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THE ULTIMATE DRAGON WARRIORS ZINE

# CASKET OF FAYS

ISSUE TWO



Welcome to the second issue of Casket of Fays, the pre-eminent Dragon Warriors Fanzine.

Halloween's approach gave us the excuse to drop some spine-chilling content into this issue. We hope that you find it suitably horrific.

You'll notice that we've got more pages in this issue than our first. When we started pulling this issue together, it was quickly evident that we could have a giant-sized issue with all the articles that had been submitted. Chopping and cutting was one heck of a job, but it means that we have some great content ready to go into issue 3 and onwards..

I won't waffle at length about what's in this issue. Discover the contents for yourself. All I will say is that we go from the very beginnings of Dragon Warriors, with '**Mortal Combat**' by Lee Barklam, to the future, with an encounter from Jonathan Hicks, writer of the next book from Serpent King Games, '**The Cursed King**'.

A message about a competition we ran across the internet. We all have our own Legend. Like a write-in from the past, spot the small divergence from canon to win a prize. Answers by the end of 2020 via any of the many ways to contact us. One winner's name to be pulled from a helm. Prize to be specified later, and a message below from the fellow whose idea the competition was. See you in issue 3 – Simon Barns (Editor)

*What's this? How dare someone write dear Baron Aldred's stats, you ask? Well, I'm the one to blame. All my idea. But it's done in good faith and I've done so by hosting a contest for people to write their idea of the Baron.. It's a small glimpse of what the Baron could be if players were to interact properly with him. We got two entries for the contest, both interesting and well written, but there's only space for one now and so meet the Baron on p19 – Simon Landry*

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**Zombie Bear** by Outland Entertainment © Jeremy Mohler, 2020

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**Ngokla** by Andrew Wright

Illustrations of **Sword** and **Skulls** by Brockprint

# A HOLE LOT OF TROUBLE

*Jonathan Hicks*

An encounter for 1st or 2nd-rank adventurers

The village of Dulsbury in the north of Albion has a most peculiar problem – they have a hole.

Dulsbury sits on a hill at the edge of Fenring Forest with a commanding view of the surrounding countryside. During a rather vicious thunderstorm, the villagers heard an almighty crash, the ground rumbled, and they woke up to find a huge hole, 20m across, in the field of Farmer Mugger (who grows the finest cabbages this side of the river).

The hole itself appears bottomless and the locals are afraid to go near it. Rumours started almost immediately – the hole is an opening to the Abyss, and those devout to the True Faith feel chills and a sense of overwhelming dread when they approach the hole. The local priest has been summoned.

The rumour that the hole is a gateway to Hell has also attracted members of a cult thought long dead; the Cloaked Believers, a group of devil worshippers known for kidnapping, murder, and other vile practices. They have decided that this is their time and have made camp in the woods close to the hole. More of their black-cloaked kind have been quietly heading to their camp.

**The Cloaked Believers** are followers of the Shadow Star, Lusiren the Fallen, who is said to have been cast out of the heavens for defying the True Faith and creating evil creatures to follow her as she tried to overthrow God. It is one of many cults that dot the lands, but this one seems to be gathering momentum.

The cult camp for now consists of only four Believers and a Black Cleric, a leader of local cult members. The cult is but a pale shadow of its former power. They are devout but not stupid and will fight until they have no hope, then they will either flee (and swear revenge on the party!) or

surrender. Their faith only stretches so far. They do not wear armour, just thin, badly made black cloaks and undergarments, and they all wield shortswords (d8, 3). If the party slay the Believers and Cleric and loot them for treasure, they will find a single crown, 24 florins, 24 pennies, and a tiny piece of quartz of low quality worth 17F.

Cloaked Believer (Black Cleric values after the oblique)

*Attack 13/14*

*Defence 7/8*

*Magical Defence 3/4*

*Evasion 4*

*Stealth 13*

*Perception 5*

*Health Points 11/12*

*Movement 10m (20m)*

*Rank Equivalent 1st/2nd*

The Cloaked Believers are here because they heard the rumours of the hole and that it may be a gateway to Hell, so they figured this was the time to try and complete their cult's mission to bring Lusiren back into the world to overthrow the True Faith.

They have already started to make plans to get into the hole and have thrown six ropes down, tying them off on strong pegs that can take the weight of a grown person and their equipment, even armoured knights.

**The Hole** is deep and disappears into darkness – throwing an object down there does not result in any sounds of impact – and the cold is almost stifling. As soon as anyone makes a descent they can feel the chill of the dark and their breath explodes into clouds of mist.

The ropes are nearly 100 feet long and as the players get to the bottom they can see that rough rock and roots slowly gives way to construction, like the bricked walls of a well but with huge blocks three feet across. As they descend further the blocks become more intricate in design, with writing and artwork reminiscent of the Selentine Empire carved into the stone, spiralling down into the hole (the carvings on Trajan's column monument in Rome are similar).

It tells a story; the first carvings show a legion of Selentine soldiers marching across hills and across a river, fighting local warrior tribes and defeating them with sword and shield. The tribes seem unorganized while the Selentine warriors are uniform and ordered. They build fortresses and towns, cultivate the fields, and seem to ‘civilise’ the local tribes.

Then they are attacked by a huge dragon! The carvings show the beast destroying what they have built and taking their riches for its hoard. To hide the treasure, the Selentines dig a huge hole and throw their wealth into it in an attempt to hide it from the dragon. They cover the hole with thick beams of wood and dirt so that it appears to be simple farmland. The dragon returns, circles, and leaves.

The next part of the carving shows a Selentine official holding up a scroll, but it ends abruptly. The story is over.

The rope ends, but there is still no bottom. Under the feet of the players is a level mist, a floor of fog that roils and bursts as if boiling. The cold shakes the bones and the silence is total, other than the breathing of the players and the creaking ropes.. Do the players go back up, or do they drop through the mist and pray that there is something not too far below?

If the players do elect to drop then they pass **Through the Mist** for a second and then emerge underneath, landing in ankle-deep mud and filth. Any player dropping through the mist should test Reflexes to avoid taking a single point of damage.

There is little light down here. The daylight penetrates the mist so that there is some light but it is gloomy. Torches or lanterns will help.

There is nothing down here but rotted scrolls, papyrus, clothes, old tools, and broken pots and utensils. There is no sign of treasure.

**Until...** the muck suddenly erupts and a grotesque, twisted creature with an axe explodes from the filth. It is skeletal, twice the size of a normal person, and seems to pull the broken items and filth to its body like a

magnet, the dirt and grime folding over the cracked and splintered bones like skin and muscle. It wields a huge axe (d8, 6).

It hisses in a strange language, and if anyone can understand Selentine, the gist is clear – ‘I am the Guardian of the Gold and you will not steal from us, reptile scum!’

This is a Guardian Spirit, created to protect hidden treasure by forming a body from whatever it can find. It is old and weak but will fight hard. It is a 4th Rank creature so the players will have to fight together or retreat as best they can and regroup! The spirit will not cross through the mist.

### Guardian Spirit

*Attack 17*

*Defence 9*

*Magical Defence 7*

*Evasion 6*

*Stealth 15*

*Perception 9 (Darksight)*

*Health Points 12*

*AF 2 (dirt and refuse)*

*Movement 12m (25m)*

*Rank Equivalent 4th*

If they defeat the spirit then they can search the refuse at the bottom of the hole. There are riches here – the Treasure Type is Good for Cash, Gems/Jewellery, and Magic Items (*Dragon Warriors* p.131) and they may make one automatic roll on the Magic Items table (*Dragon Warriors* p.132).

What they do with the hole afterwards is up to them – it might make for an interesting dig site for scholars, or even a local landmark that people will pay to visit!



# AN ARTIFICER'S GUIDE TO THE IGNIS FATUUS

*Wayne Imlach*

These fey creatures of fire and misfortune are typically spoken of with muttered curses, accompanied by tales of unfortunate souls lured to their doom while abroad on moonless nights. To the industrious artificer, however, they are a wondrous source of magical energy to be harnessed and put to use!

## **Fey Lamp (Corpse Candle)**

One must first ensnare an Ignis Fatuus. This is best done on a moonless night around the festival of Samhain, as the veil between worlds is thinnest at this time. These wisps appear in abundance across any moor or marsh. The decapitated head of a man, or a large hollowed out turnip grown in the grave of a freshly interred corpse, is set upon the open ground. The skullcap or top must be removed and set aside to provide an opening for the wisp to enter. Retreating to a good distance, the wisp hunter must wait until one of the dancing lights appears – it will be drawn to the trap, much like the reverse of a moth to a flame. The moment it blinks out of sight, the hunter must rush to the trap and replace the lid of the chosen receptacle, trapping the wisp within. A Fey Lamp has been created!

If a corpse head is used as a receptacle, the flesh will gradually dissolve until only the skull remains. The light of the wisp will shine through the eye sockets, nose, and mouth for a rather macabre effect. A turnip root will gradually blacken and harden, as if carved from a dark wood. It is advisable to have cut suitable openings in the root before entrapment. As long as any openings in the object are smaller than the Ignis Fatuus itself (which is a ball of light around 10 cm across) it cannot escape.

A Fey Lamp dims and brightens on proximity to living, sentient beings, becoming but a soft glow if there is no one within 100m, but increasing in intensity relative to both the number of, and the distance to, living person. This makes for an interesting warning device for those seeking solitude.



Interestingly, a Mystic that is Mind Cloaked will elicit no response, supporting the hypothesis that the wisp can sense minds rather than bodies.

The Ignis Fatuus will be sustained within its prison as long as it is regularly fed human blood – 1HP worth will sustain it for a week. Each day thereafter it goes unfed, there is a 1 in 6 chance it will dissipate, leaving behind a small hard coal-like lump known as an Ignis Lapis (fire stone).

### **Ignis Lapis (Fire Stone)**

This is a useful, if somewhat dangerous, magical object. If exposed to a naked flame it will catch alight and start to crackle and spit tiny, multi-coloured sparks. The following round it will explode violently, sending tiny razor-sharp shards of the flaming stone in all directions. The initial blast does 1d6+6 damage (minus AF) to anyone within 1m, while everyone else with 5m takes 1d6 damage (minus AF) from the flaming debris. Anything flammable in the area has a 1 in 6 chance of catching fire.

Set in an amulet, it makes a useful device for breaking locks or blasting foes, as long as a suitable source of flame is present. Carefully carved (to avoid sparks!) into an arrowhead, it can be attached to a shaft to create a missile of devastating power, though once set aflame the bowman should not tarry in letting loose the weapon!

### **Jack-O-Lantern**

A bold Sorcerer may utilise a Fey Lamp to create a creature known as a Jack-O-Lantern. Prior to raising a skeleton with the Animate Bones spell, the unfortunate victim's head is removed and replaced with a Fey Lamp. Capturing the wisp in the original skull will save the sorcerer the trouble of procuring two corpses, should a previously obtained lamp be unavailable.

Once created, care must be taken! This undead creature is fueled by both necromantic and fey magic, and is far more cunning and deadly than a simple-minded skeleton. It is not subservient to its creator unless immediately brought under control with an Enslave spell – this form of binding does not expire as normal, enduring until the death of the caster.

Once summoned and successfully bound, it will be found to be a rather intelligent and amusing, if maniacal, companion.

Be wary when sending your servant against other sorcerers! A Dispel Magic of 7 MP or more cast upon a Jack-O-Lantern will break the binding spell. The creature will immediately seek out and turn on its former master. Once avenged, a Jack-O-Lantern will typically look to return to the moors from where it was captured, where it may help or hinder travellers passing through its domain as whimsy takes it.

A Jack-O-Lantern can spit a jet of magical flame up to 2m – this has a Speed of 15 and does 1d6 HP damage. Magical armour can reduce this damage by its magical bonus. This cannot be used two rounds in a row.

Anyone first encountering a Jack-O-Lantern is subject to a 1d12 Fright Attack that, if successful, causes them to flee in terror for 1d4 rounds.

Once per day, the Jack-O-Lantern may cast the Sorcerer spells ‘Destrier’ and ‘Vorpal Blade’. The Jack-O-Lantern can sense any human mind within 10m, so cannot be fooled by invisibility.

*Attack 18*

*Defence 12*

*Magical Defence 20*

*Evasion 6*

*Stealth 6 (+6 if hooded)*

*Perception 16 (Panoptical)*

*Health Points 1d6+16*

*AF 0 (2 vs stabbing, half damage from fire attacks)*

*Movement 10m (20m)*

*Rank Equivalent 6th*

To completely destroy a Jack-O-Lantern, the head must be opened and the wisp released. Otherwise, a new body can be restored with a second Animate Bones spell, or it can be kept as a talkative Fey Lamp.

A Jack-O-Lantern is equipped as its master sees fit, typically with at least light armour and a fine weapon, though often invested with various magical trappings as most Sorcerers will wish to ensure their servant is well protected.

# KUMAN THONG

*Damian May*

On the southern border of Khitai and north of the Thousand Islands are other lands: Batuban, for one, but others have names unknown in other climes.

In one of these lands is found the ancient origins of the *Kuman Thong*, The Golden Child.

Originating in an ancient tale of jealousy, sorcery, and violence, the making of these grisly charms is a relatively common, if somewhat frowned at, practice of local sorcerers, necromancers, and priests.

The corpse of a stillborn child is taken from its grave and dry roasted over a fire while incantations are said to summon the power of the *Kuman Thong*. Once the ritual is complete, and the tiny body is reduced to a dry husk, it is soaked in *Nam Man Phrai*, a powerful oil in local occult traditions. *Nam man Phrai* is an oil that is obtained by placing a candle under the chin of a woman who died while pregnant or a person who died an unnatural or violent death.

Finally, it is coated with a specially prepared lacquer and then carefully covered in gold leaf. It is usually worn about the neck in a soft leather or silk bag.

The creation of Kuman Thong has since spread throughout Batuban and Southern Khitai. Similar, though more complex, rituals exist in the Thousand Islands and are used to create the beings known as Toyol.

An individual wearing this amulet is under the constant effect of the Warlock spell Fortune (*Dragon Warriors*, p.107). The individual must spend at least 5 florins each week buying small toys, sweets, and trinkets for the Kuman Thong's amusement. If they fail to do so, they will be afflicted once per week with a Curse with a Magical Attack of 20 until they make amends.

# MORTAL COMBAT

*Lee Barklam*

Mortal Combat is the precursor RPG to the Dragon Warriors RPG written by Steve Foster and Dave Morris and contains many recognisable Dragon Warriors elements, including a formative version of the Dishearten spell called Decardialisation – two such great names for that spell that it is hard to choose between them!

Within its sixty-one A4 pages was an entire role-playing game, complete with character creation, rules for combat and magic, equipment lists, 92 spells, 49 monsters (with encounter tables), 61 unique magical items (on top of scrolls and simple “plussed” magical arms and armour), and an introductory adventure, The Crypt of Lieberkuen (later republished on Dave’s blog).



Released in 1979 in a limited print run of just fifty copies by Waynflete House, Mortal Combat was also made available as a PDF as a special reward for the “Mind Games with Dr Matt” Patreon. Are you one of the lucky few to have a copy?

Whilst not everything made it from Mortal Combat into Dragon Warriors (like hit locations), there is still room to allow Mortal Combat to inspire new content for Dragon Warriors and enrich the Lands of Legend (themselves absent from Mortal Combat). Who was, for example, the great sorcerer Morgud, whose Arrow and Armour are immortalised in the Mortal Combat spellbook but did not appear in Dragon Warriors?

In future editions of the Casket, I plan to bring to life an item, a spell, an NPC, or an idea from Mortal Combat that has not previously been seen in Dragon Warriors. To start off this series of articles, I introduce the Book of the Dead, a magical artefact from Mortal Combat that may appeal to a Dragon Warriors audience.

## **Book of the Dead**

Scribed within this thick tome are a seemingly unintelligible jumble of faded arcane glyphs across its hundreds of pages, all bound in dry and decaying bleached-white leather that leaves an ashy residue that is hard to remove on the fingers of whoever handles the book. However, the power of this book is not in its reading, but in being buried with a corpse not dead for more than a year.

If both corpse and book are left undisturbed in the grave, the power of the book slowly restores the corpse to life, finally reviving and energising the being to be able to dig their way to the surface of their grave at midnight on the anniversary of their burial. Should the grave be disturbed within that time, on that anniversary, the book will instead bring to life a Night Stalker to hunt relentlessly whosoever dared disturb the grave.

Once spent, the book crumbles to ash and, whilst the being restored to life will otherwise feel and act as normal, except for perhaps some confused recurring nightmares, they must pay the price for their resurrection – upon each anniversary of their revivification, they will become possessed by the demonic spirit that wrought the hellish sorceries to bring the book into being and take the life of an innocent as payment for their continued life, with no memory of having done so the following day.

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## **AT THE COURT OF KING HADRIC – TOSHI KAIKURI**

*Chris Meacham*

From the land of Yamato, Toshi Kaikuri is an older, stern looking man, with thinning black hair. His black eyes seem deep and intelligent. At court, he communicates via a translator and wears the traditional clothes of his land, beautiful silk kimonos. He carries the traditional daisho (big sword/little sword) of a Yamato noble, as do his armoured retainers. King Hadric's guards at court have heard these men are called Samurai.

# THE LIGHT ELEMENTALIST PT2

*James Healey and Josh Roach*

In part one, we looked at the Light Elementalist's core spells. Part two details the other Elementalist spells of Earth, Air, Fire, and Water. Each of these variant spells differ for the Light Elementalist in the same way as the Darkness spells but with a more benign twist.

## **Earth**

1. Abundance – Each fruit counts as a meal for one person when eaten.
2. Spider Magic – As base spell, but stops tracking by scent in 50m radius.
3. Forest Murmurs – As the base spell except there is a 0% chance of a False Rumour.
4. Create Bog – After the spell has ended, the ground turns to sun-baked earth, requiring a Strength roll to break free.
5. Roots – Each root has 6 HP.
6. Rock Wall – As the Darkness variant.
7. Fissure – The Fissure is filled with sticky webs (*See Giant Spider, Bestiary*, p.35) which are subject to a Spell Expiry Roll.
8. Give up the Dead – Rather than raising a Zombie, this spell causes all undead within 10m of the caster 1d6 damage per Rank. No undead can be raised in that area furthermore. This is a permanent effect.
9. Tremor – As the Darkness variant.
10. Summon Man of Stone – The summoned creature radiates a gentle glow and can be assigned to guard one person or creature.

## Air

1. Cutting Power of the Mind – The ranged weapon gains +1 ABR.
2. Stargaze – As the Darkness variant.
3. False Rumours – Victims hear noises all around themselves, making them more susceptible to surprise (five in six chance).
4. Windwall – The wall may be extended up to 5m in any direction.
5. Summon The Host of the Air – As the Darkness variant.
6. Intangibility – As the Darkness variant.
7. Garotte – Causes the victim to fall into a deathlike slumber (as 'Suspended Animation') for twenty-four hours.
8. Flight – May be cast on another person (they control their own flight).
9. Spin – The victim takes 1d6 combat rounds to float back to the ground.
10. Banshee – As the Darkness variant but other victims fall into a slumber similar to the Mystic's 'Suspended Animation'. Spell Expiry Roll applies.

## Water

1. Rain – The rainwater cures hangovers and minor diseases, like colds.
2. Wave Mastery – The caster may cause a boat to become becalmed.
3. Ice Wall – As the Darkness variant.
4. Walk on Water – As the Darkness variant.
5. Ice Spear – As the Darkness variant.
6. Breathe Underwater – Caster sees underwater as if it were twilight.
7. Blizzard – The Heart of the Storm can be extended anywhere between 2m to 10m at the caster's bidding.
8. Freeze – As the Darkness variant.
9. Lightning – Five charges. Cannot raise Zombies. If all charges are used, it mimics the 'Resurrect' spell but costs 2d3 permanent HP.
10. Summon Tidal Wave – As the Darkness variant.

## Fire

1. Candle – Onlookers within the circle suffer -3 penalty to Attack.
2. Pyrotechnics – As normal but more colourful.
3. Fire Arrow – As normal but creates an arrow that glows brightly.
4. Sheet of Flame – As the Darkness variant.
5. Protection from Fire – As the Darkness variant.
6. Extinguish – Draws all the light of the extinguished flame to the Caster creating an effect the same as ‘Dazzle’ for 1d6 combat rounds.
7. Flash – As the Darkness variant.
8. Fire Weapon – As the Darkness variant.
9. Conflagration – If cast on a building, sunlight will shine out.
10. Summon the Holocaust – Immune to fire and heals 1HP per 4HP from flames and Fire Spells. Spell ends when the Holocaust is reduced to 0HP.

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## **FARE, FOUL AND FEY – ROAST BASILISK HEAD**

*Wayne Imlach*

A delicacy typically only sampled by wealthy, thrill-seeking nobles, a basilisk head needs to be carefully butchered to avoid the poisonous, calcifying effects of the creatures eyes and beak overly contaminating the remaining flesh.

If correctly prepared however, the intoxicating meat not only provides a rush of exhilaration but also a supernatural toughness for several hours afterward (+1 to ATT, DEF and Armour Factor).

Industrious and morally flexible adventurers may be able to turn a tidy sum from the carcass of such a creature in cities or at prestigious tourneys and martial events – if they have the right contacts. Its metallic feathers are also sought after for the creation of extremely lightweight, yet resilient armour.



# ZOMBIE BEASTS

*James Healey*

*“I returned from the forest that night, aching from tree felling, everywhere as black as pitch, save by the glow of my lantern. When I first saw it, I thought a bear woke from its slumber by my passing, but then I smelled it – rotting flesh and vegetation. I was gazed on by cold dead eyes.”*

In *Dragon Warriors*, Zombies are one of the most horrifying creatures a party may face – although dead, they still resemble people. If a Zombie is just an animated human, why not animate other races or creatures?

Like human Zombies, animals have low Reflexes and Movement, whilst their Magical Defence, Evasion, Stealth, Perception, and Vision are the same as the Zombie entry in the main rules (*Dragon Warriors*, p.253).

Reduce Attack and Defence by a third (rounded up), Armour Factor to Zero and add 1d6+10 HP. The animal retains its natural weapons but gains +1 to AB and damage. Magical effects and special attacks/abilities are lost.

Zombie Bear (example)

*Attack 11*

*Defence 4*

*Magical Defence 1*

*Evasion 1*

*Stealth 5*

*Perception 4 (Gloomsight)*

*Health Points 3d6+30 (6d6*

*+12 if randomly encountered)*

*Claws d8+1, 6*

*Armour Factor 0*

*Movement 6m*

*Rank Equivalent 6th*

The above can also be used for other non-animal races such as Frost Giants or Minotaurs, though perhaps not winged or huge creatures such as Dragons.



# NEW OLD MONSTERS – THE NGOKLA

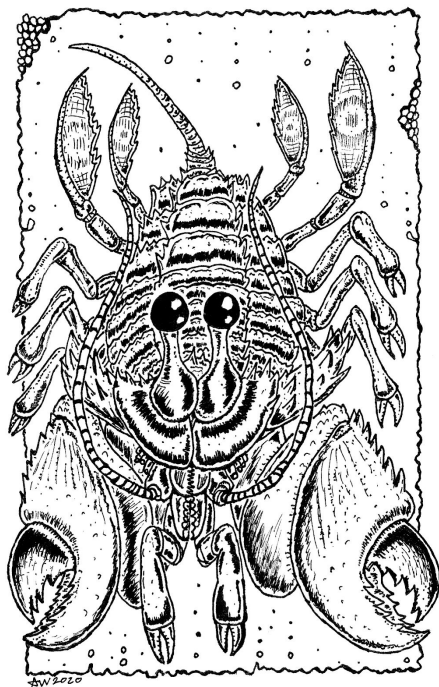
*Andrew Wright*

The lands of Legend are wide and vast and much lore has been published about them and their many diverse denizens. But, occasionally, in the footnotes and asides, we find small fragments about obscure creatures otherwise ignored. Here's one for starters.

## **Ngokla**

The Ngokla is a large trilobite-like crustacean common in warmer southern waters. Various species exist, from mud-brown freshwater varieties farmed by the river folk of the Cosh Goyopë swamplands, to electric-blue marine creatures ranging from the Azure Coast through the Gulf of Marazid to the Sea of Lament and the Deeps of Rasakna. They grow to around 1.5 metres long and are covered in thick spiny armour. Under this is succulent white flesh, much prized as a delicacy by both local people and northern gourmands. Freshwater species tend to be kept in, and harvested from, large floating wicker cages and corrals that bob up and down in the tidal river estuaries, while the marine kinds are more usually fished free-range, using nets and traps. Regardless, the flesh of one Ngokla is worth 50 Florins in local southern markets and up to 100 Florins in the ports of the Coradian Sea.

While the Ngokla itself is a herbivore, grazing on sea-grass, algae, and sea-weed, it does have some formidable defences. In addition to their tough spiked carapace, they are also armed with huge crushing



pincers, usually used for gripping onto mangrove roots or coral substrate, but equally capable of slicing clean through steel. At their terminal end is a long poisonous spine with which the Ngokla can strike forwards, flexing its segmented armour. Along each side of the body are walking legs ending in smaller pincers and two pairs of swimming blades to propel the creature rapidly through the water. These are but some of the reasons many Ngokla farmers and fisherfolk bear numerous scars!

*Attack 15*

*Defence 6*

*Magical Defence 2*

*Evasion 4*

*Stealth 11*

*Perception 5 (Panoptical)*

*Health Points 1d6+8*

*Pincers x2 (d4+3, 4)*

*Sting (d4+1, weak poison)*

*Armour Factor: 5*

*Movement 10m (15m),*

*swimming (20m)*

*Rank Equivalent 3rd*

Note: The Ngokla originally appeared in *Sleeping Gods* (p.74)

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## BARON ALDRED

*Nigel Ward*

Of middling height and build, his dark curly hair speckled with grey and sporting a short salt and pepper beard, Aldred, Baron of Gorburn, could pass for a moderately prosperous merchant or townsman in his late forties. Aldred's only distinguishing features are piercing blue eyes which glint from beneath bushy black brows and a surprisingly booming voice suited to battlefield command. He dresses predominantly in somber blacks, greys and browns. His clothes are well made but lack the ostentatious style more common amongst Southern nobles.



Although he was trained in the arts of war by his father Almaric, a renowned warrior, Aldred knows he is no more than a sound swordsman. Rather, his skills lie in statecraft – his intellect is his greatest weapon. He considers himself a good judge of character, which made Beorn's betrayal all the more frustrating.

Whilst he expects the deference due his title, Aldred is unpretentious and less taciturn company with his trusted advisers. When dealing with Southern lords and the King, he plays the part of the dour, rustic border-lord but in reality he is a clever and curious man open to new ideas. Aldred is pious enough for a lord but knows that the old gods and faerie powers still hold sway in the wild and lonely places. Although Gorburn's people are simple, unsophisticated folk the influence of the freemen of Clyster is beginning to bring more civilised tastes into the wild North.

Gorburn is a large holding but less densely populated than most Southern fiefs and the harsh weather can play havoc with harvests. Aldred's lands are thus not particularly fruitful and this together with his fair and honest levying of taxes results in an emptier treasury than Southern spies suspect!

Aldred was blessed with two children, a son and heir Almaric, and a daughter Alais. His wife, a distant cousin of the old King from near Netherford, died in childbirth. Aldred has not remarried but found comfort in recent years with the widowed Lady Sarah of Norham. Aldred is genuinely fond of his children and his wife's death meant he tended to indulge them more than was proper for noble children. Almaric's recent death by misadventure drove Aldred to the brink of despair. Only the careful ministrations of Father Theobald, Sarah, and Alais brought him forth from deep melancholy. Almaric's death has thrown Gorburn's succession into question. Whilst there is certainly precedent for 17 year old Alais to eventually become Baroness in her own right, this technically requires the King's writ. Aldred's enemies have already begun lobbying against such an eventuality and are seeking suitable suitors for Alais. Aldred ponders a marital alliance with Duke Carnasse, having broached the subject with him in Beltayne one winter.

Ill content with learning to be a proper lady, Alais has been clandestinely studying sorcery with Aldred's court magician, and has proven a quick and able study, blessed with her father's sharp intellect. Aldred is aware of this but feigns ignorance, secretly pleased Alais will have staunch friends and the power to protect herself and Gorburn in the troubled times ahead.

Beset by Thulish raids, the covetous machinations of Grisaille and Montombre, rumblings on the Cornumbrian border, and treasonous plots from within, Aldred and his people face dark days ahead. The actions of a few brave heroes could tip the precarious balance. Only time will tell whether, in the words of Gerard Grisaille, "the Old Wolf and his whelp" can keep the vicious hounds at bay or will fall to one of the many enemies intent on Aldred's demise.

Baron Aldred, Knight

*Attack 16*

*Defence 11*

*Magical Defence 6 (8)*

*Evasion 5*

*Stealth 13*

*Perception 5 (Normal)*

*Health Points 12*

*Movement 10m (20m)*

*Rank 3rd*

(Strength 12; Reflexes 13; Intelligence 16; Psychic Talent 11; Looks 12)

Special Abilities: Armour Expert, Ride Warhorse, Track, Iron Will (+2 to Magical Defence).

Armour: A fine quilted gambeson at court (AF1), in battle fine plate mail and shield (AF5).

Treasures: Aldred wears a gold chain of office crafted for him by his wizard and the monks of Osterlin. It operates as a permanent Mindcloak spell. Aldred wields his father's sword; it is a +1 blade.

# THE DRAC

*Brock*

*The ferryman rows his boat back across the River Rodubris, returning to the shore north of Sauvesse Port. As he struggles against the river's relentless current, a glint of gold catches his eye. He looks again – a golden arm ring lies in the shallows, just a few feet away from his skiff. Quickly steadying his boat, he leans over the side and reaches down into the chill waters. He reaches as far as he can, his fingers feeling the hard edge of metal, when something unseen wraps itself around his arm and pulls him beneath the water's surface. There is a splash, a brief commotion, then all is still. Some time later his boat is found floating downstream, but of the ferryman there is no sign. His family and friends comb the river banks, but he's gone.*

Dracs are water dragons found in rivers and underwater caverns in the southern lands of Chaubrette and Algandy. These shape-shifting creatures lure people into rivers by mimicking items of golden treasure such as rings, cups, or bowls. When an unsuspecting person ventures into the water to claim the prize, the drac grabs him and pulls him down to its watery lair. Most of those that fall for the drac's ruse are eaten, but some become its servants; especially as nursemaids to a drac's offspring. Such servants are returned to land once the offspring reaches maturity, usually after seven years, but are often so changed by their ordeal that those who knew them no longer recognise them.

Although dracs are invisible to normal humans, anyone who rubs the fat from a carcass feasted upon by the drac into his eye can see the creature, even recognising it when it has shifted into another form. However, if a drac realises that a human can see it, the creature will blind the person by ripping out the transformed eye. For this reason, any who have reason to try to see a drac will usually choose to treat only one eye so they won't be left completely blind if a drac uncovers their secret.

*Attack 30*

*Defence 25*

*Magical Attack 25*

*Magical Defence 15*

*Evasion 6*

*Stealth 12*

*Perception 20 (Panoptical)*

*Health Points 5d6+40*

*Talons (d12, 8)*

*Armour Factor: 4*

*Movement 10m, swimming*

*(12m), flying (16m)*

*Rank Equivalent 16th*

All Drac have the abilities of a 3rd-Rank Sorcerer, but 25% will have the abilities of a 5th-Rank Sorcerer (treat these as a Rank Equivalent of 18th).

Drac are invisible (unless they wish to be seen) to characters of Rank 5 or lower. Higher Ranking characters may see the creatures shape as an indistinct shadow; a ripple in the air. Characters of 5th Rank and lower must deduct 4 from Attack and 8 from Defence when fighting a Drac. For higher-Ranking characters, the penalty is -2 Attack and -4 Defence. These penalties can be nullified by using a spell which enables one to see invisible creatures, or using the method described above.

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## **EARNING YOUR ARMS**

*Wayne Imlach*

Enchanted arms and armour do not confer magical combat bonuses to their owner immediately. Every 28 days, a character may attempt to roll equal to or under their Psychic Talent or Looks (whichever is higher) on a D20 to obtain a single point of magical bonus. Any connection to a previous owner is then severed. This is repeated until all available bonus points are gained. If an item has become associated with a family or organisation (such as a military order), it may be passed to another group member with all bonuses immediately available.

# ALMERIC DE SAINT MEUR

*Bonivant*

With indefatigable martial skills and a sincere belief in the True Faith, Almeric is a paragon of knightly virtue. Travelling the lands as a Knight Capellar Errant, he is bold, brave, devout, honourable, and a respected diplomat of high renown.

From a Braeburg gentry family, Almeric renounced all lands and titles when joining the Knights Capellar. His vow of poverty allows only personal arms and armour. This equipment is of excellent quality, the envy of many a noble. His plate harness is of the Achant style, with fluted plates and fine silver filigree. As well as his Capellar sabre, Almeric has one of the ancient and powerful Swords of Vallandar at his hip. He rides a fine warehorse of purebred stock.

Almeric is classically handsome. Tall, olive skinned, athletic and strong-jawed with brilliant blue eyes. His black hair is shaved in accordance with his knightly vow.

Almeric speaks with a smooth Beaulangue accent, adding to his persuasive and diplomatic presence.

Almeric is famed across the land as an astute politician and cunning tactician. Kings and commoners alike trust and respect him to arbitrate disputes and mete justice fairly. Almeric is being groomed by his





Capellar Masters to enter a secret elite cadre of knights – the Templars of the Knights Capellar.

Almeric may be encountered anywhere in Albion, Chaubrette, Kurland, or Braeburg, especially near a Capellar Stronghold. He has been known to charge into a situation to save complete strangers from danger, without fear or concern for himself.

Almeric de St. Meur, Knight Capellar of Braeburg

*Attack 19*

*Defence 13*

*Magical Defence 8*

*Evasion 6*

*Stealth 14*

*Perception 7 (Normal)*

*Health Points 16*

*Movement 10m (20m)*

*Rank 6th*

(Strength 13, Reflexes 14, Intelligence 11, Psychic Talent 9, Looks 15)

Abilities: Ride Warhorse, Armour Expert, Track, Disciple of the Faith, Blessed Constitution, Iron Fortitude & Divine Zeal. Almeric is on the Crusader Pathway (*Ordo Draconis*, p21).

Languages: Chaubrette (Native), Elleslandic (Intermediate), Kurlish (Intermediate), Bacchile (Basic). Almeric is literate in these tongues.

Equipment: Almeric has sworn a vow of poverty, only being allowed personal equipment, arms, and armour: a +3 Sword of Vallandar, Achantan master plate (AF6), shield, dagger, purse of 50 florins, Capellar signet ring, and a warhorse with tack and barding.



# TROLLWARES – HAG’S BREATH

*Wayne Imlach*

This magical substance takes the appearance of a fine, bright crimson sand.

When mixed with water, the sand creates a noxious red fog that quickly billows out to cover an area 20m across. The fog irritates the eyes, and visibility is reduced to almost nothing within (treat as darkness). Any living creature breathing the fumes is subject to a Magical Attack of 24 that causes the victim to fall into a sorcerous slumber. Those afflicted can only be awakened with a Dispel Magic of at least 9 MP, or the kiss of a mere-hag.

Mere-trolls are immune to the magical effects of the fog.

If suddenly engulfed by the fog, characters may roll equal to or under their Reflexes to catch their breath and hold it for as many rounds as their Strength score.

In an enclosed space, the fog will dissipate after 3d6 rounds. If outside, it clears after 2d6 rounds, or 1d6 rounds if there is a strong breeze.

The bright red appearance and bitter taste of the substance makes it unsuitable as a poison, but anyone ingesting the dry powder would be subject to its effects immediately.

Hag’s breath is created by drying the blood of a mere-troll until only fine crystals remain. If such a creature were able to be caught and bled dry, an alchemist may be able to create 3 such items from the extracted liquid.

A mere-hag may possess several quantities stored in fragile clay pots or loosely bound leather pouches, slowly created over many years from her own bloody vomit.

## Online Resources

**DW Facebook** – [www.facebook.com/groups/2321315414820351](https://www.facebook.com/groups/2321315414820351)

**The Great Library of Hiabuor** – [www.libraryofhiabuor.net](http://www.libraryofhiabuor.net)

**The Cobwebbed Forest** – [www.cobwebbedforest.co.uk](http://www.cobwebbedforest.co.uk)

**Wimlach's Blog** – [wimlach.weebly.com/dragon-warriors.html](http://wimlach.weebly.com/dragon-warriors.html)

**DW Discord Server** – <https://discord.gg/eX4qehk>

**Dave Morris' Patreon** – [www.patreon.com/jewelspider](https://www.patreon.com/jewelspider)

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Come over to Discord to tell us what you liked in this issue, and what you want to see in the Casket in the future – or drop into the website and contact us.

