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November 2012, Issue #20

# PATHWAYS



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# PATHWAYS

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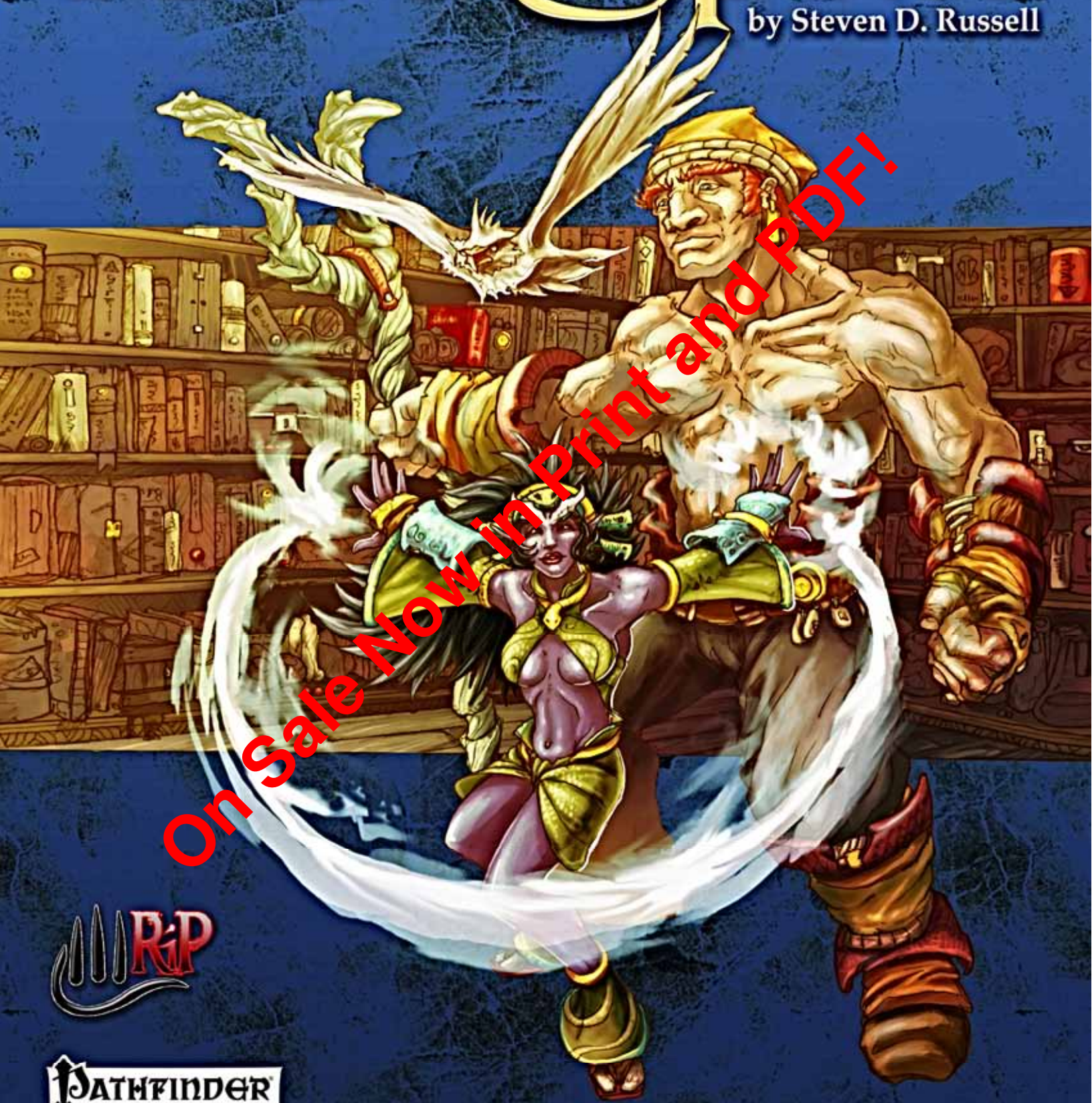
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# 1001 Spells

by Steven D. Russell



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# Editorial

By Dave Paul

I suppose we all go through these phases of GMing and playing. Way back in the 1970s and early 1980s, I had a very small group of friends who played and we all took turns running the game without really putting much planning or thought into it. Someone would say that he'd bought a module and read it a couple times and ask the rest of us when we were free to play and that was that. There was no greater campaign setting. Our characters, in whatever combination, just sort of spontaneously happened to meet at some tavern on the edge of town and we rolled with it.

In the later 1980s I primarily played, and then from about 1995 to about 2005 I took turns with two others as GM. Our three campaigns took shape. I ran a series of different types, pulling published material into my own campaign. A friend of mine ran a wonderful campaign (actually, it lasted more than 20 years) taking place in a modified version of our own world, centered around what are the British Isles in our world, in something like the 11th century. My son ran a d20 Modern campaign, a Star Wars campaign and a heavily-modified Warcraft RPG campaign. I had a wonderful, diverse set of playing experiences in all that time. I had been playing a character in the somewhat medieval England campaign whom I just loved to play (of all the characters I've played in over 30 years of playing, she was probably my second favorite). She was a wonderful blend of classes, pieced together from aristocrat, expert, diviner and my own prestige class. There was another character I had been itching to play in that campaign world, but never had the chance.

This other character, Zane, I imagined, was a young man in his late teens (remember how different a 17 year old might be in a world where the life expectancy is 40) who had set off on his own for a life of adventure, but not quite understanding what that meant. He fancied himself a ladies' man, though he also wouldn't have quite known what that meant. Zane was impulsive and quick—ready to take advantage of suckers, but relying upon his charm, not his physical skills, whenever he got caught. He thought himself quick tongued, able to get himself out of a jam with well-placed compliments. I also imagined that he had a handful of traveling companions who'd come to enjoy Zane's company (and, frankly, probably thought that he needed some advice and assistance). I thought about a muscled sword-for-hire who couldn't really remember why he ended up pulling Zane out of so many bar fights, but that he did anyway. I imagined a friar or

other man of the cloth who was forever bandaging Zane's wounds and frequently offering sagely adult advice on topics Zane found dull and uninspiring.

As Zane never, as it were, came to life in that campaign, and as my son's campaign converted to 4e, I figured I'd never get a chance to play Zane. After all, I imagined him to be a mix of classes like my other character—I imagined picking up classes in bard, expert and rogue (every time, focusing on Charisma-based skills first, and Dexterity-based skills next). I wanted him to get to 4th level before his BAB was +1 because I wanted him to be someone who always relied on his skills and almost couldn't resort to combat. I figured he'd sweet-talk some pretty lady at the bar, oblivious to her hulking companion, and, once the punches started flying, he'd do everything in his power to escape the brawl, rather than participate. I imagined him getting the group in trouble *all the time*, and pretty much never sticking around once weapons were drawn. Playing someone like this would require a very patient group of other players, willing to recognize this character as something other than the currently typical "flank 'em and shank 'em" rogue. My character wouldn't be any good in a fight, but he would be great at getting fights started.

Alas, I put the idea of Zane on the shelf years ago. With less time to play and really only a 4e campaign to play in, I figured I'd probably never get the chance. I suppose I could write about his adventures, maybe produce a collection of short stories. But then, out of the blue, I got this email last week from the friend who ran the medieval English campaign:

*Do you have any interest in playing Zane in the next year or so? I've been reading the Kingdoms of Legend book for Pathfinder, and I really like it. It could be the basis for a return to my original campaign, about 150 years in the future. While this is a bit far out, the book has been generating new interest in a 'real' world setting. I would prefer to get all the Savage Tide done first, but I may just hang up that campaign.*

I've also been kicking around the idea of a completely new group to play the new campaign. Our niece (who just turned 14 last month) is interested in playing (I ran her through some of the old red-boxed set this summer), and it occurs to me that she, my wife, and your son would make a really fun group to play with. Maybe you could make guest appearances?

Sometimes dreams do come true. Zane's adventures, it seems, are going to come to pass. I think I'll re-read *The Canterbury Tales* to get in the proper mood. The era is a little off, but only just a little, but the feel is right on.



## TRIBES ANTHOLOGY I

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## RODS OF WONDER

A Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Compatible Furror's Resource by Creighton Broadhurst



# Iron Lich Creature Template

By Steven D. Russell; Illustrations by Gary Dupuis

**S**ome creatures, in order to gain power and immortality, exchange their mortal flesh for a complex mechanical apparatus that sustains their existence. Its soul-powered furnace powers its intricate system of pumps and pistons granting it mobility and massive strength. Only the iron lich's skull, floating inside its metallic hood, betrays its mortal origins, and announces its fell nature.





## Creating an Iron Lich

"Iron Lich" is an acquired template that can be added to any living creature capable of creating the required mechanical body, or to any standard lich.

An iron lich uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

**CR:** +2

**Alignment:** Changes to any Evil.

**Type:** The creature's type changes to undead, do not recalculate base attack bonuses, saves, or skill points.

**Senses:** An iron lich gains darkvision 60 ft. and lifesense 120 ft. (as blindsight).

**Armor Class:** An iron lich increases its natural armor by +15.

**Hit Dice:** Change all racial Hit Dice to d8s, its hit points are modified by its Cha modifier rather than its Con modifier.

**Melee Attack:** An iron lich has a melee claw attack that deals damage appropriate to its size + its Strength modifier; it can use this attack as a free action once per round or use it to make an attack of opportunity.

**Defensive Abilities:** Channel resistance +4, rejuvenation; **DR** 15/bludgeoning and magic; **Immune** cold, electricity, positive energy, undead traits; **Resist** Fire 20; **Weakness** firebox vulnerability (see below).

**Special Abilities:** An iron lich creature retains all the special abilities of the base creature, and gains the special abilities as described below.

**Soul Cages (Su):** When an iron lich creature inflicts the dead condition upon a living creature, it gains points in its soul pool.

*Mindless Spirits (1 pt.):* vermin, basic oozes,

*Animal Spirits (2.5 pts.):* animal-level intelligence

*Basic Soul (10 pts.):* standard intelligent creature, a sentient monster of low CR

*Noteworthy Soul (50 pts.):* mid-level character level/CR, and otherwise characters.

*Grand Soul (100-500 pts.):* High-level characters / CR and other divinely favored souls.

This causes a soul to appear inside one of its 4 soul cages, which it can release as a standard action. A soul cage is a diminutive-sized object (AC = the iron lich's AC + its size modifier) with 5 hit points and hardness

25. Destroying a soul cage frees the souls within (each holding one-quarter of the soul points the iron lich currently possesses), though it does not return the deceased creature to life. This is a death effect. Any attempt to resurrect a body whose soul is trapped in a soul cage requires a DC caster level check equal to 11 + the CR of the iron lich. Failure results in there being no effect, while success returns the creature to life as normal.

The maximum number of soul points it can possess in its pool is equal to 600 + its HD + its Cha modifier. Any points above its soul pool's maximum are lost. An iron lich creature can cast spells without expending its spell slots by spending 1 pt. per spell level (a 0-level spell is worth 1/2 a spell level). Spending a soul point is a free action. Souls used in this manner are consumed and destroyed utterly.

**Firebox Vulnerability (Ex):** Submerging an iron lich completely in a liquid such as water, or it failing a save against a cold spell (it suffers a -4 penalty to the save even though it suffers no damage from the cold spell), extinguishes its firebox. This inflicts the staggered condition on the iron lich for 1 minute after which it must expend 500 soul points to reignite it or gain the helpless condition.

**Reliance on Souls (Ex):** Every 12 hour period an iron lich consumes 5 soul points. An iron lich that cannot consume 5 soul points at the time, or one with zero soul points, suffers the staggered condition until it can consume 5 soul points. If it does not do so within 1 minute, it gains the helpless condition.

**Special Healing (Su):** An iron lich is not damaged by positive energy (such as cure spells) and negative energy (such as inflict spells) does not heal it. *Make whole* repairs it as if it were a construct. *Iron body* cures 10 hp per caster level (maximum 150 hp).

**Abilities:** Increase from the base creature as follows: Str +10 (+5 to attack and damage, +5 to Climb and Swim skill checks, +5 to Strength, and CMD checks, +5 to CMD), Int +2 (add 1 bonus language, add 1 skill point per HD, +1 to Appraise, Craft, Knowledge, Linguistics, and Spellcraft checks, and +1 to any of the base creature's Intelligence-based DCs), Wis +2 (+1 to Will saves, +1 to Heal, Perception, Profession, Sense Motive and Survival checks, and +1 to any of the base creature's Wisdom-based DCs), +2 Cha (+1 to Bluff, Diplomacy, Disguise, Handle Animal, Intimidate, Perform, and Use Magic Device; attempts to influence others, and Channel Energy DCs, +1 to any of the base creature's Charisma-based DCs). Decrease Dex -4 (-2 to ranged attack rolls, AC and touch AC, initiative, and Ref saves, -2 to Acrobatics, Disable Device, Escape Artist, Fly, Ride, Sleight of Hand, and Stealth checks, and -1 to any of the base creature's Dexterity-based DCs).



## Soultill

XP 25,600

Iron Lich Female human sorcerer 7/harrower 7  
NE Medium Undead (augmented)

**Init** +1; **Senses** Darkvision 60ft., lifesense (as blindsight) 120 ft., Perception +7

## Defense

**AC** 29, touch 12, flat-footed 28 (-1 Dex, +2 deflection, +1 dodge, +17 natural)

**hp** xx (14 HD; 14d8+)

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +5, **Will** +13

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4, rejuvenation; **DR** 15/bludgeoning and magic; **Immune** cold, electricity, positive energy, undead traits, **Resist** Fire 20 **Weakness** firebox vulnerability (see below)

## Offense

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 dagger +12/+7 (1d4 +6/19–20) and claw +12 (1d4+6) [claw free action]

**Special Attacks** soul cages (DC 26, 572 points), spirit deck (30 ft., 7/day)

**Harrower Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 14th; concentration +20)

**1/day—divination**

**Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 14th; concentration +18)

**9/day—grave touch** (3 rounds)

**Sorcerer Spells Prepared** (CL 14th; concentration +20)

7th (3)—*finger of death* (DC 25)

6th (6)—*chain lightning* (DC 22), *enemy hammer\** (DC 22), *unwilling shield\** (DC 24)

5th (7)—*dominate person* (DC 21), *geyser\** (DC 21), *teleport*, *telekinesis* (DC 21),

4th (7)—*bestow curse* (DC 22), *dimension door*, *enervation*, *greater invisibility*, *volcanic storm* (DC 20),

3rd (7)—*dispel magic*, *fly*, *nondetection*, *protection from energy*, *seek thoughts\** (DC 19), *suggestion* (DC 19), *vampiric touch*

2nd (8)—*blindness/deafness* (DC 20), *command undead* (DC 20), *false life*, *invisibility*, *locate object*, *make whole*, *scorching ray*

1st (8)—*charm person* (DC 17), *chill touch* (DC 19), *detect undead*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 19), *vanish\**

0 (at will)—*dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *disrupt undead*, *ghost sound* (DC 16), *mage hand*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 18)

CR 15

## Tactics

**Before Combat** Soultill prefers to cast *fly*, *invisibility*, *nondetection*, *protection from elements* and use its *divination* spell-like ability to learn about its opponents.

**During Combat** Soultill prefers to attack using long range spells, making judicious use of its translocation and illusion magics so as to remain mobile and undetected, with opponents being unable to identify or locate their foe. She reserves her necromancy spells for use against singularly powerful foes.

**Morale** When outmatched, which is rare, Soultill simply retreats via her conjuration (teleportation) spells, often using them at least twice to avoid pursuit.

## Statistics

**Str** 20, **Dex** 8, **Con** -, **Int** 14, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 24

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 19

**Feats** Combat Casting, Craft Wand, Dodge, Eschew Materials, Extend Spell, Greater Spell Focus (necromancy), Harrowed, Quicken Spell, Spell Focus (necromancy), Toughness

**Skills** Bluff +15, Diplomacy +15, Fly +9, Knowledge (arcana) +16, Linguistics +16 Perception +7, Perform (dance) +15, Spellcraft +16, Use Magic Device +15

**Languages** Common, Draconic, Giant, Infernal

**SQ** blessing of the harrow, bloodline arcana, harrow casting (Towers of Charisma, Constitution, Intelligence, and Strength), reliance on souls, special healing

**Combat Gear** *scroll of cure serious wounds*, *wand of cure moderate wounds* (50 charges), *wand of magic missile* (50 charges); **Other Gear** +1 dagger, *amulet of natural armor* +2, *bag of holding* (type I), *cloak of resistance* +2, *headband of mental prowess* (Cha and Wis) +2, *ring of protection* +2, harrow deck, spell component pouch, 67 gp

**Gear** +150,200 gp

\* See the *Pathfinder® Roleplaying Game: Advanced Race Guide*™.

\*\* *Pathfinder® Roleplaying Game: Ultimate Magic*™

## Special Abilities

**Rejuvenation (Su):** One day after an iron lich is destroyed, its soul cages begin to rebuild the undead horror's body if it has even 1 soul point. This process takes 1d10 days (the reliance on souls ability still functions). If the body is destroyed before that time passes, the soul cages merely start the process anew. After this time has elapsed, the iron lich awakens, fully healed.



Rite Publishing Presents

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By: Steven D. Russell





# Order of the Scourge

by Creighton Broadhurst

Illustrated by Toby Gregory and Tamás Baranya

Cavaliers belonging to the order of the scourge believe in mercilessly punishing sinners for their trespasses. They see this as their holy duty and pursue it zealously. The order also sells its services to wealthy clients as long as their clients can prove their enemy has sinned. The order maintains dense, voluminous treatises on sin – a careful search of such teachings can cast the shadow of sin over almost any act.

Cavaliers of the scourge are implacable enemies, have a high tolerance for pain and view those weaker than themselves with disdain.

**Edicts:** Cavaliers must rigidly hold to the tenants of their faith and punish harshly any who stray from the true path. Sin must be cast out through physical pain.

**Challenge:** Whenever an order of the scourge cavalier issues a challenge, he receives a +1 morale bonus on melee attack rolls against the target of his challenge as long as he is astride his mount.

**Skills:** An order of the scourge cavalier adds Knowledge (religion) to his list of class skills. He receives a bonus to Sense Motive skill checks equal to half his cavalier level.

**Order Abilities:** A cavalier belonging to the order of the scourge gains the following abilities as he increases in level.

*Inflexible Will (Ex):* At 2nd level, the cavalier gains Iron Will as a bonus feat.

*Punish the Sinners (Ex):* At 8th level, an order of the scourge cavalier can call out to his allies, inspiring them to greater effort. As a swift action, the cavalier grants each ally within 30 ft. a +1 competence bonus on all attack and damage rolls for a number of rounds equal to half his level. At 17th-level this bonus increases to +2 and the cavalier can use this ability twice per day. At 20th-level the bonus increases to +3 and cavalier can use this ability three times per day.

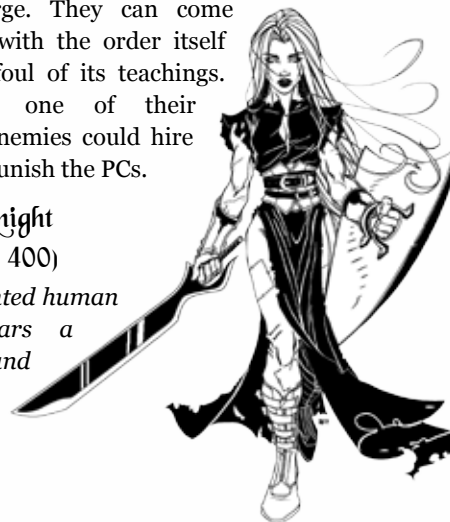
*Slay the Sinner (Ex):* At 15th level, an order of the scourge cavalier can strike his enemy with deadly effect. As a swift action, he can target one foe in plain sight. Against that foe, he adds his Charisma bonus to all attack and damage rolls. Additionally, he is treated as having the Sickening Critical feat in regards to his designated target. He can use this ability once per day. At 20th-level he can use this ability twice per day.

## In Your Campaign

PCs can easily fall foul of the order of the scourge. They can come into conflict with the order itself after falling foul of its teachings. Alternatively, one of their vanquished enemies could hire the order to punish the PCs.

### Scourge Knight CR 1 (XP 400)

*This mounted human warrior wears a breastplate and carries a heavy steel shield and flail.*



Male human cavalier (Order of the Scourge) 2

LE Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +1; **Senses** Perception +1, Sense Motive +5 (+6 to spot a lie)

### Defense

**Speed** 20 ft., base speed 30 ft.; **ACP** -6; Acrobatics -5 (-9 jumping), Climb +2, Ride +3 (+9 riding his mount), Swim +1

**AC** 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18; Shield Wall (+2)

(+6 armour [breastplate] +1 Dex, +2 shield [heavy steel])

**hp** 21 (2 HD)

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +1, **Will** +3

**Special Defenses:** Shield Wall

### Offense

**Space** 5 ft.

**Melee** mwk flail +7 (1d8+3) or

**Melee** lance +5 (1d8+4/x3)

## Atk Options challenge

### Statistics

**Abilities** Str 17, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 8

**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 16

**SQ** mount, tactician (Shield Wall)

**Feats** Iron Will<sup>B</sup>, Shield Wall<sup>B</sup>, Skill Focus (Ride)<sup>B</sup>,  
Weapon Focus (flail)

**Skills** as above plus Intimidate +4

**Languages** Common; link

**Gear** *potion of shield of faith* (+2) plus warhorse.

### Special Abilities

**Shield Wall (Ex):** When wielding a shield while adjacent to an ally that has the Shield Wall feat and that is using its shield, the cavalier's shield bonus increases by 2.

**Challenge (Ex [swift; 1/day]):** The cavalier chooses one target within sight to challenge. Against that foe his melee attacks deal +2 damage (plus +1 morale bonus to melee attack rolls if astride his mount). He takes a -2 penalty to AC, except against attacks made by the challenge's subject. The challenge remains in effect until the target is dead or unconscious or until combat ends.

### Warhorse CR —

This large, muscular horse wears leather barding.

N Large animal

**Init** +1; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +7,  
Sense Motive +1

**Speed** 50 ft.; **ACP** 0; Acrobatics +1 (+9 jumping)

**AC** 15, touch 10, flat-footed 14; **CMD** 17

(+2 armour [leather barding], +1 Dex, +3  
natural [Improved Natural Armour], -1 size)

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +4, **Will** +2

**hp** 22 (3 HD)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +6

**Melee** bite +4 (1d4+3) and  
2 hooves -1 (1d6+1)

**Abilities** Str 16, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6

**SQ** combat trained

**Feats** Armour Training (light)<sup>B</sup>, Improved Natural  
Armour, Toughness

### Scourge Priest

CR 4 (XP 1,200)

*This mounted human warrior wears finely-crafted  
banded mail and carries a light steel shield and flail.*



Male human inquisitor 3/cavalier (Order of the Scourge)  
2

LE Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +8; **Senses** Perception +3, Sense Motive +12 (+13  
to spot a lie)

**Speed** 20 ft., base speed 30 ft.; **ACP** -6; Acrobatics -5  
(-9 jumping), Climb +1, Ride +6 (+12 riding his mount),  
Swim +0

Defenses

**AC** 20, touch 11, flat-footed 19; **CMD** 17; Shield Wall (+2  
(+8 armour [+1 banded mail] +1 Dex, +1 shield [mwk  
light steel])

**Shield Wall (Ex)** When wielding a shield while adjacent  
to an ally that has the Shield Wall feat and that is using its  
shield, the cavalier's shield bonus increases by 2.

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +2, **Will** +8

**hp** 42 (5 HD)

**Space** 5 ft.; **Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +6

**Melee** mwk flail +8 (1d8+2) or

**Melee** mwk lance +7 (1d8+3/x3)

**Atk Options** Outflank, challenge, solo tactics

**Challenge (Ex [swift; 1/day])** The scourge priest



chooses one target within sight to challenge. Against that foe his melee attacks deal +2 damage (plus +1 morale bonus to melee attack rolls if astride his mount). He takes a -2 penalty to AC, except against attacks made by the challenge's subject. The challenge remains in effect until the target is dead or unconscious or until combat ends.

**Outflank (Ex)** The scourge priest gains a +4 flanking bonus when flanking enemies (not +2).

**Solo Tactics (Ex)** All the scourge priests' allies are treated as having the same teamwork feats as the scourge priest for the purposes of determining if he gets their benefit or not.

**Special Actions** command, judgement (1/day), teamwork feat (3/day)

**Command** (Su [standard; 6/day]) The scourge priest gives a creature an emotionless, undeniable order as the *command* spell (DC 14 Will negates).

**Judgement (Su [swift; 1/day])** The scourge priest calls down judgment on his foes to gain extra powers. This has one of the following effects:

**Destruction:** +2 sacred bonus to weapon damage rolls.

**Healing:** fast healing 2 as long as the inquisitor is alive and the judgement lasts.

**Justice:** +1 sacred bonus on all attack rolls.

**Piercing:** +1 sacred bonus to concentration checks and caster level checks made to overcome spell resistance.

**Protection:** +1 sacred bonus to AC.

**Purity:** +1 sacred bonus to all saving throws.

**Resiliency:** DR magic/1.

**Resistance:** Resist energy 4 (acid, cold, electricity, fire or sonic).

**Smiting:** weapons count as magical.

**Teamwork (standard; 3/day)** The scourge priest can swap his Outflank teamwork feat for another teamwork feat.

**Inquisitor Spells Known** (CL 3rd; concentration +6)  
1st (4/day)—*bleed*, *cure light wounds*, *obscuring mist*, *shield of faith*

0 (at-will)—*bleed* (DC 13), *detect magic*, *guidance*, *light*, *read magic*, *resistance*

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 3rd; concentration +6)

**At-Will**—*detect chaos*, *detect evil*, *detect good*, *detect law*

**Combat Gear** *potion of shield of faith* (+2), *wand of cure moderate wounds* (4 chgs.)

**Abilities** Str 15, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 8

**SQ** cunning initiative (+3), domain (law [inevitable]), monster lore (+3), mount, stern gaze, tactician (Shield Wall), track (+1)

**Feats** Improved Initiative, Iron Will<sup>B</sup>, Outflank<sup>B</sup>, Shield Wall<sup>B</sup>, Skill Focus (Ride)<sup>B</sup>, Toughness, Weapon Focus (flail)

**Skills** as above plus Knowledge (religion) +4 (+7 identifying monsters), Intimidate +8, Survival +11 (+12

tracking)

**Languages** Common; link

**Gear** as above plus holy symbol, spell component pouch  
**Warhorse** CR

—

This large, muscular horse wears leather barding.

N Large animal

**Init** +1; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +7, Sense Motive +1

**Speed** 35 ft.; **ACP** -5; Acrobatics -4

**AC** 19, touch 10, flat-footed 18; **CMD** 17

(+6 armour [chainmail], +1 Dex, +3 natural, -1 size)

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +4, **Will** +2

**hp** 22 (3 HD)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +6

**Melee** bite +4 (1d4+3) and 2 hooves -1 (1d6+1)

**Abilities** Str 16, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6

**SQ** combat trained

**Feats** Armour Training (light)<sup>B</sup>, Armour Training (medium), Toughness

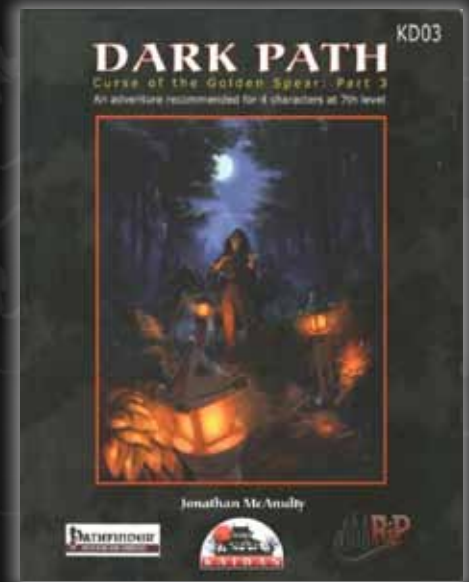
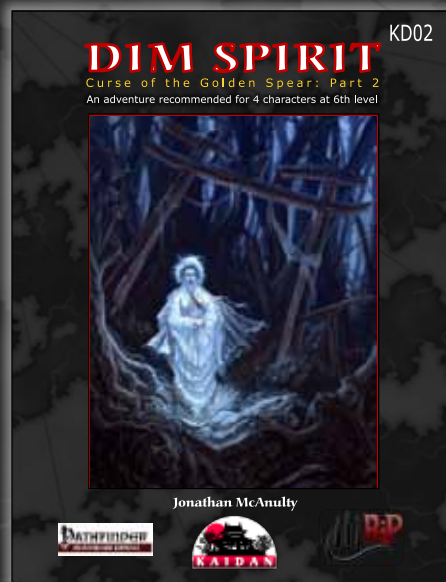
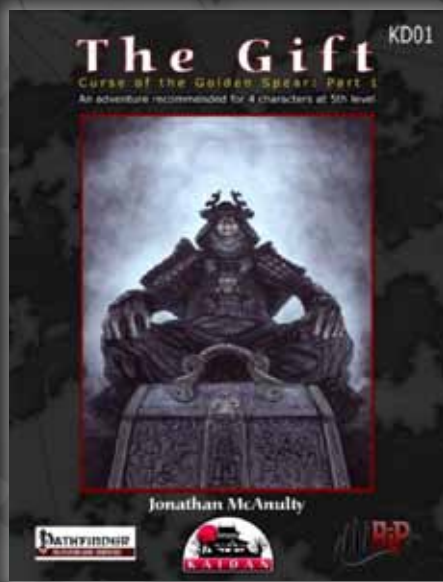
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# The Curse of the Golden Spear

## Adventure Trilogy set in Kaidan



A three part campaign arc, **The Gift**, **Dim Spirit**, and **Dark Path** is an adventure trilogy set in the cursed land of Kaidan and is suitable for a group of 5th level characters. Drawing inspiration from Japanese folklore, and fully compatible with the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game, Kaidan is a land of horror and mystery. In Kaidan, demons stalk the land in human form, the dead seldom rest easy, and life is cheap. This adventure serves to introduce players and game masters alike to the cursed realm of Kaidan.

Rave reviews make this adventure trilogy an instant classic!

Jonathan McAnulty  
**NOW AVAILABLE**





# Spellcasting with a Price

Mike Welham  
Illustrated by Ryan Sumo

Many arcane spellcasters crave access to greater power, and some will trade anything for this power. The following rules describe methods to grant access to forbidden, higher-level spells, but at a considerable cost. Even characters who have no arcane spellcasting ability may cast these warped spells. A GM might also use these rules to introduce a horror-esque element to the game by including books and scrolls with easy-to-cast but deadly spells.

## Learning Dangerous High-Level Spells

A character desiring to learn a spell beyond her abilities can do so using the following rules (and with the GMs permission). A GM can place these spells in a book or a scroll for the characters to find; upon identifying the spell contained in the book or scroll, a character also learns how to access a spell. Forbidden knowledge is easy to come by, so the price merely to obtain a forbidden spell only costs one rank in Knowledge (arcana). This reduces the maximum ranks a character may have in the Knowledge skill by one per spell learned (thus, a 3rd-level character with two forbidden spells can only have a maximum of 1 rank in Knowledge [arcana]). The GM should choose the true cost of casting each spell but should not divulge the cost (or do so if a character succeeds at an extremely difficult Knowledge [arcana] check) until the first time the character casts the spell.

The character may not regain these skill ranks unless a cleric with the Knowledge domain casts *remove curse* (or a stronger spell) upon the character, at which point the character can also no longer cast the previously known spells. If the character's arcane spellcasting abilities outstrip the spell's level, she may replace the current forbidden spell with a higher-level spell at no additional Knowledge rank cost.

For purposes of determining spell effects, assume a caster level equal to the minimum level necessary to cast the spell.

## Casting a Forbidden Spell from a Book or Scroll

Additionally (or alternately), a GM can allow characters to cast spells from musty books or spells they find in tombs, ruins or hidden areas in creepy old libraries. A character may cast a spell from these items a number of times equal to his Intelligence modifier (minimum 1). Spells on a scroll disappear when cast, but spells in a book remain for victims to cast—to their detriment—repeatedly.



## Bankrupting Spell

This spell costs the caster only in a mundane sense, somewhat to the relief of those who dabble in these spells. An arcane spellcaster who casts a bankrupting spell loses gold equal to 1,000 times the difference between the spell level and the highest-level arcane spell the character can cast. Non-arcane spellcasters lose 2,000 gp times the spell level. If a character cannot meet the cost monetarily, the character pays the difference out of his possessions (gear followed by magic items). A character who still cannot meet the cost loses 10 hit points per remaining 1,000 gp (or fraction thereof).

## Blutgeld Spell

The spell takes its pound of flesh from the caster. An arcane spellcaster takes damage equal to 1d8 times the difference between the spell level and the highest-level arcane spell he can cast. Non-arcane spellcasters take 2d8 damage per spell level. A successful Fortitude save (DC equal to 15 plus the number of d8s) reduces this damage by half. Magic less powerful than *resurrection* cannot bring a character killed by this damage to life. A character attempting to heal this damage must succeed at a caster level check against a DC equal to the Fortitude save's DC.

## Caller of Malevolence Spell

The caster, in his hubris, draws the attention of a powerful, intelligent evil creature that seeks to destroy or enslave the victim. The caster must make a Will save (DC equal to 15 + 2 times the spell's level minus

the highest arcane spell level the victim can cast, DC for non-arcane spellcasters equals  $20 + 2$  times the spell's level) to determine the creature drawn to his spellcasting.

<b>Will save result called</b>	<b>CR of creature</b>
Success minus 1	Character's level
Failure by 5 or less	Character's level
Failed by 6-10 plus 1	Character's level
Failed by 11-15 plus 2	Character's level
Failed by 16-20 plus 4	Character's level
Failed by more than 20 plus 6 (or roll of 1)	Character's level

The GM determines when the creature appears; most entities called by mortals in this manner do not particularly care when they kill their prey. If the characters manage to kill the creature called by casting the spell, they do not gain experience.

### Cursed/Diseased Spell

Casting this baleful spell calls forth a dreadful curse or disease that afflicts the caster. The character casting the spell must succeed at a saving throw to avoid the curse (per *bestow curse*) or disease (per *contagion*), however the save DC is calculated in a different manner: for arcane spellcasters, the DC equals  $15 + 2$  times the spell's level minus the highest arcane spell level the character can cast, while the DC for non-arcane spellcasters equals  $20 + 2$  times the spell's level. A character who succeeds at the save against the curse is shaken for 1 hour per spell level, while a character who succeeds against the disease is sickened for 1 hour per spell level. A character casting *remove curse* or *remove disease* must succeed at a caster level check against the save's DC.

### Enervating Spell

The spell drains the caster's life energy. The character gains a number of negative levels equal to the difference between the spell's level and the highest level arcane spell level the character can cast (for arcane spellcasters), or twice the spell's level (for non-arcane spellcasters). He only gains half the negative levels (minimum 1), if he succeeds at a Fortitude save (DC equal to 15 plus the number of negative levels). Twenty-

four hours later, the character must make another Fortitude save for each negative level at the same DC to avoid each negative level becoming permanent. A character who gains more negative levels than his character level dies and becomes a free-willed spectre.

### Mirrored Spell

The spell negatively affects the caster, regardless of how beneficial the spell might be otherwise. If the character casts a beneficial spell on another character, he incurs the opposite effect (for example, a stat bonus will incur a stat penalty, a bonus to armor class results in a penalty to armor class, etc.). If the character casts the spell on himself, he only incurs the opposite effect (gaining no benefit whatsoever). Finally, if the character casts a harmful spell, the spell affects him the same way. The caster negates the opposite effect if he succeeds at a save with a DC equal to the spell's DC; if the spell does not allow a save, the character does not get a saving throw. As a more sinister consequence, the GM could choose to have the mirrored spell affect one of the character's allies or relatives. If the character succeeds at a Spellcraft check with a DC equal to the save DC, he realizes the spell had this additional unintended effect.

### Sanity-Shattering Spell

The spell potentially drives the caster insane. The caster must attempt a Will save with a DC equal to  $15 + 2$  times the spell's level minus the highest arcane spell level the victim can cast (non-arcane spellcasters must save at a DC equal to  $20 + 2$  times the spell's level). If the victim succeeds, he only takes 1 point of Wisdom damage. If he fails, he takes Wisdom damage equal to the difference between the roll and the DC; the victim must then attempt another Will save at the same DC minus 5, or half of that Wisdom damage converts to Wisdom drain.

### Withering Spell

The spell saps the vitality from the caster's body. The caster must attempt a Fortitude save with a DC equal to  $15 + 2$  times the spell's level minus the highest arcane spell level the victim can cast (non-arcane spellcasters must save at a DC equal to  $20 + 2$  times the spell's level). If the victim succeeds, he only takes 1 point of Constitution damage. If he fails, he takes Constitution damage equal to the difference between the roll and the DC; the victim must then attempt another Fortitude save at the same DC minus 5, or half of that Constitution damage converts to Constitution drain.







# Curses

By John Bennett, Art by Bruno Balixa

## Ubutepo's Bone Nose Piercing

**Price** 725 gp

### Description

**Appearance** Ancient arcane runes set in silver crawl along a curved bone nose piercing.

**Trigger** Ubutepo's bone nose piercing waits patiently for an arcane or divine caster. When an arcane or divine spell is cast within 30 ft. of the nose piercing, the caster becomes the nose piercing's new owner. The curse triggers after 24 hours at which time the new owner pierces his nose to insert the bone.

**Effect** When the owner casts either an arcane or divine spell, he becomes fatigued for a number of rounds equal to the level of the spell cast. If, while fatigued, the owner casts another spell, he becomes exhausted for an additional number of rounds equal to the level of the spell cast. If the owner casts a spell while exhausted, he takes 1 point of permanent Constitution damage. If the owner is reduced to 0 Constitution, the nose piercing sucks in his soul, negating any attempt to bring him back to life except with a miracle or wish spell.

**History** The local witch doctor of a peaceful tribe, Ubutepo assisted his people with a combination of arcane and divine magic blessed to him by local nature spirits. Seeing in Ubutepo a strong host, the evil trickster spirit, Eshriga, spoke to Ubutepo in his dreams, whispering foul secrets. Twisted by his new-found power, Ubutepo began to offer sacrifices to Eshriga. For his fealty, Eshriga gifted Ubutepo a nose piercing made of human bone inlaid with arcane runes that allowed Ubutepo to steal the souls of his enemies to increase his own power. Leading his tribe to war, Ubutepo spilled much blood before being defeated by a coalition of nature spirits who sealed his soul away in his magical nose piercing. However, Ubutepo's presence still lingers, seeking to steal the souls of spellcasters in an attempt to destroy the barriers preventing his return.

**Removal** The casting of a spell that removes a bestow curse negates the nose piercing's powers for 24 hours. The owner does not regain any lost Constitution damage nor can ability damage be healed until the curse is lifted. To permanently remove the curse, the owner must find the same cave Ubutepo found sacred to Eshriga. After navigating its twisting labyrinth corridors, shrouded in shadows and illusions, to the altar room, the owner must invoke a ritual to Eshriga's twin brother, Tego, spirit of the sun and harvest, asking him to undo spells laid on the

nose piercing and laying Ubutepo's spirit to rest.

## Eshod's Puzzle Box

**Price** 7,770 gp

### Description

**Appearance** This small puzzle box, fashioned from shimmering silver and gold, depicts winged angels casting sinners into a lake of fire.

**Trigger** The puzzle box contains the essence of an overly righteous angel named Eshod. The curse triggers when the owner comes within 60 ft. of the presence of an evil and/or chaotic aligned creature.

**Effect** Once the curse triggers, the owner is under constant detect good and detect law spells (CL 20th). When the owner detects at least a faint aura of an evil and/or chaotic aligned presence, it immediately comes under the effect of a rage spell (CL 20th), attacking the source of the presence to the exclusion of all else until it is dead or the owner is killed in the attempt.

**History** Many millennia ago, when the gods of good wanted an evil-doer out of the way without getting their hands dirty, they used the services of the powerful solar, Eshod. Nicknamed the "Avenger," Eshod possessed an unhealthy zeal for his work. Due to his mental instability, executing the wicked began to affect his mind. Developing a fanatical belief in the tenets of good and law, Eshod began slaying those on sight who did not meet those ideals. Finally, the gods of good took action, but not wanting to reveal the truth behind Eshod, imprisoned the angel in a secret demi-plane. Paranoid, Eshod had long ago secreted away a portion of his essence into a cleverly designed puzzle box so that his work would continue if something ever befell him.

**Removal** Any effect that removes a bestow curse cast upon the subject by a good-aligned creature negates the curse for 24 hours. To remove the curse, the owner must solve the puzzle box with either a DC 40 Intelligence check or a DC 50 Use Magic Device check. If this proves impossible, soaking the puzzle box in the blood of at least 22 Hit Dice of lawful good creatures opens the box. A single solar wing feather lies in the open box and must be cast into an evil-aligned plane to end the curse. Finally, the curse can be lifted if Eshod is freed from his prison or killed.







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# Interview with Sean O'Connor

with Steve Russell

## 1. Could you tell us a little about yourself?

My name is Sean O'Connor, I'm 34 years old, and I live in Phillipsburg, New Jersey. I've contributed to more than ten products by 4 Winds Fantasy Gaming, including *Player's Option: Flaws*, *The Book of Arcane Magic*, *The Book of Divine Magic*, *Paths of Power*, *Luven Lightfinger's Gear & Treasure Shop*, *Strategists & Tacticians*, *Albion Armitage's Astounding Arsenal*, *Inkantations*, and *Tome of Monsters*. I've also contributed to Purple Duck Games' *Gods of Porphyra* and *Lands of Porphyra*, and to *Dungeon-a-Day.com*. Aside from gaming, I also have a poem published in the 2011 issue of the *Journal of New Jersey Poets*.

## 2. What is your home game like?

Right now I'm in an *AD&D* campaign with some friends, getting back to an old campaign that has been on hiatus while we tried a few different games.

## 3. What is your favorite Paizo product and why?

The *Core Rulebook* for Pathfinder. I refer to it all the time for what I'm working on, and even with everything else that's come out, all you need is the core book and bestiary and you can run a campaign. It's a great book.

## 4. You are currently doing a good deal of work for 4 Winds Fantasy Gaming, how did that start and how would you characterize your relationship with the company today?

Well it started when I was in a play by email game with Robert & Connie Thomson, and we'd been doing some world-building for the campaign. We wound up cobbling together some ideas for various nations and cultures in the game world, and when 4WFG was formed, they asked me if I was interested in doing some design work for them. I didn't hesitate and haven't regretted it since. My relationship with the company is very solid. I was recently named as lead designer for the Pathfinder compatible products from 4WFG, meaning in addition to my own design work, I help with the editorial process and creative direction for our PFRPG products.

## 5. Which Pathfinder Compatible product



## that you worked on is your favorite and could you tell us a little about it?

I think my favorite published work so far is *Paths of Power*, which is a sourcebook of base classes, prestige classes, and NPC classes. I developed the 4WFG Gladiator and Samurai, helped with the Elemental Wizard, developed the Envenomed and Crypt Stalker prestige classes, and the Sycophant and Captain NPC classes, as well as several feats and pieces of equipment. It was released two years before *Ultimate Combat* (I think, fall 2009) so our versions of the samurai and gladiator are quite different than their official Paizo counterparts, as is the Witch developed by Connie Thomson.

## 6. What was your best moment working on that product?

Figuring out how to make a workable, full 20-level class was really challenging, but finding the right balance of flavor and mechanical ability, which I hope I have done, was quite an experience.

## 7. What do you feel was the most ingenious part of that product?

I think I'm most pleased with developing the Samurai's combat styles as feat trees representing the various fighting styles of historical samurai. It allows players to have a great deal of variety with their samurai and to help find a type of combat

that fits their character concept.

**8. What was the most challenging aspect of working on it?**

The Gladiator was a case of trying to do a lot of new things at the same time, and I have to admit that the results are more effective for roleplaying than optimized for combat. That isn't going to suit all games and certainly it's not a class for a newbie.

**9. Did you learn anything while working on it?**

Well, I should have learned about biting more off than I can chew with a project... but I didn't. I actually did learn a lot about figuring out how classes work and I really appreciate the work that the creative professionals at Paizo and other third party publishers do.

**10. Other than your own work, what is the best Pathfinder Roleplaying Game compatible product out there?**

I'd have to say that Super Genius Games' Time War series – *Time Thief*, *Time Warden*, *Ravagers of Time*, etc. – are brilliant. The Time Thief is a wonderful class that does not replace a rogue or bard but fills some of the same roles in a different way. It's a unique and fun class.

**11. What in your opinion makes a good Pathfinder Roleplaying Game compatible product?**

Well, you want products that look and feel professional, and having material that is easy to understand is definitely a plus. But I think the fun factor is really the decider for me. I don't care how mechanically optimal something is, if it's boring or overcomplicated, I'm just not interested.

**12. Who is your favorite designer of Pathfinder Roleplaying Game compatible products?**

It is unbelievable how much talent is out there, working on PFRPG material right now. I suppose if I have to narrow it down, Sean K. Reynolds and James Jacobs at Paizo, and the designers at Super Genius Games, are all great.

**13. What advice would you give to would-be-freelancers?**

It's a lot harder than you think it's going to be but that's what makes it so rewarding. Pimp yourself out. Act professional. Keep your word. Remember your deadlines. Communication is key – be very

clear in what your editors expect you to deliver and stay in touch as you progress. Requirements may change or a job may just not take the turn you were expecting, and you need to make sure you and your client are on the same page. I'm not as good at all of these as I'd wish, but they're important components of the job.



**14. Who is your favorite illustrator?**

Ooh, wow, I know so many talented people I really can't say without unintentionally snubbing a few. Back against the wall, though, I have to say that Juan Diego Dianderas is ferociously talented, able to take a brief concept or description and make it into an amazing piece. I'm going to paraphrase Arthur C. Clarke here, and say that any sufficiently advanced artistic skill is indistinguishable from magic, at least to this layperson.

**15. What has been your most memorable fan response to your work?**

Well, I have a positive and a negative for that one. The negative was certainly memorable – at a convention, a fan – well, a guy, I don't know if he was a fan per se - was looking at the stacks of *The Book of Divine Magic* we had for sale, and said, "Oh, like eating a dog turd and jumping on a trampoline?" We asked him to clarify, at which point he repeated himself, and we just gave him a basic explanation of what the book was. The guy wandered off but it put an odd spin on the whole weekend. Later on we realized it was a reference to 'Pink Flamingos' by John Waters, which starred Divine. Weird. The positive was the reception of *Luven Lightfinger's Gear & Treasure*





*Shop*, which got tremendously favorable reviews and was Dark Mistress' #1 PFRPG product for that year.

**16. Could you give us an exclusive hint or teaser about an upcoming product you are working on?**

Right now I'm working on a PFRPG race book like our Halflings book, featuring Dwarves. Seeing the depiction of the dwarves of Lonely Mountain in the Peter Jackson *The Hobbit* series has got me very excited about it, and it's a challenge to stay true to the archetype of dwarves without rehashing the same old ideas.

**17. Do you have any goals as a game designer that you have yet to obtain?**

I think every game designer's goal is to have it be their day job, and unfortunately very few people ever attain that. But that's my ultimate goal. Fingers crossed.

**18. Can you talk a bit about another project?**

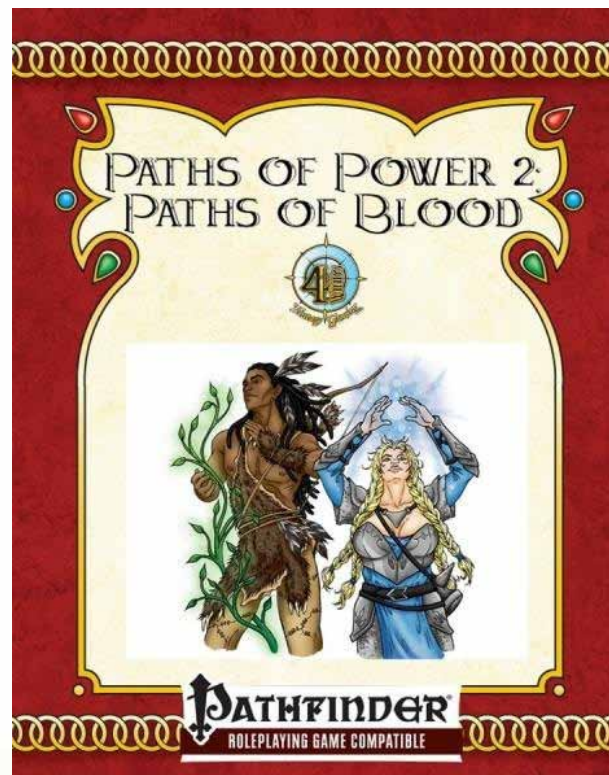
*Paths of Power 2: Paths of Blood* is in the works from 4WFG. We're working on new combat mechanics and skill trees to add a lot of variety to martial and adventuring classes in melee, and the cover art by Kristen Collins is fantastic as usual. I hope the fans like it as much as I've liked working on it.

**19. Who are some of the other wonderful people you've had the chance to work with?**

There's a long line of people and unfortunately I know I'm going to wind up leaving a few out. Robert and Connie Thomson, of course. Patricia Willenborg, Kathryn Bauer, CJ Ruby, Ryan Costello Jr, Rogan Hamby, Kristen Collins, Will Rodriguez, Kate Ashwin, Heather Crook, Jason Ammons, Dorian Chase, and Michelle Faw.

**20. Is there anything else that folks should know about you and/or your work?**

Only that I hope people buy my work and enjoy it!





Rite Publishing Presents

# The Secrets of Adventuring

By Steven D. Russell, Jonathan McNulty,  
Will McCardell, and Benjamin Rombeaut





# Reviews

Illustrated by Ryan Sumo

## So What's The Zombie Like, Anyway?

by Raging Swan press

review by Joshua "Ktfish7" Guillion

**5 out of 5 Stars!**

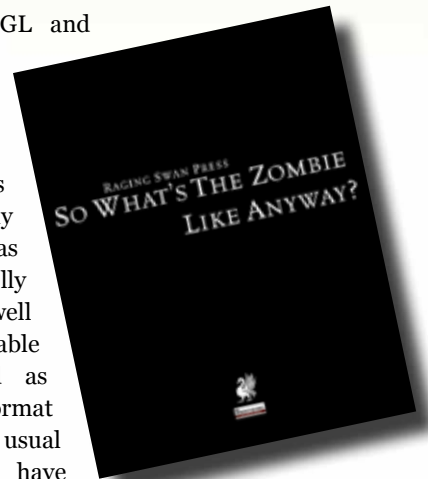
If you are not aware of the "So Whats The...Like Anyway?" series then to put it bluntly, you are working to hard as a GM. Seeking to aid in combating the all too common habit of overworked Gms everywhere of glazing over details this series offers up easy to use random charts filled with nuggets of awesomeness, all centered on one theme per collection. This time out, we're looking at zombies. Yeah, zombies...those shuffling ever hungry reminders that you never really liked your neighbors anyway, lol.

Greg Marks gives us not only three highly detailed and varied D100 lists to flesh out the zombie hordes of our nightmares, but a few templates to slap on the random flesh-eater as well, with such treats as frozen, screaming, legless...or...wait for it...pet zombie. Yeah, a template for turning Fido into a zombie...because come on, you know you want a freaking poodle zombie in the middle of a night of flesh eating mayhem just to screw with your Pcs...OK, maybe that's just me...but now you do.

Best part of these lists that Marks has put together, personally, is not that we have a list of potential visual descriptions...I mean that's really cool and all. Because let's face it here, not every zombie looks the same, nor originally died the same way. No, the best list of the three is the "What are they still carrying?" list. Think about it folks, every zombie used to be someone...and not every zombie crawled its way out of a grave all laid out proper. No, some of them entered the world of undeath with a lot less preparation, making for not only a widely different baseline of looks and races, but an eclectic collection of goodies walking around with them. Jewelry, items in pockets, clothing, things of that nature. Granted, your average zombie won't be carrying around a guitar looking to play a gig, but what if that bard never got a chance to get it unsheathed from the harness he had it strapped into across his back before he fell to a pack of zombies? And, let's assume he found himself animated then as a zombie himself, you think his tiny brain even knows there's a guitar on his back? 100 various things of this nature that would really flesh out the idea that a shuffling horde of these things would be equipped with a lot of interesting items.

Now, fifteen pages total (with about half of that going

to covers, intro, OGL and the Raging Swan checklist) is just big enough in my opinion to require bookmarks and such. Luckily Creighton agrees, as this book comes fully bookmarked, as well as having the Table of Contents linked as well. Editing and format live up to the usual high standards I have come to expect from this company, with a dual column approach to the layout.



Now, before I give an opinion on a rating, there is one final thing I feel must be mentioned here...something that just might be in and of itself the main reason to purchase this PDF. Tucked into the template options, of which there are six by the way, is a treat that literally made me chuckle evilly. A new swarm, the Zombie Limb Swarm. Now, seriously, that's just freaking evil as crap, and so damn cool it had me looking through my bits box to see if I had enough various limbs to craft a miniature for this...I mean come on, a swarm of heads, legs, arms and hands all clawing and biting...ohhhh the sweet sweet evil behind this idea alone...excellent!

So...a final rating of a well deserved 5 stars, and more than well worth the price of admission folks!

## Faces of the Tarnished Souk: Balduros Thundrsen, the Roaring Hammer

by Rite Publishing

review by Thilo "Endzeitgeist" Graf

**4 out of 5 Stars!**

The latest installment of the FoTS-series is 14 pages long, 1 page front cover, 1 page editorial, 1 page SRD and 2 pages advertisement, leaving us with 9 pages of content, so let's check this out!

Following my format of FoTS-reviews, I'll start by talking about the supplemental material contained herein:

Template-wise, we get the two advanced creature and charming creature simple templates, both of which clock in at CR 1. Among the new items, we get the stats for the new armored kilt armor and on the magical side, we get 3 new magical items: Donkey Boots (coming in

3 versions) enable the wearer to deal force damage via his/her kicks and a touch attack, potentially pushing foes away. And before you ask: they have a limit on how often they can be used per day. The Dust of Sobriety makes people that consume beverages laced with it actually become sober, while the dwarven brewing barrel is essentially a magical cool keg, which also makes alcohol stored inside more intoxicating.

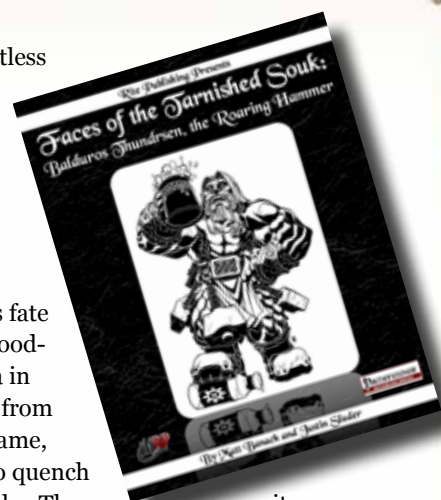
We also get a new racial trait that reflects dwarven magic resistance as well as a new archetype the Thunder Dancer - thunder dancing is a subtype of bardic performance that does not benefit from the lingering performance feat, works only when the bard is not wearing armor or light armor and changing a performance is a move action. Thunder dancers may also emit hurtful soundwaves, hasten themselves etc., being essentially a battle-centric bard focused on mobility, ending in a capstone that enables the dancer to essentially move and make a whirlwind attack against any foe in range during the move. The pdf also includes 5 new feats: The feats cover the ability to throw hammers at foes, rebounding the hammer to your square or even your hand. Other feats enhance the new archetype's abilities and the final one enable you to add your Cha-modifier to all attack by expending 3 rounds of performance. We also get 2 new traits and 6 new bardic masterpieces and boy, they are neat:

The Cat-step allows you to decrease falling distance after completing the steps, while the defensive dance of 23 steps makes you harder to hit at the cost of attack efficiency and the need to succeed concentration checks to cast spells. The Depths of the Mountain essentially lets you duplicate the effects of a resonance catastrophe, doubling as an earthquake effect. Minuet of Midnight Ivy is perhaps my favorite among them: The masterpiece enables you to gain a climb speed as long as you move laterally, making this a smart version of the wall-walking trope. The Quickening Pulse damages foes by forcing them to literally sweat blood, while Triple Time allows you to increase the movement of your allies.

Now to Balduros' 3 incarnations: At CR 6, he is simply a Thunder Dancer 6, while in his mid-level incarnation he gets the charming template and amps up his levels to 11, clocking in at CR 12. His high-level incarnation is CR 18 and adds the advanced creature template as well as even more Thunder Dancer levels, clocking in at 16 levels.

What about his background story, then? Extremely charismatic, Balduros is the rising (rock) star in the Tarnished Souk, rumored to even know a tune that forces the Khan to dance - good-looking, charming and

swooned over by countless admirers, he also hides a shameful past: His drunken stupor resulted in his former adventuring party partially losing their lives, the rest abandoning him to his fate in disgust. Prone to mood-swings between mania in depression, he suffers from borderline in all but name, trying to use alcohol to quench the worst lows and highs. The write-up also includes information for the DM to insert Balduros in his/her game as well as dreamburning information.



### Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are top-notch, I didn't notice any significant glitches. Layout adheres to RiP's old, rune-covered b/w-2-column standard and the artworks are mostly stock, but that's ok. The pdf comes fully bookmarked. Balduros is an interesting character, hitting a bit close to home for me - I've had enough experiences with people like Balduros and suffered for it, so a slight tingle of being uncomfortable remains with me. But isn't that what a good character is about? The dwarf is a tragic figure hiding behind a joyful facade and crunch-wise, I really liked the new bardic archetype and what was done with the new rules as well as his magical items and unique combat style. That being said, I still feel that his overall build is simpler than most comparable FoTS-installments, offering only two simple templates in addition to the complex archetype. In the end, that remains my only minor gripe against the dwarf, though, and thus my final verdict will be 4.5 stars, rounded down to 4 stars for the purpose of this platform.

Endzeitgeist out.

### The Genius Guide to What's In My Pocket? Part Deux

by Super Genius Games

review by Thilo "Endzeitgeist" Graf

**5 out of 5 Stars!**

This pdf is 14 pages long, 2/3 of a page front cover, 1 page SRD/editorial, leaving us with 12 1/3 pages of content, so what exactly do we get?





Well, first, let's talk about what we DON'T get: In contrast to the very first installment of the series, the second one has found an identity wholly distinct from Raging Swan Press' "So what's..."-series: Instead of providing a list of short items that can be found, we get a section

of 31 different items that all come with a price and many of them can be considered minor wondrous items that range from a carry around retractable podium to hold books and a mechanic toy that rolls around for some feet before starting to shriek. It should be noted that in the case of wondrous items, construction rules and information is included as well.

Another distinction is that each of the items herein comes with a story-seed for enterprising DMs. The pdf also includes items that e.g. make locating objects via the spell of the same name easier and orbs that allow you to record a message of up to 20 words, needles that thread themselves and similar curiosities, interspersed with a bland copper chain that is an utter filler - I honestly don't get why this break from the usual format has been included - it's neither required, nor does it feel appropriate. Even the shaving kit and gaming tiles (also rather mundane) are somewhat original in that they haven't been done. Better yet, many items take nice twists on everyday items and even toys and could be seen as representations of items that feature in our everyday lives.

The pdf also features some tricks for DMs that are mostly useful for novices à la tracking which items you've already used, different magic item sources and a short discussion of Clarke's Third law, which states that sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic and thus makes modern items possible sources of inspiration for magic items and on how to handle players treating magic like technology, which is doubly important when taking into account that many items herein might be also created via steampunk/science. Nice for novice DMs, but nothing new for me there.

### Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are very good, I noticed no significant glitches. Layout adheres to SGG's 3-column, landscape-standard and the pdf has no bookmarks,

which is a pity and a minor gripe I have with this pdf - at this point, all but Bullet point-pdfs should be bookmarked.

Now this book is markedly different from the previous one and is better for it, making this pdf even a viable purchase if you already own the "Genius Guide to what's in my Pocket" and Raging Swan's "So what's that Shiny Object like, anyways?". In fact, I'd go 5 stars for this pdf, were it not for the relative brevity of the pdf (about +20 items would have been nice) and the fact that this pdf has no bookmarks. I gave the predecessor of this file 4.5 stars, but since I wrote that review, the standard has been set even higher - while this pdf one ups its predecessor, it doesn't do so in the extent that would see me rate this the full 5 stars, so what's a reviewer to do? In the end, I'll rate this 4.5 stars and round up in contrast to its predecessor to drive home that this is imho the superior file.

Endzeitgeist out.

### #30 Evocative Vehicles

by Rite Publishing  
review by Joshua  
"Ktfish7" Guillion  
**3 out of 5 Stars.**

#30 Evocative Vehicles brings us another installment in the #30 series from Rite publishing. Liz Smith is at the reins this time around, and has presented us with an interesting collection of vehicular oddities.

Each presented with a Statblock to handle the game mechanics side of things, along with a brief history and explanation of the vehicle's abilities. Formatting and editing stand up to the standard set by Rite publishing, with Steven doing his typical excellent job in that regard. Layout adheres to the dual column approach, with embedded B&W artwork from that treasure chest of classic artwork Mr. Russell has a knack for plumbing. Bookmarks are present, but unfortunately are handled with an alphabetical subsection (B-C, D, E, F-H....) instead of linking to the actual items. Not a huge problem, but a slight disappointment.

Being that we are looking at thirty items, and to detail them all for you would negate the entire reason to purchase said product, I am going to instead touch on a



few that caught my eye. The Dancing Phoenix would be the first up, an aasimar wizard's ship, built to catch the planar winds this vessel was designed to travel the various planes in search of fellow aasimar. Something about the idea of sailing the planar seas always appeals. Dreamstead shows an obvious nod to a certain classic movie from yesteryear. A four-poster bed that will animate to gain the capacity to walk and fly with the manipulation of carving upon a bedpost. Not the most original of ideas true, but the way it is presented here did get a smile out of me.

The Infinity Thief introduces us to a ship upon which no-one can die, no matter what. Regardless of damage you stabilize right before the point of death. Now that sounds all well and good until you realize that nowhere in there did I say no damage, or no pain...this is more a curse than a benefit folks, and makes for one seriously demented crew to unleash upon a campaign world sailing the seas in their twisted curse of a vessel. And, in case you're wondering, yes, the minute you leave the vessel you regain mortality. Kekette brings me around again to an homage piece, this one being a bright yellow colored submersible...I think we'll just leave this one alone at that.

Pelte strikes me as one of the oddest, and yet cool vehicle ideas in this collection. A copper sphere large enough for 1-2 (depending upon size) the basic idea here is you catch a ride inside a gelatinous cube, using a system of rods you can extend from the sphere out past the cube's mass that extrude the scent of food to steer the creature where you want it to go. Now, idea wise, interesting. As presented however, serious issues. First off, I'm thinking if you have to open anything on this sphere to extend these rods, you're allowing the cube in, as it is a semisolid, and will ooze through openings. Second, how does one stop? How do you get out of the cube's mass once in it? Intriguing idea and all, and one I could see making for an odd encounter with an NPC for a dungeon crawl, but there are a few details I would have liked to have seen covered in its entry.

All in all, this is exactly what it states, a collection of vehicles of various ideas. Some of these vehicles are of the common enough type that they will feel instantly familiar, carriages, ships, etc. Others are a little more odd, like the steam driven medusa head warmachine (simply a walking style machine with built in siege weapons, not equipped with a gaze attack). The author approached the source material with a great deal of humor, and admittedly there are several points I feel that detracts from the over all product. Not just in the nature of how the vehicles are designed so much, or even what the vehicles are, but in reading through their descriptions and histories. An alchemical mechanical dragon comes to mind, as its history suggests that it was last known

to be in the possession of a love sick wyvern who is still trying to get it to speak and return its affection.

All in all, if your either OK with the humor, or can look past it, the vehicles here range from flat out weird and niche to interesting and usable. This one fell towards the middle for me, not really wowing me enough, but at the same time not failing to deliver on what the title suggests either. In the end I am settling on a rating of 3 stars.



### Shadowsfall: Shadow Plane Player's Companion

by Jon Brazer  
Enterprises

review by Joshua  
"Ktfish7" Guillion  
**3 out of 5 Stars.**

The Shadowsfall Shadow Plane Player's Guide from Jon Brazer Enterprises is one of those pdfs I have been looking forward to, and initial scans through the book do not disappoint, as this is one very professional looking project. Filled with a blend of color and B&W artwork, and one piece of B&W cartography that very much reminded me of long ago days of drawing up maps of fantastical lands for games with friends, the formatting adheres to the standard dual column approach. 34 pages total, with only four of those going to covers, OGL and TOC...leaving 30 pages to the material itself. Well, almost, there's an intro, and a cool coversheet of sorts (a "letter" with illustration) that starts us off.

So...Shadowsfall. Much anticipated as a setting, and here I have yet another piece of this puzzle, this time in the form of a player's guide. And what pray tell does Mr. McCoy choose to cover in this guide? Read on my friends, and I will do my best to cover the pertinent reasons you NEED this book.

Right off the bat it is important to understand that in the Plane of Shadow we are not the top of the food chain when it comes to playable races, nor even the densest population factor. To put it short humans are pretty much outnumbered. In terms of most per capita, the



title belongs to the walking dead, as the Shadowsfall setting is about as close as one can get to playing a zombie apocalypse setting without abandoning the fantasy genre. There is a very real underlying threat of the undead permeating this setting, which brings with it the obvious darkness that makes this setting a real treat for those looking to add some Gothic horror to their standard campaign. Second, Shadowsfall, or the Plane of Shadow if you prefer, is an immense realm filled with the forgotten and lost material, places and people of countless worlds and realms. The possibilities for a campaign are insane in that there are so many different cultures worth of items, material and locations all tucked into one place, just waiting to be discovered.

Introduced in the player's guide we finally get stats for the beautiful Umbral Kobold that graces the cover, and that Dale has been teasing us with. An offshoot of the standard kobold race, they are the descendents of a clan of kobold who found themselves trapped upon the shadow plane, and with no heroes to cull their numbers grew and evolved to survive their new home. Also introduced here is the Wanderer, an intriguing player race for a fallen angel essentially...but think more in terms of City of Angels as opposed to Fire and Brimstone here...these celestials asked to leave service for whatever reason, and were granted their leave. Both new races are also accompanied with an archetype suited not only for them, but the shadow plane specifically.

New class options include a new order for cavaliers, new bloodlines, evolutions, hexes and schools continue to provide more options to truly fine tune your character to the shadow plane before delving to deep into these lands. Of these options, the new school of elemental magic was probably my personal favorite, Shadow. Quoting straight from the text, as I think this really speaks for itself..."Shadow represents the memory of what was, the loss of what is, and the broken dreams of the future. It is the lifelessness and despair that comes from a former glory wasting away..." Starting to get the idea that perhaps the term Shadow Plane is referring to more than just that thing you cast on the wall yet?

New plane of course gives us new familiar options, some being shade variants, others being new to the list entirely...giant nightcrawler anyone? Or perhaps a riding dodo?? Nothing says don't mess with me like riding into combat on a dodo...lol

As is the standard within a player's guide for a setting, we are given a brief description and write up for several communities and settlements, their people and basic

traits. The immense difference here in looking at how these communities interact is that they essentially don't. Outside the walls of fortified structures lies the undead hordes. Wandering through what is known as the Outlands, or the lands between strongholds, the zombie population and random critters make sure that travel between strongholds is a dangerous enough proposition that one does not partake of it for no reason short of dire importance. Which is why it is easy to see how each of these stronghold settlements have become as vastly different as they have. Each coming to be as a means of defending a place to settle and live against raiders, monsters and the undead in general, they all have adapted a different outlook on what is the best path to take in doing so. Strongholds such as Blackbat – in business with vampire lords trading captured zombies to be used as labor in mines collecting material; Bloodchain – ruled by kytons, the humanoids within these walls pay for their safety by giving in to the sadistic desires of their masters; Kingsgrave – a once mighty stronghold complete with magical orchards providing plentiful food and a contingent of golems protecting them from the undead hordes. All was perfection until the golems turned on their masters, leaving this once mighty region into a ghostland still filled with plentiful foods and treasures for those willing to brave the still patrolling golem guardians. These are but a sampling of the settlements and strongholds detailed here, and truthfully, each has an interesting enough flavor that I would love to see them all expanded upon in future volumes.

Thirteen new feats flesh out the next section of the book, with such offerings as Shadow Style (Combat, Style) – increasing base land speed, and adding your Wis bonus to Fly and Stealth checks. Additionally we are given 2 feats that chain with this combat style to further add to the enhancements. Augment Undead does exactly what you might be thinking it does, adding to STR and HD for undead you create. Fighting Retreat stood out to me as one of those feats that I can see a great deal of intelligent players taking, as it allows for an attack action during a withdraw action...and let's face it, sometimes you just have to run rather than die. And it is always a good idea to be able to fight as you go until you are clear enough to run.

New equipment options include the wartrident, a variant pike style weapon, and several alchemical items like the deathburn and holy orb. Deathburn is a liquid that after application to an undead will change their physical damage to acidic, or cause acidic damage when applied to living tissue. The holy orb is essentially a glass grenade filled with holy water. Two vehicles are



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presented here as well, one strictly realistic in its design, the other following the eldritch/alchemical route.

Four pages are dedicated to laying out the pantheons of the Shadow Plane, explaining the portfolios of the gods, the viewpoints of their followers, and the subdomains associated to the former. Here within are the Kyton subdomain (Evil, Law) and the Shadow subdomain (Darkness). We're also given a new mystery for oracles, Joy.

Six new spells are introduced with a section opener explaining that within the shadow plane many spells more common on other planes are less effective...I would have liked to have seen perhaps more detail to this statement in game mechanics. It states that fireball would be one of those less effective spells, but does not give us any stats to show this. I am assuming this information will be within the setting guide itself for GM's, as opposed to the player's guide...so I shall be looking for it. If the statement is going to be made that common spells are less useful, and the subschool of shadow is in fact more powerful on this plane (which makes perfect sense) I would think some form of demonstrating this would be extremely useful.

As with the spells, we are given six new magical items as well, with a brief intro stating that very few magical items are actually created within this plane, as most people are concerned more with the task of day to day survival. Amongst these items we have a Cowl of Undead Command, a Kyton Slavery Whip and a Cloak of Darkness. Now in direct contrast we close the book with a chapter detailing several common magical items that have found their way to the plane of shadow, and been altered. And by altered, well, I mean altered...lol. Take the Necklace of Exploding Beads for instance, appearing as a standard type IV necklace of fireballs the beads on this necklace explode instantly upon removal from the strand, not giving you the chance to throw them at a foe...I so want to drop a few of these for my PCs to find...(insert evil laugh)...But, as cool as this section is, I think it further supports my problem with the new spell chapter. The plane changes things, and the time was taken to show that for a few magical items to help clarify this, but the same level of attention was not afforded spells. By stating that spells don't work as effectively, but not detailing any of what is meant by that, I feel a little shortchanged...especially after reading through the excellent magical items section.

OK...final tally of thoughts here. PDF is fully bookmarked, which always makes me happy. TOC was not linked, which makes me frown, but truly, that is a

personal thing since bookmarks handle that anyway. I managed to find one editing error in 34 pages...one. That's pretty good, good enough I'm not even considering it as a negative. The art ranges in quality, with a few pieces being truly excellent, the writing was all of good caliber. The idea that has grown into Shadowsfall is interesting and original enough in its approach that it feels brand new without losing the touch of familiar that a setting needs to truly be inviting. That alone deserves it high praise, as that is not an easy task to pull off. So...my feeling that a more expanded explanation of why/how some spells are not as effective would be helpful being my only true negative...and seriously, if that's all I can find to dig at you should have realized by now that this is an excellent player's guide to a fantastically written setting.

I am going with a rating of 5 for this book, as my only complaints came down to personal preferences, not actual issues with the product itself.



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