on a ring:] The doors are so well balanced that, despite their great weight, they move open smoothly.

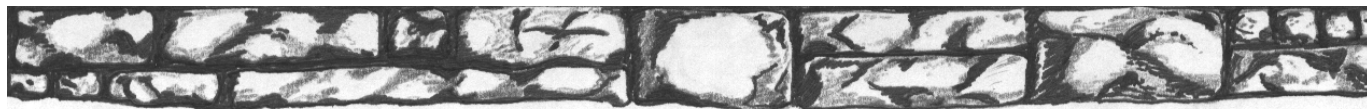
Physical Description:

The room beyond the doors is huge and much longer than it is wide. At the far end, many paces away, is a series of steps leading to a raised platform, higher than a man's head. Atop the



platform is a big dark throne. The path down to the throne is made of pale pink marble, while on both sides of the path the room's floor is of white marble. Tall fluted pillars ornamented in complex brass designs flank the path to the throne. Along the walls you see tall panels with elaborate scenes. From a distance you see intricate bits of brass over a white or dark background. [Close up, they are battle, hunting, farming or fishing scenes of exquisite detail.] Rows of oversized torch-holders line the walls. Attached to the area above each torch is a polished silver mirror, shaped to reflect out the light. Up above the mirror is a black marble panel where the inevitable smoke from the torch is concealed on its dark surface. Holes in the roof apparently vent the smoke. Beyond the throne, a pair of dark wood doors can be seen in the far wall of the chamber.





Setting Details:

The stairs to the throne are of a deep rose-colored marble. They are in excellent condition but it is clear they have had a great deal of use. The throne at the top is carved of a solid piece of black stone. It has massive armrests and a deep seat. The seat is smooth and a dark pillow the same shade as the throne lies on it. The throne is carved in intricate designs. There are niches on the insides of the arm rests that probably held needed items discretely concealed from observers below. [In one of them rests a shallow silver saucer, black with tarnish. A beautifully carved jade dog, about the size of a man's thumb, is hidden at the back of a less-obvious niche.] The block upon which the throne sits is large enough that several people could stand behind the throne. The back of the stone block under the throne drops steeply to the ground, but along one edge are four narrow footholds, making climbing up and down the back no problem for an agile person. [A slightly irregular area in the stone on the top of the dais, right behind the center of the great black throne, is the secret door that conceals a narrow escape stairway descending down through the throne's base into the floor and to the level below. A lever on the back of the throne is built into the stone. It is relatively inconspicuous, looking like an area that was chipped and repaired. A close look shows it is a lever. If a character pulls on it, a heavy iron net falls from the ceiling, between the throne and the rest of the room. The links of the chain are filled with iron disks, so that the characters cannot see through the net. The winch to raise the chain again is through one of the doors in the back of the room behind the throne.]

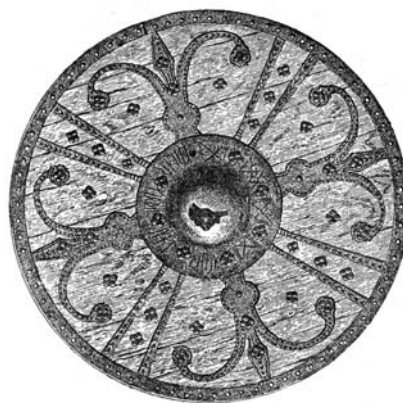
One of the doors in the back wall [on the left] goes to the robing room; the other, some paces away along the back wall of the throne room, opens to a guard-room.

The robing room is paneled in white wood with pegs along one wall. A long dark-brown robe with a hood hangs from one peg; the others are empty. Above the pegs is a shelf for garments or items of some sort. A low cupboard with two drawers is in the corner. [The top drawer is empty. The lower drawer contains two neatly folded blue silk scarves.] On the other side of the door is a simple weapon rack, holding a single old crossbow and a tall ceremonial pike. The door at the far end has a

lock on this side and opens onto a corridor staircase.

The guard-room is paneled in plain light-brown wood. It has a sizeable table with six chairs around it. A cupboard on the right wall holds half a dozen mismatched and dented brass cups. In the bottom of the cupboard you find a keg and two small barrels with tight lids. [The keg held ale and is not quite empty. One barrel, mostly empty, holds dried apples, while the other releases a handful of moths as you open it; it is half full of walnuts still in the shells.] A weapons rack on the left wall holds several shields and three ceremonial pikes, one in

obvious need of repair. The rack was clearly intended to hold other weapons as well. A sturdy winch is right next to the door to the throne room. [If the characters have not set off the curtain, they can do it here via a lever on the side of the winch; if the door is open the characters

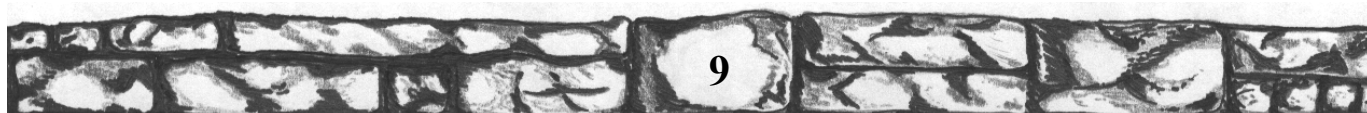


can see the whole room while winding the winch.] The plain but very strong wood door at the back of the room is locked. [The key is not in the room anywhere, but if it is forced or picked open, it leads into a corridor which is not the same as that off the robing room.]

Special Setting Considerations:

This needs to be a large room. To fit the entire description, the small rooms at the far side from the main entrance of the room must have access to other areas.

Treasure: The treasure primarily consists of household goods, including: a dark brown robe, two matching blue silk scarves, a table with six chairs, six dented brass cups, an empty keg, two barrels with scraps of apples and some walnuts. There is also a few weapons in various stages of disrepair. They include a crossbow, five shields and four ceremonial pikes. The weapons racks and shelves are affixed to the rooms and would be damaged if moved.





19 The Altar Room; CR 16

Overview:

Once a chamber for the ritual worship of a long-forgotten, and obviously evil deity, the room remains as it was when benevolent forces raided the temple long ago. The GM should determine what being or creature is being worshipped here. Trap: Glyph of Warding spell on the door; Encounter: Stone Golem protecting the altar.

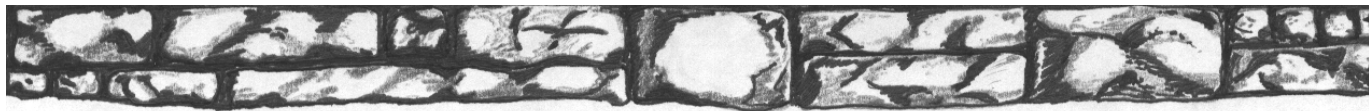
Prelude:

Down a wide set of steps covered with a dingy, rotting carpet that was once perhaps a deep purple in color, you come to a set of double doors overlaid with a plating of hammered bronze. Burnt-out torches sit in sconces on either side of the doorway. An articulately carved ivory panel is embedded in the center of each door, depicting the exploits of some powerful personage. [The doors are sealed with a Glyph of Warding (Blast, Fire): CR 4; spell; spell trigger; no reset; spell effect (glyph of warding [blast], 5th-level cleric, 2d8 fire, DC 14 Reflex save half damage); multiple targets (all targets within 5 ft.); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28. It will be set off when the first character attempts to open the doors unless the long-forgotten deity's name is spoken (Knowledge/Religion check DC 35 to determine).]

Physical Description:

[If they make it through the doorway:] You step through the doorway onto a landing atop another set of wide stone steps. The carpet here is of an intensely deep

purple hue, and it runs down the steps and continues to the far end of an immense chamber. The vaulted ceiling rises high above you, supported by a row of columns on either side of the room. Each is embossed with various images similar to those found on the doors behind you. Lining the walls behind the columns hang ancient tapestries bearing grisly images of unspeakable acts of violence. [They are very delicate and will fall to pieces if disturbed.]



Upon a raised dais at the far end of the chamber sits an altar of carved stone approximately ten feet long, four feet wide, and four feet tall. Several ghastly images akin to those upon the columns and tapestries are sculpted around the sides of the altar. They are stained with the drippings of blood, and the surface of the altar is coated with the dark evidence of countless sacrifices. It appears that the surface of the altar is a slab set on top of the stone and fluted decorations that could be handholds are along the sides of the slab. It is not readily apparent if the altar is hollow beneath the slab or not. On either side of the altar stand brazen censers on tripods of iron. Heaps of ashes and traces of half-burnt herbs and minerals rest within the bowls. Behind the altar is an eighteen-foot-tall effigy of a being that resembles the central figure of the other images throughout the chamber. He stands, arms folded across his chest, and appears to be staring angrily down upon you. [If the adventurers try to move the slab they find that they can do so.]

Encounter Details:

[If the characters attempt to open the altar, determine if the party is surprised. If the group tries to move the slab without specifically saying that someone is standing guard then it is reasonable to assume that they are intent on the possibility of treasure and are surprised.] You hear the sound of stone grating against stone but the way the sound echoes through the chamber it is impossible to tell where it came from. The lid of the altar is extremely heavy and takes several people to lift. [DC 55 to lift.] As you remove the lid the shadows seem to gather around you and the grating of stone upon stone continues to grow louder. Suddenly a massive stone arm strikes down from above and you realize that the great stone statue which had loomed over you is attacking.

[If the heroes are not surprised:] You hear the sound of stone on stone, but the lid doesn't shift. A shadow plays across the altar and you turn to see the giant statue, its hands balled into huge fists, stepping downward towards your position.

Special Monster Considerations:

The golem will use its huge fists like massive clubs and attempt to smash the characters into the flagstone floors. If the characters run away from the altar and

remain at least fifty feet away from it, the golem will return to its pedestal and resume its stance.

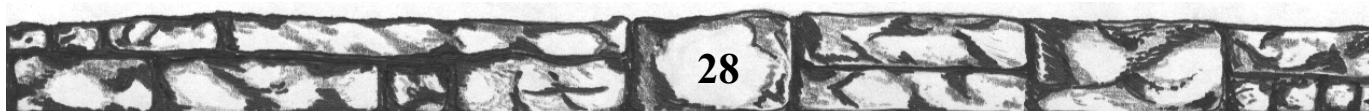


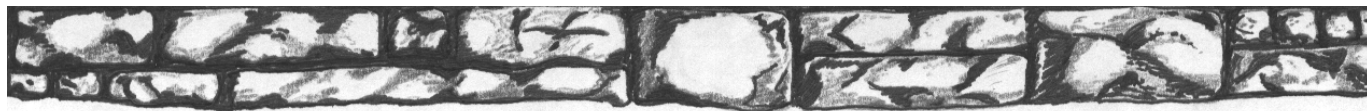
Treasure:

[If the characters defeat the golem they then have an opportunity to finish removing the stone slab and check inside the altar.] Once the dust has settled, you are able to continue to remove the stone slab that forms the surface of the altar. The altar is indeed hollow and a rich purple linen cloth decorated with gold thread covers a gray stone coffer that is set within the side walls of the altar, which is approximately five feet wide and two feet deep. There is no lid except for the rich purple covering [10 gp]. Pulling it aside, there flashes more gold from the tops of leather bags that are so full they can hardly be closed. You may be the first humans who have seen this treasure for a very long time. Looking through the coffer you find fifteen large leather sacks [2 gp each] filled with gold coins of an ancient civilization [7,400 gp], one small leather pouch [5 sp] containing four yellowish gemstones [citrine, 100 gp each], a small wooden box [5 sp] containing a golden ring engraved with ancient runic symbols [*Ring of Protection* +1; 2,000 gp], an apparently unremarkable stone cube [*Stone of Alarm*; 2,700 gp], and, wrapped inside a black linen cloth [4 sp], you find a delicate-looking mummified hand attached to a golden neck-chain [*Hand of the Mage*; 900 gp]. [Total treasure value 13,441.4 gp]

Greater Stone Golem

Size/Type: Huge Construct; Hit Dice: 42d10+40 (271 hp); Initiative: -2; Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares); Armor Class: 27 (-2 size, -2 Dex, +21 natural), touch 6, flat-footed 27





19 The floor is dark stone with faint swirls and cracks. Here and there you see a vein of lighter gray or cream color curling in the otherwise nearly black stone. For a dozen paces the floor seems to have shifted from the time the passage [room] was built because seams have risen and sunk. Some are a few finger-widths higher than the others, while others have dropped the same amount. Not many of the differences are great enough to trip you, but they make for an uncomfortable surface for walking. Instead of the familiar pattern of footfalls, you now hear the occasional stumble as someone adjusts for the uneven floor.

20 The passage is narrow and the roof is low. Roots of trees above dangle down into the pathway, pale and feathery. The stones underfoot are irregular. The floor seems to be built from poorly laid large blocks. Old timbers support the sides and roof of the passage. Most of them are intact and solid, but here and there one has slipped to tilt and provide no support for the roof. Often where a support timber has slipped, a pile of dirt has accumulated on the floor against the wall. Water has left much slime on the floor and it smells slightly sour.

21 Lying on the ground in the passage ahead of you is a shattered knife. A good long dagger, the steel blade is broken into several pieces, all of which lie on the floor. The hilt, made of iron wrapped in wire, is flattened and distorted. It looks as if that someone or something crushed this knife against the floor with great force. There is some dust on the knife, but much more lies under it: it has not been here for very long. The area is otherwise empty, and there are only the faintest of marks on the floor, certainly nothing to indicate who dropped the knife or how it was crushed.

22 The walls here are painted with elaborate murals in bright greens and yellows. It is done rather roughly and without much detail, yet the forms are very effective, showing great leaves and trees. The leaves are quite realistic and diverse—some large, some small, some feathery—representing some jungle region.

Peering out from between the plants, in one place you see the dark face and pale eyes of a great cat; in another, the dark hairy snout and tiny eyes of a peccary. White, red and yellow birds are painted high in the trees near the ceiling. The effect ends there, because the ceiling is plain, its rock unpainted. The floor too, is unadorned. There is no furniture in the area.

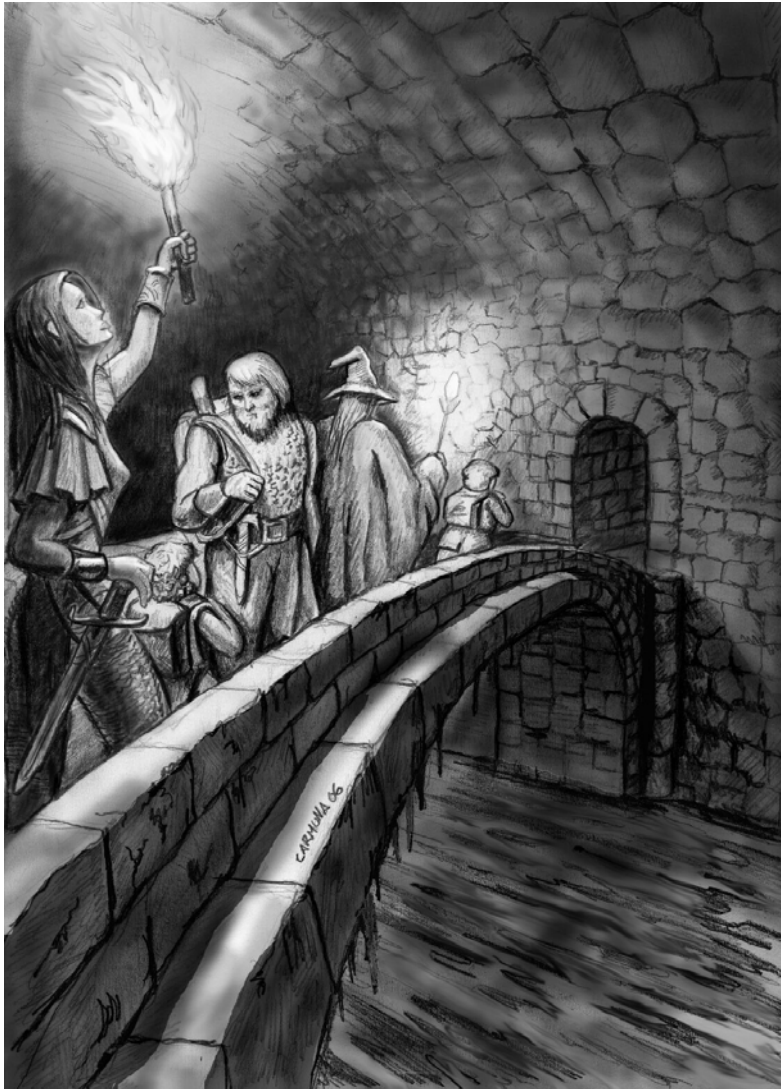


23 [After the party crosses some boundary or comes into a new area:] A strong breeze blows into your faces. The air is bitterly cold. It smells of stone and maybe iron, perhaps with a slight tinge of moisture. The wind is strong enough that it lifts light items and carries them back down the passage behind you. Your hair whips in the gust and the cold chills your exposed skin. The incoming air is blowing with enough strength that you want to squint or shade your eyes from it. Walking against it is noticeably more work. [The party walks against the wind until a new passage comes in, the passage turns, or it shifts to blow over their heads.]



32 *The Brick Span*

A brick bridge spans a subterranean stream. To cross, one would step up about a half step, then traverse about eight paces of brickwork to reach the opposite side. Over the stream, there is only the slightest rise on either side of the span to prevent a misstep that would land someone in the water. The path is comfortably wide and provides a relatively open space on the bridge. Standing over the water, there is space on both sides and a suddenly lofty expanse over head. The area above was eroded by the river, leaving rather attractive, oddly shaped rock formations. Below, the dark, cold water moves silently. In a couple of steps, you will again be enclosed by narrow cold stone walls.




33 *Access to water*

This oddly shaped room is empty of furniture, though the rock has been carved. It appears this was a natural cavern that was enlarged by hand. It has a low ceiling, but only the tallest men cannot stand straight. Some rocks are nearly tall enough to touch the ceiling, but most are rather worn. It is very chilly here. [This room was used for washing laundry in the underground river, despite the cold water. The clothing would have been laid out to dry all across this room, though it dried very slowly in the cold. If the adventurers climb all over they will find a single sock behind one of the rocks.] A clear level path winds between lumps and ridges of natural stone. After a half dozen paces, the path appears to vanish into the far wall, a solid block of rock. However, as you reach that spot, you see the path goes down two steps under an overhang, and you can smell water. Down those steps, the path descends along six wide shallow ledges to the edge of an underground stream. The last ledge is especially wide, allowing access to the water, and a seventh step can be seen underwater. The air is cold enough here that you can see your breath. Only an arm's length of water is visible; more of the stream runs under the far wall. A battered brass mug and an old stone bowl [two hand spans (10 inches) across and rather shallow] sit on a natural shelf just above the water.

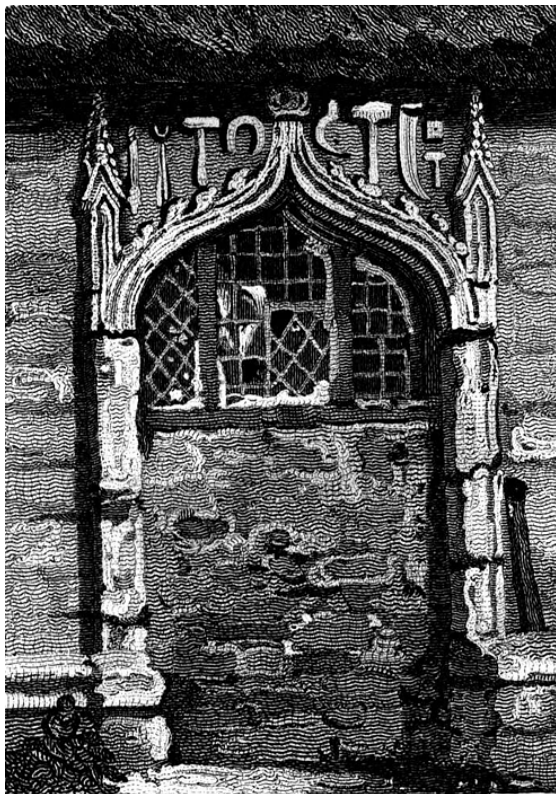
34 *Sauna or hot tub*

The simple door opens to a square room. To your left is a small bench and to the right are wooden pegs, the kind used for hanging clothes, on the light wood paneling of the wall. The floor is wooden but not very thick; it rings a little under your steps. It has been carefully laid and painted with a thick stain. The door you came in has a latch on this side. There is another plain wooden door ahead of you. It has no lock and the latch is a simple pivoting piece of wood.

You open the second, heavier wood door and see—nothing. It is gray and dense inside; your light is deflected into what seems like fog. Thick warm steam pours out around you. As it diffuses into the outer area you



can see farther into the second room. A stone-lined basin of steaming water fills most of the small area. The steam smells faintly sulfurous. The water enters the pool from the side, while the overflow drains out opposite that and vanishes back into the floor. The exit passage and the line of the top of the water in the pool are stained with a light-yellow deposit. The pool is about waist deep on a tall human. Stone stairs allow easy entry into the pool from this side. On the other side, broad stairs rise out of the water against the far wall [used for sitting on to cool off]. A stone bench has been cut from the wall to your right and it shows signs of considerable wear. There is a leather bucket on the far side of the bench. It is empty except for a square of rough cloth [washing cloth] and a long-handled brush. The edging around the pool is marked by large blocks of pale red stone. They surround the pool and make part of the stairs at the back. The only door is the one through which you entered.



Rooms

35 *A Lonely Bedchamber*

The ancient wooden door groans deeply as you push it aside, the rusted hinges popping and grinding from untold days of disuse. Dust covers everything in this chamber. The lack of footprints in the dust indicates you are the first to venture into this room for a very long time. The contents seem almost surreal. Though the wooden objects are warped and swollen, and everything is draped with curtains of cobwebs, it still appears as if the previous occupant will be returning for a night's rest. A dressing table, with its warped and cracked surface, sits along the wall across from the door, its chair pulled out slightly. A hairbrush and hand mirror await their owner's next grooming. [If picked up, the bristles will begin falling out of the brush, and the mirror's reflective surface is crazed with age.] The overstuffed bed, along the wall to your right, lies with its tattered sheets turned down for the night. [If the characters sit or lie on the bed, the mattress crumbles beneath them and a multitude of insects erupt out of the mattress to hide from the commotion.] A large armoire sits opposite the bed, one door hanging open to show the tattered, rotting remains of once-fine gowns and like garments. [Once a sorcerer's or priestess' room, perhaps the characters find an ancient bauble in the armoire, or a map in a dressing table drawer.]

36 *The Studio*

This room looks like it housed a sculptor. There is an unfinished marble statue that is cracked from top to bottom on a pedestal in the center of the room. It looks as if it was going to be a woman, but it has no distinguishing characteristics that would hint at whom it would be. Bits of stone lie scattered around the base of the statue, and you see the sculptor's chisel and mallet lying on the floor beside it. The mallet's wooden handle is almost rotted to mush, and the chisel is rusted through. There are a couple of smashed chairs lying in heaps on either side of a broken-down cot in the back corner of the room, and a table that once held the artist's other tools leans heavily against the back wall.



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As you go onward, the air in the passage gradually becomes a wind blowing toward you. Initially it is just air movement, but presently you are walking into a steady breeze. It tugs at your hair and clothes. It gradually gets warmer as well as stronger. At first, it warms away the chill of underground places, but soon it is unpleasantly warm. It blows briskly at you, steadily stronger, steadily hotter, until it feels like you are walking into a kitchen. Or perhaps a forge: the air has tinge of iron in it. It is very drying and, soon, dehydrating. [To get away from it, change direction or go through a door.]

Bits of Magicka: Mystic Writings



Tabletop
ADVENTURES

Bits of Magicka:™ Mystic Writings

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Author:

Greg Ragland

Editor:

Vicki Potter

Layout:

Marcella Ganow

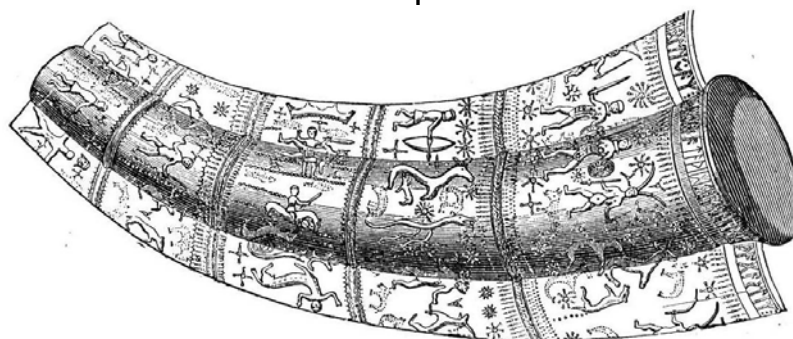
Art:

Jesús & Javier Carmona

UKG Publishing

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PROPERTIES

The chitinous plate is just over one foot long and wide, and weighs 4 pounds. The surface bears the divine spell *repel vermin*.

Scroll: Moderate abjuration; CL 8th; Scribe Scroll, *repel vermin*; Price 800 gp; Weight 4 pounds. EL 3. **Total Value:** 800 gp.

15. Scroll of Silver Motes

APPEARANCE

This is a square sheet of beaten silver with writing carefully penned upon it. The silver is highly polished, catching and reflecting light brilliantly.

HISTORY

The gnome illusionist Gaffee the Great designed this scroll as a means of self-defense while traveling through a region reputed to be the haunt of lycanthropes.

PROPERTIES

The one-foot-square sheet contains a single casting of the arcane spell *glitterdust*. When the spell is read, the silver square breaks down into thousands of gleaming silver motes that stream out and detonate at the target point. Weapon attacks on creatures affected by this casting are considered to be wielding silver weapons for the purposes of overcoming damage reduction; this additional property is unique to this scroll.

Scroll: Faint conjuration; CL 5th; Scribe Scroll, *glitterdust* (plus secret additional process); Price 875 gp; Weight 1/4 pound. EL 3. **Total Value:** 875 gp.

16. The Scroll of Dreams

APPEARANCE

A trim of elaborately stitched blue thread frames a blank sheet of brilliant, snowy white vellum. No writing or marks of any kind mar the purity of the scroll's surface.

HISTORY

A wizard of the Church of the Slumbering God (an obscure faith that believed that great wisdom and power await those who master the realms of dream and nightmare) crafted this scroll for her personal use. (Some other appropriate religion can be substituted if desired.) The scroll was later stolen

by the wererat rogue Silkpurse, who tossed it aside in disgust when she discovered it was blank.

PROPERTIES

If anyone attempts to write on the sheet, the ink or substance does not stick, but flakes or runs off.

If the sheet is placed within five feet of a sleeping person, the person can see the scroll in his or her dreams. It contains writing bearing the arcane spell *dream* at caster level 10. The spell can only be cast while sleeping in this manner. Once the spell is read, the scroll vanishes.

Scroll: Moderate illusion; CL 10th; Scribe Scroll, *dream*, must be a priest of the Slumbering God (or other appropriate deity); Price 900 gp. EL 3. **Total Value:** 900 gp.

17. The Incredible Dweomers of the Magus Ridolfo

APPEARANCE

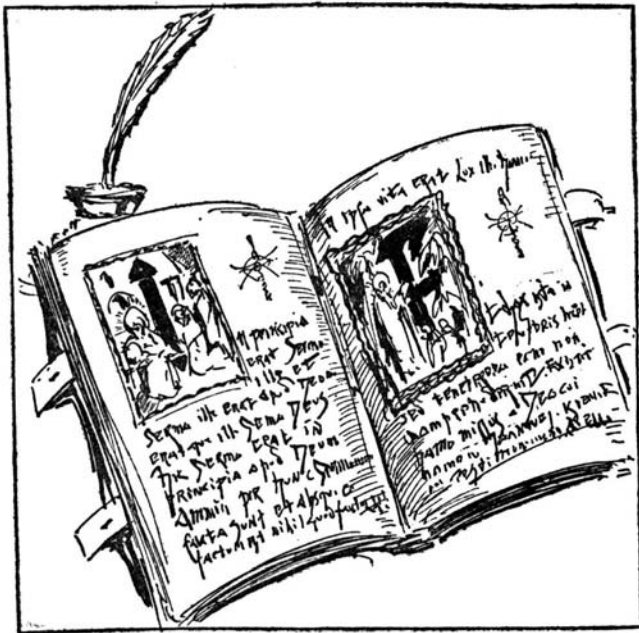
Plum fabric stretched over thin metal plates serves as the cover for this slim chapbook. Across the front in bold gold lettering is the title, Incredible Dweomers of the Mighty Magus Ridolfo. Below this, in even larger letters, are the words, "written by: The Magus Ridolfo." The pages within are done in elaborate script of black lettering on fine quality paper.

[On inspection of the book's contents:] *The first dozen pages are a long-winded autobiographical exposition on the author's incredible sagacity and vision, with a fair amount of half-baked philosophy regarding transcendence through perfection of body and mind. A typical quote: "It was in elucidating the subtle nuances of the Spirit's interrelationship with the Physique Major and its Subsidiaries that I, the Magus Ridolfo, concluded that both Physique and Spirit could be counter-reinforced through means of Arcanus to great personal benefit."*

The last six pages each hold a single scroll spell, titled: Ridolfo's Superior Physique, Ridolfo's Agile Enhancer, Ridolfo's Incredible Fortitude, Ridolfo's Excellence of Thought, Ridolfo's Perspicacious Sagacity, and Ridolfo's Irresistible Presence.

HISTORY

The wizard who named himself the Magus Ridolfo had a much smaller renown than he credited himself. After several months of shameless self-promotion, he talked himself into a quest to defeat a dragon terrorizing the countryside. Despite his best efforts to avoid confronting the beast, the dragon ultimately tracked him down and made a barely adequate meal of the Magus Ridolfo.



PROPERTIES

The chapbook is five inches wide and eight inches long, and aside from the spells might be worth 10 gp to a bored collector or sage in a generous mood. The scroll spells are actually shamelessly plagiarized from the arcane spells *bull's strength*, *cat's grace*, *bear's endurance*, *fox's cunning*, *owl's wisdom*, and *eagle's splendor*, respectively.

Each Scroll: Faint transmutation; CL 3rd; Scribe Scroll, *bull's strength*, *cat's grace*, *bear's endurance*, *fox's cunning*, *owl's wisdom*, and *eagle's splendor* (or Ridolfo's equivalent titles if you prefer); Price 150 gp each; Weight 1/4 pound. EL 3. **Total Value:** 910 gp.

18. Poisoned Scroll of Floral Might

APPEARANCE

A large pressed leaf of some tropical plant has been treated to preserve its suppleness. It bears writing that seems to have been stitched directly into the leaf itself. The scroll has a strange, musky scent.

HISTORY

The druid Windermere the Half-Elven crafted and scribed this scroll to help in his efforts to annihilate a logging town near to his home. The loggers hired a ranger assassin to deal with the druid, and the assassin did so by sneaking into the druid's lair and tainting many of his possessions, including this scroll.

PROPERTIES

The leaf bears the druidic spells *entangle*, *plant growth*, and *spike growth*. Caster level is 6. However, the leaf has been impregnated with sassone leaf residue; anyone handling the scroll is exposed to the poison.

Poisoned Scroll Trap: CR 3; mechanical; touch trigger; manual reset; poison (sassone leaf residue, 2d12 hp/1d6 Con, DC 16 Fortitude save resists); Search DC 24; Disable Device DC 22.

Scroll: Moderate transmutation; CL 6th; Scribe Scroll, *entangle*, *plant growth*, *spike growth*; Price 1,050 gp. EL 3. **Total Value:** 1,050 gp.

19. Cursed Scroll of the Toad

APPEARANCE

This sheet of semitranslucent greenish parchment is made from the scraped skin of a giant-sized amphibian. The material has a slick texture and a foul, musky scent, and has been haphazardly folded lengthwise into eighths, as if it was once rolled neatly, until someone sat on it.

HISTORY

Priests of a loathsome froglike race crafted this scroll as a trap for unwary adventurers who might try to assault their homes. They also sometimes gave out scrolls such as this to mercenary creatures who had outlived their usefulness, as part of their payment.

PROPERTIES

This is a trapped scroll! Anyone opening up the sheet is struck by transmutative magic, and must make a Fortitude save or be transformed into a fat green toad.

Baleful Polymorph Trap: CR 4; spell; spell trigger; no reset; spell effect (*baleful polymorph*, 10th-level wizard, transformed into toad, DC 17 Fortitude save negates); Search DC 30; Disable Device DC 30.

Scroll: Moderate transmutation. EL 4. **Total Value:** n/a.

45. Unholy Scroll

APPEARANCE

Ornate glyphs or runes have been carved onto this thin sheet of black slate. The markings throb with an unholy darkness, clearly visible against the dark sheen of the stone tablet.

HISTORY

Thousands of years ago, a reclusive society of evil spellcasters banded together to share lore. Calling themselves the Black Circle, they developed many spells and items of great evil formerly unknown in the world, before vanishing into obscurity. Scrolls such as this were among the least of their efforts.

PROPERTIES

The scroll contains the divine spells *blasphemy* and *unholy blight*.

Scroll: Strong evocation; strong evil; CL 13th; Scribe Scroll, *blasphemy*, *unholy blight*; Price 3,575 gp; Weight 1 pound. **EL 8. Total Value:** 3,575 gp.

46. Stones of Power

APPEARANCE

This is a large blue cloth sack bordered in purple thread, tied off with a matching purple drawstring. The bag seems to be full of small round objects.

Within the bag are more than a score of sling bullets, each carefully smoothed and polished, and etched with delicate runic markings. A folded sheet of leather is also present, tucked among the stones.

HISTORY

The halfling cleric Jonas Breitenbush, a long-time adventurer and devout follower of the halfling goddess, crafted these stones to aid him in the defense of his home town from an incursion of restless dead.

PROPERTIES

The sack is approximately one foot in diameter, and can hold up to ten pounds of material. The leather sheet is eight by fifteen inches in size, and has words to the divine spell *magic stone* branded into it.

There are a total of 36 small-sized masterwork sling bullets. The bullets have been prepared magically so that if they are used in conjunction

with a *magic stone* spell, the bullets give the spell double the normal range and always deal maximum damage. Bullets used in conjunction with the casting of this spell are ruined. These bullets are worth 100 gp each if sold individually to a person aware of their magical preparation. The bullets are sized for small users. Medium-sized creatures using them as sling bullets suffer size penalties, though they may use them with the *magic stone* spell without penalty to the attack roll.

Scroll: Faint transmutation; CL 1st; Scribe Scroll, *magic weapon*; Price 25 gp. **Stones:** Faint evocation; CL 3rd; Craft Magic Arms and Armor; Price 3,600 gp; Weight 1/4 pound each (9 pounds total). **EL 8. Total Value:** 3,625 gp.

47. Scroll of Almar's Last Stand

APPEARANCE

A large bundle of cloth has been wadded into a mass stained brown with dried blood. Closer examination reveals this to be a human-sized white robe, somewhat tattered, with a large bloody gash in the center of the back. [If the robe is searched further:] A badly crumpled sheet of white paper is tucked into a pocket.

HISTORY

The robe belonged to the saintly priest Almar, one of the most beloved priests of his good god, who disappeared several months ago while on his way to see a friend in his home city. The crumpled paper bears a spell he was conveying to his friend, the field surgeon Garrett DeVries, to assist him in his duties with the local army. Though foreign agents or evil cultists were suspected in his abduction, Almar was actually slain by a roving band of wererats, who quickly fled the city when they realized the furor they caused when their random victim turned out to be one of the city's most cherished citizens.

PROPERTIES

The scroll sheet bears the divine spell *mass heal*.

Scroll: Strong conjuration; CL 17th; Scribe Scroll, *mass heal*; Price 3,825 gp. **EL 8. Total Value:** 3,825 gp.

PROPERTIES

The scrolls contain the divine spells *word of recall* and *earthquake*. The slogan is written in Druidic, and states, "The unrepentant shall rue this day of woe."

Scroll 1: Strong conjuration; CL 15th; Scribe Scroll, *word of recall*; Price 3,000 gp. **Scroll 2:** Strong evocation; CL 15th; Scribe Scroll, *earthquake*; Price 3,000 gp. EL 10. **Total Value:** 6,000 gp.



56. Tale for a Desert Night

APPEARANCE

This is a long scroll bound in black silk ribbons; the ends are attached to a pair of ornately carved oak dowels. The writing on the scroll, done in an ornate but still easily legible fashion, tells a lurid tale of adventure in the high desert, complete with shadowy oases, awesome djinni, languishing princesses, and terrible battles of desert riders.

HISTORY

This tale was originally told by the famed storyteller Kozahrman, and set down by one of his faithful disciples, who added magical properties to more truly capture the magic of the story. The scroll has been a favored treasure of many nobles and wealthy men over the years.

PROPERTIES

The scroll is one foot wide and twelve feet long. Embedded within the tale are three *major image* spells, at caster level 5. Each of these special arcane spells conjures images from the tale, depicting key scenes to entertain the audience. The spells can be cast once per day, and only to depict these scenes.

Scroll: Faint illusion; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item, *major image*; Price 6,000 gp; Weight 1 pound. EL 10. **Total Value:** 6,000 gp.

57. Dragonbone Scroll of Revivification

APPEARANCE

Magical writing has been engraved into a jet-black bone, apparently harvested from the spine of a very large beast, as the bumpy vertebra is roughly two hand-spans in width. The lettering is picked out in red, as if the inscription had been filled with a rubbing of ruby dust.

HISTORY

This bone was crafted by the adventurer Morg Kobalt after his party vanquished a black wyrm. This was the only such item he created, for he found the bone to be too bulky to be easily carried in the field.

PROPERTIES

The vertebra, harvested from the spine of a huge-sized black dragon, is roughly a foot and a half in diameter, and weighs 40 pounds. The scroll spell carved into it is the divine spell *raise dead*.

Scroll: Moderate conjuration; CL 9th; Scribe Scroll, *raise dead*; Price 6,125 gp; Weight 40 pounds. EL 10. **Total Value:** 6,125 gp.

58. Scroll of Golden Luminance

APPEARANCE

A slim case of polished cherry wood is secured with a simple clasp. Inside nestles a thin sheet of hammered gold. Words have been embossed upon the surface of the sheet, and limned in silver leaf to stand out clearly against the gilt surface.

HISTORY

Priests at the temple of a major sun god craft a select few scrolls such as this for devout (and wealthy) champions to take into the field against the risen dead.

PROPERTIES

The case measures six inches wide, one foot long, and one inch thick, weighs one pound when empty and is worth 2 gp. The golden sheet within bears the divine spells *searing light*, *sunbeam*, and *sunburst*. The sheet is very fragile, with Hardness 0 and 1 hit point; if removed it must be handled carefully or it will crumple and tear, ruining the scroll. The spells can be cast without removing the scroll from the case.

Scroll: Strong evocation; CL 15th; Scribe Scroll, *searing light*, *sunbeam*, *sunburst*; Price 6,750 gp; Weight 1 pound. EL 11. **Total Value:** 6,752 gp.

71. Tiles of Power

APPEARANCE

Six white ceramic tiles, each the size of a maiden's hand, are stowed within a large leather belt pouch. A thin groove bisects the center of each tile at its midpoint, and each bears the symbol of a lawful good war god. Further, each tile bears a second symbol: one has a hand, the next a flame, then a pair of bulls facing one another, a circle, and the final two each a cross.

HISTORY

A church devoted to a god of war crafted these tiles for its priests to use in the field. Because they were manufactured in bulk to reduce costs, the spells on the scrolls are unstable, and so they were placed inside the tablets both to protect them from damage and to stabilize the delicate magic imbued into each.

PROPERTIES

The tiles are each three inches wide, six inches long, and about a quarter inch thick. Each tile is designed to be snapped in two down the midline. Within each is a folded sheet of paper bearing a divine spell, as follows: hand tile – *greater restoration*; flame tile – *flame strike*; tile with bulls – *mass bull's strength*; circle tile – *antimagic field*; tiles with crosses – *heal*.

Once a tile has been broken and the scroll exposed, there is a 5% chance each minute that the spell on it spontaneously casts, targeted on the creature or creatures nearest to it.

Tiles: Faint abjuration; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item; Price n/a; Weight 1/2 pound (each). **Hand Tile Scroll:** Strong conjuration; CL 13th; Scribe Scroll, *greater restoration*; Price 4,775 gp. **Flame Tile Scroll:** Moderate evocation; CL 9th; Scribe Scroll, *flame strike*; Price 1,125 gp. **Bull Tile Scroll:** Moderate transmutation; CL 11th; Scribe Scroll, *mass bull's strength*; Price 1,650 gp. **Circle Tile Scroll:** Strong abjuration; CL 15th; Scribe Scroll, *antimagic field*; Price 3,000 gp. **Cross Tile Scrolls:** Moderate conjuration; CL 11th; Scribe Scroll, *heal*; Price 1,650 gp each. EL 13. **Total Value:** 13,850 gp.

72. Spellslinger's Bandolier

APPEARANCE

This wide band or belt of leather is apparently meant to be worn across the body as a bandolier. Running down the front are ten pockets sewn into the leather, each fitted with a snug leather cap. Investigation reveals that eight of the pockets contain tightly rolled sheets of paper that have been rubbed with aromatic beeswax.

HISTORY

The adventuring wizard Nathaniel Duran had this scroll bandolier crafted to his specifications, to make drawing and reading spells as efficient as possible. He himself crafted all the scrolls contained within.

PROPERTIES

The bandolier is sized to fit an average-sized human or half-elven male, though it could be adjusted to fit other medium-sized humanoid creatures. It measures six inches in width, with the pockets jutting out an additional inch and a half on either side. Drawing a scroll from the bandolier requires as much time as drawing a weapon, and they may be drawn as a free action if one has the Quick-Draw feat. The bandolier is worth 50 gp and weighs 2 pounds.

The scrolls have been treated with a beeswax derivative to preserve them against rain and humidity. Each bears a 6th level arcane spell: *acid fog*, *mass bear's endurance*, *greater heroism*, *flesh to stone*, *repulsion*, *mass suggestion*, *mass bull's strength*, and *chain lightning*, respectively.

Scroll 1: Strong conjuration; CL 12th; Scribe Scroll, *acid fog*; Price 1,800 gp. **Scroll 2:** Strong transmutation; CL 12th; Scribe Scroll, *mass bear's endurance*; Price 1,800 gp. **Scroll 3:** Strong enchantment; CL 12th; Scribe Scroll, *greater heroism*; Price 1,800 gp. **Scroll 4:** Strong transmutation; CL 12th; Scribe Scroll, *flesh to stone*; Price 1,800 gp. **Scroll 5:** Strong abjuration; CL 12th; Scribe Scroll, *repulsion*; Price 1,800 gp. **Scroll 6:** Strong enchantment; CL 12th; Scribe Scroll, *mass suggestion*; Price 1,800 gp. **Scroll 7:** Strong transmutation; CL 12th; Scribe Scroll, *mass bull's strength*; Price 1,800 gp. **Scroll 8:** Strong evocation; CL 12th; Scribe Scroll, *chain lightning*; Price 1,800 gp. EL 13. **Total Value:** 14,450 gp.

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§ The Forest Glade Tapestry § 44

APPEARANCE

This rolled tapestry depicts a forest glade at night, with a fire burning in the center and hints of sylvan creatures lurking in the shadowy edges of the scene. Elaborate knotwork patterns frame the borders of the scene.

PROPERTIES

The entire tapestry is eight feet tall and ten feet wide, and weighs 275 pounds; it has been fashioned from dyed wool. A search of the tapestry (Search DC 15) reveals a folded up sheet of paper has been tucked into a cunningly concealed seam along the top edge of the tapestry. This sheet of paper contains a casting of the assassin/blackguard spell *merge into art*. (See Appendix Two for spell details.) The spell has been augmented with the Extend Spell feat, giving it a duration of up to 20 minutes. The tapestry is in excellent condition.

§ Unholy Scroll § 45

APPEARANCE

Ornate glyphs or runes have been carved onto this thin sheet of black slate. The markings throb with an unholy darkness, clearly visible against the dark sheen of the stone tablet.

PROPERTIES

The scroll contains the divine spells *blasphemy* and *unholy blight*.

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§ Stones of Power § 46

APPEARANCE

This is a large blue cloth sack bordered in purple thread, tied off with a matching purple drawstring. The bag seems to be full of small round objects. Within the bag are more than a score of sling bullets, each carefully smoothed and polished, and etched with delicate runic markings. A folded sheet of leather is also present, tucked among the stones.

PROPERTIES

The sack is approximately one foot in diameter, and can hold up to ten pounds of material. The leather sheet is eight by fifteen inches in size, and has words to the divine spell *magic stone* branded into it. There are a total of 36 small-sized masterwork sling bullets. The bullets have been prepared magically so that if they are used in conjunction with a *magic stone* spell, the bullets give the spell double the normal range and always deal maximum damage. Bullets used in conjunction with the casting of this spell are ruined. These bullets would bring a good sum if sold individually to a person aware of their magical preparation. The bullets are sized for small users. Medium-sized creatures using them as sling bullets suffer size penalties, though they may use them with the *magic stone* spell without penalty to the attack roll.

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§ Scroll of Almar's Last Stand § 47

APPEARANCE

A large bundle of cloth has been wadded into a mass stained brown with dried blood. Closer examination reveals this to be a human-sized white robe, somewhat tattered, with a large bloody gash in the center of the back. [If the robe is searched further:] A badly crumpled sheet of white paper is tucked into a pocket.

PROPERTIES

The scroll sheet bears the divine spell *mass heal*.

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Bits of Magicka: Pocket Items



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Credits

Author:

Greg Ragland

Editor:

Vicki Potter

Layout:

Marcella Ganow

Cover Art:

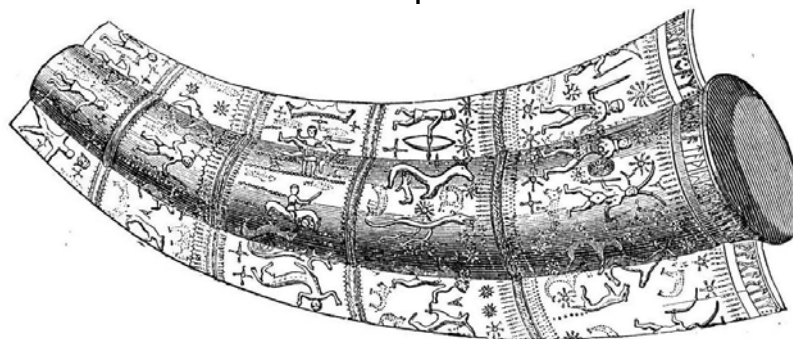
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Border Art:

Jesús & Javier Carmona

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12. Rashed's Glimmerlight

THE MARK

By the thick layer of dust coating the gray woolen robes of this diminutive gnomish traveler [male gnome Mnk6; Spot +10], he could only be a new arrival to town. He bears no visible weapons or other adornments on his simple rope belt, though the robe does have voluminous-looking pockets.

THE TAKE

The gnome's left pocket holds a wadded, heavily soiled handkerchief. His right pocket contains a few coins [3 gp, 8 sp, 9 cp], and a small sphere of clear crystal.

CONSEQUENCES OF DISCOVERY

This traveler, Rashed, views the loss of his small wealth philosophically, figuring the gods have placed the items in the hands of those in greater need, and does not actively pursue the criminals.

ITEM APPEARANCE

Polished to a mirror sheen, this smooth sphere of clear crystal is surprisingly heavy, and is about the size of a plum. [When held in one's hand:] The sphere erupts in bright silver light that clearly illuminates the area around.

ITEM HISTORY

The glimmerlight was created by the monastic Order of the Silver Flame, a group of gnome monks who seek physical excellence as a reflection of the purification of their spirituality. Rashed, a member of the order, was given the *glimmerlight* when he left to travel the land and gain experience and wisdom on his journey.

ITEM PROPERTIES

When held in hand, this crystal sphere radiates silver light brightly out to 20 feet, and dimly out to 40 feet. The sphere automatically activates when grasped, and deactivates one round after being released.

Faint evocation; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item, *continual flame*; Price 150 gp. EL 6. **Total Value:** 153.89 gp.

13. Scrivener's Exotic Inkset

THE MARK

A harried scribe [male human Exp6; Spot +4] trots along, hair mussed and a smudge of ink adorning one cheek. Despite his beleaguered appearance, the quality of his robes marks his status. He may be an important servant of a wealthy family, or perhaps the bookkeeper of a prosperous business. He bears a small leather satchel slung over one shoulder.



THE TAKE

Contained within the satchel are the scribe's tools, of masterwork quality: inks, quills, blotting sand, a knife to trim quill ends, various sheets of blank paper and parchment, and so forth [total 100 gp value]. These effectively serve as masterwork tools for the scribe's profession.

In addition, there are six different varieties of magical ink.

CONSEQUENCES OF DISCOVERY

Should the scribe's satchel be stolen, he reports the loss immediately to the noble family for whom he works; they use their resources to try to track down the thieves. Their chance of success depends upon the importance of the noble family in local affairs.

ITEM APPEARANCE

The satchel contains the tools of the trade for a professional scribe: eight ink bottles, a half dozen quills, blotting sand, a small blade and inkstone, and a small collection of parchment and paper of various sizes and degrees of quality. The contents are neatly arranged and compartmentalized, and look well maintained.

ITEM HISTORY

The scribe works both as a document writer and accountant for a prominent local family or business that dabbles in the arcane art. The magical inks he bears are not for his own needs, but for those of one of his patrons, who intends to use them to pen a few magic scrolls.

ITEM PROPERTIES

The magical inks are intended for the scribing of magical scrolls of third level or less. Using them reduces the gold piece cost of scribing by up to 50%, and uses up an equivalent gold piece amount of the inks. The total value of these inks is 2,000 gp. The magic they bear is inherent in the exotic ingredients from which they are made, and does not denote any special property other than that listed above.

Faint to moderate varied; inks harvested from a number of exotic sources (tears of a unicorn mixed with charcoal from a tree consumed by the flaming breath of an ancient red dragon, the liquid of a giant sea squid's ink sac that has been purified and blessed in a ritual during the vernal equinox, and so on); Price 2,000 gp. EL 6. **Total Value:** 2,100 gp.

14. The Ghastly Cheese of Dorgram Hamner

THE MARK

The soot-stained garments of this broad-chested individual mark him as a blacksmith or possibly a charcoal maker [male human Com5; Spot +1]. He bears a small leather satchel over one shoulder on a long strap.

THE TAKE

The satchel contains a decent quantity of coin [12 sp and 14 cp], as well as the bearer's lunch [8 cp]: a chunk of salted pork, half a dried apple, a slab of slightly stale seed bread, and a small wheel of

cheese, sealed in dull black wax. The cheese is magical.

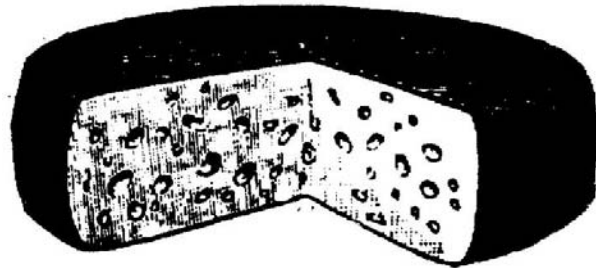
CONSEQUENCES OF DISCOVERY

Dorgram Hamner does not report the theft should the cheese be stolen; due to his clandestine associations with an evil cult he does not dare approach the city guards, and he fears reprisal from the cult should its loss be known. He therefore lays low and comes up with a cover story to explain how he was unable to accomplish his mission.

If another should eat the cheese and enjoy its effects in a manner that becomes public, the cult responsible for its creation likely targets both the eater and Dorgram for assassination.

ITEM APPEARANCE

A foul odor wafts from this palm-sized wheel of cheese. The waxy outer skin of the wheel is dead black. [If cut open:] A stench of great pungency wafts forth from the pale yellow interior of the wheel, akin to the sharpest of limburgers mixed with a faintly musty smell all its own.



ITEM HISTORY

The man carrying this wheel of cheese is secretly a member of a cult dedicated to worshipping the demon lord of slimes and oozes. He was gifted this cheese to assist him in burglarizing wealthy homes in town, to help secure funds for the cult.

ITEM PROPERTIES

To gain the full properties of this cheese, the entire wheel must be consumed. This takes one minute for a Small or Medium-sized creature, or one full round for a larger creature. The wheel is four inches in diameter and half an inch thick.

When activated, the recipient gains the ability to deform his body like an ooze, and is able to slip through cracks and holes as small as one-half inch in diameter. This effect lasts for one full hour.

Thereafter, the eater's body largely solidifies but remains a bit plastic, affording a +5 circumstance

ITEM APPEARANCE

The satchel contains the tools of the trade for a professional scribe: eight ink bottles, a half dozen quills, blotting sand, a small blade and inkstone, and a small collection of parchment and paper of various sizes and degrees of quality. The contents are neatly arranged and compartmentalized, and look well maintained.

ITEM PROPERTIES

The magical inks are intended for the scribing of magical scrolls of third level or less. Using them reduces the gold piece cost of scribing by up to 50%, and uses up an equivalent gold piece amount of the inks. The total value of these inks is 2,000 gp. The magic they bear is inherent in the exotic ingredients from which they are made, and does not denote any special property other than that listed above.

ITEM APPEARANCE

About the length of a woman's thumb, the preserved foot is covered with brindled reddish fur and has been capped with a small copper band. The paw still bears small claws.

The bead is a sphere of black glass that, on close examination, hints at a shimmering rainbow of colors deep within. It feels cool to the touch.

ITEM PROPERTIES

The bead is a standard bead of force. The weasel paw is not magical.

(of Dogram Hamner)

ITEM APPEARANCE

A foul odor wafts from this palm-sized wheel of cheese. The waxy outer skin of the wheel is dead black. [If cut open:] A stench of great pungency wafts forth from the pale yellow interior of the wheel, akin to the sharpest of limburgers mixed with a faintly musty smell all its own.

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When activated, the recipient gains the ability to deform his body like an ooze, and is able to slip through cracks and holes as small as one-half inch in diameter. This effect lasts for one full hour. Thereafter, the eater's body largely solidifies but remains a bit plastic, affording a +5 circumstance bonus on all Escape Artist checks for the next day. Each day thereafter, this bonus drops by 1 until the effect wears off at the end of the fifth day.

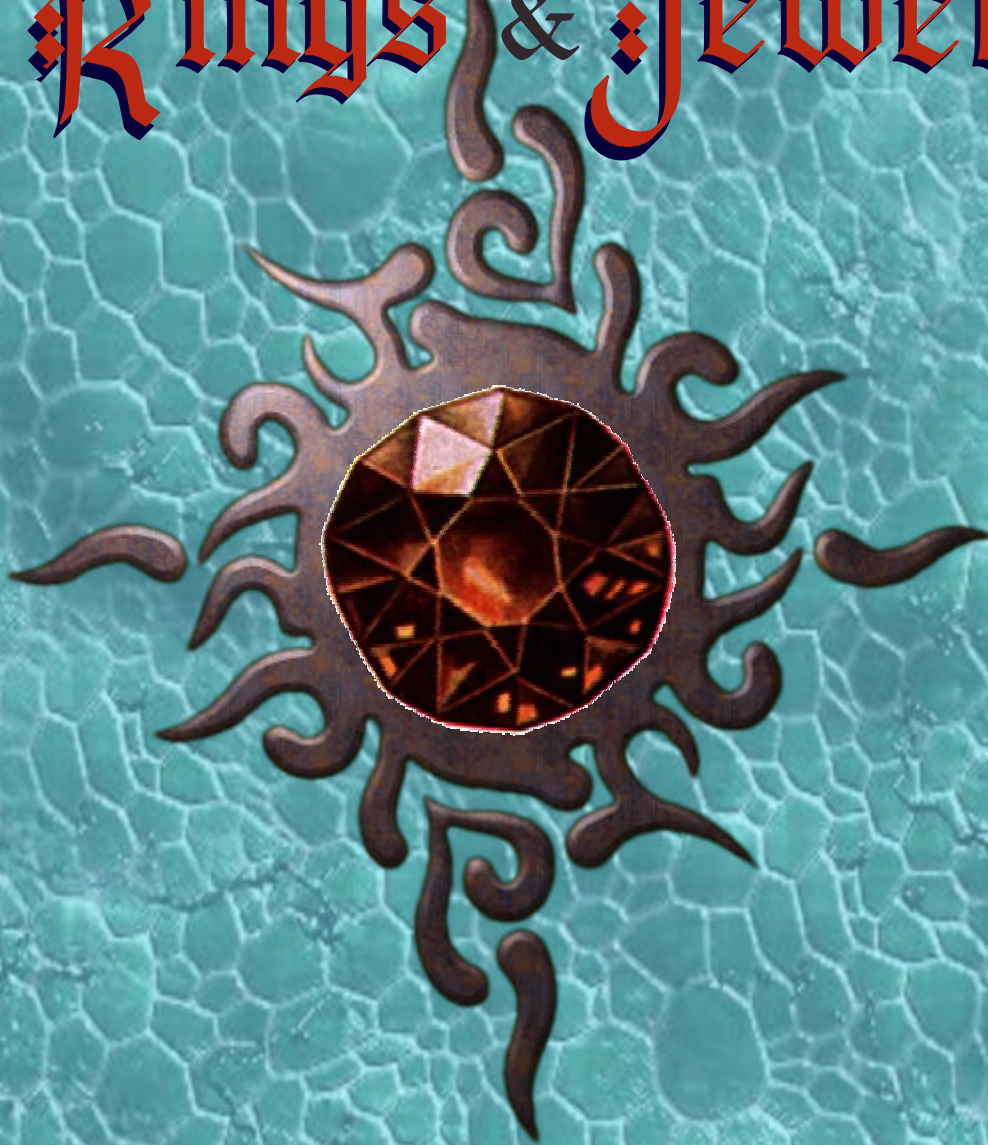
ITEM APPEARANCE

Exquisite etchings of stylized flowering vines ring this small perfume bottle near the top and bottom. A small red silk bladder attached to a thin cord connects to the top of the bottle, doubtless to be squeezed in order to spray the vessel's contents in a fine mist. The phial is half-full of pale blue liquid, and a faint, pleasant scent of exotic spices can be sensed.

ITEM PROPERTIES

To be activated, perfume worth at least 50 gp must be placed within the phial. (Its current contents are worth 50 gp as-is.) Thereafter, a creature sprayed by the perfume within the phial gains a +2 enhancement bonus to Charisma for one hour. The magic of the phial can be used up to three times per day.

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Credits

Author:

Greg Ragland

Editor:

Vicki Potter

Proofreading:

John Stam

Layout:

Marcella Ganow

Cover Art:

UK& Publishing

Cover Layout:

Marcella Ganow

Border Art:

Jesus & Javier Carmona

Other Art:

Brenna Alyn Walters

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15. Medallion of Sanctum

APPEARANCE

The image of a set of merchant's scales has been inlaid into a circular copper lozenge the size of a child's palm. The lozenge bears a small loop at one end; evidently it is designed to be worn as a medallion.

HISTORY

The priests of a god of judgment crafted medallions such as this to be worn by their Holy Prognosticators, to protect them if exposed to danger. A certain number of these have found their way into the hands of others, either as gifts of the church or sales when coin was scarce.

PROPERTIES

The wearer of this medallion may activate it once per day by mental command. When activated, for three rounds any creature attempting to specifically target the wearer with any form of attack must succeed at a DC 12 Will save. If it fails, that creature cannot follow through with the attack and loses that part of its action, as per the *sanctuary* spell. If the wearer attacks or performs another hostile action during this time, the protection immediately ends.

Faint abjuration; CL 3rd; Craft Wondrous Item, *sanctuary*; Price 1,200 gp. EL 4. **Total Value:** 1,200 gp.

16. Sabra's Tear

APPEARANCE

This thumbnail-sized translucent pale blue crystal has been carved and polished in the shape of a tear.

HISTORY

Several legends exist surrounding the origin of this stone. In the most common version, Sabra was the nymph of Ashmarlough who fell in love with the adventurer Ian Skymantle. In her grief when they parted, the tears Sabra wept formed the crystal blue pool that is the wellspring of the Sabra River, but it is said the very first tears from her eyes fell as pure crystal jewels.

This story holds that Ian was an adventuring warrior-bard who had heard tales of the beauty of Sabra's song, and sought her out to learn the secret songs of wind and field. They dwelt for a time in the ash forest that was Sabra's home, but when Ian learned what he sought he departed. Sabra in her

grief gave herself to the land. This version of the Sabra and Ian myth has been collected in the well-known sagely work *Barton's Popular Legends and Myths*.

In a second version of the tale, often told at courts by skalds, the protagonist was Iona, the younger daughter of an important leader. Her father cared little that she found her role among her people to be stifling and for escape Iona took to long rides throughout the countryside. On one such ride she met and befriended Sabra and over time they formed a strong bond of friendship. However, Iona could not escape her familial duties and eventually was forced into a loveless marriage to strengthen diplomatic bonds. Sabra wept at the loss of her friend, who traveled far away to settle with her new husband in his distant court.

The third version of the myth is least common, heard most often in small human villages, particularly those of an insular or xenophobic nature. By this account, Iona was the most beautiful lass of her community, the daughter of a village elder, and was affianced to a handsome village lad named Jadow Smith. Sabra was a covetous nymph who lusted after Jadow, but he spurned her in favor of Iona. In revenge, Sabra lured Iona into her grove by assuming the form of a songbird and imprisoned her there. Unable to rescue her himself, Jadow called upon the local village priest. The priest confronted Sabra; armored by his faith he resisted her temptations and, through the power of his god, bound her to a spring at the center of her domain where her spirit is said to dwell to this day.

Although the exact truth of the legend may never be known, the jewel known as Sabra's Tear is real enough. It has been in the possession of a number of poets and bards, most notably the famed wordsmith Artur Dannmoor, who it is said used the jewel as a source of inspiration for his melancholy epic, *The Fall of Mellis Eld*.

PROPERTIES

Anyone holding this aquamarine gemstone or carrying it directly in contact with exposed flesh feels a gentle sorrow. Though this property is not strong enough to have any overt game effect, it does serve to enhance the value of the gem as a curiosity. (Without this property, a jewel of this size and type would be worth 1,000 gp.)

Dim enchantment; CL n/a; Price 1,250 gp. EL 4. **Total Value:** 1,250 gp.

25. Bellwether Bracelet

APPEARANCE

A smooth, pale blue stone the size of a child's thumbnail adorns the front of this polished silver wristband. Two smaller stones flank the central jewel, one pale green, the other light pink. The edges of the bracelet are raised and sculpted in a pattern resembling intertwined ivy vines.

HISTORY

This device is another creation of the Deeping Vale League (see the *ring of elemental endurance*, #7 above) to assist its members in gauging the unpredictable weather of their homeland.

PROPERTIES

The stones on this bracelet change color as the air temperature, humidity, and other factors in the natural environment change, granting its wearer a +10 circumstance bonus on Survival checks made to predict the weather. The bracelet can only predict natural weather, not that generated by supernatural means.

An owner must wear the bracelet at least 24 hours before it starts functioning; it occupies the bracer slot for determining what magic items a creature can wear.

Faint divination; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item, caster must have 10 ranks in Survival; Price 2,000 gp. EL 6. **Total Value:** 2,000 gp.

26. Ring of Defense

APPEARANCE

A series of tiny ornamental shields adorn the circumference of this copper ring, placed side-to-side and inlaid with colored semiprecious stones in red, blue, green,

and white hues. Each shield bears a tiny, fanciful coat of arms, and no two shields are exactly the same in size or shape.

HISTORY

Twenty rings like this were made by priests of a god of protection for the Champions of Gwylvaedd, an order dedicated to the defense of the land and its people.

PROPERTIES

This ring functions as a *ring of protection* +1, granting a +1 deflection bonus to the wearer's armor class.

Faint abjuration; CL 5th; Forge Ring, *shield of faith*, caster must be at least 3rd level; Price 2,000 gp. EL 6. **Total Value:** 2,000 gp.



34. Earrings of Subterfuge

APPEARANCE

Secured within a folded piece of cloth is a set of three matching gold stud earrings. The earrings bear no visible adornment on the front, but the clasp of each in back is etched with miniscule arcane runes.

HISTORY

The original design for these earrings came from the Brotherhood of Peace, a guild of assassins who worked in teams of three to bring down their targets. Three such assassins originally wore this particular trio of earrings. After the assassins were captured and executed, their earrings were then used by spies of the government for a time before their agents were lost and the jewelry disappeared from common knowledge.

PROPERTIES

These earrings are designed to be worn separately, one per person. While worn, a person wearing an earring can point towards any of the other wearers within 130 feet, whisper a message and have it be heard, as per the *message* spell. The wearers need not have line of sight to each other, but they do need a clear and unobstructed path; the 130-foot range applies to the distance that must be traveled around obstacles between individuals, not to the actual distance between them. These earrings occupy the headband slot for the purposes of magic items worn on the body.

Faint transmutation; CL 3rd; Craft Wondrous Item, *message*; Price 3,500 gp. EL 8. **Total Value:** 3,500 gp.

35. Lens of Swift Reading

APPEARANCE

A gold monocle attached to a three-foot long gilded chain bears a glittering crystal lens. At the other end of the chain, a fob bears the symbol of three green leaves arranged in a circular pattern with a tiny red gemstone berry between each pair.

HISTORY

Manufactured by Gauthorm the Ancient, this lens was designed to assist him in quickly absorbing large amounts of information in his studies. It has been theorized that overuse of the monocle

resulted in Gauthorm's premature senility, causing him to eventually misplace this device.

PROPERTIES

A person reading text through the lens can absorb the information at ten times the normal rate. However, the lens does not speed up the time it takes to use a magical scroll or text, or for wizards to memorize spells.

Lens: Faint divination; CL 1st; Craft Wondrous Item, *comprehend languages*; Price 2,000 gp. EL 8. **Total Value:** 3,500 gp.

36. Anklets of Swift Speed

APPEARANCE

These smooth steel anklets are a handspan wide, and curve around in a three-quarter circle. Blue silk cord has been strung through eyelets in the back, to tighten the bands around one's calves. An elaborate swirling pattern adorns the surface of the polished steel of each anklet.

HISTORY

The monk Gale, a champion of evil known for her lightning speed, wore these anklets until she was defeated by the holy warrior Hirusani in single combat.

PROPERTIES

These anklets function as *boots of speed*. They take up the boot slot for the purposes of magic items worn on a person's body. Unlike *boots of speed*, these can only be used once per day, for a total duration of 3 rounds.

Moderate transmutation; CL 10th; Craft Wondrous Item, *haste*; Price 12,000 gp. EL 8. **Total Value:** 3,600 gp.

37. Amulet of Evil Warding

APPEARANCE

This is the holy symbol of a god of protection, fashioned from pale gold. The symbol is attached to a fine silver chain, evidently designed to be worn around the neck. The symbol glows with a very faint white radiance.

HISTORY

Desiring to protect their priests and warriors in the field, the Temple of Lost Saints manufactured over

53. Ring of Teeth

APPEARANCE

Engravings of mouths filled with tiny, sharp teeth adorn both the inner and outer surfaces of this platinum ring.

HISTORY

The vampire priest Uthic Sangstrom forged this ring as a means to punish incorporeal undead minions. He designed the ring with a nasty side effect on any living wearer who might wrest it from him.

PROPERTIES

As a move action, the wearer of this ring can command a set of disembodied jaws composed of pure force to shoot from the ring and bite a designated target within 150 feet. The teeth use the wearer's base attack bonus +1 to determine if they hit as a melee attack; they inflict 1d8+1 damage if the attack hits. This is considered a force effect, and therefore can hit incorporeal creatures without the usual miss chance, and it ignores any damage reduction the target might have.

However, the ring has a side effect. While worn, the mouths on the ring gnaw at the life force of its wearer, inflicting 1 point of negative energy damage (similar to that of an *inflict wounds* spell) per round worn. If worn by a nonliving creature, the wearer takes no damage; an undead creature wearing this ring is not hurt, but is also not healed by the negative damage.

Faint evocation and necromancy; CL 3rd; Forge Ring, *spiritual weapon*; Price 9,600 gp. EL 12. **Total Value:** 9,600 gp.

54. Ring of Brachiation



APPEARANCE

This dark wooden ring has been cunningly carved to resemble a series of overlapping oak leaves around its circumference.

HISTORY

Elven artisans of Aeldwild designed rings such as this to give to the defenders of their forest realm.

PROPERTIES

This ring, carved from darkwood, grants its wearer a +10 competence bonus to the wearer's Climb checks.

Faint transmutation; CL 5th; Forge Ring, creator must have 10 ranks in the Climb skill; Price 10,000 gp. EL 12. **Total Value:** 10,000 gp.

55. Alestid's Ring of Animal Friendship

APPEARANCE

A faint, musky scent wafts from this small loop of fabric, apparently woven from strands of silky white hair.

HISTORY

The dryad Alestid dwelt in a forest ruled by a foul-tempered and misanthropic druid, who allowed many vicious predators to prowl the forest floor looking for intruders. One unfortunate interloper, a hapless human peasant boy named Venn, stumbled upon her tree while fleeing from a pack of hungry wolves and in an act of pique the dryad sheltered the youth. Soon falling in love with his simple manner and bright disposition, she kept him for a time until he begged leave to return to his home to bid farewell to his family before returning to her. Plucking strands of her own hair, Alestid wove together this ring, which would allow Venn to woo the forest's guardian creatures into letting him pass.

Once free of the forest, Venn's family prevented him from returning; they viewed him as being under the spell of the fey creatures of the woods. The family bundled him up and shipped him off to a relative in a distant land, where he came to terms with his loss, grew old, and eventually died. Locals in the village where Venn lived whisper that the dryad waits for her lost love still, and sometimes lures incautious lads into the woods, hoping one will be Venn; such victims are never seen again.

PROPERTIES

This is a ring of animal friendship.

Faint enchantment; CL 3rd; Forge Ring, *charm animal*; Price 10,800 gp. EL 12. **Total Value:** 10,800 gp.

HISTORY

These rings were crafted by the jeweler Sofia Bregman, a notable master of her profession, for the hero Dammark Silversword and his wife Meilune. Their close friend Sadram, a priest of some repute, enchanted them with a magic to protect them in battle.

PROPERTIES

This is a matched pair of *rings of friend shield*.

Moderate abjuration; CL 10th; Forge Ring, *shield other*; Price 50,000 gp (for a pair). EL 18. **Total Value:** 50,000 gp.

89. Dante's Ring of Flight

APPEARANCE

This ring appears to have been woven from white and gray fibers in an intricate pattern of knotwork. A small, polished oval crystal of rose quartz has been set into the ring, carved into a cameo depicting a swan in flight.

HISTORY

The swanmay Inmue had this ring crafted for her lover, the human Dante Pellosari, so he might accompany her on her journeys through the wild lands where she lived. Their tale had a tragic end, for the ring's crafter, a hag named Dunwild, exacted a terrible price—the child of the two lovers. Dante swore to retrieve the child and sought out the hag's lair; he never returned from his crusade and it is said Inmue still wanders the desolate hinterlands, weeping for her lost love and child.

PROPERTIES

This ring grants its wearer the ability to fly at a speed of 60 feet, with a maneuverability of good. This speed drops to 40 feet if the wearer wears medium or heavy armor, or carries a medium or heavy load.

Moderate transmutation; CL 10th; Forge Ring, *fly*; Price 54,000 gp. EL 18. **Total Value:** 54,000 gp.

90. Cusps of Charming Glances

APPEARANCE

This pair of concave lenses is small, not much wider than the length of a fingernail. The outer surface of the lens is covered with minute facets, but the inside is smooth. Each

lens is no thicker than a sheet of fine-grade paper.

HISTORY

The gnome bard Spellbindle designed these lenses to make her travels easier, particularly when dealing with tight-fisted tavernkeepers and truculent patrons.

PROPERTIES

These small curved lenses are worn directly on the eyes, in the manner of contact lenses. When donned, the wearer's eyes glitter faintly with iridescent colors and the cusps function as *eyes of charming*.

Moderate enchantment; CL 7th; Craft Wondrous Item, Heighten Spell, *charm person*; Price 56,000 gp for the pair. EL 19. **Total Value:** 56,000 gp.

91. Ring of Spell Immunity

APPEARANCE

A large, thumbnail-sized translucent red gem has been set into this otherwise unadorned gold ring. The gem has a dark flaw running through its heart like a vein of shadow.

HISTORY

Sudi Benicar, "The Desert Rat," was a notorious crypt robber known primarily for his cowardice.

This ring was one of his most prized possessions, looted from a tomb when he was a youth, and he was never seen without it. He finally disappeared just a few years ago; how he became separated from his ring is unknown.

PROPERTIES

This ring grants immunity to a single spell of up to 4th level. To function, the word "Benicarius" must be spoken and the spell to be protected against cast with the ring as its target. Thereafter the wearer gains unbeatable SR against that specific spell. The ring provides no protection against spells that ignore spell resistance.

Moderate abjuration; CL 7th; Forge Ring, *spell immunity*; Price 56,000 gp. EL 19. **Total Value:** 56,000 gp.



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ITEM APPEARANCE

A smooth, pale blue stone the size of a child's thumbnail adorns the front of this polished silver wristband. Two smaller stones flank the central jewel, one pale green, the other light pink. The edges of the bracelet are raised and sculpted in a pattern resembling intertwined ivy vines.

ITEM PROPERTIES

The stones on this bracelet change color as the air temperature, humidity, and other factors in the natural environment change, granting its wearer a +10 circumstance bonus on Survival checks made to predict the weather. The bracelet can only predict natural weather, not that generated by supernatural means.

ITEM APPEARANCE

A series of tiny ornamental shields adorn the circumference of this copper ring, placed side-to-side and inlaid with colored semiprecious stones in red, blue, green, and white hues. Each shield bears a tiny, fanciful coat of arms, and no two shields are exactly the same in size or shape.

ITEM PROPERTIES

This ring functions as a *ring of protection* +1, granting a +1 deflection bonus to the wearer's armor class.

ITEM APPEARANCE

This smooth, black ring is made of a glossy, reflective black substance similar in appearance to obsidian, but with a slightly more resinous texture.

ITEM PROPERTIES

This ring functions as a *ring of sustenance*, with two exceptions. First, it needs to be exposed to natural daylight for at least four hours per day, or it goes dormant. Secondly, the wearer can activate the ring by an act of will as a standard action and gain the benefits of a *heroes' feast* spell (immune to fear and poison for 12 hours, 1d8+5 temporary hit points, +1 morale bonus on Will saves and attack rolls, and all sickness, disease, and nausea cured). Once this function has been activated, the ring becomes nonfunctional, and needs to be worn for a full week with daylight exposure each day as described above before it becomes functional again.

ITEM APPEARANCE

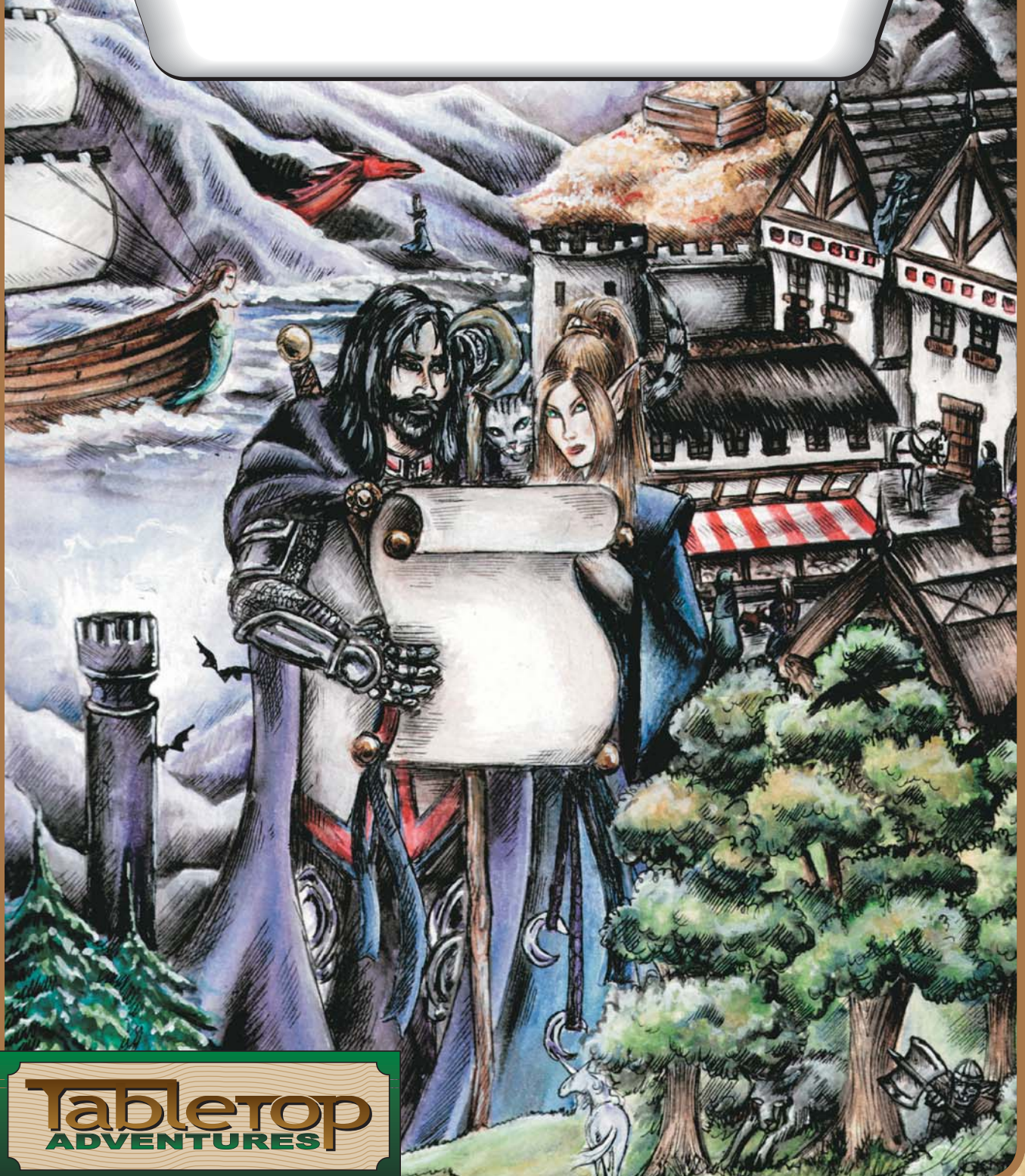
This thick jade ring is carved into simple rectangular patterns; a lozenge of glistening dark green stone has been set into its upper face. Raylike inclusions of gold thread their way through this stone's depths.

ITEM PROPERTIES

This ring functions as a *ring of feather falling*: if the wearer falls more than 5 feet, the wearer's rate of descent is reduced to 60 feet per round, and the wearer takes no falling damage upon landing.

Tabletop Adventures presents

Bits of the Boulevard



Tabletop
ADVENTURES



Bits of the Boulevard

Writers:

Christopher A. Field
K. H. Keeler
Randy Eliason
Daniel Brakhage
Martin Ralya
Rodney Lucas
John Walsh
Derek Kupper
Deborah Balsam
Christopher Welsh
Nicholas Brakhage
Mark Potter
Michael Kessler
Vicki Potter
Elizabeth Brakhage
Tyler Sherman

Artists:

Cover Artwork by
Gillian Pearce

Original Interior Artwork by
Jesus and Javier Carmona
Christine Griffin

Border Artwork by
Daniel Brakhage

Cover Layout by
Edward Wedig

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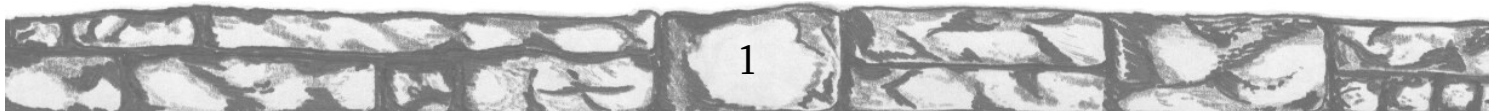
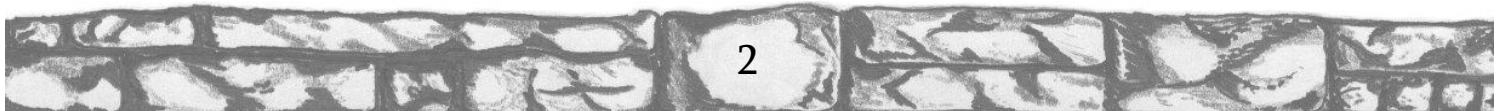




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14. A train of dwarven porters, conspicuous in their brilliant red leather jerkins and blue-dyed brewer's aprons, winds through the street. Each of the stout men carries a wooden ale cask on his shoulder, painted in a red and blue check pattern. The eldest dwarf calls out the name of the brewery to drum up interest. The chant of "Ten Keg Mountain ale" resounds through the street.



15. A merchant steps out of her shop just in front of you, clad in a deep red velvet gown. All of her fingers bear bejeweled rings, and a large emerald hangs around her neck. Six guards, each dressed in mail and bearing finely-crafted long swords that are emblazoned with a rose and an eagle, stand around her, glaring at townsfolk, and clearing a path to the merchant's coach. The coach itself is lacquered wood, stained the same deep red of her gown, and clearly cost more than many of the people nearby would earn in their lifetimes. A number of hands stretch up requesting coin, but they are quickly swatted away by the woman's guards as they seat her in the coach and ride off.

16. A fat tabby and a brightly colored iguana battle over scraps of beef fat under a butcher's window. So far, in a storm of hisses and swats, the plump cat seems to be winning the fight, while the butcher's small daughter watches from the window sill with delight.

17. "Ham pies! Get your ham pies here!" An unkempt man in a stained green tunic and red scarf calls out to the crowd. It looks as if he added the scarf as a way of trying to spruce up his appearance but he is one of those people who will never look neat no matter how hard he tries. "Ay there you folks look like you could use a bit of meat! Got to keep your strength up for fightin' dragons and all, eh?" [The man's name is Scotti and he is socially inept but he means no harm. Any conversation of more than a couple sentences is bound to elicit at least one politically incorrect, racist, or insensitive comment. There doesn't seem to be any malice behind it; he is just clueless. His meaty pies cost a laborer a day's wages.]

18. Across the street is an inn, but the sign is at an odd angle, so you can't make out the name of the establishment. Folks are entering with baggage and through the second floor window you can see a man shaving. Just in sight, off to the side of the building are what appear to be stables. This thought is punctuated by a loud crack, followed by a horse's whinny. You see a harried looking youth dart out of the stables, bent double and his arms over his head. Once a safe distance away he whirls back to face the stables and begins to shout. "Blast you, Firetounge, you near took my head off!" You hear Firetounge whinny again in reply. A couple of passers by laugh at the poor groom.

19. The sign of a windowless, red brick pub fascinates you for long seconds as you pass by. For those who can read, the finely-wrought iron sign proclaims the name of the place to be "The Vorpel," and the majority of the sign is taken up by a small puppet connected to a pinwheel. The metal shadow puppet depicts a miniature knight losing and regaining his head as the breeze stirs the pinwheel.



34. LIZARD – The chipped wooden corner of the building to your right is soaking up the afternoon sun, casting you in a shadow that seems cooler in comparison. From your position the jostling street crowd passes in clear view, voices and other noises washing over you. A slight movement draws your gaze back to the wooden beam; a small mottled green lizard has joined you. Its tiny tongue runs along its open eyes, considering.

As you watch, the creature quickly bends its legs, lowering its body a fraction, then straightens. Down, up. Down, up; it seems to be acting the fool just for your benefit.

"Watch it, you idiot!" The shout of a carriage driver sends the lizard hopping from its perch and scurrying for cover. In the street a young blond urchin dodges death from flying hooves as the carriage clatters on down the street. [This event could be good for one character alone. The GM could replace the shout with some other noise or happening, as appropriate.]

35. GAZING POOL – The alley [narrow street] opens up into a small plaza where the backs of six buildings meet. The ground is covered with mossy flagstones, and in the center of the plaza is a pool surrounded by a four-foot-high wall of stone. The top of the wall is covered with smooth, black pebbles, and many more rest at the bottom of the pool. The surface of the water is like polished glass. From the rooftops you can hear a flurry of wings beating and the cries of mourning doves.

36. DEBTORS' PRISON – A tall building looms ahead of you. Ravens clutter its towers with their glossy presence and taunt the people below with their cries. The building rises four stories above the din of the streets, the sun reflecting from its heavy, leaded windows. Thick ropes of ivy climb the stone walls of the building, lending a shaggy note of green to the otherwise gloomy edifice. A semicircular grill of iron bars is set in the side of the building at street level. Many pairs of filthy, pale hands grip the bars, and plaintive voices call for help, scraps of food, rinds of bread, freedom.

37. OUTDOOR ENTERTAINMENT – A troupe of red-vested fiddlers sits together in front of a small local tavern. They move aside for customers only grudgingly, often asking for a copper piece or two, more out of habit than need. Their fiddles sit on their shoulders, and they play sporadic bursts of popular drinking songs, than talk and laugh amongst themselves for a minute before returning to work tuning their instruments.

38. MINIATURE TOURNEY – A pair of wooden doors has been jury-rigged into a crude but sturdy table and the entire surface has been painted a velvety green. A small model of a knight's tourney has been set up; puppet kings and queens barely a foot high watch from tiny wooden stands. Stuffed squires polish wooden swords. A pair of small poodles, dressed in intricately-stitched barding that parodies the great knights of the land, have had doll knights strapped to their backs with thin carrots for lances. Every few minutes, the proprietor sets the dogs against each other, and they make their comically clumsy pass. For a few coppers you can watch all day, and the owner is even willing to take bets on the 'sport'.

39. PIGS TO THE SLAUGHTER – A human pig farmer, wrapped in mud-stained brown leathers and a dingy patterned cloak to ward off the night's chill, is leading a dozen of his fattest pigs to slaughter over their objections. Two of his burly sons, also dressed in the same distinct pattern, help the man herd the beasts through the narrow streets. A trio of well-fed sheep dogs keep the pigs on schedule for their appointment with the axe at the livestock market on the far edge of town.

40. NEW GALLOWS – Carpenters are busy putting the finishing touches on a gallows in front of the city hall. A prisoner in the jail next door shouts curses at the carpenters, and occasionally tosses old food or tiny rocks at them from his narrow slit of a window.





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Cities

I3

"Eel pastries! Get your eel and fish pastries here!" Up ahead a rather large, round peddler carries a deep wooden tray supported by straps that go over his shoulders and behind his neck. He catches your eye, [pick one of the characters]. **"Finest eel in town, wriggling only yesterday, baked into a fresh pastry with cheese and rare spices from the east! Care for a pastry?"** [The pastries are well made and look fresh. They are small, just large enough for a quick bite to eat for one person and cost a few coppers. The GM can tie the peddler to an inn by the docks/river/edge of town if desired, and use the fellow to guide characters to a specific location. His name is Japers.]

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Cities

I4

A train of dwarven porters, conspicuous in their brilliant red leather jerkins and blue-dyed brewer's aprons, winds through the street. Each of the stout men carries a wooden ale cask on his shoulder, painted in a red and blue check pattern. The eldest dwarf calls out the name of the brewery to drum up interest. The chant of "Ten Keg Mountain ale" resounds through the street.

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Cities

I5

A merchant steps out of her shop just in front of you, clad in a deep red velvet gown. All of her fingers bear jeweled rings, and a large emerald hangs around her neck. Six guards, each dressed in mail and bearing finely-crafted long swords that are emblazoned with a rose and an eagle, stand around her, glaring at townsfolk, and clearing a path to the merchant's coach. The coach itself is lacquered wood, stained the same deep red of her gown, and clearly cost more than many of the people nearby would earn in their lifetimes. A number of hands stretch up requesting coin, but they are quickly swatted away by the woman's guards as they seat her in the coach and ride off.

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Cities

I6

A fat tabby and a brightly colored iguana battle over scraps of beef fat under a butcher's window. So far, in a storm of hisses and swats, the plump cat seems to be winning the fight, while the butcher's small daughter watches from the window sill with delight.

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Cities

I7

"Ham pies! Get your ham pies here!" An unkempt man in a stained green tunic and red scarf calls out to the crowd. It looks as if he added the scarf as a way of trying to spruce up his appearance but he is one of those people who will never look neat no matter how hard he tries. **"Ay there you folks look like you could use a bit of meat! Got to keep your strength up for fightin' dragons and all, eh?"** [The man's name is Scotti and he is socially inept but he means no harm. Any conversation of more than a couple sentences is bound to elicit at least one politically incorrect, racist, or insensitive comment. There doesn't seem to be any malice behind it; he is just clueless. His meaty pies cost a laborer a day's wages.]

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Cities

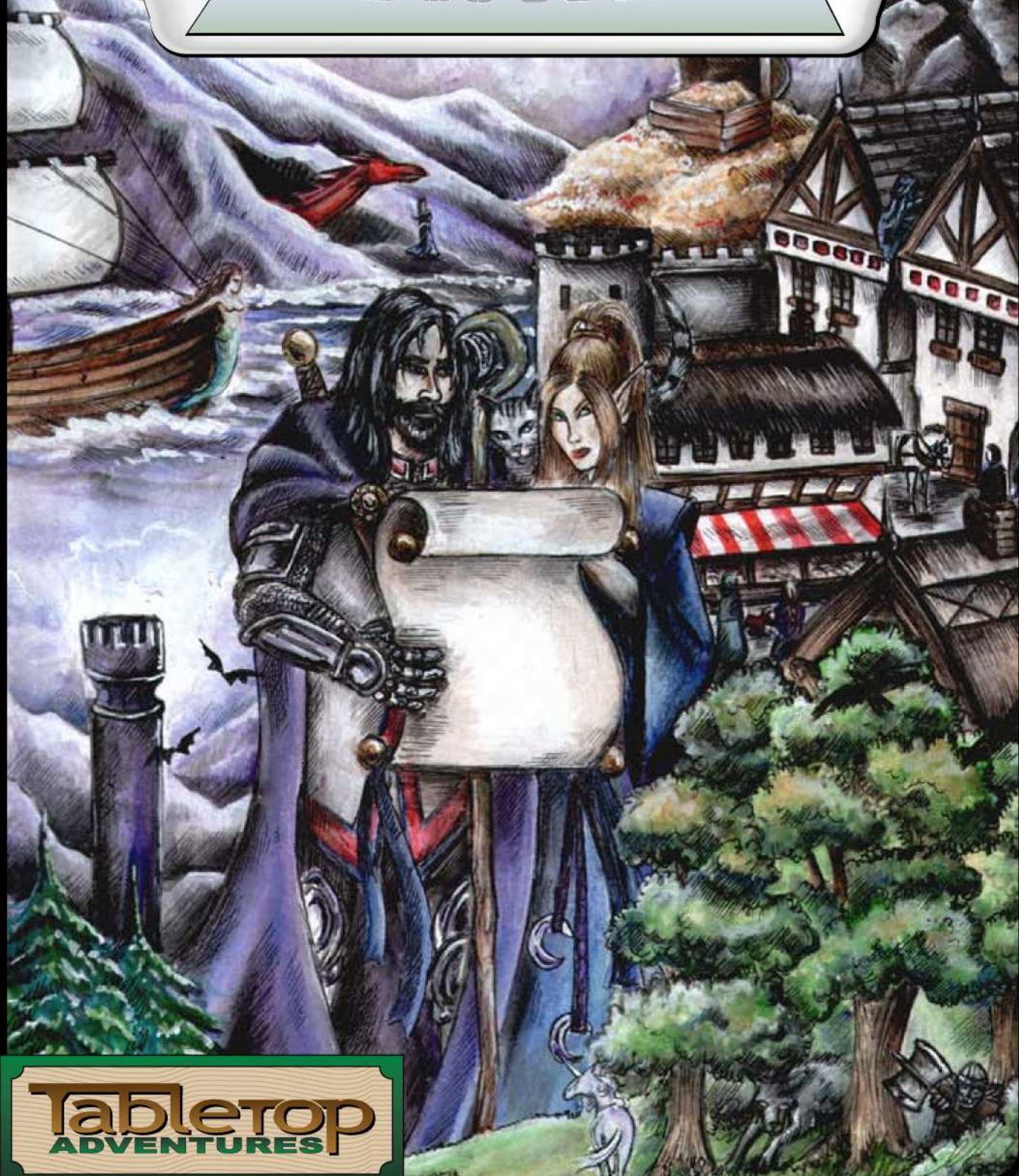
I8

Across the street is an inn, but the sign is at an odd angle, so you can't make out the name of the establishment. Folks are entering with baggage and through the second floor window you can see a man shaving. Just in sight, off to the side of the building are what appear to be stables. This thought is punctuated by a loud crack, followed by a horse's whinny. You see a harried looking youth dart out of the stables, bent double and his arms over his head. Once a safe distance away he whirls back to face the stables and begins to shout. "Blast you, Firetounge, you near took my head off!" You hear Firetounge whinny again in reply. A couple of passers by laugh at the poor groom.

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Tabletop Adventures presents

Bits of the Wilderness
**INTO THE
MOUNTAINS**



Tabletop
ADVENTURES



*Bits of the Wilderness*TM

Into the Mountains

Writers:

K. H. Keeler
Rodney Lucas
John Walsh
Nathan Douglas Paul
Matthew Lovell
Matthew Paisie
Kelly Roberts
Marcella Ganow
Lynne Mickley
Martin Greening
Nathan Mangion
Catherine Fenerty
Philip Fenerty
Vicki Potter
Taryn E. Potter

Editors:

Vicki Potter
Elizabeth Brakhage

Proofreaders:

Portions of this work were proofread by the following individuals. Any errors that remain are the sole responsibility of Tabletop Adventures.

Elizabeth M. Scott
John Henry Stam
T. W. Wombat

Layout:

Marcella Ganow

Cover Art:

Gillian Pearce
www.hellionsart.com

Cover Layout:

Edward Wedig
www.docbrown.net

Interior Art:

Jesus and Javier Carmona
www.CarmonaArt.com

Some clipart by: ©2008 Jupiterimages Corporation

Border Art:

Daniel Brakhage

Product Update Password:

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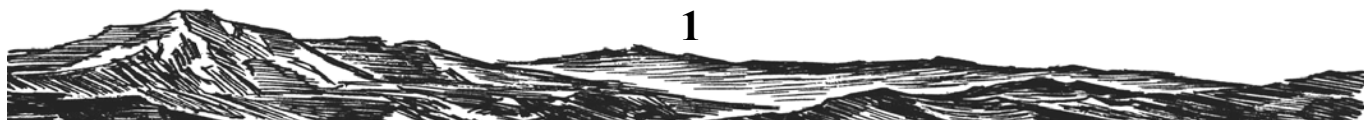
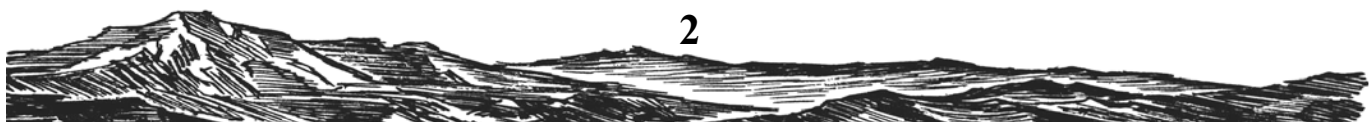





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fir with some of the toughest of the pines of lower elevations. Under them are fragrant evergreen shrubs. Squirrels chatter and dash out of sight and now and then you spot a mountain sheep on a rock face above you. Turning a corner, you find a big pine, still green, blocking the trail. It was clearly hit by lightning: the great trunk is split, and the two halves, each wider than a man's waist, are both sprawled across the path. The trunk is slightly blackened but not seriously burned. There is no easy way around; the great boulders and steep rock faces offer no alternate path.

- 53. The path ends at an open field, with grass tall enough to hide any markers which may have been left behind by previous travelers. A herd of deer graze in the distance and the field is lined by dead trees, their ancient trunks burned black from the constant lightning that strikes this region.**
- 54. A sudden rattle startles you and you look around just as a handful of small stones comes bouncing down the mountain ahead of you. They came from somewhere high above but there is no sign of what caused them to fall like that. The rest of the rocks on the slope seem stable, but of course that was what you thought before that little shower of stones.**
- 55. The narrow, steep trail that you are on opens to a small clearing. Two other heavily overgrown paths converge here, and lead to a final short passage out to a large flat rock overlooking the foothills [optionally: and the ocean beyond]. On this rock, standing like silent sentinels, are massive stone arches connected by a series of low stone walls. Bits of partially burned, rotting wood can still be found pressed into the bottom-most wall crevices. This abandoned structure, perhaps once a fortress or a grand house, frames the**

view of the cottony clouds below, which hover over the dark foothills [optionally: and sparkling blue ocean with its far coastal islands]. [The cool, moist air blowing up the coast will continue to decay the remnants of this structure's framework, leaving just the bare skeleton to slowly erode away in time.]

- 56. The path's incline is steep, but only for a short distance; it widens as the terrain flattens out on a mesa. Trees are thick at this elevation, providing shade from the burning sun and at least some shelter from the afternoon rains.**
- 57. This hillside is thick with plant life, but several patches of it are brown and dead for no apparent reason. The air feels damp, even though the sun is out and shining down through gaps in the clouds. Very few birds are in the area, only a few harshly squawking crows. There is a distant rumble, as though the puffy white clouds overhead are about to start pouring rain down. The crows squawk even louder and take off, flapping their wings frantically as they climb into the sky. Suddenly a white gout of steam sprays up from the middle of a patch of dead bushes, casting a geyser of brown leaves and boiling water into the air. [The disturbance can be a single geyser, the first in a series of geysers, or the start of a cataclysmic eruption.]**
- 58. The sun peeking through the trees warms the forested hill that you are climbing [descending]. You continue onward and soon a cool scent of damp earth fills your senses as you enter an area that is strangely devoid of almost anything but tall grass. Several tree stumps stand about knee high in this open area, indicating that this place once had trees like the rest of the hill. You notice a moss on the stumps, a strange growth that is rough to the touch, many different shades of green, and with the earthy smell of decay.**

38. *View from the Summit*

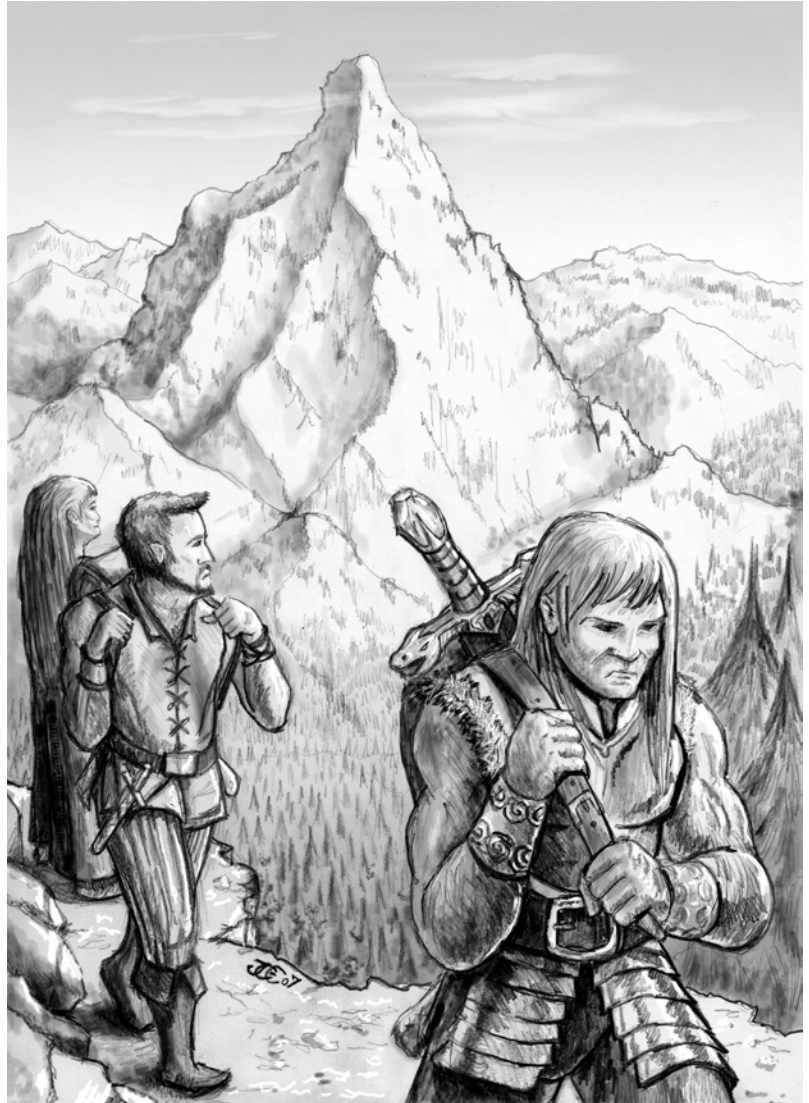
Finally you reach the summit! Wind and water have carved the highest peak of the mountain into an almost humanoid likeness, though any details are hidden beneath a thick layer of snow and icicles. There is little room to stand, much less safely make camp – the ground here is irregular and far from level, a solid mass of gray rock cracked in places by eons of exposure to the elements. Below you stretches a panoramic vista quite unlike any other you have seen. Streams and rivers that begin their lives in this very mountain lead to settlements which are faint and distant, little more than gray points along the ground. [optional: Perhaps this is what it feels like to be a god, looking down on the world from the heavens.]

39. *Snowy Peak*

You step into the fine white snow and your boots sink in deep, crunching through the layers of the small flattened peak. Around you a cold wind blows, sending shivers up and down your spine. Your tracks are very detectable here, or they would be, if any would brave this height. On the other side of the clearing the mountain descends very fast, much too steep to climb down and made worse by the coat of ice that covers it. As dangerous as it looks, it is also very pretty, the way the sun shines directly onto it, sending forth rays tipped in prismatic colors. A better way down the slope lies to your right, a more gradual grade that has obviously been used before as you see stakes and wooden slats driven into the rock. The slats are covered in snow and ice but look sturdy. Chipping away the ice should not take long.

40. *Below the Tree Line*

You descend, now below the fluffy clouds. They block the sun and close off your view of the heights. You move into a moist, cool green vale, an environment very different from the bare exposures of just an hour before.




41. *Mountain Pass*

The dull roar you have heard for the past hour has steadily grown louder, amplified by the gray stone walls of the pass as they inch together. You look up and still see a small strip of blue far above. A tiny speck glides from the right cliff, passing out of sight on the left. Mist begins to pelt your face as you edge closer to the top of the pass.

42. *Switchback Path*

You continue traveling and come to a simple pathway carved from the rock of the mountain, leading upward in a switchback





pattern, increasing the distance to travel, though making the rise more manageable. The trees have become sparser here, though tough shrubs and other alpine plants are still prevalent. The path rises some distance before teetering into nothingness, its construction forgotten or perhaps abandoned. [Plants and trees encountered in the area can include foxtail pine, devil's club, houseleek, larch, and arnica (which is known as a pain-relieving herb).]

43. *Waterfall*

The air is light here and difficult to catch in your lungs; headaches are common and the icy air is occasionally painful to breathe. Blood rushes through your ears – well, it sounds like that, but the sound continues for longer than seems possible. Eventually you realize that the noise is external rather than internal. It comes



from somewhere else, somewhere above you. When you look up to see what the disturbance can be, you feel a few drops of water on your forehead. The noise is from a waterfall, still far away but obviously powerful; it seems to be directly ahead of you. The path continues and you follow it as you must. The noise of the splashing water waxes until it drowns out all normal conversation. [If animals are present:] Your animals become nervous and skittish, tossing their heads. They require careful handling before they can be persuaded to continue. [The waterfall can be a peril or simply be close to the path. If it is a peril, then it should not be too dangerous unless its course has been changed for malevolent purposes, for the path would not have been wrought from the mountain so close to a dangerous phenomenon.]

44. *Overgrown Terraces*

The massive networks of vines and creepers on the mountainside do little to hide the fact that it was terraformed at some point. They hang like leafy curtains over the edges of each terrace, giving the mountain an oddly hairy look. Underfoot the ground is soft and loamy. In places you can see food plants competing for sunlight against the rampantly growing vines, evidence that someone used this area for cultivation in the past. When you look around you can see similar titanic staircases cut into neighboring slopes, though they are mostly overgrown as well. Wide swathes of gray and brown stone devoid of green shrubbery show where rockslides or floods scoured the mountain clean. [Terracing mountains to provide fields was a practice common to pre-modern mountain-dwellers in the Andes and parts of China, and probably other places as well.]

45. *Wayhouse*

As the mountain path continues to wind its way around the endless rock, thoughts of mortality are never far away. Falling off an icy precipice, breaking a leg and starving, attack by some fierce mountain tribe sneaking up from below the ground or giant eagles swooping down from above all seem equally possible. Off the trail, into the woods a few



Adventuring in the Mountains

by Dr. K. H. Keeler

Creating Distinctive Mountain Ranges

Interesting mountains are much more than just very large hills with a higher frequency of encounters. Do we make our mountain ranges very different from other terrain so that people get the feel of mountains? If your characters were suddenly teleported into the mountains would they be able to tell which of your world's mountain ranges they were in just from your description?

In the real world, anyone who has been to the Rocky Mountains and the Appalachian Mountains in North America realizes that the characteristics of those ranges are very different. And these ranges also have a different feel than the Swiss Alps or the Atlas Mountains of Northern Africa. Even among the Atlas Mountains there is a dramatic difference between the High Atlas and the Saharan Atlas ranges.

What follows is Tabletop Adventures' offering to help the Harried Game Master make creative and distinct mountain ranges for his or her game for the enjoyment of all. This article is specifically designed to get you thinking about your own mountain ranges. You can read through the material until you get an idea that sparks your imagination, or (if you are in a hurry or want complete mountain ideas) you can use one of the Mountain Terrain Kits at the end and go with that. Whatever method you decide to use, we hope that this article will help you create vivid imagery and hours of fun as you consider... Mountains!

The Overlord

A Bit about Mountains

Mountains are found throughout the world. They are built by uplifting when great landmasses collide, by volcanic action, or by both at once. Mountains reach great heights and then erode away.

Mountains are Barriers. 1) Mountains form barriers to rivers. Often a continental divide runs along a mountain range, with rivers on one side running east or south to one ocean and on the other side running west or north to a quite

different ocean. 2) Mountains form barriers to rain. Large air masses drop the water they are carrying as they rise. Over the summit, the descending air masses are dry and can only make the land drier. This can produce rain forests on one slope and desert on the other. 3) Mountains are barriers to animals and plants. Species common on one side may be totally absent from the other. Alternatively, a species may split into two varieties, with, for example, black leopards on one side and white leopards on the other. Most important: 4) Mountains are barriers to commerce. Goods, animals and people cannot move over an area of mountains as easily as most other land. If there is a good pass, then commerce will be deflected to this one route. If not, travelers and haulers must detour around the mountains.

Mountains Environments are Different. Climbing into the mountains, the adventurers encounter environments not found in the plains or forests below. Temperatures drop steadily with increased elevation. The growing season gets steadily shorter. Mountains generally form zones—montane, with moderate altitude forest; subalpine, with high elevation trees; and alpine, above the tree line. The zones are broad if the slope is gradual or narrow if the slopes are steep. Drier mountains have much the same zones as wet ones, but the number and identity of the plants and animals (and monsters) may be different.

Mountains are Dangerous Places. For gaming, mountains are wonderful places to adventure. The elevational changes make getting places difficult. Lack of settlement facilitates the presence of large wild animals or monsters and there are many hazards to mountain travel, ranging from avalanches to flash floods.

People of the Mountains

The natives of mountains can be anything from barbarians to ancient civilizations. Traditional elves may live in the forests and dwarves mine the rock. Bandits, 'mountain men' hunting in isolation, prospectors seeking instant wealth, trappers with their bundles of pelts, druids worshipping among the great trees, herders of sheep or goats, and hermits praying in mountain caves might all be encountered.

Mountain areas can be farmed, usually by terracing the hillsides to create relatively flat ground. However, soil is produced slowly and easily erodes away on slopes. Mountains start off without soil and develop it only over centuries, while soil increase is opposed by erosion. The



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Bits of the Mountains - Cards

The following pages contain a series of cards for in-game use. The cards contain the Bits descriptions in an easy-to-use format. These cards can be mixed and matched with other Tabletop Adventures fantasy Shards and Bits products.

*** Permission is granted to photocopy Bits of the Mountains Card pages for personal use. ***



Into the Mountains

55

The narrow, steep trail that you are on opens to a small clearing. Two other heavily overgrown paths converge here, and lead to a final short passage out to a large flat rock overlooking the foothills [optionally: and the ocean beyond]. On this rock, standing like silent sentinels, are massive stone arches connected by a series of low stone walls. Bits of partially burned, rotting wood can still be found pressed into the bottom-most wall crevices. This abandoned structure, perhaps once a fortress or a grand house, frames the view of the cottony clouds below, which hover over the dark foothills [optionally: and sparkling blue ocean with its far coastal islands]. [The cool, moist air blowing up the coast will continue to decay the remnants of this structure's framework, leaving just the bare skeleton to slowly erode away in time.]

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Into the Mountains

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This hillside is thick with plant life, but several patches of it are brown and dead for no apparent reason. The air feels damp, even though the sun is out and shining down through gaps in the clouds. Very few birds are in the area, only a few harshly squawking crows. There is a distant rumble, as though the puffy white clouds overhead are about to start pouring rain down. The crows squawk even louder and take off, flapping their wings frantically as they climb into the sky. Suddenly a white gout of steam sprays up from the middle of a patch of dead bushes, casting a geyser of brown leaves and boiling water into the air. [The disturbance can be a single geyser, the first in a series of geysers, or the start of a cataclysmic eruption.]

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Into the Mountains

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The tree stop and the path here narrows and stretches across a steep hillside filled with flat shards of dark gray rock [shale]. The flat surfaces of the rocks glisten in the sun and the edges appear sharp. [Shale makes for unsteady footing.] Above the path you can see the field of rocks extend upward to a vertical bluff where thin layers of the dark rock have crumbled away. The rock field extends down the steep hillside for a good piece before the trees re-establish their foothold. [If members of the party misstep as they cross the field, they risk sliding uncontrollably down the slope. At a minimum, exposed skin and thin fabric would be cut up and torn by the rock.]

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Into the Mountains

56

The path's incline is steep, but only for a short distance; it widens as the terrain flattens out on a mesa. Trees are thick at this elevation, providing shade from the burning sun and at least some shelter from the afternoon rains.

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Into the Mountains

58

The sun peeking through the trees warms the forested hill that you are climbing [descending]. You continue onward and soon a cool scent of damp earth fills your senses as you enter an area that is strangely devoid of almost anything but tall grass. Several tree stumps stand about two feet high in this open area, indicating that this place once had trees like the rest of the hill. You notice a moss on the stumps, a strange growth that is rough to the touch, many different shades of green, and with the earthy smell of decay.

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Into the Mountains

60

Somewhat ahead of you and across a deep valley you see what looks like a ruined fortress. Three large walls of dark rock stand but the area between them has fallen to about half their height. The tops, once certainly uniform in height, are visibly irregular from erosion. You know of no one who might have built a fortress here—no current defenders and no ancient civilizations. As the trail continues up along the ridge, you realize that the fortress is far too large to have been built by humans. It is massive: twenty, perhaps forty, times the height of a man. The walls, too, are huge: surely many paces thick. [Perhaps the walls are actually a natural formation, where a section of an old mountain has eroded to form the appearance of ruined walls, or perhaps not.]

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Bits of the Wilderness™

Into the Open

Writers:

K. H. Keeler
Marcella Ganow
Steve Honeywell
John Walsh
D. J. Burnett
Martin Ralya
Vicki Potter
Christopher Heard
Thaddeus Papke

Project Manager:

Elizabeth Brakhage

Editors:

Jen Schoonover
Elizabeth Brakhage

Layout:

Marcella Ganow

Cover Art:

Gillian Pearce
www.hellionsart.com

Cover Layout:

Edward Wedig
www.docbrown.net

Interior Art:

Jesus and Javier Carmona
www.CarmonaArt.com

Some clipart by: ©2006 Jupiterimages Corporation

Border Art:

Daniel Brakhage

Photography:

Heidi Hillhouse
Marcella Ganow
Timothy Ganow

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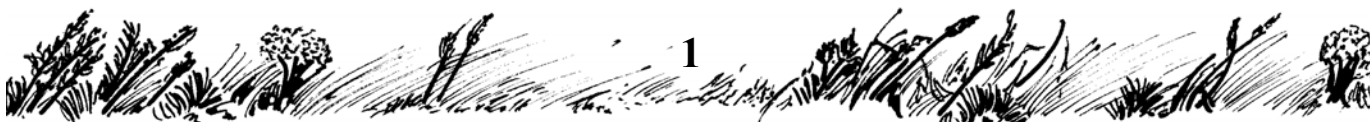
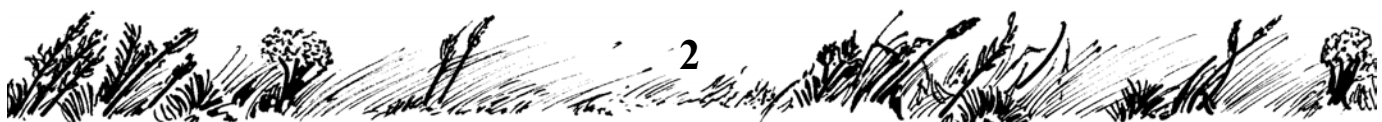




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Bits of the Plains

General

01 It is hard to have a sense of distance here. You walk a hundred steps, a thousand steps, ten thousand steps, and yet the land seems unchanged. You pass over a hill and down the slope and up the next rolling hill but the horizon is the same. There are no features and no satisfactory ways to tell your progress. The sun rises higher, reaches its zenith, and then sinks westward but your travel is still between unchanging walls of stalks and leaves. The grasses wave in the breeze all the way to the horizon, as they did first thing in the morning. The sky is a great blue and white bowl overhead, the land barely more than flat in all directions under the encompassing dome.

02 A spray of colorful flowers interrupts the otherwise monotonous greenish-brown of the tall prairie grasses. The rippling petals range from a deep blood red to an almost glowing orange. A gentle intermittent buzzing sound alerts you to the presence of bees flitting around the stand of wildflowers. [If the PCs get close enough to smell the flowers:] The flowers have an intense, tangy aroma, a smell that somehow evokes the taste of a strong fruit juice. [The bees probably signal the presence of a nearby hive where the PCs could find honey. At the GM's option, the flowers could be poisonous, or useful in some way to herbalists.]

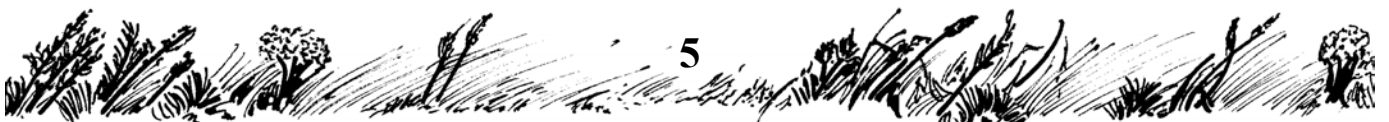
03 Single file is the only form of travel that makes any sense in the unbroken grassland. The first person forces the grass apart and begins the process of making a path. The farther back you are in the line the easier the going because the grass is more trampled when you get to it. The one in the lead finds it hard work in the relentless sun. There is little air movement where you stand surrounded by the tall grass, even though the wind makes the plant tops dip and dance, and you drip with perspiration. You have to watch your water because there are few streams. Behind


you the path you took lies as a conspicuous line across the plain.

04 A dome of royal blue sky stretches overhead, as if a gigantic bowl has been set upon the rim of the earth. White and blue clouds rim the



horizon, alive with light and shadow; there will be no storms today. The grass carpet before you is emerald green with a relief of knee high grasses interrupting the smooth expanse. The patches of knee high grasses are a mixture of green and rust colored plants. A small band of wild horses grazes upon the low-growing emerald green patches, avoiding the rust colored plants for more succulent morsels. The breeze is fresh and clean on your face. [The wild horses will be almost impossible to catch unless the adventurers have a very skilled animal handler among them.]





26 After traveling for hours [a time] through the open spaces, you come upon a band of trees. Crunching through the undergrowth, you begin to descend by bits. Picking your way down the bluffs is tedious. Fog rises around you as you progress. You continue forward through the mists, until you find yourself at the bank of a river. Fog floats across the surface of the waters. What you can see through the gray is a hazy reflection of the trees on either bank as well as the sky above. In the distance, a man fishes from the furthest bank, a dark-gray shadow in the fog. If you were to shout, he could not hear you as he is too far away. The air is heavy with the stillness.

27 The trail climbs a slight rise and for three paces you cross an old road. The solid roadbed still holds large paving stones in place. Grass has grown close on each side and a few blades reach up between the stones. The road surface is laid of big limestone blocks that must have been hauled a long distance. They stand out oddly here, where soil is a fine dark dirt with few stones of any size. Standing on the road, you can see it once stretched east and west [north and south] in a straight line, cutting across hills and valleys without regard to the terrain. A huge crew of workers and animals must have labored a long time to lay it. It lies like an ancient leg bone, pale, neglected and overgrown by grasses. Whatever it connected is no longer there. You step down onto the soft trail and leave the old road behind.

28 Tan hills rise in the distance, placing a boundary on the plains stretching out before you. Far off, you can make out a tent, a couple stocky brown horses with black manes, and their keeper. A bed of river rock cuts its way through the grassy expanse. The river is currently dry, but you can see where the spring rains have cut away soil at each bend of the wash. The soil is as black as can be. The grass here is sparse, but green. It would make for adequate short-term grazing. [This area is suitable for summer pastures, but water is scarce

right now. The boy tending the horses has nothing of value, nor does he have much useful information. He is resistant to give up the horses as his family has little else in the way of possessions. Flash flooding is possible if a sudden rainstorm were to arise.]

29 You come to a place where the trail you are on crosses another road. Your track has been wide enough to accommodate a cart comfortably. It is pockmarked with hoof prints made in wet weather and irregularly scraped by the wheel tracks of carts. The road crossing your path is more than twice as wide as the trail you are on and is scraped clear of all plants. By comparison, a few hardy weeds, some flattened and broken, manage to grow on your trail. The other path is furthermore sunk almost ankle deep compared to the surrounding grassland. Looking up and down, it you see nothing and no one. Along it, broken grass blades suggest that something passed by quite recently.



30 A sudden break in the prairie reveals a narrow lane stretching to the left and right. To the left, the road curves away almost immediately, but you can see where it winds through the grass to the distance. It is straighter to the right, heading off into the horizon. It looks like an old path, with well-worn grooves from passing horse carts and wagons. Low weeds and thistles line the road on both sides, giving way to the taller grasses just a few feet past.



18 *A Canyon through the Grass*

You have come to an area where the trail is clearly not frequently used, because while it is easy to see where the path goes, the grass is only knocked down. No open space without plants exists. Instead, travelers have broken enough plants to make a canyon through the shoulder-high tall grass. These leaves are large for a grass plant, and very long, reaching to even tall men's chins. Stalks that will hold seeds, still green now, stick up another handspan or two. In some places you cannot see more than a few feet ahead because the grasses block the view. You tromp onward, beating down the grass even more and working harder than you prefer to travel because the trail is neither open nor level. The wind whispers through the grass, making it move and concealing any sounds that might warn you of the presence of others.

19 *A Ruined Temple*

You see a strange shape sticking up out of the ground ahead of you. From this distance, you cannot quite make out the details, but it looks like a building of some sort. As you approach, the shape becomes more distinct. It is a ruined temple of some sort, and from the look of things, it has been abandoned for dozens of years. Only part of one wall remains, standing grimly over the rubble strewn around the site. A single stone staircase leads six or seven feet into the air, ending at nothing. Planks and timbers stick up from the ruin randomly. The entire site is strewn with stones that vary in size from pebbles to blocks too large for anyone to lift. [There is nothing of value here. The temple fell into disrepair and ruin more than 100 years ago, and any valuables have long since been taken away. Any character knowledgeable about religion can guess that this may have been a temple to a local nature god.]

20 *Stone Obelisk*

You first spot it on the horizon, where it looks like a tall finger pointing in the air. The closer you come, the more you realize the scale of the thing, which is the height of five men in total. It is an obelisk, a huge standing stone

erected by some long-vanished people for unknown reasons. Although tall it is narrow and little more than three paces wide or deep. The narrowness of the obelisk makes it look as if a strong gust of wind would surely knock it down yet it seems to have been standing there for a long time, judging by the smoothness of the stone from which all traces of any pattern or inscription seem to have been completely eroded. It is impossible to tell where the stone originated or how far it was dragged here by its creators. [If desired, the obelisk could be reached at dawn, dusk or a time of equinox when it points directly to the sun, moon or other astronomical phenomenon.]

Animals

21 *Spooking the herd*

The land rises to your right, and silhouetted against the horizon about a mile away is a herd of grazing animals. They are too far away to see exactly what they are or to count



them precisely, but there are at least three dozen of them. You are, perhaps fortunately, upwind of the herd. Most of the animals are the size of adults, but you can see a few younger ones milling about. [If the party approaches, they find the animals are a typical of the area. If an adventurer approaches within one-quarter mile, read the following:] **The largest member of the herd snorts and raises its head to look at you. It stands completely still, and even from this distance you can hear it breathing heavily. After a few seconds, other members of the herd stop grazing and turn to look at you as well. Suddenly, as a single organism, the entire herd turns and races away from you as fast as it can, disappearing over the far side of the hill.**





The Many Faces of the Plains

Into the Open

Where is “the open?” Usually, where the adventurers are taller than the plants. That eliminates almost all forests. Ecologists recognize several non-forested land ecosystems; grasslands, tundra, and desert are the primary examples of this type of ecosystem. This book was written mainly about grasslands. The central United States; southern South America; eastern Russia; western Asia; large sections of Africa; and much of Australia were grasslands before settlement. Much of it still is because corn, rice, wheat, and sorghum are all cultivated grasses. These regions are characterized by a community of plants that are herbs (that is, not woody, neither trees nor shrubs) and that die back to the ground each winter. In particular, the dominant plants are grasses. Tundra and desert are open areas too; some of these descriptions will apply to tundra in midsummer and some to desert, especially after the brief rainy season, but mostly we were imagining grasslands when we wrote these descriptions.

About Grasses

Grasslands are open because they lack trees. Many grassland regions are too dry for trees to survive, but other historic grasslands have plenty

of rain for trees; they become treeless because of wild fires. Grasslands share periods of drought (not necessarily long ones) in which everything dries out and wildfires sweep across the land. Grasses usually have leaves that begin at or under the ground (which is why mowing a lawn has to be done so often!); while trees, shrubs and most herbs grow from growing points (meristems) in the air. Consequently, if a fire burns a shrub or tree, the plant is set back substantially. The grass blade’s growing point is rarely burned and so continues to grow. Therefore if a prairie burns during the growing season, in a week it looks like a well-tended golf course.



Grass fires run before the wind, consuming the grass blades quickly. A big prairie fire will dry out the grass with its heat, so green grass burns almost as well as dead grass, although it is much smokier. Most historic grassland areas are flat or have rolling hills, so a fire burns for miles, sometimes hundreds of miles. Rivers in flat, relatively dry areas are often small and low, posing no barrier to a wind-driven fire. Only really big rivers, such as the Mississippi in North America, are broad enough that a prairie fire cannot jump over them.

Grasslands, then, occur where it is either too dry for trees or where fire keeps trees out. They





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Into the Open

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The trail here is packed and open. Plants are trying to retake the path, but they have been broken by the regular passage of men, beasts and carts, so they are low and trampled. On either side of you, the grass stands as high as a tall man's shoulder, creating a wall of leaves, that bends at the slight pressure of the winds. The land is relatively flat, rolling in long gentle hills. From the higher spots you can see the grassland stretching ahead of you as far as the eye can see, getting dimmer in the distance until the horizon merges with the sky. Flocks of small birds whistle and sing from the tops of the grass stalks, their calls like so many shards of glass.

Into the Open

26

After traveling for hours [a time] through the open spaces, you come upon a band of trees. Crunching through the undergrowth, you begin to descend by bits. Picking your way down the bluffs is tedious. Fog rises around you as you progress. You continue forward through the mists, until you find yourself at the bank of a river. Fog floats across the surface of the waters. What you can see through the gray is a hazy reflection of the trees on either bank as well as the sky above. In the distance, a man fishes from the furthest bank, a dark-gray shadow in the fog. If you were to shout, he could not hear you as he is too far away. The air is heavy with the stillness.

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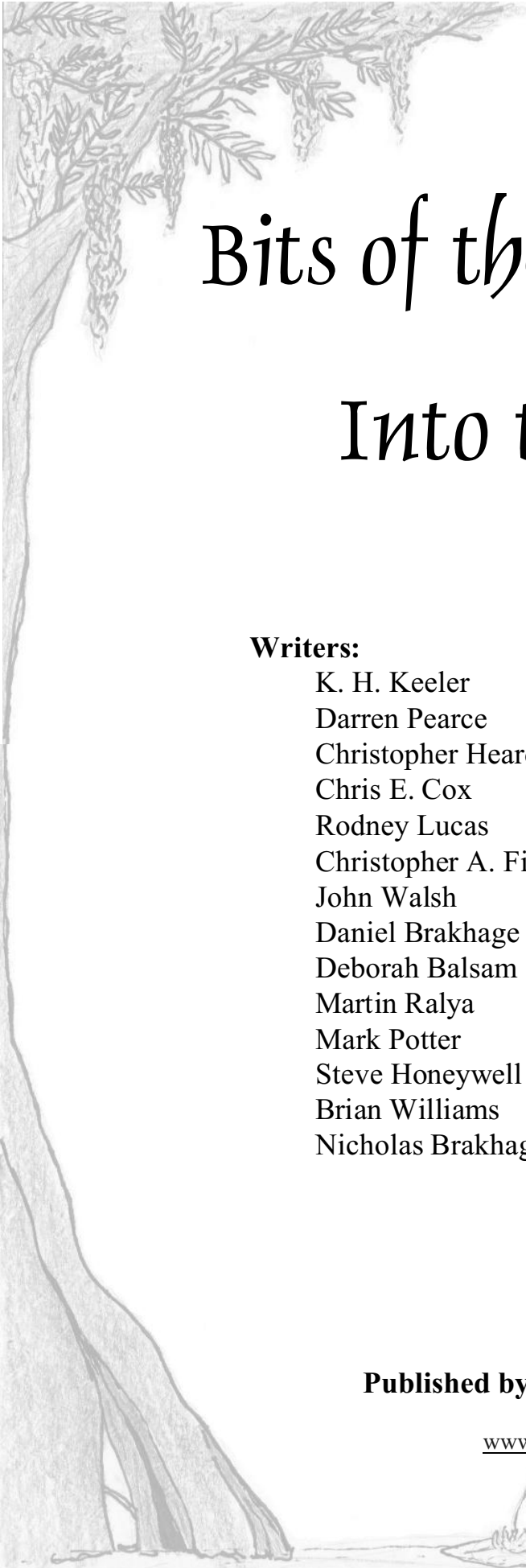
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Bits of the Wilderness™:

Into the Swamp

Writers:

K. H. Keeler
Darren Pearce
Christopher Heard
Chris E. Cox
Rodney Lucas
Christopher A. Field
John Walsh
Daniel Brakhage
Deborah Balsam
Martin Ralya
Mark Potter
Steve Honeywell
Brian Williams
Nicholas Brakhage

Artists:

Cover Artwork

Gillian Pearce

Original Interior Artwork

Gillian Pearce

Cover Layout

Edward Wedig

Border Artwork

Daniel Brakhage

Editors:

Vicki Potter
Jen Schoonover

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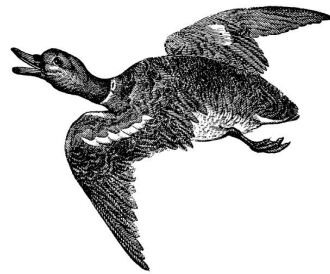
44. The trail is very level, passing a hands-breadth above the water. The water laps quietly at its shores, little ripples passing out into the green expanse. It would be very easy walking [riding] except for two things: fallen logs and wet spots. Tree branches often lie in the path. Most can be walked [ridden] through with little effort, but others need to be moved. Occasionally they are so big that they are impassible without cutting or breaking many branches. In wet spots, the water is over or under the path. The first is far preferable: you splash through noisome green water for a few steps, and then up onto firmer soil. In the latter case, however, the path sinks beneath your [your horses'] feet, covering them with mud, but also slowly sinking so that you are not sure you could get out of there if you were not moving steadily forward.

45. The trail is flooded. The water seems shallow although it is too turbid to see the ground through it. Your feet stir it up and turn the thick gray-green mud into watery slush. It is slippery and sticky at the same time. In places your foot sinks deeply and you have to stop to pull it out. The deep mud grabs your foot, requiring a hard jerk before the mud lets go with a *shloop*. The smell is a gag-inducing blast of rotten eggs.

46. The atmosphere is very moist, and the humidity makes all your possessions damp. It also allows mosses to grow over all the fallen logs and on horizontal branches. Most of the moss is also damp to touch. There are plants growing on many of the relatively level branches, little rosettes of thick leaves which form a small cup in the center. They seem to be rooted only in the moss, or perhaps nothing at all. [If the adventurers investigate these plants they will discover that the cup-like center holds water, often with larval insects wriggling in it.] Plants dangle from other branches, thin threadlike stems that form a chaotic net and grow out so that they drip from the tree branches like a shawl on an elderly

aunt. [These plants are epiphytes (air plants), which take water out of the air to grow.]

47. A tall tree leans from a base close to the trail over the soggy, partly flooded ground. A small animal dashes up the shaggy gray trunk as you near, chattering noisily. You get a fleeting impression of gray fur, a round face and a bushy tail. It disturbs the broad triangular emerald-green leaves of a huge vine that twists around the tree trunk. The leaves continue to flutter after the animal has moved past them, higher up the trunk. It disappears, first under the vine and then into the tree's canopy. Its noise is audible long after you can no longer see it or even guess its actual position, warning all of your presence.



48. The regular splashing of the water is broken by a sudden explosion of noise and a flurry of flying, brownish feathers. A duck bursts across the route ahead and veers wildly into the sky. Its quacks echo across the swamp and attract the attentions of rats and other small creatures, which dive into the water with a succession of splashes. [A mother duck has left her nest undefended to try to distract the adventurers. Anyone who looks carefully at the place where the duck emerged should be able to find the nest and some tasty duck eggs inside.]

49. The air thickens and darkens as the weather changes and the temperature drops. It is difficult to tell whether it is raining or not because of the intense humidity in the air. It makes everything from clothes to weapons to torches feels slimy and unclean. An owl hoots disconsolately somewhere in the grey, sunless landscape and, with no clear landmarks to be seen, it is almost impossible to be sure which direction is which.

stumps. The plants are skunk cabbage, which smells like decaying flesh. Many insects frequent these plants due to the smell. The characters will more than likely search around the plants because of the smell. You can hide something there if you like or perhaps have an encounter with a giant bug that comes bursting out of the water.]

34. *Swamp Description*

The ground is extremely moist here and mud squishes out from under your feet with every step. The air is rather humid and stagnant. Numerous cypress trees, with large bases that taper to the top, surround you with low hanging branches and vines, causing the area to be rather dim. Various light-green and yellow shrubs fill in the gaps among the trees, and the tiny pale-green leaves of duckweed covers the countless pools of water. Small ripples appear here and there in the pools as water drips from the rain sodden vegetation. You hear different types of birds whistling and chirping their colorful tunes. Several frogs can be heard belching in the distance, while a number of large swarms of mosquitoes, dragonflies, and other flying insects buzz around your head loudly. A large alligator splashes into the water several yards in front of you, as it realizes your presence. [There are many types of cypress trees; the ones described here are cypress vine trees, which in summertime sprout pretty red flowers with yellow stamen. Duckweeds are the smallest of flowering plants, and the little flowers are a light yellow in color and are hard to see unless you look intently. These plants grow while floating in still or slow-moving fresh water, except in the coldest regions. The alligator may be used as an encounter if desired.]



35. *Forgotten Shrine*

The hanging moss and drooping tree branches part to reveal a small clearing next to a moving stream of clear water. You can actually hear the sound of the water moving as it swirls past a small statue of a man. Fashioned from dark marble, the figure is carved with an ornate suit of armor, sword and shield. Lichen and moss cling to its base, swayed by the motion of the water rippling past. Even a few golden fish dance beneath the sunlight-dappled surface as the birds sing a cheerful song above. This seems to be the only place in the swamp-land where the choking torrents of green slime and brackish water do not touch, as if it's protected by magic or another force – even the air smells fresher.

45. *Aftermath of a Battle (winter)*

The winter's touch on this swamp-land is apparent from the leafless trees that stand like crooked old men, hunched and spindly in their bare branches. A light dusting of white covers every surface and the temperature is enough to turn a person's breath to mist with each exhalation. Half-drowned in the mud and water are the remains of a battle, the time indeterminate as the shells of armor and the shards of weapons lie scattered about, now being covered by snow. Tendrils of frost-browned weeds wrap thickly around a partially sunken skeleton of a humanoid, hands still clutching desperately at the air.

46. *Swamp Shelter, Autumn*

You come to an open area where the swamp's waters are thick with pale green algae and detritus. Brightly colored leaves from the changing trees beyond float upon the shallow water, and cosses of rushes and



cattails rise up every two feet. Up ahead a fallen tree is half-sunk in the muck. Nearly the only part of it

still above water is the massive, soil-choked root system. As you get closer you realize someone has made a shelter in the roots – a filthy hammock is tied amid the cobweb-shrouded gloom, and pots and pans are hung from higher roots. A wooden mask, carved in the likeness of a serpent, rests upon a tuft of grass growing next to the root structure. A dead rat, bloated and half-eaten by insects, floats in the water nearby.

47. *Razed Boat*

You come across a desperate sight indeed. Where a broad river flows sluggishly through the swamp, a forlorn dock stands silent, the remains of a blackened ferryboat thrusting haphazardly up from the water. The deep red of the late-afternoon sun

colors the surface of the water like rust while birds dabble off to one side, using a broken rib of the boat as an impromptu perch for their fishing exploits. Trails of dark green weeds hang from the burned wood, dipping into the languid waters.

48. *Wooden Plank Road*

Up ahead you see a road rising above the swamp, built upon wooden planks and set upon dead tree trunk pillars. Scraps of rope hang down into the murky water from the planks. Tied to the end of one of the ropes is a bottle, floating in the muck, its short thick neck the only thing visible above the vibrant green algae. [Inside the bottle are four silver pieces and a scrap of paper, black with mold.] **You can hear the scrabbling of lizards' nails as they scurry across the boards of the road.** [The road, while usable in this area, may be ruined at both ends and ultimately go nowhere.]

49. *Abandoned Cabin*

Through the twisting vines you see an unusual shape; it appears to be the roof of a small building. As you get closer, you can better see the structure through the undergrowth. It is a single-room cabin, obviously abandoned long ago. Now the swamp has almost completely reclaimed the building. Vines grow through the windows and have split through cracks in the roof. Years in the swamp have not treated this little house well; there are large gaps in the wood planks, and what looks to be the remains of a front porch now lie almost totally under water. A large tree [cypress] has sent a pair of branches into one wall and out a gaping hole in the roof. In fact, it appears that the only reason the structure is still upright is because of the support given by the tree. [If the characters investigate, they will find that this was apparently the home of a hedge wizard or druid. Nothing of much value is left inside, but there are a couple of usable flasks and vials that are still intact. Any supplies or ingredients have long since sunk into the swamp or been removed by previous visitors.]



An Overview of Swamps

By K. H. Keeler

Swamps are flooded forests. A swamp can be a great environment for your adventures. Swamps have high productivity due to the presence of water that almost always makes them home to more animals and plants than the surrounding area. Thus, encounters are more frequent. In addition the tall, dense vegetation conceals all sorts of surprises. Furthermore, swamps are hard to move through, so they often form little-known areas in the middle of otherwise well-explored lands. Rare plants might grow in the swamp, strange animals may live there, or perhaps mysterious monsters lurk there. A whole race of undiscovered elves may dwell in a swamp within sight of a castle's towers. There are a multitude of options for swamp adventures.

Temperate and Subtropical Swamps

The scenes provided here occur where there is standing water under a canopy of trees or shrubs. Our real world has many kinds of wetlands. In this book, we are not describing flooded grasslands (marshes), acid wetlands with poor decay (bogs and fens) or coastal wetlands (estuaries or salt marshes). The areas described here may lie close to other wetlands, but they are swamps.

The swamps in this book are also temperate and subtropical swamps. Freezing is the most important limit to plants and animals on earth. Frost turns water from a liquid to a solid and in doing so causes it to expand: only a minority of the earth's creatures can survive that. A quick definition of a temperate area is one with a well-defined winter (a season with the temperature dropping below freezing). Subtropical zones have occasional killing frosts—one or two a year, or every few years. In tropical regions the temperature never drops below freezing.

Periodically, the swamps described here freeze. Consequently, the conditions at different times of year can be dramatically different.

After frost, water is usually the most critical limiting factor on land but in aquatic environments, oxygen is an important component. The water in a swamp provides abundantly for its forest plants and animals, and so usually a swamp is green and productive, especially compared to areas around it. The underwater areas are frequently oxygen-deprived, however, and may be filled with partly decayed material, because without oxygen, normal decay stops.

Many swamps support a variety of species because water is plentiful and there are also diverse habitats: on land, in trees, in the water. Species-poor swamps occur where something limits the ability of plants and animals to survive there, such as acid or alkaline water in seepage swamps. Other swamps may have few species of animals or plants because a toxin (like arsenic) is present in high quantities.

Food chains in ecosystems begin with plants, which are eaten by herbivorous (plant-eating) animals, which are eaten by carnivores which are eaten by other carnivores. Scavengers live off the kills of carnivores. Other animals, fungi, and microorganisms get their food from breaking down dead creatures even further. Omnivores eat a mixed diet: from plants to hunting to scavenging. In a swamp, food chains can begin with trees, shrubs, or herbs, or with plants floating in or on the water. The herbivores can be squirrels, wild pigs, fish, nutria or muskrats, or many other creatures. The carnivores include eagles,



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Swamp

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You ride [walk] into an area with innumerable small trees growing out of the muddy ground beside the trail. Their thin trunks fill the area so there is little space between them. Someone has cut them so that the trail is passable. A few feet above your heads the leaves form a solid canopy that blocks the view in all directions. The leaves of the little trees extend over the trail only sometimes so you can see that a taller canopy of great swamp trees grows many feet above this dwarf jungle, but it certainly hems you in. There's a distinct and not unpleasant odor to these trees that for a while masks the stench of the rest of the swamp.

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Swamp

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The trail is flooded. The water seems shallow although it is too turbid to see the ground through it. Your feet stir it up and turn the thick gray-green mud into watery slush. It is slippery and sticky at the same time. In places your foot sinks deeply and you have to stop to pull it out. The deep mud grabs your foot, requiring a hard jerk before the mud lets go with a *shloop*. The smell is a gag-inducing blast of rotten eggs.

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Swamp

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A tall tree leans from a base close to the trail over the soggy, partly flooded ground. A small animal dashes up the shaggy gray trunk as you near, chattering noisily. You get a fleeting impression of gray fur, a round face and a bushy tail. It disturbs the broad triangular emerald-green leaves of a huge vine that twists around the tree trunk. The leaves continue to flutter after the animal has moved past them, higher up the trunk. It disappears, first under the vine and then into the tree's canopy. Its noise is audible long after you can no longer see it or even guess its actual position, warning all of your presence.

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Swamp

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The trail is very level, passing a hands-breadth above the water. The water laps quietly at its shores, little ripples passing out into the green expanse. It would be very easy walking [riding] except for two things: fallen logs and wet spots. Tree branches often lie in the path. Most can be walked [ridden] through with little effort, but others need to be moved. Occasionally they are so big that they are impassible without cutting or breaking many branches. In wet spots, the water is over or under the path. The first is far preferable: you splash through noisome green water for a few steps, and then up onto firmer soil. In the latter case, however, the path sinks beneath your [your horses'] feet, covering them with mud, but also slowly sinking so that you are not sure you could get out of there if you were not moving steadily forward.

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Swamp

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The atmosphere is very moist, and the humidity makes all your possessions damp. It also allows mosses to grow over all the fallen logs and on horizontal branches. Most of the moss is also damp to touch. There are plants growing on many of the relatively level branches, little rosettes of thick leaves which form a small cup in the center. They seem to be rooted only in the moss, or perhaps nothing at all. [If the adventurers investigate these plants they will discover that the cup-like center holds water, often with larval insects wriggling in it.] **Plants dangle from other branches, thin threadlike stems that form a chaotic net and grow out so that they drip from the tree branches like a shawl on an elderly aunt.** [These plants are epiphytes (air plants), which take water out of the air to grow.]

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Swamp

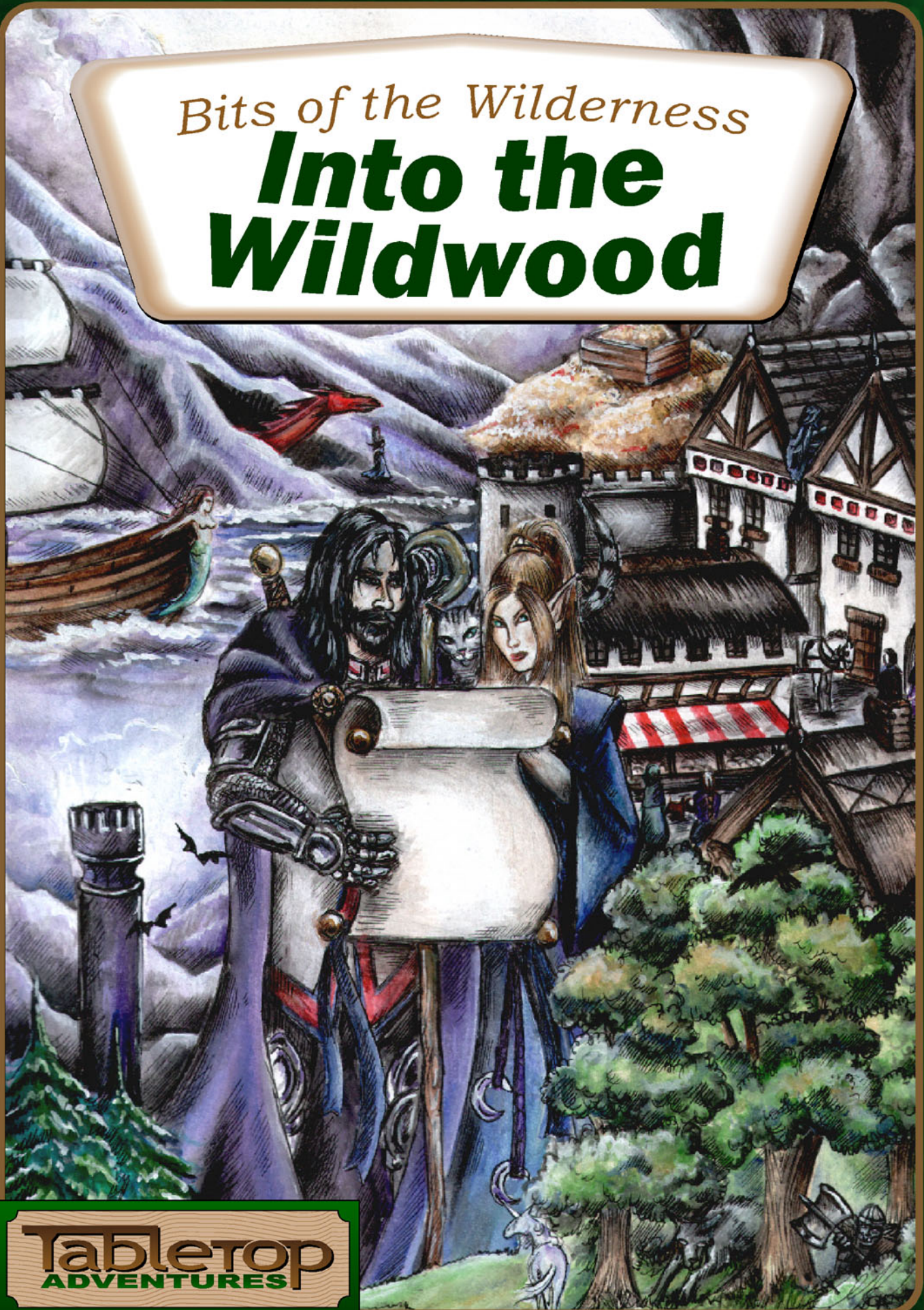
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The regular splashing of the water is broken by a sudden explosion of noise and a flurry of flying, brownish feathers. A duck bursts across the route ahead and veers wildly into the sky. Its quacks echo across the swamp and attract the attentions of rats and other small creatures, which dive into the water with a succession of splashes. [A mother duck has left her nest undefended to try to distract the adventurers. Anyone who looks carefully at the place where the duck emerged should be able to find the nest and some tasty duck eggs inside.]

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Tabletop Adventures presents

Bits of the Wilderness
***Into the
Wildwood***



Tabletop
ADVENTURES



Bits of the Wilderness™:

Into the Wildwood

Writers:

K. H. Keeler
Christopher A. Field
Daniel Brakhage
Deborah Balsam
Matt Blakeley
Rodney Lucas
Martin Ralya
John Walsh
Brian Williams
Mark Potter
Vicki Potter
Christopher Welsh

Artists:

Cover Artwork by
Gillian Pearce

Original Interior Artwork by
Christine Griffin

Cover Layout by
Edward Wedig

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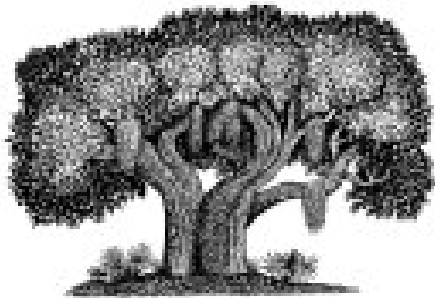
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11. The forest trail begins to wind through a much hillier area than before. Some of the trees look very precarious, almost as if they are dragging the hilltops down. Eventually you come across one that has fallen, strewing dirt, rocks, and foliage all over the trail. Your progress slows greatly as you have to pick your way across the broken terrain. Glancing over at the hill, however, you spot something odd. Something metallic. As you focus in on it, you can see that it is an armpiece from a suit of armor, but by the size it was never made to fit any human. It also still seems to have the arm in it. Whatever it is, it has been lying on this hillside for a very long time.



12. The ground in this part of the forest is rougher, with a lot of stones, and the trees are slightly farther apart. You have been passing through them for at least a hundred yards before you realize you are in overgrown ruins. Along the fringes, the stone buildings were reduced to scattered, moss-covered rocks, but here the remains are larger. The walls, while far from intact, are recognizable as walls. You come across a larger building that has pieces of all four walls – and a huge, ancient oak growing up from its center. The remains become smaller and less impressive again, as you seem to be coming to the edge of the ruins.

13. The evergreen trees here have grown tall and spread their graceful limbs out wide, sweeping the air as they sway in the breeze. The crisp scent of aged pine fills your lungs with every breath as you ride [hike] across the thick blanket of warm brown needles. Below some of the oldest, tallest evergreens the needles are layered so thick that they bury

your horses' hooves [or: your feet to the ankle] with each crunching, crackling step.

14. For most of this journey the trees have been lush and the underbrush plentiful, but now you reach a clearing where the forest suddenly turns from brown and green to black. A solitary and barren tree stands in the center of a twenty-yard circle of blackened ash and charred earth. The tree's thick trunk is scorched and covered with a web of fine cracks. Only the thickest branches remain, reaching their burnt limbs toward the empty sky. A gentle breeze stirs up small clouds of ashes, which drift lazily around the desolate clearing.

15. Outside the woods the sky seems to be clear and the sun shining brightly, but here beneath the thick green canopy it might as well be nearly night. The layers upon layers of overarching branches intertwine yards above your heads to form an almost unbroken ceiling of leaf and wood. Light pierces through only in thin, bright shafts, illuminating spots upon the forest floor no larger than your hand. The trees are so close together that you see one whose trunk has rotted away at the base, yet it still hangs suspended in the air by the tight weave of its branches with those of its neighbors.

16. There is a break in the trees and you walk out into a small clearing, its surface covered with dead, overgrown weeds. A ripe smell of decay rises from the ground. In the distance, stems of bright flowers rise from a mist that is rolling in from the other side of the clearing. Clouds gather and the wind stirs the dead foliage on the ground, making it hiss like a shaman's rattle. The fog rolls over the yellow flowers and the clearing and surrounds your feet, gathering and breaking like ocean waves. Above you an owl hoots several times. Suddenly the wind gathers force and the younger trees at the clearing's edge begin to sway, their trunks creaking loudly. There is a sharp, snapping sound, and a dead limb comes crashing to the ground behind you.

49. *Ruins in the Trees*

This part of the forest is very thick. The trees here are truly ancient – it seems no woodsman’s axe has ever come near them – but they are strong, healthy, and sturdy. This would be a paradise for the elves. Just as you think that, you see something fall from a tree and crash to the ground ahead of you. [If the adventurers investigate:] When you approach, you see that it is a piece of shattered lumber, old and weathered, but definitely worked wood. It must have been part of a structure. As you look up, you can see the sagging remains of a house in the tree top. Despite its current decrepit state, you can clearly see its elven architecture. [The GM may give a 50% chance for gathering the following information, if desired: Examining the piece before you makes that even clearer; given its size and thickness, and the holes bored near one end, this chunk must have been part of the walkway of an elven town.] Why would the elves abandon an area this perfect?

50. *Tree Roads*

This part of the forest is dominated by great, squat trees with trunks as much as twelve feet in diameter. The trees’ long limbs begin only three feet off the ground and stretch out in lengths of twenty to forty feet, often meeting and intertwining with limbs from other trees. The limbs themselves are sturdy and thick, with an average diameter of one and a half feet. [If the players choose to climb the trees and use the limbs for travel, they will find that the forest continues like this for several miles. Choosing to travel on the ground could prove difficult because of the many thick, interlaced tree limbs barring their way. The GM may allow a trail if desired.]

51. *Bear Sighting*

Across a clearing a black bear with a trio of cubs stares at you balefully and roars a warning. [If the adventurers approach, she rises up on her hind legs and roars another challenge.] At the first sign of danger, she rushes her cubs back into the treeline, leaving behind the majority of their kill, a viciously savaged, half-

eaten boar. [The GM can avoid any encounter here by simply having the bear leave the scene.]

52. *Mysterious Key*

You reach a fork in the path. The ground surrounding the path here is completely blanketed with a vibrant, blue clover, the bright full blooms almost glowing in the gloom of the woods. Hovering and darting above the clover are tiny white butterflies. There is a rustling among the clover and a small green viper courses his way through the plants. Suddenly you catch a glimpse of something gleaming dully among the greenery.

[If the adventurers investigate:]

Searching through the clover, you discover a small pewter skeleton key, the top of which is carved to resemble a squat little face with a protruding tongue. Your search startles the little viper, which slithers quickly from the clover bed and across the path. It slips back into the clover on the other side of the path and disappears from sight. [Note: This piece can be used with “Box in the Bower,” Shard #53 below.]



53. *Box in the Bower*

Here the trees are spaced more widely apart and more sunlight reaches the forest floor. Some of the trees seem ancient, reaching heights of a hundred feet or more. Many of their trunks have a diameter of ten to twelve feet. The trees' great, twisted roots have grown over the trail in many places, at times rising four feet above the ground before delving back into the loamy earth. Dozens of tiny red mushrooms sprout from the soft wood of the roots. You come to a place in the trail where it seems two of the enormous trees have grown toward each other, their great roots intertwining and forming a latticework wall that completely bars the path. The roots grown in a way that suggests a ladder, and seem easy to climb despite the slippery nature of the moss and the mushrooms growing on them.

[The roots are indeed easy to climb, and go up about eight feet. If any of the party climb them, they will find a small 'nest' of twigs and leaves tucked up against the trunk of one great tree. It is about the right size for a creature two feet tall. It contains a dirty suit of clothes in a very small size, a tiny pair of shoes, and a small locked iron box. (If any of the party has the skeleton key from Shard #52, it will fit into the keyhole and can be used to unlock the box.) Within the box are five silver pieces and a small glass vial with no stopper.]



54. *Fallen Trees*

You come to a place where all of the trees have been toppled or uprooted. Some of the trees are still alive, and new growth rustles in the wind at the tops of tangled roots, upturned, spiky branches, and thick, jutting tree boughs. You face a confusing maze of limbs and roots that seems to stretch ahead for quite a distance. The fallen trees continue in either direction as well. The air smells rich with soil here, and clouds of gnats swarm amid the dirt-choked roots and tangled branches. The only sound is the angry

bickering of squirrels from somewhere amid the deadfall.

You notice that within the root clusters of one of the fallen trees is an opening. As you look inside the opening you can see the tree is hollowed out, forming a passageway about seven feet across. A few feet into the hollow tree you discover a spider has been busy; walls of thick web break as you pass through them. [If they continue, the adventurers must pass through fifty feet or so of webs. They may encounter several normal spiders, but none are harmful.] After a hundred feet or you can see light coming from the end of the hollow tree, but once outside you find yourself in a natural cage of tangled roots as the hollow tree you just left meets with a second, hollowed tree about four feet in diameter. [If they choose to enter the second tree, they will find ten arrows and a ten-foot coil of rope. The second tree continues for another thirty feet.] After you emerge from the second hollow tree, you find the forest on the other side is once again normal, and most of the felled trees are behind you.

55. *Unusual Trail*

You switched to this branch of the forest trail a few minutes ago and it has only grown wider as you have gone along. Every step you take away from civilization seems to bring a larger and better defined trail – exactly the opposite of what you expect. After several more minutes of travel, it is fully twenty feet wide. You see no signs of it having been cleared, no saplings or plants thrown into the underbrush at its side. The soil is not dead, because you can see seedlings sprouting up here and there, but something has completely removed all traces of grown plants. You also smell a scent that you cannot recognize for some time. It teases your memory until you finally place it: the sea. The smell of salt water is all around you, despite your distance from the sea. You see no signs of a lake, a stream, even a small pond, but the salt water smell only grows stronger. [The unusual trail can diminish and disappear sooner or later, at the GM's discretion.]



An Overview of Temperate Forests

by K. H. Keeler, Ph.D.

Introduction:

The use of forests

Temperate forests grow around the world. At some point your adventurers are likely to cross one of these forests, and interesting forests will add color to your fantasy campaign. The adventurers' goal might lie in the forest, or they could pass quickly through the forest to reach their goal. Of course, even when the party expects to just pass through, adventures can happen.

On our modern earth, temperate forests are found in moister, seasonal areas of both the Northern and Southern Hemispheres and at moderate elevations in the mountains. This discussion focuses on incorporating detail into the temperate forests in your game.

When creating your forest, ask yourself some basic questions about its type and location. What kind of temperate forest is it? (See suggestions below.) How extensive will it be? Are you planning a campaign in this forest or is it just between the party and their goal? The nature of the forest will suggest encounters: with furtive magical creatures, with really big hungry predators, or with strange druids gathering herbs. If your forest is well planned, it will be easy to envision the environment and to answer questions consistently and quickly. A forest that is not just "the trees outside your window" will make the party more interested and more careful.

Forest Variety:

Not all forests are created equal

How temperate forests are alike: Obviously, all forests have trees. To be called a forest,

the trees need to shade the majority of the ground. They also have relatively high rainfall: trees are big plants, and need water at least during the growing season. In addition, temperate forests have a well-defined winter. As a quick distinction, tropical forests never get a frost, and temperate forests have hard frosts every year.

How temperate forests differ: Temperate forests differ in height; the density of the trees; the size and age of trees, from all one extreme (old/large vs. young/small) to a mixture; tree diversity: that is, the number of tree species and whether one species dominates or several are each very common; evergreenness: deciduous trees (dropping their leaves in winter or the dry season) vs. evergreens, including trees which have needle-like leaves (pines, spruce) or regular leaves (live oaks); openness: from almost no plants under the trees to layer upon layer of plants of different statures making "stratification"; and the frequency and diversity of the vines. These visible differences are caused by the amount and pattern of rain; soil types; the length of the growing season; other climate factors (how hot it is midsummer, how cold midwinter is); and the history of the region, to name the obvious ones.

Some forests have more species of trees and other living things than other forests. One reason may be that they are simply more productive. Forests that are warmer, have higher rainfall, and/or longer growing seasons have more variety than cool, dry, or short-season forests. Another reason may be that they are older; time leads to speciation and diversity. In North America, where the area was glaciated 10,000 years ago, the forest is much less diverse than in areas that have



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Wildwood

I3

The evergreen trees here have grown tall and spread their graceful limbs out wide, sweeping the air as they sway in the breeze. The crisp scent of aged pine fills your lungs with every breath as you ride [hike] across the thick blanket of warm brown needles. Below some of the oldest, tallest evergreens the needles are layered so thick that they bury your horses' hooves [or: your feet to the ankle] with each crunching, crackling step.

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Wildwood

I4

For most of this journey the trees have been lush and the underbrush plentiful, but now you reach a clearing where the forest suddenly turns from brown and green to black. A solitary and barren tree stands in the center of a twenty-yard circle of blackened ash and charred earth. The tree's thick trunk is scorched and covered with a web of fine cracks. Only the thickest branches remain, reaching their burnt limbs toward the empty sky. A gentle breeze stirs up small clouds of ashes, which drift lazily around the desolate clearing.

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Wildwood

I5

Outside the woods the sky seems to be clear and the sun shining brightly, but here beneath the thick green canopy it might as well be nearly night. The layers upon layers of overarching branches intertwine yards above your heads to form an almost unbroken ceiling of leaf and wood. Light pierces through only in thin, bright shafts, illuminating spots upon the forest floor no larger than your hand. The trees are so close together that you see one whose trunk has rotted away at the base, yet it still hangs suspended in the air by the tight weave of its branches with those of its neighbors.

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Wildwood

I6

There is a break in the trees and you walk out into a small clearing, its surface covered with dead, overgrown weeds. A ripe smell of decay rises from the ground. In the distance, stems of bright flowers rise from a mist that is rolling in from the other side of the clearing. Clouds gather and the wind stirs the dead foliage on the ground, making it hiss like a shaman's rattle. The fog rolls over the yellow flowers and the clearing and surrounds your feet, gathering and breaking like ocean waves. Above you an owl hoots several times. Suddenly the wind gathers force and the younger trees at the clearing's edge begin to sway, their trunks creaking loudly. There is a sharp, snapping sound, and a dead limb comes crashing to the ground behind you.

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Wildwood

I7

Here the path narrows and the undergrowth on either side grows wilder and thicker. Tall ferns, bright purple flowers and tangled thorn bushes grow in riots at the feet of the trees. The path is now stonier, and covered in moss in several places. As it turns to the right you notice a section of the ground covered in glossy, black feathers. [The feathers belonged to a crow.]

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Wildwood

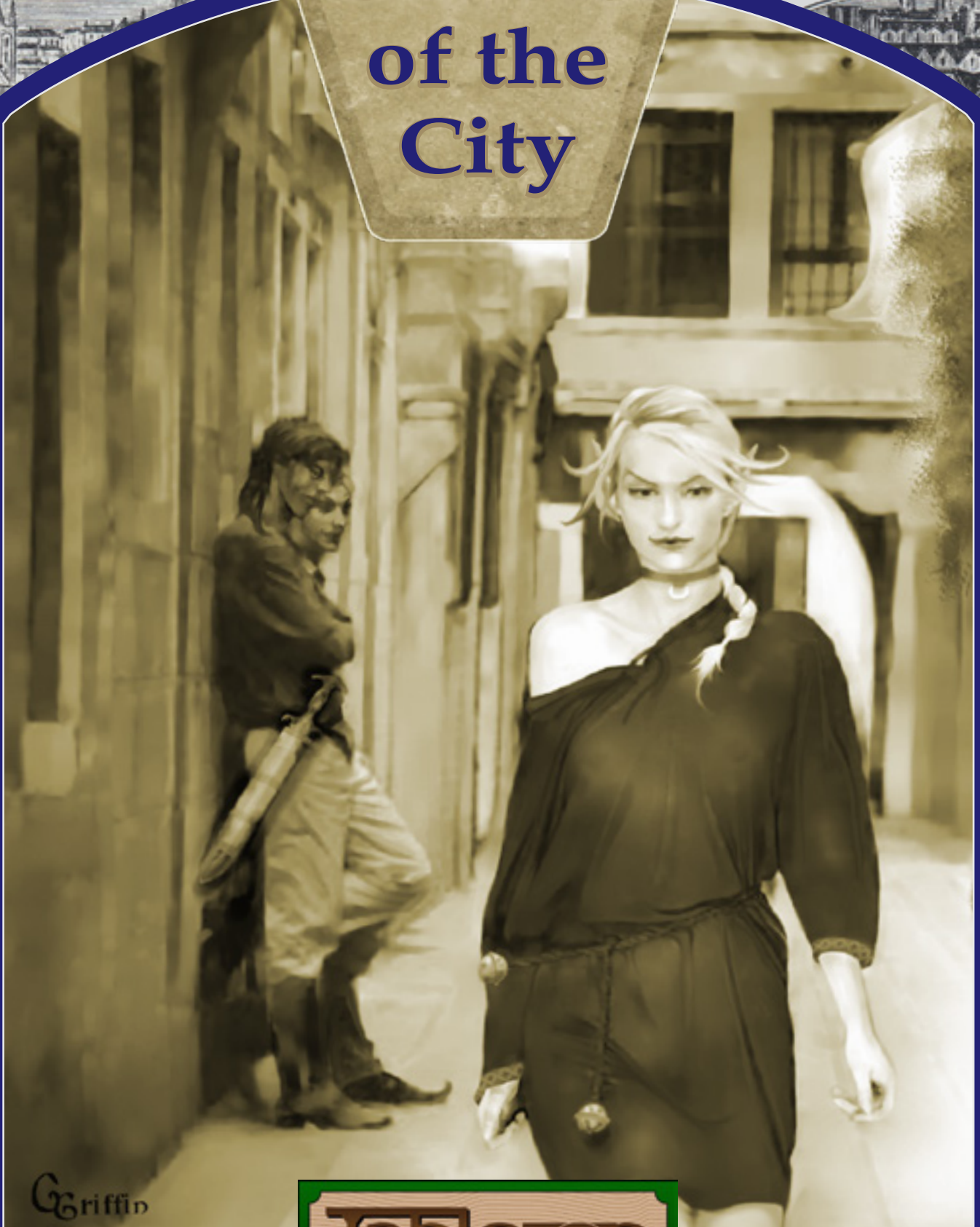
I8

The air around you is still and quiet, warm and a bit humid. Big green trees hang down over the trail here, and at the same time their great branches spread overhead and block the sun with their long, thick, dark-green oval leaves. The bark is thick and gray-green, but over it in many places grow mosses of a bluer cast. Below the trees where you travel everything is dim and dark. A deep layer of leaf litter covers the ground, muffling all sound; the noise of your passage just falls into the stillness. The silence seems to swallow all sounds – not even any birds can be heard. Looking into the trees, nothing can be seen moving either nearby or in the distance. You cannot see more than 30 yards in any direction before the tree branches block the view.

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Tabletop Adventures Presents

Shards of the City



Griffin

Tabletop
ADVENTURES



Shards of the City

***Writers:***

Vicki Potter
Mark Potter
Christopher Field
Rodney Lucas
Daniel Brakhage
Timothy Ganow
Marcella Ganow
Brendan Potter
Michael Kessler

Editors:

Vicki Potter
Jennifer Schoonover
Elizabeth Brakhage

Layout:

Brion Frantz

Cover Layout:

Brion Frantz

Cover Art:

Christine Griffin

Interior Art:

Christine Griffin
Jesus and Javier Carmona
Oliver Diaz
Mark Huffman
Dominika Klosowicz
Gillian Pearce
Brenna Alyn Walters
Terry Moore Strickland

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Street Scene Bricks



01 *The Third Hanging of Terrance Olmerson*

Scene: It is the third hanging of Terrance Olmerson, and the city guards expect it to finally take this time.

View I: **You hear the commotion before you see it: a group of about eight boys comes running down the street and into the open area of the market. They seem to be very excited, as they are jumping up and down and dashing around. Merchants in nearby stalls call out to the boys to find out what is going on. One boy turns and shouts, "They're hanging Terrance again," and points up the street. The crowd reacts quickly, moving their things and themselves until there is a clear path along the road. Armed guards come striding down the street, helping widen the pathway.**

View II: Now you can see a platform at the far end of the market where several town officials are busy erecting a standard gallows. They seem well-practiced in setting up the posts and tying the noose. Some of the merchants are scurrying around in their booths, changing the merchandise on display. One woman pulls out black ribbon, tied in bows or elaborate knots, along with some strings of black beads. Across the way, a man has pulled out what appear to be stuffed toys hanging from sticks. Each puppet is vaguely man-shaped, with a black vest and a colorful scrap tied around its waist.

From up the street you hear the sound of a crowd, and people begin to spill out into the market. Many head directly over to the gibbet, vying to get the best place. Others line the path, and the guards already there move them back to allow a clear space through the middle of the market. Finally you see black horses approaching, pulling a wagon decorated with black ribbons.

[GM Note: Just about anyone in the crowd knows the man and his situation. Terrance Olmerson is a notorious local thief and bandit lord who has been executed twice before and raised from the dead both times after his men stole his body from the authorities. The powerful rogue does not fear death because he has never been dead longer than it takes for his men to find a cleric of the thief god to raise him. Obviously, this annoys the city guard to no end and this time they vow they will keep his body until long after most spells become impractical. Terrance, of course, isn't worried; this is just the kind of challenge his boys like best.]





View III: Standing proudly in the back of the execution wagon, surrounded by several guards, is a lanky man with a smile on his friendly face. He is wearing a simple black leather vest over a fine white shirt, brown leather pants and boots, and an array of colorful silk sashes. (You can make out three.) Although his hands are tied in front of him, he waves to the crowds and calls out, “Thank you all for coming. This is a much bigger show than my last hanging!” Then he turns and makes some remark to the wand-wielding guards sharing the cart with him, but they do not appear to be amused.

The man does not seem to fear death in the least, even as the gallows draw closer. His charm never wavers, but he does unconsciously rub his already scarred neck from time to time. As he is led from the cart to the quickly erected gibbet, you hear him call out, “Can we use silk next time? Hemp chafes,” and the crowd cheers his defiance. At this point it seems that every guard in the city is patrolling through the crowd in the square, or standing watch on the rooftops armed with a wand or a longbow.

[GM Note: At the GM’s discretion, there could be a plot afoot to steal Terrance’s body immediately, or his men may be lying low waiting for a better opportunity. If the theft is attempted, the player characters could choose to get involved on either side, or just stand back and watch the show. In any case, the day could be one to remember.

It can be filled with memorable speeches from the justices of the peace or the town politicians, as well as some truly stunning last words (that lay bare several town scandals) and some great dying jokes from the always jolly Terrance. Or, the authorities could be in a rush to get the job done before anything happens so they proceed

with very little ceremony other than allowing the condemned man to say a few last words – such as, “See you next week!”

The hanging should go exactly as planned, but a near riot may break out as the common people rush the gallows to snatch some memento from the body of the great bandit.]

Plot Hooks:

- The adventurers were hired to capture Olmerson for some theft committed by his band, but someone beat them to it. Now, to collect the really high fee they were promised, they need him alive – one way or another.
- The party needs some information and was told they could get it from Terrance Olmerson. Now it looks as if they may never get what they need, unless they help him in some way. As an alternative, it might be that someone else in his band also has the knowledge required (or claims to) and would be willing to share it with them in exchange for their aid.
- Olmerson (or someone in his group) did a disservice in the past to one of the player characters or a friend or loved one. Now at least one of the group wants to see him dead permanently and is ready to help the town guard, or to actively work against his men’s plans, to be sure of it.
- Of course crooks will be working the crowd. The PCs could have their pockets picked, be robbed in some other way, or instead have something added to their packs – something recently stolen that is now too hot to handle, evidence of some other crime, or a cursed item.





Street Scene Shards

01 “Come back!” a venerable woman shouts, brandishing a rolled-up pamphlet. Similar leaflets litter the square in the wake of the parting crowd. “I’m going to be late!” A naked tot, splashing in the crystalline waters of the fountain in the center of the square, cackles with glee and then shuffles quickly behind a golden statue of a stag bending to drink. The little one peeks from between the statue’s legs and giggles as the woman tries to determine how to get him out without getting wet herself.

02 To drum up attention for his product, a dwarven locksmith wanders the streets, draped in his wares. Iron and copper chains hang over his broad shoulders and wrap around his ample belly, with dozens of samples of his work hanging from them. He beats an old bronze shield with a craftsman’s hammer and shouts out his prices to anyone who will listen. [GM Note: Algar Whitetell is trying to get rid of surplus stock and build the capital necessary to expand his small shop. He will sell any of the locks he carries for 60-75% of their usual values, depending on how well someone haggles. He is adorned with two dozen regular locks and seven others that are masterfully made.]

03 A trio of barristers, distinctive with their purple and black robes and shaven heads, walks quickly through the city, so intent on their goal that they are oblivious to those they push aside. They loudly argue the merits of a local taxation case to a beleaguered judge who walks in front of them, still dressed in his powered white wig and spectacles. The look on his face seems to indicate that he is obviously tired of their squabbling and would really rather be free of them.

04 A young woman moves through the streets, twirling and dancing as she goes. She sings a melody, innocent and uplifting, as she weaves through the crowd deftly. Close behind her is another young woman, beleaguered-looking and carefully keeping an eye on the dancing girl. She mutters apologies as she pushes past people. [GM Note: The dancing woman is not of sound mind; her friend and caretaker is trying to get to her and get her back home, preferably without causing a public commotion.]

05 Three red-skinned young women saunter through the theater district’s many inns and dancehalls, laughing among themselves and speaking rapidly in an exotic dialect. All are dressed in gowns made from what appear to be swan wings and white silk, and all are heavily perfumed. They swirl past you, laughing as they make their way from party to party; your nose itches from their overwhelming scent.

06 A wide-nosed gnome, wrapped up past his lips in tight purple banding, calmly flips through a pamphlet while sitting in a comfortable overstuffed chair just inside a nicely maintained apothecary. He watches the passers-by and lifts a hand in greeting to several. If a visitor steps inside, he’ll cheerfully introduce himself as “Doctor Finnis Flaaeon,” and announce that leeching and enemas will cure all ills. [GM Note: For a few pieces of gold, “Dr. Flaaeon” will gladly work his medical miracles on anyone feeling under the weather. Needless to say, the doctor has no real medical skill and all a person would get for the money is humiliation, and temporary weakness due to the leeching.]





leave their home. Their gray cloaks and veils are to preserve (as much as possible) their separation from the world. The religious women will not speak to or acknowledge anyone on the street. They rely on their guide (or guard) to take care of any necessary communication. If anyone approaches one of the veiled figures, the person will turn away and look down. The guard will intervene and do all the talking for the group. The others will remain close together and wait silently until the guard is ready to move on.]

44 A trio of identical halfling sisters—all plump and pretty with faces floured white and then painted with cosmetics—is on a shopping expedition. Only the best is good enough for them and they haggle with jewelers and sweets vendors with practiced cruelty. The three sisters are trailed by a quartet of burly human and orc males carrying their purchases. Though the men are finely dressed, you can see they are armed and armored under their gold-trimmed cloaks. You suspect that despite the heavy bags and bundles they carry for the women, they are not just porters.

45 A horribly burned old man, his hairless face shiny with old pink scar tissue, a strapping young man, and four young teens carefully load an enormous stained glass window into a wagon. The window is wrapped securely in thick wool blankets, but occasional glints of rainbow light flash from under the protective wrapping.

[GM Note: The man's burns come from an unfortunate accident in the glass-blowing trade. The young man is his son, and the others are apprentices. A window the size of this one is extremely valuable.]

46 You catch the scents of sandalwood and roasting meat as light from a tremendous bonfire casts an amber glow over a mysterious celebration. As you pass through the crowd,

a group of masked celebrants press wooden goblets of yellowish wine into your hands before disappearing into the throng. Conversation is loud, but below it you can hear the relentless beat of a drum.

47 A huge pack of street cats prowls the streets and alleys at night. You constantly have cats underfoot; they seem to be everywhere, chasing the hundreds of mice that infest this district. Some strange fungus grows on the mangy hides of these feral felines. Luminous splotches glow a faint aquamarine in the darkness, making the mass of cats resemble starlight on a dark ocean as they stream around your ankles. [GM Note: A magical and parasitic fungus was carried to the area by a pet cat that was part of a foreign trading caravan and it has infested these nearly wild creatures. It could eventually be deadly to them, but these street cats are almost certain to die of something else first. The fungus could infect a domestic cat, but cleaning a cat even once in a while will be enough to keep the fungus from taking hold and reproducing.]

48 A gaggle of stooped crones draws water from a town well, trading gossip. The well is an old decorative one, its wide opening carved in the shape of a gaping catfish's mouth. One of the elderly women has leashed a mangy gray-furred dog to one of the columns which supports the well's roof. Anyone who stays around and listens to the gossip can find out a great deal about the town's comings and goings.

49 As you move across the city square, a group of conical-helmed men gasp and point up at a grand cathedral of black granite. The edifice is adorned with seven lofty spires and massive flying buttresses. The men shuffle to the sheer, narrow stair leading up to the cathedral's iron gates, then, trembling, trudge upward.





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Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Version

Writers:

Daniel Brakhage
Vicki Potter
Elizabeth Brakhage
Mark Potter
Mary Hanover
Nicholas Brakhage
Nathan Mangion

Pathfinder Roleplaying Game conversion:

Skeeter Green

Cover Art:

Brenna Alyn Walters

Cover Layout:

Edward Wedig
www.docbrown.net

The Wolf in the Woods:

Darren Pearce

Interior Art:

Rob Hughes
Some clipart by: ©2011 Jupiterimages Corporation

Editor:

Vicki Potter

Original Character Art:

Gillian Pearce, Marina Badani

Layout:

Marcella Ganow

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Isobel

Female half elf expert [1,4,5] rogue [4,4,5]



Introduction

Isobel is a half-elven merchant who has made a fortune on trafficking in rare silks, spices, perfumes, and rare (sometimes contraband) items. Her privacy and that of her customers is paramount to her and she is always on the lookout for new talent in business ventures that are both above and below the board.

Narrative

On a loading dock, a beautiful blonde female of elven descent stands overseeing furious activity. From the soft calfskin knee high boots that cover her legs and the rich linen and silk of her flowing garments, it is obvious that she does not do the manual labor around here. However, neither is she merely ornamental. She seems to be alert and exacting and although her workers do not seem to overtly fear her, they are also being very careful with the boxes they are loading on the wagon. Armed guards, both mounted and dismounted, stand ready but are trying to appear inconspicuous. As for the woman, it seems that nothing escapes her notice, especially not a band of adventurers passing by. [She may catch the eye of one of the

adventurers – which is especially probable if they are particularly good-looking or appear to have special talents in combat or streetwise and/or if they look like they could afford her wares. She will make eye contact, smile and nod, and if the heroes do not seek her out she may well seek them out – or have someone do it for her.]

Quote

“I am always alert to new talents in town. Why don’t you tell me about yours?”

Personality

Being a half-elf, Isobel had to make her own way and she intends to keep doing that. A part of her resents people with a great deal of status and wealth and she takes a hidden pleasure in charging them for the decadence they choose to enjoy.

Motivation and Goals

Isobel’s goals are to accumulate the power and influence needed to be immune to the lesser irritations of life and to have the money to ensure that she can enjoy its pleasures. She loves the challenge of locating and recovering ‘special’ artifacts and, if she feels she can be away from her business she may want to accompany or lead an expedition for the challenge and excitement of it. Isobel seems to have a need to prove herself. To whom she is uncertain, but she feels it is necessary to find the acceptance she craves. Despite that apparent need her real, unvoiced need is to find someone who accepts her for who she is...and was.

Background

Isobel will not talk about her background. To do so could jeopardize her position. She has changed her appearance enough from the short-haired, grim-clad thief of her past that she would be very hard to recognize.

She started out doing petty thievery and picking pockets, moved on to stealing slightly larger things, and then got interested in some of the rare and unusual items she was seeing in her sneaking around. She stole a few of these, and found a higher quality of fence to get rid of them for her.

The fence had some contacts and knew people who knew patrons who were looking for certain





types of items, and so he started mentioning these to Isobel. For a while, she did some ‘stealing to order.’ Her curiosity about these goods grew and when she finally learned what they were worth, she was appalled that she was getting a mere pittance of the take. That was when Isobel the thief decided she was in the wrong end of the business!

After some preparation and observation she was able to go into business for herself as a merchant, selling the rare and valuable items she so admired. She maintained close contact with the local thieves’ guild, and the general view is that she is too valuable as a source of information and employment for them to demand protection money. Certain people who have jeopardized Isobel’s life have mysteriously disappeared.

Isobel still finds occasional use for her thief skills, and has not let any of them get rusty, nor is she too picky about adhering precisely to the law in certain of her dealings. She presents a very high-quality business to her clients, and has no problem soaking them for all they will stand when she sells them the ‘so-desirable’ pieces she acquires for them.

Plot Hooks

- Isobel wants to hire the party for a task of acquisition, but first wants to ‘talk’ to one who interests her to see if the party has the skills she needs.
- Isobel may seem to want only an evening’s companionship while in truth she seeks information about the road or the city from which the adventurer has just come.
- Isobel may want to hire the party for security of a special shipment but wants to discuss it in person with one party member who interests her.

ISOBEL

CR 4

XP 1,600

Female half-elf expert 1, rogue 4

CN Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +6; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +14

Defense

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +2 Dex)

hp 21 (1d8+4d8 plus 5)

Fort +1, **Ref** +6, **Will** +4; +2 vs. enchantment

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; **Immune** sleep

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *shortsword* +6 (1d6+1/19–20)

Ranged hand crossbow +5 (1d4/19–20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +2d6

Statistics

Str 10, **Dex** 14, **Con** 10, **Int** 16, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 15

Feats Alertness, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (perception), Skill Focus (profession)^B, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +6, Appraise +11, Bluff +12, Diplomacy +12, Intimidate +11, Linguistics +11, Perception +14, Profession (merchant) +13, Sense Motive +11, Sleight of Hand +10, Use Magic Device +11

Languages Common, elven

SQ Rogue talent (fast stealth), rogue talent (finesse rogue), trapfinding

Combat Gear +2 *leather armor*, +1 *shortsword*, masterwork dagger, hand crossbow, 10 bolts, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of cat’s grace*, *wand of detect magic* (50 charges), *wand of detect secret doors* (50 charges)

You smiled, you spoke and I believed,
By every word and smile – deceived.

Another man would hope no more;
Nor hope I – what I hoped before.

But let not this last wish be vain;
Deceive, deceive me once again!

– Walter Savage Landor

ISOBEL **CR 7**

XP 3,200

Female half-elf expert 4, rogue 4

CN Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +6; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +14

Defense

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +2 Dex)**hp** 34 (4d8+4d8 plus 8)**Fort** +2, **Ref** +7, **Will** +6; +2 vs. enchantment**Defensive Abilities** evasion, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; **Immune** sleep

Defense

Speed 30 ft.**Melee** +1 *shortsword* +9 (1d6+1/19–20)**Ranged** hand crossbow +8 (1d4/19–20)**Special Attacks** sneak attack +2d6

Defense

Str 10, **Dex** 14, **Con** 10, **Int** 16, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 18**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 18**Feats** Alertness, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (perception), Skill Focus (profession)^B, Weapon Finesse**Skills** Acrobatics +15, Appraise +11, Bluff +13, Climb +6, Diplomacy +13, Disable Device +8, Disguise +10, Escape Artist +8, Intimidate +12, Linguistics +11, Perception +14, Profession (merchant) +13, Sense Motive +11, Sleight of Hand +10, Stealth +8, Swim +6, Use Magic Device +15**Languages** Common, elven**SQ** Rogue talent (fast stealth), rogue talent (finesse rogue), trapfinding**Combat Gear** +2 *leather armor*, +1 *shortsword*, masterwork dagger, hand crossbow, 10 bolts, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of mage armor*, *potion of cat's grace*, *immovable rod*, *wand of detect magic* (40 charges), *wand of detect secret doors* (30 charges), *boots of elvenkind**, *bag of holding (type I)*, +2 *cloak of charisma**, *handy haversack*; masterwork thieves' tools, disguise kit, healer's kit

*included in above stats

ISOBEL **CR 9**

XP 3,200

Female half-elf expert 5, rogue 5

CN Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +6; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +15

Defense

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +2 Dex)**hp** 43 (5d8+5d8 plus 10)**Fort** +2, **Ref** +7, **Will** +6; +2 vs. enchantment**Defensive Abilities** evasion, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; **Immune** sleep

Offense

Speed 30 ft.**Melee** +2 *shortsword* +10/+5 (1d6+1/19–20)**Ranged** hand crossbow +8 (1d4/19–20)**Special Attacks** sneak attack +3d6

Statistics

Str 10, **Dex** 14, **Con** 10, **Int** 16, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 18**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 18**Feats** Alertness, Improved Initiative, Persuasive, Skill Focus (perception), Skill Focus (profession)^B, Weapon Finesse**Skills** Acrobatics +15, Appraise +13, Bluff +14, Climb +7, Diplomacy +16, Disable Device +9, Disguise +11, Escape Artist +9, Intimidate +15, Linguistics +12, Perception +15, Profession (merchant) +14, Sense Motive +12, Sleight of Hand +11, Stealth +9, Swim +6, Use Magic Device +16**Languages** Common, elven**SQ** Rogue talent (fast stealth), rogue talent (finesse rogue), trapfinding**Combat Gear** +3 *leather armor*, +2 *shortsword*, masterwork dagger, hand crossbow, 10 bolts, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of mage armor*, *potion of cat's grace*, *immovable rod*, *wand of detect magic* (40 charges), *wand of detect secret doors* (30 charges), *boots of elvenkind**, *bag of holding (type II)*, +2 *cloak of charisma**, *handy haversack*, *ring of mind shielding*; masterwork thieves' tools, disguise kit, healer's kit

*included in above stats





Kelvaran and Windsinger

Male half elf bard [1,2] ranger [4,6]

Male hawk animal companion [4,6]

Introduction

Kelvaran is a combination of the practical ranger and the emotional bard. He is native to the area and could provide an adventure for a single player or be tied in to activities the party has in the surrounding wilderness.

Narrative

[At the Faire - The setting is a faire or marketplace, lots of merchants and lots of people. The season is summer and the weather is warm to hot.] You are walking through the crowd. Surrounding you is the scent of various foods, the smell of unwashed bodies and the lingering perfume of incense. Frequently you are bumped into or jostled by someone who is also trying to make their way through the crowd. One person bumps into your left shoulder hard enough to spin you partially around. You open your mouth to say something when the sight of a gorgeous man looking your direction causes you to stop for several seconds.

During this time you take in his long, straight blonde hair, vibrant green eyes, and the sharply-defined facial features. When you realize you are staring, you are slightly embarrassed. As you turn back the direction you were going, you see that your party has continued on its way while you were distracted. You make your way past several more people before you notice that the man you were staring at a few moments ago is ahead of you to the left. He catches your eye and motions for you to follow him. He heads off in the direction of the city gate without looking back to see if you follow.

[The adventurer can decide to catch up with the group or decide to follow the man. If the person decides to follow the stranger:] **The stranger is heading for a nearby garden.**

The bushes here are tall, allowing for some privacy. The scent of the flowers is very strong and intoxicating. Roses, lilacs and a few varieties of flowers unfamiliar to you grow in great abundance. Stone paths run the length of the garden along the bushes that enclose it. As you walk further into the garden, the sounds behind you become muffled. Near the center of the garden you see a stone bench, big enough to sit two comfortably.

The man stops there and turns to face you, his forest green, knee-length cloak billowing out slightly with the motion. As you approach him, you notice that his ears appear to be slightly more pointed than normal for a human. His clothing implies that he is a man who spends most of his time out of doors, possibly a ranger. He smiles at you with an open and friendly smile.

[The character could decide to leave the garden without speaking. (In that case, see Scenarios.) If the character stays:] **“Normally, I do not act in such a hasty manner, but I felt such a strong emotion when our eyes met. I sense our time together is not of a long duration; even so, I would like to spend what time we have, together. Would you have dinner with me tonight?”**

Quote

“I see secrets in your eyes that are as deep as my feelings for you.”

Personality

The ranger is a fairly intense person and when he is in town he is seeking a personal relationship as intense as his experiences adventuring in the wilderness. That having been said, he is not rushed or hurried in his manner. He just believes in living life to its fullest and not wasting the time he and his love are given together.

Motivation and Goals

The man's motivation is that he felt an instant and deep attraction to the character, who he feels is extremely beautiful. He is only in town for a visit, but wants to spend a bit of time with the character even knowing that time is not in great supply. How often the two spend time together is completely dependent on how long the party will be in the area and the character's initiative.

Background

Kelvaran is from the area and the garden may even belong to a relative. Being half-elven, he spends most of his time away from town, preferring the woods.

Scenarios

If the person decides not to follow the ranger, leaves without talking with him, or declines to spend further time with him, the ranger will find out where the party is staying and leaves a poem (below) in the character's room. (He does have tracking, after all.) It will be written on a piece of parchment that smells of roses and has the name of his new love interest written on the outside of the folded parchment.

Poem

Our eyes met
Time stood still
Your soul touched mine
It was then I knew.

You are a part of myself
And I of you.
Our time together is short
But the time of our love, long.

Kelvaran feels an instant and powerful connection with the character but he also senses that their time together will be short and therefore is more aggressive in his pursuit than he normally would be. If he does not use his poem the first day, he will leave it in his love's room some time during the relationship. One of the character's features – hair, eyes, figure, etc., will stand out for him.

Plot Hooks

- Kelvaran is looking for a rich experience with someone while he is among people.
- The ranger may have important knowledge for the party about the surrounding area or could serve as a guide.

- Longer-term complications could include the group finding a piece of Kelvaran's cloak at the site of a battle and signs that he had recently been overcome and taken captive by something in the wild.

KELVARAN

CR 3

XP 800

Male half-elf bard 1, ranger 2

N Medium humanoid (half-elf)

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +13

Defense

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +3 Dex)

hp 17 (1d8+2d10+3 plus 3)

Fort +3, **Ref** +8, **Will** +4; +2 vs. enchantment

Defensive Abilities countersong, distraction;

Immune sleep

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee longsword +2 (1d8+2/19–20)

dagger +2 (1d4+1/19–20)

Ranged light crossbow +5 (1d8/19–20)

Special Attacks fascinate (DC 12)

avored enemy (orcs +2)

Bard Spells Known

1st (2/day)– *cure light wounds*, *lesser confusion* (DC 12)

0 (at will)–*detect magic*, *light*, *mage hand*, *read magic*

Statistics

Str 15, **Dex** 16, **Con** 10, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 17

Feats Alertness, Run, Skill Focus (perception)^B, Two-Weapon Fighting^B

Skills Handle Animal +6, Heal +6, Knowledge (all others) +0, Knowledge (geography) +5, Knowledge (nature) +5, Perception +13, Perform (poetry) +5, Ride +6, Sense Motive +9, Stealth +7, Survival +7, Swim +6

Languages Common, elven

SQ bardic knowledge, inspire courage +1, track, wild empathy +5

Combat Gear studded leather armor, longsword, dagger, light crossbow, 20 bolts, healer's kit, scroll case of poems and tales



KELVARAN **CR 5**

XP 1,600

Male half-elf bard 1, ranger 4

N Medium humanoid (half-elf)

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +13

Defense

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15

(+3 armor, +3 Dex, +2 natural)

hp 32 (1d8+4d10+5 plus 5)**Fort** +4, **Ref** +9, **Will** +5; +2 vs. enchantment**Defensive Abilities** countersong, distraction;**Immune** sleep

Offense

Speed 30 ft.**Melee** mwk longsword +7 (1d8+3/19–20) and dagger +5 (1d4+1/19–20) or mwk longsword +9 (1d8+3/19–20)**Ranged** mwk light crossbow +9 (1d8/19–20)**Special Attacks** fascinate (DC 12)

favored enemy (orcs +2)

Bard Spells Known1st (2/day)—*cure light wounds*, *lesser confusion* (DC 12)0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *light*, *mage hand*, *read magic***Ranger Spells Prepared**1st—*calm animals* (DC 12)

Statistics

Str 16, **Dex** 16, **Con** 10, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 13**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 20**Feats** Alertness, Endurance^B, Run, Skill Focus (perception)^B, Two-Weapon Fighting^B, Weapon Focus (longsword)**Skills** Bluff +9, Diplomacy +9, Handle Animal +6, Heal +6, Knowledge (all others) +0, Knowledge (geography) +6, Knowledge (nature) +5, Perception +13, Perform (poetry) +6, Ride +6, Sense Motive +9, Stealth +7, Survival +7, Swim +6**Languages** Common, elven**SQ** bardic knowledge, favored terrain (forest), hunter's bond (animal companion), inspire courage +1, track, wild empathy +5**Combat Gear** studded leather armor, +2 *amulet of natural armor*, masterwork longsword, longsword, dagger, masterwork light crossbow, 20 bolts, healer's kit, silver holy symbol, courtier's outfit, scroll case of poems and tales

KELVARAN **CR 8**

XP 4,800

Male half-elf bard 2, ranger 6

N Medium humanoid (half-elf)

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +14

Defense

AC 22, touch 13, flat-footed 19 (+7 armor, +3 Dex, +2 natural)**hp** 50 (2d8+6d10+8 plus 8)**Fort** +5, **Ref** +11, **Will** +7; +2 vs. enchantment**Defensive Abilities** countersong, distraction, well-versed; **Immune** sleep

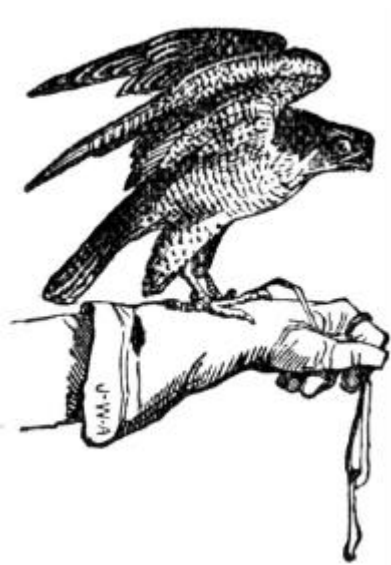
Offense

Speed 30 ft.**Melee** +1 *giant bane longsword* +10/+5 (1d8+4/19–20) and dagger +8/+3 (1d4+1/19–20) or +1 *giant bane longsword* +12/+7 (1d8+3/19–20)**Ranged** mwk light crossbow +9 (1d8/19–20)**Special Attacks** fascinate (DC 13), favored enemy (giants +4, orcs +2)**Bard Spells Known**1st (3/day)—*cure light wounds*, *expeditious retreat*, *lesser confusion* (DC 12)0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *know direction*, *light*, *mage hand*, *read magic***Ranger Spells Prepared**1st—*calm animals* (DC 12) x2

Statistics

Str 16, **Dex** 16, **Con** 10, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 14**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 23**Feats** Alertness, Endurance^B, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting^B, Run, Self-Sufficient, Skill Focus (perception)^B, Two-Weapon Fighting^B, Weapon Focus (longsword)**Skills** Bluff +10, Diplomacy +10, Handle Animal +7, Heal +9, Knowledge (all others) +0, Knowledge (geography) +7, Knowledge (nature) +7, Perception +14, Perform (poetry) +10, Ride +10, Sense Motive +10, Stealth +9, Survival +10, Swim +8**Languages** Common, elven**SQ** bardic knowledge, favored terrain (forest), hunter's bond (animal companion), inspire courage +1, track, versatile performance, wild empathy +8**Combat Gear** +4 *studded leather armor*, +2 *amulet of natural armor*, +1 *giant bane longsword*, masterwork longsword, dagger, masterwork light crossbow, 20 bolts, masterwork lute, masterwork pen, spyglass, noble's outfit

Animal Companion – Kelvaran has an animal companion, a hawk he calls Windsinger.



WINDSINGER

CR 3

XP 800

Male hawk animal companion 4

N Tiny animal

Init +4; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +17

Defense

AC 18, touch 16, flat-footed 14 (+4 Dex, +2 natural, +2 size)

hp 20 (4d8+4)

Fort +5, **Ref** +7, **Will** +3

Defensive Abilities evasion

Offense

Speed 10 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)

Melee 2 talons +5 (1d4–2)

Space 2-1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Statistics

Str 7, **Dex** 18, **Con** 12, **Int** 2, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 7

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 19

(can't be tripped)

Feats Weapon Finesse, Skill Focus (perception)

Skills Fly +17, Perception +17, Stealth +8;

Racial Modifier +8 Perception

SQ Link, share spells, tricks (3 bonus)

WINDSINGER

CR 3

XP 800

Male hawk animal companion 6

N Tiny animal

Init +4; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +18

Defense

AC 20, touch 16, flat-footed 16 (+4 Dex, +4 natural, +2 size)

hp 32 (6d8+6)

Fort +6, **Ref** +9, **Will** +4

Defensive Abilities devotion, evasion

Offense

Speed 10 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)

Melee 2 talons +5 (1d4–1)

Space 2-1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Statistics

Str 8, **Dex** 19, **Con** 12, **Int** 2, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 7

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 21

(can't be tripped)

Feats Weapon Finesse, Skill Focus (fly), Skill Focus (perception)

Skills Fly +21, Perception +18, Stealth +8;

Racial Modifier +8 Perception

SQ link, share spells, tricks (3 bonus)





Raphael

Male human expert [3,5,7]

fact that his mind is so active that it wanders from subject to subject and will sometimes start down a completely different path, spurred on by a new idea. Similarly, he has been known to fall deeply and madly in love with someone and then just as rapidly fall out of love again once he has painted or sculpted the person. This is not intentional. He just buries himself so deeply in his projects he forgets all else, like food, sleep, and those he loves. Also, shortly after he has finished a brilliant project, he sees flaws in it and then either dismisses it or tries to destroy it so he can do it again. People who have commissioned art from him are quick to gather it up before he falls 'out of love' with it. Fortunately, he has shown no inclination toward violence against people in whom he discovers flaws; he just focuses on something else. Raphael can be very stubborn and the rulers of the land know that he cannot be forced...but he can be enticed.

Introduction

Raphael is an artist and inventor.

Narrative

There seems to be a man following your party. [If the party stops:] **The man is moving around through the crowd so he can better watch your party. He seems to be concentrating upon** [pick a female of the party (if possible). The man will watch but pretty much ignore other members of the party if they begin approaching him, and concentrate on the object of his obsession.]

[If the party moves on he will follow; if the party circles around to get him, he will not run or try to stop them. Once he is cornered or challenged he will respond with:] **"What? I did not mean anything ...I just...I just..."** the man stammers, and focuses upon the one he has been watching. **"You are a goddess [god]! I must sculpt you! Someone such as yourself must be immortalized in marble."**

Quotes

[1] **You have a quality about you that must be preserved for all generations.**

[2] **The great mysteries of life are deep, like the beauty of your eyes.**

[3] **That does not matter; only the art [or whatever he is obsessed with at the time] matters.**

Personality

Raphael is a brilliant engineer, inventor, sculptor, and artist. People love his art and appreciate his engineering skills but they think his inventions are crazy. This perception is not helped by the



Motivation and Goals

Raphael wants to complete the perfect work of divine beauty, the perfect work of architecture, the perfect invention.

Background

No one knows where Raphael came from and he will not speak of it or his family. If anyone shows an interest in this he will tend to dismiss it with a comment like Quote 3 above.

Plot Hooks

– Raphael could desire to make a statue of a party member, either for himself or as part of a commission by a temple to sculpt a deity. Raphael is convinced he has found the perfect person to be his model.

– Everyone knows Raphael and they know that he is under the protection of the most powerful families of the land/city. It is possible that other powers would want to kidnap Raphael for access to his military and alchemical inventions, and the party could be hired to prevent it or to rescue him.

– Raphael could be injured by a thief trying to steal some invention of his, or in an assassination attempt by a rival power, and the adventurers could be hired to bring the criminal to justice and also find out who hired him or her. Or, if Raphael has become a dead end roleplaying-wise and his lover is getting bored, he could be assassinated and the heroes could seek the assassin.

– Raphael could be hired to design and build a stronghold for the players. He might include some of his amazing inventions (just to try them out in a real-life setting), which could be great – if they work.

RAPHAEL

CR 2

XP 600

Male human expert 3

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +2

Defense

AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10 (+1 Dex)

hp 16 (3d8+3 plus 3)

Fort +2, **Ref** +2, **Will** +5

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee dagger +2 (1d4)

Statistics

Str 10, **Dex** 12, **Con** 12, **Int** 16, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 13

Feats Skill Focus (Craft [painting]), Skill Focus (Craft [sculpture]), Skill Focus (Knowledge [engineering])

Skills Appraise +9, Bluff +7, Craft (painting) +12, Craft (sculpture) +12, Diplomacy +3, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Knowledge (engineering) +12, Knowledge (local) +9, Perception +2, Profession (engineer) +8, Sense Motive +8

Combat Gear dagger;

Other Gear masterwork artisan's tools (3 different sets), courtier's outfit

RAPHAEL

CR 4

XP 1,200

Male human expert 5

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +10

Defense

AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10 (+1 Dex)

hp 26 (5d8+5 plus 5)

Fort +2, **Ref** +2, **Will** +7

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk dagger +4 (1d4)

Statistics

Str 10, **Dex** 12, **Con** 12, **Int** 16, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 14

Feats Skill Focus (Craft [painting]), Skill Focus (Craft [sculpture]), Skill Focus (Knowledge [engineering]), Skill focus (perception)

Skills Appraise +11, Bluff +9, Craft (painting) +14, Craft (sculpture) +14, Diplomacy +5, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (engineering) +14, Knowledge (local) +11, Perception +10, Profession (engineer) +10, Sense Motive +1

Combat Gear Masterwork dagger, *wand of detect magic* (38 charges), *goggles of minute seeing*;

Other Gear water clock, masterwork artisan's tools (3 different sets), 3 courtier's outfits, engineering gear including: 2 block and tackle, canvas (30 sq yds), 47 scroll cases, glass mirrors, 3 complex locks, hourglass, merchant's scale, magnifying glass



RAPHAEL**CR 6**

XP 2,400

Male human expert 7

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +12

Defense

AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 11 (+1 armor, +2 Dex)**hp** 36 (7d8+7 plus 7)**Fort** +3, **Ref** +4, **Will** +8

Offense

Speed 30 ft.**Melee** mwk dagger +6 (1d4), or mwk silver dagger +6 (1d4-1)

Statistics

Str 10, **Dex** 14, **Con** 12, **Int** 16, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 12**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 16**Feats** Skill Focus (Craft [painting]), Skill Focus

(Craft [sculpture]), Skill Focus (Knowledge [engineering]), Skill Focus (perception), Skill Focus (profession)

Skills Appraise +11, Bluff +11, Craft (painting) +16, Craft (sculpture) +16, Diplomacy +7, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Knowledge (engineering) +16, Knowledge (local) +13, Perception +12, Profession (engineer) +15, Sense Motive +10**Combat Gear** Masterwork dagger, masterwork silvered dagger, +1 *bracers of armor*, +2 *gloves of dexterity* (included above), *wand of detect magic* (38 charges), *goggles of minute seeing*;**Other Gear** water clock, masterwork artisan's tools (3 different sets), 3 courtier's outfit, engineering gear including: 2 block and tackle, canvas (30 sq yds), 47 scroll cases, glass mirrors, 3 complex locks, hourglass, merchant's scale, magnifying glass



Silya

Female human commoner [2,3]

Introduction

A barmaid who desires male admiration and will manipulate anyone she needs to in order to get it.

Narrative

The barmaid walks up to your table, and does not seem to be in any hurry about it. She moves gracefully past the others present, her

skirt swishing around her calves as she twists back and forth a bit. Her hair is very blonde, almost white, and hangs thick and straight past her shoulders. As she stops at your table, you find your eyes drawn to her dress's low neckline, drawn by the knots of ribbon there; the most colorful part of her outfit. Her speech is also unhurried, and as melodious as her movements are graceful. "Hello all. What choices of drinks may I bring you?"

Quotes

"There's no need to holler at me! I'll be along."

"You can't rush a friendly evening [friendly meal, etc.], so just don't be in such a hurry."

Description

Silya has pale blue eyes and white-blond hair, very straight, fine, thick and soft, that hangs just past her shoulders. Her speech is slow and melodious (usually) and she moves in a graceful, unhurried manner. She generally wears dresses with calf-length skirts and gathered bodices, decorated around the neckline with embroidery or ribbons to draw attention to her modest bustline. She is shod in black leather half-boots and bedecked with several trinkets or small pieces of jewelry given to her by her various admirers.

Personality

Silya is manipulative and slightly greedy. She likes having admirers, because they say nice things about her but even more because they give her presents. She prefers gold, but even a gift as small as a single flower is something to show off.

Silya is perfectly willing to fish for compliments or to put other people in a situation (because they feel guilty or for some reason obligated) where they are compelled to do something that is to her benefit.

Silya would not be above helping herself to some little coin or trinket that a gentleman "wouldn't miss," especially if he has failed to give her the little gifts she believes she requires.

Scenarios

Silya has developed a method that usually works to gain attention for her, at least temporarily. When she is on the lookout for a new love interest, she will study the possibilities and then approach the one of her choice with this account, rendered in her slow, soft voice:

"There's a fellow that's been bothering me. He just won't leave me alone, and I'm a little scared of him. I told him I wasn't interested in keeping company with him, but he wouldn't listen to me. Then I told him I wouldn't because I had a man I was already seeing, but he doesn't really believe me. I know he's just waiting for me to leave, and I'm afraid to walk home by myself. Would you mind acting like you're my gentleman friend and walking me home? I'd appreciate it ever so much." If pressed on the matter, Silya will point to some large but otherwise non-descript person outside who she claims is the one harassing her.

– Silya may just want to get the guy alone, so she can use her wiles on him in hopes of winning herself another generous admirer. She does actually have a home a little distance away to which a gent can accompany her, and where she may invite him in if things seem to suggest that. On the other hand, things may not be as they seem.

– She could be running a scam, whereby she gets an unsuspecting fellow to take her home, invites him in and then has her 'father' catch them in a compromising position. Swearing to call out the guards on this reprobate who has been manhandling his little girl, the father can be turned aside from his wrath by a soft answer that include the chink of a fair number of gold pieces,



plus a parting gift for Silya to make up for the girl's hurt feelings.

– Silya could also be part of a ring of thieves, in which she picks out a wealthy-looking prospect and separates him from his companions with her story, and then her friends separate him from his valuables. They try to stage it to make Silya look innocent – roughing her up (just a little), or jumping the man after he leaves her house. Usually they are successful, but perhaps a very alert person would become suspicious.

SILYA **CR 1**

XP 400

Female human commoner 2
N Medium humanoid (human)
Init +0; **Senses** Perception +0

Defense

AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10

hp 6 (2d6 plus 2)

Fort +0, **Ref** +0, **Will** +0

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee dagger +0 (1d3–1)

Statistics

Str 9, **Dex** 10, **Con** 10, **Int** 10, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +0; **CMD** 10

Feats Skill Focus (bluff), Skill Focus (diplomacy)

Skills Appraise +1, Bluff +6, Diplomacy +6, Profession (barmaid) +4, Sense Motive +2, Sleight of Hand +2

Languages Common

Gear pretty shawl (1 gp), copper bangle bracelets (15 gp), copper earrings (8 gp), gold necklace with blue quartz (65 gp)



SILYA**CR 2**

XP 600

Female human commoner 3

N Medium humanoid (human)

Init +0; **Senses** Perception +0

Defense

AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10**hp** 12 (3d6 plus 3)**Fort** +1, **Ref** +1, **Will** +1

Offense

Speed 30 ft.**Melee** dagger +0 (1d3–1)

Statistics

Str 9, **Dex** 10, **Con** 10, **Int** 10, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 12**Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +0; **CMD** 10**Feats** Skill Focus (bluff), Skill Focus (diplomacy), Skill Focus (profession[courtesan])**Skills** Appraise +1, Bluff +7, Diplomacy +7, Profession (barmaid) +5, Profession (courtesan) +9, Sense Motive +2, Sleight of Hand+2**Languages** Common**Gear** pretty shawl (1 gp), copper bangle bracelets (15 gp), copper earrings (8 gp), gold necklace with blue quartz (65 gp), silk shawl (10 gp), entertainer's outfit (3gp), gold earrings with irregular pearls (40 gp), gold bracelet (55gp)**Going to the Warres.**

Tell me not (Sweet) I am unkinde,
That from the Nunnerie
Of thy chaste breast, and quiet minde,
To Warre and Armes I flie.

True; a new Mistresse now I chase,
The first Foe in the Field;
And with a stronger Faith imbrace
A Sword, a Horse, a Shield.

Yet this Inconstancy is such,
As you too shall adore;
I could not love thee (Deare) so much,
Lov'd I not Honour more.

— Richard Lovelace



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